

What is The Potential Trauma to Children During the Investigation?

1. Repeated interviewing: being asked about negative self-traits may negatively impact the child's self-esteem.
 - When a child discloses at school, they may talk to teachers, and principals, then police, then DHS and have to tell their story over and over, retraumatizing the child with each new interview or medical examination.
 - When older children are asked questions about negative behaviors (e.g., fire starting, hurting animals) they often think, "Is this the kind of person they see me as?"

2. Traumatic stress can adversely impact the child's ability to protect himself/herself from further abuse
 - Due to trauma the child may be unable to accurately describe the traumatic events in the detail needed by the investigator.
 - The child's lack of trust may cause the child to provide investigators or courts incomplete or inaccurate information about abuse experienced or witnessed.
 - The trauma may have so dulled the child's emotional reactions that investigators may be skeptical of the truth of the child's statements.

3. Fear of the unknown, lack of information.
 - They don't know what's going to happen in the examination or interview.
 - They don't know how to negotiate the above events.
 - They don't know who these people are (Drs, detectives) or why these people are asking such personal questions and touching their bodies. We tell kids not to talk to or trust strangers and never to let strangers touch their bodies; and these are strangers.