Extended Forensic Interviews

The NCAC models, promotes, and delivers excellence in child abuse response and prevention through service, education, and leadership.

What is a Forensic Interview?

“A forensic interview of a child is developmentally-sensitive and legally sound method of gathering factual information regarding allegations of abuse and/or exposure to violence. This interview is conducted by a neutral professional utilizing research and practice-informed techniques as part of a larger investigative process.”

Hallmarks

• Structure (flexible → highly structured)
• Defensible use of questions
• Informed by research
• Informed by practice
• Influenced by state statutes & local practice
Development of FI

Single-session interview has been standard practice (APSAC 2002; Everson, 2010; Faller, 1996; Faller, Cordisco-Steele, & Nelson-Gardell, 2010)
- Minimize potential trauma
- Concerns regarding suggestibility
- Limited resources
- Historical basis

Limitations of single-session model
- May not fit an individual child’s needs
- Relies on the child’s willingness and ability (Faller, Cordisco-Steele, & Nelson-Gardell, 2010)

Recognition in the field of limits of single-session (Everson, 2010; Faller & Nelson-Gardell, 2010; Goodman & Quas, 2008; Hershkowitz & Terner, 2007; LaRooy, Katz, Malloy, & Lamb, 2010; Patterson & Pipe, 2009)
- Child may need more than one opportunity
- Consideration regarding how, rather than if multiple sessions occur

Alternatives to single session interview may be appropriate (APSAC, 2002; Everson, 2010; Faller, Cordisco-Steele, Nelson-Gardell, 2010; Cronch, Viljoen, & Hansen, 2006)
- Must be carefully considered (APSAC, 2002)
  - Based upon the needs of the child
  - Not be driven by other factors
    - Such as lack of collaboration / communication to conduct investigation as an MDT
  - Suggestibility remains a concern
Development of FI

- Recommendations from literature on multi-session interviews (LaRooy, Lamb & Pipe, 2009; LaRooy, Katz, Malloy & Lamb, 2010)
  - Pay attention to fundamental memory concepts
  - High quality training & supervision/peer review of interviewers
  - Implementation of good interview practices
  - Avoidance of suggestive questioning & coercion
  - Sessions are close together
  - Same interviewer

Models for Extended Processes

- NCAC Extended Forensic Interview
- Multi-Session RATAC
- U of Michigan Family Assessment Clinic
- Harvard U Children’s Hospital
- U of NC Childhood Trauma & Treatment Center
- Others?

Differences

- Goals of umbrella organization
- Evaluator/interviewer
- Referral source
- Children/cases appropriate for referral
- Payment source
- Recording & reporting
CAC Extended Processes

- Follows & expands on FI structure
- Intended for use by CAC & MDT
- Emphasis on forensically defensible techniques
- Less MH component
- Adapted to resources of CAC & MDT
- Adapted to local practice parameters

Extended Forensic Evaluation When Sexual Abuse Is Suspected: A Model and Preliminary Data
- C. Carnes, C. Wilson & D. Nelson-Gardell
- Child Maltreatment, 1999

Extended Forensic Evaluation When Sexual Abuse Is Suspected: A Multisite Field Study
- C. Carnes, D. Nelson-Gardell, C. Wilson & U. Orgassa
- Child Maltreatment, 2001
Changes to the NCAC Process

- EFI as extended interview process
- NICHD research & guidelines
- Emphasis on good forensic questioning
- Removal of some techniques
- Qualifications of EF Interviewer
- Recording & reporting

Naming of the NCAC Process

- Forensic Evaluation
- Extended Forensic Evaluation
- Extended Forensic Interview
- NCAC Extended Forensic Interview

EF Interviewer

- Extensive knowledge of child development, cultural influences, forensic processes
- Use of forensically defensible questioning & techniques
- Attending & observational skills, patience
- Ability to do critical thinking
- Embrace the complexity of the task
**EF Interviewer**

- Commitment to MDT process
- Understanding of laws & charging definitions
- Preparation for role as a witness
- Clinical licensure still has many benefits, but no longer required

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**Personnel**

- CAC staff may be trained as Forensic Interviewers & as Extended Forensic Interviewers
- Is change in personnel always recommended?
- Delineation between forensic & therapy important

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**Possible Criteria for Referral**

- No disclosure in interview, but previous disclosures or behavioral indicators
- Incomplete or confusing disclosure
- Anxious or frightened child
- Temperamental, developmental needs of child
- Multiple traumatic events
Possible Criteria for Referral

- Communication difficulties because of age, cultural differences, disabilities
- No outcry from child / compelling reasons to believe event has occurred
- Witness to homicide
- Trafficked or exploited child
- Other criteria established by Team

Referral Process

- MDT or investigative team (IT) makes the referral
- Dual process of criminal investigation & exploring protection concerns
- Findings are reported back to IT or MDT
- Referrals from other sources are not recommended

Referral to EFI

- May follow “failed” FI
- Direct referral to EFI
  - preschoolers
  - children with disabilities or serious delays
  - extreme trauma
Session Overview

• Collection of preliminary info first
• Meeting with caregiver (CG)
• Generally 3 to 5 child sessions
• Combination of forensically defensible & child friendly techniques
• MDT may be present for sessions, but not required by protocol

Session Overview

• Sessions are close together (2/3 per week)
• Investigation is to continue during this period
• MDT can conclude work more quickly
• Protection easier to maintain
• Especially helpful for preschoolers
• Written report at end of process (?)

Purpose of Caregiver Contact

• Explanation of EFI process & CG role
• Limitations of confidentiality
• Child’s developmental history
• Family structure
• Care routines & day-to-day life
• Suggestions for narrative practice
Child Session Overview

- **Foundational Sessions**
  - Rapport / NP / Guidelines / Development
  - Rapport / NP / Family / Development
- **Allegation Focused Sessions**
  - Allegation Focused Topics
  - Follow-up & Clarification
- **Closure**

Foundational Session(s)

- Introduce child to the process
- Build rapport
- Developmental sensitivity
- Narrative practice
- Family & day-to-day life
- Introduce guidelines
- Set the tone for the sessions

Purpose of Foundational Session(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>EF Interviewer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>Skills screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>Guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Assess competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More agreeable pace</td>
<td>Establish pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for child to “open the door”</td>
<td>Increase narrative competency</td>
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</tbody>
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Allegation Focused Sessions

Transition
- Some children will “open the door” during foundational session(s)
- Funneled approach
- Tailored to child & case specifics

Transition to Allegation Focused Session(s)

Incremental approach
- Focused topics

Direct approach
- Use of externally derived info
- Touch inquiry
- Directed reassurance or info

Allegation Focused Session(s)
- Use good forensic questioning
- Open → focused → closed
- Tailor expectations to child’s ability
- May have multiple events
- Tools may be used if appropriate
- Decide how far to go
Closure Session

• May or may not be necessary
• Respectful of relationship concerns
• “Book-end” forensic sessions
• Transition to therapy
• Opportunity for follow-up information / thoughts

Extended Interview Processes

• Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Child: What To Do When a Single Interview Isn’t Enough
• K.C. Faller, L. Cordisco Steele & D. Nelson-Gardell
• Unpublished manuscript

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• Allegations of Sexual Abuse of a Child: What to do when a Single Interview Isn’t Enough
• K.C. Faller, L. Cordisco Steele, D. Nelson-Gardell
• Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 2010