Book Review

Tudor-Owen, J., van Golde, C., Bull, R., & Gee, D. (Eds.). (2022). Interviewing Vulnerable Suspects: Safeguarding the Process. Taylor & Francis

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In an era where the ethical treatment of vulnerable individuals within legal proceedings is paramount, *Interviewing Vulnerable Suspects: Safeguarding the Process* offers a timely and insightful exploration of the challenges involved in the investigative interviewing process. In recent years, police interviewing processes, particularly in the context of interviewing vulnerable suspects, have received notable attention from public authorities. In England and Wales, such issues are noted on government and College of Policing agendas, with the *Interviewing Suspects* (2023) report addressing the investigative procedures for vulnerable suspects. The importance of upholding standards within interviewing processes has been noted within research for decades, with an extensive proportion of research stating that police interviewing processes carry a substantial burden of accountability for miscarriages of justice (Poysner & Milne, 2011). This book helps to address this by exploring ethical interviewing practices that prioritise fairness, transparency, and consideration for human rights.

Divided into two parts, this book covers various aspects including theoretical frameworks, practical strategies, and legal considerations. The first part focuses on the conceptualisation of vulnerability and the initial processes of interviewing a vulnerable suspect, including training interviewers and the importance of the PEACE model: Planning and preparation, Engage and explain, Account clarification and challenge, Closure and Evaluation. The second part explores the interview approaches and implications for individuals often considered vulnerable, including culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) suspects and children as suspects.

Throughout the book, the authors examine the challenges and best practices associated with interviewing vulnerable individuals.

Tudor-Owen and van Golde draw attention to the "bigger picture" of vulnerability in Chapter 1: vulnerability might be pre-existing, but criminal justice systems and processes can create and exacerbate vulnerability. The two lead authors also argue that although the notion of vulnerability can be narrow, the definition of vulnerability must remain consistent across the criminal justice system to ensure that individuals are receiving fair treatment throughout their interactions. In addition, they argue that individuals should be considered vulnerable from their initial encounter with the criminal justice system, to ensure that safeguarding processes are upheld and effective throughout the process.

Chapter 2 draws upon the PEACE model of interviewing, the interview method most used within England and Wales (Williamson, 2006). Tudor-Owen and van Golde emphasise the importance of utilising the stages within the PEACE model appropriately. They argue that following the PEACE model will help to raise interviewer awareness of potential suspect vulnerabilities, which can then be managed in an appropriate manner. Additionally, the authors discuss the evidence-based approaches in building rapport with vulnerable suspects, including, verbal, para-verbal and non-verbal behaviours.

Within Chapter 3, Tudor-Owen and van Golde examine the dynamic differences of third-party presence within an interview. They identify a third

party, or parties, as 'an intermediary, lawyer or interpreter' (p. 19), and explore the benefits and flaws of each third-party role. Tudor-Owen and van Golde draw upon the research of Medford et al., (2003), who states that appropriate adults (AA) often do not challenge inappropriate interview tactics, questioning how beneficial the role of an AA is. They conclude that whilst intermediaries, lawyers and interpreters are vital to mitigate risks for vulnerable suspects within an interview setting, individuals within these roles must ensure that they prepare and plan for interviews appropriately.

Chapter 4 considers the impact of training on interview performance and the guidance that is applied to police interviewing processes. Within this chapter, Bull and Milne examine the *phased approach* outlined in the Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) protocol and PEACE model. By drawing upon the research of Geijsen et al. (2018), Bull and Milne identify that a large proportion of suspects are interviewed inappropriately, and they highlight the lack of guidance surrounding interviewing vulnerable adults. They emphasise that the appropriate application of the PEACE model and ABE protocol will "best safeguard the process" (p. 32) and the importance of following formal guidance is vital to the protection of vulnerable suspects.

In the final chapter of Part One, Chapter 5, Bull and Milne discuss interview supervision and management. They indicate that engaging with the Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS)-PEACE method developed by Clarke and Milne (2001) will allow good and bad interview practices to be noted, improving the overall standard of interviews. The need for a consistent approach is argued within this chapter, by concluding that "supervision needs to be fair, transparent, and conducted by well-trained individuals" (p. 39) to improve the practices of interviews for vulnerable suspects.

The second part of the book focuses on the interview process for specific vulnerabilities. Chapter 6 examines the interviewing of intoxicated suspects, with specific analysis of the perceptions of intoxicated suspects and the implications within these interviews. van Golde et al. note that memory

loss is a common issue amongst intoxicated suspects. As a result, intoxicated suspects are more likely to incriminate themselves. Moreover, "suspects may misinterpret evidence against them" (p.48), suggesting the severity of their vulnerability. The chapter concludes that an individualistic approach should be taken with intoxicated suspects to accommodate their vulnerabilities.

Chapters 7 and 8 shift their focus to the analysis of interviewing young and older individuals. van Golde et al. state that whilst there is an increase in offending rates amongst older adults, this demographic often receives sympathetic treatment, due to police perceiving older adults as mentally confused. Considering the likelihood of older adults suffering with dementia and Alzheimer's, the authors suggest that police officers should follow guidelines set out by The American Alzheimer's Association, to ensure that a factual response from a vulnerable suspect is retrieved. Similarly, within Chapter 8, it is suggested that children do not understand the importance of legal concepts, including their rights, which creates unfair judicial outcomes. This chapter concludes that an appropriate adult should be present when interviewing children to mitigate false confessions and ensure that the process is just. This conclusion, however, seems to contradict the conclusion in Chapter 3, which states that the presence of AAs is likely to change the dynamic of the interview. Although the authors imply that the role of an AA is vital, they state that the individuals within this role do not often act accordingly, resulting in an unjust interview process. Further consideration on this would be beneficial for readers.

Tudor-Owen et al. focus on interviewing suspects with mental illnesses within Chapter 9. Individuals with mental illnesses, they argue, are at a higher risk of falsely confessing and might not understand the potential implications of these statements. It is stated that specialised police training, adhering to the PEACE model, and ensuring an AA is present, can improve the interviewing approach. The recommendations noted within the next chapter are similar. Chapter 10, interviewing suspects with intellectual and learning impairments, identifies the

range of support which can be tailored to specific vulnerabilities, with a focus on Autism Spectrum Disorder and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. The difference between specific intellectual and learning impairments must be understood by police staff and third parties to ensure that the appropriate support is provided, whilst understanding the need for an individualistic approach.

Chapter 11 discusses the interviewing of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and First Nations suspects. Referring to *R v Anunga* (1976), the authors present guidelines to interviewing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals. The guidelines consider the perceptions that individuals may have towards police interviews, which could be impacted by the history of colonisation and police violence towards Aboriginal people. van Golde et al. argue that it is important to consider suspects who are non-English speaking, and/or have a historically complicated or oppressed relationship with the police, and therefore, may find it difficult to engage with the interviewing process. In relation, Chapter 12 highlights the negative perceptions that LGBTQIA+ communities have with the police, and the importance of considering historic relationships when interviewing. Gender and sexuality information must be approached sensitively, (i.e., ensuring that pronouns are communicated effectively). Authors note that in doing so, "it has the potential to impact rapport building positively… improving the likelihood of a positive interview outcome" (p. 93).

In Chapter 13, van Golde et al. analyse the interviewing implications for suspects with a hearing impairment. The authors argue that d/Deaf individuals are significantly disadvantaged throughout the criminal justice process, and the communication from staff to suspects must be transparent (i.e., translated using a qualified interpreter). Whilst interpreters are a legal right for d/Deaf individuals, they are not always present within interview settings due to the time-consuming and costly process that police must undergo. Notwithstanding, this lack of presence can lead to d/Deaf suspects falsely confessing and being wrongfully convicted. The authors note that

communication is vital between police and d/Deaf suspects and suggest that further training on interviewing individuals with physical disabilities is necessary.

This book discusses the complexities of interviewing vulnerable suspects and emphasises that all suspects should be considered vulnerable to attain accurate and reliable information. Overall, a key message from this book is that interviewing vulnerable suspects requires interviews to approach the process with empathy, professionalism, and a commitment to upholding the principles of justice and fairness. This book will be a thought-provoking read for anyone involved in the criminal justice system, from law enforcement officers and legal practitioners to psychologists and social workers. It will provide particularly useful for students in criminology, law, sociology, forensic psychology, and policing.

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