



ICBI Worksheet

Domestic Violence-Specific

ENGAGE AND EXPLAIN

PHONE CALL E&E SCRIPT:

*Hello, this is Detective _____ with the _____ agency.
Am I speaking with _____.*

*Is now an okay time to talk for about two minutes.
If not, I can call you back at a better time.*

*I am working on a new case, where your name came up.
I am not calling to try and get a statement from you over the phone, and I cannot go through
details with you over the phone either.*

My job is to make sure information is collected accurately and then verified.

The best way to do that is a short, structured conversation in person.

Here is how I handle these conversations. And it will be a conversation, not an interrogation.

You talk first, in your own words.

I do not interrupt you or try to control the conversation in any way.

*After you give your story, I may ask a few follow up questions to make sure I understand what
you mean, and you have the opportunity to correct me if I get anything wrong.*

If there is something you do not remember or do not know, it is fine to say that.

If you need a break, we take one. You're not going to be forced to do anything or say anything.

*That's not what I do. I am just interested in getting your side of the story because there are
always more than one side, and I would be terrible at my job if I didn't ask for yours or consider
yours to be true.*

I do also record the conversation so that nobody can misquote you.

We meet in a quiet professional interview room at _____.

*It is not a holding area. It's not an "interrogation room". You're not under arrest, you are going
to be free to get up and leave at any time you wish.*

It is just a private room set up for us to have a good conversation without any distractions.

*I want to make sure your perspective is captured correctly, in your words, the way you want
them to be understood, rather than relying on secondhand descriptions from other people who
may have completely different objectives than I do.*

You have two options.



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We can schedule a time to meet and do this in a controlled and straightforward way.

Or I continue working the report without your input for now.

I prefer the first option because it reduces misunderstandings and uncertainty.

What works better for you, _____ or _____.

Morning or afternoon.

The time would be _____.

The location would be _____.

Plan for about _____ minutes.

If it needs to go longer, I will tell you before we cross that point.

Again, I do not want to go into details over the phone now.

It is too easy for things to get misunderstood, and I am sure that you weren't planning on having this conversation right now or over the phone anyways.

When we meet, you will have the space, and all the time you want, to explain everything start to finish.

If something changes on your end, call me and we will adjust. I always do my best to accommodate witnesses in any case. But do understand that I work normal business hours, so we will have to plan for those times and days for our conversation.

I do very much appreciate you being willing to come in.

IN-ROOM E&E SCRIPT:

Before we start, I want to explain how this conversation will work so there are no surprises.

This is not a debate. This is a conversation.

I'm not going to argue with you. I'm not going to accuse you of anything.

I'm going to listen to you. I am going to consider everything that you tell me, and I am going to trust you. People do lie to me, but I want you to know that I don't care if they do. I trust what people say, and then I go back and verify what they tell me. Sometimes people think they're telling the truth, but their facts are a little off, and it's just due to the flaws in our memory as human beings. That's completely ok. I have interview techniques we can use to clean up messy memory in a reliable way. So, I see my job as needing to understand what happened as accurately as possible. Then when you and I both get up and walk out of this room, my job is then to go and verify information afterward. I typically have some information before we come in here but not everything. And that is why I need your help.



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Here is the structure. First, I am going to ask you to tell me, in your own words, what happened. You talk. I listen. No interruptions. After that, I may ask some follow-up questions, only to make sure I understand what you mean, not to challenge you.

If there is something you do not remember, or you are not sure about, it is okay to say that. We might be able to use some memory enhancing techniques here to get to the answer. But I also want you to know that I would rather you tell me have an honest “I do not know” than for you to hazard a guess.

If at any point you need a break, tell me and we will take one. At any time you decide you want to stop talking and leave, you can leave. I don't want you to feel pressured and like you have to be here, because that is not the case. You control whether you answer questions. I am just here to understand.

I do record our conversations so I, and nobody else, can misquote you, and so your words are captured accurately.

I also want you to know that I am not going to try to work through details with you in a rushed way. We are here as long as you want to be. I want you to have the space to explain things start to finish.

My goal is not to put words in your mouth. My goal is to understand what you experienced, what you know to be true, in your own words. This helps me avoid relying on secondhand information and helps prevent misunderstandings later.

Do you have any questions about the process before we begin.

Tell me everything that happened, starting wherever it makes sense to you to start.

NARRATIVE BASELINE

- Intimate relationships usually develop gradually over time. Tell me about how your relationship with [partner] developed.
- Couples tend to fall into certain rhythms in daily life. Walk me through what a typical day together looks like.
- Most couples spend time in consistent spaces. Tell me where you usually spend time together at home.
- There are usually patterns to how couples handle stress. Tell me how the two of you typically handle disagreements.
- Other people are often aware of relationship dynamics. Who else has observed you together during arguments?
- In some relationships, others feel the need to intervene or monitor conflict. Has anyone ever stepped in during disagreements between you two?



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CONTEXT, BOUNDARIES AND DECISION PROCESSES

- Adults usually have personal rules about what is acceptable during conflict. When disagreements happen, how do you decide what is appropriate behavior?
- Physical proximity during arguments can escalate quickly. How do you determine how close to stand or whether to make physical contact?
- Sometimes people misread tone or body language during arguments. How do you recognize when your partner is becoming overwhelmed or afraid?
- In heated moments, decisions happen quickly. What do you rely on to guide your behavior during those moments?
- Privacy and control can become issues in relationships. How do you handle situations involving space, leaving a room, or blocking someone from leaving?
- Every couple has boundaries about phones, movement, or independence. How were those boundaries handled in your relationship?

EVENT EXPLORATION

- That day likely had a certain flow to it before things escalated. Walk me through the day from the beginning.
- When people go step by step, details tend to return. What happened first?
- Arguments usually build in stages. What happened next?
- Physical spaces matter during conflict. Where were each of you positioned as things escalated?
- Patterns and routines tend to repeat. How often had arguments followed a similar path before?
- There is often a point where conflict shifts from verbal to physical. What signaled that shift, if any?

DECISION-MAKING AND COGNITIVE FRAMING

- During conflict, we are constantly interpreting the other person's intent. What did you believe was happening in that moment?
- What someone believes often determines how they respond. How did you decide what to do next?
- People often think they understand their partner's emotional state. What did you believe your partner was feeling at that time?
- Sometimes actions that feel justified in the moment look different afterward. How do you see your actions now?
- Our understanding of our role in the relationship shapes behavior. What did you see as your role during that conflict?
- In escalating situations, people often justify their force internally. How did you justify your actions to yourself at the time?



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DEFENSE ARGUMENT EXPLORATION

- **Defense Argument: Complete and Unequivocal Denial**
 - Statement: Sometimes people are genuinely confused about how a conflict escalated into a criminal allegation.
 - Invitation: Tell me everything you can think of that might explain why law enforcement became involved.
 - SPECTAR focus: Events leading up to report, prior disputes, escalation sequence, timeline shifts.
- **Defense Argument: Allegation is Fabricated or Exaggerated**
 - Statement: In heated relationships, accounts of arguments can differ significantly.
 - Invitation: Describe the argument exactly as you experienced it.
 - SPECTAR focus: Sequence, tone changes, physical positioning, duration.
- **Defense Argument: Mutual Combat**
 - Statement: In some relationships, both people contribute to escalation.
 - Invitation: Walk me step by step through how the conflict developed from the beginning.
 - SPECTAR focus: Sequence mechanics, first act of aggression, response timing.
- **Defense Argument: Self-Defense**
 - Statement: People sometimes react physically because they believe they are about to be harmed.
 - Invitation: Describe what you believed was about to happen that caused you to act.
 - SPECTAR focus: Immediate threat indicators, spatial layout, injuries, proportionality.
- **Defense Argument: Victim was the Primary Aggressor**
 - Statement: Perception of who initiated contact often shapes how the event is viewed.
 - Invitation: Tell me exactly what the other person did first.
 - SPECTAR focus: Sequence order, body positioning, witness proximity.
- **Defense Argument: Contact was Accidental**
 - Statement: Physical contact during arguments can sometimes occur unintentionally.
 - Invitation: Walk me through the exact physical movements that led to that contact.
 - SPECTAR focus: Mechanics, distance, objects in room, force trajectory.
- **Defense Argument: No Physical Injury Means No Abuse**
 - Statement: Not every conflict leaves visible marks.
 - Invitation: Describe any physical contact that occurred, regardless of injury.
 - SPECTAR focus: Contact type, pressure, duration, medical records.
- **Defense Argument: Victim is Manipulating System for Leverage**
 - Statement: Allegations sometimes surface during custody or separation disputes.
 - Invitation: Describe the status of your relationship and any legal or financial disputes at that time.



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- SPECTAR focus: Court filings, recent separations, financial strain timeline.
- **Defense Argument: Alcohol or Drug Intoxication**
 - Statement: Substances can affect perception and recall in uneven ways.
 - Invitation: What parts of that evening are clear to you, and what parts are not?
 - SPECTAR focus: Timeline anchors, receipts, bar tabs, ride logs, witness accounts.
- **Defense Argument: Victim is Unstable or Unreliable**
 - Statement: Emotional conflict can influence how events are described later.
 - Invitation: Describe your concerns about their reliability with specific examples.
 - SPECTAR focus: Documented history, third-party witnesses, prior reports.
- **Defense Argument: False 911 Report in Anger**
 - Statement: In the middle of intense emotion, people sometimes make decisions they later regret.
 - Invitation: Describe what was happening in the minutes before law enforcement was called.
 - SPECTAR focus: Timeline compression, call logs, phone records, witness statements.
- **Defense Argument: No Opportunity for Assault**
 - Statement: Space and timing matter when evaluating whether something could occur.
 - Invitation: Describe where each of you was positioned throughout the argument.
 - SPECTAR focus: Room layout, exits, barriers, surveillance.
- **Defense Argument: Defendant Has Good Character and No History**
 - Statement: People often describe themselves through their long-term behavior patterns.
 - Invitation: How would others describe your behavior during conflict?
 - SPECTAR focus: Prior police contacts, prior calls for service, digital threats.
- **Defense Argument: Physical Incapacity**
 - Statement: Medical conditions can affect physical ability.
 - Invitation: Explain how your condition would prevent you from causing the reported injuries.
 - SPECTAR focus: Medical documentation, injury mechanics.
- **Defense Argument: Injuries Were Self-Inflicted or Caused Elsewhere**
 - Statement: Injuries can occur in different ways than initially assumed.
 - Invitation: Describe how you believe those injuries actually occurred.
 - SPECTAR focus: Medical reports, timing of bruising, object involvement.
- **Defense Argument: It Was Only Verbal, Not Physical**
 - Statement: Arguments can be intense without becoming physical.
 - Invitation: Describe the tone and language used during the conflict.
 - SPECTAR focus: Threat statements, coercive control indicators, digital messages.
- **Defense Argument: Heat of the Moment, No Intent**
 - Statement: Strong emotion can narrow decision making.
 - Invitation: What were you thinking just before you made physical contact?
 - SPECTAR focus: Intent articulation, escalation markers, prior threats.



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- **Defense Argument: Victim Recanted**
 - Statement: Accounts sometimes shift after initial reporting.
 - Invitation: Describe what changed in their version as you understand it.
 - SPECTAR focus: Statement evolution, contact after report, pressure indicators.
- **Defense Argument: Victim is Jealous or Controlling**
 - Statement: Relationship dynamics can shift when new relationships form.
 - Invitation: Describe how recent relationship changes affected your home environment.
 - SPECTAR focus: Timeline alignment with incident, communications.
- **Defense Argument: Law Enforcement Misinterpreted Scene**
 - Statement: Scenes can look different depending on where someone is standing.
 - Invitation: Walk me through the scene from your perspective when officers arrived.
 - SPECTAR focus: Object placement, overturned items, injury visibility.
- **Defense Argument: Protective Action, Not Assault**
 - Statement: Sometimes physical restraint is described differently by each party.
 - Invitation: Describe any physical restraint that occurred and why you believed it was necessary.
 - SPECTAR focus: Force proportionality, duration, injury correlation.
- **Defense Argument: Argument Was Typical and Overblown**
 - Statement: Some couples have recurring argument patterns.
 - Invitation: Describe how this argument was similar to or different from prior conflicts.
 - SPECTAR focus: Pattern frequency, prior police contacts, escalation trajectory.
- **Defense Argument: Victim Fabricated to Avoid Arrest for Their Own Conduct**
 - Statement: Sometimes people attempt to shift blame during chaotic events.
 - Invitation: Describe what you believe they were trying to avoid when officers arrived.
 - SPECTAR focus: Injury distribution, witness statements, timeline control.

ELICITATION EXAMPLES (GENERAL):

- *Responsibility Evasion*
 - Statement. – “A lot of people in situations like this feel like events started moving before they could really stop them.”
 - Statement. – “It often feels like once things start, they take on a life of their own.”
 - Statement. – “Most people don’t feel like they were the one steering everything that happened.”
- *Distancing*
 - Statement. – “It sounds like this is something that happened around you more than something you were actively driving.”
 - Statement. – “People often talk about this like they were watching things unfold rather than creating them.”
- *Hedging / Narrative Softening*



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- Statement. – “A lot of people describe what happened in general terms, because the details are harder to pin down.”
- Statement. – “Most people remember the big picture first, not the exact steps.”
- *Stability and Drift*
 - Statement. – “It usually gets harder to keep all the timelines straight once several people start retelling the same events.”
 - Statement. – “When a lot of people are involved, the story tends to shift a little each time it gets repeated.”
- *Denial Activation*
 - Statement. – “Most people are surprised by how quickly others decide what kind of person they are after something like this.”
 - Statement. – “It’s frustrating when people hear one version and treat it like it’s the whole truth.”
- *Denial and Impression Management*
 - Statement. – “People usually worry more about how they come across than about the actual situation itself.”
- *Impression Management*
 - Statement. – “It seems like you care a lot about how this reflects on you as a person.”
 - Statement. – “For most people, protecting their reputation becomes just as stressful as dealing with the case itself.”
- *Hero and Victim Role*
 - Statement. – “A lot of people in your position feel like they are the only one who really tried to handle things the right way.”
 - Statement. – “It can feel like you were the one holding things together while everything else was falling apart.”
 - Statement. – “Sometimes it feels like you were trying to do the best you could in a situation that was already broken.”
- *Victim Role Inversion*
 - Statement. – “It sounds like you’ve taken most of the impact from all of this.”
 - Statement. – “A lot of people feel like they are the one paying the biggest price here.”
 - Statement. – “It often feels like the consequences hit you harder than anyone else.”
- *Mitigation*
 - Statement. – “Most people in situations like this focus on the parts that were understandable at the time.”
 - Statement. – “People usually explain what they were thinking rather than what others assume they were doing.”
 - Statement. – “A lot of people try to make sense of why their choices felt reasonable in the moment.”
- *Minimization*
 - Statement. – “Some people would probably see this as much smaller than how it has been described.”



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- Statement. – “It probably feels like the situation has grown far beyond what actually happened.”
- Statement. – “Most people are surprised by how serious others make something like this sound.”
- *Rationalization*
 - Statement. – “A lot of people can explain their decisions in a way that makes sense when you understand their situation.”
 - Statement. – “Most people feel there were practical reasons behind the choices they made.”
- *Justification*
 - Statement. – “It often feels like what you did was reasonable given what you were dealing with at the time.”
 - Statement. – “People usually believe they acted in a way that fit the circumstances.”
- *Blame-Shifting*
 - Statement. – “Usually when something reaches this point, more than one person played a role in how it unfolded.”
 - Statement. – “It’s common for people to feel that others could have handled things very differently.”
 - Statement. – “A lot of situations like this only escalate because someone else makes the wrong move.”
- *Victim Denigration*
 - Statement. – “It’s hard when people don’t really understand the other person’s behavior in situations like this.”
 - Statement. – “Most people feel the other person’s actions don’t get examined very closely.”
 - Statement. – “A lot of people feel the focus stays on them instead of on what the other person was doing.”
- *Victim Initiation / Provocation Framing*
 - Statement. – “Many people feel the situation really started earlier than what is being talked about now.”
 - Statement. – “It often feels like something set this in motion long before the incident everyone focuses on.”
 - Statement. – “Most people describe a buildup that others never really see.”
- *Revenge and Grievance Motive*
 - Statement. – “It can feel like someone wanted to hurt you back more than they wanted the truth.”
 - Statement. – “A lot of people believe this turned into something personal for someone else.”
 - Statement. – “Sometimes it feels less about what happened and more about settling something.”
- *Posturing and Framing*
 - Statement. – “The way this is being described publicly probably feels very different from how you experienced it.”



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- Statement. – “It seems like the wording people use changes how serious everything sounds.”
- Statement. – “How this is framed probably matters more than most people realize.”
- *Evasiveness / Process Avoidance*
 - Statement. – “Most people talk about outcomes first, not the steps in between.”
 - Statement. – “It’s usually easier to describe what it ended up looking like than how it actually unfolded.”
 - Statement. – “People often skip over the middle part of the story.”
- *Psychological Distance*
 - Statement. – “It sounds like you’ve had to separate yourself from a lot of this just to get through it.”
 - Statement. – “A lot of people talk about this in a very detached way once it’s over.”
 - Statement. – “It’s common to describe things almost like they happened to someone else.”
- *Boundary Reframing*
 - Statement. – “People often describe the boundaries in situations like this as more complicated than outsiders realize.”
- *Consent Ambiguity Framing*
 - Statement. – “A lot of people say what was understood between two people gets oversimplified later.”
- *Escalation Framing*
 - Statement. – “Most violent or sexual situations people talk about don’t start at the point everyone focuses on.”
 - Statement. – “There is usually a long lead-up that never makes it into the reports.”
- *Relationship Reframing*
 - Statement. – “People usually feel the relationship itself gets misunderstood once everything is reduced to an incident.”
- *Authority and System Blame*
 - Statement. – “It’s frustrating when professionals step in after the fact and think they understand everything.”
 - Statement. – “A lot of people feel the system already has its own story before they ever speak.”
- *Control Versus Chaos Framing*
 - Statement. – “It sounds like a lot of what happened was shaped by circumstances more than by deliberate choices.”
 - Statement. – “Most people describe the situation as messy rather than intentional.”
- *Identity Protection*
 - Statement. – “It seems important to you that people understand who you really are, not just what they heard.”
 - Statement. – “A lot of people worry that one situation ends up defining their entire life.”



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One operational warning that matters in your environment.

Several of these statements embed psychological direction on purpose. You should only deploy them after the subject has already produced an unprompted baseline narrative. Otherwise you will pollute your own movement analysis.

The tactical rule for your system. - Use one elicitation statement. Then go silent. Then move immediately into clean follow-up questions only after the offender has committed language to the record.

CLOSING WITHOUT CONFRONTATION

- When someone reflects on a conflict that led to police involvement, there is often something they wish had been handled differently. Is there anything you would handle differently now?
- Most people can step outside themselves and consider how a situation appears to others. How do you think this looked from an outside perspective?
- Small decisions during arguments can accumulate. What decisions of yours during that period stand out to you?
- When officers arrived, scenes can appear different than they felt in the moment. How do you think the scene appeared to them?
- Looking back at the pattern of the relationship, what parts do you believe escalated over time?