

## **Family Murder: Pathologies of Love and Hate**

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*Family Murder: Pathologies of Love and Hate*, a publication from the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry's Committee on Law and Psychiatry, is a comprehensive analysis of the different types of murder within families. Each chapter begins with a high-profile media case to draw the reader in, which serves as the starting point to consider each different category of family murder. From the cases, the psychiatric understanding of each category of family murder is discussed, incorporating research data. The chapters are organized similarly, with sections on epidemiology, motivations, unique assessment needs, and prevention. A forensic psychiatrist with expertise on the particular subject matter writes each chapter. The book flows from what is known from data and experience regarding forensic and clinical evaluations to a larger conceptualization of the topic, and to the ultimate goal of prevention.

The book begins with intimate partner homicides and progresses thorough the life cycle of the family. The chapters cover intimate partner homicide by men, intimate partner homicide by women, feticide, neonaticide, murder from fatal maltreatment and child abuse, child murder by parents, siblicide, parricide, intimate partner homicide in elderly populations, and familicide. In addition to the uniqueness of compiling family murder in one book, many of the chapters address both forensic and clinical aspects of the specified homicide. Subsections covering legal matters, working with perpetrators, and mental health interventions identify common forensic

referral questions as well as clinical challenges. Many of the chapters address "unique assessment topics" in the subset of family homicide. These subsections provide an overview of how courts have traditionally conceptualized the homicides as well as a forensic approach to such cases.

The role of mental health in each case of familial murder is addressed. In short, the authors conclude that the relationship between stressors and mental health is complex. Further, the motives in family murder are often extreme versions of emotions that everyone has experienced. In some cases, mental illness is the direct cause of the murder, and in other cases it is related but not causal. The authors address common biases in these evaluations such as age, gender, and race.

The chapters on neonaticide, written by Susan Hatters Friedman, and child murder by parents, written by Phillip Resnick, are particularly noteworthy. These chapters are authored by the leading experts in the field and offer a summary of the authors' research as well as their clinical and forensic experiences.

A significant contribution to this book is the section on prevention. The authors, recognizing the importance of primary prevention, address possible approaches to prevent familial murder. For example, the chapter on child murder by parents suggests that parenting capacity should be routinely considered in evaluating psychiatric patients who are parents. Preventive strategies such as safe havens, anonymous delivery, and baby hatches are discussed in the chapter on neonaticide.

*Family Murder: Pathologies of Love and Hate* is valuable for anyone interested in understanding the tragedy of family murder. Although this book provides forensic and clinical guidance, it reaches a broader audience because of the contributors' wealth of experience, its readability, and its debunking of societal misperceptions of such tragedies. The writing is compelling and engaging, introducing readers to actual cases followed by an infusion of research data, and concluding with forensic and clinical applications. This organization provides the first comprehensive review of the heterogeneity of family murders in one text and in doing so steps closer to prevention of such tragedies.

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