

PART I INTERVIEWS OF SUSPECTS

- I. General considerations
 - A. Interview environment
 - 1. Privacy
 - 2. No barriers between interviewer and suspect
 - 3. Non-supportive

KEY CONCEPT: A suspect is much more likely to make admissions against self-interest if questioned in a non-supportive and private environment.

- B. Goals of the interview
 - 1. Establish opportunity and access
 - 2. Evaluate precipitators
 - 3. Evaluate verbal and nonverbal behavior

KEY CONCEPT: The purpose for the interview is to evaluate the suspect's probable involvement in abuse, not to obtain a confession of guilt.

- C. Keep interview non-accusatory
 - 1. Regardless of inconsistencies or known lies
 - 2. Accusatory questioning decreases information
 - 3. Maintain an objective, truth-seeking demeanor

II. Establishing opportunity and access

- A. How close will the suspect place himself to the victim under a circumstance that would support abuse?
 - 1. Compare suspect's statements to those of the victim.
 - 2. Evaluate reasonableness of suspect's denials or behavior.
(Overcompensation)
 - B. Evaluate the suspect's personal relationship with the victim.
 - 1. Truthful tend to describe a natural and balanced relationship with the child (not overly good or unusually bad).
 - 2. Deceptive may describe an extreme relationship with the child as being very special, or unusually stressed or hostile.

KEY CONCEPT: The more specific the allegation, the easier it is to evaluate opportunity and access.

- C. Ask a direct question concerning the suspect's involvement in the abuse.
 - 1. Cover each allegation specifically.
 - 2. For comparison purposes, ask the suspect questions not alleged by the victim, e.g., as illustrated in the audiotaped interview, the question about

- touching the janitor's penis.
- 3. Evaluate strength of suspect's denial.

D. Interview Theme: A face-saving circumstance presented to the suspect to determine how close the suspect will come to acknowledging the sexual or physical abuse.

Interview themes for sexual abuse:

- 1. Accidental or inadvertent contact
- 2. Contact that was not sexually motivated
- 3. Because of alcohol consumption the suspect may have forgotten about the contact.

Interview themes for physical abuse:

- 1. The suspect was present when someone else injured the child.
- 2. The child burned himself with the cigarette.
- 3. The suspect did something accidentally to cause the child's injury.

KEY CONCEPT: The closer the suspect comes to acknowledging the victim's description of the abuse (time, location, circumstances), the more likely the suspect is involved.

III. Identifying Precipitators

A. Circumstances and events that are known to lead to sexual or physical abuse.

- 1. Sexual abuse
 - a. Being intoxicated and alone with the child.
 - b. Being alone with the child in an intimate situation, such as in bed or a bathroom with the child.
 - c. Discussions with the child centered around sexual topics.
 - d. Stress factors such as financial problems or difficulties at work or in the marriage.
- 2. Physical abuse
 - a. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
 - b. A single parent with sole care of a number of children.
 - c. Stress factors where the children become an emotional release for the suspect's frustration or anger.
 - d. A child who has behavior or learning problems.

B. Evaluating propensity

- 1. Past behaviors or present attitudes that support a tendency toward sexual or physical abuse.
- 2. The presence of environmental precipitators plus an established propensity

greatly increases the probability of the suspect's guilt.

KEY CONCEPT: The presence of precipitators alone does not increase the probability of guilt. However, when propensity is combined with precipitators, guilt is likely.

3. Propensity for sexual abuse
 - a. Acknowledging previous sexual contact with children.
 - b. Being questioned about sexual contact with children.
 - c. Being sexually aroused by children.
 - d. Thinking about sexual contact with children.
 - e. Unfulfilled sexual relationship with adults.
 - f. Being sexually abused as a child.
4. Propensity for physical abuse
 - a. Physically aggressive behavior with adults (assault and battery)
 - b. Emotional outbursts with children (frequent yelling, verbal threats)
 - c. Acknowledges "accidentally" causing injury to child during rough play or discipline.
 - d. Being physically abused as a child.
5. Interview questions to investigate propensity for sexual abuse.
 - a. Have you ever thought about (refer to engaging in behavior similar to the allegation)?
 - b. Have you ever been questioned before about (refer to behavior similar to the abusive behavior in question)?
 - c. Do you own any sexually explicit magazines?
 - d. Have you ever rented, or do you own any X-rated movies?
 - e. Have you ever told (victim) to keep something you did or said a secret?
6. Interview questions to investigate propensity for physical abuse.
 - a. Have you ever overreacted when disciplining a child and regretted your action?
 - b. Have you ever been questioned by the police about hitting or hurting someone else?
 - c. What is the worse thing that you've done to get even with someone else?

KEY CONCEPT: The absence of precipitators does not necessarily support an opinion of truthfulness.

IV. Behavior Analysis

KEY CONCEPT: When evaluating a suspect's behavior the investigator must always take into consideration factors such as the suspect's cultural background, intelligence, mental stability and level of motivation.

- A. Evaluation of attitudes
 1. Truthful
 - a. Sincere
 - b. Spontaneous

- c. Concerned
- d. Realistic
- e. Open, helpful
- 2. Deceptive
 - a. Insincere
 - b. Rehearsed
 - c. Unconcerned
 - d. Unrealistic
 - e. Guarded, unhelpful

KEY CONCEPT: A suspect's underlying attitude serves as the foundation for other behavioral responses during an interview.

B. Verbal behavior

- 1. Truthful
 - a. Offer direct responses to questions
 - b. Use of reinforcing language, e.g., "absolutely," "no way," "No. Not at all!"
 - c. On-time responses
- 2. Deceptive
 - a. Respond evasively to questions
 - b. Use of qualifying language, e.g., "Not that I know of," "To the best of my knowledge"
 - c. Delayed responses
 - d. Stalling tactics
- 3. Response delivery
 - a. Depending on pauses, voice inflection and response rate, two responses with exactly the same words can send completely different messages.

C. Nonverbal behavior

- 1. Truthful postures
 - a. upright and forward in chair
 - b. high levels of interest and emotional involvement
 - c. comfortable and relaxed
- 2. Deceptive postures
 - a. slouched or collapsed in chair
 - b. disinterest, preoccupied
 - c. frozen and rigid, uncomfortable
- 3. Truthful use hand gestures to reinforce verbal responses, especially with emotional or important responses. These hand gestures are called illustrators.
- 4. Deceptive feel uncomfortable reinforcing verbal responses with hand gestures.
 - a. hands remain stationary during important responses.
 - b. hands come in contact with facial area during important responses.
- 5. Crossing or uncrossing legs on cue to an important question.
 - a. displacing anxiety