

NICHD Revised Protocol (Table 9.1)

Supportive Non-Suggestive Techniques and Statements

A. Addressing the child in a personal way

- Address the child in a personal way using his private name. Avoid using nicknames or terms of endearment (e.g., “sweetie”)

B. Establishing rapport

- Welcoming the child
 - “I am glad to meet you today/ to get to know you/ to get to talk.” “It’s nice to meet you. My name is _____.”
- Expressing personal interest in the child
 - “I really want to get to know you/ about things that happened to you.”
 - “Today is the first time we’ve met and it is important for me to know you better.”
- Making small gestures of good will
 - “Are you warm enough?” “Let me show you the toilets.” “Here is a glass of water for you.” “Do you want to look at the video camera?” “Do you need a short break?”

C. Reinforcement

- Reinforcement during the interview
 - “You are telling me very clearly /in detail and that’s important.” “You’re really helping me understand/ know you.” “You corrected me and that’s really important.” “I understand what you’re saying.”
 - Avoid ‘grading’ (“you’re explaining that very well”) or associating reinforcement with specific content (“You told me that you ran away, which was good.”).
- Expressing thanks and appreciation
 - “I want to thank you for your help.” “I really appreciate that you are talking with me.” “I appreciate that you’re trying to remember and tell me.” “Thank you for sharing with me.”
- Emphasizing the child’s discretion
 - “It’s up to you whether you talk to me or not. I will respect your choice.”

D. Using Rapport

- Mentioning and building on trust
 - “You’ve told me a lot about yourself and I feel I know you better.” “Now that we know each other better, you can share with me what happened.”
- Expressions of care or concern
 - “I’m here for you.” “I care about you.” “You are important to me.” “People are/ I am worried that something may have happened to you.”
 - You can specify the cause for concern (e. g., “The teacher said you were crying this morning.”)
- Portraying in interviewer as someone to disclose to
 - “If something happened, I’m here to listen to you.” “You can trust me and tell me is something happened.” “It’s okay to share secrets/problems with me.” “I talk to many kids who tell me about things that have happened to them.” “It’s my job to listen to children who have problems.”

E. Emotional Support

- Generalized comments about the child’s perceived difficulties
 - “Many children find it difficult to talk/feel ashamed at the beginning but then find it easier.” “Many children have secrets.”
- Empathy
 - “I understand it is difficult for you to tell me.” “I know it’s been a long interview.”

- Checking on the child's feeling
 - "How are you doing so far/now that we are done?" "How did you feel before we began/ during our conversation?"
- Exploring emotions
 - "Tell me more about your fears." "Tell me what you're afraid of." "Tell me why you're crying." "Tell me why you don't want to tell me." "You said you can't tell me. Tell me more about that."
- Open questions about feelings or thoughts
 - "You said you were sad/ disgusted/ wanted to run away. Tell me more about that."
- Echoing emotions
 - "You said you were sad/ you were crying."
- Acknowledging/ Accepting/ Recognizing Emotions
 - "You said that it was very painful. I can understand that/ I see what you are saying."
- Reassurance
 - "Don't worry. I won't tell other children." "you won't be late for the bus." "Nobody is going to arrest you." "Sometimes it's possible to help families which/ people who have been hurt." "Sometimes it helps children when they tell others and don't have to keep a secret."
- Removing responsibility from the child
 - "If something happened/ someone hurt you, it's not your fault." "You are not responsible for that." (Or in a generalized way: "When things happened to children, it's not their fault." "Children are not responsible when they get hurt.")
- Exploring unexpressed emotions and conflicts
 - "If there is something you are worried about, please tell me."

F. Encouragement

- Emphasizing that the child is the source of knowledge
 - "I'm asking you these questions because I was not there."
- Legitimizing expression
 - "You can talk about bad things and good things." "In this office you can tell me everything." "It is ok to tell me about these kinds of things/to say these words/ bad words." "Many children tell me what happened to them."
- Expression of confidence/ optimism
 - "I want to make it easier for you. What would help you to talk?" "Would it make it easier if you wrote it down?" "You can start talking and I'll help you by asking questions." "I am here to help."
- Encouraging non-verbal communications
 - "Could you please turn toward me." "Come on, look at me. I'd like to see your eyes."
- Encouraging disclosure
 - "It is really important that you tell me if something has happened to you."