

**AWARENESS MODULES FOR POLICE PERSONNEL ON CSA  
AND POCSO ACT, 2012**

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## **Introduction**

Children constitute 44% of India's population. Unfortunately, many of them survive in some of the most difficult circumstances, both while they live with their families and when they are out of a family set up living as orphans and destitute. Studies have shown how the difficult situations in which children find themselves put them to an even greater risk of getting exposed to anti-social influences. In order to deal with such a situation it is utmost important to know the role of police officers should be taken care of Care and Protection of children is recognized as basic to their survival and growth.

The following training module has been designed to equip police officers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively protect, rehabilitate and restore children who find themselves in vulnerable situations. The module emphasizes the importance of a rights-based and professional approach when working with children and aims to increase awareness of child rights and related issues. Various methods and techniques are provided to guide police officers in their interactions with children. The primary objective of the module is to educate police officers and foster a child-centered approach when dealing with children.

## **Objectives**

- Bridge the gap between theory and practice relevant to policing and child rights / child protection so that police are able to act in the best interests of children;

## **Purpose of the Module**

One of the main duties of police institutions is to safeguard children from violence and abuse. The police play a crucial role in upholding children's legal rights, safeguarding them from abuse and juvenile delinquency, and facilitating the administration of justice when abuse or an offence is discovered. The local police force's abilities and knowledge must be improved in order to carry out these duties effectively. Along with imparting these abilities and knowledge, training aims to alter police officers' perspectives on children and their cases.

Given that police officers are typically the first to respond to cases involving children, it is essential that they have a comprehensive understanding of child rights and protection, guidelines for working with children to avoid conflicts or unnecessary barriers, and awareness of relevant programs and policies. The module developed by the researcher addresses all three of these themes.

**How to use the module?**

Based on the results of the study titled “Child Sexual Abuse: Awareness and Perception among Police Personnel (Women) In Vadodara City” the researcher identified that knowledge about Child Rights, Dos and Don'ts for police officers working with children and families and some guidelines when interviewing a children would be the most relevant themes for the personnel.

**Steps to use the Module:**

- Use module with 20 participants (Police Personnel)
- Each module consists of 60 minutes including some group activities, discussion and presentations slide.
- Use resourceful area to conduct the sessions.

## **Ice Breaking Activity**

### **Objectives:**

- To help them understand their own emotions.
- To understand what the participants are feeling.

### **Description:**

The cardboard will be placed at the entrance to the room, where participants will come and stick their notes on the column that they believe is most appropriate based on their current emotions.

### **Material used:**

Mood board, Cardboard and sticky notes

### **Time:**

10minutes

### **Method:**

Prepare big Square cardboard.

Divide it into a table of 4x4.

Label each row with the following name.

- 1) Feeling great
- 2) Feeling okay
- 3) I am struggling
- 4) Having a hard time and wouldn't mind sharing.

## **Theme 1: Child Rights and Protection**

### **Objectives:**

By the end of this section you should be able to:

- To improve police practice in relation to children;
- To comprehend the significance of police training on child rights and child protection.
- Capable of understanding the idea of child rights
- Clarify the distinction between abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Explore the concept, meaning, types, and prevention of child abuse.

### **Materials required:**

A4 size sheets, pen, pencil, eraser

**Time:** 45 minutes

### **Strategies of implementing:**

Power point presentation and group discussion

### **Introduction:**

Like any other human being, children have both general rights and more specialized rights based on their unique circumstances. All people have the right to human rights, regardless of their age, sex, race, religion, etc. However, children have some unique rights of their own because of their special status, including their vulnerability, their importance in shaping the future of a society, and their reliance on or need for additional protection and guidance from adults. The phrase "Children's Rights" refers to these.

Understanding these broad and detailed rights of children is crucial for anyone working with children's issues. This is a very important requirement, especially for officers and administrators in law enforcement organizations. If they lack this knowledge, they will undoubtedly commit at least one of the following errors: they will either fail to uphold children's



rights or will violate those rights themselves. This indicates that they are utterly failing to accomplish their goal.

This module's goal is to foster an understanding of children's special rights that is pertinent for law enforcement personnel in particular. As a result, this module will not make an effort to discuss every child's rights in detail. Instead, it addresses the rights of children in the administration of justice, with which children may come into contact either as victims of crime or as lawbreakers, as well as specific instances in which children are the victims of abuse and exploitation.

### **Procedure:**

#### **Slide 1:**

#### **Child rights (Survival, Protection, Participation and Development)**

##### **Right to Survival:**

- Right to be born
- Right to minimum standards of food, shelter and clothing
- Right to live with dignity
- Right to health care, to safe drinking water, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay healthy

##### **Right to Protection:**

- Right to be protected from all sorts of violence
- Right to be protected from neglect
- Right to be protected from physical and sexual abuse
- Right to be protected from dangerous drugs

##### **Right to Participation:**

- Right to freedom of opinion
- Right to freedom of expression
- Right to freedom of association
- Right to information

- Right to participate in any decision making that involves him/her directly or indirectly

### **Right to Development:**

- Right to education
- Right to learn
- Right to relax and play
- Right to all forms of development – emotional, mental and physical

### **Slide 2:**

Rights for children by United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:-

- Article 6 :- Survival and Development
- Article 7 :- Registration, name , nationality, care
- Article 8 :- Preservation of identity
- Article 9 :-Separation from parents
- Article 11:- Kidnapping and Trafficking
- Article 12:- Respect for the views of the child
- Article 13:- Freedom of Expression
- Article 16 :- Right to privacy
- Article 19 :- Protection from all forms of Violence
- Article 20 :- Children deprived of family
- Article 21 :- Adoption
- Article 23:- Children with Disability
- Article 24:-Health and health service
- Article 26:- Social security
- Article 28 :- Right to education
- Article 30 :-Children of minorities
- Article 31:- Leisure, play and culture
- Article 33 :- Drug abuse
- Article 34 :-Sexual exploitation
- Article 35:- Abduction

- Article 36 :- Other forms of exploitation
- Article 37:- Detention
- Article 39:- Rehabilitation of child victims
- Article 40 :- Juvenile justice

**Facilitator (s) need to do-Steps:**

- ❖ Place a sign in each corner of the room or training area.
- ❖ Explain to the participants that all children – up to the age of 18 years – have rights.
- ❖ Tell the participants that rights can be considered under four headings (survival, development, participation and protection).
- ❖ Ask the participants to stand in the centre of the room.
- ❖ Keep sheets with the heading on 4 different corners
- ❖ Ask one participant to come stand in the middle
- ❖ Read any one right. When participants hear the right, they are to go and stand under the sign of the heading where they think the right belongs
- ❖ When participants have moved to their preferred position, invite a volunteer to explain why they chose that position.
- ❖ Repeat the exercise 10 or 12 times.
- ❖ Invite the participants to sit down and discuss the exercise. During the discussion, explore if any rights were a surprise or if there were any rights that participants disagreed with.

**Facilitator should encourage discussion on:**

- ✚ Do participants think that rights apply in India? If not, why not? If yes, why?
- ✚ What is the role of police officers in promoting children's rights?
- ✚ How might participants persuade or explain the concept of children's rights to other caregivers say parents and the larger community?

## **Theme 2: Dos and Don'ts for police officers when working with children and their families**

### **Objectives:**

By the end of this section you should be able to:

- To understand best practices for Police Officers working with children.
- Be able to act in the best interests of the child.

### **Materials required:**

Paper, pen

**Time:** 60 minutes

### **Strategies of implementing:**

Focus group discussion

### **Introduction:**

Children may be involved in some type of legal action, such as custody disputes, be witnesses to crimes or accidents, or be suspected of being abused or neglected. These circumstances might necessitate formal interviewing of the child, and if done improperly, inaccurate or insufficient information may be recorded, or the child's position may not be accurately represented in court. The quality of their oral testimony is crucial because the child may not be the only witness in cases of child abuse.

### **Procedure:**

- ❖ This section of the training will serve as a reminder of the positive behaviors expected of Police Officers in regards to child protection. It takes the form of a series of “dos and don'ts.”
- ❖ Keep two chart papers on the board, one for dos and other for don'ts
- ❖ Divide the participants into two groups.
- ❖ Ask one participant from each group to write dos and don'ts they keep in mind while working with children.

- ❖ Then, ask each group to present its answers and justify its choices. To avoid repetitions, ask the first group to present. Encourage all learners to compare the presented answers with their own findings.
- ❖ After each presentation, ask other learners to comment.

### Discussion questions

1. What are the things you keep in mind while working with children?
2. What are the trainings you have already received to work with children?
3. Why it is important to know about dos and don'ts while working with children?
4. What are the dos and don'ts one should know while working with children?

### Dos and don'ts when working with children:

#### 1. Dos and Don'ts in the safeguarding of children

Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize outreach activities on children's rights, for example with local communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use child labor, employ children for small tasks, (shining shoes, washing car, cleaning house).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always take the child's opinion into consideration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take pictures of children without the consent of their parents or guardians.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report violations of children's rights by UN peacekeepers and by host state police.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be discouraged if you cannot immediately help a child. If you report cases to the child protection adviser and the police child protection focal points responsible agencies will follow-up appropriately.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always act in a child-friendly way and respect the dignity and rights of children in all interactions.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the best interests of the child and do no harm principles in all interactions with children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Casually spend your free time with local children.</li> </ul>

## 2. Dos and Don'ts in the Coordination with Other Actors

Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve communities when dealing with child protection issues.</li> <li>• Establish working relationships with other mission components and external actors that have roles and responsibilities around child protection.</li> <li>• Report all violations of children's rights to the Child Protection Advisor in a timely manner</li> <li>• Look for opportunities for joint activities with local police, such as capacity-building.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have direct discussions with local communities without involving the host State police.</li> <li>• Provide direct assistance to children</li> <li>• Ignore the host State institutions in your child protection actions.</li> <li>• Negotiate with armed groups or armed forces for the release of child soldiers.</li> </ul>

## 3. Dos and Don'ts in monitoring and reporting

Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to the monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children.</li> <li>• When reporting a violation of children's rights, always prioritize confidentiality and the child's safety.</li> <li>• Promptly report all incidents involving violations of children's rights to the child protection advisers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignore violations of children's rights that are not directly linked to armed conflict.</li> <li>• When witnessing a child right violation, collect information as a priority and attend to the child's needs after.</li> <li>• interview a child who was victim of a grave violation for reporting to the MRM.</li> </ul>

#### 4. Dos and Don'ts in your roles and responsibilities

Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support crime prevention actions of the host State police.</li> <li>• Advocate for detention as last resort to the host State police.</li> <li>• Promote child-friendly techniques when host State police interview children, and the best interests of the child.</li> <li>• Promote international standards when national law is in contravention of international law.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell host State police what to do, as you know better.</li> <li>• Ignore international standards for juvenile justice principles while mentoring host State police.</li> <li>• Ignore international standards when host State police detain children together with adults.</li> <li>• Ignore international standards when host State police does not allow for a parent or social worker to be present during the interview.</li> <li>• Take a picture of a child.</li> <li>• Ignore signs of distress in a child.</li> </ul>

**Source: Mathur (2014). Guidance for Prevention of Child Abuse.**

### **Theme 3: Guidelines on Interviewing a Child**

#### **Objective:**

- To know the guidance and approach to interviewing children
- To be able to apply child friendly interviewing techniques when interacting with children as Police.

#### **Materials required:**

Summary of Child-Friendly Interview Techniques

Case Study

#### **Time**

1 hours

#### **Activities**

PowerPoint presentation

Group Work on case studies

#### **Introduction**

. Interviewing of children is a specialized skill and, if possible, should be conducted by a trained professional. In the context of the POCSO Act, 2012 interviews may need to be conducted by a variety of professionals, including police or investigative agencies. These are forensic rather than therapeutic interviews, with the objective being to obtain a statement from the child in a manner that is developmentally-sensitive, unbiased, and truth-seeking, that will support accurate and fair decision-making in the criminal justice and child welfare systems.

Information obtained from an

Investigative or forensic interview may be useful for making treatment decisions, but the interview is not part of a treatment process.

The following are some basic guidelines that should be kept in mind while conducting the forensic interview to ensure that the interview process does not become traumatic for the child. Regardless of who is responsible for the medical history and interview, the two aspects of information gathering should be conducted in a coordinated manner so that the child is not



further traumatized by unnecessary repetition of questioning and information is not lost or distorted.

**Procedure:**

**Slides:**

**Things to be kept in mind while interviewing a child**

1. All children should be approached with extreme sensitivity and their vulnerability recognized and understood.
2. Try to establish a neutral environment and rapport with the child before beginning the interview.
3. Try to select locations that are away from traffic, noise, or other disruptions. Items such as telephones, cell phones, televisions, and other potential distractions should be temporarily turned off.
4. The interview location should be as simple and uncluttered as possible, containing a table and chairs. Avoid playrooms or other locations with visible toys and books that will distract children.
5. Always identify yourself as a helping person and try to build a rapport with the child.
6. Make the child comfortable with the interview setting.
7. Ask the child if he/she knows why they have come to see you. Children are often confused about the purpose of the interview or worried that they are in trouble. Convey and maintain a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.
8. Do not express surprise, disgust, disbelief, or other emotional reactions to descriptions of the abuse.
9. Avoid touching the child and respect the child's personal space. Do not stare at the child or sit uncomfortably close.
10. Establish ground rules for the interview, including permission for the child to say he/she doesn't know and permission to correct the interviewer.
11. Ask the child to describe what happened, or is happening, to them in their own words.  
The interviewer should, as far as possible, follow the child's lead; however, he may have to delicately introduce the topics of the abuse.
12. Always begin with open-ended questions. The interviewer should clarify the following:

- a) Descriptions of events.
  - b) The identity of the perpetrator(s).
  - c) Whether allegations involve a single event or multiple events.
  - d) The presence and identities of other witnesses.
  - e) Whether similar events have happened to other children.
  - f) Whether the child told anyone about the event(s).
  - g) The time frame and location/venue.
  - h) Alternative explanations for the allegations.
13. However, interviewers should avoid probing for unnecessary details. Although it is useful if the child can recall when and where each event occurred, children may have difficulty specifying this information if they are young, if the event happened a long time ago, or if there has been ongoing abuse over a period of time
  14. The child may get exhausted frequently and easily; in such an event, it is advisable not to prolong the inquiry, but rather to divert the child's mind and come back to the sexual abuse when the child is refreshed.
  15. Regularly check if the child is hungry or thirsty, tired or sleepy, and address these needs immediately.
  16. Let the child do the talking and answer any questions the child may have in a direct manner.
  17. Avoid questioning the child as to why he behaved in a particular way. Avoid correcting the child's behavior unnecessarily during the interview.
  18. When two professionals will be present, it is best to appoint one as the primary interviewer, with the second professional taking notes or suggesting additional questions when the interview is drawing to a close.
  19. Interviewers should not discuss the case in front of the child. Interviewers should not discuss the case in front of the child.
  20. A variety of non-verbal tools may be used to assist young children in communication, including drawings, toys, dollhouses, dolls, puppets, etc. Since such materials have the potential to be distracting or misleading they should be used with care. They are discretionary for older children.

## Slide 6: Interview Techniques – Verbal communication

Examples of non-verbal techniques include:

Good Practice	To Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish visual contact. However, always be mindful of the local culture; in some cultures, it is bad manners for children to look adults in the eye</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid being too close to the child and touching the child</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit at the same level as the child to avoid intimidation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid physical behavior that shows judgment, annoyance and impatience (frowning, looking at watch, raising eyebrows, etc.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a calm demeanor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid any behavior that gives the child the impression that you don't pay attention or don't take him/her seriously by for example leaving the room in the middle of the interview, accepting phone calls or texting messages or allowing other people to enter</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay attention to the child's non-verbal communication and respond appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid adopting a dominating behavior, for example by standing above the child</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep the interview short (as children often have a shorter concentration span)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girls should preferably be interviewed by a person from the same gender</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use translator as needed and explain the role of translator</li> </ul>	

**Adapted from:**

**MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

**Model Guidelines under Section 39 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012**

**Discussion questions:**

1. What is a difference between interviewing a child and an adult?
2. Why are guiding principles important when working with children?
3. What are some new techniques which you have learned after the activities?
4. Please share an experience of you interviewing a child

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