

Specialist Child Interviewing

(Victims/Witnesses)

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Brief History: Child Abuse

New Zealand

- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Psychological/Emotional Abuse
- Neglect

Brief History: Child Abuse

New Zealand

- 1991-2000: 91 child homicides
- Police respond to one 'domestic violence' call every seven minutes: 60% children
- 1 in 3 girls, 1 in 7 boys sexually abused before 18 years
- 2012: 21,000 cases child abuse, 4000 put in to state care, 23 further abused
- 2015: United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

Brief History: Child Abuse

New Zealand

- Intra-familial/Domestic Violence:
 - State care/orphanage
 - Online environment
- Extra-familial:
 - School environments
 - Church/faith based institutions
 - Sporting/cultural/larger community environments
 - Online environment

Child Sexual Abuse: Starting Point

Evidence Amendment Act 1989

Child victim of sexual abuse to give *evidence-in-chief* by way of a pre-recorded video tape interview

- Interpreters
- CCTV and/or screens at trial

Child Sexual Abuse: Investigation

WE DIDN'T!!

1. stringent laws
2. perceived societal myths and beliefs:
 - level of family support
 - whether Police were notified
 - plausibility of child's account
 - outcome of investigative/judicial proceedings

Societal Myths and Beliefs

- child sexual abuse only occurs with strangers
- all sexual abuse victims are female
- if the child didn't want the abuse they would have said STOP
- children cannot give factual accounts
- if it really happened, they would have said something sooner
- intra-familial sexual abuse is isolated

Delay, Reluctance, Non-Disclosure

- age
- gender
- cognitive ability
- shame/guilt
- level of familial support
- loyalty to perpetrator
- fear of consequences

Investigative and Judicial Issues

- poor inter-agency communication
- delays in arranging Specialist Child Interviews
- delays in completing police investigations, (evidence gathering)
- delays in court process and questioning of children at court

Specialist Child Interview

HOW?

- disclosed
- medical findings
- extreme and persistent patterns
- contact with known suspect
- witnessed
- admitted by suspect
- recent complaint/disclosure witness
- identified online/social media

Specialist Child Interview

WHAT?

- DVD recorded interview (visual and audio)
- MAY be conducted as part of an investigation
- child or young person (under 18 years)
- has, may have, been abused or witnessed a serious crime

Specialist Child Interview

WHY?

Childs needs and interests:

- reduce frequency that a child needs to recount - monitor
- limit the psychological/emotional impact
- child focused and allows child to state freely and clearly what (if anything) has happened
- non-verbal demonstration
- transparent
- 45-70 minutes

Specialist Child Interview

WHY?

Interests of perpetrator/justice:

- Evidence Act 2006 and Evidence Regulations 2007
- transparent
- accountability

Specialist Child Interview

WHO?

Specialised Child Interviewer

- Online and residential training
 - child cognitive development
 - suggestibility and language acquisition
 - family dynamics and cultural differences
 - legislation, regulations
- Annual accreditation
 - peer review processes

Specialist Child Interview

WHO?

Specialised Child Interviewer

- Role
 - complete
 - accurate
 - reliable
- Accountable
 - questions ‘asked’ and ‘not asked’

Specialist Child Interview

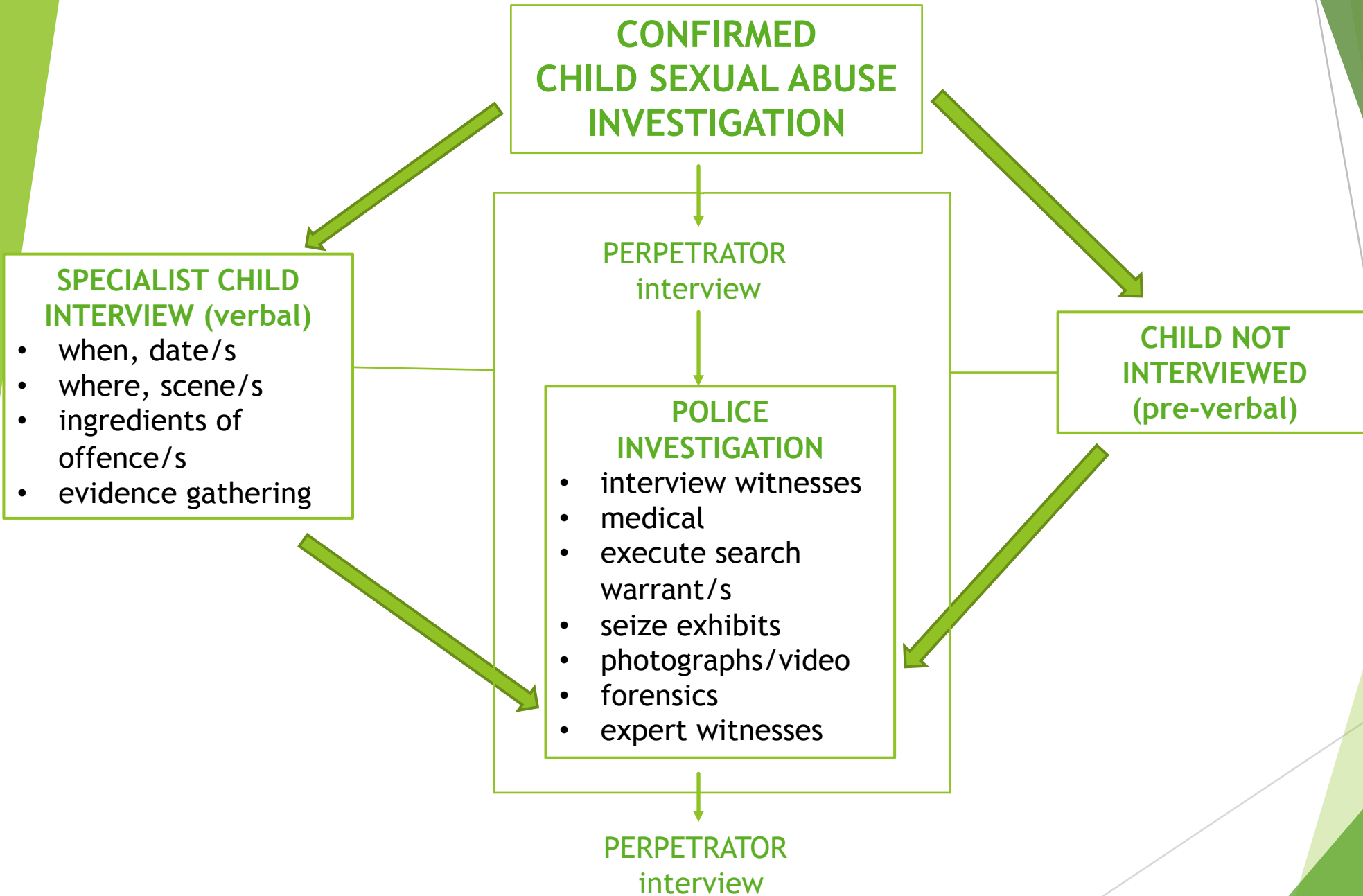
WHO?

- monitor
- adjacent room
- planned synergy interaction
- civilian clothing only (no uniforms)
- informed consent
- interviewed alone

Specialist Child Interview

WHERE?

- co-located purpose built facility
- child friendly environment/furnishings
- police
- social workers
- paediatricians/medical
- counselling services



Multidisciplinary Approach

- collaboration
- communication
- commitment

Societal Issue

What can Timor-Leste learn from
New Zealand's history?