Preface

In 1972, Martin Reiser, widely considered the father of police psychology, wrote in the preface of his pioneering book *The Police Department Psychologist*, that the book’s main purpose was to “explicate some of the dimensions of this fascinating position for psychologists…with the expectation that in the future the psychologist will be less of a rare bird in the police profession” (p. vii). Over four decades later, we are very pleased to produce a volume entitled *Police Psychology and Its Growing Impact on Modern Law Enforcement*. As the title implies, the police psychologist is no longer a rare bird, but rather an integral, contributing figure in present-day police agencies, providing support in the areas of personnel assessment, individual and organizational intervention, consultation, and operational assistance.

So much has occurred in the development and expansion of police psychology in the five years since Jack Kitaeff’s (2011) important volume *Handbook of Police Psychology* was published. For example, in that same year, the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) recognized Police & Public Safety Psychology as its 14th specialty board (American Board of Professional Psychology, n.d.). This hard-won acknowledgement helped ensure that psychology’s most rigorous professional practice standards would be applied to police psychology, to the benefit of law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. In 2013, the American Psychological Association (APA) officially recognized Police & Public Safety Psychology as a specialty, having earlier accorded it proficiency status (American Psychological Association, n.d.). APA’s recognition set the stage for police psychology to further mature and grow in regard to its breadth, empirical foundation, and impact. It is our hope that the present book represents a valuable contribution to that growth by providing leading police psychologists, many of whom are among the first generation of professionals to achieve ABPP board certification in Police & Public Safety Psychology, an opportunity to write about current practices and emerging trends in a number of the specialty’s core areas.

Today, police psychologists face unprecedented opportunities and challenges. In 2015, the *President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing* emphasized the essential importance of trust “between law enforcement agencies and the people they protect and serve” (p. 1). Police psychologists are ideally situated to support law enforcement agencies in their efforts to strengthen and build trust with the communities they serve. Resources such as this book are intended to contribute to those efforts by shedding light on best practices, identifying recent and cutting-edge research and developments, and calling attention to important challenges and growth areas that remain.

This book is intended for practicing police psychologists, researchers, students of police psychology, and others with particular interest in the specialty, including law enforcement executives and personnel. The chapters address current practices and recent advances, informed by the research literature and the latest guidelines developed by leading police psychology professional organizations. Our contributing
authors are a combination of seasoned police psychologists, academics, researchers, and other subject matter experts who are uniquely qualified to comment on the growing impact of police psychology on modern law enforcement.

We open with Trompeter’s chapter, which offers a personal take on the history of police psychology and an overview of the major practice areas encompassed by the specialty. The book is then organized into five additional sections, beginning with “Assessment and Evaluation.” Assessment has factored prominently in the development of police psychology and that importance is reflected in four chapters on the topic. Mitchell (co-editor) provides an introductory and overview chapter on the preemployment psychological evaluation of police officer applicants. Ben-Porath, Taresources, and Corey describe the use of the MMPI-2-RF in preemployment screenings, highlighting the impressive empirical support associated with the measure. Detrick and Chibnall share their insights on using the NEO PI-R, widely regarded as the instrument of choice in regard to the Five Factor Model of personality, in preemployment screenings. Finally, Mayer and Corey offer their perspectives on fitness for duty evaluations in a comprehensive chapter that provides an up-to-the-moment distillation of important considerations in this form of high-stakes assessment.

Section 3, “Clinical Interventions and Prevention,” begins with a rigorous review chapter on interventions for critical incidents, authored by Brucia, Cordova, and Ruzek. Next, Garrido and Nicoletti address first responder recovery in the wake of mass casualty events, drawing from the literature and their firsthand experience as police psychologists. The timely matter of transition and reintegration of military personnel to law enforcement careers is examined by Curran, Holt, and Afanador. Clark and White review law enforcement officer suicide, with attention to empirical trends, management of risk, and prevention.

Section 4 explores themes of “Employee Wellness and Support” in law enforcement agencies. Axelrod describes the benefits that accrue to organizations from employee assistance programs and reviews models of service delivery. Kelly and Hoban consider health and wellness programs for law enforcement officers, and share their insights on the intersection of ethics and officer well-being.

In Section 5, two chapters examine aspects of “Operational Consultation.” Cotton and Coleman survey the literature on police interactions with individuals who have mental health problems and based on their review, advocate for new, strategic approaches. Christopher and Tsushima look closely at social factors underlying police officer interactions with persons in crisis and provide recommendations based on their experience directing a program in an urban police department.

We conclude our book with a section on “Current Trends and Developments.” Bradford, McElroy, and Rosenblatt address the impact of contemporary cultural phenomena, including generational shifts, social media, and legalization of marijuana, upon law enforcement agencies’ hiring practices and identity development. McCutcheon examines distinctive ethical challenges and opportunities associated with police psychology, while calling for an emphasis on aspirational ethics.

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REFERENCES


