

Observations on the Outcome of Specialty Education and Training in Forensic Psychiatry

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The *ideal* outcome of a specialty education and training program in forensic psychiatry is, of course, a reflection of the philosophy of the specialty program and its values, insofar as these, themselves, reflect the operational role/function of the ideal forensic psychiatrist. The following picture of outcome, therefore, is one that represents the philosophy, value system, and operational role/function of such a forensic psychiatrist who has received his advanced training in the program at the University of Southern California Institute of Psychiatry, Law, and Behavioral Science.

The goal of our one-year program is to enhance the operational skills of the practicing psychiatrist such that he can continue throughout subsequent years of specialty experience and ongoing self-education and challenge in forensic psychiatry to move closer to the ideal practice of forensic psychiatry as an interface specialty. The one year of advanced training is considered to be a directional year that steers the physician onto the path of becoming the ideal professional practitioner.

The goal of this one-year program is to develop a skilled professional practitioner, not an academician or researcher; however, the program leads to subsequent training in psychiatry and law that stresses academic and research ends. The concept of professional practitioner does not connote an elite superspecialty, a superior social or educational status that is important, a well-paid group, or a specially privileged group. Rather this concept of professional practitioner derives from historic etymological roots (*L. professio*, meaning a business or profession that one publicly avows) and carries a meaning of a public declaration of responsibility. In this sense, the forensic psychiatrist is an interface professional practitioner who carries special obligations to society at large and especially to the field of law in relating the broad scope of contemporary psychiatric practice to the ends of law and in promoting fairness in the administration of civil and criminal justice.

The acronym, CLT, has continued to dominate the ideal outcome for this professional practitioner. Three elements epitomize this ideal which is characterized by the acronym, CLT, for the three features of clinician (C), logician (L), and tactician (T).

Clinician (C)

The entering candidate must already be a good clinician. During the training year he/she not only should improve in his/her clinical skills, but these skills should become more clearly structured, organized, and finely honed so that they can more aptly be applied to legal issues. Guidelines for developing clinical opinion making in psychiatry and in structuring clinical inferences that hold the highest level of professional confidence must be articulated and should become a part of the forensic psychiatrist's everyday approach to his/her clinical practice. Such development is especially important for the psychiatric-legal interview. In such interviews, the clinician in forensic psychiatry is called upon to organize his/her clinical investigation along paths meaningful for a particular legal issue and along special questions significant for the specific ends of the law.

The forensic clinician must become questioning of almost every clinical concept and dictum he/she has previously learned, must develop the ability to acquire distance from his/her own clinical stance, findings, and inferences, and must be challenging to all such clinical material in the sense of an examining adversary, if not a devil's advocate. In other words, the clinician's role as a forensic psychiatrist is not only that of an explorer of clinical material significant to the legal issue but that of one who constantly challenges all such material insofar as its reliability, accuracy, relevance, and significance to a particular legal question.

Logician (L)

Because the quintessence of the forensic psychiatrist is the logical reasoning he/she demonstrates in his/her application of clinical data to the legal issue, the outcome of this specialty program is measured largely by the extent to which the forensic psychiatrist has developed into a good logician (L). This goal is featured by the psychiatrist's ability to analyze the clinical-legal issue, crystallize the psychiatry-legal inquiry, organize and articulate meaningful assumptions that stand as fundamental conditions basic to subsequently developed relevant questions, and present these materials in the psychiatric-legal report. The psychiatrist's articulation of guidelines for his/her psychiatric-legal opinion making, and the clarity and succinctness of his/her reasoning that demonstrates how his/her clinical materials relate to underlying conditional assumptions and thus lead to logical conclusions highlight this outcome feature of the forensic psychiatrist.

This logician aspect of the forensic psychiatrist runs as the most visible thread that ties together all facets of the practice of forensic psychiatry: From the structuring of legal, medical, and psychosocial materials for preexamination review and their organized assessment into a specific psy-

Forensic Psychiatry

chiatric-legal inquiry; to the organization and conduct of the clinical examination of significant parties in psychiatric examinations for legal purposes; and to the organization of materials for presentation to a legalist, whether judge or attorney, or legal agency, in either consultation with attorney, written report to judge or attorney, or courtroom testimony.

This development and structuring by the clinician of his/her ability for logical reasoning and his/her utilization of this ability in his/her forensic practice are the most significant outcomes of the USC specialty education and training program in forensic psychiatry. Obviously, the utilization of this ability is also founded on a cornerstone of knowledge about basic law that must be held by a forensic psychiatrist and must be operationally viable for his/her use in practice.

Tactician (T)

The third element that characterizes the ideal forensic psychiatrist reflects the need to be persuasive in presenting professional materials and opinions for probative purposes. The skills that must be developed for this purpose relate to ability to organize and present as persuasively as possible the psychiatric-legal report as well as legal testimony in court. The psychiatrist's therapeutic bias that is fundamental to the practice of medicine must be made secondary to the social ends of the law. In the development of his/her tactical skills, the forensic psychiatrist must develop the ability to exercise maximum persuasiveness for his/her professional position and opinion, but nevertheless avoid presenting a partisan image of advocacy for one or another of the legal adversaries.