Balance the Scales for Kids

NATIONAL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL CENTER FOR PROSECUTION OF CHILD ABUSE
Making the Multidisciplinary Team Approach Work

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It can happen anywhere
MDT APPROACH

- An opportunity for professionals to collaborate and conduct joint interviews, which minimize the number of times the details of a case needs to be retold by a child.
Multidisciplinary Teams

• An effective Multi-disciplinary Team is dependent on a shared understanding of its goals and mission but also on shared knowledge of the general practices and procedures the team will follow in its efforts to investigate and prosecute child abuse cases as well as provide vital intervention services to child abuse victims and their families.
Multidisciplinary Teams

Benefits

- The use of a skilled forensic interviewer.
- Elimination of duplicative efforts.
- Comprehensive information sharing.
- Promote proper and expedient collection of evidence.
- To reduce secondary trauma to the victim and family, associated with the investigative process.
Services for Professionals Through MDT/CAC

- Coordination of team members for joint interviews and multidisciplinary team review meetings.
- Specially designed interview rooms with one way mirrors.
- Trained Forensic Interviewers.
- Expertise in the area of forensic interviewing, child sexual abuse and child victimization on the Internet.
Multidisciplinary Teams

- Historically, child abuse cases have been investigated by law enforcement and child protective service workers and often with each professional conducting separate investigations. Today, many jurisdictions have the availability of utilizing a multidisciplinary team to investigate these cases in a comprehensive manner. There are many benefits to a team approach.
Multidisciplinary Teams

- The use of a skilled forensic interviewer.
- Eliminate duplication of efforts.
- Comprehensive information sharing.
- Promote proper and expedient collection of evidence.
- To reduce secondary trauma to the victim, associated with the investigative process.
Members of the Team

The multidisciplinary team should be composed of professionals that are a part of the investigation and responsible for the child’s safety.
Members of the Team

- Law enforcement
- Child Protective Service Worker
- Forensic Interviewer
- Prosecutor
- Guardian ad Litem/Child Court Advocate
- Foster Care
- State Licensing Professionals
- Friend of the Court Counselor
- School
- Mental Health Professionals
- Medical Professionals
THE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION

- Confidentiality
- Self-analysis
- Conflict resolution
THE MDT “PEER REVIEW”

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- How
EVALUATE TEAM PERFORMANCE

• “If it isn’t broken, don’t fix it”.

• Greater volume of cases.

• Need for more communication.

• Has quality of the cases changed.

• New members.

• Need for review is constant.
KEEPING THE TEAM GOING

• 1. Dealing with conflict
• 2. Promoting team work
• 3. Preventing burnout
• 4. Peer review
• 5. Funding
MDTs Under Attack

- Economic woes impacting states, counties, police departments, prosecutors, non-government agencies
- Staff reductions
- Staff redeployments
Cases are not going away

- In 2007, it was estimated that child abuse and neglect cost the United States approximately $103,800,000,000.00.

- Prosecution
- Incarceration
- Investigation
- Child welfare

Cases are not going away

- May cities have seen a dramatic increase in the number of child abuse case since this recession began
  - Phoenix
  - Boston
  - Seattle
  - Las Vegas
  - Chicago
  - Beaufort, South Carolina
How to Protect and Strengthen Your MDT

- Fund raising
- Grants
- Forfeiture
Cost Benefit of Using a MDT/CAC

- Average cost of a non-CAC/MDT investigation: $3,949
- Average cost of a CAC/MDT investigation is $2,902
- 36% lower cost for investigation
- CAC/MDT communities have a higher return of investment in community services

Shadoin Amy, Demographic and Attitudinal Characteristics Predicting Taxpayer Willingness to Pay for Child Maltreatment Prevention (December 2007)
CACs in Delaware

- A.I. DuPont Hospital for Children
  1600 Rockland Road
  Wilmington, DE 1980
  Phone: 302-651-4566

- Sue Poley: Forensic Interviewer/
  Center Coordinator
CACs in Delaware

- 611 S. DuPont Highway
  Suite 201
  Dover, DE 19901
  Phone: 302-741-2123

- Diane Klecan: Forensic Interviewer/Center Coordinator
CACs in Delaware

- Children and Families First Building
  410 S. Bedford Street
  Georgetown, DE 19947
  Phone: 302-854-0323

- Ralph "Buster" Richardson:
  Forensic Interviewer/Center Coordinator
CACs in Delaware

- A.I. DuPont Hospital for Children
- Kent County CAC
- Sussex County CAC
Forfeiture

- Delaware has the existing legislative framework and case law to use forfeiture to support the specialized investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases
Forfeiture

- If the paper, articles or things were allegedly used in the commission of a crime, they shall be returned to the person from whom seized if such person is no thereafter duly convicted of the alleged crime; but if such person is duly convicted of the alleged crime, the papers, articles and things shall be disposed of as the court directs.

11 Del. C. § 2311a(3)
Forfeiture

- Cases
Forfeiture

• Preponderance of the Evidence
• One year statute of limitations; from the date of sentencing
• Criminal conviction required pursuant to common law
• Defendant entitled to jury trial; same jury that heard criminal conviction
Forfeiture

- Cars
- Computers
- Houses
- Cash
- Weapons
- Digital Camera
- Television/electronics
- Cell phones
- Blackberrys/smart devices
- IPODS/IPHONES
- Items used to groom
- Businesses
- Digital Video Recorder
“[C]hildren present us with a uniquely compelling motivation for mobilization. Our collective failure to protect children must be transformed into an opportunity to confront the problems that cause their suffering.”

Graça Machel
Acknowledgements

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