SE3R: AN OVERVIEW

Note-taking

☐ All note-taking – even that using a ‘time line’ – is a reduced version of original detail.

☐ Note-taking always implies:

Selective attention

– Scanning for ‘key facts’.

Editing

– Limited extraction of detail: “bullet points” – often compressed or generalised.
– Deletion of the rest!

Extreme risk of failing to detect critical detail

– Potentially significant detail failing the ‘relevance’ test.
– Detail that was not disclosed at all.
– Detail disclosed in an odd way.

Limited awareness of the original detail

Limited remembrance of the original detail
SE3R is NOT note-taking

- SE3R is the opposite of conventional note taking.
- SE3R is a “maximum capture, maximum grasp” technique based on linguistics and psychology:
  - how people disclose detail
  - how we process disclosed detail.

You can apply SE3R to any form of detail

- A document.
- An audio- or video-recording.
- A ‘live’ interview
  - face-to-face
  - on the telephone.
Using SE3R you can dominate detail

- You capture detail comprehensively: there is no editing.
- You are able to identify and respond to critical detail:

   **ANOMALY**

   **detail not disclosed or disclosed in an odd way.**

   - “Thin” account
   - Missing detail
   - “Silent” encounters
   - “One hander” conversation
   - Gaps
   - Jumps
   - “Non-barking dogs”
   - “Sidestepping”
   - Vagueness
   - Ambiguity
   - “Pat” account
   - Inconsistency
   - Contradiction
   - Narrative contrast
   - Significant transient change in NVB
   - Gross or no NV illustrators

   Something, or the way it is said, may sound a “warning bell”, e.g.

   - an improbable, impossible or non-sensical action or activity
   - a bizarre line of reasoning or explanation.

   Such “warning bells” are anomalies.

   **AREAS REQUIRING PROBING**

   Probing = investigation/questioning to obtain further detail, expansion and/or explanation.

- You remember detail without consciously trying to do this.
SE3R involves new learning … about the detail within disclosures

- **Background knowledge**

  Detail concerning ‘discussible topics’, e.g.

  - Individual people
  - Families
  - Groups
  - Entities
  - Identities
  - Things
  - Objects
  - Vehicles
  - Routines
  - Rituals
  - Aims
  - Objectives
  - Plans
  - Explanations

- **Narrative detail**

  Detail concerning activity and circumstances:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENTS</th>
<th>EPISODES</th>
<th>CONTINUOUS STATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>Extended activity,</td>
<td>Circumstances, condition or state of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactions</td>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td>affairs, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td><em>I walked down the road.</em></td>
<td><em>He was unconscious;</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utterances</td>
<td><em>When I was driving to</em></td>
<td><em>There was blood everywhere.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts</td>
<td><em>London...</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning</td>
<td><em>We were arguing all day.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Commentary**

  Potentially evidentially significant observations:

  - ABOUT REMEMBERING DETAIL
    - *I'm not too sure about…*
  - ABOUT DISCLOSING DETAIL
    - *I'm finding this difficult to say…*
And new learning about…

- Techniques that enable you to maximise capture and grasp of detail.

- Conventions for representing this on SE3R format sheets - which look like this:

```
+---------------------+
| Event line          |
|                     |
|                     |
+---------------------+
```

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Bin</th>
<th>Knowledge Bin</th>
<th>Knowledge Bin</th>
<th>Knowledge Bin</th>
<th>Knowledge Bin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
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Using SE3R is a skill

- SE3R techniques maximise capture and grasp of detail.

- It takes practice to apply these techniques skilfully and at speed.

- In the early stages:
  - you will need to think that bit harder than conventional note-taking
  - you will take more time applying SE3R than if you had used conventional note-taking

SE3R always takes a bit longer than conventional note-taking

- The extra time
  - maximises capture, grasp and remembrance of detail
  - reveals all the anomalies and areas for probing.

- A skilled SE3R user does not take much more time than a conventional note-taker.
Why is it called SE3R?

SE3R is an acronym: the letters and number represent the stages in applying the technique:

SURVEY

EXTRACT

READ

REVIEW

RESPOND
The materials you need to create an SE3R

- Biros
  - Individual biros with inks of the four industry standard colours: black, blue, red, green.
  - 4-colour biros containing black, blue, red, green.
  - Each colour has a specific use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLACK</th>
<th>BLUE</th>
<th>RED</th>
<th>GREEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOCUMENT</td>
<td>Detail from document</td>
<td></td>
<td>Detail from external sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERVIEW</td>
<td>Spontaneous disclosure</td>
<td>Responses to probing</td>
<td>Responses to checking back and final probing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPOSITE SE3R (2+ COMBINED SE3Rs)</td>
<td>Base source (‘anchor’) SE3R</td>
<td>Second source SE3R</td>
<td>Third source SE3R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Blank SE3R format sheets or a notepad with pages drawn in SE3R format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Bin</th>
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<th>Knowledge Bin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Event line ↓
SURVEY

- Essential first stage: NEVER leave it out.
- You apply a combination of information-processing techniques that increase:
  - attention to detail
  - grasp of detail
  - remembrance of detail.

GET A TOTAL GRASP

- Process ‘straight through’: read/listen to/observe disclosure from ‘beginning to end’.
- DON’T go back to ‘go over again’.
- DON’T attempt to rehearse/commit to memory.

IMAGE THE DETAIL

- Create a visual image in your “mind’s eye”.
- Create the utterance in you “mind’s ear”.
- Only image the disclosed detail.
- DON’T imagine: imagination involves imaging – adding detail that is not disclosed.
SPOT AND “GUGGLE” AT KEY IDEAS

- Speakers vocally stress the key idea.
- “Guggling” = nodding of head with/without acknowledging sound, e.g. mm; uh-huh.

“MENTALLY ECHO” DIFFICULT/IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGE DETAIL

- “Mental echoing” = saying the detail silently to yourself.
- Typical examples of “mentally echoed” detail:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>names</th>
<th>frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>relationships</td>
<td>durations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addresses</td>
<td>emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>times</td>
<td>attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numbers</td>
<td>physical state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REGULATE THE FLOW OF INFORMATION

- Prevents you being overwhelmed by detail.
- Act as soon as you feel your ‘memory glass’ is full!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOCUMENT/RECORDING</th>
<th>INTERVIEW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Process a ‘chunk’ at a time | • At the beginning of interview - in ‘Expectations’ stage – explain that you will regulate the flow of detail, e.g.  
  I may need to stop you from time to time to get my head around the detail you’re telling me.  
  • Regulate the flow across the interview |
You comprehensively capture the detail.

- Read/listen to/observe again the unfolding detail – regulating the flow.
- Identify and enter the three different types of detail in the appropriate area of the SE3R sheet.

**Background knowledge**

- Knowledge bins [KBs]

KB = sum total of detail disclosed on the ‘discussible topic’.

**Narrative detail (events, episodes, continuous states)**

- Event line

**Commentary**

- Adjacent to the detail or the point commentary occurs.

- Annotate as you go along:
  - anomalies
  - areas for probing (expansion; explanation)
  - areas for investigation/checking.

**THE OUTCOME: An SE3R!**
**READ**

You check the accuracy and your grasp of the detail in your SE3R.

☐ **First**

- Read all the KBs.
- Amend as necessary.

☐ **Then**

- Read Event Line detail.
- Amending as necessary.

**THE OUTCOME:** A secure remembrance of comprehensively captured detail!
REVIEW

You analyse the detail in your SE3R and use this to plan your next steps.

☐ Identify and annotate:
  - Anomalies
  - Areas for probing (expansion; explanation)
  - Areas for investigation/checking.

☐ As applicable use your annotations to create an action plan, e.g.
  - Wants Analysis: list of investigative actions
  - Interview plan: themes/topics for probing.
RESPOND

You turn your analysis into action.

- If you are working from a document/recording
  - implement your Wants Analysis, i.e. conduct/task further investigation/investigative interviewing
  - create a composite SE3R [=combination of individual SE3Rs]
  - plan and prepare for a forthcoming interview.

- If in an interview

  Respond appropriately to:
  
  - annotated anomalies
  - areas needing expansion or explanation.

  Common anomalies that occur during probing include:

  Answering a question with a question
  “Diverting” (directing you to put the question to someone else)
  “Sabotaging” (arguing; abuse; threatening)

  Measured disclosure (minimal disclosure of detail)
  “Blanking” an echo probe
  “Pat” responses
Recommended reading

