



Primary Health Care Gender-Based Violence

Child Survivors: Best Practices in Communicating with Minors

Evaluation of children differs from that of adults. The child's ability to explain what happened sequentially may be minimal to nonexistent. Protocol for disclosure with a child survivor will be addressed in Module 4.

WHAT TO SAY TO THE CHILD

- Introduce yourself to the child
- Start by building rapport; this can be done by asking the child about the day to day issues first. For example ask the child about siblings, school, friends etc.
- Once the child is at ease, confirm the nature of his/her problem.
- Reassure them that it is not their fault and whatever they tell you will be kept confidential (with the exception of reporting to authorities, which will be addressed in more detail in Module 4)
- Adapt your conversation to the child's level of understanding.
- Avoid suggestive and leading questions.

HOW TO BEHAVE

DO:

- Keep your actions and responses neutral
- Be unbiased and willing to dig deeper to understand the nuances of what happened, and how it is being interpreted by the child

DON'T:

- Display shock, emotions (crying) or embarrassment; this might cause the child to minimize, forget or shut down completely
- Praise patient for answering questions
- Promise rewards for answering questions or threaten to encourage answers