

PSYC3016: Developmental Psychology

Adult-child interaction: implications for research and professional practice

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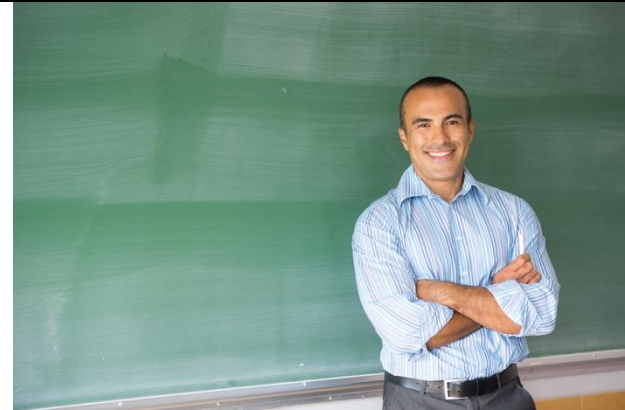
Learning Outcomes

- LO1 – have a deep understanding of the factors that should be considered when working with children across all contexts
- LO1 – understand that flexibility in approach may be required in different contexts and for different children
- LO4 – be able to discuss the relevance of working-with-children skills for different contexts (e.g. legal system, clinical practice, research).

Adult-child interaction



- Forensic psychologist
- Clinical psychologist
- Medical practitioner
- School counsellor
- Teacher
- Police officer
- Lawyer
- Social worker
- Research psychologist
- ...



What else...?

What are the important questions?

- What sort of job do you want?
- What sort of lifestyle do you want?
- Where does money fit in?

Other considerations...

- Flexibility?
- Travel?
- Interests?
- Enjoyment?
- Personality?

What else...?

What skills do you have?

- Within your degree...
 - Understanding data
 - Understanding scientific quality
 - Read, assimilate, communicate
 - Presenting information
 - Knowledge base
 - Working with others
 - Interpersonal
- Outside your degree
 - Hobbies
 - Interests
 - Skills
 - Experience

Everything but...?

Game Plan!

3 options

1. With really good Honours mark
2. With Honours
3. Without Honours

But it's ok to not have a plan!

Everything but...?

Which careers came to my careers event because they want YOU?

- PWC
- IDcare
- Genetic counsellor
- Defence
- Speech pathology
- Occupational therapy
- Teaching
- Journalism
- Social services (child protection)
- NSW police
- ARTD consultants
- Graduate medicine
- School counsellor
- ...

Adult-child interaction



Forensic – child as
victim/child as perpetrator



Psychological research



Clinical interview/treatment



Adult-child interaction

Across all contexts...

What matters?

- Consent
- Comfort of the child
- Reliability of data
- Do no harm

Adult-child interaction: consent



Adult-child interaction: consent

- What do we mean by consent?
 - **Research**
 - Remember your research participation
 - Age of child – assent/consent
 - Written/verbal/indication of agreement
 - How do we know if a child wants to stop?
 - How do we know if a child is informed?
 - What factors do we need to be mindful of?
 - Explaining versus cajoling
 - Incentivising versus bribing
 - What details might be important?
 - Where will the research take place?
 - Will mum/dad be there?
 - Will they be on camera/recorded?
 - Can they leave to use the toilet?
 - Have they had a snack recently?

Adult-child interaction: consent

- What do we mean by consent?
 - **Legal**

Witness	Suspect
Freedom to speak/not	Understanding of rights
Influence of others	Understanding of situation
Understanding of truth	Understanding of implications
	Authority effect

The implications of consent vary according to the context

Adult-child interaction: consent

- What do we mean by consent?
 - **Clinical**
 - Does a child need to agree to treatment?
 - Is lack of engagement the refusal of consent or a challenge to be overcome?
 - Can a child request parent presence/absence?
 - Separation anxiety
 - What if the child is in the care of social services?
 - Who gives consent?
 - Should a child be informed as to the nature of their participation?

Adult-child interaction: comfort of the child



Adult-child interaction: comfort of child

Comfort of child - general

- Familiarity
 - Home, school, office?
 - Have you met before?
 - Interviewed before?
- Environment
 - Novel?
 - Welcoming?
 - “Child-friendly”?
 - Confidential? – soundproof?
 - Physically comfortable?
- Explanation
 - Duration
 - Process
 - Expectations
 - Tour
 - Honesty
 - Transparency
- Affect
 - Appropriate expression
 - Paying attention
 - Video yourself!

Adult-child interaction: comfort of child

Comfort of child – child “at risk”

- Appropriate language
 - Age of child
 - Mental age
 - Professional
 - “In your own words”
 - Don’t try to be cool!
- Appropriate body-language
 - Engaged with child
 - Relaxed, professional
 - Personal space
 - Interpersonal space
- Predict behaviour
 - Trauma triggers
 - Relevant stimuli
 - Read child’s body language and affect
- Time



Adult-child interaction: comfort of child

Comfort of child

- Building rapport

Adult-child interaction: reliability of data

Extracting information – all contexts

- Quantity of information
 - Complete the tasks/interviews
 - Sufficient evidence
 - Single versus repeat interactions
- How to maximize data quantity
 - Build rapport
 - Take breaks
 - Inform child of likely duration – honestly!
 - Discuss options for completion

Adult-child interaction: reliability of data

Extracting information - general

- Quality (veracity) of information
 - Understanding of truth
 - Authority effect
 - Expectations – “right answer”
 - Aim to please

Adult-child interaction: reliability of data

Extracting information - forensic

- Quality (veracity) of information
 - Witness/victim testimony
 - Disclosure
- Problem: how do you interview a child in a way that minimises the effects of authority/wanting to please? How do you determine what the truth is?

Adult-child interaction: reliability of data

- Problem: how do you interview a child in a way that minimises the effects of authority/wanting to please and maximises truth and detail?
- Prof. Michael Lamb – University of Cambridge
 - Developed best-practice guidelines for interviewing children in cases of child sex abuse
 - NICHD Investigative Interview Protocol (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
 - It has been developed with reference to child development issues, including linguistic capabilities, memory, and suggestibility, forensic needs, interviewer behaviour, and the effects of stress and trauma by a team of researchers, interviewers, police officers, and legal professionals.
 - More than a decade of research has shown that effective interviewer training can begin with the proper use of the NICHD Protocol because it allows interviewers to maximize the amount of information obtained from free-recall memory by using open-ended prompts.
 - The NICHD Protocol requires fewer more risky focused questions be used and does not advocate the use of anatomical dolls and other risky techniques.
 - The overarching goal for effective training is to operationalize these evidence based professional recommendations.

Adult-child interaction: reliability of data

Recommended reading:
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2180422/pdf/nihms35447.pdf>
(Not as long as it seems!)

NIH Public Access
Author Manuscript
Child Abuse Negl. Author manuscript; available in PMC 2008 January 9.

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Structured forensic interview protocols improve the quality and informativeness of investigative interviews with children: A review of research using the NICHD Investigative Interview Protocol

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Abstract
Objective—To show how the results of research on children’s memory, communicative skills, social knowledge, and social tendencies can be translated into guidelines that improve the quality of forensic interviews of children.
Method—We review studies designed to evaluate children’s capacities as witnesses, explain the development of the structured NICHD Investigative Interview Protocol, and discuss studies designed to assess whether use of the Protocol enhances the quality of investigative interviews.
Results—Controlled studies have repeatedly shown that the quality of interviewing reliably and dramatically improves when interviewers employ the NICHD Protocol. No other technique has been proven to be similarly effective.
Conclusions—Use of the structured NICHD Protocol improves the quality of information obtained from alleged victims by investigators, thereby increasing the likelihood that interventions will be appropriate.

Adult-child interaction: reliability of data

- **Program Components**

The NICHD protocol trains interviewers to use open-ended prompts and guides them through the phases of the investigative interview to increase the amount of information elicited from children's free recall memory. Based on evidence that free recall memory and prompts are likely to elicit accurate information, whereas prompts that depend on recognition processes are associated with more erroneous responses

- The protocol has three phases: introductory, rapport building, and substantive or free recall.
- **Introductory phase**, the interviewer introduces him/herself, explains the child's task (including the need to describe events in detail and tell the truth), and explains the ground rules and expectations (i.e., that the child can and should say "I don't remember," "I don't know," "I don't understand," or correct the interviewer when necessary).
- **Rapport-building phase**: designed to create a relaxed, supportive environment for children and to establish rapport between the interviewer and child. The interviewer may ask the child to talk about events unrelated to the suspected abuse to encourage him or her to be comfortable leading the conversation. This step was designed to familiarize children with the open-ended investigative strategies and techniques that will be used during the next phase of the interview, while demonstrating the specific level of detail expected of them.
- During the transition between the pre-substantive and **substantive phases** of the interview, a series of non-suggestive prompts are used to identify the incident under investigation.
- If the child makes an allegation, the substantive or free recall phase begins with an invitation, such as "Tell me everything that happened from the beginning to the end as best as you can remember," followed by other free-recall prompts, such as "Then what happened?" As soon as the narrative is complete, the interviewer prompts the child with cued invitations based on the child's response in order to obtain incident-specific information. E.g., the interviewer might say, "Earlier you mentioned a [person/object/action]. Tell me everything you can about that."
- The interviewer may reference details mentioned by the child to elicit uncontaminated free recall accounts of the alleged incident. Only after exhaustive open-ended questioning should interviewers begin to ask more direct questions, such as "Where were you when that happened?" If important details are still missing at the end of the interview, interviewers may ask limited option-posing questions (such as yes/no and forced-choice questions).
- Throughout the phases of the interview, **suggestive** utterances that may communicate to the child which response is expected are strongly discouraged. Following initial disclosure, interviewers use a scripted prompt to obtain an indication of the number of incidents experienced by the child (i.e., "one" or "more than one"). From that point on, interviewers are only given general guidance regarding the types of utterances to employ, undesirable practices to avoid, and appropriate open-ended free recall and cued recall prompts to use, without having to follow an inflexible script

Adult-child interaction: do no harm

Interaction

- Inappropriate – what does this mean?
- Talk about the child when they are in ear shot
- Pretend to know things that you do not
- Keep secrets
- Cause fear/concern

Data-related

- Presume a debriefing is not required
- Guess the child's answer
- Provide the answer for the child and look for confirmation

Adult-child interaction: do no harm

What are the things you should do?

- Working with children check
- Criminal records check
- Child protection training
- Be a positive role model
 - E.g. don't let the child see you smoking outside the office
 - Manage your own emotions and behaviour
- Practice!
 - Volunteer
 - Babysit
 - Role play

Adult-child interaction

