

# CHEAT SHEET ON PEACE INTERVIEWING SKILLS



How to use the PEACE model in your investigative interviews of suspects to its full potential.

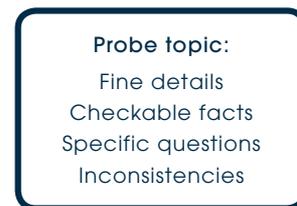
# P

Plan & Prepare



# E

Engage & Explain



REPEAT



# C

Closure

# E

Evaluation



## THE PEACE MODEL

Using PEACE in interview helps provide the interviewer with structure and consistency before, during, after and for future interviews. Interviewing is a complex process and using a methodical and professional approach can ensure you get the most out of it.

### Plan and Prepare

#### Consider interview location/time/date and recording method

The point of the interview is to get as much information and detail out of the interviewee as possible (as well as the truth hopefully!). For this to happen it is important that the interview is held in a place where there will be minimum disruption, the temperature is appropriate, no noise pollution can be heard (such as ringing phones/people talking). Ensure that getting to the location is possible – are there parking restrictions, heavy traffic build up around the area etc. Ensure you are comfortable with your recording method and if using equipment - it works!

#### Make a written interview plan. Include all objectives to be covered

When making an interview plan the investigator should use all information that is already available. The investigator should review the material and decide on the aims and objectives for the interview. The interview plan should include topic (covered below), points to prove, potential defences, any exhibits being used, Material held that may assist in suggesting the suspect may have committed the offence, any witness statements that assist in the investigation, any material gathered that may assist the investigation, Any other relevant points such as intention, *actus rea* (guilty act) and *mens rea* (guilty mind). Planning for your interviewee to remain silent, choosing not to answer (ie no comment) or providing a prepared statement (written account as to what happened).

#### Set up topic boxes and identify questions to be asked

Topic boxes should be set once you have made your interview plan. The topics should then be probed one by one in interview ensuring that all information required is covered.

#### Background research on interviewee and any safety concerns and contingencies for reactions

Individual personality and characteristics should be taken into account when planning your interview. You should ensure you know as much as possible about the person you're interviewing such as (but not exhaustive to):

- **Age** - (use of an appropriate adult or an interview supporter may need to be considered)
- **Physical/mental health** – Any medical conditions/extra support required/appropriate facility available
- **Gender** – Ensure safety of all parties from potential complaints and consider the gender of both your interviewee and interviewers.
- **Religion or beliefs** – You may need to take into consideration certain beliefs, customs or prayer times for example
- **Cultural background** – Use of an interpreter may need to be considered.
- **Family circumstance** – Do they have children that need to be picked up from school for example
- **Previous work sanctions** – Have they been involved in an investigation previously? How did they react at any interview or hearing?

- **Previous Police involvement** – This could assist in knowing how the interviewee is likely to react when questions and challenged

### Engage and explain

#### Rapport building and introductions of all persons present

Encouraging a conversation by engaging with the interviewee. Remain professional and polite with the interviewee. Remember you are not there to determine guilt – you are fact finding.

#### Explain the purpose of the interview

For example you may say “You are here because it has been alleged...” Explain the objectives clearly and indicate an overview as to what you will speak to them about. Explain that this is to properly obtain the facts and issues. The interviewee should always understand why they are being interviewed.

Cover the ground rules for interview – cover interrupting and clarification of questions if needed. For example:

### EXPECTATIONS IN INTERVIEW

If you nod or shake your head during the interview it will not be picked up on the audio recording or missed if I am looking down therefore please say yes/no instead of nodding. I will also be making notes (as will my colleague) and may miss your response.

Please do not think that I am not listening to your answers if I am making notes and not looking at you.

This interview is about finding out the truth of what happened and to give you the opportunity to give an explanation and explore any further lines of enquiry that we may need to complete.

In order for you to do this, I will give you time to answer my questions. Please consider your answer. There is no rush so take your time. Please do not try and ‘fill in the gaps’. If you do not know the answer to my question please say you don’t know.

I would also ask that you wait until I finish my question before you start to answer and I will do the same with my responses so we are not talking over each other.

I would like to gain as much information from this interview as possible so I would appreciate you could give your answers in as much detail as possible.

If applicable inform them how the interview will be stored and shared. If the interview is going to be shared (for example HR) then inform the interviewee as to who it will likely be shared with. Also inform them that it will be stored and if policy to provide a copy informing them how they can do so.

### Account

The first question should always be about the alleged offence followed by as much free recall by the interviewee as possible.

This should be accompanied by non-verbal encouragement such as posture towards the

interviewee, allowing pauses without interruption so the interviewee has time to think, using small verbal encouragement such as 'mmm' or 'carry on' and nodding your head to show you're listening.

#### **Take and develop the account by asking 5WH and TED questions**

These should be short and simple and not overly complicated.

Key questions types to use are covered later on.

#### **Review topic – probe topic – introduce – clarification/challenge – this should be used in a continuous cycle.**

Breaking the account down into smaller more manageable topics helps both the interviewer and the interviewee. Systematic probing of them topics by following the PEACE model and using a mixture of open and closed questions until as full account as possible has been obtained. Go back to the interview plan and ensure that everything has been covered by the topics raised before moving on.

#### **Challenge and clarify any inconsistencies or gaps in the account**

Use information you already know to challenge and probe into any inconsistencies or gaps in the interviewees account. If you have CCTV evidence of the interviewee in a different place and a different time to what has been said by them now is the time to put those challenges in.

### **Closure**

#### **Summarise the information that the interviewee has told you**

The information that has been provided by the interviewee should at this point be summarised back to them including any information that has been gathered in any phase (open recall, topic probing or challenging).

#### **Give the interviewee an opportunity to add/change or clarify any points**

You should ask the interviewee if they have anything they wish to add or clarify in relation to the summary you have just given them.

#### **Ask the interviewee if they have not told you anything that they now wish to add before the interview ends**

For transparency I would for the final time ask the interviewee if they wish to add anything else making it clear the interview is now ending.

#### **Ask the interviewee if they have any questions**

Ensure all questions or concerns the interviewee may have are addressed here,

#### **Discuss next steps. Agree timescales if possible**

Do not make promises you cannot keep however give the interviewee a rough timescale if you can with the next steps. Ensure you are clear as to what the next steps are.

### **Evaluation**

#### **Review and assess the information gained from the interview**

The interviewee may have provided an alibi, explanation, denial, admission. It is best practice to go back over your interview notes and establish what you have learnt from their account.

#### **Identify any further lines of enquiries that have arisen**

The interviewee may have given you a witness to speak with, an alibi to explore, CCTV to check etc. Any further lines of enquiry to come out of the interview should be included in your investigation plan as next steps and establish if they are viable. If the enquiry will not bring you closer to establishing if the interviewee is involved or not then now is the time to consider whether that line should be conducted or not. If not it is always best to record your rationale for any scrutiny later.

#### **As part of your continuing CPD appraise your own performance in the interview or ask a colleague to assist**

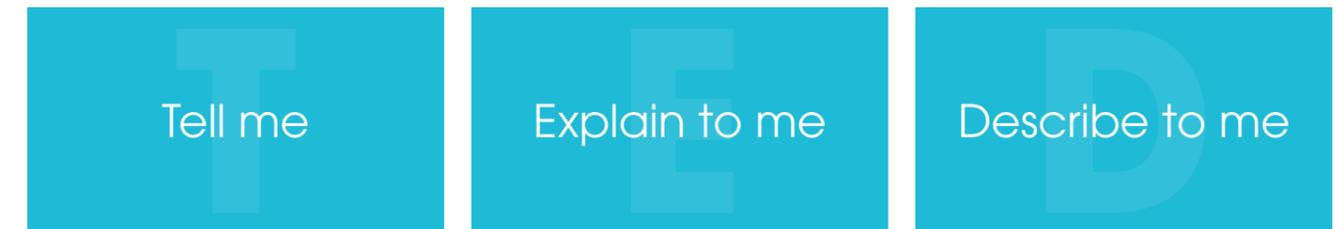
As investigators we should be striving to make our next interview even better than the one before. Ensure you ask colleagues (if involved in the process) or a supervisor to give you feedback on your interview techniques. Analyse how you felt it went. What you thought went well, what you could have improved on. Any part of the interview that went particularly well make a note of it to use for next time.

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## **TYPES OF QUESTIONS**

You should always strive to get the most information out of the interviewee. This may come down to your questioning techniques and ability.

Using open TED questions will assist with getting full responses:



To obtain more specific detail you can use the 5WH questions which will elicit more specific answers:



Open questions – Use TED and 5WH when trying to gain as much information from the interviewee as possible. These types of questions should keep the interviewee talking and engaging.

**eg. Tell me everything you can remember from that day.**

Closed questions – Use questions which can only be answered as yes or no when trying to clarify or if the interviewee is reluctant to speak with you. These types of questions may cause the interviewee to shut down. These types of questions give the interviewer more control as to how much information they want at that stage. This may restrict the interviewees account.

eg. Were you there?

Leading questions – Avoid using where possible and only use as a last resort. These questions often assume facts. Information received using these types of questions may be deemed as being less credible and ruled out at any Court hearing.

eg. So she was wearing a red coat?

Multiple questions – This may confuse your interviewee and you may not get all the information you would have if you had broken the questions down. They may not know what part to answer and you may not know which part they are answering.

eg. Were you there? Did you see who did what? How did this make you feel? Were you scared?

Forced choice questions – The correct information may have been one that you did not offer, but the interviewee may have felt obliged to pick one of your suggestions.

eg. Was the vehicle white or red?

**TOP TIP** – remember your questions should be phrased to obtain as much information as possible from the interviewee.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PEACE INTERVIEWING OR TO BOOK A  
CALL TO DISCUSS HOW WE CAN HELP TRAIN YOUR INVESTIGATORS  
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