

Can you Assess ACE's in Individuals who Don't Speak?

Presented by:
Scott J. Modell, Ph.D.

FIND

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Disproportionate Victimizations

- People with developmental disabilities are disproportionately at high risk for violent victimization, abuse, and neglect (USDOJ, 2021; Petersilia et al., 2001)
- Victimization rates for persons with disabilities is highest:
 - Sexual assault (up to 10 times as high)
 - Robbery (up to 12 times as high)
 - (Sobsey, et al., 1995; Sobsey, 1994)
- 49% of people with developmental disabilities who are victims of sexual abuse will experience 10 or more abusive incidents (Valenti-Hein & Schwartz, 1995).
- 88 to 98% of sexual abusers are known by the victims with disabilities (Sobsey & Mansell, 1994)

Bureau of Justice Statistics – 2021 Report

Average Annual Rates: 2017–2019

- Violent victimization for persons with disabilities was **almost four times** the rate among persons without disabilities
- The rate of rape/sexual assault for persons with disabilities was **more than four times** than that for persons without disabilities
- Rate of violence for males with disabilities was **more than three times** the rate compared to males without disabilities
- Rate of violence for females with disabilities, was **more than four times** the rate compared to females without disabilities

Bureau of Justice Statistics – 2021 Report

Average Annual Rates: 2017 – 2019

- Violent crime against persons with disabilities was **less likely** to be reported to police than violence against persons without disabilities
- For persons with disabilities, family members account for **double** the violent victimization compared to persons without disabilities.
- Sexual assaults against persons with disabilities are reported to police **at half the rate** compared to persons without disabilities
- Persons with **intellectual disabilities** had the **highest rate** of violent victimization from 2009 to 2019

Disproportionate Victimizations

- Some offenders specifically seek victims with disabilities because they are perceived (Lang & Frenzel, 1988):
 - To be vulnerable
 - Unable to seek help
 - Cannot or will not report the crime
- Risk of victimization is likely increased if the offender believes the victim will not be able to successfully or credibly tell anyone about the crime (Bryen, Carey, & Frantz, 2003)
- The nature of the individual's disability may prevent them defending themselves, escaping from the abusive situation, or reporting the abuse; this may cause potential perpetrators to believe they can "get away with it" (Ammerman & Patz, 1996; Wolcott, 1997).

Term to Remove from Vocabulary

- “Non-Verbal”
- Prompts
 - Do they speak?
 - How do they get their needs met?
 - Do they understand you? If so, how do you know?
 - Do they type? Text?
 - Do they use gestures to communicate?
 - Do they use any augmentative or alternative communication devices?
 - Is there anything else I should know about how they communicate?

Communication Orientation

- *“I was told by _____ (use specific name, e.g., mother, brother, staff member Shanice, etc.) that you use gestures for yes and no.”* Pause. *“Show me how you say yes.”*
 - Wait for response and note gesture.
- *“Show me how you say no.”*
 - Wait for response and note gesture.
- *“Do you use any other gestures to communicate?”*
 - Wait for response and note gesture.



Validation

- Establish a series of yes/no questions
 - Yes/Yes/No
 - Yes/No/Yes
 - Yes/No/No
 - No/No/Yes
 - No/Yes/No
 - No/Yes/Yes

Validation

- *“Thank you for showing me how you say yes and how you say no. I want to be sure that I’m understanding you and that you are understanding me. I’m going to ask you some questions. Some of these may seem easy or some may seem hard, I want you to answer the best you can.”*
- *“Are we inside right now?”*
- *“Am I standing up right now?”*
- *“Is your name Tasha?”*

ACE Question 1

- Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you
- **Or**
- Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

ACE Question 1: Adaptation

- First, I'm going to ask you did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you?
- So, did a parent or other adult in the household:
 - Often or very often swear at you?
 - Often or very often insult you?
 - Often or very often put you down?
 - Often or very often humiliate you?
- Also, did a parent or other adult in the household act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

ACE Question 4

- Did you often or very often feel that ... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?

ACE Question 4: Adaptation

- I'm going to ask you did you often or very often feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?
 - Did you often or very often feel that no one in your family loved you?
 - Did you often or very often feel that no one in your family thought you were important?
 - Did you often or very often feel that no one in your family thought you were special?
- Also, I'm going to ask you did you feel that your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
 - Did you feel that your family didn't look out for each other?
 - Did you feel you weren't close to each other?
 - Did you feel like your family didn't support each other?

ACE Question 6: Your Turn

- Were your parents ever separated or divorced?



Q & A

Thank you!

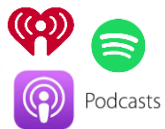
Follow #MCG on Social Media

 @modellconsult

 @modellconsultinggroup

 @modellconsult

 Modell Consulting Group, LLC



Check out MCG's podcast "Forgotten Victims: The Forensic Interview"