

Washington State Child Interviewing: [Quick Reference](#) *Interview Stages & Components*

Introduction	Introduce yourself; Neutral job description (“My job is to listen.”); Explain documentation & observers
Instructions	◇ “Don’t guess (okay to say ‘I don’t know’), but tell me if you <u>do</u> know.” Practice: “What did I have for breakfast?” <u>Practice exs.</u> for children < 10 “What did <u>you</u> have for breakfast?” ◇ “Tell me if I make a mistake.” Practice: “What would you say if I said you’re 30 yrs. old?” “How old are you?” ◇ “Tell me if you don’t know what I mean.” Practice: “Where is your patella?” “Patella is a hard word, let me ask it a different way - Where is your knee?” <i>You’re the Expert</i> Since we just met, I don’t know much about you. So when we talk, I won’t know the answers to my questions. <i>Promise to Tell Truth</i> Elicit agreement to tell the truth - “Do you <u>promise</u> that you <u>will</u> tell the truth today?”
Narrative <u>Event</u> Practice	Elicit details about a neutral non-abusive event , using a variety of open-ended prompts: to teach child type of prompts to expect & encourage narrative responses, to build rapport, and to assess child’s use & understanding of language
Transition	(“How are you feeling right now?”) Start with: “Tell me what you’re here to talk about.” As needed, follow with “It’s really important that we know what happened.” (Additional prompts should be least suggestive possible)
Substantive Questions	If multiple incidents, consider “Tell me what usually happens when _____.” Then move on to individual events. SEPARATE: Focus on 1 incident at a time: <i>last time; another time, time you remember the most; a time it was different</i> INVITE: Open ended prompts to generate initial narrative overview: “Tell me everything that happened...” ELABORATE: Open-ended prompts to elicit additional narratives & details: “Tell me more about ____.” Linear/sequential: “Then what happened?” “What happened next?” “Tell me everything that happened <u>from...until...</u> (time segmentation) “Tell me everything that happened <u>before...after...</u> ” (time framing) Action Cues (use actions mentioned by child) FOCUS: Explore key details further - <i>People, Places, Sensory perceptions</i> , etc. Other areas: <i>Who knows, Dynamics, Support, Other abuse</i> CLARIFY: Address unclear or confusing information
Closure	Recap in child’s words to ensure accuracy, assess safety, re-establish equilibrium; Thank child for effort, not content <i>WA State Child Abuse Interviewing & Assessment - Revised Jan. 2019</i>

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Examples: Helpful Prompts

Narrative Event Practice

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

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

Transition

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

Substantive Questions

If not already obvious, *"Did that happen 1 time or more than 1 time?"* then possibly, *"Tell me what usually happens..."*
Use **PATTERN OF QUESTIONS** to elicit narratives w/details about specific events): **Separate, Invite, Elaborate, Focus, Clarify**

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

Closure

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

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