

# Investigating Sexual & Gender Based Violence



## *INTERVIEWS*

# Four distinct groups an investigator would have to deal with when interviewing:

1. *Complainants*: a person or group that makes a complain
2. *Victims*: the person(s) who suffered
3. *Suspects*: person(s) believed to be guilty
4. *Witnesses*: person(s) that may have seen or heard an incident

# *Interviewing witnesses & victims*

The Peace Model:

**P** - Planning and Preparation

**E** – Engage and Explain

**A** - Account

**C** – Closure

**E** - Evaluate

# P- Planning and Prepare

- Understanding the purpose of the interview
- Defining the aims & objectives of the interview
- Understanding & recognising the points to prove
- How will the interview assist the investigation?
- What is known about the interviewee & what needs to be established?
- What are the legal requirements for this interview?
- What offences are being investigated & what are the points to prove? Not only the one behind the reason for arrest, but other possible ones

# P - Planning and Preparation

- What practical arrangements need to be made for this interview? For example:
  - I. Do you need to visit the scene of the crime?
  - II. Do you need to search any premises?
  - III. Where will the interview take place?
  - IV. How many interviewers are necessary?
  - V. What role will each interviewer take?
  - VI. When will the interview take place?
  - VII. What equipment do you need and does it work?
  - VIII. Do you need any exhibits/property?
- What has been disclosed pre-interview?
- Preparing the mechanics of the interview (stationery, exhibits, location, recording equipment i.e. video recorder or tape recorder)

# E- Engage and Explain

- Appropriate introduction
- First impressions are important
- Try to form a proper relationship between the interviewer & interviewee:
  - respond to the welfare needs of the interviewee and any particular fears and expectations

# E- Engage and Explain

- The *engage* phase is followed by the *explanation* phase in which the officer should outline the reasons for the interview and explain what kinds of action will be followed during the interview, particularly the routines
- Give common courtesy and treat every person with dignity and respect
- Establish what interviewee would like to be called
- Reassure person that they are a witness not a suspect
- Consider welfare and refreshment

# A - Account, Clarification & Challenge

- This term describes the stage in which the interviewee's recollection of the events of interest is obtained
- There are two accepted approaches of inducing recollection known as:
  1. The cognitive approach
  2. The conversation management approach



# A - Account, Clarification & Challenge cont.

1. **Conversation Management:** approach is when the interviewee is asked first to say what happened and the officer then subdivides the account into a number of individual parts which are enquired about in turn for further details.
2. **Cognitive Method:** the interviewee is asked to think back and mentally relive the event, initially with minimal interference from the interviewing officer. This is termed free recall. The officer does not interrupt, makes effective use of pauses and avoids leading questions. The interviewee is then encouraged to recall the event again using a different chronological order, or from a different perspective.

# C - Closure

- Be prepared for the closure. Closure should also include elements such as:
  - Summary
  - Check comprehension: has the interviewee understood the questions?
  - Invite questions or feedback
  - Give appreciation for their hard work
  - Indicate the value you place on their assistance
  - Consider victim and witness care
  - It is crucial that the officer responsible always ensures that there is a planned closure, rather than an impromptu end, to the interview

# E- Evaluate

- After each interview is completed, evaluate fully
- Evaluate information obtained
- Consider whether the objectives of the interview were achieved
- Evaluate the whole investigation in the light of information obtained
- Decide whether any further interview is required or whether other inquiries need to be made as corroboration, confirmation or as preparation for further investigation
- An important element of the evaluation is to put the interview in the context of the whole investigation and to review the information obtained along with that already available. Consideration should be given to the following:
  - the points to prove of any offence
  - evidence of a defence to the offence
  - what other areas need to be addressed during the investigation.
  - Evaluate interviewer's performance

The method of taking a statement can be broken down into five components: The PEACE MODEL

## *Conducting the initial evidence interview*

<b>P</b>	Preparation and planning
<b>E</b>	Engage and explain
<b>A</b>	Account
<b>C</b>	Closure
<b>E</b>	Evaluate



# *Interview conditions*

- Conduct interview in private place
- Make sure the room is clean and tidy
- Prevent interruptions
- Refreshments and toilet facilities accessible
- Materials to record statement
- Mobile phones off
- Remember victim may be suspicious, confused, distrustful, in pain or traumatised

# *Interview personnel*

- Keep police numbers at a minimum
- Select two police interviewers
- Female victim, child victim
- Language barrier
- Counsellor

# *Conduct*

- Interviewer attitude
- Do not display judgmental attitude
- Be professional and respectful
- Be patient and develop a rapport

# *Introduction*

- Introduce each person in the room
- Reason for presence in interview
- Victim safety and comfort
- Victim's health and well being
- Refreshments and toilet facilities



# *Explanation*

- Explain purpose of the interview
- Understand the outline of story
- Explain that questions may raise issues
- Let victim know they can have a break
- Seek consent for participation in interview
- In case of child victim consent from an independent person that represents the child

# *Content of the interview*

- The task of the interviewer is to get an outline of the story from the victim and the interview questions should focus upon all the elements of the crime defined as SGBV

# *Closing the interview*

- Interviewees are thanked before leaving
- Everyone understands what has happened during the interview
- Everyone understands what will happen in the future

# Interviewing a girl victim



# A girl's needs during an interview:

- Take some time to first build a rapport with the child:
  - Present yourself in a non intimidating way
  - Present yourself in a supportive way
  - Give the child time to become familiar with you
  - Avoid body positioning of power
  - Speak in a soft tone

- Show empathy
- Be child friendly
- Use eye contact
- Be sincere



- Assure the child that they are not in trouble
- Let child know that they did not do anything wrong
- Let them know what happened to them was wrong

- Show your encouragement through body language and facial expressions
- Keep questions short
- Use understandable words
- Use age appropriate methods
- Use open-ended questions
- Conduct interview in a quiet and private room

# ***What not to do***

- Do not over talk
- Do not comment negatively about the girl's behavior
- Never show negative emotions
- Avoid interviewing a girl in police uniform



# ***Interviewing suspects***



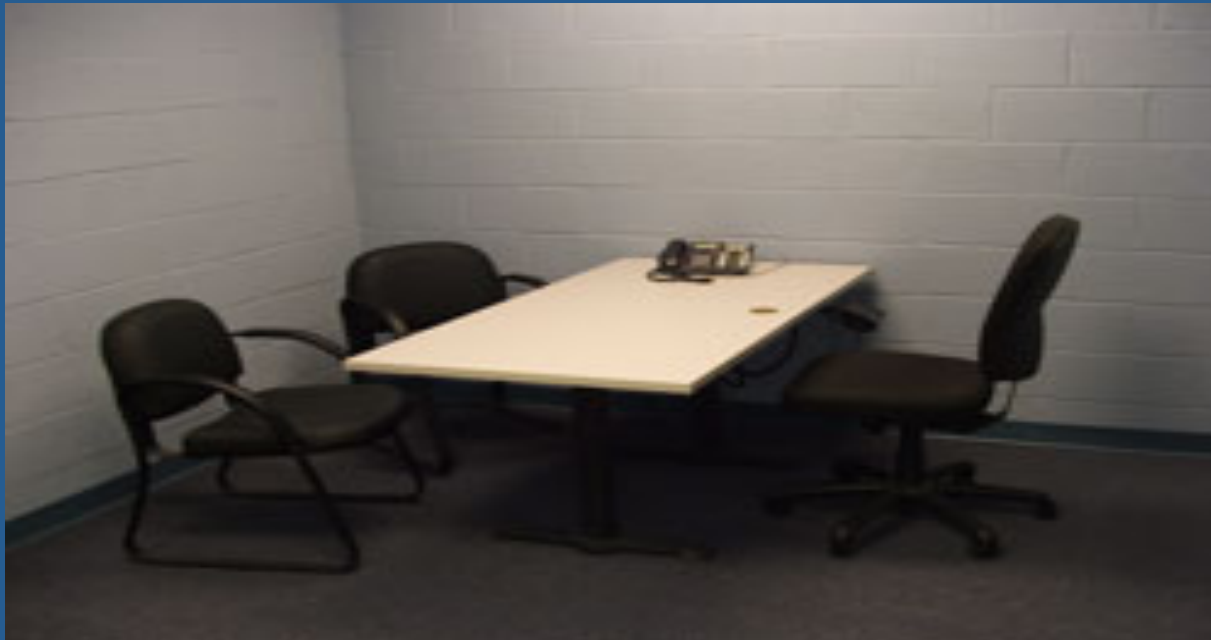
# ***Interviews***

- Respect and honour for human rights
- Use open ended questions and prompts
- Follow up with specific questions

# ***Recording interviews***

- Recording of duration time and persons present
- Interview must be clearly recorded
- In the words of the accused
- Always be mindful of the value of material evidence

# *Privacy and confidentiality when dealing with victims of sexual and gender based violence*



Helena Kennedy Centre for International  
Justice

# ***Measures for ensuring confidentiality***

- Use minimal invasive police investigative techniques
- Interview victims and witnesses in private
- Control information to media
- Medical examinations should be private
- Forensic evidence should be kept in confidence
- Official documents to be viewed only by persons involved

*Thank you*