Tell Me What Happened

Structured Investigative Interviews of Child Victims and Witnesses

Michael E. Lamb, Irit Hershkowitz,
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WILEY

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Tell Me What Happened

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About the Authors

Michael E. Lamb headed the Section on Social and Emotional Development at the US National Institute of Child Health and Human Development before becoming Professor of Psychology at the University of Cambridge. He received his PhD from Yale University, honorary degrees from the Universities of Goteborg and East Anglia, and the James McKeen Cattell Award from the Association for Psychological Science for Lifetime Contributions to Applied Psychological Research. He has authored or edited more than 40 books, including *Investigative Interviews of Children* and *Child Sexual Abuse: Disclosure, delay, and denial*, as well as about 500 professional publications.

Irit Hershkowitz is a senior lecturer and researcher in the School of Social Work at the University of Haifa, Israel from which she received her PhD before accepting a post-doctoral fellowship at the US National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. She was involved there in development of the Protocol described in this book before returning to the University. Her research has been focused on children's responses to various investigative strategies, on the value of training for child investigators, on the discrimination of plausible from implausible allegations by children, and on the development of techniques for interviewing reluctant witnesses and those with special needs.

Yael Orbach is an Adjunct Scientist at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and a Senior Researcher at the Children's Studies Program and Center, Brooklyn College, The City University of New York. A Fellow of the Association for Psychological Science, Dr Orbach received her PhD from the University of Natal and has focused her research on the application of cognitive and developmental psychological research to criminal investigations involving children. She was on the team that developed the protocol described in this book, has published many professional articles on forensic interviewing of

children, and was co-editor of *Child Sexual Abuse: Disclosure, delay, and denial* (2007). Among other current studies, Dr Orbach is conducting research funded by the US National Institute of Justice focusing on the extent to which best practice interviews with child abuse victims influence case outcomes in the justice system.

Phillip W. Esplin is a licensed psychologist in the State of Arizona who has been in private practice, specialising in forensic psychology, since receiving his Ed D from the Northern Arizona University. For six years, he headed a project for the US Bureau of Indian Affairs focusing on evaluation and placement in Special Education, and was a Senior Research Consultant to the Child Witness Project at the US National Institute of Child Health and Human Development from 1989 to 2006. He has conducted numerous national and international training seminars of proper interview/investigative techniques in child molestation cases, consulted and/or testified in a number of major sexual abuse cases in the 1990s, and co-authored many of the articles cited in this book.

Series Preface

The Wiley Series in the Psychology of Crime, Policing and Law publishes both single and multi-authored monographs and edited reviews of emerging areas of contemporary research. The purpose of this series is not merely to present research findings in a clear and readable form, but also to bring out their implications for both practice and policy. Books in this series are useful not only to psychologists, but also to all those involved in crime detection and prevention, child protection, policing and judicial processes.

One of the significant areas of concern within contemporary forensic psychology has been the status of child witnesses. Until recently, psychology and the law have tended to neglect the problems that children face in first disclosing information concerning physical or sexual abuse and later giving their evidence in court. These problems are at their most acute within the adversarial system of justice as practiced in the United Kingdom, the USA and many Commonwealth countries, where evidence is collected and assessed through the process of cross-examination: a robust test as much of the witnesses as of the quality of their evidence which traditionally makes few concessions to vulnerability. Earlier volumes in this series (Dent & Flin, 1992; Westcott, Davies, & Bull, 2002) have described research which has led to changes in law and legal procedures in many countries, designed to facilitate the gaining and giving of evidence by children, and this in turn, has increased the numbers of such cases coming before the courts. In many instances, this has ensured that adult defendants who would have otherwise escaped conviction for crimes against children receive the proper sentence of the court. As with all areas of evidence, however, there are also instances where children's evidence has led to demonstrable miscarriages of justice or where doubt continues to surround guilty verdicts. In this latest contribution to the series, Lamb, Hershkowitz, Orbach, and Esplin argue that the source of error in many such cases lies in poor investigative interviewing practices, which have induced in children a

belief that events have been experienced or observed when they have not.

Lamb *et al.* report the results of analyses of the content of actual forensic interviews conducted by police forces and social workers across three continents which illustrate a general tendency for investigators to use few open-ended questions, but lots of closed and specific questions. They argue that the overuse of the latter style of questions encourages interviewers to follow their own hypotheses and look to the children to confirm their preconceptions, which the children then take over as their own memories of the event. Greater use of open-ended questions, they argue, would allow children more opportunity to express their own version of events while providing the kind of detail which will enable the courts to reach safer verdicts.

The book describes a new type of interviewing procedure developed by Michael Lamb, the late Kathleen Sternberg, and others at the National Institute for Child Health and Development in the USA. As Lamb *et al.* emphasise, the NICHD Protocol builds on extensive recent knowledge of children's cognitive and social development. It embodies as a central feature an emphasis upon open-ended questioning and rigorous training in its use: continually framing questions in an open-ended way is a technique alien to most everyday discourse between children and adults that needs to be laboriously learned, practiced and maintained. Long-term collaborations with researchers and practitioners in four different countries have allowed Michael Lamb, Irit Hershkowitz, Yael Orbach, and Phillip Esplin to accumulate a large amount of information concerning the superior effectiveness of the NICHD Protocol relative to other widely used interviewing strategies in eliciting extended narratives from children, including the very young and those with learning and communicative difficulties, groups who have traditionally been thought to be developmentally incapable of such demands. The new Protocol promises to produce informationally-rich transcripts, of great value to the courts in their difficult task of discriminating between children's true and valid accounts of abuse and the minority of false, often sincerely held, beliefs.

As the authors emphasise, the endorsement of open-ended questioning is not new and the potential value of such procedures is widely appreciated among professional investigators. The problem has always been implementation of this principle in practice, which requires considerable attention to training and maintaining appropriate interview practices through continuous monitoring and feedback. As I have emphasised elsewhere, there is no agreed investigator training programme in England and Wales covering all police forces, no external validation of training and no system for accrediting and monitoring the

performance of interviewers after training. The position in other coun-
tries appears to be no better and frequently much worse (Davies,
Marshall, & Robertson, 1998). This book underlines the importance of
a rigorous and systematic training regime in implementing and main-
taining effective interviewing practices.

Following a prolonged period at NICHD in the USA, Professor Lamb
has returned to the United Kingdom to head the Department of So-
cial and Developmental Psychology and the Faculty of Social and Po-
litical Sciences at Cambridge University. In addition to his work on
children's interview protocols, he continues to publish widely on other
policy-related family issues, including the impact of day care, the role
of fathers in children's development and the impact of early schooling
on children's social and emotional development. Given his engagement
with societal issues, this book will be of value not just to researchers,
practitioners, judges, and lawyers, who are involved in child protection
and deal daily with children's testimony for the courts, but also to all
those who are interested in the application of psychological theory to
contemporary social problems.

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Acknowledgements

Interviewing Children About Abuse: An Overview and Introduction

Kempe and his colleagues (1962) helped launch scholarly interest in child abuse with their landmark paper nearly 50 years ago. In succeeding years, professional (and popular) interest shifted from physical to sexual abuse, largely in response to dramatic increases in the numbers of reported cases, and awareness that many instances of abuse might go unrecognised because the victims, who were the only possible sources of information, seldom gave much information to investigators. As a result, researchers made considerable efforts to understand how children's testimony can be made as useful and reliable as possible. Since 1990, furthermore, highly publicised cases in the United States (California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Florida), Norway (Bergen), New Zealand (Christchurch), the UK (Cleveland and Newcastle), and Italy (Rignano Flaminio), among others, have drawn attention to the counterproductive ways in which alleged victims of sexual abuse are sometimes interviewed. In many such cases, inappropriate interview techniques appear to have compromised and contaminated the children's testimony, rendering it flawed and unreliable (Bruck, 1999; Ceci & Bruck, 1995). As explained in this introductory chapter, therefore, the book is designed to: 1) summarise the extant research on children's memory, communicative skills, and social tendencies; 2) describe the ways in which that research has been incorporated into a specific structured interview technique; and 3) review research involving more than 40 000 alleged victims documenting the

usefulness of that technique. As we explain in some detail, forensic interviews with children can be invaluable sources of information, but they should always be recognised as parts of the forensic investigation, not seen as synonomous with the investigation as a whole.

THE BACKGROUND: INTERVIEWING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Prompted in part by widespread publicity about the infamous cases just mentioned, research on children's capacities to provide reliable and valid information about their past experiences burgeoned in the last two decades, with many other researchers paying special attention to children's suggestibility (see reviews in the last decade by Jones, 2003; Lamb, Orbach, Warren, Esplin, & Hershkowitz, 2007; Memon & Bull, 1999; Pipe, Lamb, Orbach, & Esplin, 2004; Poole & Lamb, 1998). Initially, most researchers conducted controlled studies in the laboratory, but the ecological validity of these studies was often questioned (Doris, 1991; Lamb & Thierry, 2005) so interest in field research was stimulated too. Later studies conducted in both field and laboratory circumstances focused more narrowly on issues of particular relevance to forensic application and helped generate a remarkable consensus about children's limitations *and* competencies.

In brief, the research reviewed at greater length later in this book showed that, although children clearly *can* remember incidents they have experienced, the relationship between age and memory is complex, with a variety of factors influencing the quality of information provided. For our present purposes, perhaps the most important of these factors pertain to the interviewers' ability to *elicit* information and the child's willingness and ability to *express* it, rather than the child's ability to *remember* it. Like adults, children *can be* informative witnesses, and a variety of professional groups and experts have recognised this, offering recommendations regarding the most effective ways of conducting forensic or investigative interviews with children (e.g., American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC), 1990, 1997; Jones, 2003; Lamb, 1994; Lamb, Sternberg, & Esplin, 1998; Home Office, 1992, 2002; Orbach, Hershkowitz, Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin, & Horowitz, 2000; Poole & Lamb, 1998; Sattler, 1998; Warren & McGough, 1996). As Poole and Lamb (1998) pointed out, these books and articles reveal a substantial degree of consensus regarding the ways in which investigative interviews should be conducted, and a remarkable convergence with the conclusions suggested by a close review of the experimental and empirical literature. Clearly, it *is* often possible to

obtain valuable information from children, but doing so requires careful investigative procedures as well as a realistic awareness of their capacities and tendencies. Specifically, accounts elicited using open ended questions ("Tell me what happened") that tap recall rather than recognition memory are typically more accurate, regardless of the children's ages. The completeness of these initially brief accounts can be increased when interviewers use the information provided by children in their first spontaneous utterance as prompts for further elaboration (e.g., "You said the man touched you, tell me more about that touching") (Lamb *et al.*, 2003). Unfortunately, however, forensic interviewers frequently ask very specific questions ("Did he touch you?") that draw upon recognition rather than recall memory. Such questions typically elicit less accurate responses than open-ended prompts and may even cause erroneous information to be incorporated into children's testimony. What we have learned about children's memories and reporting capacities, as well as the implications for forensic interviewers, are the focus of the next chapter.

Unfortunately, the research-based and expert-endorsed recommendations are widely proclaimed but seldom followed. As discussed more fully in Chapter 3, descriptive studies of forensic interviews in various parts of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Israel consistently show that forensic interviewers use open-ended prompts quite rarely, even though such prompts reliably elicit more information than more focused prompts do and are universally recommended as the preferred means of eliciting information from young children (and, indeed, adults, too). To the distress of trainers, interviewers, and administrators, furthermore, such deviations from "best practice" were evident even when the interviewers had been trained extensively, were well-aware of the recommended practices, and often believed that they were adhering to those recommendations! Both intensive and brief training programmes for investigative interviewers appear to impart knowledge about desirable practices but have little if any effect on the actual behaviour of forensic investigators.

Because forensic interviewers often have difficulty adhering to recommended interview practices in the field, the authors and their colleagues developed a structured interview Protocol designed to translate professional recommendations into operational guidelines that were first published as an appendix to a report by Orbach and her colleagues (2000). The structured Protocol featured in this book guides interviewers by illustrating techniques designed to maximise the amount and quality of information elicited from alleged victims. As detailed in Chapter 4, the NICHD Protocol (named after the research institute where most of the developers worked and from which they received financial support for

their work) covers all phases of the investigative interview. In the introductory phase of the interview, the interviewer introduces him/herself, clarifies the child's task (the need to tell the truth and describe events in detail), 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 appropriate). In many jurisdictions, law enforcement agencies requested the inclusion of several questions designed to establish that children understood the difference between true and false statements.

The rapport-building phase that follows the introductory phase comprises two sections. The first is designed to create a relaxed, supportive environment for children and to establish rapport between children and interviewers. In the second section, children are prompted to describe a recently experienced neutral event in detail. This "training" is designed to familiarise children with the open-ended investigative strategies and techniques used in the substantive phase while demonstrating the specific level of detail expected of them.

In a transitional part between the pre-substantive and the substantive phases of the interview, a series of prompts are used to identify the target event/s under investigation non-suggestively and with prompts that are as open as possible. The interviewer only moves on to some carefully worded and increasingly focused prompts (in sequence) if the child fails to identify the target event/s.

If the child makes an allegation, the free recall phase begins with an invitation ("Tell me everything.") and other free-recall prompts or invitations are recommended. As soon as the first narrative is completed, the interviewer prompts the child to indicate whether the incident occurred "one time or more than one time" and then proceeds to secure incident-specific information using follow up ("Then what happened.") and cued invitations (e.g., "Earlier you mentioned a [person/object/action]. Tell me everything about that") making reference to details mentioned by the child to elicit uncontaminated free-recall accounts of the alleged incident/s.

Only after exhaustive free-recall prompting do interviewers proceed to directive questions (focused recall questions that address details previously mentioned by the child and request information within specific categories (e.g., time, appearance) such as "When did it happen?" or "What colour was that [mentioned] car?" If crucial details are still missing, interviewers then ask limited option-posing questions (mostly yes/no or choice questions referencing new issues that the child failed to address previously). Suggestive utterances, which communicate to the child what response is expected, are strongly discouraged.

EVALUATING THE STRUCTURED PROTOCOL

When we developed the structured Protocol, we expected that its implementation would improve the organisation and quality of interviews with children of all ages so that interviewers using the Protocol would use more open-ended utterances and fewer option-posing and suggestive utterances and would postpone option-posing questions until later stages of the interview. Because children interviewed using the Protocol practiced responding to open-ended questions in the pre-substantive phase of the interview, furthermore, we predicted that they would provide absolutely and proportionally more details in response to the first free-recall open-ended substantive prompt and more details per open-ended utterances than children interviewed by investigators not guided by the Protocol. Because interviewers using the Protocol should offer more open-ended prompts, we also predicted that children interviewed in that way would provide absolutely and proportionally more details about the alleged abuse in response to the open-ended questions and fewer in response to option-posing and suggestive questions than children in comparison groups would.

As discussed in Chapter 5, independent field studies in four different countries (Orbach, Hershkowitz, Lamb, Sternberg, & Esplin *et al.*, 2000; Sternberg, Lamb, Orbach, Esplin, & Mitchell, 2001; Cyr, Lamb, Pelletier, Leduc, & Perron, 2006; Lamb, Sternberg, *et al.*, 2006) demonstrate convincingly that when forensic investigators employ recommended interview procedures by following the structured Protocol, they enhance the quality of information elicited from alleged victims. Interviewers employing the Protocol use at least three times more open-ended and approximately half as many option-posing and suggestive prompts as they do when exploring comparable incidents, involving children of the same age, without the Protocol. In each study, about half of the informative and forensically relevant details and more than 80% of the initial disclosures of sexual abuse were provided by preschoolers in response to free-recall prompts. Such findings suggest that the likely accuracy of information provided by alleged victims is enhanced when interviewers use free-recall prompts exhaustively before turning to more focused prompts. These findings also indicate that cued-invitations should be exhausted before 'wh' prompts are introduced because cued-invitations are input-free and thus foster retrieval of free-recall information without limiting responses to investigator-specified categories. Non-suggestive yes/no and choice questions, in which interviewers by definition introduce information, should be used only if essential information is still missing after free-recall and directive prompts have been exhausted, because these riskier alternatives are

more likely to elicit inaccurate information and their introduction may contaminate subsequent information. When priority was given to open-ended strategies and techniques, there were also significant increases in the number of facilitators and other supportive comments addressed to child witnesses (Hershkowitz, Orbach, Lamb, Sternberg, & Horowitz, 2006); this further enhanced the recall and reporting of information by encouraging children to be more cooperative.

Interviewers using the Protocol also introduce option-posing and suggestive questions later in the interview process than do peers not using the Protocol. Because option-posing and suggestive questions by definition involve the introduction of information by the investigator, they have the potential to contaminate later phases of the child's report, especially when younger children are involved and thus their delayed utilisation is forensically important. Clearly, forensic interviewers should provide children with opportunities to recall information in response to open-ended prompts before assuming that more risky interview techniques are needed. We have also shown that versions of the Protocol can be used when interviewing witnesses who are not also victims (Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Hershkowitz, & Horowitz, 2003) as well as youthful suspects (Hershkowitz, Horowitz, Lamb, Orbach, & Sternberg, 2004). These developments are also discussed in Chapter 5.

The Cognitive Interview (Fisher, Brennan, & McCauley, 2002), which has also been popular, especially in the United Kingdom, draws on many of the same cognitive principles as the NICHD Protocol, and it has been shown to help interviewers elicit more detailed and accurate information from children about staged events than 'standard' interview procedures do (Kohnken, Milne, Memon, & Bull, 1999). Although the Cognitive Interview has not been evaluated systematically in the field, some components, like Mental Context Reinstatement, have been shown to enhance the effectiveness of the Protocol (Hershkowitz, Orbach, Lamb, Sternberg, & Horowitz, 2001), and it is possible that other components might be similarly useful.

IS THE PROTOCOL SUITABLE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN?

Clearly, as discussed more fully in Chapter 6, there *are* important differences between the autobiographical memory retrieval strategies and capacities of preschoolers and those of older children (Schneider & Bjorklund, 1998). Younger children tend to remember less information and to provide briefer accounts of their experiences than older

children do. In addition, young children are more likely than older children both to respond erroneously to suggestive questions about their experiences and to select erroneous options when responding to forced-choice questions. On the other hand, although young children tend to remember less information and provide briefer accounts of their experiences than older children do, their reports are no less accurate. Despite this, some practitioners (e.g., Bourg, Broderick, Flagor, Kelly, Ervin, & Butler, 1999; Hewitt, 1999; Lyon, 1999; Saywitz & Goodman, 1996) have claimed that open-ended questions usually fail to elicit forensically valuable information from young children, especially preschoolers, even though the inadequacies and capacities of preschoolers had not been examined closely in forensic contexts.

We expected that older children would provide more details than younger children, but that use of the Protocol would increase the amount of information retrieved by recall from all alleged victims, including the youngest children. Indeed, because interviewers guided by the Protocol should use more open-ended prompts regardless of the children's ages, we predicted that use of the Protocol would especially enhance the performance of the younger children, ensuring smaller differences between preschoolers and older children than would otherwise be the case.

As expected (see Chapter 6), Lamb *et al.* (2003), found that children as young as four years of age *can* indeed provide substantial amounts of forensically important information about alleged abuse in response to free-recall prompts. On average, almost one-half of the information provided by the children came in response to free-recall prompts, regardless of age. Older children reported more details in total and in their average responses to invitations than the younger children did, but the proportion of details elicited using free-recall prompts did not increase with age. Moreover, our study showed that very young children are capable of providing most of the information (e.g., time, location, participants) needed by forensic investigators in response to free-recall prompts, thereby reducing reliance on the more risky (potentially contaminating) yes/no and forced-choice questions. Cued invitations, particularly those that remind children of actions they have previously mentioned, constitute effective ways of triggering the recall of information that is more likely to be accurate than information elicited using risky forced-choice and yes/no questions from alleged victims as young as four years of age. Interestingly, action-based cues (e.g., "Tell me more about the touching.") were consistently more effective than all other types of cues, regardless of age.

These compelling findings indicated that forensic interviewers need to provide children of all ages with opportunities to recall information

in response to free-recall prompts before assuming that more risky interview techniques are needed, especially because risky questions are even riskier when addressed to children aged six and under, and thus that forensic investigators need to make special efforts to maximise the amounts of information elicited from 4- to 6-year-olds using less risky, free-recall prompts.

Because use of the Protocol enhances the quality and informativeness of forensic interviews with alleged victims, it should enhance the value and conclusiveness of investigations into suspected incidents of sexual abuse by making it easier for interviewers to judge whether victims are telling the truth (because the children provide more information in a narrative form which is more amenable to credibility assessment) and by helping investigators to elicit more clues that may guide their search for corroborative evidence. These issues are explored more fully in Chapter 7.

One relevant study was designed to explore whether the credibility of children's statements regarding their alleged experiences of child sexual abuse could be assessed in a more valid and reliable way when investigative interviews were conducted using the Protocol rather than in an unstructured manner (Hershkowitz, Fisher, Lamb, & Horowitz, 2007). In many laboratory analogue studies, children are asked to lie about events that are not salient or emotionally meaningful, so the generalisation of findings to the assessment of credibility in forensic contexts is obviously problematic, whether or not efforts are made to include repeated suggestive questions about body contact, or to avoid introducing information not reported by the child. Hershkowitz *et al.* thus examined credible and incredible allegations of sexual abuse provided by children in the course of forensic investigations conducted in Israel by the professional youth investigators who have been required since 1998 to use the Protocol. Half of the interviews studied were conducted before and half were conducted by the same professionals after use of the Protocol became mandatory. The cases were individually matched with respect to the children's ages, the types of allegations, and the strength of the validating evidence.

Forty-two experienced youth investigators each assessed the credibility of allegations of sexual abuse made by alleged victims of sexual abuse when interviewed either with or without the Protocol. Half of the alleged incidents were judged likely to have happened ("plausible") on the basis of independent evidence, while half were deemed unlikely to have happened ("implausible"). Subsequent analyses showed that more non-Protocol than Protocol interviews were rated as "No judgement possible" rather than as either credible or incredible. Allegations made in Protocol interviews were more accurately rated as

credible or incredible when they were either plausible or implausible, respectively, than those made in non-Protocol statements. Levels of inter-rater reliability were also higher when Protocol interviews were rated. Such findings suggested that use of the Protocol facilitated the assessment of credibility by child investigators although incredible allegations (those describing incidents that were unlikely to have happened) remained difficult to detect, even when the Protocol was used. Again, it is important to recognise that forensic interviews are only part of the overall investigation, with information provided by child witnesses providing some of the information needed to understand what might have happened.

INTERVIEWING RELUCTANT AND NON-COMPLIANT WITNESSES

Most of the published research on forensic interviewing has focused on interviews with cooperative alleged victims who were ready to disclose, had often made specific allegations of abuse prior to the formal investigation, and were especially responsive to open-ended prompts. However, there is ample evidence that many victims of abuse report the abuse belatedly, if at all, with many denying or failing to report the abuse even when they are directly asked or formally interviewed. The exact numbers cannot be calculated because an unknown number of victims never disclose their victimisation and because some proportion of those who initially offer denials and later make allegations may be doing so falsely, perhaps in response to repeated suggestive questioning. Debate about the relative sizes of the false positive and false negative groups is intense (London, Bruck, Ceci, & Shuman, 2005; Lyon, 2007), but there is consensus that many abuse victims cannot be protected or helped because they never disclose their experiences or do so belatedly. In one study, Hershkowitz, Horowitz, and Lamb (2005, 2007) examined all suspected cases of physical and sexual abuse investigated in the state of Israel between 1998 and 2002. All investigative interviews were conducted using a single standardised Protocol, the Protocol discussed in this book. Overall, 65% of the 26 446 children made allegations when interviewed, but rates of disclosure were greater in the case of sexual (71%) than physical (61%) abuse. Children of all ages were less likely to disclose or allege abuse when a parent was the suspected perpetrator. Rates of disclosure/allegation increased as children grew older, with 50% of the 3- to 6-year-olds, 67% of the 7- to 10-year-olds, and 74% of the 11- to 14-year-olds disclosing abuse when questioned.

A diverse array of factors, including veiled disclosure to non-professionals (e.g., family members and teachers) or to professionals (e.g., medical doctors, CPS workers or police officers), as well as suspicions that the child was abused, may trigger formal investigative interviews with children who are unwilling to disclose. Unlike cooperative informants, children who are reluctant to disclose may be less responsive to open-ended prompts and may require more guidance and more focused prompts before making allegations of abuse. As a result, those interviewing them face an inevitable tension between the desire to initiate the disclosure of information about what actually happened and the need to avoid contaminating the memories by suggestively implanting information (even prompting false allegations) by using leading and suggestive prompts. Aiming to minimise the amount of information provided by the interviewer, rather than the child, especially during the crucial early stages of the interview, recent work has focused on identifying techniques that might profitably be used when interviewing reluctant witnesses (Chapter 8).

In another study, Pipe, Sternberg and their colleagues (2007) focused on the numbers of children who disclosed abuse when formally interviewed. The younger children were not only less likely than older children to make allegations when formally interviewed, but they were also less likely to do so following a prior disclosure. Of course, the prior disclosures were reported by other people, and the reliability of their second hand reports may be questioned, especially when the reporters were not "disinterested". It appears, however, that if the person to whom the child had reportedly made the prior disclosure was an immediate family member, presumably those most likely to have a strong interest, children were no less (or more) likely to make an allegation in the formal interview.

Although the suspect confessed to the abusive incident(s) in less than a third of all cases, confessions were not always associated with an allegation. Somewhat surprisingly, several of the older children did not make an allegation in the interview, when the suspect's confession had been triggered suspicion in the first place. More detailed examination showed, however, that in these cases the abusive incident(s) had occurred several years earlier, and/or the nature of the abuse was such that the child might not have interpreted it as abuse at the time, as discussed by Cederborg, Lamb, and Laurell (2007). Nonetheless, to the extent that suspect confession is corroborative evidence, we can conclude that there were children in all age groups who had been abused, but did not report the abuse. The reasons for the non-disclosure are many and varied, and likely to differ developmentally, as a function of the nature of the abuse and the circumstances surrounding it.

In the first field study to explore the dynamics of forensic interviews with non-disclosing victims (Hershkowitz, Orbach, Lamb, Sternberg, & Horowitz, 2006; Hershkowitz, Orbach *et al.*, 2007), we compared 50 children who did not disclose abuse in the course of forensic interviews, despite strong evidence that abuse occurred, with 50 children who disclosed abuse. Hershkowitz and her colleagues showed that forensic interviews which yielded allegations of abuse were characterised by quite different dynamics than interviews with children who seemed equivalently likely to have been abused but did not make allegations during the interview. When interviewing non-disclosers, interviewers made less frequent use of free recall prompts and offered fewer supportive comments than when interviewing children who made allegations of abuse. Children who did not disclose abuse were somewhat uncooperative, offered fewer details, and gave more uninformative responses, even at the very beginning of the interview, before the interviewers focused on substantive issues and before the interviewers themselves began to behave differently. These findings suggested that premature focus on substantive issues may prevent children who are not responsive in the episodic memory training phase from disclosing abuse. Identifying reluctant disclosers and making more extensive efforts to build rapport before substantive issues are broached, or interviewing such children in more than one session, may help suspected victims disclose their experiences.

Orbach, Shiloach, and Lamb (2007) also sought to determine whether there is a relationship between the type of prompting needed to elicit allegations of abuse and the amount of information disclosed by alleged victims during investigative interviews. All interviews were conducted by British or American police officers using the Protocol. Non-reluctant disclosers who made allegations in response to open-ended, free-recall, prompts provided significantly more forensically relevant information overall in response to free-recall prompts than a matched group of reluctant disclosers who made their initial allegations in response to focused (option-posing or suggestive) prompts. Positive correlations were found between the amount of information provided by children in the pre-substantive and the substantive phases of the interview. The findings demonstrated that reluctant witnesses are less communicative even in non-substantive portions of the interview, and continue to be reluctant and provide less information following disclosure.

Hershkowitz, Lanes, and Lamb (2007) focused on the ways in which children disclosed sexual abuse by alleged perpetrators who were not family members. Thirty alleged victims of sexual abuse were interviewed using the Protocol by six experienced youth investigators. The same principles were followed when the parents were asked to describe

in detail what had happened since the abusive incidents. The statements made by the children and parents were then content-analysed. Major characteristics of the children's and parents' reported behaviours were identified by two independent raters. More than half (53%) of the children delayed disclosure for between one week and two years, fewer than half first disclosed to their parents, and over 40% did not disclose spontaneously but did so only after they were prompted; 50% of the children reported feeling ashamed or afraid of their parents' responses, and their parents indeed tended to blame the children or act angrily. The disclosure process varied depending on the children's ages, the severity and frequency of abuse, the parents' expected reactions, the suspects' identities, and the strategies they had used to foster secrecy. The children's willingness to disclose abuse to their parents promptly and spontaneously thus decreased when they expected negative reactions, especially when the abuse was more serious. A strong correlation between predicted and actual parental reactions suggested that the children anticipated their parents' likely reactions very well.

Just as special techniques may be needed when interviewing children who are too scared or confused to talk, special techniques may be needed when interviewing children and adults with learning, communicative, or intellectual difficulties. Development of these techniques is especially timely because these individuals are at substantially increased risk of maltreatment (Crosse, Kaye, & Ratnofsky, 1993; Hershkowitz, Horowitz *et al*., 2007; Sullivan & Knutson, 2000) and have less access to a criminal justice system that is often insensitive to their capacities and limitations (Cederborg & Lamb, 2007; Westcott & Jones, 1999). From a conversational perspective, we might expect children with learning disabilities to be even more reliant on their adult interlocutors to provide structure and support to enable them to participate than their typically developing counterparts. There have been relatively few studies that explore the ability of children with learning disabilities to provide complete and accurate accounts of personally experienced events, however. When interviewed using the kinds of questions advocated for non-learning disabled children, however, children with learning disabilities are able to give reliable accounts of brief witnessed or experienced interactions, although their performance relative to chronologically age-matched and mental age-matched controls has varied across studies. The special considerations that need to be addressed by investigators exploring the possible victimisation of children with learning, communicative, and mental difficulties are explored more fully in Chapter 9.

IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING

As mentioned earlier, interviewer training depressingly often yields improvement in trainees' knowledge but no meaningful changes in the ways in which they actually interview alleged victims. Recognising this, training in use of the Protocol has always been accompanied by efforts to provide continued support, guidance, and feedback on interviewer behaviour in interviews conducted after starting to use the Protocol. The incremental value of verbal and written feedback during the course of training had been experimentally demonstrated previously in individual and group contexts, but only the NICHD training model includes feedback beyond the training period (i.e., in post training investigative interviews as well). Research on effective training strategies is discussed more fully in Chapter 10.

The importance of continuing quality control and feedback was initially assessed by comparing the effectiveness of four different training models designed to help interviewers implement recommended interviewing practices (Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Hershkowitz, Horowitz, & Esplin, 2002). In all training conditions, interviewers were first provided with a theoretical framework to help them understand how the recommended practices were consistent with basic research on children's memorial, linguistic, communicative, and social development and the performance of the interviewers was compared with that of the same interviewers conducting interviews with children of comparable age and circumstances in the six months prior to the training.

Meaningful long-term improvement in the quality of information obtained from young alleged victims of sexual abuse were observed only when well-established principles were operationalised in a clear and concrete fashion and when training was distributed over time, rather than provided in the form of a single initial session, however intensive. Didactic workshops and instruction in the utilisation of highly structured pre-substantive interview procedures thus had little effect on the number of open-ended prompts used to elicit information or on the amount of information elicited in this way, whereas intensive training in the use of a highly structured interview Protocol, followed by continuing supervision, monthly day-long seminars, and feedback on all field interviews, yielded dramatic improvements on these measures of the interviews.

In a related study, furthermore, Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Esplin, and Mitchell (2002) showed the adverse effects of the termination of supervision and feedback on investigators' performance. Forensic

interviews conducted by trained investigative interviewers who received close and continuing supervision and intensive individual feedback were compared with interviews conducted by the same interviewers in the six months immediately following the completion of training and the termination of the supervision-and-feedback. As predicted, the quality of the later interviews was inferior to that of the earlier interviews, as indexed by: 1) declines in the use of open-ended prompts; 2) corresponding increases in reliance on more focused prompts; and 3) the earlier introduction of focused prompts. The expected changes in the interviewers' questioning style were accompanied by decreases in the amount of information elicited using free-recall prompts.

These reports have important implications for those attempting to use the results of basic research in the real world. Clearly, it is possible to improve the quality of information elicited from alleged victims of child abuse, but these benefits are obtained only when extensive efforts are made not only to train interviewers to adopt recommended practices, but to ensure the maintenance of these practices as well. Regardless of their skilfulness, interviewers continue to maintain or improve their skills only when they regularly review their own and others' interviews closely, discussing their strategies, successes and mistakes with other interviewers.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

As summarised above and detailed later in the book, intensive systematic research on both children's suggestibility and their capacities to provide reliable and valid information about past experiences has helped generate a remarkable consensus about children's limitations *and* competencies. In brief, although children clearly *can* remember incidents they have experienced, the relationship between age and memory is complex, with a variety of factors (including the interviewer's skills) influencing the quality of information provided. Like adults, children *can be* informative witnesses, and a variety of professional groups and experts have offered recommendations regarding the most effective ways of conducting forensic or investigative interviews with children. The book begins (Chapter 2) with a review of the relevant experimental and field research underlying the international consensus regarding the ways in which investigative interviews should be conducted. Clearly, it *is* often possible to obtain valuable information from children, but doing so requires careful investigative procedures as well as a realistic awareness of their capacities and tendencies.

Unfortunately, as we then show (Chapter 3), research-based and expert-endorsed recommendations are widely proclaimed but seldom followed. Descriptive studies of forensic interviews in various parts of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Israel consistently show that forensic interviewers use open-ended prompts quite rarely, even though such prompts reliably elicit both more information and more accurate information than more focused prompts do. To the distress of trainers and administrators, furthermore, such deviations from "best practice" are evident even when interviewers have been trained extensively, are well-aware of the recommended practices, and often believe that they are adhering to those recommendations!

Because forensic interviewers often have difficulty adhering to recommended interview practices in the field, we worked with our colleagues to develop a structured interview Protocol designed to translate professional recommendations into operational guidelines. Chapter 4 explains and describes this Protocol, which guides interviewers through all phases of the investigative interview, illustrating free-recall prompts and techniques to maximise the amount of information elicited from free recall memory. The entire Protocol itself is included in Appendix 1.

We then turn (Chapter 5) to field studies designed to determine whether interviewers using the Protocol indeed conduct interviews that conform better to the universally recognised "good practices" described earlier in the book. Independent field studies in four different countries (Canada, Israel, the UK, and the US) demonstrate convincingly that interviewers using the Protocol use at least three times more open-ended and many fewer risky and suggestive prompts as they do when exploring comparable incidents, involving children of the same age, without the Protocol, and that the children, in turn, provide much more forensically relevant information (including disclosures) that is more likely to be accurate because of the ways in which it is elicited. In other studies, we have also shown that the Protocol can be used when interviewing witnesses who are not also victims and a version has been developed for use when interviewing youthful suspects. Contrary to widespread concerns that younger children could not be helped by use of the structured Protocol, research discussed in the book (Chapter 6) shows that children from four years of age benefit and are more informative when interviewed in this way. Younger and older children are different, of course, and we will explain strategies especially designed to capitalise on the capacities and tendencies of younger (4- and 5-year-old) children.

The broader implications and value of the Protocol for forensic investigators are then discussed (Chapter 7). We emphasise here that the Protocol operationalises the principles about which there has been

clear expert professional consensus and is the only investigative technique that has been shown to actually improve the behaviour of investigative interviewers by helping them to elicit information that is more likely to be accurate because it is recalled by the child freely rather than in respond to information and probes provided by the interviewer. In addition, interviewers are better able to judge whether victims are telling the truth when the interviews were conducted using the Protocol, perhaps because the children are thereby encouraged to provide more information in narrative form. The Protocol also helped investigators to elicit more clues that may guide their search for corroborative evidence and substantiate allegations.

Of course, the structured interview Protocol is not a panacea. It emphasises techniques that help motivated children to report information about experienced events but it does not really address those motivational factors that make some children reluctant to disclose abuse and were the focus of a recent anthology (Pipe, Lamb, Orbach, & Cederborg, 2007). This is an important issue, because many suspected victims do not report abuse when formally interviewed. Accordingly, we devote a chapter (Chapter 8) to current efforts, in the field, to develop and evaluate variants of the Protocol that address the special circumstances that attend interviews with such reluctant witnesses. Similarly, special techniques are needed when interviewing children and adults with learning, communicative, or intellectual difficulties, not least because such individuals are at increased risk of maltreatment (Cross, Kaye, & Ratnofsky, 1993; Hershkowitz, Horowitz *et al*., 2007; Sullivan & Knutson, 2000). We thus discuss ongoing research involving alleged victims who have learning difficulties in Chapter 9.

As mentioned earlier, interviewer training depressingly often yields improvement in trainees' knowledge but no meaningful changes in the ways in which they actually interview alleged victims. Recognising this, training in use of the structured Protocol has always been accompanied by efforts to provide continued support, guidance, and feedback on interviewer behaviour in interviews conducted after starting to use the Protocol. In the penultimate chapter (Chapter 10), we review what we have learned in the field about effective ways of training interviewers to continue following "best practice" guidelines.

The final chapter (Chapter 11) summarises the information provided in the preceding chapters and briefly describes what we do not yet know. Although we believe that development of the Protocol has permitted considerable progress in the way in which children are interviewed forensically, future research may further shed light on effective interviewing strategies and continue to inform forensic practices.

CONCLUSION

The research reviewed in this book demonstrates both: 1) how much we have collectively learned about children's communicative and memory retrieval capacities and; 2) that this information can be used by interviewers to maximise the value of their investigative interviews with alleged victims of abuse. The Protocol operationalises the principles about which there has been clear expert professional consensus and has been shown to actually improve the behaviour of investigative interviewers by helping them to elicit information that is more likely to be accurate because it is recalled by the child freely rather than in response to information and probes provided by the interviewer.

Of course, the Protocol does not address all the problems facing those investigating the possible abuse of young children. Although it emphasises techniques that help children to report information about experienced events and shows interviewers how to build rapport with alleged victims, it does not really address motivational factors that make many children – more than a third of suspected victims and unknown numbers of children about whom no suspicions have been raised – reluctant to disclose abuse, or the special needs of children and adults with mental, intellectual and communicative difficulties. In all, although development of the Protocol has improved the way in which some children are interviewed forensically, considerably more work is needed before we can feel confident that we are collectively doing all we can both to protect vulnerable children from further abuse and to ensure that innocent adults are not accused of crimes they did not commit because forensic interviewers failed to elicit accurate information from young informants. The Protocol remains a "work-in-progress" and must continue developing to accommodate the results of new research.

Factors Affecting the Capacities and Limitations of Young Witnesses

Because young suspected victims are often the only available sources of information about what has happened to them, it is crucial to know how well children can remember and describe stressful experiences when they are victims or witnesses of forensically important events. For this reason, many researchers have examined children's accounts of abusive incidents. Our goal in this chapter is to review our current understanding of the capacities and limitations of young witnesses. Specifically, we discuss in turn relevant research designed to explore and describe the development of children's abilities to remember and communicate information about their experiences before turning to aspects of their social behaviour and social awareness that affect their reliability as informants.

Over the past 25 years, it has become abundantly clear that both the amount and the reliability of information reported by children may be enhanced or reduced by several factors, including those pertaining to the developmental level of the child, characteristics of the event in question, and the techniques used by interviewers to elicit testimony. Numerous studies have shown a developmental progression in the amount of information that children report, with younger children typically reporting less than older children (e.g., Gee & Pipe, 1995; Goodman, Aman, & Hirschman, 1987; Goodman & Reed, 1986; Marin, Holmes, Guth, & Kovac, 1979; Oates & Shrimpton, 1991; Saywitz, 1987). Age in itself is not sufficient to account for these differences,

however, because variability among children of similar ages is common (Leichtman, Ceci, & Morse, 1997; Pipe & Salmon, 2002; Quas, Goodman, Ghetti, & Redlich, 2000; Quas, Qin, Schaaf, & Goodman, 1997). Furthermore, when task demands are manipulated experimentally by changing the types of questions asked, differences are attenuated or even eliminated (Ceci, Ross, & Toglia, 1987b; Cole & Loftus, 1987; Jones, Swift, & Johnston, 1988; Saywitz, 1987), indicating that age-related differences in performance reflect factors other than memory. Age, it seems, does not determine children's ability to recount personal experiences (Goodman & Schwartz-Kenny, 1992) but rather serves to encapsulate the influence of a number of variables relating to children's abilities, the effects of which may differ across interview/recall contexts.

In most studies, researchers have studied children's descriptions of carefully staged events in order to isolate, manipulate, and evaluate the impact of specific factors that may affect encoding, retrieval, and reporting. These laboratory analogue studies have been extraordinarily valuable, but interpretation of their results is often complicated by doubts about their ecological validity: Although interviews about staged events are meant to mimic questioning about abusive incidents, the staged incidents and interviews inevitably differ from 'real world' events in many ways. In field studies, by contrast, researchers study children's accounts of actual abusive incidents in order to elucidate the impact of uncontrolled and interdependent variables on encoding and retrieval. Field studies are typically non-experimental in nature, however, and the absence of control over potentially important factors may affect their conclusiveness as well. In this chapter, we try to build a picture informed by the complementary results of both field and analogue studies.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS

The clarity and completeness of children's testimony is clearly affected by their developing communicative abilities. Young children often do not articulate individual sounds consistently even after they seem to have mastered them (Reich, 1986), so it is quite common for interviewers to misunderstand children, especially preschoolers. In addition, the vocabularies of young children are much more limited and less descriptive than those of adults (Brown, 1973; Dale, 1976; de Villiers & de Villiers, 1999), and their statements are likely to lack adjectival and adverbial modifiers. Misunderstandings between children and interviewers may also occur because children's rapid vocabulary growth

often leads adults to overestimate their linguistic capacities and thus use words, sentence structures, or concepts that are age-inappropriate and exceed the children's competencies (Saywitz & Camparo, 1998; Saywitz, Nathanson, & Snyder, 1993; Walker, 1994). Despite their apparent maturity, young children – especially preschoolers – frequently use words before they know their conventional adult meaning, may use words that they do not understand at all, and may understand poorly some apparently simple concepts, such as "any", "some", "touch", "yesterday", and "before" (Harner, 1975; Walker, 1994).

The accuracy of children's accounts is greatly influenced by the linguistic style and the complexity of the language addressed to them by questioners, especially in legal contexts (Carter, Bottoms, & Levine, 1996; Imhoff & Baker-Ward, 1999; Perry *et al.*, 1995). For example, children are often asked to negate adult statements or to confirm multifaceted "summaries" of their accounts (e.g., "Is it not true that . . . ?"), and are expected to understand unfamiliar words and syntactically complex or ambiguous compound sentences (Dent, 1982; Pea, 1980; Perry & Wrightsman, 1991; Saywitz, 1988; Walker, 1993; Walker & Hunt, 1998; Warren *et al.*, 1996). Brennan and Brennan (1988) showed that fewer than two-thirds of the questions addressed to 6- to 15-year-olds in court were comprehensible to their peers. Perry and colleagues (1995) similarly showed that kindergarten- through university-age students had much more difficulty correctly answering complex questions as opposed to more simply phrased questions about the same witnessed event. More importantly, the kindergarteners did not even recognise that they misunderstood the complex questions, responding at chance levels on a task measuring how well they monitored their own comprehension.

The more impoverished the children's language, the greater the likelihood that their statements will be misinterpreted or that the children will misinterpret the interviewers' questions and purposes (King & Yuille, 1987; Perry & Wrightsman, 1991; Walker, 1993). When interviewers misrepresent what children say, furthermore, they tend not to be corrected, and thus the mistakes, rather than the correct information, may be reported by the children later in the interview (Roberts & Lamb, 1999). Following up on this finding in the laboratory, Hunt and Borgida (2001) found that disagreement with mistaken assertions was uncommon, with adults significantly more likely than children to disagree when interviewers distorted their answers. In subsequent interviews, 4- and 5-year-old children were more likely than older children or adults to incorporate the interviewers' earlier distortions into their later reports about witnessed events, suggesting that their memories of the event might have been distorted. This further underscores the extent to which the interviewers' behaviour – particularly their

vocabularies, the complexity of their utterances, their suggestiveness, and their success in motivating children to be informative and forthcoming – profoundly influences the course and outcome of their interviews.

In addition, children frequently interpret words very concretely and restrictedly (e.g., a child may not respond to a question about something that happened "in your house" if the child lives in a "flat"), make references that fall outside of the listener's knowledge base (e.g., "he looked like my English teacher"), thus making their accounts ambiguous. Their vocabularies, of course, may also be very idiosyncratic.

Children also *learn* how to participate in conversations. They must learn how to stay on topic, how to adapt their speech appropriately to different audiences (e.g., a "strange" interviewer who does not know their family members and was not present during the event in question), and how to structure coherent narratives about past events (Warren & McCloskey, 1997). The challenge confronting investigators is to obtain organised accounts that are sufficiently rich in descriptive detail to permit an understanding of the children's testimony. Unlike adults and older children, furthermore, young children cannot draw upon an array of past experiences to enrich and clarify their descriptive accounts (Johnson & Foley, 1984).

The richness and usefulness of children's accounts of abusive experiences are also influenced by social or pragmatic aspects of communication. For example, when asked questions such as "Do you remember his name?" "Do you know why you are here today?" or "Can you show me where he touched you?", older children usually read between the lines and provide the desired information, whereas younger children may simply answer literally "Yes" or "No" (Walker & Warren, 1995; Warren *et al.*, 1996). In addition, young witnesses are typically unaware of the amount and type of information being sought by forensic investigators and are unaccustomed to being viewed as informants rather than novices being tested about the quality of their knowledge. As a result, interviewers need to communicate their needs and expectations clearly, motivating children to provide as much information as they can.

Increases in the amounts of information reported by children as they grow older may also reflect their increasingly sophisticated skills as narrators. Young children are still developing their meta-linguistic abilities – coming to know what listeners want to know, and how to report information coherently, monitor the success of their communication, and modify strategies as necessary to ensure that the listeners have understood (Lamb & Brown, 2006; Saywitz & Snyder, 1996). For this reason, young children may not understand that their intended audience (e.g., the interviewer or jury member) is naïve with respect to what they have experienced and thus fail to provide sufficient detail

to ensure complete and accurate reports. Children are used to being questioned by adults who are already knowledgeable about the topic of conversation (Lamb, Orbach, Warren, Hershkowitz, & Esplin, 2007). By contrast, alleged victims of abuse are often the sole sources of information about the suspected events. If children fail to appreciate that the interviewer has little, if any, knowledge of the alleged events, or attribute superior knowledge to the adult interviewers (e.g., Ceci, Ross, & Toglia, 1987a, 1987b), they may refrain from reporting all they know. In addition, if children infer that interviewers would prefer particular responses, they may compromise their accounts rather than communicate their actual experiences in order to appear cooperative (Ceci & Bruck, 1993, 1995). In the forensic context, therefore, interviewers must be sensitive to children's perceptions of their knowledge and status. To facilitate comprehensive and accurate reporting by children, for example, interviewers should emphasise that they do not know what the children experienced, and that it is thus important for the children to tell as much as they know (e.g., Sternberg, Lamb, Esplin, Orbach, & Hershkowitz, 2002).

Unfortunately, however, forensic interviewers frequently ask very specific questions (such as "Did he touch you?"). Young children (those under 6) have special difficulty answering specific questions, and may exhibit a response bias (e.g., Fivush, Peterson, & Schwarzmeuller, 2002; Peterson, Dowdin, & Tobin, 1999), or a reluctance to give "don't know" responses in the absence of knowledge (Davies, Tarrant, & Flin, 1989; Saywitz & Snyder, 1993). In addition, Waterman, Blades, and Spencer (2000, 2001, 2004) showed that children (5- to 9-year-olds) often attempt to answer impossible (nonsensical) or unanswerable (where the information has not been provided) questions, especially if they are phrased as yes/no rather than wh- questions. The type of questions asked and the context in which they are introduced thus determine whether they enhance or degrade the reliability of children's reports (Poole & Lamb, 1998; Saywitz & Lyon, 2002).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEMORY

Earliest Memories

It was not until the late 1970s that researchers began to focus on children's memory for events in which they had been participants or witnesses (see Fivush & Hudson, 1990; Hudson, Fivush & Kuebli, 1992; Nelson, 1986, 1993, for reviews). The earliest studies by Nelson and her colleagues indicated that, as children grow older, the length,

informativeness, and complexity of their recall narratives increase, and these findings have been widely replicated (see Fivush, 1997, 1998; Poole & Lamb, 1998; Saywitz & Camparo, 1998; Schneider & Pressley, 1997, for reviews).The early studies also showed that even very young children can provide temporally organised and coherent narratives (Davies, Tarrant, & Flin, 1989; Flin, Boon, Knox, & Bull, 1992; Nelson & Gruendel, 1981; Saywitz, 1988). In addition, although young children tend to provide briefer free narrative accounts of their experiences than do older children and adults, these accounts are generally quite accurate (e.g., Goodman & Reed, 1986; Johnson & Foley, 1984; Marin, Holmes, Guth, & Kovac, 1979; Oates & Shrimpton, 1991). As time passes, both children and adults forget, making errors of omission much more common than errors of commission (Oates & Shrimpton, 1991; Steward, 1993). These errors are a special problem where young children are concerned because their accounts – especially their recall narratives – are often so brief.

From the time they are two or three years of age, it is clear that young children can remember and verbally recount a great deal of information about many of their experiences when questioned after both short delays of, for example, one month or less (Baker-Ward, Gordon, Ornstein, Larus, & Clubb, 1993; Cassel & Bjorklund, 1995; Fivush & Hamond, 1990; Pillemer, 1993) and sometimes also after much longer delays (Fivush & Schwarzmueller, 1998; Hamond & Fivush, 1991). Indeed, even before the acquisition of language, very young infants clearly remember, sometimes over long time periods, if appropriate non-verbal measures of memory are used (Hildreth, Sweeny, & Rovee-Collier, 2003; Rovee-Collier, Hartshorn, & DiRubbo, 1999; see Rovee-Collier & Hayne, 2000, for review).

Interestingly, however, although early experiences undoubtedly influence cognitive, social and/or emotional development, they generally do not become part of children's "autobiographical memory" systems (Howe & Courage, 2004) because infantile amnesia prevents us from recalling our earliest memories consciously (Cowan & Davidson, 1984; Pillemer & White, 1989). This difficulty in recalling events from the first years of life is not restricted to adults; young children, having acquired the language necessary for verbal recall, also have difficulty recalling their earliest memories. Further, although some events are more likely than others to be recalled from early ages (Neisser, 2004), even highly traumatic events do not appear to be available for later explicit recall when the events occurred very early in life. Terr (1988), for example, found that children who experienced traumatic events (e.g., dog bites) when they were younger than 18 months of age were unable to verbally recall the events when they were tested at older ages,

whereas detailed and coherent accounts of events were provided by children who were at least 2.5 to 3 years of age at the time of the experience. Researchers examining children's memories of stressful experiences, such as medical procedures and injuries, have reported similar findings (Howe, Courage, & Peterson, 1994).

Explanations for why these early experiences should be so difficult to recall, despite functional memory systems capable of encoding and retaining information over long time periods, are numerous and controversial (Howe & Courage, 1993; Howe, Courage, & Edison, 2003; Neisser, 2004; Nelson & Fivush, 2004). Language clearly plays a role: Memories acquired during infancy are very fragile, in part because these memories are only encoded in nonverbal modalities, involving perceptually-based attributes (Hayne & Rovee-Collier, 1995). In order to recall nonverbal representations of events verbally, these memories must be recoded into language form. Although some anecdotal evidence suggests that this recoding is possible (e.g., Myers, Perris, & Speaker, 1994), the recoding of nonverbal memories into verbal form appears to depend to some extent on children's linguistic abilities when they initially experienced the event (Bauer & Wewerka, 1997; Simcock & Hayne, 2002). Simcock and Hayne (2002) provide compelling evidence that verbal, although not pre-verbal, memories are accessible to very young children. In their study, 27-month-olds observed a novel event and were asked to verbally recall the event 6 months or 1 year later. Although the children had the vocabulary to verbally recall the events at the time of testing, they failed to do so and could only recall the events using photographs and behavioural re-enactments. Bauer and colleagues (2004) have shown, however, that events occurring at an even younger age (20 months) were recalled verbally when prop items (but not photographs) were presented at the time of recall, 3–6 months later.

Social-interactionist perspectives on the emergence of autobiographical memory also highlight the importance of language development. For instance, Nelson and her colleagues argued that children start to form long-term memories only when they begin talking about their experiences with others, thereby creating meaningful and enduring autobiographical records of their experiences (Nelson, 1989, 1993; Reese, 2002). This social construction of personal narratives influences the quantity and quality of children's narratives (Hudson, 1990b; Ratner, 1984; Reese, Haden, & Fivush, 1993). In addition, the development of children's self-concepts (Howe & Courage, 1993; Howe *et al.*, 2003) and their awareness of how memories were acquired (i.e., "source" knowledge), affect the emergence of autobiographical memory (see Howe *et al.*, 2003; Nelson & Fivush, 2004; Perner, 2000).

Developmental Changes in Children's Verbal Accounts

Once children begin to recall and talk about their experiences, their abilities are often impressive, although significant developmental changes continue through early childhood. Young children typically recall significantly less information than older children, particularly in response to very general prompts such as "Tell me what happened" and although their recall responses are not less accurate than those of older children they may omit much information that adults consider important (see Ornstein, Baker-Ward, Gordon, & Merritt, 1997; Saywitz, Goodman, Nicholas, & Moan, 1991; and Schneider & Pressley, 1997, for review). Four- and five-year-olds thus typically require more specific prompts from interviewers (Hamond & Fivush, 1991) to which they respond less accurately than older children do (Bjorklund, Bjorklund, Brown, & Cassel, 1998; Goodman, Quas, Batterman-Faunce, Riddlesberger, & Kuhn, 1994). Nevertheless, recent field research shows that children as young as four years of age provide proportionally as much information in response to open-ended questions as older children, although the brevity of their responses makes it necessary for interviewers to prompt for additional information, using the child's prior responses as cues to trigger further recall (Lamb *et al.*, 2003; Lamb, Orbach *et al.*, 2007 and Chapter 6).

Developmental differences in children's recall are not restricted to mundane experiences or those with a positive emotional valence, but are also evident when children are interviewed about painful, distressing, and traumatic experiences, such as accidental injuries and intrusive medical procedures (e.g., Cordon, Pipe, Sayfan, Melinder, & Goodman, 2004; Goodman *et al.*, 1994; Howe *et al.*, 1994; Howe, Courage, & Peterson, 1995; Merritt, Ornstein, & Spicker, 1994; Ornstein, 1995; Peterson, 1999; Peterson & Bell, 1996; Peterson, Moores, & White, 2001; Peterson & Whalen, 2001; Salmon, Price, & Pereira, 2002). Goodman *et al.* (1994), for example, found differences between 3- to 4-, 5- to 6-, and 7- to 10-year-old children in the amount and accuracy of information they recalled about the VCUG, a painful diagnostic procedure involving genital contact (see also Baker-Ward, Ornstein, & Principe, 1997). Similar age differences are evident in children's accounts of abusive experiences (Lamb, Sternberg, & Esplin, 2000; Sternberg, Lamb, Orbach *et al.*, 2001). As discussed in Chapter 6, Lamb *et al.* (2003) reported near linear increases with age in the total amount of information and the amount (though not proportion) of information elicited in response to open-ended prompts as well as in the amount of information provided in the average responses provided by alleged victims describing their experiences. Although most studies do not report

developmental changes in the *accuracy* of open-ended free narrative reports, the accuracy of responses to prompts and questions is likely to decrease markedly for the younger children, particularly when they must disagree with the interviewer to answer correctly (Cassel, Roebers, & Bjorklund, 1996; Greenstock & Pipe, 1996).

In sum, even though young children can accurately describe previous experiences, developmental changes in remembering nonetheless take place. Age emerges as an important determinant of event memory in part because it is correlated with other variables that influence memory, including children's prior knowledge and understanding of events, and the effectiveness of the retrieval strategies used. As we shall see, it is sometimes possible to eliminate or reduce developmental differences in memory when the confounding effects of variables usually associated with age, such as knowledge, are controlled.

Encoding Personal Experiences

Knowledge and understanding affect how much both children and adults remember. To the extent that there are age-related changes in the understanding, knowledge, and perceived significance of experiences, age differences in memory are likely to occur. In the classic comparisons of expert and novice chess players, for example, adult experts recalled more chess positions than adult novices did. Similar findings have also been obtained with children (Bjorklund, 1987; Bjorklund & Thompson, 1983; Bjorklund & Zeman, 1982; Chi, 1978; Chi & Ceci, 1987; Chi & Koeske, 1983; Landis, 1982), such that the usual age differences in memory can be eliminated or reversed when knowledge and age are pitted against each other (Chi, 1978; Lindberg, 1980). To quote Neisser (2004), "Because young children are less skilled and less knowledgeable than adults, they generally do not structure their experience in memorable ways" (p.2). Children who have more knowledge about experienced events later recall more details about those events than children with less knowledge (Greenhoot, 2000; McGuigan & Salmon, 2004; Sutherland, Pipe, Schick, Murray, & Gobbo, 2003).

For very young children, especially, direct experience is an important source of event knowledge (e.g., Nelson, 1986, 1996). In general, directly participating in an event is likely to result in stronger and/or more accessible memory traces, for both adults and children, than being a bystander, observer, or audience for a story about the same event (Murachver, Pipe, Gordon, Fivush, & Owens, 1996; Roediger, McDermott, Pisoni, & Gallo, 2004; Rudy & Goodman, 1991; Tobey & Goodman, 1992). Tobey and Goodman (1992), for example, found that

four-year-old children who participated in a real-life event (a Simon Says game) freely recalled central actions more accurately than children who merely observed the same event on video, and Rudy and Goodman (1991) found that four-year-olds who were direct participants in a real-life event were less susceptible to misleading questions than children who observed the real-life event. Similarly, Murachver *et al.* (1996) found that children who participated in a contrived interaction with an adult "pirate" recalled more information than those who read a story about "visiting the pirate". Their free recall was also more accurate than that of children who only watched the event or heard about the event. Even when recall was supported by behavioural re-enactment, children who were read the story were significantly less accurate than those who had participated or observed. Whether direct participation leads to stronger memories than other sources for younger children has not been examined directly, however.

A common explanation for the enhanced recall of direct experiences is that participation strengthens the resulting memory trace. Theorists agree that memory trace strength can vary (Brainerd & Reyna, 1990; Ceci, Toglia, & Ross, 1988), such that stronger or weaker memory traces can be created. Comparing 3- and 5-year-old children's memories of events about which they heard a story (narrative condition) or in which they directly participated, Gobbo, Mega, and Pipe (2002) found that children who participated recalled more details accurately than children in the narrative condition. To determine whether this difference in recall was due to differences in the strength of the memory traces created by participating rather than only hearing a story about the event, Gobbo *et al.* (2002) equated children's level of learning (or encoding) by having children in each condition reach a criterion level of learning. This criterion was achieved by exposing children to the event repeatedly. Children who heard about the event to a criterion level of learning recalled as many details as children who participated in the event (see Murachver *et al.*, 1996, for compatible findings). Thus, although participating in an event creates a stronger memory trace than merely being told about it, repeated experiences can reduce or eliminate these differences.

Adults often talk to children about anticipated as well as past events, and discuss the activities in which they are taking part (Fivush, 1998; Fivush, Haden, & Adam, 1995; Haden & Fivush, 1996). Talking about events while (Ornstein, Principe, Hudson, Gordon, & Merritt, 1997; Tessler & Nelson, 1994) or after (Goodman *et al.*, 1994; Hudson, 1990b) they are taking place may enhance children's event recall. In Tessler and Nelson's (1994) study, children's recall of an event in which they had participated reflected those aspects of the event talked about by

the parent and/or the child during the event. Ornstein, Principe *et al*. (1997) reported compatible findings in a study of children's memory of a painful medical procedure (see also Haden, Ornstein, Eckerman, & Didow, 2001). Goodman *et al*. (1994) similarly found that parents' retrospective reports of their post-event interactions with their children concerning a painful medical procedure that they had experienced were correlated with the children's subsequent ability to resist misleading questions about the procedure. In other words, although parental discussion was not related to correct recall, it was negatively correlated with errors in response to misleading questions. Further, Sutherland *et al*. (2003) found that information presented *prior* to an experience is also useful, at least when the information is specific to the experience rather than being globally related to the topic (in particular, DeMarie-Dreblow, 1991), although talk during and after an event is more effective than talk before (McGuigan & Salmon, 2004).

Event-related discussion may strengthen memories for several reasons. Discussing events in advance, for example, increases knowledge about the event, thereby rendering it more memorable, whereas post-event discussion may ensure rehearsal, which consolidates the memory or, following long delays, fosters retrieval and reactivation of the memory. Moreover, prior, contemporaneous, or retrospective discussions may all highlight important factors on which children should focus, and provide appropriate verbal labels for actions and objects, thereby facilitating memory.

Many of the experiences explored in forensic investigations may have been poorly understood by alleged victims, especially when the alleged victims were young children. In addition, disclosures of sexual abuse are often made months or even years after the abusive incident(s) (see Hershkowitz, Horowitz, & Lamb, 2005, 2007; Hershkowitz *et al*., 2006; Hershkowitz, Orbach *et al*., 2007; London, Bruck, Ceci, & Shuman, 2005, 2007 and Chapter 8) with little or no discussion with others in the intervening period. Victims of childhood sexual abuse are frequently embarrassed, afraid, or have been threatened not to tell (Cederborg, Lamb, & Laurell, 2007). In the absence of discussion and opportunities for verbal recall, such experiences may not be remembered in detailed or coherent narrative form.

In all, research on the development of autobiographical memory show that younger children's impoverished reports, relative to those of older children and adults, may be due, in part, to limited retrieval skills, meta-linguistic deficits, and immature narrative skills. Encoding and retrieval strategies develop with age and experience, and the use of effective retrieval strategies is usually associated with improved recall and reporting of information. Developmental differences in the

selection and use of cognitive strategies affect children's ability to talk about past events, and therefore the amount of support they may need to help them describe events completely. As they grow older, children learn to use strategies automatically, allowing them to alllocate more attention and effort to retrieval, whereas younger children may need explicit instruction in the use of specific strategies, although they still do not benefit from such instructions as much as older children do (Flavell, Miller, & Miller, 1993). As children become older, they also become better at generating internal retrieval cues, which makes them less reliant on external support provided during the interview (Quas *et al.*, 2000).

Repeated Experiences

Children's knowledge and the resulting memory representations can also be affected by the number of times events have been experienced. Victims of sexual abuse are frequently abused repeatedly, sometimes over long periods of time. When children experience similar events, they tend to form general event representations (or scripts) of "typical" events rather than particular incidents (Farrar & Goodman, 1992; Hudson, Fivush, & Kuebli, 1992; Nelson & Gruendel, 1981). Nelson argued that memories serve to facilitate predictions about the future, and that, as a rule, repeated experiences permit better predictions than experiences that happened only once. As a result, children should be particularly attuned from an early age to "what usually happens" (Nelson, 1986). These general event representations can help children to predict what is going to occur, understand what is happening during an event, and guide the recall and retrieval of familiar events (Brainerd & Ornstein, 1991; Brewer & Nakamura, 1984; Hudson, 1986; Nelson, 1986, 1993; Nelson & Gruendel, 1981). Repeated experience may strengthen event memories, with children recalling more details than if they experienced the event only a single time (Bauer & Fivush, 1992; Fivush, Kuebli, & Clubb, 1992; Hudson, 1990a; Hudson & Nelson, 1986; Murachver *et al.*, 1996; see Powell & Thomson, 2003 for review). Memories of repeatedly experienced events may also differ from memories of events occurring a single time because there are repeated opportunities to reactivate the memories by rehearsal. Further, children's memories of details that recur across experiences are also more accurate and more resistant to suggestion and misinformation effects (Connolly & Lindsay, 2001; Gobbo *et al.*, 2002; McNichol, Shute, & Tucker, 1999; Powell, Roberts, Ceci, & Hembrooke, 1999).

Prior experiences can also have adverse effects on children's event recall. When events recur with any regularity, accounts are likely to be skeletal, reflecting common components and the basic structure

without the details that may vary from one occasion to another. In addition, both children and adults may blur distinctions among incidents or be influenced by their general knowledge about a class of events when reporting specific events (Martin & Halverson, 1983; McCartney & Nelson, 1981). Aspects of the experience that change across reoccurrences tend to be omitted from children's event reports, so children's accounts lack the details that vary from time to time. The changing components may also be more vulnerable to suggestion, at least under some conditions (Connelly & Lindsay, 2001; Fasig, 1999; McNichol *et al.*, 1999; by contrast, see Powell *et al.*, 1999; Powell, Roberts, & Thomson, 2000). Conversely, children tend to remember unusual events better than specific events that are congruent with their general or script memories (Farrar & Goodman, 1992).

Because of the forensic importance of obtaining event-specific memories, researchers have begun to examine how to enhance the accuracy with which children recount specific experiences, as distinct from other, similar experiences (see Roberts, 2002; Roberts & Powell, 2001, for review). The ability to recall specific incidents of a repeated event, or distinguish between personal and vicarious experiences, requires engaging in a process known as source monitoring (Johnson, Hashtroudi, & Lindsay, 1993). In order to recall details about specific incidents, children must discriminate the source of the detail, including whether it happened to them the first time or the last time, in one place or another, or whether they only heard about it in the course of discussions with another person. Field work examining relations between children's source awareness and their recall of multiple experiences of alleged abuse support the importance of source monitoring for episodic recall. For example, Thierry, Lamb, and Orbach (2003) found that 3- to 11-year-old alleged sexual abuse victims who were more aware of the source of their knowledge recalled more episodic details (but not more generic details) about multiple experiences of abuse than children who were less aware of source.

Attempts to improve children's source monitoring performance and ability to recall specific events without intrusion of information about other similar experiences have met with mixed success. In general, children are less likely to make source errors when asked for open-ended, free recall accounts than when asked specific questions (Roberts & Powell, 2001). Explicitly asking children about the source of information they have reported – for example, whether it was something that they saw or something that someone told them about – can be useful with older children (Lindsay & Johnson, 1989; Zaragoza & Lane, 1994), but not with very young (3- or 4-year-old) children (Leichtman, Morse, Dixon, & Spiegel, 2000; Quas, Schaaf, Alexander, & Goodman,

2000; see Roberts & Powell, 2001; Roberts, 2002 for reviews). Thierry, Spence, and Memon (2001) found that 5- to 6-year-old, but not 3- to 4-year-old, children who were required to monitor actively the source of information about something they either witnessed or saw on television were better at monitoring source when subsequently asked misleading questions. Poole and Lindsay (2002) also found that having children monitor the source of seen and heard events in a training phase helped 7- to 8- year-olds, but not 3- to 4-year-olds, to distinguish among activities. When given more extensive source-monitoring training, however, the memory accuracy of 3- to 4-year-olds improved (Thierry & Spence, 2002). Conversely, asking children to recall experiences regardless of source and then asking for source attributions appears not to reduce confusion (Thierry, Goh, Pipe, & Murray, 2005; Powell & Thomson, 1997). Moreover, adults who *repeatedly* recalled seen and imagined objects without regard to their source confused more details and made more source monitoring errors in subsequent memory tests (Henkel, 2004).

The passage of time between experience and recall, likely to be months or even years in forensic contexts, increases both the tendency to rely on scripts (Myles-Worsley, Cromer, & Dodd, 1986; Slackman & Nelson, 1984) and the confusion of details from the different episodes (Hudson, 1990a ; Powell & Thomson, 1997; Slackman & Nelson, 1984). In forensic contexts, it may be important to specify exactly what happened on a particular occasion at a specific time. Inaccuracies reflecting confusions across occasions may adversely influence the perceived credibility of the witness, even though such demands for recall of specific episodes may be unreasonable given what we know about memory for repeated experiences. Ornstein and colleagues (1998) showed that, after a 12-week delay, children's recall of a pediatric exam became reliant on their general knowledge, as the children reconstructed their memories of the examination or filled in missing details with information about what usually happens (see also Myles-Worsley *et al*., 1986). That is, with the passage of time, script-related intrusions began to appear in children's accounts. Other sources of knowledge, not only children's own experiences, can also contribute to script-related errors. Fivush, Hudson, and Nelson (1984; Hudson & Fivush, 1991) similarly found that children relied more on general knowledge about an event (visiting a museum) to provide basic information about a specific instance of that event (a visit to an archaeological museum) over time, although they were still able to access some information about specific events after very long delays (of up to six years).

It appears that the confusion of details across episodes is more likely among younger than older children, particularly over time (Farrar &

Goodman, 1992; Powell *et al*., 1999) and that younger children are more likely to forget the source of their memories than are older children (Foley & Johnson, 1985; Lindsay, Johnson, & Kwon, 1991). Moreover, the passage of time between the experience and recall, which is likely to be months or even years in forensic contexts, increases the tendencies both to rely on general event knowledge (Myles-Worsley *et al*., 1986; Slackman & Nelson, 1984) and to confuse details from the different episodes (Farrar & Goodman, 1992; Hudson, 1990a; Roberts & Powell, 2001; Slackman & Nelson, 1984).

The effects of knowledge and repeated experience on memory are quite significant from a practical perspective. In forensic contexts, especially when child sexual abuse is alleged, it is not uncommon for children to be asked about incidents that have occurred repeatedly, sometimes over long periods of time. In the courtroom, what happened on one specific occasion is often critically important. Yet the requirement that children recall a single episode distinct from other similar experiences may be very challenging for young children. Despite remarkable memory for details of what happened (Fivush & Hamond, 1990; Powell *et al*., 1999), young children are generally not as accurate when identifying details associated with *one particular incident* of a repeated experience (Farrar & Goodman, 1990; Roberts & Powell, 2001). For example, when children between the ages of four and eight years were asked to recall the final instance of an event that was experienced six times, with minor variations in some details but the same basic event structure, children frequently recalled details from the earlier instances, rather than the final instance (Farrar & Goodman, 1992; Powell & Thomson, 1997). Powell *et al*. (1999) similarly found that children provided less accurate accounts of repeatedly experienced events because they reported details from one incident as if they occurred in another incident. These findings indicate that children can maintain accurate memories of what happened even though they may confuse episodes and not remember accurately when or as part of which specific occasion something happened. Such migration of details across episodes and confusion regarding source are more likely among younger than older children, particularly over time.

The fact that children may have difficulty recalling specific incidents of multiply-experienced events has led many court systems in the United States to relax the requirement that child witnesses identify the time of the individual incidents of multiply-experienced events because confusions between episodes do not necessarily cast doubt on the accuracy or credibility of young witnesses (see also Roberts, 2002). Children's general event representations or scripts are, however, affected not only by repeated experiences, but also by conversations,

television, books, and so on (Roberts & Powell, 2001; Sutherland *et al.*, 2003).

Traumatic, Distressing, and Other Unpleasant Experiences

In the past, forensic professionals often dismissed the relevance of experimental research on children's memory by arguing that the stressful nature of sexual abuse makes memories thereof distinctly different. In fact, considerable controversy persists in the experimental literature concerning the effects of increased arousal or stress on the accuracy of children's memory. Deffenbacher (1983) concluded that "forensically-relevant" (i.e., high) levels of stress were associated with diminished accuracy. Although some researchers have reported that high levels of stress are associated with poorer memory (Bugenthal, Blue, Cortez, Fleck, & Rodriguez, 1992; Merritt, Ornstein, & Spicker, 1994; Peters, 1987, 1991), however, others have reported that high levels of stress in laboratory setting are associated with improved memory (Goodman, Hirschman, Hepps, & Rudy, 1991; Warren & Swartwood, 1992), and others have reported no relationship at all between stress and recall (Baker-Ward *et al.* 1993; Howe *et al.*, 1994). For example, Howe *et al.* (1994) found no relationship between the amount of stress (reported by the parents) and the amount of information recalled by their children either three–five days or six months after an emergency room procedure. By contrast, Goodman *et al.* (1991b) found that children who showed higher levels of arousal during a medical procedure reported the incident more accurately than children who simply had a washable tattoo applied. When Bahrick, Parker, Fivush, and Levitt (1998) classified 3- and 4-year-old children into high, medium, and low stress groups based on the extent of their exposure to Hurricane Andrew, however, they found that children in the high and low stress groups recalled the least information about the hurricane whereas children in the medium stress group recalled the most information, suggesting that some stress improves recall while too much stress impedes it. Even when stress enhances recall, however, memories are still susceptible to the deleterious effects of suggestion and delay (Sales, Goldberg, & Parker, 2001).

Fivush (1998a) concluded that, although children may recall more details about stressful than non stressful events, developmental changes in the representation and recall of these events appear similar. Other scholars have also concluded that the same variables that influence memories of more mundane or positive experiences affect memories of stressful and traumatic experiences (e.g., Cordon *et al.*, 2004; Howe, 1997), but recent work suggests that children may recall negative and positive events somewhat differently (Fivush, Hazzard, Sales, Safati, &

Brown, 2003). For instance, when narrating emotionally *positive* events (e.g., a trip to an amusement park), 5- to 12-year-olds recalled more information about objects and people and included more descriptive details than when recalling emotionally negative events (e.g, illness or death of a family member). When recalling emotionally *negative* events, in contrast, the children included more information about their thoughts and emotions and recounted these experiences more coherently than when recalling positive events (Fivush *et al*., 2003).

Few researchers have studied the association between the severity of abuse (presumably a correlate of stressfulness) and children's recall, probably because there is no consensus regarding the ways in which the severity of abuse should be measured, and a variety of events (ranging from exposure to rape at gunpoint) are defined as sexual abuse. Of course, these differences affect the conclusiveness of field research: Because child witnesses recall different personally experienced events, many factors can make some events more memorable than others. In addition, whether or not the abuse is even stressful to children may vary depending on such factors as the age of the child and the identity of the perpetrator. With better definitions of child abuse and access to accounts of a larger number of cases, researchers may be able in the future to determine whether different types of abuse are recalled differently as a function of the many interrelated factors that characterise real-world experiences of abuse.

Although the association between stress and memory is clearly a complex one (Christianson, 1992), the inconsistent findings may be explained in part by researchers' concerns with levels of stress that were generally low and varied from study to study. Recognising these limitations, researchers have recently examined children's memories of naturally occurring experiences that were more similar, with respect to the intensity and duration of distress, to the experiences children might be asked to recount during a forensic interview. When the studies involved the VCUG, a painful diagnostic procedure involving genital contact, the to-be-remembered experience is also likely to have involved embarrassment or shame.

In general, children's accounts of painful and/or distressing medical procedures (Goodman, Quas, Batterman-Faunce, Riddlesberger, & Kuhn, 1994, 1997; Ornstein, 1995; Quas *et al*., 1999; Steward, 1993; Steward, O'Conner, Acredolo, & Steward, 1996), accidental injuries and their treatment (e.g., Howe *et al*., 1994; Peterson, 1999; Peterson & Bell, 1996; Peterson & Whalen, 2001), natural disasters (Fivush, Sales, Goldberg, Bahrick, & Parker, 2004; Parker, Bahrick, Lundy, Fivush, & Levitt, 1998), and forensic accounts of suspected or alleged sexual abuse (Lamb, Sternberg, & Esplin, 2000; Lamb *et al*., 2003; Sternberg, Lamb,

Orbach *et al*., 2001) appear to be influenced by many of the same variables, including age, that affect memory for neutral or mundane experiences (see Cordón *et al*., 2004, for a recent review). Moreover, infantile amnesia curtails the ability of children and adults alike to recall their earliest experiences verbally, whether or not they were traumatic (Fivush, 2002; Howe *et al*., 1994; Nelson & Fivush, 2004; Quas *et al*., 1999). Further, children who have experienced a painful inoculation remembered some aspects of it better than those who witnessed another child experiencing the inoculation (Lindberg, Jones, Collard, & Thomas, 2001), thereby reflecting a general tendency for participants to recall events better than observers (Murachver *et al*., 1996; Tobey & Goodman, 1992). Just as understanding and knowledge influence memory of more mundane events (e.g., Greenhoot, 2000; Ornstein, Shapiro, Clubb, Follmer, & Baker-Ward, 1997; Ricci & Beal, 1998; Sutherland *et al.,* 2003), traumatic experiences that are better understood or explained to children are recalled by them more fully and/or more accurately (Goodman *et al*., 1994).

There is some evidence that memories of negative experiences endure longer than memories of everyday events, however. When children recall neutral or positive events after extended delays, forgetting is often quite marked (e.g., Flin *et al*., 1992; Goodman, Batterman-Faunce, Schaaf, & Kenney, 2002; Hudson & Fivush, 1991; Jones & Pipe, 2002; Ornstein *et al*., 1997; Salmon & Pipe, 2000; Fivush & Schwarzmueller, 1998) whereas memories of painful and stressful experiences may change little over periods of several years (e.g., Burgwyn-Bailes, Baker-Ward, Gordon, & Ornstein, 2001; Merritt *et al*., 1994; Peterson, 1999; Peterson & Whalen, 2001). In one study, for example, children who were very young (approximately three years old) at the time of an experience (a hurricane) reported even more information when interviewed six years later than they had in an initial interview (Fivush *et al*., 2004). Of course, these children were probably reminded of their experiences frequently by family members, friends, interviewers, and even by the media. In contrast, retrospective surveys of adults suggest that young victims seldom discussed their abuse with others in childhood (London *et al*., 2005, 2007) and we know that events not discussed may not be well remembered (Fivush, Pipe, Murachver, & Reese, 1997; Fivush, 2004a, 2004b). In the only field study examining the effects of delay on children's recall of alleged sexual abuse, Lamb, Sternberg *et al*. (2000) reported that children interviewed within a month of the alleged abuse were more likely to provide information in response to the interviewers' open-ended prompts and questions than children interviewed following long (5–14 month) delays, although, very surprisingly, children interviewed early provided no more details in total than those

interviewed following the longest delays. The absence of differences in the total number of details reported may have been attributable to the poor quality of the interviews studied.

In sum, it is unclear whether memories for traumatic experiences involve unique mechanisms or can be accounted for by the same mechanisms that affect memories of other events (Cordón *et al.*, 2004). Traumatic experiences are often distinctive, so memories thereof might be retained over time better than memories of less distinctive or meaningful events (Howe, 1997, 2000, Ornstein, Larus, & Clubb, 1992). Whether or not special mechanisms are involved, however, real-world events such as child abuse may not necessarily be better remembered than memories of events or stimuli studied in the laboratory. First of all, not all incidents of sexual abuse are painful or traumatic, and thus the potentially facilitative effects of arousal and salience cannot be assumed. Relatedly, children's ignorance or misunderstanding of sexual events may make some abusive experiences even less memorable. Second, stress may affect different types of memory encoding and retrieval (e.g., recall, recognition, and reconstructive memory) in different ways. The context in which children are asked to retrieve information about the experienced event – during interviews with child protection service workers, policemen, attorneys, or judges – may be stressful regardless of whether or not the target events were (Goodman *et al.*, 1992). Researchers have not yet studied the effects of stress at the time of recall, although some have studied the effects of social support and of supportive interviewer practices which presumably reduce stress (Carter *et al.*, 1996; Davis & Bottoms, 2002; Imhoff & Baker-Ward, 1999) and it seems reasonable to expect that stress at the time of recall may hinder retrieval (Nathanson & Saywitz, 2003). Third, whether the event involves shame, perceived responsibility, embarrassment, or guilt, and whether it is talked about, reflected on, kept secret, or even negated, may all affect how experiences of abuse or trauma are remembered and recalled over time. Overall, although salience generally affects the memorability of experienced events, we cannot presume that instances of abuse will always be salient and thus easy to remember.

Following repeated *traumatic* experiences, over-general memory retrieval may occur, with several episodes summarised by reference to their common characteristics despite requests for specific examples, characterised by distinctive information about particular events, times, locations, people, places, or activities (McNally, 1998; Williams, 1996; Williams & Dritschel, 1992). Williams (1996) hypothesised that stressful childhood experiences lead depressed individuals to adopt generic retrieval strategies, typical of earlier stages of development, in order

to minimise the negative affect associated with some specific features of past events. Children who were victims, witnesses, and both victims and witnesses of family violence are significantly more depressed than children who were not victims of physical abuse (Sternberg *et al.*, 1993), and among these children the proportion of generic responses in the children's accounts of earlier family experiences were positively correlated with their depression scores (Orbach, Lamb, Sternberg, Williams, & Dawud-Noursi, 2001).

Effects of Delay

Once remembered, how durable are children's memories of their experiences? When children (and adults) recall neutral or positive events over long time periods, forgetting is typically extensive (e.g., Jones & Pipe, 2002; Ornstein, Baker-Ward *et al.*, 1997; Salmon & Pipe, 2000) and children may require many cues and props to facilitate recall (Hudson & Fivush, 1991; Fivush & Schwarzmueller, 1998) if, indeed, they can do so at all (Goodman, Batterman-Faunce, Schaaf, & Kenney, 2002; Pillemer *et al.*, 1994). Pillemer and colleagues showed, for example, that although both 3- and 4-year-old children remembered what happened at school when a fire alarm went off and they were interviewed soon after, none of the younger and only some of the older children remembered it when interviewed seven years later (Pillemer, 1993; Pillemer *et al.*, 1994; see also Drummey & Newcombe, 1995).

Children can remember other experiences after very long, forensically-relevant delays. Ornstein and colleagues showed that even quite young children recalled a paediatric examination extremely well after delays of up to six weeks (e.g., Baker-Ward *et al.*, 1993; Clubb, Nida, Merritt, & Ornstein, 1993; Merritt *et al.*, 1994; Ornstein, Shapiro *et al.*, 1997). Medical examinations are likely to be familiar events for many young children, and the good recall in this study might reflect children's knowledge about and understanding of the examination. Other studies suggest that some traumatic experiences about which children presumably had little prior knowledge may be remembered better over long delays than more mundane or neutral experiences. In a study of children's recall of the VCUG (the painful diagnostic procedure described earlier), although children did recall somewhat less when interviewed six weeks as opposed to shortly after the test, the change was not statistically significant (Merritt *et al.*,1994). Burgwyn-Bailes *et al.* (2001) similarly reported good recall of hospital treatment that included suturing of facial lacerations. Children who were between the ages of three and seven years at the time of the injury recalled a

similar number of features when interviewed one year later as they had both a few days and six to eight weeks after the suturing. However, more false alarms occurred in response to suggestive questions after the long delay, suggesting that the memory representations did change over time.

Children also remembered injuries, and the hospital treatment that resulted, in studies by Peterson and her colleagues (e.g., Peterson & Bell, 1996; Peterson & Whalen, 2001). When children were interviewed six months after the injury, they reported significantly less information about both the injury and the hospital events than when they were interviewed soon after the events (Peterson & Bell, 1996), but when re-interviewed two years and five years after the injury, the children recalled less about the hospital event than they had soon after, but as much as before about the injuries (Peterson, 1999; Peterson & Whalen, 2001). Nonetheless, the children's accounts of both the injury and hospital events were less accurate after the very long delays than in the initial interview, suggesting changes in the content of the memories, if not in the amount recalled.

Reinterviewing children about Hurricane Andrew, however, Fivush *et al*. (2004) showed that those children's reports can become *more*, rather than less, detailed after long delays. The children, who had been three to four years old at the time of the hurricane, were re-interviewed six years later. The effects were quite dramatic, with the now 9- to 10-year-old children reporting almost twice as much information as when interviewed shortly after the event (Parker *et al*., 1998).

Regardless of the research setting, delay between the occurrences of the to-be-remembered event and questioning has adverse effects on the strength of the memory trace. Lamb, Sternberg, and Esplin (2000) have shown that after delays of more than one month, children report fewer new details about alleged abuse than do children recalling abuse that allegedly happened more recently. It is thus preferable to question child witnesses as soon as possible after the alleged incident(s). Interviewers should recognise that children interviewed after a substantial delay might require more time to retrieve details from recall memory, and they should also be more cautious when questioning children after long delays because such children are more susceptible to suggestion.

Although children are more likely to be misled about staged events (Ceci, Loftus *et al*., 1994; Leichtman & Ceci, 1995) and report fewer event details about them the longer the delay (Baker-Ward *et al*., 1993; Ornstein *et al*., 1992), recent research (Roberts & Powell, 2007) shows that the timing of both misinformation and test interviews as well as the type of details mediate children's suggestibility after repeated experiences. Although 5- to 6-year-old children who experienced the

to-be-remembered (TBR) event once were more suggestive when the misleading information was introduced longer after the event than when it was presented shortly after, children who experienced the event repeatedly were more accurate after longer delays between the events and misinformation, but only when questioned about invariant details.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS USED TO PROMPT MEMORY RETRIEVAL

Seemingly regardless of the types of experiences being remembered or reported, the methods used by interviewers to elicit children's accounts of their experiences affect both the quantity and quality of information elicited from children. The distinction between recall and recognition testing is crucial. When adults and children are asked to describe events with free recall prompts ("Tell me everything you remember . . ."), their accounts may be brief and sketchy, but are more likely to be accurate. When provided with open-ended prompts like "Tell me more about that" or "And then what happened?", children often report additional details. When interviewers prompt with leading questions such as "Did he have a beard?", "Did he touch you with his private", or "Did this happen in the day or in the night", however, they shift from recall to recognition testing, and the probability of error rises dramatically (e.g., Dent, 1982, 1986; Dent & Stephenson, 1979; Hutcheson, Baxter, Telfer, & Warden, 1995; Lamb & Fauchier, 2001; Oates & Shrimpton, 1991; Orbach & Lamb, 2001). When memory is probed using open-ended prompts, respondents attempt to provide as much relevant information as they "remember", whereas children may have to confirm or reject information provided by the interviewer when focused questions tapping recognition memory are asked. Recognition probes refocus the child on domains of interest to the investigator and exert greater pressure to respond, whether or not the respondent is sure of the response. Recognition probes are more likely to elicit erroneous responses in eyewitness contexts because of response biases (i.e., tendencies to say "yes" or "no" without reflection) and false recognition of details that were only mentioned in previous interviews or are inferred from the gist of the experienced events (Brainerd & Reyna, 1996). Effective interviewers should thus maximise the reliance on free recall by offering open-ended prompts so as to minimise the risk of eliciting erroneous information. Free recall reports are not always accurate, of course, especially when the events occurred long before the interview or there have been opportunities for either pre- (Leichtman & Ceci, 1995) or post-event contamination (Leichtman & Ceci, 1995; Poole & Lindsay, 1995, 1997; Poole &

White, 1993; Warren & Lane, 1995) but they are likely to be much more accurate than reports elicited using recognition cues or prompts. The completeness of brief initial responses can be increased when interviewers use the information provided by children in their first spontaneous utterance as prompts for further elaboration (e.g., "You said the man touched you; tell me more about that touching") (Lamb *et al.*, 2003).

In field contexts, reported details can seldom be verified independently, but researchers have instead used the incidence of internally contradictory information to index inaccuracy. In one such study, Lamb and Fauchier (2001) examined the circumstances in which seven alleged sexual abuse victims repeated or contradicted forensically relevant details. Suggestive questions elicited a disproportionately high number of contradictions in that study, whereas no responses to free recall prompts were ever contradicted.

Like Lamb and Fauchier (2001), Orbach and Lamb (2001) focused on the eliciting conditions associated with the retrieval of contradictory information, but whereas Lamb and Fauchier examined "average" interviews (i.e., interviews similar in structure and quality to investigative interviews conducted by peer interviewers in investigative agencies around the world), the investigative interview examined by Orbach and Lamb was selected because it was characterised by excessive reliance on risky practices, and they expected that such an interview would elucidate the extent to which these negative practices fostered internal contradictions. Option-posing and suggestive utterances were posed from the beginning of the interview studied by Orbach and Lamb (2001) with no information provided by the child prior to the investigator's first option-posing or suggestive prompt. Of the 195 substantive utterances in the interview, 143 (73%) were option-posing or suggestive in nature. Fifty-nine (41%) of those option-posing and suggestive utterances were associated with contradictory details, either because they elicited information that was later contradicted (14 utterances, 24%) or because they elicited details that contradicted details reported earlier (45 utterances, 76%). Many (85%) of the utterances eliciting contradictory information in this study were yes/no questions. Moreover, five (25%) of the 20 option-posing utterances and 13 (52%) of the 25 suggestive utterances that elicited contradictory details were repeated.

Likewise, of the 403 details provided by the child during the interview, 138 details (34%) were associated with contradiction, in that 51 details were later contradicted and 87 details contradicted information that had been reported earlier. Moreover, in over 50% of the contradicting details, of which 91% were elicited in response to option-posing or suggestive questions, the child provided information contrary to her earlier denials. Eighty-two (94%) of the 87 contradicting details were

elicited using option-posing or suggestive utterances. No contradiction occurred in response to an open-ended utterance.

In a much larger field study, Lamb, Orbach, Hershkowitz, Horowitz, and Abbott (2007) were able to assess accuracy in terms of the convergence between details provided by 43 alleged victims and suspects when describing the same incidents. In all cases, the perpetrators admitted the offences (fully or partially), allowing Lamb *et al.* to examine the effects of the eliciting prompt type on the accuracy of information reported by the young victims. The study represented the first known attempt to assess the relative accuracy of forensically relevant details about actual criminal events retrieved from victims using contrasting types of prompts. In the study, Lamb and his colleagues carefully identified each forensically relevant detail reported by the victims and the type of prompt by which it was elicited. They then determined whether the detail was confirmed, contradicted or ignored (not mentioned) by the perpetrator. Information elicited from victims using open-ended invitation prompts was expected to be more accurate (i.e., more likely to be confirmed and less likely to be contradicted) than information elicited using focused (i.e., directive, option-posing, and suggestive) prompts. Lamb *et al.* also explored age differences in the extent to which free-recall prompts and focused prompts elicited confirmed and contradicted details.

The results partially supported the predictions. On average, only a third of the total number of details reported by the victims was related to by the suspects; the other two-thirds were ignored. Details reported by victims were deemed confirmed when the suspects specifically agreed with the victims' reports and only a quarter of all details reported by victims were confirmed in this way. Of the details reported by victims that were not ignored (i.e., of those that were related to in some way) by the suspects, however, nearly two thirds were confirmed and just under a third contradicted.

Although these results confirmed expectations about the superiority of invitations – proportionally more of the victims' free-recall details than details elicited using focused prompts were confirmed by the suspects – they did not confirm expectations that details elicited in response to invitations would be less likely to be contradicted. These unexpected findings may reflect the fact that relatively few details reported by the child victims were contradicted by the suspects, and this is likely to have reduced the sensitivity of the analyses. The small number of contradictions may be explained by the fact that only cooperative suspects (i.e., those who fully or partially admitted the allegation) were included in the sample.

Because older children remember more information than younger children (Ornstein *et al.*, 1992; Poole & Lindsay, 1995; Thierry *et al.*, 2001), it is not surprising that older children also provide more details in response to open-ended prompts than younger children do (Lamb, Sternberg *et al.*, 2000; Orbach, Hershkowitz, Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.*, 2000). Despite agreement between laboratory and field researchers with respect to developmental differences in the number of details elicited using free recall prompts, young children are, nevertheless, able to provide a good deal of information in response to open-ended questions, at least in field settings. Indeed, as detailed in Chapter 6, the proportion of details elicited in response to open-ended prompts as opposed to directive, option-posing, and suggestive prompts does not vary by age, indicating that even 4- to 6-year-olds can respond informatively to open-ended prompts (Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Esplin *et al.*, 2003; Orbach, Hershkowitz, Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.*, 2000; Sternberg, Lamb, Orbach *et al.*, 2001). Children (4- to 13-year-olds) who practice freely recalling neutral events during a pre-substantive phase of a forensic interview, furthermore, later provide more details about the alleged abuse in response to open-ended prompts than do children not so trained, regardless of age (Orbach *et al.*, 2000a; Sternberg *et al.*, 1997; Sternberg, Lamb, Orbach *et al.*, 2001).

ATTEMPTS TO ENHANCE THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION REPORTED

Noting that children's accounts of experienced events are often skeletal and devoid of forensically important details, several researchers have explored alternative techniques aimed at facilitating more complete recall. In forensic contexts, there has been most interest in representational aids like dolls and drawings, whereas laboratory analogue studies have also paid considerable attention to the possible value of contextual cues, which have only recently been explored in the field.

Representational Aids

Dolls. Several researchers have examined whether dolls aid children's event recall. Comparing the amount of information that children report with and without dolls, some researchers have shown that children report more information using dolls than without dolls, but at the expense of accuracy (Bruck, Ceci, Francouer, & Renick, 1995; Goodman *et al.*, 1997). For example, 5- to 7-year-old girls reported

more free-recall details when the dolls were used as demonstration aids (Saywitz *et al.*, 1991), but these free-recall details (collapsed across verbal and enactment) included more inaccurate details than when the dolls were not used. Similarly, Goodman *et al.* (1997) found that 3- and 4-year-olds reported more information about genital touching during free recall using the dolls than without the dolls, with more errors included in the doll reports. Unlike Saywitz *et al.* (1991), Goodman *et al.* (1997) found that the dolls enhanced the amount of information recalled by the 5- to 6- and 7- to 10-year-olds without any increase in errors. In field studies, where accuracy cannot be assessed, however, Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Boat, and Everson (1996) reported no increase in the amount of forensically relevant detail reported when dolls were employed. In addition, Thierry, Lamb, Orbach, and Pipe (2004) found that dolls were associated with play, ambiguous enactments, and contradictions. Thierry, Lamb, Orbach, and Pipe (2005) later showed after an exhaustive analysis of forensic interviews that the use of dolls did not increase the amount or quality of information that young children, in particular, provided.

The use of anatomically detailed dolls when interviewing young children is also problematic because young children have difficulty simultaneously understanding that the doll is both an object and a representation of themselves (DeLoache, 1990). DeLoache and Marzolf (1995) thus found that 2- to 4-year-old children's responses (about games that they had played with an experimenter) were more likely to be correct when they were elicited without rather than with the aid of the doll. In addition, Bruck, Ceci, Francoeur, and Renick (1995) showed that the use of anatomically detailed dolls as interview aids increased 3-year-olds' tendencies to falsely report having experienced genital touching during a paediatric examination.

Concern about the inaccuracy of doll-associated reports have prompted decreases in the forensic use of dolls in the US over the last decade, although some forensic experts still advocate their use during interviews with allegedly abused children (Blahauveitz, 2005; Everson & Boat, 2002). Others have advocated greater caution, especially when young children are involved (Poole & Lamb, 1998).

Saywitz *et al.* (1991) showed that children who had experienced a genital examination were more likely to report genital touching when focused questions were asked using the dolls (e.g., "Did the doctor touch you there?" pointing to the doll's vagina) than when asked a single free-recall question. This finding led some professionals to argue that it may be necessary to ask such focused questions using dolls to elicit disclosures of abuse when children are reluctant to describe what happened because they are embarrassed or fearful (Blahauveitz, 2005;

Everson & Boat, 1994), even though, as just explained, responses to focused questions are generally less accurate than responses to open-ended invitations.

Field researchers have also not elucidated the particular functions served by the dolls. If the dolls serve a language-substitution function (Blahauveitz, 2005; Vizard & Tranter, 1988), then children should provide more enacted information using dolls, whereas more verbalisations of doll enactments would indicate that the dolls served a memory retrieval function. Thierry *et al*. (2005) showed that, in response to directives, 3- to 6-year-olds produced more enactments than verbal details using the dolls, as did the children in Salmon, Bidrose, and Pipe (1995) study, suggesting a language-substitution function. Laboratory analogue studies further suggest that enactments using dolls may be associated with higher error rates, especially (but not only) with very young children. For example, Salmon *et al*. (1995) asked 3- and 5-year-old children non-suggestive open-ended questions about a quasi-medical event (e.g., "Tell me what happened with the stethoscope"). Children who used dolls and props to recall the event reported more information, as well as more erroneous information, during prompted recall than children in the no-props condition. The errors made using the dolls were more likely to involve the enactments with the prop items rather than the verbal details that accompanied them. The dolls and props enhanced both the verbal recall and behavioural re-enactments produced by the 5-year-olds, whereas the dolls and props enhanced re-enactment but not verbal recall by the 3-year-olds. As a result, the dolls and props seemed to serve a language-substitution function for the younger children but did not serve a unique function for the older children.

Drawings. Drawings can also be used in forensic interviews as a means of enhancing children's accounts. Drawings have been used in two different ways: as direct communicative aids whereby children draw and talk about what they have experienced (Butler, Gross, & Hayne, 1995; Gross & Hayne, 1998, 1999; Salmon, Roncolato, & Gleitzman, 2003; Wesson & Salmon, 2001), and as representational aids, in which case children are provided with drawings (e.g., of objects or people) and asked about events connected with the drawing (e.g., presence or absence of the items, or the location of possible touches; Aldridge *et al*., 2004; Brown, Pipe, Lewis, Lamb, & Orbach, 2007; Willcock, Morgan, & Hayne, 2006).

Asking children to draw while talking during the interview could conceivably facilitate children's reporting in several different ways. Drawing may help children generate retrieval cues for further recall (Butler

et al., 1995), for example. Drawing may also reduce the social demand characteristics of the interview by increasing rapport, increasing the child's comfort level, and by prolonging the interview so that children have more opportunity to retrieve and report information (Gross & Hayne, 1998; Salmon *et al*., 2003). Providing representational drawings may help children to report aspects of an event that they either do not have the language for, would not spontaneously report because the information is embarrassing or painful, or would not normally report because conversational conventions restrict the level of detail spontaneously incorporated into descriptions of past experiences (Butler *et al*., 1995). To date, the mechanisms by which providing drawings in interviews facilitates children's ability to recount experiences have not been conclusively established. Indeed, any or all of these explanations may come into play.

Studies examining the use of drawings to enhance children's reports of personally experienced events have shown that, under ideal circumstances (i.e., when asking children about true events using nonsuggestive questioning), drawing while talking yields an increase in the amount of information recalled, without compromising accuracy (e.g., Butler *et al*., 1995; Gross & Hayne, 1998, 1999; Salmon *et al*., 2003; Wesson & Salmon, 2001), although drawing may also be associated with decreased accuracy, especially after a delay (Salmon & Pipe, 2000). Several studies have also demonstrated, however, that in addition to encouraging more complete recall of true events, drawing may also encourage children to report information about events which never occurred (e.g., Bruck, Melnyk, & Ceci, 2000; Gross, Hayne, & Poole, 2006; Strange, Garry, & Sutherland, 2003). Taken together, these studies suggest that drawing and talking may generally increase children's responsiveness – about both true and false events.

With respect to interviewer-provided drawings, many clinical and forensic psychologists use human figure drawings to aid the reporting of specific information (e.g., the location of touch experienced as part of an abusive act) during interviews (Aldridge *et al*., 2004; Brown *et al*., 2007; Willcock *et al*., 2006). It is unclear, however, to what extent young children in particular are able to use these drawings as "maps" of their own body to accurately communicate their experiences. Steward *et al*. (1996) explored young children's recall of a paediatric exam that included body touch and found that although anatomically detailed drawings were associated with a marginal increase in the completeness of information reported, false reports of forensically relevant information also increased.

Contextual Cues

Many researchers have suggested that contextual cues may enhance memory retrieval by increasing the similarity between the context in which an event is experienced/encoded and the conditions in which it is recalled (Dietze & Thomson, 1993; Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Gee & Pipe, 1995; Geiselman, 1988; Geiselman *et al.*, 1984; Geiselman, Fisher, MacKinnon, & Holland, 1985; Geiselman *et al.*, 1993; Goodman & Aman, 1990; Goodman, Batterman-Faunce, & Kenney, 1992; McCauley & Fisher, 1996; Memon, Cronin, Eaves, & Bull, 1993; Peterson & Bell, 1996; Pipe & Wilson, 1994; Price & Goodman, 1990; Rand Corporation, 1975; Wilkinson, 1988). Contextual cues should enhance the completeness and accuracy of memory retrieval because features of a memory trace accessible at the time of retrieval may bring to awareness other features of the "to be remembered" (TBR) event that are not otherwise accessible (Tulving, 1983; Tulving & Thomson, 1973). The greater the overlap between retrieval cues and encoding features, the more effective cues should be at helping retrieve further details from memory. As specified in Smith's (1988) "outshining hypothesis", contextual cues should be more effective when other retrieval cues are absent, and therefore should ensure greater and more accurate memory retrieval in free recall tasks (in which no information is provided by the interviewer) than in recognition tasks (in which the target information is presented). Because children rely upon semantic encoding less than adults and have less effective and less flexible retrieval strategies, furthermore, they should benefit from context reinstatement more than adults do (Ackerman, 1981; Daehler & Greco, 1985; Gee & Pipe, 1995).

Props. The use of prop items relevant to the event in question (e.g., real items, scale models, toys, photographs) may increase the similarity between the event and the retrieval condition (interview), thereby enhancing recall by providing reminders of the event (Tulving & Thomson, 1973), or providing opportunities for children to overcome linguistic deficits by demonstrating rather than, or as well as, telling what they remember (Pipe, Gee, & Wilson, 1993). Although the use of props in interviews with young children (especially those 5 years old or younger) may increase the amount of information reported, the amount of erroneous information reported also increases, particularly when toys are involved (see Salmon, 2001, for a review). In forensic contexts, the risk of contaminating children's reports by inadvertently including items that were part of the alleged event before they were disclosed by the child, or mentioning items that were not part of the target events, is thus likely to outweigh the possible benefits of eliciting additional information.

Verbal Cues. Saywitz and her colleagues (Camparo, Wagner, & Saywitz, 2001; Dorado & Saywitz, 2001; Saywitz, Nathanson, Snyder, & Lamphear, 1993; Saywitz & Snyder, 1996) have shown that young children's narrative recollections of staged events can be enhanced using a Narrative Elaboration procedure that they developed. The Narrative Elaboration procedure involves visual cues, representing four retrieval categories (i.e., participants, settings, actions, and conversations), that helped expand the amount of information recalled while avoiding the use of yes/no and forced-choice prompts when questioning 4- to 11-year-olds (Saywitz & Snyder, 1996). Although the visual cues presented during the Narrative Elaboration procedure could function as non-suggestive visual prompts (cued recall), provided they are introduced at the appropriate time relative to disclosed information, the technique has not yet been tested in actual forensic interviews. However, input-free cueing techniques are included in the protocol as ways to help younger children, in particular, recall more information. These techniques are discussed more fully in Chapters 4 and 6.

Physical and Mental Context Reinstatement. Most of the relevant studies have involved mental context reinstatement (MCR, e.g., Dietze & Thomson, 1993; Geiselman & Padilla, 1988; Geiselman, Saywitz, & Bornstein, 1993), a guided mental exercise designed to help interviewees mentally reinstate the context in which the TBR event occurred. A structured procedure of this type comprises one of the four components of the "Cognitive Interview" (CI; Geiselman *et al.*, 1984; McCauley & Fisher, 1995) and its adaptation for use with children (Geiselman & Padilla, 1988). In most studies, the unique contribution of context reinstatement independent of the CI's other three components has not been assessed although researchers have demonstrated that MCR alone elicits more event information than do "standard" interview procedures (Cutler & Penrod, 1988; Cutler, Penrod, & Martens, 1987; Geiselman *et al.*, 1986; Gibling & Davies, 1988; Krafka & Penrod, 1985; Malpass & Devine, 1981). When MCR does not enhance event memory, it appears that the participants may not have understood the interviewers' instructions (Memon, Cronin, Eaves, & Bull, 1996), or that erroneous post-event information may have been introduced prior to context reinstatement (McSpadden, Schooler, & Loftus, 1988).

With children, the CI produces an increase in the amount of information recalled, although the effects on accuracy are somewhat unclear. Some researchers have reported increases in the numbers of accurate details without corresponding increases in the numbers of inaccurate details and confabulations (Geiselman & Padilla, 1988; Milne *et al.*, 1995; Saywitz *et al.*, 1992) whereas others have reported that increases

in the amount of accurate information are paralleled by increases in the number of incorrect details provided (Köhnken *et al.*, 1992; McCauley & Fisher, 1995; Memon, Wark, & Bull *et al.*, 1997). MCR appears to be the most influential component of CI interviews with children (Bekerian, Dennet, Hill, & Hitchcock, 1990; Memon & Bull, 1991), although the "report everything" admonition (Saywitz *et al.*, 1992), preparatory techniques (Gee, Gregory, & Pipe, 1999), and rapport-building (Boggs & Eyberg, 1990) appear to facilitate retrieval as well.

Unfortunately, few researchers have studied the independent effects of MCR and the findings are inconsistent. Malpass and Devine (1981) used guided memory techniques to enhance eyewitness identification, whereas Gibling and Davies (1988) found that this procedure reduced the contaminating effects of misleading information introduced between the TBR event and an interview about it. Bekerian *et al.* (1990) reported that MCR led to significant increases in the "recall" of both accurate and inaccurate details, whereas McCauley and Fisher (1995, 1996) reported that 6- to 7-year-olds provided up to twice as many accurate details when MCR techniques were employed than when they were not. Further complicating our understanding of MCR techniques are variations in the ways that context has been conceptualised and reinstated mentally (e.g., Malpass, 1996; Malpass & Devine, 1981; Memon & Bull, 1991; Memon, Holly, Milne, Kohnken, & Bull, 1994).

Evidently, characteristics of the specific contextual cues, events, retrieval tasks, and the age of the interviewee need to be examined when studying the effectiveness and limitations of physical context reinstatement (PCR) techniques. The events studied have variously involved a walk in the woods (Wilkinson, 1988), a magic show (Pipe & Wilson, 1994), or medical procedures (Peterson & Bell, 1996; Peterson & Biggs, 1997), and have also varied with respect to the number of occurrences, and the manner of presentation (Memon *et al.*, 1996; McCauley & Fisher, 1996; Pipe & Wilson, 1994; Saywitz & Moan-Hardie, 1994; Saywitz & Nathanson, 1993). Whereas some of the interviewees experienced the event as observers, others were participants in events that involved making clay figures (Smith *et al.*, 1987), medical procedures (Peterson & Bell, 1996; Peterson & Biggs, 1997), or being the victims of a crime (George & Clifford, 1996). Eliciting contextual cues have included labels for or actual objects associated with the TBR event (Gee & Pipe, 1995; Salmon *et al.*, 1995; Wilson & Pipe, 1989), verbal cues combined with scale models of the physical context in which the TBR event occurred (Goodman & Aman, 1990; Price & Goodman, 1990; O'Callaghan & D'Arcy, 1989; Saywitz *et al.*, 1991), and returning to the place where the TBR event occurred (Pipe & Wilson, 1994; Price & Goodman, 1990; Wilkinson, 1988).

Retrieval tasks have also varied and included identification (Cutler, Penrod, O'Rourke, & Martens, 1986; Cutler, Penrod, & Martens, 1987; Gibling & Davies, 1988; Goodman & Reed, 1986), and verbal responses (e.g., Dent & Stephenson, 1979; Gee & Pipe, 1995; Tobey & Goodman, 1992). Despite these variations, some clear patterns are evident.

Contextual cues appear to increase the amount of information reported by both younger and older children, allowing younger children who are interviewed with contextual object cues to perform at the level of older children interviewed without such cues (Gee & Pipe, 1995; Pipe & Wilson, 1994). Contextual cues do not seem to help younger children more than older children, however, and they do not reduce age differences in the quantity of information recalled, despite clear theoretical reasons to expect both effects. Relative to verbal cues, visual contextual cues should facilitate information access because they are presented in the same modality (vision) as the modality in which they were experienced, and this effect should be especially strong in the case of younger children who rely less upon semantic encoding and are less flexible in their retrieval search (Ackerman, 1981; Daehler & Greco, 1985; Gee & Pipe, 1995), thereby reducing differences between younger and older children. Although researchers expected that contextual cues would be more effective after longer delays (when internal cues had weakened) than after short delays, however, the evidence is mixed. Although some researchers report that physical cues are more effective after longer delays (Pipe *et al.*, 1993), the accuracy of the information retrieved seems to be greater the shorter the delay (Gee & Pipe, 1995; Pipe & Wilson, 1994; Powell & Thomson, 1996).

In most laboratory analogue studies, children as young as three to five years of age retrieve more information about the TBR event when interviewed in the setting where the event occurred rather than in a neutral setting (Price & Goodman, 1990; Pipe & Wilson, 1994; Smith, Ratner, & Hobart, 1987; Wilkinson, 1988). The presence of physical cues from the scene of the event is also associated with increases in both the accuracy of young children's accounts and their resistance to suggestibility (Gee & Pipe, 1995).

SUGGESTIBILITY OF CHILD WITNESSES

The enormous publicity accorded to allegations of multi-victim sexual abuse in day care centres in the 1980s and early 1990s (Ceci & Bruck, 1995; Kelley, 1996; Nathan & Snedeker, 1995: Reinhold, 1990) helped prompt many researchers to study the accuracy of children's recollections and the unreliability of their responses when questioned (see

Kuehnle, 1996; Poole & Lamb, 1998, for reviews). Law enforcement officials in these high profile multi-victim cases often appeared to have questioned children about their allegations suggestively or coercively by introducing details that had not been volunteered by the children, implying expected responses, and posing the same questions repeatedly, thereby raising doubts about the reliability of the children's "allegations".

In one particularly notorious case, members of the McMartin family were accused of abusing hundreds of children over a ten-year period (Reinhold, 1990). Interviewers and therapists confirmed that the children were asked suggestive questions, such as "Can you remember the naked pictures?" when the child had not mentioned either photography or nakedness (Garven, Wood, Malpass, & Shaw, 1998, p. 348). In addition, Garven *et al*. (1998) noted that many questions were repeated even when the children had previously given unambiguous answers. For example, after a child responded that he/she did not remember any pictures of naked bodies, the interviewer repeated the question saying, "Can't remember that part?" Even after the child again responded "no", the interviewer persisted saying "Why don't you think about that for a while . . . Your memory might come back to you" (Garven *et al*., 1998, p. 349). Such statements suggest that the event really happened and convey that the interviewer is dissatisfied with the child's response. Another questionable tactic involved inviting children to pretend or imagine that something had happened (e.g., "Let's pretend and see what might have happened"). Children asked to imagine that events occurred sometimes have difficulty when later asked to distinguish between events that "really happened" and events that were just imagined (Foley & Johnson, 1985). In addition, children may later think that the interviewers are interested in reports of both experienced and imagined events.

Repeated suggestive questioning has characterised the investigation of other cases involving multiple alleged victims at the same day care centres (see Ceci & Bruck, 1995). For instance, Kelly Michaels was accused of sexually abusing children at the Wee Care day care centre in New Jersey where she was a teacher (Ceci & Bruck, 1995). Suspicions first arose when a child having his temperature checked rectally remarked to the paediatrician that his teacher "does that" to him. When later questioned by an investigator, the child inserted his finger into the rectum of an anatomically detailed doll and indicated that other boys had their temperature taken too. Other children were repeatedly questioned about the alleged abuse in a series of interviews by police investigators and therapists; most of these children eventually alleged that Michaels had abused them. Similar techniques were used in other

such cases. For example, when children made allegations of abuse by owners and workers at the Little Rascals day care centre in Edenton, North Carolina, therapists and police officers began to interrogate all of the children who attended the centre. Some of the children disclosed abuse after ten months of "therapy" (Ceci & Bruck, 1995). In this case, none of the interviews were electronically recorded, but some of the coercive techniques were described to journalists or at trial.

Investigative interviewers in the Kelly Michaels case also capitalised on children's sensitivity to the high status of the interviewer, as when they commented, "I'm a policeman; if you were a bad girl, I would punish you wouldn't I? Police can punish bad people" (Ceci & Bruck, 1995, p. 152). Interviewers also induced negative stereotypes about Kelly Michaels by telling the children that she was "bad" or "scary". Further, interviewers in both the McMartin and Wee Care cases, among others, used peer pressure in their attempts to elicit disclosures. For example, they would tell the children that their friends had already identified the child as a victim. In addition, interviewers promised the children rewards – such as snacks or the termination of the interview – if they would make allegations.

Analysis of these notorious cases helped draw attention to such potentially problematic investigative techniques as repeated questioning and suggestion, references to the interviewer's high status, peer pressure, promises of rewards and threats, requests that children pretend or imagine that something occurred, and the use of anatomical dolls as interview aids. Such practices alarmed developmentalists and helped stimulate a number of studies that clarified our understanding of suggestibility (Kuehnle, 1996; Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Hershkowitz, & Esplin, 1999; Poole & Lamb, 1998), while fuelling an intense controversy about the value of laboratory analogue studies (e.g., Ceci & Bruck, 1995; Ceci & Friedman, 2000; Lyon, 1999, 2002).

Both social factors, such as the superior status of the interviewer (Ceci *et al*., 1987a, 1987b; Zaragoza, Dahlgren, & Muench, 1992), and cognitive factors, including those relating to pretence or imagination (Reyna & Brainerd, 1997; Roberts & Blades, 2000b; Titcomb & Reyna, 1995), may influence children's susceptibility to misinformation. Initial laboratory-based research appeared to produce inconsistent findings regarding the suggestibility of young children, however. Goodman and her colleagues showed that children as young as 3- to 4-years of age could successfully resist misleading questions suggesting actions that were very different from those that had occurred or been witnessed (Goodman & Aman, 1990; Goodman *et al*., 1987; Goodman *et al*., 1991; Goodman, Rudy, Bottoms, & Aman, 1990; Goodman, Wilson, Hazan, & Reed, 1989). In other laboratory settings, however, preschoolers

appeared especially susceptible to suggestion (e.g., Ceci *et al.*, 1987a, 1987b; King & Yuille, 1987; Toglia, Ceci, & Ross, 1989; see McAuliff, Kovera, & Viswesvaran, 1998, for a review). Ceci and his colleagues found, for example, that preschoolers are less likely to accept false suggestions made by 7-year-old children rather than by adults. In addition, Leichtman and Ceci (1995) showed that preschoolers who were repeatedly led to believe that a person was very clumsy acquiesced more easily over a ten-week period to allegations about that person than children who were given neutral information about him. Indeed, children may, under certain conditions, come to provide elaborate accounts of entire events that have never been experienced (e.g., Ceci, Huffman, Smith, & Loftus, 1994; Ceci, Loftus, Leichtman, & Bruck, 1994; Strange *et al.*, 2003). Ceci *et al.* (1994), for instance, asked 3- to 6-year-olds to repeatedly imagine experiencing a fictitious event (e.g., getting their fingers caught in a mousetrap and going to the hospital to have it removed). Many children later claimed to have experienced these events, and even after debriefing, some of the children refused to accept that the events were only imagined. Such findings suggest that young children may have difficulty distinguishing fantasy from reality, and are suggestible in part because they tend to confuse the sources or origins (fantasy vs. reality) of their knowledge (Ackil & Zaragoza, 1995; Roberts & Blades, 1999; Thierry *et al.*, 2001). When subjected to such suggestive techniques as repeated suggestion, instructions to imagine/pretend, and selective reinforcement in a series of interviews, preschool children assented to 95% of the false events (e.g., claiming that they witnessed the theft of food in their day care centre) by the third interview session (Bruck, Hembrooke, & Ceci, 1997). Such findings are not limited to children, however, with several studies demonstrating that adults too may come to produce detailed "memories" of entirely false events (e.g., Garry, Manning, Loftus, & Sherman, 1996; Hyman, Husband, & Billings, 1995; Loftus & Pickrell, 1995).

In the experimental laboratory, information suggested by interviewers is often incorporated by eyewitnesses into their memories of experienced events (Ackil & Zaragoza, 1995; Belli, Lindsay, Gales, & McCarthy, 1994; Ceci & Bruck, 1993, 1995; Lindsay, 1990; Zaragoza & Lane, 1994; Zaragoza & Mitchell, 1996) especially where pre-school children are involved (Brady *et al.*, 1999; Cassel & Bjorklund, 1995; Ceci & Bruck, 1993; Ceci & Crotteau-Huffman, 1997; Huffman, 1997; Hunt & Borgida, 1998; Leichtman & Ceci, 1995; Muir-Broaddus, 1997; Quas *et al.*, 1999; Roberts & Blades, 2000a; Robinson & Briggs, 1997) and the suggestions are repeated (Mitchell & Zaragoza, 1996). In addition, Endres, Poggenphol, and Erben (1999) showed that suggestive prompts led preschoolers to contradict information that they

had provided earlier in an interview. Similarly, yes/no questions frequently elicit erroneous information from children, particularly young children (Poole & White, 1991, 1993).

The contaminating effects of option-posing and suggestive utterances are aggravated when they are repeated. Thus, children contradict themselves at a higher rate when option-posing questions are repeated (Bruck *et al*., 1998) while repeated exposure to yes/no and suggestive questions reduces children's overall accuracy (Memon & Vartoukian, 1996; Poole & White, 1991, 1993, 1995). Whereas repeated open-ended questions are often perceived as requests for additional information, suggested Poole and White (1991), repeated yes/no questions might be perceived as indications that the initial responses were unacceptable and thus should be changed (Ackil & Zaragoza, 1995; Brady, Poole, Warren & Jones, 1999; Douglas *et al*., 1997; Memon & Vartoukian, 1996; Poole & White, 1991, 1995; Roberts & Blades, 1995, 2000), especially by younger children (4-year-olds).

It is clear that preschool-aged children are particularly suggestible, and this led researchers such as Ceci and Bruck to argue that jurists should view with scepticism the testimonies of children in the Wee Care, Little Rascals, and McMartin cases because interviewers had wittingly or unwittingly exploited children's vulnerabilities when eliciting accounts from them. Such conclusions implied, of course, that the results of laboratory analogue studies could and should be generalised to the interpretation of information provided by alleged victims in the course of forensic interviews.

For obvious ethical reasons, the events studied in these laboratory analogue studies lacked many characteristics of abusive incidents, leading to questions about their ecological validity. For example, getting a finger caught in a mousetrap and being sexually abused are quite different experiences with respect to both their nature and complexity. Additionally, some early analogue studies tested children's memory for events that the children merely watched on a video (Dale, Loftus, & Rathbun, 1978; Wells, Turtle, & Luus, 1989) or heard about in stories that were read to them (Ceci *et al*., 1987a, 1987b). Of course, children may not remember events depicted in videos they watched or stories they heard as well as they recall events in which they were active participants. In fact, Rudy and Goodman (1991) showed that 4- and 7-year-olds were more likely to accept suggestions when they were mere observers rather than participants in a real-life event. Similarly, Tobey and Goodman (1992) found that 4-year-olds who participated in a real-life event were more resistant to suggestion and provided more accurate free-recall reports than those who just watched the event on a video.

Children can also be led to make false reports about a medical exam when they are interviewed suggestively. For example, when Bruck, Ceci, Francoeur, and Barr (1995) interviewed 5-year-old children one week and one year after they had been inoculated in a paediatrician's office, children given repeated misleading information about the doctor's or research assistant's actions produced more false allegations (e.g., indicating that the research assistant had given the inoculation when, in fact, the paediatrician gave the inoculation) one year later than did children who were not mislead.

Lyon (1999) has questioned the value of these laboratory analogue studies, arguing that the interview techniques they employed do not represent typical forensic practices. He further noted that most sexual abuse cases involve a single victim whose abuser is a family member or relative, as opposed to the multiple alleged victims of day care providers. He also emphasised that leading questions might sometimes be necessary to obtain disclosures of abuse from young children who are reticent to disclose because of fear, embarrassment, or loyalty to the perpetrator. For example, many of the children (especially the 7-year-olds) who had experienced genital touching during the paediatric examination studied by Saywitz *et al.* (1991) failed to report the touching in response to general open-ended questions (e.g., "tell me what happened during the doctor's examination"), perhaps because they were embarrassed to talk about genital touching. Lyon (1999) contended that embarrassment might make children less likely to make false allegations of abuse, even when they were asked leading questions. Of course, the evidence cited in support of this claim was obtained in an analogue study (Saywitz *et al.*, 1991), not in an analysis of forensic interviews in which children understood the seriousness of the investigation and the importance of their informativeness.

Lyon (1999) also criticised laboratory analogue research on the grounds that most real-world cases of sexual abuse do not involve the coercive and suggestive practices used in many of these studies. For instance, Ceci and Bruck's studies explored the highly suggestive techniques used in the controversial day care cases, including stereotype induction, repeated questioning, suggestion, and peer pressure (Bruck *et al.*, 1997; Ceci *et al.*, 1994; Leichtman & Ceci, 1995). Lyon argued that option-posing questions, which give children the option of denying potentially false information in response to Yes/No questions or to select the correct option in response to forced choice questions, are less risky than questions that presuppose information not mentioned by the children. Most of the laboratory analogue studies revealing high levels of suggestibility involved "highly misleading" suppositional-type questions. For example, Leichtman and Ceci (1995) asked children such

questions as, "When Sam Stone ripped the book, did he do it because he was angry, or by mistake?" which make it more difficult for children to deny the misinformation (e.g., that the book was ripped) than do questions like "Did Sam Stone rip the book?" In particular, the former question requires children to correct the interviewer in resisting the misinformation, a problematic task for young children.

Bruck *et al*. (1997) misled children by telling them about the fictitious events in the context of reinforcement and pretend/imagine instructions. Lyon argued that the suggestibility effects found in this analogue study were "likely the least generalisable to the real world" (p. 1038), because such techniques are seldom used by forensic investigators. By contrast, he argued that the types of option-posing questions that occur in the real world (e.g., "Did he touch you there?") are not associated with high levels of error in analogue studies (Goodman *et al*., 1987; Saywitz *et al*., 1991), and thus should not be as problematic as suppositional questions in forensic contexts. (As shown in the next chapter, however, interviews in the field are often more problematic than Lyon acknowledged.)

Garven *et al*. (1998) showed that the exact techniques used in the McMartin Preschool case quickly led children to respond inaccurately. These researchers first examined transcripts of interviews conducted with alleged victims in the McMartin case, identifying such techniques as offering positive (or negative) consequences for making (or not making) allegations of abuse, posing the same repeated questions, and suggesting that other children had already disclosed. They then interviewed 3- to 6-year-old children about a staged event in which a male stranger visited children at their day care centre, read them a story, and handed out stickers and cupcakes. The children who were interviewed about the man's actions using a combination of highly suggestive techniques (e.g., repeated suggestive questions plus rewards for making allegations) produced significantly more false accusations than children who were interviewed using only one suggestive technique. In fact, after being interviewed with multiple suggestive questioning techniques for only $4\frac{1}{2}$ minutes, children acquiesced to the false accusations nearly 60% of the time, whereas those interviewed using only one suggestive technique acquiesced 17% of the time.

Garven, Wood, and Malpass (2000) further showed that children interviewed suggestively using reinforcement made false allegations about mundane events (e.g., that a man said a bad word) 35% of the time, whereas those interviewed without such reinforcement made false allegations 12% of the time. Children who were reinforced also alleged fantastic events (e.g., that a man took a child on a helicopter ride) more often than children in the control group. Taken together, the results of

these studies show that real-world interview practices are quite likely to elicit erroneous reports from young children.

The apparently contradictory findings regarding children's suggestibility may be resolved by examining methodological differences in both the manipulation and measurement of suggestibility and reliability. Suggestibility is multiply determined by cognitive, social, motivational, and individual difference variables. Suggestive techniques may include instructions from the interviewer to pretend or imagine what might have happened, introduction of information by the interviewer that has not been reported by the child, and pressure to provide a response or comply with propositions made by the interviewer (e.g., by telling children they will feel better if they tell, alluding to statements made by other children, introduction of stereotypes about the alleged perpetrator or descriptions of him/her as "bad" and "needing to be punished"), and repetitive questioning over a series of interviews with encouragement to speculate about what might have happened.

Children's sensitivity to the status and knowledge of the interviewer may also foster compliance with suggestive techniques, because they misunderstand the purpose of the interviewer's statements, assume that the interviewer has superior knowledge, or simply want to be cooperative. When interviewers a) adequately prepare children for their role as experts, empower them to correct interviewers, and admit that they "don't know" some answers, b) avoid asking children to pretend or imagine, c) avoid being coercive, d) do not repeat misleading questions within the interview, and e) keep children focused on central details of personally experienced events, children are able to resist misleading questions and provide meaningful and accurate accounts of their experiences (Pipe *et al.*, 2004).

PERSONALITY, SOCIAL STYLE, SHYNESS AND RAPPORT

Children are often reticent with strangers and most adults thus recognise the need to establish rapport when initiating conversations with an unfamiliar child, especially when the topics are stressful or embarrassing. Forensic interviewers are routinely encouraged to establish rapport with alleged victims before seeking to elicit information about the suspected incidents of abuse. Despite this consensus, many forensic interviewers fail to make more than perfunctory efforts to establish rapport before broaching the substantive issue under investigation (Sternberg, Lamb, Esplin, & Baradaran, 1999; Warren *et al.*, 1996).

Although it seems intuitively obvious that rapport-building is critically important, we actually know very little about how much and

what kind of rapport-building is necessary or effective, and almost nothing about how rapport-building needs may differ depending on the age and other characteristics of the children interviewed. Surprisingly, few researchers have examined different kinds of rapport-building techniques or compared interviews with and without attempts to build rapport. Field research by Sternberg *et al*. (1997) found that rapport-building using open-ended questions (invitations) about the child's everyday life and a particular past event (such as a recent birthday or holiday) helped interviewers elicit more abuse relevant information than closed-ended specific rapport-building questions did, but because this was a field study, it did not include a "no-rapport" control group.

The complexities of rapport-building were illustrated by Davies, Westcott, and Horan (2000), who found that certain types of abuse-relevant information were more likely to be elicited when rapport-building was *shorter* (less than eight minutes). They speculated that longer rapport building phases may have reduced children's attention to the later abuse questioning, or that interviewers who spent more time building rapport had less time to spend questioning the children about the alleged abuse. Davies *et al*. also suggested that children who "required" more rapport-building may have been less comfortable, less prepared, and more reluctant to provide information. Thus, rapport-building may not work for those who need it the most, and lengthy rapport-building sessions may be counter productive. On a more positive note, Wood, McClure and Birch (1996) found that children who seemed reluctant and were uncommunicative at the beginning of an interview were more likely to talk or open up to the interviewer later when rapport building was conducted well.

Clearly, further research is needed on the type and amount of rapport-building that best promotes truthful and detailed disclosures. In the meantime, we endorse the professional consensus that interviewers should strive to build rapport with children by asking open-ended questions about neutral, everyday events before questioning them about sensitive topics.

There are often marked individual differences in the amount and/or accuracy of the information children recall. Individual differences may be forensically relevant to the extent that they predict, for example, whether or not a child is likely to be suggestible or easily misled, to lie, or to benefit from a particular interview strategy (Gordon *et al*., 1993; Pipe & Salmon, 2002). More generally, understanding sources of variation in children's recall may help place their testimony in context, and help interviewers understand why some children may say less about their experiences than others do.

Most studies examining the role of individual differences in memory have focused on identifying those children likely to be vulnerable to

suggestive questioning (see Quas *et al.*, 1997). A small, but growing, number of studies have also been concerned with both cognitive and personality variables that moderate children's recall. In addition to knowledge (see above), intelligence is positively correlated with event recall (Elischberger & Roebers, 2001; Geddie, Fradin, & Beer, 2000) although the relation may be stronger for older (e.g., 8–10 year-old) children (Roebers & Schneider, 2001) and may also depend on how interviews are conducted (Brown & Pipe, 2003a). Gordon *et al.* (1993) found that language and narrative skills were positively related to recall of a paediatric exam by 5- but not 3-year-old children (see also Salmon *et al.*, 2003) but Greenhoot, Ornstein, Gordon and Baker-Ward (1999) did not find a similar correlation and Quas (1998; Quas *et al.*, 1997) failed to find any relation between language ability (as measured using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test) and children's free recall. Brown and Pipe (2003a) found that WISC-III vocabulary scores were related to event recall, whereas a measure of narrative ability was not (see also Kleinknecht, 2001).

Social and emotional factors, in particular relating to attachment and temperament, may affect children's event reports, both by mediating the way in which experiences are appraised, encoded, and organised in memory, and by influencing the ways in which they are subsequently retrieved. Goodman *et al.* (1997) argued that attachment may influence children's accounts of emotionally laden experiences. For example, using parental attachment style as an indicator of the degree to which the children were securely attached to their parents, they argued that children whose parents had an 'anxious-ambivalent' attachment style (i.e., not securely attached) may focus on locating a source of security during stressful experiences, and so not encode the experience as well as children whose parents had a secure attachment style. In turn, securely attached children should be better able to regulate their emotions, aiding both encoding and subsequent recall. Furthermore, in two studies, Goodman and colleagues found that parental attachment style accounted for the relation between stress and memory (Goodman *et al.*, 1994, 1997). Children whose parents reported insecure attachment were both more stressed during a painful and distressing medical procedure, and subsequently made more errors when recounting it than children whose parents reported secure attachment styles. Laboratory research with young (3-year-old) children also suggests a relation between memory and child attachment status, with securely attached children recognising more positive events than negative events from a puppet show, whereas the reverse was true for children who were insecurely attached (Belsky, Spritz, & Crnic, 1996).

With respect to children's temperament, findings have been mixed. Gordon *et al.* (1993) examined temperament in relation to event

memory using the Temperament Assessment Battery (Martin, 1988) and found that three dimensions from the battery (approach-withdrawal, emotionality and adaptability) were related to recall of a medical examination by both 3- and 5-year-old children. Merritt *et al.* (1994) likewise found that adaptability and approach-withdrawal were related to children's recall of the VCUG procedure. However, Baker-Ward, Burgwyn, Ornstein, and Gordon (1995) did not find any association between temperament and recall of minor surgery for facial lacerations, although coping style during the surgery was related to recall (see Pipe & Salmon, 2002; Quas, 1998; Quas *et al.*, 1997, for review). Roebers and Schneider (2001) found that shy children answered specific questions less accurately than did children who were less shy, and manageability was positively related to the number of intrusions reported by 3-year-olds when re-enacting an event using dolls and props (Greenhoot *et al.*, 1999). Greenhoot *et al.* (1999) suggested that the more manageable or "easy" children may be more compliant and eager to please, which, in turn, may have led them to produce more intrusion errors. Additionally, Greenhoot *et al.* (1999) found that less persistent 3-year-olds were more likely to produce errors than children who were more persistent and thus better able to attend to the tasks. When behaviourally reenacting events, Salmon *et al.* (2003) found that children with higher levels of "effortful control" (i.e., the ability to shift and refocus attention in order to regulate behaviours and emotions) produced more details than children with lower levels of effortful control.

FANTASY

Children over six years of age appear similar to adults in their ability to discriminate between events of internal ("imagined") and external ("experienced") origin (Johnson & Foley, 1984; Lindsay & Johnson, 1987; Roberts, 2000; Roberts & Blades, 1995), and the extent to which younger children have difficulty discriminating between fantasy and reality is poorly identified. The presence of fantastic elements in children's accounts of abuse is affected by the presence of props (such as toys or dolls) usually associated with fantasy (Thierry *et al.*, 2004), or by interviewers prompting children to "imagine" or "pretend". As a result, forensic investigators have been urged to avoid having such props present during investigative interviews and to avoid using such expressions (Lamb, Sternberg, & Esplin, 1995, Lamb *et al.*, 1998; Poole & Lamb, 1998).

CONCLUSION

Several decades of research on the frailties and competencies of young witnesses have demonstrated the advantages of a developmentally sensitive approach to interviewing in terms of both how much information children provide and, importantly, its accuracy. Although the quality of children's reports are influenced by a number of factors pertaining to the children themselves and the events they have experienced, the ways in which interviewers behave and attempt to elicit information are critical. Valid reasons for caution about the accuracy of children's responses to suggestive questioning techniques or following exposure to coercive or highly suggestive prior interviews notwithstanding, even quite young children are able to provide reliable testimony about abusive experiences when questioned appropriately. As shown in this chapter, we can assert with confidence that although children clearly can remember incidents they have experienced, the relationship between age and memory is complex, with a variety of factors (including the interviewer's skills) influencing the quality of information provided. Clearly, children like adults, can be informative witnesses. It is often possible to obtain valuable information from children, but doing so requires careful investigative procedures as well as a realistic awareness of children's capacities and tendencies. However, we must also recognise that children may need help retrieving, structuring and reporting their experiences in an elaborative manner and there are a number of constructive approaches to interviewing that provide the appropriate support without degrading the quality of children's accounts. For example, when children understand their role as informants, the naivety of the interviewer, the importance of only reporting what they know and not guessing, the permissibility of "don't know" responses and of correcting an interviewer's mistakes, feel comfortable with the interviewer and have had an opportunity to practise talking about the past in a detailed manner, and when interviewers avoid relying on closed, leading or misleading questions, even very young children are able to provide meaningful and accurate accounts of their experiences. The onus is therefore on interviewers to ensure that they establish the optimal conditions for children to provide accurate and detailed accounts of even very distressing and traumatic, experiences. In this way, we can, in turn, maximise the likelihood that children's accounts will be heard and respected in courts of law and can be protected from their abusers, while innocent adults are not falsely accused.

How do Investigators Typically Interview Alleged Victims?

The research reviewed in the last chapter has clear implications for the structure and dynamics of forensic interviews with alleged victims of child sexual abuse and, to their credit, professional and expert groups have taken advantage of this knowledge when formulating guidance for investigative interviewers. In this chapter, we focus on the extent to which interviewers actually adhere to this advice when conducting investigative interviews with alleged victims.

As indicated in Chapter 2, many researchers have studied children's capacities to provide accurate information about their past experiences, while others have paid special attention to their suggestibility. In brief, the research shows that, although children clearly *can* remember incidents they have experienced, the relationship between age and memory is complex, with a variety of factors influencing the quality of information provided. The most important of these factors pertain to the interviewer's ability to *elicit* information and the child's willingness and ability to *express* it, rather than the child's ability to *remember* it. Clearly, it *is* often possible to obtain valuable information from children, but doing so requires careful investigative procedures, as well as a realistic awareness of their capacities and tendencies.

Informed by this burgeoning body of research, expert professional groups and individuals (e.g., American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC), 1990, 1997; Jones, 2003; Lamb, 1994; Lamb *et al.*, 1998; Home Office, 1992, 2002; Orbach, Hershkowitz, Lamb, Sternberg, & Esplin *et al.*, 2000; Poole & Lamb, 1998; Sattler,

1998; Warren & McGough, 1996) agree that children should be interviewed as soon as possible after the alleged offences by interviewers who themselves introduce as little information as possible while encouraging children to provide as much information as possible in the form of narratives elicited using open-ended prompts ("Tell me what happened."). Before substantive issues are discussed, interviewers are typically urged to explain their roles, the purpose of the interview, and the "ground rules" (for example, ask children to limit themselves to descriptions of events "that really happened" to them and to correct the interviewer, request explanations or clarification, and acknowledge ignorance, as necessary). Investigators are consistently urged to give priority to open-ended recall prompts and use recognition prompts ("Did he touch you?") as late in the interview as possible and only when needed to elicit undisclosed forensically relevant information.

The universal emphasis on the value of narrative responses elicited using open-ended prompts is rooted in the oft-replicated results of laboratory analogue studies demonstrating that information elicited using such prompts is much more likely to be accurate than information elicited using more focused recognition prompts, probably because open-ended questions require the respondent to *recall* information from memory, whereas more focused prompts often require the respondent to *recognise* one or more options suggested by the interviewer. Accuracy is much more difficult to establish in the field than in laboratory analog contexts, of course, because forensic interviewers seldom know what really happened, but the results of field studies in which accuracy was assessed confirm that, as in the laboratory, responses to open-ended questions posed by forensic interviewers are more likely to be accurate than responses to more focused prompts which are, in turn, more likely to be erroneous. Interviewers are also routinely advised to avoid the 'yes/no' and 'forced-choice' questions which, as explained in Chapter 2, are especially likely to elicit erroneous information from young children. Such questions may mislead children into accepting options describing non-experienced events, or suggestively encourage them to acquiesce to interviewer-introduced input. As similarly explained in the previous chapter, risky recognition questions are even riskier when addressed to children aged six and under, and thus forensic investigators need to make special efforts to use open-ended prompts when interviewing such young children. The emphasis on the value of open-ended prompts is also supported by evidence that, in forensic contexts, responses to individual free-recall prompts are three to five times more informative than responses to more focused prompts, as we show later in this chapter.

In discussing factors that enhance or inhibit children's abilities to describe experiences of sexual abuse, some researchers have voiced

concern that frequent and prolonged abuse may lead children to provide schematic reports of abuse rather than event-based accounts (Bekerian & Dennett, 1995; Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Lamb, Sternberg, & Esplin, 1994). This concern stems from research suggesting that when events are experienced frequently and routinely, it may be difficult to elicit descriptions of specific episodes or events (Bekerian & Dennett, 1993; Nelson, 1986). As with other life events, children may develop script-based memories when abuse has been repeated, and in such cases their accounts may blur into a "routine abuse script" (Hudson, 1988). It is unclear how many incidents of abuse need to occur before a child develops such a script, however, and what other factors may influence memories of repeated abusive experiences. Whether or not a child has developed a script memory, furthermore, the types of prompts employed by the interviewer may determine whether the child provides a summary description of all the events or detailed information about specific events. Unless interviewers clearly ask about specific incidents (by referring, for example, to "the first time", "the last time", or "the time you remember the best"), for example, children may only provide aggregate accounts, even if they can remember and describe specific events. Bekerian and Dennett (1993) further showed how the retrieval of information about repeated experiences may be impaired by source monitoring problems and the inability to isolate specific events in memory. As a result, children who have been abused repeatedly and thus have much information to impart may in fact provide sketchy accounts unless interviewed carefully in a style designed to tap episodic rather than script memory.

Prior to the mid 1990s, there had been no systematic field studies of the ways in which investigative interviewers questioned children although there has been some research on police interviews of adult witnesses (e.g., Fisher, Geiselman, Raymond, Jurkevich, & Warhaftig, 1987). Accordingly, Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.* (1996) set out to examine both the types of questions posed by interviewers and the informativeness of the children's responses to those prompts in the course of investigative interviews. A representative sample of audio-taped interviews was drawn from a pool of investigative interviews conducted by Israeli "youth investigators". Because the office is responsible for all investigative interviews of young victims, witnesses, and perpetrators in Israel, the Israeli Division of Correctional Services and Services for Youth in Distress (now labelled the "Child Investigation Unit") constitutes a unique context in which to investigate the validity and quality of children's allegations. Whereas laws and practices vary widely from jurisdiction to jurisdiction in the United States, the Israeli system includes strict and uniform procedures and regulations

regarding the interviewing of victims, witnesses, and perpetrators under the age of 14. Specially trained youth investigators employed by the division are the only individuals who are allowed to interview children. They are required to begin their investigation within 72 hours of the referral and to record their interviews. Children are routinely interviewed once, with an occasional supplementary interview.

TYPOLOGIES OF INTERACTIONS DURING INTERVIEWS

In their study, Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.* (1996) first developed a typology of interviewers' questions or prompts. With many clarifications and changes in terminology (for example, the type of utterance now called option-posing was initially and confusingly labelled "leading"), the same typology has been used in many of the studies described in this book. In each study, audio-taped records of the interviews are transcribed in full by native speakers of the language used in the interview and checked carefully to ensure their accuracy and completeness. Coders then focus on the portion of each interview concerned with substantive issues, thereby excluding any introductory exchange at the beginning of the interview or within the substantive portion, attempts to establish rapport with the child, digressions, and attempts at the end of the interview to discuss neutral topics. Coders review the transcripts and categorise each interviewer utterance, defined by a "turn" in the discourse or conversation, without distinction between questions and statements. The following ten categories appear sufficient to categorise all question or prompts in the substantive portion of the interviews.

1. *Introductory comments (such as, "My job is to talk to children about things that have happened to them.")* are distinguished because, although the introductory non-substantive portions of the interview are not coded, interviewers occasionally interject such procedural comments during the substantive portions of the interviews.
2. *Non-substantive utterances (e.g., "Are you thirsty?")* are not related to the general topic at issue in the interview.
3. *Anchors* are statements (usually questions) introducing a reference to extraneous events (e.g., a religious holiday or birthday) to help specify the time when the alleged incidents took place (e.g., "Did it happen before or after the school holidays?").
4. *Facilitators* include utterances like "OK", restatements of the child's previous utterance, and non-suggestive words of encouragement designed to keep the child talking informatively.

5. *Positive emotional referents* involve references to a current positive emotional state or to the emotional state at the time of the disclosure or possible disclosure ("You look very happy this morning!", for example). References to a positive emotional state at the time of the incident are not coded here, but as directive, leading, or suggestive utterances instead.

6. *Negative emotional referents* involve references to a current negative emotional state or to the emotional state at the time of the disclosure or possible disclosure. References to a negative emotional state at the time of the incident are not coded using this category.

7. *Invitations* use questions, statements, or imperatives to elicit open-ended free-recall responses from children. Such utterances do not delimit the child's focus except in a general way (for example, "And then what happened?").

8. *Directive utterances* refocus the child's attention on details or aspects of the alleged incident that the child has already mentioned, often using 'WH' questions which request additional information about some aspect of the event concerned (e.g. "What colour was that shirt?", when a shirt was previously mentioned).

9. *Option-posing utterances* focus the child's attention on details or aspects of the account that the child has not previously mentioned, but do not imply that a particular response is expected. They were called "leading" utterances by Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Boat *et al.*, 1996; Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.*, 1996; and Sternberg, Lamb, Hershkowitz, Esplin, Redlich, & Sunshine (1996), and involve "yes/no" and "forced-choice" questions when formulated in a way that does not imply the expected response, such as "Were your trousers on or off?".

10. *Suggestive utterances* are stated in such a way that the interviewer strongly communicates what response is expected (e.g. "He forced you to do that, didn't he?") *or* assumes details that have not been revealed by the child (e.g. *Child*: "We laid on the sofa". *Interviewer*: "He laid on you or you laid on him?").

Quite frequently, single turns in the dialogue included two or more statements or questions that could be coded differently. In such cases, coders employed a "trumping" system with "mixed" utterances assigned to the highest category defined by the numerical label in the above list. Thus if an invitation (7) was also suggestive (10), the utterances was coded as suggestive.

Whereas the above categories are used to code what the interviewers say, we have also tried to categorise and quantify the children's responses as well. The following six categories appear sufficient to

categorise all children's response in the substantive portion of the interviews:

a) Responsive utterances – those related to the specific topics (aspects or details of the allegation) suggested by the interviewer in the preceding utterance.
b) Unresponsive utterances – those that were not responsive to the interviewers' previous utterance but were related to the general topic of the investigation.
c) Digressions – those utterances that were not even related to the general topic of the investigation.
d) Requests for clarification or restatement.
e) Unclear utterances.
f) No answer.

In addition to coding the types of children's responses, raters tabulate the number of words in each utterance and then, employing a technique initiated by Yuille and Cutshall (1986), quantify the number of new details provided by the children. By definition, details involve the identification of individuals or objects, descriptions of their appearance or actions, and descriptions of relevant events or actions. Details are only counted when they added to the understanding of the target incident and its disclosure, and thus, restatements of facts are not counted.

DESCRIBING INTERVIEW DYNAMICS

The initial study by Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.*, 1996, involved 22 interviews conducted in Hebrew by 12 of the Israeli "youth investigators" statutorily mandated to conduct investigative interviews of alleged victims. The 22 interviews were selected from all interviews conducted by the investigators over a 24-month period so as to represent a variety of victims' ages (5 to 11 years) and a variety of interviewers. Interviews in which anatomically detailed dolls were used were excluded. In other respects, the selected transcripts represented a random sampling from the universe of sexual abuse allegations investigated throughout the country in the early 1990s. Although the interviewee may have talked to parents, friends, and relatives, the interviews included in the study were the first formal interviews of these children.

Most of the 3 563 substantive utterances spoken by the interviewers (an average of 162 substantive prompts per interview) were directive utterances, whereas a considerable number were option-posing utterances. Only 77 (2.2%) were invitations. Most (3 214, 87%) of the interviewers' utterances elicited relevant responses from the children

Table 3.1 Relative prominence of the different prompts used by investigators to elicit information from alleged victims

Study	Invitation	Directive	Option-posing	Suggestive
Lamb *et al.* (1996); Israel ($n = 22$)	3	57	30	10
Lamb *et al.* (1996); US ($n = 24$)	2	39	49	10
Sternberg *et al.* (1996); US ($n = 45$)	5	33	50	12
Sternberg *et al.* (2001); UK ($n = 119$)	7	54	33	6
Cederborg *et al.* (2000); Sweden ($n = 72$)	6	41	39	14

Note: Numbers in the table may differ from those in the publications because they have been prorated to include only utterances of the types included in this table; earlier reports also included other types of prompts, especially facilitators, which comprised 10 to 15% of the total number of prompts used by the interviewers. In Lamb *et al.*'s American "doll study" (1996), the rates appeared separately for interviews with and without dolls; the combined rates were estimated for the purpose of this table.

(see Table 3.1). The average response was six words long and yielded an average of two details and there was a high correlation (0.83) between the number of details and the length of the children's utterances, with approximately one detail provided for every three words that the children spoke, regardless of the type of interviewer utterance to which they were responding.

Invitations elicited significantly longer and more detailed responses than did directive, leading, or suggestive utterances by the interviewers (see Table 3.2). Not surprisingly, older children provided significantly longer and more detailed responses than the younger children, but the different interviewer prompts had similar effects on children's responses, regardless of age. The same results were also obtained when data from the first and second halves of the interviews were analysed separately, suggesting that invitations did not become progressively less effective as children "ran out" of new things to say.

These results confirmed expectations, based on the literature reviewed in the previous chapter, that open-ended questions or invitations would yield responses that were longer and more detailed than responses to any of the prompts that focused the child's attention (direct, option-posing, or suggestive utterances), and that younger children would provide fewer details and shorter responses to all types of utterances than older children. The most striking finding, however, was that the interviewers made very few invitations, even though each yielded much more information than the average specific question. In addition, of course, these results showed that the interviewers were

Table 3.2 Mean numbers of details and length (in words) of children's responses to the different types of prompts

	Invitation		Directive		Option-posing		Suggestive	
	Details	Words	Details	Words	Details	Words	Details	Words
Lamb *et al.* (1996) Israel	5.0	15.8	1.7	5.6	2.0	4.9	5.1	2.0
Lamb *et al.* (1996) US	9	20	2	5	1.8	3.5	1.5	5
Sternberg *et al.* (1996) US	8.5	22.1	1.8	6.1	1.9	5.4	1.6	5.1
Sternberg *et al.* (2001) UK	7.8	—	2.7	—	2.8	—	4.7	—
Cederborg *et al.* (2000) Sweden	3.6	—	1.9	—	2.1	—	3.4	—

Note: In Lamb *et al.*'s American doll study (1996), the means appeared separately for interviews with and without dolls; the combined means were estimated for the purpose of this table.

not following expert recommendations to rely as much as possible on open-ended questions, especially invitations, when questioning children about possible abuse.

Because we had ourselves provided training to many of these interviewers in the years before the study, we knew that they were very familiar with these recommendations, but we did not know whether interviewers in other countries might find it easier to follow such guidelines, not least, perhaps, because the Israeli's youth investigators had other responsibilities (e.g. probation) that might have distracted them. Over the next several years, we thus conducted descriptive studies in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Sweden using unselected samples of forensic interviews. Prompted by our results, which we summarise below, other researchers conducted similar descriptive analysis of interviews conducted in the United States, Finland, Canada, and Norway, each time reporting results that were very much in line with our own.

SUBSEQUENT DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES

Sternberg, Lamb, Hershkowitz, Esplin *et al.* (1996) studied 45 interviews conducted by six male detectives in the sheriff's department of

a small town in the south-eastern United States. Twenty-three of the interviews involved children who reported being abused on only one occasion, whereas 22 of the interviews involved children who reported being abused on three or more different occasions. The sample included all interviews from a two-year period that involved children (35 girls, 10 boys) ranging in age from 4 to 12 years old (they averaged just over 8 years) who made a clear allegation of sexual abuse by an identified adult and who specifically said that they had been abused only once *or* more than three times.

Lamb, Sternberg, Hershkowitz, Boat *et al.* (1996) examined 24 interviews – in 8 of which anatomically detailed dolls were not used and another 16 in which dolls were used. All were conducted by child protection service officers in the south-eastern United States. The protective service offices each provided videotapes of at least two recent investigative interviews of children whose sexual abuse had been alleged and 97 videotapes were collected in this way. Anatomical dolls were widely used in this state and interviews in most counties were routinely videotaped at the time. Eight interviews did not include anatomical dolls and these eight were each matched with two other interviews involving children of the same age and gender who had allegedly experienced similar events and who were interviewed using anatomical dolls. The children in the two groups averaged nearly 7 years and ranged in age from nearly 4 to 12 years. All were native English speakers.

Cederborg, Orbach, Sternberg, and Lamb (2000) studied 72 interviews of 4- to 13-year-old Swedish children (averaging nearly 9 years) by six experienced police officers (two males, four females) from one police district in Sweden. The interviews were selected from all 110 cases involving children between the ages of 4 and 13 years who were referred to these police officers between 1986 and 1995 for video-recorded interviews. Thirty-three of the original 110 cases were excluded because the children made no allegations, one because the child summarised abusive incidents by two different perpetrators, and four because the tape was of poor quality or had been misplaced.

Sternberg, Lamb, Davies, and Westcott (2001) studied interviews of 119 British children (86 girls, 33 boys) who were interviewed between 1994 and 1997 by police officers ($n = 108$) or social workers ($n = 11$) guided by the Home Office's (1992) Memorandum of Good Practice (MOGP) mentioned earlier. The children ranged in age from 4 to 13 years (the average was 8.5 years). Consistent with the MOGP, both police officers and social workers were present for many of the investigations but one typically took lead responsibility. In 55 interviews, only one professional was present. Thirteen collaborating police forces provided transcripts for this study, each providing nine interviews on average (*range* = 2 to 21).

The United States

In the study by Sternberg, Lamb, Hershkowitz, Esplin *et al.* (1996), a total of 4 518 interviewer utterances were identified. Most of these were option–posing (40%) or directive (28%) utterances and only 211 (5%) were invitations (see Table 3.1). Most of the interviewers' utterances elicited responsive utterances from the children and there were surprisingly few differences between interviews with children who reported one as opposed to three or more incidents of abuse. Interviews of the two types (single vs. multiple) did not differ with respect to the number of interviewer or child utterances, the number of words spoken by either the children or the interviewers, or the types of utterances that predominated.

Analyses focused on the five most common types of interviewer utterance (invitation, facilitator, leading, direct, and suggestive) showed the same pattern that had been evident in Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.*'s (1996) analysis of Israeli interviews (see Table 3.1). Open-ended invitations yielded responses that were approximately four times longer and up to three times richer in relevant details than responses to any of the three types of interviewer utterances that focused the child's attention: direct, option–posing, or suggestive utterances. (The number of details and the number of words spoken by the children in each response were again very highly correlated.) Facilitators usually punctuated narrative responses to open-ended questions, and thus the responses to facilitators were combined with the responses to invitations for some analyses focused on utterance type (in later studies, details following facilitators were attributed to the previous utterance).

As predicted, invitations also yielded more relevant or central details from children who reported multiple incidents of abuse than from children who reported being abused only once. These findings replicated those obtained by Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.* (1996) in the Israeli field study described earlier and are also consistent with reports of earlier laboratory studies focused on known or staged events (Dent & Stephenson, 1979; Goodman & Aman, 1990; Goodman, Hirschman *et al.*, 1991). Interestingly, children who experienced multiple incidents of abuse did not provide more relevant information than children who reported being abused only once, perhaps because open-ended probes were employed so rarely. Evidently, although many experts emphasise the value of open-ended questions, forensic investigators in the field (like the law enforcement officers studied by Sternberg *et al.* and the Israeli youth investigators studied by Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.*, 1996) have yet to incorporate such techniques.

There has been little research on the sequence in which questions are asked. Because interviewers might be expected to employ more invitations earlier in the interview, with more focused questions asked later in pursuit of clarification and further detail, however, Sternberg, Lamb, Hershkowitz, Esplin *et al.* (1996) statistically determined whether different types of utterances had different effects depending on where in the interview they occurred. In fact, the same results were obtained in analyses of data from the first half and analyses of data from the second half of the substantive portion of the interview, indicating that invitations did not become less productive as the interview progressed. As in Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.*'s (1996) study, however, the interviewers asked very few invitations, even though each open-ended question yielded more information than the average focused question. The latter were so much more numerous that the bulk of the forensically relevant information obtained by the interviewers was clearly obtained using these more specific and risky questions.

Craig, Scheibe, Raskin, Kircher, and Dodd (1999) conducted a similar study involving police interviews with 48 alleged victims who ranged in age from 3 to 16 years, and averaged just under 9. Craig and his colleagues were primarily interested in indices of credibility in the children's accounts, and their definitions of interviewer prompts differed from those used in our various studies. More than half of the utterances coded were either directive or option-posing focused questions, about a fifth were either invitations or facilitators, another fifth were compound questions (i.e., consisting of more than one prompt type), and about 5% were suggestive.

The United States' Anatomical Doll Study

The next field study involved interviews by American forensic social workers who frequently used anatomically detailed dolls in their interviews. Although the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC, 1995) has recommended that anatomical dolls should only be used by knowledgeable and experienced professionals, little is known about the actual skill level of the majority of professionals using anatomical dolls. This ignorance is especially alarming in light of the widespread popularity of the dolls, particularly among those conducting protective and investigative interviews that have major implications for decisions about children's custody and supervision (Conte, Sorenson, Fogarty, & Dalla Rosa, 1991).

The videotaped interviews studied by Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Boat *et al.* (1996) were initially gathered by Boat and Everson (1994,

1996) as part of an effort to describe and understand the utilisation of anatomical dolls in protective service investigations. Protective service agencies in a large south-eastern state provided copies of recent video-taped interviews. The agencies were not aware of Boat and Everson's interest in anatomical dolls, because one goal of their study was to see how frequently and typically the dolls were used in the participating counties.

The coding scheme was adapted from that described earlier, with two additional categories devised to represent nonverbal gestures and enactments:

Technical suggestions. This code was used: a) when nonverbal actions were not mentioned by the transcriber but were referred to by the interviewer; or b) when nonverbal actions were not described by the transcriber in as much detail as the interviewer implies. (For example: Interviewer: Where did he touch you? Child: [points to lower part.] Interviewer: On your private.)

Suggestive actions. This code was used when the interviewer demonstrated something with the dolls that the child had not demonstrated or described verbally. This code would be used, for example, if the interviewer removed the doll's clothes before asking (or being told) whether the perpetrator's or child's clothes were on or off at the time of the alleged incident.

As Lamb *et al.* (1996) reported, the average number of words spoken or details provided by children in the substantive portions of the interviews did not differ depending on whether (M = 467, 166 details) or not (M = 469 words, 180 details) dolls were used. Whether or not dolls were used, interviewers offered few of the recommended invitations and instead used many focused (direct, option-posing, and suggestive) utterances. The relative prominence of the different interviewer utterances did not change depending on whether or not dolls were used.

As in previous studies, furthermore, the different types of utterances were associated with differentially long and detailed responses (see Table 3.2) with invitations eliciting longer and more detailed responses than more focused (direct, leading, and suggestive) utterances. On average, responses were significantly longer and more detailed when dolls were *not* used than when they were employed. In addition, the superiority of invitations over more focused measures was especially marked when dolls were not used. The introduction of anatomical dolls, in other words, reduced the disparity between the length and richness of responses to invitations relative to more focused utterances.

Although children in the two groups were carefully matched, it is still possible that the decisions to use dolls were based on some systematic criteria, such as the child's apparent shyness. In order to determine whether investigators chose to use dolls when children seemed less talkative, we tabulated the number of utterances and the number of words spoken by the children in the pre-substantive portions of the interview, but found no significant differences, suggesting that pre-existing differences among children did not explain the adverse "effects" of doll usage.

Independent ratings of these interviews by Boat and Everson (1996) revealed that in all but one of these 16 interviews, the dolls were used as anatomical models for purposes of demonstration – that is, to facilitate the children's description of the alleged abusive events. That being the case, it was somewhat surprising that the average number of relevant details provided by the children was not greater when anatomical dolls were used than when they were not used. Indeed, inspection of the means shows that the children provided more, rather than fewer, details when the dolls were not used, although this difference was not significant. The average responses provided by the children were significantly briefer and less detailed when dolls were employed, furthermore, suggesting that the use of dolls tended to inhibit rather than facilitate informativeness. In part, the difference reflected the continuation of a non-significant tendency for these children to be less talkative than those whose interviews did not include dolls, although this difference appeared to be amplified rather than ameliorated by the introduction of the anatomical dolls. It may be that these interviewers introduced dolls in an effort to motivate reluctant children to be more informative. Only a random assignment experiment would permit us to determine whether the introduction of dolls was a reaction to uninformativeness or was a cause thereof. On the other hand, the basic interview process was not much different when anatomical dolls were employed: As in earlier field studies interviewers seldom used the much-recommended open-ended invitations even though invitations yielded longer and richer responses than more focused prompts did.

Sweden

Cederborg *et al.* (2000) then set out to determine whether Swedish forensic interviews were similar to those conducted in the other countries that have been studied. The Swedish Code of Judicial Procedures (SFS, 1942, p. 740) specifies how witnesses should be interviewed for forensic purposes. The Swedish provisions are formulated in a

general manner, without specific operational instructions, although they are in agreement with other professional recommendations. They emphasise that witnesses should be allowed to give spontaneous accounts in their own words before any focused questions are posed, and that questions which suggest the expected response should be avoided. The provisions are addressed to court professionals and not to police officers, however, even though police officers are typically the first to interview witnesses. Unfortunately, the Recommendations for Preliminary Investigations (1947, p. 948) compiled for Swedish prosecutors and police officers included very general statements about the administrative and procedural handling of cases, but ignored the sections of the Swedish Code of Judicial Procedures that specify desirable and undesirable question types. Except for some modifications in content and language, moreover, no changes regarding investigative techniques had been introduced since 1947. Exactly how Swedish police officers actually conduct their interviews had never been determined before Cederborg *et al.*'s (2000) study.

The police officers participating in the study received their regular three-year training at the police academy. During this period they attended four hours of lectures on the ways in which children should be interviewed, participated in discussions of the Recommendations for Preliminary Investigations, but did not have any supervised experience interviewing children before they started conducting forensic interviews.

The relative prominence of the different utterance types is displayed in Table 3.1. As in previous studies, invitations were quite rare (6%), while more focused comments were quite common. Together, option-posing and suggestive questions comprised 53% of the investigators' utterances As in the other studies, invitations elicited more (M = 3.6) details than directives (1.9 details), option-posing (2.1 details) or suggestive utterances (3.4 details). Because invitations were so rare, only 8% of the total number of details provided by the children were elicited by invitations, 35% were elicited by directive utterances, 41% were elicited by option-posing questions, and 16% were elicited by suggestive utterances.

The mean number of utterances before the interviewer posed the first option-posing or suggestive utterance was one, or only 2% of the total number of substantive utterances recorded. In 35 of the interviews, in fact, the very first interviewer utterance was suggestive, and in another 11, the first substantive prompt was option-posing. On average, children provided only 4.3 details (4% of the total) before the first option-posing or suggestive utterance, increasing the risk of contaminating information being produced later in the interview.

As Table 3.1 makes clear, the Swedish interviews in many ways resembled forensic interviews in Israel, the UK, and the USA. In all of these countries, interviewers seldom used open-ended invitations to prompt for information and tended to rely heavily on option-posing and suggestive utterances.

The British Study

Our next study involved forensic interviewers in England and Wales who had been trained to follow the Memorandum of Good Practice (MOGP), a comprehensive guide developed by researchers and practitioners who were very familiar with the literature described in the previous chapter. Because the MOGP is so thorough, its recommendations had been adopted throughout England and Wales, and extensive resources had been invested in training, so one might reasonably have expected that interviews conducted in England and Wales would be of higher quality than those conducted in countries where less specific guidelines were given to investigative interviewers. Sternberg, Lamb, Davies *et al.* (2001) thus explored the characteristics of investigative interviews conducted between 1994 and 1997 by officers from 13 different police departments in England and Wales. Children of diverse ages, alleging various types of sexual offences, were included in this study. Sternberg *et al.* (2001) predicted that, in contrast with the investigative interviews conducted in Sweden, the United States, and Israel, interviews conducted in England and Wales would be better organised and would include more of the rapport-building techniques recommended in the Memorandum. They also predicted that interviewers in England and Wales would ask a substantial number of open-ended questions and would postpone more focused types of questions, particularly option-posing and suggestive questions, until late in their interviews.

A total of 119 children (86 females), averaging just over 8¼ years old were interviewed by police officers (108) or social workers (11) in 13 constabularies guided by and trained to use the MOGP. Consistent with the MOGP, both police officers and social workers were present for many of the investigations although one typically took lead responsibility, but in 55 interviews, only one professional was present.

The MOGP recommended that the introductory phase of the interview be used to build rapport with the child, explain the ground rules for the interview, admonish the child to tell the truth, and assess the developmental capacities of the child. In the interviews studied by Sternberg *et al.* (2001), the importance of truth telling was discussed in almost all the interviews (98%) and nearly half (49%) of the children were encouraged to acknowledge uncertainty if they did not know the answer to a

question. Only 8% of the children were told that they had to provide a complete account of their experiences because the interviewers had not been present, however.

Twenty children (17%) disclosed details about the abusive event before the interviewers made any effort to elicit information about the abuse, and in 62 (52%) other cases, the substantive phase began with an invitation, as recommended in the MOGP. In other interviews, the substantive topic was introduced using direct (4; 3%), option-posing (16; 13%), or suggestive (17; 14%) prompts. Substantive sections that began with invitations were more likely than those starting with option-posing or suggestive prompts to continue with other open-ended invitations. The substantive sections of the interviews included an average of nearly 8 invitations (6%), 20 facilitators (13%), 71 directives (47%), 40 option-posing prompts (29%), and nearly 7 suggestive prompts (5%).

In order to avoid contaminating children's responses, the MOGP recommends that open-ended prompts be exhausted before more focused prompts are employed, and it was thus important to determine whether invitations were proportionately more common and focused questions less common earlier as opposed to later in the interviews. Invitations were quite uncommon and option-posing questions were introduced early in the interviews studied, however. On average, interviewers offered only six utterances before introducing their first option-posing question. By that time, children had provided only 8% (32 details) of the substantive details they were to provide. On the other hand, proportionally more invitations were asked in the first quartile than in the last three quartiles of the substantive phase. There were no differences between the first and last quartiles in the numbers of suggestive utterances, because these prompts appeared in all quartiles of the interview.

Children provided substantive details in response to 62% of the nearly 15 000 substantive interviewer prompts (excluding facilitators) tabulated. On average, children provided 402 substantive details (the range was from 23 to 1 499 details), of which 14% (65 details) were elicited using invitations, 46% (191details) using directive prompts, 30% (114 details) using option-posing prompts, and 9% (32 details) using suggestive prompts. In other words, nearly 40% of the information obtained was elicited using the option-posing or suggestive prompts which are known to yield less reliable information than open-ended questions. Sixty per cent of the children provided their first substantive details in response to invitations whereas others provided their first substantive details when asked direct (8%), option-posing (17%), or suggestive (15%) prompts. The children's first substantive responses included an average of 11 details (4% of the total number of details provided in the interview). As in our other studies, invitations elicited more details

on average (nearly eight details per prompt) than did responses to the other utterance types (directives, option-posing, and suggestive) combined (just under three details per prompt). On average, older children provided more details in response to all types of interviewer prompts than younger children did.

Because the MOGP guidelines were both specific and implemented nationwide, we had expected that MOGP-guided interviews would be superior to those conducted by forensic interviewers in countries lacking similarly explicit national guidelines. Unexpectedly, however, these forensic interviewers in Britain relied heavily on option-posing utterances and infrequently on open-ended utterances to elicit information from children. Instead of allowing children to describe their experiences from free-recall memory, option-posing questions were asked early in the interviews. Unlike interviewers in other countries, however, approximately two-thirds of the British interviewers introduced the substantive topic with an open-question, and in this regard thus conducted slightly "better" interviews than their peers. In other respects, however, introduction of the MOGP does not appear to have substantially improved the quality of investigative interviews relative to that of investigators in other countries.

Research by Other Investigators

Since publication of the studies described here, researchers in several other countries have also studied samples of investigative interviews. Their measures of interviewer strategies and children's responses have differed from ours in many ways, of course, but the overall patterns reported have been surprisingly similar.

Thoresen, Lonnnum, Melinder, Stridbeck, and Magnusson (2006) studied 91 interviews conducted between 1985 and 2002, mostly (85) by police officers, although a few were conducted by judges (four) or psychologists (two). The suspected victims ranged in age from just under 4 to just over 14 years, and averaged $8\frac{2}{3}$ years. Across the time period sampled, open-ended invitations were seldom asked, with the proportions never exceeding 2 to 3%. However, the numbers of prompts equivalent to those we call directives increased to about 14% in 1999–2002, and the numbers of risky prompts declined. Specifically, option-posing prompts declined from a peak of 43% in 1990–94 to 31% in 1999–2002 while the use of suggestive prompts declined from 20% in 1985–89 to 8% in both 1995–98 and 1999–2002. These results indicate that interviewers (perhaps sensitised by the enormous publicity surrounding a large Norwegian multi-victim case in 1992–94) learned to avoid using

the most risky prompts when interviewing alleged victims, but still did not make much use of the most desirable question types.

Two smaller and less representative samples of forensic interviews in Finland were studied by Korkman and her colleagues. One sample involved 27 interviews of 3- to 12-year-old children who were chosen for study because they were considered to be problematic by professionals, and the other sample comprised interviews of 43 3- to 8-year-old children in hospital clinics. It is easy to see why the interviews studied by Korkman, Santtila, and Sandnabba (2006) were considered problematic: Only 2% of the interviewer prompts were invitations, 22% were directives, 31% were option-posing, and a remarkable 31% were suggestive. In the second study, Korkman, Santtila, Westeraker, and Sandnabba (2006) used slightly different coding procedures, but the interviews seemed quite problematic as well, although they had not been selected on this basis: Nearly half of the prompts were either suggestive or option-posing, about a third were directives, and only 6% were invitations. In both studies, most of the information was elicited using risky prompts and in both studies, interviewers compounded the problems by using invitations or facilitators following fewer than 20% of the responses in which the children provided forensically relevant details.

CONCLUSION

The studies described in this chapter paint a remarkably consistent and sobering picture. Despite improvements over time, recognised by most professionals in the field and systematically documented by researchers such as Thoresen *et al*. (2006), the majority of investigative interviews conducted in the 1990s and early years of the new millennium do not reflect the application of the "best practice" recommendations provided by a long list of experts and professional groups. Whereas interviewers are universally advised to obtain as much information as possible using open ended prompts, these types of prompts seldom account for much more than a twentieth of the questions or prompts used by investigators and thus it is typical for more than 80% of the information gleaned from young children to be elicited using the riskier prompts that interviewers are urged to avoid, or use "only when necessary".

This disappointing state of affairs does not reflect lack of attention to the problem. Considerable resources have been invested in training interviewers, but the yield (as documented above) has been quite disappointing, with rather minor differences between, say, British police officers following the then state-of-the-art Memorandum of Good Practice and their peers in other countries (Sternberg, Lamb, Orbach,

Esplin, & Mitchell, 2001), between expert and novice interviewers in Sweden (Cederborg & Lamb, in press), or even between interviews conducted in Norway before and after the notorious case that was the focus of so much attention and anguish in that country (Thoresen *et al.*, 2006). Do these findings mean that good interviews must remain the exception rather than the rule?

The NICHD Investigative Interview Protocols for Young Victims and Witnesses

Because forensic interviewers often have extraordinary difficulty adhering to recommended interview practices in the field, as we showed in the previous chapter, the authors and their colleagues developed a structured interview procedure designed to translate professional recommendations into operational guidelines. We describe and explain this Protocol in this chapter, showing how the Protocol guides interviewers through all phases of the investigative interview, illustrating free-recall prompts and techniques to maximise the amount of information elicited from free recall memory. The Protocol itself is reproduced in Appendix 1.

As shown in Chapter 2, children clearly can remember incidents they have experienced, although the relationship between age and memory is complex, with a variety of factors influencing the quality of information provided. Perhaps the most important among these pertain to the interviewers' ability to elicit information and the child's willingness and ability to express it, rather than the child's ability to remember it. Like adults, children can be informative witnesses, and a variety of professional groups and experts have recognised this, offering the recommendations that we described in the previous chapter (e.g., American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC), 1990, 1997; Home Office, 1992, 2002; Jones, 2003; Lamb, 1994; Lamb *et al.*, 1998; Lamb, Orbach, Hershkowitz, Esplin, & Horowitz, 2007; Orbach, Hershkowitz, Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.*, 2000; Poole &

Lamb, 1998; Sattler, 1998a, 1998b; Warren & McGough, 1996). As pointed out in Chapter 3, there is a substantial degree of consensus among professional and expert groups regarding the ways in which investigative interviews should be conducted, and a remarkable convergence with the conclusions suggested by a close review of the experimental and empirical literature. Clearly, it is often possible to obtain valuable information from children, but doing so requires a realistic awareness of their capacities and tendencies, as well as careful investigative procedures.

Unfortunately, as shown in Chapter 3, these research-based and expert-endorsed recommendations are widely proclaimed but seldom followed, with forensic interviewers typically using open-ended prompts quite rarely, even though such prompts reliably elicit more information than more focused prompts do. To the distress of trainers and administrators, furthermore, such deviations from "best practice" were evident even when the interviewers had been trained extensively, were well-aware of the recommended practices, and often believed that they were adhering to those recommendations!

For this reason, Sternberg and her colleagues (1997) initially developed a partially scripted procedure that provided forensic interviewers and children, respectively, with practice posing and responding to open-ended prompts during the pre-substantive phase of investigative interviews. Following the training, the children's first substantive narratives were significantly longer and more informative than the narratives provided by children "trained" by responding to direct questions. However, the investigators thereafter reverted to focused questioning, using few open-ended questions and prompts during the rest of the interview. Because these findings suggested that interviewers needed guidelines to help them structure the entire interview, we decided to develop a fully structured investigative Protocol (See Appendix 1).

The Protocol is a flexibly structured guide incorporating a wide range of strategies believed to enhance the retrieval and accurate reporting of information about experienced events. In the next few paragraphs, we describe the strategies included in the Protocol, citing the research reports that document the utility of each component technique or strategy.

THE PRE-SUBSTANTIVE PART OF THE INTERVIEW

Supportive Environment

To promote a relaxed and supportive environment, first of all, interviewers are asked to ensure that the room is free of distractions such as other people, noise, toys, and incoming phone calls and to build rapport

with the child early in the interview. A supportive and distraction-free environment is believed to make child-witnesses feel more comfortable and thus more willing to disclose information while also enhancing their retrieval capabilities and accuracy (Cheung, 1997; Geiselman, Saywitz, & Bornstein, 1993; Powell & Thomson, 1994; Sternberg *et al.*, 1997). Likewise, the absence of toys, including dolls, prevents inadvertent suggestions or ambiguous statements relating to the pretend behaviour of the doll, rather than to the real experiences of the child.

Introductory Phase: Explaining the Purpose and Ground Rules

A number of steps are taken to maximise the children's competence and informativeness (Lyon & Saywitz, 1999; Plotnikoff & Woolfson, 1998; Snyder & Lindstedt, 1995; Saywitz, Snyder, & Lamphear, 1996; Sternberg *et al.*, 1997). In the introductory phase, the interviewer introduces him/herself and his/her role, clarifies the child's task (the need to describe events in detail and to tell the truth), and explains the ground rules and expectations. Interviewers attempt to empower children by explaining that the children are unique sources of information because the interviewers were not present when the alleged events took place and thus do not know what happened. Interviewers also instruct the children that they are obliged to tell the truth (Lyon & Saywitz, 1999) and to only report personally experienced events rather than events they heard about or imagined. Many cooperating law enforcement agencies also asked us to include questions probing young children's abilities to tell the difference between true and false statements. Children being interviewed using the Protocol can thus be asked whether several simple statements are true or false, for example.

Interviewers continue by explaining to children that they can and should admit lack of knowledge or lack of understanding, by saying "I don't remember", "I don't know", "I don't understand", and should correct the interviewer when appropriate. Clarifying the rules of communication is believed to diminish confusion and inaccuracy (Lamb *et al.*, 1999; Michaels, 1981; Sternberg *et al.*, 1997) while maximising the children's resistance to suggestion (Ceci & Bruck, 1995; Leichtman & Ceci, 1995).

The introductory phase thus proceeds as follows:

"Hello, my name is _____ and I am a police officer/child investigator. [Introduce anyone else in the room; ideally, nobody else will be present.] Today is _____ and it is now _____ o'clock. I am interviewing _____ at _____."

"As you can see, we have a video-camera and microphones here. They will record our conversation so I can remember everything you tell me. Sometimes I forget things and the recorder allows me to listen to you without having to write everything down."

"Part of my job is to talk to children [teenagers] about things that have happened to them. I meet with lots of children [teenagers] so that they can tell me the truth about things that have happened to them. So, before we begin, I want to make sure that you understand how important it is to tell the truth. [For younger children, explain: What is true and what is not true]."

"If I say that my shoes are red (or green) is that true or not true?"

Wait for an answer, then say:

"That would not be true, because my shoes are really [black/blue/etc.]. And if I say that I am sitting down now, would that be true or not true [right or not right]?"

Wait for an answer.

"It would be [true/right], because you can see I am really sitting down."

"I see that you understand what telling the truth means. It is very important that you only tell me the truth today. You should only tell me about things that really happened to you."

Pause.

"If I ask a question that you don't understand, just say, 'I don't understand.' Okay?"

Pause.

"If I don't understand what you say, I'll ask you to explain."

Pause.

"If I ask a question, and you don't know the answer, just tell me, 'I don't know.'"

"So, if I ask you, 'What is my dog's name?' [Or 'my son's name'] what would you say?"

If the child says, 'I don't know,' say:

"Right. You don't know, do you?"

If the child offers a guess, say:

"No, you don't know because you don't know me. When you don't know the answer, don't guess – say that you don't know."

Pause.

"And if I say things that are wrong, you should tell me. Okay?"

Wait for an answer.

"So if I said that you are a 2-year-old girl [when interviewing a 5-year-old boy, etc.], what would you say?"

If the child does not correct you, say:

"What would you say if I made a mistake and called you a 2-year-old girl [when interviewing a 5-year-old boy, etc.]?"

Wait for an answer.

"That's right. Now you know you should tell me if I make a mistake or say something that is not right."

Pause.

"So if I said you were standing up, what would you say?"

Wait for an answer.

"OK"

Rapport Building Phase

The rapport building phase that follows the introductory phase comprises two sections. The first is designed to create a relaxed, supportive environment for children and to establish rapport between children and interviewers, primarily by getting to know the child. Children are encouraged to talk openly about both positive and negative issues and are prompted to respond in detail to the gentle questions provided by an attentive and manifestly interested person.

"Now I want to get to know you better."

"Tell me about things you like to do."

If the child gives a fairly detailed response, the interviewer skips past the next prompt, but if the child does not answer, gives a short answer, or gets stuck, the interviewer is advised to say:

"I really want to know you better. I need you to tell me about the things you like to do."

"Tell me more about [activity the child has mentioned in his/her account. Avoid focusing on TV, videos, and fantasy]."

Narrative Training Phase

Because children's narrative style is acquired through interactions with adults and is shaped by adults' expectations (Fivush & Shukat, 1995), interviewers need to make children aware how much detail is expected of them, while 'training' them to provide more spontaneous descriptive responses and to elaborate on their narratives about experienced events (Saywitz & Snyder, 1996; Saywitz, Snyder, & Nathanson, 1999; Sternberg *et al.*, 1997, 2002; Sternberg, Lamb, Orbach *et al.*, 2001). This training should enhance the amount of event-specific information retrieved and minimise the skeletal descriptions typical of generic statements and scripts (Bauer & Fivush, 1992; Lamb *et al.*, 1999; Nelson, 1986), and is accomplished in the Protocol by encouraging children to elaborate on issues discussed in the rapport building phase, thus continuing the rapport building process. Saywitz and her colleagues (Saywitz & Geiselman, 1998; Saywitz & Goodman, 1996; Saywitz & Snyder, 1996; Saywitz *et al.*, 1999) developed a technique for "narrative elaboration" in which visual cues were used as open-ended refocusing prompts to elicit information about events, actions, people, locations, and time. Although effective in eliciting more event information, this technique may be inappropriate in forensic settings where the timing of the cues relative to the disclosure of relevant information would influence their suggestiveness and thus their suitability. Instead, Sternberg and her colleagues' findings (1997) showed that practice responding to open-ended prompts about neutral experienced events in the pre-substantive phase allowed children to produce more information from recall memory in response to the first substantive prompt in forensic settings. In forensic settings, building on these findings, Hershkowitz and her colleagues (1998) extended the pre-substantive training to include clarification of communication rules and a more extended practice with detail-enhancing investigative techniques. Attempting to provide children with a task similar to the one they will have to perform in the substantive phase of the interview, child witnesses were encouraged to provide detailed accounts of neutral experienced events in response to open-ended interviewer utterances and were prompted to provide more information using open-ended refocusing probes. Interviewers were instructed to introduce these open-ended techniques early in the pre-substantive part of the interview when training children to provide reports from episodic memory. All of these strategies were incorporated into the Protocol.

Before the interview, the interviewer is advised to identify a recent event the child experienced (first day of school, birthday party, holiday, celebration, etc.) so that s/he can then ask questions about that event. If possible, interviewers choose an event that took place at about the same time as the alleged or suspected abuse. If the alleged abuse took place during a specific day or event, interviewers should ask about a different event. The interaction should proceed as follows:

"I want to know more about you and the things you do. A few [days/weeks] ago was [holiday/ birthday party/ the first day of school/ other event]. Tell me everything that happened on [your birthday, Easter, etc.]."

After the child responds, the interviewer says:

"Think hard about [activity or event] and tell me what happened on that day from the time you got up that morning until [some portion of the event mentioned by the child in response to the previous question]."

This prompt is repeated as often as needed, as are:

"And then what happened?"

"Tell me everything that happened after [some portion of the event mentioned by the child] until you went to bed that night."

"Tell me more about [activity mentioned by the child]."

and

"Earlier you mentioned [activity mentioned by the child]. Tell me everything about that."

In some cases, this gentle probing of a single event is sufficient, and the child seems comfortable with the interviewer and familiar with his/her role as informant by this stage. In such cases, the interviewer may proceed to the substantive section (below) after saying:

"It is very important that you tell me everything you remember about things that have happened to you. You can tell me both good things and bad things."

If the child gives a poor description of the event or seems ill-at-ease, more practice and conversation is necessary, so the interviewer continues to prompt discussions of neutral experienced events:

"I really want to know about things that happen to you. Tell me everything that happened yesterday, from the time you woke up until you went to bed."

After an initial response, the interviewer says in a supportive way:

" I don't want you to leave anything out. Tell me everything that happened from the time you woke up until [some activity or portion of the event mentioned by the child in response to the previous question]."

As before, follow-up prompts can be used as often as necessary:

"Then what happened?"

"Tell me everything that happened after [some activity or portion of the event mentioned by the child] until you went to bed."

"Tell me more about [activity mentioned by the child]."

"Earlier you mentioned [activity mentioned by the child]. Tell me everything about that."

If the child does not provide an adequately detailed narrative about yesterday, interviewers may repeat these questions about today, using "The time you came here" as the closing event.

Finally, in an effort to remind the child of the need to talk only about actually experienced events, interviewers using the Protocol conclude the pre-substantive exercises by saying:

"It is very important that you tell me everything about things that have really happened to you."

THE SUBSTANTIVE PART OF THE INTERVIEW

Following the pre-substantive phase, the interviewer attempts to shift the child's focus to the substantive issues as non-suggestively as possible so that the recollection process can commence.

The first two prompts used in this transition are completely open:

"Now that I know you a little better, I want to talk about why [you are here] today."

If the child starts to answer, making reference to material that would be a cause for concern, the interviewer immediately says "Tell me everything about that". If not, the interviewer says:

"I understand that something may have happened to you. Tell me everything that happened from the beginning to the end."

If the child does not make an allegation, however, the interviewer is urged to say:

"As I told you, my job is to talk to kids about things that might have happened to them. It is very important that you tell me why [you are here/ you came here/ I am here]. Tell me why you think [your mum, your dad, your grandmother] brought you here today [or why you think I came to talk to you today]."

Although a substantial minority of suspected victims never report abuse when first interviewed (see Chapter 8), the vast majority of those who do disclose (more than 80% in the field studies described by Sternberg, Lamb, Orbach *et al.,* 2001 and Orbach *et al.* 2001) did so in response to one of these input-free (completely open) prompts. Only if the child fails to identify the target event/s in response to either of these input-free prompts does the interviewer employ progressively more focused prompts to identify the suspected abuse when there is good reason to believe that the child was abused and that the risk of damage caused by continued abuse is likely to be greater than the risk of focusing attention on abuse when none occurred.

"As I told you, my job is to talk to kids about things that might have happened to them. It is very important that you tell me why [you are here/ you came here/ I am here]. Tell me why you think [your mum, your dad, your grandmother] brought you here today [or 'why you think I came to talk to you today']."

And, thereafter:

"I've heard that you talked to [a doctor/ a teacher/ a social worker/ any other professional] at [time/location]. Tell me what you talked about."

If the child does not make an allegation but injuries or marks are visible, or the interview takes place right after a medical examination, the interviewer might say:

"I see [I heard] that you have [marks/ injuries/ bruises] on your ———. Tell me everything about that."

If the child does not respond to this prompt, or there are no known injuries, the interviewer would ask:

"Has anybody been bothering you?"

Followed, if necessary by:

"Has anything happened to you at [location/time of alleged incident]?"

Note that this prompt refers to the alleged location/time of the abuse without mentioning the name of the suspect or any details of the suspected abuse in order to minimise possible contamination.

If the child does not confirm or does not make an allegation, the interviewer may make one final bid:

"Did someone do something to you that wasn't right?"

At this stage, if the alleged victim has not made an allegation, we recommend that the interviewer pause to consider whether to abort the interview, perhaps proceeding on another occasion. As we reported earlier, few suspected victims disclose abuse in response to these more focused prompts, all of which have attendant risks, although they have been scripted to be as innocuous as possible. In some cases, however, the investigator may have good reason to believe that the child has been abused and may need to explore the possibility further to avoid the child remaining in a home or setting where he/she may be abused further. In such circumstances, the investigator may decide to press on, trying a last few frankly though minimally suggestive prompts to see whether the child will disclose.

Investigators are advised, in case they decide to go ahead, that they should have formulated specific versions of the following questions, using the facts available to them, before the interview. Investigators should ensure that they suggest as few details as possible to the child. If they haven't formulated these questions in advance, investigators are urged to take a break to formulate them carefully before proceeding. Here are some examples:

"Did somebody [briefly summarise allegations or suspicions without specifying names of alleged perpetrator or providing too many details]." (For example, 'Did somebody hit you?' or 'Did somebody touch your wee/ pee/ [private parts]?'

"Your teacher [the doctor/psychologist/neighbour] told me /showed me [that you touched other children's wee/pee/ a picture that you drew], and I want to find out if something may have happened to you. Did anybody [briefly summarise allegations or suspicions without specifying the name of the alleged perpetrator or providing too many details]." [For example: "Did somebody in your family hit you?" or "Did somebody touch your wee/pee/other private parts of your body?")]

If the child confirms or makes an allegation, the interviewer says "Tell me everything about that."

If the child does not confirm or does not make an allegation, the investigator should turn attention to a neutral event (see below) and terminate the interview, leaving open the possibility of another interview at a later date.

THE FREE RECALL PHASE

When an allegation is made, the free recall phase begins with the first substantive invitation ("Tell me everything that happened from the beginning to the end as best you can remember"), followed by open-ended prompts ("Then what happened?", "Tell me more about that") aimed at eliciting spontaneous recall accounts of the alleged incident/s.

If the child is under the age of six, the allegation is repeated in the child's own words, without providing details or names that the child hasn't mentioned, and the interviewer then says:

"Tell me everything about that".

Interviewers continue to ask "Then what happened?" or "Tell me more about that" as often as needed until the child communicates that he/she has provided a complete description of the alleged incident.

Because their responses are briefer than those of older children, however, 4- to 6-year-olds require more prompts in order to elicit as full an account as possible (see Chapter 6) yet they often have difficulty responding to the most general open-ended invitational prompts (i.e., utterances requesting that the interviewees report everything they remember about something, e.g., "What happened?"). Unfortunately, many interviewers react by using more focused and even leading (suggestive) prompts (e.g., "So did he put his finger in your pee pee?") when questioning young children, even though such prompts are more likely to elicit inaccurate information. Instead of resorting to these prompts, cued invitations (invitations that make reference to information already provided by the children, e.g., "You said that he touched your pee pee. Tell me more about that.") are employed in the Protocol. As reported more fully in Chapters 5 and 6, 4- to 8-year-old alleged victims provide considerable amounts of forensically relevant information in response to cued invitations, which thus represent productive alternatives to risky focused questions (e.g., "So did he put his finger in your pee pee?") when general invitations appear to be ineffective. By structuring recall of experienced events, associating them with details that have been mentioned by the child, the cued invitation technique enhances the capacity of young children to reconstruct past events and elaborate upon their narrative accounts, avoiding interviewer contamination during the recall. Interestingly, action-based cues (e.g., "Tell me more about the touching.") were consistently more effective than all other types of cues, regardless of age, in Lamb *et al.*'s (2003) study of 4- to 8-years-olds.

Open-ended questions and prompts like those suggested below are thus used exhaustively to elicit narrative information from children at all ages, with focused questions only used at the end of the questioning phase to elicit essential information that is still missing. The Protocol also recommends returning to open-ended questioning mode following confirmatory responses to focused questions, a practice labelled as "pairing". In addition, contextual cueing (references to events, actions, people, places or things mentioned by the child) and time segmentation (requests for information about blocks of time demarcated by actions or events mentioned by the child) are used throughout the interview as open-ended techniques to refocus children on material they have disclosed before requesting elaboration using open-ended invitations (i.e., utterances requesting that the interviewees report everything they remember about something). Here are some examples, each of which can be employed as often as needed to ensure that all parts of the incident are elaborated.

"Think back to that [day/ night] and tell me everything that happened from [some preceding action mentioned by the child] until [the most recent action described by the child]."

"Tell me more about [person/object/ activity mentioned by the child]."

"You mentioned [person/ object/ activity mentioned by the child]; tell me everything about that."

If the interviewer is confused about certain details mentioned by the child (for example, about the sequence of events), it may help to say:

"You've told me a lot, and that's really helpful, but I'm a little confused. To be sure I understand, please start at the beginning and tell me [how it all started/ exactly what happened/ how it all ended/ etc.]."

When There May Have Been Multiple Incidents

Forensic interviewers need to elicit information from event-specific memories of the incident(s) under investigation, rather than generic statements, especially when interviewing children who have experienced multiple incidents of abuse. Like adults, unfortunately, children tend to report features common to multiple incidents on the basis of features shared by all, without elucidating the distinctive features of each specific event (Bauer & Fivush, 1992; Hudson *et al.*, 1992; Nelson & Gruendel, 1986). Interviewers must thus communicate the need for accounts of specific events and direct children to recount events that are most accessible to memory, such as those that occurred first or last in

a series of incidents. The short delay between the last incident and the time of the interview makes it more accessible to memory (Flin *et al.*, 1992; Poole & White, 1993) and the diminished opportunities for post-event contamination might also enhance the accuracy of the memories associated with it. On the other hand, because the first incident was encoded before a general scheme had been developed, it might be more accessible to memory than later incidents. Like the first of many incidents, the specific distinctive features of unusual incidents should be better remembered and more easily retrieved than specific features of other incidents that fit a general script (Davidson & Hoe, 1993).

As soon as children complete their initial narratives, therefore, interviewers prompt them to determine whether the incident occurred "one time or more than one time" and proceed to secure information about a specific incident by communicating the need for accounts of specific incidents and directing children to recount those events that are most accessible to memory.

"Tell me everything about the last time [the first time/the time in [some location]/the time [some specified activity] another time you remember well] something happened."

Further prompting involves one or more of the following open-ended prompts, all of which can be repeated, if necessary, to obtain a complete account of the event being described:

"And then what happened?"

"Tell me more about that."

"Think back to that [day/night] and tell me everything that happened, from [preceding events mentioned by the child] until [alleged abusive incident as described by the child]."

"Tell me more about [person/object/activity mentioned by the child].

"You mentioned [person/object/activity mentioned by the child]. Tell me everything about that."

Follow up Questions

If some central details of the allegation are still missing or unclear after exhausting the open-ended questions, the interviewer may need to ask direct questions. It is important to pair open invitations with direct questions whenever appropriate. In general, interviewers are taught to first focus the child's attention on the detail mentioned, and then ask the direct question:

"You mentioned [person/object/activity], When/what/where [Completion of the direct question]?"

For example:

"You mentioned you were at the shops. Where exactly were you? [Pause for a response] Tell me about that shop."

"Earlier you mentioned that your mother 'hit you with this long thing'. What is that thing? [Pause for a response] Tell me about that thing."

"You mentioned a neighbour. Do you know his/her name? [Pause for a response] Tell me about that neighbour."[Do not ask for a description.]

"You said that one of your classmates saw that. What was his/her name? [Pause for a response] Tell me what he was doing there."

"You mentioned [person/object/activity], [How/when/where/who/which/what] [Completion of the direct question.]"

Questions to Avoid

Whereas some factors enhance children's retrieval, others impede children's competency and increase the likelihood of error (Bruck & Ceci, 1995, 1996; Ceci & Bruck, 1995; Ceci & Crotteau-Huffman, 1997; Ceci, Huffman, Smith, & Loftus, 1996; Ceci, Leichtman, & Bruck, 1995). For example, interviewing strategies and techniques that are suggestive (such as the use of props or toys) decrease source monitoring and increase error (Salmon *et al.*, 1995; Salmon & Pipe, 1997). Other error-inducing interview practices include verbal prompts that encourage children to imagine (Ceci & Bruck, 1995; Lamb *et al.*, 1995; Poole & Lamb, 1998), reliance on option-posing or suggestive prompts (Dale *et al.*, 1978; Leichtman & Ceci, 1995; Wood *et al.*, 1998), and the inclusion of "Yes/No" questions (Bell, 1984; Goodman & Aman, 1990; O'Callaghan & D'Arcy, 1989; Peterson & Biggs, 1997; Peterson *et al.*, 1999; Price & Goodman, 1990; Saywitz *et al.*, 1991). The negative effect of such practices are aggravated when children are very young and when the error-inducing practices occur early in the substantive portion of the interview. In addition to using techniques that facilitate information retrieval, therefore, interviewers should avoid techniques that impede retrieval or induce error.

Break

After the open-ended questioning we have described – ideally before asking any potentially contaminating questions – interviewers are encouraged to say:

"Now I want to make sure I understood everything and see if there is anything else I need to ask. I will just [think about what you told me/go over my notes/go and check with N]."

During the break, the interviewer reviews the information received to determine whether there is any missing information, and plans the rest of the interview, formulating focused questions in detail, preferably in writing.

After the break, the interviewer begins to elicit additional important information that has not been mentioned by the child, asking additional open-ended and direct questions, as described above. Interviewers are encouraged to go back to open-ended questions ("Tell me more about that") after asking each direct question. Only after these questions do interviewers proceed to ask questions about topics not mentioned by the child.

Interviewers are advised to ask these focused questions only if they have already tried other approaches and still feel that some forensically important information is missing. It is very important to pair open invitations ("Tell me all about that") whenever possible. In the case of multiple incidents, interviewers direct the child's attention to the relevant incidents in the child's own words, asking focused questions only after giving the child an opportunity to elaborate on central (allegation specific) details. Before shifting attention to the next incident, interviewers make sure that they have obtained all the missing details about each specific incident.

The general format of questions focused on information that has NOT been mentioned by the child is as follows:

"When you told me about [specific incident identified by time or location] you mentioned [person/object/activity]. Did/was [focused questions]?"

Whenever appropriate, the interviewer offers an invitation after the child responds. "Tell me all about that."

Examples include:

"When you told me about the time in the basement, you mentioned that he took off his trousers. Did something happen to your clothes?" [Pause for a response] "Tell me all about that."

"When you told me about the last time, you mentioned that he touched you. Did he touch you over your clothes?" [Pause for a response] "Tell me all about that."

"Did he touch you under your clothes?" [Pause for a response] "Tell me all about that."

"You told me about something that happened on the playground. Did somebody see what happened?" [Pause for a response] "Tell me all about that."

"Do you know whether something like that happened to other children? [Pause for a response]" "Tell me all about that."

"You told me about something that happened in the barn. Do you know when that happened?"

If child fails to mention information the interviewer expected, it may sometimes be necessary to use other potentially contaminating questions to prompt information. Quite frequently, for example, the child has talked to a friend or parent, but fails to mention some details when formally interviewed, perhaps because s/he is embarrassed.

If the interviewer knows of conversations in which the information was mentioned, the interviewer says:

"I heard that you talked to [ ] at [time/place]. Tell me what you talked about."

If the child does give some more information, the interviewer would then say:

"Tell me everything about that."

If the interviewer knows details about prior disclosures and the information has not been mentioned in this interview, s/he would say:

"I heard [s/he told me] you said [summarise allegation, specifically but without mentioning incriminating details if possible]. Tell me everything about that."

Following up with other open-ended prompts, such as "Tell me about that."

If something was observed, the interviewer might say:

"I heard that someone saw [ ]. Tell me everything about that."

Following up with other open-ended prompts, such as "Tell me about that."

INFORMATION ABOUT THE DISCLOSURE

Although it was not initially included in the Protocol, experiences in the field led us to develop a portion of the interview concerned with

the disclosure history in part because this often provided investigative leads that could be followed in attempts to better understand and document exactly what happened to the child. This portion of the interview follows the substantive portion of the interview and begins:

"You've told me why you came to talk to me today. You've given me lots of information and that really helps me to understand what happened."

If the child has mentioned telling someone about the incident(s), s/he is asked:

"Tell me everything you can about how [the first person mentioned by the child] found out."

"Tell me more about that." These prompts are used whenever any of the prompts in the following sequence lead the child to mention a disclosure.

If child hasn't mentioned telling anyone, the interviewer probes about possible immediate disclosure by saying:

"Tell me what happened after [the last incident]." [Pause to allow a reply] "And then what happened?"

"Does anybody else know what happened?" [Pause to allow a reply] "Who?"

"Now I want to understand how other people found out about [the last incident]."

OR

"Who was the first person besides you and [the perpetrator] to find out about [alleged abuse as described by the child]?"

If the child describes a conversation, s/he is asked:

"Tell me everything you talked about."

Before being asked:

"Does anyone else know about [alleged abuse as described by the child]?

"Tell me more about that."

If the child describes a conversation, s/he is again asked:

"Tell me everything you talked about."

The entire section can be repeated with respect to each of the incidents described by the child.

CLOSURE

The interviewer completes the questioning phase by asking children whether they have additional information to report before thanking them for their cooperation and shifting the discussion to a neutral topic for closure:

"You have told me lots of things today, and I want to thank you for helping me."

"Is there anything else you think I should know?"

"Is there anything you want to tell me?"

"Are there any questions you want to ask me?"

"If you want to talk to me again, you can call me at this phone number." [The interviewer hands the child a card with the interviewer's name and phone number.]

"What are you going to do today after you leave here?"

The child and interviewer then talk for a couple of minutes about a neutral topic.

VARIANTS OF THE PROTOCOL

Reinstating the Context

The Protocol was initially developed for interviews with alleged victims of sexual abuse, and then adapted for use with alleged victims of both physical and sexual abuse. Variants of the Protocol have also been developed to assess and systematically evaluate the effects of physical and mental context reinstatement in forensic investigations of alleged victims of sexual abuse. In theory, retrieval should be easier when the context in which the event was experienced/encoded is similar to the conditions in which memories are being retrieved because accessible facets of a memory trace should bring to awareness other features that are not otherwise accessible. The greater the overlap between retrieval cues and encoding features, the greater the expected effectiveness of the cues in eliciting further details from memory (Tulving, 1983; Underwood, 1969). As a result, reinstatement of the encoding context should provide event-related cues that facilitate access to event information and thus enhance the likelihood of recollection.

Physical Context Reinstatement (PCR) was accomplished by interviewing victims at the scene of the alleged crime (Orbach, Hershkowitz, Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.*, 2000). All PCR interviews tightly followed the standard investigative protocol (described above) except that after the pre-substantive part of the interview was completed in an office, children who made an allegation during the transition to the substantive phase were interrupted and invited to accompany the interviewer to the scene of the alleged crime, where they were interviewed about substantive issues. Upon arrival at the scene, children in this group were asked to "Look around, try to remember the time you were here with [the perpetrator, as named by the child] and tell me everything that happened from the moment you got here." Those instructions were repeated if the children's responses were brief.

Hershkowitz *et al.* (1998) and Orbach, Hershkowitz, Lamb, Sternberg, and Horowitz (2000) studied forensic interviews with alleged witnesses of sexual abuse conducted at the scene of the crime to provide a comparison of the structure and informativeness of scene interviews with interviews of similar cases conducted at the investigators' office and examine whether the contextual cues provided by the scene of alleged incidents facilitated the recall of information by alleged victims of child sexual abuse. Their analyses focused on the effects of interview location, age, delay between incident and interview, number of reported incidents, and familiarity with the scene on the number of details provided in office interviews and at the scene. The results of the study are described in the next chapter.

Whereas PCR involved a visit to the scene of the alleged crime, which is not always possible or desirable for a number of reasons, Mental Context Reinstatement (MCR) involved a guided mental reconstruction of the setting in which the alleged event occurred with the aim of achieving a similar convergence between the contexts at the time of retrieval and at the time of encoding. In the research we conducted (Hershkowitz *et al.*, 2001, Hershkowitz, Orbach, Lamb, Sternberg, & Horowitz, 2002), the MCR instructions were inserted into open-ended invitations in both the pre-substantive and the substantive portions of the standard Investigative Protocol, with children asked to "close your eyes and think about that time, as if you were there again. [Pause] Think about what was happening around you. [Pause]. Think about the weather and how you felt. [Pause] Think of what sounds or voices you could hear [Pause] and what special smells you could smell [Pause]." Children who gave brief descriptions were encouraged to retrieve further information and the context reinstating instructions were repeated. Hershkowitz *et al.* (2001) studied forensic interviews with alleged witnesses of sexual abuse using these MCR procedures, and later (Hershkowitz *et al.* (2002)

compared the relative effectiveness of physical and mental context using data derived from forensic interviews of alleged child abuse victims. Both sets of results are described in the next chapter.

Interviewing Suspected Witnesses of Sexual Abuse

Impressed by the utility of the Protocol when interviewing alleged victims, youth investigators in Israel began modifying it for use when interviewing young witnesses. Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Hershkowitz, and Horowitz (2003) compared the structure and informativeness of interviews with witnesses and alleged victims of similar incidents and these results are discussed in Chapter 5.

CONCLUSION

The Protocol was developed after it became clear that interviewers had difficulty following the guidelines that had been prepared by various expert groups and individuals. Unlike these rather general guidelines, the Protocol was much more detailed and provided very specific examples of the sorts of questions that interviewers should use at specific stages during the course of the interview. Although many of these examples were scripted, the scripting was generally in the form of a "stem," which the interviewer had to adapt to accommodate the details and circumstances of the specific case and, most importantly, what the child had already said. The Protocol helped interviewers structure their interviewers in ways that allowed them to address all important issues in an appropriate sequence – introducing the roles of the interviewer and informant, explaining the ground rules, establishing rapport, practicing responses to repeated demands for unusually detailed descriptions of experienced events, non-suggestive introduction of the incident under investigation, and examination of the disclosure process.

The flexible structure proved comforting to interviewers once they had been trained, and allowed them to improve the quality of their interviews dramatically, as we show in the next chapter. So pleased were they, in fact, that variants of the protocol were developed for use with witnesses (rather than victims) as well. Research documenting the usefulness of Protocol and its variants is described in the next chapter.

Does Use of the Protocol Affect the Way Investigators Interview Alleged Victims and Witnesses?

In this chapter, we turn our attention to field studies designed to determine whether interviewers using the Protocol described in Chapter 4 indeed conduct interviews that conform better to the universally recognised "good practices" described in Chapter 3. As we report in some detail below, independent field studies in four different countries (Israel, the US, the UK, and Canada) demonstrate convincingly that interviewers using the Protocol use at least three times more desirable open-ended prompts and many fewer risky and suggestive prompts than they do when exploring comparable incidents, involving children of the same age, without the Protocol, and that the children, in turn, provide much more forensically relevant information (including disclosures) that is more likely to be accurate because of the ways in which it is elicited. In other words, the Protocol demonstrably achieves its objectives: its use leads interviewers to conduct interviews that conform to recognised good practice *and* encourages young interviewees to provide information that is more likely to be accurate than the information provided by children being questioned by investigators not following the Protocol.

Each of the studies described in this chapter was designed to assess the effectiveness of the flexibly structured Protocol. We expected that use of the Protocol would affect the behaviour of both the interviewers and the children they were interviewing. As far as the interviewers were concerned, we predicted that in Protocol interviews: a) The number and proportion of open-ended prompts would be

significantly higher in both the pre-substantive and the substantive portions; b) The numbers and proportion of pre-substantive preparatory utterances would be significantly higher; and that c) Proportionately more desirable prompts would be offered by interviewers in the substantive portion prior to the first option-posing utterance, than in non-Protocol interviews. With respect to the children's performance, we predicted that in Protocol interviews : d) The total number of substantive details provided by children would be significantly higher; e) Both the total number of substantive details and the proportion of details provided by children in their first narrative (out of the total number of substantive details) would be significantly higher; f) More of the substantive details provided by children would be elicited by open-ended utterances; g) The number and proportion of substantive details retrieved by children prior to the first option-posing utterance (i.e., interviewer input) would be significantly higher; and that h) Children would provide more detailed accounts of neutral events in the pre-substantive portion of the interview, than children in the non-Protocol condition.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE FOUR FIELD STUDIES

Study 1: Israel

In the first study, we compared 55 Protocol-guided forensic interviews of alleged sexual abuse victims with 50 non-Protocol forensic interviews, conducted by the same 6 experienced youth investigators (2 male, 4 female) in Israel (Orbach *et al.*, 2000). These youth investigators all had undergraduate degrees in social work and were employed by the Israeli Ministry of Labour and Welfare as the only professionals authorised to conduct forensic interviews of children (alleged victims, witnesses, or offenders) under 14 years of age. The six were senior investigators, each drawn from one of the six main geographical regions in Israel. The 55 children (43 girls and 12 boys) in the Protocol group and the 50 children (30 girls and 20 boys) in the non-Protocol group ranged in age from 4 to 13 years and averaged just over 9 years in each group.

The cases included in the Protocol group were drawn from the pool of sex-abuse cases involving 4- to 13-year-old children that were referred to these six investigators during 1995, provided that the interviewers followed the Protocol and that the cases could be matched with comparable cases investigated by the same interviewers before the Protocol was introduced. Three of the 58 cases originally considered for inclusion

were excluded because the interviewers did not follow the Protocol. In no cases were interviewers forced to abort the interviews because the children failed to cooperate.

The cases included in the non-Protocol group were drawn from among investigations referred to the same six investigators in 1993 and 1994, right before they began using the Protocol. The comparison cases were selected to ensure that the children in the two interview conditions were of comparable ages, had experienced a similar range of offences, and had comparable relationships with the alleged perpetrators. When exact matching was not possible, matches were selected to give advantage to the non-Protocol group. Thus Protocol interviews tended to be about simpler events, and might have been expected to elicit briefer accounts than the alleged incidents investigated in pre-Protocol interviews. All interviews in the Protocol group closely followed the Protocol whereas interviews in the non-Protocol group followed the general interviewing guidelines provided by the Israeli Youth Investigative Service.

Investigators were trained in group and individual sessions. The project began with a three-day long seminar focused on the research literature and the techniques recommended by professional experts. In the monthly group sessions that followed, instructors reviewed the empirical literature and professional guidelines that provided a conceptual framework for understanding the Protocol. Videotaped interviews were excerpted to illustrate both desirable and risky practices, and the trainees then systematically analysed videotaped and transcribed interviews on an utterance-by-utterance basis before conducting role-play interviews of one another using the structured Protocol. These interviews were reviewed by the other investigators and their instructors, and were used to promote group discussions. Recurring problems prompted rehearsal of more desirable alternatives.

In addition to the monthly group sessions, the interviewers each attended monthly individual sessions during which transcripts of each interviewer's interviews were analysed and discussed in detail. The progress of each investigator was monitored and displayed graphically. Letters, faxes, and telephone calls were used to provide feedback outside the individual and group meetings.

Study 2: The United States

In the second study, we examined 100 forensic interviews of alleged sexual abuse victims, conducted by six experienced police officers (four women and two men) in a mid-sized city in the Western United States (Sternberg *et al.*, 2001). All were the first interviews of these children, conducted by the police immediately following a formal report of the

abuse. The 27 boys and 73 girls interviewed averaged 8 years of age, and ranged from 4 to nearly 13 years. Fifty of the interviews followed the Protocol, whereas a matched sample of 50 interviews, comprising the standard condition, were conducted by the same interviewers immediately before the Protocol was introduced. The standard interviews were not guided by any Protocol. Interviews in the standard group were individually matched with Protocol interviews with respect to the severity or type of abuse, the relationship between victim and perpetrator, the victim's age (within 12 months), and whether the abuse had occurred once or multiple times.

The 50 Protocol interviews were drawn from a pool of 138 interviews comprising all investigative interviews of 4- to 12-year-old alleged victims conducted during the study period. Interviews were excluded from the Protocol condition when interviewers did not follow the Protocol ($n = 40$), the children disclosed abuse spontaneously before the interviewers had "trained" the children to provide accounts of neutral events in response to open-ended prompts ($n = 12$), or the children did not report abuse ($n = 36$). The standard interviews were drawn from a pool of 73 interviews of 4- to 12-year-old alleged victims of abuse on the basis of the matching criteria described above.

Prior to implementation of the structured Protocol, all interviewers participated in an intensive five day training programme during which the conceptual and empirical support for all phases of the interview were explained and videotaped examples illustrating both appropriate and inappropriate interview techniques were shown. After familiarising themselves with the structured Protocol, interviewers interviewed role-playing confederates who based their responses on real cases. After demonstrating their ability to adhere to the Protocol, interviewers were observed conducting forensic interviews using the Protocol and were given feedback on their techniques. Written feedback was provided on all transcribed field interviews until the study ended. In addition, individual and group training sessions focused on adherence to the Protocol and its adaptation to individual circumstances were conducted every 6 to 8 weeks.

Study 3: The United Kingdom

In the third study, we examined 100 forensic interviews of alleged sexual abuse victims by six police officers in a mid-sized Constabulary in the British Midlands (Lamb, Orbach, Sternberg, Aldridge, Pearson, Stewart, Esplin, & Bowler, under review; Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Aldridge, Bowler, Pearson, & Esplin, 2006). Most of the interviewers had limited experience investigating sex crimes involving children before the study began. All were the first evidentiary interviews of these

children, conducted by the police in accordance with the Memorandum of Good Practice (Home Office, 1992), described in Chapter 3. The 20 boys and 80 girls interviewed ranged in age from 4 to 13 years and averaged just over 9 years of age.

We compared 50 Protocol-guided forensic interviews with 50 non-Protocol forensic interviews, conducted by the same 6 investigators or their colleagues in the same constabulary immediately before the Protocol was implemented. Protocol and non-Protocol interviews were matched with respect to age, victim-suspect relationship, abuse type, and the number of alleged incidents. The 50 Protocol interviews were drawn from a pool of 132 interviews comprising all investigative interviews of 4- to 13-year-old suspected victims conducted during the study period by the participating officers, to whom investigations were preferentially assigned during this period. Interviews were excluded from the Protocol condition when it was not possible to find an adequate match in the pool of standard interviews ($n = 40$), the children did not disclose abuse ($n = 36$), interviewers did not follow the Protocol ($n = 24$), the children reported physical rather than sexual abuse ($n = 5$), the children were witnesses rather than victims ($n = 6$), or the recorded interviews were not the first Memorandum interviews ($n = 2$). The standard interviews were drawn from a pool of 119 interviews of 4- to 13-year-old alleged victims of abuse on the basis of the matching criteria described above.

Prior to the implementation of the Protocol, all interviewers participated in an intensive five day training programme during which the conceptual and empirical support for all phases of the interview were explained and videotaped examples illustrating both appropriate and inappropriate interview techniques were shown. After familiarising themselves with the structured Protocol, interviewers practiced using the Protocol to interview role-playing confederates who based their responses on real cases. After demonstrating their ability to adhere to the Protocol, interviewers were observed conducting field forensic interviews using the Protocol and were given feedback on their practices and techniques. Written feedback was provided on all transcribed field interviews until the study ended. In addition, individual meetings with the research team every six to eight weeks focused on critical analysis of the interviewers' adherence to the Protocol and its strategies in their recent interviews.

Study 4: Canada

In the fourth study, we compared 83 Protocol-guided forensic interviews of French-Canadian alleged sexual abuse victims, interviewed using a French translation of the Protocol, with 83 non-Protocol forensic inter-

views, conducted by the same 17 experienced police officers and mental health workers before they were trained to use the Protocol (Cyr & Lamb, under review; Cyr, Lamb, Pelletier, Leduc, & Perron, 2006). Protocol and non-Protocol cases were matched with respect to the children's ages, children-perpetrator relationships, and the types and number of reported incidents.

The 83 cases included in the Protocol group were drawn from the pool of 156 sex-abuse cases involving 3- to 13-year-old children that were referred to these 17 investigators during the study period between 2003 and 2005 in the context of their regular work, provided that the interviewers followed the Protocol and that the cases could be matched with comparable cases investigated by the same interviewers before the Protocol was introduced. Of the 156 cases originally considered for inclusion, 15 interviews were excluded because the interviewer did not follow the Protocol (e.g., opened the substantive phase with suggestive utterances, providing the names of the alleged perpetrators and details about the alleged events), 10 because the investigated suspicions did not involve sexual abuse, 19 because the children did not report abuse when questioned, and 29 because a matching interview could not be found. The comparison interviews were drawn from a pool of 202 interviews of 4- to 13-year-old alleged victims of sexual abuse that were referred to the same 16 investigators between 2001 and 2003, right before they were trained to use the Protocol. The majority (60%) of the alleged victims were girls. Sixty-three per cent of the children reported multiple incidents, whereas 31% reported a single incident; this information was missing with respect to 6% of the cases.

All the participating police officers (four women, four men) and social workers (eight women, one man) had investigated cases of sexual abuse for more than three years before being trained to use the Protocol. Training began with an intensive week-long session reviewing current knowledge of memory, suggestibility and children's developing cognitive and communicative capacities. The Protocol was then explained, with the research literature used to explain its structure and aims. Video-taped and transcribed interviews were used to illustrate both desirable and risky practices, and practice periods each day allowed trainees to use the Protocol when interviewing role-playing victims who followed predetermined scripts. These role-plays were filmed for review and analysis with the trainee and with the whole group. Following this week of intensive training, the investigators began interviewing alleged victims using the Protocol and received written feedback on each interview.

Coding

Electronic recordings of all the interviews studied were transcribed and checked to ensure their completeness and accuracy. Two raters then tabulated the interviewers' utterance types and the number of details conveyed in the children's responses using the techniques and categories described in Chapter 3. In each study, about 20% of the transcripts were independently coded by another trained coder to ensure that the utterances were reliably coded and the details reliably counted. Because the interviews were conducted and coded in three languages (Hebrew, English, and French), over a ten-year-period, we employed an assistant to conduct regular sessions with all coders to ensure that all remained reliable with one another.

In addition to the main coding scheme, coders in the second study (US) reviewed the transcripts to determine whether or not the interviewers followed nine recommended practices operationalised and coded by Warren *et al.* (1996) in their research on interview quality: introducing the interviewer, introducing the purpose of the interview, obtaining background information about the child's family, establishing rapport with the child, conducting a practice interview, reviewing the distinction between the truth and a lie, instructing the child to say "I don't understand/remember," or to correct the interviewer when necessary, and introducing the substantive topic in a non-suggestive fashion.

The comparison of the two interviewing conditions was based on an analysis of the investigators' utterance types, categorised with respect to the interviewers' input, their distribution and timing, as well as quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the information produced.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

In each study, interviewers in Protocol interviews offered significantly fewer prompts overall. In addition, as predicted, the number and proportion of open-ended free-recall utterances (i.e., invitations) were significantly higher in Protocol interviews than in the non-Protocol interviews in both the pre-substantive (not shown in the tables) and the substantive (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2) phases of the interviews. In both Study 1 and 4, invitations were more than three times more common and focused prompts were more than two times less common in the substantive portion of Protocol than non-Protocol interviews. Similarly, significantly more substantive cued invitations were used by interviewers in the Protocol than in the non-Protocol interviews. In addition, the

Table 5.1 Frequencies with which the major interviewer prompts were used in each of the demonstration studies (Substantive portions of interviews only)

Type of prompt	Study 1 (Israel)		Study 2 (US)		Study 3 (UK)		Study 4 (Quebec, Canada)	
	Protocol ($n = 55$)	Comparison ($n = 50$)	Protocol ($n = 50$)	Comparison ($n = 50$)	Protocol ($n = 50$)	Comparison ($n = 50$)	Protocol ($n = 83$)	Comparison ($n = 83$)
Invitation	14.53	4.30***	15.00	5.56***	22.72	6.40***	20.72	6.64**
	(9.90)	(3.22)	(7.44)	(3.57)	(11.31)	(4.27)	(12.40)	(5.58)
Directive	26.24	44.96***	17.54	26.36***	34.24	57.64***	13.17	27.00**
	(22.85)	(29.50)	(11.07)	(14.64)	(25.70)	(34.70)	(11.89)	(17.12)
Option-posing	9.78	28.60***	12.30	21.56***	14.44	28.00***	9.61	23.11**
	(8.06)	(18.15)	(6.94)	(11.29)	(12.85)	(22.14)	(9.30)	(17.57)
Suggestive	4.62	9.10***	3.12	6.64***	3.58	8.24***	2.88	5.41**
	(5.35)	(7.59)	(3.27)	(4.13)	(3.78)	(7.63)	(3.15)	(3.56)
Total number of prompts	55.16	86.96***	47.98	60.12*	74.98	100.28*	46.39	62.16**
	(39.73)	(49.68)	(23.12)	(27.17)	(41.80)	(59.92)	(27.41)	(36.19)
Number before first option-posing	7.73	2.26***	7.74	2.36***	7.66	5.78	8.67	2.44**
	(6.02)	(2.72)	(5.56)	(3.75)	(5.65)	(5.09)	(7.09)	(1.88)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Table 5.2 Relative prominence (percentages) of major utterance types in protocol and non-protocol interviews (Substantive only)

Type of prompt	Study 1 (Israel)		Study 2 (US)		Study 3 (UK)		Study 4 (Quebec, Canada)	
	Protocol ($n = 55$)	Comparison ($n = 50$)	Protocol ($n = 50$)	Comparison ($n = 50$)	Protocol ($n = 50$)	Comparison ($n = 50$)	Protocol ($n = 83$)	Comparison ($n = 83$)
Invitation	30.01 (13.96)	5.73*** (4.12)	33.16 (13.02)	9.9*** (6.25)	34.13 (15.89)	6.76*** (3.79)	48.42 (17.91)	11.75** (8.14)
Directive	44.13 (11.46)	51.51** (11.76)	34.67 (11.72)	42.79*** (9.22)	42.36 (13.22)	57.75*** (9.47)	26.19 (12.56)	42.23** (10.74)
Option-posing	18.02 (7.94)	32.56*** (9.24)	25.90 (9.20)	36.03*** (10.22)	17.90 (8.35)	27.20*** (10.32)	18.89 (11.27)	35.81** (12.98)
Suggestive	7.80 (6.79)	10.20 (6.46)	6.26 (6.12)	11.28*** (5.92)	5.61 (6.02)	8.29* (5.22)	6.50 (6.49)	10.20** (7.43)
Percentage before first option-posing	21.69 (22.17)	3.76*** (6.11)	20.26 (19.13)	5.0*** (8.93)	12.30 (9.13)	8.18* (8.88)	18.10 (22.05)	5.96*** (8.15)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

substantive portion of Protocol interviews contained significantly fewer focused (i.e., directive, option-posing, and suggestive) utterances and proportionally fewer directive and option-posing utterances than non-Protocol interviews did (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2). Compared to the non-Protocol interviews, interviewers in the Protocol condition also asked proportionally and absolutely more open-ended substantive questions before the first option-posing question was posed (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2).

Again, as expected, children in the Protocol condition recalled significantly more details from episodic memories of neutral events in the pre-substantive phase than did children in the non-Protocol condition. Contrary to prediction, however, the protocol interviews did not elicit more substantive details on average than the non-protocol interviews. Similarly, there was no group difference in the average number of details provided in the first narrative responses. Children in the Protocol condition provided proportionally more of the total number of substantive details in their first narrative response than did children in the non-Protocol condition, however, and they also provided significantly more information and proportionally more of their total output before being asked the first option-posing question (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4). Furthermore, significantly more and proportionally more of the substantive details provided by children in the Protocol condition were elicited by open-ended prompts, including cued invitations, than in non-Protocol interviews, whereas significantly fewer and proportionally fewer substantive details were elicited by directive, option-posing, and suggestive utterances (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4).

In all studies, significantly more substantive details were reported in response to recall prompts and significantly fewer were elicited by focused prompts in Protocol interviews than in non-Protocol interviews. There were no significant differences between the numbers and proportions of central details provided by children in Protocol and non-Protocol interviews in all four studies. Children in the Protocol condition provided more central details in response to invitations and significantly fewer central details in response to option-posing and suggestive utterances than children in the non-Protocol condition did, however. Similarly, a significantly greater proportion of the details they provided were both central and elicited using recall prompts and a significantly smaller proportion of the details they provided were both central and elicited using option-posing and suggestive utterances (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4). In addition, children in Protocol interviews provided significantly more and proportionally more invitation-elicited central details before the first option-posing or suggestive utterance than children in the non-Protocol condition did (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4). In both

Table 5.3 Comparison of children's informativeness (number of details) in protocol and non-protocol interviews

Type of details	Study 1 (Israel)		Study 2 (US)		Study 3 (UK)		Study 4 (Quebec, Canada)	
	Protocol ($n = 55$)	Comparison ($n = 50$)	Protocol ($n = 50$)	Comparison ($n = 50$)	Protocol ($n = 50$)	Comparison ($n = 50$)	Protocol ($n = 83$)	Comparison ($n = 83$)
Total details	230.04 (143.19)	263.98 (152.59)	165.92 (150.14)	169.82 (107.72)	367.00 (286.04)	376.86 (311.11)	224.88 (145.80)	198.87 (136.46)
Total central details	110.24 (86.73)	138.40 (80.04)	NA[1]	NA[1]	196.34 (144.30)	201.28 (160.47)	167.28 (116.90)	150.16 (110.16)
Details before 1st option-posing	75.96 (77.52)	28.06*** (55.46)	42.90 (50.16)	7.50*** (15.53)	89.30 (92.08)	43.82** (60.10)	71.45 (71.48)	11.35*** (17.84)
Invitation-elicited	117.91 (85.24)	34.36*** (43.94)	86.36 (105.60)	34.86** (36.07)	195.18 (150.11)	58.56*** (72.37)	146.77 (109.61)	31.31*** (39.55)
Directive-elicited	74.25 (74.99)	126.56** (102.68)	42.86 (41.66)	67.72** (47.55)	113.66 (110.37)	188.44* (170.74)	47.70 (46.00)	92.28*** (69.63)
Option-posing-elicited	20.51 (17.46)	67.44*** (51.43)	28.16 (29.91)	45.92* (37.19)	42.40 (61.83)	85.56* (100.01)	20.41 (22.03)	58.36*** (56.80)
Suggestive-elicited	17.36 (22.19)	35.62** (36.14)	8.54 (14.05)	21.32*** (18.05)	12.08 (14.78)	33.44** (34.34)	10.00 (13.81)	16.92** (15.23)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations

[1]Information Not Available

p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Table 5.4 Proportions (percentages) of total number of details elicited using specific prompts

Type of details	Study 1 (Israel)		Study 2 (US)		Study 3 (UK)		Study 4 (Quebec, Canada)	
	Protocol (n = 55)	Comparison (n = 50)	Protocol (n = 50)	Comparison (n = 50)	Protocol (n = 50)	Comparison (n = 50)	Protocol (n = 83)	Comparison (n = 83)
Invitation-elicited	51.12	13.93***	47.35	17.77***	54.83	13.79***	63.27	16.17***
	(21.19)	(14.63)	(19.47)	(13.1)	(18.09)	(12.12)	(19.42)	(13.76)
Directive-elicited	28.45	45.87***	27.51	40.09***	28.73	51.12***	21.54	44.56***
	(16.45)	(14.34)	(17.10)	(12.44)	(12.25)	(12.45)	(15.19)	(15.45)
Option-posing-elicited	10.30	25.57***	18.11	27.89***	10.34	21.93***	9.46	29.46***
	(8.57)	(11.96)	(11.27)	(13.43)	(8.61)	(9.87)	(8.00)	(16.02)
Suggestive-elicited	10.13	14.62	7.04	14.24**	5.10	9.81**	5.73	9.81**
	(16.44)	(13.94)	(12.70)	(10.31)	(6.58)	(8.10)	(8.72)	(7.74)
Details before 1st option-posing	34.50	11.46***	29.60	5.61***	25.41	13.06***	28.04	8.08***
	(28.03)	(19.56)	(26.37)	(11.15)	(18.62)	(14.16)	(31.34)	(14.29)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

interviewing conditions, older children provided more details than younger children did. As explained in the next chapter, the cued-invitation technique was especially effective with younger children.

The findings confirmed that the Protocol was highly effective in helping interviewers to employ recommended interview practices, to elicit information that was more likely to be accurate, and to avoid prompts that are more likely to elicit inaccurate information.

Close examination of the interviews included in Study 2 revealed significant differences between standard and Protocol interviews regarding all pre-substantive interview practices, except "explaining the purpose of the interview" (see Table 5.5). Protocol interviews were more likely than standard interviews to include an explanation of the ground rules, the recommended rapport building techniques, and a practice narrative about a neutral event. Protocol interviews were also better organised than standard interviews and were more likely to shift focus to the alleged abuse in a non-suggestive fashion. Interviewers were more likely to obtain information about the child's family in non-Protocol interviews, however.

Table 5.6 documents the order in which interviewers in the Protocol condition attempted to introduce the substantive topic, as well as the proportion of children in Study 2 responding to each of these prompts with an allegation of sexual abuse. Four of the 50 children in the Protocol condition disclosed before any of the scripted substantive prompts were offered. Of the remaining 46 children, 41 (89%) disclosed in response to an open-ended prompt, whereas 5 of the 46 children (11%) disclosed abuse only after being asked a scripted option-posing (i.e.,

Table 5.5 Practices during the pre-substantive phase of investigative interviews in Study 2 (percentages)

Recommended practice	Comparison	Protocol
Interviewer introduces him/herself	58	88
Interviewer explains purpose of interview	76	90
Interviewer obtains information about child's family	90	70
Interviewer establishes rapport	52	100
Interviewer practices discussing neutral topic	2	100
Interviewer distinguishes between truth and lie	34	96
Child given permission to say "I don't Know/understand"	0	58
Child given permission to correct interviewer	0	62
Substantive topic introduced in non-suggestive manner	42	100

Notes. All group differences, except for "interviewer explains purpose of the interview," were statistically significant, $p < .01$, by a chi-square (χ^2) test.

Table 5.6 Prompt eliciting allegation in Protocol condition in Study 2 ($n = 50$)

	Number of children asked each question	Number of children disclosing in response to each question	Proportion of children disclosing when asked each question
Disclosure prior to substantive prompting		4	
1. Tell me why you came to talk to me.	45	28	62%
2. It's important for me to understand why you came to talk to me.	9	1	11%
3. I heard you saw [professional]. Tell me what you talked about.	13	11	85%
4. Tell me why you think [ ] brought you here today.	3	1	33%
5. Is [ ] worried that something may have happened to you?	1	1	100%
6. I heard someone has been bothering you.	2	1	50%
7. I heard someone may have done something to you that wasn't right.	2	0	0%
8. I heard something may have happened to you [location, time].	2	0	0%
9. I heard that someone may have [allegation].	3	3	100%

"Is your mom worried that something may have happened to you?") or suggestive (e.g., "I heard that someone has been bothering you. Tell me everything about the bothering.") question. By contrast, when the interviewers formulated their own questions in the standard condition, 18 (36%) of the 50 children disclosed abuse in response to an open-ended question, whereas 29 (58%) disclosed abuse in response to an option-posing or suggestive question.

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING

Clearly, use of the Protocol indeed led interviewers in these four field studies to establish superior retrieval conditions for young interviewees without requiring interviewers to follow an inflexible script. Following initial disclosure and indication of the number of incidents experienced, the interviewers were only given general guidance regarding the types of utterances to employ, undesirable practices to avoid, and appropriate open-ended free recall (invitations and cued invitations) and cued recall (directive) prompts to use. The significant effects that we documented are especially impressive in light of other disappointing findings regarding the impact of specialised training, as discussed in Chapter 10. It is also noteworthy that the techniques were effective across a wide age range, as discussed more fully in Chapter 6.

We believe that the success reported here was achieved by dint of extended and intensive training, monitoring, and feedback. Whereas most training is brief and intensive, the training received by interviewers in our demonstration studies was both intensive and extended over several months. It involved repeated practice using feedback-monitored simulations and the systematic analysis of both simulated and (later) actual forensic interviews, all of which were recorded. In addition, research staff continued to provide detailed feedback even after the investigators began using the Protocol in the field. In summary, the intense, prolonged, and quality-controlled practice incorporated in this study may be a necessary component of successful training. None of the studies documenting that training is ineffective have involved such intense and prolonged practice and supervision.

THE MEANING OF THESE FINDINGS

Our research has repeatedly confirmed that implementation of the Protocol altered retrieval conditions in both the pre-substantive and substantive phases of the interviews we analysed, regardless of the

children's age. In the pre-substantive phase of Protocol interviews, for example, the interviewers made more extensive efforts to explain the rules of communication and encourage the children to practice retrieving episodic memories. In the substantive phase, furthermore, the Protocol interviews were better organised and included more desirable interviewing practices along with fewer undesirable practices. Specifically, the Protocol interviews contained more open-ended utterances and fewer directives, option-posing, and suggestive utterances.

As explained earlier, researchers have established that information drawn from recall memory is more likely to be accurate than information elicited using recognition memory prompts, thus, the higher number of open-ended utterances relative to focused utterances in Protocol interviews suggests that information of superior quality is likely to have been obtained in these interviews. Additionally, in comparison with the non-Protocol interviews, interviewers in the Protocol interviews utilised more open-ended prompts prior to the first option-posing utterance, thereby minimising possible contamination.

Our hypotheses regarding the children's performance were only partially confirmed, however. On the one hand, because the Protocol trains children in the pre-substantive phase to retrieve detailed information from episodic memory, we expected that children would provide more information about substantive issues when interviewed using the Protocol. This prediction was not confirmed in any of the four sites, where children in the two conditions provided the same amount of information.

The fact that children in the Protocol condition did not report more informative details than those in the non-Protocol condition was unexpected. We suspect that the interviewers implicitly settled for "enough" information, and that additional detail could often have been elicited had the investigators employed further open-ended prompts. Investigators obviously face a challenge obtaining as much information as possible without compromising the quality of the information obtained. Because of their training, those in the Protocol condition were perhaps especially aware of the risks associated with some interview practices and may thus have chosen not to pursue issues they might formerly have explored in risky ways. Clearly, further research on this issue in both field and laboratory analogue contexts is warranted.

Because the Protocol guides interviewers to pose proportionally more open-ended utterances, on the other hand, we expected the information elicited in Protocol interviews to be of higher quality than the information elicited in non-Protocol interviews, and this prediction was consistently confirmed. Specifically, significantly more of the details obtained were elicited using open-ended utterances and were retrieved prior to the first option-posing question, whereas proportionally fewer details

were elicited using option-posing and suggestive questions. This difference is important because, as indicated earlier, details elicited using recall memory prompts (i.e., those elicited by open-ended interviewer utterances) are more likely to be accurate than details elicited using recognition memory probes. Furthermore, Yes/No questions and suggestive prompts are especially likely to elicit inaccurate information from very young children and when posed early in the interview may even contaminate subsequent free recall and recognition responses. Thus, the reduced prominence of option-posing and suggestive utterances in Protocol interviews also enhances the probable accuracy of the information obtained. This is of prime importance when child victims are being interviewed forensically, because information is often available only from them or the alleged perpetrators. We also found that the Protocol interviews yielded more of the most crucial (both central and allegation specific) information using open-ended prompts and more invitation-elicited (free-recall) central details before the first option-posing or suggestive utterance than interviews in the non-protocol conditions did. These findings again indicate that Protocol interviews elicited information of superior quality and centrality.

Although implementation of the Protocol fostered 40% to 60% reductions in the number of details elicited using option-posing and suggestive questions, respectively, approximately one quarter of the information was elicited using option-posing and suggestive questions even when the Protocol was used. Because these types of questions are significantly more likely to elicit erroneous information than are open-ended questions, concerns about the accuracy of children's responses to these questions is warranted. Because this research was conducted in the field, of course, we do not know which of the reported details were accurate.

Indeed, it is rare to know what actually happened during incidents of abuse, and so the emphasis on the value of recalled information is based on the results of the experimental research, described in Chapter 2, showing that information elicited using recall prompts is more likely to be accurate than information elicited using recognition based prompts. We were thus very fortunate to have access to some cases in Israel where it was possible to compare the accounts provided by alleged victims with those provided by young suspects, who admitted the central details of the same alleged incidents (Lamb, Orbach, Hershkowitz, Horowitz *et al.*, 2007.) On average, the victims provided nearly 360 details, with about half elicited using invitations or produced spontaneously (i.e., not in response to information requesting prompts), another 33% elicited using directive prompts, 12% elicited using option-posing prompts, and 8% elicited using suggestive prompts.

Each detail reported by the alleged victim was classified as Confirmed, Contradicted, Ambiguous, or Ignored by comparing the victim's statement with that provided by the suspect. Details were deemed to have been confirmed when the suspect reported exactly the same information, contradicted when the detail reported by the alleged victim was incompatible with those reported by the suspect, ambiguous when one suspect reported details that were consistent and another suspect reported details that were inconsistent with those reported by the alleged victim, and ignored when the suspect made no reference to details similar to those reported by the alleged victim. An average of 30 (9%) of the details were contradicted, 73 (24%) were confirmed, 1 (.4%) was ambiguous, and the majority (an average of 253; 66%) were ignored by the suspects. Importantly, significantly more details elicited from the victims using open-ended prompts were confirmed by the suspects than those elicited in response to more focused prompts, and a nonsignificant tendency appeared for the proportion of details elicited using open-ended prompts to be confirmed more often than those elicited using recognition prompts.

The results thus only partially supported the prediction that information retrieved using open-ended recall prompts is more likely to be accurate than information elicited using prompts that triggered recognition processes. However, over 71% of the details reported by the suspects confirmed information reported by the victims and only 28.7% of the suspects' details contradicted information reported by the victims. Details reported by victims were deemed confirmed when the suspects specifically agreed with the victims' reports. Relatively few details – just over 20% of the total number reported, on average – were confirmed in this way, but nearly 30% of those retrieved using invitations were confirmed by the suspects, whereas a third fewer – around 20% – of those elicited by all other types of prompts were confirmed. However, the results did not confirm expectations that the least number of confirmations would be elicited by suggestive prompts, and that option-posing prompts would be less risky (with respect to the accuracy of the information retrieved) than suggestive prompts though more risky than directive prompts. In fact, even though directive prompts by definition tap recall processes, they did not elicit a higher rate of confirmations than either option-posing or suggestive prompts, both of which depend on recognition memory processes. This suggests that the superiority of invitations rests at least in part on their openness, with the interviewer not narrowing the focus of the informant's retrieval in any way.

The results of the analyses involving contradictions were even more puzzling, inasmuch as the rate of contradiction did not vary depending on the type of prompts used to elicit the information as we had

predicted. These unexpected findings may reflect the fact that surprisingly few details reported by the child victims were contradicted by the suspects and this is likely to have reduced the sensitivity of the analyses. The low number of contradictions may be explained by the fact that only cooperative suspects (i.e., those who fully or partially admitted the allegation) were included in the study.

The age differences were also unexpected, although they were not surprising. The proportion of details confirmed decreased substantially with age, presumably because the accounts provided by the younger children were significantly less detailed but perhaps especially rich in the most important and salient details which were, in turn, the details most likely to be confirmed by the other participants. Stated differently, the greater verbosity of the older victims may have led them to include many more specific (even if central) details that were less likely to be mentioned by the suspects describing the same incidents and events.

STUDIES EXAMINING VARIANTS OF THE PROTOCOL

Enhancing the Effects of the Protocol Using Context Reinstatement Techniques

Because the Protocol appears to be successful in bringing about improvement in interviewer behaviour and in the quality of information provided by alleged victims, we have also explored other possible techniques that might help children provide more information about their experiences. The usefulness of contextual retrieval cues has been explored by several researchers (see below), although ours was the first attempt to evaluate the utility of these cues in authentic forensic interviews of alleged child victims of sexual abuse, rather than in analogue studies.

It has been difficult to assess the usefulness of contextual cues in forensic investigations because contextual information is usually unavailable to investigators, and when it is known, reference to it may be suggestive, contaminating the information it helps to elicit (King & Yuille, 1987). To be useful but not suggestive, contextual cues can either be presented by the interviewer following disclosure of the contextual details by the interviewee, or reconstructed by the interviewee in response to interviewer-guided mental reinstatement of the general context. In our research, as mentioned in Chapter 4, the effects of both physical context reinstatement (PCR), involving exposing an individual to the actual setting in which the event occurred (after they were disclosed by the interviewee), and mental context

reinstatement (MCR), achieved by guiding the individual to "reconstruct" that setting in his/her mind, were systematically evaluated in forensic investigations when alleged victims of sexual abuse were interviewed at the scenes of the alleged events or instructed to recreate the scenes mentally.

Other than ours, no attempts have been made to study context reinstatement in forensic investigations of young alleged victims and witnesses.

1. VISITING THE SCENE OF THE ALLEGED CRIME (PCR)

In the first study (Orbach, Hershkowitz, Lamb, Sternberg, Horowitz *et al.*, 2000), we assessed the extent to which physical context reinstatement – visiting the scene of the crime – enhanced memory retrieval. Specifically, alleged victims of sexual abuse were first interviewed in the investigators' offices (the normal procedure) and then re-interviewed at the scene of the alleged incident. We expected that age would positively affect the amount of information provided at both the office and the scene, with older children providing more information. We also expected that, because younger children recall less event information and have less effective retrieval strategies than older children (Dietze & Thomson, 1993; Goodman & Reed, 1986; Peterson & Bell, 1996; Saywitz, Snyder, & Lamphear, 1996), they would benefit more from external cues. Further, we expected an inverse relationship between length of delay and the amount of information retrieved by children, although the relative effectiveness of the contextual cues was expected to be higher after longer delays (Pipe *et al.*, 1993). Following Pipe and her colleagues, we also predicted that reinstatement of environmental context would be most effective when the event had occurred in a very unfamiliar environment. Previous research (Sternberg, Lamb, Hershkowitz, Esplin *et al.*, 1996) further suggested that when multiple incidents were reported, children would provide more information than about single incidents. The risk that children would provide more skeletal scripted accounts following multiple similar experiences was expected to be reduced when contextual cues were available.

The study involved 51 forensic interviews conducted by six experienced youth investigators (two male, four female) with alleged victims of child sexual abuse in various parts of Israel. The children ranged in age from 4 to 13 years, and averaged 9 years. All the alleged crimes involved extra-familial perpetrators and took place outside the children's homes.

In all cases, there was an interview at the office and a follow-up interview at the scene of the alleged crime. The office interview was based

on similar principles as those underlying the Protocol. It began with an introduction by the interviewer and exercises designed to underscore the importance of telling the truth, correcting the interviewer, or requesting clarification when necessary. In the rapport-building phase that followed, the investigator asked open-ended questions about the child.

The investigator then asked the child about a recent holiday (Hanukah, Passover, etc.), and then focused on one component of the holiday mentioned by the child, asking "Tell me everything about . . . from the beginning to the end as best you can remember." If needed, the child was prompted ("And then what happened?"; "Tell me more about . . . ").

The interviewer then shifted focus to substantive issues by asking, "Do you know why you came here today?". Other non-suggestive prompts were used if the child failed to mention the incident under investigation. Following a simple statement of an allegation, the first invitation for a substantive narrative was posed: "Tell me everything that happened to you from the beginning to the end, as best you can remember." The child was non-suggestively prompted ("Tell me more about . . . ") when necessary.

The child was next asked if "it" happened one time or more than one time. If the child said one time, the investigator sought further details using such cue questions as "Earlier you mentioned . . . tell me everything about that". If the child reported multiple incidents, s/he was asked to describe in turn the last time, the first time, the best remembered time and another time, each time using open-ended invitations followed by open-ended prompts and cue questions.

Only at this point were the investigators permitted to ask for crucial but unmentioned details in focused yet non-suggestive ways (e.g., "Were his clothes on or off?"; "Did he touch you anywhere else?" [this was when being touched was mentioned]).

The child was then asked to accompany the investigator "to the place where these things happened", with the explanation that, "Sometimes I can understand what happened better when the child tells me at the place where it happened," and was asked to describe the events again, "as if you hadn't told me already".

Substantive issues were not discussed on the way to the scene. Once the investigator and the child arrived, the child was asked to, "Look around, try to remember the time you were here with [identified perpetrator] and tell me everything that happened from the moment you got here until the end." This invitation was followed by open-ended prompts (e.g., "And then what happened") and cue questions (e.g., "Tell me more about . . . "), ending with focused

questions when necessary, if a single incident had occurred at this site. If multiple incidents had taken place at this site, the child was asked to describe the different incidents separately as in the first (office) interview.

Towards the end of the interview the child was asked if there was anything else s/he wanted to mention, anything s/he thought the interviewer should know or anything s/he wanted to ask. The interviewer then thanked the child and ended with a short discussion of a neutral topic.

Details provided at the scene of the alleged events were only counted and tabulated when they provided new information, and were divided into two categories: location details which helped locate previously mentioned details in the physical context (e.g., "that's the bench I mentioned"; "that's the tree he sat in") and new details which provided completely new information.

As shown in Table 5.7, an average of 234 details was provided in the office and an additional 70 details were provided at the scene of

Table 5.7 Average richness of statements obtained in the first interview (at the office) and in the subsequent interview (at the scene) by features of the alleged abuse.

		Scene interview			
	Office interview Details	New details	Location details	Total details	Percent of total
Child's age					
4–8 ($n = 16$)	189.3	42.4	8.0	50.4	21%
9–11 ($n = 17$)	247.2	64.1	10.5	74.5	23%
12–13 ($n = 18$)	262.1	72.1	10.9	83.0	24%
Number of incidents					
One incident ($n = 37$)	195.3	55.4	10.1	65.5	25%
>One incident ($n = 14$)	337.1	72.4	9.3	81.6	20%
*Scene familiarity**					
Not familiar ($n = 38$)	312.8	73.0	12.2	85.2	21%
Familiar ($n = 6$)	219.0	61.1	9.5	70.7	24%
Perpetrator familiarity					
Not familiar ($n = 31$)	210.3	52.9	9.1	62.0	23%
Familiar ($n = 20$)	271.4	71.3	11.0	82.3	23%
*Time delay**					
≤7 days ($n = 17$)	206.9	58.4	10.7	69.1	25%
>7 days ($n = 13$)	284.2	71.5	10.7	82.2	22%
Overall	234.2	60.1	9.9	69.9	23%

*There are cases for which information related to these categories is missing.

Table 5.8 Correlations between measures of the children's informativeness and features of the alleged abuse

	Office interview Total Details	Scene interview		
		New details	Location details	Total details
Details in office interview	1.00	.38**	.45***	.41**
Number of incidents	.46***	.18	−.04	.16
Familiarity of the scene[a]	−.26	−.06	−.12	−.07
Time delay (days)	.05	.00	−.12	−.02

Note: [a]Familiar = 1; Unfamiliar = 0.
*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

the alleged incidents. On average, 86% of the details obtained at the scene were related to new issues and only 14% were details that helped contextualize previously mentioned details.

As expected, older children and children reporting multiple incidents provided more details during the office interview and at the scene than did younger children and children reporting single incidents, but age and number of incidents did not affect the number of location details produced during the visit to the scene.

Various measures of the children's production were significantly inter-correlated (see Table 5.8). Most importantly, the number of details provided in the office interview was significantly correlated with the total number of details, the number of new details, and the number of location details provided at the scene. In addition, the more incidents the children reported, the more details they provided at the office.

The study thus suggested that PCR, in the form of a visit to the scene of the alleged events, elicited additional details from children's memories, even after a first interview in which interviewers attempted to exhaust the children's memories. Although an unknown portion of this effect may be attributable simply to re-interviewing (McCauley & Fisher, 1995; Peterson & Bell, 1996), rather than context reinstatement (the interviewers were not authorised to conduct a second interview at the office), at least some of the details – including all of the location details – can only be attributed to context reinstatement. Further systematic research would be necessary to determine how often the visit to the scene elicited details so significant that they helped investigators to "crack the case" or fundamentally altered their understanding of what had allegedly happened. Independent of the number of details elicited, however, these visits to the scene played an essential role in letting the interviewers visualise and understand the alleged events.

On the other hand, some of the expected effects of context reinstatement were not obtained, raising doubts about the application of these hypotheses to forensic investigation. Specifically, younger children did not benefit more than older children from visiting the scene, and context reinstatement was not more effective after longer (as opposed to shorter) delays. In addition, we obtained only indirect support for our hypothesis that re-exposure to unfamiliar contexts would be more effective than re-exposure to familiar scenes.

Analysis of the types of details obtained at the scene helps to understand the eliciting role of context and the memory processes involved (see Table 5.9). Some details ("location details") identified spatial and physical components of the setting in which the event occurred. Such products of recognition processes facilitated an understanding of the events and the contexts in which the memories were embedded. Most of the additional details produced at the scene enriched the children's descriptions by adding new information about the events themselves, however. This type of production presumably involves cued recall memory rather than recognition.

Contrary to the suggestion that external cues should be more powerful when internal cues are weaker (Cutler & Penrod, 1988), the number of details provided at the scene was correlated with the number of

Table 5.9 Mean number of details by detail-type, eliciting prompt, and interview location ($n = 60$)

Detail Type	Invitations		Directives		Option-Posing		Suggestive	
	Office	Scene	Office	Scene	Office	Scene	Office	Scene
Suspect	23.18	3.72	10.73	4.95	2.63	0.85	4.10	0.42
	(21.61)	(5.87)	(14.18)	(8.39)	(3.91)	(2.56)	(7.70)	(1.60)
Victim	8.62	1.70	4.53	1.95	1.12	0.08	1.45	0.33
	(8.88)	(3.63)	(7.08)	(3.95)	(1.72)	(0.33)	(2.81)	(0.93)
Witness	3.75	0.62	1.58	1.37	0.52	0.02	0.93	0.08
	(8.03)	(2.60)	(3.40)	(5.49)	(1.10)	(0.13)	(2.65)	(0.46)
Object	1.55	0.40	0.78	0.37	0.33	0.10	0.32	0.02
	(1.87)	(1.30)	(1.64)	(1.06)	(0.75)	(0.40)	(0.81)	(0.13)
Time	3.80	0.62	2.28	0.63	2.00	0.27	0.75	0.13
	(3.42)	(1.59)	(3.04)	(1.45)	(2.11)	(0.71)	(1.67)	(0.50)
Location	4.22	3.85	3.50	3.58	0.62	0.37	0.47	0.25
	(4.58)	(3.47)	(4.94)	(3.84)	(1.21)	(0.94)	(1.16)	(0.88)

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses

details provided in the first interview at the office. It thus appears that children with weaker memories of the event also recalled less in response to context cues, and that the benefits of context reinstatement did not compensate for poor memories, whether they were attributable to age, time delay, or specific qualities of the events or of the scene. Perhaps, therefore, the usefulness of external and internal cues is related to the general effectiveness of retrieval strategies.

One could argue that it is traumatic to return to the scene of stressful events, and that this stress may impair children's memories. On the contrary, we showed that context reinstatement instead facilitated recall. Moreover, none of the children were reluctant to visit the scene, and no unusual behaviours were documented by the interviewers. The majority of the children were familiar with the scene before the abusive incidents, and thus the scenes may have had multiple associations, which might have reduced the stressfulness of the association between the scenes and the abusive events.

2. MENTAL CONTEXT REINSTATEMENT (MCR)

In the next two studies, Hershkowitz and her colleagues (Hershkowitz *et al.*, 2001; Hershkowitz *et al.*, 2002), examined the effectiveness of MCR in the course of forensic interviews with alleged witnesses of sexual abuse, and then compared the relative effectiveness of PCR and MCR.

First, Hershkowitz and colleagues (2001) compared interviews with alleged victims of sexual abuse who were interviewed using interview Protocols that were identical, except that the mental context reinstatement (MCR) techniques were included in interviews with only half of the children. The MCR techniques avoided leading, misleading, and suggestive components that are problematic in forensic contexts, because they may unwittingly increase the amount of false information reported.

MCR did not increase the total number of event-related details reported, but it did lead children to report proportionally more details in response to invitations rather than did focused prompts. This is a desirable effect because, as explained earlier, information elicited in this way is more likely to be accurate. MCR was especially helpful to the youngest children (4- to 6-year-olds) studied. All in all, the findings suggested that non-suggestive contextual cues may indeed be useful in forensic interviews.

Second, the study conducted by Hershkowitz *et al.* (2002) was designed to compare the effects of PCR and MCR using data derived from

forensic interviews of alleged child abuse victims. Forensic interviews were conducted in 1996 by six experienced youth investigators with 142 alleged victims (101 girls, 41 boys) of sexual abuse in various parts of Israel. As in the previous study, all the alleged crimes involved extra-familial perpetrators and took place outside the victims' homes, and the children averaged 9 years of age, although they ranged from 4 to 13 years. 46 of the children were interviewed at the scene of the incidents (PCR group), 46 of the children were interviewed in the office and were given MCR instructions (MCR group), and 50 of the children – 40 girls and 10 boys (M = 9.4 years; SD = 2.4) – were simply interviewed in the office (Control group).

All interviews followed the standard Protocol and only the context reinstating instructions differed. Children in the PCR group completed the pre-substantive part of the interview in an office, but as soon as they made an allegation, they were invited to accompany the interviewer to the scene of the alleged crime, where they were interviewed about substantive issues. Upon arrival at the scene, children in this group were asked to "Look around, try to remember the time you were here with [the perpetrator, as named by the child] and tell me everything that happened from the moment you got here." Those instructions were repeated if the children's responses were brief. There were no cases in which the alleged victim refused to go to the scene of the incident or appeared hesitant to do so.

Children in the MCR group were interviewed in the office and were asked to "close your eyes and think about that time, as if you were there again. [Pause] Think about what was happening around you. [Pause]. Think about the weather and how you felt. [Pause] Think of what sounds or voices you could hear [Pause] and what special smells you could smell [Pause]. Now tell me everything that happened from the beginning to the end as best you can remember." Children who gave brief descriptions were encouraged to retrieve further information and the context reinstating instructions were repeated.

Children in the control group were only given the main open-ended invitation "Tell me everything that happened from the beginning to the end as best you can remember" with no context reinstating instructions. Additional invitations were provided if the children provided brief responses. The interviews of children in all groups followed the identical Protocol following the divergent context reinstatement instructions.

The interviewers used similar numbers and types of utterances in all three groups, except that more invitations were offered in the PCR condition (M = 20) than in the control (M = 13.5) or the MCR (M = 15) conditions.

The average open-ended invitation elicited longer and more de-tailed responses from children in the MCR and control groups than

Table 5.10 Mean number of details by eliciting prompt and interview procedure

	Interview procedure	
Type of prompt	PCR ($n = 30$) M(SD)	MCR ($n = 30$) M(SD)
Invitation	44.27 (32.36)	67.77 (53.88)
Directive	33.87 (36.63)	38.67 (39.07)
Option-Posing	9.07 (6.58)	8.73 (11.17)
Suggestive	7.53 (10.56)	10.97 (16.32)

in the PCR group, but the total numbers of words spoken and substantive details provided by children in the three conditions did not differ significantly. Nonetheless, analyses of responses to different types of prompts showed group differences in both the number of words spoken and the number of details provided in response to the main invitation. Proportionally more words were elicited using invitations in the MCR condition than in the other two conditions (see Table 5.10). In addition, proportionally more details were elicited using open-ended utterances and proportionally fewer details were elicited using directive questions in the MCR than in the PCR condition.

Although both PCR and MCR were expected to enhance children's memories, the results of this study showed that their effects differ. Although more invitations were posed by interviewers in the PCR than in the MCR condition, more details were elicited using invitations (with a higher average number of details per invitation) and more details were provided by children in their first narratives and in their responses to the main invitations by children in the MCR than by those in the PCR condition. Correspondingly less information was elicited using focused questions from children in the MCR than from those in the PCR condition. Overall, similar amounts of information were obtained from children in the PCR and MCR conditions. The MCR procedures were thus associated with higher quality information retrieval than were the PCR procedures. On most measures, the MCR group also performed significantly better than the control group of children who were interviewed using the Protocol without context re-instating instructions. Except for one minor difference (in the number of words spoken in response to the main invitation), the control group and PCR group did not differ on any measures, suggesting that the PCR procedure was neither helpful nor harmful.

These results are somewhat surprising. Physical context reinstatement is expected to be at least as effective as MCR, with re-exposure to

the physical context maximising the overlap between the encoding and retrieval contexts, thereby maximising memory enhancement (Tulving, 1983). The overlap between encoding and retrieval contexts can largely be controlled in laboratory studies, in which the positive effects of PCR retrieval have been demonstrated previously. In field settings, however, one cannot control the degree of overlap, in part because changes in physical environments between the time of the incident and the time of the interview are beyond the interviewers' control. For example, cars may be parked where there was open-space before, central objects (such as toys) or persons (such as friends) present at the time of the incident may be absent at the time of the visit, and different activities may be in progress. Such changes not only decrease the degree of similarity to the original encoding context, thereby limiting the beneficial effects on memory retrieval, but may also introduce distracting stimuli. Stated differently, the PCR and MCR conditions may have differed not only with respect to the modality of exposure, but also with respect to the extent of exposure to the context.

Other features of the PCR manipulation employed here may also have been responsible for some of the differences in memory performance. Most importantly, whereas the MCR procedure was incorporated into the office interview without disrupting the course and continuity of the interview, the PCR procedure involved several disruptions. First, after rapport building and narrative-training in the office, the child and the interviewer stopped the interview in order to travel to the scene identified by the child. Thus at the very point in the interview where the children were maximally prepared to begin their substantive memory retrieval, children in the PCR condition were distracted by unrelated conversations. Second, in order to determine as soon as possible where the events took place so that most of the information could be retrieved at the scene of the alleged crime, children in the PCR condition were not encouraged to provide elaborated narratives in the office and their spontaneous reports were sometimes interrupted. Moreover, at that point the children were asked a focused question designed to elicit information about the location where the events took place, and this may have undermined the beneficial effects of the investigators' earlier efforts to encourage narrative responding to open-ended questions. Third, whereas children in the MCR condition could be introduced during the pre-substantive phase to the specific mental context reinstating strategies, later used to explore substantive issues, children in the PCR condition were not introduced in the pre-substantive phase to interview strategies later employed with the assistance of cues from the scene. It is thus possible that children in the PCR condition were not as well prepared to respond informatively as children in the MCR

condition and that the present study may have provided a more limited assessment of relative effectiveness than we anticipated. Such limitations restrict our ability to draw clear conclusions about the relative utility of the PCR and MCR procedures in ideal circumstances. At least in real-world forensic investigations, therefore, PCR does not appear to help young informants as much as might be expected. By contrast, MCR techniques can easily be incorporated into forensic interviews and appear to be effective components of such interviews.

Interestingly, children in the three age groups were not differentially affected by the context reinstating conditions, and children of all age groups in the MCR condition provided more forensically relevant information in response to invitations than did children in the PCR condition.

These effects are especially noteworthy in light of widespread claims that children under seven years of age are unable to benefit from mentally reinstating contextual cues because they lack the necessary metacognitive skills (Cronin, Memon, Eaves, Kupper, & Bull, 1992; Köhnken *et al.*, 1992; Memon *et al.*, 1993, 1996; Milne *et al.*, 1995; Saywitz *et al.*, 1992). Other findings discussed in Chapter 6 similarly show that young children are responsive to verbal cueing, too. From a forensic perspective, this research may be especially valuable because young children's accounts of alleged abuse tend to be the most sparse and skeletal. As a result, any techniques which increase the amount of high quality information obtained from children are valuable.

Larsson, Teoh, Lamb, Orbach, and Hershkowitz (2006) later asked whether physical and mental context reinstatement affected the types of details reported by alleged victims of sexual abuse and the ways in which interviewers elicit such details. By determining the types of detail that are affected by context reinstatement, researchers can concentrate on developing and refining techniques to enhance recall of particular categories of the most forensically relevant event information. By exploring the way such details are elicited, researchers may focus on prompt formulation that would enhance recall, rather than recognition, in order to increase the likelihood that the elicited information is accurate (Smith, 1988).

Larsson *et al.* (2006) focused on 30 children who had a standard Protocol interview at the investigator's office, followed by a PCR interview at the scene and 30 who had a MCR Protocol Interview at the investigator's office, followed by a MCR interview at the scene ($n = 30$). These children had been included in the previous study, so the conditions were the same as those we have just described.

Six categories were used to characterise all details in the substantive portions of the interviews to the extent that they pertained to sus-

pect, victim, witness, object, time, or location. In office interviews, significantly more details were elicited using invitations than any other prompt type whereas most of the details elicited at the scene were provided in response to directive prompts. In both office and scene interviews, "suspect" details were the most likely and object details were the least likely to be reported.

All types of prompts mostly elicited details about the suspect and elicited few details about objects. Prompt types differed, however, with respect to the other types of details they elicited. Whereas victim details were the most frequent category to be elicited (following suspect details) in response to invitations and suggestive prompts, location and time details were elicited most frequently (following suspect details) by directive and option-posing prompts, respectively (see Table 5.11).

There were significant differences in the types of details elicited in the office and crime scene interviews. In the office and at the crime scene, suspect details were most likely to be reported, but victim and location details were second most likely to be reported at the office and crime scene respectively, followed by victim, time, location, witness, and object details.

Invitations and directive prompts elicited significantly more "suspect" details than other details in the office, but they elicited as many "suspect" details as "location" details at the scene. Invitations elicited significantly more details in the office than at the scene for all detail categories except "location" details. Victim details were predominantly elicited by invitations than other prompts in the office but were elicited similarly frequently by invitations and directives at the scene. Option-posing and suggestive prompts elicited equal numbers of all detail types at the scene, but option-posing prompts elicited predominantly "sus-

Table 5.11 Mean number of details by detail-type and interview procedure

Type of detail	Interview procedure	
	PCR (n = 30) M(SD)	MCR (n = 30) M(SD)
Suspect	38.80 (30.89)	62.37 (48.13)
Victim	21.10 (20.80)	18.47 (17.30)
Witness	6.30 (9.48)	11.43 (26.12)
Object	3.00 (3.25)	4.73 (5.55)
Time	9.57 (6.32)	11.40 (7.56)
Location	15.97 (10.76)	17.73 (10.23)

pect" and "time" details whereas suggestive prompts predominantly elicited suspect details in the office (see Table 5.11).

The study thus suggested that question types may work differently when accompanied by different contextual cues. Clearly, however, much more work is needed until we know just how investigators might capitalise on these patterns to enhance the quality of the information they elicit from young children.

3. INTERVIEWING YOUNG WITNESSES

Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Hershkowitz, and Horowitz (2003) compared the structure and informativeness of interviews with alleged witnesses and alleged victims of similar incidents, matched with respect to factors likely to affect the informativeness of children in both groups. Because experienced events should be richer and more salient than events that were simply watched, Lamb *et al.* expected that witnesses would provide fewer details about incidents they had merely observed than would peers describing comparable incidents they had allegedly experienced.

In this study, 26 young witnesses of sexual abuse ($M = 10$ years) who had been interviewed using the Protocol were matched with respect to age, relationship between victim and alleged perpetrator and type of offense with 26 alleged victims of abuse who had also been interviewed using the Protocol. The same 22 investigators interviewed children in both groups, but the witnesses and victims were not interviewed about the same alleged incidents.

Interviewer Utterances There was no significant effects for age on the types of utterance used by interviewers, but there was a significant effect for role (victim/witness) in the number of invitations posed by interviewers and a significant age X role interaction with respect to suggestive prompts, with decreasing number of suggestive prompts offered to witnesses with increasing age, whereas they increased with age where victims were concerned. Comparable analyses of the proportions of all utterances that fell into each category showed role differences with respect to invitations and option-posing prompts, but no significant effects for age or age X role. More invitations were made to witnesses than to victims, whereas more option-posing prompts were offered to victims than to witnesses.

Children's responses The total number of details provided by alleged victims and witnesses did not differ significantly, although children under nine provided significantly fewer details than children over 11

years of age. Comparable analyses of central and peripheral details yielded similar effects for age and no differences between witnesses and alleged victims, although witnesses tended to provide more peripheral details than victims did. In addition, more details were elicited using invitations from witnesses than from victims, whereas more details were elicited using option-posing prompts from older than from younger children. Suggestive prompts also elicited more central details, on average, from victims than from witnesses. In general, though, the findings thus demonstrated quite conclusively that young witnesses can provide substantial amounts of forensically relevant details, especially when interviewers make extensive use of open-ended prompts. Similarities between the response patterns of witnesses and alleged victims suggested that the same principles should guide forensic interviewers seeking information from victims and witnesses and that the Protocol was a useful guide in both contexts.

Research in laboratory analogue contexts has shown that children often provide less information about events they have merely observed than about events in which they were actual participants (Murachver *et al.*, 1996). Such findings imply that witnesses should recall and recount less information than alleged victims, but this was not the case. Witnesses provided as many details as victims, with a tendency to provide more peripheral details (forensically relevant details about appearance or clothing, etc.) than the alleged victims.

Three possible factors (that are not mutually exclusive) may explain why the alleged victims failed to provide more details than the witnesses. First, victims may have been more stressed by their experiences than the witnesses, and this may have affected the amount of information they encoded. Although plausible, this hypothesis is not buttressed by empirical evidence: there remains considerable controversy about whether or not stress impedes or facilitates encoding and memory, as noted in Chapter 2 (e.g., Deffenbacher, 1983; Goodman, Bottoms *et al.*, 1991; Goodman, Hirschman *et al.*, 1991; Oates & Shrimpton, 1991; Ornstein, Gordon, & Larus, 1992; Peters, 1991; Peterson & Bell, 1996; Steward *et al.*, 1996). Second, the victims may have been more ashamed or embarrassed describing their experiences; none of the experimental studies concerned with the differential informativeness of participants and witnesses have involved incidents likely to provoke shame or embarrassment, although there is suggestive evidence and common sense reason to believe that reporters may sometimes fail to report embarrassing details (Saywitz *et al.*, 1991). Third, the interviewers questioned the victims and witnesses quite differently, even though they were all following the same investigative interview Protocol, and these differences in interviewer style may well have enhanced the

overall informativeness of the witnesses while degrading the informativeness of the alleged victims. In particular, interviewers offered witnesses more invitations than they offered victims; invitations typically, as they did in this study, elicit more details than more focused questions do. It is noteworthy that individual invitations elicited the same amounts of information from children in the two groups, so the different interview styles should not be attributed to the reticence or unresponsiveness of the alleged victims. Interviewers nevertheless chose to use riskier probes – prompts more likely to elicit inaccurate information when interviewing alleged victims – and their tendencies to do so increased as the children grew older and thus more capable of providing longer and fuller responses to invitations! Although the reasons are not clear, these findings suggest that these interviewers were more willing to "let witnesses do the talking", while directing the alleged victims' retrieval more forcefully, despite known risks to the accuracy of the information obtained.

Overall, the results demonstrated that the Protocol was as suitable for interviewing witnesses as it is for interviewing young victims. Indeed, the results of the study suggested that young witnesses may be surprisingly informative about incidents they have observed. This finding is important, because witnesses to incidents of child abuse (especially in public or group care settings) or incidents of domestic violence may often be children whose possible value as informants should not be discounted.

CONCLUSION

The studies on which we have focused in this chapter demonstrate quite conclusively that the Protocol is of considerable value to forensic interviewers. When interviewers use the Protocol, they make much greater use of open-ended questions than do their peers, and they are able to obtain considerable amounts of information in this fashion – information that it much more likely to be accurate than information obtained using the "riskier" types of questions that tend to predominate in most investigative interviews. That said, it is clear that interviewers following the Protocol continue to make too much use of those risky prompts, and there has not yet been sufficient research documenting changes in the quality of interviewing as interviewers have more experience using the Protocol and reviewing the interviews they have conducted.

Other studies reviewed here show that the quality of information obtained from alleged victims using the Protocol can also be helped by using additional physical or mental context reinstatement techniques

to try to bring the child's memory back to the circumstances surrounding the alleged abuse. Neither of these techniques has either been widely studied or widely utilised in the field, and we see considerable room for more consideration of these tools.

It is also clear that the techniques incorporated in the Protocol not only help young victims, but can be employed when interviewing young witnesses as well. This should come as no surprise, because the Protocol draws upon a large body of information about the ways in which young children behave, think, and remember experiences rather than features or characteristics that would apply only to alleged victims.

Interviewing suspected victims under six years of age

Like other professional guidelines, including the British "Achieving Best Evidence", the Protocol places special emphasis on the use of open-ended prompts, building on the evidence that freely recalled information is more likely to be accurate than information retrieved in response to recognition memory prompts. It is widely believed, however, that preschoolers (4- and 5-year-olds) provide such brief and incomplete responses to free recall prompts (e.g. Bourg *et al.*, 1999; Hewitt, 1999; Lyon, 1999; Saywitz & Goodman, 1996; Steward *et al.*, 1996) that alternative strategies are necessary. In this chapter, we examine closely the alleged and real inadequacies and capacities of preschoolers in forensic interview contexts, drawing especially on an extensive study designed to examine age differences in young children's responses to free-recall prompts.

Clearly, there are important differences between the autobiographical memory retrieval strategies and capacities of preschoolers and older children (Schneider & Bjorklund, 1998). Younger children tend to remember less information and to provide briefer accounts of their experiences than older children do (Baker-Ward, Gordon, Ornstein, Larus, & Clubb, 1993; Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Boat *et al.*, 1996; Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.*, 1996; Lamb, Sternberg, & Esplin, 2000; Ornstein *et al.*, 1992; Sternberg *et al.*, 1996). In addition, young children, especially preschoolers, are more likely than older children both to respond erroneously to suggestive questions about their experiences as well as to select erroneous options when responding to forced-choice and yes/no questions (Bruck, Ceci, Francouer, & Renick,

1995; Ceci & Bruck, 1995; Goodman & Aman, 1990; Oates & Shrimpton, 1991; Poole & Lindsay, 1998; Walker, Lunning, & Eilts, 1996). Their free recall reports are not less accurate than those of older children, however (Flin, Boon, Knox, & Bull, 1992; Goodman & Reed, 1986; Johnson & Foley, 1984; Marin, Holmes, Guth, & Kovac, 1979; Oates & Shrimpton, 1991).

Two of the initial field studies described in Chapter 5 (Orbach *et al.*, 2000; Sternberg *et al.*, 2001) showed that children in the two youngest age groups (4- to 6-year-olds and 7- to 8-year-olds) interviewed using the Protocol did not differ significantly with respect to the average number of details provided per invitation (i.e., open-ended free recall prompts) and the total number of forensically relevant details provided in response to such invitations (Sternberg, Lamb, Orbach *et al.*, 2001). Half of the information provided by the 16 4- to 6-year-olds studied by Sternberg, Lamb, Orbach *et al.* (2001) was elicited using open-ended invitations (i.e., free recall prompts). These findings indicate that young children can respond informatively to open-ended free recall prompts.

These studies included too few 4- to 6-year-old children, however, to permit close examination of age differences in children's responses to free-recall prompts. Accordingly, 130 4- to 8-year-old child-witnesses (90 girls and 40 boys) were interviewed using the Protocol in a later study (Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Esplin, Stewart, & Mitchell, 2003). The purpose of that study was to examine age differences in the amount and quality of information provided by young children in response to different types of free recall prompts. Open-ended invitations differ in scope, and it is possible that younger children may have greater difficulty than older children responding informatively to the more general invitations (e.g., "Tell me what happened" or "Tell me more about it.") than to the narrower, refocusing cued-invitations (e.g., "You said he kissed you on your lips. Tell me about the kissing."), included in the Protocol. "Cued invitations" use pre-disclosed details as contextual cues to prompt further free-recall elaboration, with those that refocus on time periods labelled "time segmenting cues". Time segmenting cues use pre-disclosed actions as temporal reference points for requesting event information about what happened before or after such reference points, during the time elapsing between two such temporal reference points, or at the same time as a designated act (e.g., "What happened while your mother was in the kitchen?" [pre-disclosed]). One purpose of Lamb *et al.*'s (2003) study was to see whether these types of cued invitations could be used effectively when interviewing 4- to 8-year-old children, and whether their effectiveness varied depending on the children's ages.

The study included forensic interviews of, 20, 29, 32, 29, and 20 suspected victims who were 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 years old, respectively. These

130 interviews were selected from a total of 271 interviews of 4- to 8-year-olds conducted in 1997–2001 by participating police officers in three police departments or Constabularies, one in the United Kingdom and two in the Western United States, where the Protocol had been introduced. All forensic interviews of alleged victims of sexual abuse conducted by the 16 participating police officers during the study periods, which differed from site to site, were considered for inclusion in the study. Interestingly, 60 of the 141 interviews that were excluded yielded no allegation of abuse, revealing a non-disclosure rate of 22 %, significantly higher than the rate reported in the earlier studies, but consistent with the evidence (see Chapter 8), that younger suspected victims are less likely to make allegations when questioned than older children are (Hershkowitz *et al.*, 2005, 2007; London *et al.*, 2005, 2007). A total of 134 interviews were excluded; 60 because the interviewers did not use the protocol, 59 because they yielded allegations of physical rather than sexual abuse, 12 were interviews of witnesses rather than alleged victims, while 3 were second interviews, or involved intermediaries or other possible sources of confusion. No interviews yielded allegations that appeared to be false; indeed, all of the alleged complaints were deemed valid by police investigators although details of the actual incidents were not known because this was a field study. There were no differences between children of each age with respect to the severity of the reported abuse, relationship to the perpetrators, or the reported number of abusive events.

All interviews studied followed the standard Protocol and all interviewers had received extensive training from researchers at NICHD on the use of the Protocol while conducting simulated and actual forensic interviews during the course of the project. For purposes of some analyses, Lamb *et al.* (2003) distinguished between general invitations (e.g., "Tell me everything that happened.") and cued invitations, which were invitations in which reference was made to a detail mentioned earlier by the child (e.g., "You mentioned that he touched you. Tell me everything about the touching."). Cued invitations were further categorised depending on whether they referenced Events, Actions, Segments of Time, or Other Topics.

Investigators' Behaviour

In the substantive portions of the interviews, investigators posed an average of 16 invitations, 17 directive prompts, 13 option-posing prompts, and 3 suggestive prompts, with the average numbers of prompts of each type not varying significantly by age. The investigators asked an average of eight substantive questions (15% of the total number

of substantive prompts) before their first substantive option-posing or suggestive prompt, and this, too, did not vary depending on the children's ages.

The average interview included five cued invitations. There was a significant effect for age with respect to the number of cued invitations, with more cued invitations being addressed to 4-, 5-, and 8-year-olds (Ms = 6, 6, and 7, respectively) than to 6- and 7-year-olds (Ms = 4). With the exception of this one non-linear age difference, these analyses indicate that the interviewers interacted similarly with children of all ages studied.

Children's Responses

Not surprisingly, there were significant age differences in the total number of details elicited as well as in the numbers elicited using each of the different types of prompts (See Table 6.1). Although the *percentage* of total details elicited using invitations was highest among the 8-year-olds (57%), the second highest percentage was among the 4-year-olds (48%), and there was no significant effect for age with respect to the proportion of details elicited using invitations.

There were also significant age differences in the average number of details elicited by each invitation, with means of 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 details for responses by 4-, 5-, 6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds, respectively. General invitations (as opposed to cued invitations) likewise yielded an increasing number of details as children grew older.

There were no age differences in the number of utterances of each type that elicited one or more details, indicating that children of all ages were equivalently likely to respond informatively to similar types of prompts. Age was non significantly associated with the likelihood that invitations would elicit informative responses but in an unusual way,

Table 6.1 Age differences in the average number of details elicited by each type of prompt

	Utterance types				
Age	Invitations	Directive	Option-posing	Suggestive	Total
4	40.0	21.3	15.8	6.1	83.1
5	54.5	32.8	22.7	6.1	115.6
6	58.1	51.0	30.3	8.8	148.2
7	65.6	43.0	26.5	9.0	144.1
8	139.7	42.1	31.6	7.1	220.4
Total	68.7	39.2	25.6	7.6	141.1

with 42, 44, 30, 30, and 48 per cent of the invitations addressed to 4-, 5-, 6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds, respectively, eliciting informative responses.

There was also an effect of age on the number of details provided before the first option-posing or suggestive prompt: the older the child, the more details were reported before the first option-posing or suggestive utterance. There was no significant effect with respect to the proportion of the total number of details elicited before the first such prompt, however: despite differences in the total amount of information provided by children of different ages, younger and older children reported similar proportions (out their total amount of reported information) before the first introduction of interviewer input via the use of option-posing or suggestive prompts.

Qualitative Analyses

In 109 (83%) of the 130 interviews, children disclosed an allegation from free recall, 96 times in response to free-recall prompts and 13 times spontaneously. In 19 (17%) cases, the allegations emerged in response to option-posing (13) or suggestive (6) prompts. Thirty-eight of the 49 preschoolers (4- and 5-year-olds) provided free-recall disclosures of the allegations (28 in response to free-recall prompts and 10 spontaneously). Nine of the preschoolers made allegations in response to option-posing (6) and suggestive (3) prompts.

Children of all ages provided forensically crucial information about their alleged abuse: "Who? What? When?". All participants specified the alleged incidents in terms of the perpetrators' actions and the body parts involved and the findings reported above illustrate how this information was elicited. Nearly all (124) of the 128 children who alleged abuse by familiar individuals (two were allegedly abused by strangers) identified the suspect; only three 6-year-olds and one 7-year-old failed to do so. Sixty-six per cent of the children (60, 71, 61, 64, and 75%, respectively, of the 4-, 5-, 6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds) identified the suspect spontaneously or in response to invitations whereas only 7% (20, 4, 7, 7, and 0% of the 4-, 5-, 6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds, respectively) did so in response to suggestive prompts. Only the information about timing was inadequate. Specifically, 10 (50%), 17 (59%), 19 (59%), 24 (83%), and 17 (85%) of the 4-, 5-, 6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds, respectively, indicated when at least one of the incidents took place, either by reference to the calendar (e.g., "last Tuesday") or to a discrete event ("the last time I slept over there"). Evidently, preschoolers were considerably less informative with respect to timing than the 7- and 8-year-olds were. All children responded informatively when asked whether the abuse happened "one time or more than one time."

The results of this study clearly demonstrated that children as young as four years of age can provide substantial amounts of forensically important information about alleged abuse in response to free-recall prompts. On average, almost one-half of the information provided by the children came in response to free-recall prompts. As expected, older children reported more details in total and in their average responses to invitations than the younger children did, but the proportion of details elicited using free-recall prompts did not increase with age. Moreover, the results reported here show that very young children are capable of providing most of the information (Who? What?) needed by forensic investigators in response to free-recall prompts, thereby reducing reliance on the more risky (potentially contaminating) yes/no and forced-choice questions. On average, invitations also elicited more forensically relevant details than did other types of utterances at all ages, as reported by other researchers (e.g., Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.*, 1996; Orbach *et al.*, 2000; Sternberg *et al.*, 1996; Sternberg, Lamb, Davies *et al.*, 2001).

Cued Invitations

Because preschoolers are often deemed incapable of providing informative responses to very general prompts (e.g., "Tell me what happened"), we were particularly interested in age differences in response to cued invitations, in which the interviewer made explicit reference to informative detail (e.g., action, object) previously mentioned by the child. An average of 25 details per interview was elicited using cued invitations. Cued invitations thus elicited 18% of the total number of details elicited, and 37% of the total number of details elicited using invitations.

Not surprisingly, both the total number of details and the average number of details per prompt elicited using cued invitations increased with age. Both action and time segmenting cues elicited more information from 8-, than from 4-, 5-, 6-, and 7-year-olds with action cues eliciting more information from children than did time segmenting, event-based, and other cue types.

The results of Lamb *et al.*'s study thus illustrated that cued invitations, particularly those that remind children of actions they have previously mentioned, constitute effective ways of triggering the recall of information that is more likely to be accurate than information elicited using forced-choice and yes/no questions from alleged victims as young as four years of age. At all ages, furthermore, more information would likely have been elicited if the interviewers had made greater use of cued invitations (the average interview included 5.4 cued invitations), particularly those that made explicit reference to actions

(i.e., action-based and time-segmenting cues) mentioned by the child. Cued invitations (e.g., "You said that he touched your vagina. Tell me more about that.") are productive and innocuous alternatives to risky yes/no and forced-choice questions (e.g., "So did he put his finger *in* your vagina?") when general invitations (e.g., "And then what happened?") appear to be ineffective. By structuring recall of experienced events, associating them with actions that have been mentioned, and breaking them into smaller units or segments of time, cued invitations enhance the capacity of young children to reconstruct past events and to elaborate upon their narrative accounts, avoiding interviewer contamination during the recall. Interestingly, action-based cues (e.g., "Tell me more about the touching.") were consistently more effective than all other types of cues, regardless of age.

Our compelling findings regarding the value of "cued invitations" indicate clearly that forensic interviewers need to provide children of all ages with opportunities to recall information in response to free-recall prompts before assuming that more risky interview techniques are needed. This admonition is especially important in light of repeated demonstrations that younger children are more likely than older children to give inaccurate responses to yes/no questions (Brady, Poole, Warren, & Jones, 1999), to respond affirmatively to misleading questions about non-experienced events (Poole & Lindsay, 1998), and to acquiesce to suggestions (e.g., Cassel *et al.*, 1996; Ceci & Huffman, 1997; Ceci, Ross, & Toglia, 1987a, 1987b; Robinson & Briggs, 1997). Such findings indicate that risky questions are even riskier when addressed to children aged six and under, and thus that forensic investigators need to make special efforts to maximise the amounts of information elicited from 4- to 6-year-olds using less risky, free-recall prompts.

In Lamb *et al.*'s study, nearly half of the informative details and 83% of the initial disclosures of sexual abuse were provided by preschoolers in response to free-recall prompts. Such findings suggest that the likely accuracy of information provided by alleged victims is enhanced when interviewers use free-recall prompts exhaustively before turning to more focused prompts. These findings also indicate that cued-invitations should be exhausted before 'wh' prompts (whether visual or verbal) are introduced because cued-invitations foster retrieval of free-recall information without limiting responses to investigator-specified categories. Non-suggestive yes/no and forced-choice questions, in which interviewers provide content, should be used only if essential information is still missing after free-recall and directive prompts have been exhausted, because these riskier alternatives are more likely to elicit inaccurate information.

Table 6.2 Age differences in the average number of details in response to each cued invitation

Age	Event Cues	Time-Segmentation Cues	Action Cues	Other Cue Types
4	1.1	1.7	3.7	2.0
5	4.2	1.3	3.1	2.3
6	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.3
7	2.2	0.9	6.2	2.7
8	1.3	4.6	8.6	2.8
Total	2.5	2.1	5.5	2.4

Developmental improvements in the effectiveness of cued invitations were especially dramatic with respect to time-segmenting cues, which were quite effective when addressed to 8-year-olds (See Table 6.2). At first glance, this may seem puzzling because action-cues and time-segmenting cues both use details about actions mentioned by the child to request additional information, yet responses to action cues steadily improved with age whereas time segmenting prompts were significantly more effective with 8-year-olds than with younger children. Perhaps this is because time-segmenting cues differ from action cues with respect to the type of information they request. Whereas action cues seek more information about the action itself, time segmenting cues solicit information about what happened during a period of time following or preceding the action referenced or during the period of time between two such actions. Thus actions are the focus of the information request in action cues and serve only as temporal reference points in time-segmenting cues. As a result, the cognitive demands of the two types of cued invitations are quite different.

The fact that 8-year-olds responded more informatively to time-segmenting cues than younger children did is consistent with Piaget's (1971) observation that temporal concepts are understood by children later than concepts related to objects and actions. Piaget explained that the comprehension of time is associated with the ability to observe the consequences of actions, to recognise causal relationships in event sequences, and to explain later occurrences in terms of former ones (Gibson, 1991; Piaget, 1971). Whereas action cues require further elaboration about the action itself, time segmenting cues require a forward projection of events, starting with a given action and continuing sequentially, as well as the capacity to review events in reverse order, going from an effect to an earlier cause. Only when children are able to relate to time operationally are they able to understand and reconstruct time sequences in this fashion. Younger children cannot engage

in such operational reversibility "whereas 8-year-olds can make use of that power and thus reconstruct the true and irreversible order of events" (Piaget, 1971, p. 6). The development of this capacity at seven to eight years of age enables children to deal with event sequences more efficiently, and this may explain the dramatic increase we observed in the amount of information provided in response to time-segmenting cues by 8-year-olds. In addition, although they also request information about events, action cues involve more focused demands for information and are thus less cognitively demanding than time segmenting cues.

Children's References to Temporal Attributes

To follow up on Lamb *et al.*'s results, Orbach and Lamb (2007) examined age-related differences in 4- to 10-year-old children's references to temporal attributes (i.e., sequencing, dating, number of occurrences, duration, and frequency) when describing allegedly experienced incidents of abuse both spontaneously and in response to temporal requests made in the course of forensic interviews. The study was designed to explore the relationships among children's ages, the specific temporal attribute referenced, retrieval mode (i.e., spontaneously or in response to requests for temporal information), and the way interviewers formulated their requests for information (i.e., whether tapping recall or recognition memory). Because all 250 forensic interviews analysed involved the Protocol, with emphasis placed on free recall of information, the children had ample opportunity to provide free-recall narratives, and thus highlight their spontaneous reporting capabilities.

The study drew on the most influential research on the development of temporal understanding in young children (Friedman, 1990, 1992, 1993, 2000; Friedman & Lyon, 2005), the capacity to mentally reconstruct time (Piaget, 1971; Tulving, 1972) by relating information associated with memories of target events to general knowledge of time patterns (e.g., days of the week or months of the year), and the abilities to reference the temporal attributes of past events, understand and use relational words, such as first, next, before, or after, and to construct narratives. The ability to report temporal information about experienced events is also affected by event-specific factors, such as the content of the event, the number of events to be reported, and the delay between the event and the interview.

Whereas laboratory studies typically ask participants to focus on single temporal characteristics, the forensic interviews examined by Orbach and Lamb (2007) afforded child witnesses opportunities to describe allegedly experienced events using a range of temporal attributes, both spontaneously and in response to temporal requests. Moreover,

whereas the emphasis in laboratory studies is usually on temporal information provided during recognition-based processes, the emphasis in this study was on recall-based processes because freely recalled information is more likely to be accurate than information retrieved in response to recognition memory prompts. Orbach and Lamb's (2007) study was the first to examine children's spontaneous references to temporal attributes when recounting personally-experienced, uncontrived real-life events. Because the interviews explored uncontrived events, however, accuracy could not be determined and the children's competence was measured by their ability to reference temporal attributes spontaneously, in response to general prompts (i.e., "Tell me everything that happened") and responsively, in response to interviewers' requests for temporal information (e.g., "When did it happen?"). Children's responsiveness (i.e., the match between their responses and the interviewers' requests) was determined by the appropriateness of the temporal category, the appropriate relational terminology, and the temporal scale used. Moreover, case outcome information, examined to provide some indication of the children's veracity, revealed that only 9% of the cases were dismissed by the police because allegations were deemed "unfounded" while 51% involved charges that led to alleged perpetrators' arrests, suggesting that most of the alleged abuse probably occurred.

In forensic settings, information about temporal attributes such as the date of occurrence, the number of alleged incidents, and the sequence of event components can uniquely define specific incidents (Tulving, 1972, 2002) and help structure narrative accounts of experiences. In the legal context, it is often critically important to specify the time at which an alleged criminal offence occurred. In cases of child sexual abuse, it is especially important to obtain such information from alleged victims because corroborative evidence is scarce and in most cases, the victim is the sole witness to the crime other than the suspect. Even when alibi defences are unlikely because the alleged perpetrator is part of the victim's immediate family and has continuous access to the child and when multiple incidents of abuse by the same perpetrator are alleged, the value of the children's testimony is enhanced when the temporal context of the alleged abuse is specified. Such references to time of day (e.g., day, night), contiguity with another activity (e.g., "every time when my mother works the night shift"), or estimations of when the abuse was initiated (e.g., "it started when I was in first grade"), contribute important forensic information. Moreover, temporal references enhance the retrieval of event-specific narratives and eliminate the non-contextualised lists of actions that are typical of script descriptions. It is much easier to evaluate children's credibility

in such narrative accounts, contained in interviews of high quality, in which most information is retrieved from recall rather than recognition memory (Hershkowitz, 2001; Raskin & Esplin, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c; Undeutsch, 1982).

Orbach and Lamb (2007) found age-related increases in the 4- to 10-year olds' appropriate references to temporal attributes, both spontaneously and in response to temporal requests. More references to temporal attributes were elicited from recall than from recognition memory, highlighting spontaneous reporting capabilities. As expected, there were positive correlations between the amount of temporal information (represented by the total number of temporal units in the temporal categories analysed) and the total amount of forensic information (represented by the total number of details) provided by the children in the course of forensic interviews, as well as between the number of temporal requests by interviewers and the production of temporal references by children. As a result, Orbach and Lamb controlled for both the total number of details provided and the total number of requests made in many of their analyses.

Sequencing was the most commonly referenced temporal category and occurred at a much earlier age than predicted by Piaget, with linear increases between the ages of four and ten years. As predicted, children made fewer references to backward sequences than to forward sequences overall, regardless of age. Even after controlling for the total number of details and the number of temporal requests, there were large increases with age in the overall number of references to temporal sequences. This was especially compelling when analyses focused on spontaneous production.

The expected increased use of "temporal location" (representing the time of an event on conventional time scales) around the age of ten years was not found, however. This was surprising because, in order to associate experienced events with temporal locations, children must be able to represent conventional time patterns and to locate events on long conventional time scales, abilities which are typically acquired between eight and nine years of age (Friedman, 1991, 1992). Familiarity with the context in which their memories were embedded (i.e., familiar daily activities) may have enhanced the children's ability to reference non-specific temporal locations with which even preschoolers are familiar and the simple increase with age that was noted may have reflected the children's ability to link events or event components to short-scale conventional time patterns, like the time of the day or the day of the week (i.e., "non-specific temporal locations"), rather than to long-scale conventional time patterns, like months of the year or calendar dates (i.e., "specific temporal locations"). Overall, the children

in this study, like adults, remembered the times of past events by re-constructing their locations relative to time patterns. Adults, however, are capable of using both short and long scale time patterns, whereas children mostly referenced short-scale time patterns or anchored their memories to familiar daily activities.

The children studied by Orbach and Lamb produced a substantial amount of temporal information spontaneously. Of the total number of references to temporal attributes, over 50% were provided sponta-neously, i.e., not in response to interviewer requests for temporal in-formation. Moreover, close to 30% of the total number of temporal ref-erences were provided by children in response to free-recall prompts and 46% in response to cued-recall prompts, summing to a compelling 74% from "recall" memory. Nearly 72% of the children's spontaneous temporal references involved temporal sequencing, perhaps because the eyewitness accounts examined in the present study involve chil-dren's event memories provided in the form of narrative responses to the open-ended invitations emphasised in the Protocol. Beyond the in-formation they impart, the references to sequence have forensic value because they help structure the investigated events, enabling eyewit-nesses to reconstruct their past experiences, report event components in chronological order, and elaborate on what happened prior to a disclosed event component, or if prompted, refer to causally-related event components. By showing that free-recall prompts elicit a large amount of temporal information from children, the findings showed that forensic investigators need not rely on the more risky (poten-tially contaminating) yes/no and forced-choice questions to obtain this information.

CAN HUMAN FIGURE DRAWINGS AND ANATOMICALLY DETAILED DOLLS HELP 5 – 7 YEAR OLD CHILDREN TO REPORT TOUCH?

Because young children's accounts of their experiences are likely to be brief (especially when interviewers are not following the Protocol) some professionals have recommend that techniques such as human figure drawings or anatomical dolls (AD) be used to help children provide com-plete reports of their abuse experiences (see Chapter 2). Other profes-sionals, however, have argued that AD dolls should not be used because they are inherently suggestive and may encourage play and fantasy (Ceci & Bruck, 1995) when children are asked to indicate what hap-pened, where they have been touched, and by whom. The adverse effects of AD dolls on the reliability of children's reports in forensic contexts are

widely recognised today, in part because these dolls can be suggestive and have dual identity as both playthings and representations of the child or perpetrator (Thierry, Lamb, Orbach, & Pipe, 2005). In addition, the few field studies examining the use of AD dolls in forensic context have not shown consistently that dolls enhance the amount of information reported (Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Boat, & Everson, 1996; Leventhal, Hamilton, Rededal, Tebano-Micci, & Eyster, 1989; Thierry, Lamb, Orbach, & Pipe, 2005). Leventhal *et al.* (1989) found that 4- to 7-year-old children provided detailed descriptions of abuse when dolls were used, although they did not specify the eliciting prompt. Lamb and his colleagues (1996) found no overall difference between the number of details reported by 4- to 12-year-old alleged sexual abuse victims who were interviewed either by using or by not using AD dolls. Children provided more details, however, in response to open-ended free-recall prompts when the dolls were not used than when the dolls were used (Lamb *et al.*, 1996).

Thierry and colleagues (2005) explored the accuracy of information provided by 3- to 12-year-old alleged victims of sexual abuse in the course of forensic investigation by evaluating the consistency of information they provided when using the dolls with earlier information they provided before the introduction of the dolls. They also explored whether any effects of dolls on children's responses were age-related. Although there were no differences in the amount of information provided by children in response to open-ended invitations or focused prompts with and without the dolls, the mode of response provided by children with and without the doll in response to focused prompts varied depending on children's age. Younger children (3–6 years old) were more likely than older children (7–12 years old) to provide enactment responses, play suggestively, and contradict earlier responses provided before the dolls were introduced, whereas older children were more likely to produce verbal responses that were consistent with information they provided before the introduction of the dolls. Children in both age groups provided more fantastic details when using the dolls than when not using the dolls. Thus, consistent with Lamb *et al.*'s study (1996), the use of AD dolls did not enhance the amount or quality of information that young children provided. Most of the new information was provided by children in response to focused, rather free-recall prompts. Although there were no differences in the number of these new details, taking into account the higher instances of enactment, play, and contradictory details in younger children's accounts when using the dolls, suggesting that the use of dolls elicited information of poorer quality from very young children. For these reasons, AD dolls are used less and less frequently by forensic interviewers around the world.

The symbolic nature of pictures is more easily appreciated by young children than that of dolls and scale models (DeLoache & Marzolf, 1992), but it is unclear how well children can use them to communicate their personal experiences. Although children as young as two or three years may appreciate the representational nature of pictures in search tasks (DeLoache, 2000, 2004), human figure drawings may pose additional challenges because the ability to use symbols of any kind varies with the context and nature of the task (DeLoache, 2004). In the forensic context, children are expected to indicate where they were touched, and with which parts of the alleged perpetrators' body. In addition, children are usually asked to report touches that occurred much earlier, introducing a memory component not hitherto examined experimentally. Thus, although 5- or 6-year-old children *can* use pictures as representations, we cannot assume that they will do so under conditions that mimic the forensic context (Salmon, 2001).

Although perhaps less popular than AD dolls, anatomical drawings are frequently employed by and widely recommended to therapists and forensic interviewers, but they have never been studied systematically, leaving no information concerning their potential value (Poole & Lamb, 1998). Obviously, anatomical drawings can be suggestive intrinsically, and they can also be used in combination with suggestive prompts, which increase the risks not only of eliciting inaccurate information but also of contaminating the child's memory in ways that compromise the value of later interviews (Ceci & Bruck, 1995). In one of the few studies designed to assess the potential value of these drawings in forensic contexts, Aldridge *et al*. (2004) took a number of steps to minimise possible risks. First, they used gender-neutral outline drawings rather than anatomically detailed drawings, reasoning that explicit drawings (see Figure 6.1) might be too suggestive and offensive to some children. Second, the drawings were only introduced at the end of the interview, after the interviewers felt they had elicited as much information as possible from the children using the structured Protocol. Because the drawings were introduced following exhaustive retrieval, any contamination was minimised and the forensic value of the information elicited earlier in the interview using the Protocol was not compromised. Third, the manner in which the drawings were introduced and used was systematic and carefully structured. Although effective use of the drawings required that they be used in association with quite focused (but not suggestive) questions, the first question offered after introduction of the drawings prompted for recall and interviewers were trained to offer open-ended prompts whenever the focused questions elicited information. This strategy was adopted to minimise the adverse impact on the quality of information elicited.
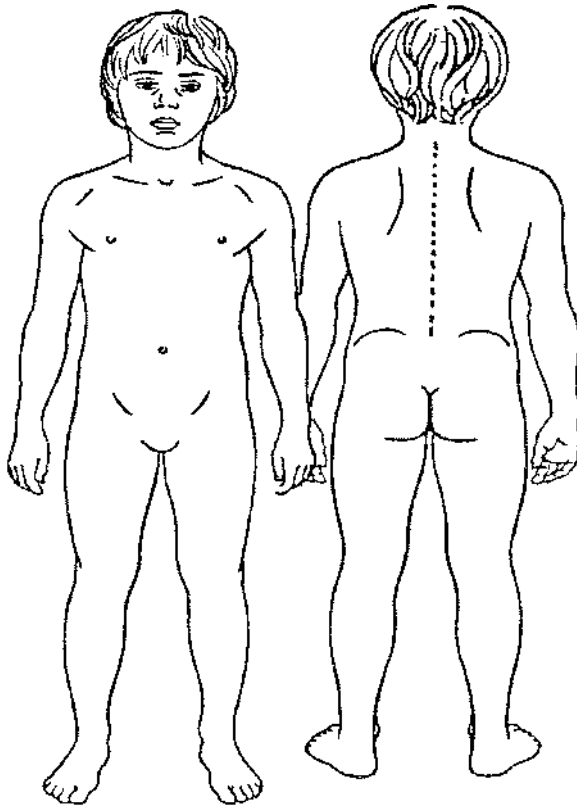
Figure 6.1

The study included investigative interviews of 90 children (72 girls and 18 boys), ranging from 4 to 13 years of age. These interviews were conducted by six police officers from a single Constabulary in the United Kingdom who had been trained to use the Protocol.

Exhaustive retrieval of information using the protocol was followed by a series of structured questions (see Appendix 2) in which reference was made to an unclothed but gender-neutral line drawing (see Figure 6.1). The sequence began with a general summary to refocus the child's attention. Because all of the children had already mentioned being touched by the perpetrator, the next prompt was a directive recall prompt that was followed by a series of alternating yes/no questions and open-ended invitations. The interviewers asked the child a series of questions concerning the parts of his/her body that were touched by the perpetrator and the parts of the perpetrator's body that made

contact with the child. Open-ended prompts were used to elicit further information whenever body contact was mentioned.

As expected, the proportions of interviewer prompts of each type changed quite dramatically after the drawings were introduced, with focused recognition memory prompts replacing open-ended recall memory prompts when the drawings were being used. Specifically, the proportion of utterances that were invitations, directives, and suggestive prompts decreased after the drawings were introduced whereas the proportion of option-posing prompts increased. In the case of option-posing prompts, the proportions were highest among 8- to10-year-olds, but the differences between these children and those who were either younger or older were more dramatic after the drawings than before. In the case of directives, the proportions increased steadily with age before the drawings whereas they were most prominent after the drawings in interviews of 3- to 7-year olds and least common in interviews of 8- to 10-year-olds.

As far as the children's responses were concerned, more details (nearly 400 on average) were elicited before rather than after (an average of just under 90) the drawings were introduced, and the total number of details provided increased with age. On average, the drawings elicited 18% of the total number of forensically relevant details obtained, even though they were only introduced when the interviewers thought that the child's account was complete. With the 4- to 7-year-olds, the drawings elicited 27% of the total number of details, compared with 19% for the 8- to 10-year-olds and 12% from the 11- to 13-year-olds, indicating that the drawings were useful prompts at all ages, but especially with the youngest children.

This apparent benefit was achieved at some cost, however, because the changed interviewing strategies that accompanied introduction of the anatomical drawings had a predictable effect on the quality of information obtained, with the recall information that is most likely to be accurate becoming less prominent, and the riskier information obtained using recognition prompts becoming much more significant in both absolute and relative terms. Introduction of the drawings thus helped the investigators elicit substantial amounts of information even after they felt that the child's memory had been exhausted but the quality of this information was lower because of the way in which it was elicited. To minimise contamination, therefore, it is preferable that anatomical drawings be introduced as late as possible in investigative interviews, as they were here.

The developmental effects reported by Aldridge *et al.* were also extremely interesting. The oldest children, having more developed retrieval strategies, provided more complete accounts of their experiences

in the standard part of the interview, whereas the younger children benefited more from focused and concrete retrieval cues which helped them access details that they did not otherwise report. The focused prompts were not disproportionately helpful for younger children in the standard part of the interview, either in this study or in the studies reported earlier, however, suggesting that systematic references to a concrete cue, the anatomical drawing, were particularly helpful for the younger children.

In addition, Aldridge *et al.* (2004) did not determine how much of the reported information involved touching, nor whether the children reported additional information about previously reported features of the incidents, or completely new events of the reported events after the drawings were introduced.

Rather more sobering findings were obtained in an analogue study by Willcock, Morgan, and Hayne (2006), who found that children's reports of innocuous touch during a scripted event tended to be inaccurate. In one experiment, 5- to 6-year-old children were interviewed one month after the event using a drawing of a clothed child (a "body map"). Ten of the 125 children reported no touches at all and fewer than half of the touches were reported. Moreover, only half of the reported touches had actually occurred. Of particular concern, more than 10% of the children who reported touches indicated that they had been touched in the genital region, and a quarter reported that their chest/breast area had been touched. In a second experiment, children were questioned using the body map immediately, 24 hours, or 1 month after the event. Reports of touch were again incomplete, although children interviewed immediately reported twice as many as those interviewed after delays. Children reported touches that did not occur even when interviewed immediately, and incorrectly reported touches to the genital and breast/chest areas as often as children in the first experiment.

Brown *et al.* (2007) subsequently explored the accuracy of information about known touches by only introducing human figure drawings after exhaustive verbal recall (a Protocol interview), with follow-up open-ended prompting and specific questions similar to those used by Aldridge *et al.* Brown *et al.* also asked whether pre-interview instruction and training enhanced children's ability to use drawings when reporting touches. The completeness and accuracy of children's verbal reports increases when children practice talking about the past (Sternberg *et al.*, 1997), or are trained to report forensically relevant categories of information (Brown & Pipe, 2003a, 2003b; Saywitz & Snyder, 1996; Saywitz, Snyder & Lamphear, 1996). Instructions and practice may similarly increase the reliability of information elicited

using human figure drawings by enabling children to overcome possible metalinguistic deficits (Lamb & Brown, 2006), orienting them to the type of information required (i.e. what a 'touch' was), and demonstrating how drawings can be used to communicate information about experienced touches.

Third, Brown *et al.* (2007) included a control condition in which recall was assessed by simply asking children direct questions about possible touches. Studies demonstrating that children frequently report touches erroneously (e.g., Krackow & Lynn, 2003; Leippe, Romanczyk & Manion, 1991; Saywitz, Goodman, Nicholas, & Moan, 1991; Steward *et al.*, 1996) have not always included control conditions in which children are questioned in the absence of drawings. Verbal prompting for some categories of information (e.g., information about people, settings, actions, conversations, and affects), without training, can be just as effective as similar prompting after training (e.g., Brown & Pipe, 2003a) and this may be true with respect to reports of touching.

Fourth, Brown *et al.* asked whether touches were as likely to be misreported as in Willcock *et al.*'s study when they were designed to be distinctive (although still innocuous) and not incidental (e.g., tickling the child's bare foot). Although these touches are not analogous to sexual abuse, they might nonetheless be more memorable than "everyday" or incidental touches, such as touches to the shoulder while dressing. Brown *et al.* further asked whether forensically troubling touches to the genital and breast area would be reported (inaccurately) as often when we used the *unclothed* human figure drawings typically used in clinical and forensic interviews, rather than the clothed body maps used by Willcock *et al.* A drawing of an unclothed figure may allow greater precision when children indicate where they have been touched. Brown *et al.* also asked children to elaborate when they reported being touched.

In Brown *et al.*'s (2007) study, a researcher touched 79 5- to 7-year-old children participating, individually, in a staged event at their school that lasted approximately fifteen minutes. A research assistant met the children in their class and took them to "meet the photographer" (a second researcher). The photographer invited the children to look at a book about pirates before dressing them in a pirate costume (boots, shirt, vest, earring, eye-patch, hat, necktie, belt, sword) on top of their school clothes. Once the children were in costume, they sat on a small stepladder and were photographed. The photographer then dressed in a cowboy costume (denim shirt, necktie, hat, belt with holsters and two toy guns) and two photographs were taken of the child with the photographer. A third research assistant then entered the room and briefly argued with the photographer about access to some equipment before agreeing to take spare equipment. Once costumes had been removed,

the children were allowed to use the camera to take a picture of the photographer and then returned to class.

During the event, the photographer touched the children seven times: she 1) tickled their feet before putting the boots on, 2) wiggled their right ear before putting the earring on, 3) squeezed their wrist to check that the wristband was on correctly, 4) patted them on the left side of their waist to indicate what side to hang the sword on, 5) put her arm around their shoulder for the first photo together, 6) put her arm around their waist for the second photo together, and finally 7) patted them on the shoulder at the end of the event. At the conclusion of the event the children returned to class accompanied by the research assistant. Children were interviewed about their recall of the event four to six weeks later by one of four research assistants, who had been trained to use the standard Protocol.

Immediately after completion of this *event interview*, the interviewers asked specifically about touches in the *touch enquiry* phase, in one of the following three ways: drawings only, drawings with instruction, and verbal questions. In two of the conditions, children were shown human figure drawings, while in the third (control) condition, children were asked questions about possible touches without the drawings. In one of the drawing conditions children first practiced using the drawing to demonstrate touches and received feedback on their responses. Brown and her colleagues predicted that children in the two drawing conditions would report more information than children in the verbal questions condition if the drawings facilitated reports of touches by providing communicative support. Further, Brown *et al.* predicted that practice using the drawings would be particularly helpful in clarifying the nature of the task, thus overcoming any meta-linguistic difficulties.

Children in the *Drawings-Only* condition were shown a human figure drawing and asked, "Did any part of the photographer's body touch any part of your body?" Children who responded affirmatively were asked to mark on the drawing where the photographer had touched them, and were then asked *open-ended questions* (e.g., "tell me about that touching") to elicit episodic recall of the touch. When children indicated that they could recall no more information, they were asked six *direct questions* about touch to different parts of their bodies (face, chest, arms/hands, front genital region, bottom, legs/feet). Three of these areas had been touched (i.e., "yes" responses were correct) and three had not been touched (i.e., "no" responses were correct). If children indicated that any of these regions had been touched, they were asked to mark the drawing and elaborate on their response, as with the open-ended questions. The procedure was then repeated using a new drawing, with the children asked if they had touched any part of the photographer's

body. "No" responses to all questions were correct, because the children never touched the photographer.

Children in the *Drawings-with-instruction* condition were given two drawings; one representing them (the same human figure drawings as children in the drawing-only condition), and one representing the interviewer. The interviewer touched the children on the elbow and then asked them to show on the drawing of themselves where the interviewer had touched them. If the children indicated incorrectly, the interviewer corrected them and demonstrated the correct response. The children were then asked to indicate on the drawing of the interviewer which part of her body had touched them. Feedback was again given. Just over half of the children (54%) required correction and additional explanation to complete the first trial successfully. After responding correctly on two trials (all children successfully completed the second trial), two additional blank drawings were presented to represent the child and the photographer. The interview regarding touch to the child was identical to that in the drawing-only condition. Two more blank drawings were then presented for the children to practice reporting touch that they initiated between themselves and the interviewer and following two successful trials children were asked to indicate on two new human figure drawings whether they had touched the photographer during the event, in response to *open questions*, before finally being asked the same *direct questions* as in the drawing-only condition.

Children in the *Verbal Questions* condition were not shown any drawings. As in the other two conditions, they were first asked an introductory question about being touched by the photographer and were encouraged to elaborate on any reports of touch in response to *open questions*. They were then asked six *direct questions* that paralleled those asked of children in the other conditions. Each question named the location of possible touch (e.g., "did the photographer touch your feet?"); if children answered affirmatively, they were asked follow-up questions to elicit further details (e.g., tell me about that touching/what was happening when she touched you on your feet), following which the next question was asked. Children who responded negatively to the first question were asked a second more specific question referring to the action associated with the touching (e.g., "did the photographer tickle your feet?"), in case they interpreted the word "touch" narrowly or had encoded the contact more specifically as a "tickle" (for example) rather than as a "touch".

Amazingly, only four of the 79 children reported being touched during the Protocol or *event interview* that preceded the touch enquiry. Two of the reports were incorrect and *none* of the 79 children mentioned any of the target touches!

As in Aldridge *et al.*'s (2004) study, the majority of children reported new information when the drawings were presented, even though the drawings followed exhaustive verbal interviews. Children who were simply asked about touch, without the drawings, were also able to report new information during the *touch enquiry*. Overall, 61% of children reported new information about experienced touches in response to *open questions* in the *touch enquiry*. Children in both the drawing-with-instruction (73%) and verbal questions (67%) conditions were non-significantly more likely to provide at least some new information than were children in the drawing-only condition (42%). More than half (58%) of the children asked to indicate on the drawing where they had been touched, in the absence of specific training and instructions, failed to report any touches, however, although they had been touched seven times.

Subsequent analyses explored the total amount and types of information about touch provided in response to *open questions* during the *touch enquiry* by the 48 children who did report at least some touches.

The total amount of information about being touched did not vary depending on condition, but the total amount of incorrect information reported did, with children in the drawing-with-instructions group reporting more incorrect information than children in the verbal questions group. Children in the drawing-only group reported as many incorrect touches as those who had instruction, but because of variability in their responses, they did not differ significantly from those in the verbal recall group. The vast majority of errors were consistent with the activities that the children took part in (e.g., touch in the context of putting on costumes, greeting the photographer, walking to the experiment).

Analyses of responses to the *focused (Yes/No) questions* that followed the *open-ended questions* about touch revealed that the accuracy of the children's responses to *focused questions* about touches to their own bodies varied by condition, with children in both the verbal questions and drawing-with-instructions conditions being more accurate than children in the drawing-only condition. The number of children making any errors of commission (incorrect "yes" responses to *focused questions* about touch to different body parts) and omission (incorrect "no" responses, denying body touches that had been experienced) did not vary by condition. Errors of omission were much more frequent than errors of commission and children in the drawing-only condition made more errors overall than children in the other two conditions.

Several children in all conditions (17% of all children reporting any touch) reported being touched in ways that might have aroused concern if they had been made during forensic interviews exploring suspicions of

abuse. Although there were relatively few reported touches to the genital area, and slightly more reported touches to the breast/chest area, these numbers are nonetheless noteworthy because all such reports were erroneous!

Three of the eight reported touches to the child's breast/chest area were elaborated upon. Two were described in an innocuous way (touch to chest whilst helping get top on; clarification that the touch was actually on the shoulder). In one case, however, the elaboration further specified that the child's "nipple" was touched. Eight of the nine reported touches to the child's buttocks were elaborated upon; three were confirmed as forensically relevant (e.g., "she got a photo of me and then she touched my bum with her hand"). Only one of the two reported touches of a child's genitals was elaborated upon and it made clear that the touch was innocuous.

None of the five reported touches to the photographer's breast/chest area were elaborated upon. Three of the four reported touches of the photographer's genitals were described further; all were classified during the child's elaboration as innocuous touches to the leg area or stomach. Lastly, one of the seven reported touches of the photographer's bottom was clarified on elaboration as innocuous (a touch of thighs when bumping into the photographer).

In this study, then, the amount of new information produced during the touch enquiry was relatively small (an average of 11 details), possibly because the event was brief and a limited amount of touching had occurred. Importantly, however, more than half of the information reported in response to open questions about touch was inaccurate, although it tended to be plausible in the context of the event. Because touching is often a central component of sexual abuse, the inaccuracy of children's accounts of experienced touches should be of great interest to forensic interviewers as well as clinicians working with suspected victims.

Why did the children report touch so poorly? Two possible explanations stand out: the length of delay and the nature of the touches. First, the delay between the event and the touch enquiry was six weeks in order to match the kinds of time periods over which children would be asked for such details in forensic contexts. Over even shorter delays, the accuracy of children's reports is greater (Steward *et al.*, 1996; Willcock *et al.*, 2006) but it is clearly important that realistic time frames be studied if experimental findings are to be generalised to the real world. Second, the touches may not have been sufficiently salient to be encoded and stored. In analogue studies touches must, of course, be innocuous but we attempted to make them distinctive and unusual. The large number of incorrect rejections of the questions specifically

assessing recall of these experiences suggests they were not memorable. Steward *et al.* (1996) similarly found that children's reports of touch during a paediatric exam were unreliable and that touches were not all equally memorable, with children recalling instances of genital and anal touch more frequently and accurately than innocuous touches. However, even genital and anal touches may be poorly reported (cf. Saywitz, *et al.*, 1991), not all abusive touches are painful, embarrassing or otherwise salient (Ceci, Powell, & Principe, 2002) and young children, in particular, may not recognise the significance of abusive acts (Cederborg, Lamb, & Laurell, 2007). If children need to report touches that were less salient, then techniques that help them to recall apparently innocuous (and not particularly memorable) touches would be very useful.

Do human figure drawings help children to report touch, as is often assumed in clinical and forensic contexts, and does practice using the drawings further increase the accuracy of the information they help elicit? Drawings accompanied by open questions about touch did not affect the amount or accuracy of the information reported. On the contrary, drawings with or without instructions in their use both led to substantial increases in reports of touches that had not occurred (although not of forensically relevant touches, as discussed below). Open-ended questions may have elicited erroneous responses because children believed that they were expected to respond, but did not remember the touching that had occurred (Ceci & Bruck, 1993), and the drawings may have exacerbated these demand characteristics.

The focused questions, by contrast, assessed children's recognition memories of touching that did and did not occur. As in previous studies, erroneous responses to the focused questions predominantly reflected false denials of experienced touches rather than false reports of touches that did not occur (e.g., Krackow & Lynn, 2003; Leippe *et al.*, 1991; Pezdek & Roe, 1997; Saywitz *et al.*, 1991; Steward *et al.*, 1996). Children who were asked direct questions with the drawings present but without prior practice using them were less accurate than those who had had practice or were questioned verbally. Although the differences in accuracy were not large (58% vs 50%), they suggest that, when drawings are used, practice using them should be provided even when children are clearly old enough to understand their representational nature.

The instructions and practice had less impact in Brown *et al.*'s study than suggested by reports that brief opportunities for practice improve accuracy (e.g., Brown & Pipe, 2003b). However, none of the training studies involved reports of touch and Brown *et al.*'s instructions may not have adequately covered the types of touches (those occurring much

earlier as part of wider activities) that the children were expected to report. The practice trials did not involve memories of distant events, and children often fail to generalise newly-learned strategies from training to new tasks (Borkowski, Milstead, & Hale, 1988; Kurtz & Borkowski, 1984), particularly without practice over different sessions, settings, and tasks (Pressley, Forrest-Pressley, & Elliott-Faust, 1985). Some children may thus have had difficulty transferring what they had learned during the practice to talking about the staged event.

In contrast to the results typically obtained in studies of interviewing (see Chapter 2), however, information about touch reported in response to open questions was more *in*accurate (mean accuracy was 38%) than that provided in response to focused questions (mean accuracy was 55%) across all conditions. Other researchers (e.g., Gee & Pipe, 1995; Greenstock & Pipe, 1996) have similarly found that children may respond less accurately when required to generate a response (free recall) to a very specific question about something they remember poorly than when given options. Additionally, the inaccuracy of responses to open questions included many commission errors, and is based only on those children reporting at least one touch. Another 31 of the 79 children studied by Brown *et al.* failed to report any touches and thus likewise made no commission errors, which are of greatest concern in forensic contexts.

Willcock *et al.* (2006) reported many more erroneous reports of touch to the genital and chest area than did Brown *et al.*, perhaps because Willcock *et al.* used a clothed body map, on which it was more difficult to specify where touches occurred. Furthermore, children who reported touches to Brown *et al.* were asked open-ended questions to elicit further elaboration. Their responses permitted quite different conclusions about the risks of providing children with human figure drawings when asking them about touch. Specifically, only 2% of the sample (one child) reporting touch elaborated in a way that maintained concern, although 4% of the children elaborated on reported touches to the buttocks (which were not assessed in the Willcock *et al.* study). Clearly, when children are asked about touches, with or without drawings, their responses must be probed using open-ended questioning, so that the nature of the touch can be clarified. Without verbal elaboration, reports of touches using a body map may be inaccurate at least in part because children locate touches imprecisely.

Of course, although rare, any erroneous reports that would have triggered suspicion in forensic contexts warrant concern. Erroneous reports of forensically relevant touches typically involved those that could have occurred, for example, whilst the photographer was putting costumes on the children, and thus appeared highly credible. Forensic interviewers and clinicians worried that their clients may have been abused should

be cautious not to inadvertently elicit erroneous information consistent with scripts concerning the behavioural context being described.

Clinicians and interviewers should also note that touches, at least innocuous (if not routine) touches, are not readily and reliably reported by 5- to 7-year-olds. Indeed, about half of the children not only failed to report being touched when asked open-ended questions, but also did not report them even when directly questioned about specific touches. Errors of omission were far more common than errors of commission, and this is clearly problematic for interviewers motivated to find out whether inappropriate touches occurred. The findings suggest that alternative (and currently unknown) techniques might be necessary to elicit such information.

Brown *et al.*'s (2007) findings also highlight the risks inherent in interpreting non-verbal responses, or simple verbal responses, without clarification. Several children indicated, either non-verbally or with a simple yes/no answer, that they had been touched in a way that could easily have been interpreted as inappropriate. Fortunately, requests for elaboration usually (though not always) elicited information that dispel such concerns.

Nonetheless, the human figure drawings did not elicit more information than the verbal questions, and were not useful when introduced at the end of an otherwise exhaustive forensic interview to elicit information about touches that had not been reported spontaneously. The benefits of any forensic interview technique – helping children report more information – must be weighed against the disadvantages – the risk of eliciting inaccurate but forensically significant information. Brown *et al.*'s study suggests that, when introduced at the end of an interview to elicit new information, drawings and questions about touch at best do not substantially improve recall, and at worst may elicit inaccurate information. Ominously, the real risks are probably even greater than suggested by the results of studies like those reported here, because both Aldridge *et al.* and Brown *et al.* conducted thorough verbal interviews before introducing the aids, and used carefully planned questions to minimise the suggestiveness of the drawings' usage.

A different use of drawing as a memory aid in young children investigations has proved especially effective in eliciting high quality information from free recall. In a recent field experiment conducted in Israel (Katz & Hershkowitz, in preparation), child investigators combined into the NICHD protocol instructions for free drawing of the alleged sexual abuse incidents in interviews with young children. As described below, this specific use of drawing aimed to freely produce internal memory cues did increase its positive effects on the amount and quality of the forensic information provided by young children.

THE EFFECTS OF FREE-DRAWING AS A MEANS
OF MEMORY SELF-CUEING

Many researchers have shown that free drawing can provide cues that facilitate the retrieval of information from memory, and may help young children reconstruct experienced events and thus report them more fully. Researchers have consistently shown that free drawing while being questioned leads children to report more information, with some experimenters finding two- and three-fold increases in the amount of information reported. Whether or not this information was accurate depended on the types of questioning with which the drawing was associated; when associated with free recall prompts, the additional information tended to be accurate, and the accuracy rate did not decline despite increases in the amount of information. Drawing has proven to be an effective retrieval tool, regardless of the age of the child, the type of event recalled, and the length of the delay between the event and the retrieval provided that it is accompanied by free recall prompts. By contrast, when drawing is associated with misinformation or suggestive questioning, the accuracy of the information provided by both younger and older children declines.

Despite impressive evidence about the extent to which drawing facilitates the retrieval of information by children about events they have experienced, we do not know whether the same benefits would occur when the events involved sexual abuse and the interviews were conducted for forensic purposes. Katz and Hershkowitz was designed to evaluate the use of free drawing during forensic interviews with alleged victims of sexual abuse.

The study involved 87 (37 4–8- and 50 9–11-year-old) Israeli children who were suspected victims of a single incident of sexual abuse by someone who was not a family member. All the children who met these criteria were interviewed by trained Israeli youth investigators using the NICHD Protocol, adapted for the study as described below. Potential participants were assigned randomly to the drawing ($n = 51$) and no drawing ($n = 36$) groups. After completion of the open-ended questioning prescribed in the Protocol, children in the drawing group were given a white sheet of paper (A4), a pencil, and an eraser, and were prompted to draw as follows: "You told me nicely what happened to you. Now I'm asking you to make a drawing of what happened, then we'll continue." For the next 7 to 10 minutes the investigators simply echoed what the children said and recorded for themselves retrieval cues that the child mentioned while drawing. After the children stopped drawing, the investigator prompted them to describe the event ver-

bally: "You told me earlier what happened, and now you have made a drawing. The drawing stays here, in front of you. Okay? [Short pause.] Now tell me, again, everything that happened, from the beginning to end, as best you can remember. You can also look at the drawing." After the child finished speaking in response to this prompt, investigators continued questioning in accordance with the Protocol, referring only to details that the children mentioned, and not to items they had drawn. To make the interview conditions comparable, children in the no drawing condition were instructed to take a 7 to 10 minute break after the open-ended questioning phase of the Protocol interviews. The interviewers then said: "You told me earlier what happened, and now you have played/taken a break. [Short pause.] Now tell me again everything that happened, from the beginning to end, as best you can remember." Thereafter, the interviewers continued to question them in accordance with the strategies recommended in the Protocol. The recorded interviews were then transcribed and checked by native Hebrew speakers before being coded by raters trained to reliably categorise the interview utterances (distinguishing between invitations, directive, option-posing, and suggestive prompts) and tabulate the numbers of new items of forensically relevant information (details were only counted the first time they were mentioned), distinguishing between central and peripheral details. All coding decisions were made reliably.

Preliminary analyses revealed that children in the drawing group provided more details in response to invitations than did children in the comparison group. Group differences in the numbers of new details provided were especially clear in the first narrative that the children provided immediately after the drawing or break. Drawing was associated with increases in the numbers of both central and peripheral details but the increase in the number of central details was especially large. The same effects were evident in analyses of the 4 to 8- and 9 to 11-year-old children when considered separately. The benefits of drawing were also especially large when the children described more severe abuse (abuse involving contact) as opposed to exposure.

The increase in amount of information following invitations is important because, as indicated earlier, details elicited using free recall memory prompts are more likely to be accurate than details elicited using recognition memory probes.

In sum, the study provided clear evidence that the opportunity to draw, followed by open-ended questioning, prompted children to produce richer reports about forensically relevant experienced events. It is noteworthy that drawings were helpful with the youngest children, from whom it is often more difficult to obtain free recall information.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that children as young as four years of age can respond to open-ended questions, and that the Protocol can be used successfully when interviewing these very young children. Regardless of age, it is possible for children to provide in response to open-ended prompts at least half of all the information they yield. It is also clear that there are important differences between interviews with very young and older children, however. Most importantly, the youngest children give very brief responses and need more prompting in order to increase the amounts of information they provide. Cued invitations appear to be a particularly useful technique for helping children recall information while avoiding the risks of contamination associated with the use of focused option posing and suggestive questions.

Although young children make much less use than older children of temporal references and cues, they do, when allowed to do so, refer to the sequences of events in ways that make it easier to understand those events, even when the information is provided in a disorganised way.

Despite widespread beliefs that young children will benefit from opportunities to express themselves using dolls or drawings to augment their verbal limitations, the evidence suggests that these "aids" do not necessarily help children and that their effects depend on the way they were used. While the use of human drawings as applied by both Aldridge *et al.* and Brown *et al.* was associated with such great risks and error that they should be avoided rather than recommended, instructions for free drawing of the TBR incident as a means of producing internal cues, combined with open-ended invitations, were very effective and may be used as a tool in the investigation of see crimes involving young children.

The Effects of the Protocol on the Broader Investigative Process

As we have shown in previous chapters, use of the Protocol allows interviewers to obtain information from children that is much more likely to be accurate because it is recalled by the child freely rather than in response to information and probes provided by the interviewer. In this chapter, we ask what difference this makes to the abilities of investigators to understand what happened to the child and thus implement appropriate responses most likely to provide protection when needed for young victims without compromising the rights of wrongly suspected adults. We focus at some length on a recent study conducted in Israel showing how use of the Protocol enhanced the ability of investigators to judge the credibility of reported instances of abuse, but to place these results in context, we first discuss studies concerned with the assessment of credibility, showing how difficult it was to distinguish between credible and incredible allegations before the Protocol was implemented. Later in the chapter, we also describe an ongoing study in the United States in which we are exploring the impact of the Protocol on the disposition of cases.

ASSESSING CREDIBILITY

In analogue studies involving descriptions of staged events rather than investigative interviews of alleged crimes, some researchers have

assessed professionals' ratings of credibility using such tools as State-
ment Validity Analysis (SVA) and its component, Criterion Based Con-
tent Analysis (CBCA) (Akehurst, Koehnken, & Hoefer, 2001; Steller,
Wellerhaus, & Wolf, 1988; Yuille, 1988), or by observing non-verbal be-
haviour during the investigative interview (Ceci & Crotteau-Huffman,
1997; Westcott, Davies, & Clifford, 1991). Other researchers have
explored non-professionals' rating of credibility (Lewis, 1993; Lewis,
Stanger, & Sullivan, 1989; Vrij & Van Wijgaarden, 1994) or com-
pared the performance of professionals and non-professionals (Cha-
hal & Cassidy, 1995; Jackson, 1996; Tye, Henderson, & Honts, 1995).
The accuracy with which statements were identified as truthful or
deceptive varied from study to study, but on average a third of the
judgements were incorrect. Raters relying on content analysis correctly
identified truthful and false statements in between 46% (Ceci &
Crotteau-Huffman, 1997) and 89% (Tye *et al.*, 1995) of the cases,
whereas raters who used non-verbal cues correctly judged between 43%
(Jackson, 1996) and 68% (Chahal & Cassidy, 1995) of the statements.
Clearly, then, professionals are frequently unable to distinguish be-
tween accounts of experienced and non-experienced events (Ceci, Lof-
tus, Leichtman, & Bruck, 1994; Horner, Guyer, & Kalter, 1993a, 1993b;
Leichtman & Ceci, 1995). Further, although professionals performed
better than non-professionals in one study (Tye *et al.*, 1995), the find-
ings reported by Ceci and Crotteau-Huffman (1997) were inconsistent
with this, and, in line with other studies, showed that professionals
are frequently incapable of distinguishing between accounts of expe-
rienced and non-experienced events (Ceci *et al.*, 1994; Horner *et al.*,
1993a, 1993b; Leichtman & Ceci, 1995).

Because judges have so much difficulty determining whether state-
ments are true or false, regardless of whether the statements were
obtained in analogue studies (Ceci *et al.*, 1994; Horner *et al.*, 1993a,
1993b; Poole & Lindsay, 1997) or real forensic interviews (Finlayson &
Koocher, 1991; Jackson & Nuttal, 1993), inter-rater reliability is also
disconcertingly poor. Ratings of any given statement are usually dis-
tributed across the available range as well. For example, the ratings
in Horner *et al.*'s studies ranged from 0.10 to 0.90 and in Finlayson
and Koocher's from 0–25% to 75–100%. In Jackson and Nuttal's study,
judgements of the same transcript ranged from "very confident that
abuse took place" to "very confident that abuse didn't take place". Al-
though high levels of inter-rater reliability do not necessarily mean that
judgements are correct, poor reliability does mean that at least some
ratings or judgements are incorrect.

Both professionals and students seem to categorise truthful state-
ments more accurately than deceptive ones (Akehurst *et al.*, 2001;

Steller *et al.*, 1988; Tye *et al.*, 1995; Yuille, 1988), perhaps because raters use different techniques to identify true as opposed to false statements. In some studies, for example, raters appeared to use more verbal information to identify true statements and more non-verbal information to detect lies (Anderson, De Paulo, Ansfield, Tickle, & Green, 1999; Vrij, Edward, & Bull, 2001). However, even when non-verbal cues are not available to raters so that judgements are based only on transcripts, there appears to be a truth bias in credibility assessment (Akehurst *et al.*, 2001; Steller *et al.*, 1988; Tye *et al.*, 1995; Yuille, 1988). Raters also express more confidence when identifying true rather than false statements (Anderson, De Paulo, & Ansfield, 1999; De Paulo, Charlton, Cooper, Lindsay, & Muhlenbruck, 1997; Vrij & Baxter, 2000; Vrij, Harden, Terry, Edward, & Bull, 2001).

In laboratory analogue studies, children are often asked to lie about events that are not salient or emotionally meaningful, so the generalisation of findings to the assessment of credibility in forensic contexts is obviously problematic, whether or not efforts are made to include repeated suggestive questions about body contact or to avoid introducing information not reported by the child (Ceci & Crotteau-Huffman, 1997; Leichtman & Ceci, 1995). Perhaps this is why credibility assessment is often so poor in these studies, even though field studies using tools such as CBCA have reported somewhat better discrimination between credible and incredible allegations (Boychuk, 1991; Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin, Hershkowitz, Orbach, & Hovav, 1997; Raskin & Esplin, 1991a, 1991b) than have the laboratory analogue studies.

CRITERION-BASED CONTENT ANALYSIS

CBCA had its origins in the observation that descriptions of events that really happened differ in content and quality from descriptions of events that were not actually experienced (Undeutsch, 1982, 1989). In particular, Undeutsch hypothesised that experienced events are reported in richer detail and with clearer links to other real-world events than events that have been fabricated or imagined. Undeutsch was specifically concerned with the qualitative characteristics of narrative accounts, believing that credibility was reflected in such factors as the extent to which descriptions of the target incidents were placed in temporal and spatial context, logically coherent though marked by digressions, and contained the unique details that appeared to define specific incidents rather than generic descriptions of general situations. Undeutsch did not claim that credible accounts necessarily contained

more details than implausible accounts, and even recognised lack of confidence as an index of credibility rather than its absence.

Steller and Koehnken (1989) and Raskin and Esplin (1991a) formalised the "Undeutsch hypothesis" by developing a list of 19 criteria that could be used to quantify features of children's statements or accounts and thereby systematically evaluate the credibility of children's accounts. They proposed that trained raters should review a verbatim transcript of the child's statement or account, decide whether or not each of the criteria or characteristics was present, and then assign a score indicating how many criteria were present. Two field studies were then conducted to determine whether accounts of incidents that actually happened were assigned higher scores on the CBCA checklist than accounts of incidents that did not happen (Boychuk, 1991; Raskin & Esplin, 1991b, 1991c). In both of these field studies, cases were drawn from among those in which the researchers or their associates were involved, and the results suggested that CBCA might be a promising technique for discriminating accounts of experienced events from those describing events that did not occur. In both studies, substantially more criteria were present in plausible accounts than in doubtful statements. Raskin and Esplin (1991c) in fact reported no overlap between the distribution of scores assigned to statements known to involve confirmed and doubtful incidents, and similar results were reported by Boychuk (1991).

Although such findings suggest that the CBCA procedure can discriminate between truthful and non-truthful accounts, the procedure was also criticised quite sharply. Wells and Loftus (1991), for example, criticised the representativeness of the 40 cases included in Raskin and Esplin's study and emphasised the importance of using independent case facts (i.e., not lack of prosecution or judicial dismissal) to establish the plausibility of the allegations. They also questioned the evaluation of inter-rater reliability, and suggested that there might be a correlation between children's ages and their CBCA scores.

Before beginning our own validation studies, therefore, we decided to study the reliability of the CBCA coding system. Horowitz, Lamb, Esplin, Boychuk, Krispin, and Reiter-Lavery (1997) found that trained raters showed high levels of agreement with one another regarding whether or not most of the CBCA criteria were present. The three raters were also highly reliable over a three-month interval, and their high levels of agreement did not vary depending upon the age of the child or the degree to which the account appeared credible. It thus seemed that the CBCA system provided a reliable means of quantitatively evaluating children's credibility. Variations in inter-rater agreement regarding temporal evaluation of children's accounts led Horowitz *et al.* to suggest

that five items be dropped and others redefined more carefully to enhance reliability, however. Our recent research has thus been concerned with the presence or absence of 14 criteria rather than the 19 originally listed by Steller and Koehnken (1989).

In conducting validation studies, a major difficulty inevitably arises: How can researchers determine whether or not the alleged incident actually occurred? Because judicial disposition is itself influenced by the child's statement, it does not constitute an independent validation of the child's allegations. For research purposes, it is thus necessary to consider only independent validating information (Wells & Loftus, 1991). Raskin and Esplin (1991c) based their discrimination between "doubtful" and "confirmed" cases on the results of polygraphic and medical examinations, suspects' confessions, and eyewitnesses' accounts, although it was obviously much more difficult to obtain independent evidence about the doubtful cases. Although recantations were obtained from several children in the doubtful groups, and there was no evidence that supported the children's allegations of abuse, the confirmation that the allegations were doubtful was weaker than comparable evidence about the confirmed cases. The absence of supporting or corroborative evidence should never be confused with contradictory evidence, however: corroborative evidence is lacking in the majority of cases which is one of the reasons why field research on credibility is both so difficult to conduct and so important to those who would like to pursue more of their cases to prosecution.

To strengthen and systematise the assessment of plausibility, Horowitz, Lamb, Esplin, Boychuk, Reiter-Lavery, and Krispin (1995) suggested that multifaceted procedures be used to synthesise the results of medical examinations, suspects' statements, polygraphic examinations, witnesses' statements, and other circumstantial or physical evidence when determining, with varying degrees of certainty, the probability that the alleged events actually occurred. An elaborate multifaceted procedure of this sort was then developed and used by Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin, Hershkowitz, Orbach, and Hovav (1997).

THE ISRAELI CBCA VALIDATION STUDY

This research study was conducted by Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin, Hershkowitz, Orbach, and Hovav (1997) in Israel, where the established system made it easier to obtain a representative sample of cases. Because interviews were selected only on the basis of the external characteristics detailed below, rather than following examination of the

interviews themselves, the interviews varied widely in quality and length, with no standardised interview procedures.

A total of 1 187 interviews of alleged victims in Israel were initially available to us for research purposes. We selected 98 cases (28 boys, 70 girls) in which: (a) the alleged assailants has been identified; (b) independent validating information was available; (c) the alleged victims were between 4 and 13 years of age (they averaged just under 9 years); and (d) the alleged incidents involved physical contact between the alleged perpetrators and victims. All of the children were Jewish Israelis, interviewed in Hebrew by one of 25 youth investigators. Of the 98 cases, 15 (15%) involved intra-familial (mothers, fathers, step-fathers, siblings, or step-siblings) and 62 extra-familial alleged perpetrators familiar to the children. The remainder (21) involved unfamiliar persons. One-third (35) of the alleged incidents clearly involved anal or genital penetration and the remainder non-penetrating abuse, including fondling or sexualised kissing. Forty-eight of the children specifically stated that they had been abused on only one occasion, 9 reported two incidents, while 41 reported three or more incidents.

The interviews were transcribed and checked by native Hebrew speakers and then rated by at least two other native Hebrew speakers who had been trained to employ the revised CBCA codes reliably. These raters were totally unfamiliar with the independent validating material. Meanwhile, other researchers used all investigative information other than the child's statement to evaluate the likelihood that the events described by the child indeed occurred using Independent Case Fact Scales (ICFS) developed for the purpose of this study. The investigative material examined consisted of redacted but otherwise verbatim copies of the relevant documents, including reports by medical examiners, sworn witness or suspect statements, polygraph examiners' reports, and sworn police statements. The raters' knowledge of the allegations was limited to a paragraph-long synopsis which made no reference to the quality of the child's account.

On each of five dimensions (Medical examinations, Witness statements, Physical/material evidence, Suspect statements, Miscellaneous information), the raters judged whether independent case facts made the allegations seem Very Likely, Quite Likely, Questionable, Quite Unlikely, Very Unlikely, left No Judgement Possible, was Not Relevant, or that the relevant information was Not Obtained. Once all available evidence had been evaluated, raters made an overall judgement regarding the likelihood that the allegation was plausible based on all available independent case facts. Ninety-eight cases were placed on the overall continuum of likelihood (Very Likely to Very Unlikely).

Very few (13) of the cases were rated as either Quite Unlikely or Very Unlikely, but there was a significant association between the plausibility of the allegations and the total CBCA scores, with the highest scores assigned to statements about events deemed Very Likely to have occurred on the basis of independent case facts. Further statistical analyses, in which cases in the Very and Quite Likely groups were combined into a Plausible group and those in the Quite and Very Unlikely groups were combined into a Implausible group, also yielded a significant effect, with the means arrayed along a continuum, and the means for the Plausible (6.7) and Implausible (4.9) groups differed significantly. Five of the criteria were significantly more likely to be present in Plausible than in Implausible accounts, and there was a near-significant tendency with respect to one other criterion. Three criteria were not present often enough for their value to be assessed.

Although the CBCA scores indeed differentiated significantly between more and less credible accounts in this study, the differences between them were much less dramatic than reported by Boychuk (1991) or Raskin and Esplin (1991b, 1991c). Particularly in light of Raskin and Esplin's (1991a) insistence on the need for high quality interviews to be included as part of the SVA assessment, our next study was thus designed to determine whether there was a relationship between the interview characteristics empirically associated with the elicitation of greater amounts of information and the presence of the CBCA criteria that ostensibly index credibility (Hershkowitz, Lamb, Sternberg, & Esplin, 1997).

As noted earlier, open-ended invitations elicit longer (more words) and richer (more details) responses than more focused utterances. The superiority of invitational prompts might be further enhanced if it could be shown that these prompts were also more likely to elicit responses that contain CBCA criteria. Accordingly, Hershkowitz *et al.* asked not simply whether the criteria were more likely to be present in truthful accounts, but examined the association between the presence of these criteria and features of the interview process, particularly the types of interviewer utterances known to elicit greater amounts of information from children. A related aim of this study was to examine the relationships among the CBCA scores, the level of verbal production by the child, and the richness of the statement in order to determine whether longer and richer accounts were associated with the presence of more CBCA criteria than briefer and more impoverished accounts.

We focused on transcripts of 20 interviews conducted prior to 1990 by two expert and experienced forensic psychologists (one male and one female) in the United States. The children (19 girls) concerned ranged in age from 4 to 13 years and averaged about 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ years. The interviews

were drawn from the records of interviews conducted by these forensic interviewers at the request of legal, judicial, and criminal justice agencies; the interviewers did not know that their interviews might be used for the purposes described here and played no role in our case selection. The children interviewed described abusive experiences that varied in complexity from single incidents (nine cases) to repeated incidents; only six did not involve penetration and all involved familiar male perpetrators, including four fathers and six step-fathers. Subsequent disposition of the cases indicated – by virtue of conviction or stipulation – that the majority of the children had probably been abused as they alleged, although validation of the allegations was not the focus of this study.

In Lamb *et al.*'s (1997) study, raters determined whether the CBCA criteria were present or absent in the transcripts as a whole, whereas coders in the later study noted each time any of the criteria was satisfied (not only that it was satisfied at least once) as well as the precise location. This permitted Hershkowitz *et al.* (1997) to examine the utterances in which the criteria were satisfied in relation to the interviewer utterances that elicited them.

Invitations evoked responses containing significantly more details and CBCA criteria than did all the other types of utterances. More importantly, the number of discrete criteria present at least once as well as the total number of occurrences (including repetitions) were significantly correlated with one another as well as with the number of words spoken by and the number of details provided by the child. The age of the children was modestly correlated with the number of words produced but, somewhat surprisingly, was not correlated significantly with either the number of details provided or the CBCA scores, although there was a non-significant tendency for age to be correlated with the traditional CBCA scores.

In a subsequent study, Hershkowitz (1999) applied the same CBCA analyses to groups of interviews deemed on the basis of independent information to constitute either highly plausible or implausible accounts of sexual abuse. In that study, she was especially interested in the dynamics of interviews with children who appeared likely to be fabricating their accounts. Because such accounts are presumably not drawn from memories of the alleged events, it was particularly interesting to determine whether various investigative utterances, including suggestive prompts, elicited qualitatively and quantitatively distinctive responses. The study involved interviews of 24 children ranging in age from 4 to 13 (the average age was just over 8).

The 24 interviews were selected from the 98 included in Lamb *et al.*'s (1997) CBCA study. For the purposes of the new study, transcripts of 12 interviews describing incidents that were deemed unlikely to have

happened were matched on the basis of the children's ages with 12 interviews believed to involve descriptions of events that appeared likely to have happened. In each case, the plausibility or implausibility of the allegations was based on Lamb *et al.*'s (1997) evaluation of independent evidence of various types (medical examinations, witness and suspect statements, and physical evidence) rated and integrated using the Independent Case Fact Scales.

There were several important differences between interviews yielding plausible and implausible accounts. In particular, children describing events that probably did occur provided longer and richer responses to open-ended prompts than to more focused prompts, just as did children in previous studies (Hershkowitz *et al.*, 1997; Lamb *et al.*, 1996a, 1996b; Sternberg *et al.*, 1996a). Such a pattern of responding is predicted when respondents extract details about experienced events from recall and recognition memories respectively. This pattern was not evident in the interviews yielding accounts of events that probably did not happen, however.

There was an intriguing, albeit non-significant, tendency for suggestive prompts to yield richer responses from children providing implausible accounts. This may have reflected a tendency for children to elaborate upon the interviewers' suggestions in the absence of memories to decode, and is consistent with evidence that, in laboratory analogue studies, children are more susceptible to suggestions when their memories are weaker.

Such findings underscore the potential dangers inherent in suggestive investigative prompts and the potential advantage of open-ended prompts and free recall narratives in the distinction between credible and incredible allegations. In the absence of such narratives, it is difficult to evaluate the credibility of children's statements, and thus high quality interviews that tap recall memory are essential for evaluations of credibility (e.g., Raskin & Esplin 1991b; Raskin & Yuille 1989). This conclusion was underscored by the results studies conducted in Israel by Hershkowitz, Lamb and Orbach (2008) and Hershkowitz, Fisher, Lamb, and Horowitz (2007).

THE EFFECTS OF THE PROTOCOL ON CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT

Hershkowitz , Fisher, Lamb, and Horowitz (2007) examined credible and incredible allegations of sexual abuse provided by children in the course of forensic investigations conducted in Israel between 1994 and 2001 by the professional youth investigators who had been required

since 1998 to use the Protocol. Half of the interviews studied were conducted before and half were conducted by the same professionals after the use of the Protocol became mandatory. The study thus constituted the first systematic attempt to see whether introduction of the Protocol had an effect of the ability of youth investigators to judge children's credibility, one of their responsibilities under Israeli law.

The interviews studied by Hershkowitz *et al.*, especially those yielding implausible allegations, were selected from a large number of interviews because there was clear independent evidence that the allegations were either plausible or implausible. Allegations were assessed conservatively by three independent raters as either plausible or implausible, using "ground truth" information such as confessions, witness accounts, physical information (e.g., photographs) and the results of medical examinations (Horowitz, Lamb, Esplin, Boychuk, Krispin, & Reiter-Lavery, 1997; and Lamb *et al.*, 1997). Plausible cases were so defined and included in the study when there was sufficient information in the form of reports by disinterested witnesses who observed some or all of the alleged events, physical evidence (e.g., photographs or videos), medical evidence, and/or suspect statements providing details about the alleged events that matched those provided by the alleged victims that raters could be confident that the alleged incidents had indeed occurred. Statements about these incidents are described as "credible" here. Implausible cases were so defined and included when there was sufficient evidence of the same sort suggesting that the alleged incidents could not have happened. Thus, for example, allegations were deemed implausible if disinterested witnesses had observed the alleged victim and/or suspect at the relevant time and had failed to observe the alleged incidents, a medical examination produced no evidence of the injuries that would have been expected had the alleged incident taken place, and/or there was physical evidence showing that the alleged incidents could not have taken place. In some cases, the alleged victims also withdrew their allegations in later interviews, providing compelling alternative accounts that were supported by independent evidence. Statements about incidents that probably did not happen are labelled "incredible" here.

Half the plausible allegations (credible statements) and half of the implausible allegations (incredible statements) were obtained in interviews conducted using the Protocol. These cases were individually matched with cases investigated by the same interviewers without the Protocol in the years before the use of the Protocol became mandatory. Cases were matched with respect to the children's ages, the types of allegations, and the strength of the validating evidence before transcripts of the interviews were sought.

Because the Protocol elicits more extensive free narrative accounts of allegedly experienced events than are typically obtained by forensic interviewers, investigators should be able to understand allegations better. For this reason, Hershkowitz and her colleagues hypothesised that raters would be able to judge the credibility of allegations made in Protocol interviews more accurately than those made in non-Protocol interviews.

Hershkowitz and her colleagues (2007) studied all 42 Israeli youth investigators serving during the data collection period in 2003. On average, they had 4.5 years of experience and had each conducted an average of nearly 700 investigations, including 150 in the preceding year. None of the investigators was familiar with the cases included in the study.

For purposes of the study, 24 forensic interviews with children alleging sexual abuse were selected because independent evidence made them either plausible (12) or implausible (12), and these transcripts were then rated by the participants. Six were Protocol-guided interviews yielding plausible allegations; six were Protocol-guided interviews yielding implausible allegations; six were non-Protocol interviews yielding plausible allegations; and six were non-Protocol interviews yielding implausible allegations. The allegations were matched as closely as possible with respect to the severity of the alleged abuse (touch over clothes, touch under clothes, and penetration) and children's ages.

Each participating youth investigator was asked to rate four transcribed statements, one from each of these categories, so seven child investigators independently judged the credibility of each of the transcribed interviews. Participants had no access to the validating information used to assess "ground truth" and thus assessed the statements' credibility based only on the interviews. Participants judged how likely it was that the alleged incidents had really happened using a 4-point scale: "very likely," "quite likely," "quite unlikely," or "very unlikely." They were also provided with a "no judgement possible" (NJP) option. In addition, participants indicated on a 5-point scale ("very unconfident" to "very confident") how much confidence they had in their judgements.

Inter-rater Reliability

The distribution of the judgements of credibility, as a function of the use of Protocol and the plausibility of the allegations, is presented in Table 7.1. As reflected in the table, the option "very unlikely to have happened" was never selected when rating either Protocol or non-Protocol

Table 7.1 The associations among plausibility, judgements of credibility, and use of the Protocol

Use of Protocol		Investigators' Judgements					
		Very likely	Quite likely	No judgement possible	Quite unlikely	Very unlikely	Total
Non-Protocol interviews	Implausible cases	2	15	20	5	0	42
		4.8%	35.7%	47.6%	11.9%	0%	100%
	Plausible cases	7	9	24	2	0	42
		16.7%	21.4%	57.1%	4.8%	0%	100%
	Total	9	24	44	7	0	84
		10.7%	28.6%	52.4%	8.3%	0%	100%
Protocol interviews	Implausible cases	8	12	12	10	0	42
		19.0%	28.6%	28.6%	23.8%	0%	100%
	Plausible cases	28	12	2	0	0	42
		66.7%	28.6%	4.8%	0%	0%	100%
	Total	36	24	14	10	0	84
		42.9%	28.6%	16.7%	11.9%	0%	100%

interviews. When rating non-Protocol interviews, the distribution of investigators' judgements was wider and inter-rater reliability lower than when rating Protocol interviews. The greater reliability associated with ratings of Protocol as opposed to non-Protocol interviews was especially evident when rating cases involving implausible allegations but not when rating plausible allegations.

Use of the 'No judgement possible" option

As shown in Table 7.2, about one-sixth of the judgements regarding Protocol interviews involved use of the No Judgement Possible (NJP) category, which was applied to nearly 5% of the plausible Protocol interviews and more than a quarter of the implausible Protocol interviews. By contrast, more than half of the ratings of non-Protocol interviews, involved the NJP category, with the NJP option used more frequently when non-Protocol rather than Protocol interviews were being judged.

Accuracy of the judgements

Nearly 60% of the ratings of Protocol interviews, including nearly all of the judgements regarding plausible and a quarter of the judgements

Table 7.2 Use of the 'No Judgement Possible' category as a function of Protocol use and plausibility.

Use of protocol		Judgement possible	No Judgement possible
Non-Protocol interviews	Implausible cases	22 52.4%	20 47.6%
	Plausible cases	18 42.9%	24 57.1%
	Total	40 47.6%	44 52.4%
Protocol interviews	Implausible cases	30 71.4%	12 28.6%
	Plausible cases	40 95.2%	2 4.8%
	Total	70 83.3%	14 16.7%

regarding implausible statements, were accurate (i.e., correctly judged as either credible or incredible) (see Table 7.3). By contrast, less than a third of the judgements regarding non-Protocol interviews, including nearly 40% of the judgements about plausible allegations and 12% of those about implausible allegations, were accurate. Both plausible and

Table 7.3 Frequency of accurate and inaccurate judgements of credibility as a function of use of Protocol and plausibility (including NJP)

Use of protocol		Accuracy of judgements	
		inaccurate	accurate
Non-Protocol interviews	Implausible cases	37 88.1%	5 11.9%
	Plausible cases	26 61.9%	16 38.1%
	Total	63 75.0%	21 25.0%
Protocol interviews	Implausible cases	32 76.2%	10 23.8%
	Plausible cases	2 4.8%	40 95.2%
	Total	34 40.5%	50 59.5%

implausible allegations were more likely to be judged accurately when Protocol rather than non-Protocol interviews were being judged.

Use of the Protocol Facilitated Judgements of Credibility

Using the Protocol clearly seemed to facilitate judgements of credibility when examining the children's statements. These experienced investigators were twice as likely to judge children's credibility accurately when the interviews were conducted using the Protocol than when they were not similarly structured. This dramatic effect is especially impressive because no other tools have been shown to enhance credibility assessment, leaving professionals frequently incapable of distinguishing between accounts of experienced and non-experienced events (Ceci *et al.*, 1994; Horner *et al.*, 1993a, 1993b; Leichtman & Ceci, 1995).

The Protocol appears to enhance the accuracy of credibility assessments because children's statements are of higher quality when interviewers follow "best practice" professional recommendations and more putative indices of credibility can be observed. As we showed earlier, the ability to identify CBCA criteria in children's statements is enhanced when interviewers elicit narrative responses from alleged victims using open-ended strategies (Hershkowitz *et al.*, 1997). In comparison with focused questions, furthermore, open-ended strategies elicit richer descriptions from children making plausible as opposed to implausible allegations (Hershkowitz, 1999).

Use of the Protocol thus not only enhances the quality of interviewing and of the elicited information, but also facilitates assessments of children's credibility. Although the Protocol was designed to foster adherence to recommended practices that enable children to provide statements of high quality, the broader goal was to help forensic professionals assess children's statements, thereby promoting justice for abused children. The results reported here show that the Protocol is a valuable forensic tool in this regard.

The large discrepancy between the accuracy of judgements about plausible and implausible statements is also noteworthy. Implausible statements were accurately identified as being incredible much less frequently than plausible statements were judged to be credible. Other researchers (Akehurst *et al.*, 2001; Steller *et al.*, 1988; Tye *et al.*, 1995; Yuille, 1988) have similarly reported that professionals and students evaluate truthful or plausible statements more accurately than implausible or deceptive ones, but we were nevertheless surprised that experienced raters only detected implausible allegations at about chance levels.

It might have been argued that the reliance on interview transcripts rather than videotapes and the absence of direct observations of the children contributed to the interviewers' poor performance. Other researchers have noted that raters use more verbal information to identify true statements, whereas they use more non-verbal information to detect lies (Anderson *et al.*, 1999; Vrij, Edward, *et al.*, 2001) and it could thus be argued that the absence of non-verbal information in our study selectively impeded the rater's ability to identify implausible statements as incredible. This explanation appears unlikely because a truth bias has been evident in much of the prior research whether or not non-verbal information was available (see Vrij, 2000, for a review).

Second, although the investigators identified implausible allegations as incredible, they often indicated that no judgement was possible in these cases, rather than that the allegations were credible. In real world contexts, such evaluations might have prompted investigators to seek further information, perhaps by re-interviewing the child, requesting a medical examination, or seeking information from witnesses. All of these steps might have increased the likelihood that an accurate decision about the credibility of the accusations could ultimately be made. Third, the study involved equal numbers of plausible and implausible cases, whereas the vast majority of allegations made by children in forensic contexts appear to be plausible (London, Bruck, Ceci, & Shuman, 2005). Knowing that most allegations are plausible may have affected the investigators' willingness to identify too many of the cases as implausible. These caveats notwithstanding, the investigators' inability to identify implausible statements is worrying. Although the accuracy with which the investigators identified plausible cases suggests that abused children are probably protected very well, the failure to identify implausible cases means that false allegations may inappropriately elicit child protection and law enforcement actions which have serious consequences.

Protocol-guided interviews yielding both plausible and implausible allegations were rated more accurately than non-Protocol interviews. With respect to plausible allegations, the use of the Protocol almost totally eliminated inaccurate judgements, whereas incorrect judgements about implausible statements were still made with alarming frequency. Abused children interviewed using the Protocol were never incorrectly considered to be making implausible allegations, whereas non-abused children fabricating allegations were disconcertingly often perceived as real victims by these experienced professionals.

The high inter-rater reliability achieved when Protocol interviews were assessed reflects the high levels of accuracy but deserves special mention as well. Levels of agreement regarding the Protocol interviews

were remarkably high in comparison with both the levels of agreement regarding non-Protocol interviews in this study as well as comparable rates reported in previous studies (Finlayson & Koocher, 1991; Horner *et al.*, 1993a, 1993b; Jackson & Nuttal, 1993; Poole & Lindsay, 1997). High agreement in itself does not necessarily indicate that the judgements are valid because raters can agree about incorrect judgements (as happened frequently in the case of non-Protocol interviews), but the high levels of agreement with respect to correct judgements regarding allegations made in Protocol interviews reveals another advantage of the Protocol. Evidently, use of the Protocol not only improves the quality of investigative interviews, but also decreases individual differences in both interviewing and credibility assessment, thereby increasing the chances that justice will be served, regardless of who performs the investigation or assessment.

THE EFFECT OF THE PROTOCOL ON THE ELICITATION OF INVESTIGATIVE LEADS

Because victims and witnesses are interviewed in the course of investigations designed to obtain complete and accurate accounts of alleged incidents, their testimony not only provides direct evidence but may also identify possible avenues of investigation that may yield further evidence. In a recent study, therefore, Darwish, Hershkowitz, Lamb, & Orbach, 2005, 2008) focused on investigative leads, defined as reports of information identifying ways investigators might pursue information that could corroborate or raise doubts about the witness' accounts. Specifically, we asked whether forensic interviews conducted using the Protocol yielded more investigative leads from alleged victims of sexual abuse than did interviews in which the Protocol was not used. We also examined the extent to which those leads enhanced the overall verifiability of the allegations made by the witnesses, and the extent to which the leads were elicited using recall prompts.

Forty-five forensic interviews of alleged sexual abuse victims conducted using the Protocol were compared with 45 pre-Protocol interviews matched with respect to the interviewer's identity, child's age and gender, perpetrator familiarity, type of abuse and number of reported incidents. Both the children's responses and the eliciting utterances were coded by trained raters.

Investigative leads were identified and subdivided into five content categories depending on the source of evidence identified (suspect, witnesses, medical leads, material leads and miscellaneous) and categorised as either central (if they referred to the core of the sexual event) or peripheral (if they referred to its context). For example, identifying

another person (beside the victim and the suspect) present during the incident was identified as a witness lead. If the child reported that the witness saw the sexual interaction, a central witness lead was coded; if the witness had simply seen them together, a peripheral witness lead was coded.

Leads were also rated with respect to their strength on a 6-point scale ranging from "very strong" "to "very weak". Only central leads could be rated "very strong" and only if they tied the suspect to the victim and to the sexual act (e.g., a report that the sexual interaction was videotaped would be a central lead of a material sort). Peripheral leads were never very strong because by definition they did not describe the sexual acts.

The verifiability of the whole statement was then assessed on a 4-point scale that weighed the lead's centrality and strength, ranging from "Very low" to "Very high". A "Very high" verifiability rating was assigned to statements containing leads that potentially linked the suspect, the victim, and the sexual acts, suggesting that the child's statement was very likely to be supported by external evidence. For example, a "Very strong" central-witness lead (identifying a witness who saw the sexual act) strongly contributes to the verifiability of the allegation because the witness should be able to verify or corroborate the allegation.

Then, interviewers' utterances eliciting investigative leads were categorised as described in Chapter 3. All transcripts were coded by one of two trained raters, who both coded 20% of the transcripts independently; inter-rater agreement was above 85% on all dimensions.

Preliminary analyses suggest that Protocol interviews produced significantly more "very strong" leads than non-Protocol interviews, although the difference between the overall number of leads was non-significant. In Protocol interviews, investigators used more open-ended prompts and fewer option-posing and suggestive prompts to elicit information about the leads.

Interviewers using the Protocol also elicited more leads-related details using free recall prompts, fewer leads-related details using option posing and suggestive prompts, and more leads-related details before the first option-posing or suggestive utterances than interviewers in non-Protocol interviews did, although there were no group differences in the total number of leads-related details produced in both types of interview. The Protocol interviews also yielded more statements with "very high" verifiability than non-Protocol interviews did.

Overall, these results demonstrate that the use of the Protocol when interviewing alleged child abuse victims allowed investigators to elicit stronger leads, and more highly verifiable statements from the young interviewees. This further underscores the extent to which the Protocol

makes it easier to evaluate the plausibility of forensic allegations made by children.

EFFECTS OF PROTOCOL USE ON CASE DISPOSITION AND RESOLUTION

In the vast majority of sexual abuse cases, the primary, and often the only, evidence is the child's verbal allegation and testimony. Decisions regarding both child protection and criminal proceedings, therefore, depend heavily on the quality of the information obtained from suspected victims during investigative interviews. Although structured interview protocols are now widely advocated, and several are currently in use, only the Investigative Interview Protocol described in this book has been subjected to systematic evaluation in the field. As documented in this book, there is impressive evidence that the Protocol facilitates the acquisition of high quality information, but there has been little research on related, critically important, questions: The extent to which use of the Protocol: 1) makes it easier to make administrative and judicial decisions and thus 2) affects case outcomes in the criminal justice and child welfare systems. In an ongoing study, funded by the National Institute of Justice, Pipe and her colleagues (Pipe, Orbach, Lamb, Abbott, & Stewart, in preparation) are conducting the first study designed to evaluate the effects of "best practice" interviewing on case outcomes. The goal of Pipe *et al.*'s study is to determine whether use of the Protocol increases the likelihood that abuse cases are substantiated and proceed through the legal system.

Matched cases involving 3- to 13-year-old alleged victims of abuse, interviewed by the same investigators before (January 1994 to August 1997) and after (September 1997 to 1998) the introduction of the Protocol, are being compared with respect to outcome variables, as well as the lengths of the delay from referral to significant temporal points in the judicial proceedings, including final disposition. The research thus asks whether the type of interview affects the proportion of cases a) "substantiated" by Child Protective Services (CPS), b) "cleared" by the District Attorney (DA), c) marked by arrests and charges, d) submitted for prosecution, and e) adjudicated (through either plea agreement or trial), as well as f) whether improved interviewing procedures increase the likelihood that child abuse cases proceed through the criminal justice processes with minimal delay.

Outcome data have been acquired from CPS assessment reports, the Children's Justice Centre (the advocacy centre coordinating the forensic interviews and providing victims' and family services) data base, police department (PD) reports, DA's screening decisions, DA's charges,

PD arrest reports, and court dispositions. The fact that the detectives, prosecutors and judges who handled the cases in both groups were the same group of professionals, and that there were no changes in leadership or policy during the study period, minimised confounding effects.

Analyses are now in progress, comparing Protocol and non-Protocol cases on each of the outcome variables. Logistic Regression Analysis is being used to identify variables that predict the substantiation of cases by legal experts at the Children's Advocacy Centre, as well as those predicting both submission to the justice systems and delays in case processing. Preliminary descriptive findings show that interview type had a significant effect on case outcomes, with proportionally fewer cases declined at screening by the DA and proportionally more cases in which the perpetrators were arrested and charged after rather than before the Protocol was introduced. Thus, the most compelling effects of interview type on prosecution outcomes so far are those demonstrating the immediate effect on decision making before and following the screening. The facts that a) fewer cases were declared "unfounded" or were declined at screening, b) more cases were submitted for screening, c) more cases led to arrests/charges, and d) more cases proceeded through the criminal justice system in the Protocol condition than in the pre-Protocol condition further document the beneficial effects of the Protocol. Such findings underscore the extent to which state-of-the-art interviewing increases the informativeness of children's statements and thereby makes it easier for appropriate interventions to be taken when necessary.

CONCLUSION

Whereas the studies described in the two previous chapters show that use of the Protocol has dramatic effects on the quality and informativeness of forensic interviews, the studies described here show that use of the Protocol also has important influences on other aspects of investigation. Investigators are frequently expected to make judgements about the credibility of the allegations made by alleged victims, but most such judgements are quite unreliable and inaccurate. In forensic contexts, experts have been most optimistic about Criterion-Based Content Analysis, but even here the discrimination between plausible and implausible statements is too imprecise for the procedure to be used as a decision-making tool. In part, this is because investigators often have to make judgements on the basis of poorly conducted interviews; researchers have shown that credibility assessment is better when experts can judge narrative responses. Not surprisingly, therefore, interviewers can recognise plausible allegations more accurately when they

are elicited using the Protocol, presumably because those interviews involve more open-ended prompts eliciting more narrative responses. In addition, interviews conducted using the Protocol are more likely than non-Protocol interviews to yield leads that investigators can pursue in the search for corroborative information. Perhaps for both of these reasons – more credible statements and more investigative leads – investigative and law enforcement agencies appear better able to reach conclusions about reported crimes when the Protocol has been used in the initial forensic interviews. Such findings underscore the extent to which use of the Protocol offers benefits to investigators that go beyond simply ensuring that the initial interviews are as informative as possible.

Interviewing Reluctant Suspected Victims and Suspects

Of course, the structured interview Protocol described in the proceeding chapters is not a panacea. It emphasises techniques that help motivate children to report information about experienced events but it does not really address motivational factors that make some children reluctant to disclose abuse (Pipe, Lamb, Orbach, & Cederborg, 2007). This is an important issue, because, as reported in more detail below, many suspected victims do not report abuse when formally interviewed in forensic contexts, even when there is clear evidence that they were in fact abused. In this chapter, therefore, we discuss our ongoing efforts to develop and evaluate variants of the Protocol that address the special circumstances that attend interviews with such reluctant witnesses.

HOW COMMONLY DO VICTIMS DISCLOSE THEIR EXPERIENCES?

There is a broad consensus that many victims of child abuse disclose their experiences of victimisation belatedly, if at all. Because some incidents may never be disclosed or uncovered, it is impossible to determine how many incidents actually occur, but it is still valuable to determine how often investigations triggered by suspicion of abuse yield disclosures by the alleged victims. In perhaps the most comprehensive effort to address this question, Hershkowitz, Horowitz, and Lamb (2005, 2007) examined nationwide information regarding the rates of

disclosure and nondisclosure in Israel during a five-year period in which all child abuse investigations were conducted using the standardised Protocol described in this book. The analyses were expected to yield generalisable insights into the characteristics of cases and children that are associated with the disclosure or non disclosure of abuse. As in other similar studies, of course, the validity of the disclosures was unknown; Hershkowitz *et al.*'s focus was on whether or not children alleged that they had been abused when formally interviewed, and thus the terms allegation and disclosure are used interchangeably. In addition, of course, the study only examined cases in which suspicions of abuse led to formal investigation, so did not give any insight into the total numbers of abuse victims or the numbers who never disclosed because their victimisation was never even suspected.

Prior to Hershkowitz *et al.*'s research, most studies on the disclosure and non disclosure of child sexual abuse had been conducted in the United States (London, Bruck, Ceci, & Shuman, 2005, 2007) and the results had been both variable and controversial. On average, the studies reviewed by London *et al.* revealed that 64% of suspected victims disclosed abuse when specifically asked by professionals, although the rates reported in individual studies ranged from 24% to 96%. Interestingly, much of the variation was systematic. First, rates of disclosure (the proportion of interviewees who make allegations) varied depending on the context in which the suspicions were explored. Even when researchers focused only on suspected victims, the lowest rates of disclosure were found in clinical settings. For example, only a quarter of the referred children in two widely-cited studies made disclosures in the course of therapy (Gonzalez, Waterman, Kelly, McCord, & Oliveri, 1993; Sorensen & Snow, 1991) and even these rates have been viewed sceptically because the interview techniques may have been highly suggestive and thus likely to elicit false allegations (London *et al.*, 2005; Poole & Lindsay, 1998). By contrast, disclosure rates in mental health evaluations ranged from 43% to 65% (De Voe & Faller, 1999; Dubowitz, Black, & Harrington, 1992; Elliott & Briere, 1994; Gries, Goh, & Cavanaugh, 1996; Lawson & Chaffin, 1992; Stroud, Martens, & Barker, 2000) and in forensic or interdisciplinary assessment interviews from 45% to 74% (Bybee & Mowbray, 1993; Cantlon, Payne, & Erbaugh, 1996; Carnes, 2000; DiPietro, Runyan, & Fredrickson, 1997; Gordon & Jaudes, 1996; Keary & Fitzpatrick, 1994; Wood, Orsak, Murphy, & Cross, 1996).

Second, higher disclosure rates were found in studies sampling better validated cases in which there was the strongest reason to believe that the interviewed children had actually been abused (Bradley & Wood, 1996; De Voe & Faller, 1999; DiPietro *et al.*, 1997; Dubowitz *et al.*, 1992; Elliott & Briere, 1994; Keary & Fitzpatrick, 1994), leading London

et al. (2005) to speculate that lower disclosure rates were reported by other researchers because many of the alleged victims they studied had not, in fact, been abused. Consistent with this view, researchers have consistently reported higher rates of disclosure for substantiated cases than for their complete samples (De Voe & Faller, 1999; DiPietro *et al.*, 1997; Dubowitz *et al.*, 1992; Elliott & Briere, 1994; Keary & Fitzpatrick, 1994). In these studies, rates of disclosure ranged from 47 to 62% for non-substantiated cases and from 76 to 96% for substantiated cases.

Third, retrospective studies of adults suggest that children are much less likely to disclose abuse than do studies focused directly on children. Thus in six of the ten retrospective studies reviewed by London *et al.* (2005), only a third of the adults who reported being abused as children said that they had reported this information earlier in their lives.

Fourth, preschoolers appeared much less likely than older children to disclose suspected abuse when questioned (DiPietro *et al.*, 1997; Gries *et al.*, 1996; Keary & Fitzpatrick, 1994; Pipe, Stewart, Sternberg, Lamb, & Esplin, 2003; Smith *et al.*, 2000; Wood *et al.*, 1996). These trends are difficult to interpret because there are multiple possible explanations: abuse could be less common but suspicions equally common among preschoolers and older children; adults may harbour more unwarranted suspicions that preschoolers, as opposed to older children, are being abused; and preschoolers may lack the cognitive, communicative and emotional abilities to understand and describe abuse experiences comprehensibly.

Fifth, London *et al.* observed that prior disclosure of abuse was a strong predictor of disclosure during formal interviews (De Voe & Faller, 1999; DiPietro *et al.*, 1997; Gries *et al.*, 1996; Keary & Fitzpatrick, 1994). When they have previously disclosed to someone, according to London *et al.*, children tend to disclose abuse 74% to 93% of the time whereas only 25% to 40% disclose abuse when they have not reported it earlier, but have been referred for evaluation because behavioural and emotional problems made parents or professionals suspect abuse in the absence of disclosure.

Sixth, there was some evidence that gender was related to disclosure as well, with boys more reluctant than girls to disclose (Ghetti & Goodman, 2001; Gries *et al.*, 1996; Levesque, 1994). The gender differences in disclosure rates were not consistent, however.

Prior to the research by Hershkowitz *et al.*, clear understanding of the reasons why children do or do not disclose abuse when interviewed was seriously impeded by a lack of information about the way children are interviewed (London *et al.*, 2005; Pipe *et al.*, 2003). As we have emphasised in this book, the way children are interviewed – especially the use of directive and coercive practices, repeated questioning, or reliance on

anatomically detailed dolls – may affect what they say, but most studies
of disclosure and non disclosure rates do not provide sufficient informa-
tion about investigative practices. Critics have argued (London *et al.*,
2005; Poole & Lindsay, 1998) that interviewing procedures in some of
the widely cited studies (Gonzalez *et al.*, 1993; Sorensen & Snow, 1991)
were seriously flawed, furthermore, leaving ambiguity about whether
or not the disclosures were valid. One strength of the analysis con-
ducted by Hershkowitz *et al.* (2005, 2007) was that they relied on a com-
prehensive national data set comprising investigations using a single
standardised investigative interview protocol – the Protocol described
in this book. As noted earlier, this Protocol was partially developed and
field-tested in Israel, and its use has been mandatory nationwide for
investigations of child sexual abuse since 1995 and for investigations
of physical child abuse since 1998. As a result, the findings reported
by Hershkowitz *et al.* (2005, 2007) and reviewed here involved *all* child
abuse investigations conducted in Israel between 1 January 1998 and
31 December 2002 during which time all youth investigators used the
same Protocol in every investigation. No other study had involved such
a large and unselected sample in which all suspected victims were in-
terviewed in a standardised manner.

The data set included all investigations involving 3- to 14-year-old
alleged victims of sexual and physical abuse interviewed in Israel in
the 5-year period from 1998 to 2002. A total of 26 446 children were
interviewed by total of 140 experienced and trained youth investigators
using the Protocol.

Analysis of the dataset showed that physical abuse (15 420) was sus-
pected more often than sexual abuse (10 988). Most suspicions of sexual
abuse involved 7- to 14-year-old children, whereas most suspected vic-
tims of physical abuse were 7 to 10 years of age. In all age groups,
around two-thirds of the suspected sexual abuse victims were female,
whereas boys made up a consistent 55% to 60% of the suspected victims
of physical abuse.

Just under two-thirds (65%) of the children interviewed made an al-
legation during the investigative interview whereas a little over a third
(35%) did not. Children were significantly less likely to make allegations
when physical (60.7%) rather than sexual (71.1%) abuse was suspected.

Rates of disclosure varied significantly depending on the child's gen-
der. In general, boys (63%) were slightly less likely than girls (67%)
to make a disclosure when interviewed, but the difference was only
significant when sexual abuse was suspected.

Even more impressive than the gender differences were the differ-
ences by age. As shown in Table 8.1, fewer than half of the 3- to 6-year-
olds interviewed made allegations, compared with two thirds of the

Table 8.1 Allegation rates by age, gender, and type of suspected abuse

Type of abuse	Gender	Age 3–6	Age 7–10	Age 11–14	Total
Sexual	Male	321	1064	979	2364
		47.0%	72.6%	77.3%	69.2%
	Female	728	2031	2689	5448
		47.7%	71.6%	83.8%	71.9%
	Total	1049	3095	3668	7812
		47.5%	71.9%	81.9%	71.1%
Physical	Male	998	2634	1734	5366
		47.8%	63.4%	65.9%	60.5%
	Female	741	1859	1393	3993
		47.0%	63.8%	67.6%	60.9%
	Total	1739	4493	3127	9359
		47.5%	63.6%	66.6%	60.7%
Total	Male	1319	3698	2713	7730
		47.6%	65.8%	69.6%	62.9%
	Female	1469	3890	4082	9441
		47.3%	67.7%	77.4%	66.8%
	Total	2788	7588	6795	17171
		47.5%	66.7%	74.1%	65.0%

7- to 10-year-olds, and nearly three quarters of the 11- to 14-year-olds. Significant age differences were evident with respect to both physical and sexual abuse suspicions, although children in the two older (but not the youngest) age-groups were less likely to make allegations when physical rather than sexual abuse was suspected. In the oldest group, girls suspected of sexual victimisation (84%) were more likely to make allegations than boys (77%) were.

Other researchers have similarly reported that rates of disclosure vary depending on the age of the children interviewed, with preschoolers less likely to make allegations than older children (DiPietro *et al.*, 1997; Gries *et al.*, 1996; Keary & Fitzpatrick, 1994; Wood *et al.*, 1996). Hershkowitz and her colleagues (2007) were able to confirm this trend in the large national data set available to them, and showed that the relationship between age and disclosure rate continues into adolescence. Regardless of the type of abuse suspected or the relationship with suspected perpetrators, adolescents and pre-adolescents were more likely to disclose abuse than school-aged children, who were in turn more likely to make allegations than preschoolers were. Of course, these data do not support London and colleagues' (2005) hypothesis that there might be a U-shaped association between age and disclosure rate, with adolescents increasingly aware of the consequences of disclosure and thus more willing to withhold information.

Other factors also affected the children's tendencies to report abuse when questioned. For example, there was a clear association between level of functioning and the children's tendency to allege that they had been abused: children with the most pronounced mental handicaps were least likely to make allegations whereas those perceived to be most competent intellectually were most likely to do so (Hershkowitz, Lamb, & Horowitz, in press).

Children who had and had not made allegations in the past also differed with respect to the likelihood that they would make allegations when formally questioned, although there were important differences between those whose alleged maltreatment involved sexual abuse and those whose alleged abuse involved physical abuse. Specifically, children who had previously alleged sexual abuse were less likely to make new allegations than other children (75% vs. 82%), whereas children who had made previous allegations of physical abuse were more likely to make new allegations than other children (77% vs. 63%).

The likelihood that children would make allegations also varied depending on characteristics of their families. Whereas about a quarter of the children living with both parents failed to disclose sexual abuse when interviewed, more than a third of the children living in other family configurations failed to disclose and almost half of the children whose parents were divorced failed to disclose sexual abuse when this was suspected. When physical abuse (typically by parents) was suspected, children living with both parents failed to disclose slightly more often (41%) than children living in other family configurations (37%). Children living with their fathers and partners were much more likely to disclose physical abuse; only 28% of them failed to make allegations when interviewed.

Children who had been removed from their homes and were thus no longer living with one or both parents failed to disclose more frequently (36%) than children living at home (28%) when sexual abuse was suspected but less frequently (36%) than children living at home (39%) when physical abuse was suspected. In other words, these Israeli children were less willing to disclose physical abuse when they lived at home with their biological parents rather than in other settings (e.g., foster families, boarding schools, institutions); children living with both parents were least likely to disclose. The greater dependence of such children on their parents, the children's greater sense of responsibility for protecting the integrity of the family, or direct and indirect pressure by the parents may all explain why children living with their parents are least likely to disclose physical abuse.

Even after controlling for the children's ages, last-born children failed to make allegations more frequently (44% for sexual and 32%

for physical abuse) than middle (40% and 26%) or first-born children (36% and 30%). Children without siblings failed to disclose suspected sexual abuse more often (38%) than children living in larger families (27–28%). When physical abuse was suspected, however, only children failed to disclose less often (36%) than children with siblings (39–40%). It appears that older siblings may be perceived by younger children as authorities who inhibit disclosure in much the same way that parents do.

The likelihood that interviewed children would make allegations also varied dramatically depending on the relationship between the children and the suspects. In Hershkowitz *et al.*'s sample, about two-thirds of the suspects were parents (including step-parents, adoptive parents, and foster parents), and children were much more likely to make allegations when the suspect was not a parent or parent figure. Small cell sizes prompt caution generalising from these results, but the data also show greatest unwillingness among the youngest children to make allegations against parents or parent figures. Caution is also warranted because it was inherently difficult to identify the suspect when the child failed to make an allegation. The data shown in Table 8.2 reflect the investigators' attempts to identify the likely suspect using all available information, including their impression of the child. When the youth investigators suspected that children had been abused by their parents but the children made no allegations, the cases were referred to the child protection agency, which only has jurisdiction when within-family abuse is suspected. Hershkowitz *et al.* thus used referral to the child protection agency as the criterion when defining suspects as either parents or non-parents when the children did not identify suspects.

The unwillingness to make accusations about parents or parent figures as opposed to other suspected perpetrators was especially marked when the alleged offences were sexual in nature (see Table 8.2), although in both cases the willingness to make allegations increased with age. In each age group, boys were less likely than girls to make allegations when sexual abuse by parents or parent figures was suspected, whereas there were no gender differences where physical abuse was concerned. Rates of sexual abuse disclosure by sons were 12%, 17%, and 12% for the 3- to 6-, 7- to 10-, and 11- to 14-year-old age groups, respectively, compared with 17%, 22%, and 34%, respectively, for daughters. It thus seemed that gender differences in disclosure rates were largely accounted for by this unwillingness on the part of sons (especially adolescent sons) to make allegations of sexual abuse by their parents or parent figures. Again, however, caution is warranted when interpreting these data because suspects could often not be identified when children did not make allegations.

Table 8.2 Allegation rates by age, gender, type of suspected abuse, and relationship to suspect

		Non-parent suspects				Parent suspects			
		Age 3–6	Age 7–10	Age 11–14	Total	Age 3–6	Age 7–10	Age 11–14	Total
Sexual	Male	284 74.3%	1005 90.0%	954 89.5%	2243 87.4%	37 12.3%	59 16.9%	25 12.4%	121 14.2%
	Female	607 75.6%	1860 90.0%	2492 94.7%	4959 90.1%	121 16.7%	171 22.2%	197 34.1%	489 23.6%
	Total	891 75.2%	2865 90.0%	3446 93.2%	7202 89.3%	158 15.4%	230 20.6%	222 28.5%	610 20.9%
Physical	Male	79 54.5%	184 68.1%	143 64.1%	406 63.6%	919 47.3%	2450 63.1%	1591 66.1%	4960 60.3%
	Female	61 59.8%	133 63.9%	81 61.8%	275 62.4%	680 46.1%	1726 63.8%	1312 67.9%	3718 60.8%
	Total	140 56.7%	317 66.3%	224 63.3%	681 63.1%	1599 46.8%	4176 63.4%	2903 66.9%	8678 60.5%
Total	Male	363 68.9%	1189 85.7%	1097 85.1%	2649 82.7%	956 42.6%	2509 59.3%	1616 62.0%	5081 56.0%
	Female	668 73.8%	1993 87.6%	2573 93.2%	5234 88.1%	801 36.4%	1897 54.6%	1509 60.1%	4207 51.4%
	Total	1031 72.0%	3182 86.9%	3670 90.6%	7883 86.2%	1757 39.6%	4406 57.2%	3125 61.1%	9288 53.8%

On 373 occasions (out of the 9 240 instances in which children did not make allegations when interviewed), the investigators were convinced that the children had been abused, either because the children had made a credible prior disclosure to a disinterested person or because abuse had been reported by a witness. All of these children were referred for medical examinations (which were usually inconclusive), and the majority (344) were also referred for further psychosocial counselling or therapy. Closer examination of these 344 cases (see Table 8.3) revealed that parents or parent-figures were suspected in most (86% or 141) of the 165 cases in which sexual abuse was suspected and almost all (98%

Table 8.3 Characteristics of cases in which child abuse was strongly suspected, but child did not make an allegation

Type of abuse	Relationship to suspect		Gender		
			Male	Female	Total
Sexual	Parent	Number of cases	33	108	141
		% within relationship to suspect	23.4%	76.6%	100.0%
		% within gender	78.6%	87.8%	85.5%
		% of Total	20.0%	65.5%	85.5%
	Non-parent	Number of cases	9	15	24
		% within relationship to suspect	37.5%	62.5%	100.0%
		% within gender	21.4%	12.2%	14.5%
		% of Total	5.5%	9.1%	14.5%
	Total	Number of cases	42	123	165
		% within relationship to suspect	25.5%	74.5%	100.0%
		% within gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	25.5%	74.5%	100.0%
Physical	Parent	Number of cases	111	65	176
		% within relationship to suspect	63.1%	36.9%	100.0%
		% within gender	100.0%	95.6%	98.3%
		% of Total	62.0%	36.3%	98.3%
	Non-parent	Number of cases		3	3
		% within relationship to suspect		100.0%	100.0%
		% within gender		4.4%	1.7%
		% of Total		1.7%	1.7%
	Total	Number of cases	111	68	179
		% within relationship to suspect	62.0%	38.0%	100.0%
		% within gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	62.0%	38.0%	100.0%

or 176) of the 179 cases in which physical abuse was suspected. As Table 8.3 shows, girls were more likely to be involved when sexual abuse was suspected, whereas boys were more likely to be involved when physical abuse was suspected. Similar differences were evident within each age group.

Of course, the large group of children who do not make allegations comprises three distinct sub groups of unknown size: 1) a group of children who were abused but do not want to report it because they are afraid, embarrassed, protective, or disinterested, 2) a group of children who were abused but do not recognise the incident as abusive/inappropriate, do not understand what the interviewer wants to talk about, or cannot make themselves understood, and 3) a group of children who were not actually abused and truthfully say so to the interviewers. Mandatory reporting statutes in both Israel and the US may prompt professionals to make reports when their levels of suspicion are low, and this would perhaps inflate the numbers of children in the third category.

Overall, according to the statistics reported by Hershkowitz and her colleagues, about two-thirds of interviews with young suspected victims of abuse yielded allegations of abuse. Once suspicions were reported to the authorities, in other words, alleged victims were quite likely to provide reports that substantiated those suspicions. Especially impressive is the 71% rate at which suspected victims of sexual abuse made allegations. Compared to previous studies involving cases in which the allegations had not been substantiated, this rate is at the higher end of the range (percentile = 94) with just one study reporting a slightly higher disclosure rate (74%, Gordon & Jaudes, 1996). By contrast, about a third of the reports of all forms of maltreatment, including neglect, involving 0 to 18-year-olds investigated by Child Protective Services in the United States are "substantiated" or "indicated," leaving about 60% unsubstantiated (Children's Bureau, 2003).

In many of the cases included in previous research on disclosure or allegation rates, the forensic interviews were not as carefully structured. Indeed, the relatively high disclosure rate obtained may thus reflect, at least in part, the nationwide reliance on the Protocol, which may have enhanced the willingness of children included in this study to disclose abuse. The high disclosure rate reported is consistent with findings from another study we later conducted in the US (see below) also using the Protocol.

Table 8.1 shows that a surprisingly large proportion of the Israeli children in the youngest group (3- to 6-year-old) studied did not allege abuse when questioned. Although it is possible that some of these interviews were triggered by unwarranted suspicions, the age differences

were so large that both cognitive and motivational factors may also be involved. In particular, it may be that the youngest children are disproportionately likely to misunderstand the purpose and focus of the investigative interview or the abuse itself, thereby failing to report experiences of abuse that they remember and would be willing to discuss if they recognised the investigators' interest. The fact that very young children more readily make allegations against familiar nonfamily members and strangers than against parents or step-parents, however, suggests that many of the non-allegations were indeed motivated, perhaps by threats or fears about possible repercussions. This possibility is strengthened by the fact that older children avoid making allegations of sexual abuse against parents or parent figures at similarly high levels: It seems unlikely, though possible, that only one-fifth of the suspected sexual abuse by parents or parent figures actually occurred, as suggested by the disclosure rates reported in Table 8.3. Such patterns suggest that special investigative techniques may be necessary to encourage disclosure of abuse by parents or parent figures when children are either young and/or the alleged offences are sexual in nature. These techniques might need to address cognitive factors that prevent younger children from understanding the focus of the interview, and motivational factors that make children of all ages reluctant to make incriminating disclosures about their parents or parent figures.

Unfortunately, interpretation of these results is limited by the fact that the validity of the children's allegations and non-allegations could not be determined. As a result, we do not know how likely *real* victims are to report their abuse, or how often false allegations are made. In addition, Hershkowitz *et al.*'s analyses only involved cases that had come to the attention of official agencies, so we have no idea how many or how few cases of abuse take place without ever triggering any kind of official investigation. On the other hand, the results reported by Hershkowitz *et al.* are especially valuable because they include all reported cases in an entire country (Israel) over a five-year period and thus provide more representative data than any other report to date.

Understanding the Disclosure Process

Whereas the reports by Hershkowitz *et al.* (2005, 2007) highlighted the characteristics of children who fail to disclose abuse, little is known about the factors that impede disclosure by individual children, and some of the most relevant studies have involved unrepresentative clinical samples or long-delayed self-reports of questionable reliability (London, Bruck, Ceci, & Shuman, 2005; Palmer, Brown, Rae-Grant, &

Loughlin, 1999). Hershkowitz, Lanes, and Lamb (2007) thus set out to explore the disclosure process with the alleged victims of sexual victimisation and their parents. In order to avoid the possibility that parents were interested (and thus potentially unreliable) informants, this study focused only on cases of extra-familial abuse, and so did not elucidate the processes of disclosure when the suspected perpetrators were family members.

Parental reactions or anticipated reactions are likely to affect the willingness to disclose abuse (Distel, 1999). In a study focused on 28 children who had sexually transmitted diseases but did not disclose abuse, for example, Lawson and Chaffin (1992) reported that most of the children whose parents were willing to believe that their children might have been sexually abused did disclose (63%) whereas only a small proportion of the children whose parents refused to accept this possibility disclosed (17%). Consistent with these findings, Gonzalez *et al.* (1993) reported that children in therapy often disclosed sexual abuse hesitantly, providing partial information and waiting for reactions before disclosing more. Retrospective analyses of childhood abuse reported in adulthood suggest that fear of family rejection and fear of disbelief are major factors leading children not to disclose (Palmer *et al.*, 1999; Somer & Szwartzberg, 2001; Schwartzberg, 2000).

Researchers who have studied parental reactions to the disclosure of sexual abuse by their children note that parental, especially maternal, support following disclosure buffers against the harmful effects of sexual abuse and promotes the victims' emotional and psychological adjustment (Everson, Hunter, Runyon, Edelsohn, & Coulter, 1989; Gries *et al.*, 2000; Sinclair, 1999; Testa, Miller, Downs, & Panek, 1992). According to Roesler and Wind (1994), however, parents are not necessarily supportive in such situations, with disbelieving and rejecting reactions to disclosure quite common. Of their sample of adult women who had allegedly been abused sexually by relatives and had disclosed abuse during childhood (before they were 16), only 37% recalled supportive reactions from their parents, whereas 63% reported non-supportive reactions.

Similarly negative reactions to disclosure have been reported by other researchers (Ageton, 1983; Jehu, 1989; Palmer *et al.*, 1999). Parents' inability to be supportive may reflect their own distress (Heflin, Deblinger, & Fisher, 2000), especially when they themselves had been abused (Alaggia & Turton, 2005). Leonard, Hellerstedt, and Josten (1997) reported that maternal distress often remained evident one year following disclosure.

Other factors also influence disclosure. Distel (1999) found that disclosures were delayed and were made to persons outside the family

when the victims were closely related to the perpetrators. More intrusive sexual acts were associated with low disclosure rates in the course of therapy among children who made a previous disclosure (Gonzalez *et al.*, 1993), whereas threats by perpetrators were associated with non-disclosure in a retrospective study of adults (Palmer *et al.*, 1999).

Similarly, the way children are prompted to disclose may influence their willingness to disclose (Gries *et al.*, 1996). When children are interviewed in a friendly context and are clearly and firmly encouraged to describe their experiences, as when interviewed using the Protocol, they provide rich and detailed information about the abusive events, including core details of the sexual acts, in response to open-ended prompts. By contrast, intimidating interviewers and inappropriate questioning can evoke denials or false disclosures (for recent reviews see Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Hershkowitz, & Esplin, 1999; Poole & Lindsay, 1998; Saywitz & Goodman, 1996). As a result, it is important to know exactly how subjects were interviewed when studying disclosure patterns, although this information is often unavailable.

Interpretation of the literature is also compromised because the validity of delayed disclosures is often unknown, and time delays between the alleged abuse experiences, the disclosure of abuse, and participation in a study influences the accuracy and validity of reports. Hershkowitz, Lanes, and Lamb (2007) thus explored children's disclosures as soon as possible after the abuse was reported. Information about the disclosure process was obtained in the first formal interview, before any police investigation or intervention by child protective services, in order to minimise post-event contamination. Specifically, after the children described the abusive events in an investigative interview, they were prompted to describe in detail what happened between the event and the interview. In order to validate and supplement the children's reports, their parents were simultaneously interviewed so that they could independently describe the events that had taken place since the alleged sexual abuse and since they became aware of it. Hershkowitz *et al.* focused exclusively on extra-familial incidents to ensure that the parents' accounts were less likely to be self-serving. Although other researchers have underscored the importance of obtaining multiple accounts of children's experiences following disclosure of sexual abuse (Leonard, Hellerstedt, Josten, *et al.*, 1997; Ligiezinska *et al.*, 1996) and although multiple informants have described aspects of children's responses to abuse (Kaufman, Jones, Stieglitz, Vitulano, & Mannarino, 1994; McGee, Wolfe, Yuen, Wilson, & Carnnochan, 1995; Sternberg, Lamb, & Dawud-Noursi, 1998), no other researchers have studied the disclosure process in this way.

Hershkowitz *et al.* (2007) interviewed 30 alleged victims of sexual abuse (18 boys and 12 girls) and their parents (20 mothers and 10 fathers). Because age affects disclosure (as we have shown above), they limited the sample to 7- to 12- year-olds (averaging 9 years) interviewed using the Protocol by 6 experienced female youth investigators in the northern and central regions of Israel during the year 2000. Children were selected for the study if they made clear allegations of sexual abuse and their statements were deemed highly credible by the youth investigators. No other inclusion criteria were employed, and the children studied were the first 30 children alleging sexual abuse in the specified regions during the data collection period). The alleged incidents involved sexual exposure by the suspect or fondling over the clothes ($n = 18$) and touching under the clothes, including genital penetration ($n = 12$).

After the children had provided a detailed description of the abusive event in their initial interviews, they were encouraged, using open ended prompts (e.g., "And then what happened?"), to continue telling what had happened since the incident. If the children did not describe the whole disclosure process in detail, they were prompted with additional questions designed to determine how other people came to know about the event, who were the first (second, third, fourth, etc.) people to know, under what circumstances, and what happened during the interaction with each of them. Children were prompted with additional open-ended questions ("Then what happened?"), time segmenting invitations (e.g., "what happened from the moment you told your friend until you came back home?"), or cue questions ("Earlier you mentioned taking a walk with your father. Tell me more about that.") until the disclosure process had been fully described.

Interviews with the parents (one parent of each child) were conducted following similar principles. Interviewers introduced themselves and the aim of the interview before initiating short rapport-building exercises in which the parents were asked to talk about themselves. They were then asked to describe in detail what, when, and how they learned about the children's experiences, and what had happened since the events. If the descriptions were brief, parents were given open-ended prompts ("Then what happened?"), time segmenting invitations ("What happened from the moment you both arrived at the doctor until you left?"), or cue questions ("Earlier, you mentioned that your child behaved strangely. Tell me more about that.") in order to obtain elaborated reports of the disclosure process. Parents were also encouraged to describe their reactions to other stressful situations and their emotional reactions and states since the event.

Characteristics of the Disclosures

All the children disclosed sexual abuse to someone prior to the investigative interview. Out of 30 children, however, a little over half delayed disclosure, with the length of delay ranging from one week to two years. Three-quarters of the children delayed for up to one month but 20% delayed for about one year (or more (7%). The tendency to delay disclosure was related to age: 33% of the 15 7- to 9-year-olds versus 73% of the 10- to 12-year olds had delayed disclosure).

The fact that the older children (10- to 12-year-olds) were more reluctant to disclose and tended to postpone disclosure more than the 7- to 9-year-olds, may have occurred because the older children were more aware of social norms and taboos, or because they were embarrassed or ashamed of not preventing the abuse. This might also explain why children were more likely to delay disclosure of more severe abuse involving intrusive sexual acts and multiple incidents as opposed to single incidents involving non-intrusive acts. Older children also tended to avoid sharing their experiences with their parents whereas younger children preferentially disclosed to their parents rather than to siblings or friends. This might reflect avoidance of the parents, but it may also reflect the increasingly supportive role played by the peer group as children get older. On the other hand, the findings are not consistent with those reported in other studies (e.g., Keary & Fitzpatrick, 1994; London *et al.*, 2005, and earlier in this chapter).

Familiarity with the perpetrators also affected the delay of disclosure: 60% of the perpetrators were known to the children, while 40% were strangers. More than three-quarters of the children who were familiar with the perpetrators delayed their disclosure, whereas less than a fifth of the children whose perpetrators were strangers did so. This association suggests that familiarity with adults in other contexts may make them authoritative figures whom children feel they should obey. Most perpetrators are familiar to the children they victimise (Finkelhor *et al.*, 1990), which may increase the number of children who fail to disclose their victimisation promptly, if at all. Sixty per cent of the children were victims of less serious sexual offences (fondling over the clothes), whereas 40% were victims of more severe offences (including touching under the clothes or penetration). Almost all victims of more severe offences delayed their disclosure; in contrast, just over a quarter of the victims of less serious abuse did so. Repeated abuse was similarly associated with delayed disclosure. Just over half of the children were victims in a single event whereas the others were repeatedly abused. Most victims of multiple incidents (86%), in comparison to just a quarter of the victims of single incidents, delayed their disclosure.

Based on their self reports, parents' reactions in stressful situations were classified as mostly calm (20%) or mostly anxious (57%). None of the children whose parents reported that they reacted calmly to stress delayed their disclosure, whereas most children (88%) whose parents reported being anxious under stress did so. This finding supports and extends previous findings from clinical studies (Gonzalez *et al.*, 1993; Lawson & Chaffin, 1992) and studies of adults' retrospective accounts (Palmer *et al.*, 1999; Somer & Szwartzberg, 2001; Shwartzberg, 2000).

Nearly half of the children first disclosed to siblings or friends, slightly fewer first disclosed to their parents, and 10% first disclosed to other adults. Most of the 7- to 9-year-old children (73%), compared to 13% of the older children, disclosed to their parents. Children who were familiar with the perpetrators were less likely to disclose to their parents (28%) than children whose perpetrators were strangers (67%). All children whose parents reported typically calm reactions to stress disclosed to their parents, whereas less than a quarter of the children whose parents reported that they tended to respond to stress anxiously did so.

How the Disclosures Occurred

Fifty-seven percent of the children spontaneously disclosed abuse, but 43% disclosed only after they were prompted. Nearly two-thirds of the children who were familiar with the perpetrators disclosed after they were prompted; in contrast, only 17% of the children whose perpetrators were strangers disclosed this way. The severity and frequency of the abusive incidents were also associated with variations in disclosure patterns. Victims of serious crimes (67%) and repeated incidents (71%) were more likely to disclose after they were prompted than victims of less serious crimes (28%) and victims of single incidents (19%). A third of the children in the sample reported being threatened by perpetrators and 23% of them reported being given emotional rewards for keeping their relationships secret. All children who were given positive emotional suggestions disclosed after they were prompted, whereas only a small minority of the children who were threatened (10%) did so. Children often disclosed after they were prompted when their parents reported anxious reactions (71%), whereas they never needed prompts and disclosed spontaneously when their parents reported calm reactions in stress. Children who delayed disclosure disclosed more frequently (69%) after they were prompted than children who disclosed immediately (14%).

Children's Reported Feelings about Disclosure

Equal proportions of the children reported feeling generalised distress and focused fear or shame of the parent and these reported feelings were significantly related to the familiarity of the suspect as well as to the severity and frequency of abuse. Children more often expressed fear or shame when the perpetrators were familiar (78%) and the abuse was serious (83%) and repeated (79%) than when the perpetrators were strangers (8%), the abuse was less serious (28%) or had occurred only once (25%). Children's feelings were also related to other aspects of the disclosure: delay of disclosure, recipient of disclosure and the way children disclosed. Most of the children who delayed disclosure (88%), those who disclosed to friends or siblings (79%) and those who did not disclose spontaneously (77%) expressed fear or shame of the parents in comparison to those who did not delay disclosure (7%), those who disclosed to their parents (23%) and those who disclosed spontaneously (29%).

Parents' Reactions to Disclosure

The parents' reactions to disclosure were classified as either supportive (37%) or unsupportive (63%). Children who reported being abused by familiar perpetrators were much more likely to face unsupportive parental reactions (89%) than children who reported being abused by unfamiliar perpetrators (25%).

The severity and frequency of the abusive incidents also seemed to influence the parents' reactions. Specifically, parents were less supportive when their children were victims of serious crimes (92% versus 44%) and repeated incidents (93% versus 37%). Most of the parents who reported that they typically responded anxiously were unsupportive (88%) while none of the parents who reported that they usually responded to stress calmly reacted so.

More of the parents whose children delayed disclosure (81%) were unsupportive than were parents whose children disclosed immediately (57%). Unsupportive reactions were less common when children did (47%) rather than did not (85%) disclose spontaneously. Parents' reactions were also related to the children's reported feelings about the disclosure. Children who reported general distress were less likely to receive unsupportive reactions from their parents (40%), whereas most of the parents (87%) whose children reported feeling fear or shame of them were unsupportive. Clearly, there was a strong link between predicted and actual parental reactions, suggesting that children may anticipate

their parents' likely reactions very well, although it is also possible that children who have negative expectations engage in other negative behaviours, which may in turn evoke negative reactions from their parents. Children who expect negative reactions engage in avoidant behaviours – they not only delay disclosure but also tend to disclose to individuals other than the parents –that are strongly associated with negative parental reactions.

Retraction of Abuse Allegations

After the investigation, four children claimed that the abuse they had described did not actually happen. Children were more likely to retract their allegations when they reported multiple incidents (29%) and when the perpetrators were familiar figures (22%); they never retracted their allegations when they reported a single incident and when the suspects were strangers.

Similarly, children were somewhat likely to retract their allegations when they delayed disclosure (25%), disclosed to someone other than their parents (29%), disclosed after they were prompted (31%) and reported fearing the parents' reactions before disclosing (27%). However, no children who made immediate disclosure, who disclosed to their parents, who disclosed spontaneously, and who expressed general distress before disclosing later retracted the allegation. Based on the investigators' assessments, the initial statements made by all children in the sample were highly credible, suggesting that the recanting children might have experienced such stress following disclosure that they sought to alleviate it by recanting.

Updating Our Understanding of the Disclosure Process

Hershkowitz, Lanes, and Lamb's (2007) study thus provided valuable insights into the factors that affect the willingness of alleged abuse victims to disclose abuse by extra-familial alleged perpetrators. The findings are especially important because researchers have not previously been able to explore the correlates of disclosure or delay when the allegations were obtained in a standardised fashion, and information about the disclosure process was obtained systematically from both the children and one of their parents.

Regulation of the disclosure process based on expectations regarding the parents' reactions was evident as well. Expectations of negative reactions were strongly associated with delayed, non-spontaneous, and indirect disclosure to a non-parent figure. This finding supports and extends previous findings from clinical studies (Gonzalez *et al.*, 1993;

Lawson and Chaffin, 1992) and studies of adults' retrospective accounts (Palmer *et al.*, 1999; Somer & Schwartzberg, 2001; Schwartzberg, 2000). The strong link between predicted and actual parental reactions suggested that children may anticipate their parents' likely reactions very well, although it is also possible that children who have negative expectations engage in other negative behaviours, which may in turn evoke negative reactions from their parents. Children who expect negative reactions engage in avoidant behaviours – they not only delay disclosure but also tend to disclose to individuals other than the parents – that are strongly associated with negative parental reactions.

Fear of parental reactions following serious abuse, which was associated with avoidant and indirect disclosure, was also characteristic of children who later recanted their allegations, partly or fully. Based on the investigators' assessments, the initial statements made by all children in the sample were highly credible, suggesting that the recanting children might have experienced such stress following disclosure that they sought to alleviate it by recanting.

Overall, the results of this small study support other reports that children who suffer severe and frequent sexual abuse, especially by familiar persons, tend to disclose belatedly, hesitantly, and indirectly, afraid or shameful of their parents' reactions. Expectations of the parents' reactions seem to be quite realistic and are strongly associated with indices of the children's emotions and cooperativeness.

INTERVIEWING SUSPECTED VICTIMS WHO ARE RELUCTANT TO DISCLOSE

Adopting a rather different approach, Hershkowitz, Orbach, Lamb, and Horowitz (2006, 2007) explored differences between Protocol-guided interviews in which 4- to 13-year-old children made allegations and those in which children did not make allegations despite strong evidence of abuse.

Research on suspected victims of abuse who do not make allegations is urgently needed because many suspected victims do not make allegations when formally interviewed. As mentioned earlier, the exact numbers cannot be calculated because an unknown number of victims never disclose their victimisation and because some proportion of those who initially offer denials and later make allegations may be doing so falsely, perhaps in response to repeated suggestive questioning. Of course, many abuse victims cannot be protected or helped because they never disclose their experiences or do so belatedly.

Because children are typically somewhat shy in initial encounters with unfamiliar adults, forensic interviewers are routinely advised to establish rapport before turning attention to the possible abuse (Poole & Lamb, 1998). The pre-substantive phase can be used not only to establish rapport with children but also prepare them in other ways so as to maximise their willingness and capacity to be informative (Saywitz & Goodman, 1996; Sternberg *et al.*, 1997). In the Protocol, explicit rules of communication are also explained in order to diminish confusion and inaccuracy while maximising the resistance to suggestion. To further motivate them, children are typically reminded that they are unique sources of information and are encouraged to practice reporting information from episodic memory by describing other meaningful personal events (Fivush & Shukat, 1995). Through practice, clear expectations are conveyed to the children regarding the amount of details and level of spontaneous elaboration expected of them in order to increase the amounts of event-specific information they provide.

Hershkowitz *et al.*'s study was designed to explore structural differences between forensic interviews in which children reported being abused (here described as the "allegation group" of "disclosers") and those in which children did not mention being abused (here called the "non-allegation group" of "nondisclosers"). To assess these differences, Hershkowitz and her colleagues compared the interviewers' prompts and the children's responses especially during the initial phases of forensic interviews, prior to any discussion of possible abuse. Interviews in the allegation and non-allegation groups were matched with respect to age of child, abuse type, perpetrator familiarity, and, where possible, strength of the suspicion that triggered the investigation. The variables explored included the interviewers' eliciting utterance types (i.e., free-recall versus recognition prompts), as well as their supportive and nonsupportive behaviours. Hershkowitz *et al.* also categorised the children's responses to the interviewers' prompts as informative, uninformative, and denial responses.

They expected that interviewers might use more focused and even coercive strategies while withholding support from children who were reluctant to provide information. They also expected that children in the "no-allegation" interviews would be less engaged in the rapport building and less cooperative in the memory training phase than would peers who made allegations. Hershkowitz *et al.* thus predicted that interviewers would use more recognition than free-recall prompts and would be less supportive and more confrontational when interviewing children who did not make allegations. They expected that children in "no-allegation" interviews would show their reluctance by giving more uninformative (e.g., omission, "don't know," "don't want to talk," "don't

remember"), digressive (e.g., reversions to "non-substantive" responses or issues), and denial (e.g., "never happened") responses during the "getting the allegation" phase than children who made allegations of abuse.

A total of 100 forensic interviews with 57 boys and 43 girls were examined. There were 20 children aged 3 to 5 years, 42 aged between 6 and 9 years, and 38 aged between 10 and 13. The first 50 interviews to be identified included all interviews of 3- to 13-year-old suspected victims who did not allege abuse when interviewed but for whom there was compelling evidence that the child had indeed been abused. Hershkowitz *et al.* then sought case-by-case matches with forensic interviews of alleged victims who made allegations of sexual or physical abuse. Cases were matched with respect to age, abuse type (sexual, $n = 19$; physical, $n = 31$) perpetrator familiarity (parent, $n = 33$; non-parent, $n = 17$), and basis for suspicion (strong evidence, $n = 32$; prior disclosure, $n = 18$).

Cases in which there are compelling reasons to believe (not merely suspect) that abuse has occurred in the absence of allegations by the child are rare and the 50 cases included in the study resulted from a comprehensive review of the data base described earlier in this chapter. Matches were easier to locate in the same data base; in each case, the match chosen was the first appropriate match to be identified. Interviews were only transcribed and coded after they had been matched and selected.

All interviews were the first forensic interview conducted with alleged or suspected victims between 1998 and 2003 by 25 trained youth investigators. All interviews were rated with respect to the strength of evidence or the basis for suspicion using the "Ground Truth" scheme described by in the previous chapter (see also Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin, Hershkowitz, & Orbach, 1997; Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin, Hershkowitz, Orbach, *et al.*, 1997). Only cases in which there was substantial reason to believe that abuse had taken place (i.e., sufficient information of one or more types that the abuse was "likely" or "very likely" and no ratings of "unlikely" or "very unlikely") were included in the study. Examples of corroborative ("likely" or "very likely") medical information included semen traces, vaginal tears, and relevant physical injuries, corroborative eyewitness accounts included reports by disinterested eyewitnesses (i.e., those who were unrelated to either victim or suspect), perpetrator confessions were deemed corroborative when they contained details matching those provided by the victims, and corroborative miscellaneous information included clear disclosure to a non-interested person (such as a teacher or counselor).

The coding scheme used in this study differed from that used in most of the studies described earlier in this book. Specifically,

interviewers' utterances in both the pre-substantive and the substantive phases of the interview were classified as either information-requesting prompts or non information-requesting utterances. In addition, interviewers' comments inserted within any type of utterance in either the pre-substantive and substantive phases of the interview were coded for supportiveness. Information-requesting prompts were then categorized as invitations, directives, option-posing, or suggestive.

Supportive comments involved comments anywhere in the interview intended to unconditionally encourage children to be informative, typically about neutral topics because we only coded the first two phases of the interview. *Supportive comments* were categorised using four exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories:

1. *Nonsuggestive positive reinforcement* involved positive responses to the children's behaviour during the interview unrelated to the content of their reports or to any other substantive issue (e.g., "You are telling very well").

2. *Addressing the child in a personal way* involved using names or terms of endearment (e.g., "Dan, tell me everything about that").

3. *References to the child's emotions* involved expressions of empathy in response to the children's expressions of positive or negative emotion during the interview (e.g., "I understand that it is very difficult for you to tell me this").

4. *Facilitators* involved non-suggestive encouragement – by saying "ok", "aha", or by echoing the children's last few words – to continue talking.

By contrast, *unsupportive comments* were interviewer comments anywhere in the interview exerting pressure on children to respond by challenging information they provided or criticising their behaviour. *Unsupportive comments* were categorised using four exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories:

1. In *Confrontations,* interviewers challenged the information provided by the children by referring to an external source (e.g., "...but I heard from the police officer that [details] happened"), a physical mark on the child's body ("You said that nothing had happened, so how do you explain this burn on your hand?"), or the implausibility of the child's statement (or contradiction).

2. *Reference to positive outcomes* involved conditional statements that positive outcomes would follow if the children were cooperative (e.g., "If you tell me, you'll feel better"; "If you tell me, we can help you").

3. *Warnings about negative outcomes* involved conditional statements that negative outcomes would follow if the children did not cooperate (e.g., "We cannot help children who do not talk").

4. *Negative references to the child's behaviour* involved criticism of the children's behaviour during the interview (e.g., "You're looking away"; "Don't touch the tape-recorder"; "Sit still!"; "You are talking too softly, I can't hear you").

The children's responses were categorised as *informative*, *uninformative*, or *denials*. Because the study only involved coding the rapport building/narrative training and getting the allegation phases of the interviews, most of the coded responses were non substantive, that is, about events or details unrelated to the suspected abuse.

In *Informative responses,* children provided the information requested in the eliciting prompts. *Uninformative responses* did not provide the information requested in the eliciting prompts and were classified as:

Omissions – failures to respond informatively or at all, unclear, inaudible, or unfinished responses, or requests for clarification (e.g., "What do you mean?");

Digressions – responses that were unrelated to the eliciting content (e.g., Interviewer: "How old are you?" Child: "My friend did not behave well at school");

Displacements – unexpected and irrelevant allegations in response to any prompt or implausible responses (e.g., Interviewer: "I have a Doctor's report showing that you have serious burns on your . . ." Child: "I fell on a hot plate");

Resistance – verbal expressions or actions indicating that the children were unwilling to provide information or be interviewed (e.g., verbal responses such as "I don't want to tell;" action responses like unplugging the microphone or leaving the interview room); or

Denials involved claims that an investigated event, a previous interaction, or an earlier disclosure never happened, or admissions that a previous disclosure was false.

Descriptive analyses of the interviews using these categories were revealing. Overall, interviewers posed more questions to non-disclosing children than to children who made allegations. Interviewers posed fewer invitations and proportionally more option-posing and suggestive prompts when interviewing children who did not make allegations as opposed to children who did. They also made fewer supportive comments to children who did not disclose than to those who made allegations.

Meanwhile, children who did not make allegations gave fewer informative responses during the pre-substantive phase of the interview than their counterparts. Children in both groups provided more details

in response to invitations than in response to directive, option-posing or suggestive prompts in all phases of the interview.

Disclosers provided more details in total, non significantly more details in response to invitations, and significantly more details in response to suggestive prompts than did children who did not disclose. In addition, children in the disclosure group provided non significantly more details spontaneously, in response to utterances that did not request information, than did children in the non-disclosure group.

The patterns became clearer when Hershkowitz *et al.* examined different parts of the presubstantive phase. Table 8.4 shows, for example, that the interviewers behaved similarly during the rapport-building phase, whether or not the children later made allegations. The children in the two groups behaved somewhat differently, however. Children in non-allegation interviews tended to give more uninformative responses (specifically, more omissions), and fewer informative responses than children who later made allegations did.

Table 8.4 Interviewers' utterances and children's responses in the rapport-building phase

	Non-disclosers		Disclosers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Interviewers' utterances				
Total number of utterances	12.90	5.32	12.94	11.23
Total number of information-requesting prompts	11.14	4.47	11.18	7.99
Proportion of Information-requesting prompts	.87	.12	.91	.11
Information requesting prompts (proportions)				
Invitations	.82	.18	.80	.21
Directive	.15	.17	.14	.15
Option-posing	.02	.05	.05	.10
Suggestive	.01	.03	.01	.03
Interviewers' supportiveness				
Proportion of supportive comments	.51	.19	.57	.24
Proportion of non-supportive comments	.01	.02	.01	.05
Children's responses (proportions)				
Informative	.73	.26	.82	.22
Uninformative	.26	.26	.17	.22
Denials	.03	.23	.00	.02

Table 8.5 Interviewers' utterances and children's responses in the narrative training phase

	Non-disclosers		Disclosers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Interviewers' utterances				
Total number of utterances	14.91	7.43	11.67	6.56
Total number of information requesting prompts	12.76	6.44	10.52	6.01
Proportion of information requesting prompts	.86	.10	.92	.11
Information requesting prompts (proportions)				
Invitations	.69	.22	.70	.20
Directive	.15	.20	.13	.16
Option-posing	.13	.11	.16	.14
Suggestive	.02	.06	.01	.04
Interviewers' supportiveness				
Proportion of supportive comments	.47	.21	.50	.25
Proportion of non-supportive comments	.01	.03	.01	.05
Children's responses (proportions)				
Informative	.73	.24	.89	.17
Uninformative	.27	.24	.11	.17
Denial	.00	.00	.00	.02

In the rapport building/narrative training phase, interviewers directed more utterances to non-disclosing children than to disclosing children. Table 8.5 also shows that, relative to the total number of interviewer utterances, interviewers tended to make proportionally fewer requests for information from non-disclosers than from children who alleged that they had been abused. The proportions of information-requesting prompts that were invitations, directive, option-posing and suggestive did not differ by group, however, and there were also no differences in the proportion of supportive and unsupportive comments addressed by interviewers to disclosing and non-disclosing children during this phase.

Disclosing and non-disclosing children again behaved differently, however. Non-disclosers provided proportionally more uninformative responses (specifically, more omission responses) and proportionally fewer informative responses than children who made allegations.

Fewer than 20% of the children who did not disclose gave informative responses to all the prompts posed by the interviewers in the episodic memory training phase, compared to more than half of the disclosing children.

In this rapport-building and narrative training phase of the interview, interviewers were in general more supportive of children who previously disclosed than of children for whom there was evidence. When interviewing disclosing children, however, interviewers were more supportive of children who previously disclosed than of those for whom there was evidence, whereas when interviewing non-disclosers, interviewers were less supportive of children who previously disclosed than of children for whom there was evidence.

Interviewers behaved very differently when shifting the focus to substantive issues depending on whether or not the children made allegations. Overall, interviewers directed more utterances to children who did not make allegations than to those who did (see Table 8.6). Interviewers directed proportionally fewer information-requests and

Table 8.6 Interviewers' utterances and children's responses in the transition to substantive issues.

	Non-disclosers		Disclosers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Interviewers' utterances				
Total number of utterances	27.59	16.08	5.96	7.30
Total number of information requesting prompts	20.87	12.06	4.83	4.46
Proportion of information requesting prompts	.78	.13	.91	.19
Information requesting prompts (proportions)				
Invitations	.43	.32	.59	.33
Directive	.12	.17	.06	.11
Option-posing	.33	.24	.25	.26
Suggestive	.10	.13	.08	.15
Interviewers' supportiveness				
Proportion of supportive comments	.39	.21	.65	.33
Proportion of non-supportive comments	.05	.14	.01	.04
Distribution of children's responses (proportions)				
Informative	.37	.21	.76	.28
Uninformative	.32	.26	.14	.21
Denials	.29	.20	.08	.15

invitational prompts as well as proportionally more directive prompts to children who did not make allegations than to children who disclosed. In addition, interviewers directed proportionally fewer supportive comments and non-significantly more unsupportive comments to children who did not make allegations than to children who disclosed.

Children who did not disclose provided proportionally fewer informative responses and proportionally more uninformative responses, (specifically, more resistance responses) than did children who disclosed. Non-disclosers also denied more than did children who disclosed.

The children's age was significantly associated with the proportions of responses that were informative and uninformative. Children up to nine years of age provided fewer informative and more uninformative responses than older children did.

Age and disclosure interacted in their effect on the proportion of denials. Whereas older children in the non-allegation group denied more than younger children did, older children in the allegation group provided fewer denial responses than younger children did.

Type of Abuse

Interviewers posed more invitations and fewer directive prompts to suspected sexual abuse victims than they did to suspected physical abuse victims although they were equally supportive of children in both groups. When interviewing non-disclosers, interviewers posed more option-posing prompts to suspected victims of physical abuse than to suspected victims of sexual abuse.

Children reacted differentially depending on the type of abuse suspected. Suspected victims of sexual abuse provided more informative and fewer uninformative responses than suspected victims of physical abuse did. Suspected victims of sexual abuse also provided more details on average in response to each interviewer prompt than suspected victims of physical abuse did.

The type of abuse suspected and disclosure interacted in their effect on the proportion of responses that were denials. Specifically, whereas non-disclosers denied more than disclosers overall, the difference was especially marked among suspected victims of sexual as opposed to physical abuse.

Gender Differences

Interviewers posed proportionally more invitations and fewer directive questions to girls than to boys. They also tended to be more supportive of girls than of boys.

Girls in the allegation group were more informative than boys, whereas there were no differences between girls and boys in the non-allegation group. Compared to boys, girls in the non-allegation group also offered slightly fewer uninformative responses whereas girls in the allegation group offered considerably fewer uninformative responses. Overall, girls provided more details per response than boys but whereas girls provided slightly more details than boys in non-allegation interviews, they provided considerably more details than boys in allegation interviews.

The Effects of Relationship to the Suspect

Fewer invitations were addressed to children suspected of having been abused by their parents than to children who were suspected victims of abuse by other individuals. Children who were suspected victims of parental abuse provided proportionally fewer informative responses and more uninformative responses than children who were suspected victims of non-parental perpetrators. They also provided fewer details per response than did suspected victims of individuals other than the parents.

Effects of Support in the Interview

The total sample (including the 50 disclosers and the 50 non-disclosers) was divided at the median into "high support" and "low support" groups on the basis of the proportion of utterances in the interview containing supportive comments. There were 28 low and 22 high support children in the non-disclosure group and 22 low and 28 high support children in the disclosure group. High levels of support were associated with reporting more details, and disclosing children unsurprisingly provided more details than non-disclosers. Further analysis showed that children who received more support provided more informative and fewer uninformative responses than children who received less support although amount of support did not affect the number of denials provided. Disclosure status also affected the children's informativeness. Disclosing children provided more informative, fewer uninformative responses and fewer denials than children who did not disclose. Disclosers who received high levels of support denied less, whereas non-disclosers who received high levels of support denied more.

Prediction of Disclosure

To examine whether the proportion of informative responses relative to the total number of responses in the episodic memory training phase

predicted the level of disclosure in the substantive phase, Hershkowitz and her colleagues divided the children into two groups: those who provided informative responses to all the information requests (fully informative) and those who provided informative responses to only some of the information-requesting prompts (partially informative). Only 17% of the children who did not disclose gave informative responses to all the prompts posed by the interviewers in this pre-substantive phase, and the proportion of informative responses relative to the total number of responses provided in the episodic memory training phase significantly predicted whether or not the children would later make disclosures. The overall predictive probability was 70%, with partial informativeness predicting non-disclosure in 83% of the cases and full informativeness predicting disclosure in 57% of the cases. Partially informative children were about six times less likely to make allegations than fully informative children.

Do These Results Help us Predict Disclosers?

Clearly, forensic interviews which yielded allegations of child abuse were characterised by quite different dynamics than interviews with children who seemed equivalently likely to have been abused but did not make allegations during the interview. Non-disclosing children and disclosing children behaved differently in both the rapport building and the episodic memory training of the pre-substantive phase, providing proportionally fewer informative and more uninformative responses. By contrast, interviewers behaved similarly with children in both disclosure groups during the pre-substantive rapport-building phase, regardless of the children's reluctance to be informative. Differences in the interviewers' behaviour became evident during the pre-substantive episodic memory training, at which time non-disclosers continued to be uninformative when asked about neutral events. For their part, the interviewers worked harder, directing more utterances in total and proportionally fewer information-requesting prompts to non-disclosers than to disclosers. To that extent, it seems that interviewer behaviour was shaped by the children's reluctance to provide information even at this early phase of the interview. Even in this phase of the interview, however, interviewers behaved similarly to disclosers and non-disclosers with respect to prompt type and supportiveness: They did not resort to more recognition than recall prompts and did not address non-disclosers with fewer supportive and more unsupportive comments, despite clear signs of the children's reluctance to be informative.

Marked group differences in interview dynamics, as well as higher concordance between the interviewers' and children's behaviour were evident when the interviewers sought to address substantive issues.

Non-disclosing children remained reluctant to provide information, instead providing proportionally more uninformative responses (specifically, more resistance and denials) and fewer informative responses than children who made allegations of abuse. When interviewing non-disclosers, meanwhile, the interviewers adhered less closely to the Protocol with respect to both memory-elicitation strategies and expressions of support. They made fewer requests for information, less frequent use of free recall prompts, more use of recognition memory prompts, and offered fewer supportive comments, while tending to offer more unsupportive comments when interviewing non-disclosers than when interviewing children who made allegations of abuse.

Guided by the Protocol, all interviewers began the transitional sequence with free-recall prompts (e.g., "Tell me why you came to talk to me today.") and offered recognition memory prompts (e.g., "Does your mum think that something happened to you?") only when free recall prompts were ineffective. Thus, in most allegation interviews, interviewers did not have to proceed very far along the sequence of transitional prompts before the children made allegations, whereas in the non allegation group interviewers tended to use each prompt in the transitional sequence, thereby using increasingly focused recognition prompts when attempting to elicit information. Interestingly, as in the case of young offenders (see below), the non-disclosers behaved like cooperative "disclosing" children to the extent that they were more responsive and informative in response to free-recall invitations than in response to recognition prompts even though the interviewers relied on proportionally more of the latter when interviewing them than when interviewing disclosers.

Although reluctant children probably needed more rather than less emotional support, non-disclosers were given less support than children who made allegations and they became less informative and increasingly resentful in their responses. Higher levels of interviewer support were associated with more informative and fewer uninformative responses in both groups. These findings are consistent with previous findings (Carter, Bottoms, & Levine, 1996; Davis & Bottoms, 2002a, 2002b; Goodman, Bottoms, Schwartz-Kenney, & Rudy, 1991; Imhoff & Baker-Ward, 1999) that interviewer supportiveness has a positive effect on the amount of information provided by children in the interviews.

All the interviews studied by Hershkowitz and her colleagues involved children who were believed to have been victimised, although the children in the two groups appeared to differ with respect to their motivation to be informative, and the children's reluctance to disclose the abuse they had experienced may have been exacerbated by the interviewers' strategies. Children who did not disclose abuse were somewhat

uncooperative, offered fewer details, and gave more uninformative responses even at the very beginning of the interview, before the interviewers focused on substantive issues and before the interviewers themselves began to behave differently, however. In addition to being uninformative, non-disclosers provided less information about themselves, their families, schools, and things they liked to do – personal topics that children were invited to talk about in the rapport-building phase. The rapport-building phase was thus less successful for non-disclosers than for children who made allegations of abuse. Non-disclosers continued to be uncooperative during the narrative training phase which is designed to continue rapport building while providing children with opportunities to describe in detail recent personally experienced events, such as their birthday parties. From this point on, the interpersonal dynamics of non-allegation interviews progressively deteriorated, with the children exhibiting more omission, digression, displacement, and resentment following the interviewers' comments and in response to the interviewers' prompts. A close examination of the interviews showed that, just before the substantive issue was broached, a critical point at which children's trust and cooperation should have been at its peak, non-disclosers were the least responsive. Not surprisingly, therefore, responses to the transitional prompts initiating the substantive phase were characterised by further reluctance. Non-disclosers were not only increasingly uninformative, but showed clear resentment and resistance; at the same time, the interviewers asked fewer open-ended questions and became less supportive. These experienced interviewers were clearly influenced by the children's reluctance to be informative and acted as though they were unaware of how important it was to maintain rapport and be supportive, especially when children may have emotional and motivational reasons to avoid disclosing their experiences. It is not clear what the non-disclosers knew in advance about the purpose of the interview and whether other social and psychological factors may have affected their uncooperativeness. Whether they were affected by feelings of guilt, shame, commitment, or fear, these reluctant children were likely to experience forensic interviews as stressful and to perceive the interviewers as threatening.

Because the children's informativeness in the narrative training phase predicted whether or not the children would disclose, that findings suggest that interviewers should not proceed to the substantive transitional phase when children are not responsive in the narrative training, because a premature transition to the substantive phase may provoke non-disclosure or denial of abuse in children who are motivated to withhold information (e.g., to protect familiar perpetrators, in response requests for secrecy, embarrassment, or fear).

In some cases, denial of abuse may be irreversible, especially when perpetrating parents become aware of the investigation and pressure their children to keep silent. It may thus be better to avoid discussing substantive issues unless it appears likely that the children will be cooperative.

The findings also suggest that interviewers can assess children's engagement in rapport building and their likelihood of disclosure with reasonable validity by observing the children's responsiveness. Such assessments may help investigators decide whether or not to proceed with the substantive phase of forensic interviews. Using this simple, easy to apply, predictive indicator of informativeness, many reluctant disclosers can apparently be identified and given additional rapport building and support before substantive issues are broached. If non-reluctant children are incorrectly identified as reluctant, Hershkowitz *et al.* proposed that no harm would have been caused by providing them with additional support. When traditional rapport building is unsuccessful, however, alternative means need to be explored. It is possible that some children may need to be interviewed on another occasion and that investigators need to consider ending the interview without addressing substantive issues. The results of this study suggest that intrusive and confrontational interviewer behaviors certainly do not help reluctant children disclose abuse.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO RELUCTANT DISCLOSERS BEHAVE LIKE NON-DISCLOSERS?

In a related study, Orbach, Shiloach, and Lamb (2007) looked closely at children who appeared reluctant to disclose abuse although they eventually disclosed in the initial forensic interviews.

Like the non-disclosers just discussed, children who are reluctant to disclose may be less responsive to open-ended prompts and may require more guidance and more focused prompts before making allegations of abuse. As a result, interviewers face an inevitable tension between the desire to initiate the disclosure of information about what actually happened and the need to avoid contaminating the memories by suggestively implanting information (even prompting false allegations) by using leading and suggestive prompts. The goal is to minimise the amount of information provided by the interviewer, rather than the child, especially during the crucial early stages of the interview.

Half of the children in Orbach *et al.*'s study ("non-reluctant disclosers") made allegations of abuse in response to the interviewers'

open-ended free-recall prompts. The other half ("reluctant disclosers") failed to disclose abuse in response to free-recall prompts and made allegations only when prompted in a more focused – sometimes even suggestive – fashion, using recognition memory prompts.

Orbach *et al.* expected that children who disclosed in response to focused recognition prompts would remain reluctant to provide information about the alleged abuse even after making allegations. They thus expected that non-reluctant disclosers would provide more abuse-related information overall, more central (i.e., allegation crucial) information, more information in response to free-recall prompts, and more information in response to each invitational prompt than reluctant disclosers would.

Orbach *et al.* also expected to find continuity in levels of cooperativeness in the pre-substantive and the substantive phases, which would be reflected in significant correlations between the amount of information provided by children when discussing neutral topics in the pre-substantive rapport building phase and the amount of abuse-related information provided in the substantive phase. They thus expected that reluctant disclosers would provide less information than non-reluctant disclosers even before abuse-related issues were introduced.

The 70 interviews included in the study were drawn from a pool of 365 investigative interviews conducted, using the Protocol, by professional investigators in the United Kingdom and the United States. The children (48 girls and 22 boys) were 4 to 12 years old at the time of interview. For the purpose of analysis, Orbach *et al.* distinguished between 35 interviews in which children made their allegations in response to one of the open-ended transitional prompts, i.e., "non-reluctant" disclosers, and 35 interviews in which children did not make allegations in response to the initial open-ended prompts and only disclosed when asked more focused (option-posing and suggestive) prompts. Children who made allegations in response to prompts numbered 1, 2, or 3 were classified as having responded to open-ended free-recall prompts (see Table 8.7). Those who made allegations in response to prompts 4, 5, or 6 were classified as having responded to focused recognition prompts. Interviews in the two disclosure groups were individually matched by age and abuse type. All interviews were also divided into two age groups by median split; children in the younger age group ($n = 35$) were 4 to 6 $1/2$ years old, whereas children in the older age group ($n = 35$) were 6 $1/2$ years and older.

The alleged crimes included anal or genital penetrations ($n = 14$), genital touching ($n = 33$), genital fondling from outside the clothes ($n = 17$), sexual exposure ($n = 2$) and physical abuse ($n = 4$).

Table 8.7 Prompts used by interviewers before children made allegations in Orbach, Shiloach, and Lamb's (2007) study

Non-reluctant children reported to one of these prompts.

1. *"Now that I know you a little better, I want to talk to you about why are you here today. Tell me why you came to talk to me."* [This is an open-ended question designed to motivate the child, who understand why s/he are being interviewed, to disclose].

2. *"It is important for me to understand why you came to talk to me today."* [This is similar to the previous prompt but trying to emphasize the importance of understanding as a way to help the child to focus on the alleged abuse].

   If children do not make allegations of abuse, the interviewers continue with increasingly more focused prompts:

3. *"I heard you saw a policeman [social worker, doctor, etc.] last week [yesterday]. Tell me what you talked about."* [This prompt tries to remind the child of a recent conversation s/he had with a professional. It is designed to motivate the child by indicating that the interviewer knows that s/he previously talked about the alleged event and to provide an input-free cue to children who are not sure why they are being interviewed].

   The 'reluctant' children, made an allegation in response to one of these, more focused prompts.

4. *"As I told you, my job is to talk to kids about things that might have happened to them. It's very important that I understand why you are here. Tell me why you think your mom [your dad etc.] brought you here today."*

5. *"Is your mom [dad, etc.] worried that something may have happened to you?"* [Wait for a response; if it is affirmative say: *Tell me what they are worried about*"].

6. *"I heard that someone has been bothering you. Tell me everything about the bothering."*

Thirty-three of the children reported single events, whereas 37 reported multiple events. All the perpetrators were familiar to the victims prior to the alleged abusive events. Twenty-eight of the perpetrators were members of the victims' immediate families [i.e., biological mothers, fathers, or siblings, stepparents (including mothers' boyfriends and fathers' girlfriends)], 12 were other family members (e.g., grandfathers, uncles, cousins) who lived with the family, as well as biological parents or siblings not living with the family, and 30 were familiar, unrelated acquaintances of the child (e.g., friends, teachers, non-resident boy/girl friends of a parent).

Close examination of the interviews showed that there were no group difference in the total number of prompts posed by the interviewers, although interviewers posed absolutely and proportionally more directive and fewer suggestive prompts to non-reluctant than to reluctant disclosers. Nevertheless, non-reluctant disclosers provided

more details in total in both the pre-substantive and the substantive phases of the interview (see Table 8.8). No significant differences were evident, however, in the number and proportion of details provided in responses to prompts of each type and in the number provided per prompt of each type in the pre-substantive phase, although non-reluctant disclosers tended to provide more information in response to pre-substantive invitations than reluctant disclosers did. In the substantive phase, in addition to providing more substantive information overall, non-reluctant disclosers provided more central details, and more details in response to invitations, directive and option-posing prompts than reluctant disclosers did. They also provided more details per invitation, directive, and option-posing prompts and tended to provide more details in response to suggestive prompts than reluctant disclosers did.

Older children unsurprisingly provided significantly more forensically relevant information in total than younger children did, although there was a significant interaction between age and disclosure group in the total number of details reported in the pre-substantive phase, with more details reported by older than by younger children in the non-reluctant group and more details reported by younger than by older children in the reluctant group.

There were significant correlations between the total number of details provided by children, the number of details elicited in response to invitation, directive, and option-posing prompts in the pre-substantive and substantive phases, and the average number of details elicited per invitation, directive, and option-posing prompt in the pre-substantive and the substantive phases (see Table 8.9).

Like Hershkowitz *et al.*'s (2006, 2007) findings, then, those reported by Orbach *et al.* (2007) revealed compelling differences in the dynamics of interviews with non-reluctant and reluctant disclosers with respect to both the children's and interviewers' behaviour. There were significant relationships between the children's initial willingness to make allegations and the total amount of information they provided about the investigated incidents in the substantive phase following disclosure. As expected, reluctant disclosers who failed to provide information in response to open-ended free-recall prompts and disclosed only when given additional focused recognition memory prompts reported fewer abuse-related details in the substantive interview following disclosure than non-reluctant disclosers did. Moreover, reluctant disclosers were already somewhat uncooperative when discussing neutral topics in the pre-substantive phase of the interview.

Whereas reluctant disclosers made their allegations by confirming details offered by the interviewers, non-reluctant disclosers made

Table 8.8 Mean number of details provided by non-reluctant and reluctant disclosers per prompt of each type

Eliciting prompt	Number of details				Average number of details per each prompt type			
	Non-reluctant (n = 35)	Reluctant (n = 35)	F^1	P	Non-reluctant (n = 35)	Reluctant (n = 35)	F^1	P
Pre-substantive phase								
Total # of details	165.97 (130.32)	110.49 (67.32)	4.69^2	.034*	—	—	—	—
Invitation	122.34 (91.24)	87.31 (61.83)	3.54	.064	19.14 (16.10)	13.38 (16.49)	2.18	.144
Directive	34.06 (69.85)	18.37 (33.75)	1.43	.236	13.58 (49.39)	3.49 (4.66)	1.45	.233
Option-posing	5.20 (16.07)	2.34 (7.61)	.90	.345	1.74 (4.44)	.67 (1.33)	1.83	.180
Suggestive	4.11 (10.20)	2.31 (4.80)	.893	.348	2.59 (5.55)	1.44 (2.61)	1.23	.271
Substantive phase								
Total # of details	179.89 (172.06)	77.34 (69.02)	10.34^2	.002*	—	—	—	—
# central details	105.63 (72.74)	50.46 (45.96)	14.24^2	.000*	—	—	—	—
Invitation	101.09 (113.54)	33.91 (40.22)	10.89	.002*	7.44 (6.93)	2.26 (2.70)	16.97	.000*
Directive	46.54 (69.95)	19.54 (20.25)	4.81	.032*	2.37 (1.93)	1.52 (1.17)	4.99	.029*
Option-posing	24.89 (23.15)	12.14 (8.14)	9.44	.003*	2.10 (1.29)	1.12 (.64)	16.48	.000*
Suggestive	5.37 (6.76)	9.94 (13.43)	3.24	.076	2.38 (3.98)	2.24 (4.85)	.018	.893

Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations
*indicates a significant difference
[1] df = 1,68
[2] df = 1,66

Table 8.9 Correlations between the number of details provided by children in the pre-substantive and substantive phases in response to prompts of each type

Eliciting prompt	Number of details				Average number of details per each prompt type			
	Pre-substantive phase	Substantive phase	r	p	Pre-substantive phase	Substantive phase	r	p
Total # of details	138.23 (106.69)	128.61 (140.01)	.61	.000*	–	–	–	–
Invitation	104.83 (79.35)	67.50 (91.07)	.43	.000*	16.26 (16.44)	4.85 (5.95)	.47	.000*
Directive	33.04 (52.89)	26.21 (55.03)	.55	.000*	8.54 (35.19)	1.95 (1.64)	.25	.039*
Option-posing	3.77 (12.57)	18.51 (18.38)	.53	.000*	1.21 (3.30)	1.61 (1.12)	.54	.000*
Suggestive	3.21 (7.96)	7.66 (10.80)	–.08	.516	2.01 (4.34)	2.31 (4.40)	–.06	.601

Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations
*indicates a significant difference

allegations in response to open-ended invitational prompts. Thus, reluctant disclosers not only received more prompts in total as well as more focused prompts, but were also reluctant both prior to and following the introduction of abuse-related issues by the interviewers. They were already unwilling to provide much information when asked to talk about themselves, family, school, and related neutral events in the pre-substantive phase, and provided much less abuse-related information than non-reluctant disclosers did following disclosure. These data suggest that reluctant witnesses were less communicative than non-reluctant witnesses even in the non-substantive portions of the interview, before the introduction of abuse-related issues, and remained reluctant to provide information about the alleged abuse even after making their initial allegations. They provided less information overall, fewer central details, fewer details in response to invitations, and more uninformative and omission responses than non-reluctant disclosers did. Unlike non-reluctant disclosers, reluctant disclosers provided more information in response to recognition than to recall prompts. Interviewers modified their strategies only in the substantive phase, apparently reacting when the reluctant disclosers failed to respond informatively to recall prompts.

Despite their difficulties eliciting disclosures from reluctant disclosers, the interviewers studied by Orbach *et al.* did not offer more prompts overall and in each of the two phases of the interview to reluctant than to non-reluctant disclosers, although interviewers differed with respect to the number of prompts of each type posed to children in the two disclosure groups. Whereas there were no differences in the number of prompts posed by interviewers to reluctant and non-reluctant disclosers in the pre-substantive phase, interviewers adhered less closely to the Protocol with respect to memory elicitation strategies when interviewing reluctant disclosers about substantive issues. They addressed reluctant disclosers with fewer free-recall and more recognition prompts, particularly more suggestive prompts, than they did non-reluctant disclosers. To a great extent, this was because the interviewers used more prompts including recognition memory prompts in the transitional sequence when interviewing reluctant disclosers. When interviewing non-reluctant disclosers, by contrast, interviewers did not have to proceed to the recognition prompts because allegations were made earlier in response to open-ended prompts, but did not use more focused recognition prompts to counter the children's resistance. The higher number of directive prompts addressed to non-reluctant disclosers, by contrast, may be explained by the larger amount of free-recall information provided by children in this group that could be used as cues for directive refocusing.

Further research is needed to explore alternative ways for motivating reluctant victims of abuse to disclose their abusive experiences in the course of forensic interviews. As suggested by the research on non-disclosers that we have discussed, increasing supportive techniques and avoiding confrontation may enhance rapport building and facilitate the creation of retrieval conditions which better help suspected victims of abuse to describe their abuse experiences during investigative interviews, even when they are reluctant to do so.

HOW DO DEVELOPMENTAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS COMBINE TO AFFECT DISCLOSURE?

One limitation of the research on non-disclosure is that the *combined* influence of variables such as age, type of abuse, relation of perpetrator to suspect has not been examined, not least because the samples of non-disclosing children have been too small, and/or information relating to multiple variables has not been available in the same studies. Interactions are likely both to occur and to magnify across-study differences in disclosure rates, however. For example, because younger children are particularly likely to keep secrets when asked (e.g., see Pipe & Goodman, 1991), very dependent on caregivers, and have fewer alternative confidantes or sources of support than older children, the relation between victim and suspect may affect disclosure by younger children more. Older children may, in turn, disclose to a wider range of confidants than younger children. One of the objectives of a recent study by Pipe, Orbach and colleagues (2007) was, therefore, to examine rates of non-disclosure in a large sample of children interviewed about suspected sexual abuse, and determine how the joint effects of age and relationship to suspect, prior disclosure, independent validation of abuse, and so on, were associated with rates of non-disclosure.

Pipe *et al.* also explored non-disclosures in relation to a number of variables that might help understand patterns of non-disclosure of suspected abuse, but that have received little attention to date. For example, suspicions of abuse are often based on a lengthy chain of events, initiated by such "triggers" as age-inappropriate sexual behaviour, physical signs, a verbal disclosure, or an ambiguous comment. Are disclosures of abuse more likely in the context of some initial triggers than others? Previous research suggests that prior verbal disclosures should be highly correlated with disclosure during formal interviews, although the recipient of the prior disclosures has hitherto been examined in very few studies (e.g., Sauzier, 1989). Moreover, extremely little

is known about other factors that arouse suspicions and thus prompt formal investigative interviews.

The study involved forensic interviews conducted at a children's advocacy centre in the western US by forensic interviewers who had agreed to participate in the research and had undergone training in the use of the Protocol. A total of 397 interviews with suspected victims of childhood sexual abuse, aged between 4 and nearly 14 years, were conducted between 1997 and 2000. In each case, the interview was the child's first formal interview at the centre where the interviews were conducted.

From police reports, information available at the children's advocacy centre (where most of the interviews were conducted), and transcripts of the forensic interviews, information about the child, the abuse, and the suspect was extracted.

Child related information included age at time of interview, gender, and with whom the child lived at the time of the interview.

Information relating to the disclosure included the initial triggering event, that is, the reason why abuse was suspected. This was categorised as: disclosure to another person, suspicion raised by immediate family member (e.g., step parent or sibling living with the child, or biological parent whether or not living with the child); suspicion raised by other relative, not living with the child; suspicion raised by friend, peer or neighbor; suspicion raised by community member (e.g., teacher or minister); suspicion raised by mandated reporters (e.g., child protection worker, therapist); suspect confession; or an anonymous informant. Whether the child had reportedly told someone else about the abuse (whether or not this was the initial trigger), and whom the child was reported to have told were coded separately.

Information relating to the abuse included the type of alleged abuse, coded as penetration (digital or penile), touch under clothing, touch over clothing, and exposure. There was also a category of "other" which included ambiguous suspicions such as sexual advances made to other children, and other sexual activity. Whether there was a single incident or repeated occurrences, and the delay between the last known incident and the interview, where this could be determined, were also coded.

Information relating to the suspect included age, gender, whether he or she was suspected of abusing multiple victims, and his/her relationship to the victim, namely immediate family, other family, familiar non-family, unfamiliar (as defined for triggering events, above). Whether or not the suspect had confessed to the entire abusive incident(s) or to a substantial part of it (e.g., suspect confesses that the child touched him but not that he touched the child, when the child alleges both) was also coded.

Information relating to the interview included whether the interviewer had adhered to the Protocol, and whether or not a disclosure was made during the interview.

Allegation Rates

The overall disclosure rate for the complete age range was 83%, and across the age groupings of 4–5, 6–8, and 9–13 years, rates were 75%, 82%, and 88%, respectively. However, not all interviews adhered to the Protocol; in 31 cases, children disclosed "spontaneously," before the interviewer had completed the pre-substantive phase of the interview and in a further 72 cases the interview deviated from the interview Protocol in some way (e.g., the name of the suspect was introduced by the interviewer, or suggestive questions were used early in the interview). Pipe *et al.* focused on those children who did not make an allegation ($n = 68$) and those who did make an allegation ($n = 226$) when interviewed following the Protocol.

Table 8.10 summarises the descriptive characteristics of these cases. In those interviews following the Protocol in which there was no "spontaneous" disclosure, the disclosure rate was 77%, with approximately the same percentage of males and females making an allegation when interviewed. Disclosure rates increased across age groups from 63% to 85%. Non-disclosure rates are, of course, the inverse and were 37%, 24%, and 15% across age groups. Because these rates exclude children who made spontaneous allegations or made an allegation when the interviewers deviated from the Protocol, they are conservative estimates of disclosure rates.

In a significant proportion of cases, the alleged or suspected abuse related to the most intrusive types of abuse, namely penetration or touching under clothes, and in general, when abuse of this type was suspected, children were highly likely to make allegations during the interview (Table 8.10). Allegations (or suspicions) of exposure, although relatively infrequent, were almost always associated with an allegation in the interview as well. In contrast, cases in which the suspected abuse was uncertain or ambiguous were relatively infrequent and were rarely associated with allegations during the interview. In only 4 of the 17 cases classified as "ambiguous suspicion" was an allegation made in interview. Further, there was no support for the prediction that younger children would be interviewed on the basis of the more ambiguous or less certain suspicions than older children. Indeed, such suspicions seldom triggered interviews, regardless of age, and were seldom associated with allegations during the formal interviews.

Table 8.10 Sample characteristics and numbers of children who did (A) or did not (NA) make an allegation when interviewed (% making an allegation is shown in brackets)

	4–5 years		6–8 years		9–13 years		Overall	
Mean Age	NA 5.05 n	A 5.13 n (%)	NA 7.56 n	A 7.32 n (%)	NA 10.97 n	A 10.87 n (%)	NA 7.95 n	A 8.55 n (%)
Gender								
Male	10	14 (58)	10	27 (73)	7	32 (82)	27	73 (73)
Female	15	29 (66)	13	52 (80)	12	73 (86)	40	154 (79)
Type of Abuse								
Penetration	6	15 (71)	2	22 (92)	2	42 (96)	10	79 (89)
Touch un/clothes	12	20 (63)	14	39 (74)	8	31 (80)	34	90 (73)
Touch ov/clothes	2	5 (71)	1	13 (93)	5	24 (83)	8	42 (84)
Exposure	0	2 (100)	2	5 (71)	0	5 (100)	2	12 (86)
Other	5	1 (17)	4	0 (0)	4	3 (43)	13	4 (24)
Perpetrator Familiarity								
Immediate Family	15	12 (44)	14	32 (70)	6	45 (88)	35	89 (72)
Other Family	1	7 (88)	2	17 (90)	4	16 (80)	7	40 (85)
Familiar	9	23 (72)	7	29 (81)	8	39 (83)	24	91 (79)
Unfamiliar	0	1 (100)	0	1 (100)	0	5 (100)	0	7 (100)
TOTAL	25	43 (66)	23	79(78)	19	105 (85)	67	227

The suspects were unfamiliar in only seven cases, and in all of these children made allegations when interviewed. Five of these cases involved children in the oldest age group and there was one from each of the other two age groups. Because there were so few unfamiliar suspects (as in prior studies), these cases were not included in many of the more detailed analyses conducted by Pipe *et al.* and summarised below.

There was a tendency for children (combined across age groups) to be less likely to make allegations when the suspects were immediate family members (72%) than otherwise (81%). When biological fathers were suspected, 57% of the children made allegations, compared to 81% for all other categories. However, the relation between disclosure and suspect familiarity depended on age; it was strongest for the youngest children and was not evident in the oldest age group. When the suspect was an immediate family member, disclosure rates were 44%, 70%, and 88% across age groups, and for other suspects (combined), 76%, 82%, and 83%. Disclosure was less for immediate family members than for other suspects for the 4- and 5-year-olds, but not for either of the two older age groups. When the suspect was a biological father, disclosure rates were 41%, 47%, and 92% across age groups, compared to 71%, 82% and 85% for all other suspect categories (combined). For the two youngest groups, there was a significant association between suspect relationship (biological father vs. all other suspects, combined) and disclosure, but not for the oldest group.

Although younger children were less likely to allege abuse by an immediate family member than the older children were, it is important to note that the probability of immediate family members being suspects did not differ across the 3 age groups. Thus, immediate family members were no more (or less) likely to be suspected abusers of younger children than older children, but younger children were less likely than older children to disclose abuse by immediate family members.

Prior Disclosure in Relation to Allegation in Interview

As reported earlier, previous research suggests that verbal disclosure prior to the formal interview makes it more likely that children will make allegations when formally interviewed (see London *et al.*, 2005). The probability of a prior disclosure did not differ as a function of age in Pipe *et al.*'s study, with about 80% having (reportedly) made a prior disclosure. Whereas 75% of the children in the youngest age group who had made a prior disclosure also disclosed in the interview, however, 98% of the oldest children did so. That is, the older children were more likely to be consistent from prior allegation to allegation in interview. Depending on definition, the inconsistencies of the younger children

Table 8.11   Proportion of children reported to have disclosed prior to
interview who also disclosed in interview as a function of relationship
between child and confidante. (The number reporting prior to interview, on
which the proportions are based, is shown in brackets).

	Immediate Family	Other family	Other
4–6 ($n = 53$)	(77%) 43	(83%) 6	(50%) 4
6–8 ($n = 85$)	(93%) 61	(100%) 7	(76%) 17
9–13 ($n = 101$)	(99%) 74	(100%) 3	(96%) 24

could be considered evidence of recantation. However, although this
age difference in consistency may reflect the younger children's unwill-
ingness to disclose abuse that has occurred when interviewed, it may
also reflect over-zealous reporting of prior disclosures by a concerned
caregiver or others, an issue we consider below. In each age group, a
small but not insignificant proportion of children who had never made
a prior, verbal disclosure of abuse, but for whom abuse was nonetheless
suspected, made allegations during the formal investigative interview
(see Keary & Fitzpatrick, 1994, for similar findings).

   When children disclosed prior to the interview, who was the disclosure
(reportedly) made to and did this influence the probability of within-
interview disclosure? Table 8.11 shows the number of children disclos-
ing to an immediate family member, other family member, a familiar
person, or "other" (community person such as teacher, minister, child
protection case worker). Across all age groups, children were report-
edly most likely to disclose to an immediate family member, followed
by another family member outside the home. Only 8% ($n = 4/53$) of
the youngest children disclosed to someone outside the family (such as
peer or neighbour), compared to 20% and 24% for the two older age
groups, respectively. Disclosure in interview, following a prior disclo-
sure (to *anyone*), was least likely for the youngest children and almost
100% for the older children, and this pattern did not depend on to *whom*
the prior disclosure had been made. Disclosure in interview was least
likely following prior disclosure to someone outside of the family for
children in the youngest groups.

What was the "Trigger" for the Investigation?

In many cases, a complex series of events triggered the investigative
interview, and the initiating event or "trigger" was coded by Pipe *et al*.
for each case. In the majority of cases, the initial trigger was either
the child's disclosure as reported by another person, or the concern of
an immediate family member (Table 8.12). Immediate family members

Table 8.12 Initial trigger (percent of each age group) separately for allegation (A)/and non allegation (NA) cases

Initial Trigger	4–6 years		6–8 years		9–13 years	
	N/A n = 25	A n = 43	N/A n = 24	A n = 78	N/A n = 19	A n = 105
Child's (prior) disclosure	16%	47%	21%	53%	5%	66%
Immediate family	32%	40%	42%	27%	32%	12%
Other family	16%	2%	13%	3%	0%	1%
Peer, neighbor	20%	2%	21%	9%	16%	14%
Community, teacher, minister	0%	2%	0%	0%	5%	2%
CP, therapist	12%	0%	0%	0%	11%	1%
Suspect confession	0%	5%	4%	9%	26%	2%
Anonymous	4%	2%	0%	0%	5%	2%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

were more likely to trigger suspicions for the younger children overall, and accounted for 40% of the cases in which children made allegations, compared to only 12% of allegations by the oldest children. Concern raised by familiar persons (not relatives), such as peers or neighbors, increasingly triggered suspicions as children grew older.

An alternative way of looking at these data is to ask: Given a particular initial trigger, what is the likelihood that an allegation will be made during the interview? When the initial trigger was the child's prior disclosure, a family member outside the immediate family, or a familiar person, the proportion of children making an allegation in the interview increased with age. In contrast, regardless of age, children made allegations 2/3 of the time when immediate family members first raised a suspicion. Thus, although an immediate family member was most likely to *trigger* the investigation for the youngest children, there was no age difference in the probability of disclosure when the child was formally interviewed.

The delay between suspected incident and time of interview is potentially important, especially for the youngest children. In extreme instances, long delays for these children could mean that the alleged events occurred before the period of childhood amnesia ended, in which case we would not expect the incidents to be remembered or reported. Table 8.13 shows that, for the youngest children, the majority of suspected incidents of abuse (allegation and no allegation cases combined) had occurred in the past month and a full 90% within 6 months; none were suspected to have occurred 2 years (or more) before the interview. In contrast, almost a third of the cases involving 6- to 8-year-old and 9- to 13-year-old children involved abuse that last occurred more than 6 months before the formal disclosure, and sometimes more than 2 years before the interview. It is also interesting to note that, despite the decreasing number of children suspected of having been abused as delay increased, particularly in the youngest group, the allegation rate (proportion of children who made an allegation when interviewed) did not change; across increasing delays, 81%, 81%, 84%, 75% and 80% of

Table 8.13   Proportion of children for who abuse was suspected and delay since last suspected or alleged incident

	4–6 years	6–8 years	9–14 years
< 1 month	71%	34%	43%
1–6 months	19%	35%	19%
6–12 months	7%	12%	12%
1–2 years	3%	8%	13%
> 2 years	0%	11%	14%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

the children (three age groups combined) made allegations about suspected abuse.

Delays to interview tended to be longer when the allegations related to members of the child's family, although, contrary to Summit's (1983) prediction, this was not different for members of the immediate family. When we looked at delay in relation to type of abuse, we found that children were more likely to delay disclosure of the more severe categories of abuse (penetration and touch under clothing). Further, when the abuse was alleged to have occurred on multiple occasions, there were longer delays between the last incident and the interview than when it was alleged to have occurred a single time. Again, age was an important variable, however. This pattern of delayed disclosure, particularly disclosure of penetration, was strongest for children age 6 years or older; as noted earlier, the youngest children tended to disclose all types of abuse within 6 months (when they disclosed at all).

Suspect Confession and Rate of Allegations

Confessions were recorded in 19%, 37%, and 35% of the cases involving children in the three age groups, respectively (allegation and no-allegation cases, combined). On average, suspects confessed in 18% of cases in which no allegation was made in the formal interview and in 36% of cases in which an allegation was made. If the suspect had confessed, a disclosure was more likely (87%) than when the suspect had not confessed (72%).

Across age groups, the proportions of children who made an allegation when the suspect had confessed were 77%, 95%, and 84%. The unexpectedly lower rate for the oldest children is attributable to one perpetrator who confessed to multiple instances of abuse that had occurred many years earlier. When there was no confession, disclosure rates were 60%, 66%, and 85%. Thus, the age difference in disclosure rate was evident whether or not the suspect had confessed.

Understanding Disclosure

In this study, therefore, most (80%) of the children interviewed using the Protocol made an allegation of abuse in the formal investigative interview. Although a high disclosure rate might be expected in the present sample because the children had been brought in for formal forensic interviews, not all children had disclosed the abuse previously and the bases for suspicion varied. The results reported here are consistent with many of those reported in previous studies, falling at neither extreme. Importantly, they highlight variables likely to affect observed disclosure rates, and interactions between them, and may thus

help explain the wide-ranging rates of non-disclosure reported by other researchers.

As in several previous studies based on formal interviews with suspected victims, age was an important variable and disclosure rates were highest for the oldest children. However, many of the older children had delayed disclosing, sometimes over very long time periods. Although Goodman-Brown *et al.* (2003) did not find a direct relation between age and delay to disclosure in their model predicting delays to disclosure, both fear of negative consequences and the perception of responsibility for the abusive incidents were associated with long delays, and both of these variables were significantly linked to age. Whether the older children in Pipe *et al.*'s study would have disclosed had they been asked about the abuse earlier we cannot know from these data. It is possible, however, that some of the younger, non-disclosing children in the present sample may disclose later, thereby becoming delayed disclosers. That is, it is likely that the sample included not only children who had been abused and disclosed the abuse, but also children who had been abused but chosen not to disclose. Some evidence for this is discussed below in the context of the imperfect association between disclosure and confession.

Age also interacted with other variables in its association with disclosure. In particular, the relationship between the suspect and the victim was related to disclosure rate for the younger children but not for those in the oldest age group (9- to 13-year-olds). Although immediate family members were no more likely to be suspects in cases involving the younger children than in those involving older children, the younger children were much less likely to make allegations when the suspects were immediate family members, and particularly when the suspects were the biological fathers. Therefore, the youngest children were *selectively* less likely to make allegations than older children, specifically when the suspected abusers were close family members (see also Hershkowitz *et al.*, 2007).

Consistent with several other studies, disclosures were more likely to be delayed when the suspect was a family member. However, this was the case when family member was defined very narrowly to include only immediate family members or was defined broadly to include, for example, grandparents. Goodman-Brown *et al.* similarly found that delayed disclosure was more common in cases of intra-familial than extra-familial abuse, a difference that is perhaps easy to understand in terms of loyalties, fear of consequences to the family, the opportunity for repeated instances of abuse, to name but a few. However, Pipe *et al.* found no support for the more specific prediction that children would be more likely to delay disclosure in the context of abuse by a

parent figure living with the child or an immediate family member (cf., Summit, 1983).

Members of the children's immediate families were more likely to have raised initial concerns when the children were younger, but this age difference was evident with respect to cases in which children made an allegation in the interview, rather than cases in which there was no allegation. Specifically, whereas immediate family members raised initial suspicion in 40% of the cases in which 4- to 6-year-old children had made allegations, the comparable figure for 9- to13-year-olds was 12%. When children did not make allegations when interviewed, however, immediate family members were the initial trigger in 32%, 42% and 32% of the cases, respectively, across age groups.

The younger children were not only less likely than older children to make allegations when formally interviewed, but they were also less likely to do so following a prior disclosure. Of course, the prior disclosures were reported by other people, and the reliability of their second hand reports may be questioned, especially when the reporters were not "disinterested." It appears, however, that if the person to whom the child had reportedly made the prior disclosure was an immediate family member, presumably those most likely to have a strong interest, children were no less (or more) likely to make an allegation in the formal interview.

Although the suspect confessed to the abusive incident(s) in fewer than a third of all cases, confessions were not always associated with an allegation. Somewhat surprisingly, several of the older children did not make an allegation in the interview, when the suspect's confession had triggered suspicion in the first place. More detailed examination showed, however, that in these cases the abusive incident(s) had occurred several years earlier, and/or the nature of the abuse was such that the child might not have interpreted it as abuse at the time, as discussed by Cederborg *et al.* (2007a, 2007b). Nonetheless, to the extent that suspect confession is corroborative evidence we can conclude that there were children in all age groups who had been abused, but did not report the abuse. The reasons for the non-disclosure are many and varied, and likely to differ developmentally, as a function of the nature of the abuse, and the circumstances surrounding it.

In sum, Pipe *et al.* found that the youngest children were least likely to make an allegation of abuse in the formal investigative interview. The finding that younger children are less likely to allege abuse is not specific to the open-ended interviewing style characterising the Protocol; to the contrary, the disclosure rates in this study compare very favorably with those from other studies. There was no evidence that fewer of the younger children had indeed been abused, and hence that

the lower allegation rate reflected a lower rate of abuse amongst this age group; suspicions were no more likely to be based on ambiguous evidence than in the older age groups, verbal disclosures prior to the investigative interview were no less likely than in the older groups, and confessions as corroborative evidence were no less likely among the youngest group. Although an immediate family member was more likely to trigger the suspicion in the first instance for the younger children, this is readily understood in terms of the more restricted social milieu of the younger children; the older children had more outside confidantes and contacts, and perhaps people more familiar with them and their activities. Rather, it appears that the youngest children were less likely to disclose abuse when interviewed, despite reportedly having made a verbal allegation prior to the formal interview, and the low rate of disclosure was strongly associated with an immediate family member as a suspect. These findings point to the need for further refinement of techniques for interviewing of the youngest children to ensure that those who have been abused are able to disclose the abuse when formally interviewed.

INTERVIEWING SUSPECTS RATHER THAN VICTIMS

Another group of interviewees who are not motivated to be informative are alleged perpetrators, and one recent study included an attempt to make use of some of the principles learned through our work with young victims and witnesses and apply it to interviews of young alleged perpetrators being questioned about the alleged offenses.

All published studies using the Protocol, including those summarised earlier in the book, have involved alleged victims who made specific allegations of abuse during the forensic interview, and thus we do not know how children might perform when they are not motivated to be informative. In particular, children who are suspected of abusing others might be expected to resist providing information, whether for fear of likely sanctions or shame. When confronting such resistance or apparent deception, interviewers might feel the need to use more focused and even coercive strategies to gain information from youthful alleged perpetrators. Presumably, the eagerness of suspects to be informative is further diminished when interviewers are required by law to warn suspects that their statements may be used against them in criminal or civil proceedings.

In our research (Hershkowitz *et al.*, 2006), we examined forensic interviews by Israeli youth investigators with 9- to 14-year-old alleged perpetrators of child sexual abuse. All interviews were conducted

using a specially designed investigative interview protocol (see Appendix 3) by interviewers who had already been trained to interview alleged victims using the NICHD investigative interview Protocol. Whereas both alleged victims and perpetrators are often interviewed by police officers in the USA and UK, youth investigators are the only officials in Israel allowed by law to question child victims, witnesses, and suspects; their recommendations have a major impact on the interventions attempted by courts and social service agencies (see Sternberg, Lamb, & Hershkowitz, 1996, for further information about the Israeli system). As in the US and UK, however, the investigations are coordinated by law enforcement personnel, not the youth investigators.

Prior to the study described here, interviews of young suspects were not systematically structured in Israel, but experience using the Protocol to interview alleged victims led the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to request similar guidelines for interviews with suspects. As described below, we explored the effects of the suspects' age and the extent to which they admitted the alleged transgressions on both the strategies employed by the interviewers and the amount of information disclosed by the suspects in response to various types of prompts. We expected that the alleged perpetrators might provide little information in response to open-ended prompts, instead providing information grudgingly in response to suggestive and even coercive prompts. Those who were younger and who denied or minimised their offenses were expected to provide less information, especially in response to open-ended questions, than suspects who were older and more forthcoming, respectively.

A team of 13 experienced youth investigators employed by the Israeli Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs interviewed 72 children and adolescents averaging 12 years of age who were believed to have committed sexual offences against other children. All interviews of suspects conducted by these investigators using the Protocol during the study period were included in the sample provided that a victim had alleged abuse in a forensic interview. As a result, the sample was highly representative of the population of youthful suspects interviewed by Israeli youth investigators. All incidents described by the alleged victims and described (or denied) by the suspects were deemed likely to have happened by the investigators but we do not know what actually happened in the incidents described, nor how much of the information provided by the suspects (or victims) was accurate, although most victim accounts were corroborated in at least general terms by witnesses or other suspects. There were 37 younger suspects who ranged in age from 9 to 12.5 years and 35 older suspects who ranged in age from 12.6 to 14 years. Twenty-one suspects *denied* the allegations completely, 23 admitted committing

all of the offences alleged by the victims (*full admissions*), and 28 acknowledged committing some but not all of the alleged offences (*partial admissions*).

The Suspect Interview Guide

The Suspect Interview Guide reproduced in Appendix 3 was patterned in part after the Protocol. Interviewers began by explaining the purpose of the interview and warning the suspect, as required by Israeli law, that their statements could be used against them in legal proceedings. Attempts were then made to establish rapport with the suspects before the investigators switched focus to the substantive topic – the alleged abuse. Whereas victim interviews conducted using the Protocol include efforts to entrain narrative responsive style in the pre-substantive portion of the interview and to switch focus to substantive issues in a non-suggestive fashion, neither of these strategies was employed in the suspect interview. Open-ended prompts were encouraged, but pilot research confirmed expectations that most suspects would deny the incidents or fail to provide useful information when first questioned using such prompts. As a result, more directive and even suggestive prompts (guided by reports of the incident by alleged victims or the results of investigative work by the police) were developed. Whenever possible, however, interviewers were instructed to ask for open-ended elaboration of information provided in response to more focused prompts.

Surprisingly, the suspects' ages did not affect the dynamics of the interviewers, but the dynamics *were* profoundly affected by whether or not the suspects admitted involvement in the incidents under investigation. As shown on Table 8.14, interviewers addressed fewer invitations, directives and option-posing questions to suspects who denied the allegations than to those who fully or partially admitted the allegations, although the means for the full and partial admitters never differed significantly. There were no group differences in the use of suggestive prompts.

Comparable analyses concerned with the proportion of utterances of each type, revealed a similar pattern: Interviewers addressed proportionally fewer directive and proportionally fewer directive and proportionally more suggestive prompts to deniers than to those who partially or fully admitted their alleged role in the incidents under investigation, and again, it was the deniers who differed from suspects in the other groups.

Examination of the suspect's responses focused only on the 51 children (25 younger, 26 older) who admitted the allegations fully or

Table 8.14 Numbers of prompts of each type used when interviewing suspects who denied, partially admitted, or fully admitted their role in the alleged abuse

	Denial		Partial Admission		Full Admission	
	Younger (n = 12)	Older (n = 9)	Younger (n = 12)	Older (n = 16)	Younger (n = 13)	Older (n = 10)
Invitations	9.08 (6.10)	8.22 (5.43)	13.42 (15.58)	16.63 (9.11)	15.31 (4.94)	17.00 (8.42)
Directives	20.42 (18.76)	12.78 (7.58)	24.78 (22.52)	47.69 (39.70)	46.69 (28.31)	46.90 (37.93)
Option-posing	9.00 (6.28)	10.33 (8.72)	10.33 (9.14)	24.06 (21.27)	18.15 (10.02)	23.80 (17.47)
Suggestive	13.75 (6.12)	19.33 (12.12)	11.17 (13.66)	22.69 (14.16)	20.77 (15.46)	22.2 (15.94)

Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

Table 8.15 Average numbers of details elicited using different types of prompts from suspects who partially or fully admitted the alleged behaviour

	Partial Admission		Full Admission	
	Younger (n = 12)	Older (n = 16)	Younger (n = 13)	Older (n = 10)
Invitations	89.08 (81.56)	91.94 (95.50)	72.46 (60.20)	67.70 (36.65)
Directives	45.58 (34.31)	96.06 (84.69)	110.62 (83.42)	138.20 (102.24)
Option-posing	18.67 (14.84)	49.69 (46.76)	27.08 (18.58)	43.80 (47.50)
Suggestive	45.42 (60.34)	50.94 (53.88)	50.77 (43.96)	39.40 (36.77)

Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

partially because, by definition, suspects who denied completely provided no forensically relevant details about their involvement in the alleged incidents. Somewhat surprisingly, Table 8.15 shows that neither age nor admission affected the suspects' responsiveness significantly. The total number of details provided likewise did not vary depending on the age or admission status of the interviewees.

Interviewers, however, offered fully and partially admitting suspects significantly more suggestive prompts than free-recall invitations and significantly more details were elicited from partially and fully admitting suspects using invitations rather than option-posing and suggestive prompts. Similarly, partially and fully admitting suspects provided significantly more details per invitation than per option-posing or suggestive utterance. These findings suggest that the investigators may have misjudged the need for suggestive and coercive prompts, because these suspects were quite responsive to open-ended prompts.

Contrary to expectation, then, the young suspects who at least partially admitted their involvement provided substantial amounts of information about the alleged incidents and were considerably more responsive to free-recall prompts than expected. The more advanced age of even the younger suspects, who were 9 to 12 years of age (unlike young child-victims who are 4 to 8 years old), may explain the larger than expected amounts of free-recall information they reported as well as the similarities between older and younger suspects with respect to the amount of free-recall information reported. Contrary to expectations, suspects in both the "full admission" and "partial admission" groups reported absolutely and proportionally more information in response to invitations as opposed to suggestive prompts, even though significantly fewer invitations than suggestive prompts were addressed to suspects in both of these groups. The interviewees provided significantly more details in response to each invitation than in response

to each suggestive prompt, indicating that they were more willing to disclose information than had been expected.

As expected, however, interviewers behaved differently when addressing alleged suspects and victims. Whereas free-recall and suggestive prompts constituted 30% and 7%, respectively, of the average numbers of interviewer utterances in victim interviews conducted using the Protocol and 6% and 10%, respectively, of the utterances in non-Protocol victim interviews (see Chapter 5), 19% and 24%, respectively, of the prompts offered to the suspects were invitations and suggestive prompts. Even though the suspects' responsiveness to free-recall and directive prompts made the expected reliance on option-posing and suggestive prompts unnecessary, over 43% of the utterances addressed by interviewers to young suspects were option-posing and suggestive. As predicted, therefore, it appeared that the interviewers were sceptical of the suspects' responses and thus exerted more pressure on them, using riskier (e.g., suggestive) prompts that may contaminate the information retrieval process while affording these suspects inadequate opportunities to freely recall their experiences. As expected, interviewers offered absolutely and proportionally more suggestive than free-recall prompts, although contrary to expectations, significantly more information was reported by suspects in response to free-recall than to suggestive prompts. The extensive reliance on suggestive and coercive prompts increases the risk that interviewers may elicit inaccurate information.

Hershkowitz *et al.* also found that interviewers asked fewer questions of suspects who denied involvement in the alleged incidents than of those who fully or partially admitted their role in the alleged abuse. They had expected interviewers to address deniers with fewer invitations and more suggestive utterances, perceiving them as less cooperative than suspects who admit their involvement, but the findings only partially confirmed the predictions. Interviewers indeed addressed fewer invitations to youngsters who denied the allegations but there were no significant differences among suspects in the different admission status groups with respect to the numbers of suggestive prompts, perhaps because the interviewers viewed all suspects with scepticism, regardless of admission status. In addition, examination of the relative rather than absolute number of prompts of each type indicated that, as predicted, interviewers addressed deniers with proportionally more suggestive utterances than they did full or partial admitters, presumably because the interviewers were sceptical of the interviewees' denials. In addition to scepticism or disbelief, the disproportionate use of suggestive prompts when interviewing deniers may reflect the limited amount of information they provided about the alleged events.

To varying degrees, non-suggestive prompts of all types build on the information provided, so the absence of information forces interviewers to introduce topics or details not recounted by the interviewee. The latter prompts are, by definition, more likely to be suggestive or coercive. Suspects who fully admitted the alleged incidents thus elaborated more on details they had already disclosed, providing considerably more information in response to "directive" prompts than partially admitting suspects.

Because deniers and younger partially admitting suspects were addressed similarly by interviewers, Hershkowitz *et al.* expected that both would provide less allegation-related information than children in the "full admission" group. In fact, however, younger partially admitting suspects were addressed by interviewers more like deniers than older partially admitting suspects, but the number of details provided in response to invitations by partially and fully admitting suspects did not differ. This may be because children who partially admitted typically denied their role in the incident while providing somewhat detailed information about what they saw other participants do, as well as about the location, time, actions, and participants.

Overall, the findings confirmed that, like alleged victims, youthful suspects can provide considerable amounts of forensically relevant information in response to open-ended prompts, even when they minimise their own involvement and culpability. This information can be compared with accounts provided by other witnesses and alleged victims, and can also yield investigative leads that can be pursued by law enforcement. To the extent that information provided in response to open-ended prompts is more likely to be accurate, it is clear that interviewers might well suspend their skepticism and pursue information as non-coercively as possible, even if it later – perhaps in subsequent interviews – becomes necessary to adopt more suggestive and coercive strategies. Certainly, the risks of coercive interviews with alleged suspects have been well documented in the popular and professional literature (Ceci & Bruck, 1993, 1995; Dwyer, 2002; Dwyer & Saulny, 2002; McFadden & Saulny, 2002; "Excerpts from...," 2002; Saulny, 2002; Wilgoren, 2003) making it clear that care is warranted when interviewing both suspects and alleged victims.

Much less is known about the dynamics of interviews with alleged suspects as opposed to victims and this study yielded enough counterintuitive findings to suggest that further careful research is warranted. The results also show that the Suspect Interview Guide may be helpful when interviewing young suspects. Even when investigators are required by law to inform suspects of the allegations against them, the interview guide allows suspects the opportunity to provide

their own accounts in response to free-recall and directive open-ended prompts.

CONCLUSION

The Protocol introduced and described in this book builds on our knowledge of the cognitive, linguistic, and social factors that conspire to limit children's accounts of their experiences, including experiences of traumatic incidents such as child abuse. As reported in Chapter 5, use of the Protocol powerfully enhances the informativeness of young children who need some non-suggestive assistance in generating and organising their accounts, but it does not address the important and complicated factors that make some children unwilling to talk about their experiences. In this chapter, we have sought to determine what proportion of suspected victims seem reluctant to cooperate with investigators, and we have described some of their distinctive characteristics. Age and relationship to the suspected perpetrator or assailant appear to be very important factors: Both younger suspected victims and children who are closely related to the suspects are more likely than older children and children with more distant relationships to avoid making allegations when formally interviewed. On the other hand, once children have told someone about being abused, they are likely to do so again when formally questioned.

Other studies described here have explored features of interviews with children who appear unmotivated to be informative. These studies reveal that reluctant children signal their reluctance early in the interview, long before the topic under investigation is approached, and that interviewers tend to respond to this reluctance counter-productively, placing pressure on the children rather than giving them more support. In the final section, interestingly, we show that this kind of coercive pressure can prompt young suspects to admit their involvement, but that interviewers would do well to avoid prolonging suggestive strategies. Investigators should revert as soon as possible to open-ended questions once young suspects have admitted their involvement if they want to get more detailed accounts of the incidents under investigation.

Interviewing Children with Intellectual and Communicative Difficulties

Whereas the previous chapter focused on the special difficulties that attend interviews of children who are reluctant to talk about their experiences, we turn in this chapter to children who are especially difficult to interview because they have learning or communicative difficulties that make information-gathering conversations problematic.

It has long been argued that children with disabilities (CWDs) are disproportionately likely to be abused, but empirical documentation has been lacking until recently. In an early review of more than 20 studies exploring the association between maltreatment and disabilities, for example, Westcott (1991) reported mixed evidence that such a link exists. Subsequent large-scale studies provided stronger evidence (Westcott & Jones, 1999), however. For example, using data from Child Protective Services (CPS), Crosse Kaye, and Ratnofsky (1993) found that intrafamilial maltreatment was 1.7 times more frequent among CWDs than among typically developing (TD) children. The association differed depending on the children's ages and gender: Boys with disabilities who were over four years of age were at especially high risk.

Similarly, using ten years of records from a hospital in Nebraska, Sullivan and Knutson (1998) found that children with various disabilities (including behaviour disorders, sensory impairment, health impairment, and mental retardation) were 1.8 times more likely to be neglected, 1.6 times more likely to be physically abused, and

2.2 times more likely to be sexually abused than children without such disabilities. They also reported that some victims of maltreatment were more likely to have psychological problems such as conduct disorders, suggesting that the association might be bidirectional. In a later study of non-clinical populations from the same community, Sullivan and Knutson (2000) found a strong association between disability and maltreatment: CWDs were 3.4 times more likely to be maltreated than TD children (31% vs. 9%; the corresponding risks for physical, sexual, and emotional abuse were 3.8, 3.1 and 3.8, respectively). Congruent with the findings of Crosse and colleagues (1993), boys with disabilities were more likely than girls to be maltreated in both of Sullivan and Knutson's studies. Preschoolers were victims of maltreatment more often than older children, and family members were the most common perpetrators regardless of disability.

Unfortunately, people with mental disabilities seldom report their experiences to the police. Murphy (2001) estimated that only one in five disabled victims made a formal complaint to the police, and Clare (2001) reported that the treatment of those complaints is often cursory and incomplete, with police investigations limited and prosecutions rare. Historically, disabled people have been regarded as unreliable witnesses (Gudjonsson, 2003) because of their poor memories, their susceptibility to suggestion, and their limited descriptive capacities (Perlman, Ericson, Esses, & Isaacs, 1994). Disabled people have difficulty providing testimony when interviewed (Milne & Bull, 2001), often becoming confused and uncomfortable, especially when asked suggestive or complex questions (Kebbell, Hatton, Johnson, & O'Kelly, 2001). According to Milne and Bull (2001), judges often fail to intervene and protect disabled adults who are intimidated in court. Similarly, researchers have shown that CWDs are often discredited in the forensic process and experience inappropriate questioning (Milne & Bull, 2001; Dent, 1986; Butterfield & Feretti, 1987; Milne, 1999).

In Israel, as mentioned in Chapter 8, all alleged victims of abuse are interviewed using the Protocol. Over 40 000 allegations of abuse have been investigated between 1998 and 2004 using the Protocol, and although more than 88% of the alleged victims were deemed to be developing normally, 11% were described as children with minor disabilities and 1.2% as children with severe disabilities. Hershkowitz and her colleagues (in press) sought to examine the types and characteristics of the offences reported by CWDs and the extent to which CWDs disclosed details of their suspected victimisation when formally interviewed. They found that CWDs of all ages tended to be overrepresented among suspected victims of sexual abuse and underrepresented (especially when the older children were concerned) among victims of physical abuse.

Alleged victims with disabilities also reported more severe forms of sexual abuse than TD children. Specifically, they were more likely to report being repeatedly victimised, victims of more intrusive abuse, and victims of more incidents involving the use of threats and force than were TD children. These findings suggest that CWDs may be used as 'safe targets' for sexual abuse because they are less able to avoid or report victimisation (Williams, 1995). On most dimensions, in addition, higher levels of disability were associated with increased risks of sexual abuse. Whereas the risks for children with minor disabilities were higher than for TD children, the risks for children with severe disabilities were even higher with respect to the number of incidents reportedly experienced, the severity of the reported sexual acts, the use of force, and the tendency for physical injuries to be inflicted during the abusive incidents.

Compared to TD suspected victims, alleged victims with disabilities disclosed abuse less frequently and delayed disclosure more often. Again, children with severe disabilities failed to disclose abuse more frequently and tended to delay disclosure even more often than peers with minor disabilities. Of course, the increased failure to disclose abuse when interviewed may increase the likelihood that CWDs will continue to be abused.

The alleged perpetrators of abuse against CWDs were more likely to be parents or parental figures than were perpetrators of abuse against TD children. As mentioned in Chapter 8, suspected victims tend to conceal abuse perpetrated by their parents much more often than they conceal abuse by other perpetrators (Hershkowitz *et al.*, 2005; London *et al.*, 2005). Thus, CWDs may delay or avoid disclosing abuse because they are more likely to be dependent psychologically and physically on their abusers. The children with severe disabilities may be especially vulnerable to abuse by their parents; they were suspected of being victimised by their parents almost three times more often than were TD children in Hershkowitz *et al.*'s study.

As in previous studies (Kvam, 2000), disabled boys appeared to be at greater risk than disabled girls for both sexual and physical abuse, perhaps because boys are more likely than girls to have disabilities. This trend was stronger for children with minor disabilities than for children with severe disabilities, and for children aged seven to ten years rather than for older or younger children.

The report by Hershkowitz *et al.* has several important implications. Most importantly, the apparent vulnerability of CWDs increases the need for effective interviewing techniques, while the reduced rates of disclosure suggest that the techniques in current use may not work as well when alleged victims have various types of disabilities.

Unfortunately, people with disabilities face other difficulties even after their possible victimisation comes to light. Relatively few cases involving intellectually disabled children are taken to court (Green, 2001; Gudjonsson, Murphy, & Clare, 2000; Williams, 1995), and few researchers have examined the way legal systems respond to possible victims of crime who are intellectually or communicatively handicapped (Agnew & Powell, 2004; Milne, 1999). Accordingly, Cederborg and Lamb (2006) undertook an inductive, qualitative study of 39 Swedish court files, focusing on the ways in which the children's handicaps and their presumed consequences were described and taken into account when the courts were evaluating the children's credibility.

They reported three broad reasons for concerns about the appropriateness of the courts' reactions to these alleged victims. First, in more than half of the cases, the judges argued that credible accounts should have the same clear characteristics (essentially, the CBCA characteristics discussed in Chapter 7) as credible accounts by alleged victims who did not have learning disabilities or handicaps. Second, unfortunately, courts seldom (about half the time) received expert guidance that might help them better understand the characteristics of specific witnesses with handicaps. Third, miscommunication between courts and potential sources of expert information about the types of information that would be most helpful diminished the value of the expert testimony they *were* given. As a result, the courts often made decisions largely in ignorance of the capabilities, behaviour, and limitations of vulnerable witnesses.

When Swedish CWDs were interviewed prior to trial, furthermore, the interviews were frequently deficient, reported Cederborg and Lamb (2007) in another study. The police officers not only asked too many focused questions (i.e., option-posing and suggestive prompts) but also dominated the interactions and typically did not try to find out if the possible victims could give information in response to less contaminating types of questions (invitations and directive questions) before proposing options or giving suggestions about what the children could have experienced. When children with intellectual disabilities were given a second chance to provide information about their abuse, however, they further developed the information that they had reported and sometimes provided entirely new information about their experiences (Cederborg, LaRooy, & Lamb, 2007).

Clearly, the limited available information suggests that interviewers tend not to interview CWDs very effectively, despite the increased vulnerability to victimisation, and as a result, disproportionate numbers of them report being abused when questioned, even using the Protocol.

What does research tell us about the possible informativeness of these children?

A few key studies (e.g., Agnew & Powell, 2004; Bruck *et al.*, 2007; Dent, 1986; Gordon *et al.*, 1994; Henry & Gudjonsson, 1999, 2003, 2007; Jens *et al.*, 1990; Michel *et al.*, 2000; Milne & Bull, 1996) have provided valuable information about the impact of questioning style on the completeness and accuracy of CWD's responses but these studies vary on a number of important dimensions, so their relevance to the forensic context is unclear. It is also unclear whether CWDs simply develop capacities slower than TD children or develop differently, which would mean that special strategies and techniques might be needed when questioning them.

Although younger TD children usually recall less than older children, their accounts are no less accurate (e.g., Goodman *et al.*, 1987; Marin *et al.*, 1979). If CWDs are simply developing slower than their TD peers, we might expect them to encode and subsequently retrieve less information than children without cognitive impairment, but to do so as accurately as their more able counterparts. Similarly, younger TD children benefit more than older children from the provision of externally provided cues designed to help them retrieve and report narrative information and as a result we might expect CWDs to benefit from such cues as well. On the other hand, the language and cognitive profiles of some disabled children (e.g., those with more severe impairment) might impede the development of such skills, and this possibility has clear implications for research on CWDs.

Interestingly, the informativeness of children with intellectual disabilities (CWIDs) is generally comparable to that of mental age-matched peers (Henry & Gudjonsson, 1999; Iarocci & Burack, 1998; Michel, Gordon, Ornstein, & Simpson, 2000; Zigler, 1969) but severity of disability often explains differences in performance. Children with mild intellectual disabilities report less information in response to open free-recall questions but are as likely as typically developing children of the same age to provide responses to these type of prompts (Henry & Gudjonsson, 1999, 2003). Many studies of CWIDs have focused on their suggestibility and acquiescence (Agnew & Powell, 2004; Gudjonsson & Henry, 2003; Henry & Gudjonsson, 1999, 2003; Milne & Bull, 1996; Sigelman *et al.*, 1981), thereby highlighting the dangerousness of certain strategies (e.g., suggestive questions) but not elucidating the capacities of CWIDs interviewed in a neutral or supportive manner. When asked the kinds of questions recommended for interviews with TD children, in fact, CWIDs give reliable accounts of brief witnessed or experienced interactions, although their performance relative to CA and MA controls has varied across studies (Agnew & Powell, 2004; Dent,

1986; Gordon *et al.*, 1994; Henry & Gudjonsson, 1999, 2003; Michel *et al.*, 2000; Milne & Bull, 1996). Children with moderate disabilities provide less information than both typically developing children and children with mild intellectual disabilities. They are also more suggestible although their responses to free recall questions tend to be accurate (Henry & Gudjonsson, 2003). Children and adults with intellectual disabilities have poorer memory and higher suggestibility scores than normally developing peers. In addition, children with intellectual disabilities have much higher memory scores than adults with intellectual disabilities (Gudjonsson & Henry, 2003).

In an ongoing study in which the Protocol was used to interview CWDs about staged events, Brown, Lewis, and Lamb (2007) reported some startling elements of strength in the capacities of CWDs and TD children who were 7 to 11 years old. In general, the children recalled about one quarter of the details of a busy school-based activity a week after it has occurred. Children with Moderate Learning Disabilities (LD) remembered less than Chronological (CA) and Mental age (MA)-matched controls, although children in all groups remembered less one week than six months after the school-based events took place. Interestingly, the children who were interviewed for a second time at six months recalled substantially more pieces of information than those interviewed then for a first time, showing the consolidating value of an initial interview.

As far as accuracy was concerned, children interviewed for the first time after a week were more accurate than at six months and children in all the groups interviewed twice recalled proportionally more correct aspects of the event at one week than those only interviewed (once) at six months. Children in the Moderate LD and MA-matched groups recalled fewer correct facts than those in the CA-matched group, but there was no difference in overall accuracy between children in the Mild LD group and their CA matched controls. The Moderate LD children were not distinguishable from peers who were matched on mental age to the two sub-samples of LD children.

As in Cederborg *et al.*'s study, the children provided lots of information in the second interview (six months) that they had not mentioned previously. Indeed, there was more new than repeated information provided. The CA matched TD children provided more new information than the MA matched and Moderate LD children, whereas the Mild LD children provided more information than did children in the Moderate LD group. However, the accuracy of this new information was low, ranging from 54% in the MA matched children to 62% in the Mild LD group, although there were no significant group differences.

Of course, different types of disabilities can influence children's abilities to describe these experiences in diverse ways, although informativeness is likely to vary greatly even when alleged victims have the same diagnosis. It is thus important to recognise the unique characteristics, competencies, and limitations of each handicapped child. Even children with poor memory capacity, impaired ability to cope with uncertainty or understand the purposes of the interview are able to answer open-ended questions and give new details about their experiences, especially when directive questions are asked (Cederborg & Lamb, 2007). On the other hand, interviewers also need to recognise that CWIDs indeed have some specific limitations. Children with autistic conditions may, for example, have difficulty understanding the perspective of the interviewers and may not understand the reasons why some questions are asked. Their abilities to follow and understand lengthy complicated questions may also be impaired. Early identification of mentally handicapped witnesses' abilities, capacities, and behaviour may help interviewers understand how to adapt their behaviour appropriately (Gordon *et al.*, 1995; Jones, 2003; Milne, 1999; Poole & Lamb, 1998; Westcott, 1992).

When interviewing both TD children and CWIDs, interviewers should start with open-ended questions because those maximise accurate recall even when intellectually impaired witnesses are involved (Kasari & Bauminger, 1998). When asked specific, closed questions, responses from people with intellectual disabilities may become less accurate (Henry & Gudjonsson, 2003; Kebell *et al.*, 2004). Because suggestive questions suggest desirable responses, they should be avoided completely whereas option-posing questions should be used infrequently, provided they are framed neutrally and non-coercively (Kebell *et al.*, 2004; Michel *et al.*, 2000), ideally followed by open-ended prompts for further elaboration. In addition to using more open questions, interviewers should use simpler language and shorter sentences.

On occasion, it may also be helpful to re-interview children so that they can elaborate on the information that they have already provided, and provide details about topics that have not as yet been discussed. In light of a previous analogue study showing that children with both mild and moderate intellectual disabilities changed their answers in repeated interviews more often than their mental age-matched peers did (Henry & Gudjonsson, 2003), it is interesting that the new and elaborated information provided by children in Cederborg *et al.*'s (2007) study did not contradict their previous statements. In fact, the overall number of between-interview contradictions was surprisingly low. However, because poor interviewing techniques predominated in the interviews, and little was known about the participants' capacities, we cannot assume that the information provided in the repeated interviews

was any more accurate than information provided in the first interview. Moreover, although the repeated interviews elicited additional forensically relevant information, we still need to understand whether interviewers who were trained to use open questions would elicit as much or more additional information in the repeated interviews as those in that study. We also need to determine whether cued invitations may help keep respondents focused on the topic and thus more responsive.

Preliminary analyses of the children's responses to suggestive questions at the end of the interviews conducted by Brown and her colleagues provided a contrast to the accuracy of the children's responses during the main interview, however. As expected, the children in all groups responded to these leading questions less accurately, with children in the moderate LD group scoring lower than those in the other groups. Prior interviewing did not inoculate the effects of suggestive questioning at six months.

A PROTOCOL FOR INTERVIEWING CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

A version of the Protocol for interviewing adults and children with disabilities has been developed and is currently being field-tested by forensic interviewers in Israel. This Protocol emphasises the principles that have been explained in this book and includes the following adaptations to some characteristics of the target population that we have outlined earlier in this chapter:

1. Because witnesses with disabilities might experience higher levels of anxiety and confusion before and during the interview than TD individuals, the rapport-building phase is extended when individuals with disabilities (IWDs) are interviewed. In addition, IWDs may be accompanied by a colleague, who may be present during the early phase of the interview, both to provide support and to introduce the investigator and interviewee to one another. After a short neutral conversation, the accompanying person leaves, so that the rapport building, narrative training, and substantive phases of the interview are conducted with only the interviewer and witness present.
2. The invitations asking the witnesses to provide personal information during the rapport-building phase are adapted to accommodate information about the witnesses gathered prior to the interview. For example, they may be asked about things they like to do at work rather than at school, or about special events experienced in a residential institution rather than at home.

3. Interviewers are instructed to provide IWDs with additional support, not only during the rapport-building phase but throughout the interview.
4. In order to make the retrieval of information easier when there have been multiple incidents of abuse, investigators are advised to focus on one incident at a time, using open-ended, directive, and, when necessary, option-posing questions before switching focus to another incident. In the original Protocol, by contrast, interviewers are advised to use only open-ended and directive question when initially exploring each of the incidents. Only later, and only if necessary, do they pose option-posing questions after refocusing the witnesses attention on each of the incidents.
5. Interviewers are encouraged to ask short questions using simple vocabulary and sentence construction to accommodate the limited attention and verbal capacities of IWDs. In addition, interviewers are encouraged to slow down the pace of the interview and to make their pronunciation as clear as possible.
6. When necessary, interviewers are encouraged to split the interview into two sessions in order to explore the allegations more fully.

CONCLUSION

Both children and adults with disabilities, including intellectual and communicative disabilities, are disproportionately likely to be abused, both physically and sexually. This increased vulnerability is especially problematic because their allegations of abuse are less likely to prompt suitable intervention; both the criminal justice and social service communities face difficulties when attempting to intervene in order to prevent further maltreatment and provide suitable intervention. Despite their handicaps and their increased suggestibility, however, there is increasing evidence that witnesses with disabilities have considerable strengths and can provide valuable information when questioned appropriately. Attempts have been made to develop a Protocol to guide interviews with such witnesses, and this Protocol is currently being used by specially trained forensic interviewers in Israel. We anticipate studying these interviews and using our findings to shape further refinements to the specialised Protocol.

Promoting and Maintaining Developmentally-Appropriate Interviewing by Training Interviewers

As we reported in Chapter 3, interviewers seldom follow professionally recommended practices. Indeed, their tendency to adhere to such recommendations is frequently unaffected by training! In this chapter, we review what we have learned in the field about effective ways of training interviewers to continue following "best practice" guidelines. We pay particular attention to the lessons we ourselves have learned, after some disappointing initial attempts to increase interviewers' compliance with professional "best practice" standards. As a result, training in the use of the Protocol is now routinely accompanied by efforts to provide continued support, guidance, and feedback.

As explained earlier, agreement regarding the ways in which interviews should be conducted has not been paralleled by changes in the way interviews are typically conducted in the field (see Chapter 3). As a result, the research-based recommendations summarised in earlier chapters are widely endorsed but seldom followed. As we and other researchers showed in studies of forensic interviews in the United States, United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Canada, and Israel (e.g., Cederborg, Orbach, Sternberg, & Lamb, 2000; Craig, Scheibe, Kircher, Raskin, & Dodd, 1999; Cyr *et al.*, 2006; Davies, Westcott, & Horan, 2000; Korkman *et al.*, 2006; Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.*, 1996; Sternberg, Lamb, Davies, & Westcott, 2001;

Sternberg *et al.*, 1996; Thoreson *et al.*, 2006; Walker & Hunt, 1998) forensic interviewers who have not been trained to use the Protocol use open-ended prompts quite rarely, even though these prompts consistently elicit more information than more focused prompts do.

Young victim-witnesses are typically the most important, if not the sole available, sources of information about alleged incidents of child abuse, yet the poor quality of most investigative interviews around the world has contributed to a situation in which appropriate legal intervention is precluded by questionable and inadequate information about the alleged events. As a result, many workshops and training programmes have been designed to improve adherence to professionally endorsed practices. Unfortunately, training programmes of this sort typically have little impact on the investigative techniques employed by forensic investigators. For example, Aldridge and Cameron (1999) and Warren *et al.* (1999) provided one- and two-week long seminars, respectively, in which the developmental research and its implications for interviewing were thoroughly explained and trainees were given opportunities to practice interviewing skills with role-playing colleagues and confederate children. In both studies, researchers were able to demonstrate that the trainees learned what and why they should and should not do when interviewing children, but when interviews of confederate children were examined systematically, the interviewers behaved exactly as they had before the training. British police officers trained to follow the Memorandum of Good Practice (Sternberg, Lamb, Davies *et al.*, 2001), as well as Israeli youth investigators (Lamb, Hershkowitz, Sternberg, Esplin *et al.*, 1996) and US police officers (Sternberg *et al.*, 1996) who had participated in intensive training programmes likewise failed to implement many of the techniques they had been taught while adopting practices they had been taught to avoid. Similar results were obtained by Stevenson *et al.* (1992) and Freeman and Morris (1999) following less intensive training programmes.

By contrast, the quality of forensic interviewing *does* improve when interviewers follow the very detailed and specific Protocol described in this book (Orbach *et al.*, 2000; Sternberg, Lamb, Orbach, Esplin, & Mitchell, 2001). The incremental value of verbal and written feedback during the course of training has been experimentally demonstrated in individual (Adams, Fields, & Verhave, 1999; Clark, 1971; Frayer & Klausmeier, 1971; Sweet, 1966) and group (Gully, 1998) contexts, but of the published interview models, only our training model includes feedback beyond the training period (i.e., in post training investigative interviews as well). Because the success of their efforts contrasted with the failures of those whose efforts were limited to intensive but time-limited training seminars, Orbach *et al.* (2000) and Sternberg, Lamb,

Orbach, *et al.* (2001) suggested that the detailed protocol *and* the ongoing supervision and feedback were absolutely crucial. Here we review two studies designed to clarify or identify the crucial components of successful training programmes.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CONTINUED FEEDBACK?

In our first examination of training, we analysed the forensic interviews conducted by a group of trained investigative interviewers in the months immediately following completion of the regular group meetings and intensive individual feedback that were part of the training provided to police officers learning to use the Protocol. For purposes of comparison, interviews conducted during the period when interviewers were receiving close and continuing supervision were matched with interviews conducted by the same interviewers following termination of the supervision-and-training regimen. We expected that the quality of the later interviews would be inferior to that of the earlier interviews, as indexed by: 1) declines in the use of open-ended prompts, 2) corresponding increases in reliance on more focused prompts, and 3) the earlier introduction of focused prompts. The expected changes in the interviewers' questioning style were in turn expected to produce decreases in the amount of information elicited using free-recall prompts.

In this study, we examined 74 forensic interviews of alleged sexual abuse victims by 8 experienced police officers (4 women and 4 men) in a mid-sized city in the Western United States. All of the interviews studied were the first interviews of these children, conducted by police officers as soon as possible after a formal report of the abuse. The boys and girls ranged in age from 4 to 12 years and averaged nearly 8 years.

Of the 74 interviews, 37 were conducted using the Investigative Protocol while the interviewers received detailed individual feedback on each of their interviews and attended group training sessions every 4 to 8 weeks for approximately 1 year. The matched sample of 37 interviews was conducted by the same interviewers in the 6 months immediately following this intensive supervisory phase. Interviews in the post-supervision group were matched with those in the supervision group with respect to the severity or type of abuse, the relationship between victim and perpetrator, the victim's age (within 12 months), and whether or not the abuse had occurred one or multiple times.

The 37 "supervision" interviews were drawn from a pool of 200 investigative interviews comprising all investigative interviews of 4- to 12-year-old alleged victims conducted by the participating investigators during the study period. Interviews were excluded from consideration

when the children disclosed abuse spontaneously (i.e., not in response to the interviewers' prompts) before the interviewers had "trained" the children to provide accounts of neutral events in response to open-ended prompts ($n = 20$), when the child did not report abuse ($n = 44$), or when no match was found in the post-supervision interviews ($n = 99$). The post-supervision interviews were drawn from a pool of 43 interviews of 4- to 12-year-old alleged victims of abuse by the same interviewers and were selected solely because they involved alleged offences comparable to those reported by children in the supervised Protocol group. Interviewers were excluded from consideration when the child did not report abuse ($n = 4$) or when the case was not suitable as a match according to the matching criteria ($n = 2$).

The Training Programme

Prior to implementation of the Protocol, all interviewers participated in an intensive five-day training programme during which the conceptual and empirical support for all phases of the interview were explained by a team of forensic and developmental psychologists. Videotapes illustrating both appropriate and inappropriate interview techniques were shown. After familiarising themselves with the structured Protocol, interviewers questioned role-playing confederates and reviewed their own and their colleagues' performance. After demonstrating their ability to use the Protocol, interviewers were observed conducting actual forensic interviews using the Protocol and were given feedback on their techniques. Thereafter, detailed written feedback was provided on transcripts of all interviews conducted by these eight interviewers until the study ended. In addition, individual and group training sessions focused on adherence to the Protocol and its adaptation to individual circumstances were conducted every four to eight weeks by the psychologists involved in the initial training. Problematic cases were reviewed with the group and techniques for addressing difficult issues were discussed.

Description of the Interviews

Although the interviews in the supervision and post-supervision groups were carefully matched with respect to the victims' ages, abuse type, and familiarity of the perpetrators, there were substantial differences in both the structure of the interviews and the amount of information provided in the interviews conducted during and after the periods during which the interviewers were given individual and group supervision.

As shown in Table 10.1, the interviewers' behaviour changed dramatically when the "supervision" ended. Most importantly, statistical

Table 10.1 Substantive prompts used by interviewers in the "supervision" study

Utterance Type	Under Supervision		After Supervision	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Invitations	16.4	34	10.1	20
Directives	19.4	35	21	37
Option-posing	13.3	24	17.2	33
Suggestive	3.5	7	4.9	11

analysis showed that the number and proportion of invitations declined significantly after supervision ended whereas the proportion of option-posing and suggestive prompts increased. In addition, after supervision ended, option-posing and suggestive prompts were introduced considerably earlier than they had been during the supervision phase. During the supervision phase, for example, there were, on average, just over eight interviewer utterances before the first option-posing or suggestive utterance, compared to just over four in the post-supervision phase.

These changes in interview strategies were matched by changes in the way information was elicited in the supervision and post-supervision conditions, as shown in Table 10.2. Specifically, there were significant declines in both the amount (from 108 to 47) and proportion (from 50% to 29%) of information elicited using open-ended prompts and a significant increase in the proportion of information elicited using option-posing prompts (from 16% to 27%). In addition, absolutely and proportionally fewer details were elicited before the first option-posing prompts in the post supervision group than in the supervision group. These changes in investigative strategy resulted in the elicitation of significantly fewer forensically relevant details in the post-supervision phase than in the supervision phase.

Table 10.2 Numbers of forensically relevant details elicited using different investigative prompts

Prompts	Under Supervision		After Supervision	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Invitations	108	50	47	28
Directives	52	27	49	33
Option-posing	36	16	29	27
Suggestive	10	7	13	10

In order to assess the robustness of the effects and to ensure that the effects were not explained by the performance of one or two interviewers, we compared mean scores for each of the five interviewers who contributed more than one interview to each condition. In their average interview, all five interviewers posed proportionally more invitations, elicited proportionally more details using invitations and proportionally fewer using directive and option-posing utterances, and elicited absolutely and proportionally more details before the first option-posing or suggestive prompt in the supervised than in the post-supervision interviews.

Clearly, this study provided compelling evidence about the importance of continued review and analysis of interviewer techniques, even after interviewers have mastered the techniques incorporated into the Protocol. Without this, the interviewers' techniques regressed, becoming less open, and more problematic even within the six month period we sampled. (Unfortunately, we did not systematically examine later interviews to see whether the deterioration in good practice continued.).

CAN OTHER FORMS OF INTENSIVE TRAINING IMPROVE INTERVIEWING?

In the second of our studies on the role of training, the importance of continuing quality control and feedback was assessed by comparing the effectiveness of four different training models designed to help interviewers implement recommended interviewing practices.

In this study, we examined 192 forensic interviews of alleged sexual abuse victims by 21 experienced Israeli youth investigators (15 women and 6 men). All were the first interviews of these children, conducted by youth investigators immediately following a formal report of the abuse. The 54 boys and 138 girls interviewed ranged in age from 4 to 14 years and averaged just over 9 years of age.

The Training Conditions

In all training conditions, interviewers were first provided with a theoretical framework to help them understand how the recommended practices were consistent with basic research on children's memorial, linguistic, communicative, and social development. The first training condition (the "validation" condition) only involved such conceptual training.

The training involved a week-long session taught by a multinational team of forensic and developmental psychologists and social workers.

In this session, instructors explained the developmental factors and circumstances associated with variation in children's abilities to describe their experiences, with emphasis on the ways in which interviewers crucially affect the quality and richness of children's accounts. Videotaped examples of desirable interview practices were shown for illustrative purposes. Because the interviewers had agreed to assist in a field validation study of children's credibility analysis, furthermore, the literature on this topic was also explained. Illustrations of the CBCA ratings were provided and participants practiced applying the CBCA criteria to interviews of alleged victims.

Interviewers in the second (or "rapport building") training condition were not only introduced to scientific principles, but were also urged to employ structured modules in the pre-substantive rapport building phase of their investigative interviews, and they practiced using these modules. Training specific to this condition (provided *in addition to* the condition I training) involved a two-day session focused on the importance of structuring the investigative interview carefully and of motivating child witnesses to be informative. Participants were given two structured rapport-building modules to use as the pre-substantive phase of their investigative interviews. One version introduced children to open-ended interview prompts while the other introduced them to focused prompts. Both modules took an average of seven minutes to implement, and interviewers were instructed to alternate between the two modules in their investigative interviews. Only interviewers who faithfully employed the two modules were included in the study.

Interviewers in the third ("victims' Protocol") and fourth ("suspects' Protocol") training conditions were introduced to the scientific principles and were also given copies of the fully structured interview Protocol and practiced using it under close supervision. The third and fourth conditions differed with respect to the amount and type of supervision provided. Interviewers in the third training condition attended intensive training courses, followed by monthly day-long group meetings in which their actual field interviews were analysed (using video recordings and transcripts of their recent interviews) and desirable and undesirable practices were discussed. In addition, interviewers in the third condition received detailed written and verbal feedback on each of their subsequent field interviews. Before the fully structured interview Protocol was implemented, all interviewers in this condition participated in an intensive two-day training seminar during which the conceptual and empirical rationale for all phases of the interview were explained by a team of forensic and developmental psychologists and social workers. Both appropriate and inappropriate interview techniques were illustrated and discussed. Trainees also conducted simulated interviews

using the Protocol which were then discussed with other trainees and the instructors.

After learning to use the Protocol, interviewers were observed conducting simulation and field interviews using the protocol and were given feedback on their techniques. Written feedback was provided on transcripts of field interviews until the study ended. In addition, individual and group training sessions focused on adherence to the Protocol and its adaptation to individual circumstances were conducted every four weeks by the social worker involved in the initial training. Problematic cases were reviewed with the group and techniques for addressing difficult issues were discussed.

Interviewers in the fourth condition participated in the monthly meetings alongside those in the third condition but received no individual supervision and feedback on their interviews. Interviewers in this condition were initially trained to interview alleged juvenile perpetrators of sexual abuse, using the fully structured 'suspect' Protocol described in Chapter 8. The interviewers attended the monthly sessions alongside condition 3 in which group level feedback on victims' and suspects' interview strategies were provided, and exemplary interviews were analysed and discussed. The interviewers received no individual supervision and feedback on their own field interviews with either suspects or child victims, however. Fewer victim interviews were conducted by interviewers in this group because they were also required to interview alleged suspects.

As in the first study, the effects of these forms of training were assessed by examining the extent to which the interviewers employed open-ended as opposed to focused questions, the amount of information elicited using open-ended rather than focused prompts or questions, and the extent to which the interviewers delayed introducing substantive information. In all cases, the performance of interviewers who had been trained using one of the four regimes described here was compared with that of the same interviewers conducting interviews with children of comparable age and circumstances in the six months prior to that specific type of training.

The results of earlier studies (Aldridge & Cameron, 1999; Sternberg *et al.*, 1997; Warren *et al.*, 1999) led us to predict that the first two training conditions would have little apparent effect on the interviewers' behaviour, whereas the third and fourth training conditions, which provided interviewers with continuous supervision and instruction, were expected to have the greatest effects on both the interviewers' practices and the quality of information provided by children. Interviewers in the third condition were expected to perform best because, in addition to the conceptual training, they benefited from both continuous group

training and supervision as well as detailed individualised feedback on many of their field interviews, whereas those in the fourth group only observed this feedback being provided to their peers.

Comparing Interviews in the Four Conditions

Close examination of the interviewers' strategies showed that invitations were both absolutely and proportionately more frequent and option-posing prompts both absolutely and proportionately less frequent in the victims' and suspects' Protocol conditions than in the validation and the rapport building conditions (see Table 10.3). Interviewers in the validation condition used absolutely and proportionally more directive prompts and proportionally fewer option-posing prompts than they did in the rapport building condition, as well as absolutely but not proportionally more directive prompts than in the victims' Protocol conditions. There were no significant differences between the suspects' and victims' Protocol conditions.

In addition, interviewers in all the training conditions used absolutely and proportionally more invitations, fewer directives, and fewer option-posing prompts than interviewers in the baseline comparison groups (see Table 10.3). Interviewers in the training groups also tended to use non-significantly fewer suggestive utterances than they had prior to training.

The effects for Condition were not significant when data from the baseline stage only were analysed, but were highly significant when data from the training stage were analysed separately. Following training, to be specific, interviewers in the victims' Protocol and suspects' Protocol conditions used more invitations, proportionally fewer directives, and fewer option-posing utterances than did interviewers in the validation and the rapport-building conditions.

Analysis of children's responses again showed that both absolutely and proportionally more details were elicited using invitations in the victims' and suspects' Protocol conditions than in the validation condition whereas proportionally more details were elicited using invitations in the victims' Protocol condition than in the validation and rapport-building conditions (see Table 10.3). Absolutely and proportionally fewer details were elicited using option-posing prompts in the victims' Protocol condition than in the validation and rapport-building conditions. Proportionally more details were elicited using directives in the validation than in the victims' Protocol and rapport-building conditions.

Invitations were more useful and both directive and option-posing prompts less useful for eliciting details after training than in the baseline conditions (see Table 10.3). Table 10.3 also shows that more details

Table 10.3 Condition and stage-based differences in the types of utterances used to elicit information

Utterance Types	Pre-Training				Training			
	Validation	Rapport building	Victims' Protocol	Suspects' Protocol	Validation	Rapport building	Victims' Protocol	Suspects' Protocol
Invitation	5.2	5.3	4.5	7.0	5.8	5.8	18.9	19.6
Directive	56.7	35.8	41.3	55.3	50.2	37.3	27.5	29.4
Option-posing	29.8	27.8	24.3	26.8	30.6	33.0	8.1	12.7
Suggestive	9.5	6.4	7.0	9.5	6.1	7.6	3.4	7.4

Table 10.4 Condition and stage-based differences in the average numbers of details elicited using the four types of prompts

Utterance Types	Pre-Training				Training			
	Validation	Rapport building	Victims' Protocol	Suspects' Protocol	Validation	Rapport building	Victims' Protocol	Suspects' Protocol
Invitation	39.3	49.2	51.4	40.5	46.2	84.3	143.2	162.0
Directive	138.2	95.7	144.7	153.4	144.0	92.5	89.9	66.4
Option-posing	54.4	55.4	55.9	57.8	76.2	95.5	19.8	13.8
Suggestive	18.2	14.5	57.4	24.0	30.0	28.8	15.6	10.7

were elicited using invitations, and fewer were elicited using directive, option-posing, and suggestive prompts in the victims' and suspects' protocol conditions after training than before. Whereas the rapport-building and validation training conditions had no effect on the amount of information elicited using invitations and directive prompts, more details were elicited using option-posing and suggestive prompts after training than in the matched baseline conditions.

Number of Details Before First Option-Posing Prompt

Another important index of interview quality is the number of details provided by the interviewee before the interviewer introduces any information, and analysis made clear that interviewers in all the training conditions elicited more information before their first intrusive prompt than did those in the baseline conditions, while interviewers allowed older children to provide more information before intruding than did those interviewing younger children. The significant interaction reflected the absence of differences with respect to condition prior to training, whereas, after training, interviewers in the victims' protocol condition were especially successful when interviewing younger children, while those in the suspect and to a lesser extent, rapport building condition, were especially successful at delaying their intrusions when interviewing older children.

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING

These reports have important, although somewhat sobering, implications for those attempting to effect the transfer of information gleaned from basic research to those attempting to apply that information in the real world. Clearly, it is possible to employ our accumulated knowledge of memory and communicative development to improve the quality of information elicited from alleged victims of child abuse, but these benefits are obtained only when extensive efforts are made not only to train interviewers to adopt recommended practices, but to ensure the maintenance of these practices as well.

The results of the first study discussed in this chapter showed that this intensive supervision and feedback played a crucial role in effecting and maintaining improvements in the interviewers' performance, because interviewers adhered to best practice guidelines less after the supervision and feedback were terminated. Specifically, analyses of matched interviews conducted by the same interviewers while they

were receiving regular feedback and after this had ended showed declines in their use of open-ended prompts and increases in their reliance on riskier option-posing and suggestive prompts. There were no group differences in the average number of details elicited per utterance of each type, and as a result, the amount and proportion of information elicited using open-ended prompts declined after the end of supervision while the amount and proportion of information elicited using more focused prompts increased. As explained earlier in the book, information in the form of free-recall narratives elicited using open-ended prompts is preferable because it is more likely to be accurate. Thus the withdrawal of supervision was associated with a decline in the quality of information obtained from alleged victims, as well as a decline in the total amount of information elicited. Conceivably, many of the benefits might have been retained if the interviewers had reviewed at least some of their interviews with peers and agency supervisors following the end of the supervision by the researchers, as this would have ensured some critical feedback. Similarly, continued discussion and problem solving within groups of investigators might have helped interviewers maintain superior interview practices, providing a less costly but effective means of maintaining the quality of investigative interviews.

The results of the second study were largely consistent with this conclusion: Significant differences between the baseline and training conditions we studied were largely accounted for by differences in the performance of interviewers in the victims' and suspects' Protocol training conditions. In these conditions, the interviewers were guided by highly structured investigative interview Protocols and continued to attend regular intensive training workshops. The effects were most clearly marked by improvements in the extent to which interviewers tried to elicit information using open-ended prompts, in the amount of information actually elicited from the children's free recall, and in the extent to which the interviewers were able to delay their first option-posing questions which, by definition, involved the introduction of information by the interviewer rather than by the child. By contrast, interviewers who received intensive short-term training but no continuing training generally performed little better than they had before training.

It was noteworthy, however, that interviewers in the suspects' Protocol condition performed at least as well as their peers in the victims' Protocol condition on all measures of interview quality. Interviewers in both of these groups employed a highly structured interview Protocol and attended intensive day long workshops every month, but those in the victims' Protocol condition also received individual feedback on most of their interviews. The fact that this continuing individualised feedback

did not bring about greater improvements in their performance (relative to peers in the suspects' Protocol condition) suggests that this especially tedious and costly form of extended supervision may not be necessary to bring about and maintain improvements in interview quality.

Overall, the results of both studies strongly suggest that meaningful long-term improvement in the quality of information obtained from young alleged victims of sexual abuse are observed only when well-established principles are operationalised in a clear and concrete fashion and when training is distributed over time, rather than provided in the form of a single initial session, however intensive. It is, of course, costly to continue providing intensive support and training to interviewers, but researchers have yet to identify any less costly techniques that are equivalently effective.

CONCLUSION

The research reviewed in this chapter shows that the mere introduction of the Protocol does not ensure that investigators will conduct high quality interviews from that point on. Rather, it is clear that trained interviewers need to continue their training in order to maintain their skills. The extended training, we have seen, needs to involve opportunities to review and discuss recently conducted interviews with other interviewers, discussing both examples of good practice as well as possible alternatives to the strategies attempted in the interviews under discussion. In the studies discussed in this chapter, the review sessions were conducted with "expert" trainers, but our experiences in the field, particularly in Israel, suggests that review sessions can be successful even when they only involve groups of interviewers, without the involvement of outside experts in interviewing. Apparently, the process or reviewing and considering alternative techniques in light of best practice aspirations is crucially important in developing and maintaining investigative interviewing skills.

What Has Been Achieved: What Else Needs to Be Done?

When we undertook to write this book, we hoped to achieve several, inter-related goals. Our first was to show that decades of research have yielded an impressive understanding of children's tendencies and capacities, and that this accumulated knowledge has helped professionals construct coherent and widely accepted best practice guidelines for the ways in which forensic interviews should be conducted. Because interviewers often have difficulty following such guidelines, however, we worked intensively with our colleagues to develop a detailed and explicit set of guidelines in the form of an investigative interview Protocol, which we have described at length in earlier chapters. As explained there, we have show in several studies that use of the Protocol by carefully trained interviewers indeed yields impressive improvements in the quality of the investigative interviews that they conduct. As explored more fully in other chapters, the Protocol can also be used when interviewing non-victimised witnesses, but may need to be adapted in certain ways to be maximally suitable for interviews of suspected victims who are reluctant to talk about their experiences or have learning and communicative difficulties. Two of the later chapters explored the circumstances surrounding these children in greater depth. Interestingly, some of the principles on which the Protocol is built can also be helpful when designing interviews with young perpetrators of abuse, who may be very unwilling to talk about their actions and experiences.

In this final chapter, we summarise in turn the information provided in each of the earlier chapters while drawing attention to areas of uncertainty and ignorance that should be the focus of further research.

In all, although we believe that development of the Protocol has permitted considerable progress in the way in which children are interviewed forensically, a great deal more work is needed before we can feel confident that we are collectively doing all we can to protect all vulnerable children from further abuse. Before commencing this summary of the message provided in the preceding chapters, however, we want to address some superordinate issues that may otherwise go lost.

THE INTERVIEW IS ONLY PART OF THE INVESTIGATION

Before beginning this review of recent work on effective, developmentally sensitive interviewing, however, it is important to emphasise that the forensic interview needs to be recognised as only a part of the investigative process. As Raskin and Esplin (1991) argued nearly two decades ago, any information obtained by interviewing an alleged victim needs to be viewed in the context of a full investigation which yields other information that allows the child's statement to be evaluated more comprehensively, guides the interviewer, and is in turn informed and guided by information provided by the young interviewee. It is perhaps a truism to note that potentially reliable witnesses or informants, whatever their age, do not always provide accurate or credible information, and the competent investigator must always be attentive to the existence or absence of factors that may affect the accuracy of the witness' statement. As we have emphasised repeatedly, for example, delay typically degrades the quality and richness of an informant's account, so investigators need to consider this factor when evaluating the information provided in any interview. The degradation in the quality of memory attributable to delay also makes informants' memories more susceptible to contamination, so the vigilant investigator needs to consider not only the potential for contamination, but also the existence of circumstances that may increase the likelihood that others might want to contaminate the child's memory, or unwittingly do so. The existence of a custody dispute, for example, should prompt the investigator to consider the possibility for intended or unintended contamination when evaluating the child's statement even though, in the aggregate, there is no evidence that false allegations are more likely to arise when an alleged victim's parents are disputing his/her custody. Similarly, investigators need to consider whether the alleged victim might have reasons to fabricate the allegations, typically to achieve some secondary gain. In our research on false allegations (Lamb *et al.*, 1997), for example, we encountered several cases in which children alleged victimisation in order to avoid punishment for returning home later than their parents had allowed. It is important to recognise that factors such as these

(potential for contamination, motivation to be deceptive) do not in themselves signal that the allegations should be dismissed; many credible allegation arise when the parents are separating, for example, or the children have good reason to fear their parents' punishment for violating curfews (again). Nevertheless, a good investigation identifies such circumstances and attempts so far as possible to seek information that would help clarify the circumstances.

Similarly, the interview is often the source of investigative leads that can direct investigators to seek independent corroborative information that can further clarify both the child's allegations and the alleged incidents (see Chapter 7).

We do not explore the broader characteristics and components of investigation in this book, but our narrowed focus on forensic interviews should not lead the reader to ignore the importance of the overall investigation and the need to see the interview as but one (important) part of the process. Because the forensic interviews of the alleged victim is part of a broader investigation, it should typically take place after a preliminary investigation has provided some hypotheses about what might have happened to the child. One key goal of the interview is to obtain information that allows evaluation of these hypotheses. Following the interview, of course, the investigation often continues, aided in part by the increased understanding obtained by interviewing the child. In many cases, further investigation will bring to light details or questions that were not addressed in the initial interview of the child, and these new questions may necessitate re-interview of the child, albeit with a narrower focus than characterised the original interview. Policies designed to reduce the number of interviews should not preclude re-interviewing when necessary. Similarly, interviewers should expect, not be surprised, that second interviews bring to light new information. This is entirely predictable, both because second and first interviews often have a different focus, and also because the retrieval of information is almost never exhaustive. Considerably more research on second (or later) interviews is needed to further clarify the benefits and risks of repeated interviewing, but we know enough already to state with assurance that blanket "one-interview only" rules do not serve the best interests of either child victims or justice (LaRooy, Lamb, & Pipe, under review).

WHICH HAS THE EXPERIMENTAL LITERATURE TAUGHT US?

Intensive interest in the capacities and credibility of young witnesses and informants developed over the last two decades in part because

of dramatic increases in the numbers of reported cases, and in part because of increasing awareness that many cases of abuse might go unrecognised if the victims were not given appropriate opportunities to describe their experiences. Indeed, because alleged victims are often the only available sources of information, considerable efforts have been made to understand how children's testimony can be made as useful and reliable as possible when investigators avoid the egregious mistakes that characterised a number of highly publicised cases around the world. In many such cases, inappropriate interview techniques appeared to compromise and contaminate the children's testimony.

Widespread publicity about these cases prompted many researchers to study children's capacities to provide reliable and valid information about their past experiences and others to focus on their suggestibility. Initially, most researchers conducted controlled studies in the laboratory, but later studies conducted in both field and laboratory circumstances focused more narrowly on issues of particular relevance to forensic application and helped generate a remarkable consensus about children's limitations and competencies.

As summarised in Chapter 2, the research showed that children clearly can remember and describe their experiences, but that the quality of information they provide varies for a number of reasons. Young children lack awareness of the ways in which their memories work and the tools that they can use to facilitate remembering. As a result, they are particularly dependent on interviewers to help them retrieve information from memory. Drawing upon the research, a variety of professional groups and experts have offered recommendations regarding the most effective ways of conducting forensic or investigative interviews with children who may have been abused. As Poole and Lamb (1998) pointed out, these books and articles reveal a substantial degree of consensus regarding the ways in which investigative interviews should be conducted, and a remarkable convergence with the conclusions suggested by a close review of the experimental and empirical literature. Effective interviewing requires careful investigative procedures as well as a realistic awareness of children's capacities and tendencies.

In accordance with the literature, it is apparent that children should be interviewed as soon as possible after the alleged offences by interviewers who themselves introduce as little information as possible while encouraging children to provide as much information as possible in the form of narratives elicited using open-ended prompts ("Tell me what happened."). Before substantive issues are discussed, interviewers are typically urged to explain their roles, the purpose of the interview, and the "ground rules" (for example, ask children to limit

themselves to descriptions of events "that really happened" to them and to correct the interviewer, request explanations or clarification, and acknowledge ignorance, as necessary). Investigators are consistently urged to give priority to open-ended recall prompts and use recognition prompts ("Did he touch you?") as late in the interview as possible and only when needed to elicit undisclosed forensically relevant information.

The universal emphasis on the value of narrative responses elicited using open-ended prompts is rooted in the demonstration that information elicited using such prompts is much more likely to be accurate than information elicited using more focused recognition prompts. Interviewers are also routinely advised to avoid the "yes/no" questions which are especially likely to elicit erroneous information from young children, misleading questions that may lead children to respond affirmatively to questions about non-experienced events, or suggestive questions to which children (especially children under six or seven) often acquiesce. The emphasis on the value of open-ended prompts is also supported by evidence that responses to free-recall prompts are three to five times more informative than responses to more focused prompts.

TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE

Unfortunately, these research-based and expert-endorsed recommendations are widely proclaimed but seldom followed, as we showed in Chapter 3. Descriptive studies of forensic interviews in various parts of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden, Finland, and Israel consistently show that forensic interviewers use open-ended prompts quite rarely, even though such prompts reliably elicit more information than more focused prompts do. Furthermore, such deviations from "best practice" are evident even when interviewers have been trained extensively, are well-aware of the recommended practices, and believe that they are adhering to those recommendations!

THE PROTOCOL

Because forensic interviewers have so much difficulty adhering to recommended interview practices in the field, our group developed a structured interview Protocol designed to translate professional recommendations into operational guidelines (see Chapter 4). The structured Protocol guides interviewers through all phases of the investigative

interview, illustrating free-recall prompts and techniques to maximise the amount of information elicited from free recall memory.

As detailed in Chapter 4, the Protocol covers all phases of the investigative interview. In the introductory phase, the interviewer introduces him/herself, clarifies the child's task (the need to describe events in detail and to 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 appropriate).

A two-part rapport-building phase then follows the introductory phase. The first section is designed to create a relaxed, supportive environment for children and to establish rapport between children and interviewers. In the second section, children are prompted to describe a recently experienced neutral event in detail. This "training" is designed to familiarise children with the open-ended investigative strategies and techniques used in the substantive phase while demonstrating the specific level of detail expected of them.

In a transitional section between the pre-substantive and the substantive phases of the Protocol interview, a series of prompts are used to identify the target event/s under investigation non-suggestively and with prompts that are as open as possible. The interviewer only moves on to some carefully worded and increasingly focused prompts (in sequence) if the child fails to identify the target event/s.

If the child makes an allegation, the free recall phase begins with an invitation ("Tell me everything. . . . ") and other free-recall prompts or invitations are recommended. As soon as the first narrative is completed, the interviewer prompts the child to indicate whether the incident occurred "one time or more than one time" and then proceeds to secure incident-specific information using follow up ("Then what happened.") and cued (e.g., "Earlier you mentioned a [person/object/action]. Tell me everything about that") invitations making reference to details mentioned by the child to elicit uncontaminated free-recall accounts of the alleged incident/s.

Only after exhaustive free-recall prompting should interviewers proceed to directive questions (focused recall questions that address details previously mentioned by the child and request information within specific categories (e.g., time, appearance) such as "When did it happen?" or "What colour was that [mentioned] car?" If crucial details are still missing, interviewers then ask limited option-posing questions (mostly yes/no or forced-choice questions referencing new issues that the child failed to address previously). Suggestive utterances, which communicate the expected response, are strongly discouraged.

USING THE PROTOCOL

When we developed the structured Protocol, we expected that its implementation would improve the organisation and quality of interviews with children of all ages so that interviewers using the Protocol would not only use more open-ended utterances and fewer option-posing and suggestive utterances but also postpone option-posing questions until later stages of the interview. Because children in the Protocol condition practiced responding to open-ended questions in the pre-substantive phase of the interview, furthermore, we expected that they would provide richer and more detailed responses to open-ended prompts.

As discussed in Chapter 5, independent field studies in four different countries demonstrated convincingly that when forensic investigators followed the structured Protocol, they indeed obtained information of higher quality than when interviewing in other ways. Specifically, interviewers using the Protocol offered many open-ended and substantially fewer option-posing and suggestive prompts than they otherwise would. These findings were important because details elicited using recall or open-ended prompts are more likely to be accurate than details elicited using more focused prompts. In addition, interviewers using the Protocol also introduce option-posing and suggestive questions later in the interview process than peers not using the Protocol. Because option-posing and suggestive questions by definition involve the introduction of information by the investigator, they have the potential to contaminate later phases of the child's report, especially when younger children are involved and thus their delayed utilisation is forensically important. Clearly, forensic interviewers should provide children with opportunities to recall information in response to open-ended prompts before assuming that special (i.e., more risky) interview techniques are needed.

The findings were replicated in four sites, without differences in the proportions of prompts that were open-ended, the proportions of details elicited using open-ended prompts, age differences, or in the proportion of the interviews completed before the first use of option-posing questions. Interestingly, however, there have been some impressive differences among the samples/sites, especially with respect to the total numbers of details obtained by the interviewers. The reasons for these differences are unclear, but we think that they reflect differences in the types of cases that tend to be investigated in the countries and specific jurisdictions where we have worked rather than cultural differences between investigators, children, or languages. Clear evidence that the Protocol can be used productively in a variety of cultural settings should

not obscure the possible value of careful cross-cultural research in the future, however.

As explained in Chapters 4 and 6, the techniques emphasised in the Protocol are not of value only when interviewing probable victims of abuse; they are also helpful when interviewing young witnesses. This may be of substantial significance, because other children are more likely than adults to have information about the mistreatment of their peers, and are commonly more aware than parents recognise of incidents of domestic violence between the parents. Thus the Protocol may have wide utility.

THE AGE CONUNDRUM

Chapters 2 and 6 drew attention to important differences between the autobiographical memory retrieval strategies and capacities of preschoolers and older children. Younger children tend to remember less information and to provide briefer accounts of their experiences than older children do and young children are more likely than older children both to respond erroneously to suggestive questions about their experiences as well as to select erroneous options when responding to forced-choice questions. On the other hand, young children's accounts are just as accurate as those provided by older children. Despite this, some practitioners, researchers, and investigators have claimed that open-ended questions usually fail to elicit forensically valuable information from young children, especially preschoolers. This made it imperative to examine closely how well the Protocol worked when the children being interviewed were 4- to 6-year-olds.

As explained in Chapter 6, we expected that older children would provide more details than younger children, but that use of the Protocol would increase the amount of information retrieved by recall from all alleged victims, including the youngest children. Indeed, because interviewers guided by the Protocol should use more open-ended prompts regardless of the children's ages, we predicted that use of the Protocol would especially enhance the performance of the younger children, ensuring smaller differences between preschoolers and older children than would otherwise be the case.

Recognising that younger children might have greater difficulty than older children responding informatively to more general invitations (e.g., "Tell me what happened" or "Tell me more about it.") than to narrower, refocusing cued-invitations (e.g., "You said he kissed you on the lips. Tell me about the kissing"), our study of younger children focused closely on differences in responses to different types of invitations,

especially "cued invitations" which use pre-disclosed details, including references to temporal cues, to prompt further free-recall elaboration. As explained in Chapter 6, children as young as four years of age clearly can provide substantial amounts of forensically important information about alleged abuse in response to free-recall prompts. On average, almost one-half of the information they provided came in response to free-recall prompts, regardless of age. As expected, older children reported more details in total and in their average responses to invitations than the younger children did, but the proportion of details elicited using free-recall prompts did not increase with age. Moreover, very young children provided most of the information needed by forensic investigators in response to free-recall prompts, thereby reducing reliance on the more risky and potentially contaminating questions.

Cued invitations, particularly those that remind children of actions they have previously mentioned, constitute effective ways of triggering the recall of information by alleged victims as young as four years of age. By structuring recall of experienced events, associating them with actions that have been mentioned, and breaking them into smaller units or segments of time, cued invitations help young children to reconstruct past events and to elaborate upon their narrative accounts, avoiding interviewer contamination during the recall. The implication is clear: Investigators do *not* need to ask option-posing, leading or suggestive questions when questioning very young witnesses, but can use techniques similar to those used when interviewing older children.

The results summarised in Chapter 6, supported by the experimental research reviewed in Chapter 2, provide compelling evidence that children aged four and over can be complemented and reliable witnesses when interviewed by effective, well-trained interviewers. This is an important finding, not least because four- and five-year-olds are depressingly often identified as suspected victims, and then has long existed considerable scepticism about their legal competence and credibility. Unfortunately, concerns about even younger children often arise too. We have not yet studied enough forensic interviews of 3-year-olds to provide a detailed accounting of their performances in the course of forensic interviews, but we can provide some speculations informed by our clinical experiences and the close examination of small numbers of structured interviews with them. Broadly speaking, we believe that an important transition occurs during the fourth year of life. A combination of factors, including infantile amnesia, immature linguistic abilities, source-monitoring failures, susceptibility to suggestion, and acquiescence tendencies conspire to make most 36-month-olds unreliable witnesses even when they can (and do) provide leads that can be of considerable value to investigators. By contrast, most

48-month-olds are competent witnesses when competently interviewed about incidents of sufficiently recent origin to be remembered adequately. Rapid changes clearly take place during the intervening months, with a number of factors, including linguistic abilities and motivations, and the recency of the incidents being explored greatly affecting the children's competence. As with children aged three and younger, careful assertive interviewing is nevertheless often warranted in a search for investigation leads even when there are doubts about testimonial competence – doubts that are likely to increase as the gap between the incidents and the trial (if there is one) lengthens inexorably.

Although most 4-year-olds can be testimonially competent when interviewed appropriately, they are not the same as 13-years-olds. In general, there are developmental changes, particularly in memory capacity, linguistic competence, and meta-cognitive understanding of the investigative interview and the child's unique role as a privileged informant, that yield age-correlated increases in children's informativeness but these trends must always be viewed in the context of other factors, including motivation and individual differences, that also affect children's behaviour in investigative interviews. For this reason, we have frequently used relative (younger, older) rather than absolute (7- or 12-year-olds) terms when reviewing the implications of our findings. It is important, we believe, not to suggest that competence or informativeness is a straightforward linear consequence of age and we are especially wary of statements that might be used, especially in both courts and the court of public opinion, to cast doubt on the informativeness or credibility of young informants.

USING INTERVIEWS TO INFORM INVESTIGATIONS

Chapters 4 to 6 thus emphasise why and how use of the Protocol allows interviewers to obtain information from children that is much more likely to be accurate because it is recalled by the child freely rather than in response to information and probes provided by the interviewer. In Chapter 7, we then asked what difference this makes – to what extent use of the Protocol enhanced the capacities of investigators to understand what happened to the child and thus implement responses most likely to provide protection and supportive interventions when needed for young victims without compromising the rights of wrongly suspected adults. We began the chapter with a brief discussion of research on the assessment of credibility, showing how difficult it has always been to distinguish between credible and incredible allegations. Investigators are, of course, frequently expected to make formal or informal judgements

about the credibility of the allegations they investigate, but most such judgments are quite unreliable and inaccurate. In forensic contexts, experts have been most optimistic about Criterion-Based Content Analysis (CBCA), but even here the discrimination between plausible and implausible statements is too imprecise for the procedure to be used as a decision-making tool. In part, this is because investigators often have to make judgements on the basis of poorly conducted interviews; researchers have shown that credibility assessment is better when experts can judge narrative responses. This suggests that Protocol-guided interviews might be valued by investigators because those interviews involve more open-ended prompts eliciting more narrative responses. Not surprisingly, therefore, a recent study conducted in Israel showed that use of the Protocol indeed enhanced the ability of investigators to judge the credibility of young children who claim to have been abused.

In addition, interviews conducted using the Protocol are more likely than non-Protocol interviews to yield leads that investigators can pursue in the search for corroborative information as we showed in another recent field study undertaken in Israel in collaboration with some of our associates. Perhaps for both of these reasons – more credible statements and more investigative leads – investigative and law enforcement agencies should be better able to reach conclusions about reported crimes when the Protocol has been used in the initial forensic interviews. In Chapter 7, we also describe an ongoing study in the United States in which we are exploring the impact of the Protocol on the disposition of cases. Such findings underscore the extent to which use of the Protocol offers benefits to investigators that go beyond simply ensuring that the initial interviews are as informative as possible when children are not motivated to be informative.

The Protocol introduced and described in this book builds on our knowledge of the cognitive, linguistic, and social factors that conspire to limit children's accounts of their experiences, including experiences of traumatic incidents such as child abuse. As reported in Chapter 5 and 6, use of the Protocol powerfully enhances the informativeness of young children who need some non-suggestive assistance in generating and organising their accounts, but (as emphasised in Chapter 8) it does not address the important and complicated factors that make some children unwilling to talk about their experiences. Although the Protocol thus shows interviewers how to build rapport with alleged victims, it does not really address the motivational factors that make some children reluctant to disclose abuse (Pipe, Lamb, Orbach, & Cederborg, 2007). This is an important issue, because more than a third of suspected victims do not report abuse when formally interviewed in forensic contexts, even when there is clear evidence that they were in fact abused

(Hershkowitz *et al.*, 2005; London *et al.*, 2005). As discussed in Chapter 8, we are currently developing and assessing, in the field, variants of the Protocol that address the special circumstances that attend interviews with such reluctant witnesses.

Statistics presented early in Chapter 8 give insight into the distinctive characteristics of suspected victims who are disproportionately likely to avoid or delay disclosure. Age and relationship to the suspected perpetrator or assailant appear to be the most important factors: Both younger suspected victims and children who are closely related to the suspects are more likely than older children and children with more distant relationships to avoid making allegations when formally interviewed. On the other hand, once children have told someone about being abused, they are likely to do so again when formally questioned.

Other studies described in Chapter 8 explore features of interviews with children who appear unmotivated to be informative. These studies reveal that reluctant children often signal their reluctance early in the interview, long before the topic under investigation is approached, and that interviewers tend to respond to this reluctance counterproductively, placing pressure on the children rather than giving them more support. Later in the chapter, interestingly, we show that this kind of coercive pressure can prompt young *suspects* to admit their involvement, but that interviewers would do well to avoid prolonging suggestive strategies. Investigators should thus revert as soon as possible to open-ended questions once young suspects have admitted their involvement if they want to get more detailed accounts of the incidents. We hasten to reiterate, too, that coercive practices do *not* seem very useful when attempting to prompt cooperation in suspected *victims*, and the risks of contamination should give interviewers pause, particularly if they expect that judicial procedures may later be necessary.

The fact that reluctant children often signal their unwillingness to be informative quite early in the interviews creates a dilemma for interviewers, who must simultaneously determine whether the child is safe from (further?) harm while avoiding potential contamination of the child's account. We believe that one key lies in creating sufficient rapport that the child feels safe confiding in an apparently trustworthy adult. When children clearly do not feel safe and do not want to confide, however, interviewers need to decide whether or not to continue the interview and, if so, how much pressure to place on the child. To date, research has not yet provided useful guidelines (when is the child ready for the substantive issue to be approached?) and our analyses of interviews with such children leave us concerned that ill-defined presumptions and assumptions (to suspect that abuse must have occurred, for example) have a much greater impact on the interview

process than systematic decision-making. One strength of the Protocol is that it provides forensic interviewers with a structured set of guidelines and discussion points that maximise the value of interviews with willing witnesses, and we hope that further research will yield comparable guidelines and decision-trees to shape interviews with children who, for a variety of reason, choose not to be informative. In developing these guidelines and Protocols, however, it will be important to recognise that, whereas children choose to be deceptive quite rarely, suspicions of abuse may arise for many reasons, with many suspicions being unfocussed. Interviewers must always, therefore, be wary of glib operational assumptions ("children never lie", "most children deny abuse when questioned") that may cloud their critical judgement and behaviour.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

As noted in Chapter 9, special techniques may also be needed when interviewing children and adults with learning, communicative, or intellectual difficulties and these, too, are the focus of ongoing research, not least because such individuals are at increased risk of maltreatment (Crosse, Kaye, & Ratnofsky, 1993; Hershkowitz, Lamb, & Horowitz, in press; Sullivan & Knutson, 2000). Several studies, in diverse countries, show that both children and adults with disabilities are disproportionately likely to be abused, both physically and sexually. This increased vulnerability is made even more worrisome by the fact that allegations of abuse by individuals with disabilities are less likely to prompt appropriate intervention; both the criminal justice and social service communities are much less likely to intervene in order to prevent further maltreatment and provide suitable intervention when the alleged victims have handicaps that adversely affect their communicative abilities. Despite their handicaps and their increased suggestibility, however, there is increasing evidence that witnesses with disabilities have considerable strengths and can provide valuable information when questioned appropriately. Attempts have thus been made in recent years to develop a Protocol to guide interviews with such witnesses. This specialised Protocol is currently being used by specially trained forensic interviewers in Israel. Evaluation of success in the field is planned, with further changes to the Protocol informed by an analysis of the successes and problems encountered.

One important question we hope to address in our ongoing research concerns differences and similarities among witnesses in relation to both their chronological and "mental ages". Analogue research by

Brown and her colleagues, summarised in Chapter 9, indicated that children with learning difficulties performed more like their chronological rather than mental age-mates, suggesting that every-day experiences may have an impact that qualifies the effect of mental or communicative capacity. It is unclear whether and how these factors also shape the behaviour in interviews of adults with learning or communicative abilities, and these factors demand further attention.

COMPETENT INTERVIEWERS ARE TRAINED, NOT BORN

Because interviewer training depressingly often yields no meaningful changes in the ways in which investigators actually interview alleged victims, training in use of the Protocol has always been accompanied by efforts to provide continued support, guidance, and feedback after starting to use the Protocol. As reported in Chapter 10, continuing quality control and feedback appears to be one of the factors assuring the effectiveness of the Protocol. The results of one study described there showed that meaningful long-term improvement in the quality of information obtained from young alleged victims of sexual abuse were observed only when the Protocol was taught and the interviewers continued to attend regular intensive training workshops. The effects were most clearly marked by improvements in the extent to which interviewers tried to elicit information using open-ended prompts, in the amount of information actually elicited from the children's free recall, and in the extent to which the interviewers were able to delay their first option-posing questions which, by definition, involved the introduction of information by the interviewer rather than by the child. By contrast, interviewers who received intensive short-term training but no continuing training generally performed little better than they had before training.

The results of a related study described in Chapter 10 showed the adverse effects that the termination of supervision and feedback can have on investigators' performance. Forensic interviews conducted by trained investigative interviewers who received close and continuing supervision and intensive individual feedback were compared with interviews conducted by the same interviewers in the six months immediately following the completion of training and the termination of the supervision-and-feedback. As expected, the interviewers stopped asking as many open-ended questions and so increasingly elicited information using riskier prompts as soon as the intensive supervision ended. Clearly, then, improvement in the behaviour of interviewers are obtained only when extensive efforts are made not only to train interviewers to adopt recommended practices, but to ensure the maintenance

of these practices as well. Regardless of their skilfulness, interviewers continue to maintain or improve their skills only when they regularly review their own and others' interviews closely, discussing their strategies, successes and mistakes with other interviewers. In Israel, for example, all interviewers were required to continue attending regular peer-review sessions of this sort, and this seemed to ensure that the investigative interviews conducted there were of the highest quality.

Unfortunately, our continued emphasis on the need for intensive and continuing training (broadly defined) has frequently been used as an excuse to avoid adopting the Protocol. Such administrative decisions are misguided—there are no other techniques that have been shown to help interviewers conduct high quality interviews, and no experts or agencies have shown that they or their investigators conduct high quality interviews—interviews that adhere to best practice guidelines–unless they both use the Protocol *and* insist on continuing education or quality control procedures to maintain the skilfulness of their interviewers. We would venture to predict that interviewing skills can only be assured by continued quality assurance procedures, whether or not the Protocol is used as a guide. We would also predict that, however taxing the training demands associated with the Protocol may be, the known alternatives will prove to be both more demanding and demonstrably less effective. Moreover, we would love to see our colleagues develop and test, in the field, alternative interview procedures. Ultimately, the field needs to embrace systematic research as the basis for further development and progress. In the absence of such a commitment, we will continue to experience a depressing reality in which children are ill-served by the agencies ostensible designed to protect and support them.

CONCLUSION

The research reviewed in this book demonstrates how much we have learned about children's communicative and memory retrieval capacities and how this information can be used by investigators to maximize the value of their interviews with alleged victims of abuse. The Protocol described in this book operationalises the principles about which there has been clear expert professional consensus. Use of the Protocol dramatically improves the performance of investigative interviewers by helping them to elicit information that is more likely to be accurate because it is recalled by the child freely rather than in response to information and probes provided by the interviewer. The Protocol also seems to help investigators elicit more clues to guide their search for corroborative evidence. In addition, interviewers are better able to judge

whether victims are telling the truth when the interviews are conducted using the Protocol. On the other hand, although the Protocol shows interviewers how to build rapport with alleged victims, it does not really focus on ways of overcoming reluctance to disclose abuse, and the version of the Protocol designed for interviews with suspected victims who would rather not talk has yet to be validated. This is an important caveat, because more than a third of suspected victims do not report abuse when formally interviewed in forensic contexts. Similarly, special techniques may be needed when interviewing children and adults with learning, communicative, or intellectual difficulties and these, too, have not yet been addressed in forensic contexts, despite the evident need for such techniques in light of evidence that these individuals are both disproportionately vulnerable to maltreatment and less likely to be the beneficiaries of either effective intervention or justice in court.

In all, although we believe that development of the Protocol has permitted considerable progress in the way in which children are interviewed forensically, much more work is needed before we can feel confident that we are collectively doing all we can both to protect vulnerable children from further abuse and to ensure that innocent adults are not accused of crimes they did not commit because forensic interviewers failed to elicit accurate information from young informants. Obviously, the Protocol remains a 'work-in-progress' and is likely to continue developing to accommodate the results of new research.

Investigative Interview Protocol

I. INTRODUCTION

1. "Hello, my name is _____ and I am a police officer. [Introduce anyone else in the room; ideally, nobody else will be present.] **Today is _____ and it is now _____ o'clock. I am interviewing _____ at _____."**

"As you can see, we have a video-camera and microphones here. They will record our conversation so I can remember everything you tell me. Sometimes I forget things and the recorder allows me to listen to you without having to write everything down."

"Part of my job is to talk to children [teenagers] **about things that have happened to them. I meet with lots of children** [teenagers] **so that they can tell me the truth about things that have happened to them. So, before we begin, I want to make sure that you understand how important it is to tell the truth."** [For younger children, explain: **"What is true and what is not true"**].

"If I say that my shoes are red (or green) **is that true or not true?"**

[Wait for an answer, then say:]

2. "That would not be true, because my shoes are really [black/blue/etc.**]. And if I say that I am sitting down now, would that be true or not true** [right or not right**]?"**

[Wait for an answer.]

3. "It would be [true/right**], because you can see I am really sitting down."**

"I see that you understand what telling the truth means. It is very important that you only tell me the truth today. You should only tell me about things that really happened to you."

[Pause]

4. "If I ask a question that you don't understand, just say, 'I don't understand.' Okay?"

[Pause]

"If I don't understand what *you* say, I'll ask you to explain."

[Pause]

5. "If I ask a question, and you don't know the answer, just tell me, 'I don't know."

"So, if I ask you, 'What is my dog's name?' [Or "my son's name"**] what would you say?"**

[Wait for an answer.]
[If the child says, "I don't know," say:]

6. "Right. You don't know, do you?"

[If the child offers a GUESS, say:]

"No, you don't know because you don't know me. When you don't know the answer, don't guess – say that you don't know."

[Pause]

7. "And if I say things that are wrong, you should tell me. Okay?"

[Wait for an answer.]

8. "So if I said that you are a 2-year-old girl [when interviewing a 5-year-old boy, etc.], **what would you say?"**

[If the child does not correct you, say:]

"What would you say if I made a mistake and called you a 2-year-old girl [when interviewing a 5-year-old boy, etc.]**?"**

[Wait for an answer.]

9. "That's right. Now you know you should tell me if I make a mistake or say something that is not right."

[Pause]

10. "So if I said you were standing up, what would you say?"

[Wait for an answer.]

"OK"

II. RAPPORT BUILDING

"Now I want to get to know you better."

1. "Tell me about things you like to do."

[Wait for child to respond.]
[If the child gives a fairly detailed response, skip to question 3.]
[If the child does not answer, gives a short answer, or gets stuck, you can ask:]

2. "I really want to know you better. I need you to tell me about the things you like to do."

[Wait for an answer.]

3. "Tell me more about [activity the child has mentioned in his/her account. AVOID FOCUSING ON TV, VIDEOS, AND FANTASY]**."**

[Wait for an answer.]

III. TRAINING IN EPISODIC MEMORY

Special Event

[NOTE: THIS SECTION CHANGES DEPENDING ON THE INCIDENT.]

[BEFORE THE INTERVIEW, IDENTIFY A RECENT EVENT THE CHILD EXPERIENCED – FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL, BIRTHDAY PARTY, HOLIDAY CELEBRATION, ETC. – THEN ASK THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT THAT EVENT. IF POSSIBLE, CHOOSE AN

EVENT THAT TOOK PLACE AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME AS THE ALLEGED OR SUSPECTED ABUSE. IF THE ALLEGED ABUSE TOOK PLACE DURING A SPECIFIC DAY OR EVENT, ASK ABOUT A DIFFERENT EVENT]

"I want to know more about you and the things you do."

1. "A few [days/weeks**] ago was [**holiday/birthday party/the first day of school/other event]. **Tell me everything that happened on [**your birthday, Easter, etc.].**"**

[Wait for an answer.]

1a. "Think hard about [activity or event**] and tell me what happened on that day from the time you got up that morning until [**some portion of the event mentioned by the child in response to the previous question].**"**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Note: Use this question as often as needed throughout this section.]

1b. "And then what happened?"

[Wait for an answer.]
[Note: Use this question as often as needed throughout this section.]

1c. "Tell me everything that happened after [some portion of the event mentioned by the child**] until you went to bed that night."**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Note: Use this question as often as needed throughout this section.]

1d. "Tell me more about [*activity* mentioned by the child**]."**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Note: Use this question as often as needed throughout this section.]

1e. "Earlier you mentioned [*activity* mentioned by the child**]. Tell me everything about that."**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Note: Use this question as often as needed throughout this section.]
[If the child gives a poor description of the event, continue with questions 2–2e.]
[Note: If the child gives a detailed description of the event, say:

"*It is very important* that you tell me everything you remember about things that have happened to you. You can tell me both good things and bad things."

Yesterday

2. "I really want to know about things that happen to you. Tell me everything that happened yesterday, from the time you woke up until you went to bed."

[Wait for an answer.]

2a. "I don't want you to leave anything out. Tell me everything that happened from the time you woke up until [some *activity* or portion of the event mentioned by the child in response to the previous question]**."**

[Wait for an answer.]

2b. "Then what happened?"

[Wait for an answer.]
[Note: Use this question *as often as needed* throughout this section.]

2c. "Tell me everything that happened after [some *activity* or portion of the event mentioned by the child] **until you went to bed."**

[Wait for an answer.]

2d. "Tell me more about [*activity* mentioned by the child]**."**

[Wait for an answer. Note: Use this question *as often as needed* throughout this section.]

2e. "Earlier you mentioned [*activity* mentioned by the child]**. Tell me everything about that."**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Note: Use this question *as often as needed* throughout this section.]

Today

IF THE CHILD DOES NOT PROVIDE AN ADEQUATELY DETAILED NARRATIVE ABOUT YESTERDAY, REPEAT QUESTIONS 2 TO 2E ABOUT TODAY, USING "THE TIME YOU CAME HERE" AS THE CLOSING EVENT.

"It is very important that you tell me everything about things that have *really* happened to you."

THE SUBSTANTIVE PART OF THE INTERVIEW

IV. TRANSITION TO SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

"Now that I know you a little better, I want to talk about why [you are here] today."

[If the child starts to talk, wait.]

[If the child gives a summary of the allegation (Example: 'David touched my wee-pee', or 'Daddy hit me'), go to question 10 on page 291.]

[If the child gives a detailed description, go to question 10a on page 291.]

[If the child doesn't make an allegation, continue with question 1.]

1. "I understand that something may have happened to you. Tell me everything that happened from the beginning to the end."

[Wait for an answer.]

[If the child makes an allegation, go to question 10 on page 291.]

[If the child gives a detailed description go to question 10a on page 291.]

[If the child does not make an allegation, continue with question 2.]

2. "As I told you, my job is to talk to kids about things that might have happened to them. It is very important that you tell me why [you are here/ you came here/ I am here]. Tell me why you think [your mum, your dad, your grandmother] brought you here today [or 'why you think I came to talk to you today']."

[Wait for an answer.]

[If the child makes an allegation, go to question 10 on page 291.]

[If the child gives a detailed description, go to question 10a on page 291.]

[If the child does not make an allegation and you don't know that there was previous contact with the authorities, go to question 4 or 5.]

[If the child does not make an allegation and you know that there was previous contact with the authorities, go to question 3.]

3. "I've heard that you talked to [a doctor/ a teacher/ a social worker/ any other professional] at [time/location]. Tell me what you talked about."

[Wait for an answer.]

[If the child makes an allegation, go to question 10 on page 291.]

[If the child gives a detailed description, go to question 10a on page 291.]

[If the child does not make an allegation and there are no visible marks, proceed to question 5.]

[When marks are visible, the investigator has been shown pictures of or told of marks, or the interview takes place in the hospital or right after the medical examination say:]

4. "I see [I heard] **that you have [**marks/ injuries/ bruises**] on your _____. Tell me everything about that."**

[Wait for an answer.]

[If the child makes an allegation, go to question 10 on page 291.]

[If the child gives a detailed description, go to question 10a on page 291.]

[If the child does not make an allegation, proceed with question 5.]

5. "Has anybody been bothering you?"

[Wait for an answer.]

[If the child confirms or makes an allegation, go to question 10 on page 291.]

[If the child gives a detailed description, go to question 10a on page 291.]

[If the child does not confirm, and does not make an allegation, proceed with question 6.]

6. "Has anything happened to you at [location/time of alleged incident**]?"**

[Note: Don't mention the name of the suspect or any details of the allegation.]

[Wait for an answer.]

[If the child gives a detailed description, go to question 10a on page 291.]

[If the child confirms or makes an allegation, go to question 10 on page 291.]

. [If the child does not confirm or does not make an allegation, continue with question 7.]

7. "Did someone do something to you that wasn't right."

[Wait for an answer.]

[If the child confirms, or makes an allegation, go to question 10 on page 291.]

[If the child gives a detailed description, go to question 10a on page 291.]

[If the child does not confirm or does not make an allegation, proceed to question 8.]

PAUSE. **ARE YOU READY TO GO ON? WOULD IT BE BETTER TO TAKE A BREAK BEFORE GOING FURTHER?**

IN CASE YOU DECIDE TO GO AHEAD, YOU SHOULD HAVE FORMULATED SPECIFIC VERSIONS OF QUESTIONS 8 AND 9, USING THE FACTS AVAILABLE TO YOU, BEFORE THE INTERVIEW. BE SURE THAT THEY SUGGEST AS FEW DETAILS AS POSSIBLE TO THE CHILD. IF YOU HAVEN'T FORMULATED THESE QUESTIONS, TAKE A BREAK NOW TO FORMULATE THEM CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU PROCEED.

8. "Did somebody [briefly summarise allegations or suspicions *without* specifying names of alleged perpetrator or providing too many details**]."** (For example, "Did somebody hit you?" or "Did somebody touch your wee-pee [private parts of your body]?")

[Wait for an answer.]

[If the child confirms or makes an allegation, go to question 10 on page 291.]

[If the child gives a detailed description, go to question 10a on page 291.]

[If the child does not confirm or does not make an allegation, proceed to question 9.]

9. "Your teacher [the doctor/psychologist/neighbour] **told me /showed me [**"that you touched other children's wee-pee"/"a picture that you drew"**], and I want to find out if something may have happened to you. Did anybody [**briefly summarise allegations or suspicions *without* specifying the name of the alleged perpetrator or providing too many details**]." [**For example**:** "Did somebody in your family hit you?" or "Did somebody touch your wee-pee or other private parts of your body?")]

[Wait for an answer]

[If the child confirms or makes an allegation, go to question 10 on page 291.]

[If the child gives a detailed description, go to question 10a on page 291.]

[If the child does not confirm or does not make an allegation, go to section XI on page 299.]

V. INVESTIGATING THE INCIDENTS

Open Ended Questions

10. [If the child is *under the age of 6*, REPEAT THE ALLEGATION IN THE CHILD'S OWN WORDS without providing details or names that the child hasn't mentioned.]

[then say:]

"Tell me everything about that."

[Wait for an answer.]

[If the child is *over the age of 6* simply say:]

"Tell me everything about that."

[Wait for an answer.]

10a. "Then what happened?" or **"Tell me more about that."**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Use this question as often as needed until you have a complete description of the alleged incident.]

[NOTE: IF THE CHILD'S DESCRIPTION IS GENERIC, GO TO QUESTION 12 (SEPARATION OF INCIDENTS). IF THE CHILD DESCRIBES A SPECIFIC INCIDENT, CONTINUE WITH QUESTION 10b]

10b. "Think back to that [day/night] **and tell me everything that happened from** [some preceding event mentioned by the child] **until** [alleged abusive incident as described by the child]**."**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Note: Use this question as often as needed to ensure that all parts of the incident are elaborated.]

10c. "Tell me more about [person/object/activity mentioned by the child]**."**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Note: Use this question as often as needed throughout this section.]

10d. "You mentioned [person/ object/activity mentioned by the child]**, tell me everything about that."**

[Wait for an answer.]

[Note: Use this question as often as needed throughout this section.]

[If you are confused about certain details (for example, about the sequence of events), it may help to say:]

"You've told me a lot, and that's really helpful, but I'm a little confused. To be sure I understand, please start at the beginning and tell me [how it all started/ exactly what happened/how it all ended/ etc]."

Focused Questions Relating to Information Mentioned by the Child

[If some central details of the allegation are still missing or unclear after exhausting the open-ended questions, use direct questions. It is important to pair open 'invitations' with direct questions whenever appropriate.]

[Note: First focus the child's attention on the detail mentioned, and then ask the direct question.]

Following is the General Format of Direct Questions:

11. "You mentioned [person/object/activity]**, [**Completion of the direct question**.]**

Examples

1. "You mentioned you were at the shops. Where exactly were you?" [Pause for a response] **"Tell me about that shop."**

2. "Earlier you mentioned that your mother 'hit you with this long thing'. Tell me about that thing."

3. "You mentioned a neighbour. Do you know his/her name?" [Pause for a response] **Tell me about that neighbour."** [Do *not* ask for a description.]

4. "You said that one of your classmates saw that. What was his/her name?" [Pause for a response] **"Tell me what he was doing there."**

Separation of Incidents

12. "Did that happen one time or more than one time?"

[If the incident happened one time, go to the *Break* on page 294].

[If the incident happened more than one time, continue to question 13. REMEMBER TO EXPLORE INDIVIDUAL REPORTED INCIDENTS IN DETAIL AS SHOWN HERE.]

Exploring Specific Incidents When There Were Several

Open - Ended Questioning

13. "Tell me everything about the *last time* [*the first time / the time in [some location] / the time [some specified activity / another time you remember well]*** something happened."**

[Wait for an answer.]

13a. "And then what happened?" Or **"Tell me more about that."**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Note: Use this question as often as needed throughout this section.]

13b. "Think back to that [day/night**] and tell me everything that happened, from [**preceding events mentioned by the child**] until [**alleged abusive incident as described by the child]."**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Note: Use variants of this question as often as needed until all parts of the incident are elaborated.]

13c. "Tell me more about [person/object/activity mentioned by the child**]."**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Note: Use this question as often as needed throughout this section.]

13d. "You mentioned [person/object/activity mentioned by the child**]. Tell me everything about that."**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Note: Use this question as often as needed throughout this section.]

Focused Questions Relating to Information Mentioned by the Child

[If some central details of the allegation are still missing or unclear after exhausting the open-ended questions, use direct questions. It is important to pair open 'invitations' with direct questions, whenever appropriate.]
[Note: First focus the child's attention on the detail mentioned, and then ask the direct question.]

Below is the general format of direct questions:

   14. "You mentioned [person/object/activity]**,**

   [How/when/where/who/which/what] [Completion of the direct question.]"

Examples

1. "You mentioned you were watching TV. Where exactly were you?"

   [*Wait* for a response]

   "Tell me everything about that."

2. "Earlier you mentioned that your father 'whacked you'. Tell me exactly what he did."

3. "You mentioned a friend was there. What is her/his name?"

   [*Wait* for a response]

   "Tell me what s/he was doing."

4. "Earlier you said that your uncle 'fingered you' ['French kissed'/'had sex with you'/etc]**. Tell me exactly what he did."**

REPEAT THE ENTIRE SECTION FOR AS MANY OF THE INCIDENTS MENTIONED BY THE CHILD AS YOU WANT DESCRIBED. UNLESS THE CHILD HAS SPECIFIED ONLY TWO INCIDENTS, ASK ABOUT "THE LAST," THEN "THE FIRST," THEN "ANOTHER TIME YOU REMEMBER WELL."

VI. BREAK

[Tell the child:]

   "Now I want to make sure I understood everything and see if there's anything else I need to ask. I will just [think about what you told me/go over my notes/go and check with NAME]**"**

   [During the break time, review the information you received, see if there is any missing information, and plan the rest of the interview. BE SURE TO FORMULATE FOCUSED QUESTIONS IN WRITING.]

After the Break

[To elicit additional important information that has not been mentioned by the child, ask additional direct and open-ended questions, as described above. Go back to open-ended questions ("Tell me more about that") after asking each direct question. After finishing these questions, proceed to section VII.]

VII. ELICITING INFORMATION THAT HAS *NOT* BEEN MENTIONED BY THE CHILD

[You should ask these focused questions only if you have already tried other approaches and you still feel that some forensically important information is missing. It is very important to *pair* open invitations ("Tell me all about that") whenever possible.]

[Note: In case of multiple incidents, you should direct the child to the relevant incidents in the child's own words, asking focused questions only after giving the child an opportunity to elaborate on central details.]

[BEFORE YOU MOVE TO THE NEXT INCIDENT, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE OBTAINED ALL THE MISSING DETAILS ABOUT EACH SPECIFIC INCIDENT.]

The general Format of Questions Focused on Information that has NOT been Mentioned by the Child

"When you told me about [specific incident identified by time or location] **you mentioned** [person/object/activity]**. Did/was** [focused questions]**?"**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Whenever appropriate, follow with an invitation; say:]

"Tell me all about that."

Examples

1. "When you told me about the time in the basement, you mentioned that he took off his trousers. Did something happen to your clothes?"

[Wait for an answer.]
[After the child responds, say:]

"Tell me all about that."

[Wait for an answer.]

2. "When you told me about the last time, you mentioned that he touched you. Did he touch you over your clothes?"

[Wait for an answer.]
[After the child responds, say:]

"Tell me all about that."

[Wait for an answer.]

3. "Did he touch you under your clothes?"

[Wait for an answer.]
[After the child responds, say:]

"Tell me all about that."

4. "You told me about something that happened on the playground. Did somebody see what happened?"

[Wait for an answer.]
[When appropriate, say:]

"Tell me all about that."

5. "Do you know whether something like that happened to other children?"

[Wait for an answer.]
[When appropriate, say:]

"Tell me all about that."

6. "You told me about something that happened in the barn. Do you know when that happened?"

VIII. IF CHILD FAILS TO MENTION INFORMATION YOU EXPECTED

Use only the prompts that are relevant.

If you know of conversations in which the information was mentioned say:

1. **"I heard that you talked to** [ ] **at** [time/place]**. Tell me what you talked about."**

[If child doesn't provide more information, ask question 2; If child does give some more information, say:]

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts, such as **"Tell me about that."** If necessary.]

If you know details about prior disclosures and the information has not been disclosed to you, say:

2. "I heard [s/he told me] **you said** [summarize allegation, specifically but without mentioning incriminating details if possible]**. Tell me everything about that."**

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts, such as **"Tell me about that."** If necessary.]

3. If something was observed, say:

    a. "I heard that someone saw [ ]**. Tell me everything about that."**

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts, such as **"Tell me about that."** If necessary.]

If child denies, go to 3b.

    b. "Has anything happened to you at [place/time]**? Tell me everything about that."**

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts, such as **"Tell me about that."** If necessary.]

If child has/had injuries or marks say:

4. "I see [I heard] **that you have** [marks/bruises] **on your** [ ]**. Tell me everything about that."**

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts, such as **"Tell me about that."** If necessary.]

5. "Did somebody [summarize without naming the perpetrator (unless child already named her/him) or providing most incriminating details]**?"**

If child denies, go to next section.

If child acknowledges something say:

    "Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts, such as **"Tell me about that"** if necessary.]

IX. INFORMATION ABOUT THE DISCLOSURE

"You've told me why you came to talk to me today. You've given me lots of information and that really helps me to understand what happened."

[If child has mentioned telling someone about the incident(s), go to question 6. If child hasn't mentioned telling anyone, probe about possible immediate disclosure by saying:]

1. "Tell me what happened after [the last incident]**."**

[Wait for an answer.]

2. "And then what happened"?

[Note: Use this question as often as needed throughout this section.]

[If the child mentions a disclosure, go to question 6. If not, ask the following questions.]

3. **"Does anybody else know what happened?"**

[Wait for an answer. If the child identifies someone, go to Question 6.] [If the child confirms but doesn't mention the name, ask:]

"Who?"

[Wait for an answer. If the child identifies someone, go to Question 6.]

4. "Now I want to understand how other people found out about **[**the last incident]**."**

[Wait for an answer. If the child identifies someone, go to Question 6.] [If there is missing information, ask the following questions.]

5. "Who was the first person besides you and [the perpetrator] **to find out about** [alleged abuse as described by the child]**?"**

[Wait for an answer.]

6. "Tell me everything you can about how ["the first person mentioned by the child"] **found out."**

[Wait for an answer.]
[Then say:]

"Tell me more about that."

[Wait for an answer.]
[If the child describes a conversation, say:]

"Tell me everything you talked about."

[Wait for an answer.]
7. **"Does anyone else know about** [alleged abuse as described by the child]?"

[Wait for an answer.]
[Then say:]

"Tell me more about that."

[If the child described a conversation, say:]

"Tell me everything you talked about."

[Wait for an answer.]
[if the child does not mention that he/she told somebody ask:]

REPEAT ENTIRE SECTION AS NECESSARY FOR EACH OF THE INCIDENTS DESCRIBED BY THE CHILD.

X. CLOSING

[Say:]

"You have told me lots of things today, and I want to thank you for helping me."

1. **"Is there anything else you think I should know?"**

[Wait for an answer.]

2. **"Is there anything you want to tell me?"**

[Wait for an answer.]

3. **"Are there any questions you want to ask me?"**

[Wait for an answer.]

4. **"If you want to talk to me again, you can call me at this phone number."** [Hand the child a card with your name and phone number.]

XI. NEUTRAL TOPIC

"What are you going to do today after you leave here?"

[Talk to the child for a couple of minutes about a neutral topic.]

"It's [specify time] **and this interview is now complete."**

Focused Questions About Tactile Contact [Touching]

1. "I want to be sure I understand everything you told me, so I need to ask you some more questions. I may ask you again about things you've already talked about. To begin, I want to show you a picture of a girl/boy like you."

[Show the child the drawings.]

[If child has mentioned a single incident but did not specifically describe tactile contact, proceed to question 3. If child has mentioned multiple incidents, use incident-defining cues to draw attention to each incident in turn, beginning the discussion of each incident by saying:]

2. "You told me about a time when you and [name provided by child; if no-one was named, say s/he"] were [use incident-defining cue]."

[If child has clearly described tactile contact, skip question 3 and proceed to 4]

3. "Did any part of [Name person as child did. If no name was provided say "his/her"] body touch any part of your body?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me more about that" or "And then what happened?"] until the child provides no new information. Then, hand the child a pen and say:]

4. "Show me on this picture where s/he touched you."

[*Wait* for a response]

5. "Did any part of [Name person as child did. If no name was provided say "his/her"] body touch any *other* part of your body?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that" or "And then what happened?"] until the child provides no new information. Then, hand the child a pen and say:]

6. "Show me on this picture where s/he touched you."

[*Wait* for a response]

7. "Did s/he touch this part [point to mouth. For children under eight, add "*the part you eat with*"]?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that touching"] until the child provides no new information. Have him/her mark the mouth.]

8. "Did s/he touch this part [point to breast/chest area. For children under eight, add "*the part your shirt covers*"]?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no new information. Have the child mark the chest area.]

9. "Did s/he touch this part [point to genital area. For children under eight, add, "*the part you wee with*"]?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no new information. Have the child mark the genital area.]

10. "Did s/he touch this part [point to arm. For children under eight, add, "*the part you draw with*"]?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no new information. Have the child mark the arm.]

11. "Did s/he touch this part [point to bottom. For children under eight, add, "*the part you poo with*"]?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no new information. Have the child mark the bottom.]

12. "Did s/he touch this part [point to lower leg. For children under eight, add, "*the part you walk with*"]?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no new information. Have the child mark the lower leg.]

If child has not indicated how the alleged perpetrator touched her/him, ask:

13. "You mentioned that [name] touched your [use child's word, if s/he used one and point to part identified by child. If child did not name the body part, simply point and say "touched you here."]. "Which part of her/his body touched you there?"

[*Wait* for a response]

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no further information.]

14. "Is there any other touching you can tell me about?"

[Wait for a response. If the child says, "No", move on to Question 15. If child says, "Yes", say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no new information.]

15. "Now I want to show you a picture of a man/woman/boy/girl like [him/her/Name if provided by child]."

[Show the child new drawings.]

16. "Did you touch any part of [Name person as child did. If no name was provided say "his/her"] body?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no further information. If the child does not specify where touch occurred, say:]

17. "Show me on this picture where you touched her/him."

[*Wait* for a response. Have the child mark the location.]

18. "Did you touch any *other* part of [Name person as child did. If no name was provided say "his/her"] body?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no new information. If the child does not specify where touch occurred, say:]

19. "Show me on this picture where s/he touched you."

20. "Did you touch this part [point to mouth. For children under eight, add "*the part s/he eats with*"]?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no further information. Have the child mark the mouth.]

21. "Did you touch this part [point to breast/chest area. For children under eight, add "*the part her/his shirt covers*"]?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no further information. Have the child mark the chest area.]

22. "Did you touch this part [point to genital area. For children under eight, add, "*the part s/he wees with*"]?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no further information. Have the child mark the genital area.]

23. "Did you touch this part [point to arm. For children under eight, add, "*the part s/he writes with*"]?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no further information. Have the child mark the arm.]

24. "Did you touch this part [point to bottom. For children under eight, add, *the part s/he poos with*"]?"

[*Wait* for a response]

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no further information. Have the child mark the bottom.]

25. "Did you touch this part [point to lower leg. For children under 8, add, "*the part s/he walks with*"]?"

If child responds affirmatively and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no further information. Have the child mark the lower leg.]

If child has not indicated how s/he touched the alleged perpetrator, ask:

26. "You mentioned that you touched her/his [use child's word, if s/he used one and point to part identified by child. If child did not name the body part, simply point and say "touched you here."]"

"Which part of your body touched that [pointing to part identified by child] part of her/his body?"

[*Wait* for a response]

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up as necessary with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no further information.]

27. "Is there any other touching you can tell me about?"

[Wait for a response. If the child says "Yes" and the information is new, say:

"Tell me everything about that."

[Follow up with other open-ended prompts [such as "Tell me about that"] until the child provides no further information.]

Interview Guide for Youthful Suspects

[Please, make sure to record the following information, before you start the interview]

My name is _____ . **The date is** _____ . **The time is** _____ . **I am interviewing** _____ **at** _____ .

A. INTRODUCING SELF

Hello, my name is _____ . **I am a social worker/policeman and part of my job is to talk to children/adolescents about things that have happened to them.**

As you can see, I have a tape recorder/video recorder here. I will record our conversation because it is important that I remember everything you tell me. Sometimes I forget things and the recorder allows me to listen to you without having to write everything down.

It was reported to the police that you have [summary of the allegation**;** e.g., "you have done something to a child named Mary"]**, and I have been asked to talk to you about that event.**

[If suspect is under age 12, go to section C or D. If suspect is above age 12, proceed to section B].

B. WARNING SUSPECTS OVER 12 YEARS OF AGE

You do not have to tell me anything. If you choose to talk to me, I will give this information to the police for further investigation. If a decision is made to press charges, whatever you tell me today can be used as evidence against you. In my experience, it is easier to help those adolescents who tell us exactly what happened so we can offer them therapy to help them stop committing such acts.

Do you understand everything I have told you?

[Please wait for the child's response. If the child says that s/he did not understand something you said, you should repeat the previous warning, sentence by sentence, checking the child's understanding of every sentence.]

Will you tell me what happened?

[Please wait for the child's response]

[If the child interrupts you to begin saying what happened, proceed to section F. If the child says s/he is willing to tell you what happened, proceed to section D. If the child says s/he is not ready to tell you what happened, go to section C.]

C. RELUCTANT CHILDREN

1. As I told you, you have the right to remain silent, but I want you to listen to me carefully because I have something very important to tell you. Children who perform sexual acts with other children need help and treatment. Children who refuse to say what happened are likely to continue performing such acts, and this will complicate matters for them. If you have done such things, it is important that you tell me everything, so that we can try to help you. OK?

[Wait for the child's response. If the child is not willing to talk, say the following:]

2. [The victim] said many things about you. This is an opportunity for you to say what happened. Do you want to tell me?

[Wait for the child's response. If the child is not willing to talk, say the following:]

3. **I want you to take a few minutes to think because this is a very important matter. If you prefer to write things down instead of talking to me, you can have a pen and paper.**

[Wait briefly.]

Are you willing to share with me what you have thought/ written?

[Wait for the child's answer. If the child refuses to talk, say:]

4. **If you don't want to talk now, we will stop now. If you change your mind and decide to talk to me at another time, you can call me at** [phone number] **or you can come to my office again.**

D. RAPPORT BUILDING

Before we talk about the reason why you are here, I would like to get to know you better. Tell me about yourself and about your family.

[Wait for the child's response.]

[If the child does not respond, gives a short response, or gets stuck, you can ask:]

1. **I really want to know you better. What else can you tell me about yourself?**

[Wait for the child's response.]

2. **What else can you tell me about your family?**

[Wait for the child's response.]

You've told me about yourself and about your family. Now, I want to hear about your school. Tell me some of the things you like to do at school.

[Wait for the child's response.]

[If the child does not respond, gives a short answer, or gets stuck, you can ask:]

What else can you tell me about your school?

[Wait for the child's response.]

Tell me about your teacher.

[Wait for the child's response.]

Tell me about the kids in your class.

[Wait for the child's response.]

E. EPISODIC MEMORY PRACTICE

Now, I want you to tell me, in as much detail as possible and in the correct sequence, about something that has happened to you. Tell me how you celebrated [Rosh Hashana, Sukkot, Chanukah, or a Birthday]**.**

[Wait for the child's response.]

Tell me exactly what you did.

[Wait for child's response.]

Now, I would like you to tell me everything about [Rosh Hashana dinner, constructing a Sukkah, Chanukah party, Birthday party, etc.]**.**

Think about [Rosh Hashana dinner, Chanukah party, constructing a Sukkah, etc.]**.**

Tell me in detail what happened from the time it started until it ended.

[Wait for the child's response. If the child does not give details, say:]

It is important that you tell me about an event that happened to you in as much detail as possible. Try to remember and describe for me again [the party, dinner, event] **I asked you about.**

F. SUBSTANTIVE PART

Now that I know you a little better, I want to talk about why you are here today. You said before, that you were willing to talk about what happened with [the alleged victim]**. It is important that you tell me the truth so I will know exactly what happened. I want you to tell me, exactly and in detail, what happened to** [the alleged victim]**, from the beginning to the end.**

[Wait for the child's description. Continue your investigation using sections J and K.]

Did you do something with [the victim] **one time or more than one time?**

[If the child agrees with the victim that there was only one incident, proceed with investigation of this one incident using sections L and M, as necessary.]

[If the child says that there was more than one incident, or the victim has reported more than one incident, check by asking specifically whether events described by the victim happened, starting with the best-supported details. For example, ask:]

Did anything happen to [the victim] **at** [a specific time and/or place]**?**

[If the child confirms, proceed:]

I want you to tell me, exactly and in detail, what happened to [the victim] **at** [a specific time and place]**, from the beginning to the end.**

[Wait for the child's response. If the child gives a description, continue the investigation using Sections J and K.]

[In this fashion, investigate each event that the victim described.]

[Only after describing all the times (events), proceed to Sections L and M, as necessary.]

G. COPING WITH DENIALS

[If the child denies part or all of the allegation, use questions 1–7, as relevant. If the child responds to one of the interviewer utterances, encourage free recall using Sections J and K.]

1. **Tell me what happened.**

   [If the child denies, bring up what the victim said on that topic, and encourage the child to respond using open questions. For example, if the suspect denies that he knows the alleged victim, ask:]

2. [The victim] **reported that you know each other. Tell me about that.**

   [If the child describes one aspect of the event, while denying other central details, confront him/her with the victim's contrasting claims, but be sure to include an open question. For example:]

[The victim] **reported that you** [took off her/his clothes]**. Tell me what happened from the beginning to the end.**

[If the suspect still denies the central details, bring up relevant contrasting evidence, and continue with an open question. For example:]

3. [A witness] **has reported that s/he saw you playing with** [the victim]**.**

Tell me about that. OR

The physician who examined [the alleged victim] **found** [evidence of assault].

Tell me about that.

[If the child continues to deny the alleged incident, say:]

4. Now, I want you to listen carefully. I have something important to tell you. Children who perform sexual acts with other children need help and need treatment. They can get this treatment only if they say what happened. Children who refuse to talk may continue to behave in the same way and they may mess up their lives. If you have done such things, it is important that you tell me now so that we can try to help you.

[If the child still denies the allegations say:]

5. I must say I am confused. On the one hand [the victim] **says that** [the allegation] **or** [the witness] **says that** [details reported by witness] **or the physician says that** [the examination results]**, and on the other hand, you say this isn't so. How can you explain what they say?**

[Wait for the child's response. If the child continues to deny, add:]

6. I want you to think for a few minutes about this. It is very important. In a few minutes we will talk again. If you prefer to write things down, you can use this pen and paper.

[Wait for the child's response.]

Can you share with me your thoughts or what you wrote?

[If child still refuses, end this interview as follows:]

7. I have explained to you how important it is that you tell me if something has happened. If you want to talk to me later at any time, please call me at [phone number] **or come to my office.**

H. COPING WITH SUSPECT MINIMISATION

1. [If the suspect tried to minimise the severity of the alleged incident reported by the victim, say:]

   I am still confused about some of the facts. Think carefully, again, about what happened with [the victim] **. You said that you** [the suspect's version of the events]**, but the information we have indicates that** [the allegation version] **. Is it possible that you did that? Tell me about it.**

   [Wait for the child's response.]

2. [If the suspect does not describe any physical violence described by the victim add:]

   You said that [the victim] [cooperated/refused to cooperate] **but the information we have indicates that** [the use of physical violence]**. Is it possible that you really** [specific violent or coercive acts] **? Tell me everything about that.**

   [Wait for the child's response.]

3. [If the suspect minimises the number of incidents reported by the alleged victim, say:]

   You said that it only happened [number of times]**, but according to the information we have, it happened more often. Is it possible that it really happened more often? Tell me everything about that.**

I. CLOSING

[After the child has described an incident]

1. **I really appreciate everything you have told me. Now, I would like you to help me understand how you came to do such things.**

   [Wait for the child's response.]

2. **Has someone ever done similar things to you?**

   [Wait for the child's response. If the child says that he was a victim of abuse, investigate according to the guidelines for investigating victims of sexual abuse. If the child denies being victimised, continue with the questions:]

3. Is there anything else I should know?

[Wait for the child's response.]

4. Do you have any questions that you want to ask me?

[Wait for the child's response.]

5. Is there anything else you want to tell me?

[Wait for the child's response.]

If you want to talk to me at any time, you can call me at [phone number] **or come to my office.**

We have now finished the interview. I hope that we will be able to help you, so that you will not get involved in such crimes.

End of recording. The time is _____ .

J. ADDING FREE INFORMATION

I would like to understand what happened from the beginning to the end.

Tell me everything you can remember, as best you can.

[Wait for the child's response.]

[If the child does not respond or gives a brief description, add:]

I would like to know everything that happened that time. I want to understand what happened from the beginning to the end. Tell me everything you remember, as best you can.

[Wait for the child's response.]

[After the child has given free description, ask for more information using open questions like: "And then what happened?" or "What else can you tell me?"]

[Proceed to Section K]

K. EXPANDING ACCOUNTS OF EVENTS MENTIONED BY THE SUSPECT

[Continue to ask the child about the event by drawing his/her attention to important details mentioned in his/her account [location, aspects of abuse, clothing] but not yet described in sufficient detail.]

You have mentioned [cream, stick . . .] **. Tell me all about that.**

[Ask in the same way, as many times as necessary, about or details that need clarification or elaboration.]

[Only after all events have been described, proceed, if necessary, to Section L]

L. EXPLORING IMPORTANT DETAILS THAT THE SUSPECT DID NOT MENTION

[If significant details (such as the locations) are not provided about an event that the suspect has mentioned, ask about them at this stage using the direct question technique. To get more details, when it is possible, proceed with an open question. For example:]

Did you [have clothes on or not] **?**

[Wait for the child's response and then add:]

Tell me exactly what happened?

[Proceed to Section M, if necessary.]

M. RELIABILITY OF THE SUSPECT'S VERSION

1. [If some details reported by the victim were not mentioned by the suspect, or were described differently, provide the victim's account as part of an invitation to describe what happened. For example:]

    [The victim] **mentioned** [cream/stick . . .] **. Could you tell me everything about that? OR You said that it happened a long time ago, but** [the victim] **said it happened three days ago. What can you tell me about that?**

    [Repeat this as many times as necessary to verify such details. If several events were mentioned, make reference to all disputed details about all the events mentioned.]

2. [If there is other information that contradicts the suspect's account, use these details as part of additional invitations. For example: "Your shirt was found in the basement, can you tell me everything about that?"]

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