

INTERVIEWING STRATEGIES

Part B: Conducting an Interview

This CD-ROM contains interview information related to children with disabilities that will hopefully provide not only specific strategies, but more importantly give you a better **personal “sense” about these children**, especially if you have limited experiences in working with them.

Decisions were made from the very beginning that the materials presented in this section, **especially related to videotape clips**, would not deal directly with interview content that was specific to child abuse, given the sensitive and confidential nature of those topics. However, this section contains a wealth of information and examples of conducting a variety of conversations with children with disabilities, along with commentary by parents and/or professionals related to critical concerns. It is hoped that this information and content can easily be translated to child abuse types of interviewing.

Children, parents and professionals contributing to this section of the CD have graciously allowed this information to be included in order to advance the understanding and knowledge base related to these children and adults with the hope that *greater protection for this population can be achieved at all levels*.


Refer also to **Disability Jargon** or **Resources** sections in order to assist in any further clarification. Video/Audio segments are indicated if appropriate to any of these sections. In addition, specific **Resource Articles** are indicated  as well.

Chart 1: *Points to Remember Overall*

Chart 2: *Individuals with Sensory Disabilities*

Chart 3: *Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities*

Chart 4: *Individuals who are Deaf*

Chart 5: *Individuals with Communication Disorders*


Chart 6: *Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders*

PRINT ALL CHARTS

PART B: Conducting an Interview

KEYWORDS: Abuse:General, Disabilities:General, Interviewing

CHART 1: *Points to Remember Overall*

1. **Work with someone to validate** “impressions” or feelings about a certain case involving an individual with special needs, especially if you have limited experience with this population of children. In these instances “*two heads*” are usually better than one, and can assist in limiting frustration, and remaining on target regarding the alleged abuse.
2. **Link-up with RESOURCES immediately**, especially related to a specific disability. Oftentimes, that in itself can assist in clarifying impressions of functioning or information given. Professionals often delay asking for help. That is a mistake! 
3. If possible, develop a “multi-disciplinary resource team” in your location that includes all professionals that are knowledgeable about disability related issues. Include a community professional (e.g. *teacher, psychologist*) who could also be called upon to assist. **There is “no magic” in interviewing these individuals.** The diversity of their disabilities prevents any ONE STRATEGY from being successful. Experience in working with such individuals will enhance the *comfort level* and skills of all who interact with this group of children.
4. Be constantly aware of the “**Vulnerabilities to Consider**” that have been outlined in **Part A: Chart 1.** For example, the level of information and awareness that these individuals have regarding their own sexuality and the issues of self-protection may be very different than their “able bodied” or typical peers. Educational practices regarding these issues are changing in the various communities related to the training in sexuality and protection. But in many ways, individuals with disabilities are not always included in those educational experiences. This fact and additional vulnerabilities discussed continue, even today, to put them at greater risk for abuse.
5. Always remember, **you may be the first person** who can help stop the victimization for an individual with a disability. **Don’t give up!** Your patience, time and sensitivity in working with this group of individuals are critical and can make the difference!

BOTTOMLINE TO REMEMBER:

Children with disabilities are children FIRST.

The skills and instincts you use in general interviewing
continue to hold true with these children as well.