



ANDERIDA ADOLESCENT CARE

TESTIMONIAL AND INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

Anderida is a therapeutic organisation. Their ongoing work with children and families includes life story work, family reconciliation and resisting harmful behaviour drawing on Non-Violent principles and methods.

Often as part of this work it is useful to interview parents and significant others.

This may be:

- As part of life story work to help develop a benign narrative of the child's origins and early years.
- As part of challenging the child's denial or minimisation of harmful behaviour.
- An acknowledgement or apology from parent/other of wrongdoing to the child.
- As part of writing an announcement which also includes an acknowledgment/apology from the interviewee/parent.
- Something else.

Interviews with interviewee/parents are sensitive and delicate pieces of work and should ideally only be undertaken by mentors who have undertaken certified NVR training or whom are qualified therapists. Plans for undertaking the work will be developed with a trained supervisor as well as drawing on this procedure.

You will consider with your supervisor:

- The intent of interview and desired outcome.
- Your relationship with the interviewee.
- What you know about their perspective of the child and family history.
- How the interview will be conducted.
- Where the interview will take place to include safety in the work, practicalities with logistics and funding.
- Safeguarding implications: is there a likelihood of disclosures acknowledging past abuse, what are the limits of confidentiality, have we reached an agreement with the LA around disclosures and safeguarding procedural responsibilities?
- Contracting; being clear with interviewees, the focus of the work, therapeutic limitations for interviewee support, confidentiality, sharing with discussions with your supervisors, what will be shared with the LA, what will be shared with the child, safety plan for interviewee if they become distressed (to include mindfulness and therapeutic activities), signposting to other therapy services if helpful, interviewees only sharing what they feel able to share.
- How and when you will meet again to debrief, and plan further stages of the work.
- How you will get your needs met whilst undertaking this work.
- How you will plan the presentation of the testimony and ensure quality support for the child following its delivery.

- Which of the questions are most helpful in achieving your aims?

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

Principles

- Visit with an open mind and show unconditional respect and regard for the person you are interviewing.
- Assume that they are good people who did their best in the circumstances.
- Assume they love their child.
- Assume they want the best for the child.
- Assume the position that it is through working alongside the parent that the child is benefitting. **NOT** that the parent failed, and we succeeded.
- Recognise the parent's contribution to the qualities their child has.
- The parent is the expert on their child.
- We are not there to judge.

Approach

- Interviewees need to be ready for each stage of the work. Sticking with positive early life story may be a good pathway to building trust and 'unblocking' the care and love they have for their child.
- Go through the contract and areas outlined with your supervisor including that they don't have to share anything they don't feel comfortable with.
- Leave enough time to pace the session, so it isn't rushed or doesn't end abruptly when the interviewee is sharing distressing memories.
- Think about and explain clearly the purpose of the communication, life story work, repair, acknowledgment or resistance and reconcile.
- Stick to what happened, discuss that it is not about attributing blame. There may be related factors, but these only provide an explanation not an excuse.
- Separate the behavior/what happened, from the person.
- Acknowledge that this is a subjective experience, and everyone has a different perspective, there are no absolute truths.
- Use 'I' statements what was the affect on me, what do 'I' think the affect may have been on my child.
- Avoid 'why' questions, these tend to take people to blaming or creating a 'meaning' for what happened that isn't helpful or factual.
- Ask the parent to think about what they are hoping to impart to their child and the benefits of sharing certain information.
- If you are uncomfortable with something an interviewee is asking you to include, explore it more- what is the parent trying to communicate/achieve, can this be done in a better way.

- Ask the parent for feedback on how they will experience hearing or reading the testimony. Consider with the parent how this is best delivered.
- Consider an interview with the 'internalized child' with them as the child, or someone else who knows that child well.
- If delivering directly to the child, help the parent to practice and regulate their emotions. Help the interviewee to think about how they will respond to their child's reaction to the letter, what can they say, do, what reconciliation gestures will be made after.
- Help the parent to think about their self-care.

Possible Questions

- What were hopes and dreams for life with this child when you first found out about them (pregnancy/adoption/fostering etc)?
- What happy memories spring to your mind when your child was little?
- What was it like when you found out you were pregnant?
- What are your happy memories?
- What aspects of parenting did you feel you were good at, as a parent?
- What was your child good at?
- What stood out about the child?
- Tell us about when things got difficult?
- What were you doing in this period?
- What was your child doing in this period?
- Knowing what you know now, is there anything you or anyone else could/would have done differently?
- What would life look like back then without these problems?
- How do you think these issues/problems affected your child (then & now)?
- What was it like for you, and who was impacted?
- What would you like to say to your child?
- What have you done to address some of these problems?
- What has changed?
- What have you noticed your child has done?
- What pledges will you make to your child going forward?
- What do you think your child needs/should hear moving forward?
- What keeps you going?
- What hopes do you have for you and your child for the future?
- Where do you see you and your child in a year?