

# Testing the Limits of Admission

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# Un-researched Area

- Psychology and physiology are confounded when testing the limits of admissions

# Polygraph Screening

- No allegation / no known incident
  - Testing any involvement
  - Testing the limits of admission

# Goals of Polygraph Testing

- Disclosure of information
- Deterrence of problems
- Detection of deception and truth

# Polygraph Results

- Information
- Test result

# Multiple-issue Exams

- Multiplicity = compounded error rates
  - Not completely fixed by statistical corrections
- Less accurate than single issue exams
- Not ethical for diagnostic testing
  - Test result is intended to serve as a basis for decision and action
- Very useful in screening
  - Looking for possible problems
  - Test result is simply information
    - Not itself a basis for decision and action

# Hazzards

- Naive expectations for precision
  - Unknown increase in both FN and FP errors when testing the limits of admission
- Exaggeration = false admission

# Guidelines – don't



# Don't

- Do not give the examinee the answer or number

# Don't

- Do not encourage the examinee to exaggerate
  - Exaggeration is a form of false confession

# Guidelines – do

- Use semi-structured interviewing strategies
- Interview to ascertain the ability of the examinee to clearly understand the behavioral issue
- Encourage the examinee to make accurate and complete admission

# Do

- Be realistic about the capabilities of the polygraph
- Attempt to provide information and results that are interpretable and usable within the boundaries of **reality**

# Types of test questions

- Topical questions
- Challenging questions
- Probing detail questions

# Basis of response

- Emotion
  - Emotion re past behavior
  - Examiner should not become the cause of an emotional reaction
- Cognition
  - Mental activity re target behavior
  - Do not become the source of mental activity
- Conditioned response
  - Question is a conditioned stimulus
  - Past behavior is the conditioning event
  - Do not become the source of a conditioned response

# Interviewing the limits

- Topic
- Challenge denial
- Clarify understanding
- Challenge the limit of admission
  - Question the limit

# Interviewing the Limits of Admission

- Two questions
  - 1) Is there any possibility it was more times than that?
  - 2) What is the most possible number of times you did that?



# Testing the limits of admission

# Question Formulation

- Use the exact number only when the number is single digit and the examinee has describe every incident
  - Besides those 5 times...
- Quote verbatim when the examinee cannot describe every incident
- Use a general exclusion statement after the examinee admits inability to recall every incident
  - After interviewing the limits
  - Other than what you told me...

# Human tendency

# Realistic expectations

- It is impossible to ever know everything

# Unrealistic hyperbole

- Makes the polygraph appear like a pseudoscientific interrogation prop

# 2 or 10

- Sometimes it is impossible to know every