

NON-FATAL STRANGULATION DESCRIPTORS FOR EXAMINERS

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Behaviors, Mannerisms, Speech, and Eye Contact

Do not use language that could be construed as evaluative or can be interpreted as a value statement, or words that assign a subjective or emotional experience to the survivor. Instead, use words that accurately **describe outward appearance, visible behavior, speech, and eye contact**. These are words that convey the emotional state of the survivor without specifically labeling it as such.

Quantifying and Qualifying Behaviors (time, intensity, manner)

- When quantifying time, indicate the number of times a behavior was observed or the length of time it was observed (i.e., cried for 20 minutes)
- When qualifying time, name the event that coincided or preceded the behavior (i.e., sobbed as she took off her clothes)
- When qualifying intensity, describe what was sensed (i.e., soft, loud, piercing, shrill, high-pitched, sharp, etc.)
- When qualifying manner, describe what was observed (i.e., measured, haltingly, abruptly, tentatively, etc.)

Always use the patient’s statements and place in quotation marks. Do not paraphrase.

Eye Contact or Visual Contact	Suggestions	Suggestions	Suggestions	Avoid
	Gape	Stare	Looks at (floor, ceiling, etc.)	Good
	Watch	Fixed	Only when addressed	Poor
	Avoid (when)	Avert	Closes eyes (when, how long)	“Good” and “poor” mean different things to different people
	Glance	Glare		

Speech	Suggestions	Suggestions	Suggestions	Avoid
	Mumble	Stammer	Responds in one or two word answers	
	Murmur	Stutter	Responds only when asked questions	
	Shout	Slow	Whispers (differentiate from hoarseness)	
	Scream	Cries while speaking	Hoarse (clarify if this is normal or new)	
			Hesitates (duration in seconds, minutes)	

Responsive-ness to Clinician	Suggestions	Suggestions	Suggestions	Avoid
	Follow directions (how)	Pause (before stating...)	Answers questions when asked	Cooperative
		Unresponsive	Responds only when asked questions	

Nonverbal/ Oral Expression	Suggestions	Suggestions	Suggestions	Avoid
	Cry	Sniffle	Wail	
	Moan	Sob	Whimper	
	Weep	Sigh		

Facial Expressions	Suggestions	Suggestions	Suggestions	Avoid
	Frown	Flinch	Pursed lips	
	Glower	Wince	Pucker	
	Scowl	Clenched jaw	Grinding teeth	
	Grimace	Biting lips		

Body Posture and/or Muscular Tension	Suggestions	Suggestions	Suggestions	Avoid
	Slouch	Stoop	Shudders	
	Tremor	Slump	Clenches fists	
	Quiver	Restless	Crosses arms in front of body	
	Tremble	Shake	Wrings hands	
	Clutching (what)	Feet pulled up as sits in chair	Draws legs up, wraps arms around knees (how and where)	

Behaviors and Actions	Suggestions	Suggestions	Suggestions	Avoid
	Pacing	Pulling at sheets	Holds front of shirt together with both hands	Afraid Fearful Scared
	Blew nose	Clutching clothes	Wipes at eyes with tissue	
	Startled	Stunned	Cowers	
	Cringe	Flinch		

Demeanor	Suggestions	Suggestions	Suggestions	Avoid
	Serious	Silent	Solemn	Depressed Sad
	Somber	Listless	Sluggish	In shock Cool Composed
	Quiet	Agitated	Irritated	Controlled Flat affect Indifferent
				Disinterested Angry Raging

Describing Anxiety

State that the client is anxious and then support with observable behaviors: wringing hands, tapping feet, sweating profusely, dilated pupils, or the client's statement (e.g., "I feel nauseated," "I have a knot in my stomach," etc.).