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Ten Step Investigative Interview

Thomas D. Lyon, J.D., Ph.D. tlyon@law.usc.edu © 2021 (Version 3)
(Adaptation of the NICHD Investigative Interview Protocol)

A. INSTRUCTIONS

1. DON'T KNOW instruction

If I ask you a question and you don't know the answer, then just say, "I don't know."
So if I ask you "What is MY DOG'S name?" what do you say?
OK, because you don't know.
But what if I ask you "Do YOU have a dog?"
OK, because you do know.

2. DON'T UNDERSTAND instruction

If I ask you a question and you don't know what I MEAN or what I'm SAYING, you can say, "I don't know what you mean." I will ask it a DIFFERENT way.
So if I ask you "Where is your PATELLA?" what do you say?
That's because "patella" is a hard word. So I would say, "Where is your KNEE?"

3. YOU'RE WRONG instruction

Sometimes I make mistakes or say the wrong thing. When I do, you can tell me that I am wrong.
So if I say, "You are THIRTY years old," what do you say?
OK, so how old are you?

4. IGNORANT INTERVIEWER instruction

I don't know what's happened to you.
I won't be able to tell you the answers to my questions.

5. PROMISE TO TELL THE TRUTH

It's really important that you tell me the truth.
Do you PROMISE that you WILL tell me the truth?

B. NARRATIVE PRACTICE & RAPPORT-BUILDING

6. PRACTICE NARRATIVES

Follow-up answers with NEXT and MORE invitations: "you said [X]; what happened NEXT" and you said [X]; tell me MORE about [X]"

a. LIKE TO DO/DON'T LIKE TO DO

First, I'd like you to tell me about things you LIKE to do.
Pick an action-oriented activity the child mentioned and follow up with "You said you like to [activity]. Tell me EVERYTHING that happened the last time you [activity].
e.g., "You said you like to play soccer. Tell me everything that happened the last you played soccer."
Now tell me about the things you DON'T LIKE to do.
Follow up with "You said you don't like to [activity]. Tell me EVERYTHING that happened the last time you [activity]."

b. LAST BIRTHDAY

Now tell me about your last birthday. Tell me EVERYTHING that happened.

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C. ALLEGATION PHASE

7. ALLEGATION

(If child discloses abuse, go directly to ALLEGATION FOLLOW UP. Determine IN ADVANCE which allegation questions you will ask.)

a. **Tell me why I came to talk to you.**
   Or, Tell me why you came to talk to me.
   It's really important for me to know why I came to talk to you/you came to talk to me.

b. **I heard you saw**
   e.g., "I heard you saw a policeman last week. Tell me what you talked about."

c. **Someone's worried**
   e.g., "I heard the policeman is worried that something may have happened to you? Tell me what he is worried about."

d. **Someone bothered you**
   e.g., "I heard that someone might have bothered you. Tell me everything about that."

e. **Something wasn't right**
   e.g., "I heard that someone may have done something to you that wasn't right. Tell me everything about that."

8. ALLEGATION FOLLOW UP

You said that [repeat allegation verbatim]. Tell me everything that happened.
e.g., "You said that Uncle Bill hurt your pee-pee. Tell me everything that happened."

9. Follow up with invitations: NEXT, MORE, HAPPENED

NEXT: "You said [X]; what happened NEXT"

MORE: "You said [X]; tell me MORE about [X]"

HAPPENED: e.g. "What was the FIRST thing that HAPPENED?" "Tell me everything that HAPPENED in the [room mentioned by child]."

EXHAUST INVITATIONS before moving to Wh-

Avoid yes/no and forced-choice questions.

10. MULTIPLE INCIDENTS

Tell me everything that HAPPENED the LAST time…
Tell me everything that HAPPENED the FIRST time…
Tell me everything that HAPPENED the time you REMEMBER the MOST…
Tell me everything that HAPPENED the WORST time…
Tell me everything that HAPPENED a DIFFERENT time…
Did (repeat allegation) happen ONE time or MORE than one time?
Only ask this question if you are unclear if the child is talking about multiple incidents