



Investigation Fundamentals

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**There's room
here for
beginners
and experts—
and both
contribute.**

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8 THINGS YOU'LL LEARN TODAY

01 Understand your job as an investigator

05 Clarify Word Choices

02 Prep Work before the investigation

06 Listen carefully and document accurately

03 Know what evidence matters

07 Interview Techniques

04 Develop better interview questions

08 Investigator Self-management



Mentimeter



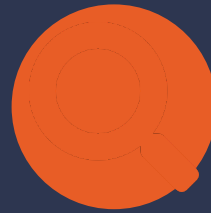


YOUR ROLE



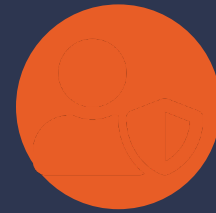
IMPARTIAL

**Check your bias.
Approach with humility.**



DILIGENT

**Thorough in gathering,
examining every angle.**



CONFIDENTIAL

**Handle sensitive information
responsibly and carefully.**

KNOW YOUR TIMELINE



If additional time is needed, the investigator notifies the parties of an extension.

BEFORE THE FIRST INTERVIEW

1

Review the Allegation

Understand nature of the complaint

2

Review Policies & Regulations

Know the relevant rules that apply

3

Create a Plan

Outline steps, order, timeline

4

Identify potential evidence

Identify & preserve all relevant material

5

Prep Interview Questions

Tailor open-ended questions per role



Remember This:
**Review the
allegations/
policies**

Create a plan

Collect evidence

Prep questions.



Advisors

HR/Student

Conduct



EMPATHY WITHOUT ADVOCACY

The Investigator's Balance

Stay emotionally neutral · Be curious, not convinced · Let evidence — not emotion — drive decisions

Empathy

*"I understand
how this feels."*

Sympathy

*"I feel bad
for you."*



Remember This:
Acknowledge
emotions

Stay neutral

Listen without
agreeing

SCHEDULE

Early

Before memories fade

Fairly

No one feels targeted

Privately

Neutral, safe locations

Clearly

State purpose and limits

*Most interviews need **60–90 minutes** Rushed interviews = missed information.*



WHY WORD CHOICE MATTERS

INTERROGATING

"Why did you say that?"

"Why did you choose that approach?"

"Explain yourself."

FINGER POINT

CONVERSATING

"What led you to say that?"

"Can you share your thought process?"

"Help me understand."

OPEN DOOR

A decorative vertical band on the left side of the slide featuring a repeating pattern of yellow and black diagonal stripes.

Remember This:

- **Questions signal either accusation or curiosity**
- **“Why” often feels like blame → defensiveness**
- **Curiosity language → psychological safety**
- **Safety leads to honest, useful information**
- **Swap “why” for how / what / can you share**



Let's Practice





THEFT OF TIME: MOCK INTERVIEW

Roles: Investigator,
Complainant,
Respondent



THE CURRENCY OF CLARITY

Words are slippery. Two people can use the same word and mean two completely different things.

*If they didn't say it, don't use it.
You are expected to ask the hard questions.*



Remember This:

**Words don't mean the
same thing to everyone**

**Your job is not to guess
Your job is to ask the
hard questions.**



Motivations & Feelings

Remember This:

Investigate actions, not assumptions.

Explain feelings with facts.



Interview Recording





Remember This:

Record only if it helps accuracy.

**Consider concerns
and destroy temporary
documents — unless told
otherwise.**



**What
Good
Listening
Looks
Like**



Remember This:

Be present. Listen without distraction. Reflect, clarify, and stay neutral.

People talk more when they feel like they are part of a conversation and not an interview—and better listening leads to better investigations.



**Deceptive
behaviors $\neq$ proof
of lying.**

**PULL THE
THREAD**

Remember This:

Suspicion is a signal, not a conclusion

**Deception cannot be determined by
body language**

**Your job is to ask, probe, and
corroborate**

**Let evidence and inconsistencies
speak, not accusations**

Let's Practice

**I don't
remember
vs I didn't
do it.**





What You Ask:

At the staff potluck, did you proclaim that ‘gluten is the secret ingredient to world domination’ and then dramatically confiscate all the dinner rolls?

What You Hear:

I don’t remember saying anything like that.



What You Ask:

On Thursday in the break room, did you say, 'Damn, your butt looks good – you been doing them squats?'

What You Hear:

Absolutely not! I just took the sexual harassment training. I would never say that to someone at work.



**Credibility –
Not all
differences
matter**

Remember This:

People remember the same event a little differently — that's normal.

Memory differences on small details are expected.

Pay attention to whether the disagreement is about the core event or about the background/minor details.



EVIDENCE DOESN'T NEED TO BE PERFECT.

IT NEEDS MAKE SENSE, BE EXPLAINABLE, AND HOLD UP WHEN SOMEONE ASKS QUESTIONS.

Direct Evidence

*Proves a fact without guessing
(admission, video, message)*

Circumstantial

*Needs connecting clues
(patterns, timing, access)*

Corroborating

Different sources confirming the same information

SUFFICIENCY TEST

Would someone who wasn't involved in the investigation come to the same conclusion if they looked at the evidence?



Resistance in Interviews

What could it mean?



55%

*of communication is
body language.
But stress ≠
deception.*

MYTH

*"They wouldn't make eye contact —
they're lying."*

MYTH

*"They looked up to the right —
deception!"*

TRUTH

*Body language reflects stress, not
truthfulness.*

TRUTH

*Use behavior to guide questions, not
conclusions.*

SIMPLE RULE: BEHAVIOR GUIDES QUESTIONS, NOT DECISIONS.



**Short
Video:**

Pivot!



INVESTIGATOR SELF-MANAGEMENT

Emotional Carryover

Carrying feelings or attitudes from one case to the next without realizing it.

Burnout Signs

Getting tired from too many cases, leading to shortcuts or a loss of interest.

Decision Fatigue

Getting tired from making lots of small decisions, so you start oversimplifying.

When to Pause

Knowing when to take a break or ask for help.

Remember This:

**Start every case clean.
Don't let the last case
write this one.**

**Shortcuts are a warning
sign, not efficiency.**



“

**Thank you for the
work you do.**

*How we investigate matters, because real
people live with the results.*