

Behavior Dynamics Journal

A bi-monthly publication focusing on the Operational Application of Behavior

Deception Detection: Cognitive Questioning Techniques

Effective questioning to help confirm or dispel initial Behavior cues. How to know when you're being lied to by Meera Senthilingam, for CNN. July 1, 2016

Cognitive questioning has been around for a long time. However, in my opinion, not used effectively or used at all to the level of its full potential. The theory behind cognitive questioning techniques (CQT) is that it requires more verbalization from an individual and commits them to a story that you can "test" for veracity. The research has shown that this type of questioning in a security atmosphere is effective in defeating prepared cover stories and activities associated with them. Cognitive type questions are valuable for the following reasons. It increases the cognitive load or thinking

process for a liar. The result of that can be observable signs of discomfort and deceit as well as verbal cues of deception. It also forces the



individual to provide a narrative and details, details that may be used for veracity. The use of CQT changes the verbal Behavior and often the nonverbal Behavior of a potentially deceptive individual; answers became shorter and had less information content by the end of the interview, whereas the answers of truthful individuals do not change. Using an information-gathering approach, asking

open-ended questions about a variety of topics, often out of any type of sequence, followed by direct questions that seek information; an individual should easily answer if they are being truthful. Cognitive questioning minimizes cognitive demand (thinking) for truth tellers, but it increases the cognitive load (thinking) for those who are trying to deceive and open up for the skilled interviewer to see. The thought is to leave people having to think heavily while sticking to their story and simultaneously watching you for your reaction, but this is just one part of the approach. Following swiftly is the need to encourage interviewees to say more and ask unexpected questions, according to Aldert Vrij. "I like encouraging interviewees to say more, as it addresses two important issues at the same time: it makes interviewees provide more information ... and results in cues to deceit," Vrij said. Another tactic is asking someone to describe an event that can be verified and to then obtain evidence for it occurring, such as asking their whereabouts and tracking down CCTV footage. "Truth-tellers give more verifiable detail than liars," Vrij said. "[In addition], it focuses on evidence to demonstrate whether someone is telling the truth or lying."

Special points of interest:

- Lying increases the thinking process
- Behavior control; controlling nonverbal behavior can be difficult
- Research shows there are both observable cues to emotion and cognitive overload when a person is lying

Next issue:

Deception: Cognitive Questioning verbal and nonverbal cues

Involuntary leakage of cues associated with possible signs of deception

There is an established body of research on deception (for review see DePaulo, Lindsay, Malone, Muhlenbruck, Charlton, & Cooper, 2003), which reveals varied results on the relationship between Behaviors and deception. This is due to a wide array of deception scenarios being studied from "interpersonal lies" (e.g., lying about liking a person you really do not like) to "high-stakes lies" (e.g., the consequences can be death or jail). High-stakes lies are most relevant to a security paradigm, as they represent situations in which the lie is relevant to the liar, the liar is highly motivated to succeed and there are serious consequences for being caught or disbelieved. The act of lying to a trained interrogator triggers fear and nervousness for a significant number of individuals (e.g., Ekman, 2001; Frank & Ekman, 1997; Ekman, O'Sullivan, & Frank, 1999; Kraut & Poe, 1980). Liars often experience the fear of getting caught, either because of the negative consequences involved for

the guilty party or because they fear the failure of their mission (Ekman, 2001). Highly motivated deceivers in high-stakes contexts (situations that most closely mirror the terrorist threat in the airport security environment) reveal increased signs of deception such as increased tension, nervousness and fidgeting (e.g., DePaulo et al., 2003). These high-stakes, face-to-face lies result in 70-90% of the deceivers revealing facial signals of negative emotions (e.g., Ekman, O'Sullivan, Friesen, & Scherer, 1991; Frank & Ekman, (1997). Studies examining face-to-face lies have also found that deceivers increase in vocal pitch (e.g., DePaulo et al., 2003; Ekman et al., 1991; Streeter, Krauss, Geller, Olson, & Apple, 1977), which is associated with the emotion of fear, whereas truth tellers do not. Studies of naturally occurring, high-motivation deceptive communication reveal support for leakage cues (e.g., Koper & Sahlman, 2001; Mann, Vrij, & Bull, 2002). Studies in which deceivers lied to cameras rather than a live person did not exhibit the recognizable Behavioral differences (e.g., Elaad, 2003; Levine, Feeley, McCornack, Hughes, & Harms, 2005).