

HELPING YOUR CHILD HEAL FROM ABUSE



WILL COUNTY
Children's
ADVOCACY CENTER

HOPE, HEALING, AND JUSTICE FOR ABUSED CHILDREN.



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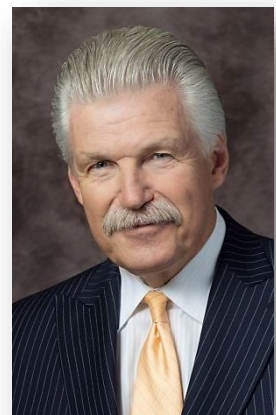
JAMES W. GLASGOW
WILL COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY



HELPING YOUR CHILD HEAL FROM ABUSE

When a child is abused, he or she experiences serious harm that is often difficult for a caring adult to understand and respond to. With treatment and support, a child can overcome these experiences, and as a parent or caregiver, your role is essential in helping your child heal.

This guide is designed to help you process and handle this difficult time, and to share with you how the Will County Children's Advocacy Center can help you and your child. We provide services to help you keep your child safe and, if your child was abused, to help your child heal.



JAMES W. GLASGOW
WILL COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY
Founder & Board Chairperson

HOW YOUR CHILD MAY BE AFFECTED

We know from research that children may experience anxiety, depression, and withdrawal from past normal activities in response to a potentially traumatic event.

Children also often develop behavior problems, as they have difficulty managing their feelings and thoughts about what happened to them.

The good news is that Mental Health treatment can help, and children can heal from abuse.

Some problems may be very specific to the abuse. He or she may avoid locations where the abuse occurred (such as a bathroom, bedroom, or school) to avoid a feeling of re-experiencing the abuse.



In addition, a child may attempt to cope by using drugs and alcohol or engaging in other “risky” behaviors. The consequences of untreated traumatic stress can affect a child’s success in school or their relationships with friends and family, and this can continue to impact an individual throughout his or her life.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

You and your child do not have to manage these difficulties alone. In fact, the best way for you to support your child is to make sure you both have the support of a larger network to help you navigate the healing process.

When there is a concern that your child may have experienced sexual abuse, physical abuse, or domestic violence, the Will County Children's Advocacy Center first coordinates a Forensic Interview to help determine whether or not abuse occurred.



It is important for your child to have a mental health assessment by a mental health professional.

It is important for your child to have a mental health assessment by a mental health professional. Abuse affects each child differently and a mental health assessment will help determine what, if any, impact the abuse has had on your child.

You will be asked to provide information about your child and family including what you see as the strengths and needs of your child, as well as any problems your family may face.



Evidence-based treatments are therapies that have been extensively studied and repeatedly shown to work in reducing problematic symptoms, such as nightmares, feeling “on-edge,” and losing interest in activities.

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We provide children, and their non-offending family members, with evidence-based, trauma-focused therapy to reduce difficulties as a result of the abuse.

In addition, a child may attempt to cope by using drugs and alcohol or engaging in other “risky” behaviors.

The consequences of untreated traumatic stress can affect a child’s success in school or their relationships with friends and family, and this can continue to impact an individual throughout his or her life.

Many children who have completed evidence-based mental health treatment report reduced sadness and anxiety and understand that they are not responsible or to blame for the abuse.



MOVING FORWARD

The Will County Children's Advocacy Center will help guide you through managing your child's abuse and treatment, but it is important that you be a knowledgeable advocate for your child.

Although there are evidence-based treatments available, not all mental health professionals use them.

Being a good advocate requires that you ask the right questions about what treatment your therapist provides.



Therapists who are trained in evidence-based trauma treatments for children will be willing and able to describe the components and their qualifications in providing this treatment.

Like any child with a physical illness, children with traumatic stress need and deserve the most appropriate and effective treatment available.

Questions to Ask Therapists About Mental Health Treatment

- 1. How familiar are you with evidence-based treatments for child trauma symptoms?**
- 2. Do you have specific training in an evidence-based treatment model? If so, what is it?**
- 3. How do you approach therapy with children and families who have been impacted by trauma?**

SUMMARY

If your child has been abused, a mental health assessment by a mental health professional can provide you information about how the abuse has impacted your child, and what next steps to take towards healing. If your child experiences traumatic stress, he or she deserves evidence-based, trauma-focused treatment services, or services that are shown to be effective in reducing harmful symptoms of traumatic stress.



As the caregiver, **YOU** are critical to the healing of your child, and you also deserve to have help in dealing with this experience.

The Will County Children's Advocacy Center is where you can receive support, information and evidence-based trauma-focused individual and group therapy and/or a link to a specialized, child sexual assault examination and evaluation.

Your Family Advocate will support you through whatever treatment is needed. This support is designed to help you, your child, and your family move forward in your lives with hope and healing.

815/774-4565

www.willcountycac.org





Recommended follow-up:

My child and I are referred to:

Our next appointment is:

Our Family Advocate is:

If you have questions, or need more information, call 815/774-4565.

