

## Chapter 4

# Conclusions

In this brief volume, we have looked at the field of risk assessment from a number of different perspectives, including its historical roots, legal statutes, and court cases that have arisen from the practice, psychological risk factors and myths, frequently used risk assessment instruments, and, perhaps most importantly, implications for treatment providers.

We have noted that the courts were initially unresponsive to the concerns of mental health professionals who tried to discuss the limitations of such assessments, though currently, some cases have emerged that reflect a growing sensitivity on the part of court to psychological research and to proper standards for risk assessments. We have also reviewed the developments and controversies in the field of risk assessment.

Indeed, researchers have sometimes talked about the three generations of risk assessment, with the purely clinical approach regarded as the first generation, the purely actuarial approach identified as the second, and structured professional judgment labeled as the third. Ultimately, our contention is that it is now time for a new generation, one in which actuarial assessment and structured professional judgment pool their resources rather than argue over which is best. Moreover, there must be a recognition of the subtleties and nuances inherent in any such assessment, as they reveal, truly, that *one size does not fit all*.