



ASSESSING CREDIBILITY

20 Minutes to Trained



Title IX: It's not about compliance, it's about commitment.

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THIS PRESENTATION



- When interviewing individuals in a Title IX process, determining the validity and credibility of their statements is essential.
- We cannot simply ask students, staff, or faculty members questions and hope they are being truthful.
- We need to assess each interviewee's truthfulness, potential for deception, impression management, and accuracy.

INTRODUCTION



- Assessing credibility involves analyzing the extent to which you can rely on an individual's testimony to be accurate and relevant in your understanding of the investigation.
- Credible is not synonymous with truthful.
- Memory errors do not necessarily destroy witness credibility.
- Nor does some evasion or misleading.
- Refrain from focusing on irrelevant inaccuracies and inconsistencies.

- ***Deception Detection*** involves questioning and observation techniques, as well as using technology that records physiological functions, to assess the likelihood of truth and falsehood.
- ***Impression Management*** is a conscious or subconscious process in which people attempt to influence the perceptions of others about a person, object, or event for their own ends.

- The ***halo effect*** is a bias in which our overall impression of a person (a figurative halo) colors our judgment of that person's character, including their credibility. The better an individual looks and behaves, the better a person we judge them to be.
- ***Cognitive load*** refers to the total amount of mental effort used in the working memory. Studies confirm that being deceptive is more cognitively demanding than being truthful.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR



- Demeanor
 - Non-verbal language.
 - Demeanor issues should be cue to ask more questions.
- Non-cooperation
 - Short, abrupt answers or refusal to answer.
 - Possible response: “You seem reluctant to answer these questions – can you tell me why?”
- Logic/consistency
 - Ask yourself, “Does this make sense?”
- Corroborating evidence

MOTIVATION TO LIE



- We lie to protect:
 - **Ourselves.** To avoid suffering painful consequences, shame, embarrassment, and/or conflict.
 - **Our interests.** To obtain material goods (e.g., money) and non-material goods (e.g. attention from the telling of tall tales).
 - **Our image.** So that others will think well of us.
 - **Our resources.** To avoid expending energy or time doing something we really don't want to do.
 - **Others.** Telling people what they want to hear is a way to protect their feelings.

www.psychologytoday.com/blog/happiness-in-world/201003/why-we-lie

Rapport = Proximity + Frequency + Duration + Intensity

- **Proximity:** the distance between you and another individual and your exposure to the individual over time (think non-threatening environment).
- **Frequency:** the number of interactions you have with another individual over time.
- **Duration:** the length of time you spend with another individual over time.
- **Intensity:** how strongly you are able to satisfy another individual's psychological and/or physical needs through the use of verbal and non-verbal behaviors (think curiosity).



Friend

Stranger

Foe

WHAT TO LOOK FOR



- Assess consistency of story – substance and chronology of statements.
- Consider inherent plausibility of all information given.
- Look for the amount of detail (facts) provided. Factual detail should be assessed against general allegations, accusations, excuses, or denials that have no supporting detail.
- Pay attention to non-verbal behavior, but not hugely significant.

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