

Effective Interviewing and Communication with Children with Disabilities



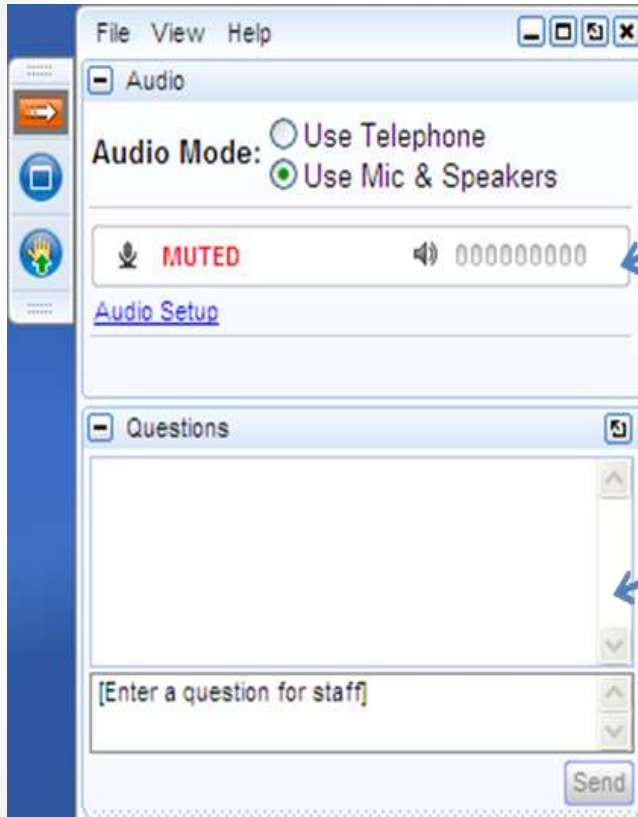
Corazon Training and Consulting
Pauline Lucero-Esquivel, MA, LMSW, LPCC
Therapy/Training/Behavior Support Consultation

1401 Avenida Mañana NE
Albuquerque NM 87110
Phone: (505)-235-2429 Fax: 866-662-6190
paulineabq@gmail.com

OJJDP's MECP

- MECP offers assistance to local, state and tribal law enforcement, nonprofit organizations, and other juvenile justice practitioners to:
 - strengthen their responses
 - increase the use of evidence-based practices
 - identify and address operational and programmatic needs
- Coordinated by Fox Valley Technical College
- For more information or to submit a training and technical assistance request:
 - www.mecptraining.org
 - mecptraining@fvtc.edu
 - 1-888-347-5610

Webinar Housekeeping



Audio Support:

- Use Telephone or Mic & Speakers
- Check 'Audio Setup' for problems
- All callers will be on mute throughout the webinar

To ask a Question:

- Type a question in the box; click Send
- Staff will respond in the 'Questions' box

Goals

- Build understanding of and empathy for clients with DD/ID
- Increase investigative skills: More tools for the tool box
- Build confidence in interviewing/investigating
- Recognize MOST of what you do is the same in an investigation with a victim or witness with a developmental disability

Developmental Disability

- Describes life-long disabilities attributable to mental and/or physical or combination of mental and physical impairments
- Manifested prior to age 22
- Other terms include:
 - Learning disability
 - Intellectual disability : I/DD
 - Cognitive disability

Developmental Disability

- Refers to affecting daily functioning in 3 or more of the following areas:
 - Capacity for independent living
 - Economic self-sufficiency
 - Learning
 - Mobility
 - Receptive and expressive language
 - Self-care
 - Self-direction

7 Types of Disabilities

- Intellectual
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Physical
- Communication
- Sensory
- Learning
- Mental Illness: Psychiatric and Psychological Conditions

Americans with Disabilities Act



The “R” Word and Rosa’s Law

The "R" Word: Strictly for Diagnosis

Children with any kind of a disability are more than twice as likely as non-disabled children to be physically abused and almost twice as likely to be sexually abused.

(Ibid., citing Petersilia, J. Report to the California Senate Public Safety Committee Hearings on Persons with Developmental Disabilities in the Criminal Justice System.

88 to 98% of sexual abusers are known
by the victims with disabilities

~Sobsey and Mansell, 1994

Why They Are At Greater Risk

- Infantilized
- Obedience to those in authority
- Lack of understanding of what constitutes abuse
- Lack of assertiveness
- Memory difficulties
- Restricted vocabulary
- Fear of retribution or vacancy

Thousands of Developmental Disabilities

What am I most likely to encounter ?

What is the severity of the disability?

- Autism
- Cerebral Palsy
- Hearing Impairments
- Vision Impairments
- Cognitive or intellectual disabilities

What's the Difference?

- Developmental Disability
- Mental Illness
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Substance Abuse/Alcohol Intoxication

Respecting People with Disabilities

- Abilities, not limitations
- Avoid labels
- Avoid excessive praise or attention:
“the cat voice”
- Let the person speak for self

Respecting People with Disabilities

- Use age-appropriate names
- Person first language
- Universally Accessible vs. Handicapped Accessible
- “Are there accessibility needs?”

If we do not have a disability now, we are
TABs*

*Temporarily Able Bodied

Can a Person with a Developmental Disability...

- Be a jerk?
- Be manipulative?
- Be exploitive?
- Be sexually aroused?
- Lie to get out of trouble

Myths & Stereotypes

Concepts of:

- Spread
- Deviancy & Evil
- Contagion
- Innocence
- Wildness

Myths & Stereotypes:

Concepts of:

- Shame
- Deviancy vs. Competency
- Stupidity
- Dread
- Pity-Courage

Interviewing Considerations

- Identifying Someone They Trust
- Caregiver
- Staff
- Family Member
- Guardian
- Case Manager
- Behavior Therapist

Interviewing Considerations

- Does the child use a communication device?
- Do you know what medications the child takes and what they are for?
- Are you in a place conducive to interviewing given the person's disabilities?
- Does your community utilize a Children's Advocacy Center that is better trained to interview children and adults with disabilities?

Interviewing Considerations

- Individuals with ID are very concrete
 - Clarify explicitly what the individual is talking about
 - Avoid asking leading questions
- Individuals with ID frequently try to say whatever authority figures want to hear
 - Try to avoid yes-or-no answer questions
 - Augment responses with requests for description

~Jill Ryan, Ph.D, 2006

Orienting the Person to the Questions

- Yes/No questions: Understand from support staff and family how the individual normally responds
- Showing pictures: “This person is being kicked. Has that ever happened to you?”

Procedural vs. Declarative Knowledge

Showing vs. Telling

~Scott Modell, Ph.D

Saliency

The relevance, the emotional pull or strength of an experience

Cultural Considerations

- Private parts in native language
- Abuse occurring in language other than English
- Cultural norms around talking about privates with family and outsiders
- Acknowledging historical trauma/system intervention trauma
- Know your community resources/cultural brokers

How Physical Disabilities Affect the Interview

- Limitations of drawing
- Assessment of skills important
- Alternative activities needed
- Activities may draw attention away from questioning

Interview Suggestions

- Let them say it how they say it
- Disclosure is shorter
- Limit follow-up questions
- Do not expect clarification
- Interviewer must monitor child's engagement with the topic

Interview Suggestions

- Interview during child's best time of day
- Limit distractions
- Have your game plan
- Prioritize
- Multiple, brief interviews safer than one which goes too long

The 3 MOST Important Suggestions:

1. Slow down
2. ***SLOW DOWN***
3. **SLOW DOWN SOME MORE**

Remember...

“Disclosure is a process...
not an event”

~Sorenson & Snow



Corazon Training and Consulting
Pauline Lucero-Esquivel, MA, LMSW, LPCC
Therapy/Training/Behavior Support Consultation

1401 Avenida Mañana NE
Albuquerque NM 87110
Phone: (505)-235-2429 Fax: 866-662-6190
paulineabq@gmail.com