

Investigative Interviewing

Criminal Justice

Two interviewing traditions with very different false-confession risks.

Information-gathering

- Open questions, free recall first
- Aim is accurate information, not confession
- Plan, engage, account, closure, evaluate
- Challenge inconsistencies after the account
- Associated with fewer false confessions

Accusatorial

- Presumes guilt and seeks a confession
- Confrontation, minimisation, themes
- Raises the risk of false confession
- Vulnerable suspects are most at risk
- Widely criticised by research bodies

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

False confessions appear in a substantial share of documented DNA exonerations; interview method matters.

Educational reference. Caution wording, recording duties and appropriate-adult rules are jurisdiction-specific. Not legal advice.