



BOUNDARIES OF DIALOGUE: EXPLORING THE SHIFT FROM GENERAL INTERVIEWING TO FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

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An interview has an important role in multiple fields like psychology, law enforcement, journalism and human resources. Interview commonly described as a conversation between two or more people to gather information from the interviewee. In forensic setup, the nature, structure, and objectives of interviews changes. Interviews are everywhere and can be seen in job applications, news reports, and even customer service calls. They are a basic way to gather facts and understand people. But not all interviews are same. Knowing the difference between a standard interview and a forensic interview is extremely important especially if in legal and investigative setup.

Getting to the truth and collecting complete details from an interviewee is a challenging job in the forensic settings. Forensic interviewing is a special skill which mostly depends on the interview technique and question technique used by the interviewer as per the interviewee. The expert skill directly affects the investigations, findings, and the justice. Having deep knowledge on the key points of forensic interviewing strengthen the investigation. Forensic interviews are mostly planned and consider the background of the interviewee. Forensic psychologist aims to reduce hints while helping interviewees remember facts clearly. The goal is not to fight or blame but to get truth out of the interviewee.

This paper aims to a comprehensive comparison between standard interviews and forensic interviews, their methodologies, purposes, techniques, and the environments in which they are conducted.

Key Words- Interview, Forensic Interview

Introduction- Interview and Forensic Interview

Regular interviews help us collect everyday information. Human resources teams use them to learn about new employees. Customer service representatives use them to solve problems. Journalists conduct them to get details for their stories. They are simply about getting facts for common needs. Understanding the differences between an interview and a forensic interview is crucial. Misunderstanding these two types of interviews can affect the findings related to legal and investigative cases. A forensic interview is different from a job

interview and clinical interview. It's a different and special way of gathering information from an interviewee about the crime under investigation. The interviewee may be perpetrator, witness, and suspect and associated with the crime in certain ways. Forensic Interview is a part of a formal investigation. So the goals are clear to get factual details to build a clear picture of the events for the crime under investigation.

This is a big difference in between a normal and forensic interview. Forensic interviews stick to open-ended and non leading questions. It's like



a "funnel" approach, starting broad and getting more specific towards the events of a crime. Other interviews can be much causal with direct, closed ended and may be guiding questions. The environment of the interview also makes a difference. Forensic interviews generally happen in specially designed rooms with video and audio recordings. Other interviews gathers general facts and wellbeing of the interviewee whereas a forensic interview gather information that can be used against the interviewee in the court. That's why a forensic expert aimed to gather information as intact memory without any contamination since a forensic expert knows how to conduct the interview. The forensic expert knows how memory works. Forensic interviewers have strong ethical limitation. They have to make sure the information they collect is true and honest. Their job is to serve justice and protect the innocents. It is very important to have the right expert for sensitive information gathering.

Purpose and Objectives of Interview and Forensic Interview

The primary purpose of a standard interview is to gather information about the interviewee, perspectives of the interviewee, and insights about the given topic. Standard Interviews are common in academic research, news reporting, and job recruiting. The focus is to understand the interviewee's thoughts and qualifications. But forensic interviews are conducted with the clear intention of gathering evidence or any other relevant information for crime investigation which may be used for legal proceedings as well. Forensic interviews are designed to obtain detailed narratives about events of the crime without the influence of any suggestive or leading questions. The ultimate goal is to collect information that can be reliable and viable in a court of law.

Methodological Differences of Interview and Forensic Interview

Standard interviews may be in structured, semi-structured, and unstructured formats. Structured interviews follow pre decided

questions. It also ensures the consistency throughout the interviews. Semi-structured interviews are more flexible than structured interview. It allows the interviewer to explore and discuss on more topics based on the interviewee's responses. Unstructured interviews are looks like casual conversations. The focus of unstructured interview is on providing a rich and understanding of subtle details. But in forensic interview, interviews tend to stick to structured interview. In forensic interview, interviewer follow specific pre-decided protocols to maintain the accuracy of the information gathered from the interviewee. Forensic interview use different interview techniques like PEACE Model, Cognitive Interviewing, Reid Technique or the other interview techniques like CBCA, SCAN etc. Forensic interviews demand standards to improve the information obtained from the interviewee. The core principle of forensic interview is to ask question without leading the interviewee's narration. Expert's questions must be fair without suggesting any answers to the interviewee. This helps keep the information pure and to ensure the person's memories are their own. A gentle and unbiased approach is the expectation from the expert. Language of the interview should be best known to the interviewee.

Interviewer-Interviewee Dynamics of Interview and Forensic Interview

The dynamics in interviews depends on the nature of the association between the interviewer and interviewee. In a job interview, there is a power imbalance favoring the employer. This favoring approach can influence the interviewee's responses. Whereas In forensic interviews the dynamic is fundamentally different. A forensic interview has interviewees as a crime suspects or victim. Forensic Interview has clear rules. First to make the rapport and then ask questions related to the crime under investigation. Interviewers are trained to establish rapport with the interviewee. It's a serious process with legal implications. There are rules about how the information gathered from the suspects can be used in judicial



system. A forensic Psychologist must follow the guidelines and ethical rules prescribed.

Techniques and Strategies of Interview and Forensic Interview

Technically interview and forensic interview are very different from each other. Standard interviews use open-ended or close-ended questions that are based on the objectives of the interview. Forensic interviews rely on question techniques that extract in-depth narratives from interviewees. The question techniques used in forensic interview proceed from Open-Ended/ Narrative Questions followed by Sequenced Questioning to Probing questions to Specific-closed questions to Alternative/Forced-Choice Questions to Confrontational or Challenge Questions to Hypothetical and Projective Questions to Verification and Closing Question. These are the general types of question techniques used in forensic interview. The use of techniques depends on the objective and interview response too. Forensic interviewers are trained to recognize and use these question techniques as per the development in the interview and the psychological states of the interviewees.

Ethical Consideration in interview and Forensic interview

Ethical practices in general interviews focus on honesty, respect, and confidentiality. Ethical practices in forensic interviews require adherence to strict ethical guidelines to protect the rights of the interviewee. Interviewers must follow the ethical guidelines. Before taking the informed consent, inform the interviewee about the purpose of the interview and its consequences.

Audience and Contextual Influences of Interview and Forensic Interview

The setting for an interview can be an office, school, college or a research lab whereas for a forensic interview, the setting is secure and controlled interview rooms. The Participant in an interview can be anyone but not associated with any type of crime. In forensic interview the

participants are Victims, witnesses and suspects. The record of an interview is in form of notes, summaries whereas the records in forensic interview are mandatory audio/video recordings and verbatim transcription. The audience for interviews varies as per the nature of interview. If it's a job interview, the primary audience consists of hiring managers. If it's an academic interview's, the audience may include researchers or students. Whereas, there is no audience in forensic interview. But the information derived from forensic interview gets audience in the legal system, which decides the meticulousness and reliability in the information presented.

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