

BOOK REVIEW

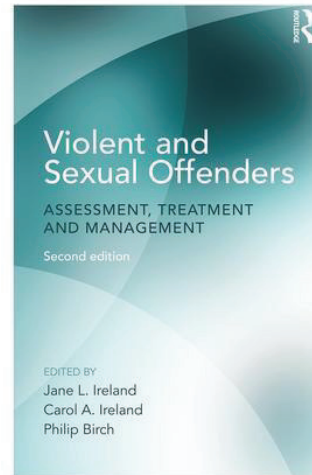
Violent and Sexual Offenders: Assessment, Treatment and Management (2nd ed.)

By Jane L. Ireland, Carol A. Ireland and Philip Birch

Routledge, Oxon

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Reviewed by Louise A. Sicard

Offender assessment, treatment and management, particularly that of violent and sexual offenders, has experienced consistent development throughout literature and practice. In 2009, Ireland, Ireland and Birch constructed the first edition of this text, which offered coverage of violent, sexual, domestic violence and stalking offenders. The first edition presented chapters that discussed key advancements such as stalking offenders, protective factors in risk assessment and the contention between static and dynamic risk assessment instruments. However, over the last decade since the release of the first edition, there has been a growth of research with significant implications to practice in this field. Accordingly, the editors have recognised the need for an examination of the progress made and issues raised during the last 10 years. Filling this gap, a second edition of ‘Violent and Sexual Offenders: Assessment, Treatment and Management’ has been published, providing a much-needed exploration of the current perspectives in this area.

Illustrating the expansion of research in the field, Ireland, Ireland and Birch (2019) present over double the chapters of the first edition. This second edition brings to light the recent research in areas explored within the first edition including violent, sexual, partner violence and stalker offenders. Importantly, the text also advances the reader's knowledge in contemporary areas of interest such as intellectually disabled sex offenders, female sex offenders who abuse children, cyber/internet sex offenders, terrorists and extremists. Through considering recent perspectives on core topics and examining emergent avenues of research in this field, this book successfully presents itself as a highly comprehensive source on violent and sexual offender assessment, treatment and management.

The text consists of 32 chapters that are arranged into four logical sections: (1) Risk assessment – current perspective, (2) Clinical assessment – current perspectives, (3) Treatment – current perspectives, and (4) Management – current perspectives. Dividing the chapters into these four sections is useful for the reader, as it effectively highlights the four distinct categories, while retaining the order of the process from offender risk assessment to offender reintegration and management within the community. It is noteworthy that this text separates risk assessment from clinical assessment, as there is a wealth of advancements as well as benefits and limitations to be expounded concerning actuarial and clinical assessment. Furthermore, each chapter has been contributed by authors who have extensive academic and/or practical experience within the specified area. Adding to this, the supporting references offered by the chapters are extensive and prove useful for further reading in the area.

Moving to discuss perhaps the most valuable aspect of this text: the implications to practice. This text is built on the work of 55 academics in the field, thus there is a thorough illustration of the various perspectives on offender assessment, treatment and management. However, arguably many of the chapters offer, what may be described as, a 'progressively positive' perspective on assessing, treating and managing violent and sex offenders. Often, previous and dated works on these offending groups,

particularly sex offender treatment, generally take a ‘negative’ approach through focusing on the offender’s risk and deficits. However, this text methodically considers the importance of adopting more contemporary, ‘positive’ approaches to violent and sexual offender assessment, treatment and management.

Exemplifying the underlying ‘positive’ perspective of the book, during the first section there are several chapters, as well as a dedicated chapter, to highlighting the value of protective factors within offender risk assessment. Further, the text explores newer offender treatment theories and models such as *desistance* which examines the pathways out of offending and the *good lives model*, which advocates for a strength-based, individualised and responsive approach to offender treatment. It is noted within the text that the *good lives model* is theoretically sound and has demonstrated merit and yet is only recently being used within treatment. Additionally, throughout section three of the text there is an underlying message that maintains the importance of employing diverse and alternative approaches to offender treatment and management, stipulating the significance of approaching an offender as an individual. Thus, it is suggested that this text may prompt practitioners, such as treatment program directors and facilitators, to consider the use of more individualised, strength-based and alternative treatments for this offending population.

Upon considering the readership of this book, it is assessed that this source will engage a diverse audience due to the all-inclusive coverage of the field of offender assessment, treatment and management. This book will be of primary interest to academics, researchers and practitioners in criminology, criminal justice and forensic psychology. Moreover, as the text provides chapters that delve into foundational theories, models and concepts to these aforementioned areas of study, it is believed that it would be appropriate for undergraduate and postgraduate students.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Louise A. Sicard, PhD is a sessional lecturer in Criminology & Policing in the Centre for Law and Justice at Charles Sturt University, Australia. She has previously held a teaching post at the University of Western Sydney, the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. She recently completed her PhD at Charles Sturt University, Australia which focused on the use of music therapy as a treatment component with offenders, in particular those with complex needs.

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