

What If I Told You?
Child Abuse Prevention Training



Adams County, Our Community, Our Kids, Prevention is in Our Hands

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Think of 10 children you know:

- Your children
- Grandchildren
- Nieces or nephews
- In your neighborhood
- In your church
- In your community group



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Just 5%

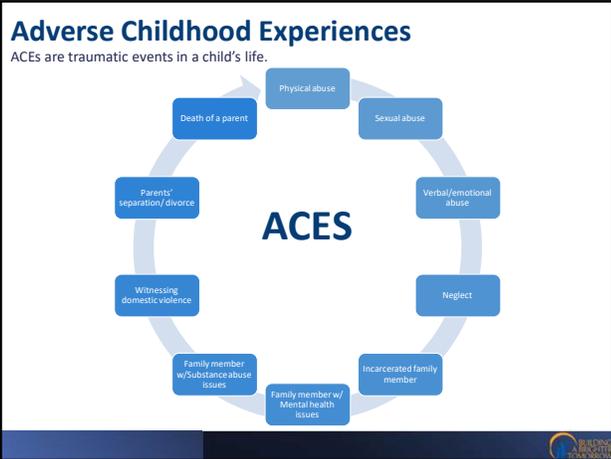
Everyone deserves to live in a community where children are safe & families are strong.

Experts believe that when 5% of adults learn about child abuse prevention, that is the tipping point in reducing child abuse in the community.

Thank ***you*** for being one of the 5% !



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Effects of ACEs

The higher the number of ACEs, the higher likelihood of more negative outcomes across their entire life.

Having an ACE score of 1 increases the likelihood of:

- PTSD
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Substance abuse
- Chronic health problems
- Poverty
- Early death

Having an ACE score of 4 or more can lead to:

- 4x more likely to abuse substances
- 3x more likely to suffer from chronic depression
- 3x more likely to have issues with employment
- 2x more likely to have serious financial issues
- 2x more likely to have heart disease
- 2x more likely to have a stroke

Having an ACE score of 6 or more can lead to a shorter life expectancy by 20 years.

The children visiting our center have an average ACE score of 5.95.

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5 Steps to Protecting Our Children

1. Learn the Facts
2. Minimize Opportunity
3. Talk About It
4. Recognize the Signs
5. React Responsibly



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1. LEARN THE FACTS

- Reality over passive trust should guide our choices about children’s safety from abuse.
- Recognize the prevalence of child abuse.
- Understand how it occurs
- 1 in 10 children are sexually abused
- Over 90% of them know their abuser
- In 2017, there were 433 ChildLine reports made in Adams County
- Last year, 226 children were served at ACCAC



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Myths About Child Abuse

- Child abuse only happens in some parts of society.
- Children are victimized by strangers.
- Children usually tell someone they are being abused.
- Many children lie about being abused.
- If a child has been sexually abused, there will be medical evidence.
- The most common type of abuse children experience at home is sexual abuse.
- Males who are sexually abused as boys grow up to sexually abuse children.
- Only men sexually abuse children.
- Boys are less traumatized as victims of sexual abuse than girls.
- Children with disabilities are less likely to become victims of abuse than children without disabilities.



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Abuse across Pennsylvania

In 2020:

- 2,697 (61%) of substantiated reports involved girls and 1,755 (39%) of substantiated reports of abuse involved boys.
 - 1% of cases were emotional abuse
 - 4% were medical neglect
 - 9% were neglect

In 2021:

- 38,013 cases of suspected child abuse were reported across the state.
 - 2,098 cases were of *re-abuse*
 - 17,742 were age 0-8 and 20,195 were age 9-17*
- 5,036 cases reported were substantiated
 - 325 were cases of *re-abuse*
 - 2,753 were age 0-8 and 609 were age 9-17*
- Approximately 14 out of every 1,000 children in Pennsylvania victims of suspected abuse.
- 192,592 children were provided in-home services through local county agencies to ensure safety & well-being in their own home



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Abuse across Adams County

In 2021,

- 364 reports of suspect child abuse were made
 - 26 were cases of *re-abuse*
 - 179 children were ages 0-8 and 185 were ages 9-17
- 61 cases of child abuse were substantiated
 - 10 were cases of *re-abuse*
 - 16 out of every 1,000 children were reported as victims
- 1,403 children were provided in-home services through local county agencies to ensure safety & well-being in their own home



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2. MINIMIZE OPPORTUNITY

- Eliminate or reduce isolated, one-on-one situations with adults
- Screen those who care for children in youth-serving settings
 - Background checks
 - In-person interviews that focus on boundaries with children
 - Personal and professional references
 - Prevention training
- People who sexually abuse children often become friendly with potential victims and their families by participating in family activities, earning trust, and gaining time alone with children.
 - Sometimes this is referred to as grooming.
- Monitor Internet & Smart Phone Use
 - The internet can be an unsafe place for children & teens, due to adults using it to lure & groom.
 - Engage kids when creating rules to making it safer.



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Professional Code of Conduct

- Organizations should have a clear code of conduct describing how staff, volunteers, and older youth will interact and conduct themselves with children.
- It should be shared with parents, posted on their website, and/or public areas of the facility.
- Staff members, volunteers, and older youth should receive an annual in-person review of the code of conduct.



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Example Code of Conduct

Appropriate & Encouraged Interactions

- Praise, encouragement, and acknowledgement
- Asking permission to touch, even for necessary reasons
 - Medical necessity
 - Pats on back or shoulder
 - Side hugs, handshakes, or high fives
- Warmth and kindness
- Public social media alerts to groups of kids and parents

Inappropriate & Prohibited Interactions

- Isolated, one-on-one interactions
- Risqué jokes or profanity
- Favoritism, gift-giving, or photographing individual children
- Front/regular hug
- Private interactions through phone/internet or any contact outside of program activities.



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3. TALK ABOUT IT

- Talk openly with children in age-appropriate conversations.
 - Talk about bodies, sex, and boundaries.
- Understand why children are afraid to “tell” when something unsafe happens .
- Make sure children understand that no matter what has happened, they can share with you.
- Explain that secrets can be harmful. If someone asks them to keep a secret- they should tell you.
- Recognize a child’s attempts to talk about their concerns.
- Tell children they can trust their gut feelings.
- Talk to other adults about abuse.



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4. RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS

- Know the signs of possible abuse to protect children from further harm
 - Be aware that in some children, there are no signs whatsoever
 - Signs don't always mean abuse is occurring, but should be a reason to take interest in what is happening in a child's life.
- Trauma is often the root of what we call "difficult" or "bad" behavior.
- We should always respond to a child in distress with patience and sensitivity when asking what's going on.
- If you see physical signs that you suspect are abuse, the child needs to be examined *immediately* by a professional specializing in child abuse.
- An abuser's conviction may depend on evidence from a physical examination or forensic interview of the child.



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5. REACT RESPONSIBLY

There are 3 situations where we need to react to child abuse:

1. A child discloses abuse to us.
2. We discover the child abuse ourselves.
3. We have reason to suspect a child is being abused.

Why Are Our Reactions Important?

When a child discloses abuse to you, it means that the child has chosen you as the person they trust enough to tell.

The child has taken a huge risk in telling you & has broken through secrecy, fear, and shame; even if only for a moment. This is a **big** achievement & shows the child's deep resiliency.

Our reaction can help the child remain calm and comfortable during disclose without the additional feelings of shame, guilt, or embarrassment.



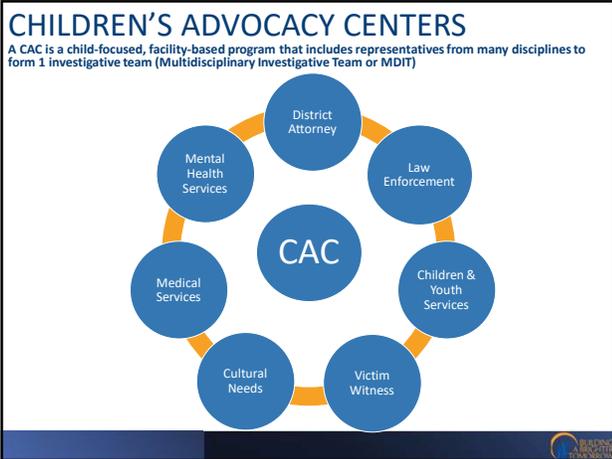
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What Reacting Responsibly includes:

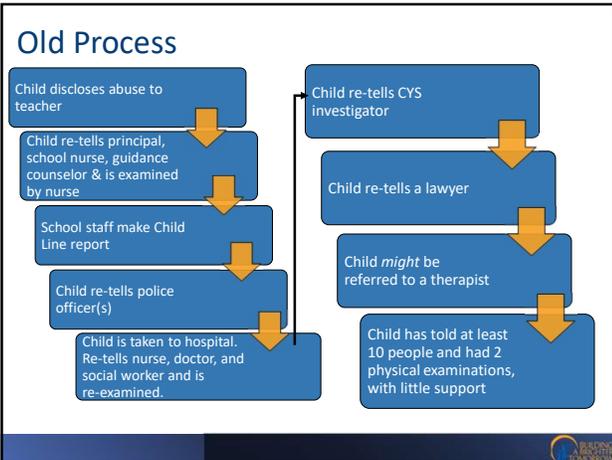
- Give the child attention, compassion, and belief
- Be patient as they're explaining what happened without prying for too many details.
- General details of who, what, when, where can be important to know but finding out specific in-depth details should be left to professionals
- Offer support
- Don't over-react with anger, shame, embarrassment, sorrow, sadness, etc.
 - Remaining calm can help the child feel comfortable as they disclose
- Report the information to Child Line: 1-800-932-0313
 - If the child is in immediate danger, call 911 and then report to Child Line



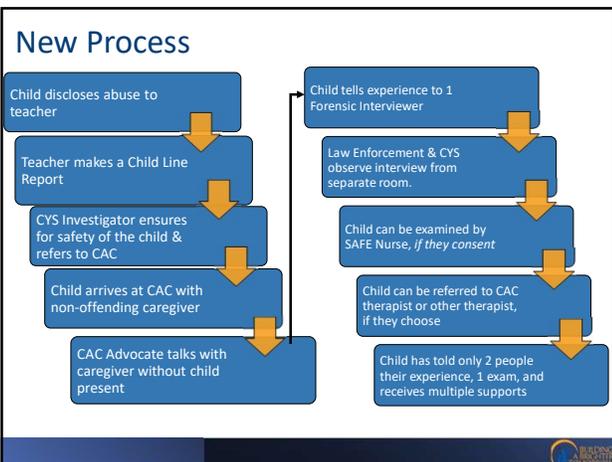
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THE ADAMS COUNTY CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER

Our Vision:

A community where children are safe, families are strong, and our child victims become children again.

Our Guiding Beliefs:

- The intervention system must be sensitive to the needs of abused children & their families and meet their needs by respecting the uniqueness of each child & family.
- Child abuse is a *community* problem. No single agency, individual, or discipline alone has the necessary skills, knowledge, or resources to provide the assistance needed by children or families that have been affected by abuse.
- The combined wisdom and professional knowledge of child protective services, law enforcement, prosecutors, civil legal aid offices, medical providers, mental health providers, and victim advocates will result in a more complete understanding of case issues and provide the most effective response possible.



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Services at the ACCAC

- Forensic Interviews
- Forensic Medical Exams with trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners
- Mental Health Services
- Victim Advocacy
- Prevention Education
- Community Outreach
- Support Services:
 - Inner Circle Girls' Group (Middle & High School)
 - Book Club (adults and children)
 - Inner Child Exploration Series (for adults)
 - Speaker Series



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HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

- Invest in the opportunity to set children on a path toward a brighter tomorrow and a community that is healthier and stronger
- Talk to the children in your life about safety regarding their body, their online interactions, and what to do if something does happen
- Let the children in your life know you are a safe adult they can rely on
- Report abuse to Child Line when you see/suspect abuse
 - 1-800-932-0313
 - You only need to suspect abuse—you do not need to investigate or confirm the abuse!
- Volunteer at a local youth-serving organization
- Support our outreach efforts
 - Join our Book Club!
 - Come to our in-person events!
 - Attend our Speaker Series Sessions!



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A BRIGHTER
TOMORROW**
ADAMS COUNTY CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER
