ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEWING

Overarching purpose of this history-gathering is to find out what has happened to this child (and is currently happening), in order to know:

- What is most important to them?
- What do they worry about?
- Who and what is safe to them?
- What is impacting them that they may not even know?
- How they interact with their world?
- What are their triggers?
1) Caregiver’s regard for child
2) Caregiver’s attunement to child’s reactivity and survival mechanisms
3) Parent observations of quality of relationship in caregiver and peer relationships

Also gives the opportunity for more thorough understanding of trauma experiences - types, age of onset, duration, intensity
**ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEWING**

- Process of asking questions in such a way to move from broad general impressions to specific examples

- Provides room for caregiver to move into a narrative about the child

- Allows getting responses to questions you did not even know to ask
Looking for ‘markers’ in the conversation:

- Emotional nonverbal indicators
- Clues to attachment relationship
- Clue to the emotional environment in which the child lives
Tommy is often disruptive and argumentative in the classroom - Tommy was out of school for a week and a half last year after an incident in which he left his school building and hid from administrators following an argument with a teacher. She also states that he has jumped out of the family's moving car several times, turned up the gas on the stovetop causing dangerous flames to rise up, and once pulled a knife on his adoptive mother and threatened to kill her. The adoptive mother reports that during his episodes, it is like “we are not getting through to him at all.”
Tommy has several playmates in the trailer park where they live, but beyond that he has not established any strong friendships or close bonds. His adoptive mother reports that he is less active than kids his age, and has trouble relating to others.

She reports that he experiences constant separation anxiety and will become concerned if someone he cares about is gone for more than five minutes.
The adoptive mother states that when Tommy moved in with his great-grandmother, he had “no communication skills” and used only grunts and groans to indicate his needs. She states that he would scream uncontrollably during potty training, and that this was the time period when his outbursts and angry fits began.
Foster mom has no major concerns regarding his sexual behaviors, though she reports that he has tried to hug and kiss a female neighbor his age and will sometimes make comments like “Hey baby” and “You’re looking good” when he sees a girl. She reports that Tommy “likes to collect older girlfriends” and that she has found him spending time with 15-16 year old girls.
“He adds that although Jamie has been through a lot “she is just an ordinary person...her situation is overrated - everyone’s got a history.”

However he concedes that has some concern that Jamie’s brain is a little “off,” indicating that she has a hard time balancing herself. Nevertheless, he reports that when he and Jamie are together alone they do just fine.
"Raylin is a drama queen. She has a need to be the center of attention and makes a really big deal out of everything. She overreacts to small situations and is easily overwhelmed. She has limited problem solving skills".
Raylin is creative and intense. She can be very dramatic and colorful. She is sensitive, and her feelings can be hurt easily. I try to be careful in how I say things to her, as she becomes easily overwhelmed. She needs time to cool off when she’s upset, because she can’t problem-solve when she’s crying, but given a few minutes, she can collect herself.
CLUES TO CHILD’S WORLD

Look for:
- Lack of details, vague responses
- Negative perception of child
- Canned or too-general interpretation
- Hyperbole
- What’s missing, or what you can’t get an answer to
SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

The ability to *purposefully* influence others, and to *understand and interpret* social situations.

Social cognition: understanding the intent and motives of others
SOCIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Initiate, develop, and maintain positive social relationships
- Express your thoughts and feelings
- Understanding the needs and perspectives of others
- Predict others’ motivations
- Can modify your own behavior in response to others
What gets in the way of smooth social communication for our kids?
Delays in CTAC-assessed children ages 6-16 (n=272)

- **57% delayed** in social cognition (Ability to read social cues, understand others’ motivation, and respond appropriately)
- **52% delayed** in understanding nonliteral language (figurative language)
- **45% delayed** in narrative cohesion
SOCIAL COGNITION - CBCL T SCORES/SOCIAL COGNITION FUNCTION N=71

- Anxious Depressed: p=.039
- Social Problems: p=.014
- Thought Problems: p=.033

Categorical: Appropriate Skills
- Demonstrates Difficulty
SOCIAL COMMUNICATION: BASIC STRUCTURE

Social Cognition → Executive Function → Language Function

Social Cognition ↔ Executive Function

Executive Function ↔ Language Function
SOCIAL COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

Language
Sentence Structure
Word meanings and relationships
Language use

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION: INTERRELATED DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES

- Language Competence
  - sentence structure (Syntax)
  - word meanings and relationships (Semantics)
  - use of language in social settings (Pragmatics)
Social Cognition
Understanding why people act in certain ways and what they are likely to do next.

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION: INTERRELATED DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES

- Social Cognition
  - Making sense of social situations
  - Understanding why people do what they do
  - Predicting what might happen next
Higher Order Executive Functions
Decision making and strategic planning processes

Language
Sentence Structure
Word meanings/relationships
Language use

Social Cognition
Understanding why people act in certain ways and what they are likely to do next.

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION: INTERRELATED DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES

- Executive Functions
  - Decision making and planning
  - Changing language and social cognitive skills based on the demands of a specific context
Social Communicative Behaviors

Higher Order Executive Functions
Decision making and strategic planning processes

Language
Sentence Structure
Word meanings/relationships
Language use

Social Cognition
Understanding why people act in certain ways and what they are likely to do next.

Higher Order Executive Functions
Decision making and strategic planning processes

Social Communicative Competence
Using language in interpersonally appropriate ways to successfully influence people and interpret events

Social Communicative Behaviors

Language
Sentence Structure
Word meanings/relationships
Language use

Social Cognition
Understanding why people act in certain ways and what they are likely to do next.

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE ALLOWS:

- Enter groups
- Engage in cooperative play and collaborative interactions (Work in groups)
- Exchange information
- Initiate and sustain interpersonal interactions
- Negotiate and resolve conflicts with peers
- Cope with changing environmental demands
- Assert needs, desires, and preferences
- Perceive and understand needs, desires, and preferences of others
- Wait your turn
BEVERLY JAMES (1996) TRAUMAGENIC STATES

(ADAPTED FROM TRAUMAGENIC STATES FRAMEWORK DEVELOPED BY FINKELHOR AND BROWNE, 1986)

the dynamics, psychological impact, behavioral manifestation of trauma
AREAS IN WHICH TRAUMATIC IMPACT CAN MANIFEST:

- Loss and Betrayal
- Self Blame
- Powerlessness
- Attachment Disturbances

Scale of 1-10, with 10 being most prominent
# Traumagenic States and Correlation with # Types Maltreatment (N=139)

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LOSS AND BETRAYAL

26 • Treating Traumatized Children

Dynamic:

Violation of Trust
Child had expected he would be protected, cared for and supported.

I don't really need anyone anyway

Physical and/or Emotional Loss
Loss of significant part of child's world such as parents, sibs, other significant people, pets, home, school, community, often in conjunction with other traumatic events.

Exploitation by Others
Child is used by adults or older children.
Behavioral Manifestations
- Somatic reactions
- Anxiety dreams
- Regressive behaviors
- Withdrawal
- Inability to attend
- Emotional disconnecting
- Avoidance of intimacy
- Apathy
- Indiscriminate clinging
- Hoarding
- Explosive anger

Psychological Impact
- Numbing of emotions
- Denial
- Suppressed longing
- Guilt
- Rage
- Distrust of self and others
When I was 3 my dad liked me to brush his thick red hair. One day he asked and I said I didn't want to, I never saw him again. He went away and then he died.

I am 65 & some days I still think it was my fault.
NEURODEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA ASSESSMENT MODEL:
DRILLING DOWN TO CAPTURE WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE BRAIN

BEHAVIOR!

Trauma Symptoms

Functionality

THE BRAIN:
Neurodevelopment
Relatedness
Traumagenic Impact
- **Difficulty with social communication skills:**
  - Difference between linguistic ability and the social use of language
  - Difficulty in using words to make friends or solve social problems
  - Poor understanding of intentions of others
  - Failure to make sense of other people’s actions and the motivations behind those actions
  - Misunderstand others, and react inappropriately
SOCIAL COGNITION

Ability to attribute mental states to others - others have thoughts, desires, beliefs, feelings different from our own

Understand language within the social setting - non-literal language

How do we do that?