Child Advocacy Centers

Presented by:
Michelle Katona Genaro
Director, Childhelp Children’s Center of Arizona
Child and Family Advocacy Centers (defined by ARS 8-466) ("CFACs") are one-stop service locations for child victims who need help and support.

CFAC’s use a co-located multidisciplinary model—they are places where victims are served, the crimes against them are investigated, and healing can begin through a partnership between healthcare, behavioral health, child-welfare, and law enforcement professionals.
• Child and Family Advocacy Centers (defined by ARS 8-466).
• There are currently 19 CFACs in Arizona.
• There are 3 models: nonprofit (e.g. Childhelp and Amberly’s Place); municipal police department (e.g. Mesa, Scottsdale, & Glendale); hospital (Northern Arizona Healthcare’s Safe Child).
• The Statewide Association of CFAC’s is the Arizona Child and Family Advocacy Network (“ACFAN”) –
Child Abuse Investigation in Arizona

• Each County has it’s own child abuse investigation protocol. ARS sec. 8-817.

• Here are the Maricopa and Pima Protocols.

• Arizona has a mandatory reporting statute. ARS sec. 13-3620.
Funding Sources

• Victims of Crime Act
  -Clinical Services
  -Advocacy Services

• Office for Victims of Crime
  -Program for children victimized by Parental/Caregiver Substance Abuse

• State Medicaid / CMDP (only therapy, not family services)

• Contracts with MCAO and Victim’s Compensation
CHILDHELP CHILDREN’S CENTER OF ARIZONA
All who enter will find love...
Co-location with Partners

- Phoenix Police Department
- Phoenix Children’s Hospital
- Office of Child Welfare Investigations
- County Attorney
- City of Phoenix Family Advocacy Center
- Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings
- Partner Meetings and Interactions
Lobby: Through the eyes of a child...

• Safe place
• Child friendly and welcoming
• The first thing they see is the playroom
• Name tags
Playroom

- Safe and welcoming
- Free play
- Age appropriate
- Sensory corner
- Snacks/meals provided if needed
- Child advocates
- Assessment begins
Medical Suite

- Child friendly décor
- State of the art equipment
- Least invasive
- Support animals
- Medical and hygiene needs addressed
- Co-location: no need to go somewhere else; one stop
Forensic Interview Room

- Trained Dedicated Forensic Interviewers
- Developmentally and culturally appropriate
- Non-leading, non-guided questions
- Non-distracting room (microphones, video hidden)
- Therapy Dogs as needed
Observation Room

- Monitor without being in the interview
- Note Taking
- Guide interview and questions
- Recorded
- Goal is one interview to reduce trauma and changes to the story
Therapeutic Services

• Best practices:
  • Trauma informed
  • Evidence based
  • Clinical Supervision
  • Ongoing Professional Development
Occupational Therapy

- Trauma is a sensory experience
- Therapeutic tool
- Express feelings of trauma
- Occupational Therapist
Worry Wall

The Childhelp Worry Wall is a therapeutic tool where children are encouraged to leave their biggest fears on the wall and not carry it in their hearts. After reading these notes ask yourself “What is your biggest fear and does it compare?”

- Eliminates secrets
- Helps children express their worries and feel heard
- Therapeutic activity
- Validates others
Clothing Closet

- New clothes/supplies
  - 2 sets of PJs
  - 2 outfits
  - Shoes
  - Hygiene items
- To replace evidence or if a child is being removed from the home
- Helps children feel clean and comfortable
Toy Closet

• New toy for all first time children (including siblings)
• Fosters ownership and something to call their own
• At the end – positive memory
Victim Advocacy Services

- All families – non-offending parent
- Education
  - Investigation and Court Process
  - Their legal rights
- Support
- Referrals
  - Food, Housing
  - Therapy
  - Other
Meditation Room

- Private place to think, pray, and process
- Private place for talking with parents about difficult issues
- Available to anyone at the center: clients, staff, partners
Thank you...

• Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

~Margaret Mead