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**Objectives**

- Learn how to conduct a semi-structured child forensic interview
- Identify the three phases of an interview
- Understand the importance of gathering pre-interview information
- Become familiar with the continuum of questioning
- Understand the use of tools and introduction of external evidence
- Know how to explore alternative explanations, other risk factors, and poly-victimization

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### Semi-structured Forensic Interview

- Semi-structured interview
- Same in all models
- Based on best-practice
- Child-focused

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### Gathering Information

- Allegation history
- Child's environment, family, culture
- Child's development
- Communicating with the child
- Additional considerations

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### Collateral Information

- MDT partners:
  - Police reports
  - Child welfare reports
  - Medical, mental health records if available
  - School
- Non offending parents
- Caretaker accompanying child to interview

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### Activity: Gathering Information

Each breakout group will review one of the below topics and discuss potential information to gather prior to the interview.

- Child Factors
- Family Factors
- Environmental Factors
- Allegation Factors

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### Interview Environment

- Interview in a neutral setting
- Reduce distractions
- Ensure privacy
- Turn off electronic devices
- Weapons & Uniforms



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### Nonverbal Communication

- Gestures
- Facial expressions
- Spatial distance
- Vocal tone
- Silence



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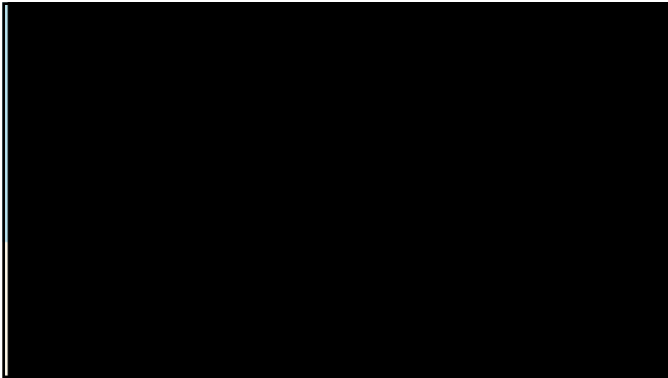
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### Supportive Interviewer

- Increases accuracy, completeness, and consistency
- Allows for child to express feelings about the interview process
- Is child friendly and trauma informed

Oregon Child Abuse Solutions  
Protect. Heal. Lead.

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**“Children can tell us what they know if we ask the right questions”**

- Anne Graffam Walker & Julie Kenniston

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### The Continuum Of Questioning



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### Overview of the Forensic Interview

Beginning	Middle (Substantive)	End
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rapport building</li><li>• Introduce self, role, observers</li><li>• Advise of video recording</li><li>• Provide instructions</li><li>• Narrative practice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transition to the topic of concern or "allegation"</li><li>• Gathering details</li><li>• Other considerations</li><li>• Explore risk factors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ending the interview</li></ul>

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### Building Rapport

- Rapport building begins prior to interview and continues throughout
- Reduces anxiety
- Reduces suggestibility
- Conversation style
- Can take extra time for children with disabilities

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### Orienting the Child to the Room

- **Introduce self**

"My job is to talk and listen with kids/people about things they know about"

- **Advise of recording**

"What you have to say is very important, so I am going to make a recording of our talk"

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### Orienting the Child to the Room

- **Provide information about people observing the interview**

"Detective \_\_\_\_\_ and your caseworker \_\_\_\_\_ are in another room and can see and hear us when we are talking today"

- **Provide the child with information about tools in the room**

"On the table there are crayons, paper and playdough you can use any of those things when we are talking today"

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### Providing Instructions

- Research Based
- Continued rapport building
- Assess child development
- Collect language sample



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## Providing Instructions

- We only talk about things that **really happened**, it's important to tell the truth
- If you *don't* know, then **it's okay to say, 'I don't know'**, don't guess
- If **you do know** the answer to a question, it's important to tell me
- Let me know if you don't **understand** my questions
- **Correct me** if I get something wrong

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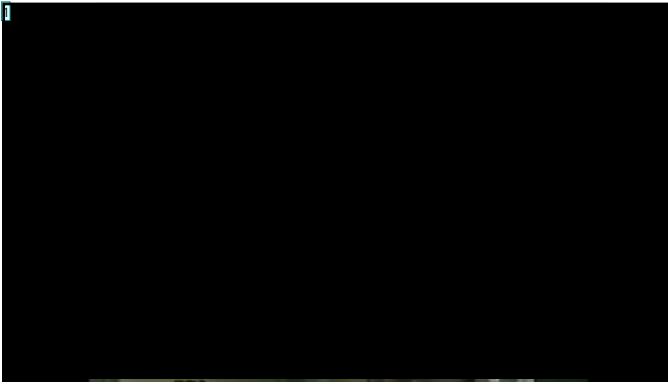
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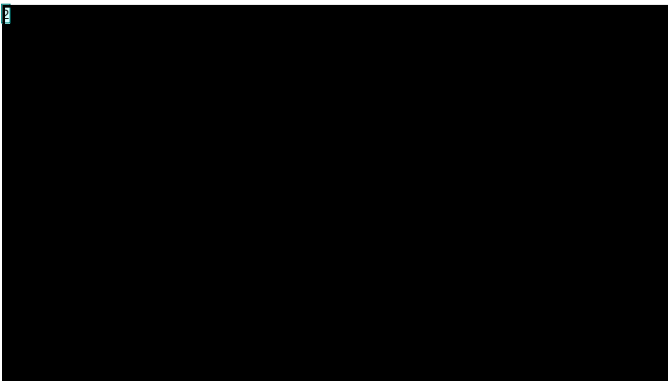
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### Open Ended Questions/Prompts



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### Open Ended Questions/Prompts

- Child's own language results in richer information
- Free narrative vs. one-word response
- Responses tend to be more accurate
- Decreases interviewer bias and possibility of suggesting new information
- Transition to topic of concern

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## Narrative Practice

Encourage child to tell about an event from beginning to end

- Consider using a topic discussed during rapport development:
  - "You told me about playing soccer, tell me about your last soccer game and start from the beginning and tell me everything that happened during that game."
  - "We talked about school, tell me about your last day at school, start from when you got to school and then tell me everything you did at school until you left."
  - "Tell me about you day today, start from when you woke up and tell me everything you did until you came here to talk with me."
- Stay on the question continuum: use closed ended questions sparingly

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## Benefits of the Narrative Practice

- Continues rapport-building
- Allows interviewer to assess child's development and linguistic abilities
- Sets expectation for narrative responses later in the interview
- Increases the quality and quantity of information provided later in the interview
- Children with disabilities should be given the opportunity to practice the narrative. Gives the child a chance to demonstrate their strengths and abilities

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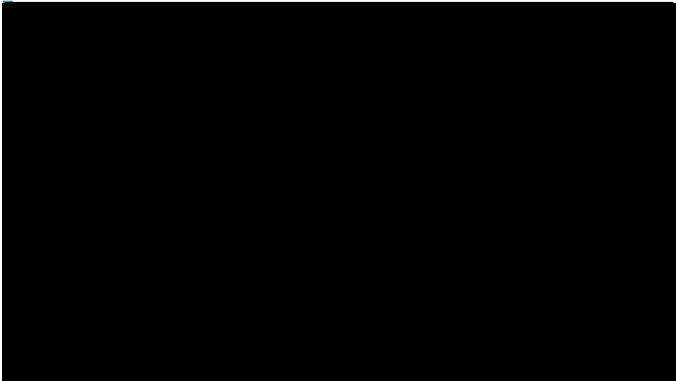
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### Activity: Beginning Phase of the Interview

#### Instructions:

- Find someone from another table
- Introduce yourselves to one another
- Take turns as the interviewer
- Practice orienting child to the room, as if you were in a child advocacy center, provide the child with instructions for the interview, and facilitate a practice narrative
- You will have approximately seven minutes each and will be given instructions when it is time to switch roles

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### Topic of Concern

- Spontaneous or Elicited
- Use a transition sentence such as:
  - "Tell me what you're here to talk about today"
  - "I heard something may have happened, tell me about that"
  - "Is someone worried about you?"
- Reminder: Hourglass




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### Situational Interviewer Responses

#### Child

"You know what happened"

"My mom knows"

"I don't want to get in trouble"

"Well you know..."

#### Interviewer

"I wasn't there so help me understand"

"I talked to your mom but my job is to hear from kids. So, tell me in your own words what happened"

"Kids don't get in trouble with me"

"Even if you think I know, tell me anyway"

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## Handling A Disclosure

- Emotional Response
- Verbal Encouragement
- Verbal Facilitators
  - "Okay, I see. Uh huh."



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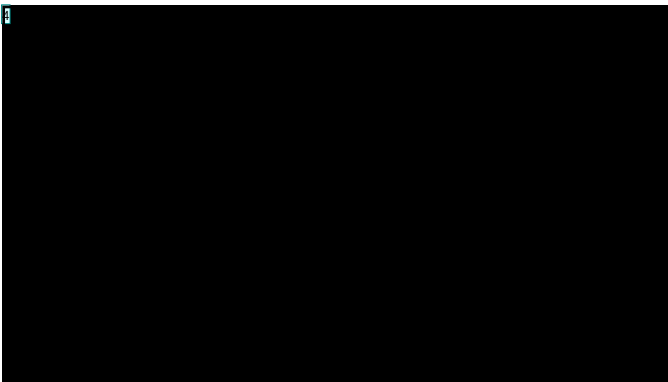
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## Focused Questions

- Includes "wh" questions and "suppositional wh" questions
- Cue a child's memory to elicit clarification and more detail
- Used when a child has exhausted narrative recall
- Help gather sensory details about a child's statement
- Helps with reluctance, developmental considerations and trauma



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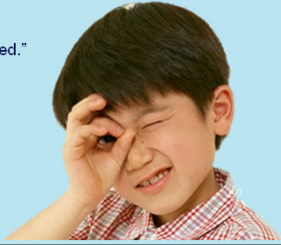
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### Focused Questions

- "Who touched you?"
- "Where were you when you were touched."
- "What did they hit you with?"
- "What did you tell your counselor?"
- "How did that make you feel?"



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### "Suppositional Wh" Questions

Instead of:	Do this:
Did he do something with his hands?	What were his hands doing?
Did he say anything?	What did he say?
Did you feel anything?	What did you feel?

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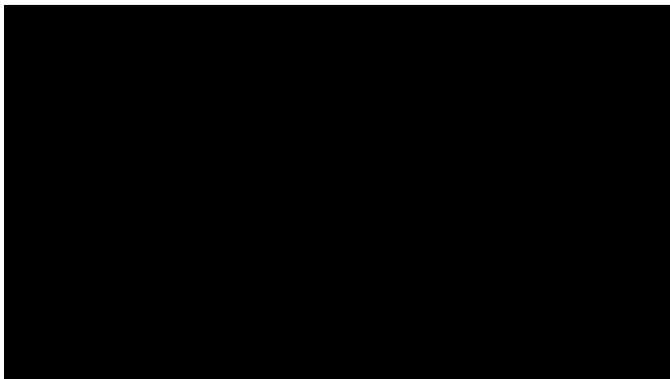
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## Closed-ended Questions

- Multiple choice or yes/no questions
- Answered with one or two words
- Clarify a disclosure or information already provided
- Clarify a previous question that seems confusing to the child
- Helpful in gathering contextual information, particularly from a young child



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## Closed-ended Questions

5 "Did anything come out of his pee pee?"  
If yes, then "Tell me about that."

- "Did it happen in the living room, bedroom or someplace else?"

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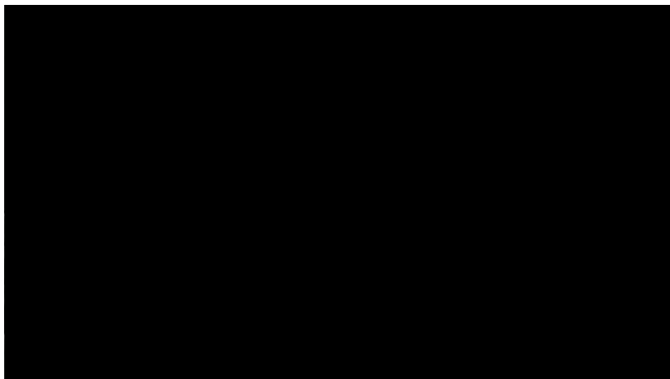
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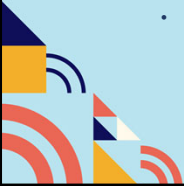
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### Strategies for gathering details

- Follow cues
- Framing
- Scaffolding



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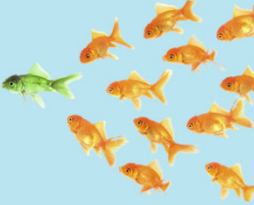
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### Leading Questions

- Introduce information with a question in which an actor, an act, and a tag are included
- Encourage the child to provide a particular response, usually an affirmative one
- **These types of questions should be avoided:**
  - "Your dad touched your pee-pee, didn't he?"



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## Coercive Questions/Statements

### Pressure the child to do or say something

- "If you don't tell me, I can't help you."
- "You don't want this to happen to other kids, do you?"
- "I can't keep you safe if you don't tell me what happened."

### May place conditions on their request

- "You can see your mom when we're done"
- "You can get a break when we're done"

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## Important Points To Keep In Mind

- Be genuine
- Use child's name
- Engage in active listening
- Refrain from promises, correcting, negative talk about offender
- Children will ask challenging questions
- Expect the unexpected
- Allow for silence
- Children with disabilities

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## Activity: The Sound Of Silence

### Instructions:

- Ask your partner a question
- The receiver of the question needs to pause for ten seconds before answering your question
- Take turns doing this activity
- Discuss with one another what it was like to have to wait for a reply




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### This or That, What or Why?

**Unclear:**

- "Where were you when she did that?"
- "Why didn't you tell?"

**Clear:**

- "Where were you when mom hit you?"
- "What made you decide to tell?"

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### Activity: Reframing And Developing Questions

**Instructions:** Work together in your small groups and complete handout, Reframing and Developing Questions

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### Time, Frequency, and Duration

- Time and frequency are difficult concepts, particularly for children age 10 and younger.
- Refrain from asking how many times
- Refrain from asking about specific dates, times, or ages
- Be event focused and have child describe different incidents
- Refrain from asking about length of time



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### Transcript

**Prosecutor:** Did it happen 5 times?

**Child:** Yes

**Prosecutor:** Did it happen 10 times?

**Child:** Yes

**Prosecutor:** Did it happen 15 times?

**Child:** Yes



(Jury acquitted because they felt the child was inconsistent)

Tom Lyons: The Avala trial

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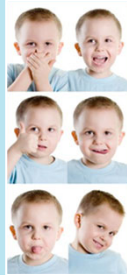
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### Eliciting Thoughts, Emotions, and Sensory Details

- Provides child's perspective on abuse
- Cues memory
- Don't make assumptions or label the child's emotional response
- Can help with corroboration
- These are unlikely to have been coached



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### Thoughts and Emotions

- Inquire about feelings before, during, and after event
- How did you feel:
  - Before he touched you?
  - During the touching?
  - After he touched you?
- Consider development – older children have more ability to provide information and be self-reflective
- Consider asking older children about the impact of the abuse

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**A Note about Penetration**

- Generally difficult to describe
- Can be subjective
- Best to be sensory and event focused

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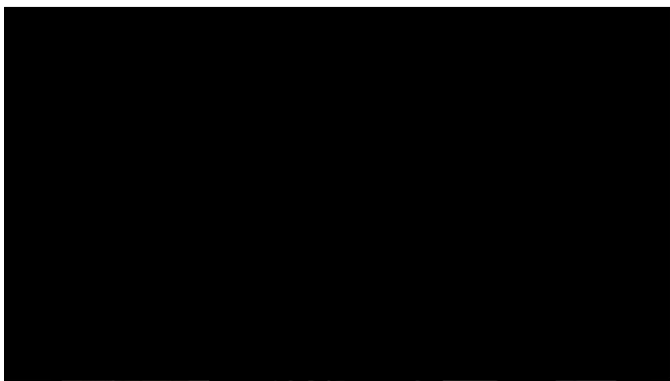
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## Pain Scale

- Pain is subjective
- Young children can not always quantify using numbers
- Abstract and does not give the full picture of what occurred
- May not have had life experiences that allow them to appropriately assess the pain on a number scale
- Scales are not validated

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## Gathering Details About Pain

- Be event focused
- Follow up with sensory questions that provide an understanding of lasting pain and impairment
  - How did you feel when you went to bed?
  - How did you feel in school the next day?
  - How did your body feel?
  - How did it feel to sit/stand/move?

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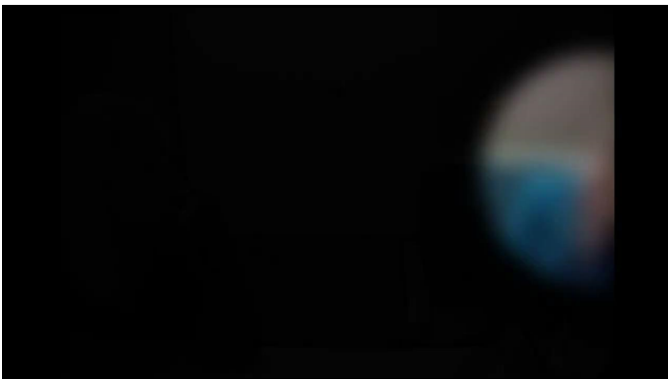
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### Scripted Account

- Scripted account is the "gist" of what happened.
- Can produce episodic leads/cue



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### Episodic Account

Ask the child questions to elicit specific details about single and separate occurrences:

- "Tell me everything that happened the last time"
- "Tell me about a time that something different happened"
- "Where were you when (x) happened?"
- "Where was (x)?"
- "Tell me about a time that stood out."

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## Script to Episodic



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### Activity: Moving From Script to Episodic Event

#### Instructions:

- With your partner, ask a question, such as how they get to work everyday, or how they spend the holidays (scripted)
- Next, ask the person to recall a specific event (episodic)
- Switch roles

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## Considerations

#### Child suggestibility

- The degree to which a child's recounting of events, or memory, is susceptible to suggestive, leading, or misleading information
- Gather as much contextual details as possible, through open-ended questions
- Children over the age of 10 are no more suggestible than adults

#### Inconsistencies

- What is meant by inconsistency?
- Are normal
- Asking clarifying questions and avoiding assumptions

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### Considerations

#### Coaching

- Intentionally influencing a disclosure/not to disclose

#### Source monitoring

- Is the child's understanding of where the information they are reporting came from

#### False allegations

- Purposefully making up an allegation

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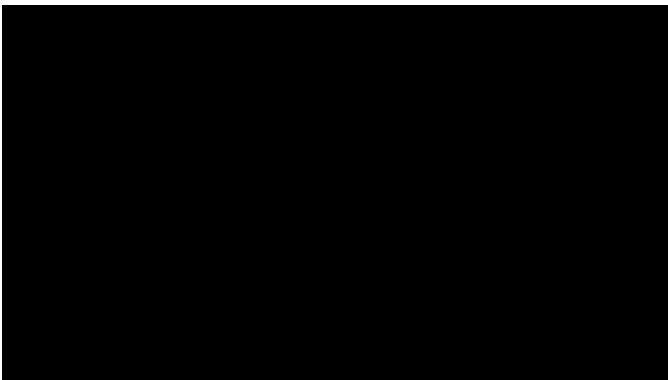
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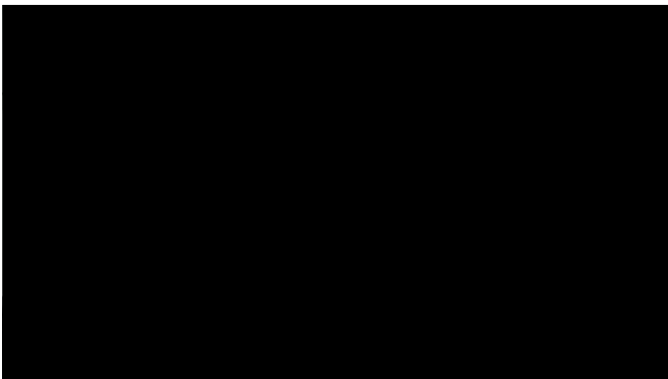
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### Using Tools

- Purpose  
Facilitate or Clarify
- Guidelines
- Types



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### Writing

- Child too embarrassed to speak
- May help with trauma
- Provides sense of control
- Say words out loud



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### Drawings

- Body parts
- Positions
- Objects
- Mapping



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### Preservation

- Produced during the interview
- Spoken out loud by the interviewer
- Labeled, numbered, dated, child's name or initials
- Labeled by the child or the interviewer

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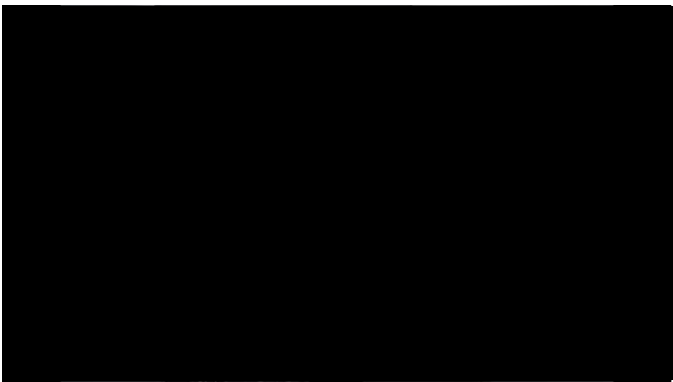
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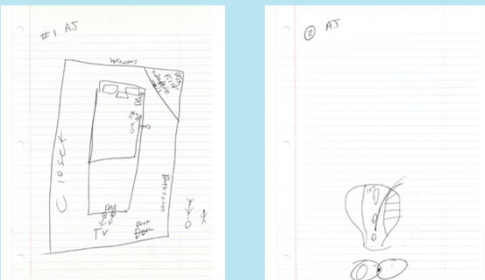
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### 11 Year Old Drawing



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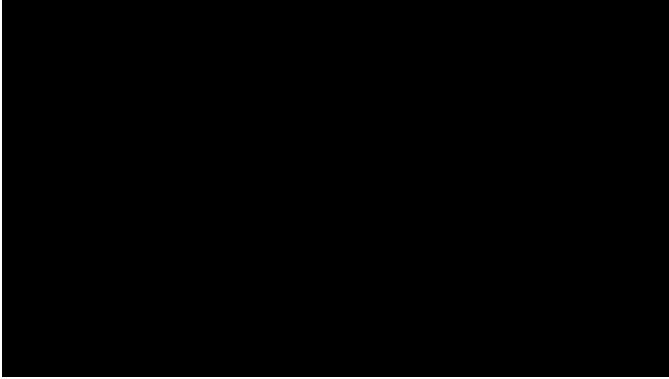
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**5 Year Old Drawing**



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**Introducing External Evidence: Verbal**

- Interviewer uses factual information and verbally introduces to the child
- Use caution
- Continue with open prompts
- Examples include:
  - The police coming to the home
  - The child visiting a doctor
  - The child visiting a certain place or location

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## Introducing External Evidence: **Material**

- External Evidence is any and all external materials used/introduced during the interview
- Understand your MDT/CAC process
  - Examples:
    - Chat logs explicit/non-explicit
    - Text messages explicit/non-explicit
    - Social media explicit/non-explicit
    - Pictures explicit/non-explicit
    - Emails
    - Other types of technology related messaging
    - Journals, notebooks, letters

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## What to Know

- Occurs in 2 different ways
- Recent information regarding victims feelings/perception of being shown explicit images
- Dynamics of victims of exploitation is important
- Abuse disclosure process as discussed in OCFIT and OIG is essential
- Differing opinions in the field

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## Prior to Introducing Evidence

- Advanced training
- Consult your Regional Service Provider
- Consult with your MDT partners
- Consider your own expertise and comfort level

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### Alternative Explanations/Hypothesis

- Communication problems
- Relationships & disclosure history
- Consequences of disclosure
- Disclosure details



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### Assessing Safety and Polyvictimization

- Polyvictimization is exposure to more than one form of victimization
- In response to concerns raised by child, caregivers and/or community partners
- Trauma Informed Practice
- Helps inform the disclosure process



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### Risk Factors and Polyvictimization

- Domestic Violence
- Substance Abuse
- Exposure to Pornography
- Physical Punishment
- Other Perpetrators
- Witnessed Harm to Others
- Sex abuse

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### Ending the Interview

- Sufficient information has been obtained
- Child is unable to continue participating
- Child requests to end the interview



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### Ending The Interview

- Consult with MDT partners
- Address worries or feelings
- Allow child to ask questions
- Transition to a neutral topic
- Thank the child for talking to you
- Additional interview



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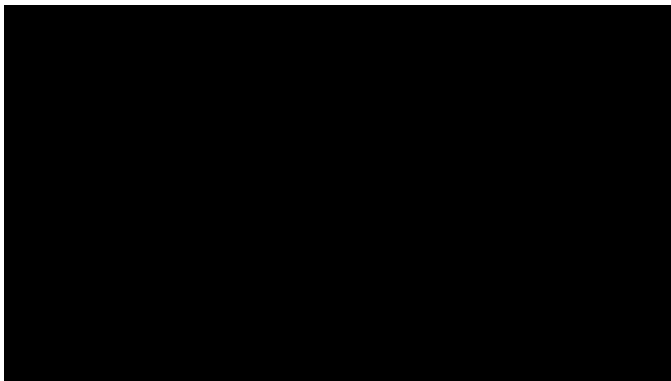
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### After the Interview

- Forensic Interviewers role
- Consult with MDT partners
- Provide recommendations to caregivers
- Documentation of recording

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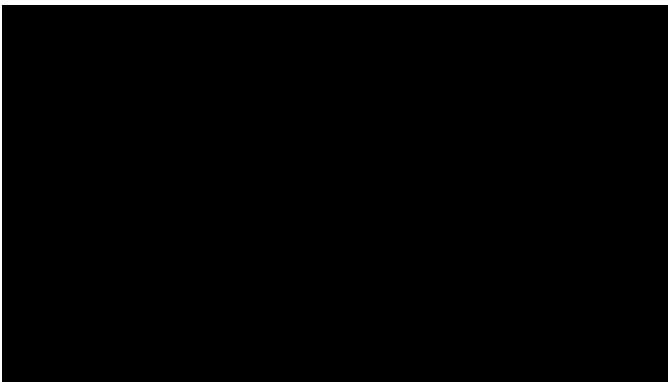
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**What questions do you have?**



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### OCFIT Day #3 Recap Quiz

**Instructions:**  
It's time for a little competition! We're going to play a game and you will get points for being correct **AND** for how fast you answer.

Go to [www.kahoot.it](http://www.kahoot.it) on your phone, tablet, or laptop and input the game pin on the following screen.

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### OCFIT Day #3 Evaluation

[bit.ly/ocfitday3](http://bit.ly/ocfitday3)

**Option #1:** Type in the URL above.

**Option #2:** Open your phone camera app and scan the QR code here to complete the evaluation.



**PLEASE NOTE:** You must complete this evaluation in order to receive credit for attending today's session.

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www.oregoncas.org

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