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FACILITATION OF DISCLOSURE AND INTERVIEWING VICTIMS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter three the researcher emphasised how important it is for the social worker conducting forensic interviews to have sound knowledge of child development and specific developmental issues. Recognition of sexual abuse depends mainly upon a child's account of his/her experiences (Babiker & Herbert, 1998:233) and therefore the child's account is of prime importance. The way in which children are interviewed can make a difference between prosecution, protection or continued abuse.

In the past, and still among some legal professionals (Morison, Moir & Kwansa, 2000:114), children are regarded as unreliable witnesses. However, there is evidence that children can be reliable witnesses, and that they can comment meaningfully about their thoughts, feelings and experiences when questioned appropriately (Orbach & Lamb, 1999:91; Hershkowitz, 2001:60; Morison *et al.*, 2000:113). Facilitating a child's account of abusive experiences is a process rather than a single event, but it should not be assessed in isolation (Bentovin, *et al.*, 1995:246). The researcher has experienced that a child may often "test the water" by giving a partial or vague account of events (Sorenson & Snow, 1991:14) perhaps to a friend, family member and even during the investigative interview. Depending on the response, the child may reveal more.

The interviewer may have an effect on children; by their choice of the physical environment for conducting interviews, their demeanour and behaviour, and their selection of questioning strategies (Poole & Lamb, 1998:75). The researcher is of the opinion that it is important when forensic interviews are conducted to follow a structured protocol prescribing specific guidelines regarding professional conduct, setting of the interviews, interview strategies and evaluation of information (Wakefield, 2006).

In this chapter the researcher will look at different interview strategies, interviewer conduct, and will also explore existing interview protocols.

4.2 CLASSIFICATION OF INTERVIEWS

"Interviewing" is a commonly used term by professionals. Professionals in the medical profession and mental health services use interviewing to assess their patients, and security personnel also use interview strategies to interrogate their suspects (Rabon, 1992:5). The researcher experienced during training sessions of various professionals in South Africa, that confusion exists regarding the difference between forensic interviews, clinical assessment interviews and therapeutic interviews. This lack of knowledge causes confusion, resulting in uncertainty and fear of the unknown. It is important to classify the different type of interviews that a social worker may be confronted with.

4.2.1 Therapeutic interviews

According to the *New Dictionary of Social Work* (1995:65), the purpose of therapy is: "Social work assistance which focuses on the emotions and psychological needs of the client." The therapeutic interview is used to provide treatment for the patient (Gordon, 1992:60), which in the context of child sexual abuse would be the child. In order to provide treatment, an assessment will be conducted to determine the treatment plan to be followed by therapeutic sessions.

When conducting these interviews, clinical techniques and methods are used, (Kuehnle, 1996:32) and clinicians generally assume that their clients are telling the truth (Poole & Lamb, 1998:107). The goal of the forensic interviewer is to obtain accurate information, while the goal of the therapist is to encourage the child to express his/her feelings and thoughts, regardless of their accuracy (Cronch *et al.*, 2006:203; Geldard & Geldard, 1997:41). The researcher is of the opinion that the primary focus during the therapeutic interview is the emotional well-being and treatment of the child.

4.2.2. Investigative interviews

Investigative interviews (Bentovin *et al.*, 1995:249) or initial interviews (Practice Notes, 2002) are described as first-stage interviews specifically targeted at those cases where criminal action may be considered. The primary focus of the investigative interview is to obtain accurate information that will be used in the criminal process of determining guilt beyond reasonable doubt (Fouché, 2006:206; Venter, 2006). The purpose of the forensic interview is "to elicit as complete and accurate report from the alleged child or adolescent victim as possible in order to determine whether the child or adolescent has been abused, or is in imminent risk of abuse, and if so, by whom" (Abney, 1996:2).

The researcher experienced, that in the South African context, a member of the South African Police Service would conduct an investigative interview after which it will be decided whether the statement consists of enough information to arrest the accused or continue with the investigation (Swart, 2003; Lock, 2004).

It is the purpose of this study to provide a structured forensic interview protocol which will provide guidelines for the social worker during forensic assessment interviews.

4.2.3 Clinical assessment and forensic assessment interviews

Assessment is defined as a "process of analysing the factors that influence or determine the social functioning of the individual, family group or community" (*New Dictionary of Social Work*, 1995:4). Assessment interviews are described as second-stage interviews (Bentovin *et al.*, 1995:249). These interviews require the skills of professionals experienced in interviewing and communicating with children with a wide variety of developmental and communication problems.

It is important for professionals to understand the difference between clinical assessment interviews and forensic assessment interviews. Clinical assessment interviews involve the use of deliberate problem-solving strategies to understand

children with disturbances and their environment of family, school and peer relationships (Mash & Wolfe, 2005:74; Kuehnle, 1996:32). Second-stage forensic interviews usually occur after the initial stages of an investigation and are usually conducted by specially trained professionals (Practice Notes, 2002; Fouché, 2006:206). These interviews are characterised by sceptical neutrality on the part of the interviewer. Techniques utilised in forensic interviewing (Practice Notes, 2002; Lamb & Poole, 1998:107):

- are grounded in research on the development of memory and language;
- are sensitive regarding the possibility of interviewer influence; and
- utilise collection of data that require minimal interpretation.

The purpose of the forensic interview is according to Müller (2001:8) "... to obtain truthful accounts from the child in a manner which will best serve the interests of the child while at the same time being legally acceptable". It is the opinion of the researcher that the goal of forensic assessment interviews is to obtain an account from a child in a developmentally sensitive, unbiased, independent and truth-seeking manner (Poole & Lamb, 1998:107), which will support accurate and fair decision-making in the criminal justice system.

For the purpose of this study the term "forensic interviewing" will be used. The focus will be on the social worker conducting the forensic interviews either during an initial investigation, or after the primary investigative interview has already been conducted by the law enforcement officials.

4.3 THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL WORKER IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM

The legal obligation to report actual or suspected cases of child abuse and neglect, is found in the Prevention of Family Violence Act, 1993 (Act No. 133 of 1993), the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act No. 74 of 1983), as well as the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act, 2007 (Act No. 332 of 2007).

Section 4 of the Prevention of Family Violence Act, 1993 (Act No. 133 of 1993) states that:



Any person who examines, attends to, advises or cares for any child in circumstances which ought to give rise to the reasonable suspicion that such a child has been ill-treated, or suffers from any injury the probable cause of which was deliberate, shall immediately report such circumstances to a police official or to a commissioner of child welfare or social worker.

Section 42(1) of the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act No. 74 of 1983) as amended with regulations provides the following guidelines for the reporting of cases:

Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, every dentist, medical practitioner, nurse, social worker or teacher or any person employed by or managing a children's home, place of care or shelter who examines, attends or deals with any child in circumstances giving rise to the suspicion that a child has been ill-treated or suffers from any injury, single or multiple, the cause of which probably might have been deliberate or suffers from a nutritional deficiency disease, shall immediately notify the Director-General...

The two possible channels for the first report are welfare agencies and the South African Police Service. By not reporting, or obstructing the investigation, a person can be liable for a fine of R5 000,00 imposed by the court (*Gauteng multidisciplinary child protection and treatment protocol*, 1999:44). If a person reporting a case is concerned with civil action being taken against him/her by the alleged perpetrator (e.g. defamation of character), this should not be a consideration as Section 42(6) of the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act No. 74 of 1983) supersedes other acts and clearly states:

No legal proceedings shall lie against any dentist, medical practitioner, nurse, social worker or teacher or any person employed by or managing of a children's home, place of care or shelter, in respect of any notification given in good faith in accordance with this section.

Parents, concerned community members and friends, as well as various professionals like teachers, doctors and psychologists who are aware of their obligation to report abuse or suspected abuse, refer children on a daily basis to social workers in order to initiate an investigation of the allegations. However, it is the experience of the researcher that the most referrals to social workers working within welfare agencies and private practices are received from the officials within the criminal justice system.

Circumstances necessitating referral for forensic interviewing will now be discussed.

4.3.1 Circumstances necessitating referral for forensic interviewing

In South Africa cases of child abuse are reported either to the welfare organisations or at the local police station. Careful co-operation and consultation between the police and welfare is needed, as the criminal route may not be possible or in the best interest of a child in all cases (*Gauteng multidisciplinary child protection and treatment protocol*, 1999:49).

After a crime against a child has been reported to the South African Police Service, a case docket or an inquiry will be opened, after which the statement of the child will be taken (Majokweni, 2002:11; SA Law Commission, 2002:4). During the course of the initial crime investigation, or after completion of the investigation and on case evaluation by the state prosecutor, numerous reasons for referral to a social worker for forensic assessment interviews (Venter, 2006; Lock, 2004) might exist. Referrals for forensic assessment interviews to social workers within welfare organisations or private practice may be done under the following circumstances: (Fouché, 2006:207):

- When state prosecutors are uncertain about proving a *prima facie* case, and hesitant to make a *nolle prosequi* decision.
- In cases where the J88 (report completed by medical doctors) does not confirm the child's statement.
- In cases where the alleged perpetrator cannot be linked to the crime.
- In cases where the child is too traumatised to disclose the intimate details of the abuse.
- In cases where the child is very young and cannot give a statement or testify in court, a forensic assessment conducted by a skilled professional can be utilised to refer the matter to the children's court or other appropriate measures to be considered.



- Children who are of pre-school age.
- Older children with learning disabilities and communication problems.
- Where there is a moderate to high level of suspicion that sexual abuse has occurred, e.g. with physical signs or behavioural responses, but where there is no response to a primary investigative interview.
- Where there have been considerable delays since the first allegations were made.

The researcher is of the opinion that the social workers within welfare organisations have an instrumental task in this regard. In many rural areas there are no social workers specialising in forensic assessment interviews, resulting in the local social worker having to deal with, among other things, this challenging task. It is thus imperative that all social workers must be able to assist the legal system in this regard. The researcher is of the opinion social workers who are equipped with a forensic interview protocol will be able to assist the legal system. It will also empower them to work in a more focused manner, addressing the needs of their community where community members who, in the process of obeying the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act, 2007 (Act No. 32 of 2007) and the Prevention of Family Violence Act, 1993 (Act No. 133 of 1993), report alleged sexual, physical and emotional abuse to social workers. Social workers in turn should then assess with consultation with the South African Police Service assessed the situation.

4.3.2 Expert testimony after conducting a forensic assessment interview

As a graduate professional, the social worker is regarded by the South African criminal courts as an expert (Carstens, 2006:188). Therefore social workers do not provide an affidavit about their forensic assessment interviews, but it is expected that a written report be provided to the court (Carstens, 2006:193). This may result in the criminal court issuing a *subpoena* instructing the social worker to give expert testimony on his/her investigation and the written report he/she has conducted. The social worker could be called to provide expert testimony on one or more of the following topics:



- Giving an opinion on the child's competency to testify (whether the child would be able to communicate, understand the difference between the truth and lie and overall understanding of morality).
- Whether the child would suffer undue mental stress if he/she testifies in an open court.
- Opinion evidence on the allegation that was investigated (consistency of the child's statement, existence or absence of other perpetrators, other explanations for the allegation, possibility of coaching by an adult, nonverbal behaviour of child during the investigation and the correlation with other victims of children in this age group).

It is the experience of the researcher that the social worker cannot say whether a child has definitely been sexually abused, as he/she had not been witness to that. However, the social worker could compare the child's verbal report, emotional content during the alleged incident and interview and changed behavioural reactions with other victims of child sexual abuse and children who were not victimised in order to conclude. The interviewer would thus not testify that a child has definitely been sexually abused, but rather indicate that there may be a possibility due to reasons mentioned above.

4.4 THE INTERVIEWER

It is crucial to highlight the importance of the conduct of the interviewer, as well as the impact that the forensic interviewer may have on the outcome of the case.

4.4.1 Training of the interviewer

In a study by Warren, Woodall, Thomas, Nunno, Keeney, Larson and Stadfeld (1999:128) 27 experienced interviewers attended a ten-day training institute designed to provide knowledge and skills for improving investigative interviews with young children. Although the training increased the participants' knowledge about children's abilities and scientific basis of various interview protocols, it did

not have a significant impact on interviewers' questioning styles or the amount of accurate information elicited from the children.

A study by Aldridge and Cameron (1999:136) evaluated the effect of a one-week intensive training course on police members' and social workers' forensic interviewing with children, and investigated the actual types of questions employed by interviewer. The study:

- found no differences in performance between trained and untrained interviewers;
- showed that specific and leading questions were found to occupy over half the total number of questions used by both sets of interviewers; and
- few free narrative report requests were used.

After training various professionals all over South Africa in forensic interviewing, the researcher found that it is extremely difficult for professionals to alter their interviewing style, especially rephrasing "why" questions (refer to paragraph 3.8.2), avoiding leading questions and exploring multiple hypotheses (Fouché, 2006:237).

Sexual abuse interviews can go astray (Wood & Garven, 2000:109) in two different ways:

- Improper interviewing has the potential to elicit false allegations from children.
- Clumsy interviewing does not typically produce false allegations, but may have other negative consequences (Cronch *et al.*, 2006:198) for both the child and the alleged perpetrator.

To avoid improper and clumsy interviewing (Cronch *et al.*, 2006:198) recommended that interviewers have:

- experience in working with children;
- previous training in interviewing or counselling;
- a master's level education;

- the ability to establish rapport through warmth and friendliness; and
- the ability to take feedback constructively and change accordingly.

Professionals involved in the investigation of child sexual abuse must successfully complete formal training which should cover (Vieth, 1999; Massengale, 2001):

- linguistics;
- child development;
- memory and suggestibility; and
- dynamics like the disclosure process.

4.4.2 Conduct of the interviewer

Forensic interviewers should avoid forming preconceived impressions of the incident (Ceci & Bruck, 1995:243; Bruck *et al.*, 2006:783) as this can colour his/her interpretation of what the child said or did. A study by Ongena and Dijkstra (2007:145) investigated the occurrence of problems within the interaction between respondents completing a survey and interviewers having to explain the meaning of questions to respondents. They found that cognitive problems among interviewers may also have an impact on how interviewers explain instructions and concepts. When working with children in the context of forensic interviewing, cognitive abilities of an interviewer may have a detrimental impact on the outcome of the investigation. It is further the opinion of the researcher that a professional who committed prematurely to the truth of the allegation, before doing a careful investigation, risks making a mistake which may have serious consequences for the child and alleged perpetrator.

Human beings tend to form judgements extremely quickly, attend and interpret information to confirm personal beliefs and pre-existing theories, and ignore or discount information that is ambiguous or contradictory (Ney, 1995:8). During a study examining child sexual abuse evaluations, and exploring the types of information affecting expert judgement, Peters (2001:149) found that concrete information such as disclosure statements and collateral information affected

abuse decisions, while inferential data such as doll play and display of emotions did not have any influence.

Emotional involvement is the subject of concern for both the professional and the client. The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (1983:669) defines objectivity as "...exhibiting actual facts uncoloured by exhibitor's feelings or opinions ...".

4.4.3 Factors influencing the social worker

The following factors may influence the judgements of the social worker:

- Personal bias may influence the assessment process (Poole & Lamb, 1998:216).
- A professional who is not trained and comfortable when speaking to children (Johnson, 2004:467).
- Race, gender and socio-economic status of the child and the alleged perpetrator (Blahauvietz, 2005; Faller, 1993).
- Alleged victim's lack of emotion (Wakefield, 2006).
- The professional's own history of sexual abuse (Faller, 1993).
- The professional's current positioning and experiences (Peters, 2001:149).
- Gathering of information about the allegation before conducting the interview (Cronch *et al.*, 2006:198).

Bruck and Ceci (2004:230) stated that the suggestiveness of an interview is not directly reflected by the number of leading questions, but rather on interviewer bias. Interviewer bias is when the interviewer has prior beliefs about the occurrence of certain events, and conducts the interview so as to obtain confirmatory evidence of these beliefs, without investigating alternative hypotheses.

The following guidelines are given to avoid interviewer bias (Poole & Lamb, 1998:238; Cronch *et al.*, 2006:198; Faller, 1993):

- The interviewer must not accept unreliable evidence about which predictors he/she should use in making decisions.
- The interviewer should be aware that once he/she has formulated a hypothesis, information inconsistent with the interviewer's hypothesis might be overlooked.
- Evidence for and against the primary hypothesis and alternative hypotheses must be listed.
- Record-keeping must be done with care and the interviewer should not rely only on memory.
- A structured investigative protocol must be followed.
- The interviewer should be aware of his/her own bias towards the gender of the child and/or perpetrator.
- The interviewer should be aware of the impact that the status of the perpetrator and/or family may have on him/her.

The researcher has learnt that the following issues are important to consider when involved in the field of investigating allegations of alleged child sexual abuse (Fouché, 2006:209; Faller, 1993; Wood & Garven, 2000:111):

- The interviewer should be aware of his/her own gender when initiating an interviewing process and must be sensitive to the effect of problems that may arise from it, e.g. a boy who has been sexually abused by a woman may fear to be alone with another woman.
- It is imperative that the interviewer should be fluent in the language in which the child relates his/her story. The interviewer should be aware of expressions in that specific language, descriptions and names for private parts and sexual activities. The interviewer must not hesitate to clarify and explore when he/she is uncertain of something.
- The socio-economic class which the interviewer represents and factors like jewellery, make-up and clothing may influence or intimidate a child from a lower socio-economic class.
- Social workers need to be aware that they may react differently to cases involving middle- or upper class individuals, cases involving the poor and the



so-called "high profile cases". The alleged perpetrator's occupation may also influence the interviewer.

- The interviewer should be aware that his/her values and beliefs concerning children, women, abusers and sex might influence him/her to be biased, e.g. a claim by an 8-year-old girl that she still showers with her father, may be different from what the professional belief is normal.
- If the interviewer is an adult survivor of child sexual abuse he/she must be alert that his/her feelings towards the perpetrator may be projected on the alleged perpetrator in the case, and that his/her own fears may be projected on the child.
- It is imperative that the interviewer must have a scientific foundation that supports his/her investigation process and that every step in the investigation process can be substantiated.
- A forensic interviewer must be aware of the effect of his/her tone of voice on children. It is important to know whether children in general experience him/her as strict or approachable.
- The interviewer must become aware of mannerisms reflected through nonverbal communication which may have a negative effect on the child client.
- Clothing that is tight or showing cleavage when interviewing either male or female children should be avoided.
- The interviewer's attitude toward sexuality must be evaluated. The interviewer should feel comfortable to talk about sexual activities and using labels for e.g. sexual organs in the context of the interview.
- The interviewer should be reminded that he/she is investigating a sexual abuse allegation and must not approach an allegation as the truth. He/she must respect other opinions.
- Multiple hypotheses should be investigated from the beginning of the investigation process until the last minute.

It is the opinion of the researcher that although professionals may strive to be objective, nobody is able to attain absolute objectivity. It is thus imperative that a professional involved with investigation allegations of child sexual abuse ensure

that he/she formulates as many hypotheses as possible and must also be prepared to rule out hypotheses on the basis of facts and not feelings (Wakefield, 2006).

Under no circumstances must an interviewer promise the child a treat (Faller, 1993; Wakefield, 2006), as this may give the child the impression that he/she has an obligation towards the interviewer to tell that something has happened. It would also give the defence the impression that the child has been bribed. A child that received a treat during or after the abuse, may also think that the interviewer is the same as the perpetrator.

4.4.4 Nonverbal behaviour of the interviewer

It is important that the interviewer is aware of his/her nonverbal behaviour as any interpreted sign of discomfort or disinterest may halt a child's disclosure of sexual abuse (Blahauvietz, 2005). Neutral encouragements should be used instead of suggestive utterances and verbalisations (Warren *et al.*, 1999:129). An interviewer must convey warmth and interest in the child, both through words and nonverbal cues such as posture, eye contact and tone of voice (Wood & Garven, 2000:111).

The acronym "SOLER" is used by Egan (2005:89) to recommend the stance of body posture:

- S – Sit squarely
- O – Open posture
- L – Lean forward
- E – Maintain eye contact
- R – Relax

The interviewer must ensure that his/her body language and verbal language are consistent with one another (Morison *et al.*, 2000:113). The interviewer must also not show shock or disgust, as this will make the child feel guilty or stigmatised (Faller, 1993; Wakefield, 2006). The researcher is of the opinion that the

interviewer must avoid doing therapy (Venter, 2006) during the forensic interview and that the nonverbal behaviour of the interviewer must reflect empathy in a non-leading or suggestive way.

4.4.5 Gender of the interviewer

Older children are according to Saltzstein *et al.*(2004:1080) more resistant to suggestibility from adult interviewers than younger children and clinically it seems that the issue of the sex of the interviewer may be a more important factor with teenagers (Jones, 1992:21). The gender of the professional is likely to influence reactions to cases of child sexual abuse. Research done by Moon, Wagner and Kazelskis (2000:753) concluded that girls' participation in counselling was not significantly related to session number, the child's age, or the gender of counsellor who provided treatment services.

Although both male and female professionals may have empathy with victims, it is possible that gender identification causes a person to be more sensitive when the victim is of his/her gender (Moon *et al.*, 2000:753). A male professional, because of his experience of having been a boy, may better appreciate the boy victim's trauma or, alternatively, have more difficulty accepting the boy's vulnerability to victimisation (Faller, 1993).

Research by Kovera, Borgida, Gresham, Swim and Gray (2005:383) examined the beliefs held by male and female workers of the International Society for Traumatic Studies about child sexual abuse and children's capabilities. It was found that female members generally have stronger beliefs in the credibility of child witnesses than male members (Kovera *et al.*, 2005:383).

Research conducted by Lamb and Garretson (2003:169) reviewed 672 forensic interviews of children aged between 4 and 14 years across Britain, Israel and the United States of America. The results showed that:

- female interviewers asked significantly more suggestive questions to boys than to girls, while male interviewers did not show a distinction; and

- girls provided significantly more details to female interviewers than male interviewers, while boys did not show a difference.

The researcher is of the opinion that if the child is visibly frightened or extremely agitated in the presence of an interviewer of a particular gender, every effort should be made to replace the interviewer with someone with whom the child is more comfortable.

4.4.6 Burnout

Work in the field of sexual abuse is extremely stressful and may lead to burnout (Morison *et al.*, 2000:115; Beckett, 2006:47). Vieth (2001) identified four factors which contribute to burnout among professionals working in the field of child abuse:

- Professionals are seldom honoured in their organisations and communities.
- Child abuse professionals are actually dishonoured due to their duties impacting on several lives.
- Training institutions seldom prepare students for the reality.
- The secondary traumatisation of working with sexually abused children will eventually take its toll (Faller, 1993).

The researcher experienced that the best preventive measure and remedy for burnout is collaborative work, e.g. always work in a "buddy" system, or consult with more experienced people either within one's own organisation or outside, or discuss cases with a colleague.

4.4.7 Interviewing factors which influence credible disclosures

Various interviewing factors may influence the disclosure of children, namely (Faller, 1993; Staller & Nelson-Gardell, 2005:1415; Loftus, 2006; Cronch *et al.*, 2006:197; Wakefield, 2006):

- Improper interviewing techniques like reinforcement (punishments and rewards).
- Social influence (i.e. telling the child what others have said).
- Asking suggestive or leading questions.
- Appearing to be less than sympathetic and supportive.
- Introducing information which the child has not disclosed.
- Removing the child from direct experience (e.g. asking what might have happened).
- Using "let's imagine" might have a detrimental influence on whether a child feels free to disclose, or whether it is a valid disclosure.

4.4.7.1 Undesirable reinforcement interviewing

It is the opinion of Garven, Wood and Malpass, (2000:47) that all forensic interviewers must avoid doing the following:

- Implying that the child can demonstrate helpfulness, intelligence or other good qualities by talking to the interviewer or making allegations.
- Praising or thanking the child for making the allegation.
- Giving tangible rewards like sweets, food or toys to reward a disclosure.
- Criticising the child's statements or suggesting that they are false, inaccurate or inadequate.
- Limiting the child's mobility, e.g. delaying a visit to the bathroom, end of the interview or going home, until the child has discussed issues of interest to the interviewer.
- Subjecting the child to physically or verbally stressful stimuli during the interview, e.g. calling the child a liar.
- Repeating a question that the child has already answered in a way that suggests that the child's first answer was unsatisfactory.

4.4.7.2 *Noncontingent reinforcement*

Noncontingent reinforcement in the form of social support can be beneficial (Carter, Bottoms & Levine, 1996:335). Hershkowitz, *et al.* (2006:754) conducted a study with suspected victims of child sexual abuse between the ages of 4 and 13 years and found that higher levels of interviewer support were associated with more informative and fewer uninformative responses.

The following supportive interviewing techniques are recommended by Garven *et al.* (2000:47) and Wood and Garven (2000:110):

- Acting and speaking in a warm, friendly manner.
- Giving the child neutral supportive compliments during the rapport-building stage of the interview.
- Praising the child for knowing the difference between the truth and lies.
- Offering one or two supportive statements at appropriate places during the interview.

The researcher is of the opinion that a forensic interviewer should be trained and at all times act in a professional way as his/her behaviour before, during and after a case may ultimately be tested in a criminal court.

4.5 THE INTERVIEW SETTING

It is the opinion of Müller (1999:108) that the more comfortable the child is, the more information he/she is likely to share. Children may also be too embarrassed or afraid to share intimate details when they believe others can overhear what they are saying. It is recommended by Cronch *et al.* (2006:205) that, whenever possible, interviews should be conducted in a safe, neutral and preferably child-friendly environment. It is also important that the interviewer sits at the same level as the child (Faller, 1993).

Extremes should also be avoided, such as a room full of toys that give the child the impression it is a play room for "make believe", or a bare, stark room with only adult furniture (Wakefield, 2006). The interviewer can adapt many settings to enhance the child's comfort and creating a childlike atmosphere. This can be achieved by incorporating certain props, toys and art materials (Jones, 1992:22). Distractions like ringing phones, music, people's voices and play material must be removed as far as possible (Orbach *et al.*, 2000:734).

It is the opinion of the researcher that the choice of the setting for the interview may vary according to the urgency involved in a case, the availability of resources, as well as the nature of the allegations. The researcher experienced that in any case, the atmosphere in which the interview takes place is as critical as the person who conducts the interview.

The following paragraphs deal with important aspects which the interviewer should consider regarding the setting of a forensic interview.

4.5.1 Time and place of the forensic interview

The interviewer must consider whether the time and place of the interview accommodate the child's developmental stage (Aldridge & Wood, 1998:25). The researcher experienced that children generally want to know whether the interviewer stays at the venue. If they hear children around, they want to know who they are, how old they are and which school they attend. The researcher is also convinced that the interviewer must make sure that the child is comfortable in the venue. If the mother is waiting in the waiting area, the interviewer must make sure that the child is convinced that no one will be able to hear what it said in the interview room (Müller, 1999:108). The researcher has also experienced that distractions like pictures on the wall and toys must be put away, especially when interviewing children who have attention deficiencies.

4.5.2 Presence of other people during the interview

Allowing others present during the interview must be clarified before an interview. The *Memorandum of Good Practice* (Home Office, 1992:13) and its updated version, *Achieving Best Evidence* (Bull, 2003a:1), state that a suspected offender should never be present at an interview. According to Aldridge and Wood (1998:28) an attached adult (like a mother) or a detached adult (like another social worker) can be helpful. The preferred practice of the *American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children Guidelines* is to see the child alone whenever possible (Poole & Lamb, 1998:102). However, Morison *et al.* (2000:117) state that the presence of significant others may have a positive or negative influence on the interview process.

In South Africa the researcher experienced that during the primary investigative interview, the South African Police Service do allow the parent or guardian to be present (Lock, 2004). Among social workers in South Africa who conduct forensic interviews, the general practice is not to allow another person in the interview (Van der Linde, 2004; Makhubu, 2004). The reason for this is to rule out attacks from the defence that the child was intimidated or coached by the parent during the assessment interviews.

4.6 INTERVIEW STRATEGIES

It has often been found that children's accuracy in reporting an event can be affected by the format of the questions (Waterman, Blades & Spencer, 2001:522). There is no winning recipe of predictable questions and answers, nor is there a particular order in which interviewers should put questions (Jones, 1992:19). Children can be reliable informants about their experiences, particularly when interviewed effectively as soon as possible after the alleged incidents (Lamb *et al.*, 2000:1586).

4.6.1 Cognitive interviewing

Cognitive interviewing as a strategy during child sexual abuse investigations is highlighted by Faller (2003:380) and has four retrieval mnemonics, namely:

- Mentally reconstructing the event (Holliday, 2003:730; Faller, 2003:381).
- Reporting everything, regardless of perceived importance (Aldridge, 1999:104).
- Recalling the event in different sequences (Cronch *et al.*, 2006:199).
- Recalling the information from different views and perspectives (Aldridge, 1999:107; Faller, 2003:381).

A study conducted by Hershkowitz *et al.* (2006: 753) found that mental context reinstatement may be a useful component of the cognitive interview compared to physical context reinstatement where the child will be taken back to the crime scene.

The structure of the cognitive interview is according to Poole and Lamb (1998:87) a sequence of four stages:

- Open-ended narration.
- The probing stage, during which the interviewer guides the witness to exhaust the contents of memory.
- A review stage, during which the interviewer checks the accuracy of notes about the interview and provides additional opportunities to recall.
- The closing.

The researcher has found it very useful after the child has verbally indicated that he/she has allegedly been sexually abused, to ask the child:

- to identify any incident that he/she may remember clearly;
- to close his/her eyes, make a mental picture of the alleged abuse happenings and report anything that comes to mind (free narrative is allowed); and
- to make a picture of the happenings.

Questions which focus on the abuse will only be asked after the above process has been followed. From experience it appeared that children may remember more clearly if this process is followed.

4.6.2 Narrative elaboration

In narrative elaboration (Faller, 2003:381) children aged 6 to 11 years old are trained to use cue cards (simple pictures to represent participants, actions, affective states and resolutions), which serve as triggers for the child so that he/she is sure to include these aspects of the event (Faller, 1993). The researcher does not have experience in this technique, but it appears that it could be seen as leading or suggestive.

4.6.3 Segmentation

Segmentation is a technique which is used to gather additional detail after the child has exhausted initial recollection of an event (Faller, 2003:382). The interviewer would ask the child to tell everything he/she can recall about a particular segment of the event. The focussing on a particular period of time may serve to decrease the child's level of anxiety about the event as a whole (Faller, 1993).

4.6.4 Building a rapport

Studies of actual child abuse interviews found that interviewers typically use close-ended questions to develop rapport and in doing so they do not set the stage for the children to talk freely (Warren *et al.*, 1999:134). It is the opinion of the researcher that the rapport-building phase is an opportunity to ask open-ended questions about home, school, friends and games so that the child may become accustomed to such questioning. These questions also give an indication to the

interviewer of the child's verbal and nonverbal skills. Aldridge and Wood (1998:35) recommend that the interviewer must explain the reason for the interview, reassure the child that he/she has done nothing wrong and emphasise the need to speak the truth (Wakefield, 2006). It is important that the interviewer explain to the child that he/she was not present at the events and may therefore unwittingly ask questions that the child does not know the answer to or do not understand.

Research by Sternberg, Lamb, Hershkowitz, Yueilevitch, Orbach, Esplin and Hovan (1997:1133) proved that children who had been trained in the open-ended condition provided two and half times as many details and words in response to the first substantive utterance, as children in direct introduction. In this study fourteen interviewers conducted 51 investigations of child sexual abuse with children ranging from 4.4 to 12.9 years of age:

- In 25 of the investigations, interviewers used a script which included many open-ended utterances to establish rapport.
- In 26 of the investigations the same interviewers used a rapport-building script involving direct questions.

The results confirmed that the style of interaction between children and interviewers in the introductory phase of the interview affected the amount of information obtained in the substantive portion of the interview. They recommended that the child be exposed to open-ended questioning on neutral subjects during the rapport-building phase.

Research by Hershkowitz *et al.* (2006:754) recommended that interviewers must assess children's engagement in rapport-building and their likelihood of disclosure by observing the children's responsiveness. This will help the investigator to decide whether or not to proceed with the substantive phase of forensic interviews.

The researcher found the following aspects very important regarding working with children (Wakefield, 2006):



- The first ten minutes with the child are the most important. During this time the interviewer must let the child know that he/she is important and will not be handled in the same way as in school.
- If the interviewer asks a question more than once, the child must be informed that it is not because the answer was wrong, but maybe because the interviewer did not hear clearly or did not understand.
- The child must know that he/she is not the only one that had ever come and talk to the interviewer. The researcher has used drawings to initially build rapport (Hiltz & Bauer, 2003). Visual representations of other children, like their pictures against the wall or in a flip file with or without names, can be pointed to lessen the stigmatisation that the child may feel.
- The interviewer also needs to show to the child that the interviewer does not think that he/she knows it all. The interviewer must really have an interest in children.
- It is also recommended that during the rapport-building phase the interviewer consciously reflects the wrong information during neutral topics to test if the child will correct him/her.
- During this phase the interviewer can discuss neutral topics like school activities, television programmes and interests of the child (Aldridge & Wood, 1998:36). Toys can also be utilised to put the child at ease.
- The interviewer should inform the child that he/she has no information regarding the facts and that child must trust his/her memory to tell what really happened and not to say what he/she thinks the evaluator might want to hear.

It is the opinion of the researcher that interviewers must not give the impression that the child comes to the office to play. Instead, the researcher has found it useful to tell children: "You are here today to come and talk to me about things that make you happy and sad" (Fouché, 2006:220).

The researcher utilised play-related communication techniques, (see paragraph 4.6.6) to build rapport with children and also to facilitate the initial disclosure in a

non-leading way (Fouché & Joubert, 2003:14) and exploring multiple hypotheses from the start.

4.6.5 Using toys and play material to facilitate the interview

Toys and play material form a natural part of communication with children. They can be helpful to prompt and bring forth the child's actions and re-enactments of experiences (Bentovin *et al.*, 1995:253). It is recommended by Aldridge and Woods (1998:45) that toys are selected to fit the age of the child, and that it is used more with very young children. Play material like colouring books, puzzles and soft toys are some of the play material recommended by them. These toys must also be utilised to facilitate rapport with a child (Aldridge & Woods, 1998:45; Faller, 1993; Bruck *et al.*, 2006:800).

4.6.6 Play-related communication techniques to facilitate the initial disclosure of the child

According to Babiker and Herbert (1998:233) "sexual abuse is not a diagnosis; it is an event or a series of events that occurs in a relationship in which the child is involved". However, the psychological consequences may be said to be "diagnosed". Psychological instruments such as behavioural rating scales and psychometric tests may assist professionals to assess and measure psychological processes, but no test or scale can give a definitive indication that a child has indeed been sexually abused (Chantler, Pelco & Mertin, 1993:271; Babiker & Herbert, 1998:239).

A study to investigate the applicability of psychological instruments in the assessment of sexual abuse in the South African multi-cultural context (Louw, 2001:1) concluded that no single measuring instrument could differentiate between abused and non-abused children. According to Sgroi, Porter and Blick (1982:69) there is no specific test to verify sexual abuse: "Validation of child sexual abuse depends almost entirely upon investigative interviewing of the child".

The researcher is of the opinion that in order to investigate multiple hypotheses, it is imperative that an interviewer does not directly start questioning a child about possible child sexual abuse. Instead, play-related communication techniques should be utilised to facilitate the conversation in a concrete, non-leading way, assisting the child to make a voluntarily verbal disclosure. The play-related communication techniques used must include forensic fundamentals like the following (Fouché, 2006:218):

- Do not use leading or suggestive questions.
- Do not make interpretations.
- Introduce new topics and questioning by means of open-ended questions.
- Clarify the child's comprehension of instructions and new concepts by means of contextualising them within neutral topics.
- Summarise at the end of each topic to verify that the child was understood correctly, before a new topic is introduced.
- Ask if there is anyone else who has not been mentioned.

The researcher developed and tested play-related communication techniques, which include the above-mentioned interviewing fundamentals to facilitate the initial disclosure on a voluntarily basis (Fouché, 2001:73). According to Section 42 of the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act No. 74 of 1983), social workers have an obligation to also assess whether the child is at risk with regard to ill-treatment. The researcher is of the opinion that social workers must also include play-related communication techniques to conduct a risk assessment in order to assess whether the child's physical and emotional needs are met in his/her current circumstances at the time of the assessment interview. Any ill-treatment of the child has to be reported and addressed according to the Section 42 of the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act No. 74 of 1983).

The researcher developed and tested play-related communication techniques during M.A. studies (Fouché, 2001:73). For the purpose of this study, only the techniques that were used during the empirical study will be briefly discussed.



4.6.6.1 Semi-structured questionnaires

A semi-structured questionnaire which focuses on non-threatening questions could be used to build rapport (Fouché & Joubert, 2003:15) and to get baseline knowledge on the following:

- The child's ability to understand the language spoken by the interviewer.
- The child's ability to process instructions and questions.
- The child's ability to communicate with the interviewer.
- The interviewer's ability to understand the child's expressions.
- Contextual information regarding the child's current living circumstances and background on immediate family and extended family.
- The child's social interaction with friends.
- Evaluation of the child's process (Schoeman & Van der Merwe, 1996:28) e.g. whether the child is an introvert, extrovert, thinks long before he/she answers questions, if he/she can provide a free narrative and other personality factors like exaggerating, suggestibility, attention span or existence of disturbing behaviour which may influence the interviewing process.

If the child discloses sexual abuse, the social worker needs to know whom he/she can approach to assist the child. For this reason the semi-structured questionnaire may also include questions like: "Who do you like most?" and "Who do you dislike most?" (Fouché, 2001:58).

4.6.6.2 The house-and-community plan

This technique was developed from a number of similar techniques like eco-cards and genograms (Kaduson & Schaefer, 1997:104; Perry & Wrightman, 1991:111; Butler & Karp, 1996:87). It focuses on the child's daily movements from his/her home to other secure or threatened places (Fouché & Joubert, 2003:16). With the child's assistance, the interviewer draws a plan of the child's home, including furniture. Clay models of the family members are made. The area surrounding

the house, with the inclusion of neighbouring houses or places where the child often pays visits to, is also drawn. Questions to explore daily routine and movement are asked. Clarification on whether the child understands the difference between "safe" and "unsafe" and testing with a neutral topic is done before the child is instructed to identify and mark all safe havens with a green pen and the unsafe havens with a red pen (Fouché, 2006:218). Both safe and unsafe ticks are explored. If the child indicates that he/she has been sexually abused, abuse-focused questioning (Cronch *et al.*, 2006:200) regarding the allegation will take place.

4.6.6.3 Family graphic and emotion cards

The goal of this technique is to determine the relationship between the child and family members and other people with whom he/she has contact. Different colour play dough balls help the child to visualise and represent friends and family members (Venter, 1993:12).

The child is requested to represent all of his/her family members and other persons that are important by choosing a strip of coloured play dough and making it into a little ball (Fouché & Joubert, 2003:16). Two large circles are then drawn, which then will represent happy and unhappy faces (Fouché, 2006: 210). Hereafter the child places the people (play dough balls) in either the circle with the "make me feel happy" face or in the circle with the "make me feel unhappy" face. Exploration as to the reasons for these placements then follows. Should the child disclose sexual abuse; the interviewer will start with the abuse-focused questioning (Cronch *et al.*, 2006:200).

4.6.6.4 Robot

The term "touching trouble" is described by Hindman (1987:19) where he differentiates between three touches. The first touch is a bad touch (when somebody hurts you); the second touch is a secret touch (private parts are

touched); and the third type of touch is a nice touch (positive contact). The researcher explains the different types of touches by comparing them to a traffic light (also known as a robot in South Africa) (Fouché & Joubert, 2003:17).

Firstly, the interviewer should clarify with the child whether he/she knows the function of the different lights of the robot and thereafter explain that humans also have a robot in their bodies, which cannot be seen, but one may feel it in your heart (Fouché, 2006:220). The interviewer then explains that human bodies react to certain touching and then a light goes on in our bodies. Firstly, if someone is hurting a person, the red light goes on, indicating "stop". The green light goes on when someone is nice to us and does not hurt us, and the orange light goes on when someone wants to touch us on our bodies and if we feel uncomfortable, or are not sure whether it is right or wrong (Fouché, 2001:67) or when someone does something and asks us to keep it a secret.

The child is requested to place the play dough balls that were used in the family graphic on the appropriate colours of the traffic light. The interviewer will clarify and explore each clay ball on the relevant colours of the traffic light and follow up any disclosure of possible sexual abuse with abuse-focused questioning.

It is thus the opinion of the researcher that play-related communication techniques should be used to (Fouché, 2006:218):

- conduct the interview in a developmentally sensitive environment;
- interview the child on the child's level;
- build rapport;
- facilitate the initial verbal disclosure of alleged sexual abuse;
- conduct a risk assessment; and
- explore multiple hypotheses.



4.6.7 Ground rules

Ground rules are very important during the rapport phase (Warren *et al.*, 1999:131; Bull, 2003b:37; Wakefield, 2006). It is recommended by Bull (2003b:37) that the interviewer should also give permission for the child to indicate whether he/she understands by either indicating verbally or by using a "don't know" or "don't understand" card. It is further recommended by Bull (2003b:37) that vulnerable witnesses may benefit from practising this in the rapport phase, e.g. the interviewer asks: "What is the name of my father?" The child should be empowered to say "I don't know" or "I can't remember" or "I don't understand". This should be practised with neutral topics (Practice Notes, 2002; Wakefield, 2006; Sternberg *et al.*, 1997:1133). It is imperative that the interviewer empowers a child (Bull 2003a:3) early in the interviewing process, by assuring the child that responses like "I can't remember" or "I don't know" may be appropriate.

Question format not only affects children's accuracy, but may also influence the tendency of children to admit when they do not know the answer. It is stated by Sternberg *et al.* (1997:1133) and Wakefield (2006) that it is important to inform the child that the interviewer does not know the answers and then test with neutral topics whether the child will indeed indicate if he/she does not know the answer.

It is the opinion of the researcher that the ground rules should be emphasised to the child after the initial disclosure. As children are interviewed in a play environment they can very easily forget that the information given has serious consequences. Children must know that discussion around a sexual abuse allegation is serious, and they also need to know that adults and children sometimes misunderstand. If the ground rules are done prior to the disclosure, the possibility exists that the child has forgotten about the ground rules by the time the initial disclosure occurs (Fouché, 2006:225).

4.6.8 Free recall or free narrative

Children are found to be more likely to accurately provide important details in free recall (Bruck *et al.*, 2006:785). The purpose of the free narrative phase is for the child to be encouraged to provide an account of the relevant events in his/her own words and at his/her own pace (Home Office, 1992:17; Aldridge & Cameron, 1999:140).

Research conducted with 145 children between the ages of 4 and 12 years, who were interviewed after allegedly experiencing a single incident of sexual abuse, revealed that interviewers employed few open-ended prompts (Lamb *et al.*, 2000:1586). A study was conducted by Henry and Gudjonsson (2007:361) where children with intellectual disabilities and age-matched controls (ages 8/9 and 12 years) watched a video of a crime and were asked a range of open-ended and specific questions about the event. Free recall increased between the two age levels for children with and without intellectual abilities.

Questioning children by using general free-recall questions results in as accurate information as adults, but children provide the information less spontaneously (Aldridge & Cameron, 1999:140; Orbach *et al.*, 2000:736). It is recommended that the following type of questions be asked to the child in order to invite free narrative (Home Office, 1992:20; Bull, 2003a:3; Starks & Samuel, 2002a:27; Jones, 1992): "Did anyone tell you why you are coming to see me today?" or "Why do you think you are here today?" Children tend to disclose events by summarising it, e.g: "He did naughty things with me", which the interviewer would follow up with questions like: "Please tell me everything that happened" (Starks & Samuel, 2002a:27; Aldridge & Wood, 1998:72; Wakefield, 2006).

Once the child starts to talk about a specific area pertaining to possible abuse, the interviewer:

- must allow the child to use free recall of whatever events are remembered in whatever order the child wishes.
- should not interrupt the child with questions.

- must say to the child he/she must tell everything that is remembered, even partial information, regardless of whether or not the child believes it is important.
- should, once the child has narrated an event, gather more information by asking the child to start at the middle and forward and backward in time.

(Wakefield, 2006; Wood & Garven 2000:112).

It is the opinion of the researcher that children must be allowed to give a free narrative of any incident in whatever order they like. The onus is on the interviewer to provide a structure in a developmentally sensitive and non-leading manner in order to assist the child to tell his/her story.

A study into the usefulness of a "story-telling" approach during child sexual abuse investigations by Westcott and Kynan (2004:37) reinforced the importance of careful questioning after free narrative, as well as the value of a second interviewer monitoring the interview.

It is the experience of the researcher that by inviting a free narrative, a detailed account of the alleged sexual abuse is not necessarily facilitated. It is therefore important that the interviewer should ask follow-up questions in a non-leading way.

The researcher experienced that when children are requested to give a free narrative, they very often only tell about the core of the happenings and will not necessarily start from the beginning to the end. It is thus imperative not to interrupt the child, but to allow the child to recount whatever is on his/her foreground at that moment.

The researcher recommends that a free narrative be followed up in the following way (Fouché, 2006:225):

- A child would normally indicate that sexual abuse has happened saying: "He did naughty things to me."
- The researcher would follow-up by clarifying what the child means with "naughty things".

- After it is determined that the child is talking about an incident of a sexual nature, the interviewer will discuss ground rules (refer to paragraph 4.6.7).
- Hereafter the child would be asked to tell whether the abuse happened once or more than once.
- The child is then requested to identify the different places where the alleged abuse happened and draw it.
- The interviewer would then explore every incident individually by saying to the child: "Tell me everything about what happened here."
- After the child has given a narrative, the interviewer identifies themes from the free narrative to explore, e.g. explicit sexual acts, contextual information and emotional content.

4.6.9 Second chance for free narrative

According to Aldridge and Wood (1998:90) it is highly effective to provide a child with a second opportunity for free narrative. A second attempt to elicit a narrative can be made after questioning is completed, provided that the interviewer clarifies that the original questioning is not being doubted (Poole & Lamb, 1998:97). The interviewer can say for example: "I think I understand most of what you told me, but I still don't understand what happened in the kitchen. Will you help me by telling me once more everything you remember about the time in the kitchen?" The child's first narrative will thus be followed by open-ended questions, specific questions and multiple choice format questions if necessary, and then a specific area of the child's testimony will be explored where a free narrative will be invited (Starks & Samuel, 2002b:25; Bull, 2003a:37).

The researcher experienced that during a forensic assessment process social workers in South Africa tend to call the child for an extra interview after they have analysed the information gained during forensic assessment interviews.

4.6.10 Invitational questions

When affirmative responses are obtained about a specific topic such as that alleged abuse happened in the bathroom, the interviewer should follow up with invitational questions (Faller, 2003:382) which invite the child to elaborate, e.g.: "Tell me what happened when you were in the bathroom with... ." Phrases such as "Then what happened after that..." and "And then" can also be used. Appropriate gestures and periods of silence can also invite and encourage the child to provide spontaneous or free narrative (Starks & Samuel, 2002b:27; Faller, 1993).

4.6.11 Neutral and supportive comments

Neutral encouragement Warren *et al.* (1999:133) is used throughout the interviewing process. Examples are: "Yeah?"; "And then?"; "Okay..."; "I see..."; "And then what happened..."; "Hmmm ..." (Egan, 2005:216; Faller, 2003:382; Wood & Garven, 2000:112). A comparison study was done by Hershkowitz, *et al.* (2006:753) where 50 interviews with suspected victims of abuse, aged 4 to 13 years, who did not disclose abuse during the interview were compared with the same number of forensic interviews of alleged victims who made allegations of sexual or physical abuse. They found, among other things, that disclosures who received high levels of supportive comments denied less, whereas non-disclosures who received high support denied more. Reassurance like "I understand that this is very difficult for you to tell" (Hershkowitz *et al.*, 2006:761) and overall acceptance of the child are imperative.

4.6.12 Open-ended or general questions

Open-ended questions can be defined as questions that invite a broad reply and cannot be answered simply by a "yes", "no", or other brief one-phrase reply (Aldridge & Cameron, 1999:140). Some researchers argue that children's responses to these types of questions are less accurate (De Voe & Faller, 2002:5),

while others state that children are as accurate as adults, but they spontaneously provide less information (Waterman *et al.*, 2001:522).

A study conducted by Davies, Westcott and Horan (2000:81) analysed 36 video-recorded interviews with children between 4 and 14 years, and found that open-ended questions provided longer answers and more accurate information than closed questions and specific yet non-leading questions.

Open-ended questioning should be encouraged in all phases of the interview, regardless of the child's age (Hershkowitz, 2001:49). Research has been done by Hershkowitz (2001:49) where 54 interviews were conducted with children between the ages of 4 and 13 about incidents of sexual abuse that they had allegedly experienced. During the interviews, interviewers used an unusually high number of open-ended prompts and open-ended inquiries. It was found that open-ended prompts yielded significantly longer and more detailed responses than did focused prompts.

Bull (2003a:3) argues that by asking open-ended questions, the opportunity arises for the child to provide more information without being leading or pressuring the child. In forensic context, open-ended prompts (invitations) yield responses that are up to four times longer and three times richer in relevant details than responses to focused interviewer utterances (Lamb *et al.*, 2000:1586; Faller, 1993). Research done by Orbach *et al.*, (2000:733) found that interviews where open-ended prompts were used facilitated more details than focused questions.

Another study by Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Esplin, Stewart and Mitchell (2003:930) examined the interviews of police officers trained in a structured protocol where suspected child victims were encouraged to provide detailed narratives with the guidance of open-ended questions. The children who were interviewed were between the ages of 4 and 8 years old. The study found that:

- 83% of all allegations and disclosures were elicited through free-recall questions (78% for pre-schoolers).
- 66% of all children identified the suspect through open-ended questions (60% for pre-schoolers).

It thus shows that interviewers do not need to bombard children with suggestive and close-ended questions in order to elicit information.

Open-ended questions invite a wide range of replies and do not suggest a specific answer. It is recommended by Cronch *et al.*, (2006:199) to be used when interviewing school-aged children and adolescents. In practice open-ended questions usually begins with "what", "how", "when", "who", or "where" (Aldridge & Cameron, 1999:140; Faller, 2003:382).

From experience the researcher found that more credible information might be elicited by means of open-ended questions as the child will tell from his/her own frame of reference.

4.6.13 Abuse-focused questions

Information not provided during free recall must be elicited by means of prompting, and for young children, the prompting often needs to be quite specific (Peterson & Biggs, 1997:280). It is recommended by Faller (2003:382) that a variety of types of questions be used when inquiring about child abuse. Specific interviewing about the alleged incidents is referred to by Cronch *et al.*, (2006:200) as abuse-focused questioning.

4.6.14 Focused questions

Children may provide more information when they are asked focused questions than when asked open-ended questions (Faller, 2003:382), although some of this information may be incorrect.

Focused questions often elicit relevant information, but they are not leading. There are three types of focused questions (Faller, 2003:382; Kuehnle, 1996:143):

- **Questions focused on people**

"Where does Joe live?" "Are there things he does especially with you?" "Are there things Joe does that you like?" "Are there any secrets in the family?"

- **Questions focused on the circumstances of the abuse**

"What do you do when grandpa baby-sits you?" "How does daddy take care of you when mom is at work?"

- **Questions focused on body parts**

These questions are generally used in conjunction with anatomically explicit dolls or anatomical drawings. After the child has named the different body parts the interviewer could ask the following questions: "Have you ever seen a dinky (penis)?" "Whose did you see?" "What does a dinky do?" "Has anyone ever asked you to touch his peepee?" (Faller, 1993) .

It is the opinion of the researcher that interviewers should attempt to obtain as much information as possible by using open-ended prompts to elicit information. Only after such prompts have apparently been exhausted, the interviewer should use more focused questions to elicit further forensically important information.

4.6.15 Specific questions

Specific questions are referred to as either close-ended questions (e.g. "yes/no" responses) (Aldridge & Cameron, 1999:140) and "wh" questions like "what", "where", "when" or a combination of close-ended questions and "wh" questions (Waterman *et al.*, 2001:522).

The Home Office (1992:21) refers to specific yet non-leading questions: In this stage the child gets an opportunity to extend and clarify any information which he/she provided previously. If, for example, a child explains that a woman wearing a dress grabbed her, specific yet non-leading questions would include: "What colour was the dress?"; "What did the dress look like?"; "Now tell me more about what happened when you walked into the bathroom" (Wakefield, 2006; Faller,

1993). Specific questions allow for extension and clarification of previously provided information both from the free narrative and subsequent phase. It also provides an opportunity for the child, who has said very little in connection with the purpose of the interview, to be reminded of what the focus of the interview is without being asked leading questions (Bull, 2003b:3). Children do not always know what is relevant and therefore the interviewer must guide the witness in an evidentially sound manner through specific yet non-leading questions.

4.6.16 Multiple choice questions

Multiple choice questions usually follow on a focused question and provide several responses for the interviewee to choose from, e.g: "Were your clothes on, off, or some other way?"(Faller, 2003:382). Multiple choice questions are leading if the list of choices offered is not exhaustive, e.g. the question: "Was it day or night when it happened?" would be specific, but not leading if it had been previously established that something had happened (Faller, 1993). However, the question: "Was his hat red or blue?" would be specific and leading, even if it had been established that there was a man with a hat, as the man's hat could turn out to be green.

Children would not necessarily have a good sense of time, days of the week, months and times of day. When a multiple choice question is thus asked, it should involve real events in the child's life, e.g: "Was it before or after lunch?" (Bull, 2003b:38).

4.6.17 Close-ended questions

According to Bull (2003a:3) if specific yet non-leading questions have not been sufficiently productive, then closed-ended questions could be asked. Questions that offer only two possible responses should only be used when better types of questions have already been tried (Bull, 2003b:38).

In research conducted by Waterman *et al.* (2001:522) 5- to 9-year-old children were asked senseless "why" questions. Most of the children did not try to answer the questions which they did not understand. However, when senseless questions were phrased in a closed format most of the children did try to answer it. These findings suggest that children may provide inappropriate responses to questions which they do not understand, or to which they do not know the answer, if the question only requires a "yes/no" response. Close-ended questions should always be followed up with open-ended questions. It is the opinion of the researcher that close-ended questions should be avoided as far as possible as it may be perceived as leading.

4.6.18 Leading and suggestive questions

A leading question is according to De Voe and Faller (2002:17) and Peterson and Biggs (1997:281) one that implies the answer. Leading questions embed or suggest an answer and make inferences or suggestions about events and circumstances that have not been previously established directly by the child in the course of the interview (Aldridge & Cameron, 1999:140). Bull (2003b:4) states that if the interviewer is of the opinion that further questioning is still necessary after free narrative, open-ended questions and specific yet non-leading questions, then it could be decided to move into leading questions. Due to children's natural compliance to adults, it occurs that children who are more willing and eager to please adults, would go along with adult's suggestions (Clarke-Stewart *et al.*, 2004:1041) and this could lead to eliciting of wrong information. However, there must be clear appreciation that a leading style of questioning may have limited evidential value in criminal proceedings (Wakefield, 2006).

Starks & Samuels (2002b:28) define questions as suggestive when details which were not previously mentioned by the child, and the expected response to the question are strongly communicated in the question.

It is the opinion of the researcher that leading and suggestive questions must be avoided at all times.



4.6.19 "Why" questions

Avoid questions to a child that begin with "why" as this is an open invitation for the child to fill in the gap (Wakefield, 2006). The researcher also experienced that children experience a "why" question as confronting and may elaborate to defend themselves.

4.6.20 Repeating of questions

It is recommended by Kuehnle (1996:133) not to repeat questions that have a "yes/no" answer, because the child may think that the first answer he/she gave was incorrect.

4.6.21 Reframing and summarising

Studies of the manner in which mothers talk to children (Saywitz, Nathanson & Snyder, 1993:61) showed that children rely heavily on adults to structure the conversation. Interviewers should avoid "topic hopping", i.e. moving from one topic to another without explaining why. All types of questions on one topic should be asked before moving on to a different topic (Bull, 2003b:38). Reframing assists children in successfully making the transition from one topic to another (Starks & Samuel, 2002a:21; Massengale, 2001). Children require transitional comments to signal a change of topic, e.g.: "We were talking about the school, now I want to ask you questions about your mother." In the context of a forensic interview the researcher found it useful to reframe, e.g.: "You've told me what happened in the bathroom. Now I want to talk about where the other people in the house were."

Reflective techniques can be used to identify inconsistencies in children's answers (Kortessluoma, Hentinen & Nikkonen, 2003:439). The interviewer can verbalise the child's answer differently to check what he/she really meant or said. The researcher is of the opinion that forensic interviewers should use this with discretion, because it may be considered as suggestive or leading.

4.6.22 Clarify labels, concepts and names

Research has shown that many common terms are unfamiliar or misinterpreted by children under the age of 10 years (Saywitz *et al.*, 1993:61). It is recommended by Starks and Samuels, (2002b:25) that labels used by both the child and the interviewer be clarified, as the interviewer cannot interpret what the child means. It is the opinion of Carstens (2006:194) that a constant clarification of information gained from the child must take place in order to prevent the interviewer from making a subjective conclusion. From experience the researcher found that it is imperative that any label used (e.g. names for private parts, positions, names for people) be clarified and that the interviewer will not interpret what the child is saying (Fouché, 2006:225).

4.6.23 Use of drawings during forensic interviewing

The use of drawings during forensic interviews is emphasised by Hiltz and Bauer (2003). Research conducted by Gross and Hayne (1998:170) found that children's verbal reports are longer and more descriptive when they drew and told rather than merely told what had happened. Another study by Bruck *et al.* (2000:196) with children between the ages of 3 and 6 years, found that children in the drawing condition had better recall of true reminders than children in the group where they were just questioned. In a study where 60 children, aged 5 and 8 years, were interviewed about times when they had felt happy, sad and scared (Wesson & Salmon, 2001:301) drawing, among other techniques, was used. It was found that drawings and re-enactment elicited a greater number of items of descriptive information than the verbal interview did.

Asking children to draw a picture about a specific event in combination with non-leading verbal prompts can enhance the verbal reports of children over the age of 4 years (Salmon, 2001:267). However, after a long delay drawings may elicit errors and false information. The drawings allow children to make their retrieval cues concrete and it is likely that representing objects on paper is easier than representing actions (Wesson & Salmon, 2001:304).

Worksheets and pictures mark children in the middle childhood's world at school. Due to them being very concrete in their thoughts (Van Dyk, 2005:149), their way of communication is by means of pictures. When asking children to draw, interviewers should avoid using words like "play", "pretend", "make-believe", or "imagine" (Wakefield, 2006). The use of drawings may be utilised in the following instances (Faller, 1993; Jones, 1992:39; Hiltz & Bauer, 2003):

- To assist children that have difficulties disclosing possible sexual abuse, e.g.: "Draw me a picture of anything. Draw me a picture of your family."
- To clarify or demonstrate what the child said about the abusive situation (after the child has already indicated that something has happened): "Draw me a picture of (identified perpetrator)"; "Draw me a picture of what (the perpetrator) did"; "Draw me a picture of where (the abuse) happened."; "Draw me a picture of the (instrument/body part) he used."
- If a child describes being abused with certain instruments, or if he/she describes creams or other aids, it can be useful to have the child draw a picture of what these instruments looked like and/or where they were kept.

Research has shown that incidents which occurred first or last in a series of incidents are most accessible to memory (Orbach *et al.*, 2000:736). The researcher would, after determining whether the alleged abused happened once or more than once, determine the different venues where the abuse happened. Then the child would be invited to give a free narrative about the alleged abuse and he/she will be asked to draw the first, last incident or any incident. From that point the researcher would explore whether the abuse happened at "any other place" "at any other time". The researcher has found that this is an easier method to determine whether the abuse happened more than once.

4.6.24 Anatomically correct dolls

Anatomically correct dolls are widely used. Although most appropriate for use with children aged 2 to 6 years, anatomical dolls may be used with children of any age (Faller, 1993). A study by Peters (2001:149) compared experts' and laypersons'

judgements regarding child sexual abuse allegations. It was found that experts might jump to conclusions of abuse merely based upon suggestive and symbolic material, and experts are warned to use anatomical dolls only for demonstration of body and parts and actions, and to make communication clear, but not as a litmus test of abuse.

Guidelines in the United States of America on the use of anatomical dolls (Holmes, 2000) emphasise that:

- the dolls should be introduced after the child has made a verbal disclosure;
- the child should specifically be told that the dolls are not toys and they are not to be played with;
- dolls should be presented when they are fully clothed;
- the appropriateness of using the dolls should firstly be assessed;
- determination whether or not a child is able to make a representational shift must be done beforehand;
- no assumptions about the child's demonstrations should be made; and
- children should not be forced to use the dolls in demonstrations.

Anatomical dolls are not accepted by many scientists and other professionals who conduct research on interviewing child witnesses. The use of these dolls does not form part of formulated guidelines on how children must be interviewed to obtain reliable and forensically useful information (Wakefield & Underwager, 2003). It is further recommended by Wakefield and Underwager (2003) that interviewers should not use the anatomically detailed dolls, as it may result in the information obtained in the interview being ruled inadmissible in court or being discredited by the opposing lawyer. A study conducted by Santtila, Korkman and Sandnabba (2004:32) studied 27 transcribed forensic interviews which were conducted in Finland, and found that interviews in which anatomically detailed dolls were used included more suggestive utterances and less detailed responses by the children.

In the South African criminal courts a child is allowed during testimony to demonstrate with anatomical dolls what actually happened (Venter, 2006). A state prosecutor from the Sebokeng sexual offences court explained that the anatomical

dolls are used when the child finds it difficult to verbalise specific detail, or when there is confusion regarding what the child meant (Venter, 2006). The dolls are only used after the child has verbalised the alleged sexual abuse. The child would be asked to identify the male and female doll and then the instruction is given: "Show us what happened" (Venter, 2006).

The researcher is of the opinion that anatomical dolls should only be used after the child has already disclosed the sexual abuse and has given an explicit verbal account, and when the interviewer is uncertain of some of the content of the child's verbal account of events (Fouché, 2006:228). The researcher is also of the opinion that forensic interviewers do not have to use anatomically correct dolls, but even teddy bears may be utilised. A stick figure could also be used in order for the child to indicate which body parts were involved in the alleged sexual abuse.

4.6.25 Truth-and-lie and morality check

The *Memorandum of Good Practice* recommends that the need to speak the truth should be emphasised within the rapport phase of the interviewer (Aldridge & Wood, 1998:58; Bull, 2003a:1). It is confirmed by Starks & Samuel (2002a:22) and Kuehnle (1996:101) that it is imperative that the interviewer must emphasise to the child the importance of speaking the truth. If interviewers imprint in children an understanding of the difference between the "truth" and a "lie" before beginning the abuse-focused questioning, it may increase the credibility of the child's statement (Cronch *et al.*, 2006:200).

It is important to test the child's comprehension of "truth" and "lie" with a concrete and abstract concept (Orbach *et al.*, 2000:750). The child may be asked questions about colours of choice and whether the child and interviewer have met the previous day (Orbach *et al.*, 2000:750). It is also important to do a morality check in order to demonstrate to the child what the consequences of a lie might be (Wakefield, 2006).

In the South African jurisdiction, all witnesses must undergo a competence examination before giving their testimony. According to the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act No. 51 of 1977) child witnesses under the age of 14 will not be sworn in, but an informal examination on their competency will be done by the presiding officer. The focus during this competency test is to determine whether the child can distinguish between the truth and a lie. The child will also be warned to tell the truth. When the police officers take a child's statement, the child does not give it under oath, but only a competency test is done and the child is warned to tell the "true story" (Lock, 2004; Venter, 2006).

The researcher is of the opinion that it is important to determine the child's comprehension about the difference between the truth and a lie, as well as the consequences of lying, right before the abuse-focused questioning will start. It is the opinion of the researcher that children must know that talking about the allegation is a serious matter, and that they should be reminded thereof before the actual abuse-focused questioning. Should the truth-and-lie test be done prior to the verbal disclosure, the child may have forgotten the importance of telling the truth by the time the abuse-focused questioning starts. The researcher is also of the opinion that it is important to ask the child after the abuse-focused questions have been completed, whether there is any part of his/her statement that he/she is not sure of or that is not the truth. This opportunity also gives the child the opportunity to rectify mistakes made during the course of the interview.

4.6.26 Investigate multiple hypotheses

It is important for forensic interviewers to assess multiple hypotheses throughout the interview (Bruck & Ceci, 2004:230). The *American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children Guidelines* advises interviewers to consider and rule out alternative explanations for suspicions of abuse (Poole & Lamb, 1998:102). Alternative hypotheses about the alleged sexual offence, for instance possible perpetrator substitution or forcing by a third party to make the allegation (Street, 1997:8) or other possible explanations (Wakefield, 2006), contribute to the objectivity of the interviewer (Carstens, 2006). The forensic interviewing process

is thus characterised by a hypotheses-testing rather than a hypotheses-confirming approach (Poole & Lamb, 1998:109; Fouché, 2006:207) and the interviewer must consider alternative hypotheses throughout the interview process.

Alternative hypotheses (Wakefield, 2006; Kuehnle, 1996:175; Fouché, 2006:237) would, among others, include the following:

- Perpetrator substitution.
- Some allegations are valid, but the child has invented or has been influenced to make additional allegations that are false.
- The child misperceived innocuous or inappropriate, but non-abusive behaviours as sexual abuse.
- The child has been influenced or pressured to make a completely false allegation to serve the needs of someone else.
- False allegation for personal motives of revenge, gain, to show off to a peer or to help someone else.
- The child has fantasised the allegation, possibly because of psychological problems.
- The child initially made up the allegations, but has talked to several people about them and they have now become real to the child.
- The child saw pornographic magazines and pictures, observed adults engaged in sexual activities and this contributed to the allegation he/she later made.
- The child engaged in sex play with peers or siblings, and then accused an adult.
- Repeated questioning by adults who believed the child had been abused, and the child began making statements to please the adult, who then reinforced the child with attention or praise.

4.6.27 Anyone else, anything else, anywhere else

During expert witness testimony in 1998, the researcher was questioned by a defence lawyer and a magistrate on why she did not ask the child if "anyone else did the same things to you" as perpetrators often agree that the child may have been sexually abused, but blaming someone else for it.

It is imperative for interviewers to ask if there is "anything else" the child wants to mention (Faller, 2003:382), or to ask the child after an allegation has been verbalised, if "anything else" has happened (Fouché, 2006:225). Due to developmental difficulties (Aldridge & Wood, 1998:99) a child would experience difficulties to verbalise how many times the alleged sexual abuse has happened. The researcher has experienced that in order to determine how many times the alleged sexual abuse has happened, it is convenient to ask whether it happened "anywhere else" than the location that the child has already mentioned.

4.6.28 Prior knowledge about sexual matters

From experience in the field of child sexual abuse and during expert witnessing in criminal cases, the researcher has found that it is crucial that the interviewer would explore what the child's knowledge was about sexual abuse before the victimisations, as this hypothesis for the child's knowledge about sexual acts has been posed to the researcher during cross-examination (Fouché, 2006:235). The interviewer may ask the child where he/she learnt about sexual abuse and what was said.

Furthermore the researcher is of the opinion that interviewer must explore whether the child has knowledge of friends' and family's victimisation in order to investigate the hypothesis that he/she is copying the allegation. It is also imperative to determine the child's exposure to explicit television programmes and pornography. However, the researcher found that it is very difficult to explore exposure to pornography without being leading. The researcher, in an attempt to determine

exposure to pornography, would ask the child: "Have you seen or heard about these naughty things (use label the child has used) anywhere else?"

4.7 THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS

It is the opinion of both Heiman (1992:311) and Babiker and Herbert (1998:234) that there does not appear to be a body of scientific research that helps the practitioner to differentiate a *bona fide* case from those which are false. However, there are certain clinical features that might indicate fictitious reports.

4.7.1 Clinical features indicating possible fictitious reports

The presence of the following clinical features in the child's account may, according to Jones and McGraw (1987:27), indicate a fictitious report:

- Lack of emotion when revealing the alleged abuse.
- Absence of emotion and threat in the child's account.
- The presence of a custody access dispute.
- Pre-existing post-traumatic stress disorder based on previous life events.

An assessment guideline is used by Faller (1993) to evaluate the child's account. The allegation is assessed on four levels, namely:

- the child's ability to describe the sexual behaviour;
- the child's ability to describe the context of the sexual abuse;
- emotional content evaluated during disclosure and reported experience during the alleged abuse; and
- consistency.

According to Heiman (1992:312) validation of abuse is made from a multidimensional perspective and should assess:

- history of symptoms;
- verbal reports;
- phenomenological experience of abuse;
- presentational style; and
- corroborating evidence.

The criterion-based credibility assessment consists of eighteen criteria, grouped into five major categories and is applied to the child's statement (Bradford, 1998:96):

- **General characteristics**
 - Logical structure
 - Unstructured production
 - Quantity of details

- **Specific content**
 - Contextual embedding
 - Descriptions of interactions
 - Reproductions of conversations
 - Unexpected complications during the incident

- **Peculiarities of content**
 - Unusual detail
 - Superfluous details
 - Accurately reported details misunderstood
 - Related external associations
 - Accounts of subjective mental state

- **Motivation-related contents**
 - Spontaneous corrections
 - Admitting lack of memory
 - Raising doubts about one's own testimony
 - Self-depreciation
 - Pardoning the perpetrator

- **Offence**
 - Detailed characteristics of the offence

Once the evaluation is completed, a validity checklist (Statement Validity Analysis) is applied which consists of eleven distinct factors grouped under four main headings (Yuille & Farr, 1987:19):

- Statement is checked for the appropriateness of language.
- The way in which the interview was conducted, and in particular the extent to which suggestive, leading or coercive questioning was used, is considered.
- The child's motives to report and whether there were any pressures existing to report falsely are determined.
- The child's allegation is compared for consistency with other statements.

4.7.2 Topics to be explored during the interviewing process

The topics to be explored during the forensic interviews are guided by the evaluation and validation process (Fouché, 2006:237; Heiman, 1992:312). From the aforementioned themes in the evaluation guidelines need to be covered during the forensic interviewing process in order to validate the information gained from the child.

4.7.2.1 Identification of the perpetrator

It is crucial to determine who the alleged perpetrator or perpetrators are (Heiman, 1992:317; Venter, 2006; Lock, 2004), what the child's relationship is with him/her and whether the child is aware of any other children that are involved (Faller, 1993). It is the opinion of the researcher that it is imperative for the forensic interviewer to know the identity of the perpetrator, as this will have an impact on whether someone would be charged for the crime committed. The researcher is also of the opinion that it is important that the interviewer determines what the child's relationship is with the perpetrator in order to conduct a risk assessment. Specific names must be obtained, as well as the address and location of the perpetrator.

4.7.2.2 Nature of the alleged sexual abuse

Explicit detail must be obtained from the child as one of the criteria is to evaluate a child's statement to determine whether the child has sexual knowledge which is considered inappropriate for his/her age (Faller, 1988:17).

The interviewer should ask questions which will cover the following aspects of the alleged abuse (Heiman, 1992:317; Fouché & Joubert, 2003:17; Carstens & Fouché, 2006:14; Faller, 1993; Fouché 2006:237; Venter, 2006):

- What has happened.
- How it happened.
- With what the child was sexually abused.
- Which body parts of the perpetrator, if any, were involved in the alleged sexual abuse.
- Where the other body parts of perpetrator were.
- Which body parts of the child were involved.
- Whether any movements occurred.

- What the child felt physically. The researcher has experienced that it is very important to explore where the child has first experienced boundary violations and what the child physically felt, heard, saw and smelt (during the alleged incident).
- The number of times the alleged sexual abuse occurred and what precisely happened during each incident. This will have an impact on criminal charges against the alleged perpetrator .

4.7.2.3 When the abuse happened

It is important to determine when the alleged abuse occurred and how often it has happened, (Heiman, 1992:317; Fouché & Joubert, 2003:17). The interviewer should ask what else happened on the day, in which grade the child was or where other persons were (Carstens & Fouché, 2006:18). This information may then be corroborated with external sources to estimate when the alleged abuse occurred.

4.7.2.4 Explore the offender's actions to involve the child

It is important for the interviewer to determine how the abuse engaged the child, whether the child was threatened or asked to keep the abuse a secret (Heiman, 1992:317; Faller, 1993) and whether the alleged offender said anything.

4.7.2.5 Clothing

The researcher has acted as an intermediary on several occasions, and child witnesses are often asked what they were wearing on the day (of the abuse) and also what the offender was wearing (Kuehnle, 1996:167). It is thus imperative to ask the child what he/she was wearing, and if he/she cannot remember (Faller, 1993), to mention it in the report so that the police official or state prosecutor, who would use information from the report to make instrumental decisions, be aware of that.

The interviewer must determine whether any clothing was removed (Jones, 1992:30), who removed it and what happened with the clothing during the abuse and afterwards.

4.7.2.6 Emotional reactions

Research by Wood *et al.* (1996:81) evaluated 55 video-recorded interviews of high-risk sexual abuse cases seen at a multidisciplinary assessment centre. They found that a credible disclosure of abuse will not necessarily include the display of emotion by the child.

In another study the ability of social workers, police officials, teachers and laypersons to detect truths and lies was tested. While five 6-year-olds, adolescents and adults told truths and lies, their nonverbal reactions were evaluated by the social workers, police officials, teachers and laypersons (Vrij, Akehurst, Brown & Mann, 2006:1230). It was found that when judging someone's demeanour, social workers, police officials, teachers and laypersons all reached around 60% accuracy in detecting truths and lies told by all three groups (young children, adolescents and adults). It thus indicates that by only focussing on the nonverbal behaviour, interviewers cannot necessarily give an accurate indication on whether a child is lying or not. However, the interviewer must explore during the interview (Faller, 1993; Jones & McGraw, 1987:33):

- the child's emotional reactions during and after the alleged incident, and
- the child's emotional reactions during the disclosure of the alleged incident.

The researcher experienced that in order to evaluate for internal consistency, it is imperative to ask a child what he/she was thinking during and after the abuse. The researcher is of the opinion that interviewers must not interpret a child's nonverbal behaviour and emotional reactions, but ask clarifying questions and explore if there is any uncertainty.

4.7.2.7 Context explanation

During the context explanation the interviewer should ask questions about the place where the abuse happened to determine the following (Faller, 1988:18; Jones & McGraw, 1987:32; Heiman, 1992:312; Kuehnle, 1996:162).

- The address where the alleged abuse happened.
- The identify of the person(s) living there.
- Whose place/home it is.
- Where in the venue the alleged abuse took place.
- Exploration of furniture and objects present.
- Where other people were at the time of the abuse.
- If there is a possibility that any person(s) could have seen what has happened
- How the child got to the venue, out of the venue and where he/she went afterwards

It is thus important to ask clarifying questions on any information regarding the context that is not clear or that is missing (Fouché, 2006:237).

4.7.2.8 Anywhere else

In order to assess multiple hypotheses like the possibility that the child has been sexually abused by another person, or has seen or heard about sexual acts elsewhere, the interviewer should also ask the child whether he/she has seen things like the alleged sexual abuse at any other place (Fouché, 2006:218). The researcher experienced during numerous expert testimonies in criminal courts, that defence lawyers often pose the hypotheses: "Is it possible that the child could have gained the sexual knowledge somewhere else than through the alleged offence?" It is very important that the interviewer should be able to cover this possibility through the interviewing process.



4.7.2.9 After the abuse

The interviewer should also explore (Carstens & Fouché, 2006:19; Faller, 1993; Heiman, 1992:312):

- what happened after the abuse.
- how the child got out of the venue/room/house.
- where the child went after the abuse.
- where the perpetrator went after the abuse.
- what the child's reactions were towards the alleged perpetrator during and after the abuse.
- whether the child has immediately told anyone.
- who the child told and what that person's reaction was and how that impacted on the child.
- reasons for the child not telling anyone about the abuse.

4.7.2.10 Reporting the alleged offence to someone

In South African courts the first rapport (first person the child reported the alleged offence to) has to testify during the trial (Criminal Procedure Act, Act No. 51 of 1977). It is thus also a standard question during the child witness' testimony that the child is asked whom he/she first told about the alleged abuse. Questions regarding delayed reporting would also be posed (Venter, 2006). For the professional assessing a child it is imperative to explore the reactions of the first rapport, as this will assist the professional to understand the trauma posed on the child. This could also explain why a child was recanting (Sorenson & Snow, 1991:15).

4.7.2.11 Consistency

It is important that the interviewer should assess and explore the consistency between the child's verbal statements and emotional reactions (Fouché, 2006:237;

Faller, 1993; Jones & McGraw, 1987:33), as well as inconsistencies in the child's statement. The researcher is of the opinion that the forensic interviewer must be alert to inconsistencies in the child's statement and must ask clarifying questions.

4.7.2.12 Closure of sessions

It is important that the child be informed regarding what will happen to the information the interviewer gained through the sessions (Fouché 2006:235). However, information regarding the legal steps should be done with discretion as to not impose any guilt on the child.

The child has the right to leave a session on a high note, and it is necessary that the professional therefore employs empowerment exercises to contain the child before a session ends and the child has to leave (Fouché, 2006:217). The *Step-wise forensic interview protocol* (Practice Notes, 2002) and the *Memorandum of good practice* (Home Office, 1992:15) recommend that interviewers shift the conversation at the end of the interview to a neutral topic prior to closure of the interview. The researcher is of the opinion that this is very important as it normalises the environment for the child before leaving.

4.8 STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

4.8.1 Memorandum of Good Practice / Achieving Best Evidence

The *Memorandum of good practice on video-recorded interviews with child witnesses for criminal proceedings*, known as *Memorandum of Good Practice* (Home Office, 1992:15), and its updated version, *Achieving best evidence in criminal proceedings: guidance for vulnerable or intimidated witnesses, including children*, known as *Achieving Best Evidence* (Bull, 2003a:1), is a phased interview protocol that was adapted as an acceptable method of interviewing children.

The phased approach treats the interview as a process in which different interviewing techniques are used in phases, proceeding from general and open to specific and closed forms of questions. During a preliminary stage (Bull, 2003a:2) the interviewer must determine the setting where the interview would take place, taking into consideration the child's age and whether the venue is suitable to interview a child of that age, privacy, few distractions and space for activities. This interview protocol consists of four phases, namely:

- **Rapport**

The aim of this phase is to build rapport with the child in order to ensure that the child feels comfortable and relaxed (Bull, 2003a:2). It also serves to supplement the knowledge about the child's social, emotional and cognitive development, as well as his/her communication skills (Home Office, 1992:15-16). The interviewer will introduce him-/ herself, explain his/her role and the purpose of the interview without referring to the alleged offence. Ground rules must be explained to the child, and will include an explanation of why the interview is conducted, what would happen with the statement and a discussion on the importance of telling the truth and not making up any information.

- **Free Narrative Account**

The interviewer acts as a facilitator, encouraging the child to provide an account of the alleged incident in his/her own words and in his/her own time. The interviewer will use general, open-ended questions, aiming to obtain information from the child which is spontaneous and free from the interviewer's influence (Home Office, 1992:17).

- **Questions**

The phase consists of three stages (Home Office, 1992:19; Bull, 2003b:37):

- Open-ended questions
- Specific yet non-leading questions
- Closed questions

- **Closing the Interview**

It is in the interest of the child that the interview be closed on a positive note, and the child should be thanked for co-operating and for providing information. The interviewer should also provide simple, straightforward information about what will happen in the criminal justice system, so that the child understands clearly the steps that will follow. It may be necessary to return to the rapport phase and chat about some of the neutral topics that were raised earlier. It is a good idea to give the child a contact name and number if the child should have any questions or should he/she wish to discuss certain matters further (Home Office, 1992:20).

4.8.2 Five phases of forensic interviewing

A series of phases are suggested by Jones (1992:30):

- **Gaining rapport**

The interviewer is to establish a relationship with the child, engage the child's interest, and make an assessment of the child's level of understanding. Neutral topics are discussed. The interviewer can explain who he/she is and describe his/her role. The issue of confidentiality can be discussed in this session or later.

- **Initial inquiry about sexual abuse**

During this phase the interviewer attempts to obtain a free narrative about the sexual abuse. The child is asked why he/she thinks he/she came to the interview. The interviewer's line of inquiry will depend upon the type of suspicion that has led to the current investigation. Broadly there are four categories, namely:

- something the child has said;
- an adult's suspicion about a place or person;
- physical disease; and
- the child's behaviour and general inquiry about family, or friends (Family drawings may be used here).



- **Facilitation**

If the child did not disclose the abuse in the previous phase, the interviewer would refer back to previous disclosure, utilise more direct and focused questions or utilise toys and prompts.

- **Gathering specific detail**

During this phase specific information is gathered regarding the clothing, emotions of the perpetrator, context information, where other people were, anyone else who did the same things and the child's participation.

- **The closing phase**

The interviewer will appreciate and recognise the feelings and emotional struggle that the child has been through during the interview. The first step into the future may be described, e.g.: "I will write my report, and you need to tell the police". Fears and anxiety need to be addressed. If the interviewer is not going to see the child again, he/she must prepare the child on that.

4.8.3 *The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Investigative Protocol*

A need was identified for a fully structured investigative protocol in the United States of America and that led to the development of the *NICHD Investigative Protocol* (Orbach *et al.*, 2000:733; Cronch *et al.*, 2006:202; Hershkowitch, 2006:766). This protocol has definite phases:

- **Introductory phase**

The interviewer would introduce him-/herself, clarify the child's task, and explain the ground rules and expectations.

- **The rapport-building phase**

It comprises two sections, characterised by open-ended prompts. Firstly, the interviewer establishes rapport between the child and the interviewer and

encourages the child to provide narrative responses to open-ended questions. Secondly, the interviewer attempts to shift the child's focus to the substantive issues in a non-suggestive manner so that the recollection process can commence, e.g.: "Tell me why you came to talk to me today." Only if the child fails to identify the target events will the interviewer employ progressively more focused prompts to identify the alleged abuse.

- **Free recall phase**

This phase starts with the first substantive invitation: "Tell me everything that happened from the beginning to the end as best you can remember." This is followed by open-ended prompts. As soon as the first narrative is completed, the interviewer determines whether the incident occurred once or more than once, and proceeds to secure incident-specific information.

- **Questioning phase**

During this phase the child is directed to recount events that are most accessible to memory. Open-ended questions and prompts are used exhaustively, with focused questions only used at the end of the questioning phase. Asking children to add any additional information, thanking them and shifting the discussion to a neutral topic for closure, complete the questioning phase.

- **Closure phase**

Interviewers complete the questioning phase by asking children whether they have additional information to report before thanking them for their cooperation and shifting the discussion to a neutral topic for closure.

4.8.4 Step-Wise forensic interview protocol

The *Step-Wise* interview protocol has been developed by Yuille (Poole & Lamb, 1998:95) and aims to minimise any trauma the child may experience during the interview and maximise the amount and quality of the information obtained from the child (Practice Notes, 2002).

The steps in this method begin with the most open, least leading, least suggestive form of questioning and, if necessary, proceed to more specific and more leading questioning. The overall format involves eight basic steps (Poole & Lamb, 1998:95):

- **Rapport-building phase**

During this phase the interviewer puts the child at ease by asking questions about the child's interests. Rules for the interviews are discussed and narratives about neutral topics are allowed to assess the level of detail the child conveys and to teach the child to tell a story.

- **Requesting recall of two specific events**

The interviewer asks the child to describe two specific past experiences like recent outings. These conversations will provide baseline data on the child's verbal skills, allowing the interviewer to reinforce the child for talking, and give the child practice responding to open-ended and non-leading questions that will set the stage for the remainder of the interview.

- **Explaining the need to tell the truth**

The interviewer will explain the need to tell the truth and will emphasise the serious nature of the interview in a non-threatening way.

- **Introduce the topic of concern**

The interviewer would start with a general question such as: "Do you know why we are talking today?"

- **Encouraging a free narrative**

After the child has exhausted his/her free narrative, the interviewer moves to questioning.

- **Asking general questions**

This begins with open-ended questions and then, if necessary, the interviewer proceeds to employ specific, but non-leading questions.

- **Using interview aids if necessary**

The *Step-Wise* protocol permits interviewers to use drawings and dolls for clarification after children have disclosed an event.

- **Closure phase**

The interviewer ends the *Step-Wise* interview by thanking the child for participating, asking if the child has any questions and explaining what will happen next.

4.8.5 An extended forensic evaluation model

The extended forensic evaluation model has been developed by Carnes (2005) and it includes five stages of gathering information:

- **First stage**

The interviewer gathers background information.

- **Second stage**

The interviewer will focus on building rapport, developmental assessment and establishing ground rules.

- **Third stage**

The interviewer conducts a social assessment and behavioural checklists are reviewed.

- **Fourth stage**

During this stage the interviewer makes use of abuse-specific questioning to gather information.

- **Fifth stage**

The interviewer reviews, clarifies and makes treatment referrals if necessary. The interviewer then uses a forensic evaluation critical analyses guide to

assess all of the information that has been gathered and to prepare a written report (Carnes, 2005).

4.9 DEALING WITH DIFFICULT ISSUES

4.9.1 Cultural competency during forensic interviews

Cultural competency is the ability to understand, to the best of one's ability, the worldview of our culturally different clients and adapt our practice accordingly (Abney, 1996:411). Interviewers should ensure that issues like language, culture and ethnic background are accommodated during the interviewing process (Fowler, 2003:42). It is the opinion of the researcher that if these issues are not accommodated, the assessment interview is likely to be confronted with them at some stage, and this could disrupt the assessment or even prevent its completion.

Cultural factors may be influential (Aldridge & Wood, 1998:216), e.g. if the child and translator have a shared culture where sexual matters are taboo, the child may find it more difficult to reveal intimate details. The researcher found it effective to put up pictures of children from different cultures and direct the child's attention to them, and to select techniques and interviewing tools during the interviewing process that are culturally sensitive. Anatomical dolls and drawings must fit the race of the child (Vieth, 2002).

It is the researcher's experience (Fouché, 2001:31) in the rural areas that when a child discloses sexual abuse to a parent, he/she will be washed and then taken to a neighbour, usually an older lady in the street, in order for her to physically look if the child has indeed been sexually abused. She then would recommend that the child be taken to the police. If a forensic investigator is not aware of this, he/she could mistakenly determine from the child that an old lady has fondled him/her. It is also not unusual for children as old as 9 years to be bathed by parents, including bathing the private parts.

The use of professional terminology or jargon should be avoided at all times (Fowler, 2003:44). White professionals in the field usually have Western world values that are brought into the interviewing room (Abney, 1996:413), e.g. long-range planning and strict adherence to time schedules. It is the opinion of Abney (1996:417) that interviewers should familiarise themselves with child-rearing practices, sex roles, family structures, religious beliefs, community characteristics and other cultural factors when working with a child from a different culture than the interviewer. The researcher experienced that a child from a white middle-class family may understand what "Plasticine" or "play dough" is and will know instinctively how to make a little figure out of it, but a black child from a rural area may never have seen play dough and may be scared to use it.

4.9.1.1 Using translators in forensic interviews

Although it may be difficult to establish an effective rapport when the interview is being conducted through an interpreter, steps may be taken prior to the interview to minimise its effect (Aldridge & Wood, 1998:215). It is the opinion of the researcher that the ideal scenario within forensic interviewing is that a child be interviewed in his/her mother tongue by an interviewer of the same culture.

The present reality is that trained, multilingual interviewers are not readily available in many communities. There are approximately 41 million people living in South Africa. More than 16 million or 40% of these people are under 18 years of age. A large majority of these children are black African children (81%), 9% are Coloured, 2% are Indian and 8% are White (Pierce & Bozalek, 2004:819). In 1997, 22 social workers of the South African Police Service underwent a special training course in order to conduct forensic assessment interviews (Stutterheim, 1999:5). There was not a single social worker in Gauteng province who could speak an African language, which necessitated the use of translators. It is therefore necessary that social workers from different races be able to conduct interviews through a translator (Fouché, 2006:214).

During the researcher's service years in South African Police Service, she did in-service training with a tea lady who assisted with translation whenever there was a language barrier between the researcher and children. The researcher also tested play-related communication techniques by means of a translator during her M.A. studies (Fouché & Joubert, 2003:14) and found that although it is extremely difficult to utilise a translator during forensic interviewing, it is not impossible. It is the opinion of Fowler (2003:43) that should the assistance of translators be necessary, they must be from an independent translator service, and not family members. They should either be experienced in or familiar with the type of work for which they are utilised.

The following are guidelines (Hiltz & Anderson 2002; Carstens & Fouché, 2006:15; Fowler, 2003:44; Aldridge & Wood, 1998:216) for those who choose to utilise interpreters in their forensic interviews:

- Establish the need for a translator by asking: "What language does this child use at home?" Although children may speak English at their school or day care centre, the interviewer must keep in mind that the child may talk about things he/she only has words for in his native language, e.g. body parts or sexual acts.
- Interviewers need to consider interpreters who have a court certificate.
- The interpreter needs to be a neutral party. The interpreter is not an advocate for the child and should not try to explain or help witnesses by expanding or rephrasing questions and answers. The interpreter must not know the child, as it may influence the child's responses due to a desire to please a loved one.
- The variations within languages should be considered, as it can lead to misunderstandings or even an inability to communicate. Gathering some specifics about the child prior to the interview and attempting to match the interpreter accordingly can address this problem.
- The interviewer should meet with the translator prior to the interview to cover the follow issues:



- The purpose and what is expected during the interview. Specifics regarding the nature of a forensic interview, any aids which may be used during the interview, method of memorialising the interview and the physical set-up of the interviewer.
- The translator should be sensitive to the fact that he/she should not change the question or the question structure (i.e. multiple choice, open-ended, "yes/no"). The translator should also alert the interviewer if questions could not be interpreted directly. The translator should not attempt to clarify the questions.
- The interviewer should be alerted to how tired the translator is and his/her ability to translate longer and shorter sentences (Fowler, 2003:44).
- The translator may have more than one way to word a sentence or question in the child's native language. The translator should be instructed to select the simplest, shortest and most concrete method.
- The translator should translate everything, even if the child answers with seemingly unrelated information, so that the interviewer can determine the relevance of all the information.
- The translator should be warned against touching or gesturing. The translator should avoid having children sitting on their laps, hugging or stroking a child, nodding their heads and gesturing.
- The setting of the interview room should be positioned so that the interactions of the interviewer and child are the focus. The interviewer and child should face each other, with the translator sitting slightly behind and to the side of the interviewer.
- Having a translator in the interview does not necessarily obligate the interviewer or the child to use her/him continuously. The use of the translator should be adjusted to developmental and situational factors.
- At the outset of the forensic interview, the interviewer should introduce the interpreter and his/her role to the child.
- When the interviewer speaks to the child he/she should focus his/her attention on the child being interviewed, not the interpreter. When speaking, the child should be addressed directly, not the translator, and the interviewer

should keep looking at the child. Phrases such as "Tell her...", or "Ask him..." should be avoided (Carstens & Fouché, 2006:14).

- The interviewer should give a pause after a sentence in order to give the interviewer sufficient time to interpret.
- The child will look at the interviewer when he/she talks and then turn his/her head to the translator.

It is the opinion of the researcher that it is imperative that the translator follows the pace of the interviewer, i.e. when the interviewer asks a question smiling, the interpreter must also smile or when the interviewer has a neutral expression, the translator must also try to have a neutral face.

4.9.2 Number of sessions

It is the opinion of Bentovin *et al.* (1995:247) that a single interview to investigate a specific event will not necessarily reveal information regarding a child's experience. A follow-up session may continue after a short break or a few minutes or hours, while others may reconvene after several days (Jones, 1992:20). It may happen that the child wants to stop the interview and the interviewer must do so, telling the child that they will meet again (Wakefield, 2006). A study conducted by Hershkowitz *et al.* (2006:754) with suspected victims of child sexual abuse between the ages of 4 and 13 years, found that interviewing children who are reluctant to disclose in more than one session, may help them disclose their experiences.

The *American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children Guidelines* indicates that two to six sessions may be involved during the interviewing process, and that not all of these would include specific questions about sexual abuse (Poole & Lamb, 1998:102). The interviewer must be willing to accept the possibility that the first interview may not result in any information at all, or may involve a child who is not willing to share any information and refuses to speak. In some cases further interviews will be necessary.

It is the opinion of Bruck *et al.* (2006:786) that repeated questioning and interviewing in suggestive interviews increase the number of false allegations. A misconception exists among professionals that only multiple suggestive interviews are needed to contaminate a report of a child (Bruck & Ceci, 2004:231). However, several studies have shown that even after one suggestive interview a child's version of the alleged incident may be tainted (Garven *et al.*, 2000:47).

The researcher has experienced that during a comprehensive assessment process two to three assessment interviews may take place (Fouché, 2006:232). During the sessions play-related communication techniques will be utilised to get to a disclosure in a non-leading way. The abuse-focused questioning will take place in one session. The investigative interview which the South African Police Service conducts, usually takes one session (Lock, 2004).

4.9.3 Allegation blind interviews

A study by Cantlon, Payne and Erbaugh (1996:1114) was conducted to compare the disclosure rates of 1 535 alleged victims of child sexual abuse interviewed in a formal setting with a structured "allegation informed" technique versus structured "allegation blind" technique. Allegation blind interviews are when the interviewer only has prior knowledge of the child's names for their own body parts and the names of significant others in the family. In the situation of the allegation informed interview the interviewer has information about the merits of the case. It was found that "allegation blind" interviews yielded statistically higher disclosure rates (Cantlon *et al.*, 1996:1114).

The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (Cronch *et al.*, 2006:198) states that it is acceptable to gather information about the allegation before conducting the interview. However, research where 1535 child abuse cases were studied over a four-year period showed higher disclosure rates with the blind interview (Cronch, *et al.*, 2006:198).

4.9.4 Video- and Audio-recording

Many researchers are of the opinion that all interviews should be either video- or audio-recorded in order to ensure that the interviewer does not ask leading questions and for supervision purposes (Wakefield, 2006; Practice Notes, 2002; Poole & Lamb, 1998:116). Studies on how much information adults remember about questions asked and answers received during conversation, showed that adults recall the major ideas, but cannot recall the exact words used, or the sequence of interactions between speakers (Bruck *et al.*, 2006:798). It is therefore recommended by Bruck *et al.* (2006:798) that interviews be recorded.

The researcher is of the opinion that video- or audio-recording of an interview has more advantages than disadvantages. It is a cornerstone of the South African judicial system that a criminal trial takes place in the presence of the accused, entailing the physical presence of the accused in court whilst the witness testifies (Le Roux & Engelbrecht, 2000:347). Due to the trauma that testifying in an open court may have on child witnesses, the legislator enacted Section 170A of the Criminal Procedure of Act, 1977 (Act No. 51 of 1977). This section provides that when it appears to the presiding officer in a criminal trial that it would expose any witness under the age of 18 years to undue mental stress or suffering if he/she testified at such proceedings in the presence of the accused, a competent person may be appointed as an intermediary in order to enable such witness to give his/her evidence through that intermediary (Le Roux & Engelbrecht, 2000:347). This means that the witness shall give his/her evidence usually by means of close circuit television. The general purport of the question will be related to the child. Older children may sit alone in the intermediary room while testifying.

Irrespective of whether a video-recording of the investigative interview has been made, the child must still testify. The researcher is of opinion that it is imperative for forensic interviewers to at least audio-record their interviews so that they do not need to rely on their memory for factual information. The recordings may then also be demonstrating the interviewer's non-leading interview protocol. Interviewers must obtain written permission from parents or caretakers in order to record the sessions (Fouché, 2006:233). The researcher is also of opinion that

the child should be informed that the interview is recorded, and it should be explained that the interviewer does it in order to remember more clearly what was discussed and in order to write a report afterwards (Practice Notes, 2002: Wakefield, 2006; Fouché, 2006:233).

4.10 CLASSIFICATION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

Conclusion in the context of a child sexual abuse investigation may have horrific consequences for those involved, such as a child may be subjected to continuous abuse, or unjustified consequences for the alleged perpetrator and family (Ney, 1995:7).

When an allegation of child sexual abuse has been made, the following possibilities should be considered according to Bernet (1993:903-908):

- The allegation is true.
- Parental misinterpretation and suggestion.
- Misinterpreted physical condition.
- Parental delusion.
- Parental indoctrination.
- Interviewer suggestion.
- Fantasy.
- Delusion.
- Misinterpretation.
- Innocent lying.
- Deliberate lying.
- Over-stimulation.
- Perpetrator substitution.
- Distinguishing forms of falsification.
- Fantasy versus delusion.

The following overall evaluation is proposed by Bradford (1998:98), namely that the child's statement is:

- credible;
- probably credible;
- indeterminate;
- probably incredible; or
- incredible.

The following classification has been used and found useful by the researcher (Fouché, 2006:237):

- The case in question appears to be a false allegation.
- Suspicion exists, but cannot be confirmed.
- Insufficient evidence is available to draw a conclusion.
- A correlation exists between the child's statement, behavioural indicators and emotional reactions and those of other victims of child sexual abuse in this age, hence sexual abuse is a possibility.

4.11 SUMMARY

This chapter gave an overview of issues related to forensic interviewing. The difference between investigative interviews and forensic interviews has been highlighted. The investigative interview is the primary interview conducted by the investigating officer of the South African Police Service. The forensic assessment interview is the so-called second-stage interview and is only conducted by professionals who underwent specialised training. Referrals usually come from the South African Police Service, or state prosecutor in exceptional circumstances where e.g. the state cannot prove a *prima facie* case.

The conduct of the interviewer has been highlighted as crucial in order to ensure the forensic process. Objectivity, the formulation of multiple hypotheses and correct use of interview techniques are very important. The gender of the

interviewer appeared to have an influence on the outcome of the interview and interviewers are warned to be sensitive regarding this.

The different interview techniques were discussed. The facilitation of free narrative before starting to ask questions was highlighted. The use of open-ended questions was also investigated. Open invitational statements and non-leading focused questions are important. It is important to reframe the questions and summaries in order to check with the child whether he/she was understood correctly. Leading questions should be avoided. The use of anatomical dolls must be done with caution. Drawings may assist a child to explain what has happened.

Topics that need to be addressed during the forensic interviewing process are where the abuse happened, who the alleged perpetrator is, where it happened. Information about clothing and context explanation must be explored. The emotional reactions of the child during the alleged abuse and when he/she first told someone must be considered.

The different interview protocols have been discussed and commonalities like rapport building, ground rules, introducing the topic to talk about, facilitating free narrative and types of questions, were found.