The ability to predict future violent behavior has long been an issue for mental health professionals. Initially it was merely assumed that we could make such predictions accurately based on our clinical skills alone. Many decisions in the judicial system hinge on an accurate assessment of violence, such as bond, probation, and parole decisions, commitment to and release from psychiatric facilities, and even whether or not a defendant should be sentenced to death.

Recent research has demonstrated however that such predictions are not as accurate as once assumed and that the methodology used was sadly lacking in validity. A tremendous amount of research has gone into risk assessment for future violence; still, the accuracy remains in question even to this day; nevertheless, judicial decisions are continually made which ignore our limited ability to assess violent behavior. This webinar will explore the factors necessary to do competent work in this area and demonstrate the ways that risk assessment can become more precise.

### Learning Objectives

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the three generations of risk assessment research
2. State the advantages and disadvantages of the actuarial approach
3. Identify how the structured Professional Judgment may be used in Risk Assessment
4. Name the major assessment instruments for risk assessment
5. Name the legal decisions in which courts have accepted and rejected risk assessment research

### Seminar Schedule

- **Begin 1 PM ET**
- **The need for risk assessment**
- **Methods and assumptions in early work**
- **Research refining ability to predict violent behavior**
- **Break 2:30-2:45 PM ET**
- **Assessment instruments: clinical, actuarial, and structured professional judgment**
- **Legal Implications: expert testimony about violent behavior**
- **End 4:15 PM ET**