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Increasing true reports without increasing false reports:

Best practice interviewing methods and open-ended wh- questions

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Abstract

A consensus has emerged among forensic interviewers that narrative practice rapport building, introducing the allegation with a "why" question about the reason for the interview, and eliciting allegation details with invitations (broad free recall questions) constitute best practice. These methods are favored because they increase true reports with little risk of increasing false reports. We discuss how interviewers can maintain this balance with open-ended wh- questions designed to elicit details often missing from children's narratives. Conversely, we show that recognition questions (including yes/no and forced-choice questions) pose risks of impairing children's productivity and accuracy, and discuss how future research can find ways of replacing recognition questions with open-ended wh- questions.

Increasing true reports without increasing false reports:

Best practice interviewing methods and open-ended wh- questions

The special issue of the APSAC Advisor on forensic interviewing (2020) reveals a remarkable degree of consensus regarding best practice. Although the terminology used to describe interviewing techniques varies, there is general agreement regarding the utility of narrative practice rapport building, initiating the allegation phase of the interview with a "why" question about the reasons for the interview (such as "tell me why you came to see me today"), and eliciting details as much as possible with "invitations," which are very broad open-ended requests for recall, including "what happened next?" and "tell me more about [content mentioned by the child]."

The agreement regarding best practice is particularly remarkable because of the wide diversity of authors, including the interviewing pioneers Kathleen Faller (Faller, 2020) and Mark Everson (Everson et al., 2020), representatives of the CornerHouse protocol (Stauffer, 2020) and ChildFirst training programs (Farrell & Vieth, 2020), and the proponents of the NICHD protocol (Stewart & LaRooy, 2020). The consensus has been built through the efforts of APSAC (APSAC, 2012) and the OJJDP (Newlin et al., 2015) to establish best practice guidance, and several experts who contributed to those efforts are also represented in the special issue (Kenniston, 2020; Steele, 2020; Toth, 2020). We were personally heartened to note that the Ten-Step Interview (Lyon, 2005), a modification of the NICHD protocol, also played a role in shaping the emerging consensus (Kenniston, 2020; Stewart & LaRooy, 2020; Toth, 2020).

In this paper we will discuss how the logic underlying this consensus can be extended to recommendations for asking children wh- questions (what, how, who, when, where, why). One of the major challenges for forensic interviewers is how best to elicit specific types of important

information often missing after interviewers have asked invitations, that is, after interviewers have elicited a narrative through "what happened" questions, and requested elaboration through "tell me more about [content]" questions. Here, the consensus is less clear. For example, Stewart and LaRooy (2020) discussed the use of wh- questions about children's subjective reactions to abuse, such as "how did you feel?" They noted that although the NICHD protocol does not include direct questions about feelings, the Utah modification of the NICHD protocol recommends them. Similarly, the APSAC guidelines (2012) also recommend asking children's feelings questions.

At first glance, the move from invitations to wh- questions implicates the tradeoff identified by Everson and Rodriquez (2020) between false positives and false negatives. False positives include false details, whereas false negatives occur when one concludes falsely that something didn't occur. At their worst, false positives mean false allegations of abuse, and at their worst false negatives mean false denials. One of the goals of invitations is to minimize suggestibility, and thus reduce false positives, whereas more specific questions often increase the likelihood of error (Lamb et al., 2018). On the other hand, invitations may overlook certain details, including the child's feelings during abuse, whereas more specific questions can capture those details (Lyon et al., 2012; Stolzenberg et al., in press). Given these considerations, one might characterize the choice between invitations and wh- questions as a choice between minimizing false positives and minimizing false negatives.

However, Everson and Rodriguez (2020) were careful to note that considering both false positives and false negatives "*often* requires a tradeoff" (p. 92; italics added). The best argument for invitations is that they elicit longer and richer and more convincing reports from children who have been abused (Brown et al., 2013; Lamb et al., 2018). Hence, they increase true

information without increasing false information. This helps to explain why implementation of the NICHD protocol increased the successful prosecution of child sexual abuse (Pipe et al., 2013). Indeed, most of the methods that have achieved consensus in the field as best-practice have done so because they avoid a stark tradeoff between false positives and false negatives.

With respect to specific details, we will argue that one can identify productive open-ended wh- questions that also increase true details with little risk of increasing false details. Asking children who have disclosed abuse "how did you feel" is one such question. Moreover, future progress in protocol development can identify additional wh- questions that increase true information without sacrificing accuracy.

At the same time, we will show that there is an important line between wh- questions and recognition questions, which include yes/no questions, questions that can be answered yes or no, and forced-choice questions, questions that provide a choice among options with an "or. Some protocols support the use of the "how did you feel" question, but add that if the child has difficulty responding, the interviewer should consider asking a question such as "did it hurt, or tickle, or something else?" (Stauffer, 2020). Hence, they support asking a forced-choice question about feelings, albeit with the "something else" option.

Moving from wh- questions to recognition questions raises more serious concerns about the risks of increasing false positives in order to increase true positives. Furthermore, cognizant of Everson and Rodriguez' (2020) concern that interviewers not focus exclusively on false positives, we will emphasize how recognition questions don't solve the problem of high rates of false negatives. Indeed, they create false negatives that are particularly damaging to children's credibility, because they entail explicit denial of details that a reluctant child might later choose to report.

In what follows, we discuss how narrative practice, introducing the allegation with a "why" question, and maximizing the use of invitations avoid stark tradeoffs between false positives and false negatives. Noting that "why" questions are not invitations, but wh- questions, we'll introduce the concept of open-ended wh- questions, and contrast their advantages with the dangers of recognition questions. Illustrating the tradeoffs, we'll discuss research on clothing placement and subjective reactions to abuse. We'll then suggest future areas for identifying productive open-ended wh- questions, and discuss what interviewers can do when they feel recognition questions are necessary. Our hope is to help create a consensus around the use of open-ended wh- questions.

Narrative Practice

Narrative practice, also known as episodic memory training, has been shown to increase the productivity of abuse reports (Sternberg et al., 1997) and to increase the accuracy of information produced in lab studies (Roberts et al., 2004). There are other likely benefits as well: it helps to build rapport, enables the interviewer to assess the child's comfort and developmental level, and allows the interviewer to become accustomed to the child's speech. Evidence of ill-effects only emerge if narrative practice goes on too long, and therefore it is recommended that interviewers take about five to seven minutes (Hershkowitz, 2009).

An underappreciated benefit of narrative practice is that children's reluctance to participate provides a strong hint that the child is reluctant to disclose, which counsels postponement of direct questions about the allegation since they are likely to lead to a denial (Hershkowitz et al., 2006). This doesn't mean that narrative practice actually increases the likelihood of a disclosure, and decreases false denials; indeed experimental evidence suggests that it doesn't do so (Lyon et al., 2014). But it means that as we move into an era in which

multiple interviews are understood as warranted (and often necessary; Blasbalg et al., in press), it provides a means to identify children who are going to deny true abuse if we push them too hard.

Introducing the Allegation with a "Why" Question

Protocols and guides nearly universally recommend that interviewers ask children a question like "tell me why you came to talk to me today" when turning to the allegation. Of course, the question will only be effective if children know why they are being interviewed, and this is largely dependent on whether the child has previously disclosed abuse. However, since sexual abuse is usually discovered because of a disclosure, this will be true in a large percentage of sexual abuse cases (Lyon et al., in press), and the question has been found to be highly effective (Lamb et al., 2018). If the child discloses abuse, it is also generally agreed that interviewers should elicit as much information as possible with invitations such as "tell me everything that happened," "what happened next," and "tell me more about [content mentioned by child]" questions. Individual episodes are elicited by asking the child to report "everything that happened" the "last time," the "first time," and other times the child can recall.

This approach reduces false allegations because of the non-suggestive nature of the questions. The interviewer is not suggesting content to the child, and therefore cannot be accused of tainting the child's report. But just as important is the way in which the approach reduces the likelihood of false denials. If a child fails to disclose abuse when asked a "tell me why" question, the child is not denying that abuse occurred. If the child is reluctant or forgetful (or if the child really doesn't know why they are being interviewed), they will provide a "don't know" response. If the child doesn't disclose in response to the "tell me why" question, the interviewer asks additional questions, but introduces content gradually in order to allow the child who has something to report to do so without excessive prompting.

When a child discloses, moving to invitations in order to elicit a complete narrative ensures that a false story isn't embellished by suggestive questioning, but also ensures that a true story won't be undermined by suggested content. Furthermore, continuing to ask invitations in order to elicit specific episodes of abuse when the abuse was repeated reduces the likelihood that the child's report will confuse different episodes, which would undermine the child's credibility.

Wh- Questions vs. Invitations

It is important to note that the question "tell me why you came to talk to me," is not an invitation, but a wh- question, also known as a "directive" in the NICHD terminology (Henderson et al., 2020). It is nevertheless unobjectionable because, although it assumes the child has a reason to talk to the interviewer, it does not suggest what that reason is. Moreover, as with other wh- questions (what, how, who, when, and where), it queries recall, rather than recognition memory. The child must generate the to-be-remembered information, rather than affirm or deny (yes/no question) or choose (forced-choice) information suggested by the interviewer.

In order to understand how to think about wh- questions, it is helpful to think more about invitations. We train our students to identify two types. The first use the word "happened." These include questions about "what happened," including "tell me everything that happened," and "what happened next," and, after the child mentions a place, "what happened in the [place]," or if the child mentions an event, "what happened when [the event]." Note that they assume that *something* happened, but beyond that, they provide no content other than what the child has provided. The second simply ask the child to "tell me more" about a detail the child has provided. Note that they assume that the child has *something* more to offer, but beyond that, they suggest no content.

Technically, "what happened next" is presumptive, because it presumes that something happened next, and asking "tell me more" assumes that the child has more to tell. However, if nothing more happened, or the child has nothing more to tell, the child is fully capable of answering "nothing." By the same token, many wh- questions presume information, but present little danger of suggestion. "What did *he* do" and "What did *you* do" are wh- questions that presume people did things, but are easily answered with "nothing." They are less preferred to invitations not because they are suggestive, but because they are more specific, and thus may overlook a detail. That is, something may have happened even if someone didn't *do* anything. For that reason, they are not optimal questions for initiating a narrative, but they are excellent questions for obtaining more specific information.

Invitations are preferred to wh- questions because they are less specific, giving the child free reign to report anything that they remember. As we noted above, they lead to longer and more productive responses. They often lead to recall of idiosyncratic content that is unlikely to be the product of coaching or suggestion. However, precisely because they are less specific, they are less likely to lead to particular types of information, and this is where wh- questions may be useful supplements.

In our interviews, we initially focus on obtaining a chronological narrative, and thus rely on "what happened next" questions. If a child provides three details that appear to be chronological when first asked to "tell everything" (either about a narrative practice topic or the abuse allegation), we subsequently ask "what happened next" questions until the child has completed their narrative. If the child provides fewer than three details, or details that appear jumbled, we help initiate their narrative by following up with "what's the first thing that happened" and then continue with "what happened next" questions. Our follow-up questions will

vary depending on whether the child's initial narrative clearly relates a single episode, multiple episodes, or a script report.

As we build on the child's initial narrative, in addition to asking "tell me more" questions to follow up, we also ask wh- questions about specific components of the children's story, which we discuss below. And this is where the protocols and guides appear to differ. In our view, one can move to many wh- questions after invitations without increasing the likelihood of false details or reducing the likelihood of true details. In turn, one can follow up answers to wh- questions with invitations. On the other hand, we are especially careful to avoid yes/no, forced-choice, and some types of wh- questions when eliciting abuse reports.

The Problems With Recognition Questions (Yes/No and Forced-Choice)

As noted above, wh- questions elicit recall memory because children must generate the to-be-remembered information. Recognition questions, which include yes/no and forced-choice questions, present the to-be-remembered information in the question. Recognition questions have both advantages and disadvantages. It is easier to recognize information than to recall information. Therefore, one can facilitate memory by asking recognition questions. But it is also easier to answer recognition questions when one *doesn't* know the answer, and therein lies the problem.

"Response availability" is the ease with which a question can be answered. Recognition questions have high response availability. At a very young age, children learn how to answer yes/no questions: with yeses and no's, nods and shakes of the head (Horgan, 1978). Similarly, very young children are able to answer forced-choice questions by choosing one of the options (Sumner et al., 2019). Because it is so easy to answer recognition questions, children guess more often and say "don't know" less often (Waterman et al., 2000). Guesses will lead to inaccurate

information and inconsistencies, because a child's guess on one occasion might not match their guess on another.

In addition to guesses, children will exhibit response biases to recognition questions. If questions are incomprehensible, 2-year-olds and young 3-year-olds tend to answer "yes," but by 4, children usually answer "no" (Fritzley & Lee, 2003). If questions ask about something plausible, young children are more likely to answer "yes" (Rocha et al., 2013). If questions ask about undesirable acts, young children tend to answer "no" (Talwar & Crossman, 2012).

Even among children who don't exhibit response biases, recognition questions tend to elicit unelaborated answers (Lyon et al., 2019). That is, if a question can be answered yes or no, children will simply answer yes or no. If a question can be answered simply by choosing an option, children will only choose an option. An extreme example of this is when children are asked "do you know" questions that contain an embedded wh- question, such as "do you know where it happened?" An immature response is an unelaborated "yes," without an answer to the embedded "where" question (Evans et al., 2017). Because the question can be answered yes, young children will simply answer yes.

Response biases and unelaborated responses lead to a lead to a litany of problems with recognition questions (Lyon, 2014; Lyon et al., 2019). Because children's responses are so brief, the interviewer does virtually all the talking. This means that the interviewer's perspective prevails, and unusual details are likely to be overlooked. Unusual details are helpful in distinguishing between reports that are more likely to be true and reports that are more likely to be the product of coaching or suggestion. Furthermore, if the interviewer is asking recognition questions and the child is giving unelaborated answers, then almost all of the words are generated by the interviewer, meaning that the chances of miscommunication due to difficult

terminology or grammar are maximized. And since the child can easily provide an answer, they are unlikely to indicate when they don't understand.

In sum, recognition questions involve a trade-off. On the one hand, it is easier to recognize than to recall, and so recognition questions will facilitate children's ability to remember details. But on the other hand, it is easier to give a false answer to recognition questions than to recall questions, and therefore recognition questions increase the likelihood of false answers. Furthermore, because recognition questions lead to unelaborated answers, they lead to other problems, including overlooking unusual details and obscuring misunderstandings.

At first glance, opposition to recognition questions might be falling into the trap described by Everson & Rodriguez (2020). Rather than avoiding false positives at all costs, they argue that interviewers should value sensitivity (identifying true allegations) as much as they value specificity (avoiding false allegations). In support of recognition questions, one can point to how they facilitate memory. Specifically, one can cite research in the laboratory demonstrating that children are more likely to disclose transgressions when asked recognition questions than when asked recall questions (Lyon et al., 2014).

However, this argument overlooks the ways in which recognition questions undermine true allegations. Imagine a case in which a child has been abused, but is asked a series of recognition questions. First, if asked yes/no screening questions about abuse, it is easy for the child to simply answer "no." The child is now on record as denying abuse, and any subsequent disclosure will appear less convincing as a result of this inconsistency. Because of response biases and guesses, the child is likely to provide inaccurate and inconsistent information. Because of unelaborated responses, the child is unlikely to provide unusual details and unlikely to let the interviewer know when the questions are confusing. Recognition questions might

increase the likelihood of eliciting a true allegation, but they also decrease the likelihood of eliciting a convincing allegation.

The Advantages of Wh- Questions

Wh- questions avoid many of the problems with recognition questions. When children don't know the answer to a question, they are less likely to guess and more likely to acknowledge that they don't know when asked a wh- question (Waterman et al., 2000). They are also more likely to inform the interviewer when they don't understand a wh- question, and if they answer regardless, their misunderstanding is more likely to be apparent. This is because an incomprehending response to a recognition question will look sensible: the child will have simply said "yes" or "no" or chosen an option.

As the reader is already aware, wh- questions are a bit tricky to categorize, because the most open-ended wh- questions are invitations (e.g., "what happened?"). Other wh- questions are quite open-ended (e.g. "what did you do?"), but not quite invitations. The most productive wh- questions appear to be those that ask about actions (Ahern et al., 2018), which is fortunate, both because children are likely to better remember actions (than descriptions; Peterson et al., 1999), and because the most important details in abuse cases tend to concern the actions of familiar people in familiar places. Although protocols and practice guides talk about maximizing the use of invitations, few would complain about wh- questions asking about actions.

The real difficulty arises with those wh- questions that are more like recognition questions. As we noted, recognition questions elicit lots of guessing because it is so easy to respond to them. Some wh- questions ask about concepts for which children have a limited number of easily retrievable (but often wrong) responses. Without knowing much about what individual words mean, young children learn that some words refer to number, some to color,

and some to time (Sandhofer & Smith, 1999; Shatz et al., 2010; Wynn, 1992). Thus, they are able to guess when asked how many, what color, or how long. That is, they understand, for example, that "how many" calls for a number, and they have learned some number words, and therefore they can provide a number in response to a number question. Moreover, they can do so in the same way that they answer recognition questions: with only a word or two. For this reason, these types of wh- questions are appropriately called "closed-ended," and should be treated much how we treat recognition questions.

Clothing Placement

The challenge for interviewers is therefore how to obtain specific information without asking recognition or closed-ended wh- questions. We have studied these issues in several specific areas and have advice to give in each. First, in sexual abuse cases, the intrusiveness of the touching is often an issue. If the touching is more intrusive, then one can be more confident that the touching was abusive, rather than accidental, affectionate, or playful. Traditionally, interviewers would ask questions such as "did he touch you over the clothes or under the clothes?" or "were your clothes on or off?" Of course, these are forced-choice questions, and we know, based on both research about forced-choice questions generally, and research on young children's responses to clothing specifically, that children will simply choose one of the options. They will do so regardless of whether they know the answer or not, and even worse, when they know that both answers are wrong. That is, clothes are often neither totally on nor totally off, but intermediate, and yet if one asks "were your clothes on or off?" young children are inclined to choose one or the other (Wylie et al., in press; Stolzenberg et al., 2017a). For example, imagine that the child's clothes were pulled down to her knees. Both "on" and "off" are misleading responses.

We have shown that a simple wh- question, "where were your clothes" is more likely to elicit an intermediate response than yes/no questions or forced-choice questions, both in the lab (Wylie et al., in press; Stolzenberg et al., 2017a) and in the courts (Stolzenberg & Lyon, 2017). This illustrates the advantages of many wh- questions. If the interviewer has done a good job of eliciting a narrative, and asked "what happened next" and "tell me more about [detail]" questions, they might elicit a spontaneous description of the clothes being removed or displaced. But if the child doesn't spontaneously mention whether something happened to their clothes, the "where"' question is a useful supplement, and it avoids the difficulties with recognition questions.

Some practitioners have argued that the risks of forced-choice questions are reduced by asking an open-choice or something-else question: "were your clothes on or off or something else?" Unfortunately, these questions were advocated (and appear to have been widely adopted) without a research base. Had practitioners sought the advice of researchers, they would have been warned that children's tendency to guess in response to forced-choice questions might lead them to simply choose one of the options when given an open-choice question, including simply answering "something else." More speculatively, researchers would worry that children would choose "on" or "off" regardless of the "something else" option, because their tendency to guess would lead them to choose the option that seemed closest to the right answer. The fact that the questions appeared effective in the field would be treated with caution, because without knowing what actually occurred, one could not determine whether children's answers were accurate.

There is now research support for these worries: Studying 3- to 6-year-old children, we have found in two studies that when clothing is neither on nor off, open-choice questions are less likely than wh- questions to elicit intermediate responses, and quite likely to elicit unelaborated

choices, including unelaborated “on” and “off” responses (Wylie et al., in press; Stolzenberg et al., 2017a). Unfortunately, there is only one other study on open-choice questions, and it is also critical of their use (London et al., 2017). Further research is needed to determine what to make of the children who respond “something else.” Can they elaborate on their response? Wouldn’t one need to follow-up their response with a “where” question, and if so, isn’t it therefore better to simply start with the “where” question?

Even the “where” question leaves room for improvement. Children are more likely to describe intermediate placement with “where” questions, but nowhere near 100% (also known as “ceiling”) performance. Furthermore, in our latest study, 3- to 6-year-olds appeared to sometimes respond “on” to “where” questions about intermediate placement because of their reticence; they were providing elliptical versions of “on the legs” or “on the arms” (Wylie et al., in press). We have also identified problems in the field. In our forensic interviews, we find that children are sometimes confused by the question, probably because we failed to specify that we wanted to know where the clothes were when the touching occurred. We suspect that “what happened to your/his clothes” may be an even better question, and this is worthy of future work.

Children’s Emotional and Physical Reactions to Abuse

Another important topic is how to elicit information about children’s subjective reactions to abuse. Children tend to exhibit little affect when disclosing and describing abuse, which can undermine their credibility (Castelli & Goodman, 2014). They often fail to spontaneously describe their emotional and physical reactions to abuse if predominantly asked “what happened” questions (Katz et al., 2016). On the other hand, we have shown that they are quite articulate if asked “how did you feel” questions (Lyon et al., 2012; Stolzenberg et al., in press), and that they can elaborate if brief responses to feelings questions (e.g., “sad”) are followed up with questions

like, “You said ‘sad.’ Tell me more about that” (Stolzenberg et al., in press). As noted above, Utah has added wh- feelings questions to its protocol (Stewart & La Rooy, 2020) and the questions are recommended by others as well (APSAC, 2012).

When children fail to respond to “how feel” questions, some groups recommend following up with an open-choice question, such as “Did it hurt, or tickle, or something else?” (Stauffer, 2020). This raises the same issues with open-choice questions with respect to clothing placement. Of course, if a child answers “something else” and then elaborates, there is less reason to worry. But if the child chooses one of the words, and either cannot elaborate on their response, or is not asked to do so, then one has to seriously consider whether the child’s response was a guess. Furthermore, the child’s subsequent use of the chosen word may now appear to be the product of suggestion.

By moving to the open-choice question, we are crossing a line from recall to recognition, from asking the child to generate a response to allowing the child to merely choose a response. On the one hand, we may be capturing true feelings that children are too inarticulate or reluctant to express, but on the other hand, we might be adding false details to the child’s report. These tradeoffs come closer to implicating the balance between sensitivity and specificity that Everson and Rodriquez (2020) describe, and reasonable minds may disagree about where the line should be drawn. But no matter one’s values, we would emphasize how children’s true reports may *appear* tainted, and in some cases actually *be* tainted by their acceptance of terms offered by interviewers. In other words, even if one focuses one’s efforts on maximizing the ability to detect abuse when it occurs, there are drawbacks in moving to open-choice questions when wh-questions fail to elicit information. We believe that continued field and experimental work can uncover interviewing methods that do not force difficult tradeoffs.

The Future for Wh- Questions

A general theme of much of our ongoing work is the potential for wh- questions to elicit information that invitations often overlook and recognition questions misstate. Many promising wh- questions appear suppositional and are therefore avoided by interviewers, but presuppose information that is easily rejected by children. For example, in our forensic interviews we routinely ask children who have narrated abuse, but failed to report conversations, what the perpetrator and the child said during the abuse. Importantly, the question does not suggest any specific content. One can still object that the question presupposes that *something* was said, but children have no difficulty in responding "nothing." On the other hand, the questions often elicit useful information evincing seduction, threats, sexual intent, and inducements to secrecy.

We suspect that some screening questions may also be phrased as wh- questions rather than recognition questions, which can help to reduce the likelihood that children will simply answer yes/no screening questions about maltreatment (such as "do people get in trouble in your house?"; Farrell & Vieth, 2020) with a curt "no" response. For example, the question "what does your [caretaker] do when they get mad at you" presupposes, but only the unexceptional fact that the caretaker has gotten angry at the child. Similarly, "what does your [caretaker 1] do when they get mad at [caretaker 2]" seems similarly innocent. Following up with "what is the worst thing that they have done" enables the interviewer to determine if the behavior is sufficiently serious to elicit concern. These questions are worthy of further study.

There are situations in which interviewers feel compelled to ask yes/no questions, and Lamb and his colleagues (2018) recommend "pairing," in which one follows up "yes" responses to yes/no questions with invitations (such as "tell me about that"). There is surprisingly little research examining the efficacy of this approach. We examined pairing in a broken toy study in

which the interviewer asked a series of yes/no questions about specific toys being broken (Stolzenberg et al., 2017b), and found that false yes responses were distinguishable from true yes responses because false yes responders were unable to elaborate when asked to say more. This suggests that the risks of false positives with yes/no questions is reduced by pairing. On the other hand, a large percentage of children (who had broken toys) simply said "no" to the yes/no questions, highlighting the way in which yes/no questions elicit false negatives. (Stolzenberg et al., 2017b). Future field studies should examine interviewers' adherence to recommendations for pairing, children's ability to elaborate on their "yes" responses, and whether children's "no" responses might be attributable to reluctance, based on subsequent disclosures.

We are hesitant to endorse the suggestion that interviewers follow-up "no" responses with a similar request to "tell me more" (Kenniston, 2020), because this may risk children feeling excessively pressured to produce content. It is reminiscent of Poole and Lindsay's (2001) study in which parents read children stories suggesting details about a visit to a science lab. When they asked yes/no questions about whether children experienced events, and asked for further details even when receiving "no" responses, they found that "children frequently denied a non-experienced event but then described it after prompting, basing their narratives on the recent suggestions from their parents" (Poole & Lindsay, Supplemental Report, 2001, p. 3).

Conclusion

Practitioners and researchers of all stripes can endorse interviewing techniques that increase productivity at the same time that they reduce error. The beauty of techniques such as narrative practice, the "tell me why" allegation prompt, and invitations is that they maximize children's ability to disclose in their own words with only minimal prompting from the interviewer. It is likely that future improvements in interviewing will further enhance children's

abilities to recall their experiences freely. At the same time, some details are resistant to "what happened next?" and "tell me more." Open-ended wh- questions provide a means by which interviewers can take careful steps towards being more specific without being suggestive. Moving toward recognition often seems necessary, but risks increasing error. The major challenge for the field is to identify questions that maintain our commitment to protect children without doing harm.

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