The death penalty has always been, and will always be, a topic of controversy from the issue of its constitutionality to the variability in its application. The authors provide focus upon the role of the forensic psychologist, specifically as it applies to mitigation.

DIFFERENTIATION OF MENTALLY ILL CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS FROM MALINGERERS ON THE MMPI-2 AND PAI

L. Thomas Kucharski, Ph.D. and Scott Duncan, Ph.D.

Much of the research on the detection of malingering has involved either simulation designs that compare normal subjects instructed to respond honestly with those instructed to feign or known groups designs where non-pathological subjects are included in the not malingering comparison group. Inclusion of non-pathological comparison subjects is not only an irrelevant comparison in regard to forensic psychological practice but has the effect of artificially inflating accuracy estimates. In order to address these methodological limitations criminal defendants were classified as malingering or not malingering based on their performance on the SIRS. Defendants who were not malingering, who did not receive an Axis I diagnosis of a serious mental illness were eliminated so as to compare malingerers with genuinely mentally ill subjects who were not malingering on the MMPI-2 and PAI indices of exaggeration. The results demonstrated that the MMPI-2 F, Fp and the newly developed Fc and the PAI NIM scales reasonably accurately differentiated the groups with acceptable sensitivity and specificity. Practical cutoff scores were identified for all but Fc. The results are discussed in terms of the utility of the MMPI-2 and the PAI in the detection of malingering.

AN EMOTIONAL LITERACY INTERVENTION WITH INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

Robin Casarjian, M.A., Jenny Phillips, Ph.D. and Richard Wolman, Ph.D.

This article presents the results of an intervention program intended to teach emotional literacy skills to male prisoners currently incarcerated in the Massachusetts prison system. Emotional literacy in this context is the ability to perceive, understand, and communicate emotions within oneself and toward others. Emotional literacy is also consistent with the concept of emotional intelligence introduced by Salovey and Meyer, “Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to monitor one’s feelings and emotions, and to use that information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (1); and popularized by Goleman (2). The authors present their analyses of both
psychological and behavioral effects of this intervention and discuss possible implications of these findings.