

Behavior Dynamics Journal

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

Deception Detection: The Deceiver's Burden

The definition of deception is generally considered to be "a successful or unsuccessful attempt, without forewarning, to create in another, a belief which the communicator considers to be untrue." (Ekman Telling Lies). There are basically 2 types of lies when it comes to deception. There are high stakes lies and low stakes lies. In a high stakes situation there are often inconsistencies between the verbal cues and the nonverbal cues. There is over one hundred years of research that shows there are visibly detectable signs of emotion and cognitive overload. In a high stakes lie where the consequences are severe, the probability of observable cues is much higher compared to a low stakes lie where the consequences are minimal or non-existent. When someone is being deceptive, he or she has to make sure they know their story inside and out. The Deceiver has to make sure that the story sounds believable and lastly

they have to control their behavior so that their nonverbals are consistent with their verbal statements. This can be very difficult. When lying takes place, there are a number of factors in play. Lying requires substantial mental effort. Mental effort can lead to significant



cant cognitive load. Cognitive load meaning, a whole lot of thinking going on. From both sides of the equation comes the opportunity of emotional and cognitive "leakage". Leakage being the actual change in the person's baseline demeanor due to the fear of discovery elements present. When there is a change in baseline demeanor observable channels open up for the skilled interviewer to see. Those channels include, the face, the voice, body language

and verbal content. Most of our true feelings are expressed through the face, eyes etc. The voice, choice of words and verbal messages all speak volumes of whether you are trying to hide something or not. Then you have your non-verbal body cues which also reveal in real time how we are feeling. All of these elements of what happens when someone is lying lead to what can be termed as a "hot spot". Hot Spots are areas of interest that present themselves either verbally or nonverbally or both when telling a lie and being questioned. It could be some inconsistency in one of the leakage cues. For example did something you say conflict with your body language, your facial expression? A previous answer? Did your tone of voice change? Did your gross body movements constrict or change when you were asked a certain question? Were your nonverbal consistent throughout the engagement? etc.

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:

Detecting deception through Cognitive Questioning techniques and nonverbal cues

Verbal and Nonverbal signs of possible deception

The list below is a compilation of long standing signs of deception when an individual or individuals are potentially hiding something.

Not answering or appearing to not understand the question
 Repeating back questions
 Evasive or vague responses
 Does not remember
 Lacks details of trip
 Down playing of significant facts
 Overly specific with answers
 Well rehearsed answers
 Complains
 Unfamiliar with their travel plans or documents

Nonverbal Cues of possible deception

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