



## I&RC Newsletter

Get it right, first time and every time

February 2026

Welcome to this month's edition of our Newsletter. As part of our commitment to help students get involved in research, presenting and writing, we have a short piece by Ricky Stone who is a PhD student researching rapport and police PEACE interviewing. He has written a short reflection on his Masters' dissertation which examined rapport and barriers when obtaining accounts from witnesses. We hope you enjoy his reflection and we are sure you will take away some learning points.

We have some dates for your diary to check out and our regular top tip for your investigations.

First let us begin with Ricky Stone's reflection on his Masters' study.

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***“Rapport building barriers within the practice of a criminal investigation regarding criminal investigators for the purpose of obtaining an account from witnesses”***

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Since the second year of my undergraduate degree at the University of Derby, when I first encountered the concept of rapport building, I questioned why there would be the need to research such a common aspect of life. As I learned more about rapport in investigative interviewing e.g., non-verbal/verbal communication and first impressions, I grew to understand how rapport is not a fixed concept but one that is ever changing to reflect the actions of interviewer(s) when building rapport.

This mindset led me to empirically discuss barriers to building rapport within interviewing for my Masters' thesis. I interviewed six policing lecturers, who had been police officers prior to transitioning to academia, about their rapport experience, their training, and any barriers they had come across attempting to build rapport. After I had completed my data collection and transcribed the interviews, I had a meeting with my supervisor. They pointed out I had collected data from both ABE and PEACE Interviews where I only wanted to collect PEACE interview rapport data.

I was able to use the ABE data to highlight that there is a deeper understanding of rapport only when participants had received further interviewing training. I was able to write about witnesses being barriers to rapport stemming from them being reluctant to talk to the police, their mental/physical state or outright hostility and mistrust towards the police. On the other side of the coin police barriers included them being biased, the time constraints to properly build a rapport and the interviewing environment.

While writing my analysis chapter, my understanding was deepened even further as I read through the transcripts and began writing. The findings all have the potential of being applied to real world policing and having a real impact by improving how police officers base knowledge of rapport, how to make witnesses want to talk to the police and by looking at where, when and how interviews are conducted. This just shows that rapport is not limited to interviewing but every action, positive and negative when interacting with the police can affect how the public views officers. By improving the areas that were identified in the dissertation, it can lead to real world changes that will benefit the police.

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*Thank you to Ricky for this insightful reflection, especially the recognition of how an understanding of the concept of rapport is enhanced with further interviewing training.*

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# Dates for your



Please check out our “Dates for Your Diary” on our website. We have some great training lined up throughout the year and hope you can all attend.

On May 27<sup>th</sup> and May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026, we will be holding two workshops titled “Vulnerability, Interviewee Assessment and Impact on Communication in Investigative Interviewing”.

This is the first of its kind. A case study combined with real life learning regarding the practicalities of investigative interviews with vulnerable adults suffering with mental health issues. These unique workshops will be suitable for academics and practitioners involved with investigative interviewing within the criminal and non-criminal fields. From police to safeguarding investigators.

We will also be holding safeguarding workshops titled “An Investigative Safeguarding Workshop: Your Perceptions and Actions”.

This is a great webinar where all of your safeguarding perceptions are challenged with lots of engaging discussions, in addition to your investigative



enquiry – you document when and why you have followed that line. When an interviewee does not want to be interviewed – you write down the reasons why and what advice you have given them.

Remember the adage – “If it’s not written it down, it didn’t happen”.



Last but not least – our next newsletter will be a stand-alone look at the relevance of questioning during your investigative interview. There is much great work out there on the best practice guide of

questioning, such as Tell, Explain and Describe before moving onto the more probing questions of Who, What, Where, How and Why. What if your questions are irrelevant? Where does relevance fit in your planning and preparation and what about ADVOKATE? Is this always relevant when obtaining an account? Do you look for relevance in your post interview evaluation?

Our next newsletter will examine this concept within the PEACE model. To obtain a copy of our free newsletter:

Please Subscribe Here

Finally, any feedback would be greatly appreciated, and we hope you enjoyed this edition. Bye for now:

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Thank you and we hope you enjoyed this edition  
Keith and Laura.

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