Expanding Our Definition of "Forensic Interview": Two Models for an Extended Forensic Process

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Agenda
- History & development
- Referral process
- Session overview
- Explanation of sessions
- Parting thoughts
- Questions

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

- Recognize limitations of single-session model
  - May not fit an individual child's needs
  - Child may need more than one opportunity
  - Relies on the child's willingness and ability (Faller, Cordisco-Steele, & Nelson-Gardell, 2010)
  - Limitations are increasingly documented in the literature (Faller & Nelson-Gardell, 2010; Goodman & Quas, 2008; Hershkowitz & Terner, 2007; La Rooy, Katz, Malloy, & Lamb, 2010; Patterson & Pipe, 2009)
  - Alternatives to single session interview may be appropriate (APSAC, 2002; Everson, 2010; Faller, Cordisco-Steele, Nelson-Gardell, 2010; Cronch, Viljoen, & Hansen, 2006)

History and Development
- Consider how, rather than if extended process may occur:
  - Should not be driven by other factors
    - Such as lack of collaboration / communication to conduct investigation as an MDT (APSAC, 2002)
  - Based upon the needs of the child

Literature
- Reminiscence & Hypernesia in Children's Eyewitness Memory
  - David La Rooy, Margaret-Ellen Pipe, & Janice Murray
  - Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 2005
- The Effects of Repeated Interviewing on Children's Forensic Statements of Sexual Abuse
  - Irit Hershkowitz and Anat Terner
  - Applied Cognitive Psychology, 2007
- The Effects of Drawing on Children's Accounts of Sexual Abuse
  - Carmit Katz and Irit Hershkowitz
  - Child Development, 2009
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Literature
- “Exploratory Assessments of Child Abuse: Children’s Responses to Interviewer’s Questions Across Multiple Interview Sessions”
  - Tess Patterson & Margaret-Ellen Pipe
  - *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 2009
- Police Interviews with Child Sexual Abuse Victims: Patterns of Reporting, Avoidance and Denial
  - Lina Leander
  - *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 2010
- Do We Need to Rethink Guidance on Repeated Interviews?
  - David La Rooy, Carmit Katz, Lindsay Malloy & Michael Lamb
  - *Psychology, Public Policy & Law*, 2010
  - La Rooy, Lamb & Pipe
  - Edited by Kathryn Kuehnle & Mary Connell

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

Referral Process
NCAC EFI
- MDT or investigative team (IT) makes the referral
- Usually follows initial attempt at FI
- Some allowance for direct referral
- Dual process of criminal investigation & exploring protection concerns
- Findings are reported back to IT or MDT
Referral Process
NCAC EFI

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

Session Overview
NCAC EFI

- Planning & preparation
- Meeting with caregiver (CG)
- Generally 3 to 5 child sessions
- Combination of forensically defensible & child friendly techniques
- MDT may be present for sessions, but not required by protocol

Session Overview
NCAC CFI

- Sessions are close together
- Investigation is to continue during this period
- Written report may be generated at the end of process

Session Overview
NCAC EFI

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Session Overview
NCAC EFI

- Care Giver Interview
  - Explanation of EFI process & CG role
  - Limitations of confidentiality
  - Important developmental issues?
  - Family structure & care routines
  - Suggestions for narrative practice
  - Connect with Victim Advocate

Session Overview
NCAC EFI

- Foundational Sessions
  - Rapport / Guidelines / Narrative Practice
  - Rapport / NP / Family / Feeling Discussion
- Allegation Focused Sessions
  - Allegation Focused Topics
  - Follow-up & Clarification
- Closure

EF Interviewer

- Skills screening
- Guidelines
- Assess competency
- Establish pattern
- Increase narrative competency

Child

- Comfort
- Familiarity
- Trust
- More agreeable pace
- Opportunity for child to "open the door"
Session Overview
NCAC EFI – Transitions

**Incremental approach**
- Focused topics approach

**Direct approach**
- Use of externally derived info
- Touch inquiry
- Introduction of evidence

Session Overview
NCAC EFI – Allegation Clarification

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

Session Overview
NCAC EFI - Closure

- May not be necessary
- Addressing questions & concerns
- Body safety discussion ?
- Transition to any follow-up

Additional Thoughts

- Review & plan between sessions
- Guidelines reviewed with child at beginning of each session
- Work products or topics from previous session may be used
- Number of sessions is flexible

Referral Process
CornerHouse MultiSession™ Interview

- Typically provided in lieu of one-time FI
- Referrals from LE or CPS
- Criteria for one-time FI applies:
  - Child has made a disclosure
  - Abuse was witnessed/memorialized
  - AP confession
  - Medical evidence

Referral Process
CornerHouse MultiSession™ Interview

Current target population:
- Children 2-years, 8-months up to 4-years-old
  - Young children present with natural barriers to the forensic interview process
- Children 4- and 5-years-old
  - Who have disabilities, or
  - Are multi-lingual and/or require an interpreter
- Any child (or vulnerable adult) with special needs or circumstances
  - Considered and determined by CAC staff and referent
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Referral Process
CornerHouse MultiSession™ Interview
- Not an appropriate intervention when:
  - Caregiver is:
    - Unavailable
    - Unprotective
    - Uncooperative (Faller et al., 2010)
  - The timelines would compromise the child’s safety
    - Health and welfare hold; alleged offender in custody
  - Child is unavailable for multiple sessions
    - Distance, other needs
  - Consider alternatives; weigh pros & cons

Overview of Services
CornerHouse MultiSession™ Interview
- Family Support Services
  - Offered during all “child” sessions; by phone in between sessions and as follow-up
  - Immediate crisis support, information and referral, ongoing support
- Multi-Disciplinary Investigative Team
  - Present for all “child” sessions
  - All sessions include at least brief pre- and post-teamings
    - More comprehensive post-interview meetings typically occur after the final interview session

Caregiver Meeting
CornerHouse MultiSession™ Interview
- Purpose
  - To explain the MultiSession™ interview process and respond to caregiver’s questions
  - To gather information about how to best conduct the interview to meet the unique needs of the child
- Usually occurs by phone, prior to first interview session with child

Session 1: Overview
CornerHouse MultiSession™ Interview
- Stages
  - The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™
    - Build Rapport & End Respectfully (Closure)
- Purpose
  - Extended opportunity to build rapport
  - Gathering information to utilize in Session 2
  - Establish the child’s comfort, communication, and competence

- Comfort
  - Transition & adjustment to unfamiliar person, environment, situation particularly when there is some awareness of the reason for interview
- Communication & Competence
  - Ways child communicates
    - Verbal and nonverbal
    - Speech
  - Encourage the child as the expert: narrative practice
  - Attention span, ability to refocus
  - General developmental abilities: cognitive, social, emotional

- Purpose
  - “What is important for me to know about ____”
  - Social functioning
  - Communication and language
  - Special needs
  - Child’s responses or indicators
  - Changes or concerns observed in the child
  - Strengths
  - Daily routine / schedule
  - Significant life events, transitions, people
  - Health and safety
Session 1: Overview
CornerHouse MultiSession™ Interview

- **Tools and Techniques**
  - Face Drawing, Family Circles, Paper, Markers
  - Shape Stacker
  - Blocks
  - Picture Cards
  - Puzzles
  - Bead Maze
- Specifically selected *options*
- Used for distinct purposes
  - Must understand and explain why and how utilized

- **Brief Closure**
  - Thank the child for spending time with you
  - Let the child know that you will talk again
    - “Thanks for talking with me. I’ll see you again tomorrow.”

- Facilitate continuation of the interview process
  - When exiting with the child, leave all tools, items in the room
  - Unless child requests, do not give Face Drawing to child at this time

Session 2: Overview
CornerHouse MultiSession™ Interview

- **Preparation for Session 2**
  - Review video recording, focusing on child’s:
    - Speech
    - Abilities
    - Attention span and focus
    - Affect
  - Identify questions, clarification, etc. to seek from caregiver and/or MDT
  - Develop plan for next session

- **Typically one – two days later**
- **CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™:**
  - Relatively brief, transitional Rapport stage
  - Continue with remaining stages

- **Tools and techniques**
  - Drawing, Anatomical Diagrams and Anatomical Dolls
    - Used as appropriate
  - Additional MultiSession™ tools from Session 1
    - May be used, but not necessarily

Additional Sessions: Overview
CornerHouse MultiSession™ Interview

- Two Sessions standard
- Additional Session(s)
  - Determining need and appropriateness
    - Identify reason
    - Consider effectiveness
    - Consider child’s perspective
  - NOT for simple lack of disclosure
  - Planful approach
    - Within the interview
    - Discussion with MDT
    - Cooperation of all parties

Parting thoughts...

- Valid challenges, concerns, and considerations
- Multi-session/extended forensic process appears beneficial:
  - Ultimate goal to provide best opportunity to children to communicate about their experience whatever that may or may not be
  - May increase opportunities through impacting
    - child’s ability to participate in the interview
    - Interviewer’s ability to conduct interview in a way that best meets individual child’s needs
Parting thoughts...

- Implementing an extended interview model
  - Requires shift in approach, long-held beliefs
- Traditional single-session interview remains most common model
  - Valid and appropriate for many children
- Practice decisions should consider findings of analogue and field research along with clinical practice
- Increased recognition in the field of need for
  - Openness to other options
  - Flexibility in practice

Questions

- What's happening in your community?
- Population(s) where more than one session might be beneficial
- Supports & barriers

More questions?

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