



## WILL TRAUMA THERAPY HELP YOUR CHILD?

Many of the children who visit Adams County Children's Advocacy Center (ACCAC) have been traumatized by their experiences. At ACCAC, we understand that this can be a stressful time for your family and we want to support you and convey hope that your child's trauma can be healed.

Sometimes a caregiver does not believe that their child needs therapy. For instance, they may say,

***"I don't want my child to have to think about it...I want them to just forget it and move on."***

Research has shown that a child will never fully forget about a trauma they experienced. Trauma is stored in the body, not just in the mind. Expressive therapies like art therapy and play therapy help a child express the trauma that is in their body without having to use words to express it. Or if your child wants to talk about it, cognitively based trauma therapy is a good outlet to answer the questions your child has about what happened to them instead of your child asking a peer or reenacting the trauma they experienced. Our therapist is trained in both, and is happy to meet with you to answer your questions and to see if everyone agrees it is a good fit.

***"I had things happen to me when I was little, I didn't talk to anyone about it and I'm fine."***

Unfortunately, what we know is that when most children and teens experience trauma, but don't process it with a trauma focused professional, they carry it with them throughout their lives. This has the potential to negatively impact their lives in the future. We are here to support you and to help get your child set up with our in-house therapist or another therapist in the community whenever you are ready. We can also share with you a list of professionals in the area that are happy to see your child or yourself for any counseling services you may want.

***"My child is acting completely normal...I don't think they were affected/I don't think this even happened."***

That is true for a lot of children and teens after experiencing a trauma. Trauma symptoms often don't occur immediately after a traumatic event, but rather over time, 3 months or even 1 year later. It is your choice if you would like to start with our therapist, who is willing to evaluate your child's trauma needs, now or in the future. Often it is better to start therapy before symptoms start to negatively impact your child's life. If you are not ready for an evaluation now, we welcome and encourage you to call back for services in the future. We can also provide you with a list of providers in the area if you feel more comfortable choosing one of these agencies.



### ***Who is ACCAC's In-House Therapist?"***

Amanda Evans-Freet has a master's degree in Art therapy (RTR-BC). She is a registered and board certified art therapist with the American Art Therapy Association and can practice anywhere in the United States and the United Kingdom. She is also a licensed professional counselor (LPC) registered with the PA state board. She is a nationally certified trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapist (TF-CBT), with post graduate education in play therapy focusing on insecure and disorganized attachment (Theraplay). She has been practicing for over 10 years in Pennsylvania with a strong focus on working with children who have experienced traumatic events. This focus includes a strong interest in the neurobiological implications of trauma on children and attachment disorders.

### **Understanding the Impact of "ACES" on your Child's Future**

ACES, or Adverse Childhood Experiences, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood. For example: experiencing violence or abuse, witnessing violence in the home or community, death of a family member, or household instability due to parental separation. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness and substance abuse in adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact your child's education and job opportunities.

Getting help immediately is the key to preventing lifelong consequences for your child. Research has shown that helping children to process their feelings and understanding about the traumatic event(s) both reduces symptoms of trauma now and improves their health and wellbeing throughout life.

### **You Have the Most Critical Role in Your Child's Healing**

Children experience their world in the context of family relationships. You are your child's most important protector and supporter. The traumatic event your child has experienced may be stressful and traumatic for you as well. Taking care of yourself helps you take care of your child. Our Child and Family Advocates are here to help you deal with your family's situation, identify needed resources and supports and prepare you for future challenges.

### **ABOUT ADAMS COUNTY CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER...**

Adams County Children's Advocacy Center is dedicated to a community where children are safe, families are strong, and child victims of abuse can become children again.

We are here to support and advocate for you and your child. When you visit our Center, your family will be treated kindly and respectfully in a child-friendly environment. We exist to reduce the trauma of child abuse investigations, promote healing for children and families, foster professional collaboration and cooperation during the investigative process and to promote education and advocacy regarding the prevention of child abuse within the Adams County community.

To learn more about us, please visit our website: [www.kidsagaincac.org](http://www.kidsagaincac.org). If you have additional questions or concerns about ACCAC services, please contact Elida Murray, Executive Director, by phone or email: [emurray@kidsagaincac.org](mailto:emurray@kidsagaincac.org)

