

Deception Traits in Psychological Interviewing- Addressing Cognitive Load

Addendum to **INTERVIEW & INTERROGATION STRATEGIES ADDRESSING SEXUAL PREDATORS**

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Difficult to discern differences between liars and truth tellers via body language and facial expressions.

Liars compared to truth tellers:

1. Experience stronger emotions (especially fear of being detected)
2. Experience higher levels of cognitive load
3. Inclined to use more and different strategies to convince others.

Lying is more taxing than telling the truth

Ask questions that are harder for liars to answer.

The accuracy rates for observing or listening is approximately 54% (Bond & DePaulo, 2006; Vrij, 2008a). No difference between public and professionals.

Main reason:

1. Examining the wrong cues (e.g., gaze aversion, looking away, grooming gestures [fidgeting]). These are not reliable (DePaulo et al., 2003; Sporer & Schwandt, 2007).

Only a decrease in illustrators (gestures that accompany speech) have been found to be associated with deception (DePaulo et al., 2003).

Most cues are faint and unreliable (DePaulo et al., 2003). Visual cues taken alone appears to impair lie detection (Bond & DePaulo, 2006). Having visual cues only results in less accurate truth detection than taking verbal into consideration (Bond & DePaulo, 2006).

Verbal cues appear more important (DePaulo et al., 2003).

Both liars and truth tellers attempt to suppress nonverbal cues, to suppress nervous behaviors (Vrij, et al., 2010b); Hartwig et al, 2010).

Truth tellers attempt to “tell it all” and try to be detailed.

Liars tend to be somewhat vague to avoid contradicting facts possible known to the interviewer.

Truth tellers and liars try to make a convincing impression and tend to show the same behaviors but their speech content differs (Vrij et al., 2010b; Hartwig et al., 2010).

Questions can be asked that raise more cognitive load in liars than in truth tellers resulting in more blatant cues to deceit (Vrij, Mann, & Leal, 2013).

Imposing Cognitive Load Approach

Lying can be more cognitively demanding than truth telling (Vrij et al., 2008).

Liars:

1. "...Need to invent a story and must monitor their fabrication so that it is plausible and adheres to everything the observer(s) know or might find out". They must remember what was said to maintain consistency (Vrij et al., 2008a).
2. Less likely to take their credibility for granted- monitor and control their demeanor to appear honest- which is cognitively demanding (Kassin et al., 2010).
3. They may monitor the investigator's reactions carefully in order to determine whether their lie is working (Buller, & Burgoon, 1996).
4. Liars may be preoccupied with the task of reminding themselves to role-play (DePaulo et al., 2003) which requires extra cognitive effort.
5. Liars have to suppress the truth while fabricating which is also cognitively demanding (Spence et al., 2001).
6. Activation of the truth may be automatic, but activation of the lie is more intentional and deliberate, requiring more cognitive effort (Walczyk et al., 2003).

By increasing cognitive demands, such as by making additional requests, liars may not be able to cope with these requests (Vrij et al., 2011b; Vrij et al., 2010a).

Strategies for Increasing Cognitive Load

Ask interviewees to tell their stories in reverse order. This increases cognitive load because:

1. It runs counter to the natural forward-order coding of sequentially occurring events, and
2. It disrupts reconstructing events from a schema (Gilbert & Fisher, 2006).

Another way is to instruct interviewees to maintain eye contact with the interviewer. When they have to concentrate on their story, (e.g., asking them to recall what happened), they are inclined to look away from their conversation partner (typically to a motionless point) because to maintain eye contact is distracting (Doherty-Sneddon & Phelps, 2005).

The above two techniques resulted in approximately 60% of the lies being correctly classified (Vrij et al., 2010b).

Unanticipated Questions

Liars prepare themselves when anticipating an interview (Hartwig et al., 2007). Planned lies typically contain fewer cues than spontaneous lies (DePaulo et al., 2003). Liars typically refuse to answer spontaneous questions or respond with "I don't know" or "I can't remember" which raises suspicion. This technique resulted in 80% correct identification of liars or truth tellers (Vrij et al., 2009).

Liars have to fabricate an answer on the spot, which may be more unstable than a truth teller's actual memory. Liars contradict themselves more than truth tellers. Liars' imagined events are not experienced perceptually but rather conceptually, without the benefits of sights and sounds. Truth tellers find it easier than liars to recall the event more flexibly (Leins et al., 2011; Johnson & Raye, 1981; Johnson et al., 1988).

The Devil's Advocate Technique is designed to detect deception in expressing opinions (Vrij, Mann, & Leal, 2013). Ask interviewees to argue against their personal view. (e.g., "what are your opinions for supporting the war in Afghanistan?"). then have them argue the opposite. People think more deeply about opinions that support rather than oppose their beliefs (Ajzen, 2001). This technique was nearly 80% effective for correctly identifying truth tellers and liars.

The Strategic Use of Evidence

Guilty suspects have unique information about the crime. Guilty suspects are likely to use avoidance strategies (e.g., in a free recall avoid mentioning where they were at a certain time) or denial strategies (deny having been at a certain place at a certain time when directly asked). Truth tellers are forthcoming. (Hartwig et al., 2007; Granhag & Hartwig, 2008).

Ask open ended questions followed by specific questions. ("what did you do last Sunday afternoon?" followed by "did you or anyone else drive your car last Sunday afternoon?"). truth tellers would likely have already mentioned what they were doing and that someone drove their car or when prompted to do so. Liars are less likely to spontaneously mention who was driving their car even after being prompted. (Vrij, Mann, & Leal, 2013)

Liars are more prepared to address their past activities than addressing their intentions.

Differences between truth tellers and liars when addressing nervousness- when truth tellers are not aware that they are being observed, they experience less nervousness whereas liars will experience more nervousness about being caught. Liars and wrong doers do not want to stand out and may avoid displaying cues that appear suspicious. Interviewing on the street versus an interview room.

Truth tellers prefer a "tell it like it is" approach (Bull, 2010; Fisher, 2010) to provide a full description of what happened whereas liars prefer a "keep it simple" approach offering few details (Hartwig et al., 2007).

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