



# Forensic Reports and Testimony: A Guide to Effective Communication for Psychologists and Psychiatrists

By Randy K. Otto, Richard DeMier, Marcus Boccaccini

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*Forensic Reports & Testimony: A Guide to Effective Communication for Psychologists and Psychiatrists* provides a roadmap for the mental health professional who wants to provide consistently accurate, defensible, and useful reports and testimony to the legal system. Authors Randy K. Otto, Richard L. DeMier, and Marcus Boccaccini, recognized experts in the field, cover all aspects of the process, including preparing affidavits and reports, preparing for depositions, and testifying.

Every written or spoken communication for the courts must be clear and precise, and distinguish between facts, inferences, and opinions. This book uniquely:

- Shows the critical differences between forensic psychological reports and the clinical reports psychologists and psychiatrists are accustomed to writing
- Includes and explains important maxims of forensic report writing, including separating facts from inferences, focusing on offering expert opinions, explaining why you think what you think, and connecting the dots between facts and conclusions
- Provides numerous examples of experts' testimony, affidavits, reports-with commentary and critiques

Expert forensic work deserves to be presented in a clear, precise, and understandable way so that it is useful to attorneys, judges, and juries. *Forensic Reports & Testimony* provides the guidelines and models forensic psychologists and forensic psychiatrists need to make that happen.



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- Sales Rank: #535285 in Books
- Published on: 2014-09-09
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.30" h x 1.20" w x 6.30" l, 1.45 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 400 pages



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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"Communication is the heart of forensic practice and this book provides a lot of heart. The authors cover every aspect of the art of forensic communication from A to Z in an easily understood, concise way.

*Forensic Reports and Testimony* is a must-have book for trainees in forensic mental health and contains much that will be of value to seasoned clinicians. I predict that this text will become the essential guide to developing professional report writing and testifying skills in training programs in psychiatry and psychology."

—**Steven K. Hoge, MD**, Clinical Professor; Director, Columbia-Cornell Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship Program; Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, NY

"In this terrifically practical book, the authors define a scholarly foundation for forensic reports, a process for conceptualizing and structuring them, and excellent how-to guidance on report writing and testimony preparation. They have made the subject come alive with many examples of good and bad reports and testimony and show how transparency and acknowledgment of limitations serves both experts and the justice system well."

—**Stanley L. Brodsky, Ph.D.**, The University of Alabama

This is the best step by step guide to report writing coupled with research based, practical advice on how to give effective testimony. It contains the crystallized wisdom of three leading forensic psychologists on how to be persuasive while staying within the ethical guidelines for forensic psychologists and psychiatrists. The authors provide multiple examples of sophisticated, nuanced responses to challenging cross examination questions.

—**Phillip J. Resnick, M.D.** Professor of Psychiatry Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine

### From the Back Cover

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- Distinguishes between report writing in forensic and therapeutic contexts
- Includes and explains important maxims of writing forensic reports and testifying, including identifying sources of information, distinguishing between facts and inferences, offering opinions that are truly expert, and making one's reasoning process clear to the decision maker
- Provides numerous examples of experts' affidavits, reports, and testimony—with commentary and critiques

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#### About the Author

**RANDY K. OTTO, PhD, ABPP**, Associate Professor, Department of Mental Health Law & Policy at the University of South is board certified in forensic psychology and clinical psychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology. He has served as President of the American Board of Professional Psychology, the American Psychology-Law Society, the American Board of Forensic Psychology, and the American Academy of Forensic Psychology.

**RICHART L. DEMIER, PhD, ABPP**, is board certified in forensic psychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology. He is retired from the U.S. Medical Center for Federal Prisoners, where he conducted forensic evaluations and served as Director of Clinical Training for the facility’s internship and postdoctoral fellowship programs. He is currently the Director of Clinical Training at the School of Professional Psychology at Forest Institute, in Springfield, Missouri.

**MARCUS T. BOCCACCINI, PhD**, Professor, Department of Psychology and Philosophy at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas has published more than 75 articles relating to the intersection of psychology and the legal system. His research focuses on agreement among expert witnesses and field research in forensic psychology.

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