

DOCUMENTATION
For Sexual Assault Examiners
BEHAVIORS, MANNERISMS, SPEECH AND EYE-CONTACT

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Use words that accurately describe:

- **Outward appearance,**
- **Visible behavior,**
- **Speech and**
- **Eye contact.**

These words convey the emotional state of the survivor *without specifically labeling it as such.*

Do not use words or language that could be construed as:

Evaluative, interpreted as a value statement or assigns a subjective or emotional experience to the survivor.

QUANTIFY AND QUALIFY BEHAVIORS (time, intensity, manner)

Quantify time . . . indicate the number of times a behavior was observed or the length of time it was observed (i.e. cried for 20 minutes),

Qualify the behavior by placing it in context . . . name the event that coincided or preceded the behavior (i.e. sobbed as she took off her clothes)

Qualify the behavior's intensity . . . i.e. soft, loud, piercing, shrill, high-pitched, sharp

Qualify the behavior's manner. . . i.e. measured, haltingly, abruptly, tentatively

EYE CONTACT OR VISUAL CONTACT

Do not use 'good or poor' as these words can mean different things to different people

Gape	Stare	Watch	Fixed	Avoided (when...)
Averted	Glance	Maintained	Looked at. . . (floor, etc)	
Only when addressed		Closed eyes (when, how long)		

SPEECH.

Responded in 1-2 word answers Responded only when asked a question

Whispered (differentiate from hoarseness)

Hoarse (clarify if this is usual or for how long) Slow(ly)

Talked and cried at the same time Murmur Mumble

Scream Stammer Stutter Shout

Hesitated... (duration in seconds or minutes)

NOTE:

Always place the survivor's statements in "quotation marks"; do not paraphrase.

Do not say the survivor "alleged" or "admitted" or "denied," use the verbs "said" or "stated."

RESPONSIVENESS TO CLINICIAN: do not use the word "cooperative"

Followed directions (how) Answered questions when asked

Unresponsive Paused before ...

Was unable to answer questions

NON-VERBAL ORAL EXPRESSION:

Cry	Wail	Sob	Weep
Whimper	Sigh	Sniffle	Moan

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

Frown	Glower	Grimace	Flinch	Wince	Clenched (jaw)
Biting lips	Pursed lips	Pucker	Scowl		Grinding teeth

BODY POSTURE AND/OR MUSCULAR TENSION . . .

Slouch	Slump	Arms crossed in front of body			
Stoop	Wringing hands	Restless	Clenched Fists		
Shudder	Quiver	Shake	Tremble	Tremor	
Clutching (What)	Feet pulled up under her as she sat in chair				
Legs drawn up, arms wrapped around knees (how and where...)					

BEHAVIORS AND ACTIONS

Blew nose	Wipe eyes with tissue	Clutching clothes	
Holding front of shirt together with both hands		Pulling at sheets	Pacing

DO NOT USE:

“DEPRESSED, SAD, OR IN SHOCK.”

DESCRIBE BEHAVIORS THAT LEAD YOU TO THAT CONCLUSION . . .

Serious	Solemn	Somber	See “speech” section
Listless	Sluggish	Quiet	

“COOL, COMPOSED OR CONTROLLED”

“FLAT AFFECT”...*instead:* describe the behaviors you see.

“INDIFFERENT” OR “DISINTERESTED”

“AFRAID, FEARFUL, SCARED” . . . *instead use:*

Startled	Stunned	Cower	Cringe	Flinch
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“ANGRY OR RAGEFUL”... *instead use:* agitated irritated

DESCRIBING ANXIETY . . .

State that the survivor is “anxious” and then *support* with observable behaviors: wringing hands, tapping foot, sweating profusely, dilated pupils, and if possible a statement from survivor, “I feel nauseated” “I have a knot in my stomach.” etc.