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Science-based interviewing: Information elicitation

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Abstract

This article describes an ethical and effective science-based model of interviewing. An initial planning phase assists the investigative team in separating facts from inferences, decreases the likelihood of errors based on cognitive biases, and prompts careful preparation of the environment. The interview begins with an explanation of why the subject is being questioned. The interviewer then metaphorically hands the interview over to the subject, making him the talker and the interviewer the listener. The interviewer engages in active listening, soliciting as much information from the subject as possible by deploying tactics that enhance memory based on science, including elements of the cognitive interview. Cues to deception are found in the details of the story, rather than in signs of anxiety or nonverbal behaviours, and by deploying Strategic Use of Evidence. This model has been shown to increase cooperation, decrease resistance, and provoke useful information in real-world criminal interviews.

KEYWORDS

active listening, cognitive interview, interview, SUE

1 | INTRODUCTION

This article is about a framework of effective and ethical interviewing that may be useful in criminal investigations or intelligence interrogations. An earlier version of this framework is described in Figure 1. The early version was developed to describe the communications skills needed to talk with and engage antagonistic people, such as in instances of hostage negotiations (Wells, 2014a, 2014b).

The usefulness of the framework shown in Figure 1 can be illustrated by the following account: On a cold winter's afternoon, negotiators were called to the 32nd floor of a high block of flats in East London. A man stood outside a set of glass doors next to a balcony, drinking high alcohol-content lager and swaying from side to side. Police officers already on the scene told negotiators that they had been told to "fuck off, or I will jump." The man looked at the two plain clothes negotiators and gestured a cutting sign across his neck, while saying, "Afternoon, Detectives" (first impressions of the desperate man of the police). The negotiators inferred that the man was used to interacting with

The statements of fact, opinion, and analysis in the paper are those of the authors and do not reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government.

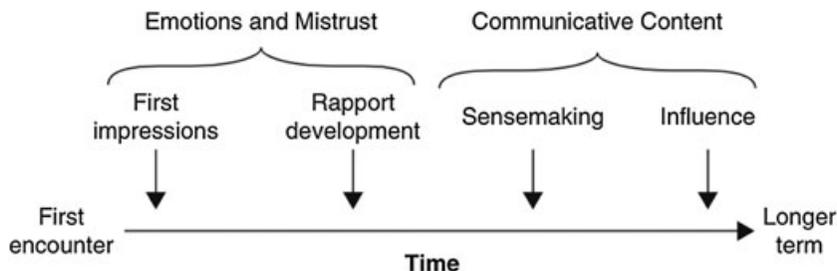


FIGURE 1 A schematic overview of the communication skills relevant to communicating with antagonistic individuals. From Wells (2014a, p. 15)

the police (first impressions of the police of the desperate man) and that, as a consequence, using authority as a means of persuasion was unlikely to succeed. Instead, the negotiators began with a summary of what they could see, to learn more about what had brought the person in crisis to his current position (rapport development):

My name is Robert and I work with the Police to help people who may be considering killing themselves. I can see that you are next to a long drop, and that you have said that if anyone tries to come into where you standing then you will jump. It appears to me that something has happened to you which has made you feel desperate for someone to hear what you have to say (recognizing emotions and mistrust).

By communicating based on what was seen and heard (sensemaking) rather than inferring the likely feelings of the perpetrator, the negotiator used non-judgmental language, which has been shown in some circumstances to have a more positive impact on interactions than more direct language (Kelley, 1950; Logan, 2012; Taylor, 2002). Similarly, the negotiator carefully chose his words when conveying his reason for talking to the person in crisis by describing himself as working with the police as opposed to being part of them. Such subtle nuances in language use are known to have a significant impact on the receiver's perceptions of the communicator (Wells, 2014b; Wells, Taylor, & Giebels, 2013). In this case, the negotiator hoped that it would reduce the perpetrators sense of being told what to do by authority figures (social influence).

The man responded with, "Fuck off and leave me alone, I am going to get pissed and then jump, there is no point, I have lost her and the kids." Although this sounded negative, it provided a basis for further interaction because it disclosed information about the man's circumstances. It allowed for further non-judgmental questioning as well as demonstrations of empathy, which has been shown to have a positive impact on communication (Rogers, 1951, 1959; Royce, 2005). In this case, the man eventually provided details regarding the recent breakdown of his marriage, access to his children, loss of his job, and his feelings of helplessness.

The model shown in Figure 1 was extended to incorporate a larger body of science (for a recent review, see Meissner, Surmon-Böhr, Oleszkiewicz, & Alison, 2017) and now serves as a framework for a course of instruction for law enforcement and intelligence agency personnel. The current framework, shown in Figure 2, is relevant to interviewing suspects, witnesses, and victims, as well as source debriefing. The current framework includes what comes prior to an interview ("Planning & Analysis"), components essential to the interview itself ("The Interview"), and what comes at the end of an interview ("Closing"). It assumes that feedback and reflection on the part of an interview team are ongoing throughout the process.

The term interrogation has particular meanings both for U.S. law enforcement (e.g., as part of the determination of Miranda warnings) and the U.S. military (e.g., the U.S. Army Field Manual 2-22.3 distinguishes between debriefing and interrogation). We use the term "interview" here in its broadest sense to refer to the interaction between an interviewer and a subject where the subject is assumed to have information of value to the interviewer. The subject of the interview is referred to here as "the subject"—who might be a suspect, witness, victim, prisoner of war, detainee, or human intelligence source.

Although it is the view of many police investigators who conduct interrogations that the end goal of an interrogation is an admission or confession to some or all of a particular crime (Inbau, Reid, Buckley, & Jayne, 2013), a broader justice is reached when such interrogations are planned and executed in such a way that new information

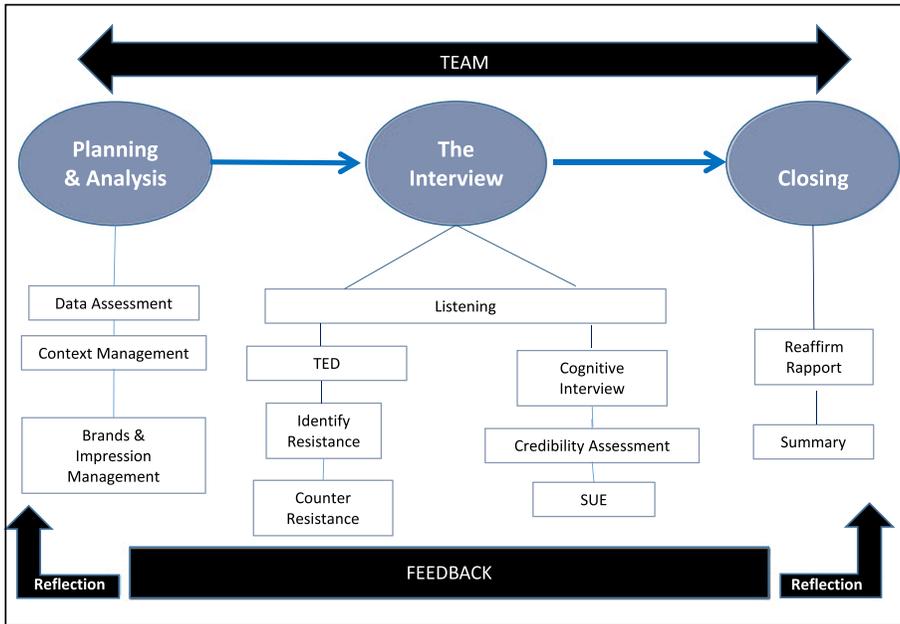


FIGURE 2 A schematic overview of a science-based approach to interrogations for purposes of information collection. TED = tell, explain, describe; SUE = Strategic Use of Evidence [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

(people, locations, activities, timings, capabilities, opportunities, and motivation) is revealed (Hartwig, Meissner, & Semel, 2014; Kassin, Appleby, & Torkildson-Perillo, 2010; Kelly & Meissner, 2015). New information may further condemn, provide evidence of the involvement of others, or even exonerate (in which case, we learn that the real culprit remains to be caught). In some instances, such as in intelligence interrogations, there is no plan for prosecution and admissions or confessions are useful only if they provide additional information about a prior event or a planned event.

The model we describe here, useful for the elicitation and evaluation of information, is based on methods that have been scientifically developed—that is, each method identified by a block within the framework is (a) grounded in sound scientific (in most cases, psychological) principles and (b) has been demonstrated to work in settings where other confounding factors are removed. Such settings usually are psychology laboratories where, for example, one interview method is compared to another for the amount, accuracy, and diagnosticity of information elicited (e.g., Meissner, Kelly, & Woestehoff, 2015; Russano, Meissner, Narchet, & Kassin, 2005). It is beyond the scope of this paper to describe the methods within each block with detail, to describe the wealth of empirical data underlying each one, or to provide a training manual. Our goal is to provide enough detail that a practitioner can understand what the tactic is and see an illustration of its application.

We have taught some of the blocks alone (e.g., courses in cognitive interview or Credibility Assessment). Students in these courses have justifiably asked when to do what and how the blocks fit together. The challenge we face is that these blocks have been developed relatively independently (by different scientists in different places, with various paradigms). The framework is an attempt to fit the blocks together. Some components, such as Data Assessment, Listening, Identify Resistance, and Reaffirm Rapport are necessary to all interviews. Other components, such as the cognitive interview, are sometimes more or less useful. However, the framework is not a “tool box”: An interview should proceed roughly in the order of left to right, with tactics described by the various blocks deployed or not, thoughtfully and strategically.

The framework depicted in Figure 2 has been shown in an independent field validation test to result in both greater cooperation and less resistance, as well as more information, when applied to real-world criminal interviews (Meissner & Russano, 2015). Additional effectiveness studies are underway.

2 | PREPARATION AND ANALYSIS

Perhaps the most important aspect of an information-gathering interview is the preparation that goes on before the interview begins—and the updating of that information as it proceeds. This may appear to be a labour- and resource-intensive process but is likely to save time and effort in the long-term because it makes errors of judgment and analysis less likely. The kinds of errors that can be avoided with proper planning and preparation include confirmation bias (the tendency to interpret, search for, and recall information that is consistent with pre-existing beliefs; Frey, 1981a, 1981b), hindsight bias (“Monday night quarterbacking”: the tendency to see an event as predictable after it has happened, despite having little or no reason to think it would happen before that; Fischhoff, 1975), availability bias (weighing evidence more if it is what comes to mind first or is most easily accessed; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973), and the fundamental attribution error (the tendency to attribute behaviours to personality or intention rather than to situational factors; Ross, 1977).

Good preparation includes distinguishing between hard facts (e.g., the licence plate of a car), what the investigation team has been told (e.g., that the car belongs to the subject), and inferences made on the basis of these items (i.e., that the subject was driving when the car hits the victim). As the interview proceeds, notes should be made that not only update the facts (that can be checked) but also make clear further inferences, topics the subject avoids or likes to talk about, or allow for the development of a timeline. Once an initial assessment is made, the early objectives for the interview can be identified. These will change, of course, as information is collected, and the analyses are updated.

2.1 | Consider the context

Part of the planning includes a thoughtful and creative assessment of the place (police interrogation room, street, hotel lobby, car, etc.) in which the interview will occur. The place should be choreographed to facilitate recall. Two broad strategies are possible: The subject may be literally taken back to the place of the event. Memories about an event include not only the people and actions of the event but also the place in which the event occurred: These memories are all linked (Tulving & Thompson, 1973). Being back in the place of interest will facilitate recall of people and activities (Godden & Baddeley, 1975). It should be noted, however, that this is a risky tactic in instances where the subject has, in fact, has no knowledge of the event; exposing an innocent subject to facts about a crime scene provides the subject with unique knowledge is likely to increase the risk of a false confession. More commonly, the interview occurs in a police station or detention centre. Small, dark rooms with a single overhead light should be avoided in favour of a well-lit, spacious room with open objects (an open window, door, drawer, book, etc.). There are some data indicating that larger, open rooms make people disclose more information (Dawson, Hartwig, & Brimbal, 2015). Because a sense of freedom to choose, or autonomy, facilitates rapport with the interviewer (Alison, Alison, Noone, Elntib, & Christiansen, 2013), the subject might be allowed to choose his chair and where he sits from among several options—and should not be put in a corner where he feels trapped.

Part of the Preparation and Analysis stage includes considering the interviewer's brand: A brand is how the subject perceives the interviewer as a function of his apparent group identity and what the subject knows or believes about that group. If the interviewer is obviously an officer of the law (with a uniform and a badge), the subject will expect him to act as he has experienced such officers (with similar uniforms and badges) to act, either via direct interaction or vicariously (e.g., via the media). The subject will, in turn, prepare to act towards the interviewer as suits someone with such a brand. Aspects of brand are signalled by clothes, speech, and mannerisms. The interviewer brand can be managed to their advantage to assist in meeting initial objectives. It is useful, also, to be aware of how the interviewer views the subject's brand, and how these perceptions will create vulnerabilities to the kinds of cognitive biases referred to above (e.g., confirmation, hindsight, and availability biases) and stereotype biases. For example, U.S. police have admitted to being predisposed to stop, search, and detain young men because they were “young, black and in a high drug-trafficking area, driving a nice car” (Rudovsky, 2001).

Careful thought as to the context and brands is part of impression management, which is the process by which people attempt both consciously and unconsciously to influence the images other have of them during interpersonal interactions (Jones & Pittman, 1982). One strategy of impression management is brand manipulation. Another is to be aware of the fact that people make quick and usually accurate judgments of another's trustworthiness, and this quick judgment predicts their cooperation with that person in the future (Schaller, Park, & Kenrick, 2007; Tetlock, 1983). First impressions and initial objectives should be carefully considered and reflected in what the interviewer says as he starts the conversation with the subject.

3 | THE INTERVIEW

3.1 | Start the conversation and then listen

There are two primary obligations of the interviewer at the outset of an interview. The first is to explain to the subject the purpose for which he or she is being questioned in a manner that is low-key and makes apparent the intent to solicit information (Alison et al., 2013; St-Yves & Meissner, 2014). When individuals meet, they seek to reduce uncertainty about the other so that they can behave appropriately (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Explaining the reason for the interview reduces uncertainty. In addition, studies of convicted criminals have shown that about 50% of the convicts had decided already whether to talk willingly or not before their interview had begun, and about 30% of those had decided to tell the truth, even though they were guilty (Deslauriers-Varin, Lussier, & St-Yves, 2011; Deslauriers-Varin & St-Yves, 2006, 2009; Kebbell, Hurren, & Mazerolle, 2006). Therefore, the interviewer first should allow the subject a sense of freedom, or autonomy, to engage with him: If a subject is willing to provide information about the topic of concern, then the best strategy is to not get in the way (Alison et al., 2013).

The second obligation of an interviewer is to instruct the subject that he is to tell as much about the event in question as possible and that the interviewer's role will be to listen (and, if the interview is not audio or video recorded, take notes). Many subjects expect the interviewer will ask questions and that the subject waits passively to be questioned. The interviewer's duty here is to convince the subject that this is not how the interview will proceed. In fact, the subject is the best "witness" to the event (even if he is guilty; Fisher & Geiselman, 1992). The interviewer telling the subject that the story is theirs and they should "tell," "explain," or "describe" (TED) in as much detail as possible increases the likelihood of eliciting detailed information (e.g., Leins, Fisher, Pludwinski, Rivard, & Robertson, 2014). This approach also takes the initial burden of the interviewer, whose role now is to listen.

It is likely that the subject will need encouragement to continue talking, for many reasons: (a) It may be hard to disabuse him of the notion that he should be just responding to questions; (b) most people naturally edit stories (e.g., when someone asks, "How is your day going?", they seldom want a fully detailed account of your every moment); (c) if the event was relatively distant in time, they may need time to recall details; or (d) they are telling a partial truth or cover story and want to keep it as short and simple as possible. Whatever the reason, the investigator at this point can simply use active listening skills (Royce, 2005; Wells, 2014a; Wells et al., 2013) to support the conversation; these are what we do naturally when we listen to an engaging story from a friend: "uh-huh ...," "go on ...," nodding, leaning forward, and appearing pleasant and interested. A bit of silence is useful as well: If the subject stops talking and appears to still be thinking (he is likely to not be looking at the interviewer, as direct eye contact is distracting), then letting a few seconds of silence pass by is highly effective (Kelley, 1950; Shepherd, 1986, 1988; Wells, 2014a).

Initial statements may not always be true or may be partially true. The interviewer has the option of directly challenging what he thinks are untruths or engaging in more strategic tactics to uncover possible deception. Rather than looking for nonverbal indicators of deception, which have been shown to be faint and often unreliable (Vrij, 2008), the interviewer can look to the verbal account that will in itself contain cues as to its validity—that is, cues to being truthful and cues to being deceptive. Truthful stories are likely to include details that can be verified (e.g., use of a credit card or surveillance footage; Nahari, Vrij, & Fisher, 2014a, 2014b). Truthful stories also are likely to contain

complications—for example, the subject was headed out for the office, and the car would not start so he had to take the bus (e.g., Jundi, Vrij, Hope, Mann, & Hillman, 2013). If the subject is encouraged to repeat parts of the story, additional information is likely to be elicited. Some of these details may be inconsistent, which is itself an indicator of veracity—contrary to what is commonly believed (Fisher, Vrij, & Leins, 2013). Someone who is telling a lie, especially a prepared lie, is unlikely to correct himself because he believes this will both look suspicious and be hard to keep track of. (Hartwig, Granhag, & Strömwall, 2007).

TED, or any other open-ended question as the initial strategy, provides an innocent subject with the opportunity to provide as many details that support his innocence as possible, and studies show that this is in fact the strategy of the innocent subject: to assume that his innocence will “shine through” (Hartwig et al., 2007). TED as an initial strategy also may reveal a subject who is unwilling or unable to provide a complete account and help the interviewer identify the source and the nature of his resistance. The interviewer can make such assessments only if the subject is talking.

Resistance comes in various forms. First, resistance might be the result of the subject's innocence with respect to actions or guilty knowledge. This possibility must be considered at all points of an interview; referring back to the “facts, ‘what we've heard,’ and inferences” that are part of Preparation and Analysis can help the interview team maintain the necessary perspective.

A subject may refuse to engage with the interviewer; for example, he sits quietly, refusing to talk or even look at the interviewer, or is agitated and talks wildly without regard to what the interviewer is saying. In broad strokes, he is avoidant (Taylor, 2002). Identifying the nature of the avoidance and the motivation for it can help the interviewer pull the subject into a more cooperative state (Knowles & Linn, 2004; Taylor, 2014; Wells, 2014a). If the subject

- Refuses to talk at all: Unless case information provides reasons for a subject refusing to talk (e.g., the subject is likely to implicate friends or family; he is familiar with the criminal justice system and deploys this as a counter-interrogation tactic), a subject who refuses to engage at all can be encouraged to do so by (a) the effective use of silence (Shepherd, 1988); (b) pointing out that others in “the same situation, here in this room” have agreed to tell their story (social proof; Cialdini, 2001; Weiss, Buchanan, & Pasamanick, 1964); (c) offering something of comfort, such as a bottle of water or a blanket (reciprocity, Gouldner, 1960); (d) if the interviewer anticipates an avoidant subject, he might offer the subject his choice of chairs to begin with; a sense of autonomy has been shown to be related to increasing the likelihood of providing information in interview settings; Alison et al., 2013). (e) The interviewer might label what the subject is doing and acknowledge that it is normal and to be expected (Knowles & Linn, 2004). (f) The interviewer might verbally mildly provoke the subject by challenging his identity (e.g., “You claim to be a good soldier but you are implicating your fellow soldiers by refusing to even talk to me”), provoking his rational nature (e.g., “There is a reason why you are in this situation and only you can help us understand it”) or pointing out the contradiction between claiming to cooperate but in fact not (e.g., “You're talking willingly with me but you circle around the central issue”).
- Talks only about his needs, beliefs, problems, and so forth: The most productive response on the part of the interviewer is to continue to listen to the subject and draw out more details on his needs, beliefs, or problems. Recognising these issues and not arguing should reduce the motivation underlying the resistance (Knowles & Linn, 2004) and encourage a sense of autonomy. In addition, (a) the language of the interviewer should match that of the subject in both the frame of the discourse—that is, both are talking about the subject's issues—and by the interviewer reflecting some key words the subject might use, such as “frustrated,” “angry,” and “injustice” (Richardson, Taylor, Snook, Conchie, & Bennell, 2014). The interviewer's goal here is to reduce the likely intensity of the emotion-laden discourse; he can do this by active listening, not shouting back, and echoing the key words. (b) The interviewer might challenge the subject on some aspect of his identity: for example, he might say, “You've said you are a good father and that you love your daughter, but not telling us what might have happened last night may make it only harder for us to find her now.” The goal of this challenge is not to be confrontational or draw the

subject into an argument, but to engage him—at least now both interviewer and subject are on the same topic; this may also create some cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957).

- Talks about apparently irrelevant topics, retracts previous statements: To redirect the conversation away from the topic at hand is a strategy not only just of criminal subjects (Alison et al., 2014) but also of politicians (Norton & Goethals, 2004). Interviewer counter-strategies might be (a) assuming a position of “seeking guidance”: “I told you why we are here today; can you help me understand why you choose not to talk to me?” (Alison et al., 2013) or by (b) pointing to inconsistencies, using evocation—that is, drawing out the subject's beliefs and feelings (Miller & Rollnick, 1991).
- Tries to manipulate the relationship with the interviewer, faults the interviewer, denies all knowledge and responsibility: The interviewer might reframe the exchange by suggesting that the subject is believed to have the most knowledge about the event in question and, in this instance, is the “expert,” or point out that he (the interviewer) is being asked to conduct the interview on behalf of the officer-in-charge (Sprecher, 2014). He might engage in some kind of story-telling about a third party perhaps in similar circumstances acting apparently in the same way but then diverting towards cooperation (Cin, Zanna, & Fong, 2004) or label the interview as a conversation between two adults, both trying to get at the truth. The interviewer might point out that he is respecting the rights of the subject to provide his own story, but the subject is refusing to recognise the importance of being forthright, unlike others in his circumstances (social proof; Cialdini, 2001; Weiss et al., 1964).

Interviews are dynamic; unless very short, there are likely to be times when the subject is cooperative and providing indicators of truthfulness; there may also be times when he is showing signs of resistance, especially if there is information or culpability he is trying to hide. There are two broad strategies to use at these points: If there is relatively little evidence, the interviewer might ask the subject to provide more details about critical aspects of the event by deploying the cognitive interview. If there is useable evidence (i.e., evidence that can be revealed to the subject), the interviewer might use the methods of Strategic Use of Evidence (SUE).

The cognitive interview was developed to improve the social dynamics between an interviewer and the subject, the thought processes of both, and the communication between them (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Geiselman, 2012). The social dynamics are improved by the interviewer engaging in rapport-building behaviours at the outset of the exchange and continuing these throughout. Thought processing is enhanced by recognising that individuals have limited mental resources, interviewing in such a manner as to recognise that memories are stored and recalled uniquely for each individual and providing multiple and varied avenues for memory retrieval. Communication is enhanced by the interviewer encouraging—and allowing for—detailed narratives, letting the individual describe a memory in terms of how it is encoded (e.g., describing someone's height as “taller than me” rather than in terms of feet and inches) and, in some instances, creating novel avenues for communication, such as picture drawing. The cognitive interview has been shown in many studies to be highly effective in eliciting information (for reviews and meta-analyses, see Fisher, Ross, & Cahill, 2010; Fisher & Schreiber, 2007; Holliday, Brainerd, Reyna, & Humphries, 2009; Köhnken, Milne, Memon, & Bull, 1999; Memon, Meissner, & Fraser, 2010).

Although we discourage a formulaic approach to interviews, there are a series of steps in the cognitive interview that are critical to its success (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992): (a) instruct the subject that they are to play an active role and not wait to be asked questions and that they should say whatever comes to mind even if it appears unimportant or trivial, but they should not guess; (b) the subject should provide a narrative for as long as he can, without the interviewer interrupting, providing as many details as possible. Once the subject has stopped, the interviewer explains that he will now assist the subject in remembering more details in several ways: (c) context reinstatement: The interviewer might ask the subject to close his eyes (or, if he is unwilling, to direct his gaze towards a blank wall) to reduce interference as he mentally reinstates the context in which the event(s) occurred: The interviewer might select a particular place and starting point (e.g., “when Frank walked into the office at 12:30 on the day in question”) and ask the subject to mentally put himself back into that place and time. Once he has

done so, which should take at least a few seconds, the interviewer asks the subject to describe what happened from that time and place in as much detail as possible: "Describe what you see. Tell me what you hear. Explain any smell or taste. How did you feel, both physically and emotionally?" (It can be useful as well to provide a beginning and an endpoint to the context reinstatement; it may not be useful to engage in context reinstatement for the whole of a complex narrative.) (d) Once the narrative is finished, the interviewer might ask probing questions to elicit more details ("describe how Frank stood at the desk"). (e) The interviewer then reviews the narrative, using his notes; this provides the subject with an opportunity to correct any errors and often results in the subject remembering more, because the summary prompts new memories. (f) The interviewer asks the subject to let him know if, once the interview is over, he remembers more (which may be likely as the subject engages in further retrospection), he should contact the interviewer (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992).

Additional cognitive interview strategies have been designed to facilitate greater recall: (a) Once an initial narrative is provided (in as much detail as possible), the subject might be asked to tell the same story in reverse order (Gilbert & Fisher, 2006). Because this can be a confusing request, the interviewer guides the subject by saying, for example, "start when Frank left the office, slamming the door behind him. What happened right before that?" (b) The subject might be asked to draw a picture relevant to the event in question. This usefulness of such a request is based on the fact that memories can be stored in various ways, so that multiple retrieval strategies will elicit more recall (Vrij et al., 2010). (c) The interviewer might provide categorical cues that should prompt additional memories. For example, if a subject is being asked to recall all the meetings he had in the previous year, he might be asked to think of meetings for each month; meetings around particular holidays or tasks; meetings with particular colleagues; meetings in particular places, and so on (Leins et al., 2014).

In addition to eliciting information about an event that may lead to additional evidence or intelligence, asking for a detailed narrative is most likely to provide the most robust cues to truthfulness: checkable facts. In fact, truthful subjects are likely to offer checkable facts even without being asked (Nahari et al., 2014a, 2014b), whereas those who are lying are unlikely to do so (Hartwig et al., 2007). Independent verification of a detail offered by a subject is the only foolproof deception detection method—this is why the best strategy for detecting deception is to elicit as full an account as possible. Other strategies to discern truths from lies are less robust but can provide indicators: (a) provide the subject with a demonstration of the amount of detail that is being asked for, using a Model Statement, because demonstrations can be more illustrative than instructions (Leal, Vrij, Warmelink, Vernham, & Fisher, 2015). A Model Statement is a highly detailed account of a relatively brief event that involves other people and multiple activities, in a place and situation distinctly unrelated to the topic of the interview. Ideally, it is a pre-recorded or carefully prescribed 2- or 3-min audio record. A truthful subject will be able to provide more details about core aspects of the event after listening to a Model Statement, whereas someone who has supplied a cover story will find this difficult and may revert to providing scripted details (i.e., details that describe what usually happens, rather than what happened at that particular time) or details about peripheral, rather than central, aspects of the event (Leal et al., 2015). (b) The interviewer might remind the subject to provide details about the planning of the event, and not just the event itself or its outcome. Cover stories are unlikely to include planning details (Clemens, Granhag, & Strömwall, 2011; Vrij, Granhag, Mann, & Leal, 2011). (c) The interviewer might ask unanticipated questions (Shaw et al., 2013). It may be the case that a subject telling a cover story has had time to think about his story, and he will have tried to anticipate what kinds of questions will be asked (Hartwig et al., 2007). Asking unanticipated questions focused on the core event that could be answered by someone telling the truth may reveal deception (Vrij et al., 2009).

What are not reliable indicators of deception are signs of anxiety (because innocent individuals are known to be anxious when confronted with authorities about incidents that are of obvious consequence; Kleinmuntz & Szucko, 1984), inconsistencies in repeated accounts (Strange, Dysart, & Loftus, 2014), and most nonverbal behaviours (DePaulo et al., 2003), including avoiding eye contact (Mann et al., 2012). For a description of the greater efficacy of cognition-based approaches over anxiety-based approaches to detecting deception, see Vrij, Fisher, and Blank (2015).

3.2 | Strategic use of evidence

Research has shown that the most powerful factor in subjects' admissions to crimes is their perception of the strength of evidence against them (Gudjonsson, 1992; Gudjonsson & Petursson, 1991; Moston, Stephenson, & Williamson, 1992). It is advantageous, therefore, for an interviewer to make a subject think he has substantial evidence or information relevant to the event in question (Granhag, Monencinos, & Oleszkiewicz, 2013; Scharff, 1950). We do not recommend lying to the subject about evidence, as such tactics have been shown to be factors in false confessions (Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 1999; Kassir & Kiechel, 1996; Moston et al., 1992). In addition, such deception is high-risk: Should the deception be revealed to the subject, it is likely to erode the relationship between the subject and the interviewer which is otherwise supportive of effective interviewing (Russano, Narchet, Kleinman, & Meissner, 2014; Scharff, 1950). However, it is possible to affect the subject's perception of the evidence, which is one outcome of the SUE technique. SUE, which has been shown to be effectively resistant to counter-measures (Luke, Hartwig, Shamash, & Granhag, 2015), has been demonstrated to be successful in eliciting cues to deception in a variety of experimental studies (Granhag, Rangmar, & Strömwall, 2013; Hartwig, Granhag, Strömwall, & Vrij, 2005; Hartwig, Granhag, Strömwall, & Kronkvist, 2006), including with subjects lying about their future intentions (Clemens et al., 2011).

The SUE technique is based on four principles: (a) The subject will try to guess what evidence the interviewer has against him (Hartwig et al., 2007). (b) Both innocent and guilty subjects will try to convince the interviewer that he is innocent, but their strategies will be different. For the innocent, they adopt a forthcoming strategy to tell all, believing that they deserve to be believed and having an illusion of transparency (Gilovich, Savitsky, & Medvec, 1998). The guilty is likely to adopt a strategy to avoid disclosing information and if presented with evidence, to deny it (Hartwig, Granhag, Strömwall, & Doering, 2010). (c) The guilty subject's words may provide two kinds of cues to deception: contradiction between their account and the evidence (statement-evidence inconsistencies) and contradictions within his own statement, as he tried to adjust to the evidence the interviewer has (within-statement inconsistencies). (d) The interviewer takes the subject's perspective to attempt to understand the subject's counter-interrogation strategies.

The essential strategy of SUE is to not disclose evidence or information until the subject has had multiple opportunities to provide a full and detailed narrative about those aspects of the core event to which the evidence or information is most pertinent (Granhag & Hartwig, 2015). For example, the interviewer should first ask for as detailed an account as possible. The guilty subject is likely to provide a narrative with as little detail as possible to still be believed (Hartwig et al., 2007). Following the free narrative, the interviewer may ask specific questions to pin the subject down to an exact and detailed account. For example, a subject may have denied having been close to a victim. Forensic computer analysis shows the subject had multiple intimate email exchanges with the victim. If confronted with the computer evidence upfront, the subject may state that he has many friends who frequently run in and out of his apartment, borrowing clothes, eating his food, and using his computer. Instead of having to disprove this (which could involve multiple interviews with other witnesses or suspects), the interviewer should exhaust alternative explanations prior to disclosing the evidence: "Tell me who you live with." "Explain who may have access to your apartment." "Describe whom you may share household items with, such as food, clothes, computer, etc." If the interviewer now reveals the email evidence, the subject can only deny the evidence or provide another explanation for it ("we were friends but I broke it off; you can ask Frank about this"). Revealing the evidence later in the interview also is likely to make the subject unsure of what evidence or information the interviewer has and what will be revealed next. An innocent subject will try to provide additional information that he or she may have thought too trivial in their initial statement; a guilty subject will make statements that contradict his or her initial narrative (within-statement inconsistencies) or will search for other ways to prove their innocence that might then be independently verified (or not). It should be noted that SUE was originally developed as a strategy to reveal the innocent as well as the guilty (Granhag, 2010).

3.3 | Good questions

Once a narrative has been elicited, using either a cognitive interview or SUE, items for further follow-up will become evident. Good questions, however, are those that prompt further narratives, consistent with the same principle: the

subject is the best witness to the event. Good questions are TED questions; if further follow-up is needed, the interviewer should subtly use the same key words that the subject uses (Taylor, 2014) and reflect back the nature of his talking: If he is talking about himself and his own needs and concerns, the interviewer should focus on those; if he is looking for reassurances or assessing whether he can trust the interviewer, the interviewer should address those issues; if he is speaking matter-of-factly about the issue at hand, the interviewer should reflect the same problem-solving mode (Taylor, 2002, 2014; Wells, 2014a). Questions should not be casual; each should address a particular objective, even if that is not stated explicitly. In addition, a particular objective (e.g., “explain the blood on your shoes”) might be the endpoint of increasingly narrow questions; the start point might be, “Describe who lives in your house and how you share household items, clothing, computers, etc.” This is called the funnel method of questioning, illustrated in Figure 3 (Matsumoto, Hwang, & Sandoval, 2015): Initial questions are broad, and more specific questions and probes directed at the objective are asked later.

If the interviewer wants to hide his objective once it is reached, he might then ask increasingly broad questions (making the funnel an hourglass). Finally, it should be noted that not all memories are verbal; spatial memories might be more easily accessed by asking the subject to draw a sketch; muscle memories might be more easily accessed by mimicking gestures or gait or finding an object of equal weight or height. It is generally good not to jump around from one topic to another; if follow-up questions are needed, these should be asked on one topic at a time (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992).

3.4 | Ending the interview

It may be useful for the interviewer to summarise what was said, which will both prompt further memories and give the subject another opportunity to correct any misinformation.

Before the subject leaves, he should be given a means of contacting the interviewer. This assumes, of course, that the rapport-based relationship between the interviewer and the subject has been maintained throughout the interview. To quote an experienced interviewer, “I always try to end the session with the expectation that the subject will want to talk to me again.”

3.5 | Baselineing

It is reasonable to recognise that individuals differ in terms of how they talk, the gestures they use, and how comfortable they are talking with people they know or do not know. Advice given to police interviewers has been to get around this between-person variance by comparing people when talking about comfortable topics with when talking about concerning topics (“baselineing”; e.g., Inbau et al., 2013). For example, an interrogation might begin with small-talk about issues that the subject is likely to be comfortable with so that the interview can ascertain his “natural” style.

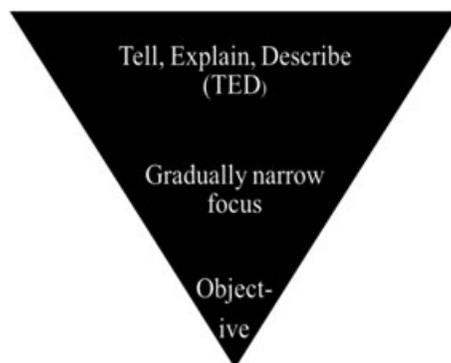


FIGURE 3 The funnel approach to questioning. From Matsumoto et al. (2015)

However, this notion is flawed because behaviour is not the reflection of internal processes (personality, needs, and emotions) as much as by the situation in which the person finds himself (Ross, 1977). That situation is not just the physical context, but the social context as well (who else is present; the social rules and roles of each person; expectations about what is normal behaviour, and so on). Although discussing football is, in fact, not likely to be concerning to the subject, discussing a crime or whatever event brought him to the attention of the interrogator is likely to be very concerning, and switching from one topic to the other changes the social context—which will itself change behaviour, independently of what the subject knows or does not know about the topic or event in question (Hartwig & Bond, 2014; Moston & Engelberg, 1993).

A better tactic is to compare verbal behaviours before and after deploying science-based tactics to elicit more information and/or cues to deception (Vrij, 2016). For example, the plausibility and number of details offered when the subject answers a question that is likely to have been anticipated might be compared with those same factors when he answers a question that is likely to have been unanticipated (Leins, Fisher, Vrij, Leal, & Mann, 2011; Vrij & Ganis, 2014; Warmelink, Vrij, Mann, Jundi, & Granhag, 2012). Thus, “baselining” might be accomplished by first asking anticipated questions, then unanticipated questions (Vrij, 2016). The same comparison could be made for when a subject is telling a story forward with when he is asked to tell it in reverse (a tactic that itself increases cognitive load)—in addition, if this story is true, telling it in reverse order is likely to lead the subject to remembering more details (Vrij et al., 2012). Another strategy is to compare the number of verifiable details a subject provides when answering questions about different aspects of the core event(s): research has shown that people provide fewer details that can be independently checked when they are attempting to deceive (Nahari et al., 2012).

3.6 | But what about rapport?

Although definitions of rapport vary widely (e.g., Army Field Manual 2-22.3, 2006; Grahe & Bernieri, 1999; Kleinman, 2006; Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990), it is commonly (and internationally) acknowledged to be fundamental to successful interviews (e.g., Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Goodman-Delahunty, Martschuk, & Dhami, 2014; Gudjonsson, 2003; Redlich, Kelly, & Miller, 2014; St-Yves & Meissner, 2014). Rapport is assumed to include elements of mutual attention (indicated by good listening), coordination (the degree to which the conversation is “in-sync,” which might be reflected in verbal or nonverbal mimicry and matching motivational frames), and positivity (a generally pleasant demeanour; Abbe & Brandon, 2012, 2013). Analyses of video recorded police interviews in the United States and the UK have found rapport to be essential to a successful interview if rapport was not something developed only at the outset of the interview but maintained throughout (Alison et al., 2013; Kelly, Miller, & Redlich, 2015).

In addition to mutual respect, many of the active listening behaviours described above support a mutually advantageous, rapport relationship between the subject and the interviewer: acknowledging the autonomy of the subject to tell his story; showing a real interest in that story as it is revealed and genuine empathy for the subject; avoiding judgmental leaks; assuming a pleasant demeanour; and drawing out the beliefs and feelings of the subject. Just as the full story must be elicited, rapport must be maintained throughout the interview by the use of active listening skills (providing the subject a sense of freedom or autonomy, accepting what the subject says without judgment, and adapting to how the subject tells the story, rather than delivering a series of questions and probes).

4 | CONCLUSION

Although the various components of the model shown in Figure 2 have been demonstrated to be reliable and valid for the purposes for which they were designed, an interview is not a strict sequence of the application of isolated tactics but, rather, a dynamic and strategic exchange. What is unique and only begun to be rigorously tested is the interview model that is described in Figure 2. As noted, initial research has shown that training on the methods described in this

model results in greater cooperation, less resistance, and the elicitation of more information in subsequent real-life interviews (e.g., Meissner & Russano, 2015). More field validation is underway.

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