

**Sexualized Violence against Women and Children: A Psychology and Law Perspective.**  
B.J. Cling (Ed.). New York: Guilford Press (www.guilford.com). 2004, 305 pp., (hardcover).

There have been few attempts to bring together a collection of papers specifically relating to psychology and the law and its particular relevance to victims of sexualized violence. This may well reflect the denial and minimization that surround sexualized crimes against women and children. This denial and minimization is emphasized by the various authors contributing to the chapters within *Sexualized Violence against Women and Children: a Psychology and Law Perspective* (Ed. B.J. Cling). The result is a remarkable text, with chapters that are both authoritatively written and thought provoking. The reader is left in little doubt as to the feelings of suspicion that victims of sexualized violence have historically encountered, not only within society, but also within clinical and legal settings.

The editor of the text (B.J. Cling) is somewhat unique, having entered the field of law, after training first as a clinical psychologist, and then as a forensic psychologist. Her interest in combining knowledge and developments from these areas is represented throughout the text. *Sexualized Violence against Women and Children: a Psychology and Law Perspective* contains eleven chapters, each chapter combining much of what is currently known about the impact of sexualized violence, and recent changes to US law.

The book is divided into three parts, i) sexualized violence against women, ii) sexualized violence against children, and iii) perpetrators of sexualized violence and other harms against women and children. The first (and largest part) of the book contains chapters on rape, spousal assault, sexual harassment in the workplace and stalking. Issues surrounding the diagnosis of rape trauma syndrome and its use in court to validate the truthfulness of a rape victim are covered early in the text. The author of this chapter (B.J. Cling) reminds us of the suspicion that rape victims have encountered with regard to the veracity of their accounts, a suspicion which has not generally been applied to other victims of crime (e.g. those who have been robbed). The clinical impact of spousal battering is discussed in the chapter by Nancy Kaser-Boyd, who provides an excellent overview of the psychological consequences of battering, dispelling myths about the victims of spousal assault and explaining the many complex reasons why women find it difficult to leave partners who abuse them. Discussion of the impact of battering also includes the use of expert testimony in relation to battering in homicide trials, as discussed in the chapter written by Carrie L. Hempel.

The issue of sexual harassment in the workplace is also covered; an important inclusion given that this topic has received inadequate coverage both in clinical and legal domains. Maureen O'Connor and Brigitte Vallabhajosula rectify this by providing a sound overview of the relevant psychological and legal issues, including coverage of gender differences in the perception of sexual harassment. The chapter on stalking, one of the shorter chapters in the book, is outstanding. Barry Rosenfeld and B.J. Cling are able to summarize the latest empirical findings and changes to the law in a clear and precise manner.

The second part of the book covers the topic of sexualized violence against children, and contains chapters on child sexual abuse, and a chapter on childhood memories of sexual abuse, an area that has generated significant debate and controversy over the last decade or so. Again the denial of the existence of child sexual abuse is discussed, as is the issue that child reporters of sexual abuse are often disbelieved. With regard to delayed memories of abuse, the chapter by Laura S. Brown neatly summarizes the latest findings which do provide support for the delayed recall of child abuse.

The final part of the book covers the area of perpetrators of sexualized violence and other harms against women and children, and includes chapters on the management and treatment of the adult sexual offender, Megan's Law, and maternal violence. In the chapter on the management of the adult sexual offender, William D. Murphy provides an excellent overview of recent advances in the treatment and management of abusers, outlining the tensions surrounding the use of social control methods (involving community notification of sexual offenders). The author reminds us that there remains a question as to what methods will reduce the victimization of children. The chapter on Megan's Law is particularly relevant to those working in the United States rather than the UK, although discussion of the development of similar laws has also received coverage in the UK media. The last chapter, on maternal violence, reminds us that women can be perpetrators of violence as well as victims, although this left me with the sense that the issue of women as perpetrators of violence required further in-depth coverage that was beyond the scope of this book.

Overall, I found this an excellent text. It is hugely informative, gathering together much of what is new in the field. Each chapter is authoritatively and clearly written. This book is likely to appeal to academics, clinicians and legal professionals alike. Although it is a text covering legal frameworks within the United States, I still found it to be accessible, informative and of enormous appeal. I welcomed the opportunity to explore a text that was dedicated to the topic of violence against women and children.

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