



## How Therapy Will 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. 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.

If your child wants to talk about it, 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.

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

Unfortunately, we know 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 an appropriate therapist 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, anywhere from a few days up to even 1 year later. 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.

## **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.

## **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, job opportunities, and overall quality of life as they grow up.

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

## **About Adams County Children's Advocacy Center**

We are here to support and advocate for you and your child. Your family will be treated with kindness and respect whether you visit our center, talk with our Advocates, or connect with us in the community.

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 promote education and advocacy regarding the prevention of child abuse within the Adams County community.

The Adams County Children's Advocacy Center provides the following services free of charge:

- Child & Family Advocacy
- Prevention Education
- Community Outreach
- Mental Health Services
- Support Groups for Teens and Adults
- Forensic Interviews & Medical Exams
- MDIT Coordination
- Online Resources

***To learn more about how we can support you, contact our Child & Family Advocates:***

**717-337-9888 | [info@kidsagaincac.org](mailto:info@kidsagaincac.org)**

*450 W. Middle Street, Gettysburg PA 17325*