



Psychopaths Among Us

“Everyone, including experts can be taken in, manipulated and conned, and be left bewildered by them....a good psychopath can play a concerto on anyone’s heartstrings....”

Robert D. Hare PhD

Young Psychopaths

- Inexplicably **“different”** from normal children
- More difficult
- Willful and aggressive
- Deceitful
- Harder to **“relate to”** or get close to
- Less susceptible to influence and instruction
- Always testing the limits of social tolerance

Early Behavior Problems

- Exhibit serious behavior problems at an early age
- Early behavior problems are more extensive and serious than other children with behavior problems
- Behaviors will include:
 - persistent lying
 - violence
 - substance abuse
 - theft
 - truancy
 - cruelty to animals**
 - cruelty to other children including siblings
 - vandalism
 - fire setting
 - precocious sexuality
 - bullying
 - running away
 - class disruption

BETH

**HOME BOX OFFICE
PRESENTS**

The Face of Psychopathic Violence



Alyssa Bustamante



- "I strangled them and slit their throat and stabbed them now they're dead," Bustamante wrote in her diary, which was read in court by a handwriting expert. "I don't know how to feel atm. It was ahmazing. As soon as you get over the 'ohmygawd I can't do this' feeling, it's pretty enjoyable. I'm kinda nervous and shaky though right now. Kay, I gotta go to church now...lol."
- She was 15 years old when she killed her 9 year old neighbor.

John Massey

In 1993, two bodies were found on a country road in Ellis County, Texas. One was male, one female. The boy, 14, had been shot, but the 13-year-old girl had been stripped, raped, and dismembered. Her head and hands were missing. He tortured animals, stalked another young woman, and revered killers like Ted Bundy, Charles Manson, and Henry Lee Lucas. He was nine years old when he killed his first cat. He added dozens more over the years, along with dogs and even six cows.



MUGSHOT

EVIDENCE

Other Case Histories

- Jessica Holtmeyer, 16, hanged a learning-disabled girl in Pennsylvania and then bashed in her face with a rock. Afterward, a witness reported Holtmeyer to say that she wanted to cut the girl up and keep one of her fingers as a souvenir.
- In 1979, sixteen-year-old Brenda Spencer received a rifle for her birthday. She used it to shoot kids at an elementary school near her San Diego home, wounding nine and killing two. A reporter asked her later why she had done it. Her answer: "**I don't like Mondays. This livens up the day.**"

Early Behavior Problems

- Early behaviors are more extensive and serious than other children with behavior problems (lying, thieving, fire-setting before 10 years of age)
- Adult psychopaths describe childhood cruelty to animals as ordinary events, even enjoyable

Animal Cruelty: Types of Abusers

- *The Experimenter:* (ages 1-6 or developmentally delayed). This is usually a preschool child who has not developed the cognitive maturity to understand that animals have feelings are not to be treated as toys.
- *The "Cry-for-Help" Abuser:* (6/7 - 12). This is a child who intellectually understands that it is not okay to hurt animals. This behavior is not due to a lack of education' instead, the animal abuse is more likely to be a symptom of a deeper psychological problem.
- *The Conduct-Disordered Abuser:* (12+) Teens who abuse animals almost always engage in other antisocial behaviors - substance abuse and gang activities.

Callous-Unemotional Youth (CU)

- Existing research suggests the presence of CU traits designates a group of anti-social youth with a distinct temperament that could play an important role in their moral development. (Blair, 1995; Frick & Morris, 2004)
- Frick and Dickens (2006) reviewing 24 published studies showed that the presence of CU traits:
 - Designates a particularly severe and aggressive group of youth
 - **Predicts future aggressive and violent behavior**
 - Predicts poorer response to treatment
 - Impairment in recognizing both sad and fearful facial expressions and vocal tones
 - Reduced emotional responses to pictures with distressing content

Callous-Unemotional Youth (CU)

- In some children, C.U. traits manifest in obvious ways. Paul Frick, a psychologist at the University of New Orleans who has studied risk factors for psychopathy in children for two decades, described one boy who used a knife to cut off the tail of the family cat bit by bit, over a period of weeks. The boy was proud of the serial amputations, which his parents initially failed to notice. “When we talked about it, he was very straightforward,” Frick recalls. “He said: ‘I want to be a scientist, and I was experimenting. I wanted to see how the cat would react.’ ”

Callous-Unemotional Youth (CU)

- In another famous case, a 9-year-old boy named Jeffrey Bailey pushed a toddler into the deep end of a motel swimming pool in Florida. As the boy struggled and sank to the bottom, Bailey pulled up a chair to watch. Questioned by the police afterward, Bailey explained that he was curious to see someone drown. When he was taken into custody, he seemed untroubled by the prospect of jail but was pleased to be the center of attention.

Psychopathy Check List: Youth Version

- Is a rating scale designed to measure psychopathic traits and behaviors in adolescents ages 12-18 years.
- It consists of 20 items that measure the interpersonal, affective, and behavioral dimensions considered to be fundamental to the construct of psychopathy.

PCL-YV

- **Example of items on checklist:**
- Grandiose sense of self-worth
(dominating/opinionated)
- Pathological lying
- Lack of remorse
- Parasitic orientation
- Impersonal sexual behavior
- Impulsivity
- Serious criminal behavior

Antisocial Process Screening Device (APSD)

- The APSD detects antisocial characteristics and tendencies in children 6 to 13 years of age. Through early identification, it allows clinicians, teachers, and parents to intervene proactively and possibly prevent destructive or criminal behavior.
- **Research indicates that antisocial behavior in young people is associated with three specific traits:**
 - **Callousness**
 - **Narcissism**
 - **Impulsivity**
- The APSD assesses these traits on three scales. Parents and teachers rate the child on items addressing interpersonal, affective, and behavioral characteristics. When ratings from these two sources are complete, they are integrated and reconciled on a combined form, the norm-based APSD-C. Test results identify antisocial traits and indicate appropriate intervention strategies.

Conduct Disorder

- DSM-IV Criteria for Conduct Disorder
 - A repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated, as manifested by the presence of three (or more) of the following criteria in the past 12 months, with at least one criterion present in the past six months:

Conduct Disorder

- (1) Aggression or serious **threats of harm to people or animals;**
- (2) Deliberate property damage or destruction (e.g. fire setting, vandalism)
- (3) Repeated violations of household or school rules, laws, or both;
- (4) Persistent lying to avoid consequences or to obtain tangible goods or privileges.

Subtypes of Conduct Disorder

- Childhood onset:
 - ❑ Left untreated, has a poor prognosis
 - ❑ In about 40% of cases, it develops into adult anti-social personality disorder (Kazdin AE, Sage, 1995)
- Adolescent onset:
 - ❑ Should be considered in a social context
 - ❑ Gang culture being used to meet basic survival needs
 - ❑ Are often less psychologically disturbed than those with childhood onset

Oppositional Defiant Disorder

- Symptoms of ODD may include:
 - ❑ Frequent temper tantrums
 - ❑ Excessive arguing with adults
 - ❑ Often questioning rules
 - ❑ Deliberate attempts to annoy or upset people
 - ❑ **Blaming others for his or her mistakes**
 - ❑ Often being touchy or easily annoyed by others
 - ❑ Frequent anger and resentment
 - ❑ Mean and hateful talking when upset
 - ❑ Spiteful attitude and revenge seeking

Narcissistic Personality

- Has **a grandiose sense of self-importance** (e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements)
- Is preoccupied with **fantasies of unlimited success,** power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love
- **Believes that he or she is "special" and unique** and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions)
- Requires excessive admiration

(American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, fourth edition*)

Narcissistic Personality

- Narcissistic can be thought of as existing along a continuum:
 - Hyper vigilant/Vulnerable
 - Oblivious Narcissist

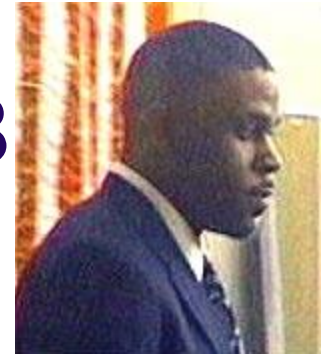
Oblivious Narcissism

- Unaware of reactions, hurt feelings or communications of others
- Arrogant and aggressive
- Seeks to be the center of attention

(Adapted from Gabbard, 1989)

Leon “Soulja” Dorsey

Executed August 13, 2008



- Suggested the families of his victims not focus on their losses
- “They’re dead.” “That’s over and done with.’
“Why are you going to sit there and worry yourself about that. Move on! “I could come in here and been, ‘Oh, I’m sorry, I’m so bad.’ But I don’t feel like that. That’s not being honest with myself.”

Hypervigilant/Vulnerable Narcissism

- Very sensitive to others' reactions
- Feelings are easily hurt
- Vigilant for slights, criticism, shame or humiliation (school shooters)
- Inhibited and shy
- Directs attention outward
- Avoids being center of attention

Antisocial Personality Disorder

- DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) a patient must have a persistent history of the disregard for the rights of others occurring since age 15, evidenced by three (or more) of the following seven traits:

Antisocial Personality Disorder

- Failure to conform to social norms
- Deceitfulness, repeated lying, use of aliases, or manipulation of others
- Impulsivity or failure to plan ahead
- Irritability and aggressiveness
- Reckless disregard for safety of self or others
- Consistent irresponsibility
- Lack of remorse, indifferent to or rationalizing having hurt or mistreated others

Antisocial Personality

- Inability to stop themselves from doing things they shouldn't do (impulse control)
- Inability to force themselves to do things they should do (self discipline)
- Lifestyle impulsivity

Antisocial Personality

- While 50% to 80% of incarcerated individuals have been found to have antisocial personality disorder, only 15% have been shown to have the more severe antisocial personality disorder type of psychopathy.
- Research on the possible biologic risk factors for developing antisocial personality disorder indicates that **the part of the brain that is primarily responsible for learning from one's mistakes and for responding to sad and fearful facial expressions (the amygdala) tends to be smaller and respond less robustly to the happy, sad, or fearful facial expressions of others.**

Antisocial vs. Psychopathy

**All Antisocial's are not
psychopaths but all
Psychopaths are Antisocial**

The difference is attachment

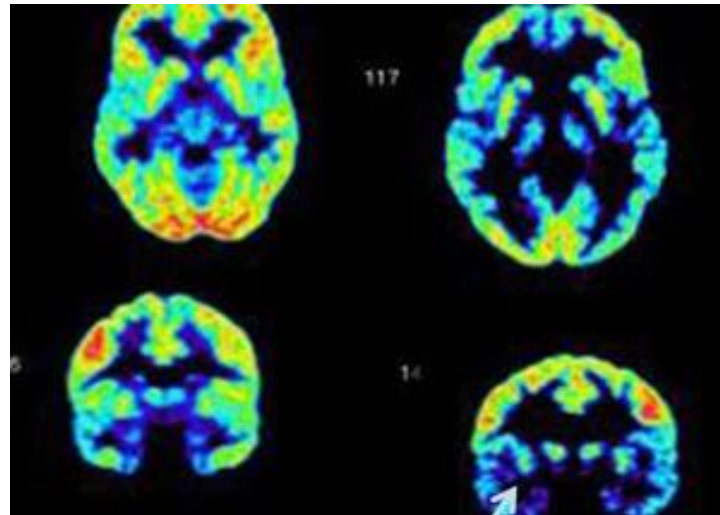
Developmental Correlates

- Etiology remains largely unknown
- Strong link between family dysfunction & delinquency/violence
- No decisive link between family history & presence of psychopathy in adults
- *“I do not believe obvious mistreatment or any simple egregious parental errors can justifiably be held as the cause of a child’s developing this complex disorder” Cleckly (1976)*
- Early callous/unemotional traits and behaviors are predictive of later problems

James Fallon Neuroscientist

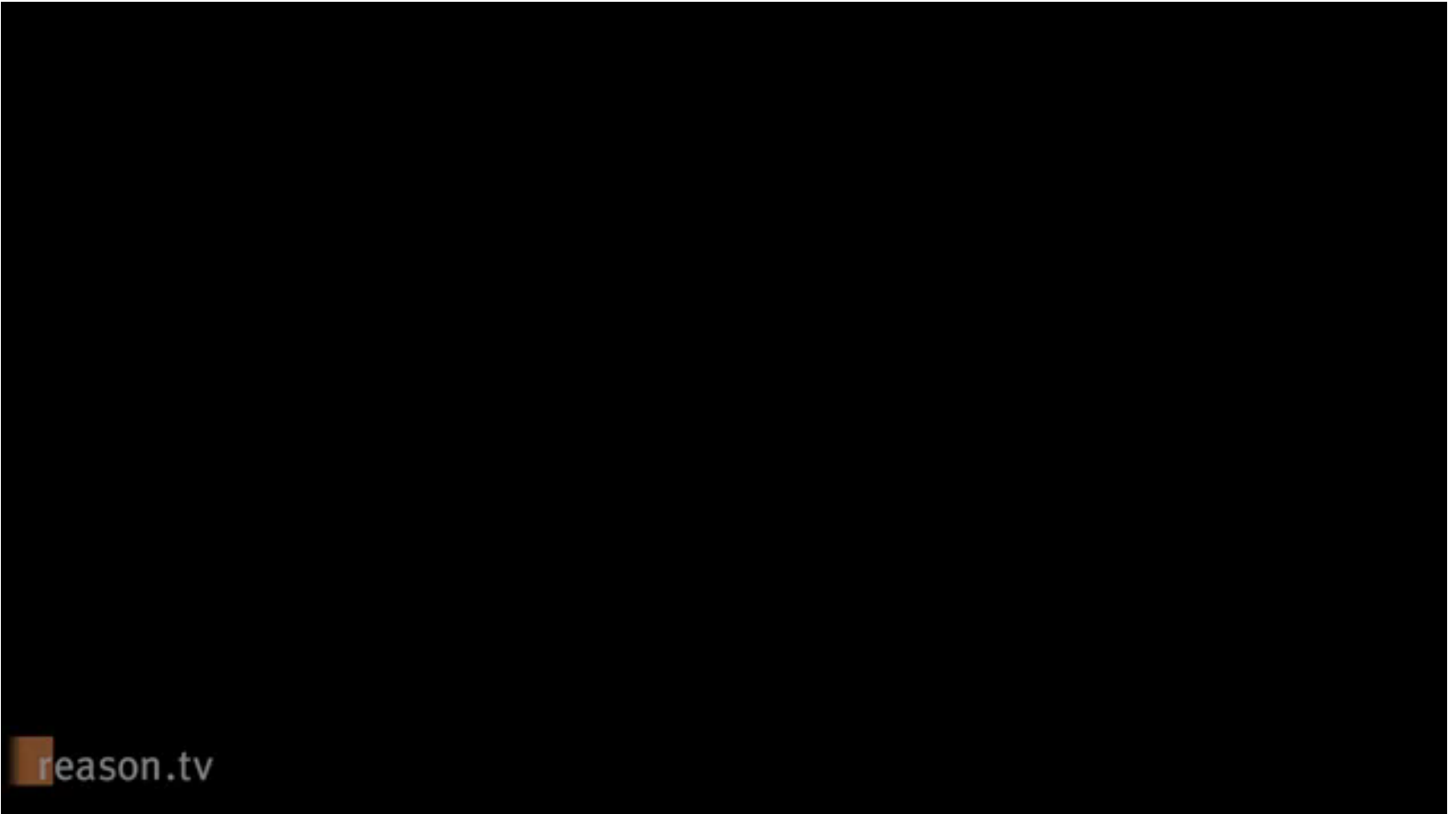


Neuroscience



Fallon's brain (on the right) has dark patches in the orbital cortex, the area just behind the eyes. This is the area that Fallon and other scientists say is involved with ethical behavior, moral decision-making and impulse control. The normal scan on the left is his son's.

Dr. James Fallon



reason.tv

Neurobiology Ethics

- If drugs can be found that suppress the dopamine reward system in the brains of psychopaths should they be required to take the drugs?
- If a person can get brain scanned to detect psychopathy should a sentencing judge impose a harsher sentence on the theory that psychopaths can not be rehabilitated?
- If a child can be identified to be both a psychopath and violent should the child be separated from society or medicated starting at a young age to alter their brain development to make them more ethical?

The words of psychopaths reveal their predatory nature

- A new Cornell University computer study can identify speech patterns of psychopaths
- Psychopathic criminals tend to make identifiable word choices when talking about their crimes
- Their words reflect their personalities, showing selfishness, detachment from their crimes and emotional flatness
- The researchers compared stories told by 14 imprisoned psychopathic male murderers with those of 38 convicted murderers who were not diagnosed as psychopathic

Words of Psychopaths

- Psychopaths used more conjunctions like "because," "since" or "so that," implying that the crime "had to be done" to obtain a particular goal
- They used twice as many words relating to physical needs, such as food, sex or money, while non-psychopaths used more words about social needs, including family, religion and spirituality
- Psychopaths were more likely to use the past tense, suggesting a detachment from their crimes
- They tended to be less fluent in their speech, using more "ums" and "uhs."

Psychopathy

- Psychopathy is not a recognized personality disorder
- At its core, it is an inability to emotionally bond with other human beings
- Combined with:
 - Low level of anxiety
 - Lack of fear conditioning

Psychopathy

- It is the emotional attachment to others that provides the foundation for the development of such qualities as:
 - Ability to feel empathy
 - Ability to feel remorse
 - Ability to feel guilt
 - Ability to feel sadness
 - Commitment
 - Loyalty

Psychopathy

- It is not an ability to feel any emotion
- They can experience certain feelings of emotional distress:
 - ***Frustration***
 - ***Envy***
 - ***Hatred***
 - ***Anger*** – two primary sources
 - Perceived attacks on grandiose self-image
 - The frustration of wish, goal, desire, urge, etc.

David Kruger



Psychopathy

- View of self revolves around not only a grandiose image – but feelings of **omnipotence**
- Omnipotence is not just the feeling of having power and control over others, but the **ultimate** power and control over others

Etc.

- The number of people with psychopathic personalities suggest that most of us will come across at least one psychopath during a typical day
- They are motivated to have a talent for, “reading people” and for sizing them up quickly. They identify a person’s likes and dislikes, motives, needs, weak spots and vulnerabilities

Etc.

- They are masters of impression management; their insight into the psyche of others combined with a superficial – but convincing – verbal fluency allow them to change their personas skillfully as it suits the situation and their game plan
- They are **social chameleons**
- They are near-perfect invisible human predators

Emotional Features

- Shallow emotions (primitive)
- They know the words but not the music (they only know the dictionary meaning of words)
- Weak emotional ties to people or principles
(they can learn to use ordinary words...and to reproduce the appearance of feeling...but the feeling does not come to pass)
- Lack of empathy, guilt, remorse
(complete lack)
- Little subjective stress

Where Are They?

- Every where
- All races, cultures
- Males (75%) and females (25%)
- General population 1%
- Offender population 10% to 25%
- Politicians, mercenaries, con-men, rapists and murderers
- Not all are in prison – **most are not**

Some “Heavy Dose” Examples

- Con artists, swindlers, fraudsters
- Telemarketers, boiler room operators
- “Pump and dump” stock salesman
- Imposters, **cult leaders**, evangelists
- Shady lawyers and car salesman
- Crooked home repairmen
- Persistent spouse assaulters, bullies
- Unethical doctors, therapists, counselors
- Corrupt politicians

Jim Jones Massacre



On November 18, 1979, 912 followers of Jim Jones committed suicide, he called it “revolutionary suicide.”

Jim Jones Massacre



Psychopathic Fiction

- They often have an engaging manner and make a great first impression
- Amazingly, victims will eventually come to **doubt their own knowledge of the truth and change their own views** to believe what the psychopath tells them rather than what they know to be true

Key Symptoms of Psychopathy

■ Glib and Superficial

- They are often witty, articulate, amusing and entertaining conversationalist
- They appear to be familiar with **art, law, poetry, psychology and literature**
- Some will claim to have advance degrees and will impress with their technical jargon
- It is not always easy to tell whether he is being glib or sincere

Ted Bundy



Glib and Superficial

“I’ve wasted a lot of my life. You can’t get back the time. I’ve tried that before, to make up time by doing more things. But things just went faster, not better. I intend to live in a much more slowed-down life, and give a lot to people that I never had myself. Put some enjoyment in their lives. I don’t mean thrills, I mean some substance into somebody else’s life. It will probably be a woman, but it doesn’t have to be a woman. Maybe a woman’s kids, or maybe someone in an old folks home. I think...no, I don’t think...I know, it would give me a great deal of pleasure, and make me feel a whole lot better about my life.”

Egocentric and Grandiose

- Narcissistic and grossly inflated view of their self-worth
- See themselves as the center of the universe, superior beings that live according to their own rules: ***"It's not that I don't follow the law, I follow my own laws. I never violate my own rules."***
- They come across as arrogant, shameless braggarts, self-assured, opinionated and cocky

Egocentric and Grandiose

- When asked how he began his life in crime one psychopath replied:

“It had to do with my mother, the most beautiful person in the world. She was strong, worked hard to take care of four kids. A beautiful person, I started stealing her jewelry when I was in the fifth grade. You know, I never really knew the bitch, we went our separate ways.”

Lack of Remorse or Guilt

- Stunning lack of concern for the devastating effects of their actions
- **Psychopaths learn that remorse is an important word**
- Psychopaths will verbalize remorse and then contradict themselves
- They **always have an excuse or deny anything happened**

Psychopathic Lies



Psychopathy and Recidivism in One Year

Psychopaths

General Recidivism 3x more likely

Violent Recidivism 4x more likely

(Hemphill et al., 1998)

Deceitful and Manipulative

- Psychopaths are seldom perplexed or embarrassed when caught in a lie
- Take courses in prison to appear to be **“rehabilitating”** themselves (become model prisoners)
- Will readily **use the Christian community** (become “born again” Christians)
- They love to use the **“cycle of abuse”** theory

Shallow Emotions

- Laboratory experiments have shown that **psychopaths lack the physiological responses associated with fear**

“When I rob a bank, I notice that the teller shakes or becomes tongued-tied. One barfed all over the money. She must have been pretty messed up inside, but I don’t know why.”

Shallow Emotions

- Psychopaths suffer from **emotional poverty** that limits the range and depth of their feelings
- They are prone to **dramatic and short lived displays of emotion**
- They equate love with sexual arousal, sadness with frustration and anger with irritability
- *“I believe in emotions: hate, anger, lust and greed,”* said Richard Ramirez, the “Night Stalker”

Carl Abuhl

CRIMINAL MINDS

 MSNBC

Poor Behavior Controls

- Psychopaths are **highly reactive to perceived insults or slights**
- They tend to respond to frustration, failure, discipline, and criticism with sudden violence
- They take offense easily and become angry and aggressive over trivialities
- They see their aggressive behavior as a natural response to provocation
- When asked if he ever lost control when he got mad, one psychopath replied: ***“No, I keep my control. Like I decide how much I want to hurt the guy.”***

Female Psychopaths

- Characteristics:
 - Usually not a sexual element
 - Usually money or power related
 - Typically know their victims
 - Rare for them to kill strangers
 - Many become nurses or doctors where nobody would expect them (Texas nurse Genene Jones killed between 11 and 46 people.)
 - People say about this group “but they seemed like such nice people.”
 - Some will kill husbands to collect inheritance or life insurance

Female Psychopaths



Lack of Responsibility

- Obligations and commitments mean nothing to psychopaths
- **Psychopaths see children as an inconvenience**
- Psychopaths do not hesitate to use friends or family resources
- Frequently manage to obtain probation, suspended sentence or early release from prison

Adult Antisocial Behavior

- Psychopaths consider rules inconvenient and unreasonable impediments
- Psychopaths have no particular affinity for any one type of crime but tend to try everything

How long is your rap sheet?

"I would think about 29 or 30 pages"

29 or 30 pages! Charles Manson's is only 5

"But he is only a killer"

Crime: The Logical Choice

- Is there honor among thieves?
- To be a criminal does not mean without conscious
- Psychopaths show no loyalty to groups, codes or principles
- Law enforcement should make use of this when trying to solve a crime

Killed in the Line of Duty

A study by the FBI found that **56%** of the offenders who killed a police officer were psychopaths.

{Killed in the Line of Duty, The Uniform Crime Reports Section, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Department of Justice, September, 1992}

Psychopathic Violence- Cold-Blooded and “Casual”

- Both male and female psychopaths are much more likely be violent and aggressive
- They commit twice as many violent and aggressive acts, both in and out of prison
- **They have no inhibitions about injuring others**

Tommy Lynn Sells



Callousness

“I took somebody’s life and shouldn’t have. I feel bad. The person died. Sometimes you think about it and a couple of times I’ve had a dream about it. Time heals everything. You get over it.”

Psychopathic Violence

- Psychopathy is associated with sexual sadism and violent recidivism among sex offenders
- Rapist tend to be more psychopathic than do other types of sexual and non-sexual offenders
- Even while incarcerated or institutionalized, psychopaths commit more violent misconducts than do non-psychopaths

Sexual Violence

- Rape provides a good example of the callous, selfish, and use of violence by psychopaths
- ***Half of repeat rapists are psychopaths***
- Their acts are result of a mixture:
 - uninhibited expression of sexual desires and fantasies
 - desire for power and control
 - the perception of the victims as objects of pleasure or satisfaction

Psychopaths In The Workplace



Jobs Psychopaths Are Drawn To

- These jobs offer power and many require an ability to make objective, clinical decisions divorced from feelings. Psychopaths would be drawn to these roles and thrive there.

1. CEO
2. Lawyer
3. Media (TV/Radio)
4. Salesperson
5. Surgeon
6. Journalist
7. Police Officer
8. Clergyperson
9. Chef
10. Civil Servant

(The Wisdom of Psychopaths: What Saints, Spies and Serial Killers Can Teach us About Success)

Psychopaths In The Workplace

- One in 25 bosses may be Psychopaths
- A rate that's four times greater than the general population according to Psychologist Paul Babiak
- He studied 203 Corporate Executives to evaluate their psychopathic traits using PCL-Revised
- Just over 5% of the executives in the study met the full criteria for psychopathy – a rate 5 times higher than than seen in the general public
- Another 4% scored abnormally high but not over the cut-off

The Psychopath as a Wife Batterer

- **In one study 25% of men in court ordered treatment programs were psychopaths**
- Psychopathy is strongly related to spousal assault but not to spousal homicide
- Psychopaths in treatment programs have serious ramifications:
 - Notoriously resistant to change
 - Limited resources
 - **Psychopaths are more likely to attend**
 - Disrupting effects on the group
 - Wife has a false sense of security

Do They Grow Out of It?

- The antisocial and criminal behavior patterns that first showed themselves in childhood continue as an adult
- It changes as they age:
 - ❑ **On average, the criminal activities remain at a high level until around age 45**
 - ❑ Their behavior then becomes that of the average persistent offender
 - ❑ The decrease is more dramatic for nonviolent offenses than for violent ones

Do They Grow Out of It?

- Before concluding that aging psychopaths pose little threat consider the following:
 - Not all psychopaths give up crime in middle age; many continue to commit offenses well into their senior years
 - **A decrease in criminality does not necessarily mean that there has been a fundamental change in personality**

What Can Be Done?

- Many researchers have concluded that “no effective treatment has been found,” or “**nothing works,**” is the common conclusion in scholarly reviews
- However, it is essential that we continue to look for methods to reduce the enormous impact psychopaths have on society

Why Nothing Seems to Work

- A basic assumption of therapy is that the patient **needs or wants help**
- Successful therapy requires that the **patient actively participate** with the therapist
- The patient **must recognize that there is a problem** and want to do something about it
- Psychopaths **don't feel they have a problem** and see no reason to change their behavior

Why Psychopaths Are Poor Candidates for Therapy

- Psychopaths are not “fragile”
- Many are protected by well meaning family members
- Psychopaths do not seek help on their own
- Once in therapy they typically just go through the motions
- **Most therapy programs do little than provide psychopaths with new excuses and rationalizations**

Why?

- Psychopaths usually dominate group sessions
- They frequently **play head games with group leaders and other patients**
- They offer few insights into their own behavior

Lyndel Williams

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