**Washington State Child Interviewing: Quick Reference**

**Interview Stages & Components**

**Introduction**
Introduce yourself; Neutral job description ("My job is to listen."); Explain documentation & observers

**Instructions**
- **Practice exs.** for children < 10
  - "Don't guess (okay to say 'I don't know'), but tell me if you do know." Practice: "What did I have for breakfast?"
  - "Tell me if I make a mistake." Practice: "What would you say if I said you're 30 yrs. old?" "How old are you?"
  - "Tell me if you don't know what I mean." Practice: "Where is your patella?" "Patella is a hard word, let me ask it a different way - Where is your knee?"

**Promise to Tell Truth**
Elicit agreement to tell the truth - "Do you promise that you will tell the truth today?"

**Narrative Event Practice**
Elicit details about a neutral non-abusive event, using a variety of open-ended prompts: to teach child type of prompts to expect & encourage narrative responses, to build rapport, and to assess child's use & understanding of language

**Transition**
(“How are you feeling right now?”) Start with: “Tell me what you’re here to talk about.” As needed, follow with “It’s really important that we know what happened.” (Additional prompts should be least suggestive possible)

**Substantive Questions**
If multiple incidents, consider “Tell me what usually happens when ________.” Then move on to individual events.

**Separate:** Focus on 1 incident at a time: last time; another time, time you remember the most; a time it was different

**Invite:** Open ended prompts to generate initial narrative overview: “Tell me everything that happened…”

**Elaborate:** Open-ended prompts to elicit additional narratives & details: “Tell me more about ___.”

**Linear/Sequential:** "Then what happened?" "What happened next?"
- "Tell me everything that happened from…until…” (time segmentation)
- "Tell me everything that happened before…after…” (time framing)

**Action Cues** (use actions mentioned by child)

**Focus:**
People, Places, Sensory perceptions, etc.

**Other Areas:**
Who knows, Dynamics, Support, Other abuse

**Clarify:**
Address unclear or confusing information

**Closure**
Recap in child’s words to ensure accuracy, assess safety, re-establish equilibrium; Thank child for effort, not content

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Examples: Helpful Prompts

Narrative Event Practice

- “Before we talk about the reason you’re here, I want you to know how I ask questions & I want to learn more about you - Tell me everything that happened today, from when you woke up, until you got here.” OR
- “Tell me about things you like to do.” THEN focus on a recent related event:
  “Tell me everything that happened from the beginning to the end of [your last soccer game, the 1st day of school, etc.]”
- “Tell me something you did this week that made you happy. Start at the beginning & tell me everything that happened.”
- “Where’s your favorite place to go? Tell me everything that happened the last time you went there.”

THEN use PATTERN OF QUESTIONS to elicit narratives that provide details: Invite, Elaborate, Focus, Clarify

Transition

◇ (Possibly-Assess willingness to continue talking: “Now that we’ve been talking a few minutes, how are you feeling?”)
◇ “Tell me what you’re here to talk about.” “It’s really important that we know what happened.”
◇ “What did ____ tell you I wanted to talk to you about?” “What do you think I wanted to talk to you about?”
◇ “I heard something might have happened. Tell me what happened.”
◇ If previous statement: “I heard you talked to [name/someone] about something that happened. Tell me what happened.”
◇ If observable injury: “I see you have [a burn, a cut, a bandage, bruises, etc.]. Tell me everything that happened.”
◇ Someone’s worried: “Is someone worried about something that happened? Tell me what they’re worried about.”
◇ Bothered you: “I heard someone might have bothered you. Tell me what happened.”
◇ “Something that wasn’t right: “I heard someone may have done something that wasn’t right. Tell me what happened.”

Substantive Questions

If not already obvious, “Did that happen 1 time or more than 1 time?” then possibly, “Tell me what usually happens…”

Use PATTERN OF QUESTIONS to elicit narratives w/details about specific events): Separate, Invite, Elaborate, Focus, Clarify

- “Tell me everything that happened when [child’s words], from the beginning to the end.”
- “You said _____ - tell me more about ______.” “Then what happened?” “What happened next, after ______?”
- “Tell me everything that happened from ______ until ______.”
- “How do you know?” “How did you figure that out?”
- “Think about what it looked/sounded like.” “Tell me everything you saw/heard.”
- “How did you feel when ____?” “What were you thinking when ____?” “How did your body feel when ____?”
- “I heard something about ______. Tell me all about that.”
- “I’m confused, tell me again about ______.”

Closure

◇ “Is there something else you want to tell me right now?” “How do you feel about - talking to me today/about leaving w/____?”

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