

Developing An Effective Child & Youth Advocacy Centre/ Child Advocacy Centre

June 13, 2016



Agenda

- **What is a CYAC/CAC?**
- **What difference will it make in your community?**
- **Who needs to be involved?**
- **What is your vision?**
- **What model should you choose? What are the options?**
- **What will it cost?**
- **What are the key elements for successful partnerships?**
- **What are the next steps?**

What Is A Child & Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC)?

- In 1985, the first CAC was established in Huntsville, Alabama to create a system that brought together professionals from law enforcement, criminal justice, child protection services, medical and mental health under *one roof*, to work *together as a team* in child abuse cases.
- The idea of community partnerships revolutionized the system response to child sexual abuse.
- Today, 30 years later, CACs are regarded as leading practice in how to respond to child abuse cases.
- There are more than 900 CACs in the United States and in 10 other countries around the world.

Recent Developments of CYACs in Canada

- **October 2010: the Federal Government, through the Department of Justice Victims' Fund announced an investment of \$5.25 million over 5 years to create new CYACs in Canada and in January 2012: the Federal Government through the Victims' Fund announced it was contributing over \$278,865 over 2 years to the Toronto CYAC.**
- **In April 2012, the Government committed an additional \$5 million dollars over 5 years to increase the availability of funding under this initiative.**

Children's Advocacy Centres in Canada

A snapshot of the locations and current stages of development of specialized services for child and youth victims of crime

Legend

- ■ ■ ■ Open
- Pilot/Demonstration project
- In development
- Feasibility study/needs assessment



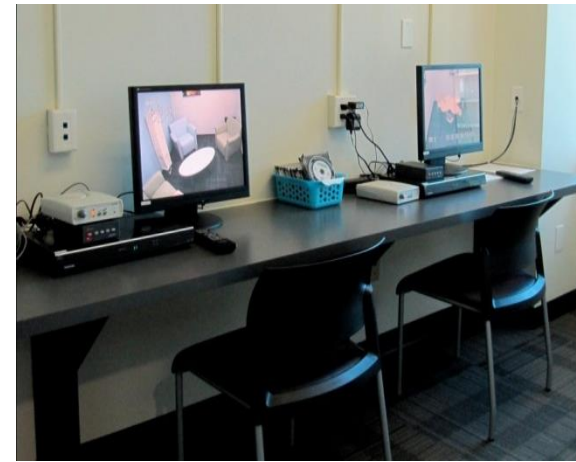
Source: Department of Justice

What Is A Child & Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC)?

- **As a *place*, a CYAC/CAC is a single location that provides a child-friendly, safe setting for a child to talk about abuse.**
- **As a *process*, the CYAC/CAC brings together a multidisciplinary team of professionals involved in child abuse investigation, intervention, treatment, and prevention.**
- **Professionals work together as a *team* and share information to achieve the best and most accurate outcomes in child abuse cases.**
- **CYAC/CACs range in the age of children served and type of abuse cases to which they respond. Some only see children under 12 years old, while others see children up to the age of 18.**
- **Most, if not all, respond to reports of sexual and physical abuse; others may also investigate neglect, exposure to family violence, child deaths, and other violent crimes (e.g., witness to homicide).**

What Is A Child & Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC)?

- **The child's investigation is coordinated with professionals from different agencies at one location.**
- **Forensic interviews are recorded using state-of-the-art recording equipment.**
- **This allows for reduction in the number of times a child has to discuss the abuse, in turn causing less trauma, and improving the quality of the investigation.**





“Having all of it under one roof, so we didn’t have to keep repeating the information, or search out services was very helpful and made dealing with everything much easier and less emotionally draining. This is an excellent program and you can tell that everyone involved really cares about the clients and whatever the needs are. Thank you so much.” (Parent)

What Is A Child & Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC)?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDpusKCYSXs>

What Difference Will A CYAC/CAC Make?

- It is important to clearly understand the needs in your community and how a CYAC/CAC will address these needs.
- It is necessary to determine what the unique needs are in *your* community. For example, what is/are the problem(s) you are trying to solve?
- You can do this by conducting a *Needs Assessment* that surveys stakeholders, including youth and families, or conducting a *Feasibility Study* that looks at all of the required components and likelihood of success in your community.
- Research existing models (they differ across North America) to determine what might best fit the needs in your community.
- You will need to consider:
 - the geographic area you are serving
 - the anticipated number of cases
 - the number of law enforcement agencies you will be working with
 - any other factors that are unique to your community

What Difference Will A CYAC/CAC Make?

- **In 2005, a survey conducted by the 4 Children's Aid Societies in Toronto and Toronto Police Service identified issues and gaps in child abuse investigation and intervention that included:**
 - **investigations not being conducted in child-friendly locations**
 - **children who were being interviewed multiple times**
 - **a lack of coordination between professionals**
 - **non-offending caregivers who were not being supported consistently**
 - **case management that was inconsistent and fragmented**
- **It was agreed that there was considerable room for improvement and that putting in place the CYAC/CAC model would lead to better outcomes for children and more successful child abuse investigations and prosecutions.**

What Difference Will A CYAC/CAC Make?

- **Over time, a CYAC/CAC may save time and money, and eliminate the problem of communication gaps between child protection agencies, law-enforcement, and the judicial system.**
- **A CYAC/CAC will streamline and reduce duplication of services, especially important in today's tough economic climate, where ensuring effective and efficient services through the optimization of system resources is a must.**
- **CACs are aligned with the political direction in many provinces. In Ontario for example, CYAC's fit as leading practice that models the Government's core message on the future of public services – *“Client focused, integrated services that produce better results and value for money.”***

What Difference Will A CYAC/CAC Make?

- **A more co-ordinated and enhanced service in the long term may reduce dependence on health/mental health agencies and need for future community services.**
- **While research in Canada is in the early stages, U.S studies show that parents whose children receive services from CACs are generally satisfied with the services, and are more satisfied with the investigation process and interview procedures than parents involved with non-CACs.**
- **Children who attend CACs are generally satisfied with the investigation experience, and more likely to state that they were not scared during the forensic interview, compared to children in comparison communities without a CAC.**

<http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/cv124.pdf>

What Difference Will A CYAC/CAC Make?

Feedback from a family shared by a child protection worker:

“The family commented on the high level of compassion and professionalism they experienced from each and every professional they encountered. They felt that walking through the front doors into an ‘unmarked’ building was very beneficial for the youth as she did not feel labelled. They commented on how important and beneficial it was for the youth to be greeted and moved directly into a quiet and safe waiting area where she was not exposed to any of the desks, computers or bureaucracy associated with the work that we do. They were especially amazed that the team from SCAN came to the child for examination. The family expressed that the difficulty of being involved in a joint police/CAS investigation was made as easy as possible through both the physical environment and through the support of the CYAC team.”

Who Are Your Partners?

- **One of the most important components of an effective CYAC/CAC is strong leadership from all partner agencies.**
- **Ideally, this will be on several levels:**
 - 1. Front-line staff who can speak to the day-to-day work and the experience of clients.**
 - 2. Senior staff who have the power to make decisions and to engage the agency Executive Directors and Boards of Directors.**
 - 3. CEOs, Executive Directors and Boards that can make operational and funding commitments.**
 - 4. Government and private funders who will support the creation of a CYAC/CAC.**

Who Are Your Partners?

At a minimum, your core partners will need to include:

- **Police**
- **Child Protection**
- **Medical**
- **Mental Health**
- **Advocacy**
- **Crown Attorney**
- **Victim Support/Court Preparation**

Who Are Your Partners?

- **Whether or not you decide on a [fully] co-located model, you will still need full representation from the core partners in order to develop your CYAC/CAC.**
- **Having all of your partners at the table from the beginning allows you to work through many of the issues prior to opening the centre, and will help to develop a strong foundation.**
- **Once your partnership team is in place, many things can happen simultaneously.**
- **With the support, commitment and leadership from your agency partners, you will be able to build your model, even though at times, it may feel fragmented. *Eventually, all the pieces will fit together.***
- **There will be different points of view, and hurdles to overcome but honesty and trust will build the more you work together, and work things out.**

What Is Your Vision For A CYAC?

- Having a set of *core values* that you can refer to if you get “stuck” is very helpful.
- Communities across Canada differ greatly and have diverse needs. It is important to have a *clear vision* for your CYAC/CAC.
- These are important discussions and need to be inclusive of all stakeholders.
- Examples of vision statements include:
 - A Centre where, *under one roof* children and youth who are victims of abuse and their families, receive the very best integrated, child-focused investigation, treatment, advocacy and support services possible.
 - A Collective partnership and voice to enhance and strengthen a community response to protecting our children.
 - A Centre to advance leading practice in investigation, treatment and ongoing support for child and youth victims and their families.

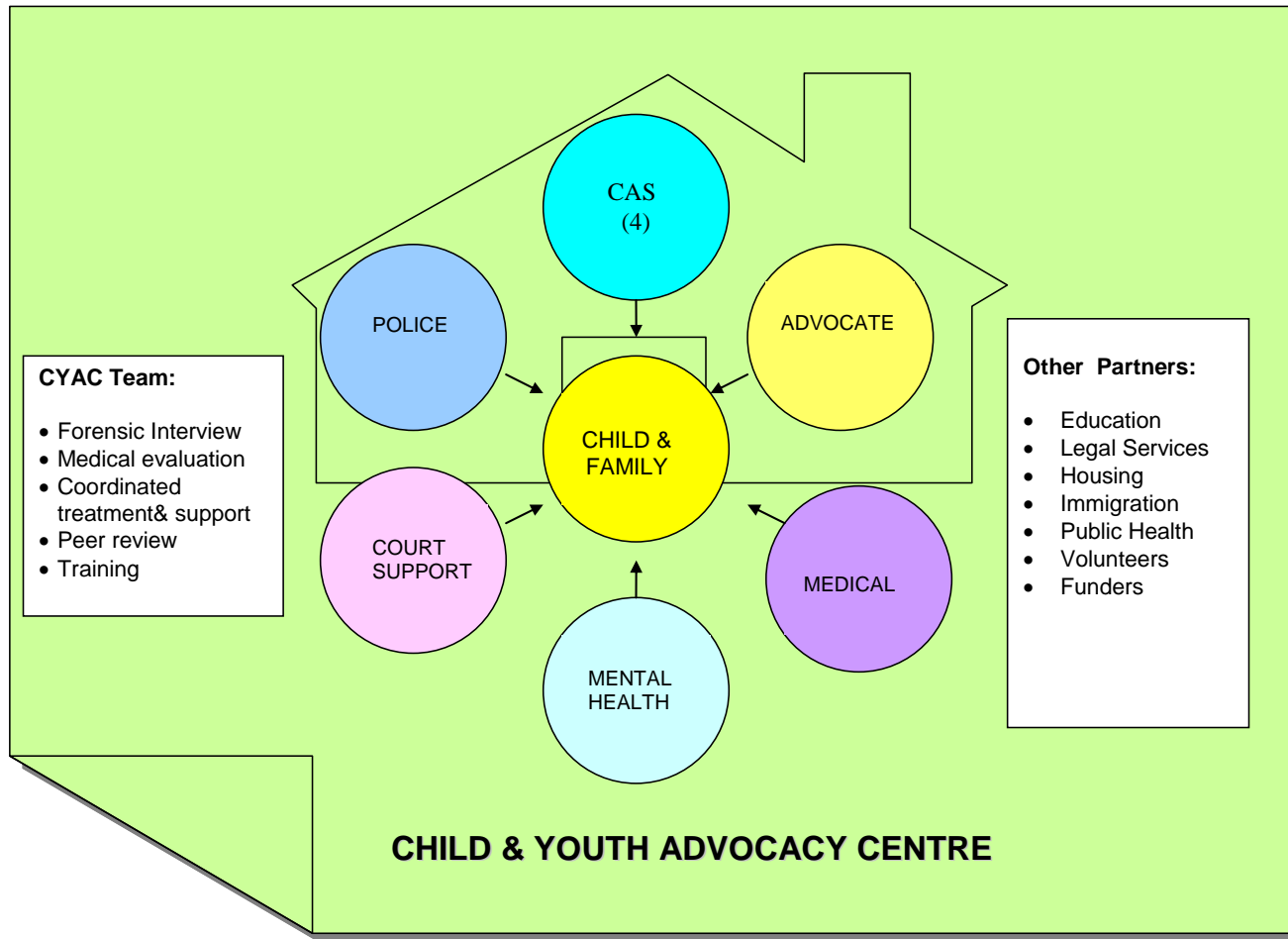
What Is Your Vision For A CYAC?

Most CYACs have a common philosophical, child-centered foundation:

- **a [co-located] multidisciplinary team (MDT) approach that includes police, child protection workers, medical and mental health professionals, advocates and victim support staff**
- **a comfortable child-friendly space that is physically and psychologically safe for children, youth and their families**
- **regular case reviews and case tracking**

Most importantly, the child is always the first priority.

What Is Your Vision For A CYAC?



What Type of Entity Will Your CAC/CYAC Be?

#10 of Draft Guidelines for Ontario Network of Child & Youth Advocacy Centres describes CYACs in the following way:

“A designated legal entity responsible for program and fiscal operations is established and implements basic sound administrative policies and procedures. Every CYAC must have a designated legal entity responsible for the governance of its operations. The role of this entity is to oversee ongoing business practices of the CYAC, including setting and implementing administrative policies, hiring and managing personnel, obtaining funding, supervising program and fiscal operations, and long-term planning.”

What Type of Entity Will Your CAC/CYAC Be?

- **You need to decide what your centre will be. When working with a number of community partners, it is critical to address this issue early. In some communities, you may want to develop a new charitable not-for-profit organization, which will require a Board of Directors.**
- **Other communities may choose to expand an existing agency or add the CAC as a program to an organization.**
- **Whatever the decision is, it is important to ensure that ALL community partners are involved and have a voice.**

What Type of Entity Will Your CAC/CYAC Be?

- **If you decide to establish a new organization, you will need to:**
 - **register your centre, either provincially or federally; and**
 - **apply for status as a registered charity.**

- **These processes take time and generally require specific legal expertise. You may be able to access pro bono legal services from one of your stakeholders or partners.**

- **If you decide to expand an existing agency or develop the CAC as a program of one of your organizations, it is still essential to:**
 - **determine how the program will be governed; and**
 - **how partner organizations are represented and involved in making decisions.**

Developing A Service Model

- **In order to develop a Service Model, it is important to decide what your CYAC/CAC hopes to accomplish.**
- **Discussion with your partners about what you hope to achieve is necessary to develop goals that can be evaluated to measure success (e.g., increasing the number of joint investigations).**
- **Having a well-defined service model is essential to the success of a CYAC/CAC.**
- **Everyone needs to commit to the model in order for it to work.**
- **Agreeing on the [core] service elements is the 1st step so that you can develop your flow of service.**
- **If there is confusion or mandate drift, going back to the service model is helpful.**

Developing A Service Model

- **It is important to carefully think through what a child/youth's experience will be when s/he comes to the centre.**

- **There are many factors to consider, for example:**
 - **How will cases come into the centre?**
 - **How will the spaces, including where interviews are conducted, be made child-friendly?**
 - **What data will you collect and who is responsible for collecting data, tracking cases?**
 - **What are the roles and responsibilities of the staff working in the centre?**
 - **How will information sharing and confidentiality be addressed?**
 - **How will enhanced coordination between professionals and shared learning be promoted?**

Developing A Service Model

- **Many CYAC's have created a new position called an Advocate, who will provide support for the child and non-offending caregiver(s) throughout the entire process.**
- **The Advocate's role: provide consistent support, advocacy and referral services to child/youth victims/witnesses of abuse and their families from the time of the initial investigation to completion of the criminal justice process (or when no further services are needed).**
- **For the child/family, the involvement of an Advocate is voluntary; services are provided with consent from children/youth and/or non-offending family members/caregivers.**
- **You may wish to consider offering the services of an Advocate to the family even if there are no criminal charges and/or verification by child protection (or an open file).**

Developing A Service Model

“Now we can all go home confident that the victim is getting the best care, beyond what our abilities are – a lot of officers are not aware of services, but specialized people know, and we can move on to the next case knowing this one is being taken care of – it’s a big relief.” (Police officer/Boost CYAC)

“Before, we assumed that people were getting services once we referred them on – some people didn’t, and they slipped through the cracks. Now it would be very tough to slip through the cracks.” (Police officer/Boost CYAC)

“The advocate was with me consistently and she made me feel safe and comfortable and her support continued for months afterwards. Without her "filling in the gaps" for me, I wouldn't have known where to turn or what my next steps should be.” (Parent)

Developing A Budget

- **In order to determine the costs for a CYAC/CAC, you will need to consider the following:**
 - **What model will be implemented (e.g., co-located, interview site)?**
 - **Do you have a facility? Will you need to lease space?**
 - **What positions will the CYAC/CAC employ and the salary range?**
 - **What furniture/equipment will need to be purchased, including IT and security?**
 - **What are the ongoing maintenance costs (e.g., phone, IT, database)?**

Developing A Budget

- **What are your sources of revenue (e.g., government, private, grants)?**
- **If a co-located model, will the partners contribute to the shared costs?**
- **What is your capacity for fundraising?**
- **How will you sustain the CYAC/CAC?**
- **Raising the amount of money needed to service the entire region, or to include all the services can take a long time – do not be discouraged if you have to revise your original plan (more than once).**
- **For example, once a certain amount of funds have been secured, consider “starting somewhere” and build toward phasing in the full model.**

Key Factors For Successful Partnerships

- ✓ **Shared goal and purpose (best interests of the child).**
- ✓ **Need to establish trust with each other.**
- ✓ **Honesty – put issues on the table.**
- ✓ **Willingness to look at other perspectives.**
- ✓ **Everyone has a contribution to make and a role to play – it's important to understand each other's roles.**
- ✓ **Demonstrated commitment.**

Next Steps

- **While it is important to have a well-developed plan for your CYAC/CAC, it is not always possible to have the perfect plan. Sometimes you just need to start with what you have and build on that in order to develop your CYAC/CAC.**
- **Having a strong commitment from your partners is one of the most important elements that will determine your success.**
- **Having the core partners (police, child protection, medical, advocacy, mental health) at the table is key to your success.**
- **Deciding on the Governance model is necessary. This may require dissecting the pros and cons of different options (e.g., establishing the CYAC/CAC as a new non-profit agency; a program of one of the existing partner agencies; reconfiguring one of the existing partner agencies to become the CYAC/CAC).**
- **No matter what Governance model, Cooperation and Service Agreements between all partner agencies should be drawn up and signed. This can take a considerable amount of time, especially when legal counsel from each partner agency has to be consulted.**

Next Steps

- **Some of the components that will need to be addressed as you move forward, include establishing a:**
 - **Multidisciplinary Team**
 - **database for case tracking**
 - **process for case reviews**
- **Beginning to think about policies and procedures specific to the CYAC/CAC.**
- **Considering reaching out to/joining the support networks that have been established (CYAC of Ontario Network; National Network of CACs/CYACs).**

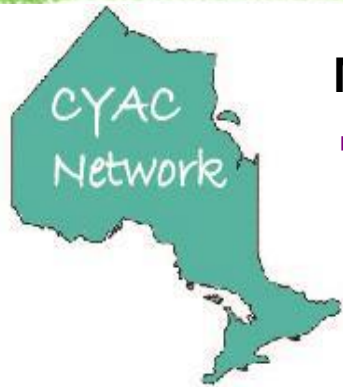


CYACO NETWORK

The Child & Youth Advocacy Centres of Ontario Network

- **The Child & Youth Advocacy Centres of Ontario (CYACO) Network is comprised of various communities across Ontario that have established CYACs or are in the process of developing a CYAC.**
- **The CYACO Network shares best practices and aims to speak in a unified voice.**
- **As of October 2015, the members of the CYACO Network include:**
 - Boost Child & Youth Advocacy Centre (Toronto)
 - Child Advocacy Centre of Simcoe/Muskoka (Orillia)
 - Children's Advocacy Centre (Ottawa)
 - Child Witness Centre (Waterloo)
 - Koala Place (Cornwall)
 - Kristen French Child Advocacy Centre Niagara (St. Catharines)
 - Safe Centre of Peel (Brampton)
 - Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (Sioux Lookout),
 - Windsor/Essex County
 - London Family Court Clinic

CYACO NETWORK (cont'd)



MISSION

- The CYACO Network is committed to building, supporting and influencing a sustainable community of CYACs across the province. Collectively, we promote the benefits of the CYAC model by providing information, support and leadership.

ACTIVITIES

- The CYACO Network spearheaded the initial development of *Provincial Standards & Guidelines* for Ontario CYACs.
- 2016-2018 *Strategic Plan*, divided into 5 areas:
 1. Build an effective Network
 2. Identify and obtain funding
 3. Enhance and expand programs and services; be leaders in best practice, training and education
 4. Identify appropriate resources, professional development, and competencies for CYACs
 5. Facilitate and oversee ongoing program evaluation and research to respond to emerging needs.

CYACO (cont'd)

- **Collaborative Evaluation Project: 4 CYACs pooled resources and contracted with the CWI to:**
 - **complete and document a literature review within the last 5 years re CYAC current practices, treatments/interventions, and evaluation tools used to assess program outcomes;**
 - **develop a high quality evaluation tools and process for CYACs across Ontario; and**
 - **assess the need for information sharing and data collection systems amongst the network.**



NATIONAL NETWORK OF CACs/CYACs

- **The Department of Justice coordinates the National Network of CACc/CYACs. This Network:**
 - is comprised of various communities across Canada that have established or are in the process of developing a CAC/CYAC
 - currently has 29 members
 - has established an Evaluation Subcommittee
- **The Department of Justice:**
 - coordinates and chairs quarterly teleconference calls for information sharing re updates, practices, research, discussion on a particular topic of interest
 - formed a National working group (comprised of a number of Network members) using the CYACO Network draft Standards & Guidelines as the framework to create a Canadian vision and National CYAC standards and guidelines
 - conducted a multi-site study
 - sponsors WebExs on various topics
 - funded Boost for the 2-year CYAC Training Project



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