LET’S TALK

Developing effective communication with child victims of abuse and human trafficking

For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY
LET’S TALK

Developing effective communication with child victims of abuse and human trafficking

Practical handbook for social workers, police and other professionals

Barbara Mitchels, September 2004
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INTRODUCTION

Many of the victims of violence, abuse and human trafficking are children who have experienced the trauma of many forms of abuse, sexual, physical and emotional. They may have physical illness or psychological problems as a result of their experiences. It is important to understand their needs and to respond to them appropriately. We should try to stop children being further abused after they are found. Shelters, repatriation and reintegration programmes often are in themselves abusive to the children that they should be protecting.


When we sit down to talk with a child, it may be the first time that the child has been really listened to, and this is a chance to establish trust and rapport, to validate the child’s experience, and begin to heal the hurts of the past. We need to be sensitive, patient, professional, empathic, and willing to be open to the child’s account of their experiencing, told in their own way.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

DO:

- Remember that children and young people have the right to respect (this includes respect for their physical, intellectual, social and emotional welfare).
- Respect the cultural, religious and ethnic background of all the people with whom you work, however different it may be from your own.
- Model good conduct for others to follow.
- Ensure that there is always be more than one adult present during activities with children and young people, or the activities should be within the sight and hearing of others.
- Respect the right of children of personal privacy.
- Create an atmosphere of trust in which children and young people can challenge attitudes or behaviours which they do not like.
- Monitor each other’s behaviour with children.
- Feel able to comment on each other’s conduct and be prepared to offer and accept constructive criticism.
- Challenge any inappropriate behaviour with children.
- Report any suspicions or allegations of abuse.
- Be aware that some actions may be misinterpreted, no matter how well intentioned.
- Recognise the need to exercise special care and caution in discussing sensitive issues with children and young people.
- Be aware of and comply with the codes of conduct and rules of the agency or organisation with which you are working.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others (unless for medical attention).
- Remember that physical contact should only be that which is necessary for the activity, it should be age appropriate, and should reflect the child’s needs not those of adults.
This handbook is intended to be used as a training resource, as a source of information, and to provide references for future reading and research.

**Training**

The handbook contains information for skills training, for example, the qualities of a good listener, and the skills required to communicate effectively with children. It contains exercises that can be done alone and in groups, which will help to develop these skills, and suggestions for workshops and training.

There is additional information included in the handbook relevant to communication with children, including child development, human rights, and other topics which can be included in training.

**Information**

The handbook can be used as a reference book. If you need more help with a particular problem, for example, the effect of posttraumatic stress on children, memory, or difficulty in communicating with a child, consult the index and find the section of the handbook for ideas and information.

**References for further research**

The handbook contains references to the research of others. The footnotes indicate research and other works which can be explored to gain further detailed information on specific topics.

For teaching purposes, the references are also set out in the Bibliography at the end of the handbook.
The first and most important principle in Child Protection is that the child’s welfare must always be paramount. In every case this overrides all other considerations.

1.iii Special needs of child victims of trafficking

Children may have been trafficked for sexual purposes or forced labour and babies may have been taken for sale or for adoption. As a result, children rescued from trafficking may have suffered from inhumane living conditions, neglect, inadequate diet and hygiene, poor health care or no health care, dangerous conditions of living and working, sexual abuse and physical maltreatment.

In addition, they will inevitably have been separated, from their home, and therefore will have experienced the physical and emotional trauma of their removal and the loss of their family and community. The continued deprivation of a loving and supportive family and community may affect a child’s development and cause significant harm.

Children who have been the victims of trafficking will often have suffered or are at risk of suffering significant harm through physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and emotional abuse.

Many health problems are a result of ill-treatment or neglect:

- Malnourishment, dental problems, retarded growth, developmental delay
- Infectious diseases from poor hygiene
- Infections or mutilations caused by inappropriate ‘medical’ treatment
- Injuries from torture or ill treatment
- Work related problems arising from working in difficult or dangerous conditions and for long hours, i.e. eye problems, respiratory illness, muscular and joint pain, exhaustion, hearing problems
Trafficked children may have their identity concealed by false documents, or have none at all. Traffickers control the children and so they remain silent about their experience through fear.

Trafficked children may not be able to speak the language of the country they find themselves in. They may not attend school, and may not have a doctor. If they are ill or injured, they may not be offered medical attention at a hospital. They are often not permitted to speak freely with trusted adults. You should take care to ensure that children are able to speak freely without coercion.

2. UNDERSTANDING POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOMATIC EFFECTS OF CHILD ABUSE

If we are aware of the physical and psychological responses to trauma, we can understand why traumatised children behave in certain ways, and we can help them more effectively.

Children may experience, witness or be confronted with ‘traumatic events’ i.e. actual or threatened death or serious injury. The child’s response might involve fear, helplessness or horror. Traumatic events can vary from a brief, single event, to long-term and repeated abuse.

Children who have been trafficked, may have experienced loss of their home, security, family support, work, and friendships. They may have suffered bereavements of family, friends, and others; and events which are shocking or upsetting, for example witnessing or experiencing imprisonment, torture, physical or other abuse.

The impact of trauma and the duration of its effects may be affected by the personality and resilience of the child, the circumstances of the events, and the degree of emotional and other support available. Adult resilience to trauma is possibly linked with their earlier childhood experience.
2.1 *Posttraumatic stress*

After any traumatic event, most people will experience some psychological and physical effects. This is a natural part of the human response to stress. Some people describe this as a ‘normal reaction to an abnormal event’. When these effects continue for a long time, or if the symptoms are very severe, medical or psychological help might be required. Responses to traumatic events can be grouped into symptoms of *intrusion* (unwanted memories), *avoidance* (blocking out the traumatic event and feelings about it) and *hyperarousal* (agitation, over-sensitivity). Memories of the traumatic events keep coming back, in the form of thoughts, memories, and dreams. Sometimes these are very real and the person feels as though the traumatic event is happening again, right now, and they are re-living it. This is uncontrollable, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to shut out or stop the memories. Often nightmares happen, and children might be afraid to go to sleep because their dreams are frightening.

Some people try to avoid activities, places, or people, that remind them of the trauma. The symptoms of ‘avoidance’ are described as a sense of ‘apathy’, ‘depression’, ‘tiredness’, ‘emotional numbing’ and ‘no vision of the future’. They might hold back feelings and memories, or become numb. Reminders of the past might be depressing, but some children may find relief in talking about the events. Sometimes pressure from family or society stops people talking about the past.

Most children recover from trauma with social support and help from their friends, family and community, or other agencies. Some cannot function in their day today life, and they continue to experience great psychological suffering. It is these children who may need expert medical or psychological help.

2.2 *Effects of captivity and powerlessness*

Children subjected to prolonged sexual abuse may assume that adults expect that affection or kindness is to be demonstrated or rewarded by sexual favours. They may be unable to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touching, and therefore do not defend themselves from inappropriate advances from adults. Some child victims may feel guilty and blame themselves for what happened to them. Adolescents may engage in prostitution or other sexual activity because they feel that their lives have already been spoiled, and they have nothing else to lose, and they feel worthless and ‘dirty.’ We should reassure these children that what happened was not their fault.

Child captives may develop disturbances in the sense of time, memory, and concentration. They may have a sense of ‘no future’ and hopelessness, and also eventually the past may also be forgotten, leading to ‘traumatic amnesia’. Personality disorganisation, or dissociation, may be associated with prolonged or very severe child abuse. They may carry unexpressed anger against those who hurt them, or people who failed to help, and it may be turned into self-hatred and suicidal thoughts.

2.3 *Psychological and behavioural effects of child abuse in children of different ages*

Older children may abuse alcohol or drugs to try to regain control over painful feelings, or sometimes children may self-harm in an effort to regain a sense of control through pain. The age of the child will influence the effect of traumatic stress on their development, and the way in which they respond to the trauma.

i) *Children under seven years of age*

Preschool children are learning to trust others, developing basic security and attachments, and developing control over their body and impulses. They are developing identity and autonomy, and seeking to understand their outer world, so they may have a limited capacity for understanding what is happen-
trauma is severe and recent, it may be risky where weapons may be available, and where the political, cultural or social climate may encourage aggressive or violent behaviour.

Research has shown that there may be a significant difference between parents’ and children’s evaluation of children’s problems, with children reporting more problems than their parents had noticed. Perhaps parents have a tendency to deny their children’s problems, or simply do not take sufficient notice. Wherever possible, families should be treated as a whole.

2.iv Physical effects of traumatic stress

After trauma, body and mind suffer together. Medical staff and other project members describe an increased number of physical illnesses and psychosomatic conditions following trauma, including circulatory system problems; also gastro-intestinal problems, asthma, endocrine and immune system problems. Sometimes children find it easier to talk about bodily aches and pains rather than reporting their feelings of sadness. Some children find that adults do not listen to their feelings, but that adults respond with more attention to a complaint of a bodily pain or illness. Some experts also consider that anger or other strong feelings can be turned inwards and result in bodily illness, and they suggest the combination of medical and psychological approaches as a treatment model.

Following trauma, the body’s immune system may be depleted, and the body becomes more susceptible to infections and to other illnesses. The symptoms of posttraumatic stress in victims of torture or sexual assault may be complicated by additional physical injuries, requiring medical attention. Girls’ menstrual cycles may be disturbed following posttraumatic stress or sexual assault, or they may suffer pregnancy as a result of rape. Girls who have suffered sexual torture, enforced sex, or sexual ill treatment may suffer from pelvic pain and sexual

Schoolwork may suffer from the child’s inability to concentrate or apathy. They may not want to share their feelings with adults or their peer group.

Symptoms of trauma may include insomnia, palpitations, tremors, sweating, feeling cold, diarrhoea, confusion, blushing, tension headaches, choking sensations or giddiness, decreased sex drive and gastrointestinal disturbances. Muscular aches in the head or back, restlessness, heaviness, or fatigue in the legs, and pains in the abdomen, head, shoulders, back or pelvic area are also common.

ii) Children over seven years of age

School age children are decreasing their dependence on their parents, and increasing contact with the world outside the family. They have a repertoire of coping strategies to meet and handle crisis situations and in fantasies, they can change events or taking revenge, and they can counteract feelings of helplessness. Schoolwork may suffer from the child’s inability to concentrate or apathy. They may not want to share their feelings with adults or their peer group. Denial or suppression of feelings seems to increase with age, and if negative or painful feelings are not freely expressed, reactions to posttraumatic stress may emerge in physical symptoms, subconsciously giving a tangible reason for complaint. Many children ask for help for bodily complaints rather than for painful feelings.

iii) Adolescents, and young people of sixteen to eighteen years of age

Adolescents are developing adult sexuality and the adult sexual role. Concerns centre on dependence and independence, fear of rejection and ambivalence towards parents. They may have inappropriate feelings of responsibility for events, so guilt and self-reproach may arise. Adolescents may express reactions through behaviour and conflicts with the environment. They may engage in risk-taking activities. This may be sublimated into sport, but where the

ing, or the long-term implications of the events. They may have heightened anxiety about separations and rejections, and are more vulnerable to the loss of their family. Their lack of understanding may be to some extent a protective factor, as is their openness and ability to be concrete and direct. Their reactions to trafficking may include anxiety about strangers, crying, clinging, and the need for much reassurance. They may show regressive behaviour - bedwetting and soiling, and sleep disturbances. The depressive symptoms may be apparent in loss of interest in play and temper tantrums.
Both girls and boys may experience feelings of guilt and shame, low self-esteem, and distortion of self-image, resulting in attempts at self-harm or suicidal feelings or intentions.

**2.v Effects of traumatic stress on memory**

When we are interviewing trafficked children, we need an understanding of the effects of traumatic experience on memory. After a trauma, events are understood and stored in memory below the level of conscious awareness. The brain attaches emotions to events, which are then given meaning. For example, a child is taken to a street market on his birthday. In the market, he is hit with a stick by a bearded man. The child will remember the painful sensation of being hit, and the brain will attach to this the emotion of fear. The brain may also create associations of that pain and fear with street markets and bearded men. Memories of the event may be later triggered on seeing similar bearded men, or being again in a street market, and the event may also be associated with the birthday.

The memory process may be speeded up or slowed down by stress. Sometimes, a low level of stress can improve learning, but high stress levels may cause problems in storing words, places, conversations, written material, and contextual details in long-term memory. This means that traumas which are prolonged or repeatedly suffered are often more difficult to remember than a single episode of severe turmoil.

In interviewing child victims of trafficking it is important to realise the psychological effects of trauma on memory, and to be consistently patient and gentle with the child.
interviewed by a specially trained police officer and social worker, and that interview ideally should be audio or video-recorded. This ensures that the court knows that the procedures for the protection of the child have been followed.

3.iii Extending information to help the child: preparation for referrals

Children who have been rescued from traffickers or abusers will inevitably be faced with many problems. Social workers and police may need to refer the child on to other agencies for specific help. The child may have medical, psychological, educational, social, housing, and other needs, which require either experts or help from their family or community.

Asking appropriate questions to find out the required information about the child before referral is important. Questions may include:

- Does the child have an identifiable family who is responsible for their care?
- If the child has no identified family, is he or she in the care of an organisation?
- Given the child’s age and ability, can he or she speak, at an age-appropriate level, the language of the country they are in?
- If of school age, is the child at school?
- Is the child known to the local social services?
- Does the child have bruises or other evidence of abuse?
- Does the child have any unexplained or untreated illness?
- Does the child have an apparently unexplained fear, depression, or anxiety?
- Is the child kept away from other children of his or her own age in the area that they live in?
- Are adults with the child unwilling to allow social workers to see the child alone?

3.iv Therapeutic interventions

If a child is suffering from posttraumatic stress or other psychological illness following their experiences during abuse or trafficking, then they may need to be referred for therapy.

Forensic interviews of children victims of abuse could include information about:

- Identity of the alleged abuser/trafficker, her/his present whereabouts, their relationship to the child.
- The duration and extent of the abuse.
- What happened in detail, when events happened, where, and how often.
- Names of anyone else having knowledge of the abuse.
- Names of anyone else involved, or observing the abuse.
- In the case of alleged sexual abuse, whether the child had been bribed or threatened to take part, and to keep it secret.
- Names of anyone the child has told in the past and what happened as a result.
- If the child has not told their non-abusing parent or family, does she or he feel able to do so now?
- Child’s feelings about the current situation and what she or he would wish to happen now.

The courts require the best evidence possible, and therefore accuracy of the child’s memory and recall is important. In forensic interviews, the way in which the interview is conducted is very important if the child’s account of events is to be used as evidence in legal proceedings or in court. The child’s account must be given freely. It must be clear, recorded accurately, and what the child says must not be influenced in any way by the interviewer.

Where a child agrees to become a witness in a court case, if possible the child should be jointly interviewed by a specially trained police officer and social worker, and that interview ideally should be audio or video-recorded. This ensures that the court knows that the procedures for the protection of the child have been followed.
The timing of the preparation for court is important. If it is carried out too soon before evidence is given, the child’s anxieties may be increased. On the other hand, if it is carried out at the last minute the child may feel rushed and be unable to assimilate the information given.

4. PREPARATION FOR INTERVIEWS OF CHILD VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

This guidance is intended for social workers interviewing children who are the alleged victims of abuse and child witnesses.

4.i General guidelines

General guidelines for the interviewing of children victims of abuse or trafficking are:

- Interviews should take place as soon as possible after the allegation or suspicion of abuse emerges
- The child should feel supported and safe during the interview
- Interviews should take place in an informal setting, and be conducted by interviewers trained to talk with children
- If possible, interviews should not be too long, to avoid tiring the child
- The child’s developmental stage and needs should be considered in planning the interview
- The characteristics of the child, the child’s family background and the interviewer should be considered in planning the interview
- The children should be given an opportunity to tell their story in their own way, before they are asked explicit questions
- The questions should begin with open questions and direct or leading questions should be reserved for the later part of the interview
- Props and cues may be used, but only with caution
than they were able to spontaneously recall, but the questioning might make their memories less accurate. Open-ended questions generate the most accurate answers. Specific questions are answered more accurately than leading questions.

4.ii Issues which affect interviews with children

Issues to have in consideration when interviewing children victims of abuse or trafficking:
- The child’s developmental stage
- The child’s level of understanding
- The child’s memory, suggestibility
- The child’s knowledge and use of language
- The child’s culture and religion
- The child’s educational level
- The child’s capacity to see the events that happened to them in the wider context of events around them
- The child’s psychological state
- The level of resources and support available for the child
- Whether the child may have been taught a story to tell investigators or police, or is likely to be influenced by fear or coercion

4.iii Memory

The amount and accuracy of children’s memories (free recall) of events increases as they reach adulthood, and younger children of three to six years appear to forget more rapidly than adults. But, although their free recall might be more incomplete and brief than adults, it is usually as accurate as that of adults. Sometimes young children may introduce fantastical elements into their accounts, but this is exceptional, and does not invalidate the rest of their account.

When questioned to help retrieve information from memory, most witnesses find that they know more than they were able to spontaneously recall, but the questioning might make their memories less accurate. Open-ended questions generate the most accurate answers. Specific questions are answered more accurately than leading questions.

4.iv Suggestibility

This is where the memory of a witness is influenced by the ideas, attitude or wishes of another person. Children (particularly those under six years) and vulnerable witnesses may be influenced by the questions they are asked, or by the circumstances of the interview, examples are:

- Where the child perceives that the interviewer or others judge an action negatively, e.g. as suspicious or wrong
- Repeated suggestive interviewing with leading questions implying a misleading account of events might induce a young child to comply with the questioner and affect free and prompt ed recall of the event.
- Misleading information provided after the event may affect free and prompted recall of the event, especially in children from four to six years
- People may try to implant false memories in children by repeatedly telling the child that a certain event happened. This may affect a child’s recall, but only if this is compatible with the child’s previous experience and beliefs.

4.v Use of language

Children might not seek to clarify questions that they do not understand and then they might give inaccurate responses. Use the first part of the interview to establish the child’s linguistic competence. Make sure that the child understands the words you are using, and that you understand their terms. They may have their own understanding of particular terms and words.
Children might learn to tell the time at around six or seven years, and the days of the week and the seasons at around age eight.

4.vi Deception

As a general rule, it is difficult to tell if a child or anyone else is telling the truth.

Remember that:

- Body language and behaviour cannot be an accurate indicator of deceptive and truthful statements. For example, some people believe that eye contact means that the speaker is telling the truth, but a good liar might know this and deliberately use it to their advantage.

- There are no special behaviours or words that identify deception, for example, covering the mouth, touching the face, blinking or looking at the ground whilst speaking is not always an indicator of lying.

- Some behaviours linked to stress may be confused with behaviours associated with deception, for example, sweating, wringing hands, or fiddling with a pen might show anxiety, but is not always an indicator of lying.

- Remember that it is very hard, even for trained police officers, to tell when someone is lying.

4.viii How to make an interview a positive experience

Generally

Older children should be interviewed alone, but a younger child would benefit from having a trusted adult with her or him.

Any adult who is the alleged perpetrator of the abuse/neglect must never be with the child during any interview. The adult who accompanies the child at an interview are there to provide support to the child at a difficult time. They can and should offer verbal and physical comfort, but must not interrupt or prompt answers from the child, must not express any shock, anger or disbelief, and they must keep the content of the interview confidential.

The interview with the child should be in a quiet room, free from distractions (such as television or radio playing) and free from the interruptions of people entering and leaving.

4.ix Choosing the right venue and facilities

Venue

Allow the child to have some control over when and where the interview takes place.

- Make sure that the child is fully at ease with the venue of the interview. Make sure that the child knows and feels comfortable in the premises and the interview room, and that they feel at ease.

- Provide, as a minimum, at least comfortable seating, toilet facilities nearby, and water. Paper, with writing and drawing materials may be provided. Refreshments may be available for the end of the interview.

- The interview room should be as private as possible. Others, who are not involved in the interview process, should not be able to stare in through windows, or to overhear the conversation in the interview.

- There should not be interruptions during the interview, and others should not be coming and going in and out of the interview room whilst the interview is taking place.
4.xi Who should interview the child?

- The interviewer(s) should have received appropriate training.
- The child may have fears or preferences about their choice of interviewer. Respect the child’s views, including those about the gender of the interviewer.
- Remember that the circumstances of the abuse may have left the child traumatized, and that psychological reactions to the trauma may influence responses to questioning. Recalling traumatic events may also impact on the child psychologically. The interviewer should be aware of this and empathic and responsive to the needs of the child. If the interview becomes too emotionally painful for the child, it should stop and, following the interview, appropriate psychological and social support and/or therapy should be offered by a suitably trained person.

4.xii Who should be present at the interview?

- Any persons suspected of harming the child should NOT be present in the interview.
- A trusted adult may be present at the interview of a young child, (for example a social worker or a teacher) to offer support wherever necessary, but they should not ask questions nor answer any questions the interviewer might ask of the child.
- A child should not be interviewed alone, i.e. with only one adult present.
- Be aware that, as a result of their experiences, the child may fear certain people. If the child does not want a specific person at the interview, explore why this is and respect the child’s views.

4.xiii Providing age-appropriate information to the child in advance of the interview

Find out the age and the level of understanding of the child, and make sure that the interview will be conducted in words that they will understand. If the child needs information, provide this at an age-appropriate level.

4.xiv Pace the interview to suit the child

The interview can be paced by:

- Slowing down speech rate
- Allowing time for the child to understand what has been said
- Allowing time for the child to consider their response
- Being patient if the child replies slowly
- Avoiding following up with another question too soon
- Avoiding interrupting the child if they hesitate... they may be taking time to think
4. xv Make sure the child understands the language used

This sounds obvious, but it is surprising how many interviewers do not think to make sure that the child understands fully the language or terminology used in the interview.

Children have their own way of describing things, and they may use a word that means something specifically to them. For example, if they use a word or a phrase in a way that does not quite make sense to the interviewer (e.g. when they talk of ‘going for a walk’, but when they say it, they look unhappy, when the interviewer might think of walking as a pleasant activity) ask the child what the phrase ‘going for a walk’ actually means to them... It might be that, to the child, the phrase ‘going for a walk’ in their experience of trafficking or abuse means going unwillingly with someone to do something that was abusive or unpleasant.

Sometimes children want to please, and they will give the appearance of understanding, but in fact they might not do so.

Ask a few general test questions to see if the child fully understands, and try to get the child to speak a little about a pleasant and non-threatening topic. Simple ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ answers from a child might not give the interviewer an indication of full understanding.

4. xvi Guidance on the use of interpreters

If interpreters are used, then make sure that certain basic safeguards are in place:

- Try to use independent interpreters who are known to the agency, specifically trained, and who are trusted
- If there is no agency interpreter, make sure that anyone else offering to interpret is not known to the child in a threatening way (i.e. make sure that any person coming forward with an offer to interpret is not associated with trafficking and trying to silence the child)
- Make sure that the interpreter has no control or influence over the child.
- The interpreter should understand that they must translate what the child actually says, adding nothing, and leaving nothing out
- The interpreter should not change the child’s answer in the interpretation, for example to improve grammar or to add detail
- The interpreter should not be allowed to take over the interview and to ask questions themselves. Their role should be neutral.
- They should be taught not to show shock, fear, or other strong emotional reactions, which may influence the child.
- Interpreters should remain calm and professional. They should be warm, non-judgmental and open in their attitude to the child.

4. xvii Points to remember

- Children do not all disclose in the same way. Some will deliberately talk about traumatic events, others will accidentally disclose traumatic things that have happened to them through behaviour.
- Disclosure of abuse may come through medical or other means.
- Children may not tell everything that has happened to them all at once.
5. **FIRST STAGE OF THE INTERVIEW**

5.i **Introductions**

To put the child at ease, make sure that the child knows in advance who will be present at the interview and why they are there. If the child has strong feelings about not wishing any specific person to be present, explore the reasons why, and respect the child’s wishes and feelings. At the interview, introduce yourself, also introduce the interpreter, and any other person present.

5.ii **Establishing appropriate boundaries and trust**

After introducing everyone, explain to the child what will happen in the interview. Explain the purpose of the interview and make sure that the child understands as far as their age allows.

Confirm that the child consents to being interviewed. If an older child who has a clear understanding of the situation refuses to participate in the interview, their decision must be respected. No child should be forced to answer questions. There should be breaks for comfort or refreshments, but refreshments should not be used as a reward for disclosure or co-operation, or withheld in the absence of co-operation.

Remember that the child is about to talk about things, people and events that may be painful to remember. They may be frightened of those who have abused them. They may be frightened of reprisals against friends or family. It is therefore very important that before the interview, the child is physically safe, and trusts the interviewer.

- There may be a delay before a child discloses, sometimes for a long time. They need to feel safe before they can tell what has happened.

- Sometimes a child will deny abuse or retract a disclosure, (for many reasons including fear) even if it is true and supported by other evidence.

- Age, culture, circumstances and the nature of the abuse may influence willingness to disclose what has happened.

- If children tell about abuse, they may not understand what will happen as a result of the disclosure.

- Remember that the circumstances of the abuse may have left the child traumatized, and that psychological reactions to the trauma may influence responses to questioning. Recalling traumatic events may also impact on the child psychologically.

- Trust: the child needs to have trust in the interviewer. Never lie, or mislead a child, or make promises that cannot be kept.

- Honesty: tell the child the truth in an age appropriate way, for example when they want to know why you are interviewing, and what you will do with the information gained.

- Children are usually very good at seeing
• Children are usually truthful. Terrible things may have happened to them that seem unbelievable to you, but, sadly, are normal events to the child. Do not judge, but remain open to the concept that the child is trying to describe their experience in the best way they can.

5.iii Confidentiality issues

Explain to the child in an age appropriate way about why you are interviewing, and what you will do with the information gained. Never lie to the child or avoid the truth. If the information from the interview might result in legal action against an offender, then the children concerned need to know how their interviews may be used.

Children should never be forced into giving an interview for the purposes of forensic evidence. They should be given an explanation, which is appropriate to their age and understanding, and allowed to make a choice about whether they will give an interview. Evidence should never be gained by duress or by coercion.

5.iv Establishing rapport

The time spent in an interview establishing rapport has a number of useful functions:

• Establishing a relationship of empathy and trust between the child and the interviewer
• Explaining the purpose of the interview and making introductions of people present
• Discussion of neutral topics, playing with toys if appropriate, and reassuring the child that they have done nothing wrong
• Ascertaining the child’s linguistic competence, level and methods of communication
• Understanding the personality and life circumstances of the child
• Setting ground rules, challenging assumptions and minimizing suggestibility.
• Some assumptions a child might make are: that every question has a right and wrong answer; that all questions must be answered, even if they are not understood; that the interviewer already knows what happened; that it is not ok to say ‘I don’t know.’
• Distinguishing the truth from lies (note that children of nursery school age can tell the difference between true and false statements, but children under ten may have been coached in what they must say. Once they feel safe from oppression the true story will usually emerge.

Remember that children need to tell their story in their own way.

Each child’s experience is unique and different from that of others. Children will describe their experience according to their character, culture, and level of understanding. Do not make assumptions about what a child means. Try to remain open to their way of describing what happened, and to find out what it is that they want to say.

Children who have suffered prolonged trauma may have difficulty in giving a clear account of events in chronological sequence. They may confuse several incidents and run them together.

Example of a way to establish whether the child understands the difference between truth and lies, and explain what is meant by truth:

Before we begin, I want to make sure that you understand the difference between the truth and a lie.

Let me tell you a story. Violeta was playing with a stone and when she threw the stone, it broke a window. She ran away. A man asked Violeta if she broke the window. She said ‘No.’

Did she tell a lie? (wait for child’s answer)

What should Violeta have said? (wait for child’s answer)

Why do you think that Violeta said ‘No’? (wait for child’s answer)

(or you can use your own age-appropriate example for an older child)

Is it right to tell lies? (wait for child’s answer)

It is vital to make sure that the child understands the importance of telling the whole truth.
6. SECOND STAGE OF THE INTERVIEW

6. i  Open questions

The interviewer should gradually move from the general discussion to establish rapport, to free narrative and open questioning moving towards those issues that have given rise to concerns. It is important to move at the child’s pace.

The task is to gradually build up a picture of what might have happened to the child.

The following are examples of possible general lines of questioning, gradually moving towards specific events.

- ‘Tell me why you think — has brought you here today?’
- ‘My job is to talk with children about things that may be troubling them. If there is something troubling you, I would like to understand what it is, so that we can try to help you. Can you tell me about anything that worries you?’
- ‘I heard that you have just come back from… Will you tell me what happened to you there?’
- ‘Can you tell me about what happened before you came here…?’
- ‘Tell me about what happened to you when…’
- ‘What happened next?’
- ‘What did you do?’

Once a child has started to tell their story, then just listen carefully, and show that you understand and are open to what they say. Try not to interrupt, but try to get a picture of what the child’s experience is.

Once the child has come to a natural stop, then specific questions may be asked to elicit more details.
6.ii Specific questions


A useful question between open and specific is to ask more about a chosen topic, e.g. ‘Can you tell me more about...?’ It allows the child freedom to tell more about an incident at their own pace and in their own way.

Other examples might be:

- What did the woman look like?
- What did the man do then?
- How did he hurt you?
- Where did it hurt you?
- Who was there?
- Where did you go to next?
- What clothes was he wearing?
- What colour was his coat?
- Where were you when it happened?
- When did it happen?

Note that the concept of dates and time is often difficult for children, especially younger children. Try to link the event with fixed points in the child’s day, for example, was it in the night time? Was it light? Was it before bedtime?

‘Why’ questions are also difficult. Quite often when you ask a person ‘Why did you do that?’ they think that you are criticising, and not simply enquiring their reason for the action. If they are defensive, try put the question in a softer voice and a more neutral way.... Why do you think that you did that? What made you do that?

6.iii Closed questions

These are the least productive questions, but they can be used with care at the end of the interview to clarify issues raised earlier. This type of question poses fixed alternatives, or gets a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer.

Examples are:

- Were you in the bedroom?
- Did he hit you with his hand?
- Did anyone see you?
- Did you run away?

Note: Interviewers should NOT put ideas into the witness’ head.

Leading questions (ones which suggest the answer) should be avoided, e.g. ‘It was blue, wasn’t it?’ If a child wants to please the interviewer, they might simply agree and answer ‘yes’ to please. This sort of questioning will not elicit good reliable evidence.

If there is a degree of trust and the child is confident, then occasionally a specific question might prompt a child to give more information than was asked, for example if asked ‘Was he wearing a blue coat?’ the child might reply ‘Yes, it was blue, but it had a red hood and he had red trainers.’

7. FINAL STAGE OF THE INTERVIEW: CLOSING

The closing part of the interview is as important as the opening. If the child has been trusting and has spoken of many things, it may be the first time that the child has felt than an adult has listened to them.

If the things talked about have been painful and difficult, the child may feel relieved to have told someone about them, perhaps for the first time, but the child may also feel sad and upset by the memories.

It is very important to make sure that the child has a person to be with after the interview (a carer, therapist, or other safe adult) who will offer them the appropriate support and help if they are sad and upset.

Closure is also an important part of the interview process because it provides an opportunity to thank
the young witness and also to answer any questions that the child may wish to ask.

The child should be invited to add anything they wish, or to correct anything they have said. The interviewer can leave advice on seeking help, and a contact name and telephone number.

The interview should not be prolonged and tire the child, but also it should not feel rushed.

The ending of the interview should ensure that the child witness leaves the room feeling confident, safe and supported in the investigation process.

8. ACTIVE LISTENING: WHAT MAKES COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVE?

These are comments, which children and young people have made in workshops about their experience of being interviewed:

**Things that make listening effective:**

- Same physical level
- Relaxed posture
- Physical safety
- Pleasant surroundings
- No distractions
- Privacy
- Clear boundaries (e.g. time, place, duration and frequency of meeting; confidentiality, mutual expectations and responsibilities)
- Good psychological contact
- Genuineness
- Non-judgmental acceptance
- Respect and valuing the other person
- Showing interest and alertness
- Open mindedness
- Good eye contact
- Acknowledgment of the other person and what is said (e.g. reflecting back, nodding)
- Open body language
- Confidentiality
- Trust
- Showing undivided attention
- Not interrupting
- Reflecting back
- Mirroring
- Allowing silences
- Clarification, owning confusions or lack of understanding
- Checking out to confirm understanding
9. BLOCKS TO COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN

Be aware of our emotional response to a child who will not talk

When children will not talk with us, it can set up feelings in us of frustration, rejection or helplessness. We have to be careful to notice our own feelings and not to become angry or punitive in response to a child who will not talk easily. Feelings of frustration in helpers may cause a child to feel their anger and become frightened. If possible, find ways to reassure the child, and to let them know that you understand why they find it difficult to talk.

It may help to ask yourself some questions:

- Is the child frightened? If so, of what? How can you help them?
- Does the child understand that they can trust you? If not, what can you do to help build trust?
- Is the venue a good one for encouraging communication?
- Are there people present who are inhibiting the child from talking?
- Are you listening effectively? Check that you are using all the appropriate listening skills.
- Does the child have speech or language problems?
- Does the child have very strong emotions, which stop them from speaking about the events they have experienced?
Specific problems in communication

Emotions:

- It is difficult for adults to express their emotions in words at the best of times. For a child who is suffering and distressed, it is very hard indeed to talk about feelings. If that child has been deprived of the love and care of a family, and possibly deprived of communication, they may be unable to identify the feelings that they have, and they may not have the words to express what they feel or even to tell their story. Here, the use of drawings, and other forms of expression, for example age appropriate toys, creative arts, drama, and songs or music may help. Children can show their feelings through play, and creative arts such as drawing or clay modelling, and the listener can use this medium to encourage communication with appropriate open questions.

- Children may be willing to tell their story through hand puppets in the form of a play rather than tell their story directly to an adult.

- The use of dance, and of musical instruments can allow children to express themselves and to show feelings, e.g. stamping feet in a dance, or banging a drum can help with anger, and an imaginary microphone can be used to sing or rap to tell a story, or to express feelings.

Cultural, religious or other societal taboos:

- Children find it difficult to talk about some things to adults. In some cultures, girls in particular could find it difficult to admit that they had been sexually abused because it will affect their social standing and also their chances of future marriage. Boys, too, may find it very hard to admit that they have been abused or raped. They may feel that they are not as strong as men are expected to be in their culture.

- The interviewer should be of the same sex as the child, if the child may find it easier to talk to someone of their own sex about what happened.

- The interviewer should express no judgment of the child.

Anger:

- A child may be very angry with adults for hurting them and for failing to protect them. The listener may need to be able to hear and to take a lot of the child’s anger and to be able to understand that this is not personal. The listener cannot allow the child’s anger to become violence towards the listener or others, and it should be contained, but if the anger is heard, it will lessen.

These are comments that children and young people have made in workshops about their experience of being interviewed:

Things that make listening less effective:

- Tension, lack of trust
- Background noise, distractions, interruptions
- Physical discomfort
- Strong emotions in listener preventing good listening
- Speaker overwhelmed with emotions, feeling self conscious, embarrassed
- Listener pre-occupied with other things
- Moving away, turning away
- Fiddling with hair or pen

Key skills here are:

1. Listen to the child’s anger without judgment.
2. Show the child that you understand why they are angry.
3. Do not defend or to argue back.
4. Do not respond back with anger or punishment.
5. If the listener has the training and experience to contain a child’s physical expression of emotion, give the child a way to express their anger safely with words, play materials, or other means e.g. allow them to punch a cushion or to kick a cardboard box and at the same time to say out loud why they are angry.
10. SPECIFIC ISSUES AND SKILLS IN WORKING WITH ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

10. i Issues for adolescents

- Adolescents are in a time of their life when rapid change is happening. They are making the transition from child to adult.

- Children seek approval from their parents. Good deeds win parental favour. Adolescents seek approval from their peer group. They may try to win approval of their peers by anti-social actions of which their parents disapprove.

- Adolescents may be concerned about the perceptions of others, and feel both judged and judgmental. This could sometimes result in arrogance and sometimes in a sense of uncertainty.

- Adolescents are trying to become adults and to find their sense of self. This may be the time when they challenge their parents’ authority.

- Emotions in adolescence may be volatile, and this may be compounded by stress and traumatic memories.

- Adolescents are dealing with profound hormonal changes. The power of hormonal influences should not be underestimated.

- Sexual abuse may affect an adolescent’s self-esteem and perception of self. The violation of their body has a profound effect on self-esteem and also destroys the child’s normal belief system, i.e. that the world is a safe place and that adults can usually be trusted.

Adolescents’ needs are different from that of younger children. They may need reassurance and support, but it is important that they feel respected and that they are not patronised. If we treat adolescents as children (rather than young adults) they may be resentful, and may refuse to co-operate.
• Girls who have been raped or abused may feel worthless, and some girls describe their feelings as being ‘dirty’.

• Boys who have been raped or physically abused may feel that they are not as strong or ‘macho’ as their peer group would expect them to be, and they may feel angry, defeated, and powerless, at a time in their lives when they need to feel strong and powerful.

• Sexually abused boys may find it very hard to admit what has happened to them and feel ashamed, as though somehow they should have been able to prevent it happening. Here, reassurance and support, particularly by those to whom they look for respect, and from their peer group, is helpful.

• Adolescent girls who have been sexually abused may be very afraid of the response of their family and friends to their experiences, and afraid of rejection. If the girl has become pregnant, this may be perceived as shameful. In some cases, the girl and her child may be rejected by her family and community.

• A girl who is pregnant as a result of sexual abuse may feel a mixture of feelings about her baby. She may love her baby, and want to keep it. She may wish for an abortion so that she can forget the past and start again. She may have religious feelings about abortion, and feel a duty to keep her baby. She may resent her baby as the child of a rapist. She may feel trapped with all these mixed feelings and find that decisions are hard to make. She may even feel suicidal, thinking that death is the only way to solve her problems.

• Adolescent girls who have been sexually abused may feel that they should have prevented the abuse somehow, and feel that they are to blame. Their feelings of guilt and shame can be overwhelming. The attitudes of others towards girls who have been sexually abused (for example family or society may show pity or disgust) may make their feelings of guilt and shame worse.

• Some girls who have been sexually abused may be left vulnerable, and be unable to protect themselves from further harm and abuse. They may feel that their childhood and innocence has been taken from them. They also may need to learn strategies to protect themselves in the future, and to develop appropriate boundaries along with their self-respect, so that they can say ‘no’ to others who may perceive their vulnerability.

• Adolescents may try to behave as adults and take on too much responsibility. They need to be allowed to develop gradually, and to accept adult duties and responsibilities gradually.

10. ii Skills and qualities in working with adolescents

The main skills and qualities need to interview adolescents are:

• Understanding the developmental stage of adolescence
• Establishing trust and rapport without being patronising
• Relating with openness to the adolescent’s experiencing
• Being non-judgmental.
• Offering reassurance and support.
• Setting appropriate boundaries
• Accepting volatile emotions in adolescence
• Understanding the effects of stress and traumatic memories for adolescents.
• Understanding the effects of sexual abuse.
• Offering reassurance and support.
• Arranging support from the adolescents’ peer group.
• Understanding the impact of gender differences in adolescence.
• Understanding the impact of cultural differences in adolescence
• Identifying and offering appropriate resources and referrals
• Helping to restore and improve self-esteem

• Some girls who have been sexually abused may feel that they are ‘good for nothing else any more’ and may prostitute themselves. This leads to further social blame and rejection. They may need reassurance that they are valued and respected, and that what happened to them was not their fault.

• Adolescents are almost adults, and so should not be patronised.
Children who are unable to walk or to feed or to do other things for themselves may have been literally left for hours alone. Their physical and emotional needs may have been ignored, and their development delayed as a result.

Children who have speech difficulties may have been ill-treated or sexually abused by adults or siblings who took advantage of the fact that they could not easily complain.

One of the biggest problems is the incorrect assumption made by many people that children who have a difficulty in expressing themselves or who suffer from a physical disability also have low intelligence. Children who have a physical incapacity may feel very angry and frustrated because they may understand everything that is said to them, but they cannot respond in a way that the listener understands, and so they are treated as ‘stupid’ or they are told what to do all the time, and treated as though they have no wishes or feelings of their own.

It is important to use all effective listening skills in order to communicate with the disabled child. Patience, respect and observation will be rewarding.

Children who have sustained deliberate or accidental injuries will have to come to terms with their new physical situation. They are likely to be suffering emotionally as well as physically. They may be shocked, and/or suffer from post-traumatic stress in relation to the event that caused the injury.

The child may grieve for the loss of a bodily function due to injury. Some of the feelings may include:

- Denial (‘I can’t believe it, this cannot be true’ ‘It can’t happen to me.’)
- Anger (‘It is not fair.’ ‘Why me?’)
- Depression (‘Poor me.’)

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12. SKILLS AND QUALITIES OF AN INTERVIEWER

LISTENING AND GOOD COMMUNICATION
Those who interview children need to have patience, and the ability to communicate effectively.

AN UNDERSTANDING OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
Interviewers need to develop effective communication with children of all ages. To achieve this they need an understanding of child development and of age appropriate language.

AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF CHILD ABUSE
Those who interview children need to understand the types of abuse to which children might have been exposed, and the potential effects of child abuse on the children concerned and their families.

OPENNESS TO THE CHILD’S EXPERIENCE
Interviewers must be non-judgmental, and value the child, being open to the feelings and experiences of the child.

BUILDING RAPPORT
Creating the feeling in children that their thoughts and feelings are understood, giving them a chance to make their own decisions, at their own pace, and demonstrating a real interest in helping the child.

ASSERTIVENESS
Being clear about your own needs, and able to express them to other people without putting them down. Through modelling, to encourage the children with whom we work to become assertive themselves.

FACILITATION
Assisting children to communicate, listen, express emotions and concerns.

RECORDING AND SUMMARISING SKILLS
Interviewers may need to record facts and the child’s feelings, creating summaries and records of interviews.
SELF AWARENESS
Pays attention to own feelings and behaviour, so as not to treat the parties unfairly without realising it.

FLEXIBILITY
The ability to maintain professional standards but also to respond to the needs of each individual child and to change the interview process in order to meet their needs and the requirements of each new situation.

BALANCE
Interviewers need the ability to be aware of their own feelings, and to balance them with the needs of the situation. They may need to match the need for support and empathy with appropriate keeping of boundaries to keep the child safe, matching authority and control with a concern for the child.

COMMITMENT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
A willingness to build an understanding of how race, gender, culture and religion play a part in the child’s experience, to be aware of different cultural needs, and to work with a diversity of children and colleagues in a non-discriminatory way.

CREATIVITY
Interviewers need the ability to come up with ideas, trying different ways of working with children where necessary, and being flexible to meet the needs of changing situations.

PROFESSIONALISM
Takes work seriously, is prepared and on time, is respectful to children and adults at all times.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS
Realising the effectiveness of verbal expression, gesture and body language in communicating with the child and others and using them appropriately.

MANAGEMENT OF THE INTERVIEW PROCESS
Able to put together a variety of skills, provide a structure for the interview, and keep control of the process.

UNDERSTANDING AND EMPATHY WITH CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS
Those who interview children need to be at ease with the children with whom they work. They need to understand how children of different ages might think, and how children of different ages might express themselves.

UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES
Interviewing trafficked children necessitates an openness and awareness of other cultures, religions, and ethnic differences. Interviews may be influenced by cultural taboos on gender, venue and the use of facilities.

UNDERSTANDING OF SITUATIONS AND PEOPLE
Has experience with people, some understanding of various different kinds of behaviour, the necessary substantive knowledge of the issues, and a familiarity with relevant rules or guidelines.

ABILITY TO LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE
Willing to build on knowledge, self-awareness, and understanding of others.

GENUINENESS
Honesty, knowledge of one’s own strengths and weaknesses.

OPENNESS TO OTHER PEOPLE
Respect, understanding of differences, and an awareness of own prejudices.

IMPARTIALITY
Is concerned about the outcome for both sides and has the ability to demonstrate that to the parties.

QUALITIES
An interviewer should have the following qualities:

- Understanding and empathy with children and adolescents
- Understanding cultural and religious differences
- Understanding situations and people
- Ability to learn from experience
- Genuineness
- Openness to the experience of others
- Impartiality
- Self-awareness
- Commitment to equal opportunities
- Creativity
- Professionalism

SELF - EXAMINATION TEST 12.

Questions:
1. Read through the skills of a good interviewer. Which six of these would you say are the most important? Why?
2. Name six qualities of a good interviewer.
3. Read through the list of qualities of a good interviewer. Think which of these qualities you are not so good at and need to develop in yourself.
4. How can you work to develop your skills and attitudes as an interviewer?
5. Think of your best qualities as an interviewer.
6. Could you help someone else to develop their interview skills and techniques? Can they help you with yours?
Exercises in developing effective communication with children

1. **PLANNING AN INTERVIEW WITH A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON**

   Working in small groups, role-play interviews of young witnesses of varying ages to include:
   - An age-appropriate explanation of the interviewer’s job/role
   - Explaining the reason for and purpose of the interview
   - Explaining what will happen in interview
   - Explaining what will be expected of the child in interview
   - Answer any questions that the child may have

   Feedback in large group.

2. **EFFECTS OF LISTENING AND NOT LISTENING.**

   In a brainstorm, participants identify the emotional impact and effects of situations when a person is not listened to, contrasting this with the situations in which people feel that they are listened to. Chart up the participants’ responses, drawing attention to the distinctions. With guidance from the tutors, participants identify the activities involved in active listening, distinguishing listening from not listening, with reference to the handbook.

3. **HOW IT FEELS TO BE LISTENED TO/NOT LISTENED TO.**

   1. Participants are asked to work in pairs, and to think of a situation in which they felt that they had not been listened to. They are asked to speak alternately for five minutes on these topics, whilst the other person listens, giving their best attention:
      - A situation in which I did not feel listened to.

Discuss in pairs or in large group the experience of not being listened to and the way it felt. Chart up the effects of not feeling listened to.

2. Repeat the exercise with the topic
   - A situation in which I felt that someone listened to me.

Discuss in pairs or in large group the experience of being listened to and the way it felt. Chart up the effects of feeling listened to.

3. Discuss how it might feel for a child who has been the victim of trafficking to be really listened to, and refer to the handbook.

4. **HOW TO LISTEN EFFECTIVELY (1)**

   In pairs, one person is the speaker, the other one is the listener. The speaker talks for five minutes about a problem in their work. Do not choose a topic that is too big or emotional to talk easily about. The listener should do their best to listen well. The speaker should try to notice whether they felt listened to, and what the listener did that showed this. They should then discuss their experience. Notice what worked, and what was not so good.

   Change over and the other person now becomes the speaker. Repeat the exercise.

5. **HOW TO LISTEN EFFECTIVELY (2)**

   Work in threes. One person is speaker, one is listener, and the third is observer.

   The speaker should talk for five minutes about an issue of their choice. The listener is to try their best to listen well. The observer is to remain silent and to notice what the listener does that encourages the speaker. In particular to pay attention to eye contact, body language, words used, and other issues.

   Repeat the exercise twice more, each person changing roles.

Discuss together what helped and what did not help, with reference to the handbook.
6. PEN PICTURE OF A CHILD

The learning objective of this exercise is to develop empathic awareness of a child, ability in description and widen awareness of personal prejudices, values and preferences. It will also identify the impact of personal values and prejudices on the use of self in the investigation of child abuse.

The participants work individually, and are asked to write a description of a child that they know well. Time for the description 10 minutes.

The participants are invited to discuss their descriptions, and the facilitator draws out the aspects of the child that have been noted. Participants are encouraged to ask themselves what they noticed, and what they left out. They should then reflect on their perceptions, and their value systems.

7. WHO AM I? HOW DO I USE MYSELF IN THE INTERVIEW PROCESS?

1. Participants are asked to reflect individually for five minutes on their own character, skills and qualities. They should make a private note of these. Strengths and weaknesses should be included.

2. In pairs (speaker and listener) they are invited to discuss their strengths, and how these might help in the task of interviewing children. Change roles and repeat.

3. In same pairs, consider weaknesses, and how these may affect the interview process. Discuss how these weaknesses might be changed or improved. Change roles and repeat.

8. WHAT DO WE EXPECT OF CHILDREN IN AN INTERVIEW?

Discuss in small groups what they would expect from a child who is being interviewed. Focus on:

• How will they expect the child to feel about the interview before it starts?

9. WHAT DO WE EXPECT OF OURSELVES IN AN INTERVIEW WITH A CHILD?

Discuss in small groups what we would expect from ourselves as interviewers. Focus on:

• How should we expect interviewers to behave during the interview?
• What would we expect to learn from the child?
• How might we expect ourselves to feel during the interview?
• How might we feel after the interview has ended?

10. PRACTICE AN INTERVIEW WITH A CHILD.

1. Take a scenario from work and practice interviewing a child in a role play. Work in threes, child, interviewer and observer. In the triad, then discuss together how the interviewer engaged with the child, created rapport, and asked questions. How did the child experience the interview? What did the observer notice? Refer to the handbook.
2. Change roles and repeat the exercise.
3. Change roles and repeat the exercise.

11. IMAGINING HOW A CHILD VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING MIGHT FEEL.

Individual exercise: Think of a child who has been taken from home at the age of ten, and who was used as a labourer until the age of thirteen when they were rescued. You have to interview that child. Think how the child might be feeling. Make a list of their feelings.

In a group, discuss the child’s feelings and needs, and how you might build trust with that child.
12. PLANNING AN INTERVIEW OF A CHILD VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING (1).

1. In a group, think of a child victim of trafficking and their life story. Then plan an interview of the child focusing on:
   - Why are you interviewing this child?
   - Where should the interview happen?
   - What facilities and resources will you need?
   - Who should be present?
   - What are the issues that the interviewers need to consider?
   - What information should the interviewer try to find out about the child?
   - What information will you give the child about yourself and why the interview is taking place?

2. In a group role play, one person is to be that child, another the interviewer, and the others observers. Carry out the interview. Ask the child to say how they felt about the interview. Ask the interviewer what comments they have on the interview. Observers then discuss the techniques of the interviewer, making constructive suggestions for changes and improvements and noting the strengths of the interviewer.

13. PLANNING AN INTERVIEW OF A CHILD VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING (2).

Discuss in large group:
   - What are the different stages of an interview?
   - What is the purpose of each stage?
   - How will you decide when to go on to the next stage?
   - Do you think that you can miss out a stage?
   - Is it acceptable to go back to an earlier stage if you feel it right to do so?

Refer to the handbook.

14. NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN AN INTERVIEW OF A CHILD VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING.

In a group role play, one person is to be a child, another the interviewer, and the others observers. Carry out an interview. The observers are to note the body language of the child and the interviewer.

15. EMPATHY WITH THE CHILD WHO HAS HAD A BAD EXPERIENCE.

1. In pairs of listener and speaker, the speaker describes how they felt during a bad experience. They then describe whether they still feel the effects of that experience, and if so, what they feel now.

2. Change roles and repeat.

3. In small groups, discuss how might a child victim of trafficking be feeling after their experiences?

4. How will those feelings affect the interview?

16. HOW CAN WE HELP THE CHILD WHO HAS HAD A BAD EXPERIENCE?

In small groups, discuss:

1. Thinking about the bad experiences that trafficked children might have, how can we help them?
2. Does talking about bad things help?
3. Are there any times when talking about bad experiences does not help?
4. If a child does not want to talk what else can we do to help?

Refer to the handbook on posttraumatic stress.

17. WHY MIGHT A CHILD FIND IT HARD TO TALK ABOUT BAD EXPERIENCES?

In a large group brainstorm the reasons why a child might not wish to or be able to talk about bad experiences.

Make a list of the possible reasons.
Refer to the handbook on blocks to communication and discuss.

18. HOW CAN WE HELP THE CHILD WHO FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO TALK?

1. In pairs, as speaker and listener, think of a time when you did not talk about a bad experience, and the speaker is asked to explain why they did not talk about it.
2. Change roles and repeat.
3. In the pair, discuss what might have helped both people to talk about their experiences.

Refer to the handbook on dealing with blocks to communication.

19. PRACTISING OPENING AN INTERVIEW

In threes, or small groups, which include a speaker, listener and observer, with reference to the handbook identify the ways in which to open an interview with a child and practice:

- Introductions
- Answering the child’s questions
- Establishing rapport

20. PRACTISING QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

In threes, or small groups, which include a speaker, listener and observer, with reference to the handbook identify and practice the three types of questions:

- Open questions
- Specific questions
- Closed questions

21. PRACTISING CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

In threes, or small groups, which include a speaker, listener and observer, with reference to the handbook identify the issues to be considered in closing the interview and practice bringing an interview to a good closure. Issues include:

- Thanking the child
- Valuing the child
- Validating the child’s experience
- Allowing opportunity for further questions
- Advice giving and referrals
- Opportunity to meet again if in the child’s interests to do so

22. COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

1. Working in small groups, identify the possible special needs of refugee children

2. Plan an interview with a refugee child of seven with speech problems found wandering alone to include:

- Venue
- Timing
- Who should be present
- Resources, equipment facilities, necessary
- Lines and methods of questioning.
- Further actions to be taken

3. Plan an interview with a blind child of twelve who has been subject to cruelty and neglect to include:

- Venue
- Timing
- Who should be present
- Resources, equipment facilities, necessary
- Lines and methods of questioning.
- Further actions to be taken
4. Plan an interview with a teenage refugee who has been sexually abused to include:
   - Venue
   - Timing
   - Who should be present
   - Resources, equipment facilities, necessary
   - Lines and methods of questioning.
   - Further actions to be taken

5. Plan an interview with a former child soldier aged fifteen to include:
   - Venue
   - Timing
   - Who should be present
   - Resources, equipment facilities, necessary
   - Lines and methods of questioning.
   - Further actions to be taken

6. Consider these children again, and think how your interview planning might have varied if they were of a different:
   - Gender
   - Ethnicity
   - Culture
   - Religion

Give examples from a variety of races, religions, cultures and ethnicities.

23. NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN

70% of human communication is non-verbal. Being a good communicator means being able to read the non-verbal cues.

The participants will work in triads. Each person in turn will become communicator, interviewer, and observer. Each exercise should take no more than a total of 15 mins.

EXERCISE 1   Communicator mimes a short scenario (3 mins) in which they convey an event and some emotion connected with it. The interviewer is to write down their understanding of the event and the emotions conveyed. Discuss in the triad (10 mins).

EXERCISE 2   The roles change. Repeat the exercise, this time the communicator is asked to mime a person that they know in some activity and give some idea of what that person is like.

EXERCISE 3   The roles change. Repeat the exercise. The communicator is asked to mime a scene from their childhood that makes them feel some emotion (with a warning not to mime a traumatic event or one which will cause them severe emotional pain).

The exercise is discussed in the large group.

24. IS CHILDREN’S EVIDENCE RELIABLE?

Small group and large group discussion, in relation to child witnesses:

1. Can you tell if a child is not telling the truth?
2. What are the indicators that a witness is lying?
3. What factors or circumstances might render evidence unreliable?
4. How could the reliability of evidence in cases involving children be improved?

Feedback in large group and discussion of good practice in gathering evidence.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

WHO Ethical and safety recommendations for interviewing trafficked women (2003), World Health Organisation