

Name Pia Puolakka

Organization MindTech

Citizenship Finland

Country of residence Helsinki, FINLAND

Degree information

Master's degree in psychology, Helsinki University, 2003.

Psychotherapist, Integrum Institute, 2017.

Service Design Programme, Aalto University Professional Development, 2018.

Forensic Psychology specialization studies, Åbo Akademi, 2019.

Diploma in Artificial Intelligence, Aalto University Executive Education, 2020.

Management training program for governmental agencies (Valtio Joko -60), HAUS, 2020.

IT Fundamentals, IT Management Fundamentals & COBIT® 2019 Foundation, Udemy, 2025.

Master of Business Administration (MBA), Aalto University, started in 2024 (ongoing)

Employment history

CEO and Founder, MindTech, 2025-

MindTech is my consulting company specialized in guiding governments, prison administrations, and justice organizations in using digital tools and artificial intelligence to transform custodial environments. I work with jurisdictions around the world to: (1) Design Smart Prisons that integrate secure, rehabilitative digital systems, (2) Develop Digital Rehabilitation Programs that promote mental health, learning, and reintegration, (3) Apply AI in Corrections responsibly and ethically to enhance decision-making and service delivery, (4) Advise on Strategic Reform using technology aligned with justice and human rights standards. MindTech is built to meet the growing demand for modern, ethical, and effective correctional reform. See: <https://www.mindtechfin.com/>.

Private forensic psychologist, clinical psychotherapist and hypnotherapist, private clinical practice in Mehiläinen Health Care and PsyJuridica law firm 2013-

I started working as a private clinical psychologist in 2013. Nowadays, I am working as a private clinical psychotherapist and hypnotherapist in Mehiläinen Health Care (since 2020) and as a consultant in forensic psychology in PsyJuridica law firm (since 2021).

Senior Specialist, Team Leader, Prison and Probation Service, Core Operations Department, Operations Management Unit, Safety, Security, and Individual Coaching Team, 09/2022 – 06/2025.

I was leading a team consisting of twelve senior specialists responsible for the national management of rehabilitative and safety practices in prisons and probations. This included management of rehabilitative program work to reduce recidivism, social work, family work, educational and vocational services, digital services, management of remand imprisonment and risk situations.

Project Manager, Prison and Probation Service, Central Administration Unit, 10/2018–12/2023.

I was working as a Project Manager for the Smart Prison project which developed Finland's first Smart Prison with personal cell devices and software for management and communication inside prison and from inside prison. The project developed digital services nationally in all units and extended the use of online services for various rehabilitative, educational, and social purposes in collaboration with various stakeholders. The project also developed an artificial intelligence -based program RISE AI intended for a new Offender Management System. There are several published articles and congress presentations about the Smart Prison and RISE AI projects (see References).

Senior Specialist, Prison and Probation Service, Central Administration Unit, 04/2017–08/2022.

As a senior specialist I was responsible for the national management, development, and co-ordination of rehabilitative practices in prisons like program work, psychological and prison chaplains' work, family work and underaged inmates. I coordinated the service design work in prisons and probations and participated in designing services for new prison units.

Psychologist, Helsinki Prison, 11/2015–3/2017.

I worked as a prison psychologist including individual counseling, program work, rehabilitative groups and developing practices with other prison staff.

Psychologist, Sukeva Prison, 02/2012–03/2017.

I worked as a prison psychologist including individual counseling, program work and developing practices with other prison staff.

Psychologist, Kellokoski Hospital, Forensic Psychiatric Unit, 01/2010–01/2012.

I worked as a clinical psychologist in a forensic psychiatric unit including psychological counseling and psychiatric assessment including risk assessment.

Psychologist, Riihimäki Prison, 09/2008–12/2009.

I worked as a prison psychologist including individual counseling, program work and developing practices with other prison staff. I was also teaching psychology in the prison's high school.

Senior Instructor, Riihimäki Prison, 05/2008–09/2008.

I was working as a senior instructor in social work including housing, subsistence, family work and practices related to the release from sentence.

Psychologist, Pro Help Unit, 02/2007–04/2008.

I was working as psychologist in a helping center for sex workers. My work included individual counseling in the center and online as well as outreach work.

Instructor, Detention Center, 10/2004–01/2007.

I worked in a detention center for asylum seekers as a social worker, which included counseling and support work, supervision and accommodation work and cooperation with various officials like Immigration Police, Immigration Office, Refugee Counseling and Border Control.

Psychologist, Helsinki Deaconess Institute, 09/2005–01/2006.

I worked as a psychologist in a child custody unit. My work included individual counseling and psychological assessment.

Psychologist Trainee, Children and Youth Hospital, 01/2002–06/2002.

I worked as psychologist trainee in a youth psychiatric policlinic including individual counseling and psychological assessments.

Research assistant, Police University College, 02/2001–12/2001.

I worked as a research assistant in a project related to offender profiling and investigative work. In addition, I worked on my master's thesis on offender profiling as part of the project.

Associations

- Ethical Board, Psychologists' Union in Finland, 2018 – 2022.
- EuroPris ICT Expert Group, EuroPris, 2020 – 2025 (co-chair 2021-2025).

- The Forensic Psychologists' Working Group, Psychologists' Union in Finland, 2020 – 2024.
- Artificial Intelligence expert group, Council of Europe, 2021 – 2023.
- Adult mental health and substance abuse work committee, Psychologists' Union in Finland, 2025- (chair, ongoing).

Voluntary work

Secretary of the Board, The Finnish Society of Scientific Hypnosis, 2014-

This is a non-profit, member-based organization intended for clinicians practicing hypnotherapy. The organization arranges annual training and events for their members.

Chair of the Board, Support for Victims of Religions (UUT), 2018-

UUT provides support for people who have faced various kinds of problems and abuse in religious groups. The problems may include for example manipulation and indoctrination, various forms of exploitation or sexual, physical, and mental violence. The organization arranges peer support for the victims and training and consultation to other professionals (social, healthcare, and judicial field) helping these victims. We are also involved in international collaboration between equivalent organizations outside Finland and do a lot of PR work in collaboration with media.

References

- Council of Europe. (2024). Ethical and organisational aspects of the use of Artificial Intelligence and related digital technologies by prison and probation services. [https://search.coe.int/cm#{%22CoEIdentifier%22:\[%220900001680b1d0e4%22\],%22sort%22:\[%22CoEValidationDate%20Descending%22\]}](https://search.coe.int/cm#{%22CoEIdentifier%22:[%220900001680b1d0e4%22],%22sort%22:[%22CoEValidationDate%20Descending%22]})
- Puolakka, P., & Van De Steene, S. (2021). Artificial Intelligence in Prisons in 2030. An exploration on the future of Artificial Intelligence in Prisons. *Advancing Corrections Journal*, 11, 128-138.
- Puolakka, P. (2021). *Narsistit vankilassa* (Narcissists in Prison). Deadline Kustannus. Helsinki. Finland.
- Puolakka, P. (2022). Implementing a Smart Prison in Finland. *Advancing Corrections Journal*, 14, 215-222.
- Puolakka, P., & Suomela, M. (2023). Digitalization Supports Human Rights in Finnish Prisons. *Advancing Corrections Journal*, 16, 50-61.
- Puolakka, P. (2024). Incarcerated Women Benefit More from Digital Rehabilitation than Incarcerated Men. *Advancing Corrections Journal*, 18, 145-158.

Award nominations

- Digital Act of the Year, Atea Finland: among the three finalists in 2019, 2021 and 2022.
- EuroPris Prison Achievement Award, EuroPris: 6th place in 2022.
- Finnish Digital and Population Data Services Agency's 'Digitukiteko' recognition awards: 2nd place in 2024.