

Research on Improving the Interviewing of Suspects¹

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This publication overviews some of the author's involvement regarding international developments in recent decades related to the improving of interviews with suspects. Its aim is to demonstrate how research has been informing policies and practices around the world. In light of psychological research, a growing number of countries/organisations have decided to adopt a model/approach of "investigative interviewing" of suspects that does not rely on coercive or oppressive methods. This article will overview 1. the evolution of the 'PEACE method'; 2. some of the research on the effectiveness of aspects of the 'PEACE' method; and 3. the 2021 publication of the 'Principles of Effective Interviewing' (drafted at the request of the United Nations). In 2016, the United Nations "Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatments" (law professor Juan Méndez) submitted his report to the United Nations, which 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". The current publication here demonstrates that police and other investigative agencies can be willing to update/improve their interviewing of suspects by taking note of the findings of relevant research.

Keywords: investigative interviewing, interrogation, suspects, the "PEACE method", LILERS

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Introduction

In 2016, the United Nations' "Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatments" (law professor Juan Méndez) submitted his report to the United Nations, which stated: "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." When mentioning this "universal protocol" in 2016, the UN Special Rapporteur noted: "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." The "universal protocol" took three years to produce and was published in 2021.

The 'old' way/method

Some decades ago in England, at 8:58 P.M. a bomb exploded. Six pounds of high explosive, placed under a seat and detonated by a crude pocket-watch timing mechanism, blasted a bar apart. The front of the building was blown out, the floor collapsed, and the debris rained down on the customers inside, killing five and injuring more than fifty. Limbs had been ripped off, faces disfigured, flesh set on fire.

According to official police written notes, one of the suspects was taken to the police station and left undisturbed in a cell that evening. At that point, the police records claim, the police officers merely asked him a couple of questions and he began to confess. The suspect was subsequently convicted of multiple murder.

However, several years later this man was released from prison following investigations into the way the police treated him. Fifteen years later the suspect provided his recollection of events. "I was petrified" he said. "I had firearms pointed at me. I was told I would be left by the side of the road – shot dead. They put me in a cell where I was spread-eagled, abused, my head was banged against a wall. That night I was interrogated". "At one stage they took away my clothes. I was naked but for a pair of handcuffs. I was shown pictures of bodies in the mortuary. I was brutalized and threatened. I was dragged around the police station by my hair. One of the people beat me down a flight of stairs. I had not a lucid thought in my head."³

Threatened that his girlfriend would be arrested for the bombing, he broke and began to name names – any names. "All right, I will tell you all I know" the police account begins. His "confession" still haunts him he has said.

³ BULL-RACHLEW 2020.

Reasons for coercion

While this case may well have been unusual within the United Kingdom, it influenced people's expectations of what can happen in investigative interviews/interrogations of suspects. One of the major assumptions underlying reasons for the use of coercive interrogation techniques is the pervasive, common-sense belief that "suspects almost never confess spontaneously but virtually always in response to police pressure"⁴ and that "confessions, especially to serious crimes, are rarely made spontaneously. Rather they are actively elicited [...] typically after sustained psychological pressure".⁵

In England, in the 1980s, two studies found that a notable proportion of the general public believed that police officers used physical force and threats when questioning people.⁶ How frequently such things happened is difficult to determine, especially since it was not until 1986 that new legislation in England and Wales required that all interviews (with suspects) be audiotaped.

Nowadays the use of physical force and threats is probably less frequent in some countries (but not in others) due to factors such as the rights for people to have a lawyer present when they are interviewed and to changes in investigator training and management. Nevertheless, a few high-profile media cases can have a strong impact on public opinion. In 1994, a senior police officer in London stated: "Unethical behaviour by interrogators has undermined public confidence and left the police service with a serious skills deficit in its ability to obtain evidence through questioning."⁷ Williamson also stated that "it does not take much skill to beat a confession out of a suspect detained in police custody" nor "much skill to fabricate a confession and allege that it was made during police questioning".⁸ However, he noted that "the police in this country would correctly deny that such things happen, but unfortunately, a considerable proportion of the general public thinks that it happens regularly".⁹

Mandatory recording of interviews

In the mid-1980s, in light of media and public concern about police interviewing and various decisions by the (national) Court of Appeal for England and Wales to quash previous convictions based on confessions that were "unreliable"/not voluntary (e.g. because of police behaviour – see above), the Government in England and Wales brought in the "Police and Criminal Evidence Act" (often referred to as "PACE"), which mandated 1. safeguards for suspects (such as the right to a lawyer, sleep, food and drink); and 2. that from 1986 all interviews with suspects be recorded (e.g. on audiotape). This was probably the first country to mandate this.

⁴ LEO 2009: 162.

⁵ LEO 2009: 119.

⁶ JONES et al. 1986; SMITH 1983.

⁷ WILLIAMSON 1994: 107.

⁸ WILLIAMSON 1994: 107.

⁹ WILLIAMSON 1994: 107.

In 1992, the Home Office (part of the government in England and Wales) published the pioneering research by Baldwin that it had commissioned in the late 1980s. Prior to this, very little research had been published on what actually goes on in police interviews with suspects. Baldwin (1993) noted that people believe that interviews with suspects are largely difficult, complex encounters with awkward, aggressive people. However, of the several hundred recorded interviews he analysed, “most were short and surprisingly amiable discussions in which it often seemed that officers were rather tentative in putting allegations to a suspect. [...] Indeed, in almost two-thirds of all cases [...] no serious challenge was made by the interviewers to what the suspect was saying”.¹⁰ “Even when the suspect denied the allegation, no challenge was made by the interviewers in almost 40 per cent of cases.”¹¹ In fact, “over a third of all suspects admitted culpability from the outset”,¹² perhaps because of the typical police (untrained) strategy at that time of revealing to suspects near to the beginning of the interview all the evidence/information the police had (in the hope that an admission/confession would then be forthcoming).

In only 20 of the interviews that Baldwin examined did suspects “change their story in the course of an interview. In only nine of these cases was the change of heart attributable to the persuasive skills of the interviewer, and even here only three involved offences of any seriousness. [...] The great majority of suspects stick to their starting position – whether admission, denial, or somewhere in between – regardless of how the interview is conducted.”¹³

Pearse (a senior detective) and Gudjonsson also noted, in their study of interviews conducted in 1991, that people rarely changed from denying to admitting the offence in the interviews. They stated that “suspects enter a police interview having already decided whether to admit or deny the allegations against them” and that interviewer techniques (at that time) “had minimal influence on whether the interviewees decided to provide relevant information”.¹⁴

McConville and Hodgson noted that the most common tactic was telling interviewees that because of evidence against them, they might as well admit to the crime.¹⁵ Moston et al. found that in the majority of several hundred taped interviews, the police interviewers spent little time trying to obtain suspects’ accounts of events. Instead, they accused the suspects of the offences and asked for their response to such accusations. Not surprisingly, they found that when the evidence was strong, confessions were more likely. When the police evidence was not strong, the suspects soon became aware of this, and thus, many did not confess.¹⁶ In Taiwan, in their survey of several hundred detectives/interviewers, Lin and Shih found that a substantial proportion (especially of those who

¹⁰ BALDWIN 1993: 331.

¹¹ BALDWIN 1993: 331.

¹² BALDWIN 1993: 335.

¹³ BALDWIN 1993: 333.

¹⁴ PEARSE–GUDJONSSON 1996: 73.

¹⁵ MCCONVILLE–HODGSON 1993.

¹⁶ MOSTON et al. 1992.

had not received training) indicated that they usually commenced their interrogations/interviews by revealing “evidence of guilt”.¹⁷

However, the early revelation of incriminating information/evidence to suspects may well assist liars (e.g. guilty suspects) to incorporate aspects of it into their accounts. Early revelation also runs the risk, especially in vulnerable people, of innocent suspects then involuntarily or voluntarily including some of this information in their subsequent accounts/confessions.

The studies that I have mentioned so far¹⁸ all concerned interviews conducted before a major change in police interviewer training occurred in England and Wales. Indeed, such studies brought about the change. This change involved several highly experienced police investigators forming a national working party (in 1991) to develop up-to-date training on interviewing/interrogating. At the same time, draft reports of the “early” research studies mentioned above (conducted soon after the recording of interviews with suspects became mandatory in 1986) led the senior London police officer Tom Williamson to convene (also in 1991) 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 the improving of such interviewing. This overview was made available to the national team of detectives that was developing a new approach, that they called “PEACE”. Once that team of detectives had drafted all of their guidance documents, they sent drafts of these (written in everyday language) to me, asking if they had “got the psychology correct?” – They indeed had. They recommended what they called the “PEACE” method/approach. This change began in 1992, and it involved guidance documents and training courses that all police interviewers in England and Wales must attend and that contained much research-based cognitive and social psychology.

What is the ‘PEACE method’?

The PEACE method involves the five phases of 1. planning/preparation; 2. explain/engage; 3. account; 4. closure; and 5. evaluation. The first stage involves understanding the purpose of the interview, knowledge of relevant laws and regulations, defining aims and objectives, information about the interviewee, and analysing and preparing the already available evidence/information. The second phase involves explaining the reasons for the interview, covering the legal requirements, explaining the ‘ground rules’, the interviewer introducing her/himself and establishing rapport with the suspect. The third phase focuses on trying via an invitation for ‘free recall’ to obtain some information from the interviewee (hence the importance of rapport and preparation), not (yet) interrupting his/her account, when their account has finished, first only asking (open) questions relating to that account, only then asking other (appropriate) questions, after that *gradually* introducing information known to the interviewer that the suspect has not yet

¹⁷ TSAN-CHANG – CHIH-HUNG 2013.

¹⁸ For a comprehensive review see MILNE–BULL 1999.

mentioned, and only then pointing out contradictions/inconsistencies. The fourth phase involves correctly summarising what the suspect has said, inviting the suspect to mention any misunderstandings, asking the suspect if he/she has any questions, explaining what may/will happen next, and the interviewer doing her/his best to ensure that the suspect leaves the interview in as positive a frame of mind as possible. The final phase involves evaluation of the information obtained during the interview (including information contrary to what was expected) and assessment of the interviewer's performance during the interview by a) self-evaluation; b) a peer/colleague; and c) a supervisor.

Evaluations of the PEACE method

In the mid-1990s, I was asked by the Home Office to identify any skills gaps in specialist police interviews (e.g. of suspects in serious cases, adolescent suspects, and/or suspects with a "low IQ") conducted by the recently PEACE-trained, experienced investigators.¹⁹ We first asked experienced detectives what they believed the most important skills were, and from their responses, plus the relevant professional and academic literature, we compiled a questionnaire containing 28 skills. Then a much larger sample of police detectives/interviewers were asked to say how necessary each of the skills listed in the questionnaire was. The skills deemed most necessary included (in rank order) 1. listening; 2. preparing; 3. questioning; 4. being knowledgeable about the subject; 5. being flexible; 6. being open-minded; 7. building rapport; and 8. showing compassion/empathy.

We then obtained recordings of specialist interviews with suspects. Each of four experts on investigative interviewing independently rated these for the 28 skills (plus for "overall skill level"). We found that skills which differentiated between interviews judged as 'skilled' and those judged as 'not skilled' were a) communication skills; b) empathy/compassion; c) flexibility; d) keeping the interviewee on relevant topics; e) responding to what the interviewee said; f) open-mindedness; g) use of closed questions; h) interview having structure; i) use of open questions; and j) appropriate use of pauses and silences. Even in the more skilled interviews, some skills were rarely present, such as appropriate use of pauses and silences, avoidance of closed questions, flexibility and empathy/compassion. This indicated that the training in the new PEACE needed to focus especially on the acquisition of these "missing" skills. Even in the less skilled interviews, some skills were often present: not releasing all the information at the beginning, and the absence of 1. inappropriate interruptions; 2. undue pressure; 3. long/complex questions; and 4. overtalking. These are skills that seemed to have been absent in earlier studies (i.e. of interviews prior to the introduction of the PEACE method).

Some years later, in our study of 142 interviews with people who may have been involved in committing crimes, we examined for the first time whether interviewing in a way that is compatible with the PEACE approach bore any relationship to the actual outcomes of these interviews.²⁰ For every interview for each phase (i.e. planning, engage,

¹⁹ BULL-CHERRYMAN 1995.

²⁰ WALSH-BULL 2010.

account, closure) and each PEACE skill within a phase, we classified that skill as being demonstrated either at a) an acceptable or above level (“skilled” or “highly skilled”); or b) at an unacceptable level (“not quite adequate” or “needs training”). Overall, we found that better PEACE interviewing was associated with securing a greater number of comprehensive accounts, such as admissions and confessions (as well as exculpatory ones).

Another of our studies with Leahy-Harland in 2017 focused on real-life taped interviews with serious crime suspects (suspected murderers/rapists). It examined 1. the strategies used and types of questions asked by police; and 2. suspects’ responses to these. It involved analyses of audiotape-recorded interviews with 56 suspects, some of which lasted many hours. We found that interviewers employed a range of skills, with presentation of evidence and challenge being the most frequently used. Closed questions were by far the type of question most frequently used, and open questions, although less frequent, were found to occur more during the opening phases of the interviews. The frequency of very ineffective question types (e.g. negative, repetitive, multiple) was low. We found several significant associations between interviewer skills and suspect responses. Interviewers’ use of 1. rapport/empathy; and 2. open-type questions was associated with an increased likelihood of suspects admitting the offence, whereas negative questions were associated with a decreased likelihood. We also examined which skills were associated with these suspects continuing to respond relevantly and found positive associations for the use of rapport/empathy, presentation of evidence and requesting attention, but negative associations for explicitly asking for an account/tell the truth, emphasising seriousness of the offence and situational futility.²¹

In other countries

In a “ground-breaking” study of actual suspects’ comments on their police interviews, Holmberg (then a senior detective) and Christianson analysed the questionnaire responses of men in Sweden convicted of murder or serious sexual offences. Within the questionnaire, 22 items focused 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). Whether denial or admittance occurred was then related to the reported style of interviewing. A relationship was found between the interviewees’ reactions and denial/admittance, in that those who reported being frightened, stressed, or insulted were less likely to have admitted. These researchers concluded that a dominant interviewing style is associated with suspects denying crime.²² This was a superficial case-oriented approach, characterised by impatience, aggression, and a brusque and obstinate condemning approach, presumably aiming to extort a confession. The actual relationship between interviewer characteristics and interview outcome/information gain was studied in Japan. Police officers who interviewed

²¹ LEAHY-HARLAND – BULL 2017.

²² HOLMBERG–CHRISTIANSON 2002.

adult suspects filled in a questionnaire that included their own level of empathic understanding. The adult suspects were those who denied having committed a crime when arrested but later confessed while or after being interviewed. For most types of crime studied (murder, rape, robbery), a significant positive association was found between officers' (self-reported) level of empathic understanding and their obtaining full confessions.²³

The effect of cognitive empathy

Above was mentioned our finding in the 1990s that a large sample of police interviewers (in England and Wales) put the skill of compassion/empathy in their top ten important skills when interviewing suspects. However, empathy is not easy to define or operationalise.²⁴ Baker-Eck and I gained access to real-life recorded interviews with suspects in serious sex crime investigations. In both of our studies, we found that the amount of (cognitive) empathy demonstrated by the interviewers was significantly associated with the amount of investigation-relevant information provided by the suspects.²⁵

Jail/prison inmates' views

The belief that perpetrators will deny being involved in serious wrongdoing has not benefitted from research on the views of offenders themselves. Research in Australia by Kebbell et al. found that only 20% had planned to deny but that 30% had planned to confess; the other 50% entered the police interview not yet having decided whether to deny or confess.²⁶ In Canada, St-Yves and Deslauriers-Varin found that a minority of offenders said that they entered the police interview/interrogation with their minds set on denial,²⁷ and in another study, this proportion was just over one-half.²⁸ Recently, we found in a large sample of U.S. jail inmates that just prior to their most recent police interrogation/interviews 39% had planned to deny, and 36% had entered the interview not yet having decided whether to deny or confess; thus, 25% had entered the interview having already decided to confess.²⁹ Therefore, interviewers of suspects need to behave in ways that 1. allow those who have already decided to tell the truth/confess to do so (without treating them in ways that alter their initial decisions); 2. assist those initially undecided to decide to tell the truth/confess (without behaving in ways that cause them not to do so); and 3. ethically/within the law encourage those whose initial decision was not to talk nor to tell the truth/confess to decide of their own volition to do so, using a variety of skills.³⁰

²³ WACHI et al. 2014.

²⁴ BAKER-ECK et al. 2021; BULL-BAKER 2020.

²⁵ BAKER-ECK – BULL 2022; BAKER-ECK et al. 2021.

²⁶ KEBBELL et al. 2006.

²⁷ ST-YVES – DESLAURIERS-VARIN 2009.

²⁸ DESLAURIERS-VARIN et al. 2011.

²⁹ CLEARY-BULL 2021.

³⁰ BULL 2014, 2019.

A new way – The United Nations Special Rapporteur

In light of psychological research, a growing number of countries and organisations have decided to adopt a model/approach of investigative interviewing of suspects that does not rely on a coercive or oppressive approach.³¹ Indeed, in 2016 the United Nations (UN) “Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatments” (law professor Juan Méndez) submitted his report, which was then transmitted by the UN Secretary-General to the UN General Assembly. 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.” When mentioning this “universal protocol” in 2016, the UN Special Rapporteur 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”.³²

Following on from the United Nations’ acceptance of Professor Méndez’s proposal that a “universal protocol” be written, a small international multi-disciplinary steering committee was set up in 2017 to draft such a document. I had the honour of being on this steering committee, which spent three years combining into one document information not only a) on interviewing/interrogating; but also b) on laws/safeguards. We were always aware that the finalised document should be shorter than 40 pages, but at one stage during our three years of deliberations its draft length was over 100 pages. The agreed-on finalised (i.e. shortened) version was published in June 2021.³³ Among its principles are that effective interviewing 1. is instructed by science, law and ethics; 2. is a comprehensive process for gathering accurate and reliable information while implementing associated legal safeguards; 3. requires identifying and addressing the needs of interviewees in situations of vulnerability; 4. is a professional undertaking that requires specific training; 5. requires transparent and accountable institutions; and 6. requires the implementation of robust national measures. Such principles are of fundamental importance.

The document “Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering” (2021) has sections both on effective practice and on ineffective practice. “Research conducted by professionals and practitioners from a wide range of disciplines [...] provides significant evidence that the application of coercion can both initially enhance resistance on the part of the interviewee and, if continually applied, lead to the provision of false information or a false confession” (Paragraph 21).³⁴ Histori-

³¹ BULL 2014, 2019; BULL–RACHLEW 2020.

³² MÉNDEZ 2016: 13.

³³ *Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering* 2021: 6.

³⁴ *Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering* 2021: 6.

cal assessments and case studies have shown that the application of coercion can backfire by obstructing the collection of factual information. Moreover, studies in neuroscience have shown that coercive techniques interfere with and may damage the memory-retrieval capacity of the brain.

This document also states: “Research has proven that unreliable information and false confessions arising from abusive practices are a frequent and foreseeable consequence of poor interviewing techniques. They have led to wrongful convictions and faulty intelligence around the world, thus undermining the objectives and effectiveness of law enforcement and intelligence gathering. Scientific evidence demonstrates that the use of coercive interviewing methods is more likely to lessen the interviewee’s propensity to cooperate during an interview and to create resistance on the part of the interviewee, even when they might otherwise have chosen to answer questions. In cases where interviewees facing ill-treatment comply with the demands of their interviewer, the information provided is of dubious reliability, as false or misleading information is frequently provided to placate the interviewer and avoid or stop abuse” (Paragraphs 22 and 23).³⁵

With regard to effective practice, the document states: “Robust research supports the efficacy of an information-gathering approach to interviewing. Rapport-based, non-coercive methods offer an effective suite of techniques that can be applied successfully by trained professionals to gather criminal and intelligence information from interviewees – including criminal suspects, victims, witnesses, and intelligence sources. Establishing and maintaining rapport is an adaptive skill that helps create a working relationship between persons and enables better communication. It is achieved by the interviewer establishing a connection with the interviewee based on trust and respect for human dignity. This requires demonstrating genuine empathy as well as reassuring them that they will receive fair treatment. Rapport-based techniques offer the interviewee autonomy over what they do or do not say and facilitate a positive interaction between the interviewer and interviewee, thereby increasing the likelihood of collecting accurate information. Findings from the large body of research into how human memory encodes, stores and retrieves information have led to interviewing methods that are effective in both promoting detailed, accurate reporting by interviewees and minimising the effects of factors that can influence their accounts. This includes the use of open-ended, non-suggestive questioning and allowing a person to freely recall the event or information from their own memory without interruption by the interviewer” (Paragraphs 29 to 33).³⁶

Our most recent study

In a sample of over 200 individuals incarcerated in two jails in the USA, our analysis revealed a four-factor structure of interrogation techniques they indicated (via questionnaire) that they recently experienced, which we labelled as humanity, rapport/relationship-building, confrontation and dominance/control. These factors and the respective

³⁵ *Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering* 2021: 7.

³⁶ *Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering* 2021: 9–10.

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.

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 rapport/relationship-building strategies, both of which are key components of information-gathering methods.³⁷

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.³⁸

Conclusion

In the United States, Kelly et al. analysed real-life investigative interviews about jail inmates' possible wrongdoing and found that the results of their study "support existing models of science-based investigative interviewing".³⁹ They noted that "research consistently demonstrates that where the PEACE model is adhered to, suspects disclose more

³⁷ MÉNDEZ 2016; MILNE–BULL 1999.

³⁸ CLEARY–BULL, 2021; WACHI et al. 2016.

³⁹ KELLY et al. 2021: 1179.

information and the risk of false confessions is significantly reduced”.⁴⁰ Some others have also been advocating a change in interviewing methods toward the PEACE model. For example, Akca et al. stated that “PEACE-based interviewing has now become the gold standard in many law enforcement organizations around the world”⁴¹ and Marques and St-Yves commented that “the PEACE framework is often considered the current best practice and has the advantage of being suitable for interviews with victims, witnesses and suspects”.⁴² May et al. stated regarding information they gathered from offenders in Germany that their “findings substantiate the benefits of an open-minded interviewing approach and fail to support a confession-oriented interrogation approach”.⁴³ In Japan Wachi et al. conducted a questionnaire study involving inmates convicted of serious crimes and stated that “relationship-focused interviewing was preferable not only because it seemed to promote confessions but also because it was associated with variables such as satisfaction with confessions and admissions at trial”.⁴⁴ Their latter point is a crucial one deserving of more research. The major challenge for those who do not yet employ what is advocated in the Méndez Principles and/or by the PEACE method is to be professional enough to admit that updating and improving one’s knowledge and skills is indeed indicative of being a professional.

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⁴⁰ KELLY et al. 2021: 1169.

⁴¹ AKCA et al. 2022: 184.

⁴² MARQUES – ST-YVES 2022: 221.

⁴³ MAY et al. 2021: 42.

⁴⁴ WACHI et al. 2016: 225.

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