

Forensic Interviewing

The Andre' Bosse Center's professionally trained interviewers have experience and skills in child development, child abuse issues and linguistics. They conduct objective interviews that bear scrutiny from outside agencies and also serve the best interests of child victims. The child's age, developmental level, and emotional state on the day of the appointment may influence what information can be obtained during the interview.

A Forensic Interview is a non-threatening, neutral, non-leading conversation. The information provided by the interviewee becomes the cues for the interviewer's next questions. It is felt that once a victim discloses, the road to healing can begin.

An Interview Story

A 6-year old disclosed a sexual assault. Parents called the police.

Police contacted Kid's House to set up interview.

A 6-year old girl had been scheduled for an interview. She and her mother were in the waiting room at Department of Human Services. The little girl was curled up next to her mother, looking frightened and obviously weeping. "She appeared to have the weight of the world on her shoulders" noted the interviewer.

Before the actual interview, the interviewer sat across from the mother and child and struck up a conversation to allow the child to become comfortable with her. After several minutes of small talk, the interviewer told the little girl that she was free to ask the interviewer any question she wanted. The interviewer continued by saying that most children ask her how old she is and how much she weighs. "How about I just answer those questions for you right now" stated the interviewer. The little girl sat up and started to show interest. The interviewer smiled and answered "I am very old and weigh too much". This brought a smile to the child's face.

As the actual interview progressed and the subject of the interview broached, the little girl asked if she had to tell "everything"? She was told "Yes." As she began telling "everything" there was a transformation taking place. Each "thing" she disclosed lightened her load. After the interview was concluded, the little girl emerged from the room smiling and confident. She was not healed, but she had taken a very important step.

Facts about Forensic Interviewing

- Interview requests come from law enforcement agencies and Department of Human Services.
- The Andre' Bosse Center in Oceana County started doing interviews in 2002 and on average conducts 10-15 interviews a year.
- Kid's House of Mason County began conducting interviews in November 2005. Over 40 interviews were conducted with children between the ages of 2 and 17 in the first 6 months of service.
- A forensic interviewer has to be certified in the technique.
- Having a trained forensic interviewer decreases the number of professionals who interview the child.

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the road to healing can begin.**