

Mental health

Specialized trauma-focused mental health services are offered to the child and family to help them cope with the trauma and to assist them through the healing process. The Dakota Children's Advocacy Center (DCAC) believes that child victims of abuse need comprehensive evaluation and treatment, and that these vital specialized services should be accessible regardless of ability to pay. The DCAC's mental health services provide assessment and treatment for children and families affected by trauma. The therapist can also provide resource information.

Making a referral

Caregivers and team members and other referral agencies are welcome to call the DCAC at (701) 323-5626. Appointments will be made for the earliest opening. Please be prepared to provide demographic information of the child, caregivers and reason for the referral as well as insurance information. The DCAC bills third party payers, Crime Victim's Compensation funds, and other funding sources. For the safety of the families that we see, convicted and adjudicated sex offenders are only allowed at the DCAC after case consultation to determine the appropriateness of their presence.

How can the therapy program assist the MDT members?

The DCAC therapy staff regularly consults with the multidisciplinary team about interviews and cases. These discussions may include information about a child's developmental stage, response to trauma or the disclosure process. In addition, a therapist is often available to meet with caretakers during interviews to assess family functioning, provide support and obtain corroborative information. A therapist can provide a critical link between investigation and prosecution by filling service gaps that often occur when working with children and families.

Mental health services are available for all children and caregivers affected by trauma and abuse even if they have not received other forensic services.



What mental health services are available?

The DCAC utilizes evidenced based mental health therapies including:

- **Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)** is designed for youth with behavioral or emotional problems related to trauma. Therapists teach coping skills to the parent and child while processing the traumatic event in a safe environment.
- **Alternatives for Families: A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT)** is designed to improve the relationships between children and parents/caregivers in families. It is most suitable for children who exhibit some level of behavioral or emotional dysfunction, and for caregivers who may resort to uncomfortable or unsafe levels of punishment.
- **Problem Sexual Behavior Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (PSB-CBT)** is an outpatient group treatment for school-aged children (and their parents) who have engaged in problematic sexual behaviors.
- **Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)** is an evidence-based treatment for young children with emotional and behavioral disorders that places emphasis on improving the quality of the parent-child relationship and changing parent-child interaction patterns.
- **Supportive Counseling Services** are also available to caregivers to help them cope with their child's trauma.



Dakota Children's
ADVOCACY CENTER