

## Documentation Descriptions

(adapted from *Non-Fatal Strangulation Descriptors for Examiners*, by Donna A. Gaffney, DNSc, RN, FAAN)

When documenting patient behaviors use objective descriptors to describe patient's appearance, eye contact (or lack of), speech, and other behaviors. Use patient's statements in quotes when possible – never paraphrase anything you put in quotations.

	<b>Word suggestions</b>	<b>Phrase Suggestions</b>	<b>Avoid</b>
<b>Eye Contact</b>	Stare, Fixed	Looks at (ceiling, floor, etc.)	Good (as in "good eye contact")
	Watch(es)		Poor (as in "poor eye contact")
	Glances	Glances at RN only when addressed	
	Avoids	Averts eyes, closes eyes (how long?)	
<b>Speech</b>	Mumble, stammer	Responds with one or two-word answers	
	Stutter	Responds only when asked questions	
	Shout, screams, yells	Cries while speaking Cries when describing sexual contact	
	Whispers	Differentiate from hoarseness	
	Slow, hesitant monotone	Hesitates 5-20 seconds when describing sexual contact  Pauses before stating (what?)	
<b>Responsiveness</b>	Follows directions (to do what?)	Answers questions when asked	Cooperative
	Unresponsive	Responds only when asked questions  No response to questions when asked about sexual contact	
<b>Nonverbal expressions</b>	Cries, sniffles, moans, weeps, sob, sigh, whimpers		
<b>Facial expressions</b>	Frown, flinch, wince, pursed lips, scowl, clenched jaw,	Grinds teeth biting lips	

	<b>Word suggestions</b>	<b>Phrase Suggestions</b>	<b>Avoid</b>
<b>Body Posture or muscular tension</b>	slouch, stoops, tremor, slump, quiver, restless, shudders, tremble, shake, clutching (what?),	Clenches fists crosses arms in front of body Wringing hands Tapping feet draws legs up, wraps arms around legs	
<b>Behaviors and Actions</b>	Pacing, startled, cringe, flinch, cowers	Holds front of shirt together with both hands Wipes eyes/nose with tissue Pulling at sheets Clutching clothes Picking at clothing when describing sexual contact	
<b>Demeanor</b>	serious, silent, somber, listless, quiet, agitated, solemn, sluggish, irritated		Depressed Sad In shock Cool Composed Flat affect Disinterested Angry Raging