Source Monitoring Task

- Source Monitoring is a cognitive process by which an individual reasons about the source of a memory or belief.

- Three-year-olds have greater difficulty in accurately identifying sources, but this ability improves throughout early childhood.

Source Monitoring And Suggestibility

- Suggestibility is the extent to which children report that pieces of misinformation occurred in the witnessed event.

- Initial reductions in suggestibility occur between the ages of three- and six- years old.

- When young children are exposed to suggestive questioning, they are likely to become confused and misattribute the sources of information.

Research Questions

- What aspect of a source helps a child accurately identify it as the source of information?

- What types of sources help children to recall a piece of information?

- What are the differences in training and knowledge amongst legal professionals?

Methods

Source Monitoring Task

Participants:
- 25 children (14 females, 11 males) participated
- Age range 6-9 years (M = 8.5 years old)

“Remember where the objects are” game (Visual, Clue or Narrative Sources)

Source Monitoring Task & Narrative Recall

Source Monitoring And Suggestibility

Participants:
- 8 legal professionals (3 males, 5 females)
- Must interview alleged child victims of sexual abuse.

Procedure:
- Participants completed a 15 minute interview about their knowledge of source monitoring and training and the techniques that they use when interviewing child victims of sexual abuse.

Results

Source Monitoring Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>4.64(9.3)</td>
<td>4.36(2.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clue</td>
<td>4.00(1.88)</td>
<td>4.00(1.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>4.00(1.41)</td>
<td>3.45(1.44)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Visual sources were the most accurately identified (see table above).
- Objects presented with visual sources were the most accurately recalled.
- Males misattributed clue sources as visual sources significantly more often than females.

Source Monitoring And Suggestibility

The most important information prior to an interview

- Development
- Dynamics of Abuse
- Understand child
- Who is the perp?

Do you see source monitoring as an issue?

Yes
No

Conclusions

Source Monitoring Task

- Males and females both accurately attributed visual sources more than clue or narrative sources, which has educational and legal implications.
- Although males performed better with visual sources during source recall, females recalled objects they saw and correctly identified the sources for those objects more than males.

Source Monitoring And Suggestibility

- Legal professionals find the child’s development and dynamics of the abuse to be the most important; however, they never mention anything about from whom the child may have received the information.

- The results indicated that legal professionals are aware of source monitoring research, however, it cannot be assumed that professionals in all areas of the country are equally aware.

References

