

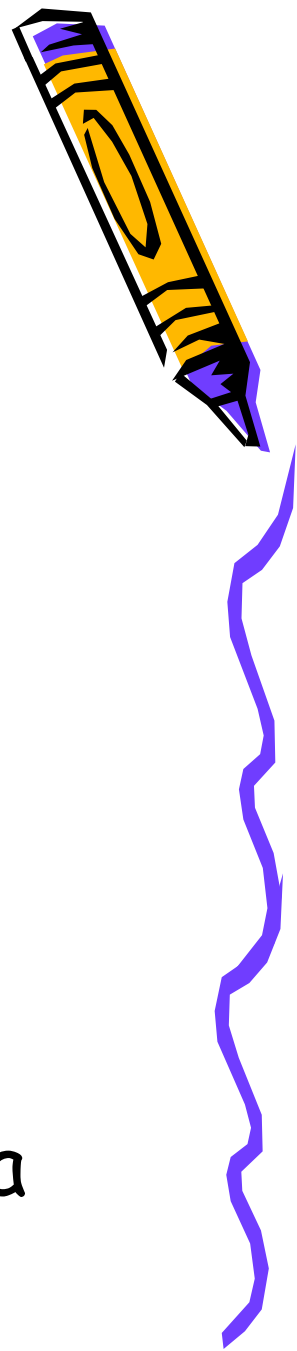
Interpreting & Interviewing for Children & Trauma Victims



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Interpreting & Interviewing for Children & Trauma Victims

- Review
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Teamwork
- Interviewing children
- Listen & observe
- Interviewing victims of trauma



Review ...



What do you want to know?

What do you already know?



Roles and Responsibilities

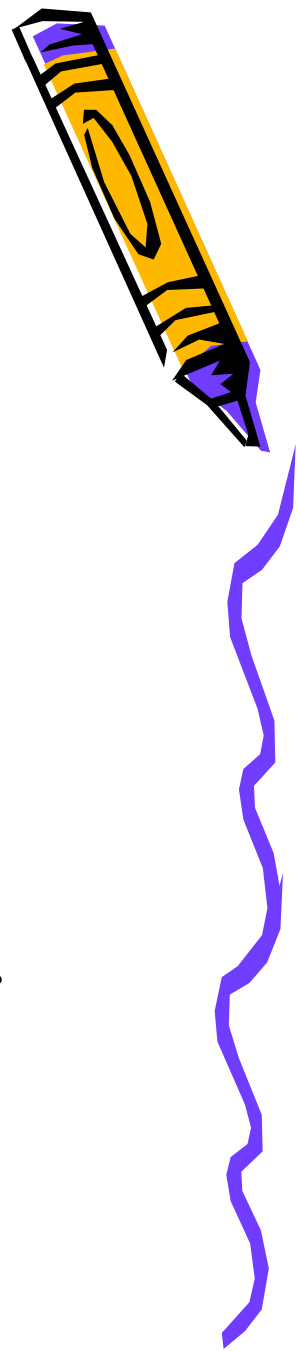


Interpreter

- To assist the UNHCR Officer by providing a specific channel for communication
- To be an additional representative of UNHCR.
- To be a voice of an applicant
- To accurately represent what the applicant is saying to the interviewer
- To be a professional
- To be a neutral partner in the exchange of information
- To be non-judgmental observer throughout the process
- To be respectful of the applicant



Teamwork

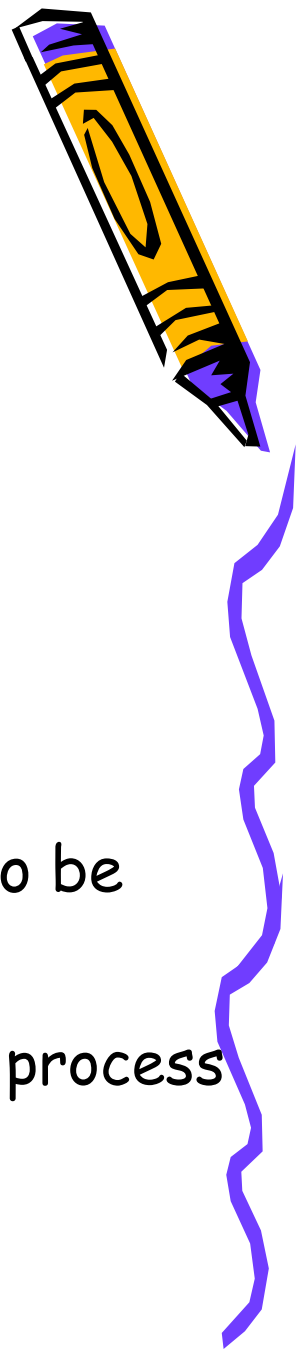


Interviewer & Interpreter

- It takes two to gain the insights from applicants in an empathetic, efficient and effective manner
- You only get out of it what you put into the process...



Teamwork



Pre -Interview discussion

- What is the purpose of the interview
- Provide an overview of the case
- Explain what you are trying to gain insight about
- Both need to be mindful of the kinds of things to be watchful for
- Express how the interpreter can be helpful in the process



Teamwork

Remember - The more comfortable and well informed people are about the purpose, process and potential outcomes the easier they are in answering questions and being honest with you.

- Some questions and approaches will encourage people to share information, while others may discourage them.
- You should be aware that there is a right way and a wrong way to ask for information
- Interviewing doesn't always mean asking a lot of questions



Interviewing / Interpreting



Who is a child?

Who is a separated child?

Who is an unaccompanied child?



Interviewing / Interpreting



Have you all seen children?

What types of trauma have you seen?

Can you interview children?

What might an interpreter be able to tell you about children?



Interviewing / Interpreting

Prior to interviewing the child take into consideration the child's age, maturity and developmental stage to understand how to present yourself to the child



Interviewing children

Put yourself in their shoes, they may be:

- Scared
- Confused
- Saddened
- Angry
- Frustrated
- Fearful



Interviewing children



How would you begin with a 6 year old?

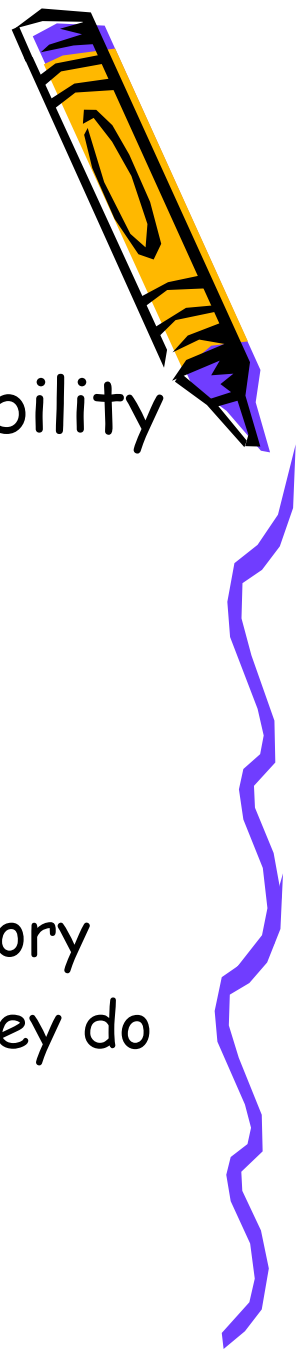
How would you begin with a 16 year old?



Interviewing children

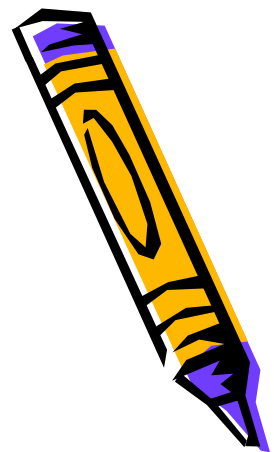
How age and maturity effects children's ability to respond :

- Preschool (3-5 yrs):
 - Will need the support of an adult
 - Can not think logically
 - Can recognize concert things as part of memory
 - May give inaccurate information on things they do not know much about



Interviewing children

- Early School Age (6-9 yrs)
 - Have stronger recall than preschoolers
 - Developing a stronger capacity for their autobiographical memory
 - They are developing self-esteem
 - They measure their skills and worth by their peers
 - They can consider varied solutions to problems
 - They need a sense of control in how they share the information



Interviewing children



Middle School age (10-12yrs)

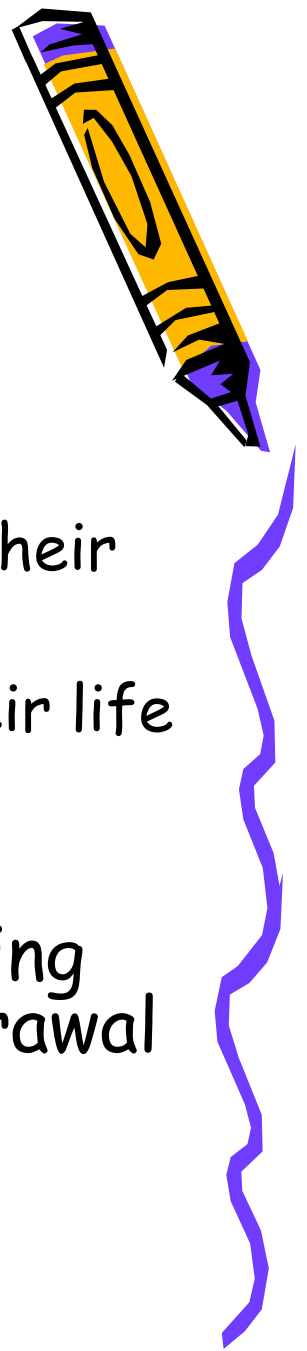
- Stronger logical thinking capacity
- Feelings of competency is needed
- They see the world in good and bad dichotomy and fairness becomes an issue



Interviewing children

- Adolescence (13-18yrs)
 - Struggle with developing their own identity
 - More independent, and less connected with their parents
 - Have a stronger grasp on the realities of their life situation

Evaluate adolescents careful in distinguishing between normal independence and withdrawal from depression or anger



Interviewing children



Additional considerations:

- Culture
- Gender
- Trauma



Interviewing children



How might Gender play a role in the process?

How might trauma play a part in the process?

How might culture play a part in the process?



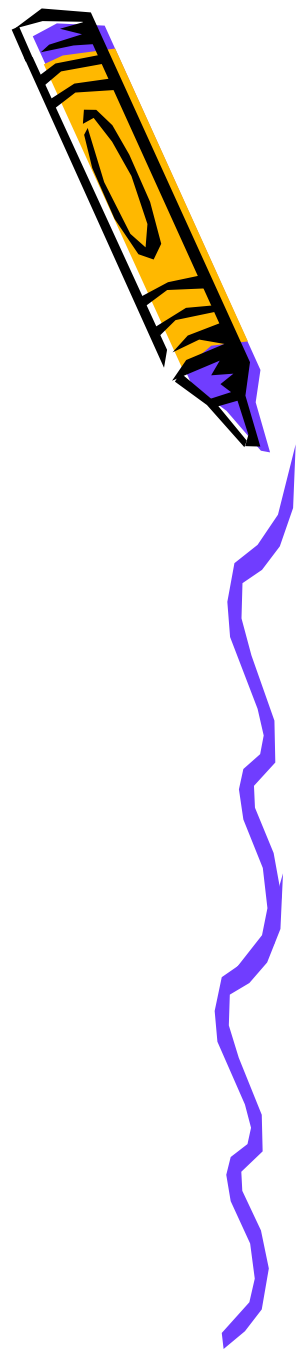
Interviewing children

Close your eyes:

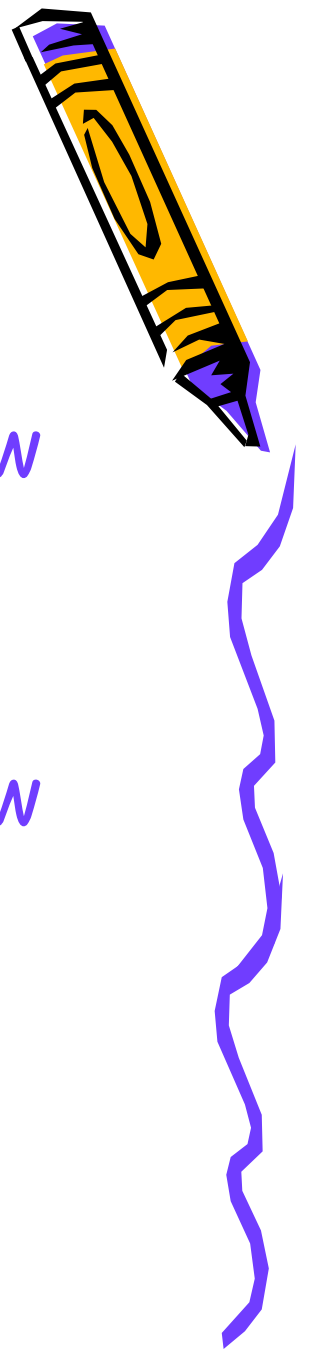
Imagine yourself at 8 year old...
things are easily confusing

Imagine yourself at 13 years old...
you are becoming a young adult

Imagine yourself at 17 years old...
you think you rule the world



Interviewing children



What are ways to make the interview less frightening to a child?

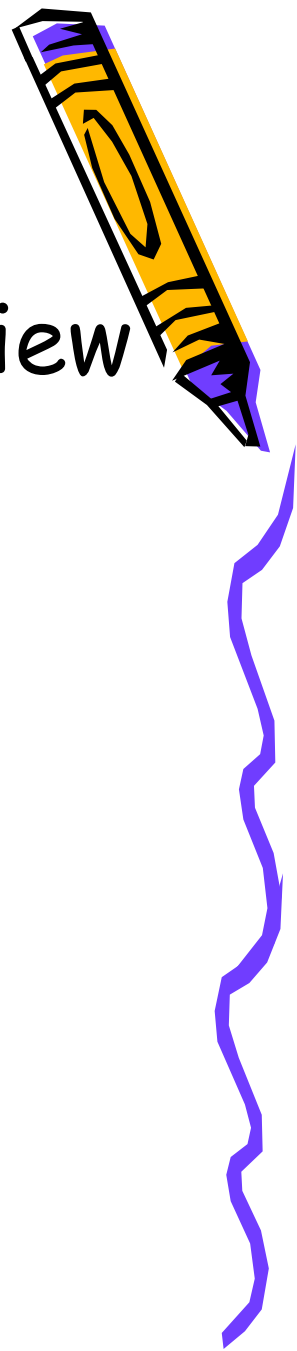
What are ways to make the interview less frightening to a woman?



Interviewing children

How would you make the interview process less scary to children?

- tone of your voice
- noise around the interview
- seating arrangements
- physical distance
- bring something to play with
- go for a walk
- play a game or kick a ball



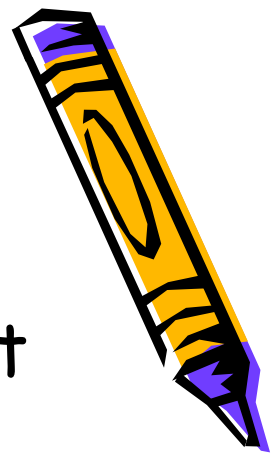
Interviewing children

Children should be interviewed in a way that allows them to feel safe.

Try and find a quiet place and, at least part of the interview should be carried out in private so that the child can speak freely.

Be imaginative:

- set aside a corner of a room
- go outside to play
- color or draw
- talk about less sensitive matters



Interviewing children



Begin the interviewing Process:

Always keep in mind the child's age and development maturity

- Introduce yourself to children
- Explain who you are
- Explain what you are doing
- Explain why you want to talk to them
- Explain what will happen to the information they give you

Allow them time to take this in, and then check with them to make sure they have understood.



Interviewing children

"Break The Ice"

How might you break the ice with a child of 10?

How might you break the ice with a child of 16?



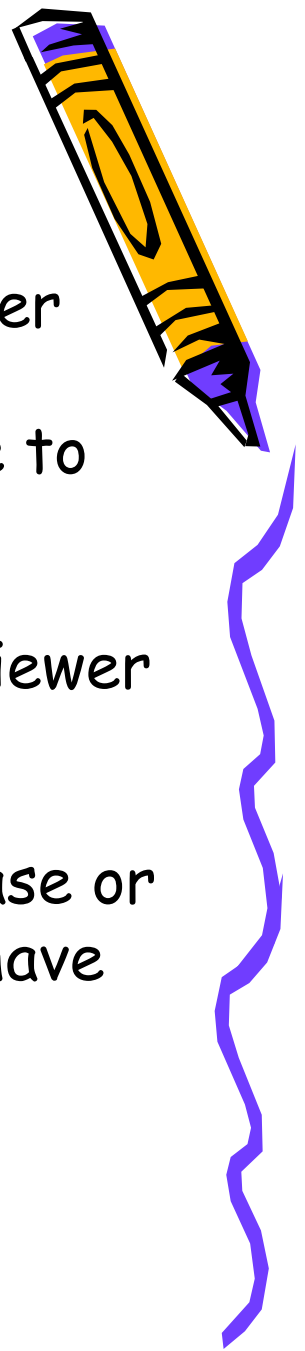
Don't pressure or rush children



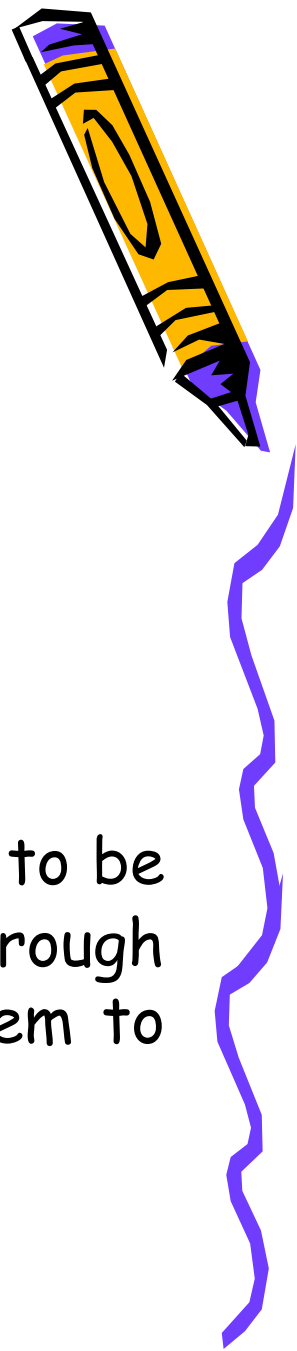
Interviewing children

There will always be pressure to do more and faster

- No matter our workload we need to be sensitive to the families and children we are working with
- Everyone needs breaks the child and the interviewer at times allow for it if possible
- If you are needing assistance to work on this case or feel you can't be objective and confidential or have some relationship you need to ask for help



Interviewing children



Allow for sufficient time:

- To express themselves
- To think about their families
- To remember the separation
- To explain their experiences

It is perfectly normal for a child and care givers to be upset during this process as they have all been through so much, grief, pain, and loss. Allow time for them to gain composure and offer comfort.

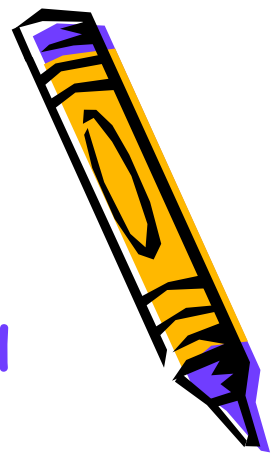


Interviewing children

- Keep direct questions to a minimum
- Encourage general conversation
 - so that the child does not feel that he or she is being cross-examined.
- Always listen to a child's questions, hopes and fears and try to respond in a way that is helpful
- Encourage children to speak about difficult issues when necessary, but never pressure them to talk



Questions



What are the types of questions you might ask a 6 year old?

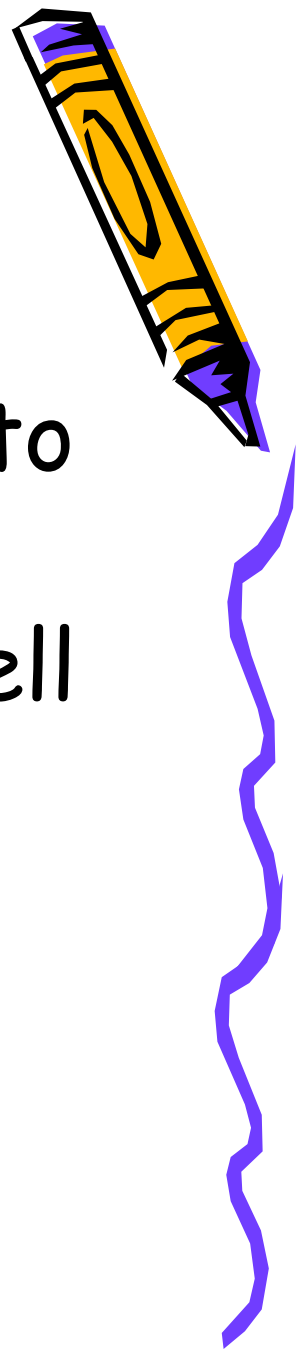
What are the types of questions you might ask a 12 year old?

What are the types of questions you would ask a 17 year old?



Interviewing children

Provide children an opportunity to be supportive when they are a certain age and have time to tell their stories.

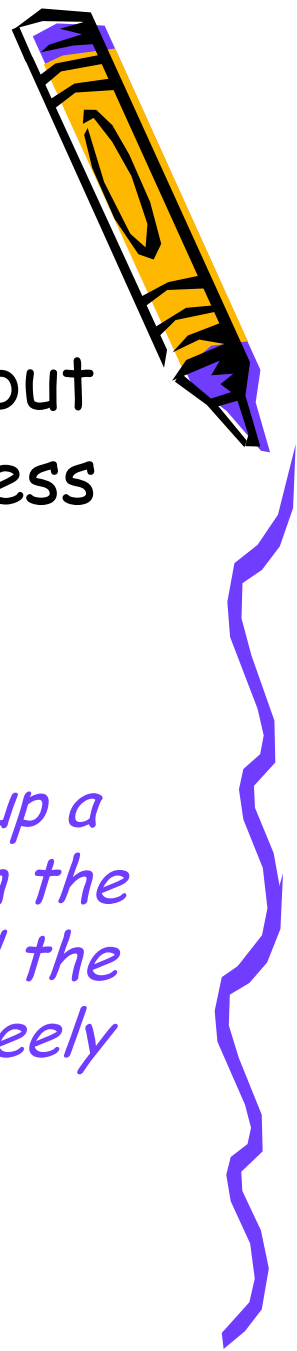


Interviewing children

- Let children take the lead in deciding how much they say
- Watch for what they don't say and non-verbal clues
- Watchful for signs of distress (uncontrollable crying)
- Avoid using slang or jargon
- Never make assumptions about what children are thinking or feeling.



Interviewing children



Sometimes children may be willing to talk but find it difficult. Making the conversation less personal can help:

A child was reluctant to give his name to the assessor interviewing him. The assessor made up a story about a bird and gave the bird a name. In the story the bird asked the name of the child and the child gave it. He was able to talk much more freely within the context of the story.



Interviewing children



- An interview should never further traumatize a child through the interview process
- Effective communication most often reflects genuineness, respect and empathy



Interviewing children

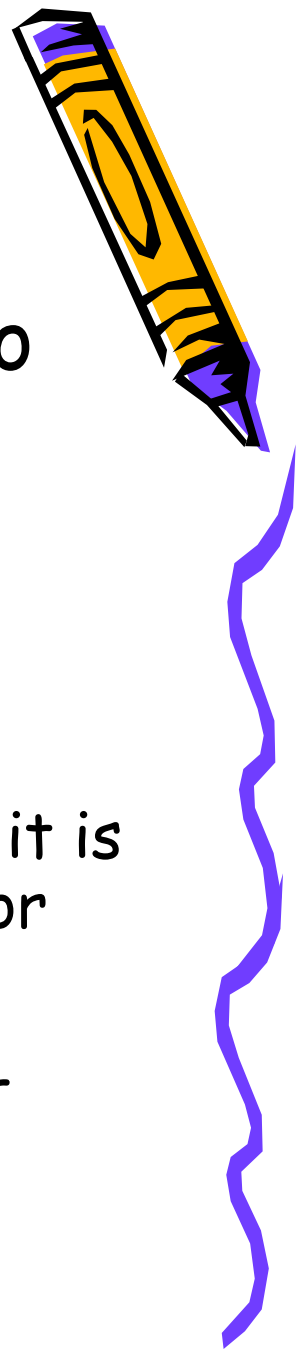


If the story they tell you changes what might this mean?

Would you believe them?



Interviewing children



Be aware that information provided to you may change:

- Children have different levels of remembering things in their life and at different ages these become less and more clear.
- Therefore remember that if the story changes it is not necessarily meaning the child is untruthful or lying to you.
- Remember the principle of benefit of the doubt



Interviewing Children



What tools/ items things might you use to help children discuss issues?



Interviewing children

What are other ways of helping children to express themselves

- Coloring
- Playing games
- Singing
- Maps & Drawing
- Talking through Puppets



Interviewing children



How much you explain will of course depend on a child's age and ability to comprehend, but all children must be kept informed.

- Be honest with the child
- Explain what is going to happen
- Reassure the child, but do not make promises or raise false hopes



Interviewing children



Just like adults if children are constantly told contradictory things they will become confused and end up not believing or trusting you if you have to return to talk to them.



Interviewing children

Consider the sequence of questions you want to ask.

- Discuss things a time-line
- Starting broad than getting more detailed as the information is provided to you
- Slowly getting more detailed and concert with the information



Interviewing children



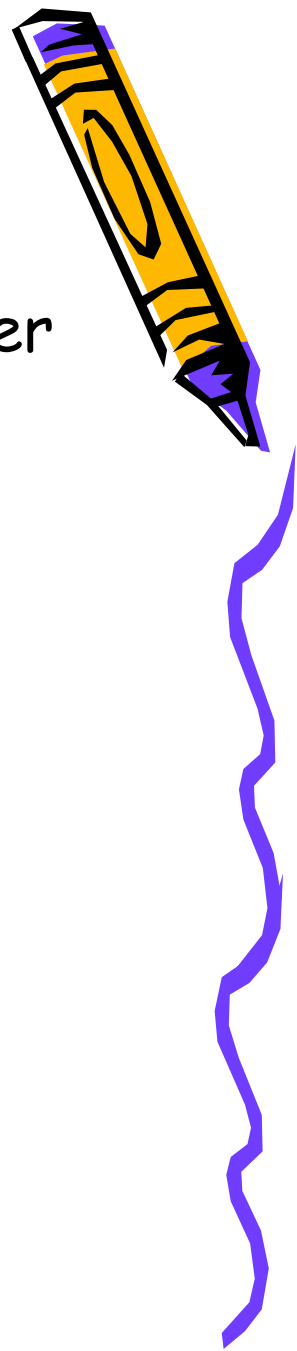
What types of non-verbal clues may give you insight that something may have happened or be happening?



Listen and Observe

You do not always need to speak to people to gather information, many aspects of the child and the family's life will be clear if you carefully observe their daily routine, interactions with one another, and behaviors.

- Body language & posture
- Eye contact
- Responses
- Appearances
- Attitude
- Silence
- Facial Expressions



Listen and Observe



When children become distressed

- Look for signs of distress in children
 - Crying uncontrollably
 - Yelling
 - Not talking at all
- If they are distressed do not pressure them
- Their distress should not be ignored



Listen and Observe



When children become distressed

- They must be supported and comforted in a way that is appropriate
 - What is appropriate will depend on the child's age, maturity and circumstances and again you should take a lead from the child.
 - Other children can be enlisted to comfort a child in distress. If you know that your interviewee has a friend or a brother or sister, ask him or her to talk to the child so that the interview can be finished.



Listen and Observe



What can direct eye contact mean?

What might a smile mean?

What might it mean if you ask the same question twice mean?

What might a touch of the hand mean?



Listen and Observe

There is always pressure in our office to get things done but this should be at the expense of treating family and children without respect and care.

- ABOVE ALL - children should be given time, give them a break, time to play games or have a drink.
- Children should be given the freedom and safety to be children.



Listen and Observe



Potential signs of distress:

- » Bruises
- » Scars
- » Fear of talking about anything
- » Avoidance out of norm for child of this age, culture, maturity
- » Uncontrollable crying
- » Aggressive
- » No eye contact
- » No emotions
- » Overly affectionate

LOOK



Interviewing Trauma Victims



Will you know the applicant is a victim of trauma?

How might you figure this out?



Interviewing Trauma Victims



Remember:

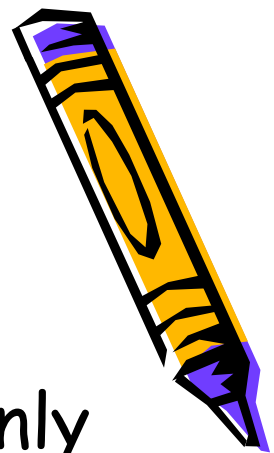
Some times the first interview won't yield as much as you want it to

It may take time to develop trust, respect from the child

It may mean that you need to try again at another time



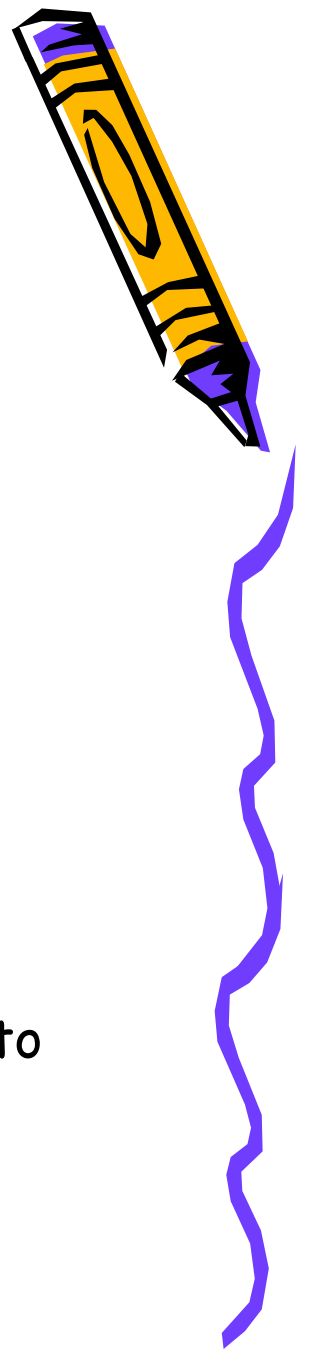
Interviewing Trauma Victims



- Need to establish trust in order to openly communicate
 - Don't make any promises
 - Follow through on any thing you say you will do
- May feel stigmatized and/or judged by the interviewer
 - Recognize that they are not the only ones who has been through this sort of thing, while also recognizing that their situation is unique



Interviewing Trauma Victims



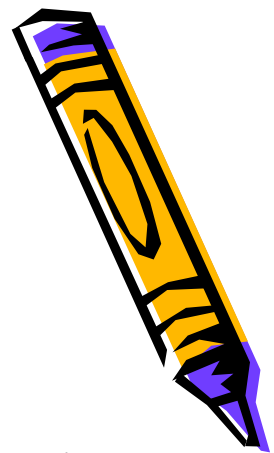
If you are aware of abuse or trauma...

Understand...

- They will need to feel safe in order to be open and communicate freely in the interview
- Those that have suffered from sexual or physical violence need personal space and boundaries
- May have very low self esteem and find it difficult to express themselves



Interviewing Trauma Victims



- Ask one question at a time
 - Avoid repeating the same question over and over again - as this may be viewed as criticism of their answer, and than they may provide with an answer that they think you want to hear
- Simple sentences
- If they don't share something with you they may not realize that it has any relevance to the situation
- Avoid criticizing the situation, perpetrator or in your mind the negative party



Interviewing Trauma Victims



What are signs of trauma, abuse, neglect, violence?

Adults & Children - Physical signs?

Adults & Children - Emotional signs?



Interviewing Trauma Victims



Trauma can effect an individuals in several areas of their lives

Emotionally - terror and horror

Physically - hyper-arousal of the nervous system

Interpersonally - separation loss

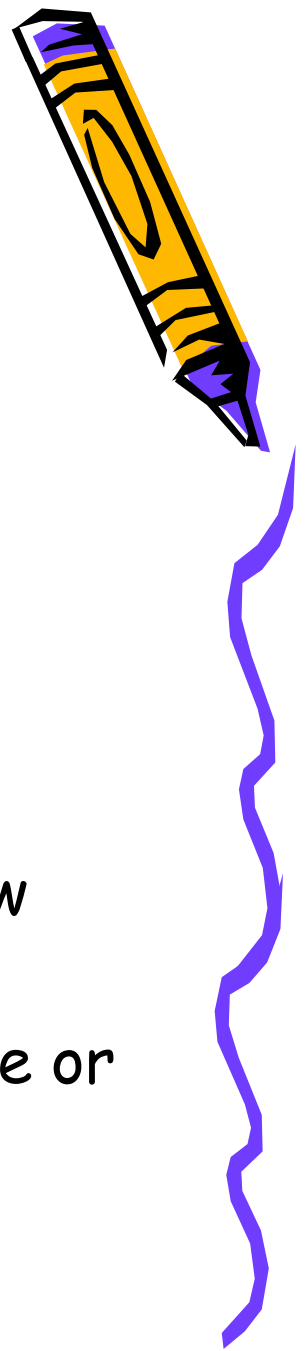
Cognitively - lack of control, helplessness



Interviewing Trauma Victims

Individuals who may have suffered abuse, neglect, violence

- Feel unsafe
- Their experience will effect their disputations and reactions to the interview
- Recalling certain events in their past may cause a change in behavior, emotional state or attitude



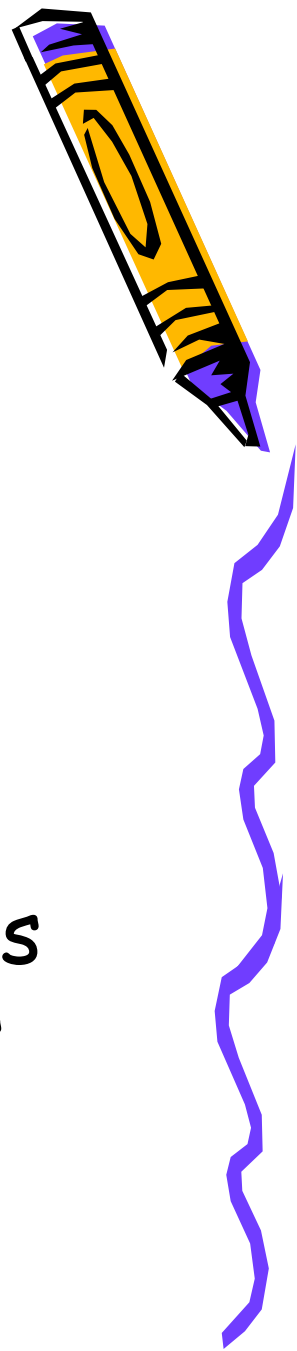
Interviewing Trauma Victims



- PTSD - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
 - May re-experience traumatic events in their lives over and over again
 - May have intrusive thoughts, visuals, emotions, nightmares, be hyper arousal
 - May be unwilling or even unable to produce a description of the events
 - May have impaired to their memory (especially short term memory)
 - Difficult experiences may be easier for children to talk about it indirectly (this gives the child mental and emotional space to express traumatic experiences)



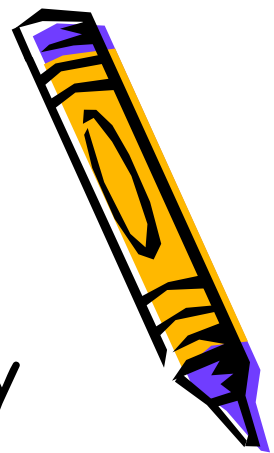
Interviewing Trauma Victims



- Single event trauma
- Chronic trauma (multiple events)
- Adults and older children with traumatic histories show large gaps in their autobiographical memories



Interviewing Trauma Victims

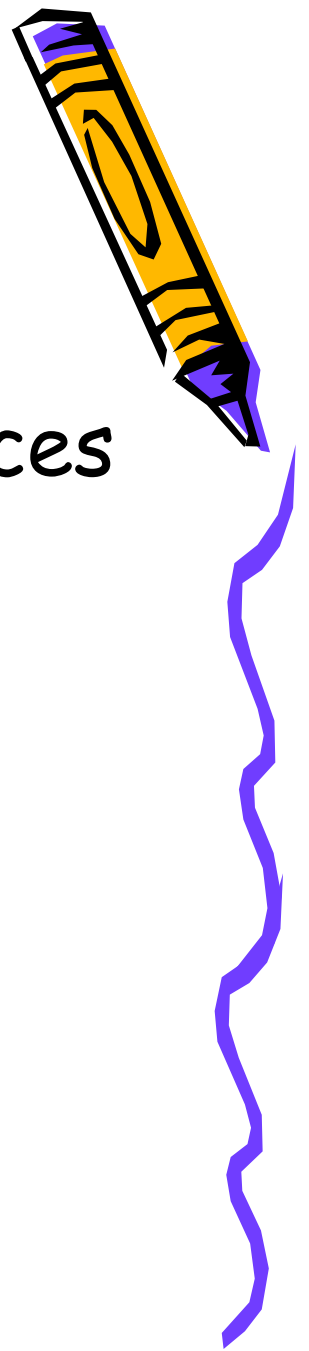


Children may deal with trauma differently

- Some may narrow their attention to a specific element or item in the traumatic event
- Some may repress memories
 - Has encoded the traumatic event or episode into memory in a narrative form and locked it away "forgotten" it, only later to be recovered if necessary
- Some may dissociate
 - Lack of normal integration of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings



Interviewing Trauma Victims

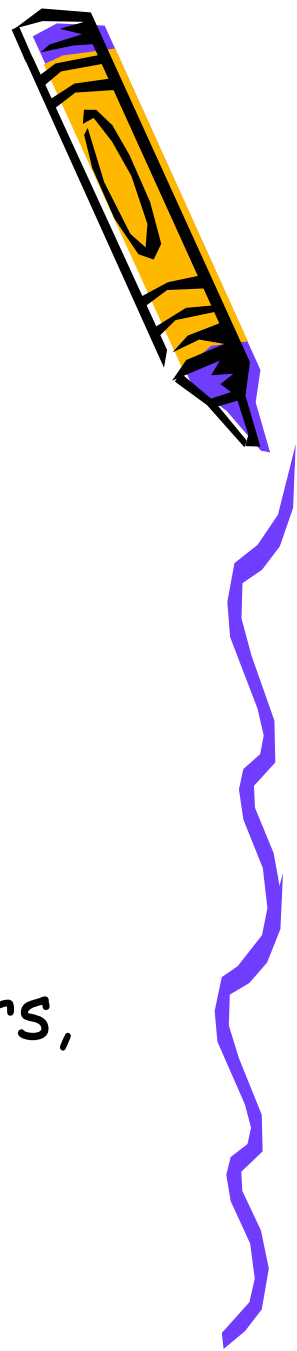


Remember to take cultural differences into account when evaluating the nature of any inconsistencies or contradictions in the story

How does your culture effect your perception of an issue?



Interviewing Trauma Victims



- Be aware of gender differences in communication
- Be patience with female applicants to overcome inhibitions, particularly regarding sexual abuse
- Females should have time to tell their stories without their husbands, brothers, fathers or children around them



Sample case...

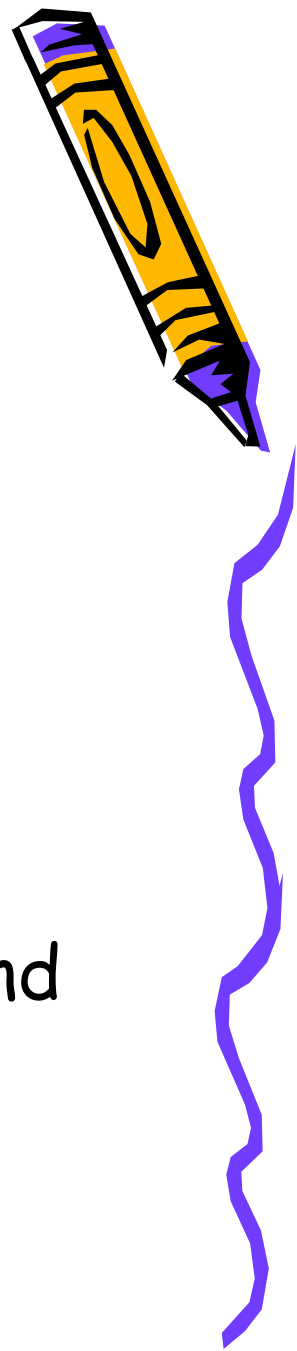


16 year old Female

- trafficked to a brothel
- sold to a man as a wife
- pregnant
- rejected by her family
- irrational awareness of acceptance
- rejected by the community



Sample case...



8 year old male

- run away
- begging on the streets
- trafficked
- irrational understanding of love
- using drugs
- inappropriate understanding of love and acceptance

