

Introduction to Interviewing and Interrogation Techniques

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1. Core Definitions

Term	Meaning
Interview	A collaborative, information-gathering conversation with a cooperative or neutral participant (e.g., witness, victim, job candidate).
Interrogation	A more adversarial, investigative dialogue aimed at obtaining a confession or incriminating information from a suspect.
Interview-Interrogation Continuum	The process often moves from a non-coercive interview to a more focused interrogation as the investigation evolves.

2. Primary Objectives

Context	Goal
Interview	• Verify facts • Clarify timelines • Obtain new leads • Build rapport for future cooperation • Elicit a confession or admission
Interrogation	• Test the consistency of a suspect's story • Identify contradictions that can be used as leverage

3. Legal & Ethical Foundations

1. Rights of the Participant

- Right to remain silent (U.S.-Miranda rights; comparable safeguards elsewhere).
- Right to counsel (where applicable).
- Right against self-incrimination.

2. Ethical Principles

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- **Voluntariness** – No threats, promises, or physical force.
- **Truthfulness** – Avoid deception that would render any obtained statement inadmissible.
- **Respect for Dignity** – Maintain professionalism, cultural sensitivity, and privacy.

3. Documentation Requirements

- Audio/video recording (when permissible).
- Accurate, contemporaneous notes.
- Chain-of-custody logs for recorded material.

4. Planning the Session

Step	Action
1. Goal Setting	Define what information is needed and why.
2. Background Research	Review case files, prior statements, and relevant law.
3. Environment Prep	Choose a neutral, comfortable setting; control noise and interruptions.
4. Materials	Prepare interview guide, consent forms, recording devices, and note-taking tools.
5. Legal Clearance	Verify jurisdiction-specific requirements (e.g., presence of a lawyer).

5. Interview Techniques

Technique	Description	When to Use
Open-Ended Questions	“Can you describe what happened that night?”	Early stage; encourages narrative flow.
Probing Questions	“What did you hear after the door closed?”	To fill gaps after the initial story.
Clarifying Questions	“When you say ‘later,’ how many minutes later?”	When details are vague or ambiguous.
Reflective Listening	Paraphrase the speaker’s words back to them.	Builds rapport and confirms understanding.
Cognitive Interview (CI)	Uses memory-enhancing cues (mental reinstatement of context, varied retrieval paths).	Ideal for witnesses of traumatic events.

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Technique	Description	When to Use
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Techniques

**Timeline
Construction