

Why RADAR? Why Now?

An Overview of RADAR Child Interview Models

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[RADAR](#) v 1.0 (Recognizing Abuse Disclosures and Responding) premiered in Fayetteville, North Carolina in November 2009. At the time, RADAR seemed superfluous in an already crowded field of established forensic interview protocols. Eleven years and several states later, RADAR v 11.0 has earned a place on the national stage as a forensically balanced, best practice interview model, especially geared toward new interviewers.

RADAR now comprises three child interview models for use in investigations or evaluations of child maltreatment:

- RADAR Child Forensic Interview (for ages 5 through adolescence)
- RADAR JR Child Forensic Interview (for ages 3½ to 5½)
- FirstCall Initial Investigative Interview (first responder interview)

All three models are grounded in current best practice and undergo periodic updates to reflect the latest research. To facilitate learning and ease of use, especially for new interviewers, consistent terminology and parallel interview structures are used across the

three models. All three models employ sample phrasing to expedite the learning process, as discussed later in the section on instructional methods. The authors chose the word “models” over “protocols” to emphasize interviewer flexibility for responding to specific child needs and case exigencies, in contrast to the rigidity of a one-size-fits-all script.

This article is organized into two parts. Part 1 outlines the rationale for the development of RADAR. Part 2 briefly describes the three RADAR models as well as RADAR’s instructional methods.

PART 1: RADAR Objectives

Four objectives served as our impetus for developing RADAR. These four objectives also define RADAR’s singular niche in the field of forensic interviewing:

1. RADAR Was Developed to Operationalize and Promote Forensic Balance in Child Forensic Interviews.

Child forensic interviewing can be viewed as having two core objectives: the protection of child victims from abuse and the protection of innocent adults from false allegations. Forensic balance is defined as emphasizing both objectives equally in interview design, instruction, and practice. In a separate article in

this issue of the *APSAC Advisor*, we argue that our field has long prioritized adult protection (or preventing false allegations) over child protection (or minimizing false denials) (Everson & Rodriguez, 2020, this issue). Despite the fact that the disclosure process is often “painful, incremental, and protracted” (Faller, 2020, p. 133), the single-session, stranger interview (SSSI) has been the predominant interview format in our field since at least the 1990s. In addition, the emphasis on preventing errors due to interviewer suggestion far exceeds attention paid to addressing perpetrator “suggestion” through manipulation, threats, and intimidation (see Everson & Rodriguez, 2020, this issue).

Although our field would undoubtedly endorse forensic balance in principle, actually *achieving* forensic balance in practice is an enormously challenging and elusive goal (Faller, 2015). RADAR incorporates four standards of practice to operationalize and promote forensic balance in all child forensic interviews. The following four practice standards are designed to increase the accuracy of case decisions by combining interview strategies that reduce false allegations with strategies that reduce false denials or disclosure failures:

- A) Interviewers should have the flexibility to conduct more than one interview session, as needed. *All* interviewers should be trained to recognize when follow-up sessions are warranted and how to conduct such sessions.
- B) The interview should include assessment of potential psychological barriers that may deter the child from communicating openly and accurately.
- C) The primary goal of the interview should be to elicit a detailed, free-narrative account of the child’s experiences, in the child’s own words.
- D) The interviewer should avoid questioning errors that can undermine the goal of eliciting a complete and accurate account from the child (Everson and Rodriguez, 2020, this issue). Such questioning errors include, but are not limited to, leading and overly suggestive questioning.

RADAR provides interview strategies to implement each of these four forensic balance standards of practice. RADAR is also one of the first forensic interview protocols to provide instruction on when and

how to conduct follow-up sessions as part of the initial five-day training. RADAR views forensic balance as a core, foundational value.

2. RADAR Was Developed to Make Best Practice Forensic Interview Training Accessible to a Broader Range of Child Abuse Professionals.

RADAR offers an economical, logistically simple, portable training model, geared especially toward new and inexperienced interviewers. To reduce costs and simplify logistics, RADAR training does not require outside actors or children to serve as practice interviewees. Nonetheless, each participant conducts a complete practice interview and receives detailed, individualized faculty feedback.

Traditional forensic interview trainings are effective in producing *better* interviewers, but not necessarily *good* interviewers. Some trainings may produce graduates who are better informed about topics such as questioning typologies and research on suggestibility, but who may not be fully equipped to conduct interviews on their own. Our experience has been that training is more effective when the focus includes not only *what* and *what not*, but also *how*.

RADAR training focuses heavily on skill development to provide new and inexperienced interviewers the preparation, structure, and confidence needed to conduct successful child interviews right out of training. Our training objective is to prepare novice interviewers so well that cancellation of their first real interview after training would result in feelings of disappointment rather than relief. At the same time, the comprehensive nature of the model, the step-by-step operationalization of best practice, and the model’s flexibility have proven to be appealing to many experienced interviewers, including many trained on multiple interview models.

3. RADAR Was Designed to Equip Novice Interviewers in Becoming Good Interviewers and Good Interviewers in Becoming Expert Interviewers.

To expedite the transformation of forensic interviewers from new to good to great, RADAR relies heavily on the methods and insights of master interviewers in

its design. In developing RADAR, we analyzed the interviews of expert interviewers whom we considered masters of the craft to identify how they operationalized best practice principles. Our goal was to distill the interview strategies developed over thousands of interviews into reproducible, teachable steps. The interview methodology derived from this process forms much of RADAR.

Our study of master interviewers revealed three sets of essential competencies that expert interviewers commonly share. The development of these competencies requires a shift in the interviewer's focus. Rather than a primary focus on interview process (*What should I ask next?*), the focus must shift to the child (*What is this child communicating in word and demeanor?*). RADAR facilitates this shift in focus by providing a logical interview structure that includes easy-to-remember rubrics to guide questioning. Once internalized, this structure frees the interviewer to attend more completely to the child. We consider the development of the following three expert interviewer competencies to be integral for RADAR mastery:

Expert interviewers are conversationally fluent interviewers. Expert interviewers present as interested conversationalists rather than interviewers following a script or administering a questionnaire. To facilitate the process of becoming conversationally fluent in administering RADAR while capturing the child-sensitive interview strategies of the experts, the RADAR Model provides learners with sample phrasing of the more challenging sections of the interview. We encourage RADAR learners to use the sample phrasing until they have internalized the gist and nuance implicit in the RADAR wording. RADAR learners can then personalize the interview to their own conversational style.

Expert interviewers are skilled at building bridges to the children they interview. Building rapport with the child is often seen as a passive process involving small talk about pleasant topics. Our examination of expert interviewing revealed building rapport to be an active, deliberate process akin to building a bridge. By our observation, the expert interviewer's attempts to bridge the distance between interviewer

and child inevitably involve offering the child three personal assurances:

- "I am a safe and competent adult helper."
- "I value what you have to say."
- "I care about you as a person."

Spoken explicitly, such claims by the interviewer may sound phony and contrived. But when conveyed implicitly by the interviewer's affect, attitude, and manner, these assurances are effective in building connections with children with a wide range of backgrounds and presentations.

Expert interviewers are skilled at reading the child. Expert interviewers successfully inhabit the middle ground between two interview extremes: *following the child* and *following the protocol*. The expert interviewer is able to monitor the child's psychological state and respond accordingly with adjustments to the pace and focus of the interview while continuing to guide the child-centered conversation to forensic topics of interest. The RADAR Model operationalizes this process, in part, by identifying several assessment points and offering options about how to proceed based upon the interviewer's reading of the child.

A specialized form of reading the child involves the interviewer's ability to 'mind the gap,' especially during substantive questioning. The gap is the interval between interview questions, from the end of one question to the start of the interviewer's next question. Minding the gap requires considerable multitasking: receiving and processing the child's response, formulating the next question, and maintaining/enhancing rapport. Novice interviewers often struggle during these gaps just to determine the next question, while expert interviewers effortlessly meet the range of mind-the-gap challenges. Expert interviewers process the child's response and identify follow-up questions, while simultaneously signaling to the child that they are interested and caring listeners. Expert interviewers are likely to be rewarded with rich and detailed accounts of the child's experiences. Novice interviewers are more likely met with limited responses to their questions as their initial store of

rapport is depleted.

Our analysis of the interviews of master interviewers also revealed a number of specific interview strategies that have been incorporated into RADAR to expedite the transformation of beginners to expert interviewers. One example is an interview strategy to strengthen initial rapport by asking personalized “you” questions to encourage reflective “I” responses. For example: “You said you really like gymnastics. What makes *you* like gymnastics so much?” This simple interview technique not only encourages the child to share at a deeper level, but also helps to convey the message, “I care about you as a person.”

4. RADAR Was Created as a Platform for Advancing the Field of Child Forensic Interviewing Through Innovations in Interview Design and Instruction.

RADAR’s ongoing efforts to advance the field of child forensic interviewing have centered on two strategies: operationalizing good interview practice into reproducible, teachable steps; and identifying and addressing areas of need in forensic interview instruction and design.

Examples of RADAR innovations are briefly described below. More complete descriptions, including instructions for use, are available by emailing the first author.

A) Need: Most training models rely on written pre- and posttests to assess mastery of the course material. Written tests are useful in evaluating increased knowledge but are limited in their effectiveness in assessing interview skills. What is needed is a method for assessing improvements in actual interview performance to supplement written testing.

Remedy: We have developed a practical methodology for collecting pre- and posttest interview samples for comparison purposes. Class members are taught a simplified version of AIM (Advanced Interview Mapping, described later) for use in assessing their improvements in question selection and sequencing between pre- and posttesting.

B) Need: Newly trained interviewers often report that the eliciting account phase of the interview after a child reports of possible abuse is the most difficult and anxiety-provoking part of the interview process.

Remedy: We have developed the 5-Step Narrative Rubric as a practical, effective, and easy-to-remember strategy for organizing questioning after the child’s disclosure (See Table 1, page 46). The rubric aids in eliciting a comprehensive narrative account of the child’s experiences, without being leading or suggestive.

C) Need: Interviewer drift after training has been identified as a serious problem. Interviewer drift from the use of open-ended narrative prompts to more specific question strategies leads to a less complete, potentially less accurate account of the child’s experiences (Poole & Lamb, 1998).

Remedy: We developed Advance Interview Mapping (AIM) as a practical, easy-to-learn tool for use in peer and self-review. The objective of AIM is to ensure interview quality and to prevent interviewer drift. AIM is described in a separate article in this same issue of the Advisor (Everson, Snider, & Rodriguez, 2020, this issue).

D) Need: Interviewing preschool age children is perhaps the greatest challenge for the forensic interviewer. Unlike interview protocols geared for older children, there is substantially less consensus on what constitutes best practice for protocols serving 3- and 4-year-olds. Two significant areas of disagreement include whether and how to present interview instructions such as “I don’t know” and how best to offer memory practice given the broad developmental range among preschoolers (Brubacher, Poole, & Dickinson, 2015; Cordisco Steele, 2015).

Remedy: As part of RADAR JR, we developed Party Animal Memory Practice (PAMP) as a visually engaging task for 3- to 5-year-olds for both memory practice and rapport building (See Figure 1). PAMP provides practice conducting free and cued recall

memory searches with immediate feedback on accuracy. PAMP also offers a more engaging and realistic task for preschoolers to practice the “I don’t know/remember” interview instruction than many traditional approaches.

Our primary objective in these innovation efforts is to advance the field of forensic interviewing, especially in places of weakness or need. Our innovation efforts are limited somewhat by the fact that RADAR does not have an in-house research arm. PAMP is a case in point. We are comfortable in promoting PAMP as a memory practice exercise and as a method for introducing the “I don’t know/remember” instruction. However, without appropriate normative data, we must be cautious in promoting PAMP as an assessment tool for making normative comparisons to other children. Starting with PAMP, RADAR offers researchers a target-rich environment for identifying meaningful and potentially impactful research projects in the field of child abuse assessment.

Part 2: Model Descriptions

RADAR Child Forensic Interview Model

The RADAR Child Forensic Interview Model is the flagship of the three RADAR models. RADAR is a structured, child-friendly model for interviewing children (ages 5+) and adolescents in cases of suspected child maltreatment and sexual exploitation. RADAR is adapted from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Investigative Interview (Lamb, Hershkowitz, Orbach, & Esplin, 2008) and includes memory enhancement techniques from the Cognitive Interview (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992). RADAR was also uniquely shaped by the perspectives of its developers (the four authors of this article) as forensic evaluators, interviewers, and instructors dating back to the early 1980s (see review by Everson, 2015).

As described in Part 1, RADAR places special emphasis on forensic balance, with the dual objective of minimizing false positive as well as false negative errors in case decisions. As a result, RADAR offers the flexibility to serve as either a single or a multi-session interview model to better accommodate the nature of

the disclosure process and the needs of the individual child. RADAR training includes instruction on the criteria for determining when a follow-up session is needed, how to bridge or prepare the child for the follow-up session, and how to conduct the additional session(s).

RADAR adheres to the best practice standards published by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) (Newlin et al., 2015). To ensure interview quality and ease of learning, RADAR operationalizes best practice as reproducible, teachable steps and provides sample phrasing for the more challenging sections of the interview. Despite RADAR’S structured format and instructional use of sample phrasing, the model offers substantial flexibility to accommodate varying types of maltreatment experiences, developmental levels, and disclosure histories.

RADAR 6-step instructional method.

RADAR introduces a direct path to interviewer excellence. Like many forensic interview models, RADAR is comprised of phases (e.g., Foundation), with each phase divided into smaller, specialized modules (e.g., Orientation and Promise, Narrative Practice). For training purposes, these specialized modules serve as the unit of instruction, either individually or in combination. RADAR employs the following six instructional steps to teach these modules efficiently and effectively:

1. Show it. Provide a video or live demonstration of the interview module(s) conducted by a skilled interviewer. A clear standard to emulate facilitates the assimilation of new skills.
2. Explain it. Provide the rationale and objectives for the interview module(s). This explanation might include a review of relevant research.
3. Distill it. Distill interviewer behavior for each module into three to six reproducible, teachable steps. Most steps will include sample phrasing or examples of acceptable phrasing for the interviewer learner.
4. Practice it right. Provide multiple mock interview opportunities for learners to practice the component steps and sample language of each interview module. The objective is

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to internalize the module’s structure and language to facilitate personalization in the next instructional step.

5. Personalize it. Encourage learners to personalize the interview by incorporating the gist and nuance of the sample phrasing into their own conversational style.
6. Master it. Encourage learners to strive for interview mastery. As described in Part 1, this includes the development of the following three competencies of expert interviewers: becoming conversationally fluent as an interviewer, becoming skilled in building rapport with children and teenagers of varying backgrounds and presentations, and developing skills in reading the child’s verbal and behavioral cues to better pace and focus the interview. Note that mastery of these competencies usually requires substantial interviewer experience and supervision after the initial RADAR training.

RADAR Training Course

RADAR offers a five-day forensic interview training course that meets the National Children’s Alliance (2017) training standards for forensic interviewers in accredited child advocacy centers. The course includes lectures, discussions, reviews of video examples, assigned readings, skill-based exercises, and a mock interview with both faculty and peer feedback. Written pre- and posttests are used to assess knowledge development. Pre- and posttest interview samples are compared to evaluate improvements in interview performance.

RADAR phases. The RADAR Forensic Interview Model is comprised of a pre-interview preparation stage and four interview phases. The four interview phases include Foundation, Screening, Eliciting Account, and Bridge/Closing. Each phase is comprised of three or more modules (see next column).

At first impression, RADAR’s pre-interview stage and four interview phases appear quite similar to the phases of other established protocols. One can discern the RADAR difference, however, in the emphasis on forensic balance throughout the interview. In this section, we highlight several RADAR interview modules and their role in attempting to reduce false

RADAR Phases

Pre-interview Preparation	<i>Referral and Background History Identify Key Topics to Explore Safe-To-Tell Assessment</i>
Foundation	<i>Rapport and Engagement Orientation and Promise Narrative Practice Barrier Assessment</i>
Screening	<i>Transition Decision Tree Screening Options</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Open Inquiry</i> • <i>Guided Conversation</i> • <i>Body Safety Screening</i> • <i>Case Specific Screening</i>
Eliciting Account	<i>Specific Event vs. Script Memory Strategy</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>5-Step Narrative Rubric</i> • <i>Screen for Other Events</i> • <i>Screen for Other Concerns/Offenders</i>
Bridge/Closing	<i>Break and Appraisal Bridge-to-Follow-up Session -or- Closing Well</i>

denials and to elicit detailed, narrative accounts. We also offer examples of RADAR’s sample phrasing in the described modules.

The Safe-To-Tell Assessment during Pre-Interview Preparation involves a review of case and family factors that might suggest a barrier or obstacle to the child’s open reporting. Examples include a possible offender with continued access to the child or a possible offender who is a close family member. After reviewing case characteristic and potential barriers, the interviewer is asked to consider this question: “In this child’s shoes, if abused, would I tell?” If the answer is no, the interviewer is encouraged to consider the option of delaying the interview until the barriers are addressed or planning a multisession interview.

The Engagement and Rapport module formally represents the first component of the Foundation phase,

though the interviewer's rapport and engagement efforts actually begin at the greeting in the waiting room and extend through the final goodbye. The interviewer's objective throughout the interview is to demonstrate in word and manner: "I value what you have to say" and "I care about you as a person." The Engagement and Rapport module ends with an unconventional invitation: "Thank you for telling me about X, Y, and Z. Do you have any questions for me? You can ask anything you want." This broad invitation for questions is one of several attempts throughout the interview to offer children an opportunity to express their concerns, lest unspoken fears or misconceptions impede the interview process.

The interviewer will typically answer the child's question with a follow-up question to clarify the child's meaning:

C: "Who's going to find out what I say?"
I: "Tell me the reason you ask that question."
C: "Because my grandmother said she would punish me if I tell."

Our experience from 2000+ interviews is that children rarely ask inappropriately personal questions. Such questions are usually easily deflected with the interviewer's standard follow-up question:

C: "Did your daddy sexually abuse you?"
I: "Tell me the reason you ask that question."
C: "Because that's what my daddy did to me."

Barrier Assessment is the final component of the Foundation Phase. The Barrier Assessment Module includes questions to alert the interviewer about possible barriers to disclosure before proceeding to Screening. Examples of sample phrasing include:

- "We've been talking about a lot of things to get to know each other better. How are you feeling so far about talking to me?"
- "Some kids/teenagers I see are worried about talking. Are you worried about talking with me today?"
- "Is someone else worried?"

This last question elicits a significant number of disclosures. Our preliminary research data suggest that

approximately 10% of children who disclose do so to this question.

The Screening Phase begins with the Transition Decision Tree, which includes a check on the child's readiness to transition to substantive questioning (e.g., anxiety level, personal connection with interviewer, level of openness/responsiveness, existence of obvious barriers). Open Inquiry follows next, which includes open-ended screening questions such as, "Let's talk about the reason you came to see me. What did you come to talk with me about?" If there has been a prior report of abuse by the child, Open Inquiry will include questions such as, "I heard you talked to your guidance counselor about something that happened. Tell me all about that."

The Screening Phase includes four modules to offer multiple approaches in eliciting disclosure statements from abuse victims and providing multiple opportunities for child victims to report their abuse. The Guided Conversation screening module initiates conversation regarding important caregivers, locations, or events related to the abuse/neglect concern. Once the discussion is within the context of the location/event/person of concern, the Guided Conversation serves as a platform to screen for abuse concerns based on the case history. RADAR offers sample questions to screen for multiple psychosocial concerns (e.g., physical abuse, exposure to domestic violence, substance abuse). The multidisciplinary team (MDT) can determine the need for broader polyvictimization screening on a case-by-case basis.

When an escalation in questioning is warranted, Body Safety Screening is a good option. Body Safety Screening involves more direct questions about possible sexual and physical abuse. Sample questions include:

- "What are the rules for private parts?"
- "Sometimes people break the rules about private parts. Do you know someone who has broken the rules about private parts?"

At any point in the interview that the child reports a possibly abusive event, the interviewer advances to the Eliciting Account phase. RADAR places substantial emphasis on obtaining a detailed narrative account of the child's experiences in the child's own words.

The first step, if possible, is to isolate and label a specific event (e.g., the time you had to stay at home because you had chicken pox). The interviewer uses the 5-Step Narrative Rubric (refer to Table 1) to elicit such an organized and hopefully complete account. Our experience is that if the interviewer's questioning is disorganized, the child's account will likely appear disorganized and less credible.

The Bridge/Closing Phase is named for the two options available for ending the interview session. At the conclusion of the Eliciting Account Phase, the interviewer is encouraged to take a break to meet with the MDT or to break alone, to review the interview for gaps, inconsistencies, contradictions, etc., and to make an appraisal of whether additional questioning now or in a follow-up session is needed. Criteria indicating the need for a follow-up session include:

- Nondisclosure despite compelling prior disclosure or other substantive evidence
- Significant barriers to disclosure reported or suspected
- Significant discrepancies in child's account vs. other evidence
- Additional perpetrator(s) likely
- Child's disclosure statement vague, unclear, lacking details

Depending upon the results of the appraisal and the need for a follow-up session by the current interviewer, the interviewer will meet briefly for a few final questions before conducting either the Bridge-to-Follow-up or Closing Well module.

The Closing Well module is designed to finish the interview warmly and well. For children who have made a disclosure during the interview, one of the Closing Well steps involves screening for the risk of retraction or reprisal. Example questions include:

- "We've talked about what X did. What do you think will happen now?"
- "Do you have some worries about what will happen?"
- "Who is a good person to talk to if you have worries?"

For children who have not made a report of abuse, there is a last probe for things left unsaid. Example questions include:

- "There is one thing I always wonder when I talk to kids and teenagers. Is there something that happened that you are not ready to talk about?"
- "Is there something else that you want me to know?"

Summary

The RADAR interview model is geared toward training new interviewers to become skilled interviewers, while providing more experienced interviewers both structure and flexibility to promote improved practice. The model uniquely operationalizes best practice techniques while adapting to the needs of the individual child. RADAR strives towards the challenging target of forensic balance by incorporating tools to avoid false positive and false negative errors, with the underlying premise that accurate information from children's full narrative accounts will best serve the child, family, and case outcome.

RADAR Research

Research on RADAR is underway. We are examining disclosure patterns in a sample of 400+ RADAR forensic interviews conducted at a large metropolitan children's advocacy center (CAC). The sample includes both child sexual abuse and physical abuse cases.

RADAR JR Child Forensic Interview Model

RADAR JR is a semistructured, child-friendly forensic interview model for interviewing preschool age children (ages 3 ½ to 5 ½) in cases of suspected child maltreatment and sexual exploitation. RADAR JR is significantly less linear and sequential than RADAR. RADAR JR is comprised of three- to six-minute visually engaging modules. These modules are designed to hold the attention of preschoolers while serving a similar function as their counterpart modules in RADAR.

Guiding principles of RADAR JR.

The authors developed RADAR JR to provide structure and guidance for interviewers struggling to adapt established models to interviewing preschoolers. Guiding principles include:

- Like its predecessor, RADAR JR emphasizes forensic balance, with the dual objective of minimizing interview errors contributing to either false positives or false negatives.
- RADAR JR was designed as a two-session model to better accommodate the developmental needs of preschool children. Interviewers and MDTs have the flexibility to add a third or fourth session as needed or to forego the second session, if contraindicated.
- Interviewers choose from interchangeable, developmentally appropriate interview modules to tailor the interview to the individual child.

RADAR JR is founded on the hard-earned wisdom of the 1980s: When interviewing preschool children, “Get in and get out.” The implication is that the interviewer should elicit the child’s statement without lingering past the child’s attention span or pushing beyond the child’s memory limits.

RADAR JR training.

The authors offer RADAR JR as a two-day training, with the prerequisite completion of a five-day RADAR training. The phases and language of RADAR JR mirror RADAR to facilitate ease of learning.

RADAR JR phases. RADAR JR is comprised of a pre-interview preparation stage and four interview phases. The four interview phases include Foundation, Screening, Eliciting Account, and Bridge/Closing. These phases and their components are listed (see next column).

Interviewers generally use the initial session to establish rapport and to assess the child’s developmental and language skills. The interviewer may choose to continue screening the child in the first session or hold off substantive questions for the second session. Interviewers may forego the second session, such as cases with children clearly unable to provide accurate history. Critically, however, decision-making is based on data points on the individual child’s functioning gleaned from the initial session, as opposed to proceeding with rote scripted questioning or simply labeling a child as “not interviewable.”

The *Foundation* phase includes tools to assess the

RADAR JR Phases

<i>Pre-interview Preparation</i>	<i>Referral and Background History Identify Key Topics to Explore Safe-To-Tell Assessment</i>
<i>Foundation</i>	<i>Greeting and Tour Rapport and Engagement Party Animal Memory Practice (PAMP) Family Drawing Open Inquiry</i>
<i>Screening</i>	<i>Decision Tree Screening Options</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Guided Conversation</i> • <i>Body Safety Screening</i> • <i>Case Specific Screening</i> • <i>Feeling Faces</i> • <i>Family Photos</i>
<i>Eliciting Account</i>	<i>One vs. More Than One Modified Event Rubric Screen for Other Concerns/Offenders</i>
<i>Bridge/Closing</i>	<i>Break and Appraisal Bridge-to-Follow-up Session -or- Closing Well</i>

child’s development, language, and any potential barriers to reporting accurate history. As discussed earlier, we developed the PAMP as a visually engaging task for 3- to 5-year-olds for memory practice and for introducing the “I don’t know” interview instruction. Consistent with the goal of forensic balance, PAMP is useful in identifying behavioral cues or “tells” that the child has reached his or her memory limit—a critical tool to prevent inaccurate history during the substantive phase of the interview. The *Foundation* phase often includes a Family Drawing as an engagement/assessment tool, as well as initial open-ended screening questions as an initial foray into screening.

As in RADAR, the *Screening* phase in RADAR JR recommends a gradual approach from open-ended inquiry to more directed screening questions based on

case history. RADAR JR utilizes the same screening tools (Guided Conversation, Body Safety Screening, and Case Specific screening) from RADAR, adapted to the developmental needs of a preschool child. The authors also offer Feeling Faces and Family Photos as two additional screening tools, especially for extended evaluations.

If the child reports abuse/neglect at any point, interviewers utilize the *Eliciting Account* phase to obtain clarification and information regarding the concern. The child's reporting, language, and memory abilities observed throughout the interview process helps inform question phrasing in this phase. As a guiding principle of RADAR JR, the interviewer focuses on *who*, *what*, and *where* during this portion of the interview, and watches for the child's idiosyncratic "tell" behaviors indicating the responses may have strayed beyond the child's memory.

In the *Bridge/Closing* phase, the interview appraises next steps based on the child and the particular case history. The model provides explicit guidance on transitioning to additional sessions and/or closing the interview process, including suggested outlines for second (or third) interview sessions.

Summary

The authors offer RADAR JR to conduct the complex task of interviewing young children and contend that the model is preferable to interviewers adapting interview models designed for older children for use with the preschool population.

FirstCall Initial Investigative Interview Model

FirstCall is a semistructured, child-friendly investigative interview for first-line responders from child protective services and law enforcement. It is designed to serve as the initial investigative interview in investigations of child maltreatment and sexual exploitation. FirstCall offers sufficient flexibility to accommodate varying types of cases and developmental levels. This flexibility includes FirstCall being abbreviated in cases in which a formal forensic interview is soon to follow.

Development

FirstCall is the newest RADAR-based model. Developed through a grant collaboration with the Children's Advocacy Centers of North Carolina (CACNC), FirstCall answers the need to better define and guide initial interviews conducted by child protective service workers and law enforcement officers. FirstCall is designed for use at case initiation to elicit critical information needed to inform case planning, with the expectation that a formal forensic interview may follow.

Many states and MDTs utilize a "first responder" or "minimal facts" interview model at case initiation. Critical information includes the nature of concerns, the alleged offender's access to the child, and immediate safety/health needs of the child. There may also be evidentiary issues depending on the timing and nature of alleged abuse. The ability to obtain accurate information at case initiation leads to a higher likelihood of improved services and case outcomes for families and children. Thus, FirstCall does not replace formal forensic interviewing, but instead guides case planning by assessing safety, health, evidence, and agency concerns.

FirstCall phases. The structure and language in FirstCall mirrors other RADAR models to facilitate ease of learning across interview platforms. FirstCall includes a pre-interview preparation stage and four phases (see table on next page).

Many aspects of this model are similar to other RADAR models already described within this article. However, there are specific differences given the different purpose and use of FirstCall as opposed to formal child forensic interviewing. For example, pre-interview planning demands consideration of the timing and location of the interview away from possible offenders, as well as information which could be obtained from collateral sources. The Eliciting Account phase includes an abbreviated 5-step Rubric, but also addresses safety and case planning needs at the time of case initiation.

FirstCall training. Approved use of FirstCall Initial Investigative Interview requires completion of a two-day training.

Before RADAR

In our position on the national stage, near the wings, we are honored to stand with the true luminaries in the field of child forensic interviewing. These pioneers and pillars of forensic interviewing include CornerHouse and NICHD as well as APSAC, ChildFirst, Childhood Trust, and the National Children’s Advocacy Center (NCAC). The four authors/developers of RADAR each received training on one or more of these forensic interview models, and RADAR is all the better for it. We are especially proud of our heritage as an adaptation of NICHD. We are also encouraged to discover that RADAR and the Utah NICHD adaptation have evolved along parallel paths in the pursuit of forensic balance (Stewart & La Rooy, 2020, this issue).

FirstCall Phases

<i>Pre-interview Preparation</i>	<i>Referral and Background Information Information from Caregivers Prior Statements/Concern for Child</i>
<i>Foundation</i>	<i>Rapport and Engagement Orientation Promise</i>
<i>Screening</i>	<i>Open Inquiry Explorer Barriers (if needed)</i>
<i>Eliciting Account</i>	<i>5-Step-Rubric Safety and Discovery Guide Explore Things Unsaid</i>
<i>Bridge/Closing</i>	<i>Review Bridge-to-Next-Step Closing Well</i>

Table 1. 5-Step Narrative Rubric

<p><u>Step 1- Elicit narrative</u></p> <p>Use free-narrative invitation to elicit initial narrative of the target event (e.g., “Start at the beginning and tell me everything you remember about the time that X....”)</p>
<p><u>Step 2- Push to end</u></p> <p>Use “what happened next?” prompts to encourage extension of narrative to the clear ending of target event.</p>
<p><u>Step 3- Circle back</u></p> <p>Circle back to key elements of narrative, in sequential order, for elaboration and context (e.g., “You said the first that happened was X. Tell me everything you remember about X.”).</p>
<p><u>Step 4- Get emotional</u></p> <p>Intersperse questions about thoughts, feelings, and body sensations.</p>
<p><u>Step 5- Fill the gaps</u></p> <p>Formulate follow-up questions, including Y/N questions as needed, to complete comprehensive account of event.</p>

Figure 1: Party Animals Memory Practice Drawing



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