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Rapport in Forensic Interviews of Children

A Bibliography

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Scope

This bibliography provides research literature covering a wide variety of topics related to building a rapport with children during a forensic interview.

Organization

Publications include articles, book chapters, reports, and research briefs and are listed 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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Rapport in Forensic Interviews of Child

A Bibliography

Dianiska, R. E., Quas, J. A., & Lyon, T. D. (2024). Using rapport building to improve information yield when interviewing adolescents: A systematic review and call for research. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 154*, 106898. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.106898

Adolescents frequently experience and witness violence and crime, yet very little research has been conducted to determine how best to question these witnesses to elicit complete and accurate disclosures. This systematic review integrated scientific research on rapport building with child and adult witnesses with theory and research on adolescent development in order to identify rapport building techniques likely to be effective with suspected adolescent victims and witnesses. Four databases were searched to identify investigations of rapport building in forensic interviewing of adolescents. Despite decades of research of studies including child and adult participants, only one study since 1990 experimentally tested techniques to build rapport with adolescents. Most rapport strategies used with children and adults have yet to be tested with adolescents. Tests of these strategies, along with modifications based on developmental science of adolescence, would provide a roadmap to determining which approaches are most beneficial when questioning adolescent victims and witnesses. There is a clear need for research that tests what strategies are best to use with adolescents. They may be reluctant to disclose information about stressful or traumatic experiences to adults due to both normative developmental processes and the types of events about which they are questioned in legal settings. Rapport building approaches tailored to address adolescents' motivational needs may be effective in increasing adolescents' reporting, and additional research testing such approaches will provide much-needed insight to inform the development of evidence-based practices for questioning these youth.

Dianiska, R. E., Simpson, E., Kim, S., Lyon, T. D., & Quas, J. A. (2024). [Building rapport in interviews with adolescent trafficking victims](). *Child Abuse Review, 33*(2), e2864. DOI:10.1002/car.2864

Though much is known about children's sexual abuse disclosure, less attention has been directed towards disclosure in other types of youthful victims, especially those who may be reluctant to tell due to either normative development or victims' specific experiences. Trafficked youth, particularly those who are adolescents, represent one such group. Understanding how suspected youth trafficking victims are questioned by authorities, especially with respect to establishing rapport and trust, is important for informing professionals how to effectively question this unique population of victims to overcome their reluctance. We examined transcripts of interviews conducted by federal interviewers (n = 12,653 question-answer turns across 33 interviews) and police (n = 4,972 question-answer turns across 14 interviews) with trafficked youth between the ages of 12 and 18. Interviews were reliably coded for the length of pre-substantive questioning, provision of instructions and ground rules, and use of rapport building and supportive strategies. Federal interviewers used pre-substantive instructions and built rapport with potential victims more often than police did. Also, and although infrequently used overall, supportive interviewing strategies were evident more often by federal interviewers than police. Results provide much-needed knowledge about how law enforcement investigators interview and elicit disclosures from vulnerable populations of adolescent victims.

Dianiska, R. E., Simpson, E., & Quas, J. A. (2024). [Rapport building with adolescents to enhance reporting and disclosure](). *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 238,* 105799. DOI:10.1016/j.jecp.2023.10579

Adolescents comprise a vulnerable population that is exposed to crime and also may be reluctant to disclose full details of their experiences. Little research has addressed effective ways of increasing their willingness to disclose and provide complete reports.

Strategies that improve honesty and report completeness in other age groups have not been evaluated to determine whether they are similarly effective at increasing adolescents' reporting. In the current study, we tested whether rapport building techniques, modified from those commonly used with children and adults to address reasons why adolescents are likely reluctant, enhance the amount of detail adolescents provide about prior experiences. The participants, 14- to 19-year-olds (N = 125), completed an online questionnaire regarding significant events (e.g., big argument with family member) they experienced during the last 12 months. After a delay, they completed a remote interview asking them to recount details of one of the events. The interview began with either standard rapport building composed of largely yes/no questions about the adolescents' background or one of two expanded rapport building phases: open-ended (questions about the adolescents' backgrounds that required narrative answers) or enhanced (open-ended questions paired with the interviewer also sharing personal information). Although only adolescents in the standard condition showed age-related increases in information disclosed, overall adolescents in the enhanced condition provided significantly longer and more detailed narratives than adolescents in the other conditions. This effect was largest for the youngest adolescents, suggesting that mutual self-disclosure may be especially beneficial for eliciting honest complete reports from adolescents about salient prior experiences.

Waterhouse, G. F., Ridley, A. M., Bull, R., Satchell, L., & Wilcock, R. (2023). Rapport-building in multiple interviews of children. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 37*(6), 1210-1222. DOI:10.1002/acp.4116

Rapport-building is key in child investigative interviews, however, recommendations of how to build rapport differ. Additionally, rapport in more complex situations: when a child is interviewed repeatedly or requires separate rapport building have not been studied. This research examined the UK's 'Achieving Best Evidence' guidelines for rapport-building, which recommend conducting a neutral discussion, compared with a control condition

and a separate rapport-building session for first interviews on children's recall and well-being (measured by state anxiety and rapport questionnaires). For second and third interviews, additional full rapport-building sessions were compared to shortened or no rapport-building conditions. No significant differences in children's (N = 107) recall or well-being were found across rapport-building conditions for all interviews. We conclude that for children who have experienced non-traumatic events, the inclusion of a neutral discussion rapport-building phase may not be any more beneficial for children than conducting a friendly interview.

Lavoie, J., Wyman, J., Crossman, A. M., & Talwar, V. (2021). [Meta-analysis of the effects of two interviewing practices on children's disclosures of sensitive information: Rapport practices and question type](). *Child Abuse & Neglect, 113*, 104930. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.104930

The forensic interview is an important part of the investigative process with child witnesses, and ensuring evidence-based practices is crucial to its success. This meta-analysis examined the overall effect of rapport practices and question type on children's disclosures during forensic interviews to determine (a) how large of an influence existing practices have on children's tendency to disclose information, and (b) how consistent the effect sizes of interviewing practices are across studies, given that inconsistent results have been found. A systematic review of child interviewing practices was conducted, and 35 studies met the inclusion criteria. Articles were categorized thematically according to interviewing practice. Two practices were predominantly represented in the literature and were selected for review and meta-analysis: rapport techniques, including interviewer support, (n = 9), and question type (n = 25 samples, 23 studies). Random-effects meta-analytic models were computed separately for rapport practices and question type, and moderator analyses were conducted to test for differences according to age and interviewing protocol. Rapport techniques had a medium overall effect on children's disclosures (d = 0.55, p < .001), and was moderated by the interviewing protocol used, but not children's age. Open-ended questions compared to closed-ended questions had a

medium overall effect on children's descriptions of sensitive events (d = 0.52, p < .001), and was not moderated by age or interviewing protocol. These findings provide overarching support for the use of rapport and support, and the use of open-ended questions in forensic interviews with child witnesses.

Johnston, V., Brubacher, S. P., Powell, M., & Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, M. (2019). Patterns of nonverbal rapport behaviors across time in investigative interviews with children. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior, 43*(3), 411-434. DOI:10.1007/s10919-019-00306-1

The present study evaluated whether the strength of relationship between child nonverbal behaviors (expressivity, attention, and coordination) across time points varied as a function of interviewer nonverbal behaviors (expressivity, attention, and coordination) under supportive versus neutral interviewing conditions. Children (n = 123) participated in an event where they were involved in breaking some rules. Three to four days later they were interviewed by either a supportive or neutral adult interviewer. Interviews were video recorded and nonverbal behaviors of both children and interviewers were coded. Multi-level modeling revealed that optimal interviewer nonverbal behaviors were predictive of optimal child nonverbal behaviors at the end of the interview. In contrast, explicitly manipulated interviewer supportiveness was related to suboptimal displays of child nonverbal behavior. Interestingly, as the interview progressed, optimally attentive interviewing was associated with suboptimal child expressivity scores. Likewise, displays of optimal interviewer coordination were associated with suboptimal child coordination scores over time. The implications of the findings for nonverbal behavior literature and professionals talking with children about sensitive information are discussed.

Ahern, E. C., Sadler, L. A., Lamb, M. E., & Gariglietti, G. M. (2017). Practitioner perspectives on child sexual exploitation: Rapport building with young people. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 26*(1), 78–91. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2016.1257529

Young people suspected of being sexually exploited are unlikely to have made prior disclosures before being approached by authorities, and this can make them especially uncomfortable when involved in investigations. Semistructured interviews were conducted with frontline social workers and law enforcement practitioners about their experiences interacting with youth during child sexual exploitation investigations. The findings provided some tentative insights into the processes by which practitioners sought to establish rapport with young people who have been exploited and establish themselves as trustworthy abuse disclosure recipients. Practitioners reported that rapport building in child sexual exploitation cases not only occurred over lengthy periods of time (e.g., months or years) but also required repeated contacts between the practitioners and young people, during which practitioners minimized their roles as authorities and maximized their authenticity as caring people. Practitioners mentioned the importance of dependability, lightheartedness, and having a casual demeanor. Findings have implications for managing reluctance and understanding rapport building when working with possible victims.

Hershkowitz, I., Ahern, E. C., Lamb, M. E., Blasbalg, U., Karni-Visel, Y., & Breitman, M. (2017). Changes in interviewers' use of supportive techniques during the Revised Protocol training. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 31*(3), 340-350. DOI:10.1002/acp.3333

Although many children are reluctant to disclose abuse due to embarrassment, fear, and the anticipation of negative consequences, researchers have only recently begun to examine whether forensic interviewers can be trained to manage children's reluctance. In this study, the supportiveness of 53 experienced interviewers was assessed in their interviews with 321 3- to 14-year old alleged victims, each conducted during the course of training to use the Revised Protocol (RP). The use of support increased, especially

between levels evident at baseline and in the last two interviews assessed. Over time, instances of inadequate support and insensitivity to children's reluctance became less common. Younger children received proportionally more support, including inadequate support, than older children. The RP training did not affect the extensive use of free recall-based questions. Findings highlight the benefits of continued supervision and training. Copyright © 2017 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Price, E. A., Ahern, E. C., & Lamb, M. E. (2016). Rapport-building in investigative interviews of alleged child sexual abuse victims. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 30*(5), 743–749. DOI:10.1002/acp.3249

Research shows that both utterance type and rapport-building can affect children's productivity during the substantive phase of investigative interviews. However, few researchers have examined the effects of utterance type and content on children's productivity within the rapport-building phase. In the present study, transcripts of interviews with 94 4- to 13-year-old alleged victims were examined. Interviews were conducted using either the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Protocol or the Memorandum of Good Practice (MoGP). The NICHD Protocol interviews contained more invitations and questions about events and hobbies/likes than the MoGP interviews. Children's productivity was associated with utterance type and topic, showing both the benefits of invitations and questions asking about past events. Our findings complement research focusing on the substantive phase of child forensic interviews, suggesting that both utterance type and prompt content during the rapport-building phase can affect children's immediate productivity. Copyright © 2016 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Hershkowitz, I., Lamb, M. E., Katz, C., & Malloy, L. C. (2015). Does enhanced rapport building alter the dynamics of investigative interviews with suspected victims of intra-familial abuse?. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology, 30*(1), 6-14. DOI:10.1007/s11896-013-9136-8

Professional guidelines for forensic interviews of children emphasize cognitive factors associated with memory retrieval and pay less attention to emotional factors that may inhibit cooperativeness. Can an additional focus on rapport-building alter the dynamics of interviews with alleged victims of intra-familial abuse, who are often uncooperative? Transcripts of interviews with 199 suspected victims who made allegations when interviewed were coded to identify expressions of interviewer support and children's reluctance and uncooperativeness in the pre-substantive portions of the interviews. Half of the children were interviewed using a Protocol that emphasized enhanced rapport-building and non-suggestive support, the others using the standard NICHD Protocol. Although there were no group differences in the use of recall-based questions, interviews conducted using the rapport-focused Protocol contained more supportive comments and fewer unsupportive comments. Children interviewed in this way showed less reluctance and the level of reluctance was in turn associated with the number of forensically relevant details provided by the children. A focus on enhanced rapport-building thus altered interview dynamics without changing the appropriateness or forensic riskiness of the questions asked.

Saywitz, K. J., Larson, R. P., Hobbs, S. D., & Wells, C. R. (2015). Developing rapport with children in forensic interviews: Systematic review of experimental research. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, *33*(4), 372-389. DOI:10.1002/bsl.2186

The vast majority of guidelines recommend that developing rapport with children is essential for successful forensic child interviewing; however, the question remains as to whether there is a sufficient body of scientific research to generate evidence-based guidelines for developing rapport with children in legal contexts. To answer this question, we conducted a systematic review of the literature to identify experimental studies of the

effects of rapport-building methods on the reliability of children's reports. Independent raters applied 12 exclusion criteria to the 2,761 potentially relevant articles located by electronic and hand searches of the literature. Experimental studies were few. Although studies to date are a beginning, the overall scientific base is weak regarding even basic issues such as how to best define rapport and the efficacy of common rapport-building techniques. This systematic review highlights what we know, what we do not know, and how much more we need to know to create evidence-based best practice. Recommendations for reshaping the research agenda are discussed. Copyright © 2015 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Steele, L. C. (2015). *Rapport in child forensic interviews.* Huntsville, AL: National Children's Advocacy Center.

This paper is an attempt to expand upon the current recommendations for building rapport with children during a forensic interview with the goal of assisting a child in being the best witness that he/she is capable of being. Specific guidance and strategies, drawn from both the empirical literature on forensic interviewing and broader literature on interviewing children in a variety of settings, are included.

Vallano, J. P., Evans, J. R., Schreiber Compo, N., & Kieckhaefer, J. M. (2015). Rapport building during witness and suspect interviews: A survey of law enforcement. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 29*(3), 369-380. DOI:10.1002/acp.3115

Building rapport with adult witnesses and suspects is recommended by major investigative interviewing protocols (e.g., Cognitive Interview and the Army Field Manual in the USA and PEACE in the UK). Although recent research suggests that building rapport can sometimes benefit police investigations by increasing the accuracy of adult eyewitness reports and potentially enhance the diagnosticity of evidence obtained from suspects, little data exist regarding how law enforcement interviewers actually define and build rapport in real-world investigations. To fill this void, the present study distributed a

questionnaire containing open and closed-ended questions to 123 law enforcement interviewers in police training courses to determine how they conceptualize and build rapport with adult interviewees. Results indicate that a majority of law enforcement interviewers define rapport as a positive relationship involving trust and communication, with a strong minority defining rapport as a 'positive or negative' relationship. Further, law enforcement interviewers reported building rapport with adult witnesses and suspects in a similar manner, often by using verbal techniques (e.g., discussing common interests via small talk) and non-verbal techniques (e.g., displaying understanding via empathy and sympathy). Theoretical and applied implications of these results are discussed. Copyright © 2015 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Collins, K., Doherty-Sneddon, G., & Doherty, M. J. (2014). Practitioner perspectives on rapport building during child investigative interviews. *Psychology, Crime & Law, 20*(9), 884-901. DOI:10.1080/1068316X.2014.888428

The inclusion of a rapport phase with children in investigative interviews is considered best practice as research shows that this can improve the quality of information provided. However, the phenomenon of 'psychological rapport', as demonstrated in a person's behaviour, is less understood. Specifically, how do practitioners *build rapport* with children in the rapport phase? The aim of this paper is to provide information on the methods used by practitioners for building rapport with children, with an explanation of how they may influence communication. Nineteen Scottish practitioners (police officers and social workers) were interviewed about their experiences and approach to rapport building with children in investigative interviews. These interviews were qualitatively analysed using a grounded theory approach and produced a model for the relationship between psychological rapport and children's communication. According to this group of practitioners, rapport building acts as a 'communication tool' and is approached using three main strategies. These strategies involve using rapport to assess the child, adjust interview approach based on the assessment, and produce a change in the child's

psychological state that facilitates communication. These findings have established practitioner understanding of rapport building and highlighted a number of areas that require further research.

Lyon, T. D., Wandrey, L., Ahern, E., Licht, R., Sim, M. P., & Quas, J. A. (2014). [Eliciting maltreated and nonmaltreated children's transgression disclosures: Narrative practice rapport building and a putative confession](#). *Child Development, 85*(4), 1756-1769. DOI:10.1111/cdev.12223

This study tested the effects of narrative practice rapport building (asking open-ended questions about a neutral event) and a putative confession (telling the child an adult "told me everything that happened and he wants you to tell the truth") on 4- to 9-year-old maltreated and nonmaltreated children's reports of an interaction with a stranger who asked them to keep toy breakage a secret (*n* = 264). Only one third of children who received no interview manipulations disclosed breakage; in response to a putative confession, one half disclosed. Narrative practice rapport building did not affect the likelihood of disclosure. Maltreated children and nonmaltreated children responded similarly to the manipulations. Neither narrative practice rapport building nor a putative confession increased false reports.

Fogarty, K., Augoustinos, M., & Kettler, L. (2013). Re-thinking rapport through the lens of progressivity in investigative interviews into child sexual abuse. *Discourse Studies, 15*(4), 395-420. DOI:10.1177/1461445613482429

Building rapport is considered important in investigative interviewing of children about alleged sexual abuse, but theoretical understanding of the nature of rapport and how to judge its presence remains sketchy. This article argues that the conversation analytic concept of *progressivity* may provide empirical tractability to the concept of rapport and indeed may be partially what people are detecting when they judge the presence of rapport. A single case is analysed, drawn from a corpus of 11 video-taped interviews with

children conducted by police in an Australian sexual crime unit. Analysis focuses on how the interviewer responds when progressivity breaks down, and how restoration is collaboratively achieved. Findings are discussed in terms of implications for future work that might investigate a more thoroughly social interactional account of rapport, and in terms of new ideas about what might constitute skillful interviewing practices amongst investigative interviewers.

Gurland, S. T., & Grolnick, W. S. (2008). Building rapport with children: Effects of adults' expected, actual, and perceived behavior. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 27*(3), 226-253. DOI:10.1521/jscp.2008.27.3.226

The quality of the child-clinician relationship is important for clinical outcomes, but the early determinants of such relationship quality are not well understood. We examined adults' behaviors and styles, and children's expectancies and perceptions of those behaviors and styles, as determinants of relationship quality. Children (n = 204) in 4th to 6th grade encountered an adult whose behavior (playing with a toy or reading a newspaper) and interpersonal style (autonomy supportive or controlling) either confirmed or violated their expectancies. Adult behavior and style predicted rapport, as did children's expectancies and perceptions. The latter effects were qualified by interactions. Results are discussed with respect to their implications for clinical practice.

Almerigogna, J., Ost, J., Bull, R., & Akehurst, L. (2007). [A state of high anxiety: How non supportive interviewers can increase the suggestibility of child witnesses](#). *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 21*(7), 963-974. DOI:10.1002/acp.1311

The present study examined the effects of state and trait anxiety on 8–11 years old children's susceptibility to misleading post-event information. Participants' state and trait anxiety were measured, after which they watched an extract from a children's movie. They were then individually interviewed using either a supportive or a non-supportive style. During the interviews, the children were asked 14 questions about the movie, seven

of which were control and seven contained misleading information. After the interview, their state anxiety was measured again. Results showed that participants interviewed in a non-supportive style were more likely to provide incorrect answers to misleading questions. Furthermore, participants who scored highly on both trait and post-interview state anxiety measures more often responded incorrectly to misleading questions. Also, pre-to post-interview changes in state anxiety were correlated with more incorrect responses to misleading questions.

Lamb, M. E., & Brown, D. A. (2006). Conversational apprentices: Helping children become competent informants about their own experiences. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 24*(1), 215-234. DOI:10.1348/026151005X57657

Alleged victims of child abuse are often the only sources of information about the crimes, and this places them in the role of experts when conversing about their experiences. Despite developmental deficiencies in memory, cognition, communication skills, and social style, researchers have shown that children's informativeness in such conversations is profoundly shaped by the interviewing practices of their adult interlocutors. We review techniques that degrade children's performance as well as those that help children perform to the best of their abilities, and discuss how these findings have important implications for the ways in which children learn to converse and interact with adults, and for their understanding of the roles played by conversations in information exchange. When adult interviewers conduct developmentally appropriate interviews with children, they help children become competent informants about their experiences.

Roberts, K. P., Lamb, M. E., & Sternberg, K. J. (2004). The effects of rapport-building style on children's reports of a staged event. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *18*(2), 189-202. DOI:10.1002/acp.957

Three- to nine-year-old children (*n*=144) interacted with a photographer and were interviewed about the event either a week or a month later. The informativeness and accuracy of information provided following either open-ended or direct rapport building were compared. Children in the open-ended rapport-building condition provided more accurate reports than children in the direct rapport-building condition after both short and long delays. Open-ended rapport-building led the three- to four-year-olds to report more errors in response to the first recall question about the event, but they went on to provide more accurate reports in the rest of the interview than counterparts in the direct rapport-building condition. These results suggest that forensic interviewers should attempt to establish rapport with children using an open-ended style. © 2004 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Davis, S. L., & Bottoms, B. L. (2002). Effects of social support on children's eyewitness reports: A test of the underlying mechanism. *Law and Human Behavior, 26*(2), 185-215. DOI:10.1023/A:1014692009941

Research on children's eyewitness testimony demonstrates that interviewer-provided social support given during a mock forensic interview helps children resist an interviewer's misleading suggestions about past events. We proposed and tested 1 potential mechanism underlying support effects: "Resistance Efficacy," or children's perceived self-efficacy for resisting an interviewer's suggestions. 81 6- and 7-yr-old children experienced a play event, then were interviewed about the event with misleading and specific questions. Consistent with prior research, children interviewed by a supportive person were more resistant to misleading suggestions than were those interviewed by a nonsupportive person. Although Resistance Efficacy did not mediate the effects of interviewer support in the full sample, additional analyses reveal that Resistance Efficacy

may be a mediator for older, but not younger, children. Contrary to predictions, children's preexisting social support reserves were not related to children's interview accuracy nor to perceived Resistance Efficacy. Implications for psychological theory are discussed, as well as implications for understanding and improving children's eyewitness reports.

Collins, R., Lincoln, R., & Frank, M. G. (2002). The effect of rapport in forensic interviewing. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law, 9*(1), 69-78. DOI:10.1375/pplt.2002.9.1.69

The psychological literature suggests that establishing rapport between interviewer and subject — whether in clinical, experimental or forensic settings — is likely to enhance the quality of the interaction. Yet there are surprisingly few studies that test this assumption. This article reports a study of the effect of rapport on eyewitness recall of a dramatic videotaped event by creating three interviewer-attitude conditions — "rapport", "neutral" and "abrupt". Participants were randomly assigned to the three conditions, and recall was elicited by two methods — free narrative and a semi-structured questionnaire. The results indicate participants in the rapport interview recalled more correct information, and the same amount of incorrect information as participants in the other two conditions. However, prompting via the semi-structured questionnaire yielded additional correct as well as incorrect information for the neutral and abrupt conditions. The results are discussed for their relevance to interviews conducted in forensic settings, and to highlight the need for more specific and improved interview training for police and other justice personnel.

Grahe, J. E., & Bernieri, F. J. (1999). The importance of nonverbal cues in judging rapport. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior, 23*(4), 253-269. DOI:10.1023/A:1021698725361

This study examined the relative impact different channels of communication had on social perception based on exposure to thin slices of the behavioral stream. Specifically, we tested the hypothesis that dyadic rapport can be perceived quickly through visual

channels. Perceivers judged the rapport in 50 target interactions in one of five stimulus display conditions: transcript, audio, video, video+ transcript, or video+audio. The data demonstrated that perceivers with access to nonverbal, visual information were the most accurate perceivers of dyadic rapport. Their judgments were found to co-vary with the visually encoded features that past research has linked with rapport expression. This suggests the presence of a nonverbally based implicit theory of rapport that more or less matches the natural ecology, at least as it occurs within brief samples of the behavioral stream.

Sternberg, K. J., & Lamb, M. E. (1997). Effects of introductory style on children's abilities to describe experiences of sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 21*(11), 1133-1146. DOI:10.1016/S0145-2134(97)00071-9

The goal of this study was to evaluate the relative effectiveness of two rapport-building techniques for eliciting information from children who made allegations of sexual abuse. Method: Fourteen interviewers conducted 51 investigations of child sexual abuse with children ranging from 4.5 to 12.9 years of age. In 25 of the investigations, interviewers used a script including many open-ended utterances to establish rapport, whereas in 26 of the investigations the same interviewers used a rapport-building script involving many direct questions. Both rapport-building scripts took about 7 minutes to complete. All children were asked the same open-ended question to initiate the substantive phase of the interview. Children who had been trained in the open-ended condition provided 2 1/2 times as many details and words in response to the first substantive utterance as did children in the direct introduction condition. Children in the open-ended condition continued to respond more informatively to open-ended utterances in the later (unscripted) portion of the interview. Two-thirds of the children mentioned the core details of the incident in their responses to the first substantive utterance and a further 20% mentioned core details more vaguely. Conclusions: These results demonstrate that children respond more informatively to an open-ended invitation when they have

previously been trained to answer such questions rather than more focused questions. These results demonstrate the sensitivity of children to the goals and expectations of forensic interviewers. Structured interview protocols also increase the amount of information provided by young interviewees. © 1997 Elsevier Science Ltd.

Tickle-Degnen, L., & Rosenthal, R. (1990). The nature of rapport and its nonverbal correlates. *Psychological Inquiry, 1*(4), 285-293. DOI:10.1207/s15327965pli0104_1

The purpose of this article is to offer a conceptualization of rapport that has utility for identifying the nonverbal correlates associated with rapport. We describe the nature of rapport in terms of a dynamic structure of three interrelating components: mutual attentiveness, positivity, and coordination. We propose that the relative weighting of these components in the experience of rapport changes over the course of a developing relationship between individuals. In early interactions, positivity and attentiveness are more heavily weighted than coordination, whereas in later interactions, coordination and attentiveness are the more heavily weighted components. Because of the gestalt nature of the experience of rapport, it is not easy to identify nonverbal behavioral correlates of the components. We discuss two approaches to nonverbal measurement, molecular and molar, along with recommendations for their appropriate application in the study of rapport at different stages of an interpersonal relationship. We present a meta-analytic study that demonstrates the effect of nonverbal behavior, measured at the molecular level, on the positivity component of rapport, and we conclude with an outline of hypotheses relevant to the investigation of the nonverbal correlates of rapport.