

## THE ALLEGED OFFENDER INTERVIEW PROCESS

- I. Preparation
- II. The Introduction
- III. Build Rapport/Adjust Questioning to Level of Understanding
- IV. Confront With Allegations
- V. Clarification Questioning
  - Expect "sympathy" ploy
- VI. Closure
  - Discuss rules of contact
  - Team contact information

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From "Interviewing the Child Molester: Ten Tips for Eliciting Incriminating Statements," by V.I. Vieth, 1998, *APRI Update*, 11(2) [Newsletter]. Copyright © 1998 by the American Prosecutors Research Institute and the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse. Used with permission.

Retrieved October, 2003, from:

[http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/apri\\_update\\_vol\\_11\\_no\\_12\\_1998.htm](http://www.ndaa-apri.org/publications/newsletters/apri_update_vol_11_no_12_1998.htm).

### **Goals of the Alleged Offender Interview**

#### **Key CPS Information to Obtain:**

- Initial reaction to disclosure
- Details about maltreatment
- Acknowledgement of maltreatment
- Presence of stressors
- Methods of coercion/secretcy
- Rationalizations for sexual activity
- Sexual activity with other children
- Motivation for sexual abuse
- Overall level of functioning
- History
- Mental health status and history
- Alcohol/drug problems
- Parenting practices
- Marital relationships
- Current emotional state
- Willingness to participate in intervention

#### **Key Law Enforcement Information to Obtain:**

- Schedule and routine
- Mental health problems
- Alcohol or drug dependence
- Physical or medical problems
- Familiarity with child and routine
- Nature and quality of relationship with child
- Description of child
- Relationship with spouse
- Corroboration
- Explanation of reasons for allegation

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Adapted from *A Coordinated Response to Child Abuse Cases, Part 1* [Video], produced by Action for Child Protection, 1994. (Available from Action for Child Protection, 2101 Sardis Road N., Charlotte, NC 28227.) Copyright © 1994 by Action for Child Protection. Used with permission.

## COMMON REACTION PATTERNS OF SEXUAL OFFENDERS

When confronted with allegations of sexual abuse, the following are predictable reactions:

- Denial of all allegations
- Partial admissions (non-sexual)
  - Non-sexual interest in children
  - Interest in child development
  - Photography as a hobby
- Partial admissions of sexual activity
  - Offender will minimize quality and quantity of sexual interactions
- Rationalization/ justification of sexual behavior with child(ren)
  - Accidental contact
  - Sexual education
  - Checking virginity/ development
  - Blame abuse on others (non-offending caretaker was unavailable; child was seductive)
  - Blame other factors (under stress, drinking too much)
  - Stressed to a point that behavior was atypical
- Admission of specific acts in response to questioning

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Adapted from: Pence, D. & Wilson, C. (1994). *Team Investigation of Child Sexual Abuse: The Uneasy Alliance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

**THE ALLEGED OFFENDER INTERVIEW PROCESS CHECKLIST**

Indicate with a check if you feel these strategies were demonstrated in the video segments.

<b>STRATEGIES</b> <b>The interviewer(s):</b>	<b>INTERVIEW WITH TOM</b>
Is there to help with the "problem."	
Knows that the suspect feels the relationship was wrong and he needs help.	
Emphasizes the need to be fair and get both sides of the story so no one will blame him for something he didn't do.	
Allows the suspect to use justifications and excuses (denial) to protect his ego while he tells about the activity.	
Helps the suspect develop or express his justification so that sexual information can be obtained.	
Expresses the love the suspect has for the victim, and the love the victim has for the suspect.	
Offers minimizers that allow the suspect to admit in a manner that he thinks lowers his responsibility, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ "Did she start it?"</li> <li>◆ "Was she coming on to you/flirting?"</li> <li>◆ "Was it the alcohol that made you do it?"</li> </ul>	

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From *Interviewing the Offender in Child Sexual Abuse Investigations* (Handouts, pp. 7, 9, 10) by James Starks and Susan Samuel, presented at the conference *Improving Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse*, May 15-16, 2003, Richmond, VA. Used with permission.

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