In this text we focus on criminal behavior and antisocial behavior (because antisocial behavior is not always criminal) from a psychological perspective. More specifically, adults and juveniles who violate the law or who act antisocially are embedded in and continually influenced by multiple systems within their psychosocial environment. This includes the individuals, their families, peers, friends, schools, neighborhoods, community, culture, and society as a whole. Meaningful theory, well-executed research, and skillful application of knowledge to the “crime problem” require an understanding of these many levels that influence a person’s life course.

The psychological study of crime has taken a decidedly developmental approach, while retaining its interest in cognitive-based explanations for antisocial behavior. In recent years, neuropsychologists have offered many new insights. Scholars from various academic disciplines have engaged in pathways-to-crime research, and these pathways may include biological and neuropsychological factors. A very common conclusion is that there are multiple developmental pathways to criminal offending; some people begin to offend very early, while others begin offending in adulthood. In addition, a variety of risk factors that enable antisocial behavior have been identified, and many protective factors that insulate the individual from such behavior have been discovered. We have listed the various risk and protective factors early in the book and refer to them throughout.

We do not consider all offenders psychologically flawed, and only some have diagnosable mental illnesses or disorders. Persons with serious mental disorders sometimes commit crimes, but most do not, and crimes that are committed by people with mental illness are typically minor offenses. Many offenders do have substance abuse problems, and these may co-occur with mental disorders. In addition, emotionally healthy people break the law, and sometimes emotionally healthy people end up on probation or in jails and prisons. Like earlier editions of this text, the twelfth edition views the criminal offender as existing on a continuum, ranging from the occasional offender who offends at some point during the life course, usually during adolescence, to the serious, repetitive offender who usually begins a criminal career at a very early age, or the one-time, serious offender.

The book reviews contemporary research, theory, and practice concerning the psychology of crime as completely and accurately as possible. The very long list of references at the end of the book should attest to its comprehensive nature. Nevertheless, it is impossible to do justice to the wide swath of behavior that is defined as crime, nor to the many models and approaches used in studying it. We have selected representative crimes and representative research. If your favorite crime, theory, model, or prevention or treatment program is not found here, we hope you will still appreciate what is offered.

An early chapter sets the stage by defining crime and describing how it is measured. It is important to stress that crime rates in the United States have gone down for most serious offenses, something that rarely comes to public attention. However, crime rates do go up in some areas. Furthermore, some crimes are never reported by victims for many reasons. In addition, crimes committed by those in powerful positions in society rarely are included in the various statistics intended to measure crime.

The book is organized from broad to specific content. Early chapters discuss individual and social risk factors, developmental principles, and the psychology of aggression, including its neurobiological basis. We include a complete chapter on psychopathy, because it remains arguably one of the most heavily researched topics in the psychology of crime. Not all psychopaths commit crime, however, a point that is often not understood. The specific crimes covered in the latter part of the book are both very common ones and crimes that are rare but attract media and research attention because of their serious nature.
New to this Edition

The twelfth edition was completed with the help of extensive reviews of the previous edition by professionals in this field. Some changes reflect new theories and models as well as ongoing recent psychological research on specific topics and offenses. Other changes reflect contemporary concerns, such as rises in hate crimes and domestic terrorism, cyberattacks, and mass killings across a wide spectrum of situations. Every chapter includes updated citations and illustrations. Many topics have been expanded, and some have been deleted.

• Chapter 16 has been deleted, and substance abuse issues have been integrated at various points throughout the book (e.g., juvenile and mental illness chapters).
• There is more focus on bias or hate crimes, political crimes, and human trafficking.
• There is increased coverage of contemporary issues relating to sexual assault, such as investigation of campus incidents, assaults in immigration detention centers, changes in statutes of limitations for victims filing civil suits.
• There is more focus on the objectification of women, such as via sexual violence portrayed in media.
• There is expanded coverage of intimate partner violence, including within law enforcement and military families.
• An expanded section on cyberbullying includes research on bullies, a dominant model for prediction, and approaches to prevention.
• There is more focus on gun violence, gun control, and related laws and court decisions.
• There is also more attention directed at mass killings and active shooter incidents, and increased attention to threat assessment.
• We have emphasized the importance of copycat violence, such as school shooting and mass killings.
• Recent and upcoming court decisions on death penalty, along with the role of psychologists in examining competency for execution are highlighted.
• There is continued but expanded focus on adolescent and young adult development.
• We have introduced the concept of emerging adulthood as it relates to youthful offenders and young adults.
• Economic and violent crimes against older adults are covered in more detail.
• Racial justice and ethnic issues are addressed, particularly in sections on crime and victimization data, service to victims, law enforcement responses, jury selection, and death penalty material.
• There is more attention to cybercrimes, including growth of ransomware attacks.
• New theories, models, and treatment programs are highlighted as relevant (e.g., Theory of Mind; psychopathy TriPM model and dark triad model; BGCM cyberbullying model; anger management treatment for juveniles; gender-responsive programs). Some of these are covered in pedagogical boxes as well as in text.
• In general, there are more contemporary issues, research, and treatment boxes. All boxes include questions for discussion.
• Terrorism chapter is substantially revised to include more attention to domestic terrorism.
• Immigration-related issues (e.g., victimization, government policies) are integrated into various chapters.
• More attention is directed at neuropsychological factors, especially self-regulation, executive function, and neuroplasticity. There is also more emphasis on protective factors that shield
children from serious antisocial behavior (community safety, parental monitoring, quality edu-
cation and health care) and risk factors that promote it (peer rejection, faulty parenting, com-
munity violence, lack of social programs and safety net).

• There is more focus on mental health in corrections along with safety in jails and prisons.
• There is extended coverage of psychological concepts such as resilience, moral disengagement,
and tactics like “nerve management” (e.g., in burglary) and neutralization (white collar and
political crime).

Criminal Behavior is designed to be a core text in undergraduate and graduate courses
in criminal behavior, criminology, the psychology of crime, crime and delinquency, and
forensic psychology. The material contained in this book was classroom-tested for over 30
years. Its strong emphasis on psychological theory, concepts, and research distinguishes it
from other fine textbooks on crime. Although we focus on psychology's contributions to
the study of crime, we are respectful of contributions from other disciplines. Theory and
research from political scientists, sociologists, economists, and legal and criminal justice
scholars are recognized in many chapters.

The book's major goal is to encourage an appreciation of the many complex issues sur-
rounding criminal behavior by citing relevant, contemporary research. However, we hope
also that readers will be encouraged to consider and act on social problems that co-occur
with crime and antisocial behavior. These include but are not limited to inadequate support
for educational programs in many communities; inattention to health hazards, particularly
for young children and adolescents; the spreading of bias and hate, often by public figures;
sexual exploitation of minors; malfeasance by various political and corporate figures; and
the lack of adequate mental health services. Though we have touched on these and similar
topics in various chapters throughout the book, we hope readers are committed to making
our world a better place and will continue to be.

Once again, we have benefited from the encouragement and help of many individuals
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