

# Trauma Informed Techniques for Interviewing Immigrant Children in Detention

## *Reflection Prompts for Practice Application*

---

The available resource materials (video modules and written guidelines) on interviewing immigrant children in detention provide a general overview of practice recommendations and trauma-sensitive approaches to the interview process. However, best practices and approaches are case-based and site-specific, and likely the most valuable form of preparation for conducting interviews comes through careful reflection and consultation in your specific context. The following questions and prompts are strongly suggested for preparing for your interview(s), and are likely best answered in a group training/consultation format.

1. Do the video modules and training content feel relevant to you in your professional role? If yes, how?
2. Have you had clients like Jenry and Ana? What issues came up in your interviews with similar clients? Any surprises or challenges?
3. How does (or, how might) a child's trauma history impact their presentation and participation in an interview? What are resulting implications for interview practices?
4. How does (or, how might) the context of detention impact a child's presentation and participation in an interview? What are resulting implications for interview practices?
5. What strategies do you use/might you use for engaging and interviewing immigrant children in detention?
6. How equipped do you feel to address the psychological and emotional needs of immigrant children in detention? Did your professional education or training include strategies for working with this population in this context?

7. How will you plan to organize and structure the physical space of the interview? What constraints might you face?
  
8. What practices or pieces of information feel most important to you to remember to share during the introductory engagement process with a child? (Recommended: Practice and role play your opening introduction to the child.)
  
9. How will you plan to maximize the child's sense of control and agency during the interview process?
  
10. For the clients you will be meeting with, what are signs of distress might you anticipate? How might the child demonstrate or manifest the distress they are experiencing in their situation?
  
11. If a child is exhibiting distress, what coping and/or relaxation strategies might you introduce, practice, or recommend?
  
12. What will you do if a child is endorsing or exhibiting a safety risk (e.g., suicidal ideation, self-harm, threats against others)?
  
13. If you get stuck during the interview process, what strategy or "fall back plan" will you utilize?
  
14. What strategies or practices work for you in helping a child to feel seen, heard, and understood during an interview?
  
15. What can you do to increase your own sense of control and empowerment during the interview at the facility? What information or supports do you need?

16. How do you plan to end the interview and provide closure for your interaction?

17. How does secondary stress and vicarious trauma manifest for you? What are the signs and signals that you are experiencing a secondary stress reaction?

18. What are 2-3 things that you will do (either pro-actively or in response to stress) to take care of yourself following your interview experience?

19. How will you plan to support your colleagues with their self-care and secondary stress reactions?

---

## About This Project

This project was made possible through a collaboration between faculty at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine, Stanford University and highly experienced attorneys practicing in this field. We have relied heavily on the guidance of these faculty and professionals, many of whom have traveled to border towns to take part in this effort: Marsha Griffin MD, Paul Wise MD, MPH, Ryan Matlow PhD, Hope Frye ESQ, Nancy Ewen Wang MD, Victor Carrion MD, Fernando Mendoza MD, MPH, Jodi Goodwin ESQ, Lisa Chamberlain MD and others. View the entire video series at <https://digitalmedic.stanford.edu/our-work/trauma/>