

# **‘The Effectiveness of Investigative Interviewing: An Evidence-based Assessment.’**

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## 2. A comment from Canada.

Initially, the term 'Investigative Interviewing' was in the early 1990s closely associated with what is called the 'PEACE Method' that was, at that time, developed in England/Wales (Bull & Cherryman, 1995; Milne & Bull, 1999; Williamson, 1993).

In a 2021 publication, its Canadian authors stated that

***"PEACE-based interviewing has now become the gold standard in many law enforcement organizations around the world, and the efficacy of the model's approach has been well established".***

Akca, D., Di Danieli, C., Shane, M., & Eastwood, J. (2021). A Test of a Short PEACE Interview Training Course: Training Efficacy and Individual Differences. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 1-12.

### **3. A 'new' way – the United Nations 'Special Rapporteur'.**

**In light of psychological research, a growing number of countries/organisations have decided to adopt the 'PEACE' model/approach of 'investigative interviewing' of suspects that does not rely on a coercive or oppressive approach (e.g., see Bull, 2019, 2014; Bull & Rachlew, 2019).**

**Indeed, in 2016 the United Nations' 'Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatments' (Law Professor Juan Mendez – who will be giving his presentation in a while) submitted his report that was then transmitted by the UN Secretary-General to the UN General Assembly. In this report, its summary stated that -**

#### **4. The United Nations ‘Special Rapporteur’ (cont’d.).**

**In this report, its summary stated that**

**“The Special Rapporteur...advocates the development of a universal protocol identifying a set of standards for non-coercive interviewing methods and procedural safeguards that ought, as a matter of law and policy, to be applied at a minimum to all interviews by law enforcement officials, military and intelligence personnel and other bodies with investigative mandates.”**

## **5 (of 24). The UN ‘Special Rapporteur’ (cont’d.).**

**When mentioning this “universal protocol” in 2016, Professor Mendez noted that “Encouragingly, some States have moved away from accusatorial, manipulative and confession-driven interviewing models with a view to increasing accurate and reliable information and minimizing the risks of unreliable information and miscarriages of justice”**

**and that “The essence of an alternative information-gathering model was first captured by the PEACE model of interviewing adopted in 1992 in England and Wales...investigative interviewing can provide positive guidance for the protocol...”.**

## **6. The evolution of Investigative Interviewing/the PEACE Method.**

**Several pioneering, 'official' studies, conducted very soon after the 1986 legal requirement in England and Wales that interviews with suspects be fully recorded, found the interviewing to be very un-skilled [see our Milne and Bull (1999) book for a comprehensive review], probably due to the absence of appropriate training.**

**These studies actually *brought about a major* change.**

## **7. Development of the 'PEACE' method.**

**This change in England involved the Government and the 'Association of Chiefs of Police' jointly to ask a number of highly experienced police investigators to form a working party (in 1990) to develop up to date training on interviewing/interrogating.**

**In light of their extensive deliberations, they recommended what they called the 'PEACE' model/approach (this being extensively informed by work in psychology).**

## **8. Psychology's contribution.**

**At the same time, a senior London detective (Tom Williamson) convened (in 1990) a different small working party of detectives and psychologists (including Eric Shepherd, Stephen Moston, and myself) that produced in 1991 an (unpublished) overview of aspects of psychology that might be useful to improving such interviewing/interrogating.**

**This overview was made available to the national team of detectives developing the new training and its philosophy. Once that team of detectives had drafted their substantial guidance documents, they sent copies of these to me, asking if they had "...got the psychology correct?" They indeed had. Thus, much of what they had written (in everyday language) was extensively informed by psychology.**



## 9. What is *'PEACE'*?

<b>P</b>	<b>Planning and Preparation</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Engage and Explain</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Account</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Closure</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>

(For more, see the 2013 document of the 'National Investigative Interviewing Strategic Steering Group entitled 'Advice on the structure of visually recorded witness interviews' that is available online at

<http://library.college.police.uk/docs/APPREF/ACPO-Witness-Interview-Structure-2013.pdf> )

## **10 (of 24). Is the 'PEACE' model/approach effective?**

**In our pioneering study of 142 interviews with people who may have been involved in committing crime, we innovatively examined whether interviewing in a way that is compatible with the 'PEACE' approach bore any relationship to the actual outcomes of these interviews (Walsh & Bull, 2010).**

**Overall, we found that better 'PEACE' interviewing was associated with securing a greater number of comprehensive accounts, such as admissions/confessions (as well as exculpatory ones indicating innocence).**

## 11. Is the 'PEACE' model/approach effective? (cont'd.)

We also examined rapport in these interviews, this being a major aspect of the 'PEACE' model (Walsh & Bull, 2012a).

The interviews which were rated as at or above 'PEACE' standard of performance in rapport maintenance *skills* were three times as likely to have achieved a comprehensive account from the interviewees than those which were assessed as below acceptable standards.

Interviews rated as at or above 'PEACE' standard in *both rapport building and rapport maintenance skills* were over five times more likely to have obtained satisfactory outcomes.

[Later in this meeting, Dr Frances Surmon-Bohr will be giving her presentation on the topic of rapport – so, even though this is a key aspect of why 'investigative interviewing' is effective (in my title), I will leave the topic of rapport to her.]

## **12. Overcoming denials/non cooperation**

**We also examined how the interviewers attempted to overcome suspects' initial denials of knowing about wrongdoing (Walsh & Bull, 2012b).**

**We assessed the interviews with suspects not only for interviewer tactics and skills/other attributes but also for interviewee movement/'shift' to providing relevant information.**

**It was found that 'shifting' from (i) denying to (ii) providing relevant, incriminating information indicating guilt/admissions/confessions more often occurred when certain tactics and skills/other attributes were present (many of which are recommended by the 'PEACE' method). [For more on this, see our publication.]**

### **13. Is the 'PEACE' model/approach effective? (cont'd.).**

**Another of our studies (Leahy-Harland & Bull, 2017) focused on real-life taped interviews with serious crime suspects (i.e., suspected murderers/rapists) conducted by very experienced interviewers 'highly trained' in investigative interviewing/the 'PEACE method (referred to as 'tier 3' trained – Ray to explain).**

**It examined (i) the strategies used and types of questions asked by police and (ii) suspects' responses to these.**

**It involved analyses of audiotape-recorded interviews with 56 suspects, some of which lasted many hours.**

## **14. Is the 'PEACE' model/approach effective? (cont'd.)**

**We found a number of significant associations between interviewer skills and suspect responses.**

**Interviewers' use of rapport/empathy and open-type questions was associated with an increased likelihood of suspects admitting the offence,**

**whereas 'negative questions' were associated with a decreased likelihood.**

## **15 (of 24). Suspects' views.**

**In a 'ground-breaking' study of actual suspects' comments on their police interviews, Holmberg and Christianson (2002) analysed the questionnaire responses of men convicted in Sweden of murder or serious sexual offences.**

**Within the questionnaire 22 items focussed on how the interviewers had behaved when interviewing these men (i.e. in the role of suspects) and a further 16 items on the men's reactions.**

**Another question asked about the extent to which the prisoners had admitted to (or denied) the crime during the police investigation (around half had admitted).**

## **16. Suspects' views (cont'd.)**

**Analysis of what the prisoners indicated regarding how interviewers had interviewed them revealed that some of the interviewers were reported to have behaved largely in a 'dominating' way and others in a 'humane' way** (at that time, there was no nationally agreed training in Sweden, but there is now).

**Analysis of the interviewees' reports of their own reactions revealed that (i) some of them had been obliging, friendly, and felt respected, whereas (ii) others had been frightened, stressed, and felt insulted.**

**More of those in the 'humane' group indicated that they had confessed.**



## **17. The actual relationship in other countries.**

**The actual relationship between interviewer characteristics and interview outcome/information gain was studied in Japan.**

**Police officers (n=274) who interviewed adult suspects (who denied having committed a crime when arrested but later confessed during or after being interviewed) filled in a questionnaire which included their own level of 'empathic understanding'.**

**For most types of crime studied (i.e., murder, rape, robbery) a significant positive association was found between officers' (self-reported) 'level of empathic understanding' and their obtaining of 'full confessions'.**

## **18. Empathy.**

**Later in this meeting, Dr Bianca Baker-Eck will give her presentation on the topic of 'cognitive empathy'. Even though this is a key aspect of why 'investigative interviewing' is effective (in my title), I will leave this topic to her. Other than here to briefly say that Bianca gained access to two samples of real-life recorded interviews with suspects in serious sex crime investigations in England.**

**In both of our studies we found that the amount of 'Investigation relevant information' provided by the suspects was significantly related to the amount of (cognitive) empathy being demonstrated by the interviewers.**

## **19 (of 24). In North America.**

**In Canada, Snook, Brooks, and Bull's (2015) survey of prison inmates found that (i) evidence-using and (ii) humanitarian interviewing techniques were associated with confessions and with suspects' self-reported cooperation during interview.**

**In the USA, Kelly, Miller, and Redlich (2016) gained access to police interviews with robbery suspects and found that 'rapport and relationship building' was associated with increased suspect cooperation and that 'confrontation/competition' was associated with resistance. *(Professor Redlich may mention this study within her presentation.)***

20. Kelly & Meissner (2015). Interrogation and investigative interviewing in the United States: Research and practice. In D. Walsh et al. (Eds.), *Contemporary developments and practices in investigative interviewing and interrogation: Volume II (suspects)*. Routledge.

**“A growing number of empirical studies have begun to assess the diagnostic utility of information-gathering approaches to interrogation, such as the PEACE model used in the UK and other countries.**

**Both experimental research and field studies...have demonstrated that information-gathering methods of interrogation...which involve the development of rapport, good elicitation strategies, positive confrontation, and strategic evidence presentation methods...produce more diagnostic outcomes by...increasing the likelihood of eliciting true confessions while reducing the likelihood of eliciting false confessions.”**

**21. Russano, Kelly, & Meissner (2019). "Training and field evaluation research on suspect interviewing." In *The Routledge International Handbook of Legal and Investigative Psychology*.**

**“Researchers have examined the associations between investigators’ and suspects’ reports of interrogation methods used and self-reported interrogation outcomes. Generally speaking, and across diverse samples, self-reports suggest that a rapport-based, relationship-focused approach is associated with greater cooperation and self-incriminating disclosures, while coercive and confrontational approaches are associated with resistance.”**

**“For example, Goodman-Delahunty, Martschuk, and Dhimi (2014) found that the use of...a greater number of rapport and relationship-building techniques and certain social strategies (e.g., reciprocity) were reported to be associated with a higher likelihood of incriminating disclosures” from terrorism suspects.**

**22 (of 24). Bettens, T., Cleary, H., & Bull, R. (In press). Humane interrogation strategies are associated with confessions, cooperation, and disclosure: Evidence from a field study of incarcerated individuals in the United States. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*.**

**In a sample of 249 individuals incarcerated in two jails in the USA, ‘exploratory factor analysis’ revealed a four-factor structure of interrogation techniques experienced by respondents, which we labelled as *humanity*, *rappport/relationship-building*, *confrontation*, and *dominance/control*. These factors and the respective items loading onto them are consistent with prior interviewee-focused research.**

**Respondents who reported experiencing humane strategies were more likely to confess, cooperate completely, and disclose incriminating information.**

**Dominance/control-oriented strategies predicted partial confession (but not cooperation or disclosure), and confrontational techniques did not predict outcomes – neither did rapport techniques; however, two of the three rapport/relationship-building items were reported as the least used techniques, thus constraining the rapport findings.**

**23. Bettens, T., Cleary, H., & Bull, R. (In press). Humane interrogation strategies are associated with confessions, cooperation, and disclosure: Evidence from a field study of incarcerated individuals in the United States. *Criminal Justice and Behavior* (cont'd.).**

**Respondents in the present sample were most likely to agree that the USA police used *confrontation* and *dominance/control* strategies. These factors included items related to presumptions of guilt and direct accusations (*confrontation*), and hostility, aggression, and authority (*dominance/control*). Given that police in the United States have most often been trained in and use accusatorial methods, it is not particularly surprising that this sample of individuals incarcerated in the United States reported being questioned with these techniques.**

**Indeed, over three-fourths of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the interrogating officer already seemed to believe they were guilty before they started talking.**

**Respondents tended to disagree that these police used *humane* and *rappport/relationship-building* strategies, both of which are key components of information-gathering methods (Mendez, 2021; Milne & Bull, 1999).**

**24 (of 24). Bettens, T., Cleary, H., & Bull, R. (In press). Humane interrogation strategies are associated with confessions, cooperation, and disclosure: Evidence from a field study of incarcerated individuals in the United States. *Criminal Justice and Behavior* (cont'd.).**

**The humanity technique emerged as the approach most predictive of interrogation outcomes. Specifically, the use of humane interrogation strategies significantly predicted respondents' likelihood to partially or fully confess (versus denial). Such findings are consistent with prior studies. These findings are particularly meaningful—police who doubt the utility of humanity approaches may be encouraged to learn that persons suspected of a crime reported providing confessions in interrogations where humane techniques were employed.**

**We also found that respondents' confession intent predicted full confession, cooperation, and disclosure. To the extent that respondents' retrospective assessments are accurate, this finding echoes prior work undermining the assumption that all persons suspected of a crime enter police interrogations intent on denial, silence or proclamations of innocence. Aggressive questioning techniques in these instances may be unnecessary at best and counterproductive at worst (Cleary & Bull, 2021; Wachi et al., 2016b).**