



PROGRAMS

THAT WORK

Evidence-based Child Forensic Interviewing

The Developmental Narrative Elaboration Interview

INTERVIEWER GUIDE

KAREN J. SAYWITZ

LORINDA B. CAMPARO

OXFORD



Evidence-based Child Forensic Interviewing

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

David H. Barlow, PhD

SCIENTIFIC

ADVISORY BOARD

Anne Marie Albano, PhD

Gillian Butler, PhD

David M. Clark, PhD

Edna B. Foa, PhD

Paul J. Frick, PhD

Jack M. Gorman, MD

Kirk Heilbrun, PhD

Robert J. McMahon, PhD

Peter E. Nathan, PhD

Christine Maguth Nezu, PhD

Matthew K. Nock, PhD

Paul Salkovskis, PhD

Bonnie Spring, PhD

Gail Steketee, PhD

John R. Weisz, PhD

G. Terence Wilson, PhD



Programs

*That Work*TM

Evidence-based Child Forensic Interviewing

THE DEVELOPMENTAL NARRATIVE
ELABORATION INTERVIEW

Interviewer Guide

Karen J. Saywitz • Lorinda B. Camparo

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide.

Oxford New York

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press in the UK
and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by
Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

© Oxford University Press 2014

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a
retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior
permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law,
by license, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reproduction rights organization.
Inquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be sent to the
Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above.

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Saywitz, Karen Jill.

Evidence-based child forensic interviewing : the developmental narrative
elaboration interview / Karen J. Saywitz, Lorinda B. Camparo.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-19-973089-6

1. Interviewing in law enforcement. 2. Child witnesses. I. Camparo, Lorinda B. II. Title.

HV8073.3.S29 2014

363.25'4083—dc23

2013022450

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

Stunning developments in health care have taken place over the last several years, but many of our widely accepted interventions and strategies in mental health and behavioral medicine have been brought into question by research evidence as not only lacking benefit, but perhaps, even inducing harm. Other strategies have been proven effective using the best current standards of evidence, resulting in broad-based recommendations to make these practices more available to the public.

Several recent developments are behind this revolution. First, we have arrived at a much deeper understanding of pathology, both psychological and physical, which has led to the development of new, more precisely targeted interventions. Second, our research methodologies have improved substantially, such that we have reduced threats to internal and external validity, making the outcomes more directly applicable to clinical situations. Third, governments around the world and health care systems and policymakers have decided that the quality of care should improve, that it should be evidence-based, and that it is in the public's interest to ensure that this happens (Barlow, 2004; Institute of Medicine, 2001).

Of course, the major stumbling block for clinicians everywhere is the accessibility of newly developed evidence-based psychological interventions. Workshops and books can go only so far in acquainting responsible and conscientious practitioners with the latest behavioral health care practices and their applicability to individual patients. This new series, *Programs ThatWork*™, is devoted to communicating these exciting new interventions to clinicians on the front lines of practice.

The manuals and workbooks in this series contain step-by-step detailed procedures for assessing and treating specific problems and diagnoses.

But this series also goes beyond the books and manuals by providing ancillary materials that will approximate the supervisory process in assisting practitioners in the implementation of these procedures in their practice.

In our emerging health care system, the growing consensus is that following evidence-based practice procedures is the most responsible course of action for the mental health professional. All behavioral health care clinicians deeply desire to provide the best possible care for their patients. In this series, our aim is to close the dissemination and information gap and make that possible.

This guide addresses the discrepancy between the requirements of forensic interviews and the abilities of young children to perform well when faced with this situation. Young children are frequently called upon to communicate needed forensic information, but this requires myriad developmental skills they have not yet mastered. Their brains are still developing abilities in language, comprehension, memory recall, resistance to suggestion, and emotional maturity, and without accommodations to their individual level of development, interviews can produce false reports, stress, frustration (for child and interviewer), and miscommunication.

The Developmental Narrative Elaboration (DNE) Interview, created by Drs. Karen J. Saywitz and Lorinda B. Camparo and outlined in this guide, offers an evidence-based interview template and set of techniques for professionals in mental health, social service, law enforcement, and law, designed to help children ages four to 12 reliably tell as much as they can about their experiences and perceptions. This semi-structured process respects legal requirements as well as social science; it is based on child development research, child forensic interviewing research, and Saywitz and Camparo's own tested strategies for improving children's recall and communication of forensically relevant information. Divided into three main phases, the DNE helps the interviewer guide children to understand the unfamiliar context, teaches the Narrative Elaboration Strategy, and provides unbiased recall cues and tips to help enhance the child's memory and reduce potential miscommunication and suggestibility.

This empirically supported guide is a much-needed resource that will be invaluable to professionals who conduct forensic interviews with children and want to get the most accurate information while minimizing children's stress, accommodating their developmental limitations, and maximizing their strengths and abilities.

David H. Barlow, Editor-in-Chief
Programs *That Work*™
Boston, Massachusetts

References

- Barlow, D. H. (2004). Psychological treatments. *American Psychologist*, 59, 869–878.
- Institute of Medicine. (2001). *Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the Twenty-first Century*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

Acknowledgments *xi*

Chapter 1 Introductory Information for Interviewers *1*

Chapter 2 Evidence Base for the Developmental Narrative
Elaboration Interview *24*

Phase I Preliminary Phase

Chapter 3 Before the Interview: Setting Up the Interview
Context *51*

Chapter 4 Beginning the Interview: Introductions, Creating a
Template, and Developing Rapport *61*

Chapter 5 Demystifying the Legal Process and the Interview *71*

Chapter 6 Before the Core Interview: Teaching the Narrative
Elaboration Strategy *78*

Chapter 7 Before the Core Interview: Optional Methods for
Improving Communication and Resisting Suggestion *88*

Phase II Using the Developmental Narrative Elaboration Interview to Elicit Children's Statements

Chapter 8 The Core Developmental Narrative Elaboration
Interview *99*

Chapter 9 Exploring the Details in Allegations of Abuse and
Neglect *130*

Phase III Closure

Chapter 10 Closing the Interview *147*

Appendices

Appendix A: Reminder Cards for Elementary School-Aged Children	165
Appendix B: Reminder Cards for Preschoolers	167
Appendix C: Sample Transcript of Child Learning to Use the Reminder Cards	169
Appendix D: Sample Transcript of Additional Practice Task	171
Appendix E: Thinking Cards for Resisting Suggestive Questions	173
Notes	175
References	179
About the Authors	191

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank their many colleagues who have contributed to the development of the Developmental Narrative Elaboration Interview. We especially want to thank our research collaborators: Lynn Snyder, Rebecca Nathanson, Joyce Dorado, Susan Moan-Hardie, Vivian Lamphear, and Carol Jaenicke. We would like thank Deirdre Brown and Carole Peterson for their research on narrative elaboration and for their comments on a draft of this book. Appreciation is also extended to our mentors, Shari Diamond and Milton Miller, without whom this work would not have been possible, and our families, Richard, Sarah, Anna, James, Robyn, and Stayce.

This page intentionally left blank



Evidence-based Child Forensic Interviewing

This page intentionally left blank

Background Information and Purpose of This Program

This book describes the Developmental Narrative Elaboration (DNE) interview. The DNE is a step-by-step process for interviewing children in a forensic context that respects both legal requirements and social science research. It is an evidence-based approach derived from three sources of data: (a) the long-standing research literature on child development; (b) contemporary research on child interviewing; and (c) studies of our own innovative strategies for improving children's recall and communication of forensically relevant information. The DNE is comprised of a core template for interviewing children as well as a set of individual evidence-based techniques that can be embedded into the core template at the interviewer's discretion as cases unfold. In addition, the DNE incorporates best-practice principles derived from an emerging consensus among professional organizations in the field. (See Saywitz & Camparo, 2009; and Saywitz, Lyon, & Goodman, 2011, for further discussion.)

The DNE interview is designed to elicit reliable information from children in a wide array of contexts where the results of the interview will serve as input for legal and social-service decision making. Settings run the gamut, from social workers and police officers in the field making decisions about child protection and adult culpability; to private-practice clinicians in their offices evaluating suspicions of child maltreatment; to attorneys involved in dependency, family, civil, or criminal court cases. The DNE is a cross-disciplinary approach intended to serve the needs of professionals in mental health, social service, law enforcement, and the legal system.

The DNE was designed to address a problem all interviewers face—an inherent mismatch between the demands of the forensic context and the capabilities of young children. Forensic interviews differ from traditional clinical interviews and from everyday conversation (see Saywitz, Esplin, & Romanoff, 2007, for further discussion). They require a host of abilities and skills that children may not yet have mastered, as these skills develop gradually as children's brains mature and they gain experience in the world around them. At a minimum, the forensic interview demands that children translate their memories and perceptions into verbal responses within a question-and-answer format, often in an unfamiliar setting. Frequently, high levels of attention, language production, comprehension, knowledge, reasoning, memory retrieval, resistance to suggestion, perspective-taking, and emotional maturity are required. Without accommodations to the child's developmental level, the demands of the forensic interview can outstrip a child's abilities, leading to miscommunication, misinterpretation, false reports, and unnecessary stress on both children and interviewers.

To close the gap, the DNE provides the scaffolding, structure, and guidance children often need to perform optimally; that is, at a more advanced level than their developmental limitations normally allow.¹ This is accomplished by a template that lowers task demands to a child's developmental level and by a set of evidence-based memory and communication strategies that improve children's performance. The DNE furnishes children with the knowledge necessary to understand the unfamiliar forensic context and task demands, provides unbiased retrieval cues to help children organize their memory search, and utilizes optional instructions and preparation to enhance memory and reduce potential for miscommunication and suggestibility.

What Is the Developmental Narrative Elaboration Interview?

The DNE is a semi-structured interview procedure designed for children four to 12 years of age.² The goal is to help children to tell as much as they can about their experiences and perceptions to the best of their ability and in their own words, without tainting their reports. It consists of three principal phases.

Phase I

Phase I is a preliminary phase that includes introductions, rapport development, and explanations to increase children's awareness of how the forensic interview differs from everyday conversation, plus optional strategies for enhancing memory reports, improving comprehension of follow-up questions, and reducing suggestion.

Phase II

Phase II involves eliciting children's statements; we refer to this stage as the Core Interview. It comprises three steps: Free Recall, Cued Elaboration, and Short Answer Follow-up Questions. Each step lays a foundation for the step that follows and builds on the step that precedes it.

Free Recall

In the first step, interviewers create an opportunity for children to give a spontaneous or minimally prompted narrative of a potentially forensically relevant incident(s) (e.g., "What happened?"), followed by one or two simple, open-ended prompts (e.g., "Tell me more" or "What happened next?").

Cued Elaboration

In the second step, interviewers provide a unique opportunity for further elaboration by helping children structure their memory search with generic, non-suggestive verbal or visual cues. (The visual cues are simple line drawings that can be photocopied from Appendices A and B and cut into individual cards.) These verbal and visual cues prompt children to provide additional detail in their own words about four empirically-derived categories of information: (a) participants, (b) locations, (c) actions, and (d) the conversations and affective states of participants. This process provides interviewers with a larger data set of information from which to craft better-informed, and potentially less-biased, follow-up questions for the third step.

Short Answer Follow-up Questions

In the third step, interviewers employ specific follow-up questions to double back and explore any important, vague, and inconsistent information mentioned by the child in order to elicit further elaboration, clarification, and explanation. These questions are formulated according to evidence-based guidelines for generating developmentally appropriate and non-leading questions.

Phase III

Finally, Phase III is a time for closure. It consists of guidelines for closing the interview to address children's questions and educate them about next steps, to help children regain their composure if upset, and to identify potential stressors and generate anticipatory coping strategies. Table 1.1 provides an overview of the interview process. Each phase is presented in detail in the remaining chapters of this book.

Table 1.1 Overview Checklist of DNE Interview

Phase I: Preliminary Phase

- **Setting:** Create a physical and psycho-social setting to facilitate, not undermine, the child's motivation, cooperation, and effort.
 - Create a private, safe, child-friendly, warm, non-judgmental atmosphere.
 - Outline the mechanics of what will happen during the interview.
 - Use introductions to place the interview in context. Explain interview objectives, your role, and the child's role.
 - Demystify the legal process. Educate the child about the information-gathering and decision-making process in a developmentally appropriate fashion.
- **Rapport:** Take time to develop rapport and create a conversational template for the interview to follow.
 - Consider suggested activities for breaking the ice and developing rapport.

continued

Table 1.1 Overview Checklist of DNE Interview *continued*

- Using open-ended questions that require multi-word responses, model a style of discourse that demonstrates the child is expected to tell as much as possible in his own words, with minimal prompting.
- If met with ambivalence, silence, or reluctance, consider suggested activities for understanding and working around a child's reasons for reticence.
- **Optional Strategies:** Teach optional strategies for improving memory and communication.
 - Teach narrative elaboration strategy with reminder cards. (*optional*)
 - Teach strategies for improving communication. (*optional*)
 - Teach strategies for resisting suggestive questions. (*optional*)
- **Interview Pointers:** Provide pointers as deemed necessary from toolkit of options.
 - Select from a list of explanations designed to increase children's awareness of how the forensic interview differs from everyday conversation.

Phase II: Eliciting Children's Statements with the Core Interview

- **Step One—Free Recall:** Provide an opportunity for minimally prompted or spontaneous descriptions of a forensically relevant event(s). Follow with simple open-ended prompts for elaboration.
- **Step Two—Cued Elaboration:** Provide an additional opportunity for elaboration on the Participants, Setting, Actions, Conversation, and Affective States with either visual or verbal DNE category cues.
- **Step Three—Follow-up Questions:**
 - Use short-answer questions that require multi-word responses to return to important information for further elaboration, clarification, and explanation.
 - When questions requiring one-word answers are necessary, follow up with requests to elaborate or explain so you are certain a child's response means what you think it means.
 - Follow guidelines to formulate non-leading and developmentally sensitive questions.
- Continuously evaluate when to proceed and when to terminate.
- Consider the merits of introducing the topic of interest by referring to verifiable information from outside sources.

Phase III: Closure

- Take time for closure. Review key points. Give children a chance to ask questions.
 - Educate the child about next steps and dispel fears when possible.
 - Identify anticipated problems and plan positive strategies for coping as needed.
 - Check for safety issues and make referrals as needed.
-

How Does the DNE Address the Interviewer's Dilemma?

In the sections that follow, we highlight immaturities that the DNE is designed to address in children's memory, communicative competence, resistance to suggestion, cognition, and social skills.

Addressing Limitations on Children's Memory Reports

Children are able to recall a remarkable amount of information about past autobiographical events, especially highly salient, unique, emotionally engaging, and meaningful events (Bauer, 2007; Nelson & Fivush, 2004), and these are exactly the types of events most likely to be relevant in the forensic context. However, the completeness and accuracy of young children's recall is highly dependent on the way children are questioned (Larsson & Lamb, 2009). The information children report in response to *free recall* tasks where they generate the answer from their own memory (e.g., responses to "What happened?") is generally accurate but incomplete. Often, information is elicited piecemeal by adult questions that drive the organization of the material and guide the memory search.

It would not be uncommon for a five-year-old who is asked, "What did you do after school today?" to respond with "We played." Further details would require additional questions from the adult, for example:

ADULT: "Who did you play with?"

CHILD: "Mary and Bob";

ADULT: "What did you do?"

CHILD: "Play on the swings";

ADULT: "Where did you do that?"

CHILD: "At the playground";

ADULT: "Which playground?"

CHILD: "The one in the park."

Hence, young children's spontaneous and independent free recall of past events (e.g., "We played") is often skeletal and insufficient for forensic