

Trauma Informed Practice Strategies (T.I.P.S.) for Medical Examiners

1. Interviewing

- Avoid the need for multiple interviews
- Tape record interviews.
- Law enforcement watches the interview (outside of the room) and may ask that a particular question be asked.

2. Before the exam

- Explain as much as possible (and appropriate to age and understanding of child) what's going to happen – going to check your body for some things.
- Ask them, or their parent, what their worst fear is about what's going to happen today. Even speaking it, it's been acknowledged, and may alleviate some of the fear. Address fears as much as possible.

3. During the exam

- Let them wear their own clothing. Don't use gowns. They should always have some of their own clothing on – Take off their top to exam chest and heart, put that back on before taking off bottoms.
- Let them choose who is in the room during the exam.
- Explain everything ahead of time and again while doing it.
- Be calm and confident. Assure them it's not going to hurt. Let them know that you have done this many, many times (e.g. one examiner sees a hundred or more kids a month). Let's them know there are others like them. Kids are curious and ask questions – How many babies? How many kids are you seeing today?
- Have books and toys to play with child during the exam. Kids are happy to be distracted.
- Use language appropriate to the child. Find out the child's name for body parts.
- Always start with the least traumatic body parts first. Develop rapport. Perhaps talk about school or something else first. By the time we get to examining the genitals or anus they should be pretty relaxed and know that

- we're not going to hurt them. We have looked at lots of other body parts before that.
- Be as honest as we can in answering questions. If we don't know we say we don't know.
 - Give information appropriate to understanding and age. Fear of the unknown is the worst. For example, some children are worried about being pregnant, having HIV, or being gay.

4. After the Exam

- At CARES we give every kid a hand made blanket and a picture of themselves to take home with them.