Overview

This module begins with an introduction to looking at the links between risk and mental health, followed by an exploration of developmental models of personality and emotional behaviour, leading on to mental disorder/illness and a specific focus on aggression/violence in a criminal justice context. The latter part of the module explores theory, diagnosis and treatment of personality disorder, including psychopathy, its links with antisocial behaviour and implications for practice. Strengths and weaknesses of differing theoretical perspectives and their application are explored, and a thread of diversity is incorporated throughout the module. A case study approach is adopted, to enable students to make links between theory and its practical application.

Learning Objectives

After completing this module students should be able to:

- Critically evaluate the evidence that mental illness and personality disorder are risk factors for violence and/or criminal behaviour;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the implications of the prevalence of mental illness and personality disorders in forensic settings;
- Appreciate the theoretical and methodological issues that apply to research on emotional disorders and mental health and apply these to a forensic setting;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the developmental processes contributing to adult mental illness and personality disorder;
- Critically evaluate the current theories of personality disorder, methods used, its identification and the current research on its treatment;
- Appreciate the implications for practice including a) offence analysis, b) assessment, c) management and d) intervention;
- Critically evaluate the concept and the research evidence relating to the measurement of psychopathy;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the concept of co-morbidity and describe the various theories and the implications for assessment and treatment;
- Demonstrate an appreciation of the importance of responsivity issues when planning and implementing treatment in a forensic setting;
- Produce a case formulation which could be used to guide assessment and treatment of an individual in a forensic setting.

Topics Covered

- Risk
- Personality Theory
- Mental Disorder
- Personality Disorder
- Psychopathy
- Co-Morbidity
- Suicide
- Case Formulation
Teaching Methods

The teaching methods include both lectures, tutorials, group discussions and case studies.

Sample Reading


