

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

Introduction	Introduce yourself; Neutral job description (“ <i>My job is to listen.</i> ”); 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</u>...<u>until</u>... ” (time segmentation) “ Tell me everything that happened <u>before</u>...<u>after</u>... ” (time framing) Action Cues (use actions mentioned by child) FOCUS: Explore key details further - People, Places, Sensory perceptions , etc. Other areas: Who knows, Dynamics, Support, Other abuse 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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