**Brief Summary**

**An Overview of Deviance**

Crime and deviance are linked.  Deviance refers to those behaviors that violate social norms.  Some deviant behaviors are serious enough that society has chosen to pass laws against them (these are crimes); other deviant behaviors may be frowned upon by society but have not been defined as crimes.  Internal and external socialization processes teach social norms and clarify what behaviors society is and is not willing to tolerate. Socialization and social control are key concepts in controlling human behavior. Society determines what behaviors are acceptable, and deviations from those behaviors bring a variety of social sanctions (not limited to those meted out by the criminal justice system). A failure to socialize to the norms of society is often used as an explanation of criminal behavior and deviance.

**The Social Control of Deviance**

While laws create formal social control, informal social controls may actually be more significant in shaping what we do, and do not do. There are multiple agents of social control. Government and medical institutions may exert formal social control, while the social institutions of the family, peers, and schools serve as informal social controls. Donald Black argues that law is used as a tool of formal social control in four distinct ways: penal, compensatory, therapeutic, and conciliatory. He further notes that societies with strong informal controls rely less on law to control behavior; but as society becomes more stratified, a greater reliance on formal social control is necessary.

**The Medicalization of Deviance**

Highlighting Black's therapeutic social control, the chapter explores the role of medicine and science in defining and responding to deviant behavior. Defining various forms of deviance as a disease or medical problem is contrasted with the criminal justice system's assumption that offenders act based upon their own free will, raising questions about accountability for crime. Although it is infrequently invoked, and usually unsuccessful, the presence of the insanity defense in our legal system highlights the interplay of medicalization and criminal responsibility. The medicalization of deviance has shifted the blame and punishment for some offenders, which in some cases has led to vindication and putative backlash.