Interviewing and consultancy skills for direct and indirect assessments by threat assessment professionals

Dr Caroline Logan

Threat assessment professionals require skills in the direct assessment of people who may be ambivalent, if not reluctant, to engage in such a process. Threat assessment professionals also require skills in the practice of indirect assessment, such as when a person refuses to engage or when there are sound operational reasons not to engage with the person directly. The principal skills required are those relating to interviewing in the case of direct assessments and consultancy in the case of indirect assessments. This workshop aims to enhance these important and linked threat assessment practice skills.

The day will focus on the interviewing skills useful for direct assessments, whether brief or extended. Skills will include interview preparations and planning, managing initial contacts and endings, and rapport building – or enhancing the conditions of cooperation. Specific techniques will be examined, such as enquiring and changing topics (or conversational facilics), probing, observing, managing and riding resistance, and detecting and challenging anomalous accounts. The first part of the day will conclude by examining how to adapt existing and new skills to more challenging interview situations, such as the direct assessment of people with mental health problems, including personality difficulties, or people who are neurodivergent. Case studies and exercises will be used to enhance learning and test skills.

The second half of the day will build on the skills covered on day one and focus on their applications to professional consultancy related to the indirect assessment of persons of interest. Skills will include consultancy preparation and planning, listening in a multidisciplinary team meeting, detecting and making sense of differences of professional opinion, assimilating diverse and possibly contradictory information, risk/threat formulation, and threat management planning. Schein's process consultation model will be discussed in detail and contrasted with alternative approaches to consultation. And again, case studies and exercises will be used to enhance learning and test skills. Learning objectives for the workshop:

1. To enhance the awareness of participants in interview styles and techniques, including their own.

2. To encourage the development of new skills, such as in conversational facilics in direct assessment interviews or consultation skills for indirect assessments.

3. To provide participants with some exercises with which they may practice and observe developments in their interviewing competencies following the workshop.

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Caroline Logan is a Consultant Forensic Clinical Psychologist. She has worked as a lead consultant in high and medium secure forensic mental health services in the north of England, and as a consultant/contractor with law enforcement and threat assessment and management agencies in the UK and elsewhere for almost 30 years. She is also an honorary senior lecturer at the University of Manchester (from 2009, and before that, a senior research fellow then an honorary research fellow at the University of Liverpool between 1996-2009). In addition, she is a scientist at Helse Bergen in Norway. Dr Logan has ongoing clinical and research interests in personality disorder, including psychopathy, risk, violent extremism, and forensic clinical interviewing, and she has a special interest in gender issues in the range of offending behaviour. She has published five books and over 80 articles on these subjects, including Violent Extremism: A Handbook of Risk Assessment and Management, a

book co-edited with Randy Borum and Paul Gill, published in November 2023, and a second edition of Managing Clinical Risk: A Guide to Effective Practice, co-edited with Lorraine Johnstone, published in December 2023. She has commenced work on a new book on violent extremism in youth and a book on personality and risk is in the pipeline.