




Victim Advocacy and Support Services

National Guidelines for Canadian
Child Advocacy Centres/Child & Youth Advocacy Centres



Outline

- Background & Context
- The Advocate Role Across Canada
 - **Child Witness Centre**, Kingston, ON
 - **SeaStar CYAC**, Halifax, NS
 - **SKY Coordinated Response**, Kootenay Boundary, BC
 - **CYAC Simcoe Muskoka**, Simcoe Muskoka, ON
- Challenges & Learnings
- Q&A



Guideline


Victim advocacy and support services are available to all children, youth and their families at the CAC/CYAC. Advocacy and support are offered to help reduce trauma for the child, youth and supporting family members and to improve outcomes.



Key Components

“A victim advocate is available to the child and family to provide a consistent and comprehensive network of support.”

Can include:

- Support
 - Education
 - System navigation
 - Information & updates
 - Access to supportive services and referrals
 - Continuity and follow up
- 

Role title may vary

Victim Advocate

Child & Youth Advocate

Family Advocate

Victim Services Responder

Coordinator

Navigator



Rationale

- Child and youth victims and their families:
 - Have a number of individualized needs
 - Need assistance in understanding & navigating through the responses of different systems
 - May require both immediate and on-going support throughout the criminal justice process and after
- Continuity of support
- Neutral role, not aligned with any one partner mandate





From: *Field Guide to Family Advocacy*. (2017). Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi and West Virginia Child Advocacy Network

Function

“...the role of the victim advocate was a significant strength of the CAC model. It was seen as providing the glue to hold the MDT together and supporting clients throughout the process.”

Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice Canada. (2018). Understanding the Development and Impact of Child Advocacy Centres (CACs). Ottawa, ON: Department of Justice Canada.

“You are the hub or the “glue” for the team’s overall response.”

Children’s Advocacy Centers of Mississippi & West Virginia Child Advocacy Network. (2017). Field Guide to Family Advocacy.



Anticipated outcomes

Victim advocacy and support services are available to all children, youth and their families at the CAC/CYAC. Advocacy and support are offered to help reduce trauma for the child, youth and supporting family members and to improve outcomes.



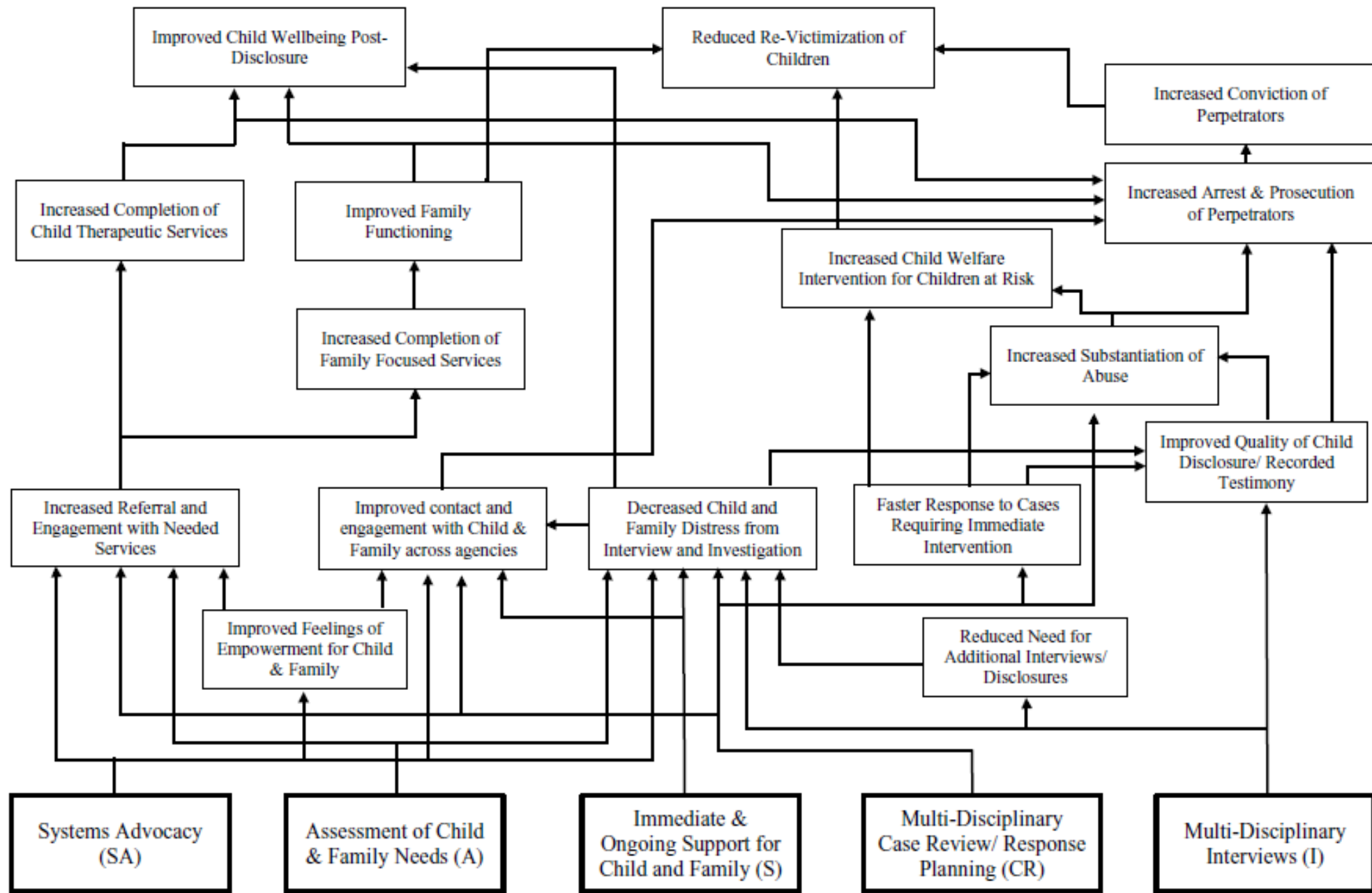


Fig. 2. Outcomes logic for multi-disciplinary teams.

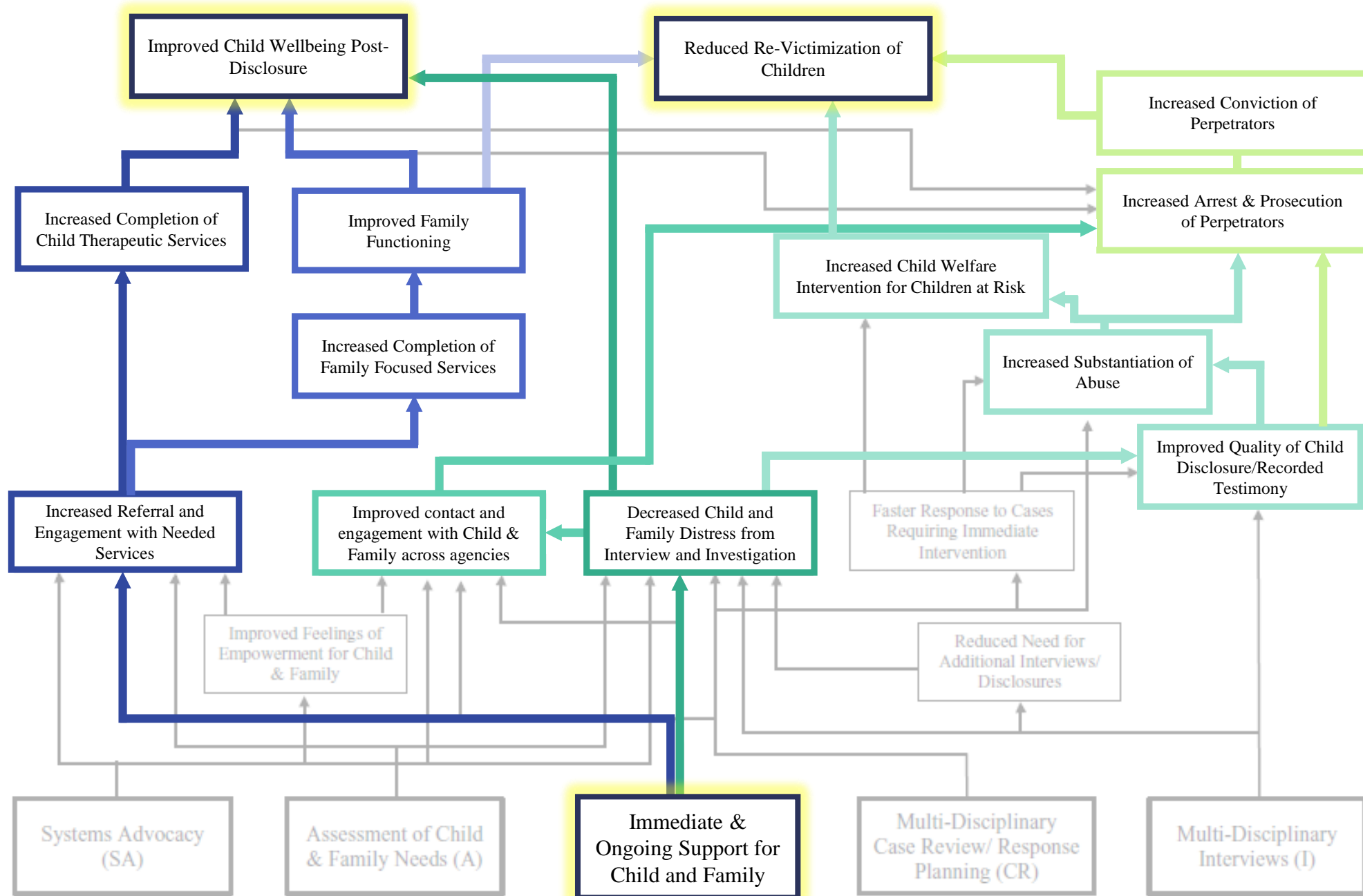


Fig. 2. Outcomes logic for multi-disciplinary teams.

Anticipated outcomes

“Caregivers identified the victim advocate as the most important service received by them and their child(ren).”

Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice Canada. (2018). Understanding the Development and Impact of Child Advocacy Centres (CACs). Ottawa, ON: Department of Justice Canada.



Variations

- Considerations may include:
 - Existing services (e.g. Victim Services), avoiding duplication
 - Community's gaps & needs
 - Available resources
 - Case volume
 - Geographic reach



Variations

- Structure
 - Designated role(s) within the CYAC
 - Provided by a partner agency
 - Components shared across roles
 - One person vs multiple
 - Paid vs Volunteer

Key Component:

“Although more than one person may perform advocacy functions at different points in time, coordination that promotes continuity and consistency is the responsibility of the CYAC.”

Variations

- Although it may be implemented in different ways
- We're all working toward implementation of the same guideline
- The goals remain the same:

Comprehensive advocacy and support to **reduce trauma**
and **improve outcomes**



The Advocate role across Canada





Child Witness Centre





Child and Youth Advocacy Centre

Child and Youth Advocate Program



- It is a VOLUNTARY program offered to all children and youth who are participating in a forensic interview.
- Primarily Child and Youth Advocate services are utilized within the scope of the CYAC, but services may extend to other areas of our local police services.
- Provide consistent support, advocacy and referral to services for children, youth and their families.
- Child and Youth Advocates work rotating shifts and are available to provide forensic interview support between the hours of 9:00 am and 8:00 pm.
- Child and Youth Advocate can attend forensic interviews outside of the CYAC location.

Forensic Interview Support

- Child and Youth Advocate greets child/youth and their family to the center.
- Provides a tour of the center.
- Explains the interview process and introduces child/youth to the MDT.
- Completes Child and Youth Advocate Consent and Release of Information.
- Is available to support the child/youth and their family during the interviews, answering questions and supporting their emotional well being.
- Provided the family consents to follow up support the Child and Youth Advocate will connect with the youth and caregivers within 72 hours post interview.

Follow Up Only Support

- Sometimes a Child and Youth Advocate is unavailable or unable to attend the initial forensic interviews, in this case police or child protection can refer them for support and an advocate will follow up in 72 hours.

Ongoing Support

- Referring the child/youth and their families to supportive services.
- Maintaining regular communication with the family on a scheduled bases as needed.
- Providing general support and information.
- Serving as an advocate/liaison between families and agencies.
- Maintaining contact with the MDT for relevant updates, as well as sharing questions/concerns raised b the family

Rebecca Heibein-Kursikowski

Program Supervisor
111 Duke Street East
Kitchener, ON
N2H1A4

519-744-0904 X 231

rebecca.heibein-kursikowski@childwitness.com



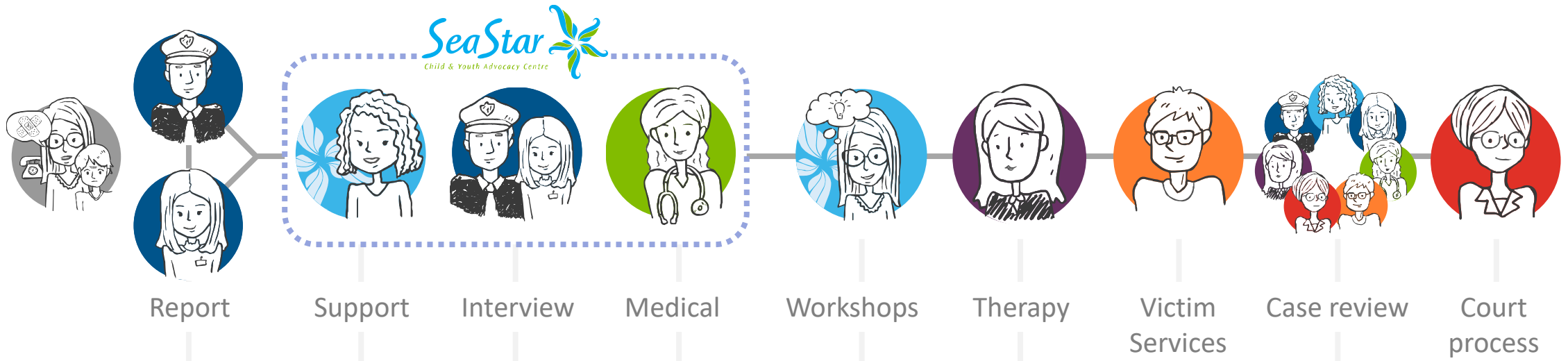
SeaStar

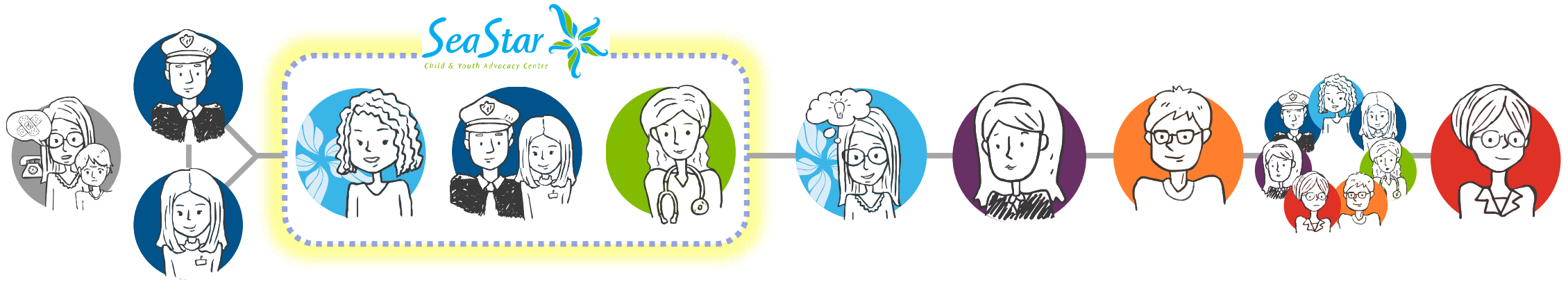
Child & Youth Advocacy Centre





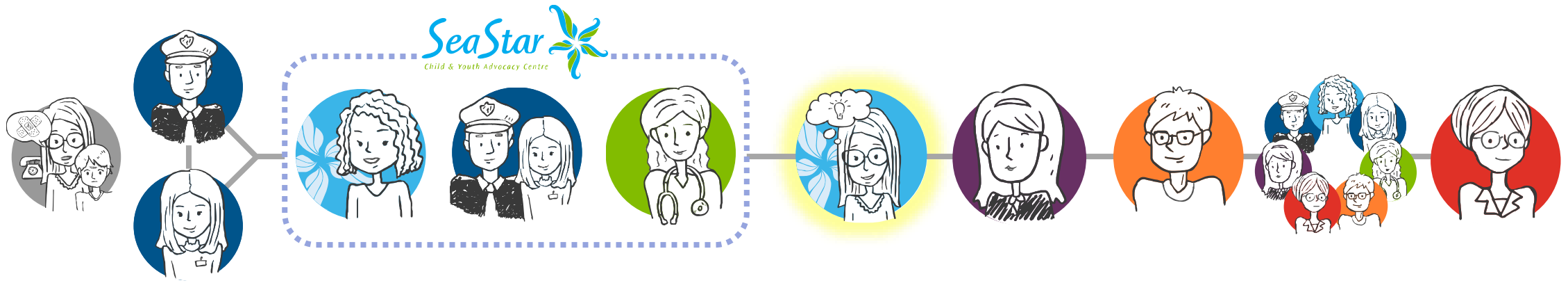
- **Child & Youth Advocate Position**
- BSW, Registered Social Worker
 - Experience in:
 - child protection/child welfare
 - intake and/or client navigation





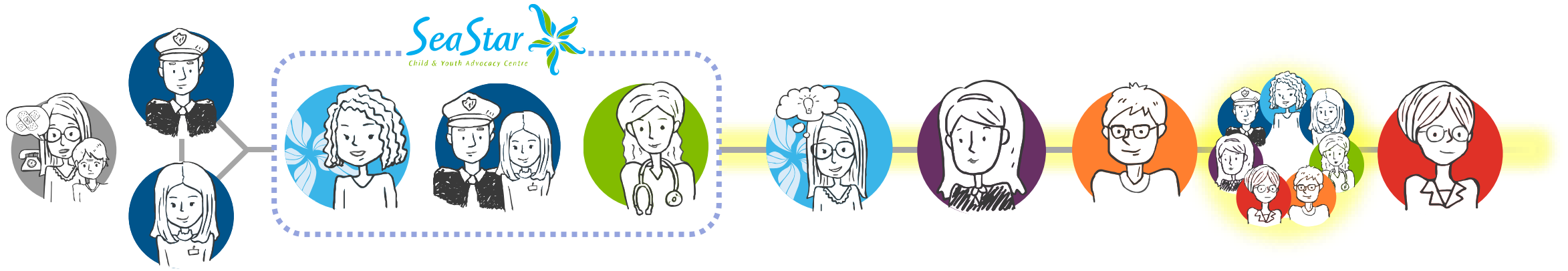
Support during/after visit

- Helps plan smooth & coordinated visit
- Meets with caregiver while child interviewed
 - Focus is on process & system information
- Supports child while caregiver interviewed
- Assesses for & helps make referrals



Psychoeducational workshops

- Understanding of trauma, emotions, self-awareness
- Practical parenting strategies
- Self-care



Ongoing follow up

- Individualized level of contact
- May stay connected alongside Victim Services
- Will close file when family is ready
- Attend Case Review



Christina.Shaffer@iwk.nshealth.ca

www.SeaStarCYAC.ca



[@SeaStarCYAC](https://twitter.com/SeaStarCYAC)

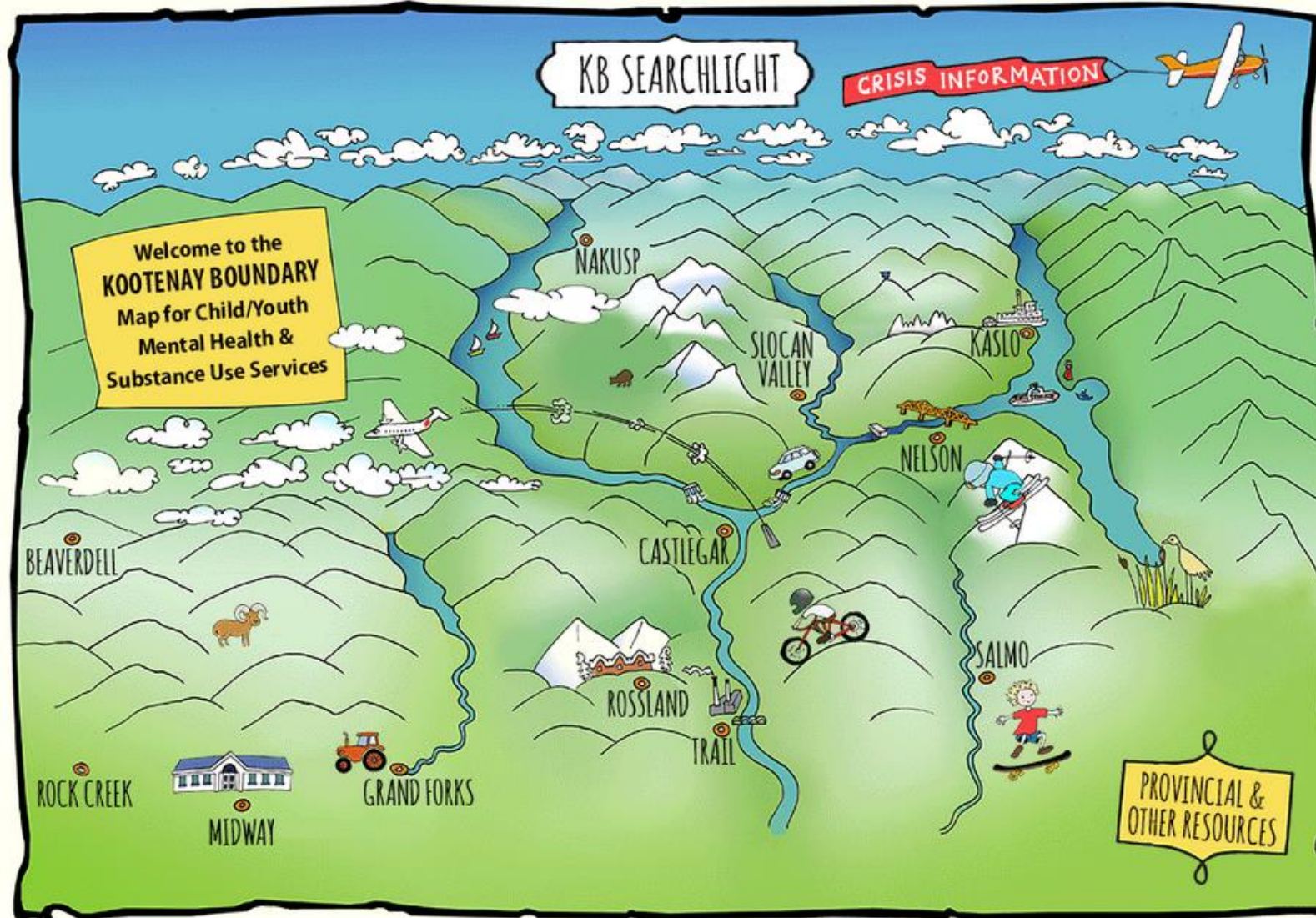


[SeaStarCYAC](https://www.facebook.com/SeaStarCYAC)



Safe Kids & Youth
Coordinated Response

Safe Kids & Youth (SKY) Coordinated Response



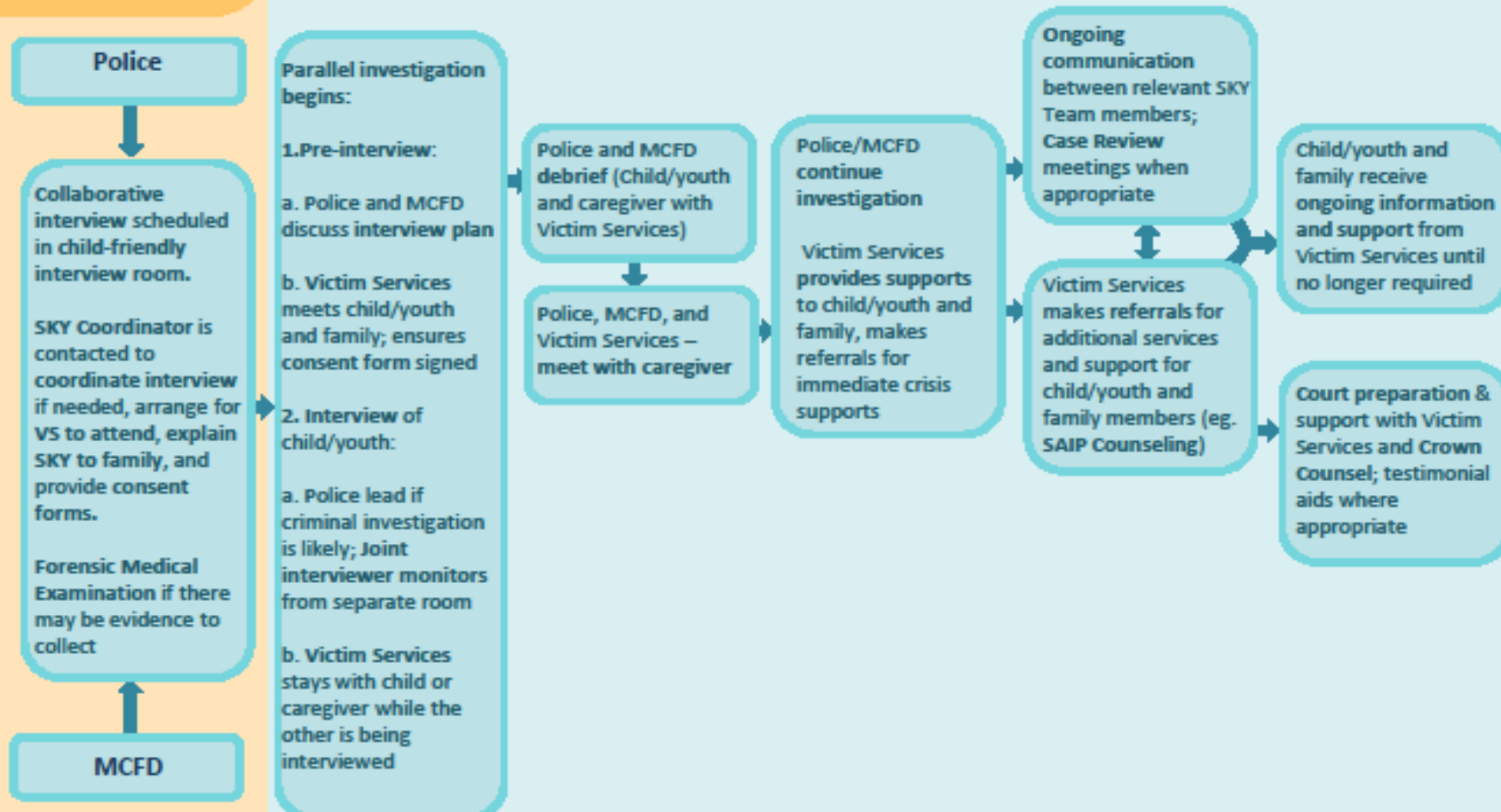
Structure of SKY Coordination



- Our Child Advocate positions are called “SKY Coordinators”
- Had contracted with Victim Service Workers in each community, but recently restructured
- Now have two part-time SKY Coordinators that cover three communities each



Safe Kids & Youth (SKY) Coordinated Response Practice Flow Model



Role of SKY Coordinators

- MDT Coordination at the time of interview
- Provides system navigation to SKY families
- Organizes MDT meetings, including case review meetings
- Manages data collection
- Promotes awareness of SKY Coordinated Response
- Maintains interview rooms





Website: <https://thekoop.ca/sky/>

Krysta Aronson

SKY Regional Manager

Email: sky@thekoop.ca

Phone: 1-250-551-1126



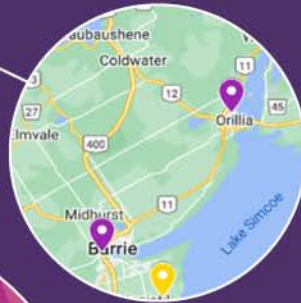


**The Child & Youth Advocacy Centre
Simcoe Muskoka**



Police
Child Welfare
Victim Services
Medical
Mental Health
Court Supports





Common Ground

Next Session
Tuesday Sept 13th - Tuesdays from 5-7 pm for 6 weeks

Location
Barrie CYAC - 64 Cedar Pointe Drive, Unit 1409

For questions & to register
Email: commonground@cyacsimcokesimcokes.ca
or call: 705-327-0118 to speak with an advocate

A 6-week youth group for female identifying folks ages 12-18 who have witnessed, experienced, or are at increased risk of experiencing gender-based violence to come together in a safe space to learn how to break the cycle of abuse.

Weekly Topics

- Social Media
- Healthy Relationships
- Gender-Based and Dating Violence
- Human Trafficking
- Safety Planning
- Consent & Boundaries

You are not alone

Role of the Advocate in Practice in Simcoe Muskoka

- ★ Advocate Support
- ★ Our Community/Mobile Approach to Advocacy Programming
- ★ Our Facility Dogs
- ★ Common Ground Youth Group
- ★ Satellite Medical Examination Space on-site our Orillia location

A group of people, seen from behind, standing in a field of tall grass at sunset. They are all raising their hands to form heart shapes against the orange and purple sky. The image has a soft, purple-tinted overlay.

Advocacy Program Overview

The Advocacy Program is voluntary and free of charge for children/youth (up to and including age 24) and their non-offending family.

Advocates support child/youth victims or witnesses of crime including (physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, domestic violence, online sexual exploitation, and human trafficking.)

Child & Youth Advocates are available during business hours to support Forensic Interviews, but often flex their schedule to meet the needs of our Investigative MDT partners.

Key highlights of the Advocate program are:

- ★ Coordination of the Forensic Interview including scheduling and intake
- ★ Forensic Interview Support
- ★ Follow-Up Support
- ★ On-going Support



Coordination of the Forensic Interview

- ★ Advocates receive a call from police services or child protection services (Investigative MDT) to schedule a forensic interview when a report or disclosure has been made to them.
- ★ Forensic Interview(s) are scheduled at one of our locations.
 - ★ Joint Police & Child Protection Investigations
 - ★ Police Only
 - ★ Child Protection Only
- ★ General intake completed during booking.
- ★ Coordination and preparation of any special requests from Investigative MDT to best support the family and/or investigation



Forensic Interview Support

- ★ Advocates ensure the space is welcoming, child/youth friendly, culturally safe and prepared with any special accommodations to best support the child/youth.
- ★ Advocates greet and welcome the child/youth and their non-offending caregiver(s) providing a tour of the centre, along with snacks & refreshments.
- ★ The Advocate facilitates the introduction of the child/youth to the MDT and explain the forensic interview process and 'what to expect'.
- ★ Advocates support the child/youth and attending caregivers during the forensic interview in our Family Room spaces
- ★ Informed Consent to Service or Verbal Consent for Follow-up



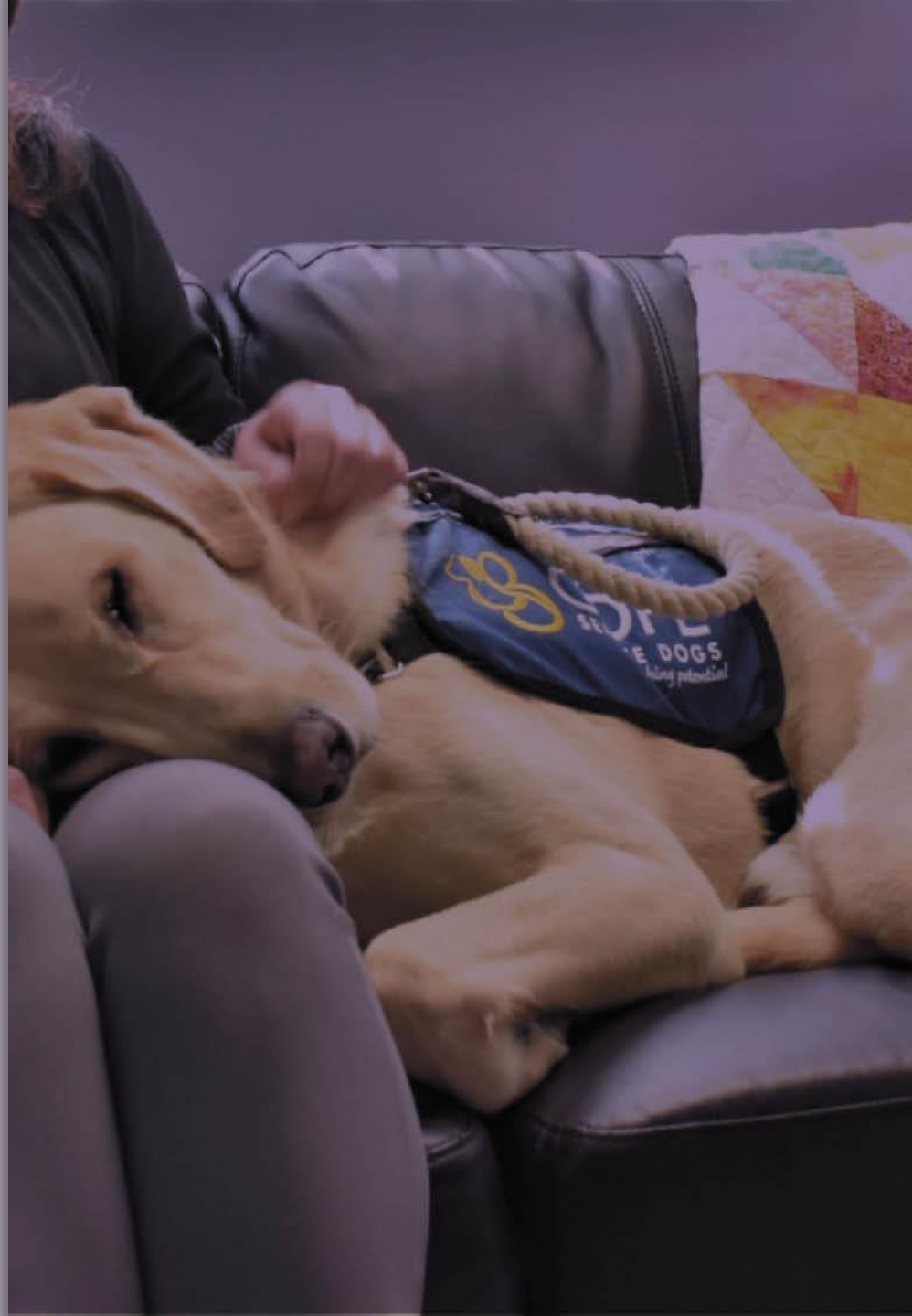
Follow-Up Support

- ★ Advocates follow-up with families within 72 hours following the forensic interview to discuss their self-guided next steps, goals, and priority needs.
- ★ Verbal Consent for follow-up calls include explanation of Advocate Program and Supports and next steps towards the child/youth and family's goals (service referrals, educational materials, needs assessments, cultural supports)
- ★ Needs Assessments include learning about high priority needs and setting a next steps plan with the child/youth and family.



On-going Support

- ★ Advocates maintain regular contact with the child/youth and family to provide:
 - ★ System Navigation
 - ★ Referrals to post-investigative MDT partners & unique community programming
 - ★ medical, mental health, Victim Services, culturally-based and family focused services, housing/food programs, and/or legal supports
 - ★ Animal-based therapeutic programs, LGBTQ2S programming, recreation, and grief supports
- ★ Provide on-going education and information re: understanding abuse and trauma, emotions, self-care, secondary prevention education.

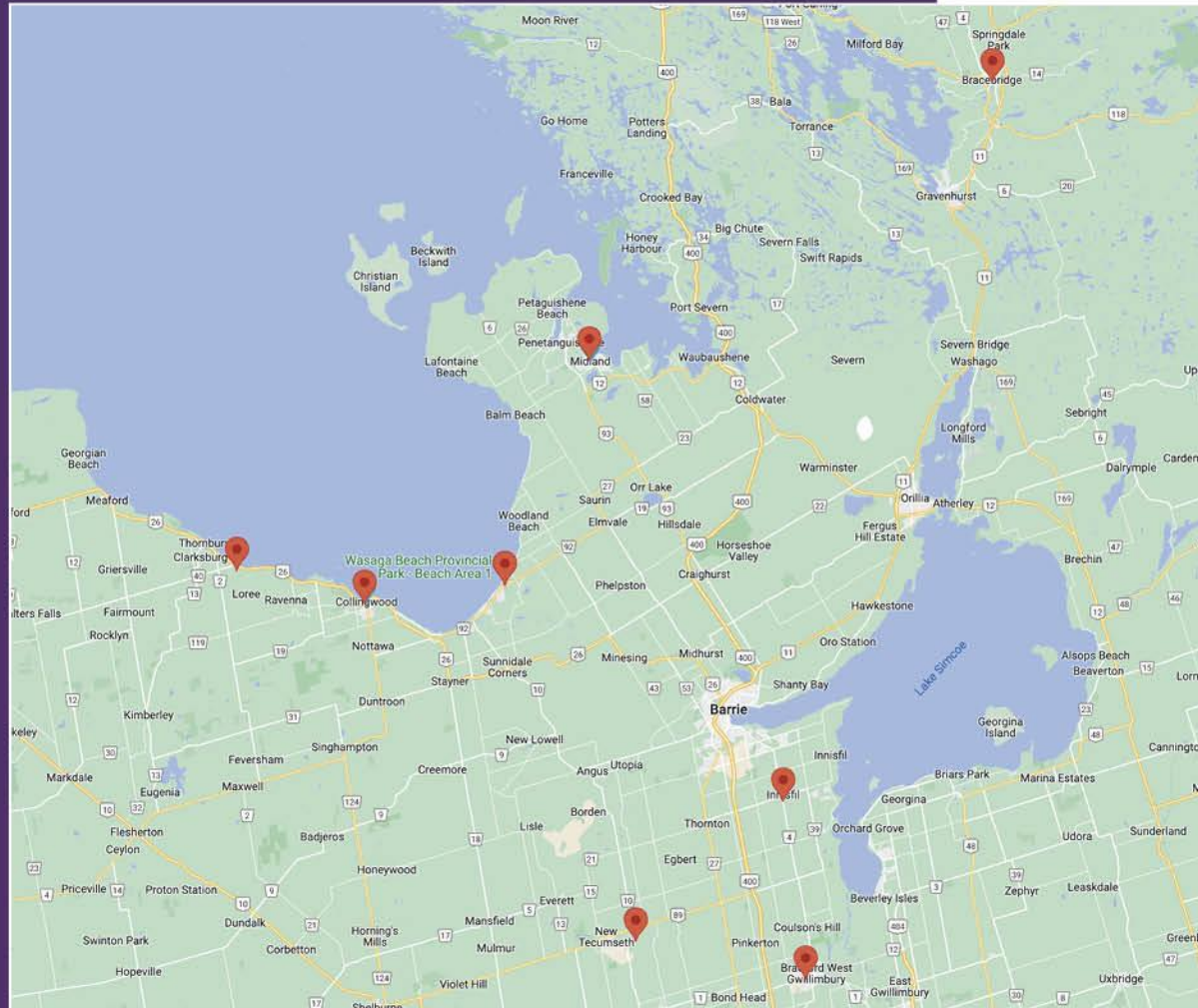


Community/Mobile Approach to Advocacy Programming

A Child & Youth Advocate is deployed across our region, accompanied by one of our Accredited Facility dogs to support the child/youth, their family, and our MDT closer to the child's home community.

- ★ Community Centered
- ★ Provides a safe and familiar surrounding closer to the child/youth's home
- ★ Reduces transportation barriers for both the family and MDT partners
- ★ Aids in timely MDT collaboration
- ★ Cost effective

Mobile Locations



- ★ Alliston
- ★ Bracebridge
- ★ Bradford
- ★ Collingwood
- ★ Innisfil
- ★ Midland
- ★ Town of The Blue Mountains
- ★ Wasaga Beach



Meet our Canine Team



Beacon and Moose help to create feelings of safety and calm for children, youth and families while at our Centres.

They provide emotional and relaxation support as well as deep pressure therapy





Common Ground



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Weekly Topics



You are not alone

Funded by:



Women and Gender Equality Canada

Satellite Medical Examination



Satellite Medical Examination Room in partnership with Orillia Soldiers Memorial Hospital and The Regional Centre for Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect.



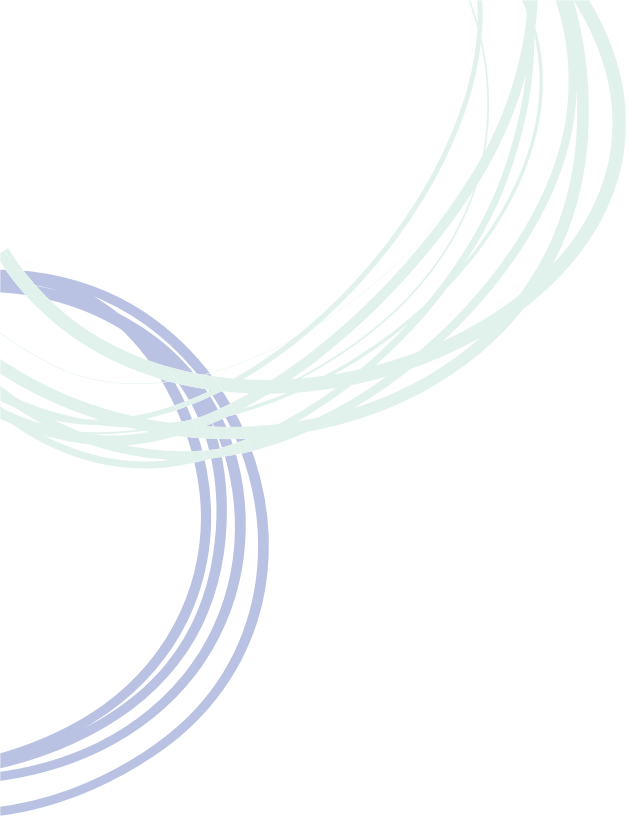
705.327.0118

www.cyacsimcoemuskoka.ca

ORILLIA: 359 West St. N. Orillia, ON L3V 5E5

BARRIE: 64 Cedar Pointe Dr. Unit 1409, Barrie, ON L4N 5R7


info@cyacsimcoemuskoka.ca



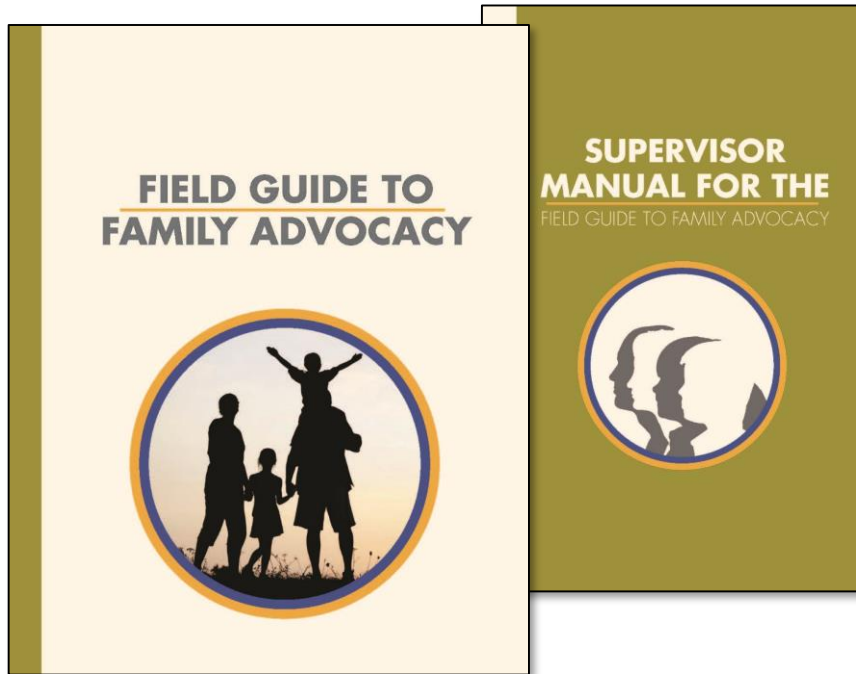
Challenges & Learnings



What we have learned?

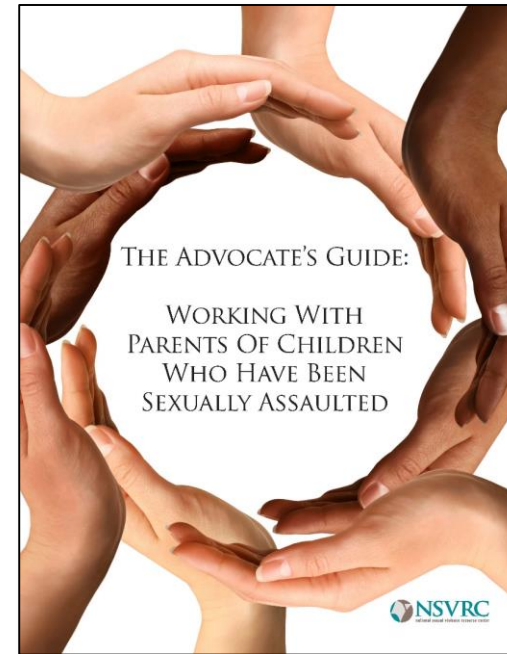
- We are still learning!
 - Listen to your MDT
 - Need strong relationships with partners
 - Need consistent coordination across all communities
 - Staff turnover & awareness of the role
 - Celebrate our local (and regional) diversity
 - Facility Dog program
 - Co-location
 - Funding
- 

Additional resources



Field Guide to Family Advocacy

Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi
and West Virginia Child Advocacy Network



The Advocate's Guide: Working with Parents of Children who have been Sexually Assaulted

National Sexual Violence Resource Centre



Questions?
