Forensic Interview Structure

STAGE 1 (Rapport)

- **Introductions**
    - » Introduce self/role
    - » Age-appropriate explanation of process
    - » Answer questions/address concerns

- **Early Engagement**
    - » Allow child to become comfortable
    - » Engage child in conversation regarding topics that are **interesting to the child**
    - » Learn about child's interests/day-to-day life

- **Interview Instructions**
    - » Explain instructions/ground rules/expectations
        - Correct me
        - Don't know/don't guess
        - Don't understand
        - True/Real

- **Narrative Practice (Episodic Memory Training)**
    - » Select topic(s) of interest
        - In-depth discussion of 1 to 2 separate non-abusive events
    - » Invite child to "tell me all about…"
        - Set baseline by modeling episodic narrative
        - Teach child about need for forensic details
        - Listen without interruption
        - Follow with responses that encourage further narrative

- **Family**
    - » "Tell me everyone who lives with you."
    - » May be documented through listing names or drawing (if developmentally appropriate)

The **NCAC Child Forensic Interview Structure** provides guidelines for best practice based on research and expertise demonstrated in the field. The NCAC process is a flexible structure that allows for discretion in matters decided by state statues and community practices.

STAGE 2 (Substantive Phase)

- **Transition**
    - » Question(s) which invite child to discuss substantive issues
    - » Start broad and become progressively more focused ("funnel" approach)
        - "How come you're here today?"
        - "What did your mom/dad tell you about coming here today?"
        - "Has something happened that we need to talk about?"
    - » More direct prompts may be used if needed

- **Narrative Description**
    - » Elicit narrative using recall prompts
    - » Ask for explanation or further description
    - » Avoid rush to specific questions

- **Follow-up Questions**
    - » Questions eliciting further details
    - » Keep questions as open as possible
    - » Cautious use of prompts that tap recognition memory

- **Clarification**
    - » Questions seeking clarification of previous terms or statements
    - » Consider linguistic style and developmental ability
    - » Tools or other techniques may be helpful for some children

- **Closure**
    - » Return to everyday conversation or neutral topic discovered in rapport
    - » Answer questions or concerns
    - » Thank child for the participation, time, and effort (not content)