



ARE YOU LOOKING FOR MORE FORENSICALLY RELEVANT DETAILS?

Revise the Way You Develop Rapport, and Include Social Support

What Do You Want in a Forensic Interview?

The goal of a forensic interview is to elicit forensically relevant details with a high degree of accuracy regarding allegations of maltreatment.



Best Practice

Recall questions are associated with higher accuracy and fewer inconsistencies and errors. Asking broad open-ended prompts which elicit recall memory (such as *"Tell me everything you remember about..."*) as well as asking questions about prior statements encourages further elaboration and more forensically relevant details.



Developing Rapport

Failing to establish adequate rapport may negatively impact the willingness of children to share their experiences. Interviewers often ask *"Do you go to school"*, *"What grade are you in?"*, *"What's your favorite subject?"*, or *"Tell me about your friends?"*, which can be unfortunate questions.

These questions reflect an assumption that school or friends are safe or fun topics. However, children may perform poorly in school, are bullied, or have few friends. These questions can adversely impact children and impede rapport development.



Asking children about themselves allows them to choose topics in which they have an interest. Once the topic is present, then discuss fully using open recall prompts designed to elicit further information.

Social Support

Socially supportive statements further aid children in fully sharing their experiences. Saying *"Thank you for sharing that with me. It helps me to get to know you..."* or *"I appreciate you helping me understand..."* assists in the continuation of rapport throughout the interview. Research shows that if a child does make a disclosure, these techniques encourage children to share more information later in the interview.



Remember to ask children about themselves, and to include more supportive statements from the beginning to the end of your interview.