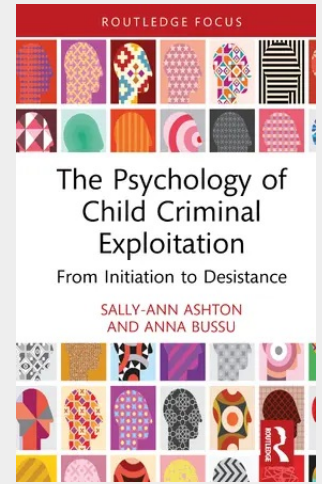


The Psychology of Child Criminal Exploitation

From Initiation to Desistance

Drawing on the narratives of adolescents and adults reflecting on their childhood experiences, this book offers a psychologically informed understanding of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) as a dynamic, relational and non-linear process. Reflecting sustained empirical, theoretical and practice-based engagement with CCE, the book moves beyond narrow risk-factor approaches to examine how exploitation develops, becomes embedded, and, in some cases, is disrupted over time. It traces pathways from vulnerability and initiation through co-offending, emotional experience, identity formation and desistance, highlighting the roles of coercion, constrained choice, social relationships and structural inequalities. Centring the voices of young people, the book challenges simplistic victim-offender binaries and explores how children understand, experience and make sense of their involvement in exploitative contexts. By integrating forensic, developmental, social and environmental psychology with contemporary criminological scholarship, it provides a process-oriented framework for understanding how exploitation is established, sustained and resisted. Offering important implications for safeguarding, youth justice and professional practice, The Psychology of Child Criminal Exploitation will be of interest to students, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers working in psychology, criminology, youth justice, social care, education and safeguarding.

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