

NON-OFFENDING PARENT INTERVIEW ISSUES

During the interviewing process questions should be asked to determine the following:

1. Whether the non-offending parent believes the child's disclosure to be true;
2. Whether the non-offending parent had prior suspicion or knowledge of the abuse; whether he/she questioned the child or the offender about his/her suspicions, and how the child or offender responded; and whether he/she participated in any way in the abuse;
3. Whether he/she fears the offender, particularly, whether he/she fears physical or emotional harm to the child or to him/herself as a result of the disclosure;
4. Whether the child has previously displayed indications of abuse, such as: avoiding the offender; receiving special treatment from the offender; complaining about the offender's behavior; sexual acting out; running away from home; inappropriate sex play with other children; any physical signs of abuse such as bleeding or bladder infections; frequent nightmares; and other behavioral indicators of abuse;
5. Whether, and when, the offender has had access to the child, and whether the offender has had opportunity to be alone with the child;
6. Whether the non-offending parent is either physically absent from the home or emotionally detached from the family; does he/she work long hours, go out often, assign responsibility for child care and other household responsibilities to his/her spouse or older children;
7. Whether there has been a history of substance abuse, domestic violence, marital problems, or prior sexual abuse in the family;
8. Clarify the family's roles and behaviors with regard to privacy in bedrooms or bathrooms; the degree to which family members are clothed in each others' presence; sleeping arrangements in the home;
9. Whether the non-offending parent can corroborate or verify specific information from the child's allegations; such as, the offender did take the

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child camping for a weekend last month; the offender does play poker and other card games with the child; the offender does threaten to ground the child if she dates; the offender does have a Polaroid camera.

10. Whether there are other children in the home, or immediate neighborhood, who may have been victimized or are at potential risk of victimization.

11. What is the NOP's relationship with the AP like, i.e.

- a. sexual relationship
- b. marital history
- c. history of violence
- d. history of arrests for any family member
- e. mental health treatment for any family member
- f. any awareness past allegations of sexual abuse by AP
- g. employment history of NOP and AP

In situations of extrafamilial abuse, the child victim's parent(s) should be asked similar questions. They should also be asked to share as much information as they can about the alleged offender, including their knowledge of his/her contacts with other children.

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