The Forensic Interviewer and The Crisis Worker
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Disclaimer

• The information contained in this handout was used in conjunction with a live presentation. These materials outline a portion of that presentation and should not be taken out of context by merely reading them without benefit of that presentation.

History of the FAC/CAC
Purpose of an Advocacy Center

• Minimize further trauma to victims
• Provide comprehensive victim services
• Thorough investigations
• Successful prosecutions
• Communication!

How Do I Find An Advocacy Center?

ACFAN
http://acfan.net

NCA
http://nationalchildrensalliance.org

Goals & Purpose

• IAC
  • Engage Community Stakeholders in the promotion of victim-centered services
  • Provides a forum for communication regarding protocol and best practice
• MDT
  • Improve joint investigations and collaboration efforts, along with information sharing
  • Provide comprehensive, effective response to reports of abuse and neglect
Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)
- Law Enforcement
- Department of Child Safety
- Medical (Forensic Nurse Examiners/Physicians)
- Prosecutors (City and County)
- Crisis Intervention/Victim Advocates
- Forensic Interviewers
- Counselors
- Attorney General
- Adult Protective Services

Interagency Council (IAC)
- Education professionals
- Probation
- Mental Health professionals
- GAL (Guardian Ad Litem)

Needs of the victim
- To be informed about the process/at the FAC/CAC, and after
- To be included in the process
- To be given choices
- To be comfortable in his/her surroundings
- To know who to contact throughout the process
Role of the Forensic Interview and Forensic Interviewer

- Forensic Interview is "jumping off point" of the investigation.
- Forensic Interviewers:
  - Approach the interview from a neutral perspective
  - Obtain factual information from children
  - Investigate if a CRIME has occurred
  - NOT used to determine a child's veracity
  - Used in a legal setting

Role of the Crisis Worker

- First point of contact/sets the stage
- Establishing and maintaining rapport
- Liaison between Investigators and child/family
- Support to the victim and his/her family
- Safety and protection throughout the process
- Provide resources
- Provide referrals
- Transportation

Overcoming Challenges

- Communication (What does this mean to you?)
  - Briefing/Providing information (which can affect time, misinformation, case disposition/resolution)
  - Become familiar with and RESPECT each other's disciplines/roles and expertise
  - Educate/inform victim/family so don't receive contradictory information
  - Rapport aids in forensic interview
  - Burnout, Compassion Fatigue, Vicarious Trauma managed through self care
Burnout

• Demands placed on an individual exceeds his/her available resources
• Related to stressful working conditions that leave you with feelings of frustration and powerlessness.
• The consequences of the challenging work conditions, NOT the difficult material, that precipitates burnout.
• How have you experienced it or seen it in colleagues?

Compassion Fatigue

• Used interchangeably with Vicarious Trauma
• Described as the “cost of caring” for others in emotional pain. (Figley, 1982).
• Regularly hear very difficult and traumatic stories, you begin to lose your ability to feel empathy for your clients, loved ones and co-workers.
• Described as “nothing left to give.”

Vicarious Trauma

• Parallels to burnout include symptoms such as exhaustion, feeling overwhelmed, isolated and disconnected.
• Relationship of the person suffering from VT to the world around them becomes altered.
• We accumulate and carry the stories of trauma-including images, sounds, and details—we have heard, which then come to inform our worldview.
Self Care

• The proactive strategies that professionals use to offset the negative aspects of working with trauma victims and promote their own wellbeing.

• Mother Teresa wrote in her plan to her Superiors that it was MANDATORY for her nuns to take an entire year off from their duties every 4-5 years to allow them to heal from the effects of their care-giving work.

Self-Care Wheel

• Physical
• Psychological
• Emotional
• Spiritual
• Personal
• Professional

Communication Components

• Inform the professionals involved of when the interview is taking place
• Better investigation
• Enhanced forensic interview
• Identify needs of the victim
• Resources
• Referrals
Key Elements for Successful Teamwork

• Rapport
• Trust
• Respect
• Team Building

Questions