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Verbal signs of deception

When engaging an individual or individuals to confirm or dispel your initial observations you need to pay close attention to the verbal and nonverbal words and actions of the person you are engaging. It is widely accepted that deceptive individuals will likely offer up abbreviated answers containing very few details. They often speak in generalities with no particular details. Often they will hesitate or repeat back the question while they buy time to formulate an answer. **Remember**, when someone is trying to deceive you, there is a cognitive load (a lot of thinking) occurring and a tremendous burden on the deceiver. The deceiver has to make sure he/she knows the story inside and out, back and forth. The deceiver has to make sure his or her story sounds believable. The list below is compilation of long-standing verbal signs of possible deception.

- 1. Not answering or appearing to not understand the question
- 2. Repeating back the questions
- 3. Delayed answers
- 4. Gives non-answers
- 5. Evasive or vague responses
- 6. Does not remember
- 7. Lacking details
- 8. Not answering or appearing to not understand the question
- 9. Downplaying of significant facts
- 10. Overly specific answers
- 11. Well-rehearsed answers
- 12. Complaints
- 13. Unfamiliar with their travel plans or documents

Decoding verbal indicators of deception

When assessing credibility or truthfulness, it is important to assess some very basic but relevant components to what you are being told. In other words: Does the story make sense? Are the responses to your questions very brief? Does the individual make corrections so that the facts are accurate?

Is the individual consistent with their statements or do they contradict themselves? Are there adequate details that lend themselves to the fact that this is indeed true, or is there a lack of details indicating the story may be fabricated?

Remember, it is critical that you be cognizant to what precipitated the change in demeanor during the engagement. What did you ask? What happened that caused the person to show you the signals above? If you pay attention and know what to look for, you can be very successful at identifying suspicious behavior and deception and be ready to act accordingly. There are some in the behavior community that believe nonverbal indicators are generally less reliable than verbal ones. However, when combined with verbal indicators such as saying "yes," while shaking the head "no," shows an inconsistency. Below are examples of nonverbal indicators that may be associated with deception or withholding information.

- 1. Throat clearing
- 2. Face becomes flush
- 3. Begins to sweat
- 4. Trembling of voice or body *(not associated with a medical ailment)
- 5. Gestures conflict with verbal message
- 6. Changes in voice pitch, rate, volume, choice of words or dry mouth





