



PATSY'S HOUSE
HOPE. HEALING. JUSTICE.

**PARTNER AGENCY
WORKING PROTOCOLS**

PATSY'S HOUSE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER, INC.
CHILD ABUSE RESPONSE and EVALUATION (CARE) TEAM GUIDELINES

**MULTI-DISCIPLINARY
TEAM MEMBER
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The MDT (cont.)

Protective Services (DFPS)/Child Protective Investigations (CPI), Wichita County District Attorney, 97th Judicial District Attorney Office, 97th District Juvenile Probation, 46th Judicial District Attorney's Office, 50th Judicial District Attorney's Office, United Regional Healthcare System (URHCS), Contracted Individual Private Therapist, and Patsy's House Children's Advocacy Center (PHCAC).

B. Roles and Responsibilities (General unique roles, commitment to the MDT, areas of authority by discipline)

1. Law Enforcement

- a. Role: Law Enforcement Agencies are responsible for conducting criminal investigations of child abuse and neglect cases in which a crime may have occurred as defined by the Texas Family Code and the Texas Penal Code.
- b. Role of Law Enforcement in the MDT:
 - 1.) Strive to conduct joint investigations of cases with DFPS.
 - 2.) Refer child victims and/or witnesses who meet the case criteria outlined on Page one (1) of these Protocols to the Advocacy Center for interviews, sexual assault exams, Mental Health and Advocacy services and/or coordinated case planning meetings.
 - 3.) Contact the other investigating agency representative prior to or immediately following the interview being scheduled.
 - 4.) Attend and observe forensic interviews of their assigned cases.
 - 5.) Provide the CAC and MDT with status updates and final disposition information related to their cases.
 - 6.) Take possession of the digital recording and any other evidence produced during the child's forensic interview (e.g. drawings, etc.).
 - 7.) Participate in the regularly scheduled coordinated MDT meetings, when their cases are scheduled for discussion.

2. Child Protective Investigations

- a. Role: Cases handled by the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services are those identified by the Texas Family Code, Chapter 261, that involve any of the following individuals as alleged perpetrators/offenders:
 - 1.) A parent, guardian, managing or possessing conservator, or foster parent of the child.
 - 2.) A member of the child's family or household as defined by Chapter 71 of the Texas Family Code.
 - 3.) a person with whom the child's parent resides
 - 4.) school personnel or volunteers at a child's school or daycare
 - 5.) personnel or a volunteer at a public or private child-care facility that provides services for the child or at a public or private residential institution or facility where the child resides
 - 6.) an employee, volunteer, or other person working under the supervision of a licensed or unlicensed child-care facility, including a family home, residential child-care facility, employer-based day-care facility, or shelter day-care facility, as those terms are defined by the Human Resources Code
- b. The role of DFPS-CPI as related to the MDT is as follows:
 - 1.) Strive to conduct joint investigations of cases with law enforcement.
 - 2.) Refer child victims and/or witnesses who meet the case criteria outlined on Page one (1) of these Protocols to the Advocacy Center for interviews, sexual assault exams, Mental Health and Advocacy services, and/or coordinated case planning meetings, as indicated within these Protocols.

Mental Health (cont.)

treatment.

b. Role of contracted Individual Private Therapist in the MDT:

- 1.) Upon referral from Patsy's House, contracted mental health providers will provide evaluation and treatment appropriate to the client's needs and development.
- 2.) Contracted Private Individual Therapist will be custodian of records for client information related to clients referred and will obtain necessary releases allowing them to share appropriate information.
- 3.) Provide the CAC with information to confirm that a victim or family members have accessed counseling Services.
- 4.) The therapist will attend MDT meetings to staff cases of victims or families who have been referred to the CAC, and provide a mental health perspective for any cases which may be reviewed.

6. Victim Support and Advocacy

a. Role: The VSA role is to assess child victim and non-offending family member/guardian needs for services and to enable child victim and/or non-offending family members/guardians to access counseling, social services and/or community resources, as needed. The VSA may meet with Team Members and family pre and post interview to assess needs. The VSA has a role in the reading, review and tracking of Statewide Intake Reports.

b. Role of family advocacy in the MDT

- 1.) Follow-up with non-offending family member to determine any need for additional referrals.
- 2.) Follow-up with counselors to determine whether counseling has been accessed.
- 3.) Coordinate and attend the MDT team meeting, providing information as needed.

7. Forensic Interviewing

a. Role: To conduct the interview in a neutral, fact finding manner and to coordinate with MDT members to ensure information is gathered necessary to conduct a coordinated investigation. The FI may meet with Team Members and family pre and post interview.

b. Role of Forensic Interview in the MDT:

- 1.) Attend and participate in multidisciplinary team meetings.

8. CAC

a. Role: Provides facility space for coordination, facilitation, and support of team members. PHCAC also has a role in the receipt and review of Statewide Intakes.

b. Role of CAC in MDT: Provide facilitation and coordination to ensure a consistent comprehensive approach to all cases.

C. Conflict Resolution Policy MDT Conflict Resolution Policy has the ultimate goal of focusing on our shared mission, while having mutually satisfying options and fair standards that result in a wise agreement. Conflict arising within the MDT will be resolved based on the following procedures:

1. If conflict occurs between individual MDT members, they must first work to resolve conflict among themselves.
2. If the conflict continues between MDT members, the supervisors of the respective agencies are contacted by the ED of PHCAC to schedule a meeting for further clarification and resolution. Supervisors are asked for their opinions, input, and evaluations based on their agency experience and knowledge. The PHCAC Executive Director may be asked by the supervisors to facilitate the meeting and to continue to communicate with the supervisors regarding any progress made or lack of progress made in the conflict resolution.

Intake and Coordination (cont.)

does meet qualifying criteria and it has not yet been referred directly from local law enforcement and/or DFPS, DFPS and LE will be contacted by Patsy's House Staff – according to the agreed upon timelines for such contact - to discuss joint investigation options and possible referral for CAC services.

c. Patsy's House understands that the children's advocacy center's role in reviewing the reports is to review and identify SWI within the case acceptance criteria as defined by the children's advocacy center's/MDT's Working Protocol and facilitate children's advocacy center/MDT services related to case investigation, assessment, and intervention. In addition, we understand that the children's advocacy center's access to the SWI's shall not be construed to change, reduce, or expand the authority or jurisdiction of the children's advocacy center or any multidisciplinary team partner agency as it relates to initiating and conducting investigations, assessments, and/or interventions. All intake reports provided to the CAC by DFPS-SWI remain the property of DFPS.

4. Process for coordination of joint investigations, sharing of initial intake information, documentation, etc.

a. The following information will be furnished by the requesting agency:

- 1.) ages and dates of birth for all children in the home
- 2.) need for an interpreter, if applicable
- 3.) person bringing the child(ren) to Patsy's House (name and relationship to child)
- 4.) county where offense is alleged to have occurred
- 5.) alleged perpetrator information
- 6.) special considerations i.e. diagnosis or children with disabilities

5. Process for ensuring an after-hours MDT response (as per TFC 264.4061) and, as applicable, provision of CAC services after hours

a. An afterhours response or MDT joint investigation may be conducted, should supervisors of the Partner Agencies, and Patsy's House determine that the response cannot wait until normal business hours. Partnering Agencies should contact Patsy's House staff, by calling one of the after-hour numbers provided by Patsy's House.

B. Forensic Interviews

1. Criteria for referral and receipt of FIs. The preferred practice is that all children age 3-17 are brought to PHCAC where the forensic interview will be conducted. Category of victimization is determined by the requesting agency (and subject to change based on the Forensic Interview outcome). The forensic interviewer will conduct a brief developmental assessment for children prior to the interview to determine if the child is able to effectively participate in the forensic interview.

2. Scheduling

a. Forensic Interviews may be scheduled by contacting Patsy's House during regular business hours, Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm at 940-322-8890. After hours, or emergency interviews refer to section d below. Forensic Interviews are scheduled by Patsy's House staff. It is the responsibility of the requesting agency to notify the other involved partner agency of the time and location of the Forensic Interview.

b. Every effort will be made to schedule interviews at the closest satellite office or in the child's community. The interview location will be determined at the time the interview is scheduled.

c. Should travel to an established site present a hardship for the family;

- 1.) The family may be transported by a 3rd party.
- 2.) The requesting agency can find an interview site that will meet the following requirements:

a.) Neutral facility where confidentiality can be maintained (i.e., a church or other non-profit agency; this would exclude an office of a partner agency or

Recording of Interviews (cont.)

d. Prosecutors may be required to make access to the recording available to defense attorneys as part of discovery, therefore partnering agencies will follow their own agency policies and Texas statute related to providing access to the recording.

6. Forensic Interview Process

a. Forensic interviews are conducted in a neutral, fact finding manner and coordinated to avoid duplicate interviewing. Within the semi-structured narrative process, the Case Team members present in the observation room will be consulted to ensure all relevant information necessary to conduct a coordinated investigation is gathered.

b. Interviewers will utilize interview aids as needed to assist the child's disclosure. These aids may include but are not limited to: anatomical drawings, anatomical dolls, photographs, timelines, map drawings, text messages, videos, and/or chat logs.

c. In cases where an interpreter is needed, the interpreter must be certified and approved by the PHCAC and the Case Team members. The interpreter can be used for communication with the family and child pre and post forensic interview as well as during the interview itself. The interpreter must sign a confidentiality agreement.

d. It may be necessary to refer to or show the child physical evidence during the interview such as pictures, videos, or chat logs, especially if the child has not yet disclosed abuse or neglect prior to the interview. The interviewer will be advised by investigative agencies of any preliminary evidence before scheduling the interview and the decision to use evidence will be on a case by case basis. This will be a decision made by the Case Team members with investigative jurisdiction in the case.

e. The only individuals allowed in the interview room during a forensic interview will be the forensic interviewer, the child, and – when needed - an approved certified interpreter.

7. Observation of Interviews

a. Law Enforcement investigators, Child Protection Investigators, District Attorney's office, and designated PHCAC staff (FI, FA and/or ED) are the only individuals allowed to be present in the observation room during the interview.

b. The interviewer may leave the room during the interview to consult with the observing Case Team members to communicate with and to receive input or additional information needed.

8. Post-Interview Procedures/Staffing/Information sharing

a. After the interview, DFPS, Law enforcement, family advocate and forensic interviewer may meet with parent/guardian.

1.) discuss the outcome of the interview as deemed appropriate by the investigators present

2.) stress the importance of mental health services based on the child's behavior or statements obtained during the forensic interview

3.) give information on any additional resources the family may need

4.) provide information on what the next steps will be in the coordinated investigation

9. Criteria and process by which a child has a multi-session or subsequent interview is as follows:

a. Due to trauma or other reasons, the Case Team members with jurisdiction agrees that the child would benefit from an extended forensic interview resulting in a MSFI.

b. The interviewer will meet with the investigators both prior to and immediately following the interview in order to share information and decide on best practice for the next interview to be set up. A MSFI is only conducted with unanimous Case Team support.

c. Once the Case Team members decide it is best to conduct a MSFI, the caregiver is notified and asked to bring the child back to the CAC for another interview.

Medical Evaluation (cont.)

Patsy's House Family Advocate may or may not be notified. If the request is made or a determination that the request will be made by team members, it is best practice to attempt to schedule prior to family leaving the CAC. If that is not possible then the Family Advocate will complete the scheduling and notification process in as timely a manner as possible. The Advocate will be available for accompaniment.

8. The purpose of the medical evaluation is to provide an opportunity to heal for the victim through examination, to assess and treat any health concerns, and to provide supportive information for prosecution. (Evidence, Baseline and Health, Emotional and Physical)

9. Medical emergencies will be handled by calling 911, or emergency care staff, i.e. Ambulance, Fire Department and Primary Care Physicians. The method carried out would depend on the nature of the emergency.

10. Practice for limiting duplicative medical evaluations is to request an appropriate level of examination initially.

11. All consents are signed according to Hospital and CAC protocol. Requesting agencies will follow the hospital procedure to attain records, copies of records and evidence as needed.

E. Mental Health Services

1. Mental Health treatment is a clinical process designed to assess and mitigate the long term adverse impact of trauma or other diagnosable mental health conditions.

The Forensic Interview is the process of gathering evidentiary information and determining what the child has experienced.

This is separate from the Mental Health treatment process. Every effort is made to ensure clear boundaries between these roles and processes.

2. Counseling services are made available to children ages 3-17 years of age and to non-offending family members of alleged victims related to any case meeting the qualifying case criteria for PHCAC, as outlined on Page One (1) of these Protocols:

- a. victims of emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse
- b. secondary victims of abuse, i.e. non-offending siblings and/or parents
- c. returning clients if/when issues reoccur in association with previous trauma

3. Types of Therapeutic Services available:

- a. Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TFCBT)
- b. Play Therapy
- c. Individual Counseling
- d. Sibling Sessions
- e. Family Sessions

4. Contracted Individual Private Therapists will share appropriate information with relevant Partner Agencies, i.e. DFPS, District Attorney, Law Enforcement. Clients' rights to confidentiality will be protected in accordance with applicable state, federal laws and Professional Ethics as mandated by Texas Board of License Professional Counselors.

5. Counselors providing services, either at Patsy's House or offsite based on PHCAC referral will be certified by the State of Texas as eligible to provide counseling services. Counselors will maintain current malpractice insurance and provide proof of such coverage to PHCAC.

6. Process for referring clients for services

- a. Referring Out: Contracted Individual Private Therapist will provide referrals in accordance with Texas Board of License Professional Counselor i.e., three separate community referrals will be provided to clients, if referral is for Mental Health Services. Referrals are based on case by case needs. If Mental Health Provider becomes aware of potential medical issues, referral to client's Primary Care Physician will be made. In the case client is relocating to another service area, referral to local Children's Advocacy Center will be provided.

G. Case Tracking

1. Patsy's House case tracking system is exclusive to Collaborate. Information tracked consists of client and family information including, but not necessarily limited to, contact information and relevant demographic information; and case information including, but not necessarily limited to alleged category of abuse, partner agencies involved in investigation and intervention, CAC services recommended, CAC services provided, case status and disposition in child protection and criminal justice systems, etc.
2. MDT partner agencies may access case specific information and/or aggregate data at scheduled MDT meetings or upon request to PHCAC MDT coordination staff.
3. Records Retention
 - a. Contents of each client file may include, release forms signed by the client's guardian, all forms completed by the staff and/or a member of the MDT. Initial intake is a hard copy file. All other information and follow up is directly entered electronically into Collaborate. If/when any physical files are (as per PHCAC records retention policy), to be destroyed, the information maintained electronically will be deleted as well.
 - b. The staff of Patsy's House and members of the MDT who are involved in a client's case may have access to client files. Access to client files by other persons will be provided only upon court order and properly executed subpoena, delivered to the Executive Director of Patsy's House who is custodian of records.
 - c. Client files are the property of Patsy's House Children's Advocacy Center, Inc.
 - d. Client files will be retained for no less than twenty (20) years after the client's eighteenth birthday.
 - e. Any physical client files will be stored at Patsy's House in a locked storage cabinet or file room.
 - f. Each of the various partner agencies will maintain records in accordance with their own agency's record retention policies.
 - g. Records of Patsy's House Children's Advocacy Center will be retained as per TFC Section 264.408. and PHCAC Board-adopted Records Retention Policy.

VII. Review, Revisions and Re-Execution of Working Protocols

- A. This agreement can be terminated by any party without cause by giving written notice to the other parties.
- B. The working protocols must be reviewed, revised as needed and re-executed, at a minimum, every three years, upon significant changes to current practice, or upon a change of authorized partner agency signatories.
- C. In the event protocols are in conflict with agency policies or other changes dictate the need for revisions, partnering agencies may submit a request to the PHCAC Executive Director for review and revision.

Patsy's House Children's Advocacy Center MOU.

DocuSigned by:

Manuel Borrego, Chief
Manuel Borrego, Chief ~ Wichita Falls Police Dept

John Gillespie, DA Wichita Co.
John Gillespie, District Attorney ~ Wichita County

DocuSigned by:

David Duke, Sheriff
David Duke, Sheriff ~ Wichita County

Fred Tillman, Chief ~ Burkburnett Police Dept

DocuSigned by:

Steve Davis, Chief
Steve Davis, Chief ~ Iowa Park Police Dept

Michael Dozier, Chief ~ Electra Police Dept

DocuSigned by:

Staci Beesinger, Sheriff
Staci Beesinger, Sheriff ~ Archer County

DocuSigned by:

Justin Perron, Chief
Justin Perron, Chief ~ Archer City Police Dept

Joe Chunn, Chief ~ Holliday Police Dept

Kenny Lemons, Sheriff ~ Clay County

Marshall Thomas

Marshall Thomas, Sheriff ~ Montague County

DocuSigned by:

Kent Holcomb
Kent Holcomb, Chief ~ Nocona Police Dept

DocuSigned by:

Jonathan Lloyd, Chief
Jonathan Lloyd, Chief ~ St. Jo Police Dept

DocuSigned by:

Casey Polhemus, 97th DA
Casey Polhemus, District Attorney ~ 97th Judicial District

Becky Dickson

Becky Dickson ~ 97th District Juvenile Probation

DocuSigned by:

Randy Agan, Chief
Randy Agan, Chief ~ Vernon Police Dept

DocuSigned by:

Bill Price, Sheriff
Bill Price, Sheriff ~ Wilbarger County

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Staley Heatley, 46th DA
Staley Heatley, District Attorney ~ 46th Judicial District

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Pat Laughery, Sheriff
Pat Laughery, Sheriff ~ Hardeman County

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Michael Hopkins, Chief
Michael Hopkins, Chief ~ Chillicothe Police Dept

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Mike Brown, Sheriff
Mike Brown, Sheriff ~ Foard County

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Jennifer Habert, District Attorney ~ 50th Judicial District

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Patrick Coggins, Chief ~ Midwestern State University

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Bill Horton
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Shawn Vandygriff, DFPS CPI Regional Director

Ashland Spencer-Batiste, DFPS CCI Director

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Donnell Arnold, SAEB OSI
Donnell Arnold, Superintendent - SAFB OSI

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Guy Green, Chief
Guy Green, Chief of Police - Bowie Police Department

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Denise Roberts
Denise Roberts, Executive Director ~ Patsy's House