

A Look Inside the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™

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CornerHouse, a children's advocacy center and training center located in Minneapolis, MN, began conducting forensic interviews of children and adolescents in 1989, using the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ developed at CornerHouse; the following year, CornerHouse began providing forensic interview training. Since then, CornerHouse has regularly updated the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ to adapt to findings from research and in response to knowledge gained in the practice of conducting forensic interviews [See Anderson, 2013, for a review of the protocol's evolution]. CornerHouse has used the [CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™](#) in its current form in conducting forensic interviews since 2012 and has taught it in CornerHouse Forensic Interview Training since 2013. Professionals in the field acknowledge that many of the forensic interview protocols in use, including the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™, have drawn from the same pool of research (Newlin et al., 2015) and professional guidelines (APSAC Taskforce, 2012; NCA, 2016) in the development of forensic interview protocols and training programs. While this shared foundation means the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ has much in common with other protocols, there are some distinctive aspects to the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™, derived from CornerHouse's application of the research and literature and based upon CornerHouse's unique position in the field, with three decades of engaging in the practice of forensic interviewing and providing training. This knowledge,

experience, and history created the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ in practice today.

The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™

The Guiding Principles of the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ are Person Centered, Semi-structured, and Forensically Sound (Anderson, 2013; CornerHouse, 2018a). CornerHouse built the protocol around these concepts, and interviewers should actively consider the Guiding Principles during the forensic interview process. Additionally, the concept of *intentionality* holds significance for CornerHouse practice. Knowledge of the stages and specific techniques of the protocol is necessary; having an understanding of why and how to apply a particular technique is essential for conducting a forensic interview that is individualized and responsive. An interview conducted using the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ is intended to be a dynamic process, using the flexibility integrated into the protocol to engage in an interaction unique to the individual.

The protocol is designed for use in a range of circumstances with a variety of individuals. CornerHouse uses "individual" to refer to the person being interviewed; this reflects CornerHouse's person-centered guiding principle, respecting and responding to each unique interviewee. "Individual" may refer to a child, adolescent, or vulnerable adult. The protocol is developmentally based, and there are specific modifications regarding the Recommended Methods or Possible Tools that interviewers might use

depending on the individual's functioning; however, the overall protocol remains the same regardless of if the individual interviewed is a child, adolescent, or vulnerable adult. Similarly, the protocol is designed for interviews regarding a range of alleged experiences; whether the presenting allegations—or experiences ultimately reported by the individual—involve sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, exploitation, witnessing a violent crime, or any other type of allegation about which an individual may have information to share, interviewers can conduct the forensic interview using the same basic interview protocol.

The semi-structured CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ [Figure 1] consists of four possible Stages, each with an identified Purpose, along with Recommended Methods and Possible Tools for achieving those purposes (CornerHouse, 2018a; CornerHouse, 2018c).

Since it is a semi-structured protocol, practitioners may modify or eliminate the Stages of the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™, in response to the spontaneity or needs of the individual; for example, if a spontaneous disclosure occurs during Build Rapport, the interview can transition directly to Explore Statements, eliminating the Seek Information stage. Within each stage, interviewers may use or omit particular Recommended Methods and Possible Tools in response to the presentation of the individual; additionally, there is no designated sequence in which interviewers should use the Recommended Methods within a specific stage, with the exception of those for the Seek Information stage.

The following sections describe each stage, with some illustration and examples; however, this is not intended to provide comprehensive information or to serve as an alternative to attending a full forensic interview training.

The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™: Build Rapport

The purpose of the Build Rapport stage is to establish a foundation for the interview process by orienting the individual, learning about the individual, and facilitating the individual's best possible functioning.

Figure 1. CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™

BUILD RAPPORT	<p>PURPOSE</p> <p>To establish a foundation for the interview process by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orienting the individual • Learning about the individual and their functioning • Facilitating the individual's best possible functioning <p>POSSIBLE METHODS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orienting Messages • Face Drawing • Narrative Practice • Family Information
SEEK INFORMATION	<p>PURPOSE</p> <p>To provide an opportunity for the individual to report their experience by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing a forensically sound strategy for approaching the topic of inquiry, fully utilizing indirect prompts • Incorporating interview tools in an intentional manner, when appropriate <p>POSSIBLE METHODS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Opportunity • Anatomy ID • Touch Inquiry • Extended Touch Inquiry • General Inquiry • Specific Inquiry
EXPLORE STATEMENTS	<p>PURPOSE</p> <p>To allow the individual to share details of their experience by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to the individual • Allowing a range of communication, including use of interview tools as beneficial • Returning to Seek Information as appropriate <p>POSSIBLE METHODS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize foundation from Build Rapport • Encourage narratives using Invitation and Inquiry • Follow individual's information • Return to Seek Information
END RESPECTFULLY	<p>PURPOSE</p> <p>To provide respectful closure to and transition from the interview by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending to the individual's presentation, communicated experience, and observed needs • Providing a developmentally sensitive and individual-centered transition <p>POSSIBLE METHODS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore Resources • Acknowledge Participation • Provide Opportunity for Questions • Return to Neutral Topic • Offer Face Drawing/Business card

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The Recommended Methods and Possible Tools are intended to provide the individual with what they¹ may need to best participate in the forensic interview, and to provide the interviewer with what they may require in order to adjust for this individual.

Establishing a foundation for the forensic interview includes providing an orientation to the interview process and the environment, as the forensic interview is likely to be a novel experience for most interviewees. This can occur through providing *orienting messages* at the interview's outset, as well as by integrating orienting messages throughout the subsequent stages of the interview as applicable situations arise. For example, early in the interview, an interviewer may provide an orienting message introducing the interviewer's role ("My job is to listen and to learn about you.") and lack of knowledge ("When I ask questions, it's because there are things I don't know."); later in the interview, a situation may arise to reiterate this message ("Remember before, I told you I ask questions because I don't know what happened."). Providing orienting messages can impact the individual's participation in the forensic interview, such as through the individual's spontaneously telling the interviewer if they cannot answer a question (Anderson, Anderson, & Krippner, 2016). While there are similarities with practices that practitioners may refer to as "ground rules" or "interview instructions," orienting messages are distinct from these, as the primary intention is to provide information to assist with acclimating to the unique culture of the interview (Stauffer, Maples, & Lukas Miller, 2018). Interviewers adjust orienting messages for the development and particular needs of the individual; this includes variation in the specific orienting messages provided and in how and when interviewers convey particular messages.

Establishing a foundation for the forensic interview also includes identifying how to adjust the forensic interview to fit each unique individual. The Build Rapport stage includes opportunities to learn about the individual's abilities and communication and to discover what is useful for maximizing their abilities.

The Recommended Methods of Build Rapport, employed in an intentional manner, can serve multiple functions. As an example, the Recommended Method of engaging in *narrative practice* regarding a neutral topic can be used to orient the individual and convey that they are the focus of the interview ("My job is to find out about you—tell me about something you like to do."). Interviewers may also use it to establish patterns of communication ("Tell me everything that happened at your last softball game from the beginning to the end."). Additionally, narrative practice during Build Rapport is an opportunity to learn about the individual, such as how the individual naturally communicates and how they respond to the interviewer. For example, the interviewer may note whether the individual provides extended, detailed narratives if the interviewer remains silent, if the individual benefits from specific orienting messages ("I wasn't there and I don't know what happened."), whether they use a combination of verbal and non-verbal methods of communicating, if particular types of invitations or inquiries impact sharing of information, or other unique aspects of this individual's communication the interviewer may observe.

Facilitating the individual's best possible functioning involves applying what the interviewer learned in Build Rapport to the later stages of the interview. For example, if stating, "I wasn't there and I don't know what happened," was useful in eliciting details about their softball game, the interviewer may provide this same orienting message when inviting the individual to share details about a time their stepfather whooped them. If the individual drew a map of the softball field to tell about their game, the interviewer may offer a marker and paper to provide the option of drawing the location where the whooping took place. If the individual paused for an extended time before beginning to share about their softball game, the interviewer may allow for at least as much silence when the individual is later reporting about their experience of being whooped.

The protocol does not stipulate a fixed point in

¹ CornerHouse uses practices and language that are as inclusive as possible, in acknowledgement and respect of the range of gender expressions and identities of the individuals who trust us with their stories. To reflect this, the pronoun "they" is used throughout this article as a singular and a plural pronoun.

identifying completion of rapport building or defining specifically when to transition to subsequent stages. The interviewer adjusts Build Rapport to the individual and their needs, and the interviewer is intentional in determining when and how to transition from Build Rapport. Considerations include the individual’s sense of comfort and their engagement, communication, and what the interviewer has had opportunity to learn to inform how they may approach the remainder of the interview. For some individuals, additional rapport building may be beneficial, and transitioning too soon may not provide their best opportunity to participate in the forensic interview. For some, more extended rapport building may be unnecessary and could have potential negative impacts on the individual’s continued participation in the interview. It is recommended that the Build Rapport stage continue for as long as is necessary to establish an adequate foundation for the rest of the interview; however, transitioning from Build Rapport should occur as soon as is appropriate for the individual.

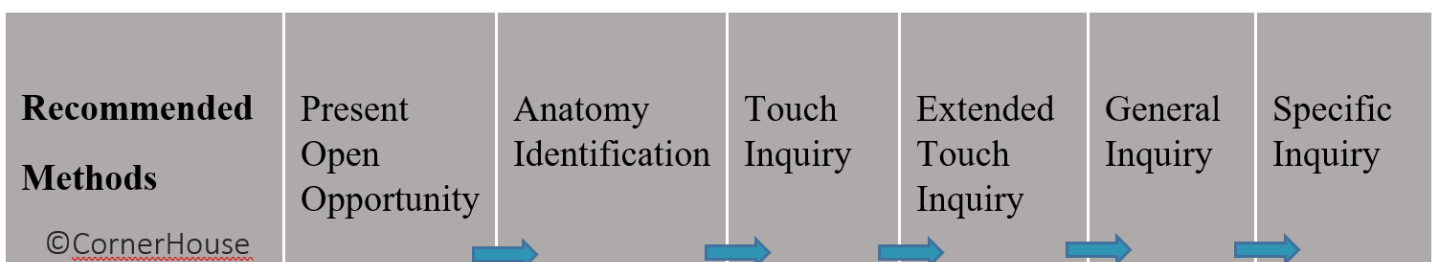
The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™: Seek Information

The purpose of the Seek Information stage is to provide an opportunity for the individual to report their experience. This occurs through the interviewer’s choosing a forensically sound strategy for approaching the topic of inquiry, fully utilizing indirect prompts, and by incorporating interview tools in an intentional manner, when appropriate. Recognizing that disclosure of abuse or other potentially traumatic experiences is a process, acknowledging that individuals may arrive for their forensic interview with varying levels of preparation, and understanding that interviewees represent a range of developmental abilities, the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ incorporates Recommended Methods that

provide multiple, progressive options to allow the opportunity to report experiences of concern. This design—beginning with the most indirect strategy, and potentially becoming more concrete or specific if necessary—is intended to balance the possible needs of the individual with the responsibility to remain forensically sound.

The Seek Information stage begins with the Recommended Method of Presenting an Open Opportunity, offering a broad invitation for the individual to share a topic of concern (e.g., “Tell me about coming to talk with me today.” or “What did you come to talk about?”). Interviewers present a form of open opportunity for nearly every interview, as it may offer the most indirect opportunity to make a disclosure. Many individuals will report when presented with an open opportunity. However, this Method may be more effective for individuals with particular circumstances, such as individuals who have some understanding of the purpose of the forensic interview; who have been prepared for the forensic interview; who have a sense of comfort or safety in reporting information; who have the abstract abilities to understand the question; or who are generally ready, willing, or able to disclose an experience of concern. If an individual does not make a disclosure in response to an open opportunity, additional Recommended Methods are available that may allow an individual to report experiences, if experiences of concern have occurred. These Recommended Methods include options that are more concrete or grounded, that introduce general concepts in order to increase comfort in talking about potentially difficult topics, or that may offer cues for memory retrieval. One example is a neutral introduction of the topic of touch, inviting the individual to share about touch they have experienced (e.g., “Sometimes I ask people

Figure 2. Possible Recommended Methods for the Seek Information Stage



about touches; tell me about touches you get.”). Neutral introduction of the topic of touch may be more effective for some individuals in providing an opportunity to report their experience. It may be less abstract and better understood for individuals who are developmentally concrete, such as younger children or individuals with particular disabilities, could orient individuals to the acceptability of talking about bodies and experiences of contact, or may serve as a memory retrieval cue for an individual as to an experience or event.

As with all stages of the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™, there are specific modifications based upon development regarding the Recommended Methods and Possible Tools available for use in Seek Information. Unique to this stage is the designated sequence for incorporating the Recommended Methods, starting from the most indirect prompt and moving toward progressively more direct prompts, if necessary, for the individual. Figure 2 illustrates this progression. While maintaining the sequence of these Recommended Methods is important, it is not necessary to use all the available Methods. The function of each distinct Recommended Method in Seek Information is to allow the individual an opportunity to report their experience; once an individual has made a report during the forensic interview, using additional Methods would be superfluous. At any point that a disclosure occurs, the interview transitions directly into the next possible stage of Explore Statements.

While the protocol includes options for approaching the topic of inquiry that are progressively more direct, the Recommended Methods in Seek Information do not include strategies that could negatively impact the individual’s sharing of accurate information. For example, with Specific Inquiry, the most direct of the Recommended Methods, an interviewer might use a specific piece of information to compose a question that intentionally remains as open and neutral as possible (for example, “Did something happen at your house?”). Strategies such as an interviewer’s introducing an event and implying that they have knowledge of an event’s occurring or asking an individual to speculate regarding specific acts or events are not present in the Seek Information stage.

Not all individuals will report experiences of concern during a forensic interview. Some may not be ready, willing, or able to report (or to effectively participate) during the forensic interview, and some individuals may not have experiences or information to report. As the purpose of the Seek Information stage is to provide an *opportunity* for the individual to report their experience, the forensic interview proceeds to the End Respectfully stage if there is no report after forensically sound strategies have been exhausted.

The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™: Explore Statements

If an individual discloses an experience of potential concern, the interview transitions to the Explore Statements stage. The purpose of Explore Statements is to allow the individual to share details of their experience, by listening; by allowing a range of communication, including use of interview tools as beneficial; and through a return to the Seek Information stage, as appropriate. The Recommended Methods facilitate this communication, eliciting details within a person-centered and forensically sound approach in efforts to maximize what the individual can share and minimize potential barriers. Strategies to support the individual’s sharing of information include applying what was learned about the individual in Build Rapport, having developmentally appropriate expectations, encouraging narratives, recognizing the individual as the expert regarding their own experience, and being responsive to the individual’s needs.

The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ refers to the approach for eliciting information as Invitation & Inquiry (Anderson, 2013; CornerHouse, 2018c). As illustrated in Figure 3, corresponding to a traffic light: Interviewers can use Invitations, denoted in green (i.e., “go”), freely; they can use Inquiries, represented in yellow (“caution”), with care; and they should avoid attempts to elicit information that are leading, suggestive, or coercive, represented in red (“stop”). Although Invitation & Inquiry is employed throughout all stages of the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™, it has a particular function for the Explore Statements stage’s purpose of allowing details. The Invitations are those which invite an individual to share about their experiences in their own words,

Figure 3. Invitation and Inquiry



drawing upon what is most salient to them or best remembered. Invitations can elicit information which is more likely to be accurate (APSAC Taskforce, 2012; Newlin et al. 2015), and they provide minimal parameters or direction from the forensic interviewer.

Examples of the Invitations include “Tell me more about that,” “And then what happened?,” or use of silence to facilitate the individual’s sharing of information at their own pace. Invitations are preferable for eliciting information whenever possible. However, Invitations alone may not be sufficient for allowing the individual to share particular details of their experience or for eliciting potentially imperative elements. In such situations, the use of Inquiry may be necessary. These are more specific, direct types of questions. Some examples are questions such as “What’s your babysitter’s name?,” “Did it hurt?,” or, “Were you in your room or your brother’s room or somewhere else?” Use of Inquiry may be appropriate at times, and the individual may provide information in response. However, there are potential drawbacks, as Inquiry might limit the overall information that an individual may share, and there is a possible negative impact upon accuracy (APSAC Taskforce, 2012; Newlin, et al., 2015). CornerHouse recommends that use of Inquiry be judicious.

Often, there will be several options for how an interviewer could phrase a question, necessitating that the interviewer consider which option is most appropriate for allowing the individual to share details of their experience. Even when using Inquiry, interviewers should compose attempts to elicit information in the most open way possible (for example, asking “How did it feel?” rather than “Did it hurt?”), with more specific or direct options used if necessary. For example, if an individual appears confused and unable to answer the question “How did it feel?,” asking in an alternative way may be helpful, such as “Did it hurt, or tickle, or something else?” Use of Invitation & Inquiry in the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ recommends for an Inquiry to be paired with a follow-up Invitation (e.g., “Where were you when you saw mom get hit?” - “In the hallway” - “Tell me all about being in the hallway”); doing so can encourage narrative responses and allow the individual to communicate more fully from their own experience.

While verbal communication (including sign language) facilitated through the use of Invitation & Inquiry is the primary way that individuals are likely to share details, the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ provides for additional options, to be incorporated in an intentional manner, which may allow the individual to communicate in the way most effective for them. See “Use of Media” in this article for additional information.

Incorporated into the Explore Statements stage are intentional strategies for actively avoiding possible bias or assumption regarding what the individual has experienced or the information they may share. These include following the information reported by the individual during the interview, regardless of pre-interview allegations; considering alternative explanations; eliciting clarification or inviting correction; and providing opportunities for other reports. Research and practical experience have identified that individuals frequently experience polyvictimization, not only experiencing repeated, similar abuse events but also multiple types of abuse (Finkelhor, Turner, Shattuck, Hamby, & Kracke, 2015). However, individuals may not initiate reporting of additional experiences, and an individual’s process of disclosure may result in their incrementally

disclosing experiences. To increase the potential for an individual to share the breadth of what they may have experienced, the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ includes intentional opportunities for individuals to report experiences of abuse beyond what they may have already shared in the forensic interview, through a return to the Seek Information stage. This may include screening for other alleged abuse with the same or another alleged perpetrator; other types of abuse, including abuse involving photos/videos or commercial sexual exploitation; or witnessing abuse of others. If the individual makes additional disclosures, the interview will move back into allowing the individual to share details, continuing to cycle between Seek Information and Explore Statements as necessary.

The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™: End Respectfully

The purpose of End Respectfully, the final stage of the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™, is to provide a respectful closure to and transition from the forensic interview, through attending to the individual's presentation, communicated experience, and unique needs, and by providing a developmentally sensitive and individual-centered transition. In accordance with CornerHouse's Guiding Principle of being person-centered, the interview is not finished simply because the interviewer is done gathering information; the interview is complete when the individual states or indicates that they have nothing additional to share, that they want to be done, and/or they are ready to transition. While interviewers offer individuals the opportunity to ask questions, the interviewer's role in this stage, as throughout the interview, remains one of receiving, rather than providing, information. Interviewers should consider this when responding to questions and in other exchanges as the interview nears conclusion. Interviewers may explore resources by asking an individual who they have available as resources ("Do you have someone you can talk to if you ever need help?"); through inviting such information, there is an opportunity to learn if the individual has a support system they recognize and that is available, or if there may be potential vulnerabilities. The additional Recommended Methods of End Respectfully are more specifically intended as ways to bridge the individual's

experience within and outside of the interview and to intentionally facilitate the individual's transition from the forensic interview setting. The End Respectfully stage is meant to be just as individualized as the other stages of the protocol, responding to the unique needs of the individual and what will best support their transition from the forensic interview.

Use of Media in the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™

CornerHouse supports the intentional and judicious use of specific media as interview tools during forensic interviews using the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™. The use of these interview tools in the protocol provides opportunities for the individual to share details regarding experiences, serves as a visual reference, offers options aside from referencing the individual's own body, allows opportunities for clarification and correction, and provides an alternative to exclusively verbal communication. In general practice, the types of media incorporated into The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ are limited to paper, anatomical diagrams, and anatomical dolls. Their usefulness is dependent upon the abilities of those employing them—namely, forensic interviewers who are trained in their use, during forensic interviews with individuals (children, adolescents, or vulnerable adults) who are developmentally capable of using the tool. Responsible use requires understanding by both the interviewer and the individual of how a tool is used, the reason for its use, and parameters of recommended use. Introduction should include verbal clarification of their purpose and appropriate instruction regarding their use. These interview tools, when used effectively, can enhance communication during the forensic interview.

Paper. The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ incorporates paper, used for drawing or writing, in a variety of ways. Large chart paper, mounted to an easel or wall, provides shared access; the individual and the interviewer may use the paper, and anything written or drawn is visible to both. Options for use may include opportunities for drawing people, places, objects, or events the individual is describing; noting information to use as a reference during the interview; or offering the individual the option to write their information.

While drawings may provide useful information, individuals should be invited to verbally describe what they are drawing, as interpretation of an individual's drawing is not supported practice in the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™.

Anatomical diagrams. The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ allows for the use of a specific set of anatomical diagrams, which are detailed male and female anatomical diagrams that show front and back views of the body and are consistent in appearance with the age/physical development and ethnicity of the individual being interviewed. CornerHouse does not recommend the use of other types of diagrams, which may depict figures that are clothed or without genitals. Diagrams which cover or omit particular body parts could result in potential misunderstanding or difficulty in identifying which part of the body is being referenced (Brown, Pipe, Lewis, Lamb, & Orbach, 2007; Gunderson National Child Protection Training Center, 2016; Lyon, 2012; Otgaar, Horselenberg, van Kampen, & Lalleman, 2012). It is also CornerHouse's position that such diagrams could convey that there are parts of the body (or experiences involving those parts) that may not be acceptable to talk about. Introduction and use of anatomical diagrams may occur during the Seek Information or Explore Statements stages. Interviewers present anatomical diagrams in a neutral manner that is adjusted for the development of the individual and combined with orienting messages. The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ identifies options for specific use of the anatomical diagrams, and functions may include using anatomical diagrams to learn the individual's names for various parts of the body, to serve as a reference, to offer an alternative or additional means of communication, or to allow for specificity or clarification.

CornerHouse has adapted previous practices regarding the introduction and use of anatomical diagrams (Lukas Miller, 2018). Individuals are no longer asked to identify, nor will interviewers label, a diagram as a "boy" or a "girl"; rather, the focus is on the individual's identifying the anatomical diagram that best represents them (e.g., "the one that has parts like you"). In this way, interviewers and the individuals being interviewed can use anatomical diagrams

in a manner that is more inclusive and respectful of the range of gender identities and expressions of individuals, while still providing a mechanism for communication regarding the physical parts of the body that may have been involved in reported experiences.

As with any practice during the forensic interview, practitioners should apply forensically sound principles when incorporating anatomical diagrams. Anatomical diagrams in the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ are intended to be used in conjunction with providing opportunities for the individual to share narrative regarding their experiences; they should not be used in a manner that limits or replaces such opportunities.

Anatomical dolls. CornerHouse supports the use of anatomical dolls during the forensic interview as a tool that can enhance an individual's ability to communicate their experience. CornerHouse uses commercially produced male and female anatomical dolls with body parts similar to people, including oral, anal, and genital openings; with adjustable, removable clothing; of a size that can easily be maneuvered; and available in a range of ages and skin tones, to best represent the individual, the alleged perpetrator, or others. Recommended use includes consideration of the individual's developmental ability to use the anatomical dolls.

The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ restricts when interviewers may introduce the anatomical dolls, to occur only after an individual has made a verbal disclosure during the forensic interview. Use of the anatomical dolls is limited, used only as a demonstration aid for the individual to show what happened. It is essential that the interviewer encourage the individual to verbally describe what they are showing, as the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ does not support the practice of interpreting what the individual is demonstrating. As with other interview tools, interviewers should use anatomical dolls in a manner consistent with overall best practices of forensic interviewing. Before, during, and after use of anatomical dolls, interviewers must give individuals opportunities to provide narrative regarding their experience.

The intentional use of these specific interview tools (paper, anatomical diagrams, and anatomical dolls) is an intrinsic element of the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™. They are represented in each stage and offered as valid options for communication. However, it is not CornerHouse's position that use of paper, anatomical diagrams, or anatomical dolls is required, appropriate, or necessary in every forensic interview. Further, as with any technique, interviewers should not rely upon these interview tools as the sole means of obtaining information from an individual. Yet, it is also CornerHouse's position that verbal communication, exclusively, may not be most effective for every individual. Factors such as an individual's culture, development, or their response to trauma may influence an individual's communication. The Guiding Principles upon which the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ is built direct interviewers in conducting forensic interviews that are mindful of best practices *and* which provide the best possible opportunity for each unique individual to communicate their experiences in their own way. When used with intentionality and in alignment with the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™, such interview tools can be a valuable component of the forensic interview process.

The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ and Other Practice Considerations

Given differences in individual agency practices or jurisdictional requirements, interviewers sometimes use the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ in conjunction with practices not specifically taught or recommended by CornerHouse. For example, The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ does not include a routine truth-lie discussion, but some jurisdictions require this; CornerHouse encourages video recording, but some agencies do not record their forensic interviews. While particular practices may not specifically be supported by CornerHouse, they would not necessarily preclude conducting an interview using the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™.

Multiple-session forensic interviews. While the majority of forensic interviews will be the traditional single session, there are times when this does not fit an individual's needs. CornerHouse advocates

for flexibility in the number of interview sessions, consistent with current best practice guidelines and research (APSAC Taskforce, 2012; Faller, Cordisco-Steele, & Nelson-Gardell, 2010; La Rooy, Katz, Malloy, & Lamb, 2010). CornerHouse's options for multiple-session forensic interviews are considered to be a single interview, separated into multiple sessions. CornerHouse does not support a practice of repeated, duplicative forensic interviews.

Three distinct types of multiple-session forensic interviews are incorporated into CornerHouse practice, applicable to particular circumstances. CornerHouse MultiSession Interviews™ are scheduled at the time of intake to occur over multiple sessions; these are based upon specific criteria, such as when the individual is a very young child or has special needs. Adjusted forensic interviews were scheduled to occur as a single session but extend into another session; a possible circumstance could be with an individual who discloses multiple perpetrators. A Follow-up forensic interview occurs when a forensic interview was completed, but something prompts the individual's return; for example, a non-disclosing individual who later indicates readiness to report. Interviewers use an intentional process in considering if a multiple-session forensic interview is appropriate and how the interview is approached. These multiple-session interviews are conducted using a modification of the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™.

Introduction of externally derived information.

Introduction of externally derived information during the forensic interview is a complex practice consideration. What is identified as externally derived information encompasses a broad range, including a continuum of the amount and type of information and how it is introduced. Consideration involves weighing potential concerns and benefits of introducing externally derived information, including how doing so may impact the individual, the forensic interview, and the investigation (Hayes & Weigman, 2018). CornerHouse considers these complexities along with case factors and other circumstances regarding if, when, and how externally derived information is introduced. The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ does not include specific provisions for the introduction of physical evidence (such as bringing

photos into the forensic interview), and this is not part of current CornerHouse practice. However, there are ways in which interviewers may incorporate the judicious use of externally derived information, such as during the Seek Information stage, where approaching a topic of concern may include using particular allegation information to compose inquiry. For example, after more indirect opportunities have been exhausted, an interviewer may ask the child, “Do you go to camp? Tell me about camp,” if allegation information indicated abuse reportedly occurring at camp.

As we look toward the future, CornerHouse remains actively engaged in reflection of the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ and in considering how these and other practices intersect with the protocol.

Conclusion

The CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ provides the opportunity for CornerHouse forensic interviewers and multidisciplinary team members to listen to the more than 500 children, adolescents, and vulnerable adults interviewed at CornerHouse

each year, and to the countless others interviewed by those trained in the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™, which to date includes more than 33,000 professionals from all 50 states and from 20 countries (CornerHouse, 2018b). As best practices and professional guidelines continue to evolve, and as research and direct experiences continue to inform practice, the CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol™ will continue to adapt as well, while remaining committed to the Guiding Principles of being Person Centered, Semi-structured, and Forensically Sound.

About the Author

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