



## CHAMPAIGN COUNTY CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER CULTURAL COMPETENCY PLAN

### Introduction

The CAC promotes policies, practices and procedures that are culturally competent. Cultural competency is defined as the capacity to function in more than one culture, requiring the ability to appreciate, understand and interact with members of diverse populations within the local community. Cultural competence involves the awareness of cultural differences and the integration of this awareness into practical skills that enhance one's ability to adequately serve diverse populations. Diversity issues influence nearly every aspect of work with children and families, from welcoming a child to the Center, employing effective interviewing techniques, gathering information, selecting appropriate mental health providers and securing help for a family in a manner which is likely to be utilized.

### Policy/Procedure

It is the policy of the Champaign County Children's Advocacy Center that children and families from all backgrounds feel welcomed and acknowledged by staff, Multidisciplinary Team members, and Governing Board members, regardless of their appearance, background or beliefs.

While receiving services at the Champaign County Children's Advocacy Center, children and families of all backgrounds are welcomed, valued and respected. To effectively meet the child's needs, Center personnel and Multidisciplinary Team members attempt to understand the child's world-view and adapt practices as needed and as appropriate. The team provides services to a diversified target population regardless of age, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or mental challenges, socio-economic status or any other cultural descriptors. CAC services are provided free of charge. No victim referred through the Multidisciplinary Team process is denied services based on inability to pay.

The CAC's work environment promotes the highest levels of performance and integrity from its employees and other members of the Multidisciplinary Team. In keeping with this commitment, the Children's Advocacy Center strives to create an environment where its employees and Multidisciplinary Team members are valued as individuals who together comprise the working team.



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***Champaign County Children's Advocacy Center***

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Clients, CAC employees, Multidisciplinary Team members, Governing Board members and anyone else with whom we have dealings are treated with respect, dignity and fairness. Members of the CAC team are encouraged to seek opportunities to develop and reach their full potential as individuals, thereby, achieving both professional and personal goals. Members of the CAC team promote not only awareness of the issues surrounding cultural diversity but demonstrate sensitivity to these issues by interacting in an appropriate manner with members of other cultures.

## **Implementation**

All CAC employees and members of the Multidisciplinary Team in dealing with each other, clients, the Governing Board and the public in general not only value diversity but also:

- Are aware of differences in values, communication styles, spirituality, definitions of family AND are accepting of those differences.
- Are aware of one's own cultural values and identity and understand how cultural conditioning influences our beliefs about human behavior, values, communication, biases, etc.
- Are conscious of the dynamics that are inherent when cultures interact.
- Share cultural knowledge.
- Develop necessary adaptations when delivering services which reflect an understanding of diversity between and within cultures.

These elements are demonstrated in all services that the Children's Advocacy Center delivers. They are also reflected in the practices and policies of the CAC as well as in the attitudes of CAC staff, members of the Multidisciplinary Team and Governing Board members.

In order to accomplish these goals, the CAC provides a system of care that displays cultural sensitivity and competence. This system of care encompasses a number of elements, including environment of care, staff knowledge, skill and attitudes, tools used in the service delivery process and personnel management.

Environment of care refers to the physical setting in which services are delivered to the client. For the Children's Advocacy Center, this primarily refers to the building that houses the program, although services are also delivered in the homes of clients as well as in public settings such as a courthouse or hospital. The Children's Advocacy Center provides a facility that is fully accessible to the entire Champaign County community in need of CAC services. The Children's Advocacy Center is a handicapped-accessible and smoke-free facility. To insure that the environment of care at the CAC is inviting to all children and families, the CAC is decorated with pictures that respect the diversity of its clients. The CAC also provides access to materials and toys that reflect the needs and interests of the diverse population of children served, including dolls representing a variety of cultures, puzzles, crayons, markers, coloring books, drawing pads, a chalkboard, stuffed animals, building blocks, a kitchenette set, videotapes, compact disks, etc.

Staff knowledge, skills and attitudes encompass five elements: Awareness and acceptance of one's own cultural values, awareness of differences, understanding of the dynamics of difference, development of cultural knowledge, and ability to adapt practice skills to fit the cultural context of the client. To help insure that CAC staff and Multidisciplinary Team members have the knowledge, skill and attitudes to provide culturally competent services, the following policies are implemented:

1. The Executive Director insures that professional staff of the CAC attends cultural sensitivity trainings/workshops and reviews professional articles on cultural competency.
2. To help insure that Multidisciplinary Team members have access to information on cultural issues, the CAC Executive Director makes team member agencies aware of opportunities for cultural competency training and distributes to member agencies relevant professional articles on cultural competency.
3. CAC staff and Multidisciplinary Team members should be alert to professional research and literature from which others on the team may benefit. A copy of such relevant literature and research should be provided to the Executive Director for copying and distribution to the team.
4. When an appointment is scheduled, the CAC Case Manager inquires about the child's ethnic/cultural background and determines the need for an interpreter. If an interpreter is needed, arrangements are made at the time of scheduling.
5. During the information gathering process, the interviewer inquires about the ethnic/cultural background of the family and documents findings in the case file. Awareness of the following potential issues and an opportunity to address them with the family enhances service delivery:
  - Child and family perception of the criminal justice system based on cultural experience;
  - Child and family perception and attribution of shame and responsibility for abuse.
6. During the information gathering process, the interviewer inquires about and is sensitive to cultural preferences the family may have for help/healing.
7. Supervision of cases receiving services from the CAC includes discussion by the Multidisciplinary Team of cultural issues unique to the case, and how these issues interface with staff providing services and the service delivery process. These discussions occur during pre- and post-interview briefings, monthly Multidisciplinary Team Case Review Meetings, and case-specific MDT review meetings and are documented by the CAC Case Manager in the respective case records.
8. After consultation with caregivers and members of the Multidisciplinary Team, the CAC attempts to align each client with community-based services that are

culturally appropriate for that client and actively seeks activities that are appropriate for the age, race, gender and interests of the client. Through review of individual providers' cultural competence action plans, the CAC attempts to access services for its clients from providers who have demonstrated a commitment to cultural competence in the provision of its services.

9. Team case reviews include identification and review of cultural issues that might impact upon the case so as to help team members become aware of such issues and to help insure that these issues are considered in the service delivery process. Documentation of this process is made by CAC staff on the Multidisciplinary Team Case Review form, which is made a part of the client's case record.
10. When an investigation involves non-English-speaking children and family members, the CAC makes provisions to overcome any barriers in communication by enlisting the assistance of bi-lingual parties. To the extent possible, all services provided to the child or family are provided in the family's language of choice. When necessary, the CAC accesses language interpreter services through the East Central Illinois Refugee Mutual Assistance Center, the University of Illinois, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, local law enforcement agencies, and private parties. The CAC also maintains a list of sign language interpreters to provide assistance for the hearing impaired. Prior to their involvement in an investigation or follow-up services, CAC staff orients interpreters to the applicable CAC and Multidisciplinary Team procedures.
11. It is the policy of the CAC to actively seek outreach opportunities with groups that reflect the diversity of our community. We provide materials, speakers or other means of communicating about child abuse issues to these populations.

Tools that are used in the service delivery process include tools used in the forensic interview process (e.g. anatomical dolls), written handouts or documentation tools, and toys/activities for children. To insure that these items reflect cultural sensitivity, the following policies are implemented:

1. The CAC pursues written materials for victims explaining their rights and our services in different languages.
2. Anatomical dolls and drawings are available in a variety of skin tones.
3. Toys and games for children include dolls/action figures of different ethnic backgrounds.

Personnel management refers to recruiting, hiring and maintaining professional staff, volunteers and Governing Board members that are representative of the cultural groups served at the CAC. The CAC supports a policy of broad representation that reflects the demographics of the community. The CAC Constitution and By Laws expressly provide that, in all activities, the CAC will not discriminate against any

person or entity on the basis of age, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or mental challenges, socio-economic status or any other cultural descriptors. Furthermore, the CAC complies with the Equal Employment Ordinance of the County of Champaign, and all advertisements for employment state that the CAC is an equal opportunity employer. The Children's Advocacy Center recruits, hires and retains staff, volunteers and Governing Board members that are representative of the cultural groups served by the CAC. To accomplish this goal, the following policies are implemented:

1. The CAC Governing Board and the Executive Director insure aggressive and thorough recruitment of multicultural persons to fill vacant staff positions by advertising and otherwise recruiting in places where multicultural applicants live, work and attend school.
2. The CAC Governing Board is comprised of the representatives of 13 different law enforcement, educational, mental health, and medical agencies. The Governing Board acknowledges the importance of diversity among its members and encourages current Governing Board members to assign minority members of their staff to the Multidisciplinary Team and to the CAC Governing Board. Furthermore, the CAC Governing Board actively recruits Governing Board members of ethnic backgrounds consistent with the population served by the CAC.

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