Inside the Mind of the Sex Offender:
Investigative Interviewing

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Ice Scraping
What facilitated admission?

- 80% of those who said they gave a complete or almost complete admission said they were treated with respect and understanding by the interviewer or person they told.

- 60% of those who denied or gave minimal admissions said they were treated in a disrespectful and derogatory manner by the interviewer.

- Specialized sex offence units appear to obtain the highest admission rates.
RELATIONSHIP BASED APPROACH
BRIDGE BUILDING 101

“The Best Symbol of Common Sense - A Bridge”
-Franklin D. Roosevelt
Interviewing 201

- **PREPARE** – You’ll get no more information than you are willing to hear (know your biases)
- **PLAN** - Know what you need to know
- **CONSULT** – Tap into experience / Be familiar with research on offenders
- **DESIGN** – Set up the Interview Environment / Try to establish an atmosphere of mutual respect
INFLUENCE

- Similarities and Association = Affinity
- Reciprocity - i.e. Hare Krishna
- Imitation Effect - i.e. Everyone tells me...
- Commitment (Foot in Door Technique)
- Authority (Milgram Study)
- Scarcity - Availability Determines Value
- Social Influence Theory
Gary - Intro
Shane Regular Guy
Why Offenders Admit.

In a study of 30 male non-familial child molesters, Gilbar & McGrath, (1998) found that:

- 100% of initial admissions were largely for self-serving purposes
- 47% wanted to “get it off my chest”, “stress of keeping the secret”, “tired of living this way”
- 23% knew they were caught, “had me red-handed”
- 20% wanted to get into treatment
- 17% wanted to get a shorter sentence
The same study found that when they admitted:

- Most (73%) admitted when first confronted
- About half (47%) first admitted to police
- Most (62%) who initially denied did not admit until several months or years later
Holmberg and Christianson (2002)

- They concluded that a “dominant interviewing style is associated with suspects denying crime”. This style involved a “superficial case-oriented approach, characterised by impatience, aggression, a brusque and obstinate condemning approach.”
Davis and O’Donohue (2003)

- the likeability of the interviewer
- the interviewer’s confidence
- the credibility/trustworthiness of the interviewer
- the interviewer’s position
- the weight of evidence.
230 prisoners, 45% had admitted the crimes to the police chosen by the prisoners as very relevant were

“police would eventually prove their culpability” (47%)
“it was obvious that they had committed the offence” (45%)
“feeling guilty about the offence” (45%).
The questionnaire items that were most often chosen as not being at all relevant to the “motivation to confess” were

- “frightened of the police” (91%)
- “frightened of being locked up” (81%)
- “police pressure during the interview” (76%).
predictors of the decision to confess or not:

perception of the strength of evidence against them

use of legal advice at time of police interview
GRIMACE approach

- Firstly (i.e. prior to interview) to **Gather Reliable Information**
- Then secondly to **Motivate an Account from the suspect**
- And only then to **Challenge Effectively**
- “the game is up”
Predatory vs. Opportunistic

- Child Victims (Preferential vs. Situational)
- Most sexual assaults – Perpetrator known
- Predatory often masked as opportunistic
- Understanding importance of fantasy and Behavioural Progression (Crime Cycle)
PREDATORY NATURE

Need Gratification
Lack of Empathy
Poor Behavioural Controls
PREDATOR:

- One who commits acts of instrumental violence by preying upon individuals including those with whom a relationship has been established or promoted for the primary purpose of victimization.

PREDATORY VIOLENCE:

- Criminal Sexual Acts
- Hate/Fear-Based Crimes
- Instrumental Violence
Conceptual Overlap Among Sex Offender Characteristics

- Inadequate
- Preferential
- Antisocial
- Psychopathic
- Situational
PSYCHOPATHIC OFFENDERS
A prototypical psychopath is an individual who has a cluster of characteristics, including:
lack of empathy guilt or remorse for antisocial or harmful acts

deceitful and manipulative

Egocentric and grandiose
behavior and emotions that tend to be shallow and superficial

an enormous sense of entitlement

dominant & controlling
- an impulsive, nomadic lifestyle
- irresponsibility
- need for excitement / risk taking
• propensity for manipulation, intimidation and predatory violence

• a generally unstable, antisocial, or asocial lifestyle — not necessarily criminal — in which others are used or victimized
The PCL-R 2 x 4 Hierarchical Model

Facet 1: Interpersonal
- Glib/Superficial
- Grandiose
- Lying
- Conning
- Lacks Remorse
- Shallow Affect
- Lack of Empathy
- Not Responsible
- Needs Stimulation
- Parasitic

Facet 2: Affective
- Lacks Goals
- Impulsive
- Irresponsible

Facet 3: Lifestyle
- Poor Controls
- Early Problems
- Delinquency
- Revocation of Release
- Criminal Versatility

Facet 4: Antisocial

Factor 1
Factor 2

Psychopathy
30+
Two Latent Classes

- **LC1**: Manipulative
- **LC2**: Aggressive

Consistent with Karpman, Arieti
Three Latent Classes

- **LC1**: Manipulative
- **LC2**: Aggressive
- **LC3**: Sociopathic
  - Result of low PCL-R threshold
  - Low on Affective (Not callous/has remorse/takes responsibility)
  - Good candidate for treatment?

- Potential external correlates in need of investigation
I AM FISHEAD
Interviewing the Psychopathic Personality

- Ego Dominant
- Charismatic
- Impulsive
- Prone to Boredom
- Grandiose
- Strives for Recognition
- Manipulative
- Abrasive/Derogatory
- Little Fear

- Feed to self-report
- “Enlighten Me”
- Emotionless/Cool
- Time is on our side
- Respect by Respected
- Co-construct solid option
- Controlled Choices
- Professional/Business
- No threats/intimidation
Interviewing the Psychopathic Personality

- Consequences not a factor
- Blames Others
- Underestimates Problem
- Exaggerates/Lies
- No Loyalty
- Sense of Entitlement
- Competitive

- Face-saving Out
- Use others’ incompetence
- Use Minimization
- Absorb and use later
- Intel. on others
- Stroke the Ego
- Don’t Argue
Did you kill her?
Interviewing 201

- Use open ended questions, indirect and direct questions
- Use well considered assertions
- Avoid power struggles - use joining
- Change topic areas
- Narrow the question down to get agreement
Interviewing the Inadequate Personality

- Ego Deflated
- Withdrawn
- Cognitive Deficits
- Emotionally vulnerable
- Underestimates Problem
- Rationalizes Actions
- Strives for Acceptance
- Manipulative
- Abrasive/Derogatory
- Blames Others

- Empathic Response
- Active Listening
- Use simple language
- Emotional Hooks
- Use Minimization
- Absorb & Agree*
- Rapport Building
- Controlled Choices
- Professional/Business
- Use others’ incompetence
Interviewing 201

- Provide “face saving” strategies
- Provide motivation for disclosure
  - Identify benefits of disclosure, such as relief and taking positive steps.
- Initially focus on non-violent aspects of the assault
  - Companionship
  - Acceptance
  - Sense of power
Interviewing 201

- **Reduce Reactivity & Shame**
  
  children tend to be attracted to you \( \lor \) you molest children

- **Make it easy to agree**

  Impulsive behaviour- As a man do you like living on the edge and making quick decisions that lead to action?

- **Make it difficult to disagree**

  Denial of specific behaviour \( \lor \) Denial of event

  Different cultures have different views on who you can have sex with, who is the closet relative, you have had sexual contact with?
Interviewing 201

- Fallacy of Uniqueness - normalizing
  “we all fantasize”

- Not “if” but “when” - Assume it has occurred
  How many times do you generally masturbate per week?

- Over the Moon - See upper limits of quantity or impact
  How many times a day did you fantasize about offending?
  40, 50 times a day?
Interviewing 201

- Repeat questions
- Suspend Judgment
- Guard your buttons – check your reaction
- Use challenges / Alternate with support.
- Focus on inconsistencies and illogical reasoning
- Focus on inconsistencies between his account and victim’s account
Interviewing 201

- Rationalization - From the framework in which the offender rationalized the behaviour. (i.e. DHIC)
- Minimization – Foot in the Door (i.e. “gave him a shot”)
- Joining – Strokes the offender ego (i.e. “men need action”)
Dealing with Denial

- Explore reasons for denial
  - protects against physical harm from others
  - protects against feelings of unworthiness
  - protects against emotional rejection from significant others

- Explain that giving up denial represents progress/strength/courage
Interviewing 201

- Build the Bridge before you try and cross
- Push – but know when to do it
- Use “successive approximation”
  - Discuss other historical material first
  - Discuss other material as a less anxiety provoking lead
- Avoid emotionally laden words
  - e.g. rape, pedophile, sadist
Changing Context

- Affects behaviour
- Dismantles guardedness
- Reduces or increases anxiety
- Changes the playing field
- Opens a different stream of affect & cognition
- Provides a healing environment

Context in your life – campfire/vehicle at night/ski lift/boat/horseback
Focus on Needs

- Needs Motivate (self perception)
  - Power / Ego / Greed
  - Perfection / Revenge / Rage
- Behaviour can be predicted (Crime Cycle)
- Behaviour reinforced with reward (M.O.)
Courtroom Trailer Boys
QUESTIONS???

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