

forensic clinical interviewing

practical skills for threat assessment professionals

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AETAP, Helsinki 24-26.18

overview

- background
 - interviewing for risk *versus* threat assessments
- interviewing skills for threat assessment
 - towards an integrated approach
- ethical considerations
 - in brief
- summary & conclusions

aim

to have you accept the possibility that interviewing clients or 3rd party sources for the purpose of threat assessment is a specialist undertaking requiring the application of a range skills and techniques best drawn from a combination of the forensic *and* the clinical (risk) interviewing fields

BACKGROUND

violence risk assessment and management

(clinical interviewing skills & techniques)

versus

threat assessment and management

(forensic or investigative interviewing skills and techniques)

focus

risk assessment & management

- on the potential perpetrator
- on harmful outcomes, which may be impulsive/reactive/affective *or* premeditated/instrumental, against a known or unknown victim
- on historic information about past incidents of harm and their antecedents and consequences, as well as the individual's history of personal problems
- on individuals acting alone
- on the prevention of general kinds of harmful outcomes

threat assessment & management

- on the relationship between the potential perpetrator and victim
- on predatory, targeted, intended violence
- on situational, environmental, contextual and motivational variables
- on individuals acting alone *or* as part of a coordinated group
- on the prevention of specific outcomes (e.g., a school shooting, a terrorist attack)

evaluator

risk assessment & management

mainly practitioners in
(forensic) mental
health, corrections and
social services

threat assessment & management

mainly law
enforcement and
security services

process

risk assessment & management

slow, an event for a specific purpose or date (e.g., an annual review, a court hearing)

threat assessment & management

often rapid, a continual process of intelligence-gathering and (re)evaluation to guide ongoing action in an evolving, real-time situation

assessment context

risk assessment & management

consultative, assisting
legal decision-making
(e.g., sentencing)

threat assessment & management

operational, guiding
front-line action

assessment evidence

risk assessment & management

evidence typically emphasises more static historic and dispositional variables, including psychiatric diagnoses from a range of sources, *including* in most cases, direct interviewing of the potential perpetrator

threat assessment & management

evidence typically emphasises dynamic situational, environmental and contextual variables, which could include current psychiatric symptoms, collated around a timeline from a range of sources, including the direct interviewing of the potential perpetrator(s) and 3rd party sources

Meloy & Hoffman, 2014

outcomes

risk assessment & management

prevention, through the
careful steering of the
person away from harmful
outcomes (balance of risk
and protective factors)
through collaborative
working, ideally

threat assessment & management

prevention through
monitoring and eventual
disruption via arrest (risk
factors – little interest in
protective factors)

techniques

includes indirect
assessments
through 3rd party
interviews

direct
assessment
via interviews

purposeful encounters
with individuals who
have information of
value

e.g., sexually violent predator; a
defensive or hostile potential violent
extremist; an uncommunicative client
with an autism spectrum condition
and an obsessional interest in
weapons; a paranoid and hostile
stalker

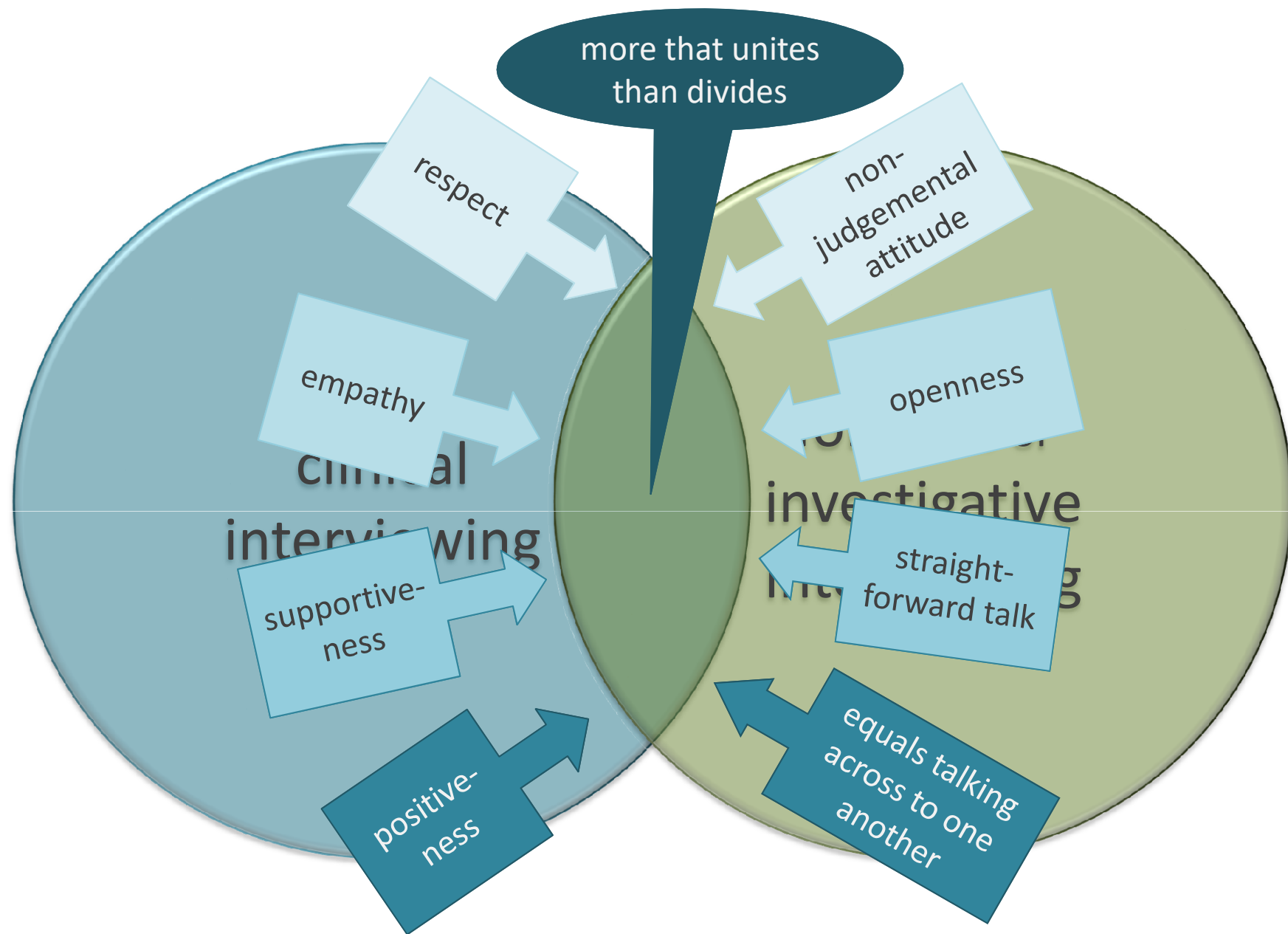
a feature of *both* risk and
threat assessment and
management

different practitioners working
with the same clients at different
points in the trajectory

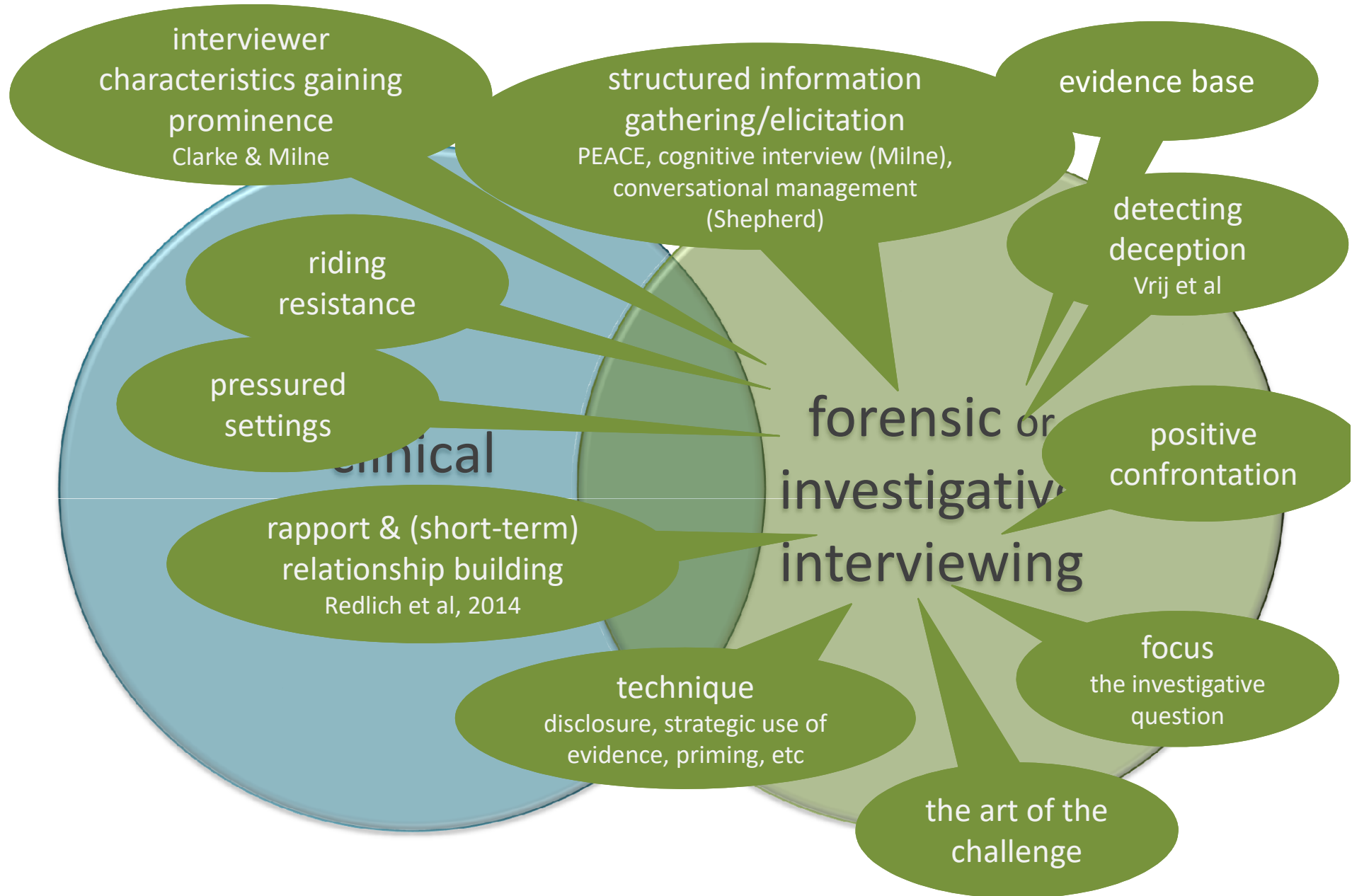
opportunities to learn in
respect of interviewing practice

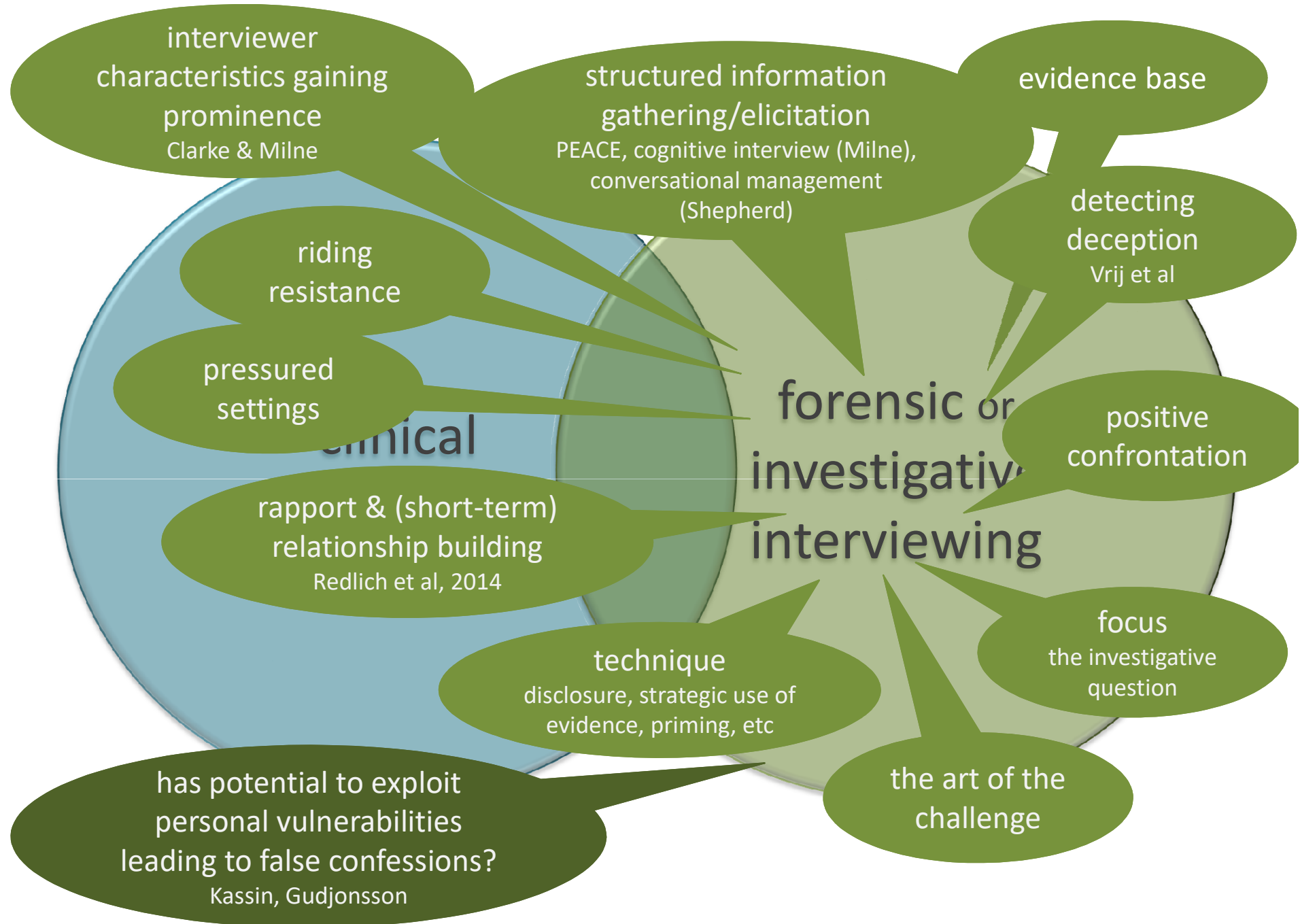
for threat assessment

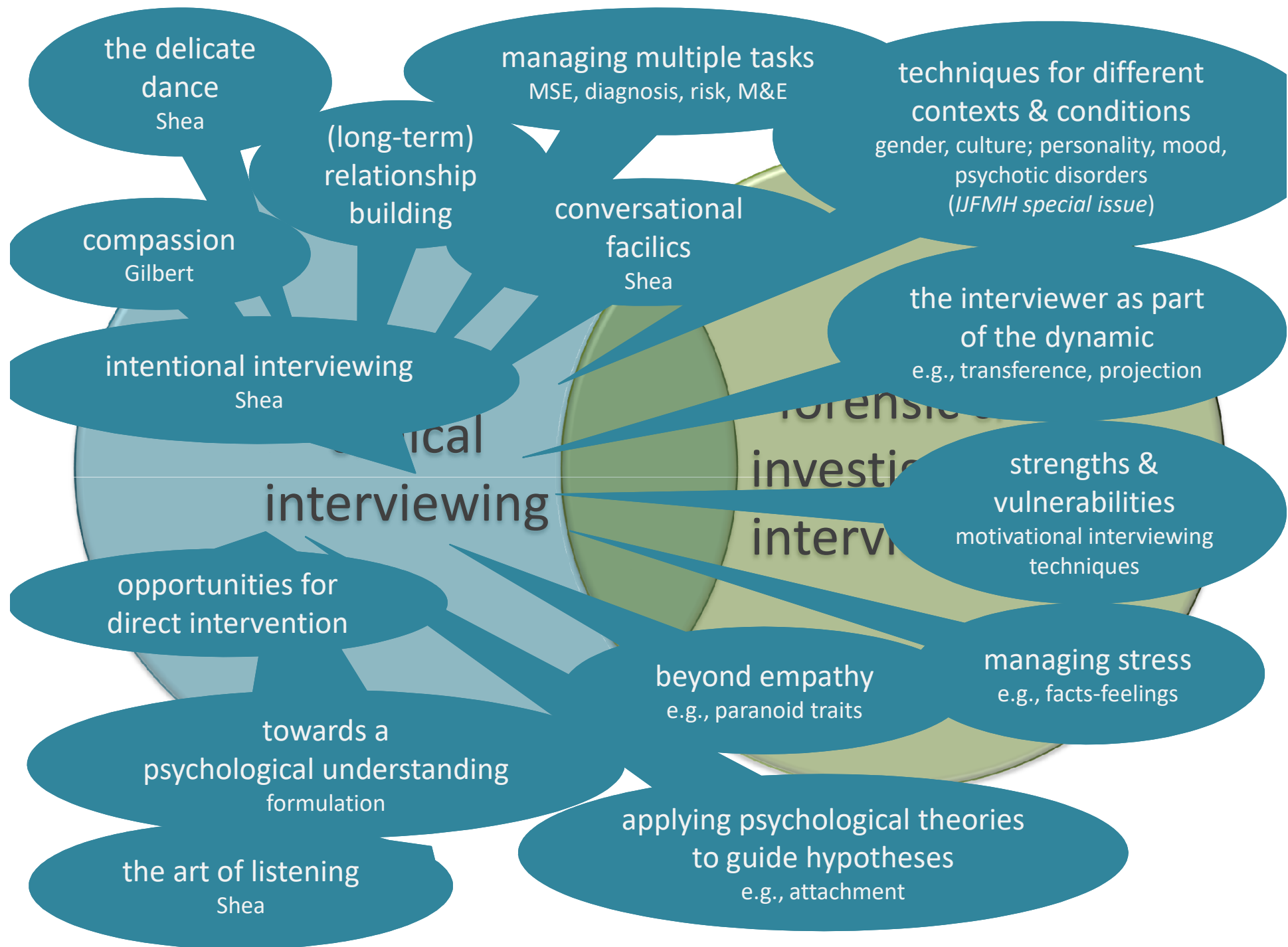
INTERVIEWING SKILLS

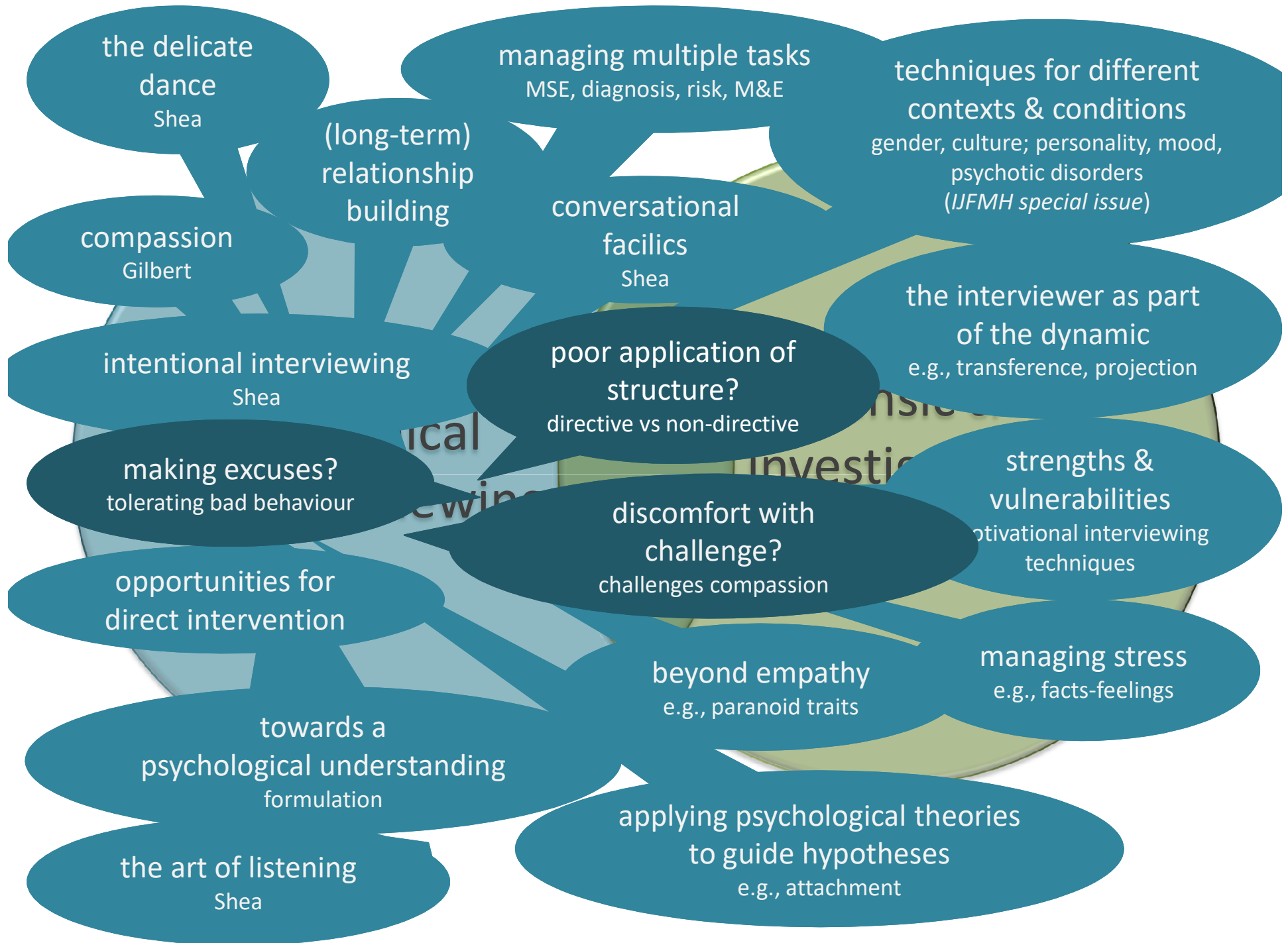


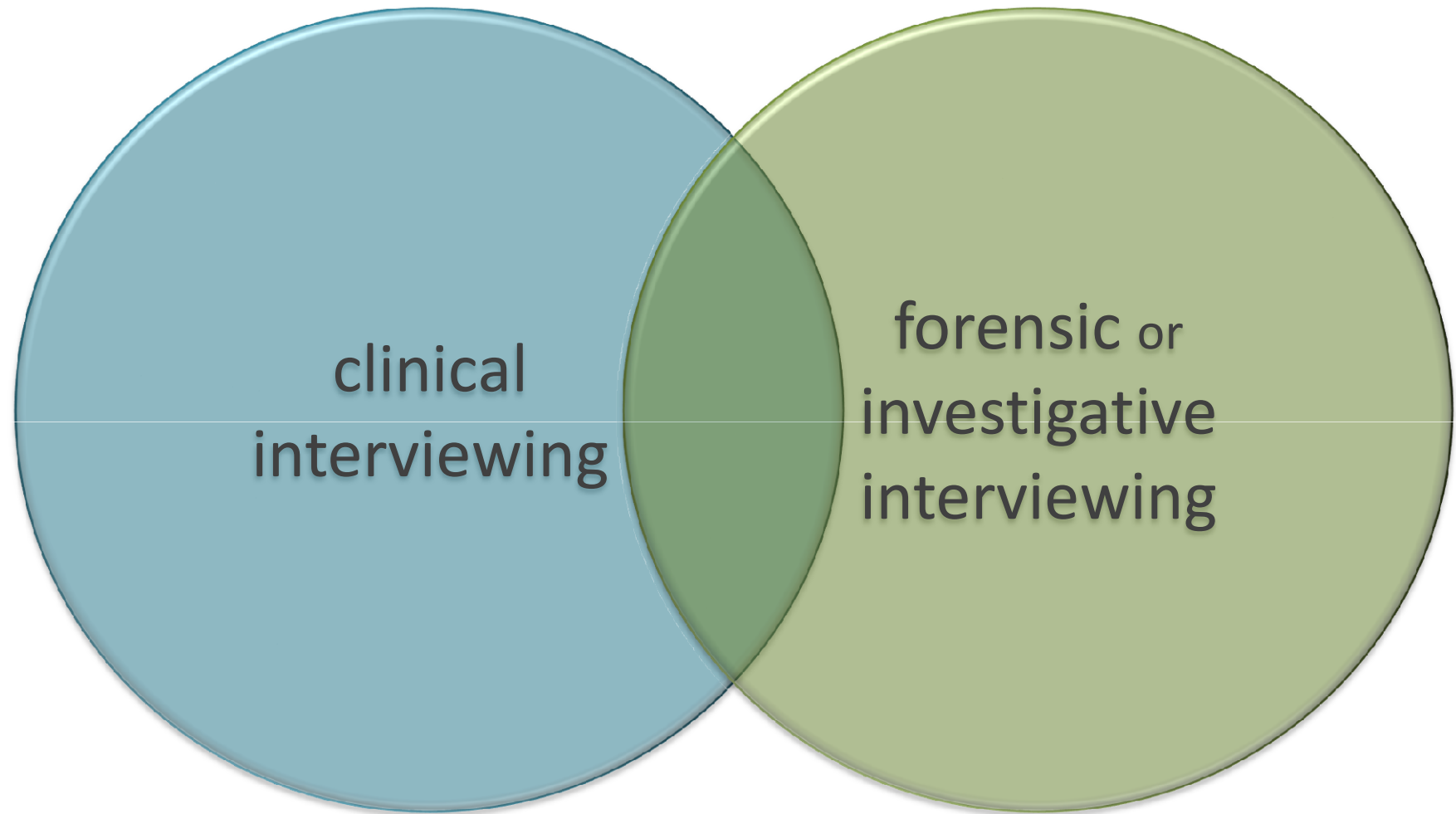
Shepherd & Griffiths, 2013













forensic clinical
interviewing

in brief

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

our darkest days ...

The New York Times | U.S. [Share](#)



Psychologists Open a Window on Brutal C.I.A. Interrogations

JAN 16 2017 13:40:21 JAN 20 2017 15:29:36

A lawsuit filed on behalf of former prisoners reveals new details about a program that used techniques widely viewed as torture.

By SHERI FINK and JAMES RISEN

JUNE 21, 2017

guiding principles in medical ethics

- **autonomy**: clients as individuals who choose their own courses of action
- **non-maleficence**: duty to avoid doing harm or to minimise harm
- **beneficence**: our duty to do good to clients and to eliminate suffering
- **justice**: all should be treated as equal

interviewing

- information gathering from individuals who may not be motivated to provide it
 - potentially coercive
 - a challenge the individual's right to *autonomy*
- but where there is a obligation to act on the basis of the assessment of harm potential
 - in favour of the principle of *non-maleficence*

interviewing

- more understanding of the individual = more options for measured, proportionate and ethical risk/threat management
 - towards *diversion* rather than arrest
 - in favour of the principles of both non-maleficence and beneficence

interviewing

- interviewing – direct or via a 3rd party – is a potential key to that understanding and therefore practice that balances the ethical dilemmas it can present
 - it may feel like tolerating or accepting potentially harmful behaviour or individuals
 - agencies, practitioners may differ in their acceptance of such approaches in interviewing and threat management

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- interviewing clients for the purpose of threat assessment is a specialist undertaking
 - therefore, training and supervised practice
- it requires the application of a range specialist skills best drawn from a *combination* of the forensic and the clinical interviewing fields
 - therefore, the risk and threat assessment fields
- ethical practice is our guide to best practice in the field

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