



ORBIT Interviewer Training:

Managing Difficult Interpersonal Interactions & Achieving Rapport

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ORBIT TRAINING

The 'ORBIT' model (Observing Rapport Based Interpersonal Techniques) was developed to research the most effective methods of conducting sensitive, high-stake interviews, where individuals may be resistant or reluctant to cooperate. ORBIT is derived from Professor Laurence Alison and Emily Alison's work in which they analysed the largest global corpus of real-life interviews conducted by the UK police and military of terrorist suspects and war criminals. In excess of 1,700 hours of field interrogations have been studied since 2012. Detainees include ISIS, Al Qaeda, Extreme Right Wing, Paramilitary, and suspected war criminals.

The objective of training is to enable individuals from a wide range of organisations (security, military, law enforcement, humanitarian organisations, corporate conduct/compliance/audit/risk teams) to obtain comprehensive, detailed and direct information in a way that is legal, sensitive, compassionate, respectful, professional and, most critically, effective. ORBIT is based on the highest standards of scientific scrutiny.

OUTLINE

Courses cover the interpersonal skills and rapport-based methods that have been empirically tested in extremely difficult environments by two internationally recognized psychologists, who for the past 28 years, have worked alongside law enforcement, military, security services and the intelligence services. Their world leading research has been used by CIA, DoD, FBI officers in the US, by the Joint Force Intelligence Group, MoD and National Advanced Counter Terrorism Units across the UK as well as by Shin Bet in Israel, and by law

enforcement agencies across Europe. The latest sectors interested in our work include International Banks, Trade Compliance and the International Red Cross. For a popular media article see: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/oct/13/the-scientists-persuading-terrorists-to-spill-their-secrets> .

FORMAT

Workshops include a series of detailed talks on the internationally recognized ORBIT (Observing Rapport Based Interpersonal Techniques) model. Following this, participants are put through a series of exercises to develop and hone key skills to using the ORBIT model. For more advanced participants, these skills are then deployed across a series of immersive role-plays. Participants are provided with immediate feedback and coaching by psychologists and field professionals to accelerate learning. Subsequent 'top up training' is also available through both face to face work as well as online support packages that include modelling best practise, aide memoires and 'flashcard' challenges.

The online activity enables participants to keep their learning activated post-training and embed the new skills into their repertoire. It will also enable students to be appraised of the very latest research as more and more work is completed on the ORBIT data base.

We have regularly and empirically evaluated the efficacy of training in order to target the sequence of learning the interventions appropriately. Having worked alongside law enforcement security services and military for over 25 years we are well versed in operational requirements, managing sensitive information and the practical functioning of deployments.

ORBIT TRAINING PACKAGES

- Basic Training (2 days)
- Advanced Practitioner Training (3-5 days)
- Advanced Expertise Development (2-3 days)
- ORBIT Tactical (1 day)
- Train the Trainer (1-2 days)
- Online Guidance, Coding and Management of Resources
- Bespoke Research and Development

BASIC TRAINING PACKAGE (2 DAYS)

Course overview:

- Introduction to the ORBIT model and its core components via an interactive and engaging lecture with a number of short tasks and video clip examples.
- Participants will first be taught/reminded of key interviewing principles and concepts (e.g. the use of different types of questions, use of silence, and paralinguistic cues and minimal encouragers).
- Participants will then become familiar with ORBIT's interpersonal circumplex and key rapport-based skills and concepts drawn from therapeutic models that facilitate effective communication (the basic course will focus mainly on the use of 'reflection' as a key skill).
- Participants will then be asked to construct 'Self-build scenarios' drawn from their own experiences (guided by facilitators). These scenarios are then role-played to practice the skills covered in the initial training. Facilitators will provide coaching and feedback to build up participants' understanding and application of the model.
- The course provides a foundation for learning the ORBIT rapport-based approach and evaluating one's own practice or evaluating the practice of others.
- Suitable for frontline practitioners, managers and supervisors, interview planners.

We know that the biggest hurdle to developing expertise in using rapport-based skills is unlearning bad habits that impede or puncture efforts to establish rapport. In our research, the elimination of inconsistent approaches was the single most important factor in determining whether an individual would cooperate or not during questioning. Therefore, the initial training focuses on building awareness of what sorts of approaches are consistent with the model and eliminating approaches that are inconsistent or damaging to rapport (and the extraction of information, intelligence and evidence).

ADVANCED TRAINING PACKAGE (3-5 DAYS)

Course overview:

- Further knowledge acquisition via a more in-depth lecture and with more complex short tasks to understand the full ORBIT model and further skill development via immersive scenarios using role-actors can be added onto the initial basic training for more advanced frontline practitioners.
- Scenarios are designed to test particular challenges that frontline practitioners are likely to encounter in the field (e.g. refusal to speak, use of religious rhetoric to deflect questions, use of scripted or vague responses, etc.).

- We are recognised as the non pareil designers of immersive scenarios, having developed countless immersive learning events (and studied the value of immersive role play and how to use these to assist learning).
- Participants will receive in-depth feedback and coaching to improve and develop their delivery over the course of the training.
- The length of this training is determined by the number of scenarios used with participants which can range from a one-day immersive scenario- to multiple scenarios spread over 2-3 days.

An evaluation of the use of this 5-day immersive scenario-based training strategy with the UK police on the national counter-terrorism interviewing course established that participants had embedded the learning and continued to use approaches consistent with the ORBIT model in their daily practice up to 18 months post-training. This is an unusually effective approach insofar as many other studies have shown significant performance decrement after only 6 weeks. As such, we have preliminary evidence that even with relatively short training ‘dosage’ (5 days), skills are maintained for a significant duration. Anecdotal evidence also confirms this with comments from JFIG personnel and UK CT that ‘we can tell who has and who has not received the training as soon as we are on deployment’.

ADVANCED EXPERTISE DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE (2-3 DAYS)

Course overview:

- Participants with a substantial amount of experience or who have completed the advanced interviewer training in ORBIT can then attend a follow-up training event.
- This training event will recap the ORBIT model and build on previous understanding and skills through a series of challenging interactive exercises.
- Participants will focus on the tactical use of a layered framework of rapport-based methods to manage specific challenges they are likely to encounter in the field.
- Participants will complete a series of micro exercises focusing on specific skills and will then be asked to bring these together in an immersive and challenging scenario run over 1-2 days (dependent on complexity required).

Participants who are naturally interpersonally skilled make small gains on basic training in rapport-based skills. To harness their potential for developing significant expertise, this course is only for individuals who already have a solid understanding of the ORBIT model and a clear grasp of the use of rapport-based skills in their practice.

This training will hone in on particular approaches that can be used strategically and in a layered format to open up very resistant or difficult subjects during interview. This follow-up is aimed at elite interrogators, to further develop their subtle and more sophisticated use of rapport.

ORBIT TACTICAL TRAINING PACKAGE (1 DAY)

Course overview:

- Advanced practitioners who are facing particular interview challenges can be provided with a one-day tactical session.
- They will be provided with a number of domain specific scenarios to role-play in order to test and determine the most beneficial approach to secure cooperation.
- They will receive support from facilitators to debrief and identify those approaches which are most successful and those best avoided.

This sort of bespoke, focused session can be used to boost a team's skill levels prior to a specific task or deployment or to manage a particular hurdle that has arisen. We have used this sort of session to design specific challenges in order to test skills and practise in a safe learning environment. The principle is to 'stress test' ideas in practise prior to deployment so that mistakes can be made in training (the train hard fight easy principle).

This was used to recent powerful effect for Joint Forces Intelligence Group on operational deployment. Our work was described as 'critical to mission completion' in these challenging environments.

TRAIN THE TRAINER PACKAGE (1-2 DAYS)

Course overview

- A course for training facilitators to learn how to deliver ORBIT training for others in the team or new members of staff (can be delivered on a one-to-one or small group basis).
- Participants will have to have taken part in the initial ORBIT training course and will be provided with a trainer manual containing all slides from lectures, task sheets with instructions and explanation of the purpose of each task conducted and will practise delivering the material.

This package is designed specifically to enable training facilitators to be able to deliver the training back to their teams or new members of staff themselves. Facilitators will need to show that they fully understand the ORBIT model of interviewing and the underlying concepts of it before they can train it. This is a particularly useful course for those who have small teams and want to be able to train a new member of staff without having to arrange a full ORBIT course.

ONLINE GUIDANCE AND COACHING PACKAGE

Overview:

We can provide online guidance, coaching and management of resources following any of the ORBIT training courses. Of particular use is the ongoing ability to self-monitor and monitor staff. We are able to train key personnel to code and thus monitor staff performance using the ORBIT model. This requires a 2-day training course followed by course assessment and licensing as an 'ORBIT' coder such that an individual(s) can comprehensively code and assess their own personnel with adequate reliability and validity. With this package, as well as face to face training, ORBIT coders are given online support and if required, can avail themselves of updates on Research & Development as we continue to understand more and more about specific skills and the evolution of counter-interrogation or resistance approaches adopted by detainees.

BESPOKE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE

Overview:

We are well versed in analysis and coding of different products (interviews, interrogations). We are able to analyse and give results and guidance on the efficacy of ORBIT on your data with a view to develop bespoke analysis, results and training for your area of interest.

PERSONNEL

The team has an extensive background and experience in delivering training in Rapport-based methods and associated clinical methods, research on interpersonal skills and deception.

Laurence Alison



Professor Alison is Director of Critical and Major Incident (CAMI) Research at the Department of Psychology, University of Liverpool. CAMI focuses on high profile critical and major incidents (from disaster management to terrorism). Prof Alison has over 28 years of experience working on applied projects for Law enforcement and the security services. This has enabled him and his team to conduct high quality rigorous research that has made a difference to practitioners ‘at the coal face’ and that transfers to training. His

work has helped change policy, practice and procedure at both a national and international level. He has an international reputation and several high-profile publications on the subject of investigation, decision making and the psychological processes relevant to critical incidents. He currently provides training to FBI/CIA/DoD, The UKs National CT interviewing cadre and the British Army in the ORBIT framework for rapport-based interrogation methods.

He was key psychological advisor on over 450 critical and major incidents debriefs including the 7/7 bombings, the Sharm El Sheik attacks, the poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko and the preparations for the London Olympics. He was key advisor and research on a child sexual exploitation project that resulted in the largest operation in UK police history and which, across a 6-month period, led to the arrest of over 1,200 offenders, the safeguarding of over 1,000 children and a cost saving to UK government of £15million. He has over 200 published articles, books, edited books and government and industry reports. Malcolm Gladwell described Prof Alison as ‘one of my academic heroes. He does what every writer longs to do. He makes the difficult clear – without losing his rigour’.

Emily Alison

Emily Alison has worked as a behavioural consultant psychologist for the last 20 years, providing treatment in both the criminal justice sector and in the community. She specialises in the assessment and treatment of violence and has worked with over 850 domestic violence perpetrators as well as designed therapeutic interventions for Domestic Abuse, Child to Parent Violence, Healthy Relationships for Children and Young People, Sexually Harmful Behaviour and Sexual Risk Taking in Adolescents, and Gang and Weapon linked offending. For the last 10 years, she has been a research associate with the University of Liverpool and has been involved in the development of the Preventing Violent Extremism Tool for profiling potential extremism and the ORBIT framework for Advanced High Value Detainee Interviewing. As part of this research, she has observed over 500 hours of UK police interviews with terrorists, covering a range of ideologies including Al Qaeda, Right-wing, and ISIS.



Sample Publications

- Alison, L. J., Alison, E., Noone, G., Elntib, S., & Christiansen, P. (2013). Why tough tactics fail and rapport gets results: Observing Rapport-Based Interpersonal Techniques (ORBIT) to generate useful information from terrorists. *Psychology, public policy, and law*, 19(4), 411.
- Alison, L., Alison, E., Noone, G., Elntib, S., Waring, S., & Christiansen, P. (2014). The Efficacy of Rapport Based Techniques for Minimizing Counter Interrogation Tactics amongst a Field Sample of Terrorists. *Psychology, Public Policy & Law*, 20(4), 421-430.
- Alison, L., Alison, E., Noone, G., Elntib, S., Waring, S., & Christiansen, P. (2014). Whatever You Say, Say Nothing: Individual Differences in Counter Interrogation Tactics Amongst a Field Sample of Right Wing, AQ inspired and Paramilitary Terrorists. *Personality & Individual Differences*, 68, 170-175.
- Shortland, N., Alison, L., & Moran, J. (2019). *Conflict: How Soldiers Make Impossible Decisions*. Oxford University Press.
- Alison, L., Power, N., van den Heuvel, C., Humann, M., Palasinski, M., & Crego, J. (2015). Decision inertia: Deciding between least-worst outcomes in emergency responses to disasters. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol 88, Issue 2, pp. 295-321.

Sample Industry and Government Reports

- Alison, L. (2016). Operation Northmoor: Evaluation of The British Army's Use of 'Direct Challenge in Interrogations in Kandahar and Basra. Prepared for RMP.
- Alison, L. (2015). Operation Notarise. Prepared for CEOP Command.
- Alison, L., Waring, S., & Humann, M. (2014). *Independent Evaluation of Ex. Joint Endeavour*. Internal report produced for JESIP and the Home Office.
- Crego, J., Alison, L., Eyre, M., & Grant, J. (2010). *Homelessness: 10kV review of strategy and operations for Los Angeles Police Department*. Report prepared by Centre for Critical and Major Incident Psychology for the Los Angeles Police Department: Internal document.
- Crego, J., Alison, L., & Eyre, M. (2009). *Operation Lockinge: 10kV debrief of terrorist kidnapping of British hostages*. Report prepared by Centre for Critical and Major Incident Psychology for the Metropolitan Police Service: Internal document.
- Alison, L., Crego, J., Eyre, M., & McLean, C., (2006). *Operation Theseus: in the face of adversity. 10kV debrief of the London bombings, July 2005*. Unpublished report from Centre for Critical Incident Research prepared for the Metropolitan Police Service.