



I18 Writing Forensic Psychological Reports for Police Officer Applicants: First Responders in the War on Terrorism

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The goals of this presentation are to introduce the IACP pre-employment guidelines as well as the Peace Officers Standards of Training (POST) as a practice foundation for conducting the forensic pre-employment psychological evaluation. This presentation will also explore the essential parts of a proper clinical interview where a significant portion of the report information is obtained. For example, an applicant's job history and contacts with legal authorities are reviewed for the applied for position.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by showing how long-term outcomes may be observed through a reduction in negligent hire cases highlighted through litigation for officer misconduct.

Police officers are vital front-line responders in the war on terrorism. Therefore, the recruitment, selection, and training of officers assume an essential role in national security. Two useful forensically-relevant references are available for examiners involved in the selection process (i.e., psychological pre-employment screening). The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the Peace Officer Standards (POST) both offer guidance for qualified forensic examiners who must evaluate applicants for these safety sensitive positions. Psychological screening must now incorporate psychological issues related to national security into the evaluation process. After attending this presentation, attendees will understand some the practices used in conducting these evaluations as well as crafting the forensic psychological report that is usually submitted to the hiring authority with national security in mind.

The presentation has three primary learning objectives. First, attendees are introduced to the IACP pre-employment guidelines as well of the Peace Officers Standards of Training (POST) as a practice foundation for conducting the forensic pre-employment psychological evaluation. Second, this presentation explores the essential parts of the clinical interview proper where a significant portion of the report information is obtained. For example, an applicant's job history and contacts with legal authorities are reviewed for the applied for position. The ability to manage or vulnerability to stress is examined within the context of an applicant's coping skills. Finally, the presentation covers writing of the forensic report with considerable attention devoted to the I-Section (i.e., integration section). For example, in some venues, the integration section is the only portion of the report that will be read either because of time or interest constraints on the part of the recipients or because of legal strictures. For example, Federal Rule 803 does not permit the jury to receive the entire report as a written exhibit. In addition, 803 restrict the use of learned treatises attached to the report allowing only the reading of report passages and Rule 702 requires that the psychologists' testimony be grounded in valid constructs and techniques applied to the data in the report rather than relying on biased or stitched together speculation.

These constraints make the integration of the data and reasoning of central importance to the report and the subsequent testimony. The informed use of data, reasoning, and recommendations are by-products of a culturally responsive model that would substantially improve the foundation needed to withstand intensive review during adversarial questioning and cross examination. A case study will be used to illustrate how this process takes place. When carefully crafted, the integration section represents the highest form of evidenced-based practice within this specific forensic context. It is a process that includes forensic research, psychological expertise, and relevant psycho-cultural aspects of the individual being evaluated.

Forensic Psychology, First Responders, Terrorism