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USC Child Interviewing Lab

Interview Supportiveness and the Revised NICHD Protocol

Thomas D. Lyon, J.D., Ph.D.
USC Gould School of Law
Midwestern Regional Child Advocacy Center
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What we'll do today

- Reminder of the NICHD protocol
- Review of the Revised NICHD protocol
 - Additional rapport building when needed
 - Supportive Non-suggestive statements
- Research on the Revised NICHD protocol
 - Increased disclosure rates
 - Fewer allegation questions
 - Lower reluctance

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Readings for Today

- Revised NICHD Protocol
 - <http://nichdprotocol.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/RevisedProtocolTMWH2final-1.pdf>
- Appendices to Revised NICHD Protocol
 - <http://nichdprotocol.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/AppendicesToProtocol.pdf>

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Overview of the NICHD protocol (and comparison to Ten Step)

- Introduction (explaining and practicing ground rules)
 - Similar to Steps 1-5 (Interview Instructions)
- Rapport building
 - Tell me about things you like to do
- Training in episodic memory
 - Tell me everything that happened
 - During a recent positive event
 - Yesterday
 - (if needed) Today
 - Similar to Step 6 (Practice Narratives)

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Overview of the NICHD protocol (and comparison to Ten Step)

- Transition to substantive issues
 - Increasingly specific questions about the allegation
 - Similar to Step 7 (Allegation)
- Investigating the incidents
 - Tell me everything...
 - Similar to Step 8 (Allegation Follow-up)

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Overview of the Revised NICHD Protocol

- Introduction
- Rapport building and narrative training
 - Tell me about things you like to do
- Explaining and practicing ground rules
- Further rapport building and episodic memory training
 - Tell me everything that happened
- Substantive phase
- Disclosure information

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Most important differences:
(1) Additional rapport building when needed

- E.g., “Tell me about things you like to do”
 - If child *does* respond, “Thank you for sharing that with me, it helps me get to know you.”
 - If child *doesn't* respond, “I know this is the first time we have met and I really want to know about you. I am glad I can talk to you today [Child's name].”
 - “I really want to know you better [child's name]. I would like you to tell me about things you like to do at school [during recess, after school].”

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Most important differences:
(2) Supportive non-suggestive statements

- A. Addressing the child by name
- B. Establishing rapport
 1. Welcoming the child
 2. Expression of personal interest
 3. Small gestures of good will
- C. Reinforcement
 1. Reinforcing behavior (e.g. “you are helping me understand”)
 2. Thanks and appreciation
 3. Respect for the child's decisions

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Most important differences:
(2) Supportive non-suggestive statements

- D. Using rapport
 1. Reflecting on the relationship (e.g. “I know you better”)
 2. Expression of care (e.g., “I am here for you”)
 3. Emphasizing you are someone to disclose to (e.g., “I talk to many kids”)

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Most important differences:
(2) Supportive non-suggestive statements

- E. Emotional support
 1. Generalization of the child's expressed difficulties
 2. Empathy (“I understand” “I know”)
 3. Checking the child's (current) feelings
 4. Exploring/echoing/elaborating emotions
 5. Reassurance (“sometimes it helps”)
 6. Removing responsibility

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Most important differences:
(2) Supportive non-suggestive statements

- F. Kind encouragement
 1. Child is the key source (“I was not there”)
 2. Legitimizing expression (“you can talk about good things and bad things”)
 3. Expression of confidence or optimism (“I'm sure you could tell me”)
 4. Offering help
 5. Encouraging non-verbal communication (“Can I see your eyes?”)
 6. Encouraging disclosure (e.g. “Please go ahead and tell me”)

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Research on the Revised NICHD Protocol: Disclosure

- Hershkowitz, Lamb, & Katz (2014)
 - 426 4- to 13-year-olds with corroborative evidence of intrafamilial abuse (most physical)
 - Disclosure increased from 50% to 60%
 - (among children who had not previously disclosed, 44 to 52%)

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Research on the Revised NICHD Protocol: Number of Allegation Questions

- Ahern, Hershkowitz, Lamb, Blasbalg, & Karni-Visel
 - 230 3- to 13-year-olds with corroborative evidence of intrafamilial physical abuse
 - Fewer questions were needed to elicit disclosures in Revised Protocol (5.8 vs. 7.0)



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Research on the Revised NICHD Protocol: Number of Allegation Questions

- 0) I want to talk about why you came today.
- 1) I understand that something may have happened to you.
- 2) Why do you think [person] brought you here?
- 3) I heard you talked to [person].
- 4) I heard you had [bruises].
- 5) Did anything happen at [time/location]?
- 6) Has anyone bothered you?
- 7) Has someone done something not right?



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Research on the Revised NICHD Protocol: Reluctance

- Blasbalg, Hershkowitz, Lamb, Karni-Visel, & Ahern (2018a)
 - 254 4- to 13-year-olds with corroborative evidence of intrafamilial physical abuse
 - Less reluctance during the allegation questions (24% vs. 30%)
 - Less reluctance during the disclosure (23% vs. 27%)
 - Definition of reluctance: dk/dr, resistance, denial
- See also Blasbalg et al. (2018b), Karni-Visel et al., (2018)



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Studies on the Revised NICHD Protocol

- Ahern, E. C., Hershkowitz, I., Lamb, M. E., Blasbalg, U., & Winstanley, A. (2014). Support and reluctance in the pre-substantive phase of alleged child abuse victim investigative interviews: Revised versus Standard NICHD protocols. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 32, 762-774.
- Blasbalg, U., Hershkowitz, I., & Karni-Visel, Y. (2018a). Support, reluctance, and production in child abuse investigative interviews. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 24, 518-527.
- Blasbalg, U., Hershkowitz, I., Lamb, M. E., Karni-Visel, Y., & Ahern, E. C. (2018b). Is interviewer support associated with the reduced reluctance and enhanced informativeness of alleged child abuse victims? *Law and Human Behavior*, 43, 156-165.
- Hershkowitz, I. (2011). Rapport building in investigative interviews of children. *Children's testimony: A handbook of psychological research and forensic practice*, 109-128.
- Hershkowitz, I., Ahern, E. C., Lamb, M. E., Blasbalg, U., Karni-Visel, Y., & Breitman, M. (2017). Changes in interviewers' use of supportive techniques during the Revised Protocol training. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 31, 340-350.



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Studies on the Revised NICHD Protocol

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- Lewy, J., Cyr, M., & Dion, J. (2015). Impact of interviewers' supportive comments and children's reluctance to cooperate during sexual abuse disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 43, 112-122.



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For more information

- tlyon@law.usc.edu
- Email me to be put on list for Case Review webcast (Fridays 11 AM PST and archived).
- For reprints of articles, google "Bepress Lyon."

