



Forensic Interviewing Practices in Children's Advocacy Centers: 2009 Data

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Forensic Interviewing Practices in Children's Advocacy Centers: 2009 Data

In August 2009, a survey of Child Advocacy Centers was conducted by The Regional Children's Advocacy Center Offices (RCACs), the National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC), and the National Children's Alliance (NCA) to determine the state of forensic interview practices within Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) in the United States. The survey consisting of ten multiple choice questions was sent to approximately 700 NCA member Children's Advocacy Centers with a response rate of 247 (37%). 182 (73.7%) of respondents were accredited CACs while 59 (23.9%) of respondents were associate CACs, and 6 (2.4%) of respondents were developing CACs. The 2008 revised NCA Accreditation standards for CACs included new requirements for training and peer review for forensic interviewers. This survey was used to help provide an overview of forensic interview practices in the field relative to the revised standards for accreditation and to provide indicators for additional training needs in the areas of forensic interview process and professional development.

Question One asked, *Who conducts forensic interviews at your CAC?*

51% of respondents replied that CAC Forensic Interviewers (FI) conducted the interviews while 16.9% stated that Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Partners conducted interviews, and 32.1% stated that interviews were conducted by both FIs and MDT partners. See Table 1.

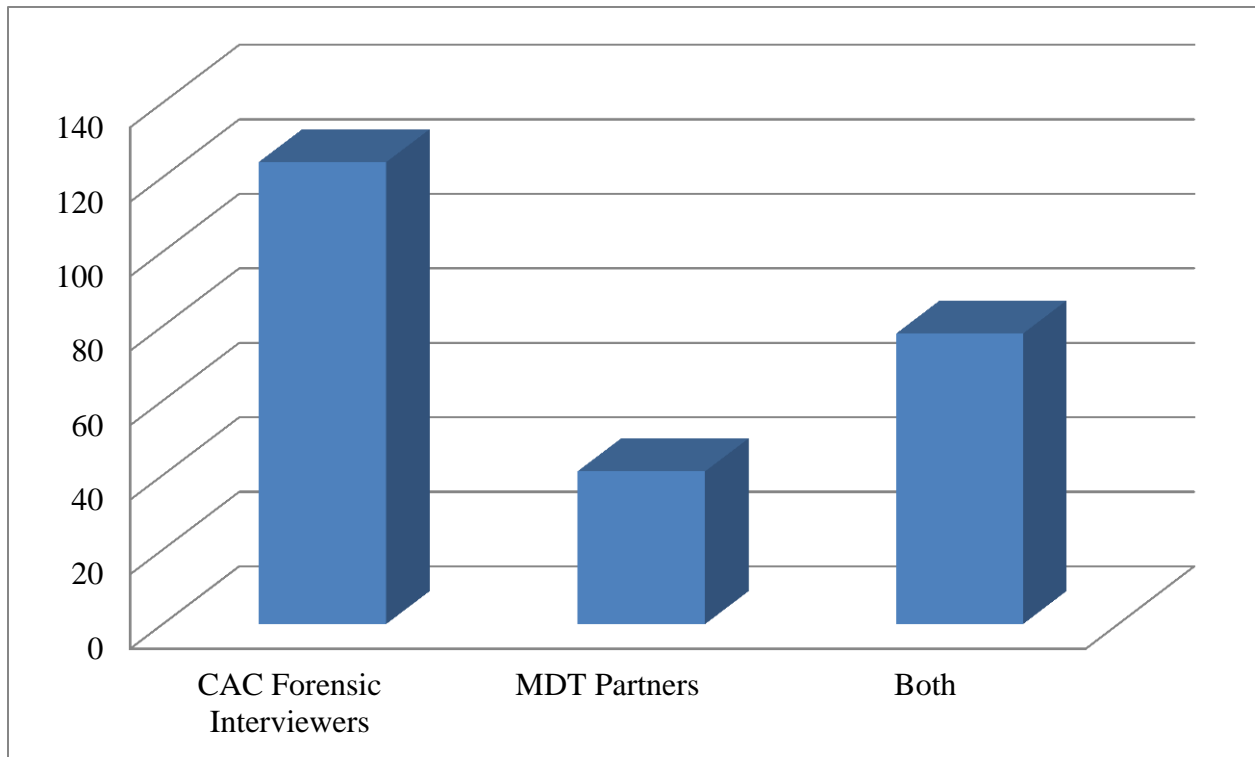


Table 1. Who conducts Forensic Interviews at Children’s Advocacy Centers.

Question Two asked about the *type of training Forensic Interviewers had obtained*. Respondents could indicate more than one if they received multiple trainings. Six Training programs were indicated as follows: Just over 52% trained through FindingWords/Cornerhouse, 52.4% trained through NCAC, just over 39% trained via state-based training, close to 25% trained via APSAC, close to 7% trained through NICHD, and 6.4% trained via Childhood Trust. See Table 2.

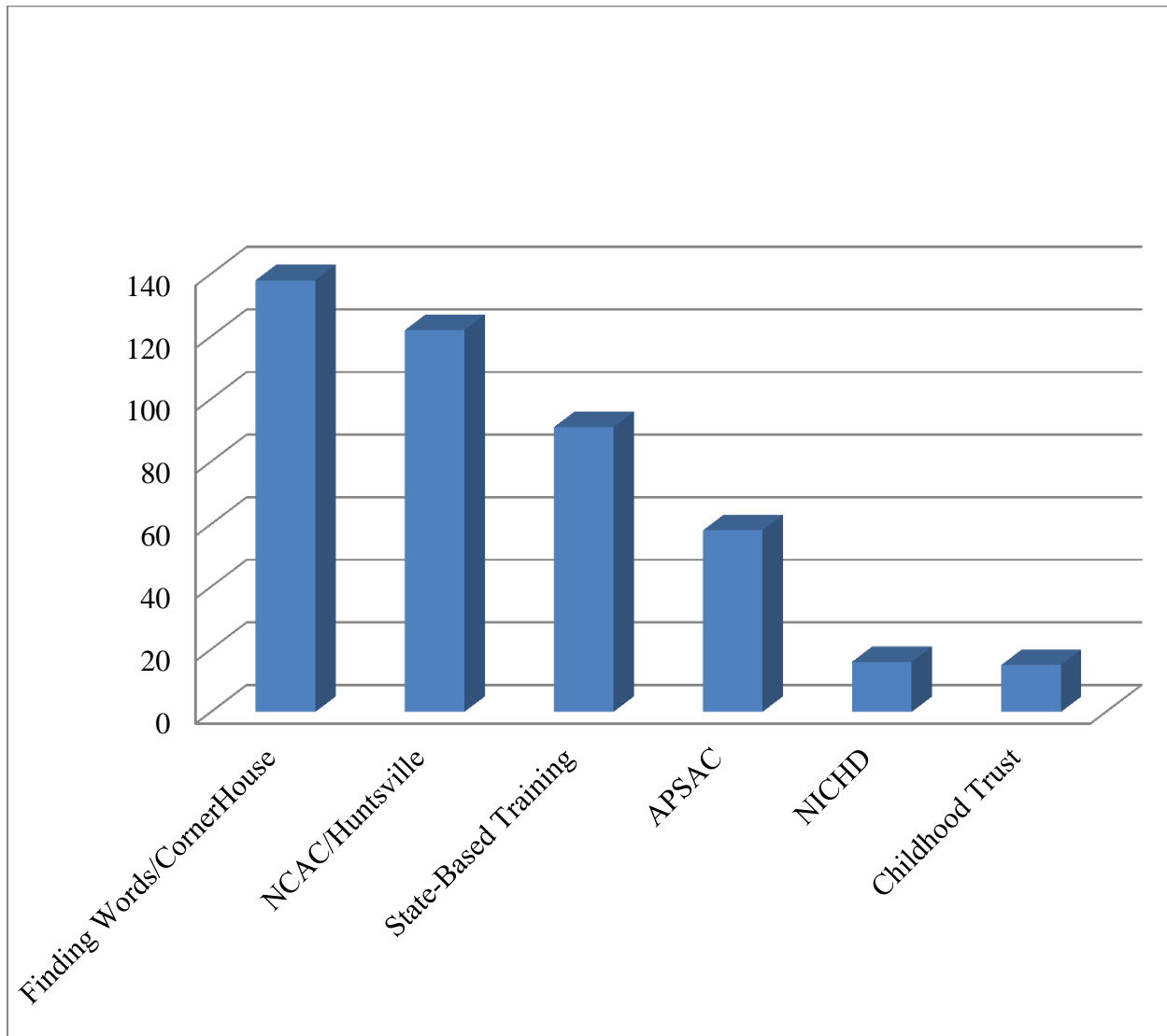


Table 2. Type of training obtained by Forensic Interviewers.

Question Three asked *whether Forensic Interviewers at the CACs participated in Peer Review*.

245 respondents answered this question. 202 (82.4%) of those answering the question, responded “yes”, while 43 (17.6%) of those answering the question responded “no”.

Question Four was addressed to those with Forensic Interviewers participating in Peer Review and asked *how often Peer Review was conducted*.

9.8% responded that peer review was conducted weekly. Just under 50% responded “monthly”, 44% responded “quarterly”, and 6% responded that peer review was conducted on an annual basis. See Table 3.

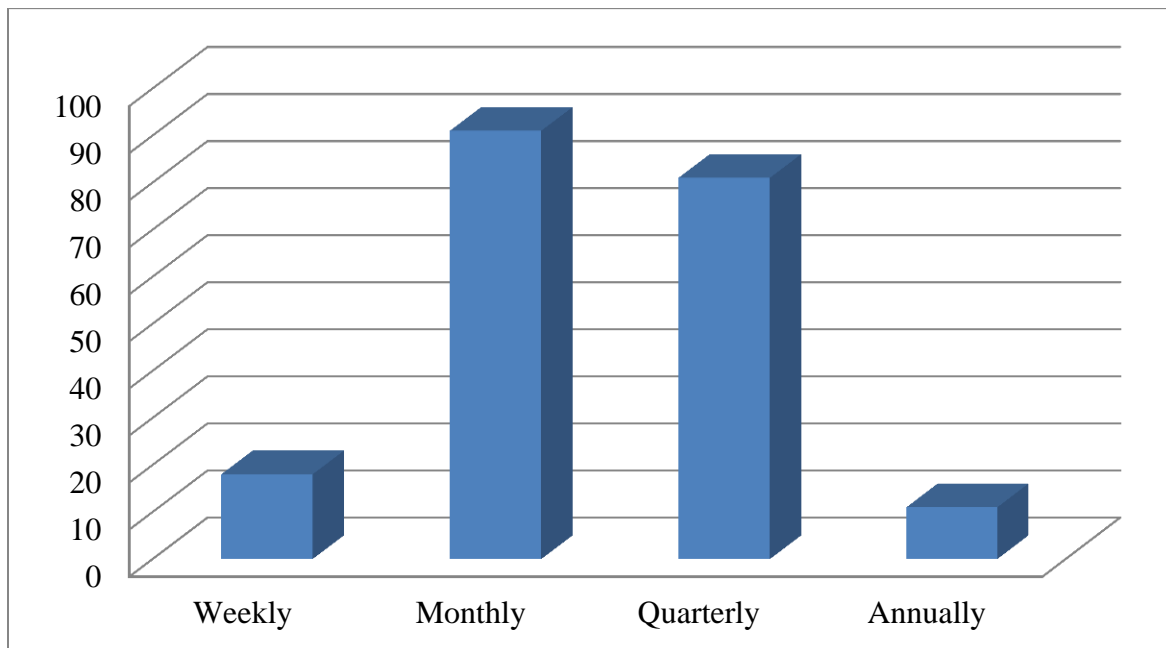


Table 3. How often Peer Review is conducted.

Question Five asked *how the CACs conducted peer review*. More than one answer could be indicated.

40% of respondents conducted statewide peer review, while just under 40% conducted peer review within the MDT. 35.3% said they conducted peer review within the CAC staff, while close to 18% conducted it nationally. Just over 11% reported conducting no peer review.

Question Six asked *if the CACs record forensic interviews*.

With a response rate to this question of 100%, 89.5% responded “yes” and 10.5% responding “no”.

In Question Seven, those who responded “yes” to the previous question were *asked if they record all interviews*. 95% responded “yes”, while 5% responded “no”.

In Question Eight, those who responded “no” to question six were *asked if they would prefer to record interviews*. 26 (89%) answered “yes” while 3 (10.3%) indicated they would not.

Question nine asked if the CACs were *mandated to record Forensic Interviews by State Statute?* Of the 229 responding to the question, 42 (18.3%) responded “yes”, while 187 (81.7%) responded that they are not mandated to record FIs.

The final question inquired about *the recording format used to record Forensic Interviews*. More than one answer could be indicated. 84.5% of respondents indicated that the recording format used was DVD and 19.5% indicated use of videotape. 19% reported using DVR and 3.1% reported recoding by audio only. See Table 4.

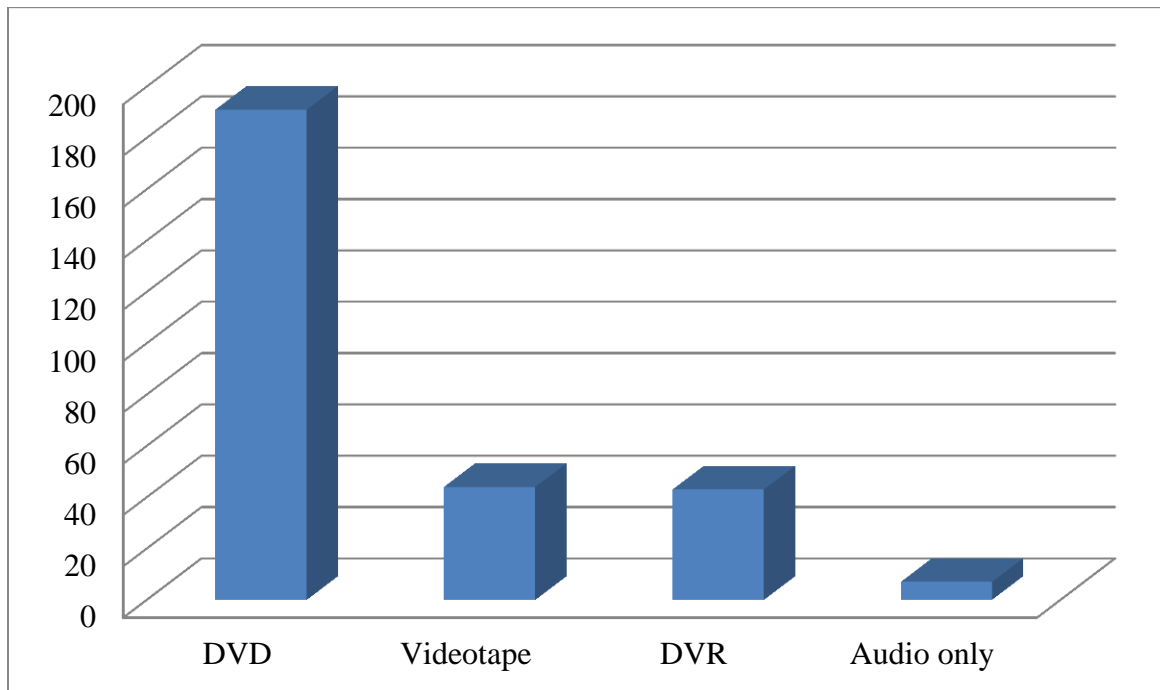


Table 4. Recording format utilized to record forensic interviews.

These results are not inclusive of the practices employed at all Children’s Advocacy Centers, but the relatively large sample size does provide a barometer of the current practice related to forensic interview training, peer review, and recorded documentation. With the emergence of expanded forensic interview training, new forensic interview peer review efforts, and improved technology for documenting forensic interviews, it is expected these results will change on a yearly basis.