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FORENSIC ART AND THE COGNITIVE INTERVIEW

In this workshop Cynthia Marsh will present some case examples in which the Cognitive Interview was key in accessing hard to reach memories which resulted in detailed case information and composite sketches. She will also give participants a chance to test their memories and have the experience of interviewer/ interviewee in breakout sessions. This will be a fun and interactive workshop that will bring awareness to facial features, and how the composition and variations of the face make us all individuals.

DETAILS:

'Information is the lifeblood of investigations and it is the ability of investigators to obtain useful and accurate information from victims and witnesses that is most crucial for case solution and effective criminal prosecution. Yet full and accurate memory recall is difficult to achieve during a police interview.

The Cognitive Interview (CI) is an innovative method to enhance witness recall. In practice, police interviewers often dominated the social interaction with the witness by asking many questions, and by asking questions that elicited only brief answers. This relegated the witness to sit passively waiting for interviewers to ask questions (Fisher et al., 1987). To compound the problem, interviewers often discouraged witnesses from taking active roles by interrupting them in the middle of a narrative response.

These practices have the adverse effects of reducing the amount of information witnesses provide and increasing inaccurate responses. This is because these practices entice witnesses to (a) withhold information, (b) not provide any unsolicited information, (c) give abbreviated answers, and (d) volunteer answers they are unsure of. Furthermore, they disrupt the natural process of searching through memory, thereby making memory retrieval inefficient.

The Cognitive Interview has proven to (a) increase the amount of information gathered, and/or (b) decrease the likelihood of a recalling an event incorrectly. Core elements necessary to include in the CI include (a) developing rapport with the witness, (b) asking open-ended questions (c) asking neutral questions and avoiding leading or suggestive questions, and (d) funneling the interview, beginning with broader questions and narrowing down to more specific questions. The CI is a systematic approach to interviewing witnesses with the goal of

increasing the amount of relevant information obtained without compromising the rate of accuracy. The CI is based on scientifically derived principles of memory and communication theory as well as extensive analyses of law-enforcement interviews. Most important, the CI has been found in empirical studies to produce significantly more information than standard question-and-answer type interviews and without decreasing accuracy.'

From: **Interviewing Witnesses and Victims R. Edward Geiselman & Ronald P. Fisher**
University of California, Los Angeles & Florida International University
Michel St. Yves (Ed.), *Investigative Interviewing: Handbook of Best Practices*.
Thomson Reuters Publishers, Toronto, 2014.