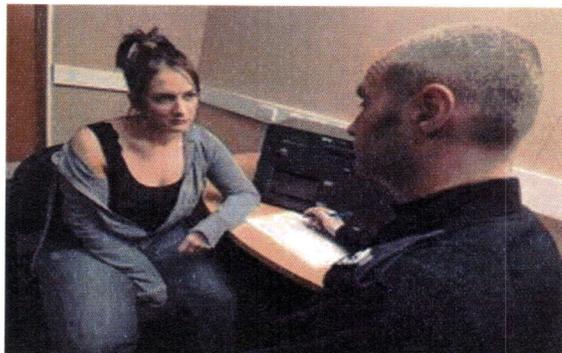


Trauma Informed Victim Interviews (TIVIs) - The “How To’s”

Donna Kelly, Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence
Resource Prosecutor, Utah Prosecution Council
Justin Boardman, Detective, West Valley City Police Department

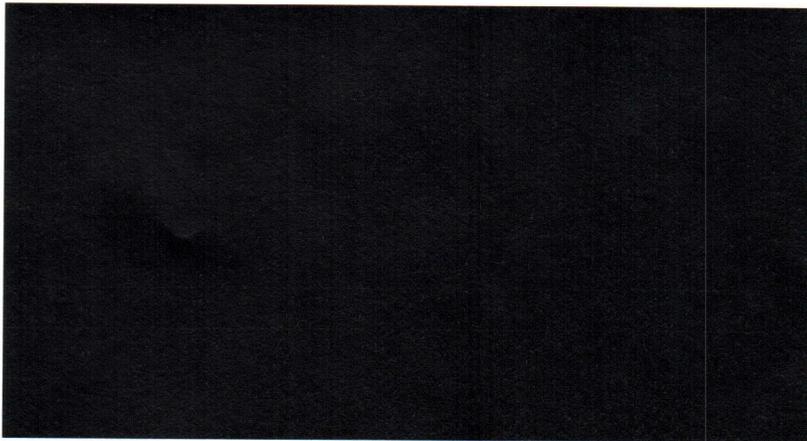
Trauma Informed Interview For Law Enforcement



Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview (FETI)

- ▶ Term “Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview” coined by Russell Strand
- ▶ Three principles of FETI:
 - ▶ 1) Genuine Empathy
 - ▶ “Never treat a victim as a witness to their own crime.”
 - ▶ 2) Facilitate detailed statement by victim
 - ▶ “Help me understand what you are able to tell me about your experience.”
 - ▶ 3) Shut your mouth, open your ears and listen

Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview (FETI)

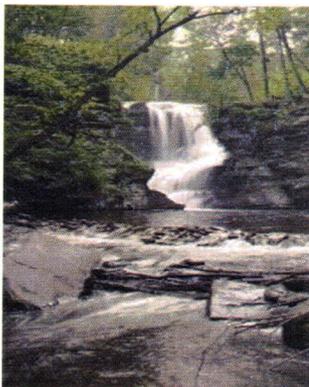


What we've learned from 25 years of Child Forensic Interviews

- ▶ Open-ended questions result in the most accurate and most detailed information about abuse
- ▶ Interviewers should encourage narratives from children - and this is a LEARNED skill for interviewers (it is not intuitive)
- ▶ Narratives are the most effective and powerful way to convey information that will be understood by listeners
- ▶ Allowing a child to choose the details to tell is the least harmful way to interview a child
- ▶ Comfortable settings are more conducive for emotional interviews



Remember those who are Downstream!



We can make victims look less credible by asking questions that call for “I don’t know” and “I don’t remember” answers.

The danger in asking inappropriate questions is the effect on those downstream:

- ▶ The victim
- ▶ Prosecutors
- ▶ Judges
- ▶ Juries



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Pre-Interview Preparation

- ▶ Gather Information
- ▶ Assess Victim Readiness
- ▶ Maintain calm, professional demeanor without expressing opinions

Set the Stage

- ▶ Choose time and place
- ▶ Determine how to record interview
- ▶ Decide who should be present



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- ▶ Explain the Rules for the Interview
 - ▶ “I am here to gather as much information as you are able to give me about your experience.”
 - ▶ “Always tell the truth.”
 - ▶ “Don’t guess.”
 - ▶ “Tell me everything. Sometimes victims don’t tell everything because they are embarrassed or feel like they have done something wrong or feel guilty. It’s important to tell me everything. Don’t leave anything out.”
 - ▶ “What you say is important, so we are taping this interview (OR: I am writing down what you say).”
 - ▶ “I will ask mostly short questions, so you should be doing most of the talking today.”



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- ▶ Explain the Rules for the Interview
 - ▶ “Tell me all about what happened - as much as possible of what you remember. Then, I’ll ask you some follow up questions about things I need to know more about.”



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- ▶ Attend to victim’s immediate priorities
 - ▶ “Is there anything we need to do before we start the interview?”
 - ▶ “This may take ___ minutes/hours. Is that OK?”
 - ▶ “Do you have any questions before we start?”



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Crime Scenario Narrative

- ▶ Similar to child forensic interview protocols
- ▶ Ask open ended questions to maximize narratives
- ▶ Ask follow up questions in “headline” style
- ▶ Ask questions focused on threat, emotions, senses
- ▶ Do not interrupt or cut off victim
- ▶ Do not ask questions in “rapid fire” style
- ▶ Use silence as an interviewing tool
- ▶ Follow up with specifics AFTER narrative is given
- ▶ If hard questions are necessary, explain WHY you’re asking



Trauma Informed Interview For Law Enforcement

Closure

- ▶ How you end interview may determine whether the victim stays involved in the system
- ▶ Minutes of skillful support from any sensitive person immediately after a crime can be worth more than hundreds of hours of professional support later
- ▶ **REMEMBER:** We only prosecute a small percentage of our cases, but we have an impact on the victim in 100 per cent of our cases





Trauma Informed Interview For Law Enforcement

Closure

- ▶ Express thanks for what victim has done so far
- ▶ Encourage victim to focus on their life and on healing
- ▶ Explain next steps in process, but NEVER make promises about outcomes
- ▶ Give contact info and rules
- ▶ Connect with victim advocate
- ▶ Give positive messages of hope

How NOT to do a Victim Interview

- ▶ Jo'D 1

How to do an Effective Trauma Informed Victim Interview

- ▶ Jo'D 2

We have an impact on victims in 100 per cent of our cases.

- ▶ *"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*
- ▶ -Maya Angelou





“You can do it.”