

Welcome to the Child Advocacy Center!

The Chemung County Child Advocacy Center uses a team approach to partner with children and families who have been affected by physical and sexual violence in order to end child abuse and promote healing.

Upon receipt of a referral from **Child Protective Services or Law Enforcement Agencies**, the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) can conduct **Forensic Interviews**, provide **Victim Advocacy Services**, setup **Forensic Medical Exams**, refer for **Mental Health Counseling**, or connect children and families with additional resources. Following a referral from a Family Services Clinician, caregivers can also be enrolled in **Protective Parenting Group**. The CAC also offers **Community Education and Awareness** to engage and train professionals and the general public.

Multi-Disciplinary Team Approach (MDT): Case Review is conducted monthly to evaluate each referral. A team of professionals ensures appropriate services are wrapped around the children and families we serve. This team includes: Law Enforcement, Victim Advocacy Services, Mental Health Providers, Medical Professionals, Child Protective Services, Legal Professionals, Probation, among others. Case Review/MDT is not open to the public and is strictly confidential.

Forensic Interviews (FI's): FI's are conducted by specially trained personnel who are uniquely skilled in open ended discussions with youngsters. FI's are not interrogatory and can be ended at any time by the child. Live FI's are observable by CPS, Police or District Attorney's. Outside agencies, officials, and guardians are **not** permitted to attend or observe FI's and are unable to obtain copies of the recorded Forensic Interviews without a judicial subpoena or extenuating circumstances. Anyone who conducts a Forensic Interview may be subpoenaed to testify in Court.

Victim Advocacy: Every family meets with a CAC Advocate to complete paperwork and discuss the family's needs. FI's require a parent or guardian's permission beforehand; advocates can do referrals for counseling, additional services or resources, and Forensic Medical Exams. Clothing, hygiene products, pack and plays, etc. are made available as needed and advocates are able to offer additional support to families during the legal process or at Court. Our Advocates also assist with scheduling and preparation for Forensic Interviews and Intakes.

Mental Health Counseling: If a child has disclosed abuse, specialized services and Trauma-Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CF-CBT) are available onsite. If there was no disclosure, another avenue is probably more appropriate. The initial meeting (intake) is for the guardian to provide the child's history and discuss needs; the therapists can also explain the therapeutic process and plan for treatment. Our clinicians do get subpoenaed to testify in Court, but cannot make recommendations related to custody, visitation or anything outside their scope of expertise.

Community Outreach and Education: The Community Education & Awareness Coordinator offers and attends public events to bring information and resources to the region. The Coordinator is a certified Facilitator of *Circles of Safety®*, *Darkness to Light®* and *Monique Burr Foundation®* curriculums to educate children and adults about child abuse and body safety, including topics of electronics use, appropriate relationships, (cyber) bullying, human trafficking, and protective parenting.

Protective Parenting Group (PPG): Our Clinicians & Community Educator offer PPG every Wednesday from 1—2PM. PPG lasts a total of ten weeks (weeks 1 & 10 are in person; the other 8 are via Zoom). Members are permitted to miss one session before removal, due to the short duration. PPG covers topics including: child development, domestic violence, online safety, healthy relationships, protective factors, and abuse/maltreatment. Before PPG enrollment, all who wish to engage must have a Family Services therapist and meet requirements for an internal referral for Group.

