

Assessment of Dangerousness for MDOs: A Structured Approach

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Track: Clinical

CE: CPA/BBS/BRN, MCLE (1.5)

POST TBD

Narrative

This workshop will examine the use of structured risk assessments for the assessment of dangerousness in the Mentally Disordered Offender (MDO) civil commitment scheme. The pros and cons of actuarial, structured professional judgment, and clinical judgment approaches for MDO assessment will be discussed. The benefits and drawbacks of using of the HCR-20 V3 for this purpose will be examined. Application of this measure will be demonstrated with a case example.

BIO

Melinda DiCiro, PsyD

Chief Psychologist, Forensic Services Division, Mentally Disordered Offenders and Sexually Violent Predators, California Department of State Hospitals

Melinda is the Chief Psychologist for MDO Civil Commitment in the Forensic Services Division of the Department of State Hospitals. She was formerly the Clinical Director of Inpatient Treatment and Crisis Triage at California State Prison Sacramento.

Trayci Dahl, PhD, ABPP, CTM

Consulting Psychologist, California Department of State Hospitals

Trayci is a consulting psychologist for the California Department of State Hospitals, MDO Commitment Program. She earned her PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Michigan and completed her doctoral training as an intern at Patton State Hospital in 2003-2004. She is a Diplomate in Forensic Psychology and a Fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Psychology. She is licensed in California and Oregon. Her focus has been on risk assessment of adult violent offenders, with a primary interest in filicide and other individuals facing capital charges.

Susan Napolitano, PhD

Sexually Violent Predator Evaluator, California Department of State Hospitals

Susan has more than 20 years experience as an expert witness in civil and criminal court cases. A native of New York, she earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from LeMoyne College in Syracuse, N.Y. and a master's in clinical psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison, N.J. She completed her PhD at the California School of Professional Psychology in Fresno, California. In 1991 followed by two years of post-doctoral training in child, adolescent and adult clinical psychology at the Sullivan Center for Children. Susan served as Assistant Clinical Director of the Sullivan Center for Children in Fresno, California for 15 years. She served

as chief of staff at Cedar Vista Hospital in 1999 and formerly worked as an adjunct faculty member of the California School of Professional Psychology and Fresno Pacific University. As an expert witness, Susan has testified on behalf of prosecutors, plaintiffs and defendants in cases involving Mentally Disordered Offenders (MDO), sexual abuse of children, sexual abuse allegations, child custody, malpractice and personal injury. She is an expert in Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome (CSAAS) and received training by the Child Abuse Training and Technical Assistance (CATT) centers as a Child Forensic Interview Specialist. Susan served as Child Forensic Interview Specialist with the Madera County Child Sexual Assault Response Team (CSART) from 2006 through 2010. She has mentored new psychologist evaluators, testified throughout California and provided expert consultation for attorneys. She holds the position of Sexually Violent Predator Expert with the Department of State Hospitals. Her forensic experience also includes conducting Sexually Violent Predator (SVP) evaluations and Mentally Disordered Offender (MDO) evaluations for the California Department of State Hospitals, Forensic Services Unit. She also serves as a the MDO Peer Review Program Coordinator, and is a mentor, trainer and quality assurance provider for MDO evaluators. Susan is a past president of the Joaquin Valley Psychological Association and a member of the National Register of Psychology Providers. She served as editor of the San Joaquin Psychologist for nine years. In 2000, she received the Distinguished Psychologist Award from the San Joaquin Valley Psychological Association.

Brandon Yakush, PsyD

Consulting Psychologist, California Department of State Hospitals

Brandon received his doctorate from Loma Linda University in 2006. He started at the Department of State Hospitals - Atascadero (formally Atascadero State Hospital) that same year on an admissions unit. In March 2007, Brandon began with the hospital's growing Forensic Services department, primarily conducting MDO evaluations of hospitalized patients. Over the past 10 years, he has conducted evaluations for DSH - Atascadero of MDOs, patients committed for trial incompetency under PC 1370, and those patients committed under PC 1026, not guilty by reason of insanity. In addition to his evaluator duties, Brandon also coordinated and oversaw all of the forensic training for the hospital's APA - accredited pre-doctoral internship, lead forensic trainings throughout the hospital, including monthly Forensic Grand Rounds, and supervises/mentors all new evaluators in the hospital's Forensic Services. He is now a consulting psychologist with Forensic Services at the Department of State Hospitals. He conducts Sexually Violent Predator (SVP) evaluations and Mentally Disordered Offender (MDO) evaluations for the California Department of State Hospitals. Brandon also serves on the MDO peer review team and evaluator trainer. He has published in the area of the definition of moral wrongfulness as included in California's definition of legal insanity.

Learning Objectives

1. List three arguments against using clinical or other unstructured method alone to determine dangerousness for MDO assessment.
2. List 10 data elements necessary and relevant for consideration of dangerousness for MDO's.

3. Describe a method for assessing dangerousness in MDO's using the HCR-20 V3.
4. Apply the HCR-20 V-3 to assessment of dangerousness to the case example.