
Textbook of Violence Assessment and Management

*edited by Robert I. Simon, MD, and Kenneth Tardiff, MD, MPH.
American Psychiatric Press, Washington, DC, 2008, 614 pages,
\$99.00.*

In the service of full disclosure, this reviewer notes that he originally wrote a cover blurb for this book as follows:

Edited by two acknowledged leaders in the field and packed with contributions from nationally-recognized experts, this text provides one of the most comprehensive coverages available today on a topic of great interest and concern to clinicians. Timely, thorough, readable—and filled with case examples, tables and summaries—this book will come to lead the field.

According to the present journal editor, this blurb did not pose a conflict to doing a more extensive review, which is herein respectfully submitted.

In addition to “interest and concern” as noted, it is obvious that violence in our patients also causes a 2-pronged anxiety for the treaters: anxiety about the results of the violence itself and anxiety about possible legal repercussions following the violence. The present textbook should go a long way toward relieving at least some of those anxieties.

The textbook’s 28 chapters are grouped under 6 rubrics, each rubric containing several chapters: Assessment Principles, Mental Disorders and Conditions, Treatment Settings, Treatment and Management, Special Populations, and Special Topics. Further, each chapter is organized under reasonable headings and ends with a bulleted list of “key points,” which are an excellent aid to memory and understanding.

Although all the chapters are written by recognized scholars on the topic at hand, I will single out some welcomed, and perhaps unusual, topics to discuss. A chapter on cultural competence in violence risk assessment addresses racial and ethnic factors that

may bear on this evaluation of the patient. A chapter on psychotherapeutic interventions in violence management fills a need that may be ignored in today's race to pharmacologic solutions to all psychiatric problems. A chapter on violence and the elderly reviews an often overlooked population at risk. Two attorneys review case law on "legal issues of prediction, protection, and expertise." Other chapters cover recent heightened concerns about workplace violence, school violence, and violence toward clinicians.

The title of the final chapter, by Simon, is "Clinically-Based Risk Management of Potentially Violent Patients"; this title captured one of the major strengths of the book: it is not only evidence-based (although it is that), but clinically based, which is not necessarily the same thing. The clinical basis of the entire text assures its relevance and value to all mental health clinicians.

Thomas G. Gutheil, MD
gutheiltg@cs.com

Author affiliation: Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts. **Financial disclosure:** None reported.
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