CHILD & YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTRE of Kelowna

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The Child and Family Advocacy (CFA) Program is a service offered to all families involved with the CYAC during a child abuse investigation. A Child and Family Advocate (Advocate) provides immediate and ongoing support, as well as referrals to appropriate services for children and their non-offending family members. An Advocate ensures that the needs of each child are prioritized and responded to in a timely manner.

An Advocate is the glue that binds. The net-new presence of the CFA program in the community is how we collaborate with the agencies and ensure the needs of the child are at the center of everything we do. After coming to the CYAC each child and family has a consistent ally by their side as they journey towards healing. The role of an Advocate is to close the gaps between agencies and ensure that everything occurring with a file is in the best interest of the child.

At the CYAC, we recognize that abuse affects the entire family. We want to ensure family members feel that they have a place to share their story and find support. An Advocate provides information and resources to families that are referred to the Centre.

By providing regular follow-ups throughout their entire interaction with the CYAC. From the beginning of the investigation to the recovery process an Advocate works to minimize the long-term impact of abuse, while supporting the family throughout their healing.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Every child who attends the CYAC is connected with the CFA Program on a voluntary basis. The choice to participate with the Multi-Disciplinary Team is a big part of the CFA Program as it gives the child and their family a voice in a situation where they may feel they do not have a lot of control. This helps to empower families to advocate for their needs during a very difficult time. If the family chooses to engage with the services, they will be provided with information, support, and referrals unique to their needs. Services will be available throughout the investigation and beyond.

An Advocate is available to meet with the child and family anytime they attend the CYAC, whether it be for an RCMP/MCFD interview, a follow up visit, a pediatrician appointment, or a counselling appointment. An Advocate becomes a reliable support that the family can trust and begin to rely on throughout the process.

One of the principle functions of the CFA Program is to oversee the coordination of agency services. An Advocate maintains a birds eye view of the child's file to ensure that any identified gaps are addressed and the child and family's needs are met in a timely and compassionate manner. An Advocate represents a family's voice and holds the agencies accountable. An Advocate ensures the needs of children and families are maintained as the top priority in all that we do.

THE CFA PROGRAM STRIVES TO ENSURES THAT FAMILIES HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE STEPS IN THE INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS, AS WELL AS, WHO TO CONTACT FOR SPECIFIC QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

CYAC DELIVERY TEAM

- Child and Family Advocate
- Resilient Families Program Coordinator
- Operations Manager
- Executive Director

SERVICE AGENCIES WITHIN THE CYAC

- Police (RCMP)
- Child Protection Services (MCFD)
- Victim Support Services
- Healthcare Services (IHA)
- Westbank First Nation

COMMUNITY BASED PARTNER SERVICES

- Education Staff
- Legal Staff
- Counsellors

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES?

Our number one priority to is to ensure that the needs of children and families are addressed, and brought to the forefront of our work. Through a dedication to this goal, families receive immediate access to services, as well as support and information in a collaborative and ongoing way, ultimately reducing the trauma traditionally experienced when an abuse report is made. The coordinated services and the Multi- Disciplinary Team approach eliminates the need for children and families to self-navigate through multiple agencies and a confusing network of services.In this model, families receive continuity of services from start to finish, and can focus their attention on building a trusting relationship with their support team.

HOW IS IT FUNDED?

As a core program of the CYAC we seek funding from multiple sources to ensure balance and sustainability. These sources can include: grant funding from government agencies and private foundations, corporate partnership and community-based fundraising initiatives.

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