

Developing a Forensic Practice: Operations and Ethics for Experts

by William H. Reid, MD, MPH. Routledge, New York, NY, 2013,
307 pages, \$140.00 (hardcover), \$49.95 (paper).

In this book, Dr William Reid, a past president of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, generously imparts knowledge he has acquired, taught, and distilled for decades from his own successful forensic psychiatric practice. An outgrowth of his teaching and writing on the subject for years, this compendium offers direction for effectively growing and developing a forensic mental health practice.

Psychiatrists who have little or no forensic background will appreciate the first 9 chapters, which include a fairly extensive glossary as well as detailed descriptions of expert-attorney relationships, record reviews, evaluations, reports, affidavits, deposition, testimony, fees, and ethics. Although the ethics chapter per se is less than 3 pages long, inevitable discussion of ethical principles is sprinkled throughout nearly every chapter. Reid's writing acts as a primer to more detailed ethical analyses, such as those of Candilis and colleagues' *Forensic Ethics and the Expert Witness*.¹

Unless they need a memory refresher, readers who have completed a forensic psychiatry fellowship will most likely want to skip beyond chapter 9 to where Reid begins discussing the nitty-gritty of forensic practice: office setup, marketing, and business procedures. Additional chapters examine liability issues and provide an attorney's view into exactly which characteristics lawyers value in the experts they hire.

Following these chapters are appendices, which alone are worth the price of the manual. Containing dozens of examples of important documents, including letters, reports, affidavits, and other communications, these appendices distinguish this volume from others in the field. The range of report examples spans

the breadth of civil and criminal case types and even includes psychological autopsies and professional licensing agency reviews. In this regard, the appendices are more comprehensive than Heilbrun and colleagues' somewhat similar *Forensic Mental Health Assessment: A Casebook*.² Probably in the interest of brevity, Reid's reports are not accompanied by the detailed discussions that the aforementioned *Casebook* utilizes. Nevertheless, readers should find sufficient guidance in the general principles of each document example in *Developing a Forensic Practice*.

As a practical all-in-one summary replete with document examples, Reid's writing delivers exactly what its title promises: guidance to psychiatrists interested in developing a forensic practice. Beyond the practical, the book serves as a prelude to where education and research in forensic psychiatric decision making needs to mature. What remains to be written is a text that analyzes the epistemology of forensic psychiatry: one that examines heuristics; explores in greater detail potential biases, including countertransference; and updates the 1991 guide *Decision Making in Psychiatry and the Law*³ with regard to inference and decision making under conditions of uncertainty.

REFERENCES

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