

Sacramento Police Academy Interview and Interrogation Court

Statement of Purpose: The purpose of this course is to provide police recruits with strategies for rapport building and questioning with a goal of obtaining thorough and accurate statements from victims, witnesses, and suspects.

Introduction

- a. Instructor introductions
- b. Course objectives
- c. Differences between interviews and interrogations (discussion)

Effective Communication

- a. Rapport building
 - i. Tone and phrasing
 - ii. Body language
 - iii. Proxemics
 - iv. Allow individuals to vent
 - v. Establish a foundation
- b. Preparation and development of the right environment
 - i. Preplanned questions/agenda
 - ii. Recording equipment
 - iii. Calm environment
 - iv. Accommodations for comfort of the involved individuals
- c. Ask the right questions
 - i. Who, what, when, where, and how
 - ii. Disclaimer on asking "why"
 - iii. Clarification and follow up questions

Group Activity

- a. Discuss a hypothetical report call dispatch
 - i. Students develop questions they want to ask the involved individual

Strategic Questions

- a. Types of questions
 - i. Open ended
 - ii. Closed
 - iii. Clarification
 - iv. Time and space
 - v. Alternative
 - vi. Negative alternative
 - vii. Leading
 - viii. Loaded
 - ix. Bait

Considerations for thorough fact finding

- a. Chronological order
 - i. Clarify the sequence of events
- b. Witnesses
 - i. Identify sources
- c. Corroborating Evidence
 - i. Clarify the existence and location of evidence
 - ii. Assure that evidence is safeguarded
- d. Note taking
 - i. Pay attention and develop shorthand method
 - ii. Avoid the pitfall of relying on body worn cameras

Objectivity

- a. Expressing a commitment to the truth
 - i. Formal opening
- b. Building rapport without being too familiar
 - i. Providing equal attention, courtesy, and respect to all individuals
- c. Avoiding promises and commitments
 - i. Not bargaining or making deals that may impact the truth
- d. Implicit bias
 - i. Involved Individuals
 - ii. Interviewing officer
- e. Summarizing statements
 - i. Having the individual co-sign the statement

Psychology of Deceit

- a. Opening group activity (two truths and a lie)
 - i. Discussion on folk wisdom surrounding lie detection
- b. Why do people lie?
 - i. Discussion on human nature, perceived benefits, and consequences
- c. Progression of lies
 - i. Types of lies
- d. Why do people lie to the police?
 - i. Discussion on perceived benefits and consequences
- e. Why people confess?
 - i. Anxiety caused by lying
 - ii. The tell-tale heart paradox
- f. Verbal Indicators of Deception
 - i. Lack of self-reference
 - ii. Verb tense
 - iii. Answering questions with questions
 - iv. Vague and noncommittal statements
 - v. Oaths

- vi. Euphemisms
- vii. Alluding to actions
- viii. Lack of detail
- ix. Narrative Balance
- x. Stalling
- g. Physical Indicators of Deception
 - i. Eye contact
 - ii. Posture
 - iii. Proxemics
 - iv. Fidgeting
 - v. Sweating
 - vi. Respiration
- h. Considerations of context
 - i. Nervousness and emotions connected to the crime
 - ii. Shock and trauma
 - iii. Cultural differences
 - iv. Recall and memory issues
- i. How to illicit the truth
 - i. Importance of rapport and establishing a baseline
 - ii. Utilizing the suspect's anxiety
 - iii. Minimizing consequences and maximizing benefits of telling the truth
 - iv. Avoiding coercion

Demonstrated Interviews and Interrogations

- a. Review videos of effective and ineffective interviews/interrogations
 - i. Discuss pros and cons of the interview/interrogation strategy

Scenarios

- a. Students respond to report call scenarios with the following learning objectives:
 - i. Rapport building and showing empathy
 - ii. Organizing an interview with emotional/agitated individuals
 - iii. Asking appropriate questions to obtain all necessary information
 - iv. Detecting and addressing deception

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