[Writer’s Name]

[Instructor’s Name]

[Subject]

[Date]

Criminalizing and Punishing Psychopaths

A psychopath is the individual suffering from a chronic mental illness accompanied by violent behavior. The role of a neural system that assists in social decision-making has been explored from various perspectives. Several pieces of evidence suggest that the decision-making components solely rely upon the coordination of various neurocognitive systems. The neurocognitive system supports multiple processes such as perspective-taking and stimulus valuation (Yoder). Thus, it is undeniably true that emotions and moral behavior are interlinked with each other. The research conducted in the field of psychology reveals that psychopath has the ability to distinguish between right and wrong yet they are emotionally unstable and therefore lacks the emotional feeling of what is right and wrong.

In the context of criminal justice punishing a psychopath has always been the topic of debate. Punishing and not punishing a psychopath has become an ethical dilemma upon which everyone has a different perspective. However, most of the people agree upon the idea that a psychopath should not be punished like a normal adult who did the same crime as a psychopath does. The reason behind this perception is that psychopath is mentally ill due to which they should be treated according to the criminal law that is defined for the normal people. The brain imaging research also highlighted that in psychopaths there is a reduction in structure and function in the emotional-related brain area as compared to the normal adult so punishing them for a crime is not right (Yoder)However, a criminal act cannot be ignored and therefore, there must be an alternate form of punishment. They should be held captive in a mental care facility where they can be treated. Additionally, psychopaths should be subjected to various forms of social control as they do have the ability to harm others (Glenn). This will facilitate in ensuring that the other members of the society are safe and protected.

**Works Cited**

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Yoder, Keith J., and Jean Decety. "The neuroscience of morality and social decision-making." *Psychology, Crime & Law* 24.3 (2018): 279-295.