



**Adult Advocacy  
Centers**

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## Forensic Interviews vs. Forensic Interview Techniques

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Forensic interviews and using forensic interview techniques are two different approaches used in gathering information from alleged crime victims with disabilities, particularly in investigative contexts. While both aim to elicit information in a non-leading manner, there are significant differences in their methods, goals and outcomes.

Typically, forensic interviews are conducted by trained specialists with a focus on interviewing people who may have undergone trauma or abuse. The forensic interviewer's goal is to preserve the integrity of the evidence and collect information in a way that reduces the risk of re-traumatization. During forensic interviews, the individual is asked open-ended questions that allow them to provide information that is pertinent to the inquiry in a systematic and non-leading manner. The environment for forensic interviews is trauma-informed and includes audio and video recording and a consultation with a multi-disciplinary team, who is watching the forensic interview live, in an adjacent room.

On the other hand, using forensic interview techniques refers to the use of specialized questioning strategies in interviews, regardless of who conducts them. These techniques are designed to increase the accuracy and completeness of the information gathered and minimize the potential for errors or bias. For example, forensic interview techniques may include open-ended questioning, using neutral and non-leading language and asking follow-up questions to clarify responses.

The level of skill and training requirements is one of the main distinctions between forensic interviews and using forensic interview techniques. Forensic interviews include having a signed Memorandum of Understanding with law enforcement and following a forensic interview protocol implemented by a certified and trained forensic interviewer. Using forensic interview techniques is an approach to facilitate communication that can be used by professionals when interacting with crime victims with disabilities.

