



How to Promote Child-friendly Interactions with Children

Module at a Glance

Overview

United Nations Police (UNPOL) personnel are not mandated to work directly with children. However, UNPOL plays a critical role in guiding and training the host-State police in adopting child-friendly techniques in their interaction with children. It is important for UNPOL officers to know United Nations guidance and approach to interacting and communicating with children, as it will inform their advisory and mentoring role vis-à-vis the host-State police.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Demonstrate how to adapt their language to children
- Demonstrate how to adapt their attitude and physical approach to children
- Demonstrate how to adapt to the individual situation of each child
- Demonstrate how to support the host-State police in interviewing children

Module Map

Duration: 365 minutes (6 hours and 5 minutes)

Assessment: 15 minutes

The Module	
Introduction	Slides 0-3
How to adapt your language to children	Slides 4-11
How to adapt your attitude and physical approach to children	Slides 12-20
How to adapt to the individual situation of each child	Slides 21-35
How to support the host-State police in interviewing children	Slides 36-38
Learning Activities	
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Additional information	Page 40 + Separate file
Learning Evaluation	
Learning evaluation	Page 40
Assessment	Separate file

The Module



Instructors must decide which activities to use and in what combination, which may influence the delivery duration of the module from 4 to a little over 6 hours.

It is important that the learning objectives of all of the four segments are covered, as participants cannot succeed in this module if only some of the objectives have been covered. Language and attitude, for instance, constitute a sequence, and instructors must cover case studies, key messages, and skills from each segment for learners to progress and achieve the overall objective of the module.

Even though the focus of this module is on techniques required to be able to adapt to dealing with children in policing interactions, it is essential to emphasize to participants that their role as United Nations police officers in the context of United Nations peace operations is to mentor and advise host-State police on such techniques, and not to engage in interviews or direct communication themselves, other than in exceptional circumstances.

Child-friendly interview techniques are the focus of a specialized training programme that cannot be covered within the time frame of this module. It is important to understand that the present course does not provide the knowledge and skills to conduct child-friendly interviews. Proper expertise is needed, and UNPOL can help by sharing relevant norms and practices in this regard to contribute to improving the way such interviews are conducted by the host-State police. Collaboration and coordination with civilian Child Protection Advisers is required to ensure that advanced capacity-building is conducted by qualified personnel. Instructors may need to have a discussion with participants to clarify this point.

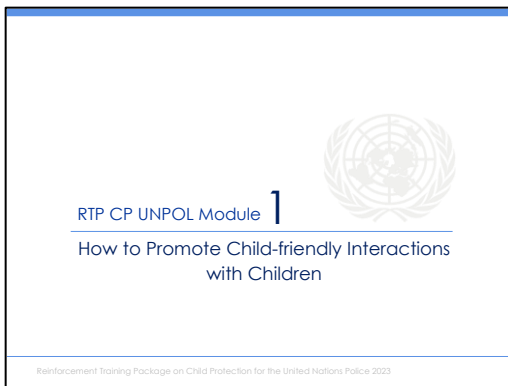
In this module, it is suggested that instructors select as many learning activities as are relevant to reinforcing the skills and understanding required to fulfil the mandates and obligations, in terms of promoting child-friendly interactions with children. The module will not cover advisory techniques; it is assumed that participants have acquired those skills elsewhere.

Starting the Module

Introduce the following (show slides 0-3):

- Title page and lesson topic
- Aim
- Learning Objectives
- Module Overview

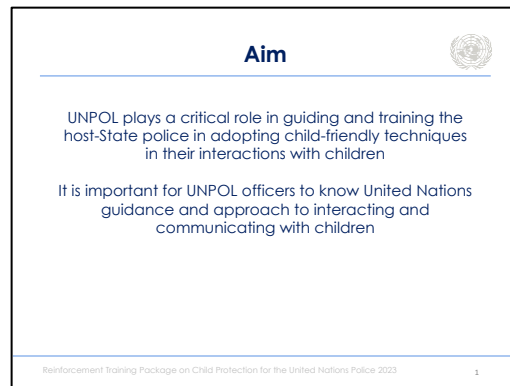
Slides 0 – 3: Introduction slides



RTP CP UNPOL Module **1**

How to Promote Child-friendly Interactions with Children

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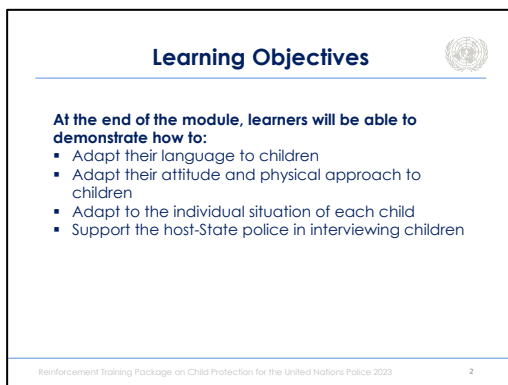


Aim

UNPOL plays a critical role in guiding and training the host-State police in adopting child-friendly techniques in their interactions with children

It is important for UNPOL officers to know United Nations guidance and approach to interacting and communicating with children

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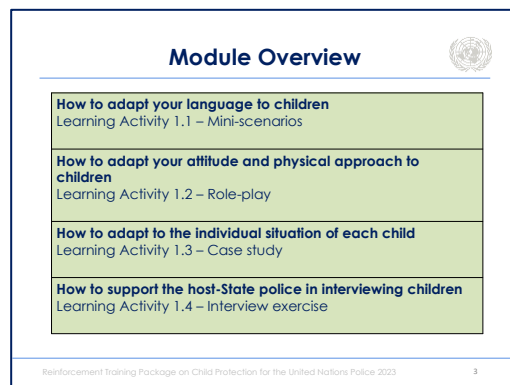


Learning Objectives

At the end of the module, learners will be able to demonstrate how to:

- Adapt their language to children
- Adapt their attitude and physical approach to children
- Adapt to the individual situation of each child
- Support the host-State police in interviewing children

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Module Overview

How to adapt your language to children Learning Activity 1.1 – Mini-scenarios
How to adapt your attitude and physical approach to children Learning Activity 1.2 – Role-play
How to adapt to the individual situation of each child Learning Activity 1.3 – Case study
How to support the host-State police in interviewing children Learning Activity 1.4 – Interview exercise

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Learning Activity 1.1

How to adapt your language to children




There are numerous situations where the host-State police must interact with children. In this segment, instructors will help United Nations Police (UNPOL) personnel understand and apply child-friendly language in their communication with children.

NOTE to instructors: Learning Activities 1.1 and 1.2 go together.

TIME: 75 minutes

- Introduction of activity and instructions: 5 minutes
- Group work: 15 minutes
- Plenary: 15 minutes
- Group work: 10 minutes
- Plenary: 10 minutes
- Group work: 15 minutes
- Questions and key messages: 5 minutes

Slide 4: Learning Activity 1.1 – Instructions



Learning Activity 1.1

Instructions

Four different scenarios of interactions between the host-State police and a child

- Discuss the scenario in your group (5 minutes)
- Write down a word-for-word (verbatim) record of the interaction (10 minutes)
- Present your ideas to the plenary

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INSTRUCTIONS:


- Slides 5 & 6 contain four situations covering four different focus areas. Trainers are encouraged to use as many case studies as possible, as they all provide insights into different realities of children and armed conflict.
- Divide participants into four groups (or eight groups if there is a large number of participants – two groups can work separately on one situation) and assign one situation to each group.
- Ask participants to write down precisely what the host-State police officer would say to the child in the particular situation. It should be emphasized that the intervention by the host-State police is the very first contact the child will have with a professional after the incident. This means that the communication should explain the situation and the next steps. Participants are invited to carefully choose their words and the construction of their sentences. The written text should read word-for-word what the police officer would say, like a word-for-word (verbatim) written record. Remind participants that their handwriting must be legible as their text will be passed on to another group in the next step of the exercise.
- Give participants 15 minutes to conduct the exercise, then ask them to put aside their texts and listen to the other interventions.
- Use slides 7 to 10 for the debriefing. The estimated time to complete the debriefing is about 15 to 20 minutes, depending on the number of scenarios used in the exercise.



Instructors should make sure to reserve sufficient time for debriefing at the end of each learning activity, as this is where the instructor can add value to the discussion, by verifying answers and complementing them with additional information provided in the module. Achieving the objective of this activity depends on the quality of the discussion after the group exercises.


Ask the groups to exchange their written sentences with another group. Ensure that each group has read and understood the situation (in slides 5 & 6) that is associated with the text they now have.

Slides 5 & 6: Situations

Situations 

- **Situation 1:** Imagine that the host-State police proceed with the arrest of a man for a criminal offense. A police officer must now explain the situation to the man's daughter, aged 10, who witnessed the arrest.
- **Situation 2:** Imagine that the host-State police meet with a boy, aged 12, at a school, a few hours after an attack. A police officer must now initiate the first interaction with the boy who most likely witnessed the attack on the school.


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Situations 

- **Situation 3:** Imagine that the host-State police arrive at a scene where a boy, aged 15, has apparently been raped. A male police officer must now initiate the first interaction with the boy and explain what will happen next.
- **Situation 4:** Imagine that the host-State police have to take responsibility for a 17-year-old boy who has just been demobilized from the armed forces. A police officer must now initiate the first interaction with the boy and explain what will happen next.

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Slide 7: Adapting communication to a child

Adapting communication to a child 

- A good interaction with a child will be one in which the child feels safe and taken seriously
- In each situation, the police officer should:
 - Explain the situation in simple words
 - Provide information on why the child is in contact with the police
 - Explain the next steps to the child

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Slide 8: Vocabulary

Vocabulary 

Use simple words


- Good examples: crime, police, judge, your description of what happened.
- Bad examples: infraction, attorney, court of appeal, hearing, apprehension, etc.

Use non-confrontational vocabulary

- Good example: "I am here to explain what the next steps will be and to answer your questions."
- Bad example: "My responsibility is to ensure you don't do this again and that we learn the truth."

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Slide 9: Adapting communication to a child (cont.)



Adapting communication to a child (cont.)

- Use short and simple sentences (one idea per sentence)
- Use positive language
- Use neutral, non-subjective sentences
- Use non-suggestive / non-leading sentences
- Use open questions as much as possible
- Respect the right of the child to remain silent

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- Use short and simple sentences (one idea per sentence):
 - Good example: “We will contact your parents and ask a social worker to come to help you quickly.”
 - Bad example: “Once the judiciary police complete the data collection, and after the prosecutor gives formal instructions on the procedure, a referral will be made to the assigned guardian until your caregivers have been informed about the situation.”
- Use positive language:
 - Good example: “Do you know how we can contact your parents?”
 - Bad example: “Aren’t your parents aware that you are here?”, “Haven’t your parents told you where they are?”
- Use neutral, non-subjective sentences:
 - Good example: “Another police officer like me will meet with you soon so that you can explain what happened.”
 - Bad example: “You will be interviewed soon to see if you can convince us that you are not guilty.”
- Use non-suggestive / non-leading sentences:
 - Good example: “Would you like to see a doctor?”
 - Bad example: “You should see a doctor because you seem unwell.”
- Use open questions as much as possible:
 - Good example: “Please tell me what happened.”
 - Bad example: “You helped the culprit, right?”
- Respect the right of the child to remain silent:
 - Good example: “You don’t have to answer my question if you don’t want to/if it makes you uncomfortable”.
 - Bad example: “I will help you if you answer my question”.



Once participants have been reminded of some of the techniques to be used to adjust their communication to a child, ask each group to apply their learning to the text produced by the other group. Their task is to amend the text and suggest ways to improve it, using a different colour pen. Give participants 10 minutes to review and improve the written text of the other group; then present slide 10.

Slide 10: Elements for interacting with a child




- When interacting with a child, the police officer should always clarify the following elements:
 1. *Who am I?*
 - Always begin by introducing yourself, using child-friendly language.
 2. *Who are you?*
 - Ask the child to identify himself/herself briefly.
 3. *Are you ok?*
 - Talk with the child to ensure that he/she feels safe and that his/her basic needs can be met (water, food, hygiene, physical and mental health).
 4. *What is happening?*
 - Ensure the child understands what is happening, asking him/her to tell you what is happening and complement the information if necessary.
 5. *What will happen now?*
 - Ensure the child understands the immediate next steps, and clarify what the child can expect in the next minutes and hours.
 6. *Do you have questions?*
 - Ask the child if he/she has any questions. Also inform the child about who is now responsible for him/her in the immediate situation (it might be you or someone else, but it must be clear to the child).



With that information in mind, ask the groups to return the text to the group that originally wrote it. Give participants another 15 minutes to take note of the suggested changes made to their text and to produce a final version that also takes into account the basic elements presented in slide 10.

Inform participants that the next step of this learning activity will take place in the next segment of the module.

Slide 11: Key messages for Learning Activity 1.1



Key messages for Learning Activity 1.1

- All interactions between a police officer and a child should address the following six elements: Who am I? Who are you? Are you ok? What is happening? What will happen now? Do you have questions?
- Vocabulary should consist of simple, non-confrontational words
- Your sentences should be short, positive, open, neutral, non-subjective and non-suggestive
- The child has the right to remain silent and should be presumed innocent

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Reference Materials

Additional resources and references for instructors to enrich their knowledge prior to facilitating this segment of the module:

- DPO, DFS and DPA, Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations, 2017, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/1._protection_-_3_child_protection_policy_0.pdf
- DPO and DPPA, Handbook for Child Protection Staff in United Nations Peace Operations, 2023, [https://resourcehub01.blob.core.windows.net/\\$web/Policy%20and%20Guidance/corepeacekeepingguidance/Thematic%20Operational%20Activities/Child%20Protection/2023.03%20Handbook%20for%20Child%20Protection%20Staff%20in%20United%20Nations%20Peace%20Operations.pdf](https://resourcehub01.blob.core.windows.net/$web/Policy%20and%20Guidance/corepeacekeepingguidance/Thematic%20Operational%20Activities/Child%20Protection/2023.03%20Handbook%20for%20Child%20Protection%20Staff%20in%20United%20Nations%20Peace%20Operations.pdf)
- UNICEF, Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, Guidelines on Child-friendly Legal Aid, October 2018, <https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/5171/file>

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- UNICEF Uganda, Key practice: Play and communication with children, 2017, www.unicef.org/uganda/key-practice-play-and-communication-children
- UNICEF, Communicating with Children: Principles and Practices to Nurture, Inspire, Excite, Educate and Heal, November 2011, [https://sites.unicef.org/cwc/files/CwC_Web\(2\).pdf](https://sites.unicef.org/cwc/files/CwC_Web(2).pdf)

Learning Activity 1.2

How to adapt your attitude and physical approach to children



In this segment, instructors will help United Nations Police (UNPOL) personnel understand and apply child-friendly interaction techniques when dealing with children, emphasizing good practices regarding attitude and physical approach.

NOTE to instructors: this activity should only be carried out if the first activity has been completed. Learning Activities 1.1 and 1.2 go together and cannot be facilitated separately. There are four role-plays to choose from. Depending on time and baseline capacities, it is possible to only use two or three scenarios. This learning activity is designed to deepen the learning of participants in the application of child-friendly interactions. In case participants already have experience on the matter, or there isn't enough time to deliver this module in full, this learning activity can be considered optional.

Before initiating this activity, it is important that instructors remind participants that their role as United Nations police officers is to mentor and advise host-State police on techniques for interacting with children, and not to engage in direct interactions with children themselves. If they have an opportunity to train host-State police on techniques for interacting with children, it should be done in coordination with Child Protection Advisers.

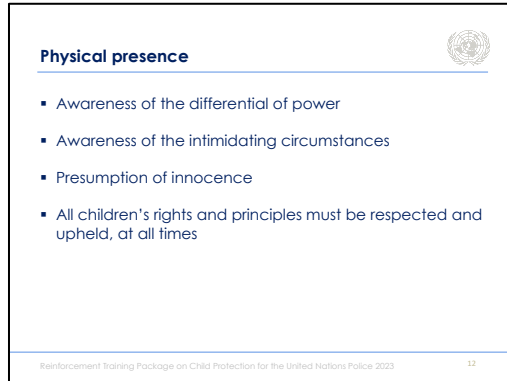
TIME: 105 minutes

- Introduction of content: 15 minutes
- Introduction of activity and instructions: 5 minutes
- Role-play 1: 10 minutes
- Plenary: 10 minutes
- Role-play 2: 10 minutes
- Plenary: 10 minutes
- Role-play 3: 10 minutes
- Plenary: 10 minutes
- Role-play 4: 10 minutes
- Plenary: 10 minutes
- Questions: 5 minutes




Instructors should use slides 12 to 18 to review key skills and approaches applicable to adapting attitudes and physical approaches to children. Instructors are invited to use the slides as a reference and generate a discussion with participants about the key aspects they already know, and new ones.

Slide 12: Physical presence



- When interacting with a child, it is critical to be aware of the differential of power between a police officer and a child.
- Child-friendly interactions require the police officer to be aware of the intimidating circumstances and adjust his/her attitude accordingly so as to establish a respectful contact that optimizes the child's safety and well-being, as well as his/her right to information.
- Even when a child might be suspected of being in conflict with the law or already has a criminal record, the child must be presumed innocent and all children's rights and principles, including those pertaining to justice, must be upheld at all times.

Slide 13: Physical presence (cont.)



Physical presence (cont.)


Good practices regarding attitude and body language:

- Avoid dominating behaviour
- Be mindful of your body language
 - Stand or sit at the same level as the child
 - Avoid being too close to the child
- Be sensitive about suggestive behaviour
 - Avoid touching the child
- Establish visual contact

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- Avoid adopting a dominating behaviour, for example by standing above the child.
- Stand or sit at the same level as the child to avoid intimidation.
- Avoid being too close to the child.
- Avoid touching the child. When a child is distressed or is crying, the first reaction may sometimes be to hold the child to comfort him/her. However, in many cases this can be intimidating for a child, especially if the child has been physically or sexually abused. Instead, the police officer should demonstrate empathy in tone of voice, language, and facial expression, but avoid any physical contact.
- Be sensitive about body language or words that could be perceived as suggestive.
- Establish visual contact; however, always be mindful of the local culture. In some cultures, it is considered bad manners for children to look adults directly in the eyes.
- Be mindful of your body language, hand gestures, posture; avoid unnecessary movements such as leaning forward – as it could be interpreted as too insistent or leaning backwards – as that could indicate lack of interest or scepticism.

Slide 14: Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication 

- Create a contact with the child that is engaging, not intimidating
- Remain calm
- Avoid showing judgment, annoyance or impatience
- Pay full attention to the interaction with the child

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- The most important aspect of non-verbal communication when interacting with children is to create a contact with the child that is engaging, but not intimidating. This is not easy to do, especially when the child is experiencing distress, fear or shock. Children, especially young ones, tend to be influenced by the behaviour of the adult; therefore, if you are calm and patient, the child is more likely to calm down.
- Maintain a calm demeanour.
- Avoid any behaviour, gesture, expression, tone of voice that indicates judgment, annoyance or impatience (e.g., frowning, looking at watch, raising eyebrows, etc.).
- Avoid any behaviour that may give the child the impression that you are not paying attention or not taking him/her seriously (e.g., walking away in the middle of the conversation, taking a phone call, texting on phone, or allowing other people to intervene in the conversation).

Slide 15: Active listening


Active listening 

- Introduce yourself
- Create an environment in which the child feels free to talk about what happened
- Pay attention to non-verbal communication
- Never raise your voice
- Avoid taking notes during the interview

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- The police officer should state his/her name. This enables accountability (the child knows who is talking with him/her, and can identify the person in case he/she or the family wishes to make contact/file a complaint), and allowing the child to call you by name contributes to establishing a personal relationship, which can make the child feel safer and more comfortable (speaking to another person, not to a “police officer”).
- Practice active listening: create an environment in which the child feels free to explain the situation/talk about what happened. Active listening means that you are engaged in the conversation; to do this, you should look interested and attentive, show signs of encouragement to the child, give the child time to think before answering a question.
- Pay attention to the child's non-verbal communication and respond appropriately.
- Never raise your voice or shout at the child.
- In such a short initial interaction, avoid taking notes on the spot; focus on the child first, then proceed with notes at the end of the interaction.

Slide 16: Gender sensitivity


Gender sensitivity 

- Let the child choose between two police officers, ideally of different genders
- Avoid asking personal questions that are unrelated to the situation

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- Before initiating contact, it is recommended to offer the child the opportunity to choose between two police officers, ideally of different genders. It should not be presumed that girls will necessarily prefer to interact with a woman, or that boys will prefer a man. It is better to let the child decide. This also generates trust, as it indicates that their opinion matters and that they will be respected in their interaction with the police.
- Police officers should focus their questions on information relevant to the case at hand and avoid asking personal questions that are unrelated to the situation.
 - Refrain from asking questions about the child's lifestyle, e.g., "What do you normally wear when you go out?" or "Do you often go out alone at night?"
 - These types of questions would be intruding on the child's privacy and are therefore inappropriate.
 - Such questions may make the child feel that he/she is being judged and may give the impression that the police officer is blaming him/her for what happened.

Slide 17: Coordination


Coordination 

- UNPOL should guide the approach used by the host-State police
- Child Protection Advisers (CPAs) are the most suitable actors to provide expert advice
- UNPOL should refrain from interacting directly with children

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- UNPOL can use the material in this module to guide the approach used by the host-State police when they interact with children.
- UNPOL must bear in mind that Child Protection Advisers are the most suitable actors in the mission to support capacity-building exercises relating to child-friendly communication techniques.
- Given the non-executive mandate of most United Nations peace operations, it is essential that UNPOL refrains from interacting directly with children. This is the prerogative of the host-State police.

Slide 18: Interpreters

Interpreters 

- Explain to the child why interpreters are there and how they will work
- Explain to the child that he/she can ask questions/seek clarifications anytime
- Ensure that the interpreter interprets accurately and uses child-friendly language (quality control)
- Using interpreters takes longer, therefore allow for sufficient time
- Cultural differences come into play in interpretation

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Additional advice to the host-State police regarding the use of interpreters:

- If the interpreters are taking notes or recording the interview, the police office should explain to the child why they are doing that, what the notes/recording


would be used for, then obtain the informed consent of the child before proceeding.

- If the host-State police are conducting the interview through an interpreter, they should explain to the child who the interpreter is, and that the child can request clarification at any time if he/she does not understand a question.
- The host-State police should brief the interpreter carefully on child-friendly interviewing techniques such as those included in this training module. Interpreters play an active role in the interview, therefore they must understand how to act in a child-friendly manner.
- The host-State police should ensure that the interpreter accurately interprets their words as well as those of the child. If possible, the presence of a colleague who speaks the local language(s) should be requested, for quality control purposes. If the interpreter does not understand the questions or the child's answers, it is crucial that he/she asks for clarification, without making assumptions.
- Conducting an interview through an interpreter will take longer than speaking directly to a child; the host-State police should allow for sufficient time to conduct the interview, taking breaks if necessary.
- Cultural differences come into play in translation; the host-State police should make sure that their questions are phrased in a simple way so as to avoid confusion during interpretation.



After closing the discussion, please proceed with the instructions for the role-play.

Slide 19: Learning Activity 1.2 – Instructions



Learning Activity 1.2

Instructions

- Each group designates two volunteers to simulate the interaction between the police officer and the child (7 minutes)
- The participant playing the part of the police officer should focus on how he/she interacts with the child
- The participant playing the part of the child should focus on how the police officer approaches him/her
- Observers will comment focusing on language used, attitude and approach

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INSTRUCTIONS:

- Remind participants about the four situations presented on slide 5 & 6. Ask each group to designate two volunteers who will simulate the interaction between a host-State police officer and a child. Allow 5 minutes for the groups to designate the two volunteers and prepare their roles. Inform them that each role-play will last 7 minutes maximum.
- The participant playing the role of the host-State police officer should focus on how he/she interacts with the child, paying attention to what he/she says to the child, how he/she behaves with the child, etc.).
- The participant playing the role of the child should focus on how the host-State police officer approaches him/her, and react accordingly.
- Remind the participants to act naturally. Participants should not exaggerate the role of the child. The child should act as if he/she is intimidated by the situation but willing to collaborate. They should act realistically and simulate a lifelike interaction between a host-State police officer and a child in the given situation.
- Consider finding a location in the middle of the room where all participants can clearly hear the conversation. Consider dividing participants into groups and conducting more role-plays simultaneously with a smaller group of observers who can more easily hear the interaction.
- Begin by inviting the two volunteers for Situation 1 to come forward and carry out the role-play.
- Instructors should observe the role-play and avoid intervening, unless the role-play is derailing. Instructors should be mindful of the time so as to end the role-play after 7 minutes.
- Commend the volunteers on their performance. Call for two to three comments from the other participants who observed the role-play, to get their views on what worked well and what less well. Focus on the language, attitude and approach, not on the acting skills of the participants.
- Instructors can refer to slides 12 to 18 to cross-check the application of all the principles and practices presented to facilitate the debriefing, emphasizing a few elements that were well done, and a few elements that could be improved regarding vocabulary, formulation of information given to the child, and communication strategy.
- Once a role-play is completed and a rapid debrief has taken place, proceed with the next one and continue until you complete the exercise.



After the debriefing for the last role-play, ask learners if they have any questions on the content of this segment. It is important to allow sufficient time to answer all questions.

Slide 20: Key messages for Learning Activity 1.2

Key messages for Learning Activity 1.2 

- Coordinate capacity-building and development activities with Child Protection Advisers
- Police officers and interpreters should always avoid physical contact in interactions with children
- Police officers and interpreters should be active listeners: pay full attention to the child, and avoid distraction
- Police officers and interpreters should adjust their attitude and posture to the child; be at the same level as the child

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Reference Materials

Additional resources and references for instructors to enrich their knowledge prior to facilitating this segment of the module:

- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Manual on Human Rights Monitoring, Chapter 11 on interviewing, 2001, www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Chapter11-MHRM.pdf
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Austrian Federal Ministry of Interior Affairs, *Resource Book for Law Enforcement Officers on Good practices in Combating Child Trafficking*, 2006, publications.iom.int/books/resource-book-law-enforcement-officers-good-practices-combating-child-trafficking
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime: Child-friendly version, 2006, www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Guidelines_E.pdf. For its associated training tools, see www.unodc.org/justice-child-victims/
- UNICEF, Guidelines on Child-friendly Legal Aid, 2018, www.unicef.org/eca/media/5171/file

Learning Activity 1.3

How to adapt to the individual situation of each child



In this segment, instructors will help United Nations Police (UNPOL) personnel understand and apply approaches adapted to the evolving capacities of each child.

TIME: 135 minutes

- Introduction of activity and instructions: 10 minutes
- Group exercise: 15 minutes
- Presentation (Group 1): 10 minutes
- Plenary: 20 minutes
- Presentation (Group 2): 10 minutes
- Plenary: 15 minutes
- Presentation (Group 3): 10 minutes
- Plenary: 15 minutes
- Presentation (Group 4): 10 minutes
- Plenary: 15 minutes
- Questions and key messages: 5 minutes




The case studies in this segment are based on the premise that UNPOL is composed of experienced police officers who have worked with children in contact with the law. They combine the principles of justice for children in contact with the law with the realities of armed conflict. Instructors are encouraged to divide participants into groups without briefing them before they begin the exercise. The purpose of the activity is to allow participants to use their existing knowledge and experience to answer the questions on their own. Instructors should be well prepared for the debriefing exercise at the end of the learning activities, and should be able to explain the key messages, lead the discussion, ensure the alignment of key learning objectives, and provide any additional information.

There are four case studies with four different focuses, in four different countries in this activity. Instructors are encouraged to use as many case studies as possible, as they all provide different insights into the coordination realities in United Nations peace operations. Instructors should make sure to reserve sufficient time for debriefing at the end of each learning activity, as this is where the instructor can add value to the discussion, by verifying answers and complementing them with additional information provided in the manual. Achieving the objective of this activity depends on the quality

of the discussion after the group exercises, rather than simply carrying out the exercise and quickly moving on to another segment.

Slide 21: Learning Activity 1.3 - Instructions



Learning Activity 1.3

Instructions

- Read the case study assigned to your group
- Discuss the following two questions (15 minutes)
 - 1) Explain in detail the actions that the host-State police should take before, during and after the interview with the child
 - 2) Considering what you know about the child's behaviour, how would you recommend that the host-State police adapt its approach? Give concrete examples of what to do and not to do?
- Present your findings to the plenary

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INSTRUCTIONS:

- Provide participants with the materials and instructions for the activity.
- Divide participants in four groups and assign each group one case study.
- Ask the groups to answer the two questions in the case study.
- Give the groups 15 minutes to complete the exercise (for larger groups, encourage participants to divide the tasks).
- After 15 minutes, ask the first group to briefly present its findings.
- Then, use slides 22 to 26 for the debriefing.



NOTE to instructors: you could also ask all the groups to present their findings one after another, and conduct a final debriefing combining all points presented below together, to make connections between case studies and possibly save time. Instructors should adapt the way they will use the slides and the strategy of debriefing accordingly.

Slides 22 to 25: Case study 1 (Jean, Central African Republic)

Case Study 1: Debrief

- Seeking medical attention is the priority
- The detention is not justified
- The child cannot be criminally responsible
- Protection against possible retaliations are needed
- Joint preparation between social workforce and police is needed
- Water, food and quiet place

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Case Study 1: Debrief (cont.)

- Inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) about the case
- Ensure the presence of a lawyer for the child
- The child should choose between a male and a female host-State police officer
- Inform the child about his rights; the child should consent to be interviewed

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Case Study 1: Debrief (cont.)

- Avoid overcrowding in the room
- Allow for breaks and adapt to level of maturity of the child
- Consider wearing civilian clothes instead of a uniform
- Set ground rules and establish the importance of telling the truth
- Sit down at the same level as the child
- Introduce yourself, ask the child his name, explain the situation

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Case Study 1: Debrief (cont.)

- Use simple conversation topics to establish trust
- Ask the child what he meant when he told the police officer that he did not want to hurt anyone
- Rehabilitation, psychological and social support are the priority after the interview


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Some aspects to consider:

- As signs of distress are evident, seeking medical attention is the priority before starting the interview.
- Detention is not justified in this case.
- Jean is below the minimum age of criminal responsibility in the Central African Republic. Therefore, he cannot be held criminally responsible for any crime he might have been forced to commit during his association with the armed group.
- Protection against possible retaliation is needed for Jean and his family.
- Joint preparation between social workers and police is needed to conduct one single interview with the child.
- The host-State police officers should be advised to put the child in a quiet and comfortable room, offer him some water, and ask him if he is hungry.
- If the child knows where his parent(s) are, the host-State police should be advised to call the child's parent(s) and ask them to be present at the interview, if possible; inform the parent(s) about the case and ensure the presence of a lawyer for the child.

- The host-State police should be advised to offer the child a choice between a male and female police officer to lead the interview.
- The host-State police should inform the child about his rights to legal aid and seek consent from the child for the interview.
- A social worker should be present during the interview and should be allowed to talk to the child before the start of the interview, if conditions allow.
- The host-State police should avoid overcrowding in the room.
- The host-State police should be advised to allow for breaks in the interview and to adapt the proceedings to the age and gender of the child.
- The host-State police officer conducting the interview may want to consider wearing civilian clothes instead of a uniform. The child might be intimidated by a uniformed officer, as he is likely to have been mistreated before by people wearing uniforms in the armed group that sent him to conduct the attack.
- In the relationship-building phase of the interview, the host-State police officer conducting the interview should gently set the ground rules and establish the importance of telling the truth.
- The host-State police officer should position himself/herself at the same level as the child.
- The host-State police officer should start by introducing himself/herself and asking the child's name, using a gentle tone of voice. Then, he/she should explain why the police have brought him to the police station. The officer should also inform Jean of his rights.
- It will then be important to use a few simple conversation topics to establish trust between the child and the interviewer, e.g., ask about what sports the child likes. During this conversation, the interviewer should look for signs of distress in the child. If there are signs of distress, the police officer should discuss with the social worker on the best course of action.
- If they decide to continue the interview, the police officer should try to ask open, non-leading questions to get the child's version of the situation, e.g., by simply asking "Please tell me what happened today".
- The officer should remain patient and give Jean all the time he needs to tell his story. The officer should remain friendly and avoid looking or sounding impatient or judgmental.
- When asking for information about the child's association with the armed group, the officer could start by asking Jean what he meant when he told the police officer that he didn't want to hurt anyone.
- Rehabilitation, psychological and social support should be the priority after the interview; safety, protection, as well as rehabilitation can be provided by specialized services. This implies proper referral by the police to the competent services.

Slide 26: Why is interviewing children different from interviewing adults?

Why is interviewing children different from interviewing adults? 

- The brain of a child is still developing, affecting decision-making
- The level of development and maturity of each child is different
- Children can be intimidated by figures of authority and new environments
- Children who have grown up in armed conflict environments socialize differently from those who have not

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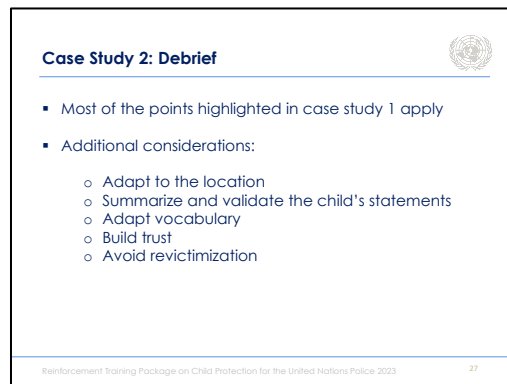
Some aspects to consider:

- Because the brain of a child is still developing, affecting their decision-making processes, and their rationality versus spontaneity.
- Because the level of development and maturity of each child is different, this may influence the way questions are asked during the interview, or how explanations are provided about what happened.
- Because children think differently from adults, they understand events and situations differently, based on their stage of development, their maturity and other personal characteristics such as their gender, ethnic origin, culture, etc.
- Because children have a different perception of time than adults and may not understand the urgency of a situation.
- Because children often have a shorter attention span, requiring interviews to be kept short or the need for several breaks.
- Because they communicate differently from adults, for instance in their choice of words and sentence structure.
- Because victims, in particular child victims, risk being further distressed when having to relate what happened to them.
- Because children can get scared or intimidated by figures of authority (e.g., police officers or somebody wearing a uniform) or by new environments (e.g., a police station).
- Because children who grow up or live in armed conflict environments socialize differently and their behaviours cannot be compared to children living in peaceful environments.



After the debriefing for case study 1, invite the second group to share their answers. Proceed with the same steps for the debriefing for case study 2, using slides 27 to 29. Note that these slides do not repeat the points already raised in case study 1. Therefore, instructors should be mindful of slides 22-26 as being generally relevant to the other three case studies and highlight previously mentioned elements that may be appropriate, or points that may have been forgotten.


Slide 27: Case study 2 (Pascaline, South Sudan)



- Most of the points raised in case study 1 apply (joint preparation with social workers, contacting family, offering water and food, child's choice of male or female interviewer, informing child about legal rights and legal assistance, avoiding overcrowding the room, taking breaks, adapting to child's age and gender, wearing civilian clothes, introducing oneself by name to the child, looking for signs of distress, exhibiting patience, prioritizing reintegration and support referrals after the interview).
- Additional particularities include:
 - The host-State police officer(s) should adapt to the condition of the room where Pascaline is located (her environment) and position themselves at the same level as her.
 - The host-State police officer(s) should occasionally ask Pascaline to repeat in her own words what the officer said, so as to evaluate her understanding and adjust accordingly.
 - The host-State police officer(s) should also, from time to time, summarize their understanding of what Pascaline said, and ask her to confirm whether they have understood correctly.
 - The host-State police officer(s) should adapt their vocabulary to ensure that the child can understand them; they should also be mindful of making short sentences and remaining objective.

- Building trust is critical in this case; receptive body language is important; showing respect for the child's views and using active listening techniques are essential.
- The host-State police officer(s) must be careful not to revictimize Pascaline in relation to her former association with the armed forces. They should seek to obtain information through the police, judicial or social files regarding her demobilization, and concentrate their question on the current situation.
- When asking about her situation in the village and her relationship with neighbours, the host-State police officer(s) should ask questions like: "Tell me about your relationship with your neighbours", and "Tell me what happened before this incident".

Slide 28: Recognizing and managing distress


Recognizing and managing distress 

- Police officers not competent to determine whether a child is traumatized or not
- Recognizing possible symptoms of shock/distress can help to approach a child with greater care and to refer the case if needed
- Simple recollection of facts can bring a very high level of stress to the child
- Ensure that the child will not suffer additional stress during the interview

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- In conflict and post-conflict contexts, the number of children who are suffering from shock or who are distressed is higher than in other circumstances. Interviewing a child in shock or distress can be extremely challenging.
- Trauma can only be diagnosed and treated by medical professionals who are trained to do so; therefore, it is not the role of police officers to determine whether a child is traumatized or not.
- However, being able to recognize possible symptoms of shock and distress can help you to approach a child with greater care, and to determine when a referral to a healthcare professional is necessary.
- The simple recollection of facts can produce a very high level of stress to children suffering from shock or who are distressed.
- Before starting the interview, it is important to ensure that the child will not suffer additional distress from it (e.g., by having a medical professional see the child, coordinating interviews so as to avoid multiple interviews, or requesting the presence of a social worker during the interview).

Slide 29: Causes of distress



Causes of distress

- Shock/distress can be caused by:
 - A single event
 - An ongoing situation
 - Multiple events over time
- The same event will affect children differently
- Shock/distress can last for varying amounts of time


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- Shock and distress can be caused by:
 - A single event: e.g., an attack on the child's village.
 - An ongoing situation: e.g., repeated physical and/or psychological abuse by a member of the child's family.
 - Multiple events over time: e.g., repeated forced displacements of the child and his/her family owing to continuous droughts or fighting.
 - It is important to note that the same event will affect individual children differently. This is due to many factors, such as the child's personality, upbringing, support structures, culture, personal resilience, age, gender, etc. Some children will come out of a horrible experience experiencing shock, distress, while some might not.
 - In the same way, shock and distress can last for various lengths of time depending on the child, his/her circumstances, and whether the child receives proper attention or not.



Apply the same method for the other two case studies, alternating between group presentations and debriefing. Please, use slides 30 to 32 after the third group has completed its presentation of case study 3.

Slide 30: Case study 3 (Shaima, Afghanistan)



Case study 3: Debrief

- Points highlighted in case studies 1 and 2 apply
- Additional considerations:
 - Host-State police should seek assistance from mental health professionals
 - Officers should adapt their behaviour to the conditions in the hospital room
 - Seek support and complementary information from family members or neighbours
 - Do not make any promises

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- Most of the points raised in case studies 1 and 2 also apply to this case (joint preparation with social workers, contacting family, offering water and food, child's choice of male or female interviewer, informing the child about legal rights and legal assistance, avoiding overcrowding the room, taking breaks, adapting to the child's age and gender, wearing civilian clothes, introducing oneself by name to the child, looking for signs of distress, exhibiting patience, prioritizing reintegration and support referrals after the interview, repeating information, summarizing child has said for validation, being mindful of body language)
- Additional considerations:
 - Mental health is a complex domain, and the host-State police should seek assistance in preparing and conducting the interview with Shaima.
 - The host-State police officers should adapt to the condition of the hospital room where Shaima is located (the environment), and position themselves at the same level as her during the interview.
 - Seeking support and complementary information from family members or neighbours might help to triangulate information.
 - Advise the host-State police to always be careful not to promise results that they cannot guarantee as that can do more harm than good. Even if Shaima is distressed, they should not promise that they will find her daughter, nor that they will find those responsible for her disappearance. While no promises should be made regarding results, it is possible to promise to do your absolute best to resolve a situation.

Slide 31: Symptoms of distress

Symptoms of distress

- Everybody reacts differently to stress
- Symptoms of distress can be physical and/or psychological
- Psychological, medical, and social workers are best suited to address symptoms of distress

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- Symptoms of shock/distress can be physical and/or psychological. They could include:

Shock, denial, or disbelief, anger, irritability, mood swings, guilt, shame, self-blame, feelings of sadness or hopelessness, confusion, difficulty concentrating, anxiety and fear, withdrawal, memory loss, apathy, feeling disconnected or numb, insomnia or nightmares, being easily startled, racing heartbeat, aches and pains, fatigue, edginess, agitation, muscle tension.

Slide 32: Adapting to distress

Adapting to distress


- The police need to adapt their behaviour when observing symptoms of distress
- Example of adapting include:
 - Taking breaks
 - Using a calm tone of voice
 - Acknowledging distress
 - Showing empathy (without physical contact)
 - Empowering the child in decision-making
 - Providing opportunities to raise questions/concerns about safety or the safety of family

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Apply the same method for case study 4. Please, use slides 33 and 34 for the debriefing and to conclude the segment, after the fourth group has completed its presentation.

Slide 33: Case study 4 (Abdel, Iraq)

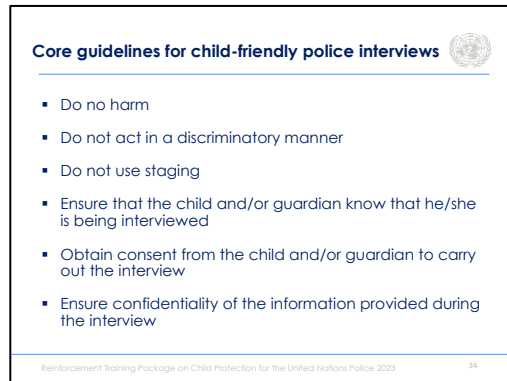
Case Study 4: Debrief 

- Most points highlighted in case studies 1 to 3 apply
- Additional considerations:
 - Show respect for the child
 - Be careful not to revictimize the child
 - Ask open, non-leading questions
 - Evaluate the child's level of understanding and adjust accordingly
 - Summarize and validate the child's statements

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- Most of the points raised in case studies 1 to 3 apply to this case.
- Additional considerations:
 - Building trust is critical in this case; receptive body language is important; showing respect for the child's views and using active listening techniques are essential.
 - The host-State police officer(s) must be careful not to revictimize the child in relation to the crimes he committed in the past. Referring to this in the interview will increase the child's perception that the police is subjective.
 - When asking about what happened, the host-State police officer(s) should ask questions like: "Could you please tell me what happened?"
 - Regarding follow-up questions, the host-State police officer(s) could ask questions like: "Please, tell me what happened before that".
 - The host-State police officer(s) should occasionally ask the child to repeat in his own words what the officer(s) said, so as to evaluate the child's understanding and adjust accordingly.
 - The host-State police officer(s) should also, from time to time, summarize their understanding of what the child said, and ask him to confirm whether they have understood correctly.

Slide 34: Core guidelines for child-friendly police interviews




There are recognized core guidelines to be followed when interviewing a child to be in line with international standards. These core guidelines apply to all children of all ages, and police officers must integrate them fully. They include:

- **Do no harm:** Avoid pejorative or judgmental questions, attitudes or comments that could be interpreted as insulting to the child, insensitive to cultural values, could place the child in danger, expose the child to humiliation, or reactivate the child's pain and suffering from traumatic events.
- **Do not act in a discriminatory manner** based on sex, race, age, religion, status, educational background, physical abilities or any other attributes that could increase the child's social exclusion.
- **Do not use staging:** Do not ask children to tell a story or take an action that is not part of their own experience to explain/describe a situation. When interviewing children, in particular, it is important to bear in mind the "need to know" approach, and focus on the key data and the need to obtain all and only the details about the child's experience. This is essential to reduce the risk of revictimization (e.g., do not ask to recreate the whole experience, nor return to the site of the incident).
- **Ensure that the child and/or the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) know that he/she is being interviewed:** explain the purpose of the interview and its intended use.
- **Obtain consent from the child and/or the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) to carry out interviews and to video record them.** When possible and appropriate, this permission should be in writing.
- **Ensure confidentiality of the child's testimony:** to do this, pay attention to where and how the child is interviewed; limit the number of interviewers; make sure that the child is comfortable with those present and able to tell their story without outside pressure, including from the interviewer.



After the debriefing for the last presentation, ask learners if they have questions on the content of this segment. It is important to allow sufficient time to answer all questions.

Slide 35: Key messages for Learning Activity 1.3

Key messages for Learning Activity 1.3 

- The child's level of maturity influences the interview
- Trauma can only be diagnosed and treated by health professionals
- Recognizing symptoms of shock/distress can help to approach the child with care, and to determine the need for referral
- Ensure that the child will not suffer additional distress because of the interview
- Follow core guidelines for child-friendly police interviews

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Reference Materials

Additional resources and references for instructors to enrich their knowledge prior to facilitating this segment of the module:

- UNICEF, Ethical reporting guidelines: Key principles for responsible reporting on children and young people – Guidelines for interviewing children, www.unicef.org/media/reporting-guidelines#:~:text=Guidelines%20for%20interviewing%20children,and%20grief%20from%20traumatic%20events
- HelpGuide, Emotional and psychological trauma, www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/emotional-and-psychological-trauma.htm#signs

Learning Activity 1.4

How to support the host-State police in interviewing children



In this segment, instructors will help United Nations Police (UNPOL) personnel understand and apply interviewing techniques adapted to children.

The following activity is based on the premise that UNPOL is composed of experienced police officers who have worked with children in contact with the law. It combines the principles of justice for children in contact with the law with the realities of armed conflict. Instructors should ask participants to carry out the assigned task, but should not brief them before they begin the exercise. The purpose of the activity is to allow participants to use their existing knowledge and experience to answer the questions on their own.

Instructors should have prepared beforehand for the debriefing exercises at the end of the learning activities, and should be able to explain key messages, lead the discussion, ensure the alignment of key learning objectives, and provide any additional information.

Before initiating this activity, instructors should remind participants that their role as United Nations police officers is to mentor and advise host-State police on techniques for interacting with children, and not to engage in direct interactions with children themselves. If they have an opportunity to train host-State police on techniques for interacting with children, it should be done in coordination with Child Protection Advisers.


TIME: 50 minutes

- Introduction of activity and instructions: 10 minutes
- Individual exercise: 15 minutes
- Review: 10 minutes
- Circulation and review of correct answers: 10 minutes
- Questions and key messages: 5 minutes



Use slide 36 to introduce the activity. Before initiating the exercise, instructors should use slide 37 to introduce the six rules to follow when conducting an interview, and briefly summarize the key points under each rule.

Slide 36: Learning Activity 1.4 – Instructions



Learning Activity 1.4

Instructions

- This activity consists of an interview that involves useful and less useful interviewing techniques
- Individual work: Use different colours of pens to identify the good and bad interviewing techniques used by the police officer in the interview, indicating why the line is a good or a bad technique (15 minutes)
- In groups of two: compare and review your answers (10 minutes)

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INSTRUCTIONS:

- Provide participants with the materials and instructions for the activity.
- The activity consists of an interview that involves useful and less useful interviewing techniques.
- Working individually, participants should identify the good and bad interviewing techniques used by the police officer in the interview. They should use different colours to highlight the good and bad lines in the dialogue, then they should indicate why the line is a good or bad technique. Give participants 15 minutes to complete the task.
- After 15 minutes, ask the participants to work in pairs and compare their answers. Give them 10 minutes to complete the review.
- After 10 minutes, circulate the handout to allow the participants to assess their own answers against the suggested ones. Give them 10 minutes to complete the evaluation.



If time permits, instructors can suggest role-playing for the debriefing for this learning activity: one participant can play the role of the police officer and another can play the role of the child. Factor in an additional 15 to 20 minutes if role-playing is used.

The role-play should focus on how to amend the interview in a way that it becomes more child-friendly and improving the bad techniques.

At the end of the role-play, ask three to four participants to share their main observations. Make connections with the six rules for a good interview (slide 37) that were introduced prior to the exercise.

Slide 37: The six rules of a good interview



Build trust

- The way in which the police officer(s) interact with a child has a direct impact on the way the child will respond and react to his/her questions. If the child trusts the police officer, he/she will feel more comfortable to talk.
- Part of creating trust would be for the host-State police officer(s) to introduce themselves, state their mission and their role, and explain the process in simple language.
- A child may not feel comfortable volunteering information to an aggressive police officer; however, a child may be more inclined to talk freely with a police officer who has created a climate of trust.
- To effectively communicate with a child, it is crucial to first establish a good relationship and build trust. This can be done by using verbal and non-verbal language appropriately, e.g., by taking time to talk about matters that are not related to the situation, like what sports or games the child likes or about the child's school, while ensuring respect for the child's privacy.
- The child needs to understand the situation, why he/she is being interviewed and what the information will be used for. It is therefore crucial that the police officer(s) explain the situation to the child and ensure that he/she fully understands.
- If and when possible, the child should be offered the opportunity to choose between two officers, ideally of different genders, for the interview.

Create a child-friendly atmosphere

- When preparing the room for interviewing a child, the host-State police officer(s) must ensure that the interview is conducted in a safe, private and non-threatening environment (no weapons). They should choose a room that is relatively quiet and where there will be no interruptions; nobody should be allowed to walk in while a

child is being interviewed, and the police officer(s) should not accept phone calls while talking to the child.

- The police officer(s) should always position himself/herself at the child's "eye level" – that is, he/she should sit beside or in front of the child, rather than stand.
- It is preferable to make sure the child is comfortable before beginning the interview, e.g., by offering some water and/or something to eat, allowing him/her to use the toilet, etc. If certain basic needs are not met, the child might not be able to participate effectively in an interview. This will also help to build trust.

Keep an open mind and remain objective

- It is important to view the child objectively without stereotypes and prejudice.
- In order to be fully receptive to information that the child will communicate, the host-State police officers must put aside their own biases and beliefs. They must also refrain from judging the child based his/her appearance, which may be misleading, e.g., the clothes the child is wearing, his/her facial expressions, piercings, tattoos, hairstyle, etc.
- If the child looks nervous, it may not indicate guilt but rather fear of the police officer(s) or of being alone in a police station, for instance. Nervousness does not equal guilt.

Remain professional

- The host-State police officer(s) must show empathy and respect for the child; this will facilitate the conversation.
- The police officer(s) must remain patient and give the child time to think about and answer the questions, bearing in mind that they may have to ask the questions in different ways before getting a satisfactory answer
- Children, especially younger ones, do not always know which details are important and which ones are not.
- The police officer(s) must show interest in the child's story by nodding, verbally indicating that they have heard, or repeating what he/she has said, and should not look bored or impatient.

Know how to listen

- Using active listening techniques and engaging in the conversation with the child will contribute to building trust and reducing fear. If the child feels that the police officer(s) are listening and are interested, he/she is likely to talk more freely.
- The police officer(s) should avoid interrupting the child while he/she is talking.
- The police officer(s) are encouraged to record the interview or take notes, if possible, so that the child does not have to repeat his/her story multiple times. It is important to explain to the child why the interview is being recorded / why notes

are being taken and what the recording or notes would be used for, and to obtain his/her consent to do so.

- It is perfectly acceptable to allow the child to be silent during the interview and not to force the conversation.

Know how to conclude the interview

- Before concluding the interview, the police officer(s) must ensure that all relevant points have been covered and ask the child if he/she has any questions or wants to add anything.
- It is important to inform the child of the next step of the proceedings and thank him/her for cooperating.
- Conclude by telling the child that the information he/she has provided will be looked into; the police officer(s) should not raise expectations, nor make promises to the child.



After the debriefing, ask learners if they have questions on the content of this segment or the module. It is important to allow sufficient time to answer all questions.

Slide 38: Key Messages for Learning Activity 1.4

Key messages for Learning Activity 1.4

The six rules of a good interview are:

- Create trust
- Create a child-friendly atmosphere
- Keep an open mind and remain objective
- Remain professional
- Know how to listen
- Know how to conclude the interview

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Reference Materials

Additional resources and references for instructors to enrich their knowledge prior to facilitating this segment of the module:

- DPO, DFS and DPA, Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations, 2017, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/1._protection_-_3_child_protection_policy_0.pdf
- UNICEF, Ethical reporting guidelines: Key principles for responsible reporting on children and young people – Guidelines for interviewing children, <https://www.unicef.org/media/reporting-guidelines#:~:text=Guidelines%20for%20interviewing%20children,and%20grief%20from%20traumatic%20events>
- HelpGuide, Emotional and psychological trauma, www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/emotional-and-psychological-trauma.htm#signs

Learning Activities

Additional information for learning activities is in a separate file. It includes:

Activity	Name	Method	Time
1.3	How to adapt to the individual situation of each child	Case studies	135 minutes
1.4	How to support the host-State police in interviewing children	Case study	50 minutes

Learning Evaluation

Learning evaluation options for this module are in a separate file.

TIME: 15 minutes