

INITIAL CHILD INTERVIEW TRAINING

LAW ENFORCEMENT MODULE

WORKBOOK

**A WORKBOOK DEDICATED TO
HELPING YOU UNDERSTAND
ICIT: LAW ENFORCEMENT MODULE**

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Center for Innovation and Resources, Inc.

INITIAL CHILD INTERVIEW TRAINING: LAW ENFORCEMENT MODULE

COURSE OVERVIEW

The Initial Child Interview Training (ICIT) aims to train first responders on trauma-informed procedures for gathering minimal facts information in a child abuse case. Participants will learn how to avoid conflicting statements that may result from ineffective interviewing or situational factors beyond the interviewer's control.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After finishing this course, participants will be able to:

- Summarize four considerations for a minimal facts interview
- Describe how a minimal facts interview fits into a coordinated, multi-disciplinary investigation
- List three trauma-informed practices that can be employed in a minimal facts interview
- Recite at least three benefits of referring a child to a Child Advocacy Center/Multi-disciplinary Interview Center for a forensic interview

COURSE TERMS & DEFINITIONS

- **Forensic Interview:** A developmentally sensitive and legally sound method of gathering factual information regarding allegations of abuse and/or exposure to violence. Forensic interviews are conducted by a competently trained neutral professional utilizing research and practice informed techniques as part of a larger investigative process.
- **Forensic Interviewer:** A professional trained to understand the impact of trauma on a child's developing brain and formulate questions within the scope of the child's cognitive ability.
 - First responders fulfill their role and guard the investigation by determining minimal facts related to whether or not a crime may have occurred, to determine the safety of a child.
- **Child Maltreatment Investigations:** One of few calls for service where an officer may gather all information needed from the reporting party without speaking to the victim because it reduces the number of interviews with the child.
- **Victim:** We use the term "victim" to refer to the child who is the subject of the child abuse investigation; Typically in child welfare, we refer to the child as the "child," or "minor" or "client."
 - "Victim" is a criminal justice term, the term law enforcement uses in their child abuse investigations, but it is also the terminology utilized on the Suspected Child Abuse Report, or SCAR.
- **Suspect:** a criminal justice term and refers to the person who, as the term implies, is the suspect in a child maltreatment investigation. This term also appears on the SCAR.
- **Minimal Facts Interview (aka Initial Child Interview):** The terms "Initial Child Interview" or "Minimal Facts Interview," are used interchangeably throughout this course, to refer to the initial, brief, fact-gathering interview that commences after a suspicion of abuse has been reported to the Child Welfare hotline, screened in, and assigned to an Emergency Response Social Worker. Minimal facts interviewing refers to ascertaining just enough information to determine whether or not a crime may have been committed.
 - In your county, these interviews may also be called: Initial Contact Interviews, First Responder Interviews or Joint Response interviews.
- **Externally Derived Information:** information introduced into the interview that the child has not mentioned

COURSE TERMS & DEFINITIONS

CONTINUED

- **Cognitive Development:** a person's acquisition of the ability to form concepts and reason about various ideas
- **Preoperational stage:** runs from about ages two to seven (this can fluctuate depending on the child).
- **Suggestibility:** refers to the degree to which encoding, storage, retrieval and reporting of events can be influenced by external factors.
 - In the context of a child interview, it refers to the concern that interviewer behaviors could influence a child's report.
- **Ombudsman:** Has the power to investigate and file complaints against otherwise influential organizations or high-ranking officials. They often have the power to request key documents, interview individuals, and order a legal investigation when/if necessary. If agreed to, ombudsmen rulings are legally binding.

COMMON ACRONYMS

- **MDT:** Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT); members include law enforcement, child welfare services, victims advocates, medical and mental health professionals, district attorney's office, and forensic interviewers trained in allegations of child abuse.
- **CACs:** Child advocacy centers. Also referred to as a Multi-Disciplinary Interview Center. Serves as center location for collaboration of MDT.
- **MDIC:** Multi-Disciplinary Interview Center (see above).
- **SCAR:** Suspected Child Abuse Report
- **SART:** Sexual Assault Response Team Examination
- **LE:** Law Enforcement
- **CW:** Child Welfare
- **MR:** Mandated Reporter

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RESOURCES

DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVIEWS CHART

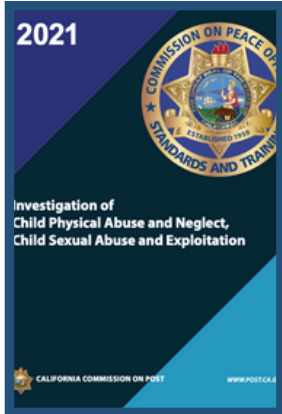
INTERVIEW TYPE				TIMEFRAME
Initial Child Interview or Minimal Facts Interview	Establish MINIMAL FACTS only to determine whether a crime may have occurred and determine immediate safety and protective concerns . <i>A Minimal Facts Interview of a child may not be needed if the minimal facts can be gathered from an informed adult.</i>	First responders: Patrol officer or Emergency Response Social Worker. Joint response is ideal to reduce duplicative interviews.	Varies; if urgent, could be at the scene of a reported crime	Urgent
Investigative Interview	More complete fact-gathering interview of a child, if the case will likely not be referred for a full MDT Forensic Interview. Per local county protocols.	Investigators: Emergency Response Social Worker or Detective. Joint response is ideal to reduce duplicative interviews.	Varies; should be a safe, neutral location	Non-urgent; planned to be as soon as possible after a report of suspected abuse
Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) or Forensic Interview	Gather detailed information about incidents of alleged child maltreatment while increasing the amount of information a child can provide in the least traumatic and suggestible manner. Information gathered is used by the MDT to assess for safety and further manage the case.	Forensic Interview Specialist, specially trained to interview all ages of children and adolescents and developmentally delayed adults.	Child Advocacy Center or other MDT child- friendly setting with participation of MDT	Non-urgent; planned to be as soon as possible after a report of suspected abuse

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RESOURCES CONTINUED

CHILD ABUSE INVESTIGATION - COMMISSION ON POST

California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. (2021, October). Child abuse investigation - commission on post. POST Guidelines for the Investigation of Child Physical Abuse and Neglect, Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. https://post.ca.gov/Portals/0/post_docs/publications/Child_Abuse_Investigation.pdf



Access Here



CHILD FORENSIC INTERVIEWING: BEST PRACTICES

Newlin, C., Steele, L. C., Chamberlin, A., Anderson, J., Kenniston, J., Russell, A., Stewart, H., & Vaughan-Eden, V. (2015, September). Child forensic interviewing: Best Practices. Child Forensic Interviewing: Best Practices. <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh176/files/pubs/248749.pdf>

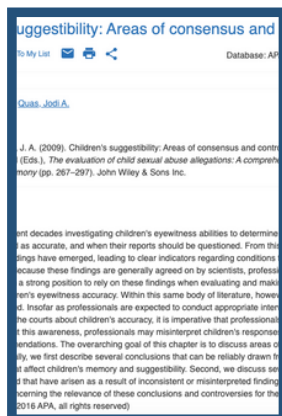


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CHILDREN'S SUGGESTIBILITY: AREAS OF CONSENSUS AND CONTROVERSY

Malloy, L.C., and Quas, J.A. 2009. Children's suggestibility: Areas of consensus and controversy. In The Evaluation of Child Sexual Abuse Allegations: A Comprehensive Guide to Assessment and Testimony, edited by K. Kuehnle and M. Connell. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, pp. 267-297.



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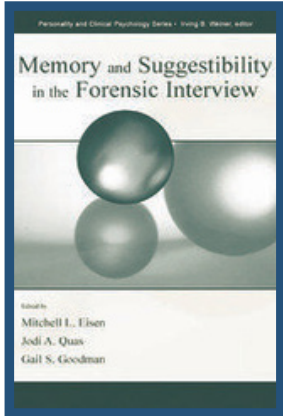


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RESOURCES CONTINUED

CHILDREN'S SUGGESTIBILITY IN THE FORENSIC CONTEXT

Poole, D.A., and Lindsay, D.S. 2002. Children's suggestibility in the forensic context. In *Memory and Suggestibility in the Forensic Interview*, edited by M.L. Eisen, J.A. Quas, and G.S. Goodman. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 355-382.



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CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE: THE RESEARCH BEHIND "BEST PRACTICES."

Jones, L.M., Cross, T.P., Walsh, W.A., and Simone, M. 2005. Criminal investigations of child abuse: The research behind "best practices." *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 6(3):254-268.



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FORENSIC INTERVIEWING IN CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE CASES: CURRENT TECHNIQUES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS.

Cronch, L.E., Viljoen, J.L., and Hansen, D.J. 2006. Forensic interviewing in child sexual abuse cases: Current techniques and future directions. *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 11(3):195-207.



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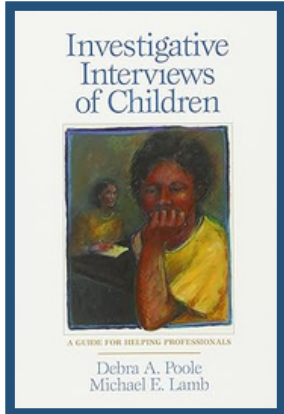


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RESOURCES CONTINUED

INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEWS OF CHILDREN: A GUIDE FOR HELPING PROFESSIONALS.

Poole, D.A., and Lamb, M.E. 1998. Investigative Interviews of Children: A Guide for Helping Professionals. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

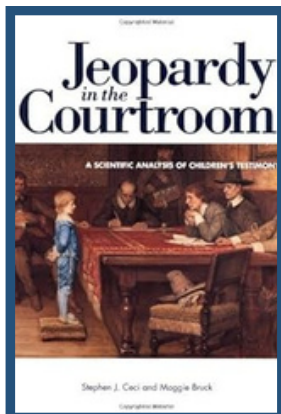


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JEOPARDY IN THE COURTROOM: A SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S TESTIMONY

Ceci, S., and Bruck, M. 1995. Jeopardy in the Courtroom: A Scientific Analysis of Children's Testimony. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.



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MULTIDISCIPLINARY CHILD PROTECTION TEAMS: LIMITING VICTIM TRAUMA AND STRENGTHENING PROSECUTION CASES

Elkins, F. C. (2023, May). Multidisciplinary child protection teams: Limiting victim trauma and strengthening prosecution cases. https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/05-2023/child_protection_teams.html



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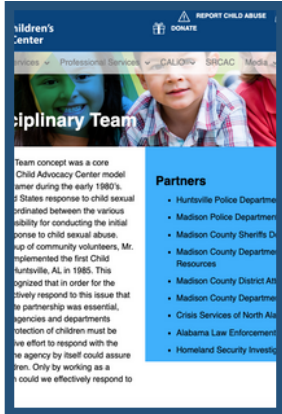


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RESOURCES CONTINUED

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM

National Children's Advocacy Center. Multidisciplinary Team. W3Schools. (2021).
<https://www.nationalcac.org/multidisciplinary-team/>

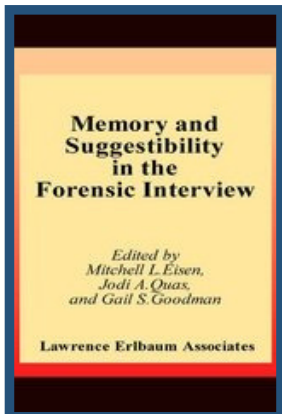


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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: THE CREDIBILITY OF CHILD WITNESSES IN THE CONTEXT OF SPECIFIC QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

Fivush, R., Peterson, C., and Schwarzmuller, A. 2002. Questions and answers: The credibility of child witnesses in the context of specific questioning techniques. In *Memory and Suggestibility in the Forensic Interview*, edited by M. Eisen, J. Quas, and G. Goodman. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 331-354

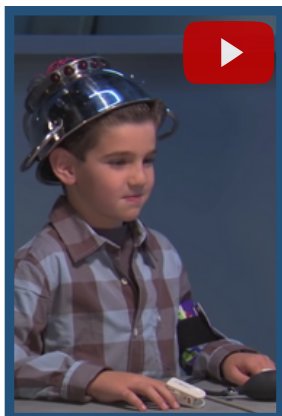


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JIMMY KIMMEL LIE DETECTIVE #1

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<https://youtu.be/KPgpRw9tiuM?si=wAiXJhXrtGjYAWpk>.



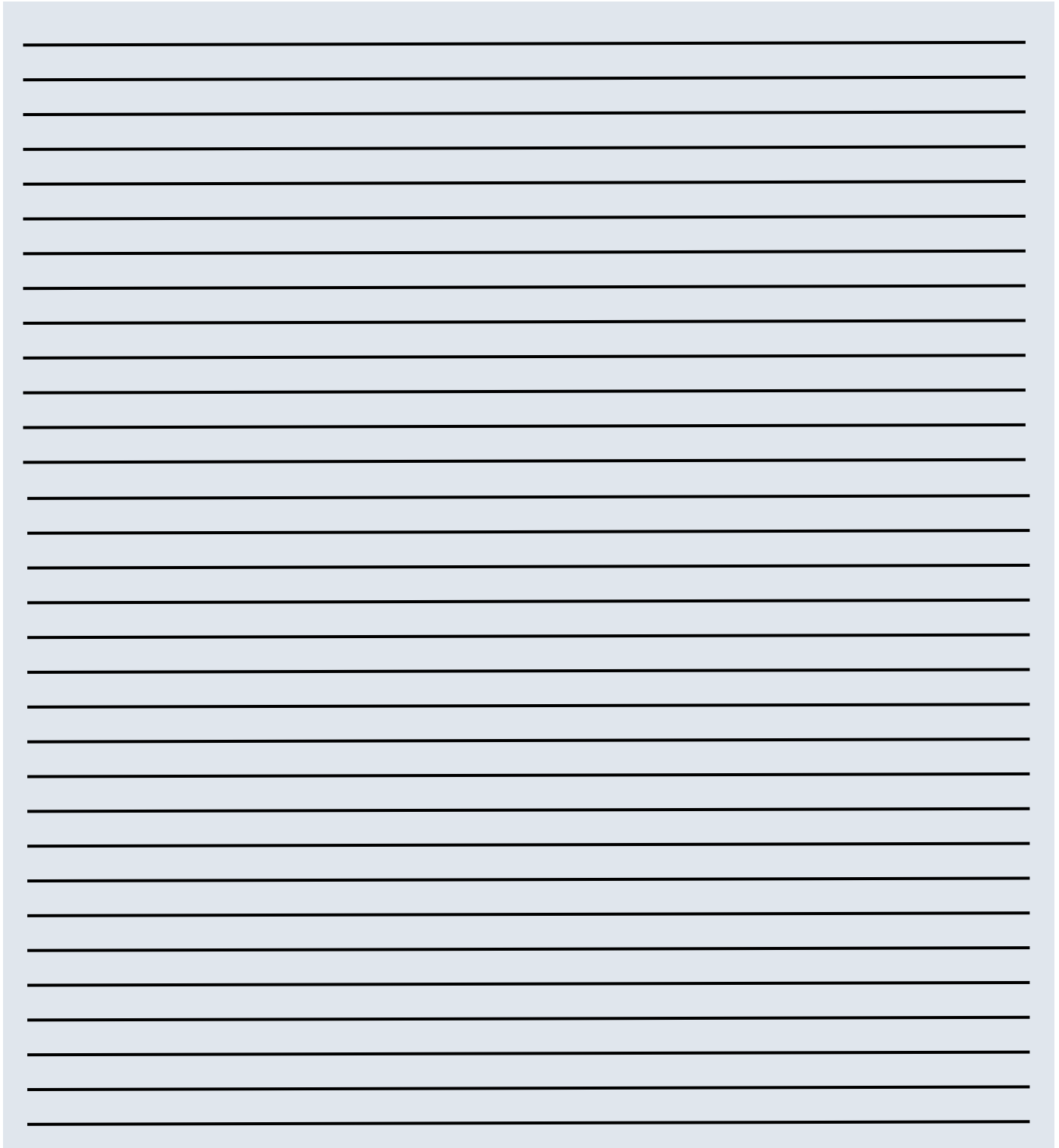
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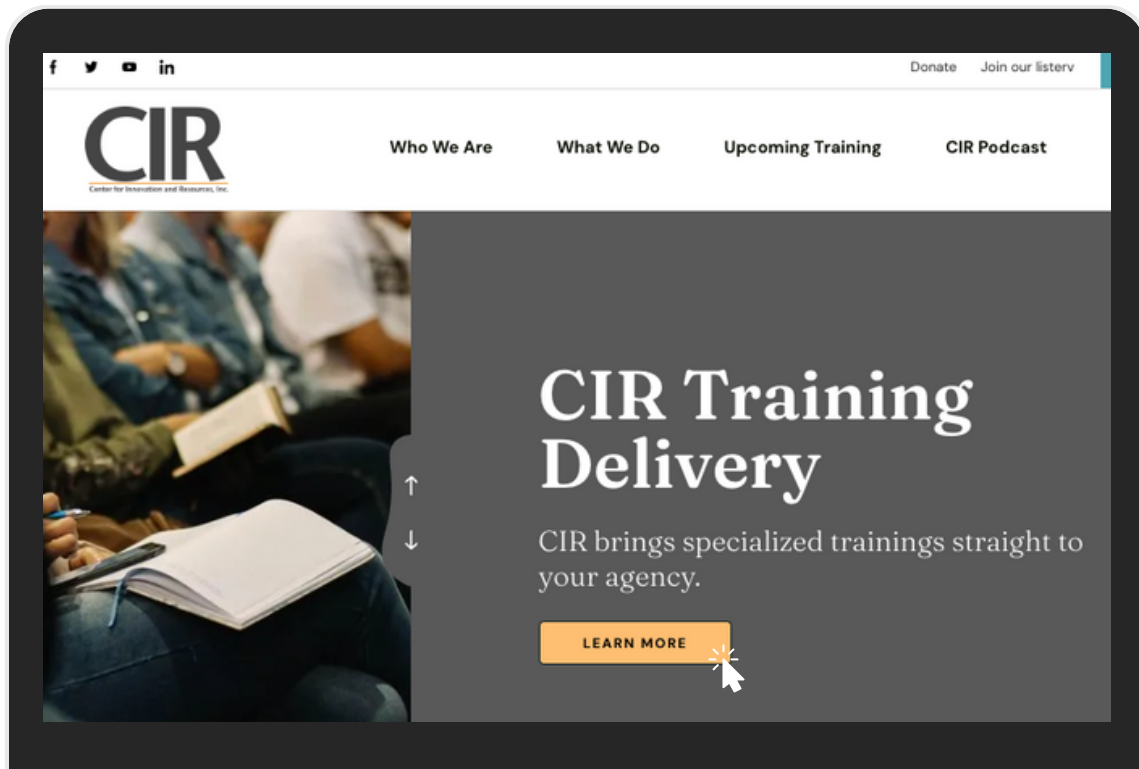
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SELF-REFLECTION

Take a moment to reflect and note how you intend to improve your interview techniques. What will you ask your county or CAC? What questions will help you gain information and minimize trauma in a minimal facts investigation?



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For more classes, trainings, and resources
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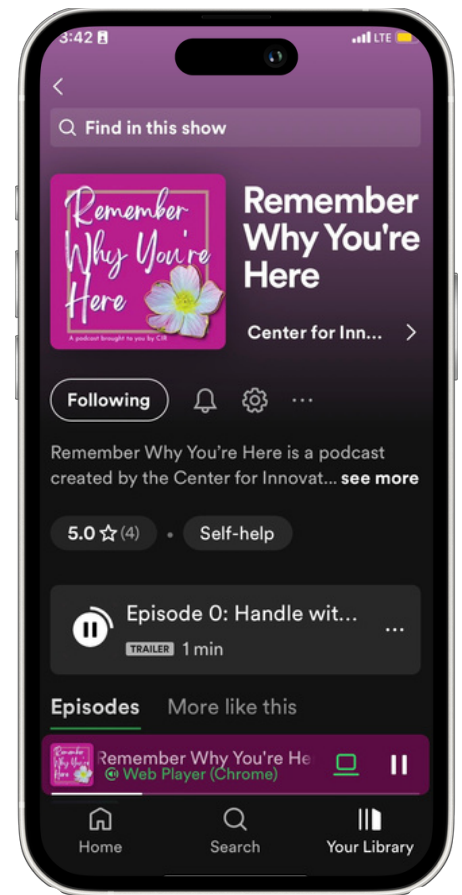
FOLLOW CIR!

Remember Why You're Here

A podcast brought to you by CIR, where we host conversations with experts in the field about what started their journey to do work around abuse and healing.

This podcast journey started at the beginning of 2023 and is rooted in our desire to have deeper dialogue with the trainers, experts, and our co-workers who are in both the field and on the edges of the field.

Listen to *Remember Why You're Here* on Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music!



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