

INTERVIEWER QUESTION TYPES – DEFINITIONS

OPEN / RECALL QUESTIONS (also known as an open-ended prompt or free recall question) tap recall memory. Encourage a child to talk descriptively about a topic and require the child to provide information using his/her own words.

Narrative Invitation – Open-ended questions that give little direction.

- “Tell me more.”
- “Describe [...].”
- “What happened next?”

A narrative invitation may follow a reflection of the child’s statement or a portion of the child’s statement.

- “You said that mama yells when she gets mad. Tell me about your mama yelling.”

Focused Narrative Request – Open-end questions that cue the child to a specific topic (person, location, activity, object, or time frame) previously discussed. Focused narrative requests tap free recall memory while providing structure to the conversation and encouraging a child to talk more about a topic in their own words.

- “Tell me more about ____?”
- “You said _____. Tell me more about _____.”

A focused narrative request may follow a reflection of the child’s words.

- “You said that the man had messy hair. Tell me about the messy hair.”
- “You said your brother did a bad thing. Tell me about the bad thing.”

“Wh” Questions/Detail Questions – Open-ended question that begins with “wh” (usually what). Children do not understand the forensic details required and not all known and relevant information will be included in the child’s narrative description. Detail questions begin with “who,” “what,” “where,” “how,” or “when” and are useful in directing a child to think about specific elements of an event already under discussion. Detail questions should always be framed in such a way as to give the child permission to say that he/she does not know the answer.

- “What happened next?”
- “What kind of things do you do with _____?”

Specific – Questions that can be answered with one word/simple phrase

- “What is your brother’s name?”
- “How old are you?”

CLOSED / RECOGNITION / OPTION-POSING QUESTIONS – Child is provided options from which to choose or further respond

Multiple-Choice – May be useful in clarifying a detail question when the child seems confused by the intent of the question. The preferred format is to provide two or more choices and a third less specific option (at times only two options are available) and to follow with an open prompt (pairing).

- “Were you in the living room or the kitchen or somewhere else?”
- “Did that happen one time or more than one time?”

Yes/No – Questions that allow for a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response and are used to cue the child’s memory about specific information not addressed in the child’s narrative description in a manner that checks whether or not the child actually has a piece of knowledge (i.e. “Did he say something to you?” as opposed to “What did he say to you?”).

Interviewers should be cautious about using yes/no questions to address substantive elements of abuse (i.e. specific acts or people). With some children, yes/no questions may be employed as a last resort. Without additional narrative description or clarification, a singular response to a yes/no question is inconclusive.

- “Did he say something to you?”
- “Did anything else happen that day?”

Questions that Introduce Information – Information is provided in the question by the interviewer and the child is asked to respond:

Questions that contain information from an externally derived source (such as doctor’s report or original allegation)

- “I heard that the police came to your house last night. Tell me all about that.”

Questions that ask about other possibilities

- “Did he ever do something to your body?”

Suggestive – Questions that introduce too much information to the child and/or seem to imply an answer

- “It is okay to tell me that your father has been doing bad things to you.”
- “It’s okay to tell me what your father did. Your brother already told me about it.”

Facilitation – (reflection/paraphrasing) Other responses that demonstrate the interviewer’s interest, checks for clarification, or helps to focus the conversation (makes use of child’s previous words and statements)

- “You said that your father has been doing bad things to you for a long time.”
- “Your father touched your tuti.”

At times, the interviewer is only providing information to the child (i.e. recording/ interview instructions/etc.). These interviewer utterances can be coded as **Information**.