

CHILDFIRST® FORENSIC INTERVIEW TRAINING

ChildFirst® is the forensic interview training program of Gundersen NCPTC. Students receive training on the ChildFirst® Forensic Interview Protocol, child development, memory and suggestibility, testifying in court, legal issues and preparing children for court. This 40-hour training incorporates lecture and discussion, review of electronically recorded interviews and skill-building exercises. Each student will have the opportunity to develop their interviewing skills through an interview practicum with actors and feedback from expert forensic interviewing faculty.

This course is designed for those part of a multidisciplinary team, including law enforcement officers, social workers, prosecutors, child protection attorneys, investigators and forensic interviewers.

DAY ONE

7:45-8:15 a.m. **Registration and pre-test**

8:15-9 a.m. **Welcome and overview of training**

9-9:45 a.m. **Effective interviewing**

The major forensic interviewing protocols and courses have far more similarities than dissimilarities. This workshop will address forensic interviewing issues as well as discussing the handful of differences among the leading models.

The increasing growth of racial and ethnic communities and linguistic groups within our population, each with its own cultural traits and child rearing practices, presents a challenge when responding to allegations of child maltreatment in this country. This topic is introduced here and discussed throughout the course.

9:45-10 a.m. **Break**

10-11:30 a.m. **Dynamics in child abuse**

This presentation will describe the dynamics of abuse, educate attendees on how children exhibit dynamics, demonstrate scientific support for Summit's Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome (CSAAS) and discuss how children's experiences impact the investigation, prosecution and treatment of child abuse.

11:30 a.m.-12 p.m. **Process of disclosure**

Delayed disclosures, incomplete disclosures and nondisclosure by children are not uncommon in child sexual abuse cases. In this training, we will discuss the different context and elements of children's disclosures, motivational factors that may inhibit disclosure, and models of the disclosure process. We will also explore methods to assist children through the progression of disclosure in the interview process.

CHILDFIRST® FORENSIC INTERVIEW TRAINING

- ChildFirst® was designed by and for the front-line child abuse professional.
- Teaches students to apply the latest research to real-world situations.
- Students watch videotaped child sexual abuse interviews as a means of bringing the course material to life.
- Requires students to demonstrate their interviewing skills through the interview practicum.
- Models the multidisciplinary approach.
- Encourages ongoing critiques of students' interviewing skills in order to improve technique.
- Approved by the National Children's Alliance to meet accreditation standards.

- 12-1:15 p.m.** **Lunch break**
1:15-3:15 p.m. **Child development**

As sexual abuse and victimization is increasingly addressed in the media, it is important that professionals and others understand “normal” sexual development and behavior in children and teenagers, and recognize behaviors that might indicate sexual victimization of a child, or sexually aggressive behaviors towards others. This session will also discuss issues of emotional, social, cognitive and language development in children that may impact their disclosure of and communication about witnessed or experienced traumatic experiences.

- 3:15-3:30 p.m.** **Break**
3:30-5 p.m. **Questioning children**

This session will teach participants how to overcome difficult situations during forensic interviews. Participants will understand the various types of questions that are appropriate in forensic interviews and how to employ the different question types.

DAY TWO

- 8-9 a.m.** **ChildFirst® forensic interview protocol**

This workshop examines the ChildFirst® Forensic Interview Protocol currently replicated in 20 states and 2 countries. This protocol takes a holistic approach to forensic interviews, and incorporates best practices as defined by research and practical experience. The principle of the ChildFirst® model is the best interest of the child. The cognitive, physical, emotional and psychological needs of the child are the primary concern. ChildFirst® is a model that utilizes best practice and research to employ purposes, considerations and techniques for training those investigating allegations of child maltreatment. The purposes of interview stages are discussed, and the use of media, props and tools are explored. Participants will also be exposed to issues regarding training, supervision and peer review of interviews.

- 9-11 a.m.** **ChildFirst® forensic interview protocol**
11-11:10 a.m. **Break**
11:10 a.m.-12 p.m. **ChildFirst® forensic interview protocol**
12-1:15 p.m. **Lunch break**
1:15-2:30 p.m. **ChildFirst® forensic interview protocol**
2:30- 2:45 p.m. **Break**
2:45-3:45 p.m. **ChildFirst® forensic interview protocol**
3:45-4 p.m. **Break**
4-5 p.m. **ChildFirst® forensic interview protocol**

DAY THREE

8-9:30 a.m. Anatomical dolls

When used properly, research strongly supports the use of anatomical dolls after disclosure of maltreatment in the interview process. Although there are several studies that express concerns about their utilization, these studies use the dolls in a manner that is very different from actual practice. In this workshop, forensic interviewers, prosecutors and other MDT members will learn to use anatomical dolls correctly and to be able to defend their use in court.

9:30-9:45 a.m. Break

9:45-10:45 a.m. FIRST - Your FIRST Response to Child Maltreatment

Protecting children from child abuse and maltreatment requires that everyone understand how to recognize, respond and report any form of maltreatment a child may endure. Our FIRST response is often the single most important step in effectively responding and reporting maltreatment. This presentation will discuss MDT roles and responsibilities, how to listen and respond to a child's needs.

10:45-11:15 a.m. Review of ChildFirst® protocol

11:15 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Lunch break

12:30-1:30 p.m. Preparing kids for court

Court preparation is invaluable for children required to testify in court. The purpose of court preparation is to assist the child witness in his or her ability to testify truthfully and effectively in a courtroom. This session will discuss the importance of preparing children for court, and court for children, and will provide concrete examples of courtroom modifications and child preparation techniques designed to meet the best interests of the child in court.

1:30-2:30 p.m. Blocks and block removal

There are a wide variety of issues that can delay or prevent a child from fully disclosing the details of their abuse or neglect. In this session we will talk about what causes blocks and other issues in the interview, as well as ways to remove them so that children can tell us what, if anything happened. This will include strategies for dealing with tentative disclosure and how to move from tentative disclosure to more active disclosure. It will also include recantation and problems caused by alleged perpetrators, families, special needs and interviewers.

2:30-2:45 p.m. Break

2:45-3:45 p.m. Suggestibility

Research on the memory and suggestibility of children is vast and often confusing. This session will review current and past literature on memory and suggestibility and its applicability to child abuse cases. Participants will also be exposed to interview characteristics known to have the potential to taint reports of abuse, and will understand how to evaluate the suggestibility of children and how to avoid leading and suggestive techniques in interviews with children.

3:45-4 p.m. Break

4-5 p.m. Working as a MDT to obtain corroborating evidence in cases of child abuse

A forensic interview is not a litmus test for the veracity of a child's report of maltreatment. Multidisciplinary teams should work to corroborate as much of the child's interview statement as possible – thinking beyond the direct evidence and DNA. This session discusses the

importance of corroboration and provides practical examples of the variety of elements of a child's statement that can be corroborated by the MDT, based on the forensic interview and statements obtained by others.

DAY FOUR

8-9:30 a.m. Testifying in court

This session will discuss testifying in court. It is critical for professionals to understand why they are testifying and in what capacity. It is also important that advocates for children in court appropriately and adequately use documented statements in child abuse cases for court purposes.

9:40-11:10 a.m. Hearsay

The importance of understanding the definition of hearsay, identifying hearsay exceptions and how they can be argued in court; and examining hearsay in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court case, *Crawford v. Washington* will be addressed. Case law will also be discussed to demonstrate specific points in the presentation.

11:10-11:30 a.m. Course review

11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Lunch break

12:45-1 p.m. Preparation for actor exercises

Each trainee will conduct an interview with a trained actor portraying a child with abuse in their history. The trainees will employ the ChildFirst protocol and practice the skills they learned during the week. Each interview will be preceded by a team staffing and followed by a debriefing.

1-1:45 p.m. Exercise: Student interview and feedback #1

1:45-2:30 p.m. Exercise: Student interview and feedback #2

2:30-2:40 p.m. Break

2:40-3:25 p.m. Exercise: Student interview and feedback #3

3:25-4:10 p.m. Exercise: Student interview and feedback #4

4:10-4:20 p.m. Break

4:20-5 p.m. Exercise: Student interview and feedback #5

DAY FIVE

8-8:45 a.m. Exercise: Student interview and feedback #6

8:45-9:30 a.m. Exercise: Student interview and feedback #7

9:30-9:40 a.m. Break

9:40-10:25 a.m. Exercise: Student interview and feedback #8

10:25-11:10 a.m. Exercise: Student interview and feedback #9

11:10 a.m.-12 p.m. Exercise: Student interview and feedback #10

12-1:15 p.m. Final examination

1:15-2:15 p.m. Lunch break

2:15-2:45 p.m. Closing