

# Evaluating interview strategies

Psychology



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running head: Evaluating Interview Strategies Evaluating Interview Strategies Submitted [Pick the Forensic interviews are performed for variety of purposes. There are various types of techniques available that can be used for investigations such as cognitive interviews, hypnosis and polygraphs however selection of these methods is dependent on their appropriateness and effectiveness in the given circumstances. While selecting appropriate interview strategy, it is important to know the strengths and weaknesses of cognitive interviews, hypnosis and polygraph. Based on these characteristics, their impacts on legal investigations can be determined. The cognitive interviewing is an investigation method through which authorities attempt to deduce necessary information from the witnesses and victims through interviewing. The CI investigations are designed to reduce the noise in the information provided by those being investigated and receiving data that has been tempered due to poor memory. Since CI examines organization as well as the context of the memory therefore it can be said that CI is beneficial in examining the accuracy of the information provided by the witnesses and victims. Although extensive nature of investigation in CI helps in retrieving information from different dimensions, this method has several limitations as well. CI is more time-consuming as compared to other methods of forensic investigation (Maras & Bowler, 2010). Secondly, high level of interviewer's information is required. Thirdly, witnesses with poor or compromised memory and cognitive function are unable to provide necessary information when investigated through CI. Unlike CI technique, polygraph testing is dependent on the accuracy of the equipments used instead of the competence and proficiency of the interviewer. The Polygraph testing technique involves examination of

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physiological factors such pupil dilation, increased heart rate, blood pressure and respiration. The technique is used on the basis of an assumption that lying or manipulating the truth is detectable due to these physiological changes. Although these changes may be beneficial in giving rise to doubts about the accuracy of information provided by the witness however this technique may not be able to provide conclusive evidences (Gordon & Fleisher, 2011). Certain limitations of this technique may include investigations by untrained professionals who focus more on getting a confession instead of finding a truth. Secondly, many law enforcement authorities do not recognize polygraph as the stand alone evidence. Presence of poorly trained professionals also allows the accused to give fake statements that may not be detected under mechanical examination. Therefore, a detailed psychological examination will be required. Unlike polygraph, hypnosis helps in gaining more detailed information with comparatively lower susceptibility of the subject to lie or misstate. Although hypnosis provides more control to hypnotists over the subject that may lead to the retrieval of detailed information, there are several weaknesses attached to this phenomenon that question its applicability as a forensic investigation tool. According to Wagstaff (2008), it is possible for a person to lie under hypnosis or fake it as well. Although there are indicators that may demonstrate faking of hypnosis however competency and skills of hypnotists play a vital role here. In addition to that, it is also important to ensure that hypnotist remains unbiased in their approach as wrong direction of investigation could lead to faulty recall of events (Gordon & Fleisher, 2011). Furthermore, a pre-established notion that hypnosis can provide accurate information due to increased memory shifts the emphasis of investigation

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from main facts to peripheral unconfirmed details. It is important to note that out of these three forensic investigation tools, cognitive interviewing helps in having a rather detailed account of a particular event. Due to its deliberate four-step nature and comparatively lower dependency on the interviewer, cognitive interviews provide an objective account of the event. However, cognitive interviews may not provide detailed and accurate accounts when used on very young children. Furthermore, long retention intervals may also affect the quality of evidences received. Therefore, cognitive interviews will be least effective with increasing intervals and also where subject has some cognitive disorders such as autism (Maras & Bowler, 2010). On the other hand, polygraphs are most effective when performing comparative analysis of individuals' contradicting statements regarding the same event. Also, a victim or an eye witness tends to give multiple statements, polygraphs helps in finding out the most relevant facts. On the other hand, polygraphs tend to be least effective where subjects are inherently nervous or have a very strong cognition (Gordon & Fleisher, 2011). Furthermore, situational factors tend to have a greater impact on the subjects being tested. As compared to polygraph, hypnosis tends to provide more accurate details of the events encountered by the victims. Situations where victims or survivors tend to forget or eliminate important pieces of information due to trauma associated with the event, hypnosis helps in retrieving such details in a controlled environment which further helps in reducing the impact of trauma (Wagstaff, 2008). Considering the effectiveness of these three investigative strategies, it can be said that cognitive interviews help in retrieving information mainly from eye witnesses and victims instead of suspects whereas suspects can respond better to polygraph and hypnosis provided that experienced and

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highly trained professionals undertake the process. Hypnosis also helps in retrieving information from witnesses and victims as far as retrieval of peripheral details is concerned. A comparative analysis of these three strategies also leads to an understanding that polygraphs appear to be more accusatory than cognitive interviews and hypnosis as it is more focused on lie detection than truth verification whereas the other two are more intended to find out important details that might have been missed in traditional investigations. References Gordon, N. J., & Fleisher, W. L. (2011). *Effective interviewing and interrogation techniques*. London, England: Elsevier Ltd. Maras, K. L., & Bowler, D. M. (2010). The Cognitive Interview for Eyewitnesses with Autism Spectrum Disorder, *Journal of Autism Development Disorder*, 40, pp. 1350-60. Wagstaff, G. F. (2008). Hypnosis and the Law: Examining the stereotypes, *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 35(10), pp. 1277-94.