



iIRG

INTERNATIONAL
INVESTIGATIVE
INTERVIEWING
RESEARCH GROUP



KU LEUVEN

Leuven | Belgium
8-10 July, 2026

WELCOME

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the 2026 biennial conference at KU Leuven. At the top, we must recognize the tireless work of our host, Dr Lore Mergaerts, without whom this event would not have been possible. Thanks to Lore and her organising team for making what will surely be one of the best iIRG conferences ever!

We are delighted to gather once more with researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and students from around the world who share a commitment to advancing the science and practice of investigative interviewing. Our conference provides a unique opportunity to exchange ideas, present innovative research, foster new collaborations, and strengthen the international community dedicated to ethical, evidence-based interviewing.

The field of investigative interviewing continues to evolve through interdisciplinary research, technological innovation, and international cooperation. The work presented throughout this conference reflects not only the diversity of our members' expertise but also our shared goal of improving interviewing practices in ways that enhance the pursuit of truth, justice, and public trust. Leuven, with its rich academic heritage and vibrant cultural atmosphere, offers an ideal setting for thoughtful discussion and meaningful connections. We encourage you to take full advantage of the outstanding scientific program, engage in lively conversations with colleagues, and build new partnerships that will continue long after the conference concludes.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Executive, Scientific, and Student Committees, presenters, volunteers, and everyone whose dedication and hard work have made this conference possible. Their efforts have created an exceptional forum for learning, collaboration, and professional growth. Special thanks to our sponsors, Davidhorn and Mangold, for your ongoing support of iIRG.

Whether you are joining us for the first time or returning as a long-standing member of our community, we hope you find the conference both intellectually stimulating and personally rewarding. Thank you for being part of iIRG, and we wish you an inspiring, productive, and enjoyable conference, and a memorable stay in Leuven.

With our warmest regards,
Susanne H. Flolø and Christopher E. Kelly
Co-Directors



For over four decades, Davidhorn has championed a singular mission: ensuring every investigative interview upholds fairness, accuracy, and human dignity. Founded by former Chief Superintendent David Horn – who recognised that wrongful convictions often stem from flawed interview practices – we have grown into a global organisation placing ethical interviewing at the heart of criminal justice reform.

Our approach is grounded in collaboration with leading academic institutions, forensic psychology departments, and human rights organisations. By working closely with researchers, we ensure our solutions reflect evidence-based practices aligned with UN standards and the Mendez Principles, bridging scholarly insight with operational reality.

Serving over 400,000 users across 10,000+ installations worldwide, our digital recording systems create tamper-proof, court-admissible records that provide accountability and transparency, protecting both the vulnerable and the accused.

Technology alone cannot guarantee ethical practice. That is why our solutions support organisations and professionals in strengthening training, building capacity, and upholding public trust in justice systems.



Mangold develops software solutions for the recording and scientific analysis of investigative and forensic interviews. Mangold solutions enable researchers and practitioners to capture high-quality interview recordings and to code, annotate, and analyze them in a structured and reliable manner, supporting evidence-based research, interviewer training, protocol development, quality assurance, and the continuous improvement of investigative interviewing practices.

Conference opening reception

July 7 - 6:00 pm

Only for registered participants

Registration closed



Location: Botanical Garden (Kruidtuin)

Kapucijnenvoer 30, 3000 Leuven

How to get there: <https://visitleuven.be/en/botanical-garden>

TABLE OF CONTENT

Day 1

Opening.....	7
Schedule	9
Social events	13

Day 2

Opening	15
Schedule	17
Conference dinner	20

Day 3

Opening	22
Schedule	24

Abstracts

Symposia	28
Practitioner case studies.....	36
Posters	36
Oral presentations	44

Conference

Day 1

July 8

Opening

Day 1



8:00am Registration Desk Open **DV3**

9.30am Welcome & Opening Session **DV1.91.56**

9.45am Keynote Speaker: Prof. Dr. Lilian Milnitsky Stein **DV1.91.56**

10.30am Transfer time with coffee available at to take to the sessions **DV3**

July 8

About the key note speaker

TITLE: DISSEMINATING AND IMPLEMENTING INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEWING: CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS



When? Wednesday 8th of July - 9:45 am

Lilian is a pioneer in the field of the psychology of testimony in Brazil, with a particular focus on vulnerable witnesses. She is an associate researcher of the CogJus Group, affiliated with the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (University of Oslo), and the IMED Foundation. She has built a solid academic and research career at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS). For over 20 years, she has provided training for justice system professionals on memory-dependent evidence, investigative interviewing, and eyewitness identification at both national and international levels. She was a member of the Steering Committee that developed the Méndez Principles.

Room	DV3 01.25	DV3 01.07	DV3 01.01	DV3 01.31
Topic	Vulnerability	Child victims/witnesses	Deception	Symposium
10.45am	Vulnerability and PACE, 1984- A critical analysis into investigation of suspects in England and Wales <i>Shah</i>	Service evaluation of Psychologist-Led investigative interviews for child victims who have experienced sexual abuse <i>Trigeorgis & Lakin</i>	Aligning Polygraph Interview Protocol with Evidence-Based Investigative Interviewing Practices <i>Prado-Pelayo</i>	The Méndez Principles: How can we narrow the implementation gap? <i>Minhas et al., Mountford, van Beek & Memon</i>
	Introducing and (re)framing interviewee vulnerability in light of (Imple)Méndez <i>Dehaghani & Mergaerts</i>	To plan or not to plan: German specialized police officers' views on preparing for child forensic interviews <i>Pülschen, Pülschen & Martschuk</i>	Deception Detection Accuracy: A Comparative Study Between Law Students and Professional Judges <i>Groza</i>	
	Psychological vulnerability of suspects in postmodern societies and its implications for the implementation of the Mendez Principles <i>Djubina</i>	From Guidelines to Ground-Level: A Qualitative Study of Forensic Interviewer Experiences in Child Maltreatment Cases <i>Lundon & Klemfuss</i>	The state of automated verbal deception detection <i>Loconte, Festor, Bolkvadze, Fatjanova & Kleinberg</i>	
	Recognizing and interviewing intellectually disabled suspects <i>Kranendonk</i>	Questioning the expertise of “experts” who recommend active hypothesis testing in child forensic interviews <i>Macdonald, Price, Lamb, Parker, Binford & Dimitropoulos</i>	Using a Cross-Cultural Incentivized Lie Paradigm to Investigate Decision-making in the Asylum Setting <i>Töredi, Skrifvars, Selim & Antfolk</i>	
		Beyond the known benefits of invitations in child investigative interviews. <i>van der Sleen</i>	Toward More Accurate Modelling of Interview Data in Investigative Research <i>Zloteanu, Ben-Shachar & Porter</i>	
12.05pm	Lunch			

Room	DV3 01.25	DV3 01.07	DV3 01.01	DV3 01.31	
Topic	<i>Reporting/access victims</i>	<i>Investigative interviewing</i>	<i>Practitioner Case Studies</i>	<i>Symposium</i>	
1.20pm	<p>A Staged Intervention Model to Improve Access to Justice in Sexual Abuse Cases Involving Children and Adolescents with Disabilities: Experience at the Ministerio Público Tutelar of Buenos Aires, Argentina <i>Benatuil</i></p>	<p>Monitoring and evaluation of the use of investigative interviewing in Ukraine <i>Yavorska, Rohalska, Vyshnevskaya, Dulkaj, Livocka, Vasylchuk, Medenska & Semkiv</i></p>	<p>Applying PEACE-Based Investigative Interviewing Under Flagrante Constraints: Lessons from a Real Interview with a Vulnerable Youth Suspect <i>Guzzi</i></p>	<p>From Evidence to Action: Turning Bias Mitigation Research into Usable Interviewing Practice (1) <i>Minhas, Verheyen, Visu, Vlachos & Kusters</i></p>	
	<p>A Typology of Child Disclosure Patterns: Disclosing Abuse and Violence in a National Text-Based Chat Service <i>Schlaupitz, Simpson, Quas, Strøm, Hafstad & Augusti</i></p>	<p>Double the Interviewers, Double the Pressure? Examining How the Number of Interviewers Influences Interview Experiences <i>Lucier-Lewis, Crough, Larivière, Seth & Eastwood</i></p>			
	<p>Testing the effectiveness of new technologies in victim reporting to guide CSI deployment decisions <i>De La Fuente Vilar, Earwaker, Ching, Anbazhagan, Lisalo & Meenaghan</i></p>	<p>Facts Don't Lie: A Vignette Exploration of Police Officers' Perception and Attitudes on Investigative Interviewing in Nigeria <i>Ogunseye, Larivière & Eastwood</i></p>			
	<p>Disclosing online child sexual abuse <i>Lahtinen, Mikkonen & Seppänen</i></p>	<p>Confabulation, Investigative Interviewing, and Evidential Reliability <i>White</i></p>	<p>Interviewing children with limited language ability – a composite case study <i>Larkin</i></p>		
2.40pm	<i>Transfer time with coffee/tea/water available at DV3 to take to the sessions</i>				10

Room	DV3 01.25	DV3 01.07	DV3 01.01	DV3 01.31
Topic	<i>Interviewing in applied settings</i>	<i>Vulnerability</i>	<i>Symposium</i>	<i>Symposium</i>
2.55pm	Productive or nonproductive - that is the question! An analysis of question typologies in high stake crime investigations. <i>Vaughan, Milne, Dalton & Vernham</i>	The role of lawyers representing witnesses and victims in Polish criminal proceedings during investigative interviews in the light of the Mendez Principles <i>Solodov</i>	From theory to training: initiatives for implementing research in investigative interviewing practice <i>Kranendonk, Dehaghani & Smith, Mergaerts, Kask & Bull</i>	From Evidence to Action: Turning Bias Mitigation Research into Usable Interviewing Practice (2) <i>Minhas, Verheyen, Visu, Vlachos & Kusters</i>
	The Effects of Online Medium and Communication Format on Self-Disclosure, Rapport, and Trust in Vetting Interviews <i>Brouillard, Burns, Falvey & Tsivka</i>	The Hidden Barrier to Digital Justice: Foreign Language Vulnerability in Virtual Legal Proceedings <i>Balogh & Bernardini</i>		
	Interviewing complainants of rape and sexual assault (RASSO); is it a generalist or specialist role? <i>Tidmarsh & Milne</i>	“There is a glass between us”: A qualitative exploration of the cultural challenges perceived during interviews by asylum seekers <i>Yunus, Hope, van Veldhuizen & Koppel</i>		
	When every second counts: Testing the Time-Critical Questioning (TCQ) Protocol in a Virtual Reality Terror Attack Scenario <i>Hope, Jansson, Kontogianni, Lovreglio, De La Fuente Villar, Paes & Feng</i>	How important it is to shape and form questions to suit a person with autism: Delivering an Autism Awareness Training Programme for Irish Police Officials <i>Cusack</i>		
	The interview of suspects in fraud and corruption investigations <i>Willems</i>			
4:15pm	<i>Transfer time with coffee/tea/water available at DV3 to take to the sessions</i>			

Room	DV3 01.25	DV3 01.07	DV3 01.01	DV3 01.31
Topic	<i>Eyewitness/memory research</i>	<i>False confession research</i>	<i>Suspect interviewing</i>	<i>Symposium</i>
4.30pm	Cross-cultural differences in memory reports: a comparison between Bangladeshi and the UK samples <i>Yunus, Hope, van Veldhuizen & Koppel</i>	False Evidence-Wrongful Likelihood: Ameliorating a specious probability of False Confession-Wrongful Conviction conditional on Police Interrogation <i>Catlin, May, Smith, Meissner, Redlich & Kelly</i>	Examining Psychological Detention in the Canadian Context <i>Ogunseye & Eastwood</i>	Bridging the Gap: Coproduction in Practitioner–Academic Collaborations in Investigative Interviewing <i>Cassidy, Vanderhallen, Green, Milne, Tidmarsh, Stevens, Kanja, Wagner, Flowe, Veldhuizen-Ochodničanová & Melunovic</i>
	Stereotype-driven distortions in eyewitness memory for faces: a program to debias memory and increase witness memory accuracy <i>Noc</i>	Child Forensic Interviewing and Wrongful Convictions: Lessons from Exonerations in Child Sexual Abuse Cases <i>Miller, Fessinger & Klemfuss</i>	The Sound of Silence: Anatomy of the Psychology of the Silent Suspect <i>Ibusuki & Yamada-Furuta</i>	
	The Confidence-Accuracy Relationship in Recall of Repeated Events <i>Brubacher, Lehmann, Garcia, Paterson, Fisher & Powell</i>	False Confessions to Child Sexual Abuse: Evidence from 326 Exonerations Cases <i>Fessinger, Miller & Klemfuss</i>	Dynamic emotion recognition: Interpretation, adaptation, and facilitation in an investigative interviewing context <i>Toolin, Gabbert & Scott</i>	
	“Better late than never”?: The impact of the point of noticing a crime on eyewitness recall performance <i>Van Golde, Cullen, Redfern, Hamilton, Wissman & Alchin</i>	Content in Police Interviews: A Micro-Level Analysis of Speech Units in False and Presumed True Confessions <i>Blanco-Velasco & Clow</i>	Who Influences Whom? Evidence for Suspects’ Influence on Strategy over Time <i>Jansson, Kelly, Hagsand, Kapetanovic, Evans & Schreiber Compo</i>	
	The Impact of Individual Difference Characteristics on Strategic Regulation of Memory <i>Rubinova & Harty</i>	Schoolhouse interrogations and confessions: Perspectives from U.S. principals <i>Bettens & Redlich</i>		
5.50pm	END OF SESSIONS			

6.00 pm - Social activities
Digital Investigative Interviewing Game (DV1 91.56) by Dr. Kristjan Kask
Sightseeing walk through the highlights of the city
Student mafia game



Social activities

8 July-6:00 pm

Highlights and Hidden Corners

Explore and be surprised by both iconic and hidden Leuven during an unforgettable walk full of highlights!

Cost: £12.20 (€14)

Only for registered participants: Registration closed

Digital Investigative Interviewing Game

Put your investigative skills to the test in an interactive digital game.

Cost: free

Student Social Event: Mafia – The Game

Put your skills to the test and see how strong your investigative interviewing really is while trying to uncover (or secretly be) the Mafia.

Cost: free (Sponsored by Mangold)

Student dinner

After the mafia game, we will head to a budget-friendly restaurant to continue the evening. you can choose to join one or both student activities. please note that registration before july 1 is required for the dinner.

Cost: pay at the restaurant

Please register on our website

Conference

Day 2

July 9

Opening

Day 2



8:00am Registration Desk Open

DV3

9.00am Keynote Speaker: Prof. Dr. Lennart May

DV1.91.56

9.45am Publishing in IIRG's journal

DV1.91.56

10.00am Transfer time with coffee available at to take to the sessions

DV3

July 9

About the key note speaker

TITLE: USING INTERVIEWING RESEARCH IN TRAINING AND THE COURTROOM: NAIVE EXPECTATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED.



When? Thursday 9th of July - 9:00 am

Lennart is an Assistant Professor of Legal Psychology at Medical School Berlin. His research focuses on suspect and witness interviewing, as well as on suspect statements. He also writes expert witness reports on witness and suspect statements, and provides interview training for police, prosecutors, judges, defense lawyers, and private investigators. He is a member of ImpleMéndez and the leader of Working Group 1 (Investigation, Interviewing, Interrogation Themes). Moreover, he is the founder and director of the Méndez Centre for Effective and Fair Interviewing (ZEFAB), which promotes evidence-based and human rights-compliant interviewing practices across the German-speaking region. He has also worked as a consultant for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, supporting the implementation of investigative interviewing and the Méndez Principles in German-speaking countries.

Room	DV3 01.25	DV3 01.07	DV3 01.01	DV3 01.31
Topic	<i>Legal safeguards</i>	<i>(Ethical/evidence-based) investigative interviewing</i>	<i>Symposium</i>	<i>Symposium</i>
10.15am	Exploring the quality of police interviewers' explanations of the police caution during an investigative interview <i>Parker, Wright & Mattison</i>	When Children Kill Children: Ethical Interviewing and the Cross-Norm Inhibition Effect in Juvenile Homicide Investigations in Türkiye <i>Kaya Cicerali & Ensari Cicerali</i>	Investigative Interviewing in Sexual Offense Cases: Insights from the PRESEL and PRIAS Projects <i>Deslauriers-Varin, Bélair, Gauvin, Girard & Vermaut</i>	Rapport Based Approaches in Complex Contexts <i>Alison, Alison, Nunan Dahl, Malmgren, Phillippsen, van Beek, Cozzi, Torensma & Kipperman</i>
	Same Rights, Different Scores: The Effect of Coding Practices on Legal Rights Comprehension <i>Underwood, Lively, Watt & Eastwood</i>	Ethical Interrogation in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Investigator Attitudes and Pathways for Reform in Sarajevo Canton <i>Fazlić & Deljkić</i>		
	The Same but Different? The Impact of Language on the Understanding of Interrogation Tactics and Legal Rights within Suspect Interviews <i>Crough & Schwartz</i>	Techniques and Practices in Investigative Interviewing with Adult Suspects in Europe: A Scoping Review <i>Pinheiro, de Oliveira Gonçalves, Dias-Almeida, Sousa Almeida & Milne</i>		
	Redefining the Suspect in Polish Criminal Proceedings: Implications for the Right to a Fair Trial <i>Woldan & Mazur</i>	Transitioning to Evidence-Based Practices: Preliminary Findings on the Adaptability of the PEACE Model within Turkish Law Enforcement <i>Çetinöz, Zeyrek Rios & Gönültaş</i>		
	From Recognition to Response: do Lawyers Recognize Suspect Suggestibility in Police Interviews? <i>van Veldhuizen & van Os</i>	Méndez in practice: A survey of Icelandic investigative interviewing <i>Bragason, Valberg & Bergthorsdottir</i>		
11.35 am	 <p style="text-align: center;">POSTER SESSION</p>			
12.00 pm	Lunch			

Room	DV3 01.25	DV3 01.07	DV3 01.01	DV3 01.31
Topic	<i>Use of AI</i>	<i>Professionalisation</i>	<i>Practitioner Case Studies</i>	<i>Symposium</i>
1.00pm	<p>Training Police Interviewers to Adapt to Suspects with Speech, Language and Communication Needs Using an AI Simulation <i>Stuart</i></p>	<p>Assessing Tier 1 Investigative Interviewing Skills: Comparing Training Formats and Standardising Methods <i>Lino, Giampaoli, Costa & Weber Ceconello</i></p>	<p>Intersectionality in Trauma-Informed Workplace Investigations <i>Zehl</i></p>	<p>The Méndez Principles: Narrowing the Implementation Gap (One) Perspective from Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Norway <i>Solodov, Mazur, Fazlić & Deljkić Walsh, Fahsing & Curley</i></p>
	<p>Virtual Kids – Training Child Interviews Using Virtual Characters Based on Role-Playing LLMs <i>Schneider, Tuggener & Niehaus</i></p>	<p>Field reflections from training Finnish asylum officials in investigative interviewing <i>Skrifvars & Korkman</i></p>		
	<p>AI in Elicitation: Evidence from Rapid Reviews on ‘Interviewing’ Systems and AI-Enabled Interview Training <i>Hope, Buckley, Sauer & Page</i></p>	<p>Police interviewer personality profile matrix research project – an interview ‘speed dating’ tool for police <i>Funicelli, Claydon & Regoeczi</i></p>	<p>What Happens When AI Joins the Interview? Opportunities and Risks for Modern Investigations <i>Knutsen (Davidhorn)</i></p>	
	<p>Automated Coding of Questions and Responses in Forensic Interviews and Trial Testimony <i>Szojka, Yashraj & Lyon</i></p>	<p>Self-Reported Investigative Interviewing Competence, Knowledge, and Professional Beliefs in the Swiss Police: A National Baseline Survey <i>Wyler, Fiechter-Wüthrich, Ghelfi, Gisler, Hofer, Kind, Körber, Niehaus, Schärer, Schneider, Weber & May</i></p>		
	<p>Bullshit on Bullshit: Compounding AI Errors and Investigative Interviewing <i>May & Nunan</i></p>			
2.20 pm	<i>Transfer time with coffee/tea/water available at DV3 to take to the sessions</i>			

Room	DV3 01.25	DV3 01.07	DV3 01.01	DV3 01.31	DV1 91.56
Topic	<i>Language/linguistic perspectives</i>	<i>Vulnerability</i>	<i>Symposium</i>	<i>Symposium</i>	<i>Symposium</i>
2.35 pm	A call for research on bilingual eyewitness memory <i>Perez & Zhang</i>	Examining cross-examination with autistic adults <i>Bagnall, Crane, Mayo, Cameron, Millmore, Mattison & Maras</i>	Adaptations to Facilitate Children’s Accounts of their Experiences <i>Brubacher et al., Bayer et al., Steele & Martschuk et al.</i>	Advancing Investigative Interviewing in Cold Cases: Science, Practice, and Implementation <i>Harvey, Price, Gabbert & Luther</i>	Professional Development Session iIRG-S: bridging the gap between research and practice <i>Chaisson, Pinheiro</i>
	Understanding Language Synchrony in Parole Hearing Interviews <i>Sohail, Price & Luther</i>	Developing an international expert consensus definition of suggestion: A modified Delphi study <i>Stein, Helstrip, Parris & Terhune</i>			
	Interviewing Interviewees, Interviewers, and Interpreters: Understanding the Key Factors that Benefit Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) Sexual Assault Victim-Survivors in Investigative Interviews <i>Zhang, Cullen, Walker & van Golde</i>	“It doesn't matter what we say he believes this person”: Practitioner Perspectives of identifying and working with neurodivergence and vulnerability in victim survivors of romance fraud <i>Kenrick, Kalocsányiová, Ahmad & Carter</i>			
	Forensic Linguistics Implications of Interpreting Swearwords in Police Interviews <i>Hijazo-Gascón, Gómez-Bedoya & Filipovic</i>	Investigative Interviewing of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Malaysia <i>Chung</i>			
	Trauma Exposure in Investigative and Legal Contexts: Secondary Traumatic Stress Among Canadian Interpreters <i>Szusecki & Malloy</i>				
3.55 pm	AGM (DV1 91.56)				
4.30 pm	END OF SESSIONS				

iIRG 2026 Conference Dinner

July 9 - 6:30 pm

Only for registered participants

Registration closed



Location: Faculty Club

Groot Begijnhof 14, 3000 Leuven

How to get there: <https://www.facultyclub.be/en/contact>

Conference

Day 3

July 10

Opening

Day 3



8:30am Registration Desk Open

DV3

9.30am Keynote Speaker: Dr. Philip Daeninck

DV1.91.56

10.15am

Transfer time with coffee available at to take to the sessions

DV3

July 10

About the key note speaker

TITLE: THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT SEEMS TO BE A TOUGH SENTENCE. REFLECTIONS FROM A DEFENCE LAWYER'S PERSPECTIVE.



When? Friday 10th of July - 9:30 am

Philip holds a law degree from KU Leuven. Since 2000, he has been a practicing attorney at the bar, with extensive experience in assisting interviewees during police questioning. In addition to his legal practice, he has been affiliated as a researcher and lecturer at the Institute of Criminal Law and KU Leuven, as well as at the National Institute of Criminalistics and Criminology (NICC). He is an active member of the Criminal Law Commission of the Flemish Bar Council and trainer on legal assistance as part of the permanent training scheme for defence lawyers within the Flemish Bar Council. Philip also regularly publishes on a wide range of topics in criminal (procedural) law, with a particular focus on pre-trial detention. He also serves on the editorial boards of several national leading journals.

Room	DV3 01.25	DV3 01.07	DV3 01.01	DV3 01.31
Topic	<i>Vulnerability</i>	<i>Adolescent/child witnesses</i>	<i>Eyewitness research</i>	<i>Symposium</i>
10.30am	Investigative Interviewing in the context of gender-based violence: challenges and training demands among Brazilian civil police officers <i>Weber Ceconello, Scarpati & Bernardes</i>	Effects of Rapport Building on Lay Perceptions of Child Witnesses <i>Simpson & Quas</i>	The effect of stress during retrieval on memory and psychological wellbeing <i>Zhang, Cullen, Walker, Sauerland, Hope & van Golde</i>	Interviewing in Different Cultures and Contexts: Knowledge, Practice, and Suggestibility <i>Stein, Bücken, Otgaar, Duque & Irwanda</i>
	Examining the Word Abuse as a Possible Barrier to the Reporting of Maltreatment Against Older Adults <i>Warren & Sheppard</i>	Mock jurors' perceptions of child witnesses' credibility: The effect of honesty-promotion interview strategies <i>Salhab, Akehurst, Cassidy & Talwar</i>	DrAlfting Toward the Super-Co-Witness: AI-Induced Memory Contamination <i>May</i>	
	Recognizing Vulnerability: An evaluation of a screening tool and interview training vulnerable suspects in the Netherlands. <i>Dekker, Wessels, Bouma, Weiher, Watson, van Beek & Rispen</i>	Understanding Adolescents' Interrogation- Related Legal Decisions <i>Kaba & Malloy</i>	Using Virtual Reality to Simulate the Witness Experience and Induce Stress <i>Arenzon & Marin</i>	
	"Well, I'm going to contradict myself again now..."- Police perceptions of L2 English speakers as vulnerable persons in England and Wales <i>King</i>	"Can you explain that?": Adolescents and Interview Ground Rule Use <i>Spyksma, Brubacher, Duarte de Souza & Malloy</i>	Depth of disclosure for repeated stressful events <i>van Golde, Cruz Rivera, Gabbert, Dilevski, Wheeler & Stevens</i>	
			Improving the Diagnostic Value of Perpetrator Descriptions <i>MacAskill, Ives, Dodson, Konopka & Seale-Carlisle</i>	
11.50 pm	Lunch			

Room	DV3 01.25	DV3 01.07	DV3 01.01
Topic	<i>Registration/recording of interviews</i>	<i>Child victims/witnesses</i>	<i>Symposium</i>
1.00pm	<p>To tell or to write: the comparison of verbal and written statements according to modality <i>Suurna, Kask & Murnikov</i></p>	<p>Police Interviewing Practices in Domestic Abuse Cases in Scotland <i>Rubinova</i></p>	<p>Assessing the Transformation of Investigative Interviewing Across Jurisdictions: Developing and Piloting a Context-Sensitive Framework <i>Weber Ceconello, Milne, Fahsing, Rachlew, Asplund, Friis-Olsen, Vaughan, Yavorska, Bielousov, Dias, Katazer & Guzzi</i></p>
	<p>From written protocols to recorded interviews: criminal interviews in Poland in light of the Méndez Principles <i>Solodov</i></p>	<p>The quality of child sexual abuse interviews in the Portuguese criminal justice system <i>Fernandes, Gomes, Sousa Almeida, Matos & Albuquerque</i></p>	
	<p>Modality matters: The impact of interview transcription on people’s perceptions of deaf signing suspects <i>Morgan</i></p>	<p>Analyzing the Victim’s interview of Sexual Crime (and Suspect’s interview) and Integrating with the Evidence <i>St-Yves & Deslauriers-Varin</i></p>	
	<p>Cost-effective AI-based transcription solutions for interview recordings in Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian under the Méndez Principles <i>Solodov</i></p>	<p>The Effectiveness of the Timeline Technique in Improving Accurate Recall of Mock Witnesses of Domestic Abuse <i>Ulamen & Rubinova</i></p>	
	<p>Assessing the accuracy of a human post-editing approach to AI-generated transcripts of interview recordings <i>Harrington & Tompkinson</i></p>		
2.20 pm	<i>Transfer time with coffee/tea/water available at DV3 to take to the sessions</i>		

Room	DV3 01.25	DV3 01.07	DV3 01.01
Topic	<i>Suspect/informant interviewing strategies</i>	<i>Rapport research</i>	<i>Symposium</i>
2.35 pm	<p>The Scharff Technique Goes East: An Online Test in Japan <i>Haginoya & Nakamura</i></p>	<p>Rapport Building and Emotional Support in the Intermediation of Testimony During Criminal Oral Trials Involving Children and Adolescents <i>Fuentes Rebolledo & Rosati Jerez</i></p>	<p>Roundtable on the conceptualization of vulnerability in light of implementing Principle 3 of the Méndez Principles <i>Mergaerts, Adelaide Skeem Lolk Geist, Verheyen, Lahtinen, O'Mahony, Sousa Almeida & Dehaghani</i></p>
	<p>Similarity Makes the Difference? The Effects of a Similarity Relationship-Building Strategy on the Informant-Source Handler Relationship and Information Disclosure <i>Raducu, Conchie, Taylor, Hope & Breana</i></p>	<p>Cross-cultural validation of a rapport measurement tool for Swedish police interview training <i>Ericsson, Öman Ekervhén, Nyström, Stenlund & Davis</i></p>	
	<p>U.S. Investigators' Perspectives On Why They Discourage Misrepresenting Evidence to Criminal Suspects <i>Madfors</i></p>	<p>The role of establishing and maintaining rapport in suspect interviews in a laboratory setting <i>Izotovas & Walsh</i></p>	
	<p>Give 'em enough rope to hang: The tacit prompting cycle <i>Robertson</i></p>	<p>Exploring Underlying Components of Rapport in Professional Information-Gathering Contexts <i>Brouillard, Gabbert & Scott</i></p>	
		<p>Rapport: The Surprisingly Long History of a Concept and a Practice in Investigative Interviewing <i>Hofman</i></p>	
3.55 pm	Closing Session (DV1 91.56)		
4.30 pm	CONFERENCE END		

Abstracts



Symposia abstracts



Day 1

From theory to training: initiatives for implementing research in investigative interviewing practice

Kranendonk, Dehaghani & Smith, Mergaerts, Kask & Bull

This symposium combines international perspectives on integrating research into training and investigative interviewing practice. It addresses challenges and opportunities in translating scientific evidence into sustainable tools across countries and professional roles. The contributions present evidence-based initiatives, including trainings, professional guidelines and vulnerability identification checklists for legal practitioners, and a web-based investigative interviewing game. The symposium demonstrates how research-informed practices can be adapted across legal contexts, connecting research, training, and practice.

The Méndez Principles: How can we narrow the implementation gap?

Minhas et al., Mountford, van Beek & Memon

The symposium is aligned with the goals of iiiRG to improve the field of investigative interviewing in asking how the investigative interviewing community can address the challenges in implementing Mendez in diverse contexts. This symposium is unique in approaching these challenges from multiple perspectives drawing upon changes in legislation, surveys, empirical research and practitioner experience to name a few angles. The symposium presenters and collaborators come from academic and practitioner backgrounds bringing their expertise in ethics, police training, policing, cognitive psychology, linguistics, human rights, clinical psychology and emotion and law. Funding arising from the COST Impleméndez Project (CA22128) has provided has resulted in a surge of energy and forged new collaborations across the globe to put the Mendez principles into practice. It has also drawn attention to how much more work needs to be done to address to narrow the implementation gap

From Evidence to Action: Turning Bias Mitigation Research into Usable Interviewing Practice (part 1 / part 2)

Minhas, Verheyen, Visu, Vlachos & Kusters

Despite widespread recognition that cognitive biases and prejudicial stereotyping distort investigative interviewing and decision-making, structured mitigation remains inconsistently implemented in practice. Recent findings from our cross-national practitioner survey (N = 201) reveal a substantial implementation gap. While practitioners across six international jurisdictions endorse the importance of bias mitigation, 73.6% reported no structured approach to regulating bias in their investigative work. Importantly, practitioners using structured regulation were significantly more likely to articulate a mitigation strategy compared to those without structured approaches. In short, mitigation clustered where structure existed, suggesting that structure, not awareness alone, is the mechanism that enables effective bias mitigation in investigative decision-making. These findings align with results from our recent meta-analysis examining bias mitigation interventions in investigative contexts. The strongest and most reliable effects were associated with structured, cognition-regulating techniques, such as consider-the-opposite prompts, preset questioning formats, open-ended interviewing protocols, and simulation with feedback, rather than awareness-based training alone. Together, the survey and meta-analysis demonstrate a consistent pattern: bias awareness is widespread, but operational regulation requires structured procedural scaffolding. This workshop operationalises an evidence-to-practice pathway by integrating empirical findings with practitioner-led case analysis, moving participants beyond recognising bias toward actively regulating it within investigative workflows. The session also contributes to the development of an international Bias Mitigation Practice Guide aimed at supporting scalable, evidence-based practice across jurisdictions.

Bridging the Gap: Coproduction in Practitioner-Academic Collaborations in Investigative Interviewing

Cassidy, Vanderhallen, Green, Milne, Tidmarsh, Stevens, Kanja, Wagner, Flowe, Veldhuizen-Ochodničanová & Melunovic

Impact is best achieved when academic research happens with practitioners rather than to them: this is the core of coproduction. This symposium will highlight how coproduction can help to bridge the gap between interviewing research and practice.

Day 2

Investigative Interviewing in Sexual Offense Cases: Insights from the PRESEL and PRIAS Projects

Deslauriers-Varin, Béclair, Gauvin, Girard & Vermaut

This symposium brings together five presentations stemming from two large-scale research partnerships conducted in close collaboration with police services: the PRESEL and PRIAS projects. Both initiatives are based on the systematic analysis of real-world, video-recorded suspect interviews in sexual offense investigations, including cases of online sexual exploitation of minors (n = 130) and sexual assault (n = 250). Embedded within a partnership-based, practice-informed research framework, these projects provide rare access to authentic investigative interviews and case materials. Drawing on extensive coding frameworks, the research advances knowledge on interview dynamics, suspect behavior and disclosure patterns, investigative strategies, and how individual suspect characteristics - such as developmental stage and prior criminal history - interact with investigative practices to shape the unfolding of interviews in high-stakes sexual offense investigations. Together, these contributions illustrate how rigorous, partnership-based research can generate evidence-informed insights to advance investigative interviewing practices in sexual offense cases.

Rapport Based Approaches in Complex Contexts

Alison, Alison, Nunan Dahl, Malmgren, Phillipson, van Beek, Cozzi, Torensma & Kipperman

The application of rapport-based methods of interviewing has received increasing empirical scrutiny as an alternative to more accusatorial based frameworks of suspect interviewing. Interviews conducted by police, military, and intelligence professionals differ markedly from laboratory simulations in duration, operational stakes, and interpersonal asymmetry. This symposium brings together applied researchers and practitioners examining how rapport-based approaches function in high-stakes and complex environments.

The Méndez Principles: Narrowing the Implementation Gap (One) Perspective from Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Norway

Solodov, Mazur, Fazlić & Deljkić Walsh, Fahsing & Curley

European human rights case law and EU procedural rights directives have strengthened the procedural position of witnesses and victims in criminal proceedings, including their right to legal assistance during police questioning. In Poland, however, discussion has largely focused on defence lawyers, while the role of lawyers representing witnesses and victims during penal interviews remains insufficiently examined. This presentation explores that role in the context of Polish criminal proceedings, using the Mendez Principles on Effective Interviewing as an analytical framework. The Mendez Principles emphasise non-coercive, rapport-based and ethical interviewing aimed at obtaining reliable information rather than confessions. Against this background, the presentation looks at how the presence and participation of lawyers representing witnesses and victims are regulated in Polish law and how they function in practice, as well as how they influence interview dynamics. It addresses practical difficulties, including limited training in non-coercive interviewing, uncertainty about the procedural role of such lawyers, and tensions between a protective function and cooperative interview models. The presentation suggests that the Polish framework risks formal compliance with procedural safeguards without meaningful implementation of the Mendez Principles, and points to possible improvements through training, clearer professional standards and closer cooperation between legal professionals and criminal investigators.

Day 2

Adaptations to Facilitate Children's Accounts of their Experiences

Brubacher et al., Bayer et al., Steele & Martschuk et al.

In this symposium, international experts (from Australia, Canada, Germany, USA) share their work on supporting children to provide accounts of sensitive and often traumatic experiences, from pre-disclosure through to trial, considering adaptations that account for context, culture, developmental age, and neurodiversity.

Advancing Investigative Interviewing in Cold Cases: Science, Practice, and Implementation

Harvey, Price, Gabbert & Luther

When an investigation has no new leads to be pursued, it becomes "cold". Through the lens of the cold case of Katrin Konert, who has been missing since 2001, this symposium will explore investigative interviewing in a cold case context. We will focus on what is currently known about interviewing in cold cases, share some promising methods for interviewing, and demonstrate how this knowledge has been passed on to the next generation. We invite the audience to join in a discussion on investigative interviewing in cold cases and share their own expertise to help further investigations like Katrin Konert.

Professional Development Session iIRG-S: bridging the gap between research and practice

Chaisson & Pinheiro

This Professional Development Session, organised by the iIRG Student Committee, aims to facilitate an open conversation between a diverse panel of academics and practitioners. By bringing together expertise from different professional backgrounds, the session seeks to deepen mutual understanding between research and practice and to explore how both domains can inform and strengthen one another. Rather than viewing knowledge transfer as a one way process, the discussion will focus on how researchers and practitioners can collaboratively identify needs, challenges and opportunities that shape future investigative interviewing research and practice. The panel will address questions such as how academic work can become more relevant and responsive to real world contexts, how practice can inspire new research directions, and what barriers currently hinder effective collaboration. Panellists are encouraged to draw from their own experiences and to share concrete tools, strategies and approaches that students and (early career) researchers can apply in their own work. The aim of the panel is to leave the audience with insights on how to develop and conduct impactful research, and to encourage them to reflect on their own approach to building meaningful connections between academic work and professional practice.

Day 3

Interviewing in Different Cultures and Contexts: Knowledge, Practice, and Suggestibility

Stein, Bücken, Otgaar, Duque & Irwanda

Investigative interviewing is critical for an effective and ethical criminal justice system. Some guidelines and evidence-based protocols exist that can help interviewers conduct non-suggestive interviews, such as the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) protocol to interview alleged child victims. However, it remains unclear whether core concepts underlying these protocols, particularly interrogative suggestibility, are understood, interpreted, and addressed similarly across cultural and professional contexts and different populations. The current symposium brings together five complementary studies examining the translation of evidence-based interviewing principles across cultures, professions, and contexts through the lens of interrogative suggestibility.

Assessing the Transformation of Investigative Interviewing Across Jurisdictions: Developing and Piloting a Context-Sensitive Framework

Weber Ceconello, Milne, Fahsing, Rachlew, Asplund, Friis-Olsen, Vaughan, Yavorska, Bielousov, Dias, Katazer & Guzzi

The effective implementation of Investigative Interviewing (II) requires more than the formal adoption of evidence-based models. Across jurisdictions, substantial variation persists between legal endorsement, institutional capacity, professional culture, training regimes, and the everyday practice of interviewing suspects, victims, and witnesses. Although international guidelines such as the Méndez Principles and PEACE provide normative direction, there remains a lack of structured tools capable of assessing how these principles are operationalized within different legal, organizational, and cultural contexts. This symposium presents the development and pilot application of the Framework for Interviewing Transformation (FIT), a multi-dimensional assessment model designed to evaluate the maturity of Investigative Interviewing systems across jurisdictions. The FIT framework integrates ten analytical dimensions, including leadership, legislative frameworks, investigative mindset, knowledge base, training regimes, quality assurance mechanisms, recruitment, technology, responses to miscarriages of justice, and the role of agents of change. Methodologically, the framework combines passive data (laws, regulations, standard operating procedures, case law, budgets, and public reports) with active data (surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, and performance assessments), enabling triangulation between formal regulation, institutional narratives, and operational practice.

Roundtable on the conceptualization of vulnerability in light of implementing Principle 3 of the Méndez Principles

Mergaerts, Adelaide Skeem Lolk Geist, Verheyen, Lahtinen, O'Mahony, Sousa Almeida & Dehaghani

According to Principle 3 of the Méndez Principles effective interviewing requires identifying and addressing the needs of interviewees in situations of vulnerability. These situations of vulnerability, however, are diverse and can stem from a multitude of factors associated with the interviewee's personal characteristics and/or the situation interviewees find themselves, either as a witness, victim or suspect. As vulnerability can differ depending on the individual and the context, the Méndez Principles remain rather abstract and provide little guidance on dealing with vulnerability in interviewing practice. To ensure adequate implementation of the Méndez Principles and the adequate implementation of appropriate measures, there is need for debate on the conceptualization of vulnerability and how to identify and act upon it, both within and outside of a criminal context. This roundtable aims to boost the cross-fertilization between academia and practice, with a focus on how to make the conceptualisation of vulnerability under Principle 3 of the Méndez Principles more actionable for practitioners. The roundtable focuses on interaction between academics and practitioners with regard to the concept of vulnerability across disciplines and situations, the identification of vulnerability, and the adequacy of existing and desired special measures. In doing so, it examines different criminal and non-criminal interviewing contexts (e.g. police interviewing, asylum procedures, humanitarian services, special inspection services). Consequently, this roundtable will contribute to identifying and bridging the gaps on how to respond to the vulnerability of different types of interviewees in different situations, catalysing future research in this area.

Practitioner case studies

abstracts



Day 1

Applying PEACE-Based Investigative Interviewing Under Flagrante Constraints: Lessons from a Real Interview with a Vulnerable Youth Suspect

Guzzi

This practitioner case study presents a real investigative interview conducted approximately two years ago in a Brazilian *flagrante* (urgent custody) department. The case involved a 17-year-old suspect in an attempted murder investigation, carried out in a time-sensitive context with limited preparation time, competing procedural demands, and heightened emotional intensity. The case also included indicators consistent with hate-related motivation, adding further complexity to the interview. The suspect's age, vulnerability, and the seriousness of the offence required careful balancing of ethical safeguards, investigative needs, and memory-preserving techniques. The setting reflects a broader systemic context: Brazil is in the early stages of implementing science-based investigative interviewing. In urgent custody environments, operational pressures frequently push practitioners toward closed, leading, or confirmation-driven questioning. This case therefore offers a realistic example of how PEACE-aligned principles can be applied under pressure in a country still consolidating training, supervision structures, and feasible standards for practice improvement. Using anonymized excerpts from an audio-visually recorded interview, the session will demonstrate how minimal-but-structured planning can be conducted in serious, time-critical cases while preserving an investigative mindset. It will illustrate rapid rapport-building strategies grounded in procedural justice, particularly in interviews involving vulnerable youth suspects. The presentation will examine the use of transfer of control, free narrative prompts, and neutral encouragers to maximize spontaneous recall without contamination, followed by a structured clarification phase using a funnel approach (open → specific → closed only when necessary), prioritizing verifiable details such as people, locations, timelines, CCTV, digital traces, and witnesses. The case will also address how to close high-stakes interviews in ways that maintain dignity, reinforce cooperation, and clarify next procedural steps. The session will conclude with a concise, practitioner-oriented guide for conducting investigative interviews in *flagrante* and other urgent custody contexts, integrating lessons on vulnerability, serious violence, hate-related indicators, and early-stage implementation challenges. All materials will be fully anonymized, with sensitive content minimized. Use of the interview data is authorized under appropriate institutional permissions and ethical safeguards, and the focus of the session is professional learning and implementation rather than case publicity.

Interviewing children with limited language ability – a composite case study

Larkin

An anonymised, composite case study highlighting ways for interviewers to work creatively with children with limited language ability. How to give them the best opportunity to give evidence, in the context of psychologist-led investigative interviews with children who have experienced sexual abuse. Sharing practice-based learning which has enabled children with limited language ability to successfully complete Video Recorded Interviews and provide significant evidence contributing to police investigations.

Practice areas for interviews will include:

- *Building rapport, involving outreach visits, pre-interview assessments and exploration of the child's key interests;
- *Evaluating the child's communication abilities to respond to different question types;
- *Supporting safe adults who already know the child, to act as unregistered intermediaries – alongside a registered intermediary and interviewer;
- *Sharing different ways to introduce the topic into the room – including through the use of images – in a non-leading manner;
- *Considering a range of communication tools, including the child's existing communication tools, new interview specific visual tools and prompts, the use of forced choice questions with visual prompts and combining verbal, visual and gestural forms of communication to maximise the child's understanding; and
- *Balancing protocols with the need to work flexibly, to allow these very vulnerable children the best chance to give evidence.

Day 2

Intersectionality in Trauma-Informed Workplace Investigations

Zehl

Workplace investigations increasingly involve allegations of misconduct where power, identity, vulnerability, and institutional dynamics intersect. While trauma-informed practices are now widely recognized as essential, they are often applied in generalized ways that do not fully account for how overlapping social identities and positionality shape an individual's experience of harm, participation in an investigation, perceptions of authority, and assessments of credibility. An intersectional approach also supports investigators in reflecting on their own identity and positionality, as well as the often-unconscious biases that may shape interactions, interpretations, and credibility assessments on all sides of an investigation. This session introduces an intersectional approach to trauma-informed workplace investigations, adapted from established investigative guidance developed for complex human rights investigations and translated into a practical, investigator-facing framework suitable for corporate, public-sector, and institutional workplace contexts. Rather than introducing intersectionality as a social theory, the session presents it as an investigative methodology that strengthens planning, preparation, and decision-making. The primary focus is on the early stages of an investigation, including mandate interpretation, contextual analysis, team composition, interview planning, and investigative strategy, while situating intersectionality across the full lifecycle of a workplace investigation. Participants will learn how applying an intersectional lens can enhance fairness, accuracy, and defensibility, while reducing re-traumatization, misinterpretation of behaviour, and unintended bias. The session emphasizes concrete investigative decisions and practical tools, not abstract concepts.

What Happens When AI Joins the Interview? Opportunities and Risks for Modern Investigations

Knutsen (Davidhorn)

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly becoming part of investigative interviewing. It can transcribe interviews in minutes, translate conversations across languages, identify themes, generate summaries and increasingly support investigators throughout the investigative process. These capabilities promise significant gains in efficiency, consistency and access to information. But AI also raises fundamental questions. What happens when AI becomes part of the evidential chain? Can it strengthen investigative interviewing without undermining fairness, transparency and the integrity of evidence? And how do we ensure that AI supports professional judgement rather than replacing it? This presentation explores both the opportunities and the risks of integrating AI into investigative interviewing. Drawing on current research, international best practice and practical experience from digital evidence solutions used by police agencies and child advocacy centres, it examines where AI can add genuine value—and where caution is essential. The presentation argues that successful AI adoption is not primarily a technology challenge. It begins with high-quality interviewing, reliable recording, secure evidence management and robust human oversight. AI will only ever be as trustworthy as the evidence it is given. Whether you are a researcher studying investigative interviewing or a practitioner responsible for conducting interviews and managing evidence, this session aims to provide practical insights into how AI can enhance investigations while protecting the principles that make interview evidence reliable and admissible.

Poster abstracts

Day 2



Mobile AI Support for Patrol-Based Investigative Interviewing During the “Golden Hour”: Early Field Experience and Crisis-Exercise Evaluation in the Norwegian Police

Bente Skattør

The first hour after a major incident (“Golden Hour”) is decisive for establishing situational control, allocating resources, and constructing an initial investigative timeline. During this period, patrol officers must simultaneously secure the scene, manage safety, and conduct preliminary investigative interviews in and around the incident location. Yet conventional documentation practices—handwritten notes followed by later report writing—can delay the transmission of interview-derived intelligence to operational and investigative command. This delay risks fragmentation of information across responders and reduces the utility of early witness and suspect accounts for time-critical decision-making. This poster presents early field experience from AI4Interviews, a Norwegian Police innovation initiative (since 2025) piloting a mobile application (“Capture”) designed to support patrol-based investigative interviewing through AI-assisted documentation. Capture generates first-draft interview records via speech-to-text transcription that officers subsequently review and correct. In addition, the system has been deployed in structured crisis exercises to examine two operational capabilities: (i) near-real-time availability of raw (initially uncorrected) transcripts to relevant command structures, and (ii) automated AI summarisation distributed through a live feed from the scene. In parallel, exploratory large-language-model (LLM) workflows are being developed to categorise and synthesise content across multiple interviews (e.g., merging convergent accounts, extracting timelines, highlighting discrepancies, and surfacing actionable follow-up questions). We report empirical insights derived from a multi-method evaluation strategy across three police districts (approximately 10 users per district), integrating (a) field observations, (b) patrol officer questionnaires, (c) semi-structured interviews with patrol personnel, (d) consultations with investigators and command staff, and (e) analysis of system outputs and usage data. The poster will illustrate how digital artefacts—raw transcripts, automated summaries, and examples of downstream analytic outputs—can be generated and disseminated within seconds of capture, enabling operational personnel to integrate inputs from multiple responders and support decisions under time pressure. We also discuss implementation lessons learned relevant to practitioner adoption: managing transcript quality under noisy, dynamic conditions; clarifying roles and accountability for review and correction; ensuring secure and permissioned dissemination; and mitigating variability in LLM-generated outputs through prompt standardisation, version control, and transparent labelling of AI assistance. Finally, we characterise the current stage of readiness as early field piloting with promising operational utility but limited systematic validation, motivating further controlled exercise-based testing and structured performance evaluation prior to broader operational rollout.

Misleading deception classifiers with automated and human paraphrasing attacks

Lucca Pfründer

In verbal credibility assessment in investigative interviews, approaches such as criteria-based content analysis (CBCA) suggest that someone who experienced an event will produce verbal cues different from someone who fabricates a memory of an event. While credibility assessment based on verbal cues is promising, the decision-making process is complex and time-consuming. In contrast, automated approaches relying on trained machine learning models make real-time assessments and typically outperform humans in deception detection. However, those models are vulnerable to minute yet targeted modifications of input statements (e.g., through paraphrasing) designed to trick a model into misclassification. We trained a classifier (DistilBERT) to detect autobiographical lies and truths (4542 statements). Targeted modifications aimed at manipulating the initial model prediction were then made to the original statements either by humans or a large language model (LLM). The findings suggest that the original model’s accuracy (77%) dropped drastically when humans (38%) and LLM (46%) modified statements. Nearly 70% of the modifications successfully changed the model’s prediction (i.e., from lie to truth or from truth to lie). We caution against premature excitement over automated deception detection methods and discuss how the process of text modification attacks can help in developing more robust deception detection methods.

Bringing the evidence together: an umbrella review of police interviewing methods

Evelien Claes

Research on police interviewing is extensive, yet the evidence base is widely dispersed across distinct research methods, theoretical perspectives and target populations or techniques. This fragmentation makes it difficult to determine which conclusions are genuinely well supported, under which conditions they hold, which are shaped by methodological choices, and where meaningful knowledge gaps remain. Consequently, the evidence base is difficult to navigate, also for policymakers and practitioners when determining which conclusions can reliably inform interviewing practices. To address this challenge, this umbrella review brings together systematic reviews and meta-analyses on the performance of interviewing methods to provide an integrated overview of this research field. The poster will outline preliminary insights from this synthesis, highlighting what the field collectively knows, what remains uncertain, and where further research is most needed.

From School to Forensic Settings: Strengthening Communication Practices in Suspected CSA Cases - Findings From a One-Year Follow-Up Evaluation

Maike Cigelski

In cases of suspected child sexual abuse (CSA), communication prior to forensic interviewing is particularly sensitive, as inappropriate early conversations may compromise later forensic procedures. Against this backdrop, a comprehensive one-day module on fundamental communication techniques was incorporated into a four-day, full-time CSA training program for school staff. Building on empirically derived findings, the module integrates basic principles of forensic interviewing, such as avoiding suggestive questioning, while retaining the responsibility for criminal investigations with law enforcement professionals.

To evaluate the long-term usefulness of the training, semi-structured follow-up interviews were conducted one year after completion with school professionals (N=9) in Germany. Participants consistently identified the communication module as one of the most valuable components of the program, highlighting its applicability in both suspected CSA cases and everyday school practice. Reported benefits included increased confidence in conducting sensitive conversations and heightened awareness of communicative risks. At the same time, participants noted that while the training provided a solid foundation in essential communication skills, ongoing, more in-depth, practice-oriented training are needed to sustain and further develop these competencies. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of communication training as a foundational element of professional education for school staff in CSA contexts.

Practitioner Experiences with SUE in Financial Crime Investigations

Manon Hoekstra

Effective application of the Strategic Use of Evidence interview method (SUE) requires willingness of the suspect to provide a statement and the availability of potential evidence (Granhag & Hartwig, 2015). These are conditions that are frequently met in investigations involving financial offences and white-collar suspects (Hoekstra & Verhoeven, 2021). This presentation highlights the implementation of SUE within the Dutch Fiscal Intelligence and Investigation Service (FIOD), a financial criminal investigation agency operating under the same legal framework as the Dutch police. FIOD has developed a two-day SUE training program tailored to financial-economic crime. More than 200 FIOD officers have completed this training. The presentation reports findings from two surveys. The first survey (n = 66) captures immediate post-training evaluations and perceptions of the added value of SUE. Among other things, the results show that participants rated the training with an average score of 8.5 (10-point scale). All participants indicated that they experienced SUE as a valuable addition to their interviewing repertoire. The second survey, examines among earlier cohorts of SUE trained FIOD officers (n = 38) the perceived practical utility of SUE and perceptions of results. The presentation concludes with implications for practice and future research directions regarding the use of SUE in interviews with white-collar offenders.

The information obtained from children's iconic gestures during forensic interviews

Yuki Fujiwara

Eliciting accurate information from children is extremely important in forensic interviews, and the interview protocols to date have primarily focused on verbal exchanges. By contrast, children tend to use many gestures to explain their experiences and knowledges because their language skills are still developing. Though gestures can add different information from children's speech (Broaders & Goldin-Meadow, 2010), relatively little is known about the accuracy and the contents of children's gestural information. In Japan, forensic interviews have been video-recorded and accepted as official evidence since 2023, and not only speech but also gestures have become increasingly important as a means of communication for children.

Therefore, the present study investigated how much information children's iconic gestures have and how accurate they are in the interviews about their experiences. Japanese children aged five to eight years participated in the experiment, in which they took a mock physical exam and subsequently had a follow-up interview individually. They were video-recorded and coders evaluated the accuracy of the gestures. Implications for children's gesture during forensic interviews will be discussed.

How Immigration Status and Interview Method Effects Perceptions of Coercive Control

Jason Carty

When responding to domestic violence calls, police officers must quickly piece together events and decide whether an arrest is warranted. However, mandated questions may be phrased in ways that undermine trust and discourage cooperation, particularly in cases involving coercive control or immigration (Grant & Cross-Denny, 2017). Victims experiencing coercive control often hesitate to speak with police due to financial dependence, legal vulnerability, or fears for their safety (Madina et al., 2020). Immigrants may be especially reluctant, as abusive partners can exploit immigration status as a tool of control. Research shows that cooperating witnesses provide more accurate information when asked open-ended questions and allowed to respond without interruption (Fisher et al., 1989).

This project examines laypeople's perceptions of police interviewing practices, coercive control, and immigration status in a domestic violence context.

Method

The study uses a 2 (forensic vs. standard interview) × 2 (immigrant vs. citizen) × 2 (coercive control vs. no coercive control) design. Participants complete gender norms and authoritarianism measures, followed by a filler task. They then read a transcript of a mock emergency domestic violence call and complete a survey assessing victim culpability and perpetrator guilt using Likert-scale items.

A New Witness-Compatible Retrieval Technique: Self-Generated Verbal Cueing Enhances Episodic Recall in Investigative Interviews

Donna Taylor

Investigative interviewing depends on witnesses accessing detailed episodic memories; however, commonly used mnemonic techniques such as Mental Reinstatement of Context (MRC) can impose cognitive load and may not be suitable for all witnesses. We introduce and evaluate a novel Verbal-Reinstatement-of-Context (Verbal-RC) technique designed to trigger episodic retrieval through self-generated verbal cues. In a between-subjects mock-witness experiment (N = 149), participants viewed a simulated robbery and were interviewed 48 hours later using MRC, Sketch-Reinstatement-of-Context (Sketch-RC), or Verbal-RC. Self-generated cue conditions significantly outperformed interviewer-generated MRC in correct recall, completeness, and accuracy, without increasing errors or confabulations. Sketch-RC produced the strongest effects overall; critically, Verbal-RC also generated reliable recall gains, offering a rapid, low-burden alternative when sketching or imagery-based techniques are inappropriate. These findings support theoretical accounts of encoding-retrieval overlap and the task-support hypothesis while providing direct operational implications. Transferring retrieval control to witnesses appears to enhance evidential yield, reduce cognitive demand, and expand interviewer toolkits with flexible, inclusive techniques. Verbal-RC represents a scalable addition to contemporary investigative practice.

Widening Access to Justice: Own-Generated Verbal and Sketch Reinstatement-of-Context Cues Improves witness memory versus Interviewer-Generated Cues

Coral Dando

Criminal justice relies on information from witnesses. Retrieval from episodic memory is cognitively demanding; thus, many interview protocols advocate techniques to support episodic retrieval mode, which is essential for obtaining detailed accounts. Currently, interviewers have two empirically validated techniques for triggering and scaffolding conscious remembering: Mental-Reinstatement-of-Context (MRC) and Sketch-Reinstatement-of-Context (Sketch-RC). However, where neither is appropriate, there are few alternatives. We report a potential addition to the interviewer toolbox, aimed at reinstating context through self-directed verbal cueing, namely the Verbal-Reinstatement-of-Context (Verbal-RC). Using the mock witness paradigm, we compared the interviewer-directed Mental-Reinstatement-of-Context technique with self-directed Sketch-RC Verbal-RC Context cue techniques. Participants were interviewed 48 h after viewing a mock robbery. Memory was analyzed for correct and erroneous recall, completeness, and accuracy. Participants who self-generated retrieval cues recalled an average of 26% (Sketch-RC) and 11% (Verbal-RC) more correct information, were more complete and more accurate than those in the MRC. Improvements were not accompanied by increased errors, which were an average of 34% and 22% lower (respectively) in the self-generated conditions. Both self-generated retrieval cues were more effective than interviewer-initiated cues and conferred clear advantages, although Sketch-RC was most efficient. Witnesses unable or unwilling to sketch, Verbal-Reinstatement-of-Context may be a viable alternative.

Preschool Children's Person Descriptions

Laura Melnyk

Introduction: Preschool children tend to provide very few details when asked to describe strangers. We tested whether this was due to memory factors and whether cued questions would promote accurate, detailed reports. Method: Participants were 26 preschool children. A male confederate visited their classrooms. The children were interviewed about 10-20 minutes later, with random assignment to the memory or photograph condition. The procedure was identical for both conditions, with the exception that the children in the photograph condition were provided with the man's photograph as visual aid. • First, in free report, the children were asked open-ended questions about the man's appearance. • Next, in cued report, the children were asked cued questions about the man's appearance.

Results: Two 2 (condition) x 2 (details: accurate vs. inaccurate) mixed ANOVAs were performed. • Free report: Surprisingly, the number and accuracy of details was similar for both conditions. • Total report (free report + cued report): Children in the picture condition provided more details than the children in the memory condition. However, the accuracy of the details produced did not differ between conditions. Discussion: Our research suggests that children's inability to provide detailed, accurate person descriptions is not due to memory factors. Implications will be discussed.

Investigative Interviews with Child Suspects in Europe: A Scoping Review

Beatriz Dias-Almeida

Interviewing juvenile suspects is a legally and ethically sensitive stage of the criminal process, given their developmental vulnerability in custodial settings. International child-rights standards emphasise procedural safeguards, non-coercive practices, and developmentally appropriate communication. However, the extent to which these principles are implemented in practice remains unclear. This scoping review, conducted in accordance with JBI guidelines and reported following PRISMA-ScR statement, maps the empirical and legal literature on investigative interviews with juvenile suspects, focusing on techniques used by criminal justice professionals, the role of legal assistance and support persons, and young suspects' perceptions. Eight studies published between 2010-2024 met inclusion criteria. The studies examined police and judicial practices, the implementation of child-sensitive safeguards, and defence lawyers' participation. Findings indicate variability in developmentally appropriate and information-gathering approaches. While open-ended questioning, language adaptation and rapport-building were reported, their application was found to be inconsistent. Children described negative custody conditions, limited understanding of their rights, and experiences suggestive of intimidation. Although legal assistance is required in several jurisdictions (e.g., Belgium), findings indicate that defence lawyers frequently adopt a passive role. The literature reveals a persistent gap between child-rights standards and interviewing practices, highlighting the need for clearer operationalisation and systematic evaluation of safeguards.

Tick Tock, Hold that Thought: The Impact of a Brief Delay on Semantic and Episodic Memory Recall

Fiza Hasan

One goal of forensic interviews is to help complainants describe individual instances of a crime to determine the number and types of charges against an offender. However, offences like domestic violence tend to occur repeatedly, making recall of individual instances challenging. With repeated instances, individuals form a semantic memory for what usually happens, which can help recall details that were experienced during a repeated event, even if not linked to instances. Researchers propose asking a semantic prompt (“what happens in a repeated event?”) before an episodic prompt (“what happened during an instance”) yields more details than the reverse order. This semantic-first advantage has been observed with a week’s delay between viewing the final instance and retrieval. We tested the advantage with a 10-minute delay. Adults ($N = 148$) watched four domestic violence videos before responding to a semantic or episodic prompt about the video(s) in counterbalanced order. Participants reported marginally more details about an instance targeted for recall when the episodic prompt was asked before the semantic prompt. Our findings suggest legal practitioners may find it beneficial to ask adults what happened for an individual instance before asking what usually happens when a crime is reported after a brief delay.

Interviewing Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence during the Russia-Ukraine War: Mapping an Empirical Gap

Anastasiia Valiavko

Since 2014, and particularly following the 2022 full-scale invasion, conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) has been documented in the Russia-Ukraine war. Yet no systematic empirical research examines how Ukrainian investigative authorities interview survivors.

This exploratory study addresses that gap by examining interviewing practices within the National Police, the General Prosecutor’s Office, and the Security Service of Ukraine. The project draws on evidence-based investigative interviewing research demonstrating that rapport-building increases cooperation and information yield (Collins et al., 2002; Walsh & Bull, 2012), cognitive interview techniques enhance accurate recall (Memon et al., 2010), trauma affects memory encoding and retrieval (Brewin, 2014), and leading questioning increases suggestibility (Gudjonsson, 2003). In sexual assault contexts, inadequate interviewing may contribute to secondary victimization (Campbell, 2008).

However, it remains unknown whether these principles are reflected in CRSV investigations conducted under wartime conditions. Are trauma-informed and non-suggestive approaches systematically applied? How are evidentiary demands balanced with survivor wellbeing?

Using a questionnaire completed by investigative professionals, the study examines whether current interviewing practices reflect established scientific principles, identifies possible gaps, and aims to inform practical recommendations for conflict settings.

The effect of challenges to memory for sexual violence during an investigative interview on memory reporting

Madeleine Ingham

Sexual violence complainants may receive disconfirming feedback during investigative interviews in the form of challenges to details within their memory account. The effects of disconfirming feedback on memory reporting during an interview have not been investigated in the context of sexual violence – an important consideration given that complainants unequivocally face misconceptions and barriers to reporting. Eighty-five women ($M=19.19$, $SD=2.03$, 54% white) encoded an implied sexual assault in Virtual Reality and were randomly assigned to a control ($n=43$) or feedback ($n=42$) interview, where they received challenges to their account. Interviews have been coded for accuracy, and multi-level modelling will be used to explore challenge effects on memory reporting (accuracy, quantity, completeness). We propose two opposing hypotheses for the effect of feedback on reporting, wherein challenges will: 1) increase accuracy, but decrease quantity and completeness by increasing the response threshold, such that only highly confident details are subsequently volunteered, or 2) decrease accuracy and completeness, but increase quantity by lowering the response threshold, such that lower confidence details are volunteered in an effort to repair the relationship with the interviewer. A better understanding of the mechanisms of memory in response to feedback is critical in preserving evidential reliability, and in mitigating retraumatisation.

Detecting deception using temporal segmentation in remote versus in-person interviewing

Simina-alexandra Cacuci

Research on remote investigative interviewing practices focuses almost exclusively on the accounts provided by victims and witnesses. Thus, little is known about how suspects provide their statements in remote interviews. We examined the temporal segmentation approach, a technique prompting participants to elicit additional verbal information according to different temporal episodes of a witnessed mock crime. Truth-tellers are thus encouraged to provide more details, since they can more easily focus on specific time-framed sequences compared to a free, unstructured, recall. Deceivers face the task of providing plausible details for specific moments while trying to keep their story coherent. Thus, our ongoing study's main goal is to reveal potential differences between face-to-face and remote interviewing settings. Another aim is to investigate the role of free recall versus temporal segmentation in providing detailed accounts and in eliciting deception cues. Overall details will be used as dependent variable. The study will provide further insight into remote interviewing practices and the role of an adaptive interviewing strategy across various settings.

Investigative Interviews with Adult Sexual Assault Complainants in Europe: A Scoping Review

Patrícia de Oliveira Gonçalves

Investigative interviewing is a pivotal stage in rape investigations, influencing the quality of collected evidence, credibility assessment, and the overall experiences of complainants within the justice process. Legally recognised as vulnerable witnesses in several jurisdictions, sexual assault complainants are entitled to specific safeguards designed to guarantee trauma informed and procedurally fair interviewing practices. However, existing research suggests these are not always fully implemented. Mapping the evidence on investigative interviewing is an important step to clarify how current practices align with established recommendations and to support their effective implementation. This scoping review aims to synthesise the available European literature on investigative interviewing with adult sexual assault complainants, focusing on existing techniques, recommendations, practices and both criminal justice professionals' and victim-survivors' perspectives. Following JBI guidelines and the PRISMA ScR statement, this review maps empirical and grey literature published between 1997 and 2025. A total of 61 sources were included, covering academic publications and grey literature from Portugal, U.K., Sweden, Denmark and Hungary. Preliminary findings indicate that, despite existing legal and institutional guidelines, research examining how these procedures are implemented remains scarce within Europe and is largely confined to a small number of countries, emphasising the importance of implementation focused research across European jurisdictions.

Oral presentation abstracts



Day 1

“How important it is to shape and form questions to suit a person with autism”: Delivering an Autism Awareness Training Programme for Irish Police Officials

Alan Cusack

It is well-established in international literature that persons with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are over-represented in criminal justice systems globally (Boran 2024; Finnerty 2021). This phenomenon raises questions concerning the accessibility of the forensic formalities that are adopted at all stages of the criminal process (Murphy et al, 2017). Of particular concern, in this regard, is the capacity of police officials to identify, and respond appropriately, to the needs of persons with asd during the investigative interview. Indeed, studies suggest that a failure to adapt this forensic process to account for the needs of persons with asd can materially bias the accuracy of any elicited testimony. Moreover, such a failure can have an irreparable impact on the trajectory of proceedings given that pre-trial statements often have a formative influence on trajectory of a criminal dispute (Cusack 2021). And yet, despite the reverential juncture that the police interview suite occupies, as well as the long-heard calls for targeted disability awareness training for Irish criminal justice agencies (Status of Persons with Disabilities, 1996; Moloney and Gulati, 2019), at the time of writing, no formal autism awareness programme exists within An Garda Síochána. In seeking then to address an important lacuna in Irish police training, this paper details the delivery, and evaluation, of a pioneering Autism Awareness Training programme for members of An Garda Síochána which took place in October 2024.

Who Influences Whom? Evidence for Suspects' Influence on Strategy over Time

Louise Jansson

Rapport enhances the quantity and quality of information in investigative interviews and is recommended by multiple frameworks and training manuals. Since training associates rapport with more detailed responses, interviewers may assume rapport is established and a suspect is cooperative if the suspect talks a lot. However, suspects may provide elaborate accounts even without sharing useful information. If verbosity is assumed to indicate cooperativeness and established rapport, this could lead to inaccurate evaluations of the interview. Therefore, we tested whether suspect verbosity influenced perceived rapport and suspect guilt. Two-hundred participants listened to one of three audio recordings of a mock police interview, where the questions were either answered with Low, Medium or High verbosity, but where the answers never contradicted the held evidence. Afterwards participants rated perceived rapport and suspect guilt.

We found that rapport ratings were rated higher in the High over Low and High verbosity-conditions. Participants also perceived suspects as being less likely to be guilty as verbosity increased even though suspects did not provide investigation relevant information in any condition. If individuals' base rapport and guilt judgements on verbosity rather than objective assessments of the evidence, it may lead to sub-optimal investigative outcomes.

Dynamic emotion recognition: Interpretation, adaptation, and facilitation in an investigative interviewing context

Katie Toolin

Over the last few decades, a growing evidence base for investigative interviewing techniques has promoted a shift in the landscape from an accusatorial, confession-seeking strategy to an ethical, information gathering strategy. A valuable asset in this strategy is the ability to accurately recognise and interpret an interviewee's behaviour. The aim is to ensure appropriate response in order to foster cooperation and promote meaningful information elicitation. A sensible step in advancing this skill is to understand the cognitive processes behind successful dynamic emotion recognition. The research presented here investigated emotional intelligence, thought strategies (such as perspective-taking and empathic concern), motivation and cognitive load over two studies using different dynamic emotion stimuli. The initial study presented a range of 14 emotions (7 positive, 7 negative) in short verbal but non-sensical clips (GERT-S) and found that regardless of strategy and context, participants had reduced recognition accuracy for negative emotions. These findings led to the development of a new set of dynamic stimuli presenting only negative emotions, across six phrases likely to be said in an investigative interviewing context. Findings have provided promising insight and have informed short training sessions to aid intra and interpersonal behaviour recognition across investigative psychology, policing and security contexts.

The Sound of Silence: Anatomy of the Psychology of the Silent Suspect

Makoto Ibusuki

At the previous Ottawa conference, presenters showed an analysis of interrogators' mindsets, using actual interrogation video in Japan. This analysis focused on the types of statements Japanese interrogators make when confronting suspects who exercise their right to remain silent. Japanese Constitution and the Criminal Procedure Law recognize a suspect's right to remain silent during interrogation. However, it is common for interrogators to make statements suggesting that remaining silent is wrong or improper, and they harshly criticize them. In Ottawa, we analyzed the reason why interrogators adopt such a negative attitude towards suspects remaining silent, based on a cultural-historical context. This time, based on detailed handwritten accounts by the suspect featured in the video used previously, we will report the psychological state of suspects remaining silent. Japanese interrogators aim and think it as important to build rapport with suspects who clearly state to exercise their right. Therefore, for opening suspects' mind, interrogators try to extract confessions by employing various strategies based on information related to them. However, this analysis reveals that such interrogations carry the risk of lead to conditions alike psychological torture for the suspect. In conclusion, the presenter argues that protocols regulating interrogators' statements are necessary.

Examining Psychological Detention in the Canadian Context

Funmilola Ogunseye

Psychological detention occurs when an individual, not under arrest, feels they must comply with a police officer when voluntarily interacting with them. Determining whether an individual should be considered psychologically detained within noncustodial police interviews is vital because detention triggers several legal protections, such as the right to legal counsel. To assist the Canadian legal system in determining detention, *R v Grant* (2009) outlined three sets of factors that should be considered: (1) the circumstances surrounding the encounter, (2) the nature of police conduct, and (3) the individual's characteristics. In this study, we use a policy-capturing approach to assess the most salient factors contributing to laypeople's and police officers' perceptions of psychological detention. Participants watched various Artificial-Intelligence (AI) generated videos of police interactions with manipulated variables (Officer's attire/Access to the door/Voluntariness information/Officer's tone), imagining themselves as the person being interviewed. After watching each video, participants rated their perception of psychological detention. Data collection is ongoing, and statistical analysis will be used to examine these factors. The end result will provide a systematic examination of factors that may influence perceptions of psychological detention during noncustodial police interviews, offering valuable insights for the forensic psychology field and legal decision-makers.

Schoolhouse interrogations and confessions: Perspectives from U.S. principals

Talley Bettens

Students in the U.S. disciplined for school misconduct face an increased risk of legal system contact, yet little research examines how principals question students to determine guilt or innocence. We surveyed 446 high school principals about their interrogation-related practices, training, and perceptions. Results show principals regularly question students about misconduct, though only one-third received formal training in interviewing youth; of those, 22% were trained in the controversial Reid technique. Principals commonly reported using evidence-based questioning methods (e.g., rapport-building, 74%). However, they also frequently reported using non-evidence-based techniques like observing body language to deception detection (63%), which was reportedly used significantly more by principals trained in Reid ($p = .02$). In an experimental vignette, principals indicated that students who confessed, compared to denied, were significantly more likely to be disciplined and referred to police, but principals would also be significantly less likely to continue investigating the misconduct after a confession is obtained ($ps < .001$). Findings suggest principals routinely question students despite limited formal training, rely on a mix of tactics, and view confessions as common and conclusive. Developing standardized, evidence-based guidelines for school questioning may better protect students' procedural rights.

Content in Police Interviews: A Micro-Level Analysis of Speech Units in False and Presumed True Confessions

Guadalupe Blanco-Velasco

Police interviewing research has primarily examined interview content in studies of child witnesses and adult victims, often focusing on case-relevant information. Content-based research on false confessions is limited and has similarly tracked case-relevant details in suspects' statements, reporting comparable levels of detail in false and presumed true confessions. However, interviewer and suspect content have rarely been analyzed using the same detailed coding framework, and content beyond case-relevant information has received less attention. This study addresses these gaps by examining the entire content of both police interviewers' and suspects' statements. We analyzed 40 interviews (20 false and 20 presumed true confessions), capturing the topics present in each speech unit (i.e., a segment obtained by splitting speaking turns into smaller codable units). A large language model was trained to assign one or more topics per unit. Because outcomes were categorical and units were clustered within interviews, we used generalized linear mixed-effects models (GLMMs), with cluster bootstrapping given the small number of interviews, to test for differences in topic prevalence (frequency of topics) and content density (topics per unit) across speakers and confession types. Our findings support future work linking topic patterns to interview outcomes and developing a tool to distinguish confession types.

False Confessions to Child Sexual Abuse: Evidence from 326 Exonerations Cases

Melanie Fessinger

Courts have recognized that "a confession makes the other aspects of a trial in court superfluous, and the real trial, for all practical purposes, occurs when the confession is obtained" (Colorado v. Connelly, 1986, p. 182). Yet decades of research reveal that coercive interrogation tactics can elicit false confessions from innocent suspects and contribute to wrongful convictions (Kassin et al., 2025). To date, no empirical studies have explored how false confessions contribute to wrongful convictions in child sexual abuse cases. This evidence may be particularly influential, as these cases often lack physical evidence and instead rely on the child's word against the defendant's. In this study, we examined 326 child sexual abuse cases documented by the National Registry of Exonerations between 1989 and 2024. False confessions were less common in these cases (8%) than across all exonerations recorded by the registry (13%). Among the cases with false confessions, most exonerations involved new evidence that no crime had occurred (84%); few involved DNA evidence (16%) or the identification of the real perpetrator (8%). Additional analyses will review the circumstances of the interrogation, including whether the exoneree was coerced, threatened, or fed details about the alleged crime.

Child Forensic Interviewing and Wrongful Convictions: Lessons from Exonerations in Child Sexual Abuse Cases

Quincy Miller

Child sexual abuse cases present unique challenges for conviction and exoneration given the typical reliance on the child's account as the primary source of evidence. Across the investigative process, children's accounts may be shaped by informal questioning by family members and formal interviews by authorities, increasing risk for false allegations. Despite these well-recognized vulnerabilities, little empirical research has examined wrongful convictions and exonerations in such cases. Drawing on the largest sample of child sexual abuse exonerations to date (N = 326), we examined cases documented by the National Registry of Exonerations between 1989 and 2024. Unlike other types of crimes, alleged victim perjury or false accusation was the leading contributor to wrongful convictions (85%). Common influences on children's false accusations included familial influence (42%; i.e., coaching, threats or physical force, disclosure rejection) and authority influence (34%; i.e., suggestive or repeated questioning by law enforcement, child protective services, and child forensic interviewers). The most common contributing factor to exoneration was alleged victim recantation following conviction (46%). Time between conviction and recantation ranged from several months to 43 years (Mdn = 4). Common recantation recipients included authorities (63%), the child's family members (22%), and exonerees (13%). Factors influencing post-conviction recantation and implications for investigative interviewing and decision-making practices will be discussed.

False Evidence-Wrongful Likelihood: Ameliorating a specious probability of False Confession-Wrongful Conviction conditional on Police Interrogation

Allison Redlich

A recently published paper (Mourtgos & Adams, 2026) calls into question 45+ years of research, the interviewing policies of numerous nations, and the Mendez principles. Using Bayesian analyses, the paper asks, How much do currently legal interrogation tactics contribute to false confession wrongful convictions (FCWC)? Their conclusion is that about 1% of FCWCs are the result of lawful interrogation tactics. We review and correct major flaws with their methods and ultimate conclusion. For example, Mourtgos and Adams estimate rates of WC and FC using incomplete, and sometimes inaccurate, data. Corrected, we find a risk up to 88% higher than reported. In addition, there is selection bias in the comparison of FCWC and non-FCWC cases. Because Mourtgos and Adams disregard the experimental literature, they argue for using randomly drawn values to estimate sensitivity and specificity. Yet the non-experimental literature makes clear there are several ways in which FCWC cases are unique from non-FCWC. As one example, taking length of interview into account, we find a 1 in 18 FCWC, rather than 1 in 100. Finally, even with a corrected model, Mourtgos and Adams are simply asking the wrong question by ignoring the harm on the harmed and ignoring known alternatives.

The Impact of Individual Difference Characteristics on Strategic Regulation of Memory

Eva Rubínová

Investigative interviews are social situations with goals that are either explicit (i.e., the interviewer sets expectations at the onset) or implicit (i.e., the interviewee must infer what is expected). Based on perceived goals, interviewees make strategic decisions regarding their memory output that are characterized by the quantity-accuracy trade-offs: to maintain accuracy, interviewees may withhold information that has low probability of accuracy. The present study explored the impact of individual difference characteristics such as anxiety, depression, and long-term stress in a non-clinical sample of undergraduate students on memory and metacognition using the forced-free recall paradigm. Participants viewed two scenarios of domestic abuse. Following a delay after each scenario, they answered a set of questions in the forced phase (i.e., providing responses was mandatory) and the free phase (i.e., providing responses was voluntary), while providing confidence ratings for each response. We found a negative relationship between anxiety and confidence and proportion of retained information: the higher anxiety, the lower reported confidence in each phase, and the more details participants withheld in the free phase. At the same time, anxiety was unrelated to accuracy. We will discuss the importance of considering individual difference characteristics in interviewing settings.

“Better late than never”?: The impact of the point of noticing a crime on eyewitness recall performance

Hayley Cullen

Eyewitness memory is a crucial form of evidence in legal cases. However, witnesses can make significant errors even during optimal encoding conditions. In reality, witnesses may not be subject to these optimal encoding conditions, which may lead them to fail to notice crimes, or only notice them after they have begun. In three experiments, we used an inattentive blindness paradigm to determine whether the point at which individuals notice crimes (early vs. late vs. never) influences their recall performance. Participants viewed a video while completing an attention-demanding task. During the video, an unexpected assault occurred. Participants were asked a series of questions about what they noticed during the video, to categorise them as early noticers (seeing the entire assault), late noticers (noticing only after the assault had been perpetrated) or never noticers (missing the entire assault). After a filler task, participants were exposed to a post-event narrative that contained correct and incorrect information about the assault. Then, participants completed free- and cued-recall tasks and rated their confidence in the accuracy of the information they provided in each. We will discuss the findings and their implications for police interview practices and research methodologies in forensic psychology.

The Confidence-Accuracy Relationship in Recall of Repeated Events

Sonja Brubacher

Self-rated confidence is widely believed to be a good indicator of memory accuracy—and this is often, but not always, true. The strength of the confidence-accuracy (C-A) relationship depends on many factors and has mostly been studied in eyewitness lineup identifications. In the present research, we tested this relationship in memory for repeated events; similar experiences, such as domestic violence, that happen multiple times. In such cases, victims' accounts are often critical to investigation and charges, but the repeated nature of the experiences can lead to memory impairments. Specifically, the frequency and similarity of the events can interfere with the recollection of the individual episodes, leading to confusion of details across episodes. In this presentation, we will highlight our findings from two studies, including that the C-A relationship is moderate and positive, but weaker than for memories of unique (one-off) events; that the relationship is stronger for details that occur repeatedly (e.g., suspect identity) than for those that vary (e.g., clothing worn); and that the timing and type of measurement used affects the strength of the relationship. This research has implications for understanding how confidence relates to memory accuracy when people are recalling one episode out of multiple similar incidents.

Stereotype-driven distortions in eyewitness memory for faces: a program to debias memory and increase witness memory accuracy

Mathilde Noc

This program investigated how stereotypes of criminality distort eyewitnesses' memory for faces, and whether such distortions can be reduced through an intervention. First, mental representations of “criminal” and “hero” faces were examined using reverse correlation (RC). Second, after watching a video featuring a neutral man, participants received post-event information describing him as a criminal who kidnapped a child vs. a hero who saved a child. Participants' memory for the face was then reconstructed using RC. Results showed that individuals hold specific representations of a “criminal face”, and that the memory for a suspect's face is biased in a stereotypical direction. These findings have important field implications, as such memory distortions may contribute to inaccurate descriptions/identifications. Study 2 extends this work by examining whether stereotype-driven distortions can be attenuated through a debiasing intervention. Following criminal vs. hero information, participants completed a learning task designed to promote counter-stereotypical associations (adapted from Chua & Freeman, 2021), before reconstructing the target face using RC. This intervention may lead to facial memories closer to the original, indicating reduced distortion. Together, this program highlights both the vulnerability of eyewitnesses' memory to stereotypes, and the potential of learning approaches to mitigate such biases in criminal identification contexts.

Cross-cultural differences in memory reports: a comparison between Bangladeshi and the UK samples

Md Yeasir Yunus

Recent research in investigative interviews suggests that culture influences how individuals encode, recall, and report their experiences. Much of this research has focused on comparisons among Africans, Europeans, and Middle Eastern populations. Communication in some cultures (low-context) is more explicit and detailed, whereas in high-context cultures it relies more on shared understanding and implicit cues. In this experimental study, we examined cross-cultural differences in memory reports between participants from Bangladesh (a collectivist, high-context culture in South Asia) and the United Kingdom (an individualistic, low-context culture in Europe). Participants (N = 100; Bangladesh = 44, UK = 56) watched recorded events set in Bangladeshi and UK contexts, with randomisation applied equally, and completed both free-recall and structured-cued-recall tasks. Across both recall tasks, UK participants reported significantly more correct details and fewer incorrect details. No differences were observed in the number of unanswered cued-recall questions. Confidence in memory recall did not differ significantly between countries for either recall type, although Bangladeshi participants reported higher confidence during cued recall. Additionally, UK participants expressed greater distrust toward their memory. These findings warn against assuming that insights from different cultures are equivalent and suggest adopting culturally informed interviewing methods.

"There is a glass between us": A qualitative exploration of the cultural challenges perceived during interviews by asylum seekers

Md Yeasir Yunus

Asylum interviews typically occur in a cross-cultural context between people from different cultural backgrounds. This research explored the cultural challenges perceived by a group of asylum seekers and refugees who had previously participated in asylum interviews. Using criterion-based purposive sampling, we conducted ten semi-structured interviews with asylum seekers and refugees who attended asylum interviews in the UK. Thematic analysis identified four themes and ten subthemes related to: (1) Language and interpretation; (2) Cultural expectations, norms and preferences; (3) Factors affecting information disclosure; and (4) Issues relating to interview procedure. Key implications for practice include the need for training and development for interviewers to expand their awareness of cultural factors and to develop a sense of cultural humility in interactions. Similarly, training for the interpreters should ensure understanding of the interview process and the need for accurate interpretation that minimises potentially meaningful omissions or inadvertent distortions of statements. Additionally, asylum seekers should be provided with accessible translation support for transcripts and other official documents. In addition to gender- and dialect-sensitive interviewing, enhancing rapport through culturally sensitive communication and assigning the same officials to cases over time may reduce the existing cultural challenges and barriers in asylum interviews.

"The Hidden Barrier to Digital Justice: Foreign Language Vulnerability in Virtual Legal Proceedings

Katalin Balogh

In the digital transformation of legal systems, foreign language vulnerability has emerged as a critical barrier to equitable access to justice. Individuals with limited proficiency in the dominant language of legal proceedings—often referred to as Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals—face compounded challenges in online legal environments. These include difficulties in understanding legal terminology, navigating digital interfaces, and accessing interpretation or translation services. While many jurisdictions mandate language access in criminal cases, significant gaps persist in civil and administrative proceedings, especially in virtual settings where the burden of requesting language support often falls on the user. This vulnerability is exacerbated by the lack of standardized protocols for remote interpretation, inconsistent training for legal professionals, and limited awareness among LEP individuals of their rights to language assistance. Moreover, errors in interpretation or translation in online hearings are harder to detect and rectify, potentially leading to irreversible legal consequences. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach: robust policy frameworks that guarantee language access across all legal domains, investment in high-quality remote interpretation technologies, and comprehensive training for legal practitioners in linguistic equity. Ultimately, ensuring linguistic inclusion in online legal settings is not merely a technical challenge but a fundamental matter of justice and democratic participation.

The role of lawyers representing witnesses and victims in Polish criminal proceedings during investigative interviews in the light of the Mendez Principles

Denis Solodov

European human rights case law and EU procedural rights directives have strengthened the procedural position of witnesses and victims in criminal proceedings, including their right to legal assistance during police questioning. In Poland, however, discussion has largely focused on defence lawyers, while the role of lawyers representing witnesses and victims during penal interviews remains insufficiently examined. This presentation explores that role in the context of Polish criminal proceedings, using the Mendez Principles on Effective Interviewing as an analytical framework. The Mendez Principles emphasise non-coercive, rapport-based and ethical interviewing aimed at obtaining reliable information rather than confessions. Against this background, the presentation looks at how the presence and participation of lawyers representing witnesses and victims are regulated in Polish law and how they function in practice, as well as how they influence interview dynamics. It addresses practical difficulties, including limited training in non-coercive interviewing, uncertainty about the procedural role of such lawyers, and tensions between a protective function and cooperative interview models. The presentation suggests that the Polish framework risks formal compliance with procedural safeguards without meaningful implementation of the Mendez Principles, and points to possible improvements through training, clearer professional standards and closer cooperation between legal professionals and criminal investigators.

The interview of suspects in fraud and corruption investigations

Tom Willems

Suspect interviewing is a crucial tool for successful corruption and fraud investigations. The field is however under-researched and there is currently no interview model or approach that addresses the specifics of such interviews. Moreover, the Méndez principles shun science-based interviewing tactics which might be particularly effective here, for ethical concerns based on paradigms that do not seem to completely apply. I research an 'effective, lawful and fair specialised interviewing approach for suspects in fraud and corruption investigations'. To do so, I first mapped the profile and behaviour during interview of such suspects by questioning investigators (n=170) in Belgium, France and Germany about their two last suspect interviews.

In a second step, I presented the same experts a specialised and strategic approach to such interviews, based on scientific insights from social and cognitive psychology on how people judge and decide. I then asked them to assess the effectiveness, legality and fairness of the advocated approach.

To contrast the opinion of practitioners, I also tested the advocated approach by presenting it to a representation of defence lawyers and members of the Implémendez network. This made for very rich and cutting-edge debates, the outline of which I would like to share with you.

When every second counts: Testing the Time-Critical Questioning (TCQ) Protocol in a Virtual Reality Terror Attack Scenario

Lorraine Hope

Getting information quickly is critical, particularly during incidents where witnesses hold time-sensitive intelligence about perpetrators, weapons, locations, plans or escape routes. Previous research shows the Time-Critical Questioning (TCQ) interviewing protocol (Hope et al., 2025) supports the reporting of priority information in time-sensitive interactions. The current research evaluated whether the TCQ protocol facilitated reporting of priority information during a terrorist attack scenario. Participants (N = 135) experienced a high-fidelity virtual-reality simulation of a terrorist attack involving multiple perpetrators in a public space. Immediately afterwards, while the attack was framed as ongoing, they completed a 10-minute urgent interview using either TCQ or a control protocol. Participants interviewed with TCQ reported significantly more priority information than controls, with a medium effect size, while maintaining equally high accuracy. The opening I-RELATE instruction produced a strong early effect, with TCQ participants providing significantly more information at the outset. Exploratory findings indicate that these participants were more aware of the urgency of the situation and prioritised essential details accordingly. These findings replicate previous TCQ results and extend its application to evolving attack scenarios, demonstrating its potential to improve rapid, high-quality information elicitation during critical incidents.

Interviewing complainants of rape and sexual assault (RASSO); is it a generalist or specialist role?

Patrick Tidmarsh

Sexual offence investigations, where complainants are the primary (and sometimes only) witnesses to the offending acts, require effective complainant interviews more than any other area of criminal investigation. This presentation will discuss the results of research examining video recorded interviews with rape complainants, conducted within two UK police forces. The focus was on two key areas of interviews, the processes and techniques employed to conduct the interview, and the amount of RASSO relevant evidence (RRI) elicited. Analysis of research outcomes clearly showed that improvements were necessary in both areas of interviewing practice. Analysis also assessed whether those with specialist training in a specialist unit demonstrated skills that were better than those from a general policing role (i.e. with no specialist training). Discussion will then centre around solutions and the development of a new model of practice that blends the Whole Story approach with the Enhanced Cognitive Interview.

The Effects of Online Medium and Communication Format on Self-Disclosure, Rapport, and Trust in Vetting Interviews

Celine Brouillard

Vetting interviews are used to assess whether individuals in sensitive roles may pose a national security risk. Research suggests that online home-based vetting interviews elicit comparable, and in some cases greater, sensitive disclosure than in-person interviews conducted at home or in office settings (Winters, 2022). However, the impact of different online modalities on information disclosure remains unclear. To examine whether interview format influences disclosure in online vetting contexts, 131 adults participated in a simulated vetting interview from home and were randomly assigned to one of four conditions: (1) Video+Audio for both interviewer and participant, (2) interviewer Video+Audio - participant Audio-only, (3) interviewer Audio-only with participant Video+Audio, or (4) Audio-only for both. Participants were asked questions relevant to security risk and measures included overall disclosure, levels and depth of self-disclosure, rapport, self-awareness, and implicit attitudes related to trust and distrust. The Video+Audio condition showed a tendency toward higher disclosure; however, most conditions produced similar levels of disclosure. Cultural similarity positively predicted disclosure across conditions, except in the Audio-only condition. Implicit trust, distrust, and self-awareness did not systematically account for differences in disclosure. These findings inform best practice in online vetting interviews.

Productive or nonproductive - that is the question! An analysis of question typologies in high stake crime investigations

Martin Vaughan

The research evaluated question typologies used in suspect interviews in high stake crime investigations from the UK. 50 interviews, concerned with allegations of murder, rape, attempted murder, death by dangerous driving, assault, sexual assault, high value theft, and kidnapping were analysed. All interviewers had received extensive PEACE model investigative interview training including completing an advanced level (PIP 2/Tier 3) specialist suspect interview course. Of the 50 interviews 25 were managed by an Interview Manager (IM) (PIP2/ Tier 5) who is responsible for implementing an ethically and legally sound interview strategy. In total, 103 hours of police interviewing and 17,874 questions were analysed. The research established that the specialist interviewers used more non-productive questions than productive questions. There was also no difference whether interviews were managed by an IM or not. The results will be presented and discussed. The ability to identifying various question types is a skill, and a skill that not all interviewers possess. Thus, training should continue to encourage the interviewer to ask more productive questions whilst recognising the potential negative aspects of non-productive questioning with a greater emphasis on interview evaluation and reflection.

Monitoring and evaluation of the use of investigative interviewing in Ukraine

Vasylyna Yavorska

Over the past three years, Ukraine has proactively implemented the investigation interview methodology in institutional policies, training programmes, and the daily practice of pre-trial investigation bodies. However, the formal requirement to apply this methodology does not in itself ensure compliance with its standards in practice, creating the need for tools to assess the quality of its implementation.

This research examines the practical application of the investigation interview methodology by practitioners who have completed specialized training, within the context of its gradual institutionalization in the criminal justice system. The aim of the research is to develop and pilot a standardized instrument for assessing the quality of investigation interviews, to evaluate compliance with methodological and ethical standards, and to identify common challenges in practical implementation. The empirical component is based on the analysis of 20 video-recorded investigation interviews conducted by trained practitioners in criminal proceedings of various categories, including war crimes, corruption-related offences, crimes against life and health, and proceedings involving children. The expected results include identifying patterns in the application of investigation interviews, determining key challenges to their national implementation, and assessing the suitability of the developed instrument for use in quality assurance and professional training within criminal justice authorities.

Facts Don't Lie: A Vignette Exploration of Police Officers' Perception and Attitudes on Investigative Interviewing in Nigeria

Funmilola Ogunseye

Investigative interviewing researchers have advocated for a shift from confrontational techniques to information-gathering techniques. Despite the abundance of research on investigative interviewing worldwide, it remains challenging to determine whether police investigators effectively apply these well-researched techniques in their practice. In the current study, a semi-structured interview was used to examine the practices of 11 police investigators (Mage = 42 years, Mexperience = 10 years) from the Nigeria Police Force in Lagos, Nigeria. Participants first read a crime vignette and then answered questions about what they would potentially do as the Investigating Police Officer in the case. Participants discussed their general preparation process for interviewing suspects and witnesses identified in the vignette, as well as the methods they may use to detect deception during the hypothetical interview. Results showed that more than half of the participants reported relying on body language to detect deception, and about 73% mentioned establishing an alibi from the suspect as a point of emphasis during the interview. This study provides one of the first detailed direct glimpses into police interviewing behaviours in Nigeria.

Double the Interviewers, Double the Pressure? Examining How the Number of Interviewers Influences Interview Experiences

Sierra Lucier-Lewis

Little experimental research has examined how the number of investigators present during an investigative interview may impact these interactions. The current study therefore sought to address this gap. Undergraduate participants (N = 141) were randomly assigned to view a first-person video of a mock investigative interview from the perspective of either a suspect or a victim, with either one or two interviewers present in the room. All participants then completed ratings of comfort, perceived pressure, willingness to disclose information, and sense of connection with the interviewer(s); suspect-condition participants also reported their likelihood of waiving or invoking their legal rights. Across conditions, victims reported greater comfort ($d = 0.38$), connection ($d = 0.37$), and willingness to disclose ($d = 0.89$) than suspects. However, the presence of two interviewers reduced comfort ($d = 0.71$) and increased perceived pressure ($d = 0.40$) for victims, while having minimal effects on suspects' perceptions and no meaningful impact on suspects' legal-rights decisions. These findings suggest that interviewer number differentially affects victims and suspects. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Confabulation, Investigative Interviewing, and Evidential Reliability

Michelle White

Confabulation poses a serious risk to the integrity of the criminal justice system. Although well-documented across neuroscientific and psychological research, confabulation receives less recognition within legal and policing discourse, despite the centrality of memory-based evidence in criminal cases. This paper adopts a multidisciplinary approach, integrating cognitive science, legal vulnerability and policing scholarship, to examine how confabulation arises in a criminal justice context, and how it is currently understood by practitioners. Confabulation is closely associated with cognitive vulnerabilities, including neurodivergence, mental-health conditions and trauma; factors disproportionately represented within the CJS. Consequently, this paper proposes that confabulation is more prevalent than previously recognised. It also suggests that, despite considerable progress in vulnerability-aware policing, there remains a substantial gap in practitioner awareness, particularly among police interviewers, legal representatives and appropriate adults. Using a doctrinal analysis of legislation, case law and professional guidance, this paper examines how confabulation is addressed in law, the adequacy of current training provisions and considers the extent to which current legal standards address situations known to provoke confabulatory responses. It identifies inconsistencies in the application of existing safeguards, including PEACE-aligned interviewing practices, and underscores the need for enhanced specialist training and legislative backing to ensure ethical and reliable evidence-gathering.

Vulnerability and PACE, 1984- A critical analysis into investigation of suspects in England and Wales

Prejal Shah

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act, 1984 (PACE) and the Codes of Practices (CoP) have been working on improving the investigation of vulnerable suspects since 2018. Some argue that the pre-2018 test of 'benefit of the doubt' test paved way for the new reforms to the para 1.4 of Code C CoP. (Dehaghani, R. (2019). Vulnerability in police custody – police decision-making and the appropriate adult safeguard. Routledge) Most of the recommendations focussed on vulnerable adult (VA), appropriate adult (AA), and Interview Managers(IM). One of the main reason of this focus was to determine the vulnerability of a suspect during investigation in the pre-trial stage. The presence of an AA with a VA, while paramount under Code C of PACE, has been under serious criticism over the past few years. While the training of Ims on vulnerability has changed over the past few years, the focus now needs to be on training police personnel on vulnerability. This research looks into PACE and CoP, the Mental Health Act, 1983 and its codes, and the Department of Health Act, 2015 while analysing these statutory provisions to improve PEACE training of IM and other police personnel (Vaughan, M., Milne, R., Cherryman, J., & Dalton, G. (2024). Managing investigative interviews with vulnerable suspects in the UK: do specialist interview managers (IM's) understand vulnerability? Psychology, Crime & Law, 1–20.) This research will look into the interaction of the IM, AA, along with the relevant legal advice and explore the quality of legal advice conveyed to the VA.

Disclosing online child sexual abuse

Hanna-Mari Lahtinen

Online child sexual abuse (OCSA) is a growing problem with worldwide implications for children. This study contributes to research on OCSA disclosure by examining factors associated with disclosing online abuse experiences to adults. Data were drawn from a population-based sample of 6,825 sixth- and ninth-grade students who participated in the Finnish Child Victim Survey 2022. Experiences of OCSA were reported by 23.1% of respondents. Most disclosed the experience to a friend (44.4%), whereas only a minority disclosed to an adult, and reporting to the police was rare (1%). The most common reason for non-disclosure was perceiving the experience as not serious enough to report it. Even when disclosure to an adult occurred, children were seldom encouraged to report to authorities. Multivariate analyses showed that being a girl, younger age, higher-quality parent-child relationships, trust in authorities, sharing images, prior experiences of online bullying, and peer relationship problems predicted disclosure to adults. The results indicate that despite awareness-raising campaigns, most OCSA experiences remain hidden from authorities. As early disclosure is crucial for terminating abuse and ensuring support, more targeted education for children and parents is needed. Implications for research and investigative interviewer practice are discussed.

Testing the effectiveness of new technologies in victim reporting to guide CSI deployment decisions

Alejandra De La Fuente Vilar

The quantity and accuracy of information provided to Crime Scene Investigators (CSIs) influence law enforcement deployment decisions in dwelling burglary incidents. This stakeholder co-created study examined whether remote video-mediated interviewing improves the quality of information obtained compared to standard telephone interviewing procedures. In a between-subjects experimental design (N = 70), participants were randomly allocated to either a video-mediated or telephonic reporting interview condition. After exploring a virtual environment and subsequently entering a matched physical mock burglary scene, participants completed a simulated reporting interview with authorities. Results indicated a significant effect of interview modality on both the quantity and accuracy of information reported, with video-mediated interviews yielding superior outcomes. Perceived rapport did not differ significantly between conditions. These findings suggest that real-time visual interaction may enhance the effectiveness of victim reporting in burglary cases, with direct implications for the adoption of digital communication technologies in frontline policing practice.

A Typology of Child Disclosure Patterns: Disclosing Abuse and Violence in a National Text-Based Chat Service

Caleb Schlaupitz

Maltreatment affects the lives of millions of children globally, showing links to negative outcomes across virtually every domain of functioning. Self-disclosing maltreatment could mitigate abuse and help garner emotional and instrumental support, but relatively little is known about the myriad ways that children disclose. The present study implemented an abductive approach to thematic analysis to identify patterns in how children elect to disclose maltreatment during anonymous online conversations via a national help chatline for children and youth. Joint coding scored chat conversations of 61 children (M_{age} = 14.5; range 9-17). Three distinct disclosure pattern typologies were constructed: purposeful (i.e., child was direct and deliberate in disclosing abuse and requesting help), tentative (i.e., child's mention of abusive behavior was less certain and necessitated confirmation from the chat operator), or elicited (i.e., child's disclosure occurred after being prompted by the operator). Additional sub-themes were generated under each main theme. Findings advance understanding of the processes and potential motivations underlying children's disclosures to helplines – a context in which increases in disclosure could improve early identification and intervention, but also inform policies regarding the operation of text-based chat services for children.

A Staged Intervention Model to Improve Access to Justice in Sexual Abuse Cases Involving Children and Adolescents with Disabilities: Experience at the Ministerio Público Tutelar of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Denise Benatuil

Ensuring effective access to justice for children and adolescents with disabilities requires assessment-driven forensic practices capable of identifying functional capacities and determining appropriate procedural adjustments. In line with Article 13 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a structured anticipatory forensic intervention model was developed to operationalize disability-inclusive standards in sexual abuse cases. The model is organized into three sequential stages. Stage one involves systematic case file analysis and the formation of the intervention team. Stage two consists of an individualized functional assessment aimed at informing procedural adjustments. This includes evaluation of primary and secondary cognitive abilities using the Capalist instrument, an informational interview with the primary caregiver, familiarization with the interview environment, and the preparation of a detailed technical report specifying recommended adjustments. Stage three comprises the forensic investigative interview, conducted with all assessment-informed adjustments implemented. The model began implementation in 2025 within the Ministerio Público Tutelar of the City of Buenos Aires, a public child rights protection agency, and has been applied in 50 cases. This framework seeks to consolidate disability-inclusive forensic practice, ensure procedural fairness, and strengthen evidentiary reliability in cases involving children and adolescents with disabilities.

Toward More Accurate Modelling of Interview Data in Investigative Research

Mircea Zloteanu

Investigative interviewing research directly informs forensic practice, shaping how professionals elicit information, assess credibility, and evaluate evidence. The strength of these contributions depends not only on theory and design, but on the use of statistical analyses that properly reflect the structure of the data. Many core outcomes in this field—such as the number of details reported, inconsistencies identified, or verifiable sources provided—are count variables that underpin substantive conclusions about interviewing effectiveness and deception detection. Count data are integers, typically positively skewed, bounded at zero, and often overdispersed. Yet they are frequently analysed using methods such as t-tests and ANOVAs that make unrealistic assumptions. When these assumptions are violated, parameter estimates may be biased, Type I error rates inflated, statistical power distorted, and effect sizes misrepresented. In a field where findings may inform training, policy, and courtroom testimony, such analytical mismatches risk compromising both scientific credibility and applied decision-making. We demonstrate the importance of aligning analyses with data structure by reanalysing investigative interviewing data using appropriate models. We show how conclusions can change when appropriate methods are applied. To facilitate adoption, we provide R code and Jamovi scripts as a practical guide, enabling researchers to implement these analyses easily.

Using a Cross-Cultural Incentivized Lie Paradigm to Investigate Decision-making in the Asylum Setting

Dilhan Toreli

In 2024, over eight million people applied for asylum (UNHCR, 2025). Because asylum seekers often lack external evidence, interviews are central to credibility assessments. However, most asylum-interview research relies on archival data, where the ground truth of claims—whether statements are actually truthful—is unknown, preventing investigation into the diagnostic value of truth/deception cues. We developed an incentivized lie paradigm tailored to the asylum context in which half of informants are instructed to tell the truth and half to fabricate information, establishing ground truth through a known-groups paradigm. To strengthen ecological validity, informants are incentivized to be perceived as credible through a reward if successful. We instructed non-heterosexual Turkish informants to provide truthful accounts of sexual identity-based experiences in Turkey, and heterosexual Turkish informants to fabricate such experiences. Finnish interviewers conducted online interviews with support from a legal interpreter. Interview transcripts are independently coded by two coders for credibility indicators commonly used by asylum adjudicators (i.e., detail, plausibility, consistency) enabling examination of how truth-tellers' and deceivers' narratives differ in asylum-like interviews. We expect truth-tellers to score higher than deceivers on all credibility measures. Data collection is ongoing; preliminary results will be presented at the conference.

The state of automated verbal deception detection

Riccardo Loconte

Humans' limitations in detecting verbal deception have sparked interest in automated and computational methods based on natural language processing and machine learning. Progress in this field, however, is hindered by fragmentation between psychology and computer science and by substantial heterogeneity in research practices. This work mapped research practices in automated verbal deception detection (AVDD) through a systematic review by analyzing 248 relevant records and 5,148 models. Results revealed that key strengths in AVDD are represented by research replicability and shifts toward methodological advances, such as embeddings for text representation and transformers for model architecture. Key limitations concern the need for more rigorous ground-truth standards, broader operationalizations of deception, and rigorous out-of-domain evaluation to advance the reliability and applicability of AVDD in legal and other high-stakes contexts. Furthermore, this work conducted a statistical analysis using linear mixed models to estimate the average AVDD accuracy across key methodological factors, including ground-truth level, experimental design, type of deception, linguistic features, model category, and evaluation approach. Findings from this analysis will be presented at the conference. Altogether, this systematic review and statistical analysis provide a detailed overview of the state of AVDD, informing future research and legal practitioners on its opportunities and challenges.

Deception Detection Accuracy: A Comparative Study Between Law Students and Professional Judges

Groza Gabriela

Background and Objectives: The current study investigates the proficiency in deception detection by comparing a cohort of lawstudents (N = 62; m = 19.9) with a sample of professional judges from the Romanian judicial system (N = 52; m = 37). The primary objective was to analyze the gap between objective accuracy and subjective confidence in legal decision-makers.

Methodology: Participants were exposed to 10 video stimuli featuring targets delivering either veracious or fabricated accounts. The experimental task followed a two-step protocol: • **Credibility Assessment:** Participants categorized each statement as truthful or deceptive. • **Confidence Rating:** Following each decision, participants quantified their level of certainty regarding the judgment made.

Results: The analysis examines the qualitative criteria employed by both groups (e.g., narrative coherence, emotional involvement, and perceptual details) during the evaluation process. Preliminary findings indicate a significant discrepancy between the metacognitive confidence of legal professionals and their actual accuracy in identifying deceptive behavior.

Conclusions: The research highlights the overconfidence bias prevalent among experienced decision-makers in the legal field. The results underscore the necessity of evidence-based training in forensic credibility assessment to mitigate the risks associated with intuitive, yet fallible, detection strategies in judicial proceedings.

Aligning Polygraph Interview Protocol with Evidence-Based Investigative Interviewing Practices

Rodolfo Prado-Pelayo

The polygraph interview is a central procedure in the administration of psychophysiological detection of deception (polygraph) tests. Historically, its application has incorporated techniques that emerged without empirical support and that may contradict principles and best practices derived from research in psychology and investigative interviewing. Over the past 20 years, we have developed a polygraph interview protocol that is carefully aligned with evidence-based interviewing practices. This evidence-based protocol has been implemented in at least four laboratory studies (published and unpublished) using mock-crime paradigms involving simulated theft, information leakage, and corruption. The empirical basis for the interview protocol comprises approximately 400 participants recruited through public announcements and more than 80 novice examiners. The objectives of the polygraph interview protocol include inducing cognitive rather than emotional activity, increasing the degree of standardization with an emphasis on rapport building and examinee comprehension, and eliminating suggestive practices, coercion, response contamination, and potential examiner bias. Across studies, this approach demonstrated classification accuracy (mean = 86%), with sensitivity of 80% and specificity of 92% when inconclusive outcomes were excluded.

This presentation briefly describes the polygraph interview protocol and its benefits in aligning practice with empirically validated interviewing principles. Findings are limited to laboratory settings with novice examiners.

Beyond the known benefits of invitations in child investigative interviews

Jannie van der Sleen

Empirical research has shown that both general and cued invitations within investigative interviews with children elicit more accurate information than directive, closed and option posing questions. Drawing on professional experience with child investigative interviewing, it is proposed that invitations offer additional benefits beyond those currently documented in the literature. This presentation illustrates this idea through examples and aims to stimulate further empirical research within the investigative interviewing framework.

Questioning the expertise of “experts” who recommend active hypothesis testing in child forensic interviews

Sarah MacDonald

The McMartin Preschool case in the 1980s was one of several alleged day care sex abuse cases that highlighted the need to establish best practices in forensic child interviews. As a result of that case, tens of millions of dollars were allocated to study and develop child interviewing techniques that were most likely to preserve the integrity of the accounts of children identified as possible victims and survivors of child abuse. That research led to the identification and standardization of the child forensic interviewing techniques widely used today. Despite the creation of best practices for child forensic interviews, courts sometimes accept as expert witnesses professionals who promote practices that should not be used when interviewing children who may have been victimized. A recent case in Canada underscores the critical need for awareness of best practices in child forensic interviews. This discussion article examines the dangers of viewing the lack of active hypothesis testing as a sign of poor interviewing.

From Guidelines to Ground-Level: A Qualitative Study of Forensic Interviewer Experiences in Child Maltreatment Cases

Georgia Lundon

Forensic interviews at Child Advocacy Centres (CACs) provide crucial evidence in child maltreatment investigations. Despite established best practice guidelines, a persistent gap exists between evidence-based recommendations and real-world implementation (Lamb, 2016). Rather than evaluating practice against academic standards, this study positions practitioners as experts whose insights should drive meaningful improvements to training and resources. This ongoing qualitative study employs semi-structured interviews with trained forensic interviewers (N = 20) from Southern California CACs. Interviews explore practitioners' experiences navigating bilingual interviews, multidisciplinary team (MDT) dynamics, and implementing evidence-based practices under real-world constraints. Data are analysed using thematic analysis with reliability coding. Data collection is underway (6 interviews completed, remaining interviews scheduled) with completion anticipated by April 2026. Preliminary findings reveal rich practitioner insights across two key areas. Regarding bilingual interviewing, participants identified recurring linguistic challenges including pronoun confusion, preposition errors, and pseudotemporal misunderstandings (mistaking 'tell me about the time' as a request for clock time), alongside adaptive interviewer strategies. Regarding MDT collaboration, participants described significant tensions with law enforcement, including pressure to elicit developmentally inappropriate responses and misunderstandings of legal definitions. Findings will inform practitioner-researcher collaboration to develop contextually relevant guidance that is evidence-based and practically feasible, strengthening outcomes for vulnerable children.

To plan or not to plan: German specialized police officers' views on preparing for child forensic interviews

Simone Pülschen

Conducting a child forensic interview places high cognitive demands on the interviewer. Any measures that reduce these demands relieve the interviewer and thus contribute to improving the interview, which ultimately also benefits the quality of the statements. Following, interviews should be thoroughly prepared. However, the interviewer's intuition or beliefs and knowledge of the allegation/s can unintentionally influence the interview. It is therefore crucial to develop alternative hypotheses. In Germany, specialized police officers who conduct child forensic interviews (N=18) were asked about their preparation for interviews. The majority of respondents stated that they specifically gather information using parents, files, the relevant public prosecutor's office or the youth welfare office as sources of information. Analysis of the responses revealed that interviewers predominantly prepared with a focus on three topics: gathering information on (a) the child's developmental stage, (b) the child's family situation, and (c) the circumstances of the alleged event. The preparation of video recordings was also frequently discussed. One area for improvement is the problem of interviewer bias due to prior information which is rarely addressed.

Service evaluation of Psychologist-Led investigative interviews for child victims who have experienced sexual abuse

Christina Trigeorgis

Background: This service evaluation explores the use and impact of specialist trained Clinical Psychologists conducting child investigative interviews in collaboration with the police, as part of the Lighthouse (Barnahus) sexual abuse service in London. The model and practice of using Clinical Psychologist interviewers will be explored, including the aims of supporting children to provide high-quality evidence while minimising harm and re-traumatisation. This is done by drawing on expertise in child development, trauma-informed practice and emotional wellbeing; alongside comprehensive planning, rapport building, interviewer techniques and supervision in line with best-practice.

Methods: Psychologist-led interviews were evaluated through feedback from children and young people, and professional stakeholders (e.g. Police, Social workers, Intermediaries and Interpreters) who used the service. Qualitative and quantitative feedback were collected through age-appropriate questionnaires. Interviewer-rated checklists were collected to capture interviewer fidelity to best-practice protocols.

Results: Evaluation data, demographic data and case characteristics from Psychologist-led investigative interviews will be presented. Findings indicated that interviews were developmentally appropriate and sensitive to children's needs while maintaining evidentiary integrity. Qualitative themes related to views of the interview quality, interviewer expertise, impact on child victims, child-friendly environment and multi-agency collaboration.

Discussion: Learning from the evaluation and future directions for research and practice will be discussed.

Recognizing and interviewing intellectually disabled suspects

Robin Kranendonk

Suspects with intellectual disability (ID) are overrepresented in the criminal justice system; approximately one-third of suspects have ID. However, ID often goes unrecognized, posing risks to procedural rights. Interviews not adapted to cognitive limitations, heightened suggestibility, and compliance can lead to inaccurate statements, false confessions, insufficient support, and wrongful sanctions. Empirical knowledge on detecting ID and adapted interviewing remains limited. This presentation demonstrates how suspects with ID are recognized and interviewed in Dutch police practice and how questioning techniques affect statement accuracy and comprehensiveness. The analysis draws on semi-structured interviews and observations of police interviews.

Findings show that prior knowledge of ID and specialized training improve recognition and interviewing practices. Trained interviewers addressed relevant personal topics (e.g., education) more often and probed responses more thoroughly than untrained interviewers, who focused on general topics (e.g., work) and appeared less aware of vulnerabilities. Among 44% of perceived nonvulnerable suspects, signs of ID were present. Training and prior knowledge resulted in greater attention to legal rights, rapport-building, and fewer confrontational techniques. Open-ended questioning, active listening, and verification yielded more case-related information. The presentation highlights the need to integrate vulnerability recognition and adapted interviewing into police and judicial training and strengthen regulatory frameworks.

Psychological vulnerability of suspects in postmodern societies and its implications for the implementation of the Mendez Principles

Jelena Djubina

Contemporary society is increasingly shaped by digitalization, which intensifies information overload, chronic stress that reduces individual resilience, and social fragmentation that weakens support systems. These factors may manifest themselves in investigative interview settings. Socio-psychological conditions influence the formation of criminal behaviour and may simultaneously generate from of vulnerability within criminal justice proceeding. They affect impulse control, emotional regulation, cognitive processes, and the ability withstand pressure. Traditional understandings of vulnerability in investigative contexts typically focus on predefined legal categories, such as age diagnosed mental disorder. However, vulnerability may also take a situational and socially conditioned form, affecting individuals who do not formally belong to recognised “vulnerable” groups. Drawing on socio-psychological theory and, where available, elements of discourse analysis of investigative interviews, this paper examines how digitalization as a significant contextual factor may shape communicative behaviour and decision-making during suspect questioning. References to online platforms are analysed as indicators of boarder social transformations influencing interactional dynamics. It is argued that effective implementation of the Mendez Principles requires recognition of dynamic and situational vulnerability. Such an approach enables better identification of interviewees’needs, adaptation of interview procedures, reduction of coercive risks, and strengthened protection of human rights.

Introducing and (re)framing interviewee vulnerability in light of (Imple)Méndez

Roxanna Dehaghani

Whereas Principle 3 of the Méndez Principles provides some guidance and entails a broad interpretation of vulnerability, on a conceptual level it still poses some challenges as to fully grasping vulnerability (e.g. how individual and situational vulnerability relate to one another) and how to deal with it in practice. As such, this presentation will entail an analysis of Principle 3, reflecting on the approach taken to vulnerability, based on how vulnerability may manifest itself within different interviewees (e.g. suspects vs. witnesses, criminal vs. non-criminal contexts) and different legal systems (e.g. predominant inquisitorial vs. accusatorial systems). Based on this reflection, the presentation will discuss the advantages and remaining gaps and questions regarding the conceptualization of interviewee vulnerability. It will then develop a set of recommendations for further interpretation and implementation of Principle 3, accounting for different manifestations of vulnerability depending on the particular context and status of the interviewee (being a suspect, victim and/or witness). As such, the presentation will provide input for how to move forward with a view to implementing Principle 3 in interviewing practices.

Day 2

Investigative Interviewing of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Malaysia

Kai Li Chung

Children with intellectual disabilities are at heightened risk of sexual victimisation and face substantial barriers to disclosure due to communication challenges and social vulnerabilities. Despite these vulnerabilities, investigative interviewing practices in many parts of the world do not cater to the needs of children with intellectual disabilities. This study represents the first Malaysian effort to systematically examine interview practices involving alleged child sexual abuse victims with intellectual disabilities. It comprises three components: (1) in-depth interviews with police officers to understand their experiences and challenges; (2) analysis of interview transcripts to evaluate question types used; and (3) a workshop aimed at improving officers' knowledge about best practice interviewing of children with intellectual disabilities. This collaborative initiative seeks to generate culturally relevant research findings and advance the application of psychology within the Malaysian criminal justice system.

Police interviewer personality profile matrix research project – an interview 'speed dating' tool for police

Michel Funicelli

The enquiry by Funicelli and Laurence in 2017 was first to propose the creation of a profile matrix from which to match the personality and communicative suspiciousness traits and competency abilities of police interviewers with personality profiles of serious crime offenders with the objective in mind to optimise rapport building. The findings of that investigation showed that roughly 25% of the variance in the outcome of a positive suspect interview was accounted by two types of police profiles: Extroversion and Communicative Suspiciousness, and another one of combined traits of Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Communicative Suspiciousness. The objectives of this research project are 1) to replicate the Canadian study with a larger sample of UK and US based police officers, and 2) to extend the study to include CCCU and USC students, as proxies for serious offenders, in confiding serious social transgressions with independent third parties. The reasoning behind a profile matrix is to optimise the outcome of a suspect interview. Confessions in wrongful conviction cases show that police interviews are a significant source of miscarriages of justice with figures ranging from 15-20% based on DNA exonerations. We hypothesize that better quality rapport-based suspect interviews are likely to reduce potential judicial errors.

Field reflections from training Finnish asylum officials in investigative interviewing

Jenny Skrifvars

Interviewing asylum applicants is a vital, yet challenging part of the refugee status determination procedure. Research has shown that asylum officials only partly adhere to best-practice guidelines. To address this, we recently developed and ran a novel training program in investigative interviewing and legal psychology for Finnish asylum officials and found it to significantly improve the officials' know-how. During the training, officials reported various practical and organizational constraints that hinder best-practice interviewing and negatively affect their work. This field reflection builds on the officials' reports and our observations as trainers. The most commonly reported challenges related to procedural aspects of how the interviews are organized, such as the high workload during the interview, the set-up of the interviewing rooms, and the collaboration with both interpreters and legal representatives. Another set of challenges related to questioning techniques, with officials struggling to build rapport and instruct the applicants effectively. As these concerns can have a considerable negative impact on both interview quality and work-related stress and motivation, addressing them is vital. We discuss the challenges in relation to empirical research and propose recommendations for future research and practice.

"It doesn't matter what we say he believes this person": Practitioner Perspectives of identifying and working with neurodivergence and vulnerability in victim survivors of romance fraud

Jo Kenrick

Fraud and cybercrime is now the most likely type of crime for a person to experience in the UK, with over £100 million lost to romance fraud in 2024. A recent nationally representative survey revealed that neurodivergent individuals are 50% more likely to be victims of fraud than neurotypical individuals. Reluctant victims, poor resourcing and a lack of training make this a difficult crime for investigators. We know that vulnerability is conceptualised poorly by those investigating fraud offences (Skidmore et al., 2020) and that fraud is often viewed by police as "low-harm, low-priority and less legitimate" than violent crime (Kaseem & Turksen, 2025). So, building a clear understanding of what vulnerability and susceptibility mean in this context are essential to inform prevention strategies. The current study is part of a wider participatory project in partnership with fraud prevention officers from Kent and Essex police forces, autistic adults, and victim survivors of romance fraud. Here we survey police officers and other frontline practitioners to assess how well the risk and protective factors identified in academic literature map on to their real-world experience. We also identify challenges they experience working with this crime, specifically in identifying vulnerability through neurodivergence.

Developing an international expert consensus definition of suggestion: A modified Delphi study

Madeline Stein

The term 'suggestion' is frequently used in a wide variety of clinical and research domains spanning law, medicine, psychiatry, and psychology. However, the term is often undefined, poorly defined, or used inconsistently, leading to ambiguity in its usage across theoretical, empirical, and clinical domains. This presentation will review the results of a pre-registered, three-round modified Delphi study recruiting international experts from the fields of hypnosis, placebo/nocebo responding, and forensic/memory research to establish a consensus definition of suggestion. Exploratory questions were used to characterise experts' perspectives on within- and between-context stability of responsiveness to suggestion (i.e., suggestibility). Thirty-nine expert panellists participated, and 94% completed all three rounds. Panellists reached moderate consensus (75.6% agreement) on a definition of suggestion. There was no consensus on the temporal stability of suggestibility (44% agreement), on whether hypnotic, placebo/nocebo, and forensic contexts share an underlying domain of suggestion (37% agreement), and views on preferred terminology for suggestibility were heterogeneous. The establishment of a consensus definition of the term suggestion provides a foundation for improved cross-domain communication and theory development and enables novel directions for basic and applied research.

Examining cross-examination with autistic adults

Ralph Bagnall

Cross-examination is a key component of proceedings in the court system, but is widely recognised as challenging - particularly for vulnerable court-users. In contrast to traditional adversarial questioning, the 'best-evidence' approach emphasises clear, concise, non-leading questions. To date, no studies have directly compared autistic adults' cross-examination testimony under traditional vs best-evidence conditions. Across two experimental studies, we examine the effects of cross-examination style on autistic witnesses' evidence and its evaluation by mock jurors. In Study 1, autistic adults (n = 56) viewed a mock-crime video, provided a witness statement, and underwent either a traditional or best-evidence mock cross-examination by a trainee barrister. Outcomes included testimony accuracy and completeness, self-reported clarity of questions, and examination-related anxiety. In Study 2, mock jurors (target n = 800) viewed video excerpts from these examinations and rated witness coherence, credibility, and question clarity. Data collection and analysis will be completed by March, with full results to be presented at IIRG 2026. This research provides the first experimental evidence on how cross-examination style influences the quality of autistic witnesses' evidence and how that evidence is perceived by jurors. Findings will have implications for policy and practice to ensure cross-examination is fair and effective for autistic court-users.

Trauma Exposure in Investigative and Legal Contexts: Secondary Traumatic Stress Among Canadian Interpreters

Tyler Szusecki

Across investigative and legal interviewing contexts, spoken-language interpreters are routinely asked to communicate detailed accounts of violence, persecution, and loss. Their repeated exposure to traumatic material, paired with limited structural supports, raises important questions about how to prepare and protect interpreters who facilitate high-stakes interviews. Secondary traumatic stress (STS), which captures the negative psychological effects of indirect exposure to trauma, and compassion satisfaction (CS), which reflects the positive feelings derived from meaningful work, are particularly relevant to understanding interpreter well-being. We report preliminary findings from an ongoing national survey of Canadian interpreters ($N = 51$). Among those who completed the STS subscale ($n = 41$), average STS scores were low ($M = 20.1$, $SD = 6.9$), though 34.1% reported moderate STS. Experiences with traumatic content were common, with 37.5% reporting frequent exposure. CS scores were high ($M = 42.5$, $SD = 6.7$), with 65.9% falling in the high range (> 42). CS was moderately and inversely correlated with STS ($r = -.45$, $p = .003$), suggesting a potential protective role. Findings highlight a risk-resilience profile with implications for investigative interviewing practice, including interpreter preparation, support, and the development of trauma-informed interview procedures that minimize STS while preserving interview quality.

Forensic Linguistics Implications of Interpreting Swearwords in Police Interviews

Alberto Hijazo-Gascón

This study examines the forensic linguistic implications of interpreting swearwords in police interviews, particularly in cases involving vulnerable victims. From a forensic linguistics perspective, insults are not merely lexical items but potential evidentiary elements whose translation can shape legal outcomes. As emotion-laden expressions (Pavlenko 2008), swearwords trigger strong affective responses and may constitute key evidence in hate crimes (Hale et al. 2020). Their perceived offensiveness varies across languages, genders, and social groups, making accurate interpretation crucial in judicial contexts (Beers-Fägersten, 2007, Jay and Janschewitz 2008). The methodology of the study consists of different tasks. First, 36 interpreting students translated 30 insults in three simulated police interview settings (domestic violence, homophobic aggression, and insults against a police officer) between English and Spanish. Second, over 200 native speakers of British English and European Spanish rated the offensiveness of the swearwords used in the first task. Findings reveal inconsistencies in trainees' renditions, often mitigating or intensifying severity. Survey results also show that gender and experiences of discrimination influence offensiveness ratings.

Interviewees, Interviewers, and Interpreters: Understanding the Key Factors that Benefit Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) Sexual Assault Victim-Survivors in Investigative Interviews

Celine Van Golde

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) victim-survivors of sexual assault face heightened vulnerability, especially when investigative interviews neglect to consider their diverse beliefs, norms, attitudes, and behaviours stemming from cultural differences (van Golde, et al., 2022). Our first study seeks to validate potential disparities in memory report quality and quantity between CaLD and non-CaLD interviewees. Additionally, we investigate the role of interpreters in potentially mitigating memory differences. We recruited bilingual Mandarin speaker and native English speakers to engage with an implied sexual assault scenario in a virtual reality headset. They then went through a cognitive interview with a trained interviewer to report on the scenario after one week delay. The bilingual Mandarin participants were randomly assigned to be interviewed in Mandarin (M-M), in English (M-E), or interview in English with the assistance of an interpreter (M-I-E). Native English speakers were all interviewed in English (E-E). Participants were asked to provide a free recall report of the scenario, and their stress level will be measured before and after experiencing the scenario and then before and after the interview. Interpreters' stress level was also measured. Participants were also asked to describe their impression of the interview, the interviewer and the interpreter (in conditions where there was an interpreter). Preliminary results will be presented and discussed. We hope these results will shed light on the nuances that demand attention for a more culturally sensitive approach in investigative interview practices.

Understanding Language Synchrony in Parole Hearing Interviews

Roshni Sohail

Parole hearings are a high-stakes interview context where the interaction between parties can influence decisions regarding the interviewee's freedom. Though language style matching (LSM) has been shown to facilitate cooperation, rapport, and positive outcomes in police investigative interviews, little is known about interview practices and linguistic synchrony in parole hearing interviews. Examining 600 transcripts from parole suitability hearings from a US-based Department of Corrections, the results showed that verbal mimicry was highest in parole hearings involving incarcerated individuals designated as low risk for future violence. Conversely, verbal mimicry scores were significantly lower for those who posed an elevated risk of violence, particularly if they had been denied parole previously. Controlling for an incarcerated individual's risk level, LSM scores did not predict the final parole decision. These results indicate that other factors (e.g., pre-determined clinical risk level) may overshadow interpersonal dynamics and linguistic synchrony during the hearing interview. These findings raise questions regarding parole hearing interviewers' ability to foster a cooperative environment with higher-risk individuals and highlight potential barriers to rapport-building in the parole process. Overall, the present study underscores the need for further investigation into how various factors influence the communicative fairness of high-stakes interviews.

A call for research on bilingual eyewitness memory

Christina Perez

Many forensic interactions between eyewitnesses and legal professionals are inherently linguistic in nature. Eyewitnesses must recount their experiences across multiple settings, and these reports are then evaluated by jurors, judges, and attorneys. Despite decades of eyewitness memory research, few researchers have explored whether bilingualism impacts the quality and accuracy of eyewitness reports. Though research with monolingual populations has been helpful in developing investigative interviewing techniques, their findings may yield limited generalizability to bilingual witnesses. As international migration increases, legal professionals are increasingly likely to encounter bilingual witnesses. To properly address the needs of bilingual witnesses in upcoming decades, empirical research must be conducted before practitioners and researchers can recommend and utilize appropriate interview techniques.

Our presentation will serve as a call for eyewitness researchers to meet this need for increased research on this subject. We will begin our presentation by providing an overview of the cognitive, linguistic, and emotional correlates of bilingualism and their influence on the encoding, storage, and retrieval of autobiographical memories. We will then present the findings from our systematic review of the literature on autobiographical memory in bilinguals. The forensic implications of our findings and future directions for research will be discussed.

Self-Reported Investigative Interviewing Competence, Knowledge, and Professional Beliefs in the Swiss Police: A National Baseline Survey

Wylter Helen

As part of COST Action CA22128 ("ImpleMéndez"), which supports the implementation of the Méndez Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering, we conducted a national baseline survey among Swiss police officers. The study aims to document current self-assessed interviewing competence, training experience, familiarity with evidence-based techniques, and professional beliefs regarding what constitutes a "good" police interview. German-, French-, and Italian-speaking police officers (N = 1,169; M = 15 years of service, SD = 9.6) from cantonal and federal police corps and across policing branches completed a brief online questionnaire. Familiarity with interviewing techniques and conceptions of effective interviewing were assessed using open-ended questions, enabling qualitative content analysis of officers' reported knowledge and professional beliefs alongside quantitative results on self-assessed competence and training experience. The findings provide the first nationwide empirical baseline of self-reported investigative interviewing competence, knowledge, and beliefs among the Swiss police. Results will be presented and discussed in relation to the Méndez Principles, with particular focus on alignment with evidence-based investigative interviewing principles. This baseline assessment serves as a reference point for guiding implementation efforts and evaluating future progress in Switzerland.

Assessing Tier 1 Investigative Interviewing Skills: Comparing Training Formats and Standardising Methods

Denis Lino

Assessing investigative interviewing skills is necessary to ensure evidence-based practice. Despite a tiered structure in various countries, most research focuses on evaluating advanced levels, neglecting the large number of professionals trained at level 1. The present research addressed this gap by analysing different ways to assess training at tier 1. One of the approaches used self-report questionnaires to measure adherence to appropriate and inappropriate practices in an interview. Data from 573 police officers in initial training showed that theoretical training led to significant changes in knowledge about human memory, false confessions, and in the perception of best practices, such as the use of open-ended questions, strategic planning, and rapport building. A second strategy sought to construct a standardised multiple-choice test to serve as an evaluation tool for students. Data from 587 police officers showed that a theoretical module, delivered either online or in-person, resulted in students from different jurisdictions achieving average scores between 70% and 100%, depending on the teaching format and student profile. Therefore, the importance of building standardised and validated methods for student approval at tier 1 is highlighted, it could help identify areas for improvement in training and the most cost-effective teaching format.

Bullshit on Bullshit: Compounding AI Errors and Investigative Interviewing

Brandon May

AI systems are being deployed across policing, drafting reports (Adams et al., 2024), summarising intelligence (May et al., 2026), and supporting investigative interviewing (May, 2025). Yet current frameworks treat AI errors as discrete, detectable events. This paper argues they are neither. Drawing on Frankfurt's (2005) concept of bullshit -- outputs characterised by indifference to truth rather than intent to deceive -- we present a three-category Taxonomy of Bullshit operationalised for policing. Specifically, we present factuality errors (fabricated content), faithfulness errors (departure from source material or instructions), and task-specific errors (violations of investigative and professional standards). In interviewing contexts, these errors are already present across the investigative cycle. For instance, AI-generated case summaries that brief interviewers before they enter the room; question generation tools that rely on assumptions about what happened; and AI-assisted transcription and narrative tools that smooths, fills, and restructures what witnesses/victims/suspects say. We argue that each of these represents a point at which bullshit can enter the process undetected (i.e., a factuality error within a faithfulness error, surfacing through a task-specific error, requires simultaneous application of distinct detection strategies). We conclude by arguing that existing processes (e.g., PEACE) were never designed to catch these errors.

Automated Coding of Questions and Responses in Forensic Interviews and Trial Testimony

Zsofia Szojka

Automated question type coding models that have achieved high reliability with manual coders can generally only distinguish among broad question categories (Røed et al., 2023; Szojka et al., 2025). We examined whether two large language models (RoBERTa) trained on questions (N=351,920) and responses (N=125,603) from forensic interviews (n=1,435) and trial testimony (n=416) involving 3-to 17-year-old alleged victims of CSA can achieve high reliability with manual coders when discerning among six types of questions and five types of responses. In addition to the previously explored categories (invitations, wh-questions, option-posing, non-questions), we trained the question classification model to identify 'do you know/remember' questions, which can lead to referential ambiguity (Evans et al., 2014), and tag questions, which strongly imply an expected response (Cassel et al., 1996). We then trained the response classification model to distinguish among unelaborated 'yes', elaborated 'yes', unelaborated 'no', elaborated 'no', and all other responses. Unelaborated responses to option-posing questions are often ambiguous (Szojka & Lyon, 2024). The question and response classification models achieved high reliability with manual coders (both models: K=.94). Automated question and response type classification provides an accurate method of evaluating the quality of questioning and identifying potentially ambiguous responses in forensic interviews and court testimonies.

AI in Elicitation: Evidence from Rapid Reviews on ‘Interviewing’ Systems and AI-Enabled Interview Training

Lorraine Hope

We present findings from two rapid reviews on the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in information elicitation relevant to security and investigative contexts. The first review examined conversational AI systems, including chatbots and large language model-based agents, used to gather sensitive disclosures across health, social care, research, and public-safety reporting. Evidence suggests that conversational design features shaped disclosure quality, while risks related to misunderstanding, privacy, trust, and content accuracy persisted. Despite rapid adoption, evidence for reliable elicitation remains fragmented and highly dependent on conversational design and human oversight. The literature is also beset by significant methodological inadequacies. The second review examined AI-based training for investigative interviewing. Traditional classroom approaches often fail to shift entrenched questioning habits, whereas avatar-based simulations with immediate feedback improve the use of open questions, rapport-building, and information accuracy, with skills transferring into practice. Emerging AI-driven avatars offered dynamic and scalable training, with early evidence from adult contexts showing gains when feedback was integrated. Together, the reviews explore strengths and weakness in the use of AI as a tool to support information elicitation. Evidence-informed considerations and recommendations will be outlined to support ethical and effective integration of AI into elicitation workflows and training.

Virtual Kids – Training Child Interviews Using Virtual Characters Based on Role-Playing LLMs

Teresa Schneider

Interviews with children in suspected cases of sexual abuse pose substantial challenges for law enforcement, as in most cases the child’s statement is the sole piece of evidence and children are particularly vulnerable to suggestive questioning. Conducting such interviews therefore requires specialized training, yet opportunities for realistic practice are limited. To address this gap, we developed virtual child characters using the concept of serious gaming to train law enforcement in child interviewing. The system automatically classifies interview questions as recommended or non-recommended and generates corresponding responses using large language models (LLMs). When interviewers increasingly ask suggestive questions, the virtual characters respond with distorted or false information, thereby simulating the risks associated with poor interviewing practices. At the end of each interview, interviewers automatically receive individualized feedback on their interview performance. In an initial small-scale evaluation study, police officers (N = 39) completed a training session with five different virtual characters. Preliminary results show that the training increases the use of recommended questions while reducing the use of non-recommended questions. In the oral presentation, the training software will be introduced, the results of the study will be presented and the potential for police education and further training will be discussed.

Training Police Interviewers to Adapt to Suspects with Speech, Language and Communication Needs Using an AI Simulation

Fiona Stuart

Individuals with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) are significantly over-represented in police custody, yet these needs are frequently unidentified. Police are not routinely trained to identify SLCN and adapt their communication accordingly. Standard police training often assumes typical language processing and is designed and delivered in-house without specialist input (e.g. Speech and Language Therapy or Registered Intermediary expertise). This places vulnerable suspects at risk of reduced participation and can contribute to unreliable evidence. The research underpinning this paper explores the use of an AI interface simulation as a novel training tool to support police interviewers in adapting their questioning strategies for suspects with SLCN. The AI Simulation utilises agentic loops in two ways. First, it simulates a young male suspect with undiagnosed Developmental Language Difficulties (DLD) and responds dynamically to officer questions. Second, the AI functions as an interview trainer, analysing officer inputs against specific linguistic parameters, including vocabulary frequency, information-carrying words, negation and question type. Immediate feedback is provided, with simplified alternatives suggested where appropriate. This paper presents the design and proposed implementation of a pilot evaluation with police officers, examining feasibility and perceived impact on interview practice. The research contributes to emerging interdisciplinary work at the intersection of law and policing, communication vulnerability, and applied artificial intelligence.

Méndez in practice: A survey of Icelandic investigative interviewing

Olafur Orn Bragason

Ethical and evidence-informed interviewing practices are widely recognised as essential to legitimate and effective criminal investigations. In practice, however, how such standards are applied depends on both individual routines and the organisational environment in which investigators work. This study examines current interviewing practices among serving Icelandic detective officers, drawing on the Méndez Principles as a guiding reference point.

An anonymous nationwide online survey has been designed for distribution to practicing detectives in Iceland. The questionnaire gathers background information (including professional experience, prior training, and interview frequency) and includes 45 Likert-type items (Never–Always). These items address key dimensions of interviewing practice, such as preparation and information-gathering approaches; rapport and communication; procedural safeguards and adaptations for vulnerability; recording and transparency; the active consideration of alternative hypotheses; perceived organisational support; and opportunities for reflection and feedback within the workplace. The analysis will provide an overview of how closely current practices align with the Méndez Principles and will explore organisational factors that may support or constrain their sustained use. By identifying patterns in both practice and context, the study aims to contribute to ongoing discussions about both policy and professional development in investigative interviewing.

Transitioning to Evidence-Based Practices: Preliminary Findings on the Adaptability of the PEACE Model within Turkish Law Enforcement

Esra Çetinöz

The effectiveness of criminal justice outcomes is inherently linked to the quality of interviews conducted with suspects, victims, and witnesses. While global trends shift from coercive, confession-oriented methods toward information-gathering frameworks, implementing these techniques requires a context-specific understanding of local institutional cultures. This study, conducted within the scope of the COST Action IMPEMENDEZ, explores the current interviewing landscape in Türkiye to develop a culturally sensitive framework for investigative interviewing. The methodology employs a multi-phase approach involving semi-structured interviews with 15 recently retired Turkish police investigators experienced in diverse crime categories, including homicide and organized crime. Participants were selected based on their extensive field experience to provide a retrospective yet contemporary look at investigative practices. Data analysis is currently being conducted using thematic content analysis, systematically categorized according to the five stages of the PEACE model: Planning and Preparation, Engage and Explain, Account, Closure, and Evaluation. Preliminary findings indicate distinct patterns in how Turkish investigators manage the "Account" and "Engage" phases, revealing culturally unique aspects and institutional challenges that may influence the transition from traditional methods to ethical interviewing standards. The final results aim to provide a roadmap for a training-needs analysis and a localized model of investigative interviewing that upholds human rights while ensuring high-quality evidence collection.

Techniques and Practices in Investigative Interviewing with Adult Suspects in Europe: A Scoping Review

Samuel Pinheiro

Suspect interviewing is a crucial yet fragile step of criminal investigations, with interview quality directly influencing the amount of relevant information elicited. While previous research has studied the interviewing techniques used by members of the criminal justice system in different European countries, systematising this knowledge is an essential step towards the implementation of evidence-based interviewing practices. This scoping review, conducted according to JBI guidelines and the PRISMA-ScR statement, maps out the techniques used in investigative interviewing with adult suspects in Europe, as well as the perceptions of police officers, magistrates and suspects regarding this topic. A total of 65 studies were included, published between 1991 and 2025, taking place in 14 countries. Preliminary results—derived from a sample of 19 studies analysing real investigative interviews—suggest that there are similarities in the techniques used in the countries included. Nonetheless, different patterns were found across countries, which will be presented and discussed. These discrepancies are particularly significant in the use of challenges and rapport and relationship building techniques, which manifested differently in the countries analysed. Additionally, our results suggest a limited use of evidence-based interviewing techniques, and the existence of a gap between best practice and the reality of police interviewing.

Ethical Interrogation in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Investigator Attitudes and Pathways for Reform in Sarajevo Canton

Adnan Fazlić

This presentation examines investigator attitudes toward ethical interrogation practices in Sarajevo Canton, Bosnia and Herzegovina, with reference to the Méndez Principles. Survey data from 119 police investigators reveal encouraging support for ethical techniques such as patience (87.7% agreement) and preparation (84.1% agreement). At the same time, mixed views on audiovisual recording (40% agreement) and communication balance (22% agreement), together with continued endorsement of coercive tactics such as interruptions and the “good cop/bad cop” strategy (24.6%), highlight significant contradictions in attitudes. These results demonstrate both positive orientations toward humane interviewing and persistent reliance on accusatorial traditions. Furthermore, the findings point to a clear gap between ethical ideals and investigator attitudes, underscoring the need to align police organisational culture with the Méndez Principles. Experience and recent training were shown to strengthen support for rapport-based approaches, suggesting that structured professional development can serve as a lever for change. This presentation argues that reforming organisational culture in Sarajevo Canton, and more broadly across Bosnia and Herzegovina, requires embedding non-coercive, evidence-based methods into interrogation practice. Such reforms would enhance information accuracy, safeguard human rights, and build public trust, situating Bosnia and Herzegovina within the global movement toward ethical and effective investigative interviewing.

When Children Kill Children: Ethical Interviewing and the Cross-Norm Inhibition Effect in Juvenile Homicide Investigations in Türkiye

Lütfiye Kaya Cicerali

Cases in which children are accused of killing other children, often without prior ties and sometimes portrayed as emotionally detached, draw intense public attention and place investigative authorities under extraordinary pressure. When minors are suspected of serious violence, they occupy a paradoxical position. They are legally vulnerable as children, yet publicly perceived as dangerous offenders. This tension raises an urgent question about whether investigative practices remain aligned with the standards set out in the Méndez Principles on effective interviewing. This qualitative study examines how ethical interviewing standards are implemented in juvenile homicide investigations in Türkiye. It combines phenomenological hermeneutic analysis of interviews with active and retired police officers, prosecutors, and forensic experts with content analysis of case files, statutory frameworks, court decisions, and media narratives from the past decade. The analysis focuses on due process safeguards, evidentiary practices, and the treatment of child suspects during interrogation in contexts shaped by public and political pressure. Drawing on the concept of the cross norm inhibition effect, the study explores how competing expectations around child protection, deterrence, public security, and accountability influence adherence to non-coercive interviewing principles.

From Recognition to Response: do Lawyers Recognize Suspect Suggestibility in Police Interviews?

Tanja van Veldhuize

Since 2016, Dutch defence lawyers have been permitted to attend police interviews. They may intervene when a client does not understand a question, faces undue pressure, or when continuing the interview would be irresponsible. This safeguard is vital for all suspects, but especially for vulnerable individuals who may be more suggestible. Lawyers therefore need to recognize signs of vulnerability and suggestibility and adjust their advice accordingly. Previous qualitative research (Mergaerts, 2021) suggests that lawyers usually detect vulnerability intuitively, drawing on experience and focusing mainly on the suspect’s behaviour and communication, while paying less attention to situational factors. Building on these findings, the present study investigates experimentally whether lawyers can identify suggestible answering patterns, and whether this ability depends on the presence of a formal diagnosis of mild intellectual disability. In an online vignette study, Dutch defence lawyers read two excerpts from fictional investigative interviews with a suspect of attempted arson. The vignettes vary both the presence of a mild intellectual disability and whether the suspect resists or adopts suggested information. We also explore how lawyers would adapt their assistance to the suspect’s needs. Data collection is ongoing; results will be presented at the conference.

Redefining the Suspect in Polish Criminal Proceedings: Implications for the Right to a Fair Trial

Piotr Woldan

The Polish governmental Bill (Print No. 1600) proposes amendments to the Polish Code of Criminal Procedure and related legislative acts, aiming to implement EU directives into domestic law, including Directive 2013/48/EU. One of the most significant changes introduced by the bill concerns a new legal definition of a suspect in Polish law. Although the adoption of the bill remains uncertain, it constitutes an important step towards strengthening suspects' procedural rights. In particular, the proposal explicitly broadens the right of access to a lawyer and the right to receive information about procedural rights. This presentation provides an overview of the bill as it relates to suspects and examines its potential impact on the interviewing of suspects and on criminal trials more generally. The analysis is framed by the Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering (the Méndez Principles), with particular emphasis on Principle 2 („On Practice”) and incorporates the views of practitioners such as prosecutors, judges, and defense lawyers. While the bill enhances suspects' rights - for example, by allowing the postponement of an interview until legal counsel arrives and by expanding access to legal aid - it fails to introduce certain safeguards, most notably mandatory audio-visual recording of suspect interviews.

The Same but Different? The Impact of Language on the Understanding of Interrogation Tactics and Legal Rights within Suspect Interviews

Quintan Crough

An increasing portion of the US population speaks English as a second language (L2). Weaker L2 proficiency poses a significant risk for individuals in the criminal justice system. It has been well-documented that limited L2 proficiency negatively affects suspect decision-making and contributes to false confessions. In the present study we examined the impact of language proficiency and interrogation tactic on bilingual's understanding of their legal rights (e.g., right to remain silent) and subjective perceptions of the legal interview (e.g., pressure) and expected legal outcomes (e.g., sentence severity). A sample of N = 181 university students who were highly-proficient speakers of Spanish and English were randomly assigned to review interrogation transcripts from one of four interrogation tactic conditions: Control (i.e., neutral, information-gathering questioning), Rapport (relationship-building and trust-enhancing communication), Minimization (downplaying the seriousness of the offense or offering moral justifications), or Maximization (emphasizing the seriousness of the offense and potential consequences), in either Spanish or English. All participants then completed language proficiency measures and reported on various perceptions of the interview (e.g., pressure), expected legal outcomes (e.g., sentence severity), and their understanding of their legal rights. Participants in the Maximization condition reported the highest levels of perceived offense severity and pressure and the lowest levels of perceived sympathy. Participants in the Minimization condition reported the lowest ratings of severity and the highest ratings of sympathy and leniency. In the Maximization condition perceptions of pressure were lower for transcripts in English relative to Spanish, and the magnitude of the difference increased with increasing English dominance. English-dominant participants rated their understanding of their rights higher in both the English and Spanish conditions in all interrogation tactic conditions except the Minimization condition. In the Minimization condition English-dominant participants rated their understanding of their right the lowest in the English transcript condition. These results suggest that inferences and rights understanding are not language neutral. Rather, interview language can shift Spanish-English bilinguals' understanding of risk, protection, and likely outcomes, seemingly placing such individuals at a particular disadvantage when interrogated in English. Theoretical and practical implications for investigative interviews conducted with Spanish-English bilingual suspects will be discussed.

Exploring the quality of police interviewers' explanations of the police caution during an investigative interview

Louise Parker

In England and Wales, a suspect must understand the police caution for evidence to be admissible in court. Research has shown that very few individuals fully understand the caution, particularly those with intellectual disabilities. It has been found that explaining the caution can increase understanding. However, it is currently unclear how this happens in practice. The Caution Comprehensive Criteria, a coding framework developed for the current study, was applied to 179 police interview transcripts to examine (i) the comprehensiveness and accuracy of interviewers' explanations of the caution, and (ii) whether there were differences when the suspect had been identified as vulnerable. Interviewers gave a fully accurate and comprehensive explanation in 3.9% of interviews, an accurate explanation which lacked comprehensiveness in 60.9% of interviews, and an inaccurate explanation in 35.2% of interviews. A common misconception in interviewers' explanations was that the caution signalled a loss of the right to silence. There were no differences in the explanations when suspects were identified as vulnerable. The findings suggest that the caution's intended legal safeguard may be undermined, as the majority of police interviewers' explanations lack comprehensiveness and accuracy during the investigative interview.

Same Rights, Different Scores: The Effect of Coding Practices on Legal Rights Comprehension

Christopher Lively

Notwithstanding researchers' efforts to improve legal rights comprehension (e.g., increasing listenability of Right to Silence/Counsel cautions), decades of research show that adults and youth do not fully understand their legal rights (aka police caution, charter rights). Notably, reported comprehension scores vary widely across studies (e.g., 81%, Eastwood et al., 2016, vs. 44%, Lively et al., 2022). The current study conceptually replicated Eastwood et al. (2016) and examined whether comprehension assessments differ by coding scheme: a 6-item (Eastwood et al., 2016) versus a 16-item coding guide (Lively et al., 2022). Participants (N = 124, Mage = 19.94 years) read one of three legal rights script varying in complexity (difficult, medium, easy) and then reported their understanding. As predicted, the 6-item (vs. 16-item) coding guide produced significantly higher average comprehension scores (72% vs. 41%, respectively; $d = 1.52$). Contrary to Eastwood et al. (2016), the easy script did not yield the highest comprehension. Results reinforce that legal rights comprehension remains limited and underscore the need for (i) standardized coding practices in legal rights research, and (ii) law enforcement delivery methods that follow best practices for listenability.

Day 3

The Effectiveness of the Timeline Technique in Improving Accurate Recall of Mock Witnesses of Domestic Abuse

Victory Ulamen

In the United Kingdom, the primary reason domestic abuse cases do not lead to charges is due to a lack of sufficient evidence. This evidence often includes the reports of victims or witnesses taken by investigative officers. When witnesses or victims are interviewed about a series of similar events (i.e., repeated incidents), they must recall details of a specific event, which can be difficult, and there is no guidance on interviewing adult witnesses of repeated offences. In this pre-registered study, we tested whether an interviewing intervention called the Timeline Technique can facilitate memory recall for adults acting as mock witnesses to a crime of domestic abuse. Participants viewed interpersonal relationships reflecting early stages of domestic abuse in Virtual Reality on two consecutive days, and on the third day, they were told a crime was reported and were asked to provide a written report. One week later, participants are interviewed using either the Timeline Technique or a Free Recall interview. We hypothesise that the Timeline Technique will improve accurate recall at interviews compared to a free recall report. We are collecting data from the last participants to meet our pre-registration sample. The coding of written statements and interview transcripts is ongoing.

Analyzing the Victim's interview of Sexual Crime (and Suspect's interview) and Integrating with the Evidence

Michel St-Yves

Examining a crime scene can sometimes uncover traces left by the perpetrator and help reconstruct the events. To achieve this, the crime scene must be carefully secured to prevent contamination or alteration, which could compromise the investigation. The same principle applies to victims, whose memories hold crucial information about what occurred. Unlike a crime scene, however, these witnesses can actively recount and share what happened. This is particularly important in cases of sexual crimes, where evidence often relies heavily on the victim's testimony. This presentation highlights the critical role of testimony in sexual crime investigations—both from the victim and the alleged perpetrator—in understanding the events, identifying investigative leads, particularly with the aid of forensic science, and ultimately uncovering the truth.

Police Interviewing Practices in Domestic Abuse Cases in Scotland

Eva Rubínová

Charge rates for domestic abuse remain: 50% in Scotland and 15% in England and Wales. The primary reason cases fail to result in charges is evidential difficulties, which are significantly more common in domestic abuse than other cases. A key factor contributing to evidential difficulties is the repeated nature of domestic abuse: reporting on multiple incidents is a challenging task. This project aims to map practices used by Police Scotland investigators with experience in domestic abuse cases. Preliminary findings from five interviews revealed that investigators follow best-practice recommendations by collecting an open narrative and subsequently narrowing down to specific questions, and that victim-led practice is the operational norm. Investigators commonly recognised a challenge in converting narratives of repeated abuse into actionable incidents and noted that chronology-building and anchoring incidents around temporal landmarks facilitates recall of incidents. Training in structured interviewing methods is currently lacking, and investigators learn most practices "on the job." Recorded interviews are perceived as maintaining better integrity of evidence and reducing the burden of repeated disclosure, although standard interviews are typically noted down by hand, which some investigators found disruptive. I will discuss lessons learned and steps towards improving interviewing practices in domestic abuse investigations.

Investigative Interviewing in the context of gender-based violence: challenges and training demands among Brazilian civil police officers

William Weber Cecconello

Interviewing women victims of gender-based violence is challenging for police due to complex relation dynamics, patterns of coercion and emotional trauma that may affect victims' narratives. Investigative Interviewing is an evidence-based approach to be used in gender-based crimes, and is supported by a growing body of research on rapport, open-ended questioning, and ethical information-gathering practices, but this context still may require specific interviewing techniques. Although there is existing literature that can inform both general investigative interviewing skills and specialized approaches to intimate partner violence (e.g., the "whole story" approach), it remains unclear whether this body of evidence provides sufficiently detailed and context-sensitive guidance for practice, or whether gaps persist between the recommendations available in the literature and the needs perceived by police officers in the Brazilian context. This study aimed to understand the training needs in Investigative Interviewing among Brazilian civil police officers working on gender based crimes, specifically focusing on needs that may not be fully addressed by general interviewing skills training, as an initial step toward developing training guidelines for the Brazilian context. A focus group was conducted with officers from specialized women's police stations in the Southeast region of Brazil who had previously received training in Investigative Interviewing. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes identified revealed challenges and training demands in three main dimensions: (1) relational aspects, including establishing rapport in different emotional states and understanding the cycle of violence and its influence; (2) difficulties in eliciting accounts, such as managing non-linear narratives; and (3) procedural issues, including completing risk assessment forms, as well as the need to integrate the case with previous reports. Findings are discussed in light of the literature on Investigative Interviewing and gender-based violence situating officers' reported needs within existing evidence and highlighting implications for the development of context-sensitive protocols and advanced training modules.

Rapport: The Surprisingly Long History of a Concept and a Practice in Investigative Interviewing

Elwin Hofman

'Rapport' is a key concept in investigative interviewing today. It is, for instance, regarded as crucial in both the Méndez Principles and in the ORBIT interviewing technique. However, the historical background studies of rapport in investigative interviewing sketch (if any) is often partial and overly celebratory. This paper has two goals:

(1) Tracing the conceptual history of the term "rapport", from its first use in the context of hypnosis in the late eighteenth century to its relatively recent prominence in investigative interviewing.

(2) Showing how rapport-like practices have been promoted in criminal interrogations since the abolition of judicial torture around 1800.

By highlighting these two distinct but entangled historical trajectories, I argue that we can better understand the novelty of recent approaches to investigative interviewing. What is new is not the promulgation of the superiority of rapport-based interviewing, but attempts at an unadulterated and sustainable implementation. At the same time, this historical sketch shows the main challenges involved: the compatibility of rapport with coercive interviewing techniques in the past, and its intrinsic intertwinement with therapeutic culture in its present-day form.

Exploring Underlying Components of Rapport in Professional Information-Gathering Contexts

Celine Brouillard

Rapport-building is regarded as an essential skill in professional information-gathering contexts and can significantly impact the quality and outcome of an interaction. However, limited attention has been given to how rapport is established. This study explores the underlying components of rapport as theorised in the Rapport-Pro model (Brouillard et al., 2025), mutual connection, paying attention, building a relationship, being approachable, and being professional. We extend prior research by examining how components of the Rapport-Pro work separately and together to foster rapport to contribute to the overall rapport-building process. Using a one-way between-participant survey design, 200 participants were randomly allocated to one of five conditions in which rapport components were isolated or combined: control condition, paying attention condition, building a relationship condition, being approachable condition, and combined components condition. The results revealed that each rapport component individually enhances perceptions of rapport, with a collaborative effect observed when multiple components are combined. Additionally, the findings challenge existing debates by highlighting that while a mutual connection is important, rapport is still effectively established through other components even in the absence of a strong mutual connection. These findings have implications for training rapport-building in a range of professional practice information-gathering settings.

The role of establishing and maintaining rapport in suspect interviews in a laboratory setting

Aleksandras Izotovas

We experimentally investigated whether rapport building used throughout the interview affect information elicitation and cooperation of the interviewees. We also examined interviewees' attitudes towards law enforcement and how it was related to reported information and perceived cooperation. Participants (n = 69) were instructed to take a role of the offender, watched a mock-crime video, and were assigned to one of three groups: Using rapport techniques in the beginning of the interview by the interviewer (establishing rapport); using rapport techniques throughout the interview by the interviewer (maintaining rapport); or no rapport techniques used by interviewer (control). Standard interviewing scripts with rapport techniques and questioning were prepared for each condition. Dependent variables were number of correct details, total details reported by the interviewees, and self-reported cooperation level. Both establishing rapport and maintaining rapport did not increase the number of correct, total details in the accounts, and self-rated cooperation level. Theoretical and practical implications will be discussed during the conference presentation.

Cross-cultural validation of a rapport measurement tool for Swedish police interview training

Sarah Ericsson

Rapport building is central to effective interviewing. However, previous research outlines that rapport is difficult to operationalize, assess, and train partly due to inconsistent definitions and varying methods of measurement. As more international policing organizations embrace humane information gathering approaches, definitions and assessment of rapport must be adapted across cultures and languages to enhance training and professional practice. The present study outlines the cross-cultural adaptation of an established tool for measuring rapport in police interviews; specifically, the translation of dimensions of rapport-building behaviors from English to Swedish, in combination with adaptation for use within the Swedish culture and legal system. The cultural validation process followed the International Test Commission guidelines which involved translation, expert focus groups, interrater reliability tests, and pilot testing with experts. The findings of this process highlighted that aspects of rapport-building rely on pragmatic word usage within cultural contexts. For accurate assessment of rapport-building behaviors, compromises on lexical and semantic translations are required when adapting definitions and operationalizations across languages and cultures. The findings of this study can support researchers and teachers in the assessment and training of rapport-building behaviors, as well as inform future cross-cultural studies of rapport within investigative interviewing.

Rapport Building and Emotional Support in the Intermediation of Testimony During Criminal Oral Trials Involving Children and Adolescents

Alicia Fuentes Rebolledo

This presentation reports the findings of a qualitative study on how judges acting as intermediaries perceive the process of building rapport and providing emotional support to children and adolescents who are victims of sexual and violent crimes and who testify in criminal oral trials. The aim is to understand these actors' perspectives on creating a relationship that facilitates the protected participation of victims in this context. The qualitative methodology employed allows for the exploration of the subjective meanings that intermediaries attribute to their practices, an aspect that has been scarcely addressed in previous research in Chile. The results presented focus on identifying the notions these professionals hold regarding rapport and emotional support within the framework of criminal oral proceedings. This study is relevant because it highlights the strategies and challenges faced by criminal judges when accompanying children in highly demanding judicial processes, providing key inputs for their training and for strengthening good judicial practices. The findings are expected to contribute to improved professional performance in situations of high vulnerability, promoting more sensitive, victim-centered, and rights-based interventions.

Give 'em enough rope to hang: The tacit prompting cycle

Jordan Robertson

This talk examines the tacit prompting cycle in US suspect interviews and how this practice can be perceived by jurors. The cycle, which is sometimes taught in investigative interviewing (including Reid Technique materials), uses silence, minimal feedback, and filler words to encourage a suspect to elaborate an answer without explicit prompting from other actors. It typically involves a single question-answer sequence followed by interviewer restraint, creating space for extended suspect narration. Four authentic US police interviews were analyzed using sociopragmatic methods to identify instances of tacit prompting. Across cases, a consistent pattern of tacit prompting was found, appearing independent of crime type, interview length, or case outcome. An audio clip containing a tacit prompting cycle was then presented to a mock-jury of eligible US participants (n=160). Participants rated and subsequently explained their opinions of the suspect's perceived truthfulness, helpfulness, believability, clarity, and guilt, allowing insight into how such interactional practices shape lay interpretations of interview evidence. Together, these analyses trace a line from interview production to courtroom perception, highlighting how subtle conversational techniques may influence both the content of suspect statements and the judgments later made about them.

U.S. Investigators' Perspectives On Why They Discourage Misrepresenting Evidence to Criminal Suspects

Marika Madfors

U.S. criminal investigators have long been criticised for using deception during interrogations, as deceptive practices have been linked to false confessions, unreliable statements, and diminished public trust. However, not all investigators support the use of deception. To understand the motivations of those who are allowed to use deception yet actively avoid it, this study explored the perspectives of investigators who reject deception by focusing on misrepresented evidence. 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted with experienced investigators who to various degrees disagreed with the practice of misrepresenting evidence to suspects, focusing on which practices they avoid and why they avoid them. Findings show that participants reject lying about evidence for several reasons, including increased availability of actual evidence, improved training, perceptions of potential consequences, and moral values.

However, while rejecting lies about evidence, some investigators continue to see a need for subtler forms of misrepresentation, such as bluffs and hypothetical questions. The implications of the findings will be discussed, contributing to our understanding of how research-based recommendations are adopted in practice, why non-research-based practices persist, and a continued need for researcher-practitioner collaboration to ensure that research-based reforms are grounded in operational realities.

Similarity Makes the Difference? The Effects of a Similarity Relationship-Building Strategy on the Informant-Source Handler Relationship and Information Disclosure

Andreea-Antonia Raducu

Informants provide valuable information to their handlers about past or future criminal activity, forming a long-lasting partnership and helping safeguard the general public. The two parties often hold conflicting motivations and views. We currently know little about the lifecycle of the informant-source handler relationship and information disclosure across time, but findings from our previous studies suggest that finding common ground might be crucial for a successful collaboration. Based on Knapp's (1978) Staircase Model, we propose that informant-source handler relationships progress through four stages of increasing closeness and disclosure: Initiating, Experimenting, Intensifying, and Integrating. We theorise that similarity (e.g similar hobbies) will be crucial for relationship progression, alongside empathy and trust. We tested the model using a 4-week online role-play paradigm, featuring mock handlers/ sources. There were two conditions: a) Similarity/Common ground, where handlers disclosed personal information and emphasised similarities, b) No Similarity, where handlers did not disclose anything personal. Results will show if the similarity strategy/ self-disclosure more broadly enable faster stage progression, as well as how they affect empathy, trust, and information disclosure across time. In practice, this will help source handlers to tailor their approaches according to the most central aspects of relationship-building.

The Scharff Technique Goes East: An Online Test in Japan

Shumpei Haginoya

The Scharff technique is a HUMINT-oriented interviewing method designed to elicit "new" information while masking the interviewer's information objectives and leaving sources underestimating their contribution. Although its efficacy has been demonstrated in Western contexts, it remains unclear whether it generalizes to East Asian settings. We report an initial test of the Scharff technique in Japan using online interviewing. One hundred adults recruited via a crowdsourcing platform were randomly assigned to either a Direct Approach interview or a Scharff interview. Participants role-played as information-holding sources and completed pre/post memory checks. Interviews were conducted via video calls and followed a three-phase structure: an initial open invitation, a structured second phase (three direct questions vs. three correct claims), and a final open invitation. Transcripts were coded for objectively new information units. Self-report measures assessed perceived information revealed and perceived transparency of the interviewer's information objectives. We hypothesize that, relative to the Direct Approach, the Scharff interview will elicit more new information while interviewees perceive having disclosed less and remain less aware of the interviewer's information objectives. Data collection is ongoing, with analyses to be completed by April 30, 2026.

The quality of child sexual abuse interviews in the Portuguese criminal justice system

Delfina Fernandes

The Statements for Future Use (SFU) proceeding is a central evidentiary mechanism in child sexual abuse (CSA) cases in Portugal. To prevent children from testifying at trial and to collect their account as close as possible to the alleged events, this pre-trial interview is mandatory during the investigation phase. Despite extensive scientific guidance on evidence-based interviewing, little is known about current practices in Portugal. This study addressed this gap by examining questioning style and children's responses in 128 SFU interviews conducted between 2014 and 2024 with victims aged 3 to 16 years. Interviews were coded for utterance types and children's responses. Results showed that option-posing questions were significantly more frequent than all other question types. Focused-recognition prompts were approximately twice as often as recommended open-ended prompts. Invitations accounted for only 6% of utterances. Nevertheless, the findings indicated that, on average, each invitation elicited more detailed responses than any other question type, thereby underscoring their effectiveness. Overall, interviews in the Portuguese criminal justice system remain heavily reliant on recognition-based questioning, increasing the risk of error and contamination, compromising the reliability of their testimony. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening protocol adherence and institutional commitment to child-sensitive justice practices.

The effect of stress during retrieval on memory and psychological wellbeing

Celine Van Golde

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive issue in Australia, with 1 in 5 women experiencing sexual violence since age 15. Despite the severity, only an estimated 1.5% of cases lead to successful prosecution. A key contributor to this justice gap is the investigative interview process, which often induces emotional stress that -besides from harming the victim-survivor wellbeing- potentially can impair the accuracy and completeness of victim-survivors' statements. While research on stress during memory encoding (when experiencing an event) is well-established, findings on stress during retrieval (when remembering an event at a later time) are mixed, with some studies showing no effect and others indicating significant memory impairment. This inconsistency highlights the need for ecologically valid research to understand how stress affects memory and psychological wellbeing during interviews. This project aimed to address these gaps by examining how acute emotional stress during memory retrieval impacts recall in Sexual Violence cases, to determine how victim-survivors can best be assisted when providing their statements. Results will be discussed.

Assessing the accuracy of a human post-editing approach to AI-generated transcripts of interview recordings

Lauren Harrington

In England and Wales, written records of police-suspect interviews are produced for investigative and/or evidential purposes. There is increasing interest in the use of AI speech technologies to produce these records, and several guidance documents produced by policing bodies (e.g. NPCC, 2023) highlight the importance of human oversight when employing AI. However, what constitutes an effective approach to human oversight in transcription remains unclear, as inherent priming effects can bias the reviewer's objectivity. This paper presents the results of a study which investigates the ability of human reviewers to accurately identify and correct errors within the output of an automatic speech recognition (ASR) system. Four audio recordings of male British English speakers were either (i) transcribed from scratch by participants, or (ii) transcribed using Whisper (Radford et al., 2023) and then corrected by human reviewers. Preliminary analysis demonstrates that post-editing an ASR transcript can offer substantial time savings without degrading the overall accuracy of a transcript. However, participants failed to consistently identify all ASR errors, with several high-impact linguistic inaccuracies remaining in the corrected text. These findings suggest that human review is not necessarily a reliable safeguard for ensuring the accuracy of transcripts initially generated using AI technologies.

Cost-effective AI-based transcription solutions for interview recordings in Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian under the Méndez Principles

Ilia Solodov

The Mendez Principles recommend audio or video recording of interviews in proceedings. Recordings serve three purposes: allowing interviewers to focus on questioning, ensuring accountability and transparency, and providing material for training. In many European countries, recording interviews and interrogations is mandatory in specific investigations, including sexual offences, cases involving minors or other vulnerable persons, and serious crimes. Because memory traces in witnesses and suspects are volatile and can be distorted at early procedural stages, it is crucial to document interactions with investigative authorities. Despite these benefits, studies show that law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners often perceive recording as an additional burden. Recordings must be reviewed, stored, and transcribed, which consumes time, strains IT infrastructure, and complicates legal analysis. To address these challenges, interviews should be indexed in a cost-effective way that improves searchability and enables automated analysis using large language model (LLM) systems. This presentation examines the feasibility of applying modern AI models to transcribe and index interview recordings in the three main languages of the Polish justice system: Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian. It proposes an affordable, practical solution that can be integrated into the existing framework of Polish criminal procedure and offers clear, step-by-step guidance for practitioners.

Modality matters: The impact of interview transcription on people's perceptions of deaf signing suspects

Lauren Morgan

When courts rely on transcripts of suspect interviews rather than audio or video recordings, there is a risk of 'contamination' of the linguistic evidence (Haworth, 2018). This paper outlines a series of experiments investigating the additional risks introduced when the suspect is a deaf sign language user and the interview is interpreter-mediated. Using a simulated interview with a deaf signing 'suspect', participants were either shown a video or a transcript of a short section of the interview. They were then asked questions about their perceptions of the suspect's behaviour, emotional state, and trustworthiness, and the rationale for these. I will present analysis of the resulting quantitative and qualitative data and discuss the implications for the transcription of interviews involving a visual-gestural language with no written form. I will also consider the wider context of the courtroom and what other strategies could be implemented to improve the presentation of such evidence in court. While the data and context discussed in this paper is based on users of British Sign Language (BSL), and the legal system of England and Wales, the findings have implications for transcription of interviews involving other signed languages, and interpreter-mediated interviews more generally.

From written protocols to recorded interviews: criminal interviews in Poland in light of the Méndez Principles

Denis Solodov

Audio and video recording of criminal interviews is increasingly presented as a safeguard of procedural fairness (in the light of ECHR case law), a protection against coercion, and a tool for improving evidentiary reliability (in light of the Méndez Principles). It is also an important source of research and training materials for teaching interviewing tactics. In Poland, however, the traditional and legally dominant form of "recording" remains the written protocol, which continues to function as the primary evidentiary record. Audio-visual recording, where used, is legally treated as secondary and supplementary, creating a structural tension between the need for transparency and the reality of protocol-based documentation. This presentation examines the issue from a dual perspective: that of a lawyer and a legal educator. It outlines the Polish procedural framework and key controversies surrounding recording, including access, completeness, technical standards, and defence rights, with reference to the Méndez Principles. It also draws on a questionnaire conducted among 198 law students after classes on interviewing and interrogation techniques. The findings highlight concerns about selective recording, the evidential status of video versus protocols, and the risks of treating recordings as "objective truth". The presentation argues that meaningful reform requires legal procedures and training grounded in scientific research and aligned with international and soft-law standards.

To tell or to write - the comparison of verbal and written statements according to modality

Remy Suurna

Written testimony may occasionally be collected from witnesses in investigative interviews. Compared to verbal interviews, written statements generally contain less accurate sensory and contextual details, as writing can be more cognitively taxing. Verbal statements, however, may contain more inaccurate details in the form of cognitive attributions. The amount and type of details may also vary between modalities of writing, that is, writing by hand or typing on a keyboard. Handwriting can be more cognitively complex than typing, however the use motor functions may aid in lexical search, potentially leading to more detailed statements. We explored differences in sensory, contextual and cognitive information recalled through different modalities (oral, handwriting, computer typing). Also, statements given in a native and non-native language were compared. Statements were collected from 120 mock witnesses who were shown a video clip depicting a theft. Participants were assigned to three groups based on the modality of recall: verbal free recall in an interview, written statements using a pen and paper, and typed statements on a computer keyboard. Half of the participants gave statements in their native language and half in their second language. Differences in the statement accuracy between modalities and used languages are discussed in the presentation.

Improving the Diagnostic Value of Perpetrator Descriptions

Abbie MacAskill

Eyewitness descriptions play a vital role in criminal investigations, yet police have voiced concerns about their usefulness for decades. Existing interview procedures focus on increasing the amount of accurate details eyewitnesses recall. However, increasing accuracy alone does not guarantee that descriptions are diagnostically useful for attempting to match a suspect. The goal should therefore be to increase diagnostic value alongside accuracy. Diagnostic descriptions include individual features (e.g., wide-set eyes, pointed ears) that help distinguish a perpetrator from innocent lookalikes. This research compared four procedures: a standard free recall, the Person Description Interview (PDI), the Self-Administered Interview (SAI), and a novel Diagnostic Description Interview (DDI). In Stage 1, participants described unfamiliar faces from memory using one of the procedures. In Stage 2, a separate group matched those descriptions to the correct face. Descriptions from the DDI produced significantly higher matching accuracy than those from the other procedures. The diagnostic value of descriptions may also depend on face recognition, linguistic ability and race. These findings suggest that prompting witnesses to focus on individual features improves the diagnostic value of perpetrator descriptions. The DDI offers a promising approach for enhancing investigative interviews, which could help investigators locate guilty suspects and reduce wrongful convictions.

Using Virtual Reality to Simulate the Witness Experience and Induce Stress

Valerie Arenzon

Accurate and complete witness testimonies can be critical in criminal investigations, yet psychological stress during a crime can affect how individuals remember events. Currently, the published effects of acute stress on memory remain contradictory and inconsistent. These inconsistencies are largely attributed to methodological limitations in experimental protocols, such as insufficient visual complexity and emotional engagement. Therefore, the present study employed a virtual reality (VR) method to simulate a witness experience. The objective was to examine whether a VR-based simulation of a crime elicits a stress response in participants compared to a VR-based neutral scenario. Data was collected from healthy participants (N = 25, Mage = 25.14) before, during, and after viewing the scenario. Physiological stress was assessed via electrodermal activity (peaks per minute) while subjective stress was measured using a Likert scale (1 to 10). A linear mixed-effects model showed that participants in the crime group exhibited significantly greater electrodermal reactivity during scenario viewing than those in the control group ($p = .001$). Subjective stress also differed between conditions ($p = .05$). Validating this protocol offers a tool for future research on the effects of stress on memory recall in forensic contexts and related processes, including suggestibility, misinformation, or perception.

Drifting Toward the Super-Co-Witness: AI-Induced Memory Contamination

Brandon May

The use of generative AI into law enforcement has outpaced both empirical validation and governance infrastructures. This paper extends our concept of drifting (May, 2025), drawing on our research investigating (i) the LLM misinformation effect paradigm, and (ii) human-AI interactions. We identify four compounding mechanisms of risk specific to investigative interviewing. First, LLMs function as super-co-witnesses. Notably, LLMs act as conversational agents whose sycophantic validation, narrative coherence maximisation, and iterative reinforcement produce misinformation rates higher than control conditions. Data collection is on-going, however, preliminary analyses suggest that those exposed to LLM memory elicitation tools had a 30% reduction in memory accuracy, and significant increase in commissions. In addition, participants reported higher mental workload and temporal demand using LLM models. Second, AI-generated interview scaffolds privilege procedural exhaustiveness over adaptive, trauma-sensitive questioning, suppressing the relational and interpretive judgment essential for reliable disclosure. Third, algorithmic authority effects induce normative deference to fluent but potentially inaccurate outputs, progressively undermining metacognitive functions. Fourth, the non-deterministic nature of LLM outputs renders contamination resistant to detection, audit, and disclosure. We conclude that AI must function as a bounded supplementary tool, subject to empirical oversight, transparent governance, and Méndez-compliant ethical standards.

"Can you explain that?": Adolescents and Interview Ground Rule Use

Sydney Spyksma

Forensic interviews with children should begin with setting ground rules to help children cope with the novel interview situation by informing interviewees that they can say "I don't know" (IDK) and "I don't understand" (IDU) or correct an interviewer's mistakes (CM). However, research on ground rules disproportionately focuses on young children because a general assumption exists that adolescents can apply the ground rules without being explicitly told them. We interviewed adolescents (N=81), aged 12 to 17, about their autobiographical experiences that were randomly assigned to a Control or Ground Rules condition. Nine interview prompts necessitated the use of a ground rule alongside regular prompts that did not require a ground rule response. Results showed that adolescents readily applied the ground rules to questions intended to elicit their use. A Prompt Type X Ground Rule Type Interaction indicated adolescents used IDK significantly more than IDU and CM and IDU significantly more than CM for regular prompts; however, IDK and IDU use did not differ for ground rule eliciting prompts, yet IDK and IDU were used significantly more than CM. By assessing adolescents' ground rule use, we can inform the development of more effective and developmentally appropriate interview techniques for adolescents.

Examining the Word Abuse as a Possible Barrier to the Reporting of Maltreatment Against Older Adults

Kelly Warren

Reports of maltreatment against older adults are estimated to represent just 20% of cases that occur, despite some two decades of research identifying barriers to reporting and working to reduce these barriers. In an earlier study, we asked older adults to read a maltreatment scenario and indicate why the victims might not report; however, participants failed to endorse the usual barriers identified in previous research. More recent qualitative research has suggested older adults may be hesitant to identify as "abused"—making them reluctant to report—but no studies have tested this. Here, we explored whether this barrier—the use of the word "abuse"—could explain why older adults might not report maltreatment. Older adults (60+) were asked to indicate how often they experienced items reflecting abusive (e.g., being grabbed in a way that left a mark) and non-abusive (e.g., being hugged) behaviours over the past year, before being asked explicitly whether they had been abused. Most older adults who experienced abusive behaviours said they were not abused and some even stopped responding to the survey when they reached the questions that said "abuse" explicitly. Results suggest that saying "abuse" when interviewing older adults may influence their willingness to discuss maltreatment.

Recognizing Vulnerability: An evaluation of a screening tool and interview training vulnerable suspects in the Netherlands.

Denise Bouma

Research has increased awareness of risks associated with interviewing vulnerable suspects, e.g., vulnerabilities can impact perceived credibility of suspects' accounts and lead to ineffective information gathering. To address these risks, Dutch police detectives are mandated to identify potentially vulnerable suspects and accommodate those vulnerabilities within their interviews. Therefore, a screening tool was developed to aid practitioners in recognizing vulnerability in suspects alongside specific interview training to equip practitioners with skills to effectively and safely interview vulnerable suspects.

However, practitioners' experiences using these tools remain unclear. Therefore, two studies were conducted to (1) assess the perceived effectiveness, familiarity and usability of screening tool and (2) the effectiveness of the interview training, through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with current and former training participants.

We found practitioners mainly relied on suspects' socio-economic status as objective indicators of vulnerability and struggled operationalizing questions about e.g., interviewees hobbies, overlooking their potential value. Therefore, effective use of the screening tool was dependent on training as otherwise practitioners were uncertain how and when to apply it. Evaluation of the training found improvement in trainees' self-rated knowledge, capabilities, and behaviour, but highlighted the need for practical (post-training) practice and organizational support to increase confidence in newly qualified interviewers.

Mock jurors' perceptions of child witnesses' credibility: The effect of honesty-promotion interview strategies

Gadda Salhab

In England and Wales, jurors assess child witnesses' credibility after watching video-recorded interviews of children's testimony, along with their performance on a competency test, the Truth-Lies Discussions (TLDs). In the NICHD protocol, children are asked to promise to tell the truth at the start of their interview. This study examined the effect of different honesty-promotion strategies on mock jurors' perceptions of children's honesty and credibility. Two hundred participants watched a video-recorded interview of a child and an interviewer taking part in an honesty-promotion strategy. The child either 1) "passed" a TLD; 2) "failed" a TLD; 3) promised to tell the truth; 4) was primed to tell the truth with reciprocity; or 5) listened to the 'ground rules' of the interview and was reminded of the importance of telling the truth (control). Participants' perceptions of the child's honesty and credibility were recorded through questionnaires. There were no differences across conditions in mock jurors' assessments of the honesty of the child's statement. However, the child who "failed" the TLD was reported as less credible than the child who promised to tell the truth and the child who was primed with reciprocity.

Understanding Adolescents' Interrogation- Related Legal Decisions

Kaiden Kaba

Adolescents are a vulnerable population characterized by impulsivity and a tendency to prioritize short-term gain over long-term costs, increasing their risk of false and coerced confessions compared to adults. In Canada, the Youth Criminal Justice Act recognizes these vulnerabilities and provides youth with increased legal protections, including parental presence during police questioning. However, research has found that parents do not necessarily enhance and may, at times, undermine adolescents' legal decision-making (Cleary, 2014). Little research has examined how parents and teens navigate legal decisions together, and what factors (e.g., age, legal knowledge) influence these discussions and the subsequent decisions. This study examines (1) the underlying themes of parent-teen legal discussions and (2) what factors affect teens' legal-decisions. Using an open-access, customizable legal simulation (Wilford et al., 2019), 30 parent-teen dyads watched a scenario in which a character; who resembles the teen participant, is falsely accused of theft, and is read their legal rights by a police officer. Parents and teens then discussed the simulation as if it was a real situation in which they found themselves. Findings may shed light on the factors that contribute to youth false confessions, informing best practices regarding parental involvement in teens' legal decisions.

Depth of disclosure for repeated stressful events

Celine van Golde

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a prominent issue within Australia and worldwide. For successful prosecution, victims are asked to recall these often stressful experiences in detail. While research shows that repeated stressful events can be recalled more accurately than non-stressful events, there is limited understanding on the factors that influence the amount of detail, or depth, with which such memories are disclosed. Depth of disclosure is often associated with perceived credibility. Given that the victims' testimony is often the only evidence available in IPV cases, it is pertinent to understand if depth of disclosure is associated with recalling stressful repeated events. Therefore, this study investigated how stress and repetition impact victims' depth of disclosure. 122 Female participants engaged in either a single event or four highly similar events over a four-week period. Participants imagined themselves partaking in a hypothetical relationship scenario involving either a domestic violence encounter (stressful condition) or a closely matched neutral relationship encounter (non-stressful condition). One week after the final scenario, participants completed a recall task. Transcripts were coded using a protocol to examine depth of each disclosure. Results will be discussed in relation to how these can inform the credibility of domestic violence victims' statements.

“Well, I’m going to contradict myself again now...”- Police perceptions of L2 English speakers as vulnerable persons in England and Wales

Katherine Diane King

Effective police interviewing relies on recognising and accommodating vulnerability. When vulnerability is overlooked, the risk of unreliable evidence, unfair outcomes, and reduced public trust in the police increases (Gudjonsson 2010, Powell 2002). In England and Wales, this issue is particularly pressing due to the fast-growing diverse population and the rising number of individuals with limited or no English language proficiency (2021 Census). Such circumstances can lead to increased stress, miscommunication, and power imbalances resulting from linguistic, as well as cultural, differences. Simultaneously, ‘vulnerability’ is inconsistently defined and represented across police training and guidance materials, leading to uncertainty in practice. Individuals with English as a second language (L2-speakers), do not always fit into existing criteria of ‘vulnerability’, resulting in officers relying on personal judgement to determine if an L2-speaking individual is vulnerable or not. This paper explores how police officers in England and Wales define and perceive L2-speakers as vulnerable persons. Drawing from original survey data and interviews with police officers, gaps between policy and practice are highlighted, and a call is made to provide clearer and more consistent guidance on L2-speakers as vulnerable persons to better accommodate the multilingual populations of England and Wales and improve their access to justice.

Effects of Rapport Building on Lay Perceptions of Child Witnesses

Emma Simpson

Rapport building is an important component of forensic interviews with children. Little research, though, has examined how presentation of rapport affects laypersons’ perceptions of the child and case outcome. In an initial study, participants (N=180, 50.0% female, Mage=43.5 years) were presented four forensic interviews (order counterbalanced) in which a child alleged sexual abuse by a male perpetrator. At the beginning of each transcript, rapport building was varied to include ground rules, narrative practice, both, or none, in a within-subjects design. After reading each interview, participants rated the defendant’s guilt and answered questions about the child and their statement. A second study (N=478, M=36.6, SD=12.3, 47% female) varied both rapport and child age (5, 9, or 13-years-old) in a between-subjects design. In the first study, there were no main effects of any rapport manipulations; in the second, when rapport was built according to best-practice guidelines, the child was perceived as most credible [$F(2, 423)=3.95, p=0.02$]. There were also main effects of age: the 5-year-old was perceived as most credible [$F(2, 423)=4.00, p=0.02$] and responsive [$F(2, 423)=6.77, p=0.001$]. While results indicate that best-practice rapport can make a child appear more credible to laypersons, other factors, like age, may be stronger predictors.

Discover Leuven



Leuven tourism

<https://www.visitleuven.be/en>



Discover Leuven

Highlights



Town Hall and Grote Markt
University Library and Tower
Saint Peter's Church
Oude Markt (longest bar in Europe)
Great Beguinage
Keizersberg Abbey
Vaartkom

Activites



Botanical Garden
Stella Artois Brewery
Art and science route

Museums



M Museum
Museum PARCUM
Museum of Zoology



Nature



Park Abbey
Arenberg Castle and Park
Provinciedomein Kessel-Lo
Forests of Brabant

In case of emergency

<p>Police</p> 	<p>Non-urgent: +32 16 21 06 10</p>
<p>Medical and fire services</p> 	<p>Urgent: 101</p> <p>112</p>
<p>KU Leuven Campus emergency number</p> 	<p>+32 16 32 22 22 22</p>

<p>Emergency Department Hospital</p> 	<p><u>UZ Leuven Gasthuisberg</u></p>
<p>Doctor</p> 	<p><u>Khobra</u> (to find a doctor online)</p> <p><u>Wachtpost Leuven</u> for week nights, weekends and public holidays</p>



iIRG

INTERNATIONAL
INVESTIGATIVE
INTERVIEWING
RESEARCH GROUP



KU LEUVEN

Leuven | Belgium
8-10 July, 2026