

CARE FOR THE CAREGIVERS

Child abuse affects the entire family.

Oftentimes, caregivers will ignore their own needs once abuse is disclosed.

If you find yourself in the position of needing to care for a child sexual abuse victim and hold a family together, remember to take care of your-self as well.

Schedule self-care time, join a support group, or seek out a qualified mental health counselor for support and guidance.

The Children's Advocacy Center can make an appropriate mental health referral for caregivers too.

To contact the Children's Advocacy Center:

Susan Loehn

593 Elm Street
Northampton MA 01060
(413) -522-2946

To contact the Northwestern DA's Child Abuse Unit

One Gleason Plaza Northampton
MA 01060 (413) 586-9225

www.northwesterncac.org



Family Waiting Room at the CAC

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IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD HAS BEEN A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Always report any suspicions of child abuse. Call the **Department of Children and Families at (413) 775- 5000** or after 5 pm and weekends the **Child-at Risk Hotline at 800-792-5200**. You may save a child from further harm if you report your suspicions.

Emergency medical treatment for child abuse is provided at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield or UMASS Medical Center in Worcester.

Remain calm and thank the child for telling someone. The child has undergone a potentially traumatic experience and could be frightened by your response.

Acknowledge that it is not the child's fault. Child abuse is NEVER the victim's fault. The child may feel ashamed and embarrassed or feel that he or she allowed the abuse to happen. Explain to the child that it is not his or her fault. The child is not to blame and is not in trouble.

Encourage the child to talk openly. In abuse situations a child tends not to trust people as easily, because the abuser has violated that trust. But once a child discloses abuse, he or she may feel as though a weight has been lifted off him or her. Encourage the child to talk freely with you or a trusted person about what happened without pressuring them.

THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING SERVICES FREE OF CHARGE:

FORENSIC INTERVIEWS

- A child-friendly, non-leading, non-traumatizing interview of child victims is conducted in a neutral location and a comfortable environment to obtain an impartial account of the child's abuse that is accurate without causing further trauma to the child.
- The multidisciplinary team observes the interview from a separate room using closed-circuit technology.

MEDICAL EVALUATIONS

- The Children's Advocacy Center provides appointments to an experienced medical doctor specializing in pediatric and adolescent sexual abuse and forensic evidence collection.
- On-site non-emergency forensic medical exams are available to victims of suspected sexual or physical abuse. Medical services are provided in collaboration with Cooley-Dickinson Hospital .

COUNSELING & REFERRALS

- Information and referrals for trauma informed mental health treatment are provided for victims and family members.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

- The CAC provides outreach and education to child care workers and community members to end child abuse in our community.

ADVOCACY & SUPPORT SERVICES

- Coordination, advocacy and support throughout the criminal justice process.
- Information on victim's rights including victim compensation and protective orders as well as general support for child victims and their family.

90%

of child sexual abuse victims are abused by someone they know, love and trust.

- 1 in 4 girls will be sexually abused before turning 18.
- 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before turning 18.
- 1 in 5 children is sexually solicited online.

