



Ongoing Supervision, Continued Training, & Peer Review of Child Forensic Interviewers

A Bibliography

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Global Response to Child Abuse**

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Scope

This bibliography lists publications covering a wide variety of issues related to the ongoing supervision, continued training, and peer review with child forensic interviewers.

Organization

Publications include articles, book chapters, reports, and research briefs and are arranged in date descending order. Links are provided to full text publications when possible. However, this collection may not be complete. More information can be obtained in the Child Abuse Library Online.

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Ongoing Supervision, Continued Training, & Peer Review of Child Forensic Interviewers

A Bibliography

Baugerud, G.-A., Johnson, M. S., Dianiska, R., Røed, R. K., Powell, M. B., Lamb, M. E., Hassan, S. Z., Sabet, S. S., Hicks, S., Salehi, P., Riegler, M. A., Halvorsen, P., & Quas, J. (2025). [Using an AI-based avatar for interviewer training at Children's Advocacy Centers: Proof of concept](#). *Child Maltreatment*, 30(2), 242–252. DOI:10.1177/10775595241263017

This proof-of-concept study focused on interviewers' behaviors and perceptions when interacting with a dynamic AI child avatar alleging abuse. Professionals ($N = 68$) took part in a virtual reality (VR) study in which they questioned an avatar presented as a child victim of sexual or physical abuse. Of interest was how interviewers questioned the avatar, how productive the child avatar was in response, and how interviewers perceived the VR interaction. Findings suggested alignment between interviewers' virtual questioning approaches and interviewers' typical questioning behavior in real-world investigative interviews, with a diverse range of questions used to elicit disclosures from the child avatar. The avatar responded to most question types as children typically do, though more nuanced programming of the avatar's productivity in response to complex question types is needed. Participants rated the avatar positively and felt comfortable with the VR experience. Results underscored the potential of AI-based interview training as a scalable, standardized alternative to traditional methods.

Brubacher, S. P., Powell, M. B., Johnson, M. S., Cano, M. C. L., Hassan, S. Z., Riegler, M. A., Halvorsen, P., & Baugerud, G. A. (2025). [Experts' views on artificial intelligence-based child chatbots to train investigative interviewing skills](#). *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 39(2), e70048. DOI:10.1002/acp.70048

High-quality training involving interactivity, spaced practice, and feedback is necessary to foster lasting skills in investigative interviewing. Technological advancements have

yielded the possibility of using intelligent chatbots for interviewers to practice skills; but to be useful, such tools must offer quality learning experiences. In the present study, 28 interview trainers and professionals with related experience tested a chatbot for 10 min. The participants were then interviewed regarding the chatbot's utility. The professionals reflected on the learning elements and user experience. They appreciated the self-paced and reflective nature of the tool, including its ability to provide feedback. The participants' concerns—for the current chatbot and the use of AI in training more broadly—included the need for the tool to simulate learning goals and offer nuanced experiences and feedback. The participants' insights offer important considerations for the use of intelligent chatbots for skills training as the technology advances.

Haginoya, S., Sun, Y., Yamamoto, S., Mizushi, H., Yoshimoto, N., & Santtila, P. (2025). Improving questioning skills and use of supportive statements in simulated child sexual abuse interviews. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 39(1), e70031. DOI:10.1002/acp.70031

We examined the simultaneous training of questioning skills and supportive statements through simulated child sexual abuse (CSA) interviews paired with feedback. Eighty inexperienced participants were divided into four groups: no feedback, feedback on question types and case outcomes, feedback on supportive statements, and the combination of all feedback types. Each participant conducted four online simulated CSA interviews with child avatars. Results showed that combined feedback improved both questioning skills and supportive statements, demonstrating the potential for simultaneous multi-skill training. The proportion of recommended questions increased by 20%–30% on average, while supportive statements increased two- to four-fold. However, combined training showed slightly lower improvements compared with single-skill training suggesting the presence of a trade-off. These findings highlight the importance of personalized feedback and suggest that initial separate training for single

skills or additional interventions may enhance multi-skill training effectiveness, contributing to more effective interviewer training programs.

Sharman, S. J., & Danby, M. C. (2025). [Investigative interviewers' peer feedback on a child forensic interview](#). *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 1-18.
DOI:10.1007/s11896-025-09727-9

Ongoing feedback following training helps support child forensic interviewers' adherence to best practice techniques in the field. Given the challenges in employing experts to deliver this feedback, having trained interviewers provide peer feedback may be more feasible. Across two studies, we examined the accuracy and quality of trained child interviewers' peer reviews. Two samples of police officers recently trained in child forensic interviewing were recruited (Study 1 $n = 60$; Study 2 $n = 63$). Participants reviewed a transcript of a fictional child interview. They rated how well the interviewer adhered to best practice in each phase of the interview, gave comments to justify each rating, and provided two paragraphs of feedback for the interviewer. Compared to experts' ratings, participants rated the interviewer as more closely adhering to best practice in all interview phases (except the episodic memory training phase in Study 2) and identified significantly fewer elements of best practice in their explanations and feedback paragraphs. Overall, participants identified more negative than positive elements of the interviewer's practice, but participants given instructions on how to write quality feedback provided more positive comments and used a 'feedback sandwich' structure. Participants in Study 2 (who had less training in child interviewing) found the task more difficult than those in Study 1. These studies demonstrate that recently trained child interviewers provided somewhat useful peer feedback, but it was more limited—and more positive—than experts' feedback. Being informed about providing feedback increased the quality of participants' feedback, although the improvement was small.

Brubacher, S. P., Kirkland-Burke, M., Gates, V., & Powell, M. B. (2024). [Investigating a Train-the-Trainer model of supervision and peer review for child interviewers in Canadian police services](#). *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 1-15.
DOI:10.1007/s11896-024-09696-5

This project, conducted in one Canadian province, investigated whether a train-the-trainer model of supervision and peer review could improve the interviewing skills of police officers new to interviewing children. At 6 police services, 2 “interview specialists” were chosen by criteria (e.g. having conducted > 30 interviews with children), commitment (minimum 2 years to project), and performance evaluation of a mock and field interview. Specialists received additional training on leading group peer review and individual supervision. They carried out these activities over a 9-month period with 3–4 trainees (new interviewers) per site. Trainees’ interview performance was evaluated with mock and field interviews pre and post intervention. Qualitative interviews about project feasibility were carried out with the specialists at the end of the project, and the results of those interviews comprise the focus of this paper. At the time of the qualitative interviews, only 9 specialists and 5 sites remained in the project. Their interviews revealed that organizational buy-in was critical theme. Other emergent themes were that (different) training is needed for all levels of interviewing experience including interview specialists, that peer review formats are not one-size-fits-all across services, and that fostering a culture of peer review enhances cohesion.

Baugerud, G. A., Røed, R. K., Hansen, H. B., Poulsen, J. S., & Johnson, M. S. (2023). Evaluating child interviews conducted by child protective services workers and police investigators. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 53(5), 2784–2803.
DOI:10.1093/bjsw/bcac245

High-quality interviews that follow best-practice guidelines are the best means available to frontline child protective service (CPS) workers and specially trained police officers to investigate and detect abuse and maltreatment. In Norway, the CPS and police are trained in the same interview method. In the current quantitative study, we investigate

sixty-five interviews conducted by the CPS of children ages 4–8 years and seventy-two interviews conducted by the police of children ages 3–6 years. Our analysis shows that the CPS workers presented more open-ended invitations and fewer suggestive questions than the police officers. However, the CPS also asked more option-posing questions. Still, this finding may indicate that CPS workers come closer than police officers to follow best practice guidelines when they conduct child interviews. It should be noted that the police are also trained in an extended interview method, unlike the CPS workers. The number of open-ended invitations was sparse in both samples. Differences in the span of children's ages in the two samples and different legal frameworks may have affected the findings. Implications for interview training are discussed.

Røed, R. K., Baugerud, G. A., Hassan, S. Z., Sabet, S. S., Salehi, P., Powell, M. B., Riegler, M. A., Halvorsen, P., & Johnson, M. S. (2023). [Enhancing questioning skills through child avatar chatbot training with feedback](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1198235). *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*, 1198235. DOI:10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1198235

Training child investigative interviewing skills is a specialized task. Those being trained need opportunities to practice their skills in realistic settings and receive immediate feedback. A key step in ensuring the availability of such opportunities is to develop a dynamic, conversational avatar, using artificial intelligence (AI) technology that can provide implicit and explicit feedback to trainees. In the iterative process, use of a chatbot avatar to test the language and conversation model is crucial. The model is fine-tuned with interview data and realistic scenarios. This study used a pre-post training design to assess the learning effects on questioning skills across four child interview sessions that involved training with a child avatar chatbot fine-tuned with interview data and realistic scenarios. Thirty university students from the areas of child welfare, social work, and psychology were divided into two groups; one group received direct feedback ($n = 12$), whereas the other received no feedback ($n = 18$). An automatic coding function in the language model identified the question types. Information on question types was

provided as feedback in the direct feedback group only. The scenario included a 6-year-old girl being interviewed about alleged physical abuse. After the first interview session (baseline), all participants watched a video lecture on memory, witness psychology, and questioning before they conducted two additional interview sessions and completed a post-experience survey. One week later, they conducted a fourth interview and completed another post-experience survey. All chatbot transcripts were coded for interview quality. The language model's automatic feedback function was found to be highly reliable in classifying question types, reflecting the substantial agreement among the raters [Cohen's kappa (κ) = 0.80] in coding open-ended, cued recall, and closed questions. Participants who received direct feedback showed a significantly higher improvement in open-ended questioning than those in the non-feedback group, with a significant increase in the number of open-ended questions used between the baseline and each of the other three chat sessions. This study demonstrates that child avatar chatbot training improves interview quality with regard to recommended questioning, especially when combined with direct feedback on questioning.

Røed, R. K., Powell, M. B., Riegler, M. A., & Baugerud, G. A. (2023). [A field assessment of child abuse investigators' engagement with a child-avatar to develop interviewing skills](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 143, 106324. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106324

Child investigative interviewing is a complex skill requiring specialised training. A critical training element is practice. Simulations with digital avatars are cost-effective options for delivering training. This study of real-world data provides novel insights evaluating a large number of trainees' engagement with LiveSimulation (LiveSim), an online child-avatar that involves a trainee selecting a question (i.e., an option-tree) and the avatar responding with the level of detail appropriate for the question type. While LiveSim has been shown to facilitate learning of open-ended questions, its utility (from a user engagement perspective) remains to be examined. We evaluated trainees' engagement with LiveSim, focusing on patterns of interaction (e.g., amount), appropriateness of the

prompt structure, and the programme's technical compatibility. Professionals ($N = 606$, mainly child protection workers and police) were offered the avatar as part of an intensive course on how to interview a child conducted between 2009 and 2018. For descriptive analysis, Visual Basic for Applications coding in Excel was applied to evaluate engagement and internal attributes of LiveSim. A compatibility study of the programme was run testing different hardware focusing on access and function. The trainees demonstrated good engagement with the programme across a variety of measures, including number and timing of activity completions. Overall, knowing the utility of avatars, our results provide strong support for the notion that a technically simple avatar like LiveSim awake user engagement. This is important knowledge in further development of learning simulations using next-generation technology.

Yan, Z., Brubacher, S., Boud, D., & Powell, M. (2023). The influence of self-assessment practices on online training for investigative interviewing skills. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 76, 101236. DOI:10.1016/j.stueduc.2023.101236

This paper investigates how 192 trainees' self-assessment practices and personal attributes related to their success in an online interview training program. Performance was measured pre- and post-training by evaluating the use of open-ended questions and positive interviewing behaviors. Personal data and a pre-training survey on self-assessment practices (i.e., SEFI, *seeking external feedback through inquiry*; SEFM, *seeking external feedback through monitoring*; SIF, *seeking internal feedback*; and SR, *self-reflection*) were also collected. Trainees with higher levels of SEFI had larger learning gains from the training, whereas trainees with higher levels of SEFM or SIF had smaller learning gains. Trainees with lower interviewing skills before the training, and those from policing backgrounds, demonstrated larger learning gains. Younger trainees evidenced a larger increase in the use of open-ended questions, while older trainees showed greater changes in prevalence of positive interviewing behaviors. The implications of the findings for the development of training programs are discussed.

Brubacher, S. P., Powell, M. B., Steele, L. C., & Boud, D. (2022). The use of a guided peer review assessment for investigative interviewers of child witnesses. *The Journal of Forensic Practice*, 24(1), 1-17.

The aim of this work was to spark a greater conversation among practitioners and academics about professionalizing the peer review process and aiding interviewers to develop peer review tools that would support their continued growth. The authors conclude with five key tips for professionals that stem from the experiences creating and evaluating the guide in combination with existing literature and three areas for future investigation. Investigative interviewers assess their colleagues' interviews ('peer review') as a necessary part of their practice, and for their self-development. Yet, there is little guidance around what the process involves and how they might do it. Research suggests that effective peer review is supported by using guidance material. The goal of the present work was to describe the use of such a guide by a group of professionals who regularly conduct investigative interviews with children, to share what was learned with other professionals seeking to create a formalized peer review process. Sixty US child witness interviewers completed a guided peer review assessment of an anonymous interview, as an assignment at the conclusion of an 18-hour training program that focused on developing their interviewing skills. They consented to the use of their learning data in research, and the research was approved by the university's research ethics board. Peer reviews were coded for the extent to which they used the guide to support their evaluations, and the overall quality of the review to assess the utility of the guide in supporting them to conduct effective assessments. In general, the guide and instructions for providing feedback were moderately effective in supporting the peer assessments, but results suggested specific training in how to deliver peer review would be useful. Through this process, the authors identified components that would be helpful to further increase the efficacy of peer review.

Brubacher, S. P., Shulman, E. P., Bearman, M. J., & Powell, M. B. (2022). Teaching child investigative interviewing skills: Long-term retention requires cumulative training. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 28(1), 123–136. DOI:10.1037/law0000332

Successful interview training includes components beyond content learning (e.g., coding question types, practicing skills in simulated interviews), but the advantages conferred by adding components are unclear. The present research evaluated best practice questioning and behavior following the addition of a series of training components delivered in a logical order. In Study 1, randomly assigned treatment (n = 34) and control (n = 41) participants received an intensive 1-day content lecture. Next, the treatment condition completed workbook exercises (self-paced) followed by small-group practical sessions over 6 weeks. Both conditions were assessed prior to and immediately following the lecture, after the coding exercises, after the small-group sessions, and 9 months posttraining. Improved skill was observed in all participants after the lecture. The treatment condition continued to progress with cumulative training, whereas the control condition leveled off or decreased in skill with time. There was no deterioration for the treatment condition 9 months posttraining. Study 2 replicated the treatment condition from Study 1 except that all training was delivered online (with face-to-face components via videochat) and learners (n = 12) differed from Study 1 participants in their profession, country of employment, and recruitment. Study 2 results indicated that the training program could be delivered completely online with the same positive outcomes as when the program included in-person components. Overall, results indicated increased learning with the addition of components and showed that, when initial learning is intensive, skill is maintained.

Danby, M. C., Sharman, S. J., & Guadagno, B. (2022). [Testing an evaluation tool to facilitate police officers' peer review of child interviews](#). *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 37(3), 711–725. DOI:10.1007/s11896-022-09516-8

Providing child forensic interviewers with ongoing opportunities for feedback is critical to maintaining their interviewing skills. Given practical difficulties with engaging experts to provide this feedback (such as costs and workloads), the current paper explores whether a structured evaluation tool can assist police interviewers to accurately peer review interviews. A structured checklist of best practice skills was created, and participants in two studies used it to evaluate mock transcripts of child interviews that ranged in quality. Transcripts were manipulated to present the opening, transitional, and substantive interview phases as a strong, poor, or mixed performance of best practice skills. In Study 1, 57 police participants from one jurisdiction evaluated the opening and substantive phases of the transcript less accurately when the transcript contained a mixed performance of best practice and the transitional phase less accurately when it contained poor performance. In Study 2, a similar pattern of results was replicated with a sample of 37 police interviewers from a separate jurisdiction with shorter interview training. Results suggest that structured tools are helpful to inform peer review of child interviews, but tools that are too rigid might not be helpful when nuanced improvements are required.

Nathan, S., & Moret, J. D. (2022). Sexual assault forensic examiner recruitment and retention: Using simulation to teach a trauma-informed interview. *Journal of Forensic Nursing*, 18(1), 54–58. DOI:10.1097/JFN.0000000000000358

Traditionally, sexual assault nurse examiner training focuses on examination skills and evidence collection. Gathering history and supporting the patient in a trauma-informed approach are equally important components of postassault care. Simulation is an established tool in healthcare education; however, there is limited research on applying simulation to the training of sexual assault nurse examiners. The Sexual Assault Forensic

Examiner Recruitment and Retention program developed and delivered standardized patient-simulated scenarios to teach elements of trauma-informed sexual assault interviews. Simulation allowed trainees the opportunity to practice interviews and receive direct feedback from the standardized patient actor and experienced examiners. Evaluation results showed that learners valued this opportunity, endorsing that it improved their ability to conduct a forensic interview. This innovative program introduced a framework for training new examiners on trauma-informed interview techniques, using standardized patients.

Pompedda, F., Zhang, Y., Haginoya, S., & Santtila, P. (2022). [A mega-analysis of the effects of feedback on the quality of simulated child sexual abuse interviews with avatars](#). *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 37(3), 485–498.
DOI:10.1007/s11896-022-09509-7

The present study aimed to test the effectiveness of giving feedback on simulated avatar interview training (Avatar Training) across different experiments and participant groups and to explore the effect of professional training and parenting experience by conducting a mega-analysis of previous studies. A total of 2,208 interviews containing 39,950 recommended and 36,622 non-recommended questions from 394 participants including European and Japanese students, psychologists, and police officers from nine studies were included in the mega-analysis. Experimental conditions were dummy-coded, and all dependent variables were coded in the same way as in the previously published studies. Professional experience and parenting experience were coded as dichotomous variables and used in moderation analyses. Linear mixed effects analyses demonstrated robust effects of feedback on increasing recommended questions and decreasing non-recommended questions, improving quality of details elicited from the avatar, and reaching a correct conclusion regarding the suspected abuse. Round-wise comparisons in the interviews involving feedback showed a continued increase of recommended questions and a continued decrease of non-recommended questions. Those with (vs.

without) professional and parenting experience improved faster in the feedback group. These findings provide strong support for the efficacy of Avatar Training.

Powell, M. B., Brubacher, S. P., & Baugerud, G. A. (2022). An overview of mock interviews as a training tool for interviewers of children. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 129, 105685. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2022.105685

Mock (simulated) interviews can be used as a safe context for trainee interviewers to learn and practice questioning skills. When mock interviews are designed to reflect the body of scientific evidence on how questioning skills are best learned, research has demonstrated that interviewers acquire relevant and enduring skills. Despite the importance of this exercise in learning interview skill and its prevalence as a learning tool in other fields such as medicine and allied health, there has been relatively little discussion about mock interviews from an educational perspective in investigative interview training. This paper addresses that gap by providing the first comprehensive overview of the way mock interviews have been used in training interviewers of children. We describe the research that supports their utility, and the various ways they can be implemented in training: providing insight to learners; allowing opportunities for practice, feedback, and discussion; and as a standardized way to assess skill change over time. The paper also includes an overview of the cutting-edge use of avatars in mock interviews to enhance efficiency, provide unique learning experiences, and ultimately reduce training costs. We explain why avatars may be particularly useful in basic training, freeing up human trainers to facilitate mock interviews around advanced topics and discussion.

Starling, S. P., Martinez, K. A., & Frasier, L. D. (2022). [A standardized peer review program improves assessment and documentation of child sexual abuse](#). *Pediatric Quality & Safety*, 7(1), e522. DOI:10.1097/pq9.0000000000000522

The objective was to assess the impact of interventions associated with ongoing expert peer review on the quality of child abuse medical providers' written and photograph documentation in child sexual abuse cases. Pediatricians participated in a HIPAA compliant blind peer review process on a web platform developed to provide the American Board of Pediatrics maintenance of certification. Participants submit sequential photograph and written documentation of child sexual abuse examinations over 1 year. Documentation includes genital examination descriptions and interpretation of findings. Reviewers evaluate the photographic quality and written documentation of examination findings utilizing a numerical rating system. Each case cycle is reviewed by one of four experts in child abuse who received training in a uniform evaluation process. Reviewers follow each case throughout three cycles of documentation, selecting from several interventions that have been customized to address the quality issues noted. The third and final cycle includes summary comments from the reviewer. Forty-one participants completed the program at the time these data were collected. A paired *t* test analysis of the combined scores of the three measures, such as Image Quality, Quality of Written Documentation, and Accuracy of Exam Interpretation, showed a statistically significant improvement ($P < 0.001$) between the first and last sets. In addition, each of the individual measures was statistically significant between the first and last case sets with a *P* value of <0.05 for each. Peer review with interventions customized to address quality issues improved the quality of the assessment and documentation of child sexual abuse evaluations.

Cyr, M., Dion, J., Gendron, A., Powell, M., & Brubacher, S. (2021). A test of three refresher modalities on child forensic interviewers' posttraining performance. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 27(2), 221–230. DOI:10.1037/law0000300

This study aims to advance the field of child forensic interviewing by assessing the impact of different refresher training modalities on police officers' abilities to adhere to the steps of an interview protocol and on the types of questions used. Previously trained police officers (N = 46) were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions: (1) supervision with an expert, (2) peer group supervision, and (3) computer-assisted exercises on children's investigative interview techniques. Comparison of interviews conducted before (n = 136) and after (n = 124) the refresher modalities revealed an improvement in performance across time for almost all steps of the protocol. There were more effects associated with time than with modality of refresher training with regard to question types used during episodic memory training and the substantive phase of the interview. Although there were some differences between the three conditions, no method emerged as clearly superior. Results suggest that all modalities could be useful in refreshing adherence to the steps of an interview protocol and use of best practice questioning approaches. The discussion highlights that the time devoted to the three modalities was likely not enough and that further studies are needed to determine the most optimal delivery of refresher training.

Haginoya, S., Yamamoto, S., & Santtila, P. (2021). The combination of feedback and modeling in online simulation training of child sexual abuse interviews improves interview quality in clinical psychologists. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 115, 105013. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105013

Previous research has shown the effectiveness of simulation training using avatars paired with feedback in improving child sexual abuse interview quality. However, it has room for improvement. The present study aimed to determine if the combination of two interventions, feedback and modeling, would further improve interview quality compared to either intervention alone. Thirty-two clinical psychologists were randomly assigned to

a feedback, modeling, or the combination of feedback and modeling group. The participants conducted five simulated child sexual abuse interviews online while receiving the intervention(s) corresponding to their allocated group. Feedback was provided after each interview and consisted of the outcome of the alleged cases and comments on the quality of the questions asked in the interviews. Modeling was provided after the 1st interview and consisted of learning points and videos illustrating good and bad questioning methods. The proportion of recommended questions improved over the five interviews when considering all groups combined. The combined intervention (vs. feedback alone) showed a higher proportion of recommended questions from the 2nd interview onward while the difference between the combined intervention and modeling alone and the difference between the modeling alone and feedback alone were mostly not significant. The number of correct details were affected in the same way. No significant differences in the number of incorrect details were found. The results show that the combination of feedback and modeling achieves improvement greater than that of feedback alone.

Lawrie, M., Brubacher, S. P., Earhart, B., Powell, M. B., Steele, L. C., & Boud, D. (2021). Testing the effectiveness of a blended vulnerable witness training for forensic interviewers. *Journal of Family Trauma, Child Custody & Child Development*, 18(3), 279–297. DOI:10.1080/26904586.2021.1894303

The current study tested the effectiveness of a compact (18 hour) and blended (involving online and face-to-face components) training course, adapted from a previously evaluated course found to be successful in fostering long-term change in interviewing skill. The compact course was developed by trimming the previous course to only include learning activities that empirically demonstrated improvement of interviewing skills. There were 41 US forensic interviewers, with prior training experience, who took part in the research. Their interviewing habits were assessed using standardized mock interviews immediately prior to, and at the conclusion of training. A subset were assessed 9–

24 months later. Results demonstrated that, despite reductions in length and content, training was effective in the short term and the subset maintained trained behaviors up to 24 months after completion. Results suggest that adjustments to training can be effective if the training remains founded on principles of human learning.

Lawrie, M., Brubacher, S. P., Powell, M. B., & Boud, D. (2020). Forensic interviewers' perceptions of the utility of mock interviews with trained actors as a training tool for child interviewing. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 106*, 104553.
DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104553

The use of mock interviews (also known as role play), particularly using trained actors as interviewees, has demonstrated positive effects on communication training but little is known about how learners engage with these practice activities. The current study was conducted to determine what perceptions forensic interviewers hold about mock interviews as a learning exercise for developing skills for child interviewing, and whether there are negative perceptions that could potentially have an impact on the helpfulness of the exercise. Participants: Written reflections were obtained from 35 US forensic interviewing professionals who were enrolled in an online child interviewer training program. Common themes were extracted from the reflections to establish forensic interviewers' perceptions of aspects of the mock interview. Extraction of themes assisted in the determination of whether perceptions impacted the manner and degree to which interviewers engaged in the mock interview process. Results suggest that regardless of potential anxiety, learners experience multiple benefits from the mock interview. Conclusions: Findings from the present study suggests suggest most trainees perceive mock interviews favourably, and they are useful in child interview training programs.

Cordisco Steele, L., & National Children's Advocacy Center. (2018). [Continuous Skill Building for Forensic Interviewers: A Research-to Practice Summary](#). Huntsville, AL: National Children's Advocacy Center.

Krause, N., Pompedda, F., Antfolk, J., Zappalá, A., & Santtila, P. (2017). The effects of feedback and reflection on the questioning style of untrained interviewers in simulated child sexual abuse interviews. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 31(2), 187–198. DOI:10.1002/acp.3316

We provided immediate and detailed feedback in a training paradigm in which simulated interviews with computer generated avatars were used to improve interviewers' questioning style. Fifty-nine untrained student/interviewers conducted eight interviews each and were randomly assigned to a control, feedback or feedback and reflection group. Compared to the control group, the groups receiving feedback used a higher percentage of recommended questions and retrieved more relevant details while using a lower percentage of not recommended questions and retrieved less wrong details. Only the groups that received feedback reached a reliable change in the proportion of recommended questions. The reflection intervention proposed in the present study did not enhance training effects above and beyond feedback in the present sample. The present study replicated previous findings regarding the role of feedback in improving the quality of investigative interviews, however, failing to show an effect of reflection. Further studies on different reflection tasks are suggested.

Wolfman, M., Brown, D., & Jose, P. (2017). Examining forensic interviewers' perceptions of practice-focused supervision. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 50(4), 566–581. DOI:10.1177/0004865816655588

Regular supervision influences interviewing quality with child witnesses. It is unclear, however, whether interviewers recognize the importance of supervision, and how often they access it. The present study surveyed 39 New Zealand Specialist Child Witness Interviewers (otherwise known as forensic interviewers), and examined: (a) their access

to, and, perceptions of supervision, and (b) factors that may influence their access to, and, perceptions of supervision. We identified 26 interviewers who received some form of practice-focused supervision. Within this group, there was considerable variability in terms of how often they accessed supervision, and, their ratings of how satisfied they were with their access to, and the content of, supervision. Furthermore, some of those who did participate in supervision felt they did not actually receive specific input about their interviewing. Thus, an important area for investment in promoting good interviewing practice is developing effective approaches to facilitate interviewers engaging in regular practice-focused supervision, perhaps, at least in part, by addressing some of systemic barriers identified (e.g. limited financial support, time constraints, lack of experienced supervisors, lack of understanding/support from managerial staff and geographical isolation).

Wolfman, M., Brown, D., & Jose, P. (2016). Taking stock: Evaluating the conduct of forensic interviews with children in New Zealand. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 22(6), 581-598. DOI:10.1080/1068316X.2016.1168426

This study examined adherence to the New Zealand Specialist Child Witness Interviewing model in 93 interviews with children about sexual abuse allegations. Interviewers (n = 27) demonstrated good adherence to the scripted components of the model during the preparation stage of the interview. When investigating the abuse allegation, interviewers demonstrated a greater use of Direct ('Wh-') (57%), and Option-posing prompts (20%) than stipulated by the model and fewer broad open-ended prompts (22%). Very few suggestive questions were posed. In contrast to recommended practice, Direct and Option-posing prompts were not only asked frequently, but were introduced very early in the investigative phase of the interview. Training, supervision and feedback should focus on increasing the use of broad open-ended prompts and minimizing premature use of more focused prompts to promote best-practice interviews.

Goetzold, S. (2015). An open and shut case of closed questions: An exploration of joint investigative interview training in Scotland. *Child Abuse Review*, 26(2), 116–129. DOI:10.1002/car.2391

Children in Scotland who are subject to child protection interviews should be interviewed jointly by specially trained police officers and social workers who have attended training based on a national curriculum. This study, which was conducted in two Strands, explores the effectiveness of the training, focusing specifically on the free narrative phase of the interview. Strand A explores respondents' self-evaluation, obtained through semi-structured interviews with 16 participants, while Strand B comprises an analysis of 21 role-play interviews. The findings show a considerable discrepancy between perceived practitioner confidence in ability and actual skill levels observed in role-plays, where interviewers showed a persistent overuse of specific and closed questions, while neglecting the use of open prompts and open questions to encourage free narrative. The study concludes that the national curriculum is not as effective in preparing participants for the free narrative phase of the interview as perceived by participants. Possible reasons are explored. Copyright © 2015 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Lyon, T. D., & Stolzenberg, S. N. (2015). [Repeated self-and peer-review leads to continuous improvement in child interviewing performance](#). *Journal of Forensic Social Work*, 5(1–3), 20–28. DOI:10.1080/1936928X.2015.1068721

The present study examined whether a training model that focuses on consistent exposure to protocol procedure, self-evaluation, and intensive peer-review sessions could improve interviewers' ability to adhere to best practices. Law students (N=19) interviewed 5- to 10-year-old children on a weekly basis as part of a semester-long forensic child interviewing class. They transcribed their interviews, and participated in 1-hr self- and peer-reviews. The proportion of each question type was calculated (option-posing, Wh- questions [what, how, where, why, when, and who], and open-invitations) within each interview for each interviewer. Across 10 weeks of interviews, interviewers

consistently improved their performance, decreasing the proportion of option-posing questions by 31% and increasing the proportion of open-invitations by 47%. All interviewers improved. The present study suggests that with consistent self-evaluation and peer review, forensic interviewers can incrementally improve their performance.

Greeley, C., Yoon, J., Tran, X., & Giardino, A. (2014). A nationwide survey of peer review practices in child maltreatment teams. *Child Abuse Review*, 25(3), 230–240.
DOI:10.1002/car.2337

Medical evaluations for suspected child sexual abuse carry a significant medico-legal burden and are often performed in a variety of clinical settings, by clinicians with different levels of expertise and experience. Peer review or professional practice evaluation is an important component for quality assurance. We surveyed 255 programmes which provided sexual abuse evaluations which were identified through queries with national child abuse professional organisations. We sought information on team composition and setting, patient population characteristics and each site's peer review process. Of the 129 responding programmes, 42 per cent (n = 44) reported having a written peer review process. There were no differences between practice types with regards to having a written peer review process, the percentage of cases reviewed, the documentation type reviewed or the percentage reporting an external review process. The majority of programmes (n = 89, 85%) reported that they review both chart and photo documentation during the peer review process. Our data support that most programmes involved in child maltreatment evaluations undergo some form of peer review, but there exists a large amount of heterogeneity in the process by which it occurs.

Cederborg, A. C., Alm, C., Lima da Silva Nises, D., & Lamb, M. E. (2013). Investigative interviewing of alleged child abuse victims: An evaluation of a new training programme for investigative interviewers. *Police Practice and Research, 14*(3), 242–254. DOI:10.1080/15614263.2012.712292

This evaluation focused on the developing interviewing skills of 104 active crime investigators in Sweden who participated in six different half-year courses between 2007 and 2010. The courses emphasised a combined model of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Protocol and the PEACE model of investigative interviewing. The teaching was interdisciplinary. The evaluation involved interviews of 208 children, most of whom were suspected victims of physical abuse. The investigators used two-thirds fewer option-posing questions and three times as many invitations after training as they did before training. These data show that the training was very effective in shaping the interviewers' behaviour into better compliance with internationally recognised guidelines.

Price, H. L., & Roberts, K. P. (2011). The effects of an intensive training and feedback program on police and social workers' investigative interviews of children. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 43*(3), 235–244. DOI:10.1037/a0022541

In the present study, we assessed the effectiveness of an extensive training and feedback program with investigative interviewers of child victims of alleged abuse and neglect in a large Canadian city. Twelve investigative interviewers participated in a joint training initiative that lasted 8 months and involved classroom components and extensive weekly verbal and written feedback. Interviewers were significantly more likely to use open-ended prompts and elicited more information from children with open-ended prompts following training. These differences were especially prominent following a subsequent “refresher” training session. No negative effects of training were observed. Clear evidence was found of the benefits of an intensive training and feedback program across a wide variety of investigative interviews with children. Although previous research has found

benefits of training with interviewers of child sexual assault victims, the current study extends these findings to a wide range of allegations and maltreatment contexts.

Vieth, V. I. (2009). [In the shadow of defense counsel: Conducting peer review of forensic interview in an age of discovery](#). *The Official Newsletter of the National Child Protection Training Center*, 1(10), 1-6.

Powell, M. B. (2008). Designing effective training programs for investigative interviewers of children. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 20(2), 189-208.
DOI:10.1080/10345329.2008.12035804

'Best-practice' guidelines for conducting investigative interviews with children are well established in the literature, yet few investigative interviewers actually adhere to such guidelines in the field. One of the problems is that little discussion has focused on how such guidelines are learned and sustained by professionals. To address this concern, the current article reviews the key elements of interview training programs that are known to promote competent interviewing. These elements include: (i) the establishment of key principles or beliefs that underpin effective interviewing, (ii) the adoption of an interview framework that maximises narrative detail, (iii) clear instruction in relation to the application of the interview framework, (iv) effective ongoing practice, (v) expert feedback and (vi) regular evaluation of interviewer performance. A description and justification of each element is provided, followed by broad recommendations regarding how these elements can be implemented by police and human service organisations in a cost-effective manner.

Powell, M. B., Fisher, R. P., & Hughes-Scholes, C. H. (2008). The effect of intra-versus post-interview feedback during simulated practice interviews about child abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 32(2), 213–227. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2007.08.002

This study compared the effectiveness of two types of instructor feedback (relative to no feedback) on investigative interviewers' ability to adhere to open-ended questions in simulated practice interviews about child abuse. In one condition, feedback was provided at the end of each practice interview. In the other, the instructor stopped the interviewer at various stages *during* the practice interviews to provide feedback. The relative effect of these conditions was examined by measuring interviewers' performance in a standardized mock interview paradigm immediately prior to, immediately after, and 12 weeks after the practice and feedback sessions. Prior to and 12 weeks after the practice sessions were administered, there was no significant difference in participants' adherence to open-ended questions irrespective of the nature of the feedback, or whether feedback was received. At the immediate post-practice assessment interval, however, the participants who received feedback *during* the practice interviews performed better (M proportion of open-ended questions = .85, SD = .13) than the other participants (post-interview feedback M = .67, SD = .18, p < .001; no feedback M = .56, SD = .16, p < .001). This heightened use of open-ended questions was associated with a greater tendency among the interviewees to provide abuse-related details in response to open-ended questions (M = .91, SD = .11) compared to the other participants (post-interview feedback M = .77, SD = .15, p < .05; no feedback M = .69, SD = .16, p = .001). Different types of feedback can be differentially effective in training child abuse investigators to adhere to open-ended questions. The benefits of any training program, however, are likely to be short-lived without ongoing practice.

Lamb, M. E., Sternberg, K. J., Orbach, Y., Esplin, P. W., & Mitchell, S. (2002). Is ongoing feedback necessary to maintain the quality of investigative interviews with allegedly abused children?. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6(1), 35–41. DOI:10.1207/S1532480XADS0601_04

Thirty-seven 4- to 12-year-old alleged victims of sexual abuse were interviewed using the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development investigative interview guide by 8 experienced forensic investigators who received regular supervision, including timely feedback on their ongoing interviews. These interviews were matched and compared with 37 interviews conducted by the same investigators immediately following termination of the supervision and feedback phase. After the supervision ended, interviewers used fewer open-ended prompts and thus elicited less information from recall, instead relying more heavily on option-posing and suggestive prompts, which are less likely to elicit accurate information. These results suggest that ongoing supervision and feedback may be necessary to maintain desirable interview practices.

Lamb, M. E., Sternberg, K. J., Orbach, Y., Hershkowitz, I., Horowitz, D., & Esplin, P. W. (2002). The effects of intensive training and ongoing supervision on the quality of investigative interviews with alleged sex abuse victims. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6(3), 114–125. DOI:10.1207/S1532480XADS0603_2

Four distinct strategies were employed to train 21 experienced forensic interviewers to interview alleged sex abuse victims (M=9.20 years of age) in accordance with professionally recommended practices. The structure and informativeness of the 96 interviews they conducted following training were compared with the structure and informativeness of 96 matched interviews conducted by the same interviewers in the 6 months prior to the training. Didactic workshops and instruction in the utilization of highly structured presubstantive interview procedures had little effect on the number of open-ended prompts used to elicit information or on the amount of substantive information elicited in this way. By contrast, intensive training in the use of a highly structured interview protocol, followed by continuing supervision in the form of monthly day-long seminars,

supplemented in some cases by detailed individual feedback on recent interviews, yielded dramatic improvements on these measures of interview quality.

Walker, N. E. (2002). [Forensic interviews of children: The components of scientific validity and legal admissibility](#). *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 65(1), 149-178.
DOI:10.2307/1192369

Aldridge, J., & Cameron, S. (1999). Interviewing child witnesses: Questioning techniques and the role of training. *Applied Developmental Science*, 3(2), 136-147.
DOI:10.1207/s1532480xads0302_7

Evaluated the effect of a 1-wk intensive training course on police and social worker forensic interviewing with children (mean age 6.2 yrs) and investigated the actual types of questions employed by interviewers. Analysis of 19 videotaped interviews was used to compare trained and untrained interviewers on a series of rating scales designed to assess interviewer performance. The number of requests for free reports and the number of open, specific, leading, and nonleading questions used were obtained. No differences were found in performance between trained and untrained interviewers on any rated behaviors with both trained and untrained interviewers rating poorly. Specific and leading questions were found to occupy over half the total number of questions used by both sets of interviewers, and few free report requests were used. That is, interviewers mostly asked the types of questions least likely to obtain valid and reliable information from children, with no evident variation from this pattern within the trained group. It is concluded that these findings suggest that interviewers use inappropriate questioning strategies to obtain information even after training and rely heavily on specific rather than open questioning.

Warren, A. R., Woodall, C. E., Thomas, M., Nunno, M., Keeney, J. M., Larson, S. M., & Stadfeld, J. A. (1999). Assessing the effectiveness of a training program for interviewing child witnesses. *Applied Developmental Science, 3*(2), 128-135.
DOI:10.1207/s1532480xads0302_6

Twenty-seven experienced interviewers attended a 10-day training institute designed to provide knowledge and skills for improving investigative interviews with young children. Participants completed pre- and posttraining surveys assessing their knowledge of the scientific evidence regarding memory, suggestibility, and other aspects of children's ability to provide accurate accounts of events during interviews. They also conducted pre- and posttraining interviews with preschool children about 2 previously experienced events. Participants' knowledge about children's abilities and the scientific basis of various interviewing protocols increased significantly after the training. However, training did not have a significant impact on interviewers' questioning styles or the amount of accurate information elicited from the children. Results indicate that successfully translating knowledge into practice requires multiple opportunities for skill practice and feedback.