

Children's

Advocacy Center

of Collier County

Improving the lives of abused children



HOPE IS REAL, HELP IS REAL,
YOUR STORY IS NOT OVER!

WHO DO YOU TURN TO WHEN THE UNTHINKABLE HAPPENS?

Morgan was one of my first clients after starting at the Children's Advocacy Center.

Her older brother had raped her multiple times.

She came to the CAC for a forensic interview and was immediately Baker Acted due to suicidal ideation. She was only 13 years old.

Once the Baker Act facility discharged Morgan, I started working with her. It was tough to get her to open up and even to get her to talk much about anything. The tremendous amount of guilt regarding her abuse manifested itself in her quiet demeanor.

Over time, we were able to work through her anxiety and shame. About six months into therapy, I began to notice her talk more openly. We were finally at a point where we could start working on her trauma narrative, in which she addressed what she would say to her perpetrator if given a chance.

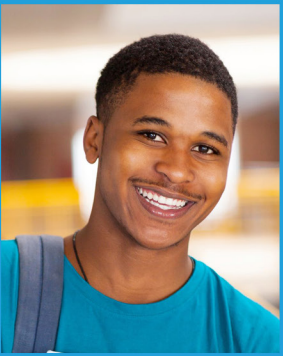
"YOU DON'T HAVE POWER OVER ME"

Her narrative was peppered throughout by this reoccurring theme. It was vital for her to show her perpetrator that she was beginning to flourish. It was essential to demonstrate her ability to forgive herself even though she had done nothing wrong. Her narrative depicted a journey from helplessness, isolation, and the loss of power and control to the restoration of safety and personal empowerment. She began to make meaning out of her multiple traumas.

As our sessions progressed, Morgan began to look towards the future, making plans to pursue college and growing stronger every day. I remember when her mother and little sister came in to sign the discharge paperwork; mom was crying, and all she kept saying was, "Thank you, thank you." She had gotten her daughter back.

- HANNA HARGROVE, LMFT
CAC CLINICAL THERAPIST





HOW WE HELP: What to expect when you come to the CAC

When you enter the CAC, one of our Child Advocates will greet you. **The Child Advocate** is here to make sure you understand why you are at the CAC and explain the available services. Advocates can provide a voice for children when they may not feel like they have one. Advocates also coordinate community services to help mitigate the traumatic effects of abuse.

Child Advocates:

- *Explain the process and services provided*
- *Provide case management/inter-agency coordination*
- *Inform & link families to resources in the community*
- *Help families apply for victim compensation*
- *Help children through the entire court process – from the initial arrest, to depositions, to facing their abusers in the courtroom*
- *Provide trauma screenings*
- *Administer satisfaction surveys*
- *Conduct training in the community*

The Advocates will then direct you to one of the other four programs provided here at the CAC. One of these programs is our **Child Protection Team**. When child abuse is suspected, our Child Protection Team is here to get the whole story. To do this, we bring together experts in many different fields to figure out exactly what happened and to better protect the

children we serve. The Child Protection Team includes our medical director, who is a board-certified pediatrician, our team of forensic interviewers, and our licensed psychotherapist. Our team works closely with the local Sheriff's Office, the local Police Departments, the Department of Children and Families, and the State Attorney's Office to help supplement investigation activities. The Child Protection Team is skilled in evaluating alleged child abuse and neglect, assessing risk and protective factors, and providing recommendations for interventions to protect children and enhance a caregiver's capacity to provide a safer environment when possible.

Child Protection Team Provides:

- *Medical diagnosis and evaluation*
- *Child and family assessments*
- *Multidisciplinary staffings*
- *Psychological assessment*
- *Specialized and forensic interviews*
- *Expert court testimony*
- *Training for emergency room staff and other medical providers about how to identify abuse*

If the Child Protection Team determines that abuse has happened, the victim, their non-offending caregiver(s), and siblings are encouraged to participate in therapy through our **Counseling Program**. Our counseling services provide specialized treatment services for children who are victims of

abuse, as well as their families through a combination of group, family, and individual counseling. Our Counseling Program reduces the trauma caused by child sexual abuse, assists the family in crisis, prevents further abuse from occurring, and enables families to have healthy, non-abusive relationships.

Our Counseling Program operates on the belief that specialized treatment services provided to children and families will prevent the long-term psychological effects of child abuse and improve functioning.

Counseling Services Provide:

- *Prompt intake services*
- *Multiple assessment tools*
- *Individualized treatment planning*
- *Specialized individual and group therapy for child survivors, siblings, and non-offending caregivers*
- *Crisis intervention*
- *Personal safety education & cyber safety education*
- *Peer support*
- *Community resources and referrals when appropriate*
- *Proven & evidence-based therapeutic strategies that work*

We believe that most parents genuinely love their children and want to become better parents. It is with this belief that our **Parenting Education Program** provides both voluntary community parenting classes

HOW WE HELP: Our Programs

and comprehensive in-home and group court-ordered parenting classes. Each session is experience-based and focuses on the development of nurturing parenting skills that help prevent child abuse and neglect from occurring.

Parenting Education Focuses on:

- *Understanding the appropriate developmental expectations of children*
- *Developing empathy for their own needs and the needs of their children*
- *Appropriate discipline strategies*
- *Understanding appropriate parent-child roles*
- *Developing a child's age-appropriate power and independence*

The separation between two parents is never easy, especially for children. Through our **Family Safety program**, the CAC allows for safe managed exchange and supervised visitation of children between parents with a history of, or potential for, domestic violence.

Family Safety Program Provides:

- *Safe, neutral site for regular custody exchanges to spare children from witnessing ongoing strife and further victimization*
- *Staggered arrival and departure times*
- *On-site security*
- *Risk assessments*



WE SEE OVER 2,500 CHILDREN & FAMILY MEMBERS DUE TO CHILD ABUSE



WE HELPED IN THE PROSECUTION OF 125 ABUSE CASES



87% OF THOSE CASES RESULTED IN CONVICTIONS



286 CHILDREN & THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS ENGAGED IN THERAPY



91% OF PARENTS WHO COMPLETE OUR PROGRAM DO NOT GO ON TO RE-OFFEND

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Every dollar matters. Help us provide over 2,500 children and their family members with the help they deserve.

GIVE HOPE

WWW.CACCOLLIER.ORG / 239.263.8383

Here is what your donation can do:



CONNECT TO HELP

At the CAC, advocates create a bridge to help people by pointing them to local and community resources that address a variety of issues a family might need.



INVEST IN THERAPY

CAC therapists use Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and other evidence-based treatment modalities to assure that children can process and overcome the abuse they have suffered.



KEEP KIDS SAFE

The CAC keeps kids safe through our Child Protection Team and Family Safety programs. We not only provide a voice to the voiceless but work tirelessly to make sure that children receive justice.



PRESENT HOPE

The CAC aims to create a community that does not tolerate child abuse. We provide training and public presentations to enlighten and engage the community about abuse prevention.

WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD DISCLOSES ABUSE

A child with long hair, wearing a white tank top and dark shorts, is running away from the camera in a grassy field. The child is holding a flag on a pole with their right hand. The background is a soft-focus landscape with a horizon line. The entire image has a blue tint.

DO

Stay calm

Let your body language tell the child that you hear what he/she is telling you and that you believe them

Listen carefully and write down the exact words the child used in the disclosure

Tell the child that it is not their fault

Thank the child for having the courage to report this to you

Inform the child, as soon as possible, of what will happen next with the reporting

Report the abuse

DO NOT

Do not use shocked or disbelieving body language when a child discloses to you

Do not judge the validity of the allegation, if you are skeptical, try not to express your doubts to the child

Do not ask for more details or ask direct questions

Do not make promises you can not keep

Do not confront the alleged abuser

REPORT CHILD ABUSE

1-800-962-2873

or call 911 if the child is in danger.

MISSION

TO IMPROVE THE
LIVES OF ABUSED
CHILDREN

VISION

TO CREATE A
COMMUNITY THAT
DOES NOT TOLERATE
CHILD ABUSE



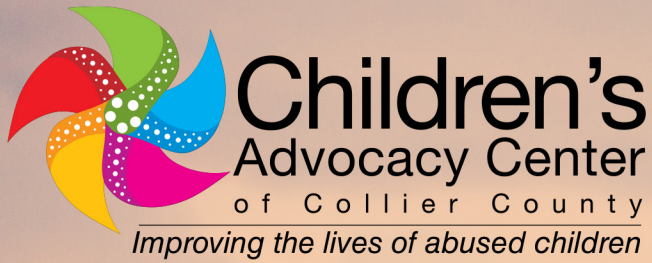
WE BELIEVE

THAT child abuse is horribly traumatic

THAT no child should have to suffer through abuse alone

THAT every child's story is important

THAT better days are ahead of you



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Services are provided without regard for race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or religion. For more information or a disability accommodation, please contact the main office.

The Children's Advocacy Center of Collier County is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization that provides all its services at no cost. We can provide these services due to the generous support by private donors, grants through the Naples Children & Education Foundation, The United Way of Collier County, The Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation, Arthrex, and the Children's Network of Southwest Florida.