Contemporary Use of Human Figure Drawings and Dolls: Where Do We Go From Here?

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My Vantage Point
- Clinical Psychologist
- Knowledge and experience with research methods
- Active CAC forensic interviewer, 24 years
- Exposure to many protocols
- Consulting and testifying expert
- Prosecution and Defense
- Senior curriculum contributor to ChildFirst SC
- User of Drawings and Dolls, but with decreasing frequency

My Messages
1. A primary use of HFD’s and Touch-based questioning in CFI’s is to transition into the topic of concern, not to explore the details
2. Secondary uses of HFD’s are:
   - Identification of vocabulary
   - Clarification of recalled information
3. Research confirms that 2a. is doable and not problematic
4. Most of the lab research does not simulate the other applications

How Do We Transition? ChildFirst SC
1. Natural
   Derived from rapport
2. Cued
   What do you know about coming here today?
   __________________________
1. Invited: Anatomy Identification and Touch-based Questioning
   a. Determining whether a child can understand and communicate about touch
   b. Then asking if that child has received, or been asked to give, a sexual touch
2. Informed
   Introducing externally verifiable information

Anatomy ID and Touch-based Inquiry for Transition: What Does It Look Like?

What Happens After Transition? Exploration
- Tell me all about that.
- Free-recall
- Seeking narrative elaboration
- WH/1F questions
- Use of option-prompting paired with free-recall and focused recall
- HFD’s are not a component of this process

What We Don’t Teach for Exploration
- Did he touch you here?
- Did he touch you there?
- Did he want you to touch him here?
- Did he want you to touch him there?

What We Don’t Teach for Exploration
- It increases erroneous responses from children who do not have a personal recollection to offer
- Young children are not always proficient transferring location to diagrams or dolls
- It may elicit additional true disclosures from children who have personal recollection to offer
- The problem is….you don’t know who you are interviewing
What We Also Don't Teach

- Introducing HFD's after topic exploration for "relentless probing"
- Instead, diagrams for clarification of vague or ambiguous responses

Child Forensic Interviewing

- Majority have verbalized abuse before the CAC FI (see Leach, 2017, and Pipe, 2007)
- Most of our population has experienced memorable touch
- Some have not verbalized abuse before the CAC II
- Not all children refer to the CAC have something to tell
- Non-disclosers are of greater numerical concern than false reporters (see Leach, 2017)

Sensitivity v. Specificity

- A sensitive test picks up lots of potential "signals"
  - More detection of true cases
  - More "false positives"
- A specific test picks up fewer, stronger and more certain "signals"
  - Fewer detection of true cases
  - Fewer "false negatives"


"When the interviewer moves to direct questions utilizing a doll or drawing, the likelihood that children disclose touch increases... Steward et al: 3-6-year olds, higher true positive rate than false positive rate; disclosure of touching was weak to moderate evidence of touching. 
Saywitz et al: 5-7-year olds, higher true positive rates than false positive rates, and the rates of false positives were so low that a disclosure constituted strong evidence that the child had been touched.

Conclusion: Touch-based questions yield higher sensitivity, lower specificity

Areas of Agreement in Research and Practice

- Reconstruction memory cues are safer, and recall – such as it is – will be more accurate.
- Free recall will be incomplete and sparse
- Children will avoid reporting known genital touches
- The younger the child, the greater the concerns about suggestibility and emotional demand characteristics

Heading into the research...

- Questions or comments at this point?

Structure for Analyzing Research

- Lab or Field?
- Sample (number and ages of children)
- Presence of ground rules and information about CFI model?
- Procedure for inserting HFDs
- Results
- Recommendations
- Do the recommendations match the results?

Lab Studies With Forgettable Touches

- Designed events led the touches were not memorable
- Poole, et al (2011): 9% of the children recalled any of the targeted touches in free recall
- 14.5% of children in the HFD condition reported false intrusions of touching, usually by pointing to [primed] body parts. In contrast, this type of false allegation never occurred in the standard condition.
- Brown et al (2007): 0% of the children recalled any of the 7 targeted touches in free recall
- Bruck (2009): Only 3% (n = 15) of all utterances contained touching information; two of the 15 were incorrect. Most children reported no touches.
- Willcock (2006): 10 out of 125 children denied being touched
- Responses were only 37.6% complete.
- Responses were only 47.8% accurate
- Second experiment similarly poor recall
Because the children's recollections of these touches were so poor, these studies give us a window into effects of option posing questions using HFDs with children who do not have information to give. Remember: most of the children referred to a CAC have made a prior disclosure. These studies are therefore limited in utility for understanding effects on children who have described salient sexual touches and are being asked to divulge them in detail in a CFI.

Brown, et al: They will supply some false positive answers, but generally will not back them up with elaboration. "Forensically relevant errors were infrequent and were rarely elaborated on," and "Although asking children to talk about intrusion touches may lead them to report unreliable information, especially when human figure drawings are used as aids, errors are reduced when open-ended prompts are used to seek further information about reported touches." i.e., recognition memory prompt >>> reconstructive invitation


Field Study, children 4-13 (N=90). NICHD CSA investigative interviews
HFD introduction for questions at the end (post-disclosure / post-exhaustion)
Aldridge: "Use of an [HFD] helped investigators elicit forensically important information from alleged victims even after the investigators believed that they had already exhausted the children's memories."
"Overall, the HFD elicited 18% of the total number of forensically relevant touches obtained. With the 4- to 7-year-olds, however, the drawing elicited 27% of the total number of details."

Lytle, London and Bruck 2015

Can children always "understand and communicate about touch?" No.
Three-dimensional object improves ability for preschoolers (doll)
Two-dimensional object use improves with age

Poole and the Exuberant False Reporter

Cognitive Control / Executive Control – keeping context / rules in mind and acting appropriately
Low SES, ADHD and ASD have impaired cognitive control
Age-related
Exuberant false reporters exist, especially little boys under 6
HFD create an "environmental-dependency-driven" response


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Some Sources of Error in Child Forensic Interviews

Children's Developmental Status and Experience
Interviewer's Training and Experience
Errors of Omission: Interviewer and Child
Errors of Commission: Interviewer and Child
Situational Demand Characteristics: Interviewer
Question Type: Interviewer
Reconstructive Memory Prompts
Recognition Memory Prompts

Research: More Accuracy With Unclothed HFD's Than Clothed HFD's

The unclothed HFD led to more correct reports of touch than the clothed HFD
Other results are similar to the studies of forgettable touches
HFDs helped with immediate recall
HFDs led to more true and false responses in delayed recall
A Salient Touch and New Findings: Dickinson and Poole, 2017

- "Mr. Science GERM DETECTIVE" Lab Study
- 4-8 year olds (287)
- Ground rules and narrative practice
- Next stage: Open-ended prompts vs. diagram-assisted questioning
- All stages occur for both conditions:
  - Open-ended prompts about Germ Detective
  - Questions about wrongdoing
  - Questions about touches
  - Diagram-assisted questions about specific touches with diagram (or not for both)

Dickinson & Poole (2017) Results

"The percentages of children disclosing any touching or attempted touching in the conventional first and diagram-first conditions were 87.2% and 83.7%, respectively."

Only 27.6% disclosed touching during open-ended prompting, but twice as many did so when interviewers asked about wrongdoing. "What we did not anticipate was how ineffective a single prompt to describe a touch report would be during questioning without a diagram."

Dickinson & Poole (2017) Results

"Tell me what happened," children either did not elaborate or still did not mention which body part was touched. Whereas, "the diagram-first condition produced a higher percentage of children with at least one accurate specific disclosure of touching or attempted touching."

Dickinson & Poole (2017) Results

"New disclosures continued to emerge as the interview unfolded, confirming earlier findings that children do not always immediately report touches they are capable of remembering."

Dickinson & Poole (2017): Pre-disclosure x Interview Type x Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No previous disclosure</th>
<th>Previous disclosure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventional-first</td>
<td>Diagram-first</td>
<td>Conventional-first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>96.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"The diagram advantage remained highly significant for 5- to 8-year-olds."

Dickinson & Poole (2017) Results

"Children who disclosed by pointing simultaneously reported touching and where they were touched. In the conventional-first condition…children who had not previously disclosed were more often vague when verbally responding and did not always elaborate in response to a single prompt to tell what happened. As a result…diagrams more effectively elicited information from children who had not previously disclosed. And, "Neither the percentage of children making new accurate disclosures nor the percentage making new inaccurate disclosures was significantly associated with age, disclosure history, or interview condition."

Dickinson & Poole (2017)

- For both conditions, finishing with yes/no specific probes using the diagram was problematic.
- A few new accurate (6.5%) responses blended with inaccurate (5.9%) reports of touching specific body parts.
- Accuracy rate of only 36.8%
- No difference between groups (no difference of first or diagram-first)
- Rather than calling for a moratorium on their use, the benefits of HFD's remain "largely unknown."

"Relentless Probing" vs. Invited Transition

- Anatomy ID and Touch-based questioning as a pathway to the topic of concern is not the same as "probing for more" after a full inquiry about a targeted event
- "Understanding and communicating about touch" + "questions of wrongdoing" + "an invited transition to the topic of concern"
- These two processes should not be confused

The Ironic Use of Recognition Memory Prompts in Research Design

- Wilcock (2006): Shown a medal (recognition memory prompt) from fire station trip to cue to the event, then interviewed with open and specific questions
- "I heard that [the male confederate's name] helped you put on a costume to wear when you went to the fire station...show me where he touched you when he put the costume on. Point to where he touched you."
The Ironic Use of Recognition Memory Prompts in Research Design

• Otgaar, et al (2012): The assistant showed them the measuring tape as a [recognition memory] prompt to direct the memory towards the target event. While showing the measuring tape, she told the following: 'I would like to talk with you about the time you were together with the lady who carried this tape with her.'

Dickinson & Poole (2017): "Did you come to the university a few weeks ago to go into the science room and play Germ Detective?" [If "no"], the interviewer reminded the child of the science room, the money they had received, and the topic of the program... If necessary, the interviewer displayed a lab coat and safety glasses to orient the child to the topic of conversation. Nineteen children said "no"... but remembered with [verbal prompt]. Four children who responded "yes" forgot the topic of conversation after seeing the lab coat, and all four subsequently answered questions about the Mr. Science experience.

That's Kind of The Point

• We can't do that in child forensic interviews.
• To GET to the topic of concern is the first challenge.
• Using diagrams and questions about touch is one doorway.
• Not the first doorway (cue: what do you know about coming here today?)
• But maybe the third doorway.
• Once the door is opened, set aside the HFD
• It is then available for clarification, if needed.

Emerging and Needed Research

• "Atmosphere of concern" has not been studied.
• Screening for children with cognitive control deficits may refine our application of diagram-based inquiry.
• More salient touch studies (e.g., germ detectives) are surely forthcoming and will be much more relevant.
• Need to distinguish between diagram-based questioning as a transition (unsaid), diagram-based questioning as clarification, and diagram-based questioning as "relentless prodding".

What About Rule-Reminders?

• "Blended" unnamed processes (N=1)
• Semistructured Cognitive Interview (N=1)
• Beyond the Silence (Ohio, N=2)
• Finding Words / ChildFirst (N=3)

My Survey

• "Other", N=22
• Beyond the Silence (Ohio, N=3)
• "Blended" unnamed processes (N=1)
• Semistructured Cognitive Interview (N=1)
• Finding Words / ChildFirst (N=3)

Please identify the forensic interview model or protocol you use.

• Beyond the Silence (Ohio, N=2)
• Finding Words / ChildFirst (N=3)
• State Protocol (N=1)
• "Blended" unnamed processes (N=1)
• Semistructured Cognitive Interview (N=1)
• Finding Words / ChildFirst (N=3)

You indicated "Other" for the forensic interview model or protocol you use. Please explain. (N=22)

You indicated your state has its own protocol. Please name your state. (16 States, N=53)
Are anatomical diagrams a permissible option for use in your forensic interviews? (N=579)

What ways are permissible for you to use anatomical diagrams? (N=530)

What type of anatomical diagrams / human figure drawings do you use?

Which of these statements best reflects your use of anatomical diagrams with children under 8? (N=529)

Why are anatomical diagrams not permissible in your interviews? (N=43)

Which of these statements best reflects your perspective on anatomical diagrams? (N=578)

Are anatomical dolls a permissible option for use in your forensic interviews? (N=579)

What ways are permissible for you to use anatomical dolls in your model? (N=100)

What type of anatomical dolls do you use? (N=200)
References: Field Studies and Other

Field Studies

References: Recent Lab Studies

Recent Lab Studies

References: Medical Exam Studies

Medical Exam Studies

References: Position Papers

2. NCAC (2015). Position Paper on the Use of Human Figure Drawings in Forensic Interviews

Thank you

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