

VICTIM INTERVIEW CHECKLIST¹

The Physical Environment

- Is a location familiar to the victim-witness available?
- Is a non-threatening, neutral location available?
- Can the victim-witness face a window and/or door?
- Is a round table available?
- Can you sit with the victim-witness without a barrier between you?
- Do you have beverages and snacks available?
- Have you arranged for breakfast, lunch and/or dinner?

The Interview Participants

- Have you removed signs of your law enforcement status (uniform/gun)?
- Are you wearing street clothes?
- Have you limited the number of people in the room?
- Does the victim-witness prefer to be interviewed by someone of the same gender?
- Have you selected a primary interviewer?
- Have you come to a consensus on the interview's tone?
- How will participants notify the primary interviewer of their questions?
- Are you relying on the victim-witness' attorney for help?

The Interpreter

- Is the interpreter the same gender as the victim-witness?
- Do you want to use simultaneous interpretation?
- Do you want the interpreter to explain cultural contexts?
- Have you introduced the interpreter to the participants and victim-witness?
- Has the interpreter signed a confidentiality agreement in the presence of the victim-witness?
- Have you selected and explained rules of interpretation to all participants?
- Are you speaking directly to the victim-witness rather than the interpreter?
- Are you looking at the victim-witness, not the interpreter?
- Is there interpretation occurring of everything spoken in the room?
- Are you asking one question at a time?
- Are there signs of conflict between the victim-witness and interpreter?
- Do you sense the interpreter may have a connection to the trafficker?

¹ Heinrich, Kelly, and Jennifer Podkul. "Gaining the Trust of Your Victim-Witness: A Guide for Law Enforcement Working Human Trafficking Cases." *The Global Freedom Center*, 2011: 41-43. Available at: <http://globalfreedomcenter.org/GainingTrustGFC.pdf>.

The Interview Structure

- Are you able to keep the interview to a duration of two hours?
- Are you prepared to allow for breaks?
- Have you alerted the victim-witness of the next interview's topics?
- Have you alerted the victim-witness' attorney of the next interview's topics?
- What is the tone of the interview?

The Explanations Necessary

- Have you each explained your role?
- Have you provided the victim-witness with a written description of your roles, such as a diagram?
- Have you distinguished your role from everyone else assisting the victim-witness?
- Have you explained the process?
- Are you allowing the victim-witness time to ask questions?
- Are you referring questions about immigration?
- Have you explained that it is okay to say "I don't know" or "I don't remember" or "I don't want to tell"?
- Have you said "it is not your fault"?
- Have you referenced similar cases that you have worked on?
- Have you given the victim-witness reasons to work with you?

The Relationship

- Have you researched the victim-witness' culture?
- Are you refraining from verbal and nonverbal messages that might confuse the victim-witness?
- Have you created ways for the victim-witness to assist?
- Have you created ways for the victim-witness to make decisions?
- Have you refrained from making promises?
- Have you acknowledged any spoken or unspoken fears and concerns?
- Are you watching for physical clues signaling discomfort?

The Support System

- Are you working in conjunction with a victim-witness specialist?
- Are you frequently inquiring about your victim-witness' welfare and needs?
- Have you taken steps to ensure that your victim-witness' immediate needs are being met?
- Are you offering critical, supportive benefits to your victim-witness?
- Are you being careful not to withhold benefits?
- Have you avoided detention and found appropriate shelter for your victim-witness?