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The Trauma Experience



**•Overwhelms:**

- Ability to cope
- Ability to integrate ideas and emotions of event

• Result? Extreme confusion & insecurity

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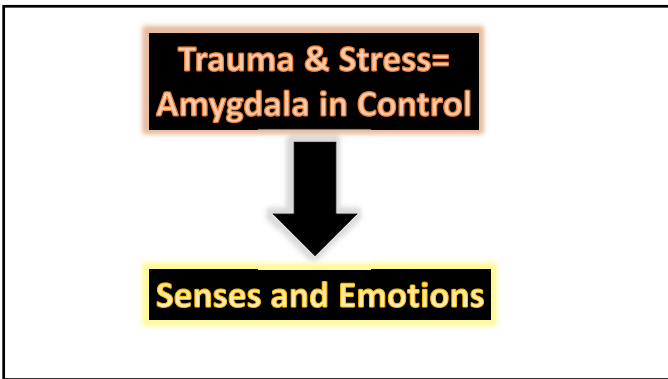
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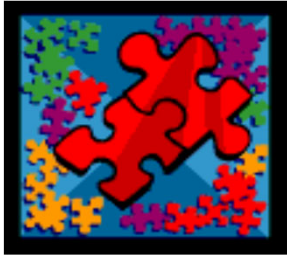
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Memory of Crisis Event looks like....



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### EFFECTS of TRAUMA

- Memory has been **Impaired**
- The **sensory** and **motor** parts of the brain are responding.
- Memory is **fragmented**, difficult to retrieve
- Memory is **ACCURATE**

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The Investigator's Role: Take The Allegation Seriously

"By **corroborating** as many facts as possible, no matter how insignificant they may seem, the officer can better help **establish the validity** of the victim's story and improve **credibility** even when there are other problems with the investigation." Russell Strand

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Credibility Concerns in the Care Facility Setting



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Some Background on **MEMORY**

**IMPLICIT MEMORY**



**EXPLICIT MEMORY**



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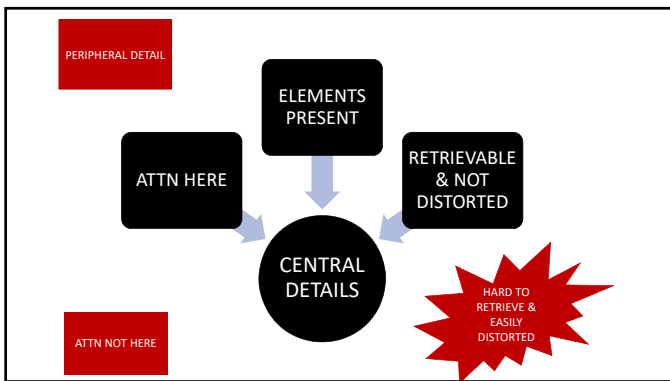
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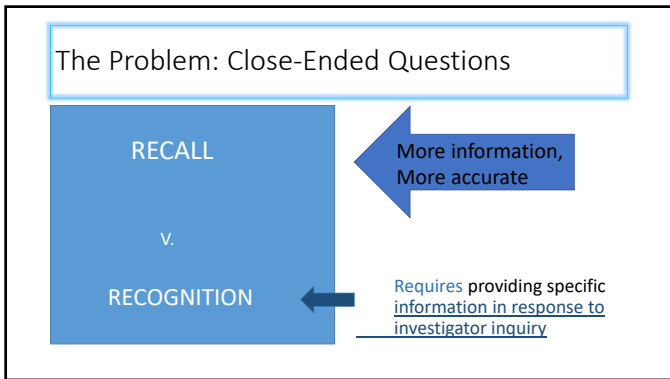
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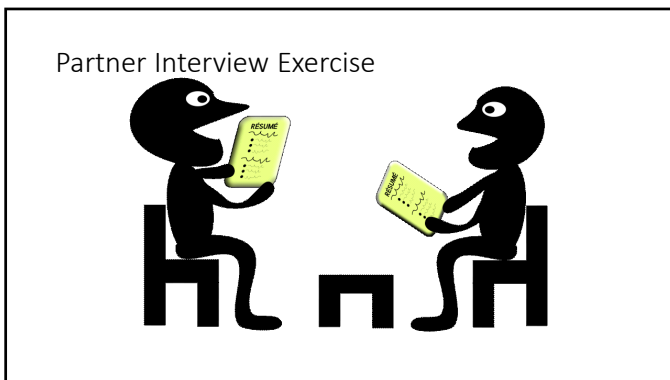
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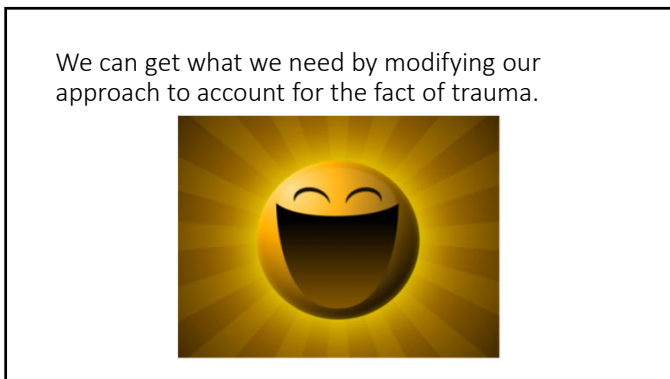
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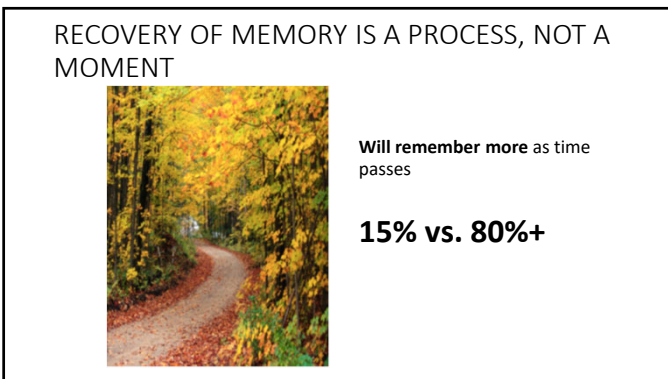
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We must facilitate return of a sense of control to the victim.

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The Initial Interview: Acute Crisis

• **Essential information ONLY.** Do not press the victim to reveal details of the assault that are not necessary in order to take the initial report.



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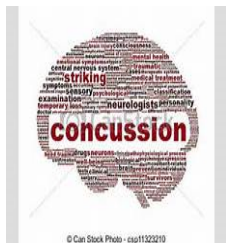
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Minimal Facts/Getting the Info – think “Critical Incident”



**RATIONAL THOUGHT BLOCKED, so you**

- Ask Short & direct Q's; open-ended as possible
- **Listen & Re-Word**
- **Repeat and Verify**
- Non-leading: victim likely to “agree” out of confusion/not listening

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Critical Incident/Minimal Facts Interview  
"WHAT HAPPENED."

**Why are you listening for this info?**

- **What** happened?
- **When** did it happen?
- **Where** did it happen
- **Who** did this?
- **Who** are the witnesses?
- Are there other victims or offenders?
- Lastly...ask, "How did it end?"

• Avoid "why-type" questions.

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When You Need More than Minimal Facts:

Interviewing  
Not  
Interrogating




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Action Step 2: Be Empathetic



How would you like it if the mouse did that to you?

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### Action Step 3: Build Rapport

- Rapport
  - \*respects
  - \*accepts
  - \*provides information
  - \*establishes your interest




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### Action Step 4: Put the Victim at Ease

Victim Satisfaction is directly related to victim perception of being in CONTROL.




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### Action Step 5: Actively Listen

**Every good conversation starts with good listening.**

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What we have learned from Trauma Research

- LISTEN WITHOUT INTERRUPTION
- ALLOW the VICTIM to CONTROL flow of information



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Action Step 6: Be Open-Minded



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What we have learned from Trauma Research

USE JUDGMENT-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

“Tell me about what you were thinking...”

v.

“Why did you...”  
“Why didn’t you...”

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Action Step 7:  
Ask Open-Ended Questions

- THE VICTIM IS THE EXPERT.



- ALLOW THEIR MEMORY TO LEAD THE WAY.

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Open-Ended Questions

- Some Examples:
  - Tell me about....
  - Tell me more about...
  - Tell me what you remember about...
  - Help me see what you saw...(heard, what your body felt, etc...)
  - What are you able to tell me about your experience?



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Action Step 8: Focus on EVENTS

The **EVENT EXPERIENCE** is the central idea.

The details will come.



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Action Step 9: Ask about Sensory and Emotional Details



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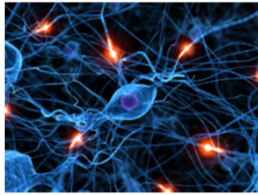
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Making the emotion/senses connection



- Questions might look like:
  - Tell me about what you were feeling when...
  - Tell me about what you were thinking when...
  - What were you hearing/tasting/smelling/touching /seeing when...
  - What was your reaction to...

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Action Step 11: Prepare the Way for Additional Disclosures



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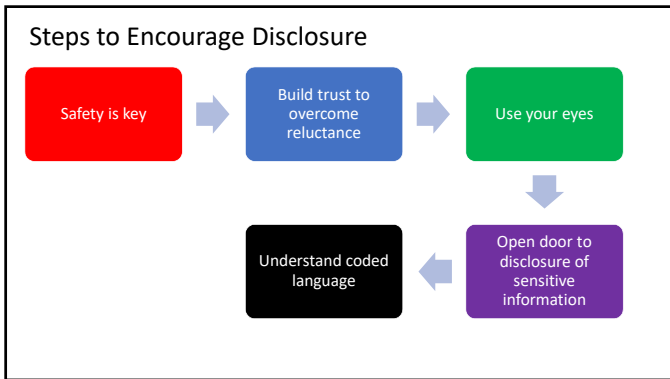
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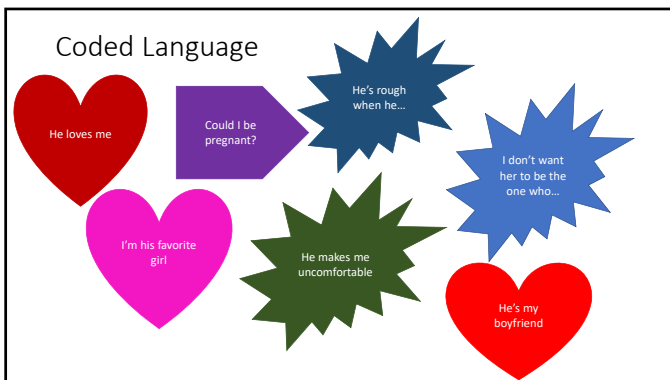
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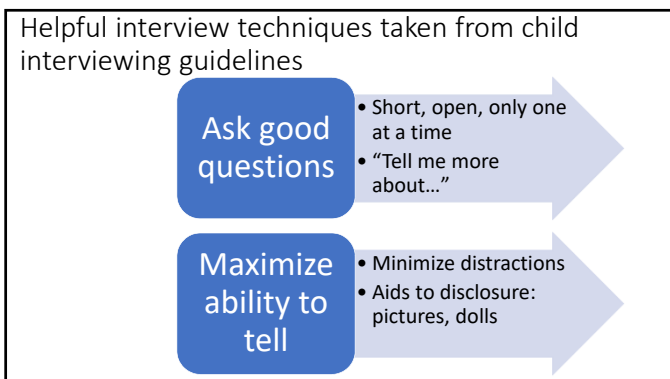
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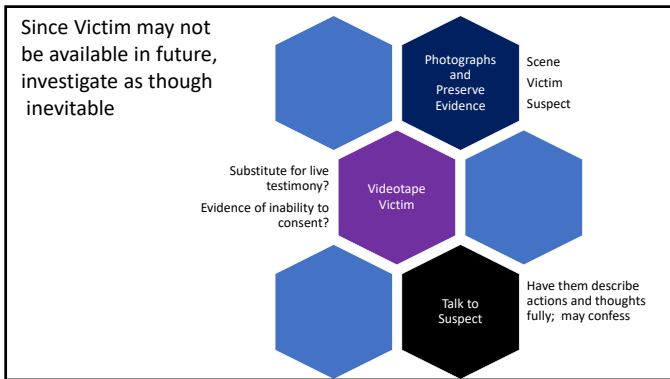
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Avoid the mistake of discounting information without an investigation. Because trauma memory is different than normal memory, even those with cognitive challenges can accurately relate their experiences.

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