

PRIOR TO INTERVIEW

- Gather information about child's abilities and limitations, prior to the interview
- Know interventions used – i.e. token system, anger chart, first-then, deep breathing, etc.
- Take time to prepare child and help them understand what will happen next (advance warning, consider having child visit the day prior to interview just to see facility and room)
- Make sure all physical needs are met (hunger, restroom, comfortable in room seating)
- Best practice is to plan for 2 – 3 hours, with one or more breaks if needed
- Better yet, plan for more than one interview
- May need to allow "favorite object/s" in interview to gain compliance

DURING INTERVIEW

- Challenge is balancing child's need and forensic needs, discuss with team what case priorities are
- Brief run-through of equipment and how everything works may reduce stress/confusion
- Don't fidget – your movements may be distracting
- Do not take perceived rudeness or abrupt/loud behaviors personally this may be how they communicate – social rules are not always understood
- Communication may not be consecutive
- Response to one question/topic may come in the middle of another response
- Be comfortable with long bridges between communication
- Use longer pauses to allow for processing and answer formulation
- If you do not get a response to a question after appropriate time, reword it and then ask child if they understood
- Be ok with child's movement (safe distance)
- Do not look at child for extended periods of time
- They may seldom make eye contact, or hold contact longer depending on interventions child has had
- Some anecdotal evidence that children with ASD perceive pain differently
- Be wary of asking whether an act "hurt" or was "painful"
- Simplify the task – break into smaller components – less words
- Child may only answer part of your question if it is too long and this can cause some confusion from the answer
- Lessen the amount of "wh-" questions that are out of context
- Instead of "who was in the room" use "tell me the people in the room"
- Be concrete. More focus on the physical world, objects, and literal definitions not feelings
- Limit prepositions i.e. inside, before, after, on, below, during
- Rapport may be difficult to establish – or may not be necessary
- May be unable to complete answer if interrupted
- May be able to provide detailed information about concrete experience yet be unable to answer specific questions
- Human figure diagrams generally not helpful
- Avoid reinforcing stimuli for disclosure

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