



**203 Remote:  
Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse  
Cases**

**INSTRUCTOR GUIDE**

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\* All names and identities used in this module are fictitious. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

## 203 Remote: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse Cases

### Agenda for Two-Day Workshop on 203 Remote: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse Cases

#### Day One

Estimated Time	Content	Page
45 minutes	<b>Section I:</b> Introduction	1
1 hour, 30 minutes	<b>Section II:</b> Overview of Investigative Interviewing	8
1 hour, 30 minutes	<b>Section III:</b> Preparation Stage of the Child Interview	15
1 hour, 30 minutes	<b>Section IV:</b> Beginning and Introductions Stage of the Child Interview	26
1 hour, 15 minutes (complete 45 minutes in Day 1)	<b>Section V:</b> Questioning and Clarifying (Work) Stage of the Child Interview (continued to Day 2)	34

## Day Two

<b>Estimated Time</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
1 hour, 15 minutes (complete remaining 30 minutes)	<b>Section V:</b> Questioning and Clarifying (Work) Stage of the Child Interview (continued from Day 1)	38
45 minutes	<b>Section VI:</b> Endings and Transitions Stage of the Child Interview	43
50 minutes	<b>Section VII:</b> Interviewing the Non-Offending Parent	48
1 hour	<b>Section VIII:</b> Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator	56
50 minutes	<b>Section IX:</b> Interviewing Collateral Contacts	68
50 minutes	<b>Section X:</b> Making Decisions in Case Planning	74
1 hour	<b>Section XI:</b> Practice Interviewing	83
15 minutes	<b>Section XII:</b> Closing and Evaluations	87



# 203 Remote: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse Cases

## Section I: Introduction

### Estimated Length of Time

45 minutes

#### Key Concepts:

- ✓ Assisting child welfare professionals to tune into their own thoughts and feelings is a necessary step of self-discovery before they can effectively interview people surrounding sexual abuse.

#### Method of Presentation:

Lecture, individual activity, script, large group discussion

#### Materials Needed:

- ✓ Zoom Room Flow Chart
- ✓ Managing Zoom Breakout Rooms: Instructor Guide
- ✓ Instructor-Prepared Word Document: What's In It For Children and Families?
- ✓ Instructor-Prepared Word Document: Parking Lot
- ✓ One blank Word Document
- ✓ Electronic device; 1 per instructor/participant
- ✓ **Instructor Resource #1: Sexual Abuse in Nine North American Cultures: Treatment and Prevention**
- ✓ **Appendix #1: Word Document (Excerpt from How I Learned to Drive) – two copies**
- ✓ **Handout #1 (203 Remote: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse Cases PowerPoint Presentation)**
- ✓ **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #1 (203 Remote: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #2 (Child Sexual Abuse Certification Series)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #3 (Learning Objectives)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #4 (Agenda on Day One)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #5 (“How I Learned to Drive”)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slides #6-8 (Complexity of Child Sexual Abuse)**

#### Outline of Presentation:

- Introductions
- Review of learning objectives and agenda
- Difficulty of the subject matter
- Complexity of child sexual abuse investigations

## Section I: Introduction

**Instructor Note:** Title one Word Document "What's In It For Children and Families?" (WIIFCF) and the other "Parking Lot." Record participants' answers to the questions below on the appropriate Word Document and save them for review later on a shared screen. Review the WIIFCF list at the end of each day.

Make reference to the **Instructor Resource #1: Sexual Abuse in Nine North American Cultures: Treatment and Prevention** book by Lisa Fontes on the shared screen via Word Document. This will be referred to later in the training day.

**\*Prior to participants joining the session, set up the Zoom breakout rooms, following the Zoom Room Flow Chart, set up all instructor-prepared Word Documents needed for the session; track attendance of participants for entry into Bridge.**

### **Step 1: (20 minutes) Getting to Know Each Other**

**Do:** Greet participants as they join the session and have participants rename themselves on their Zoom screen with their names and county. Confirm that they can hear you and see the shared screen. Troubleshoot any technical difficulties. Conduct a final sound and screen sharing check before beginning the session. Ask participants to mute their microphone for time being.

**Do:** Take attendance, making sure to get a verbal confirmation from participants that they are present. Review the 15-minute rule. Ask participants to notify you right away if they are late joining the session after any of the breaks or if for any reason, they need to leave the session today or tomorrow.

**Facilitator Note:** It is important to make note of attendance at the beginning of both days of this session and after each break. At the end of Day 1 and Day 2 of this module, attendance must be submitted to CWRC in Bridge.

**Do:** Ask participants to have something ready to jot down a few important notes that they will need to refer to throughout the session. Provide the Workshop ID and ask participants to write it down.

\*Use the format below for participants to introduce themselves. Have an **Instructor-prepared Word Document** on the shared screen to document the below information:

Agency & Unit	Number of years' experience
Experience working with children or families who have experienced sexual abuse (Yes or No)	One concept or skill they wish to gain from this training

Introduce yourself and briefly describe your professional experience with child sexual abuse cases. Ask participants to introduce themselves to the group and include information about where they are from, their job, and what they hope to gain by attending this workshop. While participants describe what they wish to learn, delineate which topics will be covered in this workshop, recording them on the **“What’s In It for Children and Families?” Instructor-Prepared Word Document** and placing topics not to be covered on the **Parking Lot Instructor-Prepared Word Document**. Provide an explanation regarding why certain topics are not to be covered. Refer participants to resources to find information (including their supervisors/agency). Display **PowerPoint Slide #2 (Remote Child Abuse Certification Series)** on shared screen and inform participants about the other workshops offered in the Remote Child Sexual Abuse Certification Series:

- **Overview of Child Sexual Abuse** (Pre-requisite to all other courses in the series)  
In preparation for the more specialized concepts in the Remote *Child Sexual Abuse Certificate Series*, this two-day overview offers fundamental information necessary for working with children, youth, and families at various stages of the child welfare casework process facing sexual abuse issues. Participants will discuss beliefs/values and possible effects on casework efforts, child welfare law, individual and familial dynamics (including signs, characteristics, patterns, and cycles of sexual abuse), as well as how this information relates to collaborative service planning and delivery.
- **Sexuality of Children: Healthy Sexual Behaviors and Behaviors Which Cause Concern**  
In this workshop, participants will learn healthy development of children's sexual knowledge and behavior as well as the family's role in the development of healthy sexuality. It will focus on how sexual abuse affects healthy sexual development and how to identify sexually reactive behavior, extensive mutual sexual behavior, and perpetrating behavior in children. Also, management techniques for children who exhibit sexually reactive behavior will be presented.
- **Working with Juveniles Who Sexually Offend**  
This workshop serves as an overview for child welfare professionals on the topic of working with juveniles who sexually offend. As child welfare professionals come into contact with juveniles who sexually act out and/or offend, it is imperative that they be able to identify and connect issues related to assessment and treatment issues throughout the case planning process. In this workshop, best practices in the areas of collaboration, service planning, permanency planning, and placement will be related to sex offense specific assessment and treatment.
- **Family Reunification and Case Closure in Child Sexual Abuse**  
The process of reunification in child welfare cases in which sexual abuse has occurred requires the child welfare professional to take special measures within the reunification process. After attending this workshop, participants will

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understand the safety issues present during the reunification process, the key ingredients needed in a safety plan, the critical treatment milestones that the victim, perpetrator, and family must meet prior to reunification, and the process that should be used when reunifying a family and closing a case.

Show “WIIFCF” and “Parking Lot” Instructor-Prepared Word Documents on the shared screen. Review the training room rules:

- Be on time
- Adhere to the 15-minute rule
- Be aware of the training schedule – 9:00 to 4:00 with breaks
- Announce your presence by unmuting and turning on your camera
- Focus on learning:
  - No cell phones (calling or texting)
  - Only contact office in emergencies
  - No sidebar chatting via chat feature in Zoom

In addition, the instructor should note these guidelines for effective learning:

- Provide constructive and motivational feedback
- Demonstrate respect for others
- Engage in risk-taking
- Remember: Practice Makes Permanent

Distribute **Handout #1 (PowerPoint Presentation)** via chat feature in Zoom and display **PowerPoint Slide #3 (Learning Objectives)** on the shared screen, and review. Advise participants that **Handout #2 (Idea Catcher)** will be used at the end of this workshop when trainees develop action plans and encourage them to jot down notes on it throughout the training.

Display **PowerPoint Slide #4 (Agenda on Day One)** on the shared screen and review Day 1 of the training, reminding participants of the difficult nature of the topic, and ask if there are any questions or comments.

### **Step 2: (10 minutes)** **Team Formation**

Use criteria #1 **OR** #2 listed below to form teams that are diverse based on experience with child abuse/child sexual abuse investigations. Read the criteria listed beside each bullet point below, one bullet point at a time. Ask participants, to type their name in the Zoom chat after the criteria that matches their experience:

1. How long they have been doing child abuse investigations:
  - 0-6 months,
  - 6 months- 1 year,
  - 1-2 years,
  - 2-5 years,
  - more than 5 years

2. How many sexual abuse investigations they have completed:

- less than 5,
- 5-25,
- 26-50,
- 51-100,
- more than 100

**Facilitator Note:** The ideal team size is 4 members. You must have at least two teams. As participants say their name, list the names in order on the shared screen for participants to see. Starting with the first participant who shared their name, count off by the total number of teams that will result in teams of an appropriate size. List the team number beside each participant's name to reference throughout the session as needed.

- If there are 8 participants or fewer, count off by 2.
- If there are between 9 and 12 participants, count off by 3.
- If there are 13 or more participants, count off by the number of teams that will result in teams of an appropriate size.

**Say:** Ones, you are a team. Twos, you are a team... (etc.)

**Do:** Advise participants that the group they are in will be their assigned group for duration of the two-day training.

**Do:** Explain how teams will work together via Zoom on team activities throughout this module. Prior to team activities, you will review the instructions with the large group, and then provide guidance on how to enter your team's breakout room in Zoom.

### **Step 3: (15 minutes)**

#### **Tuning In**

Ask participants to share some of their initial feelings when observing or conducting a sexual abuse interview. Record these on a **Word Document** for use with a later activity.

Remind participants that, as described during the *Remote Overview of Child Sexual Abuse*, dealing with sexual abuse is difficult; however, our mission as child welfare professionals demands that we face the issues head-on so they can help children, families, and others identify and overcome sexual abuse and its effects. Advise participants that the excerpts they are about to hear may evoke some of the same feelings they just listed and that participants can feel free to mute themselves and turn off their camera if they prefer.

In preparation for the following activity, ask for a volunteer to help read the part of Uncle Peck and provide the volunteer with a copy of **Appendix #1 via shared screen (Excerpt from *How I Learned to Drive*)**.

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Before beginning the reading, inform participants that the excerpts are taken from *How I Learned to Drive*, a play by Paula Vogel. In this play she describes the experiences of a young girl who is sexually abused by her uncle, beginning at age 11, while he was teaching her how to drive. Display **PowerPoint Slide #5 (How I Learned to Drive)** on shared screen. Encourage participants to close their eyes while they listen. The following excerpt occurs when the girl, Lil Bit, is 17 and they are alone in the car.

**Instructor Note:** Allow at least 3-5 seconds of silence before beginning the large group discussion.

### Discussion:

- What emotions does this evoke? Answers might include:
  - Fear
  - Helplessness
  - Anger
  - Disgust
  - Sadness
- What physical sensations did you feel? Answers might include:
  - Tightening of stomach muscles
  - Clenching of fists or jaw
  - Nausea

**Instructor Note:** Relate these emotional and physical responses to reactions child welfare professionals may have during the course of the investigation as well as to reactions of the subjects of the report (child, parents, and alleged perpetrator), household members, and collateral contacts.

Present the next two discussion questions to the group:

- What typical elements of sexual abuse does this scene depict? Answers might include:
  - Secrecy
  - Cognitive distortions of the perpetrator
  - Blaming the victim
- How can knowing this help during sexual abuse investigations? Answers might include:
  - Being alert to possible cognitive distortions
  - Uncertainty of child victim
  - Difficulty of disclosure/reluctance to talk about the incident(s)
  - Feelings of guilt and shame in the victim

**Instructor Note:** Allow participants to talk with each other in their breakout rooms for 2-3 minutes. Note how difficult it may be to identify within ourselves that sexual abuse information can be overwhelming, even if we do not know the victim. Relate that the need to take a break from emotionally laden discussions may arise during interviews with children, parents, and other professionals. When participants finish their

discussion, continue with the following information, tying it into participants' WIIFCF comments if possible.

Although much of the rest of the material covered in this curriculum is skill-based and not as emotionally charged, it is important to remember these thoughts and feelings so child welfare professionals can relate to those being interviewed and to maintain the motivation to keep children safe despite any challenges they may face.

Ask participants to offer reasons why investigating sexual abuse may be complex. Prior to displaying **PowerPoint Slides #6-8 (Complexity of Child Sexual Abuse)** on the shared screen, compare the participants' answers to the following challenges. Once the large group has finished answering, display **PowerPoint Slides #6-8** on the shared screen and review any answers not offered by participants. Contribute several case examples of items on the list to further participants' understanding.

Note that, regardless of whether the family is known to the agency or it is a new referral, there may be many challenges throughout the investigative process. This workshop will provide child welfare professionals with some of the tools necessary to overcome those obstacles.

Conclude this segment by giving the participants time to reflect upon the materials and highlight any areas they might want to note for improvement. Ask participants to use **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher)** as a reference to capture key learning points from this section of the training. Ask participants to share what they wrote down.

# **203 Remote: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse Cases**

## **Section II: Overview of Investigative Interviewing**

### **Estimated Length of Time:**

1 hour, 30 minutes

### **Key Concepts:**

- ✓ The process of keeping children safe begins with the initial referral.
- ✓ In order to determine when it is appropriate to intervene with a family, child welfare professionals must be able to carefully assess the safety threats and risks to the identified child and other potential victims in the household.

### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, individual reflection, small group activity, large group discussion, role play activity

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Electronic device; 1 per instructor/participant
- ✓ Two blank Word Documents
- ✓ **Handout #1 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) (revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #3 (Objectives of the Investigation)**
- ✓ **Handout #4 (The Mary Referral)**
- ✓ **Handout # 5 (How a Sexual Abuse Allegation Meets the Safety Threshold)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slides #9-10 (Amended CPSL: Perpetrator Definition)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slides #11-12 (Amended CPSL: Sexual Abuse/Exploitation Definition)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #13 (Scope of Investigation)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #14 (Investigative Goals)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #15 (Activity)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #16 (A Successful Interviewer)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slides #17-18 (Definitions of Interview Types)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #19 (Additional Resources)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #20 (Mary Referral Script)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #21 (Reporting to ChildLine)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #22 (Receipt of Report by a CCYA)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #23 (When a Health Care Provider Makes a Report Involving an Infant)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #24 (Reporting Scenario #1)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #25 (Reporting Scenario #2)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #26 (Definitions of Safety and Risk)**

### **Outline of Presentation:**

- Scope of the investigation
- Types of interviews
- Receiving reports and screening
- Safety concerns

## Section II: Overview of Investigative Interviewing

### Step 1: (25 minutes) Scope of Investigation

Display **PowerPoint Slides #9-10 (Amended CPSL: Perpetrator Definition)** on the shared screen and **PowerPoint Slides #11-#12 (Amended CPSL: Sexual Abuse/Exploitation Definition)** on the shared screen. Briefly review the definitions of perpetrator and sexual abuse/exploitation with participants. Sexual abuse investigation consists of a series of interviews with the identified child, the other children in the family, non-offending parent, household members, the alleged perpetrator, and collateral sources of information. It should also include review of available medical, law enforcement, and school records. Review of any prior reports of child abuse involving the child, sibling/other children in the home, parent, or alleged perpetrator should occur prior to planning the investigation. In addition to gathering information about the abuse, child welfare professionals must assess the safety of and risk to the identified child in order to determine if a safety plan is necessary and what services may be needed by the family.

Inform trainees that, in general, most interviews will collect general and broad information first and become progressively more focused and specific as the interview continues. Display **PowerPoint Slide #13 (Scope of Investigation)** on the shared screen and explain that the funnel is widest at the top, representing general and broad questions, and becomes narrower towards the bottom, representing more focused and specific questions.

Review **PowerPoint Slide #14 (Investigative Goals)** on the shared screen with the participants. Each interview will need to be tailored to the specific child or adult being interviewed. Investigative interviews are intended to:

- Yield information that will enable the agency and coordinating agencies to make decisions regarding pending allegations and
- Evaluate possible safety threats and risk factors for the child

Best practice guidelines indicate that all interviews should be conducted on the same day to prevent intimidation and the possible removal or destruction of evidence. The perpetrator must be prevented from having access to the identified child(ren) during the investigation, however, potential protective actions should be discussed with the child, family, and other key people involved with the family (e.g., extended family, school, or medical personnel) prior to determining specifics of the safety plan.

In summary, it is important to remember key factors related to the objectives of the investigation. Post in the chat and review **Handout #3 (Objectives of the Investigation)**.

Display **PowerPoint Slide #15 (Activity)** on the shared screen. Have each group go into their breakout room. Each group should have a **blank Word Document** and someone to write, ask them to record three important qualities an investigative

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interviewer must possess and what skills they would need to have related to those roles. Allow 2-3 minutes for each group to complete their discussion and to record their answers on their **blank Word Document**. Reconvene the large group and offer their insights. Then display **PowerPoint Slide #16 (A Successful Interviewer)** on the shared screen and review the qualities listed to reinforce concepts offered by the group.

**Instructor Note:** Various professional associations have developed guidelines to assist professionals in conducting sexual abuse interviews. The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the American Psychological Association (APA) are some of the primary resources. They focus on providing a standard way to gather information and draw conclusions through the interview process regarding whether sexual abuse has occurred.

### **Step 2:** (15 minutes) **Types of Interviews**

In discussing the investigative process, it is important to distinguish between therapeutic (clinical/counseling), investigative (child welfare professional), and forensic (CAC/LEO) interviews and the various roles each plays related to child sexual abuse.

#### Activity

Ask participants to individually jot down their ideas of the differences. Give them 10 minutes to complete this and ask participants to share with the large group some of their ideas.

Display **PowerPoint Slides #17-18 (Definitions of Interview Types)** and clarify the slide contents through the information below:

#### **Investigative Interviews**

The investigative interview can be described as a directed conversation between an investigator and a subject in order to gather information about an incident. Kee McFarlane (1986) describes the interview as a “conversation with a purpose.” Sound investigative interviews look not only at how and where to elicit information but also at identifying individuals and resources necessary to assure child safety. It can include concurrent planning for children through the initial screening and interviews during an investigation. Child welfare professionals primarily focus on investigative interviewing, incorporating some principles of forensic interviewing.

#### **Forensic Interviews**

Forensic interviews are much more narrowly defined, requiring specialized training as well as a specific order to the interview process. They are often conducted by law enforcement officials who concentrate on obtaining accurate information which will lead to confirmation or disproving of any evidence related to the prosecution process.

#### **Therapeutic Interviews**

Therapeutic, or clinical, interviews are not necessarily concerned with the details of the abuse but rather the child’s perceptions of events surrounding the sexual abuse and

how the events affected the child. They should occur after the investigation of the abuse by child welfare and/or law enforcement and should not be substituted for the investigative or forensic interview. Typically, these interviews are conducted by mental health professionals or counselors, focusing on how the child has personalized the sexually abusive experience and on helping the child navigate the healing process.

**Instructor Note:** Display **PowerPoint Slide #19 (Additional Resources)**. It is highly recommended that child welfare professionals stay current on literature and research regarding investigative and forensic interviewing since best practice and legal rulings change over time. One resource for accidental v. sexual abuse-related hymenal injury photographs is: *Child Abuse & Neglect: Sexual Abuse* (June 16, 2006) by Angelo P. Giardino, MD, PhD, on the *emedicine* website. The article can be retrieved at <http://www.emedicine.com/ped/topic2649.htm>. Further information regarding forensic interviewing and certification can be obtained through National Association of Certified Child Forensic Interviewers (<http://www.naccfi.com/>) or a similar organization. If desired, record this website information in the Zoom chat for participants.

### **Step 3: (40 minutes)** **Receiving Reports and Screening**

Inform participants that this training will focus on investigative interviewing. Specifically, they will now turn their attention to receiving potential reports of abuse. Ask participants for input regarding their own county's procedures for screening and intake. In summary, note that, while various counties may have different procedures, certain information will need to be gathered and specific decisions made during initial contacts.

Display **PowerPoint Slide #20 (Mary Referral Script)** on the shared screen. Distribute **Handout #4 (The Mary Referral)** via Zoom chat and ask participants to complete the handout with those in their breakout groups, as if they were a screener for their agency. Inform them that they will have 10 minutes in which to complete the handout and to decide if they would accept the referral for investigation or not. (Open breakout rooms and allow participants to join their group)

Reconvene the large group and have participants to call out answers they recorded on their **Handout #4 (The Mary Referral)** for what is known and what still needs to be explored, including what questions they would ask in order to obtain the "Needed Information." Some of the needed information may include:

- When they saw the child
- The current location of the child
- The immediate safety of the child
- Any assistance the referral source can provide in assuring the current safety of or future risk to the child
- Correct contact information
- Willingness and availability of referral source to be re-contacted
- Information on extended family members or significant others who can assist in safety planning for the child

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- Any other information about the child or family (child/family's schedule, special needs, language barriers, risk of violence, drug and alcohol involvement)

Display **PowerPoint Slide #21 (Reporting to ChildLine)** on the shared screen. Explain to participants that mandated reporters are required to report directly and immediately to ChildLine when they have a reasonable cause to suspect a child is victim of abuse. The CPSL was amended to require staff members of institutions to report directly to ChildLine rather than to a person in charge of the institution. Mandated reporters can file an electronic report of suspected child abuse online. These reports can be made through the Child Welfare Portal.

Display **PowerPoint Slide #22 (Receipt of Reports by a CCYA)** on the shared screen. Explain to participants that when a report is made directly to a CCYA and not ChildLine, after ensuring the safety of the child and any other child in the child's home, the CCYA must immediately notify the department of the report. If the report was given over the phone, the CCYA must attempt to collect as much of the information listed in the "contents of report" as possible and submit information to the department within 48 hours by written report or by electronic technologies (23 Pa. C.S. §6334. Disposition of complaints received & 23 Pa. C.S. §6313. Reporting procedure).

Display **PowerPoint #23 (When a Health Care Provider Makes a Report Involving an Infant)** on the shared screen. Explain to participants that when a health care provider makes a report involving an infant to a county agency, the law requires the agency to take the following actions:

- Ensure the safety of the child immediately
- See the child within 48 hours of receipt of the report
- Contact the parents of the child within 24 hours of receipt of the report
- Provide necessary services for the child (23 Pa. C.S. §6386. Mandatory reporting of children under one year of age)

The amended CPSL also states that "medical summaries or reports of the photographs, X-rays and relevant medical tests taken shall be sent to the county agency at the time the written report is sent or within 48 hours after a report is made by electronic technologies or as soon thereafter as possible (§6314. Photographs, medical tests and X-rays of child subject to report).

Ask one person from each group to share whether the information provided would result in a case being screened out in their county (e.g., no caretaker relationship, sexual experimentation among peers) with possible services with another social service agency or if the referral should be accepted for investigation. Request that the group spokesperson include the rationale for their decision.

Do they have enough information to know if the incident happened yesterday or several months ago? Remind participants it is important to determine if the referral source has completed or facilitated a medical examination, obtained photographs, and made contact with any family members.

Remind participants that, according to §6311(b)(2) of the CPSL, the child does not have to “come before” the mandated reporter. Display **PowerPoint Slides #24-#25 (Reporting Scenario #1 - #2)** on the shared screen. Ask a volunteer to read each scenario and facilitate a discussion about the questions on each slide. You may also want to ask the moderator to prepare a **Word Document** to show on the shared screen and type notes from the discussion on the **Word Document/whiteboard**. See suggested answers below:

- **PPT Slide #24:** In this situation, Andrea has a reasonable cause to suspect that Bryan is a victim of sexual abuse. Andrea is required by law to report.
  - A mandated reporter must report suspected child abuse in certain situations when a person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter than an identifiable child is the victim of abuse
  - The child victim does not have to be under the care, supervision, or guidance of the mandated reporter for the mandated reporter to be required to report suspected abuse.
- **PPT Slide #25:** Mandated reporters who work at institutions, schools, facilities, or agencies must report *immediately and directly* to ChildLine. As a child welfare professional, and a mandated reporter, Glenn needs to inform Mr. Kelley of his new responsibilities as a mandated reporter.

Ask what services they would partner with during an investigation. Remind participants that the 2014 amendments to the CPSL requires the creation of a multidisciplinary investigative teams which will “be used to coordinate child abuse investigations between county agencies and law enforcement. The county agency and the district attorney shall develop a protocol for the convening of multidisciplinary investigative teams for any case of child abuse by a perpetrator involving crimes against children” (§6365[c]). If appropriate, the caller should also be provided with information regarding supportive services, such as a victim witness association, local rape crisis center, medical facilities, and counseling resources.

If a report of suspected sexual abuse is received in which an alleged perpetrator does not meet the definition of perpetrator in §6303 of amended CPSL (2014), the child welfare professional is required to refer the case to the appropriate law enforcement department for criminal investigation, per §6368(j) of the amended CPSL (2014), through use of a CY-104 (Report to Law Enforcement Officials).

Another circumstance might be a case in which the child abuse is reported after the child is over the age of 23. Changes were made to the statute of limitations for child abuse reporting, which extends the length of time under which district attorneys may pursue criminal prosecution to the alleged victim’s 50<sup>th</sup> birthday (42 Pa. C.S. A. §5552).

Other special instances might include if it is a child in a resource parent home/substitute care and the resource parent/substitute caregiver or a household member is the alleged perpetrator. The CPSL explains that if the suspected abuse has been committed by the CCYA or any of its agents or employees, the department will assume the role of the agency with regard to the investigation and directly refer the child for services (23 Pa. C.S. §6362[b]).

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### Step 4: (10 minutes) Safety Concerns

Once the referral is received by the screener or intake, certain decisions need to be made, including those related to safety threats and risk factors. Remind participants of the difference between safety and risk by displaying **PowerPoint Slide #26 (Definitions of Safety and Risk)** on the shared screen. As much as possible, key players (e.g., extended family/support system, school, law enforcement) should be involved in developing the initial plan which must clearly delineate an ongoing means of assessment, communication, and plan revision. Note that safety assessments provide child welfare professionals with a structure and filter for the information they gather.

Remind participants that, if sexual abuse has occurred or is suspected, it is considered a safety threat in Pennsylvania according to the Safety Assessment and Management Process (SAMP). Distribute **Handout #5 (How a Sexual Abuse Allegation Meets the Safety Threshold)** via Zoom chat. If there is a potential threat of violence or if the non-offending parent/caregiver does not have the capacity to bar the perpetrator's access to the child, a safety plan must be created and immediate steps implemented to assure the child's safety.

Every child in the home should be evaluated for sexual abuse, not just the children of the same gender or age range, because sex offenders do offend across age ranges and genders. A safety plan should be developed which will contain a decision regarding contact and visitation between the child victim and the alleged perpetrator. Any appropriate documentation should be completed and discussed with the supervisor prior to case closure or screen out.

Conclude this segment by giving the participants time to reflect upon the materials and highlight any areas they might want to note for improvement. Ask participants to use **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) or other document** to capture key learning points from this section of the training. Ask participants to share what they wrote on the handout.

# 203 Remote: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse Cases

## Section III: Preparation Stage for Child Interview

### Estimated Length of Time

1 hour, 30 minutes

### Key Concepts:

- ✓ Pre-planning the investigation is necessary to effective intervention.
- ✓ Child welfare professionals need to understand the interplay of culture and values in order to sensitively handle investigations, responsibly interview and protect children.

### Method of Presentation:

Lecture, individual activity, small group activity, large group discussion, video

### Materials Needed:

- ✓ Electronic device; 1 per instructor/participant
- ✓ Two blank Word Documents
- ✓ **Appendix #2 (Tender Years Act Scramble)**
- ✓ **Trainer Resource #1 (Exclusions to Child Abuse)**
- ✓ **Trainer Resource #2 (OCYF Bulletin 3490-03-01, effective 3/10/03)**
- ✓ **Trainer Resource #3 (Tenders Years Act Scramble Answer)**
- ✓ **Trainer Resource #4 (Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure: Part E: Preservation of Testimony and Evidence)**
- ✓ **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) (Revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #6 (Information Gathering)**
- ✓ **Handout #7 (First Impressions)**
- ✓ **Handout #8 (Addressing Diversity and Cultural Differences)**
- ✓ **Handout #9 (Guidelines for Working with the Amish Community)**
- ✓ **Handout #10 (Use of Translators)**
- ✓ **Handout #11 (More About Mary)**
- ✓ **Handout #12 (OCYF Bulletin: PA Supreme Court Decision Update)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #27 (Stages of the Interview Process)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #28 (Exclusions to Child Abuse)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #29 (Definition of Culture)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #30 (Sequencing of Interviews)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #31 (Location of Interviews)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #32 (Electronic Recording)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #33 (Advantages of Electronic Recording)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #34 (Tender Years Act Scramble Instructions)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #35 (Interviewing Tools)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #36 (Family Tree for the Doe-Davis Family)**
- ✓ **Video Clip #1 (Use of Body Drawings) (2 minutes, 57 seconds):**
  - Note: all videos in this course can be accessed from this page:  
<http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/sexualabuseseriesvideos.htm>
  - Video Clip #1 can be directly accessed here:  
[http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip\\_1.mp4](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip_1.mp4)

## **203 Remote: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse Cases**

### **Outline of Presentation:**

- Stages of the interview
- Cultural factors
- Logistics of the interview
- Equipment and interview tools

## **Section III: Preparation Stage of the Child Interview**

### **Step 1: (5 minutes)**

#### **Stages of the Interview**

Understanding the purpose and intended outcomes of interviews can assist workers in remaining committed to using best practice throughout the process. Looking at the interview as having steps or phases will help the child welfare professional cover all of the material and will help the child know what to expect. The interview with the child is to be conducted in an age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate manner. Remind participants that every stage should be used for each interview with the referral source, child, siblings, non-offending parent, alleged perpetrator, and collateral contacts.

Display **PowerPoint Slide #27 (Stages of the Interview Process)** on the shared screen and review the 4 stages. Note that the first stage involves the preparation that the child welfare professional must consider and implement prior to the interview, beginning with development of a plan. Since a vast amount of information must be gathered in a way that still engages the family, it is important to plan the interviews prior to speaking with the child or other parties. Distribute **Handout #6 (Information Gathering)** via Zoom chat and encourage participants to review it as part of their preparation for interviews in the field. The first step in preparation is considering culture.

### **Step 2: (5 minutes)**

#### **Exclusions to Child Abuse**

Display **PowerPoint Slide #28 (Exclusions to Child Abuse)** on the shared screen. Explain to participants that there are certain exclusions to child abuse that may apply in any given case. Briefly review the categories on the slide. Ask participants if they are able to provide examples of these exclusions. **Trainer Resource #1 (Exclusions to Child Abuse)** provides the full definitions to help the trainer facilitate the discussion.

### **Step 3: (10 minutes)**

#### **Cultural Values Related to Sexual Abuse**

Distribute **Handout #7 (First Impressions)** via Zoom chat. Give participants a few minutes to study the handout and then ask them to share their first impressions of this image. Do they see gray dots in the white spaces? Are the gray dots really there? Explain to participants that this is an example of how we often time see things that aren't really there. This can also happen when we see people too. Facilitate a discussion with the following questions:

1. Has anyone ever had a wrong first impression of someone who had a different background or came from another culture?
2. Has someone from a different background or culture ever had the wrong first impression of you? (adapted from "Diversity Activities for Youth and Adults," 2008)

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Advise participants that child welfare professionals need to evaluate the influence of a child's culture on how they see themselves and the world around them. Note that families represent a myriad of religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds as well as varying sexual orientations. Display and review **PowerPoint Slide #29 (Definition of Culture)** on the shared screen.

**Instructor Note:** Although the focus will be on the identified child and sibling in this section, the same principles will apply to the non-offending parent, alleged perpetrator, and collateral contacts. The following description of the funnel should be visualized for participants on a Word Document/whiteboard on shared screen for later reference in Section V.

This can be seen as a funnel in which the overall culture (broader perspective) is drilled down into the family culture (narrowing of funnel), which is affected by the individual's experiences surrounding specific issues (neck of the funnel, producing the individual's cultural perspective (below the neck of the funnel). It is also important to recognize that values, beliefs, and codes of conduct of cultural groups change over time as a child develops.

Solicit answers from participants related to why it is important for child welfare professionals to understand the impact of these factors, emphasizing the following points:

- a) Assess to what degree the individual subscribes to ethnic, religious, or cultural values and codes of conduct common to his/her group
- b) Understand how these may affect an individual's response to sexual abuse
- c) Use that information to sensitively intervene to protect the child
- d) Behave and respond in ways that respect the ethnic, religious, or cultural group

In looking at cultural values of specific groups, it is important to realize that each family may be a member of multiple cultural or ethnic groups and are, therefore, each their own unique blend of values and beliefs. A family's values, beliefs, traditions and codes of conduct may inhibit the child's willingness to disclose and the parent's willingness to report, believe, and protect the child.

### **Step 4: (20 minutes)** **Cultural Awareness and Personal Experience**

Ask participants why it is important to consider cultural perspectives and experiences when identifying child sexual abuse or when providing services to families? Explain to participants that child welfare professionals must consider cultural perspectives and experiences when identifying child sexual abuse or when providing services. A cross-cultural perspective can add clarity and complexity to an investigation.

Explain that in some cultures, there is very little distinction between a “sexual touch” and a “non-sexual” touch. Any touch can be seen as sexual touch. In other cultures, it’s more of a spectrum. That’s why you will see men holding hands in some cultures and not in others. Ask participants to share any experience, personal or through work, that might exemplify the idea that in some cultures sexual/non-sexual touch is on a continuum?

Finally, ask participants what cultural differences could potentially be misinterpreted as sexual abuse (or indicators of sexual abuse)?

Tell the participants that child welfare professionals also need to be aware of how their personal experiences, values, and biases can influence their interpretations of what is happening with a particular child and/or family. Relying upon personal values and bias can undermine the child welfare professional’s credibility and effectiveness.

Distribute **Handout #8 (Addressing Diversity and Cultural Differences)** via Zoom chat. Ask participants to take a few minutes to read the three scenarios and individually answer the question. Once most are finished, ask participants to discuss their response with the large group. Allow about five minutes for discussion. Ask if they considered how much of their own personal experiences, values, and biases influenced their response.

Emphasize that family values will almost always make a difference on sexual abuse-related issues. Note that interactions with certain ethnic, religious, or cultural groups may require additional skills from the child welfare professional.

**Instructor Note:** For more information on diversity and culture, participants may take 307: *Valuing Diversity* through the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center.

Distribute and review **Handout #9 (Guidelines for Working with the Amish Community)** via Zoom chat. Note that the Amish community is both a religious and cultural group. Highlight that both Amish and Mennonite communities are based on orders governed by the elders of the church, who may need to be included in decision-making during the investigative process. It is important to understand that asking the family how the elders should be involved may be a first step in building rapport with the family and may lead to how interview rules (e.g., who would be present during the interview) are established.

### **Step 5: (10 minutes)** **Language Barriers**

Other special considerations may include the family’s use of a language other than English, such as Spanish, Vietnamese, a hearing deficit, deafness, and/or the family’s use of American Sign Language. One such consideration may be language barriers. This could include that the family speaks English but the family’s use of the language or their customs may be unfamiliar, as with the Amish community.

It is important to distinguish between language barriers, physical barriers to communication, and cultural misunderstandings. For example, some Asian cultures may

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consider it polite to agree to whatever the child welfare professional (person in authority) is saying. Determine if the person is responding within a cultural context versus not understanding the language being spoken require different interventions. It is crucial to respond in a culturally sensitive manner and, as needed, to employ the use of a translator.

Distribute **Handout #10 (Use of Translators)** via Zoom chat and review. It is especially important to ask for clarification if one or more of the following conditions are present:

- The interviewee's primary language is not English
- The person comes from a different geographic location
- There is a culture or dialect distinct from that of the interviewer
- The interviewee is hearing impaired
- They have a speech impediment
- There are other verbal factors, such as echolalia (repeating some or part of a prior person's speech)

Note that individuals who cannot communicate with child welfare professionals in their primary language may not be able to understand the child welfare professional's role or purpose, nor be able to accurately convey their needs or circumstances. With children for whom English is a second language (including deaf children who primarily sign), use of inverted word order may require clarification of the sentence meanings and sequence of events. Child welfare professionals should contact translators who are familiar with the culture and utilize their expertise to inform them about the proper way to approach the family, intervene on behalf of the child, and arrange for appropriate services. Translators and other "cultural consultants" can often provide valuable advice and improve effective communication between the child welfare professional and child/family.

Child welfare professionals should seek out a language resource bank, become familiar with its benefits and limitations, and discover the agency's policies regarding use of it. In areas where there are few translators available or many different languages spoken, agencies may sometimes contract with a similar, confidential service through Language Line Services (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week), which uses an 800-number on which to connect. (For further information, call 1-800-528-5888 or go to <https://www.languageline.com>.)

**Instructor Note:** You may wish to put the name of this service and the contact information on a **Word Document/whiteboard** for participants. Note that, if the county does not have an already-established contract, they cannot use the Language Line services. Encourage them to take back the information to their agency so a contract can be established, if it is needed.

Emphasize that it is not imperative that every child welfare professional be an expert in every ethnic, religious, or cultural group. This should not dissuade child welfare professionals from using information and literature available to learn more about the diverse populations and the interwoven fabric of culture. It is important to know where to

turn to gather the information or literature. One valuable source is Sexual Abuse in Nine North American Cultures: Treatment and Prevention, written by Lisa Fontes.

Encourage participants to ask questions during contact with children and families to ensure understanding of the particular child or family's culture in order to assess children and families accurately in light of their own values and beliefs.

### **Step 6:** (10 minutes)

#### **Logistics**

Having looked at the overall structure of the interview and culture of the family, participants will now turn their attention to the stages of the interview, beginning with the Preparation Stage. The primary focus will initially be on interviewing the identified child, siblings, and other children involved in the investigation.

Distribute **Handout #11 (More About Mary)** via Zoom chat. Ask participants to briefly read over the handout, using this to fill in information the screener may have ascertained by further questioning of the referral source, as discussed in Section I. When they are done reading, ask them to offer in the large group what they would do next. Answers might include such things as talking with the teacher, scheduling interviews, or looking at the previous case file. Through clarifying questions to the participants, draw out that the child welfare professional should first take an opportunity to discuss the referral and investigation plan with the supervisor to determine, among other things, the logistics of conducting the interview. Logistics could include:

- Sequencing
- Timing
- Method
- Location

One of the first considerations would be the sequencing of the interviews. Display **PowerPoint Slide #30 (Sequencing of Interviews)** on the shared screen and remind participants that the first interview should always be with the identified child and then with the other children involved, taking into account cultural and practical considerations.

If not offered by participants, note that:

- Separate interviews maximize the integrity of the information obtained
- Siblings must always be interviewed in child sexual abuse cases for corroborating evidence and as potential victims
- Abuse may have happened to both the girls and the boys in the family
- A medical exam should be provided to all siblings of victims with an STD (sexually-transmitted disease), even if the sibling denies sexual abuse conduct interviews with other possible child victims such as neighbors, playmates, members of the same club or sports team, and members of the extended family

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- It can sometimes be helpful to interview a support person or the non-offending parent first in order to gather information such as the child's cognitive level, individual needs, words for body parts, and body functions
- Other contact interviews may need to be conducted later during the investigative process

Relating to when and how the interviews should be conducted:

- Interview children when they are rested and fed
- Nap time, meal times, school schedules, and custody arrangements should be taken into account
- Children with developmental or medical concerns should be individually assessed to determine how they can best be interviewed (e.g., use of language board)
- It may be necessary to interview young children in the presence of a support person, such as a TSS (therapeutic support staff) or interpreter
- Collaborate about who will be in the room during the interview and who will take the lead in the interview and how the interview will be documented
- In medical settings or at Children's Advocacy Centers, interview children fully clothed prior to the physical examination
- Instructions should be provided to any support person prior to the interview regarding containment of their physical/emotional (crying, gasping, rushing to the child) and verbal (contradicting, correcting or suggesting) responses
- Make all possible efforts to increase the comfort of the child
- Focus should be on choosing a time and place that is best for the child

Display **PowerPoint Slide #31 (Location of Interviews)** on the shared screen and reinforce:

- A quiet, neutral and comfortable location with minimal distractions is preferred
  - Away from noisy areas, ringing telephones, vending machines, and outside entrances
  - Safe for everyone involved
- Interview young children in an interview room specifically designed for children, furnished with child-sized furniture
- If possible, use a room fully equipped with audio or videotaping equipment, interview tools, and a two-way mirror or closed circuit television

**Instructor Note:** Professionals should take into consideration how to dress when using rooms with child-sized furniture or where they may need to be seated on the floor.

### Step 7: (15 minutes) Electronic Recording

Documenting the interview is typically defined by the process and procedures of the agency or an investigating law enforcement organization; however, with the growth of technology, many law enforcement agencies and Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) are moving toward videotaping on DVDs or other taping mechanisms in order to

highlight the child's statements, demeanor, and vocabulary. Inform participants that in 2014 the legislature specifically provided funding for the establishment and support of Child Advocacy Centers. Interviewees must be notified that they are being taped and agree to the process, preferably through signing a release. The tape should include a verbal account of the date, time, persons present, and the location of the interview.

Display **PowerPoint Slide #32 (Electronic Recording)** on the shared screen. Explain to participant that in her article, "Documentation and Assessment of Children's Forensic Interview Statements," from the *Widener Law Review*, Amy Russel explains that "interviews of alleged child abuse victims and witnesses are often the primary source of evidence on possible criminal activities involving sexual abuse. Therefore, it is critical that investigative interviews conducted with children are completely and accurately documented to effectively capture the child's statements regarding any abuse allegations, events witnessed, or denials of witnessing or experience traumatic events" (306). Russel goes on to explain that many published forensic interview protocols, interview practice guidelines, and best practice manuals recommend that "documentation of an interview include the child's exact verbal statements, the emotions and behaviors exhibited by the child during the course of the interview, and the questions posed by the interviewer" (306-307). Furthermore, the "behavioral interactions of the interviewer are also important to capture to avoid future challenges that the interviewer manipulated the child's verbal reports through his or her own body language or nonverbal cues during the interview" (Russel, 307).

Display **PowerPoint Slide #33 (Advantages of Electronic Recording)** on the shared screen. Tell them that Russel goes on to explain that "the advantages of electronic recordings are well documented by investigative professionals: they serve as a means to decrease the number of investigative child abuse interviews and to reduce court appearances for children. Repetitive investigative interviews that require children to repeat their experiences of abuse increase trauma that children experience due to their abuse" (311). While the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) acknowledges that not all investigative or legal professionals agree on one single method for documenting investigative interviews, the professional organization advocates for electronic recordings as "the most comprehensive and accurate method of documentation" (Russel, 307).

A critical court decision in Pennsylvania involved a 1994 Supreme Court decision, *A.Y. v. Department of Public Welfare and Allegheny County Children and Youth*. This ruling spurred an **OCYF Bulletin (3490-95-01)** outlining guidelines for hearsay evidence and audio or videotaping. This Bulletin has been updated by **Trainer Resource #2 (OCYF Bulletin 3490-03-01, effective 3/10/03)**.

Distribute via Zoom chat copy of **Appendix #2 (Tenders Years Act Scramble)**. Display **PowerPoint Slide #34 (Tender Years Act Scramble Instructions)** via shared screen and review. Ask participants to work together in their group in their breakout room to come up with the final product. Allow approximately 3-5 minutes for completion and, even if participants are not done, stop the activity. After groups have reconvened in large group, ask each group's spoke person to offer their results and then review the actual statements from **Trainer Resource #3 (Tenders Years Act Scramble Answer)**

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on the shared screen, reinforcing how important collaborative partnerships are to best practice.

Distribute **Handout #12 (OCYF Bulletin: PA Supreme Court Decision Update)** via Zoom chat and highlight the noted changes as a result of the updated Bulletin. Note that another alternative to the child appearing in court, especially with young children, is to request that the judge meet with the child in chambers.

**Instructor Note:** Specific guidelines for testimony by video recording can be found in **Trainer Resource #4 (Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure: Part E: Preservation of Testimony and Evidence)**.

Although there was a United States Supreme Court decision in 2004 (see *Crawford v. Washington*, 124 S. Ct. 1354) regarding changes in admission of certain testimonial statements for criminal proceedings, this was overturned during a Jefferson County case in Pennsylvania. It was ruled that the *Crawford* ruling was not applicable as the statements made by the child were considered “non-testimonial” due to the circumstances of the police interrogation being “to enable police assistance to meet an ongoing emergency” (2007 Pa. Superior Court decision, *PA v. Rickey Lee Allhouse, Jr.*). Testimony by other professionals was also allowed, using the same “primary purpose” litmus test.

### **Step 8:** (15 minutes) **Interviewing Tools**

**Instructor Note:** Have some favorite interviewing tools to display for participants on the Zoom screen during this section and for use with activities in the following section.

Interviewing tools can assist children in communicating information. Ask participants to share what types of tools they use when interviewing. Display **PowerPoint Slide #35 (Interviewing Tools)** on the shared screen and briefly describe the types of tools available:

**Dolls** - There are several uses of dolls however they are primarily used now as demonstration aids, to show what occurred and/or to serve as a body inventory aid. Dolls of many types may also be useful in discovering the child's ability to fasten or undo snaps, buttons, ties, and other items requiring fine motor skills.

**Body Drawings** - Body drawings are also a commonly used interviewing tool. Some of the pre-fabricated drawing sets include drawings or outlines that display unclothed bodies of preschool children, school aged, adolescent, adult, and mature adult individuals. Many sets often include Asian, Hispanic, African-American, and Caucasian ethnic groups. Outline sketches consist of only the eyes on the drawing. The child is asked to fill in the body parts as they go along and name them. As with the dolls, most investigative interviewers use the body part drawing and the purpose of the body part to assist in identifying the child's names for the body parts and their use.

**Other Tools** – Tools used for interviewing children can be simple and easily available items as well. They may include colorforms, crayons and paper, Play-doh or clay, puppets, building blocks or Legos, doll houses/furniture and toy telephones.

Note that many of the tools described might be used primarily with younger children but may be able to be adapted for older children as well. For children able to understand the instruction, the child welfare professional may ask them to draw the layout of the house (what rooms are where) to use as a way to question them about what happens in the various rooms of the house (routinely) versus what happened the day(s) of the incident(s). Another way to bridge to the incident itself is to have them draw what is in the actual room where the alleged abuse occurred, naming each object. This can then lead to important information for assessing the child's developmental levels, veracity of the statements, and potential sources from which evidence can be collected. Have the child sign and date the drawings.

Display one sample tool at a time and ask participants to identify how they would use the tool to assess the child, what would be the appropriate age child with which to use it, and what kind of questions they would ask. Inform participants that they will now be viewing a video portraying the use of the body drawing tool. Ask participants to evaluate what information other than names for body parts were learned during that part of the interview. Play **Video Clip #1 (Use of Body Drawings)**. Have participants share their observations.

Note that information other than what was asked through direct questions was gathered in the interview, such as the child's knowledge of colors and other developmental issues. Further, although very simple tools were used, they were effective and appropriate to the age of the child.

Child welfare professionals may either have a myriad of tools available to them, such as a Children's Advocacy Center. It is important to use whatever tools are available in the space provided and it is recommended that child welfare professionals always carry some tools with them, such as body drawings or paper, pencils, and crayons to help supplement the interview process.

**Instructor Note:** If unfamiliar with genograms, go to <http://www.genopro.com/genogram/> to familiarize themselves with genograms. The website provides a general explanation of genograms, their uses, and the meanings of symbols.

One final tool, used as a way to gain a quick overview of the family situation, is to jot notes down on a genogram. Display **PowerPoint Slide #36 (Family Tree for the Doe-Davis Family)** on the shared screen, highlighting the different components. Reinforce that the genogram can be used while interviewing any child who is able to delineate family relationships (mom, dad, sister, brother, etc.) as a tool in gathering and organizing information. Older children can be asked to draw it themselves to provide explanations of who lives in what household, what relationships various siblings (full, half or step) or "cousins" have within the family, or patterns of behavior (domestic violence, drug and alcohol use, mental health conditions, etc.). Genograms can also be

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used later in interviews with the non-offending parent or collateral contacts to fill in missing information, such as given names, ages, or genders that the child was unable to provide.

**Instructor Note:** For further information regarding genograms, refer participants to *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention, Third Edition*, by Monica McGoldrick, Randy Gerson, and Sylvia Shellenberger (W.W. Norton & Co, Inc., 2008).

Having considered the various aspects of preparation, the child welfare professional is ready to embark on the interview itself.

Conclude this segment by giving the participants time to reflect upon the materials and highlight any areas they might want to note for improvement. Ask participants to use **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) or other document** to capture key learning points from this section of the training. Ask participants to share what they wrote on the handout.

## **203 Remote: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse Cases**

### **Section IV: Beginning and Introductions Stage of the Child Interview**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

1 hour, 30 minutes

#### **Key Concepts:**

- ✓ Setting a strong foundation for the interview will lead to more open discussion/disclosure during later stages of the interview.

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, individual and small group activities, large group discussion and activity, video

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Electronic; 1 per instructor/participant
- ✓ Two blank Word Document
- ✓ Sample interview tools (provided by instructor)
- ✓ **Table Resource #1: Sexual Abuse in Nine North American Cultures: Treatment and Prevention**
- ✓ **Appendix #3 (Beginning and Introductions Stage Components)**
- ✓ **Trainer Resource #5 (Beginning and Introductions Stage Components Order)**
- ✓ **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) (Revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #13 (Structuring Interview Questions)**
- ✓ **Handout #14 (Developmental Issues in Interviewing Children)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #37 (Rules of the Interview)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #38 (Children's Communication Sequencing)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #39 (Activity)**
- ✓ **Video Clip #2 (Introductions) (1 minute, 8 seconds)**
  - [http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip\\_2.mp4](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip_2.mp4)
- ✓ **Video Clip #3 (Building Rapport with Young Children & Older Children) (4 minutes, 25 seconds)**
  - [http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip\\_3.mp4](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip_3.mp4)
- ✓ **Video Clip #4 (Timelines) (2 minutes, 36 seconds)**
  - [http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip\\_4.mp4](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip_4.mp4)

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

- Components of the Beginning and Introductions Stage
- Child communication
- Use of interviewing tools
- Elaborating skills

## Section IV: Beginning and Introductions Stage

### Step 1: (35 minutes)

#### Components of the Beginning and Introductions Stage

**Instructor Note:** The following activity will use the cards from **Appendix #3 (Beginning and Introductions Stage Components)**. Participants should have blank paper/Word document to take notes on for this activity. Bring in samples of interviewing tools for use with a demonstration/activity in **Step 3 (Children's Communication)**.

Note that, having prepared for the interview and, as part of that preparation, looked at cultural factors surrounding the particular child(ren) and family, child welfare professionals will then initiate contact with the child. Ask the group to brainstorm the components of this stage. Components (as indicated on **Trainer Resource #5, Beginning and Introductions Stage Components Order**) should include:

- Introductions and Purpose
- Rapport Building
- Establishment of Interview Rules
- Assessment of the Child
- Bridge to Inappropriate Sexual Behavior

Create five groups (if participants are not already arranged in 5 groups). Using **Appendix #3 (Beginning & Introductions Stage Components)** via shared screen, assign each group a component and remind them to have blank paper. Distribute **Handout #13 (Structuring Interview Questions)** via Zoom chat and ask participants to use the information from the handout and related to their component to prepare a short presentation for the larger group. Advise them that each group should review the information given, review the resources related to their component, if appropriate, and record some case examples and/or notes for the presentation. Each group should then decide on what and how they will present. Allow groups 15 minutes to prepare. Send groups to breakout rooms. Enter breakout rooms to answer any questions the groups may have about the presentation.

**Instructor Note:** It is preferred that participants work in the same teams that were formed at the beginning of the training session. If you do not have 5 teams, you may wish to assign each team more than one component from **Appendix #3** OR you may wish to assign each team one component and work on the remaining components as a large group.

**Instructor Note:** While the groups are working, prepare Word Documents labeled with the following words: "Vagina," "Penis," "Breasts," "Buttocks," "Testicles," "Ejaculation/Sperm" for use in a later activity.

When groups return from breakout room, ask each group to present, in the order listed below. Hold each group's presentation to no more than 2-3 minutes per component from

Appendix #3, allowing time following the presentation for other participants to make comments or ask questions. As each group presents, summarize the section using the following tools:

- Introductions and Purpose: **Video Clip #2 (Introductions)**
- Rapport Building: **Video Clip #3 (Building Rapport with Young Children & Older Children)**
- Establishment of Interview Rules: **PowerPoint Slide #37(Rules of the Interview)**

Once completed, remind participants that elements of the first two components were presented in previous trainings relating to interactional skills. Finally provide the following summary for the first three components:

The child welfare professional begins the interview process, introducing themself to the interviewee, revealing the purpose or reason for the interview, building rapport, and setting the stage for obtaining specific information about the allegation during this stage of the interview. The child welfare professional should encourage the gradual movement from more general information to more sensitive information. This stage may last only a few minutes or may take quite a while. It is important that child welfare professionals take time to build rapport and gain accurate information during this part of the interview and not rush through it.

The goal is to lay a foundation of knowledge, gain insight into the interviewee's basic level of functioning, and learn about routine, daily events in the child/family's lives. This phase may include questions related to a child's understanding of or words for time (today, yesterday, tomorrow v. "mañana," meaning later or tomorrow); knowledge of numbers, letters, and colors; household rules and consequences; the child's routine/schedule; titles/names for household members; relationships with others; and other basic information. Note that rapport building will look different depending on the age of the child.

### **Step 2: (20 minutes)** **Assessment of the Child**

Having covered the first three components of the Beginning and Introductions Stage, participants should turn their attention to the fourth component. Ask the fourth group to present on Assessment of the Child (summary resources contained in curriculum below).

Seeing children as their own cultural group, with age being viewed as an aspect of culture, allows child welfare professionals to determine what skills they will need to work with this particular group. As with any interview, the child welfare professional will want to begin the interview in a culturally-sensitive way. Child welfare professionals may start the interview by shaking hands and making eye contact but, for some people, these behaviors actually reduce rapport and trust. Being aware of the impact of one's actions will assist the interviewer understand the language and general behavior of the child in order to get "baseline" information regarding their verbal and non-verbal communication

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patterns. The child welfare professional needs to listen to the words and the meaning behind the words.

Highlight some key issues in **Handout #14 (Developmental Issues in Interviewing Children)**, shared via Zoom chat, and encourage participants to use the handout for self-study at a later time. Note that some of the groundwork for evaluating this may have been covered while doing rapport-building.

Part of establishing the baseline may include how the child fixes times and dates for certain events. The child's use of time frames is often one of the most vital pieces of information secured during an investigative interview. Show **Video Clip #4 (Timelines)** and ask participants to describe how using various identifiers to establish timelines could influence interviews with other people (e.g., developmentally delayed adult, person who could not see a clock but knew it was before or after a particular event, etc.). Reinforce their observations and note that perception of time is influenced not only by a child's age and developmental level but also by their culture.

Reinforce to participants that information is often not provided as it relates to chronological order. Sequencing, or identifying the order of events, is also crucial to understanding what occurred. As with many other facets of interviewing, sequencing is influenced by a child's culture. They may tell stories in either a sequential or contextual way, with most small children telling stories conceptually.

Display **PowerPoint Slide #38 (Children's Communication Sequencing)** on the shared screen and ask for volunteers from among the participants to read it aloud to the larger group. Ask participants to identify how the two accounts differ. If not captured by participants, share the following:

In the first story the speaker concentrates on telling the order of events from a time perspective. The speaker clarifies the causal connection between being told of the reward for doing a chore, choosing to do the chore, doing the chore, and receiving the reward. There is no mention of feelings.

In the second story, the speaker assumes that you will understand the relationship between doing the chores and receiving the ribbons. This child concentrates on explaining her feelings about the ribbons, her mother's view of her in the ribbons, and the importance of everyone in the family contributing to the well-being of the family.

Allow the child to initially tell their story in the way that is important to them, leaving clarification and specific details for later stages of the interview. In order to do this, child welfare professionals must master the elaborating skill of containment, or containing one's own responses. It is important because it "helps the client tell their own story" and keeps the worker from attempting to "help" before the whole story is told (Shulman, 2006, p. 126). Using this method helps child welfare professionals gain the child's respect, maximize the amount of information gained, and avoid leading questions.

Non-verbal communication may include voluntary movements (such as drumming their fingers, kicking their feet, standing, or pacing), involuntary physiological responses (such as tics, narrowing of the pupils, rate of breathing, heart rate, perspiration), and other body language, such as tone, rate of speech, facial expressions, and body position. Watching and documenting these activities can assist the child welfare worker in assessing not only the child's baseline behavior, but also anything that might represent an unusual response for the child. Note that the same principles apply to interviewing teenagers and adults.

**Step 3: (20 minutes)**  
**Bridge to Inappropriate Behavior**

Inform participants that they now should have established a baseline rapport and understanding of the individual they are interviewing through the first four components of the Beginning and Introductions Stage. In light of that, they are ready to begin the transition to the work stage of the interview. In child sexual abuse cases, this can be done through the Bridge to Inappropriate Sexual Behavior stage.

Have the fifth group make their presentation. Note that, as previously discussed, using tools such as body drawings, dolls, or paper and crayons (child's own drawing) can help elicit information about the layout of the house, household members, and names of body parts. Language that is easily understandable is important to effective communication during an interview, as well as explanations for any unfamiliar or difficult words. Child welfare professionals should also ask the child or family to explain any unfamiliar or seemingly out of context words, as well as any terms that may refer to private body parts or any sexually related terms.

As a way to demonstrate the types of terms they may encounter, show participants the **Instructor-Prepared Word Documents** with the headings with a body part on it. Ask participants to say words children or teens might use for vagina, breasts, buttocks, penis, testicles, or ejaculation/sperm, going around the Zoom room in a counterclockwise fashion until everyone has contributed words to each sheet. Instructor will type on each document and show via shared screen. Allow 10 minutes for participants to share their words. If participants were unable to come up with any slang terms, note that some examples might be:

- Vagina -- butterfly, box, peach, cooter, va-j-j, pocketbook, kitty
- Breasts -- nips, pillows of life, the girls, knockers, coconuts
- Buttocks -- bootie, hiney, tushie, bum, ba-donk-a-donk
- Penis -- turd cutter, lollipop, tube steak, wee-wee, tallywhacker, one-eyed willie, winker, wiener, birdie, pole, pee-pee, ding-dong, schlong, popsicle, snake, peter, twig and berries
- Testicles -- the boys, balls
- Ejaculation/sperm -- skeet, milkshake, jizz

Ask participants to clarify any terms unfamiliar to the group. Relate this activity to the need to clarify terms, phrases, and words the child uses during the interview which

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describe body parts, sexual acts, or other knowledge that the child would not normally have (e.g., regarding prostitution or pornographic material and how it is disseminated).

Note that while continuing the interview, child welfare professionals should use the child's or family's terms for various body parts, once defined. It is also important that we conduct our conversations and interactions with children with an increased awareness of the cognitive, lingual, and developmental barriers for ourselves as well. For instance, children learn very early to be cooperative with adults. Because of this it is essential to ask follow-up questions, exploring children's responses to abstract concepts such as those about age, size, time, relationships, and distance. Another strategy is to ask the child to repeat back questions the child welfare professional asked to ensure that the child heard and processed the information.

Although interviewing tools can be used at any point during this stage, it is often during the last two components of this stage that interviewing tools are introduced. The tools offer one way to segway into the next stage by exploring names for body parts with a doll or leading into bedtime/bath time rituals through the use of a dollhouse.

If children are having difficulty starting on more difficult subjects, it may be helpful to set the conversation up using a toy telephone or cell phone. The distancing of the child from direct interaction may allow them to explore topics that are taboo. Use of drawings or lists made by the child can add to conversations around discipline, rewards, or punishments, leading into how these areas may affect events or activities surrounding the abuse.

Using one of the interviewing tool samples, select a volunteer from among the participants and assign them a suggested age. Do a brief demonstration of how the tool might be used during the Beginning and Introductions Stage of the interview. This includes what type of activities or questions might be used to assess the child's level of functioning during rapport building and how to bridge to inappropriate sexual behavior.

Reinforce that the interviewer's initial work with a child must convey to the child that the interview will be conducted in a safe and sensitive manner. The child should be granted as much control in the interviewing environment as is realistically possible to lessen the trauma of the interview process.

### **Step 4: (15 minutes) Combining Skills and Knowledge**

Another way to lessen the trauma of the interview process is to use containment skills, especially if the child discloses shocking, bizarre, or violent details. Containment may include some of the skills already mentioned during the discussion regarding use of support people in the interview, such as not physically, emotionally or verbally reacting to a child's statements. It can include low or no affect, such as an approach a law enforcement officer may take, or containing such natural responses as, "It's going to be okay" or hugging the child during particularly difficult moments of the interview. Although use of touch can sometimes be used positively during an interview, it is

especially important with child sexual abuse victims to establish clear and safe boundaries.

A second skill is focused listening which involves being "present" with people during the interview, concentrating on what the child is saying through use of active and reflective listening skills (Shulman, 2006, pp. 128-132). Active listening requires the listener to be open and objective to be aware of what the person is actually saying and not to what the listener thinks they are going to hear. Reflective listening requires the listener to reflect the information back to the person for clarity and confirmation by repeating it for accuracy. For instance, "When you close your eyes and stop talking, you feel scared?" Both these skills are important in allowing the child to pace the interview at a comfortable level and keeping them as the primary focus of the interview.

One of the most difficult skills, which incorporates both containment and focused listening skills, is reaching inside silences. The first part of the skill is to be comfortable with allowing the silence. The ability to let the child tell their story at their own pace, allowing for silence when they need it and then knowing when to ask a question to draw out what the child may be thinking or feeling requires a great deal of skill and practice. Observing others who use these skills during an interview is one way of learning how to develop elaborating skills.

If comfortable doing so, select a volunteer, provide them with a scenario (e.g., you are a 7-year-old child who was sexually abused by a babysitter or you are the 12-year-old child from the *Learning How to Drive* excerpt we read this morning in Section I). Ask the volunteer to begin telling their story while the instructor demonstrates the three skills above: containment, focused listening, and reaching inside silences. This should take no more than 2-3 minutes. After the demonstration, be silent before moving on. Ask the volunteer for feedback on how they felt and whether the use of the skills was helpful. Then ask other participants what they heard and observed.

Alternately, share a case example or use the following anecdote and then lead a large group discussion contrasting the use/lack of elaboration skills by child welfare professionals and the potential perception of their actions by the child:

An experienced worker is being shadowed by a new, young Latinx worker. They go out to interview an 11-year-old white boy at school. The guidance counselor allows them to use her office, which is long and narrow with glass windows on 2 walls and glass in the upper part of the door. Children changing classes often pass by the office. The child is seated at one end of the office, bordered on two sides with filing cabinets. The workers sit in chairs located between the child and the door. When the child begins to discuss more sensitive topics, bridging to sexualized content, the experienced worker remains calm and begins to matter-of-factly draw out further information, allowing silences in the conversation. During one of the silences, the Latinx worker, who is obviously agitated, goes over and hugs the boy, saying, "Everything is going to be okay."

Display **PowerPoint Slide #39 (Activity)** via shared screen. Ask each participant to label blank paper with the above skills (containment, focused listening and reaching into

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silences), leaving spaces between each label. Instruct participants to individually record at least one example of each on their paper and one way they can improve their use of the skill when they return to work. Allow 60-90 seconds for participants to record their answers without talking. Allow 15 minutes for participants to share their discoveries with the large group (breakout rooms can be used if preferred). When complete, ask for a few volunteers to share a new discovery or connection to their work with the large group.

Encourage participants to take opportunities to speak with their supervisor about agency expectations surrounding use of these skills. If possible, participants should rehearse this specific stage of the interview with their supervisor or an experienced worker, processing out how it felt and what worked well or could be done differently after the rehearsal. Also, invite participants to practice with trusted family and friends, noting that this can be a way for family and friends to feel a part of their important work without compromising confidentiality. Record yourself and then play it back. Promote the use of motivational and constructive feedback as a way of promoting elaboration skills as well. Becoming comfortable with the use of the beginning skills will also help child welfare workers as the interview progresses.

Conclude this segment by giving the participants time to reflect upon the materials and highlight any areas they might want to note for improvement. Ask participants to use **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) or other document** to capture key learning points from this section of the training. Ask participants to share what they wrote on the handout.

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### **Section V: Questioning and Clarification (Work) Stage of the Child Interview**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

1 hour, 15 minutes

#### **Key Concepts:**

- ✓ Understanding how to interview children with developmentally appropriate methods increases the child welfare professional's ability to provide appropriate services for their well-being and to keep children safe in a permanency-based setting.

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, individual and small group activities, large group discussion and activity, video, case scenario

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Electronic device; 1 per instructor/participant
- ✓ Two Blank Word Documents
- ✓ **Appendix #4 (Focused Questions Cards)**
- ✓ **Trainer Resource #6 (The Six Domains as Questions)**
- ✓ **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) (revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #3 (The Mary Referral) (revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #11 (More About Mary) (revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #13 (Structuring Interview Questions) (revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #14 (Developmental Issues in Interviewing Children) (revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #15 (Checklist for Interviewing/Questioning Children)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #38 (Children's Communication Sequencing) (revisited)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #40 (Stages of the Interview Process)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slides #41-42 (Incorporating the Six Domains)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #43 (Agenda on Day 2)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #44 (Reasons a Child May Purposefully Disclose)**
- ✓ **Video Clip #5 (Secrets) (1 minute)**
  - [http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip\\_5.mp4](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip_5.mp4)
- ✓ **Video Clip #6 (Focused and Clarifying Questions) (47 seconds)**
  - [http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip\\_6.mp4](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip_6.mp4)
- ✓ **Video Clip #7 (Child's Disclosure) (5 minutes, 40 seconds)**
  - [http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip\\_7.mp4](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip_7.mp4)

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

- Components of the work stage
- Focused questioning and clarification
- Process of disclosure and children's reactions

## **Section V: Questioning and Clarification (Work) Stage of the Child Interview**

### **Step 1: (15 minutes)**

#### **Components of the Work Stage**

Display **PowerPoint Slide #40 (Stages of the Interview Process)** on the shared screen again. Note that participants are now familiar with the first two stages and will now turn their attention to the third stage. Refer participants back to the funnel developed in Section III, which talked about the influence of larger culture, family culture, and individual experiences on the child. Remind participants that their age also puts them in a different culture and will influence the type, timing, and complexity of questions asked.

During the Questioning and Clarification Stage of the interview it is best to begin with open-ended questions to elicit as much free-flowing information from the child as possible. As information is provided, the child welfare professional will move toward more focused questions during the interview process to gather detailed information, determining what pieces of information or details have yet to be obtained or clarified. Any perceived inconsistencies, gaps in the statements, and/or corroborative pieces of information should be addressed at this step.

The purpose of this stage is to gather as much information as possible, including the child's knowledge of the identified child/sibling and the allegations. This is the section where very specific abuse-related questions are asked. The child welfare professional may question the child/children in more detail about family life and relationships, supervision, body parts, bathing, and bedtime rituals before turning to the specific allegation(s) of abuse. Answers are clarified through reflecting back and asking more specific questions.

During this stage of the interview, the child welfare professional takes the generalized information previously received and tries to narrow the focus to the abuse allegations. This may also be the stage during which the child first discloses. The goal is to obtain as much detailed information about individual episodes of abuse as possible. So, for instance, if a child reported earlier in the interview that Uncle Joe washes her "down there" and it "hurts 'cause he rubs so much," the child welfare professional now wants to fill in details of what occurs while Uncle Joe is bathing the child.

Ask participants to think back to Section IV when **PowerPoint Slide #38 (Children's Communication Sequencing)** and **Handout #14 (Developmental Issues in Interviewing Children)** were discussed. Note that these same principles apply to each individual interview as well as over the course of interviews. Show **Video Clip #5 (Secrets)** and highlight the language the child used in describing the secret.

Remind participants that open-ended questions are used to get as much information as possible without leading or suggesting. Close-ended questions may be helpful during the early stages of an interview while gathering specific information about the household/family life and also later in the interview when clarifying information already

provided. Asking a projective question like, "What do you think might help your family?" could be used to elicit valuable information about the safety and well-being of the child as well as to convey a sense of respect for them. When establishing a safety plan, it may be useful to ask a miracle question (e.g., "If you woke up tomorrow and you were perfectly safe, what would that look like?"). Remember that it is important to talk to the child, when age-appropriate, because safety affects them directly. Child welfare professionals should explore what might make them feel safe and with which resource people they feel comfortable.

Affirm that the child has a right to ask questions and expect answers to them (as was discussed during rules of the interview) from the child welfare professional as well as any other professionals with whom they are in contact. Encourage interviewees to write down any questions they might have or to ask someone else to help them remember their questions for their next appointment or visit, just as participants might at a training or child welfare professionals might do between supervisory sessions. Teaching children and parents how to advocate for themselves and their family can become a significant factor in whether a family will need continued services.

### **Step 2: (30 minutes)** **Questioning**

The interview should be viewed as a funnel, with general and broad questions being asked first and more specific and focused questions being asked as the interview progresses. Draw a funnel denoting the flow of questions on the Zoom whiteboard/Word document and show on the shared screen. Note that the purpose of questioning relates to gathering information regarding the six safety assessment domains and then, more specifically, to the safety threats surrounding the sexual abuse. Following this flow will assist child welfare professionals in making informed decisions about the child's safety, permanence, and well-being.

Ask participants to watch **Video Clip #6 (Focused and Clarifying Questions)** on the shared screen and determine how they would have handled the situation, focusing on the child's age and developmental level. Upon completion of the video, process the participants' questions, comments, and discussion regarding the information contained in the video.

Display **Appendix #4 (Focused Questions Cards)** on the shared screen. Assign one role to each group (referral source, child, sibling, non-offending parent, alleged perpetrator, collateral contacts). Ask each group to review **Handout #4 revisited (The Mary Referral)** and **Handout #11 (More About Mary)**, shared via Zoom chat/shared screen, as if they were going to interview the person assigned to their group from **Appendix #4**: referral source (Mrs. Smith-teacher), child (Mary), sibling (Mike-in 1<sup>st</sup> grade), non-offending parent (Mary's mother), alleged perpetrator (John-stepfather) or collateral contact (Mrs. Marino-school principal). Before groups go to their breakout rooms, ask them to identify a recorder for their group. Ask each group to work together and reach consensus on 2-3 specific focused questions they would ask in their interview with the person assigned to their group.

**Instructor Note:** It is preferred that participants work in the same teams that were formed at the beginning of the training session. If you do not have 6 teams, you may wish to assign each team more than one role from **Appendix #4** OR you may wish to assign each team one component and work on the remaining components as a large group.

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After 10 minutes, reconvene the large group from the breakout rooms, and have each small group's reporter report out their identified questions. Prompt reporter to put the group's answer in the Zoom chat, identifying which group's answer it is. Remind participants that child welfare professionals must use a variety of approaches when interviewing that are fit to meet the needs of the child (or adult) they are interviewing. The child welfare professional must make a professional judgment about:

- What type of questions to use
- How to phrase the questions
- How to order the questions

Refer participants back to **Handout #13 (Structuring Interview Questions)**, shared via Zoom chat/shared screen, and **Handout #15 (Checklist for Interviewing/Questioning Children)**, shared via Zoom chat/shared screen, noting that dependent on the age and cognitive level of the child/sibling various questions may be used.

Siblings should always be asked about their knowledge of what occurred with the identified child as well as other potential victims, including the sibling himself. While interviewing the siblings, the child welfare professional should gather corroborating evidence. Emphasize factual information, such as what the sibling saw, heard, or smelled but also take note of any other information provided. For instance, if an identified child disclosed that she was sexually abused at night, with her sister in the bed beside her, the sister may be able to provide further details regarding the abuse. If the child revealed that the perpetrator "peed" all over her stomach at the end of the incident, the sibling may be able to state that, although she had her eyes closed, she could feel the bed going up and down, she heard the perpetrator moan, and then "some sticky stuff" got all over the sheets.

It is also important to clarify any seeming inconsistencies. If the sibling provides different details or sequence of events, it may be necessary to clarify with the child if this was during the same or a different event. It is important to make the generalized assessment of the sibling's developmental level and to compare it with that of the identified child when looking at how the information coalesces or seems different.

Asking focused questions will help workers clarify the who, when, where, and what of the allegations as well as assist in safety and family service planning. Further, it is important to assess all children in the family regarding safety threats and ongoing risks, including those related to child sexual abuse. If the sibling is aware of the sexual abuse, this may be captured by questions such as, "What were you doing while this was happening?" or "Did anything like that ever happen to you?" The siblings may also become part of the safety plan, as appropriate. For instance, if the perpetrator were to come to the home unannounced, an older sibling may be able to get the child into a

room with them and lock the door. Perhaps the sibling could call a relative or neighbor to come help them or to contact the police.

**Instructor Note:** If time permits, display **PowerPoint Slides #41-42 (Incorporating the Six Domains)** on the shared screen and use **Trainer Resource #6 (The Six Domains as Questions)**, also on the shared screen, to provide examples of questions child welfare professionals may ask. Solicit additional information from the participants by asking, "What types of questions from the previous activity relate to each domain? Have you asked enough questions and gathered enough information to be able to assess each domain?

Summarize the group's answers and note that the child welfare professional may have one understanding of the family following the child interview but that more insight will be gained from the following interviews. Remind participants that various types of questions and interaction will be used with the child and family throughout specific interviews as well as throughout the life of the case. Keeping in mind the specific focus of the contact or part of the interview will help child welfare professionals choose the most appropriate type of question or interaction to use.

**Instructor Note:** This should be the **end of the first day**. After volunteers from each table have shared, review what is on the WIIFM Word Document, noting what has been covered and what will be discussed during second day.

### **Step 3:** (20 minutes) **Process of Disclosure**

**Instructor Note:** This should be the beginning of the second day. Assign Zoom breakout rooms for Day 2. Make note of attendance and ask participants to show presence by unmuting and turning on their cameras. Answer any lingering questions that participants may have from Day 1. Display **PowerPoint #43 (Agenda on Day 2)** on the shared screen and review **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher)** on the shared screen to orient participants to what was already covered on the first day and what will be covered on the second day.

Every child welfare interview should provide an environment in which children can safely disclose what happened to them when they are ready to do so. From the very beginning of the interview, the child welfare professional can assist the child/family in coping with the disclosure by remaining objective and conducting the investigation without bias while also building trust and rapport.

**Instructor Note:** The child welfare professional may interview a child more than one time. Generally, the purpose of the initial interview with the identified child is to gain disclosure. In interviews with siblings, the initial interview may be to gain further information regarding what happened to the identified child however further interviews may be for the purpose of gaining a disclosure from the sibling.

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Disclosure may often be a series of statements that are revealed over a period of time by the child rather than linear statements linked together in sequential order. In fact, they do not need to be statements at all. For example, drawings, poems, or papers may reveal the theme of sexual abuse. Children may reach a critical turning point, such as finding out a sibling is being groomed for sexual abuse, the non-offending parent becoming seriously ill, or becoming a teenager and wanting to date which results in a disclosure. Sexually abused children and teens must constantly weigh the risks of maintaining the secrecy of the sexual abuse versus the risks of disclosing the information.

Note that there are various ways in which sexual abuse is disclosed. "Disguised" disclosure is a technique children may use when unsure of the reaction they will receive or when they want to know it is safe to tell. A child may say something like, "What happens if a girl tells her mother that someone was touching her?" (Normand, 2007). Adolescents may also provide clues to the sexual abuse over time to see how others will respond to the information before they make a purposeful disclosure.

"Indirect" disclosure may come about when a child makes statements such as, "My babysitter keeps bothering me" or "I don't like Grandpa anymore" (Normand, 2007). A child may make such statements when they are embarrassed to talk about it, do not have the words to talk about it, or has promised not to tell (Normand, 2007).

"Accidental" disclosure is defined as disclosure "revealed by chance rather than a deliberate effort on the child's part" while purposeful disclosure is defined as "when a child consciously decides to tell an outsider" (Sgroi, 1982). It may come about as a result of someone discovering the child has a bloody discharge or vaginal infection, with confirmation by a doctor that the child has a sexually transmitted disease or sexual trauma to the vaginal, anal, or urethral area. Preschool and younger children often "accidentally" disclose by engaging in sexualized behavior or verbalizing inappropriate statements, whereas an adolescent girl may become pregnant and thus reveal the perpetrator by naming the father upon further exploration by the family or doctor. Ask participants on the Zoom screen to provide several examples of questions that would fill in the details of an abusive episode, and describe an episode. Examples could include the following: "What is your 'pee-pee'?"; "Did he touch your 'pee-pee' one time or more than one time?"; "Was Uncle Joe with you the whole time you were in the bathroom?"; "What is in the bathroom?"; "Was anyone else home at the time?"; "What were you doing right before Uncle Joe touched you?" If the child says Uncle Joe touched her with his hand, clarify what kind of touch. Further detail can be gained by asking, "What was Uncle Joe wearing?"; "What did you have on?"; "Did Uncle Joe touch you anywhere else?"; "What words, if any, did Uncle Joe say?"; or "Did he make any other noises?" Remember that children and many cognitively challenged adults may describe their experiences more with sounds, smells, or tastes than chronological events or specific actions.

Ask participants on the Zoom screen to provide a reason for purposeful disclosure and go around round robin style. Display **PowerPoint Slide #44 (Reasons a Child May Purposefully Disclose)** on the shared screen and emphasize the following related concepts:

- The family is being disrupted as a result of other stresses.
- The perpetrator has left the home.
- The adolescent develops the insight that the abuse is not okay or that there are more serious implications than they realized earlier.
- The adolescent is directly asked about the abuse and given assurances of a safe environment.
- The adolescent finds a safe relationship (e.g., a romantic relationship or therapeutic alliance).
- The perpetrator or another significant other dies.
- The adolescent becomes aware that other children or siblings are at risk.
- The abuse becomes intolerable.

(Deaton and Hertica, 1993)

Show **Video Clip #7 (Child's Disclosure)** on the shared screen. Ask participants to identify the positive aspects and challenges presented in the video. Ask several participants to share experiences they have had regarding children disclosing sexual abuse and have them share what they believe may have contributed to the child feeling comfortable enough to share that information.

**Step 4: (10 minutes)**  
**Reactions to the Disclosure**

Note that an important variable in the disclosure process is the reactions of the individuals who have heard the statements of abuse. Providing support, not blaming the victim, and providing for the safety of the child and family are paramount. It is important to be truthful with the child about the fact that things will change and to prepare them for possible outcomes or situations they may face. Encourage children to identify people to whom they can go for comfort, support, and protection. This may include teachers, neighbors, or friends. Child welfare professionals must provide the time, support, and tools to assist with the aftermath of disclosure.

The child welfare professional should be aware that siblings, in particular, often have a difficult time dealing with the allegation of sexual abuse. Lead a group discussion about why siblings might have a difficult time with the allegation and investigation. Add any points from the following list that was not generated by the group:

1. The sibling may be saddened and worried about the identified child.
2. The sibling may be worried that they will be victimized as well.
3. The sibling may be angry at the identified child for “lying” about the perpetrator.
4. The sibling may have been jealous of the identified child because the perpetrator treated that child in special ways in the past.

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5. The sibling may be too young to understand sexual abuse or the family may believe that the sibling should not be told about the sexual abuse.
6. The sibling may have been a victim of abuse in the past and made the decision not to disclose.
7. The sibling may believe that it is wrong to turn to outsiders like the police or a child welfare professional and may be angry that the alleged child victim brought these outsiders into the family.
8. The sibling may be upset because the non-offending parent is upset, the family had to move to a shelter, and/or the alleged perpetrator is unable to come home.
9. The sibling may be embarrassed, ashamed, or afraid of what will happen.
10. The sibling may feel guilty for not protecting the child.

Sometimes siblings are sexually abused children who have not yet disclosed and are waiting to see how the disclosing child is treated by various family members and the system. Other times, these children were not victims of sexual abuse but they were victimized through the dysfunction of the family system. Some of these children may have been “groomed” for sexual abuse but no unwanted touching, photographing, or exploitation has yet taken place.

The siblings should also be included in a discussion, directed by the non-offending parent, concerning what has happened to the identified child, what changes are happening in the family, and how this will affect family life. For instance, if the children now have to go to a babysitter’s home before and after school, the children may have to get up earlier in the morning and have packed their lunches the night before. Parents should encourage the children to talk about their feelings and reactions to what has happened and to reinforce that, if anything like that were to happen again, the children should tell an adult and keep telling until someone believes them and/or helps them.

Explain the importance of normalizing reactions to the identified child's disclosure and note that the sibling(s) may need special help in dealing with the disclosure and its aftermath. Remind participants that keeping track of the various siblings' reactions and referring to them later will help in developing a safety plan for all the children and with later service planning.

Conclude this segment by giving the participants time to reflect upon the materials and highlight any areas they might want to note for improvement. Ask participants to use **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) or blank paper** to capture key learning points from this section of the training. Ask participants to share what they wrote on the handout/document.

## **203 Remote: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse Cases**

### **Section VI: Endings and Transitions Stage of the Child Interview**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

45 minutes

#### **Key Concepts:**

- ✓ In order to determine when it is appropriate to intervene with a family, child welfare professionals must be able to carefully assess the safety threats and risks to the identified child and other potential victims in the household.

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, individual and small group activities, large group discussion and activity, video

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Two blank Word Documents
- ✓ Electronic device; 1 per instructor/participant
- ✓ **Appendix #4 (Focused Questions Cards), Revisited**
- ✓ **Trainer Resource #7 (Additional Information Used in Assessing Children's Statements)**
- ✓ **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) (Revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #16 (Applying Critical Thinking Skills)**
- ✓ **Handout #17 (Factors Used in Assessing Children's Statements)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #45 (Critical Thinking Skills)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #46 (Critical Thinking Skills Continued)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #47 (Critical Thinking Skills Activity)**
- ✓ **Video Clip #8 (Endings and Transitions) (39 seconds)**
  - [http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip\\_8.mp4](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip_8.mp4)

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

- Components of the Endings and Transitions Stage
- Safety threshold
- Assessing credibility

## Section VI: Endings and Transitions Stage of the Child Interview

### Step 1: (20 minutes)

#### Components of Endings and Transitions

As noted in the previous sections, the interview process follows a flow, from the general to the specific. Having begun with planning the interview beforehand, the child welfare professional introduces their role and the purpose of the interview, builds rapport with the child, learns about the child's daily life/routines, transitions to more sexualized topics, and then delves into the specifics of the allegations. Once the disclosure is made or the specific purpose of the interview is accomplished, it is important to recognize the emotional impact on the child and to deal with any questions or concerns the child may have.

In this final stage of the interview, the child welfare professional ends the interview; requests permission from the child to talk again, if necessary, at a later point; communicates next steps, including what the child welfare professional may be sharing with parents/caregivers, the police or others; and talks about how that day's interview may affect the child and his/her family, such as involving services from the agency or other community providers that may be needed.

Children and families are given help dealing with the aftermath of the allegations, including how to handle statements made or reactions the child or sibling(s) may have relating to the disclosure of sexual abuse. It is important to use the skill of reaching into silences to draw out any fears or concerns the child may have and to address those prior to leaving the child's presence. A safety plan should be discussed if the child is remaining in the home and determined to be safe with a comprehensive plan. This may include contact with other family members, involving school personnel, or taking the child to be seen medically. If the child is to be placed in an alternate setting/substitute care, this will also need to be discussed in detail. Any questions the child/children have should be addressed prior to the end of the interview.

The conclusion of the interview provides closure by summarizing what information has been obtained, allowing the child to clarify information, exploring the interviewee's fears, and setting the stage for further investigative effort (Colorado Module C). Bring the child back to a less sensitive topic area and provide some time for the child to talk about the interview itself. For example, the interviewer may ask, "What was the hardest thing to talk about?" or "What one thing helped you to feel more comfortable?" Allow time for the child to "come back to normal" before returning to class, home, or another setting. Ensure the child's mental health status, especially if they have expressed fear regarding the consequences of their disclosure or have stated they do not know if they can face the aftermath. Provide for a support person to stay with the child, if possible, to help them through the initial aftershock of the interview/disclosure.

Advise participants that a short segment demonstrating a simple ending and transition to an interview will be shown. Play **Video Clip #8 (Endings and Transitions)** on the

shared screen. Ask participants to note key components of the interview segment and to offer any suggestions on how it could be improved. After the video, ask participants to share what they noticed and review the following information, if not noted by participants:

- Thank the person for their participation
- Only make promises that can be kept
- “Leave the door open” for future interviews
- Discuss next steps
- Identify supportive people with the child/non-offending parent who can help protect and care for the child

Ask each group to reconvene in their breakout rooms, and identify someone in each group to write on a blank word document and have someone report out when large group reconvene. Have each group record a sample ending for a meeting as if they were a child welfare professional interviewing a person with their assigned role (referral source, child, sibling, non-offending parent, alleged perpetrator, collateral contact) from the **Focused Questions Cards (Appendix #4); show again on shared screen**. Instruct participants to also include what “transitions” child welfare professionals might need to consider regarding a person in their assigned role and to record that on the word document as well. Advise participants that they have 10 minutes to complete these tasks and to identify a spokesperson. Reconvene the large group at the end of that time and ask each group reporter to report on their work. Ask other participants to provide additional ideas or techniques they have used successfully in the past.

**Instructor Note:** For this activity, participants can share their documents on the shared screen so long as sharing privileges have been set in Zoom to enable all participants to display their screens. This setting change can be done by the instructor or moderator (whoever is the “host” in Zoom for the training session).

After the “child” group has shared, offer the following information if not covered by the group:

At the conclusion of the interview the child can also be asked to gather up all of their personal items and help pick-up any interviewing tools that were used. For example, children can be asked to help dress the dolls or gather up the crayons. They may also be asked to turn off the lights and shut the door of the interview room to help provide closure to the interview.

When all groups have reported out, thank them for their participation and note that the investigation is not complete after the interview is over: it is just beginning.

## **Step 2: (25 minutes)**

### **Assessing the Credibility of the Child**

After completing the interview, assessment is vital to determining if child sexual abuse has happened and by whom. Ask participants the following questions, “Do you have

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enough information to determine if present or impending danger exists?", "Does it meet the safety threshold?" and "How would you know?"

Wrap up the discussion by noting that child welfare professionals generally do not have all the information needed to make a determination regarding the abuse after only one interview with the child or the interviews with the identified child and siblings. They may need to make a time-limited decision about what next steps need to occur without having all the facts. For instance, the child may have been interviewed at school, it is the end of the school day, and the child welfare professional has to decide if the child can safely return to the home prior to the professional having contact with the non-offending parent or if alternate arrangements need to be made. Consultation with one's supervisor is key in making these types of decisions.

Part of the decision-making is deciding whether or not the child's statements are credible. Child welfare professionals often do not have medical evidence, they may rarely have collateral contacts and perpetrators seldom admit to sexual abuse; therefore, the statements of the child may be the primary deciding factor in determining whether an abuse is substantiated. In order to assess an allegation accurately, it is important to remember that sexual abuse allegations differ due to type, circumstance, age of the child, and a variety of other factors. As such, every interview should be individualized to the specific circumstances that exist.

Ask participants if they can define "critical thinking." Explain that one key skill in accurate assessment of a child's statement is critical thinking skills, which is also a key component in assessing safety. Display **PowerPoint Slide #45 (Critical Thinking Skills)** on the shared screen and review the various steps that can be considered when applying critical thinking skills to a case. Display **PowerPoint Slide #46 (Critical Thinking Skills)** on the shared screen and explain that in the investigative interviewing stage, you will mostly gather information and begin analyzing the situation. Display **PowerPoint Slide #47 (Critical Thinking Skills Activity)** on the shared screen and show **Handout #16 (Applying Critical Thinking Skills)** either on the shared screen or by sending to participants via Zoom chat. Ask participants to recall a case that they are working on currently or have worked on recently. Give participants five minutes to apply the Comprehension and Analysis steps to this scenario. After five minutes, ask them to volunteer their responses. Give them five more minutes to discuss, then debrief the activity. Ask participants if this was helpful? Is this something they do naturally? Or is this something they need to work on?

As previously discussed, a child's statements will be influenced by their age, development, feelings, gender, culture, and experiences. In making decisions regarding credibility, it is helpful to use multiple hypotheses, thinking through all the possible scenarios of the available information. Some children who have cognitive or other limitations do not have the ability to describe what happened in a clear, concise way. Young children may not have the words to tell what occurred. The child welfare professional must be careful to take these factors into account when assessing credibility.

Ask participants to offer some factors they might consider in assessing the child's statements, both after the initial interview with the child and following completion of the interviews. Following discussion regarding these factors, show **Handout #17 (Factors Used in Assessing Children's Statements)** on the shared screen. Review these factors, if not yet discussed, and offer any further insights provided on **Trainer Resource #7 (Additional Information Regarding Factors Used in Assessing Children's Statements)**, displayed on the shared screen.

Conclude this segment by giving the participants time to reflect upon the materials and highlight any areas they might want to note for improvement. Ask participants to use **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) or other document** to capture key learning points from this section of the training. Ask participants to share what they wrote on the handout.

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### **Section VII: Interviewing the Non-Offending Parent**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

50 minutes

#### **Key Concepts:**

- ✓ The child welfare professional must build rapport with the non-offending parent, maintain an awareness of the family dynamics, and understand the non-offending parent's characteristics in order to accurately assess the child and family situation.
- ✓ The child welfare professional must remain sensitive and objective during the interviewing process and be able to provide emotional support and encouragement to the non-offending parent in order to assure the safety of the child, protection of the child in the future and recovery of the child victim.

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Presentation, small group activity, large group activity and discussion, video

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Two Instructor-Prepared blank Word Documents
- ✓ Electronic device; 1 per instructor/participant
- ✓ Instructor labeled Word Document for Non-Offending Parent Reactions activity
- ✓ **Trainer Resource #8 (Non-Offending Parent Reactions to Disclosure)**
- ✓ **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) (Revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #18 (Non-Offending Parent Interview Issues: Beginning and Introductions Stage)**
- ✓ **Handout #19 (Non-Offending Parent Interview Issues: Questioning and Clarification Stage)**
- ✓ **Video Clip #9 (Non-Offending Parent Issues) (1 minute, 5 seconds)**
  - [http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip\\_9.mp4](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip_9.mp4)

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

- Stages of the interview
- Reactions to disclosure
- Referrals for service/safety planning
- Evidence collection

## Section VII: Interviewing the Non-Offending Parent

### Step 1: (10 minutes) Preparation Stage

**Instructor Note:** At the beginning of the second day or at the break, label Word document as follows (one topic per line) for use during the Non-Offending Parent Reactions activity in this section:

- Initially not sure if the allegations are true or not (alleged perpetrator is non-offending parent's paramour or spouse)
- Paralyzed by the impact of the disclosure (alleged perpetrator is non-offending parent's paramour or spouse)
- Do not believe it is true (alleged perpetrator is non-offending parent's paramour or spouse)
- Do not believe it is true (alleged perpetrator is non-custodial parent)
- Are certain that it is true (perpetrator is non-offending parent's paramour/spouse)
- One non-offending parent/caregiver believes it and the other does not (perpetrator outside the home)

Ask participants the purpose of interviewing the non-offending parent. The following purposes should be included in the discussion:

1. To gather corroborating information regarding the allegations of sexual abuse
2. To determine what, if any, role the non-offending parent played in the abuse
3. To determine if the parent believes, supports, and can keep the child safe
4. To assess the need for supportive services (i.e. medical, emotional, financial, and legal support, emergency provision of food, clothing, shelter)

Ask the group what they might want to consider as they prepare for the interview with the non-offending parent.

Some planning issues might be:

- ◆ Holding the interview as quickly as possible after the child and siblings' interviews
- ◆ Coordinating with community partners
- ◆ Deciding if the contact will be announced or unannounced
- ◆ Planning questions to be asked/topics to be covered
- ◆ Choosing an interview location (agency, CAC/hospital, home, police station)
- ◆ Determining if transportation issues exist
- ◆ Selecting a site that will provide maximum privacy
- ◆ Arranging for a translator, if needed
- ◆ Considering what issues might arise as a result of the allegation/disclosure
- ◆ Determining availability of culturally sensitive services
- ◆ Preparing resource pamphlets/information in the parent's primary language
- ◆ Considering the immediate safety of all the parties, including the worker

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Another key piece in preparation for the interview with a non-offending parent/caregiver is tuning into one's own feelings about the parent/caregiver. Encourage participants to think back to the video tape segment used with the non-offending parent interview (Sylvie's Interview) in 203: *Overview of Child Sexual Abuse*. Ask them to share some key points (e.g., the disclosure is a trauma to the parent, parent has multiple emotions, commitment level of parent in protecting the child) and to keep these in mind while discussing the interviewing process with the non-offending parent.

### **Step 2: (15 minutes)**

#### **Beginning and Introductions Stages**

In general, the child welfare professional takes the lead in interviewing the non-offending parent. This assists in rapport-building and future teaming with the parent surrounding protection of the child/family and accessing needed services.

During this step of the interview with the non-offending parent or primary caregiver, the child welfare professional should clearly state the reason for the interview and the goal of protecting the child in their home, if at all possible. This may help lower the fear level of the parent who may think that all child welfare professionals do is remove children from their parents any time an issue arises.

Attempts to establish rapport with the non-offending parent should begin with general, non-threatening questions about family life, marital relationship, and childcare. These questions should be open-ended, allowing the parent to share the information that comes to mind and seems important. Questions such as, "Can you tell me who lives here?" or "What rules do you have in your family?" can be used.

Show **Handout #18 (Non-Offending Parent Interview Issues: Beginning and Introductions Stage)** on the shared screen and review the specific information that should be gathered during this step of the interview process.

During this step of the interview, the child welfare professional compares this information with information gathered in the interview with the child. For example, the child welfare professional may have noted that the child reported that his mother was at work during the incident of abuse. While discussing hours of work, the mother indicated she is at home on Tuesday evenings. Asking a follow-up question regarding the night of the incident may reveal that she switched shifts with someone and indeed was not home at the time, thus supplying corroborating evidence.

This can lead to bridging to more sexualized topics as more information is revealed, including the topic of the pending allegations. The child welfare professional should express to the parent or caregiver that the details of the allegations/child's disclosure may be distressing. The child welfare professional may wish to take some time discussing the parent's feelings regarding how such a situation arose, as many parents will blame themselves for being unaware of the circumstances or abuse itself. It is especially important to explore feelings with both parents, since they may have differing reactions and/or may be separated from the child (e.g., non-custodial or incarcerated parent).

Ask participants to share experiences they have had in dealing with parents or caregivers regarding their feelings regarding the allegations, focusing on their own feelings regarding the encounter. Also have them identify what they could do differently the next time. At the end of the allotted time, ask each participant to share how they successfully dealt with a situation or what they could do differently the next time. Focus on best practice techniques and reinforce the need to tune in to oneself prior to and during the interview.

Summarize by noting that the child welfare professional must be able to remain objective while providing emotional support and encouragement to the non-offending parent. Child welfare professionals can use what they learned from their own feelings to help non-offending parents. For instance: "I understand you are feeling shocked. It must be hard to imagine such a thing. This is hard to deal with."

Remind participants that, with each type of interview, the skills learned in earlier sections will apply. Having prepared for the interview, tuned in to oneself, initiated contact and begun to build rapport, participants should be ready to move on to the next stage: Questioning and Clarification.

**Step 3: (15 minutes)**  
**Questioning and Clarification Stage**

As the child welfare professional enters the Questioning and Clarification Stage, more focused questions are appropriate. The questions grow more sensitive and may be more difficult to discuss as some deal with sex and sexuality, adult relationships, and other matters considered private.

The child welfare professional may want to begin by sharing small pieces of information such as the specific date the incident occurred. Parents may need to have questions answered about what the child said specifically happened. For instance, sharing with the parent the fact that their son or daughter said, "Daddy made me lick his penis" or "Daddy licked my penis" leads the parent to think through how their son or daughter may have learned this information.

Filtering through the information and identifying any gaps may result in further clarifying questions: "How would your child know the details of sexual activity?" and "Do you have X-rated movies or other erotic materials in your home?" are both focused questions that will help you to assess the credibility of the allegation and the parent's ability or willingness to protect the child.

Child welfare professionals can often follow up with projective questions such as, "Why would Tina say this about her step-father if it were not true?" or "Can you tell me how Frank might make-up such a question?" The parent's answers to those projective questions may also lead to previously undisclosed information, such as prior abuse or the child's exposure to sexually explicit materials.

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The parent may also disclose some behaviors exhibited by the child, which they now connect to the abuse. Ask participants from each table to offer at least one suggestion that a parent or caregiver may have noticed. Answers could include:

- Masturbating at school and/or inappropriately at home
- Spitting on other children
- Storing and hiding dirty underwear in the closet
- Leaving bed at night/not wanting to sleep alone
- Not wanting to shower or bathe

It is important to explore when these behaviors began and to ask if the parent has anything further to share that might help the interviewer understand the family or the circumstances. Issues or memories brought out by the interview process may be shared at this time that can become vital to the determination of abuse.

Show **Video Clip #9 (Non-Offending Parent Issues)** on the shared screen. Ask participants to recall the thoughts and feelings participants shared regarding working with non-offending parents. Ask the participants to brainstorm why it might be hard for the parent to handle the disclosure, given her particular set of circumstances. For instance:

- The relationship between the child and parent may be conflictual
- The parent may have been abused as a child
- The parent may be financially/emotionally dependent on the alleged perpetrator
- The parent may fear the alleged perpetrator because of domestic violence
- The alleged perpetrator may be extremely manipulative

Educating parents regarding the grooming process may help the parent identify behaviors seen or statements heard that help corroborate the child's statements regarding sexual abuse. Providing examples of cognitive distortions of the alleged perpetrator may also confirm suspicions the non-offending parent might have as well as help the parent gain insight into the meaning of subtle cues that the abuse was happening.

Show a blank **Word Document** on the shared screen. Ask participants to brainstorm about why the parent might react that way to the disclosure, how the child welfare professional can be supportive, and what options they might explore to assist the parent. Allow 5-10 minutes for the group to discuss the topics while the instructor records answers on the Word Document. When the large group is done sharing, show **Trainer Resource #8 (Non-Offending Parent Reactions to Disclosure)** on the shared screen to add additional information/comments.

Reinforce their answers and show **Handout #19 (Non-Offending Parent Interview Issues: Questioning and Clarification Stage)** on the shared screen and also via Zoom chat, highlighting how the types of questions that should be asked at this step of the interview process tie into learning about and dealing with the parent/caregiver's reaction to the disclosure or allegations.

Direct questioning can also be used when the child welfare professional's use of less direct ways of communicating are unsuccessful. For instance, a child welfare professional might ask an open-ended question: "Mrs. Wright, I am concerned about your son's safety; what do you think?" If Mrs. Wright indicates that she is not concerned, the child welfare professional can make their techniques progressively more focused: "Mrs. Wright, I think something has happened to your son" or "Mrs. Wright, I believe your son when he says he was sexually abused" or "Mrs. Wright, your son needs protection; if you can't protect him then we must take some alternative action to protect him."

Note that, in situations of extrafamilial abuse, the questions to the child's parents or caregivers may need to be altered. Ask participants for examples of how the questions might be asked differently or what other questions they might ask. (For example, they might be asked to share as much information as they can about the alleged offender, including their knowledge of contacts with other children.) Thank participants for their input and advise them that, once these questions have been answered and clarified, it is time to move on to the next stage of the interview.

#### **Step 4: (10 minutes)** **Ending and Transitions Stage**

During the ending and transitions stage of the interview process, the child welfare professional should assess immediate safety threats as well as ongoing risks to the child and family with the parent or caregiver.

Title a **Word Document** "Next Steps" and show on the shared screen. Ask each participant to share one suggestion of what else they would cover with the non-offending parent at the end of the interview or what other steps they would take following the interview with the non-offending parent.

Once everyone has had a chance to participate, review the Word Document. If not offered by the group, note that the parent or caregiver's assistance should be solicited to complete the next steps in the investigative process, such as:

- How to talk with siblings about the allegations
- How to provide support to the victim
- What immediate alterations need to be made to the family's daily routine or living arrangements
- What immediate services are needed
- Providing the non-offending parent with information and assistance in linking with ongoing services, such as individual and family counseling
- Supplying emotional care to the parent surrounding feelings of guilt, anger, and distress
- Providing support to the parent in following through with getting members of the family to help

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- Scheduling a visit or telephone contact the following day to deal with urgent issues

The child welfare professional should also give guidance on being open to discuss sexual abuse with the child but only when and how the child wants to talk about it. Advise them that, from a legal standpoint, discussions between the parent and the child could be portrayed in court as “contamination” or “coaching.” At the same time, parents who refuse to discuss the abuse with their child may be sending the child the message that this subject should not be talked about. The child welfare professional can help the parent prepare for possible conversations with the child and advise parents to keep a diary of the child's statements, how and when they arose, and the parent's responses. This diary can be a valuable tool in court when defense attorneys suggest that the parent “brainwashed” the child or planted the disclosure.

The parent may also have questions about what will happen to the alleged perpetrator. Child welfare professionals should be honest with non-offending parents about the possible offender and the need to protect the child from any contact with them.

**Instructor Note:** In 2007, changes were made to the rules regarding Megan's Law and the Pennsylvania Sexual Offenders Assessment Board (SOAB) to expand listed offenses and increase penalties. For sexual predators (convicted of a sexually-related crime, assessed by the Board, and found at a hearing to be a sexually violent predator) the board will now submit to the court a summary of the offense, along with the full report (facts of the current offense, prior offense history, characteristics of the individual, and factors related to re-offense).

At times, the non-offending parent may also request that certain items be taken out of the house, such as videotapes, bed sheets, or the child's underwear. If a law enforcement officer is present, an official search (with consent or a warrant) may follow the interview which can be valuable in obtaining corroborating evidence. For instance, if the child stated that the perpetrator showed her a magazine with naked people in it, wiped them with a towel, ejaculated on the sheets, or used lubricant on their fingers, these items should be collected by the law enforcement official.

**Instructor Note:** If requested to do so and time does not allow for law enforcement to come obtain these items (e.g., the parent wants the items out of the home before the alleged perpetrator comes home from work), the child welfare professional should wear gloves or ask the parent to place the items in a paper bag, which should then be sealed and labeled until it can be delivered to the appropriate law enforcement officer, thus preserving the chain of evidence.

In closing the interview, address how the non-offending parent can help the child begin the process of healing. While it is important to listen and respond to the non-offending parent with a non-judgmental attitude, the child welfare professional must focus the parent's attention on the child, perhaps through asking: “How do you think your son/daughter is feeling right now?” In supporting the non-offending parent, child welfare

professionals should help the non-offending parent remain calm, focus on the needs of the child, and objectively examine the evidence as it emerges.

Another way of encouraging a non-offending parent is to inform the parent that the best outcome in these kinds of situations occurs when the parent displays belief in the child. Emphasize that they can move forward by making decisions about how to protect and support their child. Some non-offending parents can understand this as a two-step process and make a commitment to protecting their child until it is known for sure whether the abuse took place.

Throughout the interview, the child welfare professional should remind the parent/caregiver of the goal to protect the child and that you must work together to achieve this goal. It should be reinforced that an alliance with the child's therapist or counselor could assist in developing a plan to re-establish appropriate boundaries and provide ongoing assistance and advice to the parent. Be mindful to model healthy boundaries with the family and children and to promote interdependency among family members and their support system to assist the family in healing.

Conclude this segment by giving the participants time to reflect upon the materials and highlight any areas they might want to note for improvement. Ask participants to use **Handout #2 or blank document (Agenda/Idea Catcher)** to capture key learning points from this section of the training. Ask participants to share what they wrote on the handout.

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### **Section VIII: Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

1 hour

#### **Key Concepts:**

- ✓ Being aware of the difficulty of accurately interpreting verbal and non-verbal responses assists the child welfare professional in understanding how to prepare for an interview with an alleged perpetrator.
- ✓ Becoming aware of assessment and treatment options for sexual offenders assists child welfare professionals in defining their role in providing services to alleged perpetrators.
- ✓ Possessing a working knowledge of legal issues provides structure on how to question an alleged perpetrator during an interview.

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture; individual, small and large group activities, video

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Electronic device; 1 per instructor/participant
- ✓ Two Instructor-Prepared Word Documents
- ✓ **Trainer Resource #9 (Delay of Notification)**
- ✓ **Trainer Resource #10 (Miranda Warning Transmittal)**
- ✓ **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) (Revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #13 (Structuring Interview Questions) (Revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #20 (Assessment Tools for Alleged Sexual Offenders)**
- ✓ **Handout #21 (Guidelines for Recording Sexual History)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slides #48-49 (Thinking Errors)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #50 (Activity)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #51 (Common Sex Offender Assessment Areas)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #52 (Delay of Notification)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #53 (Interviewing Alleged Perpetrators)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #54 (Assuring the Child's Safety)**
- ✓ **Video Clip #10 (Projective Questioning) (1 minute, 4 seconds)**
  - [http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip\\_10.mp4](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip_10.mp4)
- ✓ **Video Clip #11 (Confrontation) (2 minutes, 21 seconds)**
  - [http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip\\_11.mp4](http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/curriculum/SexualAbuseSeries/InvestigativeInterviewing/Clip_11.mp4)

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

- Cognitive distortions
- Role of the child welfare professional
- Stages of the interview

## Section VIII: Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator

### Step 1: (5 minutes)

#### Cognitive Distortions

Note that, while empathizing with the non-offending parent may be considered a normal part of sexual abuse investigations and interventions, viewing an alleged perpetrator as a client is often more difficult. Reinforce that child welfare professionals must be objective during the interview process to rightly apply critical thinking skills and analysis to the investigative process.

One reason for this difficulty may be the cognitive distortions child welfare professionals have encountered while dealing with alleged perpetrators. Perpetrators of sexual abuse often erroneously cite religious, ethnic, or cultural justification for their abusive behavior. In the large majority of cases, this does not mean that the religious, ethnic, or cultural group to which they belong condones the abuse.

**Instructor Note:** Read each example slowly and look for/ask for reactions from participants, using **PowerPoint Slides #48-49 (Thinking Errors)** on the shared screen. Demonstrate for participants how to use the skill of reaching into silences (e.g., “I’m sensing that you’re shocked by some of these statements.”) after reading the statements.

Consider these examples of thinking errors:

- “I am the mother in this household. I may do what I want with my child.”
- “I am responsible for educating my son. I am teaching him about sexuality.”
- “I am a man with strong sexual desires. She is available for me to use in this way.”
- “I asked her if it felt good to her; I was careful not to hurt her.”
- “He never said he didn’t want to do it. I never did anything he didn’t want me to.”
- “I told her we are all sinners; we all have problems – and I asked her if she wanted to see what my problem was.”
- “Oral sex doesn’t count; it isn’t cheating.”
- “My wife doesn’t mind. She doesn’t want to give me head so I had her little girl do it. At least I wasn’t committing adultery by going outside the marriage.”
- “A stiff dick has no conscience.”

Label **two Word Document “Thinking Errors”** and show on the shared screen. Ask participants to say examples of other thinking errors they have heard and Instructor types examples on a Word Document. Continue to write until both documents are filled (Instructor may only need one Word Document for this activity). As participants share their examples, have them review the answers typed and, if someone has already said the example they were thinking of, ask participants to offer an alternative statement.

John M. Grohol (2009) defines cognitive distortions as “ways that our mind convinces us of something that isn’t really true. These inaccurate thoughts are usually used to

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reinforce negative thinking or emotions..." For sexual offenders, cognitive distortions legitimize sexual involvement with children and help maintain offending. These cognitive distortions should be incorporated into the child welfare professional's documentation and case records both in the investigative and ongoing phases of their casework. They may include ideas like the perpetrator is unable to control thoughts and actions related to sexual abuse, the abuse had a minimal effect on the child, the child "wanted" it, or children should be sexually trained by someone who "loves" them (e.g., parent or caretaker).

It is important to be able to distinguish between such distortions and true cultural values and beliefs. For example, Latino families may view a male's genitals as a source of pride, showing the child's virility and ability to carry on the family. Ahn and Gilbert (1992) relate that some Latinx and Asian cultures do not view touching a young child's genitals as harmful whether because it is believed to "encourage the growth of the genitals," or thought to help "keep children quiet or to help them fall asleep."

Cultural factors notwithstanding, there is no definitive answer regarding why people sexually abuse children. Note that this topic was already discussed in the *Overview of Child Sexual Abuse* and it encapsulated biological, environmental, and other factors. Focusing the interview on the specifics of the particular incident disclosed by the allegations and on revealing any other incidents with the identified child or any other children, child welfare professionals should approach the interview with the alleged perpetrator in much the same way as other interviews.

### **Step 2: (10 minutes) Child Welfare Professional's Role**

It is essential to recognize that during an investigation, facts are still being assembled regarding what occurred. Although the main focus of all child welfare work is the child, the family and significant others touching the child's life are also clients; their strengths and needs should also be addressed during contact.

The interview with the alleged perpetrator can serve several different functions. It can:

- Assist in a child's statement being corroborated and verified
- Provide insight into the dynamics of victimization and the situation of the current victim(s)
- Help clear an innocent person
- Reveal the *modus operandi* (way of operating) of the offender
- Provide information about other offenders

The investigative interview primarily focuses on the first two purposes, while forensic interviews may encompass all five. If an investigative interview reveals information regarding the last three purposes, child welfare professionals should provide that information to law enforcement officials.

On the shared screen, show a **blank Word Document**. Ask the participants to take 10 minutes in the large group to identify possible reasons why an alleged perpetrator might display nervousness or anxiety throughout the length of the interview, including any racial, ethnic, or cultural issues that may have an impact. Instructor should type responses on the document. Once the large group has shared, ask participants to tie their answers to potential reactions of an interviewee.

If not brought out by the group, note the following situations:

- People who are unfamiliar with the system and do not know what to expect
- A person who is in the U.S. illegally
- People who believe they will not be treated fairly by the system
- Refugees who fled from oppressive governments may have tremendous fear of any government representative
- Parents who may fear that their children will be taken away

The child welfare professional must be careful to conduct a thorough investigation. The interpretation of behaviors that indicate nervousness must also be viewed with a critical eye. For instance, avoiding eye contact is often interpreted as being indicative of nervousness but may actually be a shame reaction. In some cultures, avoiding eye contact signifies respect, not nervousness.

Interviewing and assessment of the alleged perpetrator is important for providing additional information to the child welfare professional to make quality decisions and for planning appropriate interventions with the alleged perpetrator. At times a specialized forensic assessment may be conducted, typically exploring the child's/contact's statements, police records, and medical records. The alleged perpetrator may display a variety of emotions: anger, disgust, horror, anxiety, or nervousness. Note that most people are initially nervous when being interviewed by a law enforcement officer or child welfare professional. Some people become less nervous after a few minutes, especially when a child welfare professional has carefully established rapport.

Remind participants that the alleged perpetrator has not yet been confirmed as someone who committed the acts of which they are accused. The alleged perpetrator is also a client for whom services may be needed and deserves to be treated in an ethical manner.

### **Step 3: (10 minutes) Making Connections**

Having discussed how to interview both the identified child and a non-offending parent, child welfare professionals will learn information about and techniques for interviewing alleged perpetrators. As with other interviews, it is important that the child welfare professional remain unbiased and non-judgmental in order to elicit information and engage the alleged perpetrator in a working relationship.

Display **PowerPoint Slide #50 (Activity) on shared screen**. Assign each group one of the following topics: Preparation Stage, Beginning and Introductions Stage, Questioning

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and Clarification Stage, Ending and Transitions Stage, and Alleged Perpetrator is a Non-Family Member. Ask participants to go back to their breakout room, and discuss the assigned topic. Groups should take 5 minutes in their breakout room to discuss and record how interviewing the alleged perpetrator differs from interviewing the other subjects of the report (child, parents) in light of their assigned topic. While they are discussing, the trainer should go in the breakout rooms and assist groups as appropriate. Advise participants that each group will have 3-5 minutes to present their information to the rest of the participants. Advise participants that they may wish to refer back to **Handout #13 (Structuring Interview Questions)**; distribute via Zoom chat before sending participants to breakout rooms. Inform participants that the trainer will provide additional information following each group report out.

**Instructor Note:** It is preferred that participants work in the same teams that were formed at the beginning of the training session. If you do not have 5 teams, you may wish to assign each team more than one role from **PPT Slide #50** OR you may wish to assign each team one role and work on the remaining components as a large group.

### Step 4: (10 minutes) Preparation Stage

Highlight the following information if not brought out by participants:

- It is important to coordinate with law enforcement during the investigation.
  - Section 6334.1 of the amended CPSL (2014) states that "if the suspected child abuse is alleged to have been committed by a perpetrator and the behavior constituting the suspected child abuse may include a violation of a criminal offense, the appropriate county agency and law enforcement officials shall jointly investigate the allegations through the investigative team established in Section 6365(c)."
  - Section 6365(c) of the amended CPSL (2014) requires that "a multidisciplinary investigative team shall be used to coordinate child abuse investigations between county agencies and law enforcement...The multidisciplinary investigative team shall consist of those individuals and agencies responsible for investigating the abuse or for providing services to the child and shall at a minimum include a health care provider, county caseworker and law enforcement official."
- While child welfare professionals are often effective interviewers of children and parents, law enforcement officers typically possess specific knowledge and skills for interviewing "suspects" of alleged crimes.
- Ideally, the investigative interviewing of alleged perpetrators should be done by law enforcement in conjunction with child welfare professionals.
- Historically, law enforcement recorded many interviews with alleged perpetrators.
- Documentation for demonstrating the Miranda waivers were knowing and voluntary and that the alleged perpetrator had the competence to successfully waive them is important in recording or note-taking during the interview.

- If law enforcement is unable to co-interview with the child welfare professional, the child welfare professional must ascertain whether or not law enforcement would prefer to interview the alleged perpetrator prior to the child welfare professional.
- Section 6368(l) of the amended CPSL (2014) outlines the notice of investigation process:
  - Prior to interviewing a subject of a report, the county agency shall orally notify the subject, except for the alleged victim, who is about to be interviewed of the following information:
    - The existence of the report
    - The subject's rights under 42 Pa.C.S. § 6337 (relating to right to counsel) and 6338 (relating to other basic rights)
    - The subject's right to have an attorney present during the interview
  - Written notice shall be given to the subject within 72 hours following oral notification, unless delayed.
- While sometimes the interview may take place in the home, generally it will occur in the police station, agency, or prison.
- As much as possible, the interview setting needs to be free of distractions, such as extraneous papers, documents, photos, pictures, windows, telephones, radios, and noise, especially when held at the police station.
- An alleged perpetrator in custody or incarcerated on charges related to the offense must be given a Miranda warning, including that a person who is accused of a crime has the right to remain silent and the right to have an attorney present during questioning.
- The interview may have to be postponed until an attorney can be secured.
- If the interview is conducted with an attorney present, careful note-taking or recording of the interview is essential.
- It is necessary to inform alleged perpetrators that the child welfare professional will be cooperating with law enforcement.
- If the alleged perpetrator refuses to cooperate with an interview, the CPS report will be based on the other sources of evidence available.
- The child welfare professional must explain why removal is necessary within the context of the development of a safety plan for the child and should not use it as a threat.

The interview with the alleged perpetrator is typically held at a police station or sheriff's office, in order to assure safety and to meet requirements of the law enforcement interview. Note that the alleged perpetrator has the right to choose not to answer questions without the presence of an attorney.

Many forensic specialists employ a variety of assessment tools and objective measures to assist them in rendering decisions regarding an offender's level of risk to the community. There are different assessment tools and objective measures for adults who sexually offend than there are for juveniles who sexually offend. In order to remain current, the child welfare professional must examine the current available information in the body of the literature/research available on alleged perpetrators of sexual abuse.

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Review **PowerPoint Slide #51 (Common Sex Offender Assessment Areas)** on the shared screen. Next show **Handout #20 (Assessment Tools for Alleged Sexual Offenders)** on the shared screen for further reference.

**Instructor Note:** Note that assessment of specific areas may need to be part of a request for a forensic interview in order for the interviewer to determine which assessment tools to use. Advise participants that **Handout #20 (Assessment Tools for Alleged Sexual Offenders)** is a representative, not comprehensive, list of assessment tools and that no one tool can measure all the factors involved. The Minnesota Sex Offender Screening Tool-Revised (MnSOST-R) and the STATIC-99 are the two tools generally used by the Governor's Sex Offender Assessment Board. Child welfare professionals should be familiar with these resources and the types of factors each measures.

Child welfare professionals should be aware of the differences in terms related to CPS versus legal investigations and use the terms appropriately. For instance, the term confession indicates, in legal terms, that a person has acknowledged committing an act and has accepted responsibility for it. An admission, however, is merely an acknowledgment that the participant has, at a minimum, some knowledge or participation in an incident. This is relevant when completing the CY-48: the “perpetrator admission” checkbox and the narrative.

When recording, child welfare professionals should document any breaks, when and if the alleged perpetrator was advised of their rights under the Miranda warning, in addition to any admissions that they make. In addition, the CY-48 should contain a concise report of the allegations and response of the alleged perpetrator.

**Instructor Note:** Display **PowerPoint Slide #52 (Delay of Notification)** on the shared screen for information regarding delay of notification to the alleged perpetrator regarding the investigation, refer to **Trainer Resource #9 (Delay of Notification)**.

Another difference between the interview with the alleged perpetrator and other interviews is the potential for the child welfare professionals to have to issue a Miranda Warning. In 1988, the Department of Human Services issued a memorandum concerning child welfare professionals giving Miranda Warnings to alleged perpetrators of child abuse. The memorandum states, “CPS caseworkers must provide Miranda warnings to an alleged perpetrator who is in the custody of law enforcement on criminal charges related to the alleged abuse that the CPS caseworker is investigating.” The child welfare professional does not have to give Miranda rights to an alleged perpetrator who is in the custody of law enforcement officials on criminal charges not related to the alleged abuse being investigated nor to an alleged perpetrator who is not in custody.

**Instructor Note:** Reference: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Office of Child Welfare Services, **Special Transmittal (April 12, 1988) from Thomas R. Jenkins, Director.** See **Trainer Resource #10 (Miranda Warning Transmittal)** for full text and sample form.

If a child welfare professional is planning to interview an alleged perpetrator who is in custody on charges related to the alleged abuse, the worker should ensure they are familiar with their agency policies and procedures regarding this and are familiar with any forms they would be expecting the alleged perpetrator to sign.

**Step 5: (10 minutes)**  
**Beginning and Introductions Stage**

Once the child welfare professional is prepared, they would then follow through with the interview, starting with the Beginning and Introductions Stage. Ask the group assigned that stage to present their findings. If not included, highlight the following:

- Child welfare professionals must verify the identity of the alleged perpetrator.
- The alleged perpetrator must be informed:
  - What the presenting allegations are
  - That the child welfare professional's job is to protect the child
  - That no final decision has yet been made, prompting the need for the investigation
- If the alleged perpetrator is in police custody on charges related to the incident, the child welfare professional must provide the alleged perpetrator the Miranda warning and ensure the alleged perpetrator understands their rights.
- It is important to note that the child welfare professional is cooperating with law enforcement and will release information obtained during the interview to officials in the appropriate jurisdiction.
  - Section 6340(a)(9) of the amended CPSL (2014) states that reports shall only be made available to law enforcement officials of any jurisdiction, as long as the information is relevant in the course of investigating cases of:
    - Homicide or other criminal offense set forth in section 6344(c) (employees having contact with children; adoptive and foster parents), sexual abuse or exploitation, bodily injury or serious bodily injury caused by a perpetrator or non-perpetrator.
    - Child abuse other than that identified under the previous paragraph by a non-perpetrator.
    - Repeated physical injury to a child under circumstances which indicate that the child's health, safety or welfare is harmed or threatened.
    - A missing child report
- If the alleged perpetrator is not willing to discuss the allegations of sexual abuse, they may still be willing to provide some background and family information.

Show **Video Clip #10 (Projective Questioning)** on the shared screen to demonstrate how child welfare professionals may approach the topic of sexual abuse and bridge to sexualized content while interviewing an alleged perpetrator.

**Step 6: (10 minutes)**  
**Questioning and Clarification Stage**

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The bridge to sexualized content would then move participants to the Questioning and Clarification Stage of the interview. If not shared by participants, review the following:

- The interviewer will observe the alleged perpetrator's communication patterns for indications of truthfulness.
- Child welfare professionals/other MDIT members must listen for and document corroboration of prior information as well as any new information the alleged perpetrator might disclose.
- Asking questions to which the child welfare professional already knows the answer is useful in assessing when the alleged perpetrator is lying or telling the truth.
- Child welfare professionals should:
  - Remain calm
  - Communicate their commitment to fairness in their tone of voice and professional behavior
  - Avoid making judgments or negative statements about the alleged perpetrator's behavior
- Child welfare professionals should conclude the interview if they feel unsafe or threatened. A law enforcement officer or another worker should accompany the child welfare professional who is fearful or uncertain of an alleged perpetrator.
- It is often difficult to gather accurate and complete information regarding someone's sexual history, especially if that individual is alleged to have committed a sexual crime.
- The alleged perpetrator is invested in "keeping the secret." The alleged perpetrator has a lot to lose, possibly their children, family, home, reputation, and/or their own past secrets. They may protect it at all costs by adamantly denying the allegations or minimizing the sexual offense. The alleged perpetrator may also be embarrassed, be scared to go to jail, or may not want the abuse to stop.
- If the alleged perpetrator denies the sexual abuse, the child welfare professional must evaluate:
  - Is there an admission of many of the facts, but not that sexual abuse occurred?
  - Is there denial of many of the facts, as well as denial of the sexual abuse?
  - Is the alleged offender denying the allegation based on characteristics of the victim (for example, that the child is a liar or is angry with the offender for other reasons)?
  - Is the alleged perpetrator saying that the abuse did not occur because the offender did not have access to the victim at the time or dates of the supposed offenses?

Note that some form of confrontation may become necessary during the interview. Explain that confrontation does not mean the child welfare professional becomes angry. It is just sharing information or beliefs directly with the person being interviewed. This can be as simple as saying, "Angelina said you messed with her while giving her a bath." The child welfare professional must be comfortable in asking very personal and

detailed questions, starting with the use of proper words denoting genitalia and sexual actions and also including the terminology used by the alleged perpetrator.

Use **Video Clip #11 (Confrontation)** on the shared screen to show one way in which confrontation may occur during interviews. Note that alleged perpetrators may react to the disclosure by providing “reasons” why what occurred was not abuse, such as it being a form of training or protection to the child, or it being a mutually desired occurrence or activity.

Show **Handout #21 (Guidelines for Recording Sexual History)** on the shared screen as these may be helpful in reminding participants of the types of questions they may want to use or adapt to this interview. Remind participants that alleged perpetrators may also have been sexually abused as children so directing the questions regarding children to the alleged perpetrator may be useful. In addition, some questions may also reveal further sexual trauma received or perpetrated. All such information is important to understanding the needs and motivations of the alleged perpetrator.

#### **Step 7: (5 minutes)** **Ending and Transitions Stage**

Display and review **PowerPoint Slide #53 (Interviewing Alleged Perpetrators)** on the shared screen, as well as **PowerPoint Slide #54 (Assuring the Child’s Safety)** while discussing the following points:

**Instructor Note:** If these bullet-pointed items have already been covered by the group reporting out, simply review the slides and continue with the rest of the section.

- A safety plan should be developed which will address appropriate visitation between the child and the alleged perpetrator.
- Child welfare professionals should seek the cooperation of the alleged perpetrator in voluntarily refraining from any contact with the child victim.
- The alleged perpetrator should be advised that the investigation generally takes 30 days but may take as long as 60 days.
- Engaging the alleged perpetrator during the initial interview may result in further cooperation with the investigatory process.
- Scaling questions can be used to assess the alleged perpetrator’s level of cooperation (willingness to cooperate) during the rest of the investigatory process.
- The law enforcement officer may request that the alleged perpetrator come to the police station for a polygraph test.
- An arrest may be made during the CPS investigation but this does not guarantee that the alleged perpetrator will remain in jail nor that they will stop all contact with the child.
- When placing a child or seeking protective custody, the “no-contact” agreement should be made part of the juvenile court order for support to the non-offending parent, school, and other caretakers.

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- If applicable, the non-offending parent may also need to seek a Protection from Abuse order.
- It is important to talk to the alleged perpetrator regarding the effects of this separation and/or court orders, if applicable.
- In making a determination, evaluate whether the alleged perpetrator has:
  - A possible alibi
  - A partial admission to the allegations of/circumstances surrounding sexual abuse
  - A full admission to all facts and circumstances surrounding the allegations (and any new incidents/offenses)
- It is important to ask if the alleged perpetrator has any questions prior to closing the interview and also to provide any positive feedback possible, including their willingness to participate in the interview.
- The child welfare professional should thank the alleged perpetrator and indicate the likely next steps of the investigation.
- Referrals should be made to individual counseling, sex offender's group, or other community resources which can be of assistance to the alleged perpetrator. This should include shelter information if the alleged perpetrator is leaving the home and has nowhere else to stay.

Remind participants that it is important to address any identified or underlying needs of the alleged perpetrator and to refer them for any needed services, regardless of their guilt or innocence. In his book, *The Skills of Helping Individuals Families, Groups, and Communities* (2006), Lawrence Shulman explains:

“It is important to see that identifying the taboo or any other obstacle is done to free the client’s energy to work on the mutually agreed-upon contract. Sometimes simply naming the obstacle will release the client from its power. In other situations, some exploration of the obstacle may be needed before its impact abates. For example, a client might need to talk briefly about the difficulty they feel in discussing issues related to sex. Their family norms might have added to the pressure against such open discussion.”

Conclude this segment by giving the participants time to reflect upon the materials and highlight any areas they might want to note for improvement. Ask participants to use **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) or other blank document** to capture key learning points from this section of the training. Ask participants to share what they wrote on the handout.

## **203 Remote: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse Cases**

### **Section IX: Interviewing Collateral Contacts**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

50 minutes

#### **Key Concepts:**

- ✓ Understanding the importance of interviewing siblings and others who have knowledge of alleged incidents is crucial to the effective investigation of child sexual abuse.
- ✓ Being aware of collateral contacts' roles in the investigation will assist in case planning.
- ✓ Understanding the roles of community partners during the investigation and working together collaboratively minimizes trauma to the child and family.

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, small group activity and large group discussion

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Two Instructor-Prepared Word Documents
- ✓ Electronic device; 1 per instructor/participant
- ✓ **Appendix #5 (Community Partner Activity Cards)**
- ✓ **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) (Revisited)**
- ✓ **Handout #22 (Act 55: Family Finding and Kinship Care)**
- ✓ **Trainer Resource #11 (Additional Information for Community Partners Activity)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #55 (Act 55)**
- ✓ **PowerPoint Slide #56 (Collaboration with Other Agencies)**

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

- Introduction
- Issues related to family and other household members
- Partnering with school personnel
- Teaming with community partners

## **Section IX: Interviewing Collateral Contacts**

### **Step 1: (5 minutes)**

#### **Introduction**

In order to successfully investigate child sexual abuse allegations, the child welfare professional must interview anyone who is believed to have knowledge about the alleged sexual abuse. This can include other family members or people in the community, whose contact with one of the members may have given them knowledge that would illuminate the investigation.

Identifying information, such as full name, dates of birth/age, address, parents' names and social security numbers, when known, are necessary when gathering information from collateral contacts or when contacts are providing information about other potential victims.

### **Step 2: (10 minutes)**

#### **Other Family or Household Members**

Other family or household members can have many of the same reactions as the siblings. Sexual abuse can put extended family members in difficult binds. Loyalties are often conflicted. The perpetrator's side of the family does not believe the allegation while the non-offending parent's side of the family does or those that live in the household believe the child while other members of the family and friends do not. Child welfare professionals need to be aware of these loyalties and be sensitive to this difficulty.

Family members can be very important to an investigation. They can provide corroborating information and many provide financial, emotional, or physical help to the family. Family members might also be able to provide an informal or kinship care placement for the identified child and siblings if the non-offending parent cannot protect the child or children from abuse or retaliation.

Child welfare professionals can help families deal with the allegations and subsequent investigation by asking family members to focus on the safety of the child or children, by letting family members know that the child welfare professional believes the child, by urging family members to spend energy on helping family members rather than defending the family against outsiders, and by being sensitive to family members who may be asked to help in ways that burden them financially or emotionally.

Family members should also be made aware of any community resources which can be of help to them, especially if they are to provide care to the children. Special attention should be given to any religious beliefs, especially in regard to the selection of counselors. If possible, children should remain in their home school districts to minimize the impact of the trauma, separation, and placement. If the children are placed with a non-relative, every effort should be made to ensure that the child is able to attend family functions, have sibling visits, and maintain cultural and religious ties to their own community. Display **PowerPoint Slide #55 (Act 55)** on the shared screen. Next refer participants to **Handout #22 (Act 55: Family Finding and Kinship Care)** on the

shared screen. Explain to participants that Act 55 requires county children and youth agencies to search for and identify extended relatives and kin who may be willing to support children and families entering the child welfare system. Support should be given to caregivers, including transportation assistance and coordination of visits in the most home-like setting possible.

**Step 3: (15 minutes)**  
**School Personnel**

School personnel, especially teachers and school nurses, are excellent sources of corroborating information that can help you confirm or deny an allegation of child sexual abuse. They may be able to offer information on children's behaviors associated with child sexual abuse, have insight into the child's relationship with their family members, or have observed medical or psychological conditions that might be associated with child sexual abuse. School employees are mandated reporters. The definition of school includes vocational, charter, and private schools, as well as colleges and universities (23 Pa. C.S. § 6303). Mandated reporters who have reason to suspect that a child is a victim of abuse and who are staff as a school facility must themselves make an immediate and direct report to ChildLine. After reporting to ChildLine, the school employee must then notify the person in charge of their school. The person in charge must facilitate the cooperation of the school with any investigation of the report (23 Pa. C.S. § 6311. Persons required to report suspected child abuse).

It is important to obtain whatever documentation school personnel might have which would support the allegations, such as a noted change in the child's behavior shortly after the alleged perpetrator moved into the home or unusual injuries or symptoms (like constant stomach pain) which may be related to the abuse. As with all mandated reporters:

- A mandated reporter should immediately make a report of suspected child abuse electronically to ChildLine. If a mandated reporter cannot immediately access ChildLine electronically, they may make an oral report via the Statewide toll-free telephone number.
- A mandated reporter making an oral report of suspected child abuse shall also make a written report, which may be submitted electronically, within 48 hours to the department or county agency assigned to the case in a manner and format prescribed by the department.
- The failure of the mandated reporter to file the report shall not relieve the county agency from any duty, and the county agency shall proceed as though the mandated reporter complied with the above paragraph (23 Pa. C.S. § 6313. Reporting procedure).

Although the CPSL allows for release of medical documentation and other records when making a referral of child abuse, school districts may have policies that require releases of information to be signed for. This includes information such as school psychological or psychiatric reports when the school is cooperating with the investigation. The child welfare professionals should seek such releases even if not required so that ongoing information can be obtained and shared for monitoring the safety of and risk to the child. According to the *CPSL §6346 (a), Cooperation of other*

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agencies. *General rule*, “School districts shall cooperate with the...agency by providing them upon request with the information as is consistent with law.”

Because of the information they are required to share, school personnel often feel uninformed when it comes to the potential child victim, especially if they reported the abuse. They often want to know more about the case and the investigation than can be released due to confidentiality requirements of the laws. The child welfare professional should share information with the teacher or nurse up to the limits of the law and their own agency's policy. The *CPSL* (§6340 (a) (12), *(Release of information in confidential reports, General rule)*) indicates that the following information can be shared with the mandated reporter who made the referral: “The final status of the child abuse report...whether it be indicated, founded or unfounded” and “Any services provided, arranged for or to be provided by the county agency to protect the child.”

**Instructor Note:** Reinforce that such information cannot be shared with people other than the multidisciplinary investigative team (MDIT) or mandated reporter. At times, issues can surface during discussion of such matters in a teacher's lounge, on an elevator, while calling a parent from the office regarding follow-up services, or when speaking to a child in the hallway. If issues arise, remind school personnel that respecting confidentiality is not only a legal matter but also one of preserving the dignity of the child and family.

The child welfare professional should explain why more information cannot be shared and should also educate the referral source regarding the meaning of the various findings. For the child's health and safety, the child welfare professional should also pursue having releases signed by the parent to share needed information with school personnel. At times, school personnel may be made a part of the multi-disciplinary team related to the investigation since the school often has information vital to the investigation and may be a part of the safety plan (e.g., will not release the child to anyone other than identified caretakers, will allow the child to go to the nurse or counselor's office when needed, will help identify any potentially harmful situations).

### Step 4: (20 minutes) Teaming with Community Partners

In order to conduct a sound investigation into child sexual abuse, many professionals from various disciplines are often needed. Child welfare professionals have traditionally taken the lead in interviews with the identified child, siblings, and any additional children due to their training and experience surrounding child development, family dynamics, interviewing skills, and child sexual abuse. Other professionals (e.g., forensic interviewers, law enforcement officers) may also conduct an investigative interview separately or in combination with the child welfare professional.

Assign participants, by groups, the roles of various community partners on **Appendix #5 (Community Partner Activity Cards)**. Ask each group to discuss with whom they collaborate and assure confidentiality during a sexual abuse investigation related to the community partner on the card they were provided. Allow them 15 minutes to discuss in their respective breakout rooms. Instruct participants to document their answer on a

word document and identify a spokesperson to report out. During the large group report out, ask the other groups how this is different or the same regarding how their roles are delineated in their agencies.

**Instructor Note:** It is preferred that participants work in the same teams that were formed at the beginning of the training session. If you do not have 6 teams, you may wish to assign each team more than one role from **Appendix #5** OR you may wish to assign each team one component and work on the remaining components as a large group.

**Instructor Note:** Add information from **Trainer Resource #11 (Additional Information for Community Partners Activity)** as appropriate while groups are reporting out. Examples of confidentiality forms to be signed by multidisciplinary team members, the MDIT, or those who may be participating in/cooperating with the investigation process can be circulated, if desired.

When all groups have shared, emphasize the use of the MDIT from **Trainer Resource #11 (Additional Information for Community Partners Activity)**. Reference **PowerPoint Slide #56 (Collaboration with Other Agencies)** on the shared screen and review how the following mandates encourage collaboration while addressing issues of confidentiality:

- *§6368 Investigation of reports* of the amended CPSL (2014) contains CPS regulations outlining how and when information can be shared during and following investigations.
- *55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3130.44 (c) Confidentiality of family case records*. Allows information “necessary to protect the safety and well-being of a child” to be released, including another county agency and other providers of services to children and families with whom they are accepted for service. The other providers may have access to and the right to use identifying information in order to carry out its service responsibilities, with the amount and type of information released being determined by the county agency.
- *Juvenile Act §6311 (b)(2)(Powers and duties)*. The guardian *ad litem* for a dependent child is to represent the legal interests and the best interests of the child at every stage of the proceedings and is to be given timely access to relevant court and county agency records, which includes reports of examination of the parents or other custodian of the child pursuant to this chapter, and medical, psychological, and school records.
- *Juvenile Act (§6336 (f) Discretion of the Court)*. The court at any disposition proceeding shall have discretion to maintain the confidentiality of mental health, medical or juvenile institutional documents or juvenile probation reports.

Summarize this activity by stating that in order to effectively team with other professionals, certain principles should be kept in mind. Recognize that individual

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members or agencies may have a different agenda for the team or may allow their own professional or personal philosophies to influence the team process, making collaboration toward the common goals of child safety and a case plan even more important. Further, delineation of roles and duties for each team member is needed. Involving community partners in decision-making will ultimately lead to more positive outcomes for children and families.

Conclude this segment by giving the participants time to reflect upon the materials and highlight any areas they might want to note for improvement. Ask participants to use **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) or other blank document** to capture key learning points from this section of the training. Ask participants to share what they wrote on the handout.

## **203 Remote: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse Cases**

### **Section X: Making Decisions In Case Planning**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

50 minutes

#### **Key Concepts:**

- ✓ Knowledge gained from the interviews prepare the child welfare professional to make case planning decisions.

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, small group activity, large group discussion

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Electronic device; 1 per instructor/participant
- ✓ Two Instructor-Prepared Word Documents
- ✓ **Appendix #4 (Focused Questions Cards) (Revisited)**
- ✓ **Trainer Resource #12 (Characteristics of a Safe Environment)**
- ✓ **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) (Revisited)**

#### **Outline of Presentation**

- Safety decisions/safety plan
- Substantiation of the abuse
- Case Planning
- Case Closure

## Section X. Making Decisions in Case Planning

### Step 1: (5 minutes)

#### Safety Decisions

Having looked at how to conduct the investigation, participants will now focus on their next steps involving case planning. Hold a large group discussion with the participants about how safety threats interact with the family's protective capacities in making service plan determinations. For instance, the initial assessments in sexual abuse cases are done simultaneously with the investigation and provide the child welfare professional with a formal process for making critical decisions.

Emphasize that safety assessments are not something done once or twice during the life of the case; rather they are an ongoing activity that is constantly being evaluated, particularly as decisions are being made. Although the safety assessment only specifically addresses the primary caregivers, the interrelationships with any other household members (especially if household members come and go) is captured in the safety assessment through looking at how the primary caregivers protect or fail to protect the children.

Continual reconsideration of the current safety threats and future ongoing risk must be taken into account while it is being determined if the allegation is substantiated and the plan should be revised accordingly.

### Step 2: (10 minutes)

#### Safety Plan Development

As previously noted, an allegation of sexual abuse may represent a safety threat. When safety threats exist but the child can still remain in the home based on the protective capacity of the primary caregiver(s) with or without the assistance of reliable, suitable support people, a safety plan may need to be put in place. Always consult with your supervisor about the need for a safety plan.

A safety plan is a written arrangement between caregivers, responsible persons, and the county agency designed to control present danger and/or impending danger by mobilizing current protective capacities in order to allow the Child Protective Services (CPS) investigation, General Protective Services (GPS) assessment, and/or safety assessment to occur. The safety plan must include specifics such as under what conditions a child will remain safe in the situation in which they are currently residing and a method for monitoring compliance with the plan. The safety plan may remain in effect as long as needed (must be implemented and active as long as threats to child safety exist) and must be continually evaluated and modified as long as it is in effect. (See OCYF *Draft Bulletin #3490-08-xx, Safety Assessment and Management Process* and the accompanying *Reference Manual*.)

The belief and support of the non-offending parent is crucial to minimizing the effects of sexual abuse and facilitating the healing process for children. Child welfare professionals must determine whether the non-offending parent can support and protect

the child victim on an ongoing basis and to work on changing the family environment so that the child can be offered future protection.

Safety plans completed by the child welfare professional may include how to support the parent through use of extended family, community resources, school/medical personnel, and religious practitioners. It should note the protective capacity of the parent/family, the resiliency of the child, the potential for any threats against the child or family and how to ameliorate them. A safety plan is sufficient when it is a well, thought-out approach containing the most suitable people taking the necessary action frequently enough to control safety threats and/or substitute for diminished caregiver protective capacities. Progress and adherence to safety plans should be checked at every contact.

### **Step 3: (10 minutes)** **Substantiation of the Abuse**

Key decisions during and following the investigation include:

- Whether the report is substantiated or unsubstantiated
- Whether the agency will continue to work with or be involved with the child and family and/or if the child and family will be referred to another agency for services
- Whether emergency services are needed to protect the child from further harm while in the home
- Whether court action (protective supervision or placement) should be pursued
- Where the child should be placed, if needed
- What the permanency goal will be for the child, if placed

(Brittain & Hunt, 2004)

The use of supervision during a child sexual abuse case is a crucial aspect of the investigation, for case review, feedback, guidance, and case direction. At a minimum, the supervisor must review the case with the worker every ten (10) days. Although experienced child welfare professionals may possess the advanced skills needed to conduct sexual abuse investigations, they will still require supervision to discuss the content and direction of the case. Marsha Salus identified the significance of supervision when she stated, “Any decision that affects the safety or permanency to the child must be made in consultation with the supervisor” (2004).

As best practice and in keeping with the Pennsylvania Standards, supervision should occur at least once a week. The regulations (*3490.61(a) Supervisory Review and Child Contacts*) mandate that the supervisor review the case at least once every 10 days, dependent on the level of risk to the child, and record essential elements on the supervisor’s log. It is crucial for supervisors and child welfare professionals to review all of the information obtained during the ongoing investigation. Supervision should focus on engagement of the child and family, risk and safety assessments and the associated decision plans, comprehensive assessments of all subjects of the report, factors affecting the decision-making process, and development of a case plan. Consultation with the rest of the MDIT,

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other professionals, and family members should occur throughout the investigation and be taken into account when decisions are being made.

Supervisors and child welfare professionals should determine if the case should be unfounded, indicated, or founded. Since a founded determination is from the court, it is not generally the finding during the initial investigation but the determination on an amended form at a later time. The supervisor and child welfare professional will want to weigh all of the information obtained during the investigation, including other possible explanations, and rule in or out whether or not sexual abuse likely occurred per statutory guidelines. They should then identify specifically what services are needed in order to ensure the safety, well-being, and permanency of children in child sexual abuse cases.

**Instructor Note:** “Founded Report.” A child abuse report involving a perpetrator that is made pursuant to the CPSL, if any of the following applies:

1. There has been a judicial adjudication based on a finding that a child who is a subject of the report has been abused and the adjudication involves the same factual circumstances involved in the allegation of child abuse. The judicial adjudication may include any of the following:
  - i. The entry of a plea of guilty or nolo contendere
  - ii. A finding of guilt to a criminal charge
  - iii. A finding of dependency under 42 Pa. C.S. §6341 (relating to adjudication) if the court has entered a finding that a child who is the subject of the report has been abused.
  - iv. A finding of delinquency under 42 Pa. C.S. §6341 if the court has entered a finding that the child who is the subject of the report has been abused by the child who was found to be delinquent.
2. There has been an acceptance into an accelerated rehabilitative disposition program and the reason for the acceptance involves the same factual circumstances involved in the allegation of child abuse.
3. There has been a consent decree entered in a juvenile proceeding under 42 Pa. C.S. Ch. 63 (relating the juvenile matters), the decree involves the same factual circumstances involved in the allegation of child abuse and the terms and conditions of the consent decree include and acknowledgement, admission or finding that a child who is the subject of the report has been abused by the child who is alleged to be delinquent.
4. A final protection from abuse order has been granted under section 6108 (relating to relief), when the child who is a subject of the report is one of the individuals protected under the protections from abuse order and:
  - i. Only one individual is charged with the abuse in the protection from abuse
  - ii. Only that individual defends against the charge
  - iii. The adjudication involves the same factual circumstances involved in the allegation of child abuse
  - iv. The protection from abuse adjudication finds that the child abuse occurred (23 Pa. C.S. §6303. Definitions, 2014)

concisely when completing their report either in writing or through electronic

technologies. Note that, according to §6303 of the amended CPSL (2014) defines indicated report as:

1. An investigation by the Department or county agency determines that substantial evidence of the alleged abuse by a perpetrator exists based on any of the following:
  - i. Available medical evidence
  - ii. The child protective service investigation
  - iii. An admission of the acts of abuse by the perpetrator
2. A report may be indicated for any child who is the victim of child abuse, regardless of the number of alleged perpetrators
3. A report may be indicated under paragraph (1) (i) or (ii) listing the perpetrator as "unknown" if substantial evidence of abuse by a perpetrator exists, but the department or county agency is unable to identify the specific perpetrator.

If the case is unfounded, services may still be provided, if warranted for other reasons. Generally, cases will not be founded (determining in juvenile court or criminal court to be abuse or a crime related to abuse) before the end of the 30- or 60-day investigative period. It should be noted that a report must be unfounded if the CY-48 is not submitted to ChildLine by the 60-day deadline. Generally, if the case is indicated (determined to be true, based on the CPS investigation, medical evidence, and/or other corroborating evidence), the family is accepted for ongoing services. If the case is already open for ongoing in-home or placement services, an amendment to the Family Service Plan/Child Permanency Plan and any accompanying court documents will need to be made to reflect the changes.

#### **Step 4: (5 minutes)** **Case Planning**

Remind the participants that, according to *Pennsylvania Standard I-E (Permanence)*, the child welfare professional must work directly with and involve all family members, as well as others involved with the family, in a comprehensive family-focused assessment to determine the strengths and needs of the family. The initial family-focused assessment must be completed within sixty (60) calendar days of the referral, also per *Pennsylvania Standard I-C (Make Investigative Decisions)*, and must include: an assessment of the family's living conditions, the family's financial situation, available family and community supports, parent/child interactions, parenting skills, substance abuse, functioning and behaviors of the children, parents' history and personal characteristics, parents' developmental levels, and interactions between the parents and/or among household members.

Again, the importance of engaging the subjects of the report and the family members needs to be emphasized. This may become especially important if there is a circumstance in which the alleged perpetrator is willing to leave the home voluntarily but then chooses to move in with another client family or other person with children in the home. It is important not to violate confidentiality when concerned for the other client or family. Maintaining relationships and providing ongoing guidance to all those involved with the abuse is paramount.

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### Step 5: (10 minutes) Arranging Services

In keeping with their previously assigned roles (referral source, child, sibling, non-offending parent, alleged perpetrator, collateral contacts) from **Appendix #4 (Focused Questions Cards)**, instruct participants to identify examples of services or assistance that might be offered to or provided by those in the various roles as part of the case planning process. Ask participants to consider how it would differ if the child were to remain in the home with a safety plan versus going to kinship or substitute care. Allow 15 minutes for large group discussion.

Highlight that, dependent on the siblings' reactions and pre-existing mental health conditions, the sibling may also need to be referred for services in the community. Appropriate family members should be identified as alternatives for the children if the parent is not available. Siblings should also be included in discussion of the Family Service Plan, especially if they are over the age of 14.

The child welfare professional should work with the treatment professionals, educators, medical personnel, and others who are working with family members as a team. Best practice is for the same mental health therapist to be providing treatment to the child and the non-offending parent in order for family therapy to take place seamlessly, when appropriate. The perpetrator should receive services from a different provider to help assure the safety of the child and to avoid any conflicts of interest for the provider.

It is vital to establish clear treatment goals for the child victim, the non-offending parent and the alleged perpetrator, especially in cases where reunification or case closure is a goal. As previously identified, the child welfare professional should obtain any needed releases and coordinate the family, therapists and other professionals working together, sharing information, and assessing the readiness of all parties for case closure and/or reunification.

It is important for child welfare professionals to recognize that therapy is not required for all children who have been sexually abused. Typical treatment for child victims deals with the effects of the sexual abuse and the effects of the investigation on the child. Although many details of the abuse might surface during the therapeutic process, the focus should remain on healing for the child.

Trauma work or the facilitation of the healing process takes place in the everyday world of the child. Thus, all of the adults in the child's life are involved in providing therapeutic services to the child. The child welfare professional, armed with the appropriate resources and support, is one individual who can assist the child's caregivers in moving toward healthiness with the child from the point of investigation to the establishment of permanency for children.

For children in care, the restructuring process might be even more difficult since cognitive distortions of worthiness and blame are reinforced by their removal from their home. Thus, it is vital that kinship providers and foster parents dedicate an

extraordinary amount of time restructuring children's cognitive beliefs and values. Child welfare agencies must utilize concurrent planning from the outset in the event the children are unable to return home.

When children are acting out, behavior management is therapeutic work that is essentially conducted outside of therapy. Therapists assist the child's caregivers in identifying the problematic behavior, identifying the need that the behavior fills, developing a plan to address the behavior, and working on strategies to replace the behavior with more positive behaviors. Creative approaches and strategies using the non-offending parent, relatives, and formal supports within the community, such as schools and religious communities, are the key to minimizing problematic behaviors for children who are sexually abused.

Ask the group for participants to identify topic areas that they believe should be included in treatment. Areas of concern might include the following information:

- How to respond and manage the child who was victimized and sibling groups
- Emphasize communication
- Parenting skills (focusing on boundary establishment, rules in the family, power issues)
- Understanding sexual abuse
- Non-offending parents as victims of the offender's cognitive distortions
- Dependency issues of the non-offending parent
- Drug/Alcohol issues, if applicable
- Non-offending parent's own victimization, if applicable (Elliott & Carnes, 2001; Deblinger, Steer & Lippman, 1999)

Sex offender treatment for adult males has primarily been a specialized treatment model. The prevailing type of treatment that has been endorsed over the years is a cognitive-behavioral approach, often administered in a group setting. Working with adult sex offenders requires that any type of intervention be conducted with an emphasis on community safety. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) operates under the premise that thoughts, feelings (affect), and behavior are interrelated and influence each other. Specialized assessment is necessary to identify any deviant sexual interests which then require interventions to promote sufficient and effective sexual self-regulation.

Treatment assists the offender with identifying stressors and cognitive distortions, challenging assumptions or rigid beliefs, and identifying and developing strategies to replace them with healthier, more flexible, and appropriate thoughts. CBT has also been identified as the best course of treatment for dealing with juveniles who sexually offend (Worling, OJJDP, 2000). Treatment for children and adolescents needs to be individualized and in consideration of their developmental context and should include their caretakers whenever possible. Treatment should be designed to facilitate understanding of the contextual and internal factors which contributed to the juvenile's sexual acting out/offending behaviors, identify risks related to the potential for recidivism, and develop both internal interventions and external structure to assure safety.

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In addition to these treatment components, some sex offenders might require pharmacological intervention to help manage their sexual impulses. Identify that there is a website in Pennsylvania that provides treatment and management standards for sexually violent predators as well as information by zip code of registered offenders – <http://www.meganslaw.state.pa.us/soab/site/default.asp>.

**Instructor Note:** For participants' benefit, the instructor may want to type the website information in the Zoom chat.

**Step 6:** (10 minutes)

### Next Steps

Continuing with the case planning process, child welfare professionals need to consider each component. Title type the following into the Zoom chat: “**ASSESSMENT + CASEWORK = CASE PLAN.**” State that a thorough assessment, as previously described is important in order to provide safety information to the child welfare system as well as to plan for appropriate interventions and monitoring of the child and family.

Ask participants, after they are finished interviewing all subjects of the report, what their next steps might be? Record answers in the Zoom chat. Participants might mention:

1. Safety decision
2. Placement decision
3. Family Service Plan
4. Permanency planning which is done using concurrent planning
  - a. Goal or permanency goals inform objectives and objectives inform the services chosen
5. Case closure

Facilitate a discussion with the large group around how investigative interviewing informs these next steps.

Tell participants that case planning sexual abuse cases requires specialized knowledge. *209: Family Reunification and Case Closure in Child Sexual Abuse Cases* will provide further information on the next steps of a sexual abuse case.

Conclude this segment by giving the participants time to reflect upon the materials and highlight any areas they might want to note for improvement. Ask participants to use **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) or other blank document** to capture key learning points from this section of the training. Ask participants to share what they wrote on the handout.

## **203 Remote: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse Cases**

### **Section XI: Practice Interviewing**

#### **Estimated Length of Time:**

1 hour

#### **Key Concepts:**

- ✓ Putting classroom learning to use within the first 24 hours helps solidify new material into permanent practice.

#### **Method of Presentation:**

Lecture, triads, small group and individual activities, large group discussion

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Instructor-Prepared Word Document
- ✓ Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) (Revisited)
- ✓ Handout #4 (The Mary Referral) (Revisited)
- ✓ Handout #11 (More About Mary) (Revisited)
- ✓ Handout #13 (Structuring Interview Questions) (Revisited)
- ✓ Handout #14 (Developmental Issues in Interviewing Children) (Revisited)
- ✓ Handout #15 (Checklist for Interviewing/Questioning Children) (Revisited)
- ✓ Handout #18 (Non-Offending Parent Interview Issues: Beginning and Introductions Stage) (Revisited)
- ✓ Handout #19 (Non-Offending Parent Interview Issues: Questioning and Clarification Stage) (Revisited)
- ✓ Handout #23 (Scenario: Interviewing the Identified Child)
- ✓ Handout #24 (Scenario: Interviewing the Non-Offending Parent)
- ✓ Handout #25 (Scenario: Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator)

#### **Outline of Presentation:**

- Preparation for interview activity
- Practice interviews
- Process out of various stages of interviews

## Section XI: Practice Interviewing

### Step 1: (10 minutes) Preparing for the Interview

Now that participants have gained an understanding of how an investigation is planned and how each stage of the interview is crucial to its outcome, inform participants that they will have an opportunity to practice interviewing. Advise participants that the purpose of this exercise is to allow them the opportunity to apply the information that they received on interviewing the identified child, siblings, the non-offending parent/caregiver, the alleged perpetrator, and collateral contacts. The practice interviews will be approximately 5 minutes long. Acknowledge that an entire interview cannot be conducted in the time allotted for this activity.

Designate a category for each of the groups (the identified child, siblings, the non-offending parent/caregiver, the alleged perpetrator and collateral contacts).

Once groups have been assigned to a categories of people to be interviewed, inform participants that they will take turns playing each one of the following roles: interviewer, interviewee, and observer.

Inform participants that they will process out the activity initially within their breakout rooms. The small groups will then reconvene with the large group to summarize learning points.

**Instructor Note:** It is preferred that participants work in the same teams that were formed at the beginning of the training session. If you do not have 6 teams, you may wish to assign each team more than one role OR you may wish to assign each team one component and work on the remaining components as a large group.

Distribute the Scenario Handouts to each group via Zoom chat, which would include: **Handout #23 (Scenario: Interviewing the Identified Child)**, **Handout #24 (Scenario: Interviewing the Non-Offending Parent)**, and **Handout #25 (Scenario: Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator)**. Remind participants that further information regarding the referral, allegations and family situation can be found on **Handout #4 (The Mary Referral)**, **Handout #11 (More About Mary)**, and **Handout #13 (Structuring Interview Questions)**.

Refer participants to additional handouts related to their particular interview. For example: child: **Handout #14 (Developmental Issues in Interviewing Children)** and **Handout #15 (Checklist for Interviewing/Questioning Children)**; and non-offending parent: **Handouts #18 (Non-Offending Parent Interview Issues: Beginning and Introductions Stage)** and **#19 (Non-Offending Parent Interview Issues: Questioning and Clarification Stage)**.

After assigning each group a role, direct participants that the breakout rooms are open and instruct participants that they will use a **blank Word Document** to record

information regarding each stage of the interview. Advise participants this information will then be used in discussion with the other members of their group.

Ask participants to take about 25 minutes in their groups to:

- Discuss decisions to be made in preparation for the interview and record those items on a Word Document. (approximately 5 minutes)
- Decide which stage of the interview each participant in their group wishes to practice: Beginning and Introduction, Questioning and Clarification, or Ending and Transitions. (Each participant within the group should select a different stage.)
- Select which person will be the interviewer, interviewee, and the observer for each stage.
- Practice interviewing each other, starting with the Beginning & Introductions Stage. Each interview should last approximately 5 minutes.
- Stop after each stage of the interview for the observer to record their reactions and responses to the exercise on their Word Document.

Remind participants to develop questions that are both open- and close-ended in their preparation phase. Advise participants that, following the allotted time, they will reconvene as a large group to report out on each stage of the interview, noting similarities and differences between their findings.

### **Step 2: (25 minutes) Practice of Interviews**

**Instructor Note:** During this activity, go into the breakout rooms to assist participants in re-phrasing questions as needed and to promote thinking through the goals of the stage they are practicing. It is vital to assist the teams during the interviewing process as this is an activity where participants are allowed and encouraged to make mistakes. Spend some time with each of the groups, although some teams will need more assistance than others. Look for comprehensive yet fair questioning of each party (non-offending parent, alleged perpetrator, etc.).

Remind participants after the initial 5 minutes to record their Preparation Stage feedback and to begin their practice interviews, if they have not already done so. Approximately every 5 minutes afterward, remind participants to record observer feedback and to switch roles, if they have not already done so.

### **Step 3: (15 minutes) Processing Out**

After approximately 25 minutes or when most participants appear to be done, bring participants back to the main room. Instruct groups to have their group's Word Document ready (**Instructor note: groups will send saved Word Document to the Moderator via email or via chat for Moderator to display at the appointed time on the shared screen**).

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Following the allotted time, reconvene the large group and ask each group to review their findings with the large group via the Word Document on the shared screen. Ask for each group to share what they had thought about for the Preparation Stage, announcing which interviewee they had chosen. Follow this up with other groups sharing how their thoughts were the same or different. Summarize any common themes shared by participants and then move on to the other stages of the interview, always beginning with the child group(s) and ending with collateral contacts in order to reinforce proper sequencing of interviews. Summarize common themes at the completion of discussion regarding each stage.

Ask volunteers to share what surprised them the most about the interview and what area they may need to concentrate on in future interviews. Ask them to identify one resource or person who could help them. Instruct participants who did not share to also reflect on these issues. Allow 30 seconds of silence for reflection and then solicit any closing comments.

Conclude this segment by giving the participants time to reflect upon the materials and highlight any areas they might want to note for improvement. Ask participants to use **Handout #2 (Agenda/Idea Catcher) or other document** to capture key learning points from this section of the training. Ask participants to share what they wrote on the handout.

# **203: Investigative Interviewing in Child Sexual Abuse Cases**

## **Section XII: Closing & Evaluation**

### **Estimated Length of Time:**

15 minutes

### **Key Concepts:**

- ✓ Adult learning principles indicate that concepts used within the first 24 hours after training are more likely to become long-term changes.

### **Method of Presentation:**

Individual activities, lecture, large group discussion

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ **Handout #26: Action Plan**
- ✓ **Handout #27: References**
- ✓ Bridge

### **Outline of Presentation:**

- Wrap-up
- Completion of action plan and training evaluation

## Section XII: Closing & Evaluation

### Step 1: (15 minutes) Wrapping Up Activity

Display **Handout #26 (Action Plan)** on the shared screen and ask participants to:

- Think about how their new awareness of investigation and interviewing might change the way they approach their work
- Write down what they might want to add to their existing work or change about their work

Ask participants to reflect and complete the document plan on a piece of paper. After 10 minutes ask individuals to share their thoughts with the group. Guide a discussion about their thoughts.

Thank the group for their participation. Share **Handout #27 (References) or the link to this handout on the CWRC website** and inform participants that the information on the references page provides resources that may be of interest to them.

Open Bridge and navigate to the manage check in screen, and change the date in the “Attendance Date” field to the current date. Record the attendance for day 2, followed by clicking the “Close Daily Attendance” button.

Finally, ask participants to log in to Bridge and complete their evaluation. Workshop evaluations are sent to each participant’s que on their home screen of Bridge when their attendance has been confirmed on the last day of the workshop. These evals will not show up in a participant’s que, until their attendance is confirmed, and the workshop daily attendance has been closed.

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