

## INTERVIEWING PRINCIPLES

### Adhere to the Child First Doctrine

The child is our first priority.  
Not the needs of the family  
Not the child's "story".  
Not the evidence.  
Not the needs of the courts.  
Not the needs of the police,  
Child protection, attorneys, etc.

### Allow the Competence of the Child

It is the interviewer's responsibility to allow the child to communicate at His/her maximum level. Interview must be conducted with the child's development level in mind.

### Interviewing is a Science and an Art

#### SCIENCE

Requiring specialized knowledge, a base of research, a methodical approach, and skilled application.

Must be aware of the dynamics of sexual abuse. Must be aware of children's developmental stages.

#### ART

Guided by intuition and creativity; influenced by emotions, beliefs and background and performed better by those with flair of empathy.

Good interviewers develop sensitivity to the nuances of children's behavior, body language, facial expressions and words. They rely on their instincts to maintain a comfort level with children which gives children a sense of control and safety.

## TYPES OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE INTERVIEWS

### Medical Model

Usually done in medical facility – physical in nature  
Focus – what does the child need to be healthy. Child well-being

### Psychosocial or clinical

Usually done by therapist who has had some forensic interview techniques.

### Forensic or Investigative

Cornerhouse method – specific purpose to try and gather as much information and details as possible to help build case for prosecution.

## WAYS CHILDREN COMMUNICATE

Language

Behavior

Emotions

## CORNERHOUSE FORENSIC/INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEW

It is FOCUSED

It is SEMI-STRUCTURED

It is PURPOSEFUL

## CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ACCOMMODATION SYNDROME

She Dr

Secrecy

Helplessness

Entrapment and Accommodation

Delayed or Unconvincing Disclosure

Retraction

## THE TRAUMAGENIC MODEL

TBPS

### Traumatic Sexualization

1. sexual response
2. Use as a Weapon

### Betrayal

1. By own bodies (they may have experienced some pleasure in the experience)
2. By the system
3. By the perpetrator
4. By family members

### Powerless

1. Don't have power to make it stop

### Stigmatization

1. How do people look at you differently when you start to tell

## HOW CAN INTERVIEWERS BE SUGGESTIVE IN AN INTERVIEW

### Behavior

Nodding your head

Pointing

Positioning

### Language

Tag questions – i.e. he touched your peepee, didn't he ...?

Asking child to confirm statements.

Stereotyped questions

Offering bribes or rewards

## TYPES OF DISCLOSURE

ACCIDENTAL – abuse revealed by chance

PURPOSEFUL – child makes conscious decision to tell

## STAGES OF DISCLOSURE - DTARR

Denial

Tentative

Active

Recanting

Reaffirming

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TENTATIVE DISCLOSURE

Forgetting

Distancing

Minimizing

Empowerment

Dissociation

Discounting

## TYPES OF MEMORY

Recognition – (flash card or some other cues are given)

Reconstructive – (narrative description and recall)

## STAGES OF MEMORY

CODE – place the information into a file (people/kids sometimes code odd things that are important to them, that others may not “see”)

RETAIN – file the information in the drawer (brain)

RETRIEVE – pull file from the drawer (brain)

## ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

Types of Questions You Should Ask

Simple

Concrete (senses questions – see, hear, touch, feel, smell)

Types of Questions You Shouldn't Ask

Complex

Abstract – kids are egocentric and may not be aware of what is going on around them if it does not involve them

Additional Tips

Ask Sensory Questions

Increase use of Child's Name

PROCESS OF INQUIRY

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Free Recall	Focused Recall	Multiple Choice	Yes/No	(Mis) Leading
I				
N	_____ AGE			D
D				I
I	_____ ABILITY			R
R	(Enhancers)			E
E				C
C		EMOTIONAL TRAUMA _____		T
T		(Diminisher)		
NARRATIVE	FOCUSED/ NARRATIVE	SELECTED	LIMITED SELECTED	SUGGESTED FROM INTERVIEWER

EXPECTED VERBAL RESPONSES

## **RATAC**

### **USING DRAWINGS IN A FORENSIC INTERVIEW CAN**

- Build Rapport
- Invite Correction
- Clarify Communication
- Prod the Child's Memory
- Enhance Recall of Details
- Demonstrate the Child's Credibility
- Provide Evidentiary Information
- Re-engage the Child's Interest
- Take Away Intensity

### **RAPPORT (3 c's)**

- The purpose is to establish the child's
- Comfort
- Communication and
- Competence

### **ANATOMY IDENTIFICATION**

- The purpose is to:
- determine the young child's understanding of and ability to distinguish between genders and
- arrive at a common language regarding names for body parts.

### **TOUCH INQUIRY**

- The purpose is to:
- Assess the child's ability to understand and communicate about touch (don't be use "good" touch or "bad" touch. May have been told by perp that it is good or it may have actually felt good or they may associate themselves as bad.

### **ABUSE SCENARIO**

- The purpose is to:
- Allow the child to provide details of his/her abuse experience(s), and
- Explore alternative hypotheses.

### **CLOSURE**

- The purpose is to:
- Educate the child regarding personal safety
- Explore safety options with the child and
- Provide a respectful end to the interview

### **ANATOMICAL DOLLS – Key Concepts**

- The Most Appropriate FUNCTIONAL use of Anatomical Dolls is in a Forensic Interview as a Demonstration Aid

## REPRESENTATIONAL SHIFT

It is a Cognitive Ability to see yourself outside of your self.  
Usually developed between the ages of 3 and 4.

## REASONS TO USE ANATOMICAL DOLLS IN FORENSIC INTERVIEW

For Clarification Purposes

To allow the child to demonstrate consistency

To allow the child to distance from his/her own body

To allow the child to communicate what cannot or will not be said (the victim has to verbalize in court what happens, can't just demonstrate on the dolls)

## TYPES OF BLOCKS (SPFPIS)

### SETTING

Toys

Parents in the room and/or observing the interview

Two people doing the interview

Set up

Location

Temperature

Accessibility

### PERSONAL

Dynamics

Loyalty

Relationship with the perpetrator

Severity of abuse

History of prior abuse

### FAMILIAL INDUCED

Family privacy

Messages not to talk

Enmeshed family system

Coaching

Entrapment

Betrayal

### PERPETRATOR INDUCED

Fear

Past harm

Threats (verbal and nonverbal)

Bribes/promises/gifts

Child accepts perpetrator's reality

## INTERVIEWER INDUCED

- Uniform/badges
- Misunderstandings/assumptions
- Reactions to child statements (interviewee has to stay neutral)
- Preconceived ideas
- Unfriendly/intimidating demeanor
- Prior relationship with the child
- Child may not like the interviewer
- Interviewer may be asking developmentally inappropriate questions
- Body position of child – interviewer needs to get on the level of the child

## SPECIAL NEEDS

- Developmentally delayed
- ADHD/ADD
- Visual/Hearing Impaired
- Language/Communication
- (also does the child have an event that may be distracting him, i.e. big test, or suppose to be at a soccer game, etc., lots of homework, or other things distracting them.)

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN ASSESSING A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

- Age
- Gender
- Social Skills
- Cognitive Ability
- Culture
- Verbal Ability

## BLOCK REMOVAL TECHNIQUES

- Reassurance
- Remove Distractions
- Reflection Statement
- Developmentally appropriate line of questioning
- Repetition
- Mirroring/Opositional Mirroring
- Redirection
- Silence

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- Use words that are: Simple and Concrete (for 5 & under)
- Avoid words that are complex or abstract

CHILD IN COURT What pre-trial motions can make the process less stressful for the child.

## CHILD'S RIGHTS IN COURT

1. The right to let court personnel know if someone in the courtroom is making them uncomfortable

2. The right to answer “I don’t know”, “I don’t understand”, or “ I don’t remember” instead of guessing.
3. The right to a break, a glass of water, etc.
4. The right to show emotions.
5. The right to a support person.
6. The right to understand their “job” in court is to tell the truth.
7. The right to a comfort item.
8. Kid friendly oath

#### COURTROOM ENVIRONMENT

Support person(s)

Exclude and admonish (usually the responsibility of the prosecutor)

Close courtroom during victim testimony

Courtroom configuration

Controlled questioning (pre-trial motions for things like silent objections, motions to ask leading questions if child is developmentally delayed or has learning disabilities)

#### COURTROOM ENVIRONMENT

Oath/competency

Leading questions allowed by prosecutor

Age appropriate questions

No compound questions

No double negatives

No “do you remember” questions

Voice control

Frequent breaks/scheduled testimony

Objections

#### WHAT MAKES A STATEMENT RELIABLE

Look to spontaneity and consistent repetition of statement

Was their a prior interrogation that render spontaneity suspicious?

Look to mental state of child

Look to age inappropriate terminology

Look to lack of motive to fabricate

Don’t look to corroborating evidence

#### MORE FACTORS INDICATING RELIABILITY

Child’s emotions

Play and gestures during disclosure

Developmentally unusual sexual knowledge

Age appropriate terminology

Idiosyncratic detail (smell, tastes, etc)

Statement against interest

Motive to fabricate

Child disagrees or corrects interviewer

Child will testify

**WHO CAN BE AN EXPERT WITNESS:**

An individual with special knowledge experience or education greater than a lay person.