A terrorist plotting a mass casualty attack as part of an extremist group. A disgruntled employee on the verge of taking action that will cause significant financial and reputational harm. A lone actor in the recesses of the dark web hacking, stealing, misinforming or circulating material that may well ruin lives.

These scenarios, although appearing different on the surface, have a similarity at their core. Specifically, these scenarios involve human beings who have decided to take radical action that will have dire consequences. Once identified, they are the individuals that interviewers must engage with to prevent those consequences in the immediate and longer term.

Thankfully such individuals are rare. However, the prospect of failing to make the best use of an opportunity to speak to them places significant pressure on law enforcement and intelligence personnel. In addition to the short term aims of securing a conviction or preventing an immediate tragedy, there may be a longer term aim of learning about the motivations, autobiographical history and key transitions that have led them to this point. As such, there is the immediate objective of gaining cooperation in the interview as well as a need to gain a detailed understanding and then adjusting these through a series of cognitive leaps, forming and testing hypotheses until we reach what we consider to be a plausible approximation of the other person's perspective.

Unfortunately, this process is subject to an egocentric bias. Furthermore, and precisely because it is cognitively demanding and time consuming process of anchoring and adjustment. This begins with anchoring our assumptions in our own understanding and then adjusting these through a series of cognitive leaps, forming and testing hypotheses until we reach what we consider to be a plausible approximation of the other person's perspective.

In such cases, resistance by the interviewee might be attributed to their personal characteristics, such as deliberate avoidance, unwillingness to face reality, or even a lack of intelligence. Interviewers might even reach a (premature) conclusion that it is unwillingness to face reality, or even a lack of intelligence. In such cases, resistance by the interviewee might be attributed to their personal characteristics, such as deliberate avoidance, unwillingness to face reality, or even a lack of intelligence. Interviewers might even reach a (premature) conclusion that it is impossible to elicit usable information from such interviewees.

OPERATIONAL PRESSURES
A number of common features in operational environments may exacerbate the challenges inherent in taking another's perspective into account.

• Time pressure – whether a lack of planning time before the interaction or a perceived need to get to the important matter at hand. Lack (or perceived lack) of time may truncate the perspective taking process even further, likely resulting in an even more inaccurate model.

RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE
Incentivising accuracy can improve our ability to model another person’s perspective. The increased possibility of success should be a sufficient incentive to encourage the questioning of assumptions about an individual. Spending more preparation time and effort modelling the likely perspective of an interviewee is not time wasted. Similarly, more is needed than the delver of empathy in the interview itself, although that and other positive behaviours are likely to be beneficial (see Alison & Alison, this issue).

Modelling an interviewee’s perspective and generating alternate hypotheses about their possible reactions may also facilitate the generation of alternative action plans. Doing this as part of preparation prior to the encounter is likely easier than during the encounter itself, when cognitive resources are in high demand.

For example, how is the interviewee likely to react when they are told the reason they are being approached? Is there information that can be used to impress upon them that this is a process they need to engage with? How will they react when they realise who they are talking to? Do the answers to these questions provide clues that will get them to engage or triggers that will cause them to switch off? Understanding the interviewee’s perspective could help not only in planning what to say, but also when to say it.

It may be that rather than trying to change the person in front of us, we can take the easier route and adjust our half of the interaction. Following an unsuccessful attempt, rather than putting down to ‘it’s just them’, we need to explore it as an indication that our model of their perspective is incomplete.

The terrorist, employee and hacker are all likely to have different reactions to attempts to engage with them. However, by working to see things their way, we give ourselves a better chance of success.

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