A Research-to-Practice Summary:
A comparison of responses to substantive transition prompts in interviews with children

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ARTICLE:


SUMMARY:

Purpose:
Compare children’s responses to two transition prompting phrasings on rates of disclosure:
1. Tell me what you’re here to talk to me about today.
2. Tell me why you’re here to talk to me today.

Subjects:
Children five to nine years old were recruited from primary schools across Australia.

Design:
The children were randomly assigned to the what (n=198) or why (n=203) conditions. The children experienced four 25-minute scripted activity sessions which centered around six main activities (e.g., listening to a story, doing a puzzle) and were then interviewed 3-14 days after the final activity session. All interviews were conducted by the same interviewer who was blind to the assigned condition. After building rapport, the interviewer posed the assigned transition prompt.

The children’s initial responses to the transition prompts were coded as informative (made reference to some aspect of the activities) or uninformative (made no reference to the activities).
Findings:
Overall, children’s answers were informative 63% of the time:
1. Older children were informative 69% of the time.
2. Younger children were informative 49% of the time
3. Older children were 1.41 times more informative than younger children.

Children who received the what prompt responded informatively 72% of the time. Children who received the why prompt responded informatively 52% of the time. Children who received the what prompt were 1.38 times more informative than those who received the why prompt.