

# What Every Clinician Should Know About Violence Risk Assessment

The ability to predict future violent behavior has long been an issue for mental health professionals. Initially it was merely assumed that we could make such predictions accurately based on our clinical skills alone. Many decisions in the judicial system hinge on an accurate assessment of violence, such as bond, probation, and parole decisions, commitment to and release from psychiatric facilities, and even whether or not a defendant should be sentenced to death.

Recent research has demonstrated however that such predictions are not as accurate as once assumed and that the methodology used was sadly lacking in validity. A tremendous amount of research has gone into risk assessment for future violence; still, the accuracy remains in question even to this day; nevertheless, judicial decisions are continually made which ignore our limited ability to assess violent behavior. This webinar will explore the factors necessary to do competent work in this area and demonstrate the ways that risk assessment can become more precise.

## Target Audience

Psychologists  
Therapists  
Social Workers  
Psychiatrists  
Counselors  
Nurses  
Course Level: Advanced

## Learning Objectives

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the three generations of risk assessment research
2. State the advantages and disadvantages of the actuarial approach
3. Identify how the structured Professional Judgment may be used in Risk Assessment
4. Name the major assessment instruments for risk assessment
5. Name the legal decisions in which courts have accepted and rejected risk assessment research

## Seminar Schedule

The webinar outline is attached. See the Live Webinar page for the start and end times.

## Outline

Begin 1 PM ET

The need for risk assessment  
Methods and assumptions in early work  
Research refining ability to predict violent behavior

Break 2:30-2:45 PM ET

Assessment instruments: clinical, actuarial, and structured professional judgment  
Legal Implications: expert testimony about violent behavior

End 4:15 PM ET

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## The Presenter

Dr. David Shapiro has been called the Father of clinical forensic psychology. His first book on forensic assessment appeared in 1983 and was the only book at that time to approach forensic assessment from the point of view of actual issues encountered in practice rather than from a theoretical basis. Since that time, he has authored five more textbooks and four dozen peer reviewed articles dealing with the interface of psychology and law. His comprehensive approach to forensic assessment has been widely distributed and used as models for various books and training programs.

Dr. Shapiro is a Diplomate in Forensic Psychology of the American Board of Professional Psychology and has been actively engaged in forensic practice for over forty years. He is currently a Professor of psychology at Nova Southeastern University and teaches courses in forensic assessment, criminal law, ethics and professional practice, supervision and consultation, projective personality assessment, and risk assessment for future violence. He regularly provides forensic and ethics training at a variety of national forums, including APA and ABPP.

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This seminar has been reviewed and approved by Keith Hannan, Ph.D., Laura Davie, LICSW, Tina Jenkins, Psy.D., and Loreen Yearick, MSN, RN. This approval expires on March 1, 2028.

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