

Behavior Dynamics Journal

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

Deception: Cognitive Questioning

In our last article we spoke about Cognitive Questioning and how valuable it can be. As I said before 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. **GENERAL QUESTIONS:** Where are you going? What are you going to do today? What is the purpose of the trip? (Customs question) How long will you be here for? How many times have you been here / before? Who you planning to meet when you get to your destination? What are you going to do while you are here?

Please describe in as much detail as possible what you are going to do today/tomorrow? **ACTION**

QUESTIONS: How will you spend the remaining time until your meeting, work, lunch etc.?

Tell me about the last time you were here? **SUPPORTING QUESTIONS:** What other information can you give me that reassures me you are telling the truth? Is there any question I can ask you about your trip that should convince me that you are telling the truth? Other than those you are



traveling with, who else knows that you are making this trip today? Who could I contact at your destination who could confirm the purpose of your trip? If so, who? Again, who can I contact here or at home that could confirm the purpose of your trip?

Getting answers comes down to what you ask, how you ask it and listening carefully to the answers. This includes asking questions in no particular order. This is thought to leave people having to think heavily while sticking to their story and simultaneously watching you for your reaction. A skilled interviewer will encourage interviewees to say more and also ask unexpected questions. Truth tellers should have no problem fielding these questions says Carl Macario, who helped create the TSA behavior detection program. "The more you talk the better it is for me because you may give up something not previously stated or give me something I check out". "Liars will struggle to keep their stories straight."

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: Micro expressions. What are they? How are they used and why?

Possible Deception: verbal and nonverbal cues associated with possible signs of deception

Generally speaking, there are two areas we can look at when it comes to the possible display of deception cues. **Verbal** – what an individual says and how they say it; voice pitch, tone of voice, choice of words, details, lack thereof, use of lack thereof. **Non-verbal** – gestures, gross body movements, facial expressions of emotion inconsistent with the spoken word. The available research literature has used a number of different cues of deception across the three different categories (non-verbal and verbal). These have all been found to be cues to deception to a greater or lesser extent and in different - but not all - situations. It's important to note that the signs listed below maybe signs of discomfort, nervousness or uneasiness but never are they signs someone is lying. Understanding what precipitated the nonverbal cue, what did you ask that caused the behavior? What happened that caused the behavior? Verbal cues are associated with the content of

the deceptive statement. The research shows the more reliable cues that appear consistently show that liars may tend to make more negative statements. They also may use more generalizing terms ("always", "everybody"), use less temporal and spatial information, make less self-references ("I", "me"), provide statements that lack plausibility, and gives shorter answers. Liars may pause for longer when speaking or answering. Research studies have examined rate of speech; mistakes in speech (word repetition, slips of the tongue, sentence incompleteness, false starts); and speech hesitations (fillers such as "um" and "uh"). Research has shown that liars may tend to use fewer illustrators such as hand/arm movements, finger movements, soothing gestures, scratching, stroking movements (seen as calming nerves); smiling; eye contact and gaze direction; head movements (such as nodding); and changes in posture and position.