

5

*Ikigai in Forensic Settings**Nichola D. Snape & Dean Fido***Abstract**

The study of forensic psychology draws together elements of psychological investigation and law in an attempt to understand the complex interplay between perpetrators of crime and their victims. Though professionals practising forensic psychology may work in a variety of disparate settings, including prisons, hospitals, and the community, what they have in common is the need to call upon and bridge knowledge from the core paradigms of psychology (e.g., social, developmental, and biological facets) to assess the needs and motivations of offenders of crime. Ultimately, this knowledge drives the formulation and implementation of treatment interventions as a means of reducing recidivism. However, although models of intervention such as the Good Lives Model are built around the need to recognise positive support mechanisms and one's ability to overcome barriers, the specific role of ikigai is yet to be discussed to any degree within forensic psychology research or practice. This brief chapter provides an overview of contemporary forensic psychology theory and background, before hypothesising how the concept of ikigai could be implemented and some of the potential barriers in doing so.

Keywords: Forensic Psychology; Offender; Victim; Case Formulation; Risk Assessment; Rehabilitation; Recidivism

Introduction

In previous chapters, the role of ikigai has been comprehensively discussed across several focal areas; the main purpose of which was to outline the prospective applications of ikigai in sectors where its application may not be overtly obvious. By facilitating our understanding of ikigai within Western research, potential mechanisms by which benefit might be brought through future interventions and implementations can be identified and actioned. This chapter will explore the application of ikigai within the applied setting of forensic psychology. First, forensic psychology (including some of its more contemporary debates) will be introduced for the wider benefit of our diverse readership and as a means of delineating the scope and scale of this field. Second, potential avenues for the implementation of ikigai within forensic settings will be delineated, with special attention as to how it would both fit in with current forensic practice and the potential changes that it could bring about. Finally, we will briefly outline some potential barriers for the implementation of ikigai in forensic settings, before drawing together the conclusions.

An Introduction to Forensic Psychology

Forensic psychology is concerned with the psychological aspects of legal processes in courts. The term is also often used to refer to investigative and criminological psychology: applying psychological theory to criminal investigation, understanding psychological problems associated with criminal behaviour and the treatment of those who have committed offences (British Psychological Society, 2021).

Forensic psychology is generally considered to be a conjunction between the fields of psychology and law, where psychological theory and knowledge surrounding offenders and victims are applied to criminal matters (Blackburn, 1996). Initially, psychologists' involvement in legal proceedings was largely centred around understanding the poor accuracy of eye-witness testimony given in court proceedings (Bartol & Bartol, 2013). Prior to developments in DNA testing techniques and technology, eye-witness testimony was given outsized importance as evidence in criminal trials, and so it was critical to understand where there could be inaccuracies in these accounts. Over the years that followed, psychologists became increasingly relied upon in criminal trials, exploring complex issues such as the state of mind of the accused, assessing competence to stand trial, or the validity of insanity pleas, to inform legal decisions with regards to culpability and sentencing (Ward, 2013). This largely involves the use of psychometric testing to determine whether any mental health disorders impacted

upon the individual's capacity to behave rationally at the time of the offense. This can determine whether an offender should be incarcerated in a prison or in a mental health facility to ensure they receive the appropriate level of care. Psychologists have also become involved in the post-conviction process relating to rehabilitation and recidivism, with the aim of protecting the public by preventing future offenses while also offering offenders the opportunity to improve themselves. This is more representative of the role of forensic psychologists today (Bartol & Bartol, 2013).

There are three key roles of a forensic psychologist working with offenders following conviction. The first is to conduct risk assessments to predict the likelihood of an convict reoffending if given the opportunity. The conclusion of this assessment can be the deciding factor in whether an offender is released on parole, so it is vital that they are accurate to both avoid putting the public at risk and to avoid imprisoning an individual unnecessarily (Brown & Singh, 2014).

The second key role of a forensic psychologist is to carry out case formulations. These are hypotheses about the psychological factors influencing an offender's behaviour that allow the psychologist to work collaboratively with them to identify these factors, in order to better understand how best to support the individual. These factors may be social, psychological, or biological, and are based on theories of the factors related to offending behaviour (Heffernan & Ward, 2017).

Case formulations have a crucial influence on the third key role of the forensic psychologist, which is the development of treatment and rehabilitation plans. Theories of forensic psychology often form the basis for offender treatment and rehabilitation, using psychological understandings of various offender groups to develop treatments, with the aim of minimising the threat posed by the offender. It is the role of the psychologist to conduct these rehabilitations, using their knowledge of the offender to tailor treatments plans to effectively improve their outcomes (Casey, Day, Vess, & Ward, 2013).

The crucial impact that forensic psychology can have upon high-stakes legal decision-making highlights the importance of ensuring that its theories, tools, and methodologies are grounded in extensive clinical and empirical research (Gudjonsson, 2003). Theories in forensic psychology can be applied to victims of crime as well as offenders, supporting those effected by crime in various ways to ensure that they recover from psychological trauma. Forensic psychologists consider theories of victimisation to aid in understanding the impact that crime can have upon victims, as well as the ways in which this impact can be minimised. For example,

a key area of psychological research that can be applied to victims of crime is research into post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This research has linked PTSD to maladaptive beliefs, and this can then be applied to minimising a victim's risk of developing persistent PTSD (Ehlers & Clark, 2000). This is just one example of the ways in which forensic psychology can be applied to support victims of crime. Such understandings of forensic psychology have led to a trauma-focused approach to treating victims of crime, allowing for more holistic treating methods, improving their recovery, and minimising long-term negative impacts.

In summary, forensic psychology refers to the application of psychological theory to legal situations, with the aim of both understanding the factors associated with crime and the consequences of crime on both the offender and the victim. These understandings are then used by experts in both law and psychology to ensure that offenders are treated appropriately and victims are supported appropriately. The long-term goal of forensic psychology is to minimise future offending through education, prevention, and rehabilitation. In the next section, we briefly discuss the current scope of ikigai discussion in forensic psychology, and delineate some of the leading contemporary theories for the benefit of the lay reader (see Weiner & Otto, 2013 for a more comprehensive overview).

Ikigai & Forensic Psychology

Given the above facts, it is imperative that one looks for cost- and resource-efficient means of not only intervening and treating perpetrators of crime both within forensic settings and the general population, but also as a means of preventing initial criminal acts from the outset.

The remainder of this chapter will be separated into several sections. The first will briefly outline some of the contemporary theories of offending behaviour and rehabilitation to help the reader understand modern manoeuvres within forensic psychology. The second will hypothesise some of the potential avenues by which ikigai could be implemented within forensic psychology, as well as set out some of the barriers to implementation. Afterwards, the key themes of this chapter will be drawn together into a core take-home messages for readers looking to further investigate or implement ikigai within the forensic psychological sector.

Contemporary Themes in Forensic Psychology

One of the central goals of the forensic psychologist is to understand the motivations of individuals who commit criminal behaviour. Methods for this draw together elements

ranging across current social circumstances, historical and development factors, personality characteristics, and opportunities to offend as a means of predicting the likelihood of individuals engaging in criminal behaviour in the future. Models of offending behaviour differ as a function of the types of behaviour being scrutinised, and one of the most prevalent of these over the last 40 years is that of sexual offences (Finkelhor, 1984; Ward & Beech, 2016; Ward & Siegert, 2002).

Ward and Beech (2016) describe models of offending behaviour as manifesting from several “interlocking neuropsychological systems” (p. 125) that are rooted in developmental and evolutionary processes. Here, behavioural manifestations (e.g., sexual arousal for deviant stimuli) may be linked to atypical development in motivational (e.g., cognitive) or emotional systems, which can be further exacerbated by biological abnormalities (e.g., brain malformation), environmental disruption (e.g., stress), or intoxication. With these factors taken together, one may find themselves overcoming the typical inhibitory barriers that lead one to socially deviant behaviour, and failing to fully consider fully their potential effects or implications prior to enactment. This can result in long-lasting personal, social, and financial damage to the offender. Ward and Beech frame this model in the remit of sexual offending, but it likely has wider applicability for other types of offending behaviour, such as improperly obtaining and disclosing private digital images as described by Fido and Harper (2020). Although it is possible to use this or other models of forensic psychology to understand and predict offending behaviour, one of the primary roles of the forensic psychologist is to formulate and implement intervention strategies to rehabilitate offending individuals.

One of the most prominent models for offender rehabilitation (across a variety of offence types, populations, and settings) is the Good Lives Model (GLM; Ward, 2002; Ward & Brown, 2004; Ward & Stewart, 2003). With this model, service users are tasked with balancing the promotion of *approach* behaviours and the management of *avoidance* behaviours as a means of negotiating a *Good Life* (i.e., a meaningful and fulfilling life). The GLM proposes that humans seek primary goods (e.g., healthy living, knowledge, mastering work, having fun, acting with autonomy, peace, romantic and familial relationships, social connectedness, spirituality, happiness, and creativity) and that deviant and criminal behaviour may emerge through an inability to legitimately access and acquire these goods. In forensic settings, service providers (e.g., forensic psychologists) work to develop strong therapeutic alliances and a sense of self-direction and motivation in their clients with the goal of preventing further offenses (Ward, 2010). Reductions in reoffending can be accomplished by developing intervention plans

that seek to develop the skills, knowledge, and opportunities to help convicted offenders overcome some of the barriers preventing them from accomplishing their life goals (Purvis, Ward, & Willis, 2011).

The Implementation of Ikigai in Forensic Settings

Effective rehabilitation is an essential means of reducing recidivism, but at present it is unclear where ikigai might be implemented into this school of thought. At the time of writing, there is only a single mention of ikigai within the forensic psychology literature. Here, Schippers (2017) briefly highlights the importance of identifying effective crime reduction strategies by instilling a reason for being but provides little more regarding how this might be implemented and measured. The element of measurement can be easily achieved using the recently translated English version of the Ikigai-9 (Fido et al., 2019) a nine-item scale measuring ikigai.

While not intended for forensic applications, the Ikigai-9 is nonetheless ideally suited for it for three reasons. First, it is an extremely brief measure, so it can easily be used by both the service provider and the service user, either in isolation, or as part of a larger battery of questionnaires and psychometrics. Second, it can be either completed by the offenders themselves or via interview with the service provider asking the questions, meaning that it can in principle overcome barriers of engagement that more complex psychometrics might have with such populations. Though it remains to be tested, service providers might also be able to use this tool as a basis for discussions with the offenders as a means of identifying potential mechanisms for intervention, as is encapsulated through techniques such as motivational interviewing (e.g., Stinson & Clark, 2017). Third, the Ikigai-9 provides a tool to measure pre- and post-intervention adaptation of scores. It should be noted that at the time of writing, no research has been published that has used the Ikigai-9 to measure response change across points in time, though this might be a function of how recently it has been published.

The main difficulty in implementing ikigai in practice, however, is the identification of opportunities to instil ikigai-related principles into existing or new interventions. Although punishment is primarily concerned with identifying where and when behaviours should be changed to ensure accountability and facilitate rehabilitation, this can only be achieved within the context of helping offenders to acquire skills and develop capacity (Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Salmon, 2009). As such, when working with offenders to improve their wellbeing and reducing their propensities to reoffend, such skills and tools might be reinforced and amplified

if offenders are simultaneously realising the importance of their lives and actions for themselves and others, and this presents an opportunity for ikigai principles to be incorporated. In fact, definitions of the GLM provided within this chapter closely align with the conceptualisation of ikigai that has been constructed throughout this book – in that one is seeking rationale for their own existence and development; forever seeking to move forward and not give up hope with their current circumstances (Ward, 2010). This could therefore serve as a useful benchmark to understand the degree to which ikigai-related principles qualitatively map onto concepts within the GLM and whether there is further scope for more concrete integration thereafter.

There are, however, barriers that might hinder the implementation of ikigai within the criminal justice system, and in forensic psychology more broadly. First, is the heterogeneity of the offenders who enter prison settings and access the kinds of services in which it could be incorporated. Such diversity does not only manifest as differences in age, sex, and type of offence, but also as a function of some of the environmental factors that can contribute to causing criminal behaviour, such as economic status, location, and social networks.

As described throughout this book, there has been only limited research into the personality traits associated with ikigai and the means by which ikigai could be moderated/increased (e.g., Fido et al 2019; 2020). As such, it is difficult to fully assess which individuals (and in what capacity) might benefit from interventions that seek to promote ikigai until such research can sufficiently answer this question. To some extent, intervention paradigms such as the GLM recognise the individual characteristics of offender groups (across biological, social, and developmental dimensions) and so the further integration of ikigai within the GLM's conception of a "good life" might be possible.

Moreover, there will likely be cultural barriers to the implementation of ikigai-related principles that would vary from country to country, meaning that marketing strategies and their implementation would also need to vary. For example, although principles pertaining to ikigai have already been adopted within health settings in the East (see García & Miralles, 2017), this would be novel to Western forensic settings, (especially if referred to by name) and so would likely require the development of more *buy-in* by both service-users and providers. But this should not be too much cause for concern, as we see with prisons in the UK, for example, showing that they are malleable to integrating non-mainstream research-informed intervention programmes into their rehabilitation programmes (Farrier, Baybutt, & Dooris, 2019; Baybutt, Dooris, & Farrier, 2019). For the lay-reader's benefit, the two studies outlined above document

the use of horticultural programmes within prison settings as a means of bringing about positive mental and physical health of offenders.

Concluding Remarks

Taken together, there is clear opportunity for ikigai to be implemented into forensic settings, and for related principles to inform future intervention strategies and testing in a resource- and cost-efficient manner with little burden on service providers. , Even if not directly named, glints of ikigai can be recognized in current models like the GLM, , but it the degree of qualitative similarity between the two concepts remains to be seen. Moreover, although logistical barriers might exist from the outset with the implementation of any new theory or techniques into existing programs, user-friendly measures of ikigai already exist (e.g., the Ikigai-9; Fido et al., 2019) to help to ease these barriers. Finally, we present this chapter as a call to arms for researchers, service providers, and associated professionals within forensic fields to further and develop the ideas and research discussed throughout this chapter.

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