

# Polygraph

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## **Forensic Interviewing, Polygraph and Child Deception**

**Stanley M. Slowik<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

This paper discusses some of the problems with the validity and reliability of forensic interviews of young children commonly conducted at Child Advocacy Centers upon which polygraph examinations of accused individuals rely. Specific problems with suggestibility and repetitive interviewing techniques are identified so examiners can recognize inadequate or poorly conducted forensic interviews in cases of child sexual abuse.

Key words: Child Advocacy Center, Forensic Interviewing, Polygraph, Child Deception

Critical to all specific issue polygraph examinations is the investigation that precedes the examination and often both describes the matter being investigated and the person to be examined (Reid & Inbau, 1977). If this investigation is done poorly or terminated prematurely in a rush to carry out a polygraph examination, among other possibilities, the examiner's case fact analysis, strength of issue determinations and relevant and comparison question selection can all be significantly impaired. This, in turn, would likely result in a poorly conducted examination with invalid results. In cases involving the alleged sexual abuse of a child, the pre-polygraph investigation often depends entirely upon the forensic interview of the alleged child victim since medical evidence, corroborating witnesses, pictures or other types of proof of abuse are usually nonexistent (Slowik, 2007).

Forensic interviews of children in sexual abuse cases, sadly, have a long history of ineffectiveness resulting in irreparable harm to both the alleged victim and suspect. Traditionally, child interviews were conducted by Child Protection Services, police or Social Services and were done so poorly that both the resulting polygraph examinations of the

accused and governmental determinations of guilt were sometime~ later proven to be in error (Ceci & Bruck, 1995). Perhaps the most notorious of all of these cases was the McMartin Pre-School case in which Child Protection Services and the police engaged a group of pre-schoolers in intensive and repetitive interviews resulting in 321 criminal charges being filed, a seven year criminal investigation and a trial costing the state of California 16 million dollars (Walker, 2002). Eventually, all charges were dismissed but the lives of the accused - as well as the preschoolers - suffered substantial and possibly irreparable harm.

As a direct result of the McMartin and other poorly handled cases, the Child Advocacy Center (CAe) emerged. In theory, professionally trained interviewers at the CAC's were supposed to balance the investigative needs of the police and prosecution while providing the psychological protections of the child therapist and make a determination that there was at least sufficient credibility to the suspected abuse to warrant further investigation if not an arrest. Unfortunately, there appears to be an emerging body of evidence indicating that many current forensic interviews of children

<sup>1</sup> Stanley M. Slowik is a frequent presenter for the APA, the past CEO of John E. Reid & Associates and President of Stanley M. Slowik, Inc., an organization that conducts, creates and offers instruction in various interviewing techniques.

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are neither conducted in an objective manner nor possess the diagnostic validity for the determinations they make (Drach, Wientzen & Ricci, 2001; Hagen, 2003). When this is the case, any subsequent polygraph examination of the accused will be directly and negatively affected.

It is therefore the intent of this article to identify some of the more common sources of error associated with the forensic interviews of children, particularly allegations of sexual abuse so that polygraph examiners and others involved in these cases can make assumptions and decisions that are reasonably sound and defensible.

For the purposes of this article, children will refer primarily to pre-schoolers, approximately ages 3 through 6, since the majority of the published research regarding interviews of children allegedly abused uses this specific subject population.

### **Repetitive Interviewing**

There are two basic types of repetitive interviewing situations, both of which have harmful effects upon the forensic interview that polygraph examiners rely upon to construct the polygraph examination of the accused. First there are cases where the child has been interviewed by a number of different people in different settings usually working independently of each other. Second, there are cases where the child is questioned repeatedly by the same agency, sometimes within the same interview session, by the same or different interviewers working in concert with each other.

In the first situation, many adults who talk to children about suspected sexual abuse prior to the forensic interview at the CAC are completely untrained in both investigative and interviewing techniques (Warren & Marsil, 2002). No matter how well intentioned, they say and do things with the child that profoundly and permanently affect subsequent interviews conducted by investigators who have at least received some type of formal training in validated, diagnostic interviewing techniques. These unschooled interviewers typically include parents, relatives such as older siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, guardians and neighbors. They also include

teachers, medical personnel, coaches, Scout leaders, clergy, nannies and numerous other adults in supervisor positions. Interviews conducted by non-professional interviewers often contain egregious procedural errors such as asking leading questions or instilling bias for or against the accused based on their relationship to the accused (Pool & Lindsay, 1998). This tends to occur more frequently when the outcry takes place during an acrimonious child custody battle (Pool & Lindsey, 1998) and different parties with vested interests all talk to the child before the formal interview at the CAC. Among other serious problems resulting from these often unavoidable early interviews is the introduction of information such as descriptors of sexual anatomy or acts previously unknown to the child that could be misinterpreted as knowledge inappropriate for the child's age and possibly circumstantial confirmation of sexual abuse. It should be noted, however, that research consistently indicates that age inappropriate sexual knowledge and many inappropriate sexual behaviors such as excessive masturbation, public sexual displays, etc. are just as prevalent among children thought 'never to have been abused as those known to have been abused. Whether introduced by coaching, poor interviewing technique or reasons completely unrelated to the allegation, e.g. seeing pornography on a computer, these symptoms are simply not valid indicators of child sexual abuse (Lanning, 2002). Examiners and others should look for evidence that the forensic interviewer not only actively tried to determine who talked to the child prior to the forensic interview but what specifically was discussed prior to forensic interviewing. Most importantly, the forensic interviewer needs to explore (and the examiner needs to confirm that) certain specific causes of false reports and false memory were specifically considered. Child answers resulting from directed responses, acquired language, threats, promises, bribes, etc. are usually indistinguishable from unmanipulated answers when children are asked open questions such as "What happened?" during the forensic interview. What is often assumed to be the original answer to a question appearing in the interview conducted at the CAC may, in fact, be a changed answer from similar questions that were asked in prior interviews.

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In the case of repetitive questions and/ or interviews by the same interviewer or agency, many of the same errors cited above can occur, but, as is sometimes the case with interviewers operating independently of each other, two more insidious problems can also occur. Children, and many adults for that matter, often interpret repetitive questioning as an indication that their previous answers have been incorrect (Memon & Vartoukian, 1996). As a result, they often change their answers. Inconsistent and contradictory responses can be a classic symptom of deception since liars often get their stories confused and the stress generated by repeated questioning ("they don't believe me") can cause deceptive people to change their answers to escape this lie-generated stress. One might be able to justify this technique if the investigator could be certain that the initial answers were always deceptive and the "new" answers were now the truth. The problem arises when you consider the nondeceptive motives for changing answers, e.g., a child trying to "please" the interviewer. Unfortunately, since the primary purpose of the initial forensic interview is to determine if there is an adequate basis for the allegation, there is always a substantial possibility that the initial answers were in fact the truth, in which case stress generated by repetitive questioning is actually the cause for either deceptive answers or false memories (Doepke, Hendersen & Critchfield, 2003). It should be noted that in cases where the interviewer has manipulated the child's trust using various rapport building techniques, the child may actually change truthful answers to false responses in an attempt to please the interviewer, maintain the positive emotional attachment with an adult the child admires or to avoid rejection by the interviewer (Russell, 2006). While no ethical investigator would condone badgering or threatening a child as appropriate tactics in child interviews, other actions such as promises, rewards, bribes and overt manipulation of trust ("I'm here to help/protect you, etc.") can be equally effective in creating false responses.

The second insidious effect of repetitive interviewing techniques on both children and adults is habituation to the interviewing process where the same stimuli (questions) do not provoke the same response (answers) when repeated in close temporal proximity

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(Slowik, 2002). Children and others that have been repeatedly interviewed about the same issue not only become more adept at discovering answers they believe the interviewer wants to hear but tend to display the relaxed, comfortable demeanor more typical of a truthful person - not necessarily because they are being truthful but merely because they've adjusted to the interview process again and again.

For all of these reasons, examiners who must rely upon the forensic interview conducted at the CAC should make sure the interviewer's report indicates a formal attempt to discover any and all interviews regarding the issue under investigation conducted prior to the forensic interview. At the very least, the report should state that the child was specifically asked if they had been questioned by their friends, parents, teachers, relatives, medical staff and other likely adults with a summary of the child's statements included so that previous omissions, inconsistencies and contradictions among interviews become apparent. When it becomes obvious that the forensic interviewer completely failed to ask about prior interviews, examiners should be extremely cautious about creating the examination based primarily upon the forensic interview and take the time and effort to identify and evaluate the effects of previous interviews and repetitive questioning on the results of the forensic interview.

### **Suggestibility**

One area that researchers and forensic interviewers agree warrant special concern is the problem of suggestibility and young children (Ceci & Bruck, 1993a). Once a child has incorporated something that didn't actually happen into his or her subsequent narrative as to what happened, it becomes virtually impossible to separate real and false memories. Perhaps the most common procedure known to induce false memories in many child interview subjects are the use of props such as anatomically explicit drawings or dolls (Bruck, Ceci, Francoeur & Renick, 1995). Some child interview instructional manuals maintain that the use of explicit prompts is a "best practice" and actually advocate the use of such props (Sorenson, Bottoms & Perona, 1997). Nearly all of the published research indicates that, at best,

drawings and dolls do not contribute to the accuracy of the child's statements but rather, can lead to false and inaccurate statements resulting from the inherent suggestibility of these devices (Lindberg, Chapman, Samsack, Thomas & Lindberg, 2003). However, it should be noted that if the child has already been specific in describing sexual anatomy and activities prior to the introduction of drawings and dolls, the use of these prompts doesn't appear to create new inaccuracies. Examiners should therefore key to that portion of the forensic interview report in which the child describes the actual sexual abuse. If this was not discussed or revealed before the introduction of sexually suggestive devices, there is a much greater possibility of affordance errors, i.e., statements or activities that occur simply because the child is curious and the interviewer has afforded them a mechanism to act out such as inserting a finger into a doll's orifice only because the doll has an orifice (Fincham, Beach, Moore & Diener, 1994).

Unrelated to suggestibility but associated with the use of prompts in interviewing are errors of omission on the part of the interviewer. If a prop was introduced after a child made allegations of specific sexual acts in response to neutral, open question and the child proceeds to demonstrate something sexual with a prop but the interviewer chooses to ignore the child's actions, the interviewer intentionally or unintentionally - may be conducting a selective interview. Selective interviews are those in which the interviewer only seeks answers to questions that confirm a pre-determined outcome and fail to explore other unanticipated possibilities (Ceci & Bruck, 1995).

Most of the research on child suggestibility attributes the children's vulnerability to the lack of cognitive development. Therefore suggestibility is very age sensitive with three year olds more likely to make inaccurate statements as a result of suggestion and six year olds less likely during forensic interviews (Quas, Thompson & Clarke-Stewart, 2005). While it is believed that the majority of inaccurate statements made by pre-schoolers are the result of false memories resulting from suggestibility, it should be noted that young children are capable of fabricating lies about serious

matters such as sexual abuse even without instruction or coaching' (Quas & Clarke-Stewart, 2005). Reporting errors appear to decrease if the child has knowledge or experience regarding the event he or she is reporting. At the same time, research indicates that it's easier to plant false stories of sexual abuse in children who have actually been abused (Pezdek & Hodge, 1999). In most cases, it is assumed that pre-schoolers normally would have no knowledge of sexual anatomy or activity and so it is also assumed that children who make explicit reports of such activity are more likely to be accurate with regard to allegations of abuse. Unfortunately, in today's world, there are other sources of sexual knowledge available to young children besides actually being the victim of abuse. The Internet, adult TV programming, DVD's and other materials are sometimes readily accessible to children who, after viewing, are quite capable of describing very detailed sexual acts. Compounding this problem is the problem of sourcing errors where very young children are sometimes unable to distinguish between things that actually happened to them, things that were told to them by others or things they saw on tapes or in pictures (Walker, 2002). Examiners should be diligent to look for evidence in the forensic interview that the interviewer has conscientiously investigated all of these possible sources of suggestion.

Overall, pre-schoolers are more likely to have more omission errors (failing to report sexual contact that actually occurred), more exaggeration errors (claiming penetration or insertion when they were only touched) and more fabrication errors (claiming to have been touched when they were never touched) than children over six years old (Warren, 2002). Pre-schoolers also tend to be overly inclusive, equating an adult's use of profanity with sexual touching, and they have a difficult time recognizing when they do not understand questions (Warren, 2002). As a result, preschoolers tend to answer questions they don't understand and appear to be quite confident in their answers even when they are in error. Ironically, this same phenomenon surfaces with child psychologists, child therapists and other experts with regard to their ability to accurately diagnose children who have actually been sexually abused from children who say they were when they were not. In

short, decision confidence does not equate to diagnostic accuracy when it comes to statement accuracy of either purported child victims or child experts (Ceci & Bruck, 1994). Finally, most pre-schoolers simply lack sufficient language and vocabulary skills to articulate certain concepts and events leaving investigators with a paradox; does the child not understand the question or does the child understand but lack the communication skills necessary to respond more adequately (Talwar, Lee, Bala & Lindsay, 2004)? Preschoolers tend to be very egocentric and fail to consider the perspective of others. This includes such critical issues as intent (Understanding Child Development, 2001). Thus, they sometimes fail to distinguish between innocent parental touching of genitalia during bathing or medicating and inappropriate sexual touching. Pre-schoolers make more encoding errors, e.g., equating private sexual anatomy with any part of the body covered by clothing. Children tend to have more retention errors where their memories of events are distorted by subsequent events and conversations. Finally, young children tend to have more retrieval errors, again, may actually be due to their inability to articulate their thoughts and recollections rather than not recall an event (Wakefield & Underwager, 1992). Preschoolers typically communicate using a vocabulary of only 1,200 to 6,000 words yet as any parent can attest, even infants are very much aware of what is being said and what's happening well before they possess the ability to verbally communicate (Understanding Child Development, APA, 2001).

One of the most critical elements of cognitive development and child deception often inadequately evaluated or completely overlooked by forensic interviewers is the reality that most young children conclude that lying is morally bad because they associate lying (or being caught lying) with punishment (Bussey, 1992). At the same time, they haven't developed the mechanism to view truthfulness as an ethically rewarding experience. In other words, while young children fear being caught lying, they don't see a lot of benefit in being truthful particularly when being truthful results in punishment. Polygraph examiners and interviewers using behavioral techniques that have been validated in terms of diagnostic accuracy

have long been aware that even in adults the perception of negative consequences is a critical element in triggering both the verbal and non-verbal responses (Edelstein, Luten, Ekman & Goodman, 2006). Sadly, many forensic interviewing techniques fail to recognize this basic component and actually engage in one-sided procedures that subvert the psychophysiological mechanisms. Rather than manipulate the child's emotional state with stress reducing tactics justified as "rapport building", forensic interviewers should approach the child interview in a neutral, objective fashion and neither attack to increase the child's stress nor pacify to reduce stress. In this fashion observed changes in stress related behavior during the course of the interview are more likely to be the result of the questions and the child's truthful or untruthful response. In general, subjects who appear to exhibit significantly less stress as the interview progresses, particularly if the questions become more sensitive, are more likely to be truthful to the issue under investigation. Conversely, subject's who exhibit a marked increase in behavior associated with stress are more likely to be lying about the event being discussed. Techniques that suggest to the child that "They haven't done anything wrong" or "Nothing will happen to you" artificially bias the behavioral responses. Not surprisingly, if there is little or no fear of detection, both children and adults tend to exhibit more of the behaviors associated with truth tellers, even when lying (Slowik, 2007).

The problems of suggestibility in forensic interviews are most acute when the report of the allegation surfaces while the child is in therapy for some unrelated matter or the child is in therapy at the time of the forensic interview because of the initial report and new allegations and details of abuse surface (Ceci & Bruck, 1993). Some therapeutic methods used with children are particularly susceptible to creating false memories. Hypnosis and inadvertent hypnosis resulting from repetitive questioning has been shown to be likely to create false memories that subjects recall with great confidence as being true (Of she & Watters, 1998). Sadly, research indicates that 18% of psychotherapists wrongly believe that people can't lie under hypnosis; some wrongly believe that memories recovered through the use of

hypnosis are actually more accurate than other memories and 28% believe that memories of past lives can be recovered (Yapko, 1993). As is the case for repressed memories, there is no valid evidence that past lives, repressed memories or alien abductions actually exist but there is ample evidence that some memory recovery techniques commonly used in therapy can create false memories. Examiners therefore must be especially vigilant when conducting examinations based on reports or forensic interviews generated while the child was participating in therapy. It is important to note that techniques such as hypnosis or the use of anatomically explicit prompts that increase the risk of false memories through suggestibility may in fact be appropriate for therapeutic interviews. Examiners need only be concerned when the initial report or case facts upon which the examination is constructed depend upon information generated by such methods and the accuracy of the child's statements is critical.

### **Interviewing Technique Errors**

Many of the procedures and practices that appear to cause errors in the forensic interviews of children apply equally to interviews of adults where the focus is on the accuracy of the report. When examiners, as part of the normal case fact review and analysis become aware of these problems, the examination should either be postponed until the matter can be successfully resolved or, where possible, procedures adjusted to reduce examination errors. Such would be the case when the examiner discovers that the CAC interview he or she is reviewing is neither the only nor the first interview of the child. In such instances, the examiner would be well served to postpone the interview of the accused until he or she has had a chance to read and evaluate the contents of the child's previous interviews and look for substantive inconsistencies and contradictions. If this is not possible, at the very least, the examiner should carefully question the accused as to any information the accused may have regarding the child's statements made prior to the CAC interview.

One of the most serious problems with many forensic interviews of children involves omissions on the part of the interviewer,

specifically, failing to explore alternative possibilities for what the child says happened. Sometimes these omissions are the result of interviewer bias where consciously or unconsciously the forensic interviewer desires a certain outcome. Some forensic interviewing techniques used at CAC's specifically instruct interviewers not to explore alternative possibilities since the child might feel the interviewer is questioning the veracity of the child or the adults who helped bring the complaint forward (Bruck, Ceci & Hembrooke, 1998). While this rationale is questionable even in therapy after the complaint has been investigated and the facts corroborated in so far as these cases can be corroborated, failing to objectively investigate and explore other possibilities is a critical error. Examiners might be able to detect this error by looking for evidence that the forensic interviewer has asked the child who else they've talked to, what was said and if anyone has told the child what to say. As would be the case in any investigation, the child's responses to these questions should be evaluated in terms of significant inconsistencies and contradictions, keeping in mind that poor interviewing techniques alone can cause inconsistencies and contradictions in very young children. Examiners should also confirm that the forensic interviewer has explored motives for deception on the part of the child, either through coaching or on the part of the child acting independently (Ceci, 1993). While the research appears to indicate that the most common cause of inaccurate abuse reports by preschoolers is the result of false memories created through suggestibility during poorly conducted interviews, even very young children can fabricate allegations of sexual abuse. Examiners should look for evidence that the more common motives for fabrication (child custody battles, revenge for previous disciplinary actions, need for attention, threats, peer pressure, etc.) were discussed during the formal interview at the CAC when this interview is an important part of the examiner's case facts (Ceci, 1993).

As is the case for all forensic interviews, not just those involving young children, examiners should look for the following errors in technique:

**MULTIPLE ISSUE QUESTIONS - "Did he make you touch him while he was touching you?"**

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COMPOUND QUESTIONS - "Did he touch you on your breasts, butt and between your legs?"

LEADING QUESTIONS - "He didn't make you kiss him, did he?" or "I bet he told you not to tell anyone, didn't he?"

DIRECTED RESPONSES - "That's good!", "You don't mean that do you?" or any of a lengthy list of non-verbals such as head nodding/ shaking, smiling/ frowning, etc. following a child's response.

INTERVIEWER BIAS - Similar to directed responses, but with more emphasis: "Whoever would do things to children is a very bad person and you can help us get him!"

TELEGRAPHING - "People who lie get caught because they can't keep their story together, so you'd better not change anything from what you've said before!" or saying things like "Ya, right!" after a response thought to be deceptive.

MANIPULATION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS - "Now, no matter what, nothing is going to happen to you." Or "I want you to know that you're safe here and you don't have to be afraid of anything" (Lanning, 2002).

As stated previously, most preschoolers have not developed the mechanism that creates self-satisfaction in doing the right thing (telling the truth) even when negative consequences result. Pre-schoolers, however, are highly motivated to avoid punishment. While the whole concept of the CAC may have been largely due to overly aggressive interviewing tactics that generated fearful behaviors in truthful subjects, techniques that manipulate the subject's interview using stress reduction techniques wrapped in the guise of rapport building are equally harmful in the opposite direction. Most examiners tend to rely on reports created by the same forensic interviewers at the same CAC's. When this is the case, some effort can be made to periodically review the forensic interviewer's record of outcomes. If the forensic interviewer has enough experience to have created a reasonable body of work where the interview outcomes can be evaluated, examiners should be concerned with excessively lopsided determinations. Depending upon the variety of child sexual

abuse cases the forensic interviewer handles and when the forensic interviews are conducted in the investigative process, examiners should look for examples where children's statements were determined to be inaccurate and allegations proven to be false. If, on the other hand, it is always the forensic interviewer's conclusion that there is sufficient evidence to sustain the allegation, with the qualifications stated above, there is a high probability that some of the forensic interviewer's determinations are in error since the probabilities are not historically likely. In fact, the lack of differential probabilities between symptoms that accurately diagnose real from false victims of child sexual abuse is one of the more glaring weaknesses in the interviews commonly promoted by CAC's. Techniques such as the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), Symptoms Associated with Sexual Abuse (SASA) and various forms of the Child Sexual Behavior Inventory (CSBI) simply don't have even the minimal accuracy needed to base polygraph examination design decisions upon let alone investigative or court conclusions (Sbraga & O'Donohue, 2003).

### **Truth Lie Discussions**

As the direct result of a number of child interview debacles, the courts, following Federal Rules 601 and 603 have consistently determined \_ that children, with very few exceptions, can no longer be automatically excluded as witnesses simply because they are children and the courtroom experience is presumed to be distressing or emotionally harmful (Lyon & Saywitz, 1999). As reality has proven, testimony by children, including cross-examination, can be conducted in a straightforward manner with no negative effects on the child. In those rare and exceptional cases where there is reason to believe from the pre-trial record that the child fears the accused, courtroom screens and/ or video cameras can be utilized. Unfortunately, there are still a number of child developmental experts prepared to argue that all testimony in court by children is innately harmful, that young children are incapable of lying or lying about something as serious as sexual abuse.

In any case, before the child's testimony can be admitted, the child must demonstrate that he/she can identify truth and deception and that they understand the



moral implications of lying. Because of this obvious and beneficial legal requirement, forensic interviewers have incorporated the need for this process into the fact-finding interview conducted at the CAC. Some of the more difficult aspects of satisfying these legal requirements are the undeveloped cognitive and language skills present in most preschoolers. Thus the child may actually have an acceptable understanding of lying and the consequences of lying but be simply unable to express him or herself. Ideally, it would be desirable for interviewers to just ask open questions such as "What is a lie?" or "What happens to people who lie?" and then evaluate the child's abilities and understandings. In an attempt to prevent the exclusion of children's testimony in cases where a child possesses the requisite cognitive ability but lacks the language skills to explain it, forensic interviewers sometimes ask more specific questions or present scenarios to demonstrate the child's understanding. Unfortunately, this sometimes results in a meaningless discussion of color or pet identity completely subverting the legal requirements (Huffman, Warren & Larson, 1999). For example, the forensic interviewer might hold up a green crayon and ask the child "If I tell you this crayon is red, is it a lie?" Virtually all authoritative definitions of deception require consideration of intent (Strichartz & Burton, 1990). Thus, if someone were merely mistaken because they don't know the name of a color or pet species, they would not be considered liars. Compounding the problem, there are interviewing manuals recommending tactics like the "color test" as a best practice with absolutely no research to indicate that children who know their colors understand deception or the morality of deception any better than children who "fail" the color identification test. Polygraph testing itself is not immune from the reality that the common practice is not necessarily the best practice (Krapohl, Stern & Ryan, 2003). Ironically, even when forensic interviewers use techniques that have actually been validated to prove the child can tell the difference between truth and deception and understands the moral consequences of lying, this ability is no guarantee that the child will tell the truth (Gilstrap & McHenry, 2006). As is the case with adults, people who lie about criminal activity do so primarily to avoid negative consequences which can result both from

being caught lying and from being truthful about wrongdoing. Finally, there are those who recommend - as a Best Practice, no less subverting the investigative interview and the FRE 601 and 603 requirements by interjecting procedures that might be appropriate during therapy but either bias the child's responses or contaminate the interview so it cannot be introduced as part of any formal legal proceeding (London & Nunez, 2002). These tactics include deliberately incorporating therapeutic procedures into the fact-finding interview so the session can resist review and discovery by claiming to be privileged therapy and not part of an investigation. Other tactics include failing to tape the interview, tapes of such poor quality that they cannot be transcribed or reviewed, intentionally telling the child that the interviewer may repeat some questions knowing the problems of repetitive questioning and suggestibility or actually stating that the tape will or cannot be used in court.

Again, it should be noted that most of these concerns are only relevant to the basic fact-finding interview upon which the polygraph examination relies. If child therapists can demonstrate that manipulative tactics have a beneficial impact in therapy, they should not be held to the same standards of practice required in validated investigative or forensic interview.

### **Interview Training**

One of the most important findings of the research involving forensic interviewing is the relationship between the length and type of interview training and interviewer's competency with regard to obtaining accurate information from children. Three elements should be present to ensure an interview that can be relied upon; use of an interviewing technique that has been validated for diagnostic accuracy; a lengthy initial course of instruction that includes a captive internship at least some of which involves real-life subjects in actual sexual abuse cases; and, some type of quality control where actual case interviews are periodically reviewed and critiqued.

Only one state today (Illinois) requires that student polygraph examiners undergo a captive internship in which they must conduct

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real-life cases under direct supervision of a licensed instructor and most states do not even license polygraph examiners. A similar situation exists for students of forensic interviewing (Russell, 2006). As was the case for medicine, law and other professions, students who learn by direct observation and discussion - in addition to formal academic instruction - tend to be more proficient in the real world application of their knowledge. The flaw with this system, of course, is that it entirely depends upon the competency and willingness of the mentor to teach the student the correct procedures, an assumption often proven to be false. Starting with Reid College, polygraph training schools slowly accepted that their basic techniques need to be validated as diagnostically accurate and their teaching methods proven effective (Horvath, 2007). Sadly, there are still teaching institutions within the polygraph profession that have never established the validity or reliability of the techniques they teach.

Forensic interviewing is still in the early stages of the validation process with

regard to the accuracy of information obtained. It appears that many forensic interviewers today use techniques, while purported to be accepted or even best practices that have never been scientifically researched with regard to the accuracy of information obtained. Some promote interviewing procedures such as the use of drawings and dolls that do not increase the quality of information but can actually increase inaccurate and false information because of suggestibility. Polygraph examinations are dependent upon the investigations, which precedes them which, in the case of child sexual abuse allegations, are heavily dependent upon CAC interviews. Examiners should make an effort to discover how many interviews of the child of what type were conducted by whom using what techniques and carefully evaluate the accuracy of information. Particular attention should be made to evaluate with the effects of repetitive and suggestive interviewing practices. Inadequate or inaccurate case facts will almost always result in an inaccurate polygraph examination.

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