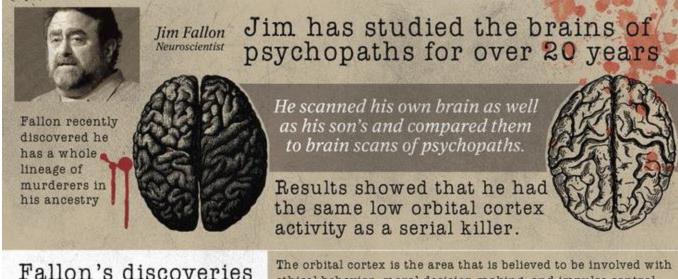
# **Inside The Criminal Mind: Brain Scans Of Serial Killers Show Low Orbital Cortex Activity, High Psychopathic Tendencies**

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ethical behavior, moral decision making, and impulse control

Genetics, brain patterns, and childhood traumas all help make up the brain of a serial killer. Best Counseling Degrees

Television shows like "Dexter" and "The Following" have given us a terrifying glimpse into the criminal mind of serial killers. We often catch ourselves asking, "Why do they kill?" "How do they pick their victims?" and "Why can't they control their impulse to kill?" To answer these questions, Best Counseling Degrees has developed "The Brain of A Serial Killer" infographic to explore the genetics, brain patterns, and childhood traumas that make up this profile.

Dr. Helen Morrison, a Chicago-based forensic psychiatrist, has studied and interviewed 135 serial killers. She has found shocking similarities, and believes a chromosome abnormality is a likely trigger. This chromosome abnormality begins to show itself during puberty, especially in men who display their homicidal tendencies. Brain scans show they never develop a sense of attachment and belonging to the world, meaning they don't empathize with their victims, which allows them to kill them.

Neuroscientist Jim Fallon has studied the brains of psychopaths for over 20 years, and stumbled upon a shocking discovery in his research — he has the same low orbital cortex activity as a serial killer. This is the area that is believed to be involved with ethical behavior, more decision making, and impulse control. Low activity in this region means there's less normal suppression of behaviors, including rage, violence, eating, sex, and drinking.

"People with low orbital cortex activity are either free-wheeling types or sociopaths," Fallon said.

When it comes to childhood, serial killers are more likely to have experienced child abuse than society in general. In a study of 50 serial killers, researchers found about 70 percent experience some maltreatment and 50 percent go through psychological abuse growing up. Fallon's research has led him to believe childhood experience could make all the difference when it comes to the making of a serial killer.

Overall, the profile of a serial killer is a person who murders three or more people in at least three separate events with a cooling period between hits. They generally kill during a cycle when they're feeling stress, and feel temporarily relieved after they commit the homicide. The motivations of serial killers vary, but they often fall into these four categories: Obtaining money, experiencing the thrill, a sense of power, and a desire to rid the world of evildoers.

View the infographic below to learn more about the making of a serial killer and the prevalence of homicides around the world.

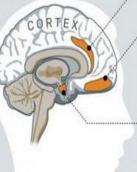
## A SERIAL KILLER'S WHAT IS A SERIAL **BRAIN VS. A NORMAL** BRAIN A serial killer is someone who murders three or more "I didn't want to hurt them, I only people in at least three separate events wanted to kill them." Serial killers also tend to have a "cooling off" period in between murders -David Berkowitz VHY DO THEY DO IT? 90% 1) To get rid of the "evil" in the world 2) Because of the thrill 10% 3) A sense of power 4) Obtaining money HEN DO THEY DO IT? 35% Serial killers often kill in a time of stress, thus helping them relieve it When they finish the murder they feel relieved and do not "hunt" again until their stress resurfaces

https://infogram.com/a-serial-andnbspkillers-brain-vs-a-normal-brain-1go502yex816mjd

# THE MINDSET OF A Criminal

## The criminal mind

Abnormalities in brain structure and function could turn people to crime



#### Anterior cingulate

Criminals with low activity have higher risk of reoffending

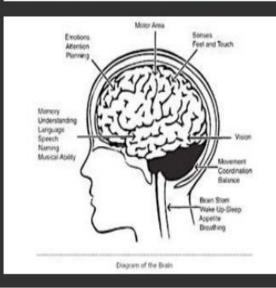
## Ventromedial prefrontal cortex

Up to 11% smaller and less active in habitual offenders

### mygdala

Shrunken and less active in teenagers with aggressive conduct disorders

# THE MINDSET OF A Normal Person



# 10 MOST COMMON TRAITS OF A SERIAL KILLER

 Alcohol/Substance Abuse- According to the FBI's statistics, the childhood homes of more than 70% of serial killers experienced problems related to substance abuse.

2) Psychological Abuse During Childhood- According to the interviews and discussions that have been held with known serial killers, emotional abuse and neglect has been the form of abuse most of them (50%) suffered.

3) Sexually Stressful Events In Childhood- Research material tells us violent sexual events during childhood have serious affects on an individual's development.The witnessing of violent sexual acts between family members and/or parents had some of the most damaging effects on a child's life.

4) Bed-Wetting- Researches argue that persistent bedwetting past the age of five is demeaning for a child, especially if parents or other figures of authority tease them about it. The child may then act out against animals or use arson to channel their anger and frustration. Over 57% of serial killers were bed-wetters until an unusually advanced age.

5) Growing Up Lonely and Isolated- Family members of future serial killers are usually out of step and at odds with each other. Their relationships are malfunctional and debilitating. These families also have a tendency to move around a lot, and the children are normally removed into shelters before they can turn 18. 6) Fantasies- Serial killers' fantasies are often about control and violation. In fact, during research, it became clear that serial killers could remember NO positive fantasies they had as children. They will even fantasize about their own traumas, over and over again – the difference being that in these fantasies they are the attacker.

7) Preferring Auto-Erotic Activities- Most serial killers admitted that during their teenage years they avoided parties and other social events. They definitely never experimented as normal teenagers do with sexual activities among their peers, but with themselves instead. 8) Developing Fetishism In Adulthood- Many will start their trouble making as relatively harmless peeping-toms, before moving on to housebreaking, rape, and murder. As these start to excite the offenders, they tend to repeat their crime in order to get that "pleasure" again. 9) Acting Out Fantasies On Animals- Almost all serial killers - in fact, 99% of them - admitted that they started by acting out their violent fantasies on animals before starting on human beings. Due to the dysfunctional families most serial killers come from, such abnormal behavior may be ignored or completely missed - as in the case of Jeffrey Dahmer, whose father was oblivious by the fact that his son was dissecting animals. These acts of animal cruelty are a great source of pleasure to young killers, and they manage to perfect the art completely later performing the same acts on their human victims. 10) Physical Injuries- Head injuries received during accidents, repeated head trauma suffered during physical abuse or injuries during birth have been suggested as a very important link to aggressive and violent behavior. 70% of serial killers received extensive head injuries as children or adolescents, clearly showing the link between these types of injuries and serial murder. Some researchers believe that the frontal cortex (the area involved in planning and judgement) does not function properly in psychopaths.

# Types Of Serial Killers:

#### ORGANIZED

- Above average intelligence
- Methodological
- Lure victims
- Maintain control over the crime scene
- They follow their crimes in the media
- Usually socially adequate

### DISORGANIZED

- Low intelligence
- Impulsive
- Murder when the opportunity arises
- They rarely dispose of the body, usually leaving the body where they found it.
- Introverted

#### MODERN-DAY MURDERERS BY NUMBER OF VICTIMS

The 10 most prolific killers of the past 50 years, and a breakdown of the methods used

