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### Investigation Toolkit Helps Keep Interviews Objective, Consistent

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By Nina Youngstrom

With so much riding on effective compliance investigations, Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation uses mock investigations in its training. They include exercises that are analogous to board games in which interviewers sharpen their skills in an entertaining way by trying to solve the mystery of an alleged compliance or policy violation. Mock investigations are part of the investigation toolkit developed by Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, which provides inpatient and outpatient addiction and mental health treatment, and there are ground rules now as well for virtual interviews because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It’s helped us feel more confident in our interviewing skills,” said Jackie Stemwedel, director of compliance, at the Health Care Compliance Association’s Compliance Institute April 19.<sup>[1]</sup>

To practice interviewing skills, the investigation team, a multi-departmental group composed of compliance, privacy, human resources and legal, plays a game that’s similar to the board game Clue. The goal is to gather facts and determine whether a company policy has been violated. Various investigators take on different roles (e.g., interviewer, interviewee, potential witnesses) and review fact sheets about the “allegations” based on their character. The interviewers use their skills to gather information, and the interviewees answer questions based on their character, and “little scenarios are interjected along the way,” Stemwedel said. In the end, everyone comes together to share their conclusions. “It’s a fun way to collaborate and figure out how people got through their investigations,” she explained.

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