Social History

These topics are presented in rough chronological order, but you should feel free to pursue them in whatever order seems appropriate with a given client. Some clients will be unwilling to talk about their childhood at first, but may become more willing after they see the way you handle a discussion of their criminal history, hobbies, or employment background. If your client won’t or can’t answer a question, try asking your “ally.”

Birth, Growth & Development

☐ Any known complications with mother’s pregnancy (bleeding, toxemia, smoking, alcohol, drugs, physical abuse, depression, accidents, illness)
   Sample Q: How was your mother’s health during her pregnancy with you?

☐ Any complications at birth (premature, respiratory difficulties, jaundice, known defects)
   Sample Q: Did your mother ever complain about her labor and delivery?
   Sample Q: What does your mother say about the day you were born?

☐ Approximate age at which developmental tasks accomplished (responsive smile, rolling over, crawling, pulling to stand, walking, speaking, self-care)
   Sample Q: What has your mother told you about what you were like as a baby? As a child?

☐ Relationship with parents (emotional support, nurturing, expressions of love, discipline, infliction of physical harm or pain, sexual abuse, sexual modeling, displays of nudity, invasions of privacy)
   Sample Q: Tell me about your mom?
   Sample Q: How did your mom handle it when you did something wrong?

☐ Relationship with others in household

☐ Relationship with peers in school and neighborhood
   Sample Q: What did you do when you weren’t in school?
   Sample Q: What were your friends like? How did others treat you?

☐ Police or social workers ever come to house

☐ Client or siblings ever run away

School History

☐ Age began school
☐ Schools attended (dates, addresses, reason for changing schools)
☐ Progress from one grade to next
☐ Placement (advanced, special education)
Behavioral difficulties

Sample Q: Did you like school? What did you/ did you not like about it?

- Lateness, attendance
- Performance
- Significant teachers/coaches
- Parental involvement in school
- Highest grade completed
- Extracurricular activities, clubs, sports

Environmental Factors

- All addresses where client lived
- Name, age, current address of all people with whom client lived
- Physical conditions in which client grew up (type of neighborhood, housing conditions, availability of heat, number of rooms, number of people in residence)
  Sample Q: Tell me about where you grew up?
- Exposure to toxins (smoking, lead, folk remedies, solvents, glue, industrial area, agricultural area)
  Sample Q: Where did you play when you were small?
- Client, family, or caretaker ever in an occupation at risk for neurotoxic exposure (agricultural, chemical, pharmaceutical, degreaser, dry cleaner, dental hygienist, electronics, plastics, painter, printer, rayon, steel, transportation, foundry, scrap metal)

Medical & Mental Health History

- Kind of health care child/family received (ER, doctor, clinic)
- Injuries, accidents, illnesses, including during childhood
- Head trauma (blows, car accidents, falls, sports injuries)
- Fevers, headaches
- MRI, CAT scan, PET, EEG, x-ray of head, neuropsych or psych testing
- Hospitalizations
- Emergency room visits
- Alcohol/drug use
  Sample Q: Tell me about the first time you ever used drugs or alcohol?
- Alcohol/drug treatment (where, when)
- Mental health evaluations, court-related or otherwise
- Mental health treatment (where, when, who treated)
- Medications

Military History

- Ever rejected for military service
- Name, branch, and dates of service
- Highest rank obtained & rank at discharge
- Type of discharge
Significant military experiences

Sample Q: What stands out to you when you remember being in the Army?

☐ Vaccinations, overseas experience, special training
☐ Veteran's care, post-military trauma or illness

Court History

☐ Prior juvenile or criminal charges (jurisdiction, disposition, name of attorney, date of offense, date of arrest, character of offense, length and place of incarceration or juvenile placement, name of parole/probation officer)
☐ Prison and/or probation record (disciplinary record, compliance with rules, ever granted privileges, work history, participation in programs, ever evaluated or treated, medications administered, noteworthy relationships)
☐ Plaintiff or defendant in civil case
☐ Witness in any court proceeding
☐ Filed bankruptcy
☐ Child support proceedings
☐ Paternity proceedings

Contact with Government Agencies

☐ Arrests, other police contact
☐ Benefits (food stamps, disability, unemployment, social security)
☐ Child welfare
☐ Veteran's Administration
☐ INS

Employment History

☐ Employment record (name, address, supervisor, dates of employment, reasons for leaving)
☐ Problems with employers/co-workers
☐ Lengthy periods of unemployment (why, collect benefits)

Sample Q: What did you do when you weren't working? How did you pay the bills?
☐ Workmen's compensation claims

Religious Background/Community Activity

☐ Attendance as child/adult (where, name of church, personnel, activities)
☐ Other community groups/service

Hobbies

☐ What client likes to do in spare time