

MEDIA KIT

Reporting on Child Abuse.



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Purpose Of This Kit

Unfortunately, child abuse is a pervasive issue both in the US and abroad. Safety for our children and young people is crucial. Reporting on child abuse is a challenging but important responsibility for journalists. The sensitive nature of the subject, the graphic nature of the allegations, and the level of public outrage surrounding the instances may be overwhelming for the journalist and the audience.

Stories concerning child abuse that don't provide any prevention or solution material have a unique opportunity to raise public awareness about the problem. Journalists might expand the subject matter of their reporting on child abuse by showcasing or analyzing the efforts being made in their community to stop further occurrences of abuse. By implementing this shift in focus, the media may instruct the public on how to prevent child abuse and guarantee the healthy development of all our children. (1,2,3,4)

This toolkit was developed to assist journalists, reporters, producers, and other media professionals in making educated choices about how to cover crimes against children. Each story offers the audience the opportunity to learn that every instance of child abuse is accompanied by a community that is working to prevent it.

This kit is being made available as a resource manual for journalists that cover child maltreatment. By doing this, we can step up our efforts to prevent child abuse and ultimately improve our world.

[Credit to the National Children's Advocacy Center Media Kit](#)



Who We Are

Our History

In 1986, a group of concerned citizens and professionals got together and created the Bradford County Child Sexual Abuse Task Force. The purpose of the original entity was to educate the public about child sexual abuse and to increase the prosecution of offenders.

In 1989, the Task Force received a grant from the Children's Trust Fund to construct a facility to give sexually abused children in Bradford County a safe and child-friendly place to be interviewed by CYS and law enforcement personnel and to minimize the number of times a child is required to recall their story of abuse.

Our vision has continued to grow since the inception of the Task Force. We continue to offer a child-friendly environment to children who have been victimized by abuse.

In 2015, CHCAC became an accredited member through the National Children's Alliance.

We now provide a place for abused children and their families to receive the necessary services to recover and heal from their traumatic experience at no cost.

Our Mission



To reduce trauma to children and their families by providing a safe and supportive environment through a collaboration of community agencies.

Our Vision



Every child in our community will have access to a supportive, trained and coordinated multidisciplinary response to child sexual abuse, serious physical abuse, and witness to traumatic crime allegations.



What We Do

Collaborative Services

Working with a team of professionals when an allegation of child abuse is made. This collaborative approach to the investigation makes the process as streamlined as possible.



Forensic Interviewing

Forensic interviewers provide objective, developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive forensic interviews about abuse allegations that are legally defensible.



Medical Evaluations

Specially-trained medical providers perform comprehensive forensic medical examinations and crisis interventions to survivors of sexual assault.



Family Advocacy

Family advocates provide on-site advocacy to families of abuse victims including education, emotional support referrals, and follow-up. Advocates ensure that families are linked to appropriate comprehensive services.



Mental Health

Therapists provide on-site and off-site Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) to child victims to help restore a child's feeling of safety and begin the healing process.



Prevention Education

As part of our comprehensive approach. Evidence-based child abuse prevention programs are available to school-aged children, caregivers, and youth-serving professionals.



Expertise

The Children's House has experts available to speak about the following issues:

Child Sexual Abuse

Serious Physical Abuse

Children witnessing violence

Forensic Interviewing of Children

Child Abductions

Trauma Informed Mental Health

Child Abuse Prevention

Youth Serving Organization Training

Internet Safety

Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth

Multidisciplinary Team Approach to Investigating Child Abuse



Media Contact

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The Facts

When reporting on crimes against children, before drafting a story consider the following issues regarding the impact of public disclosure details:

- Will details of the report inadvertently disclose the identity of the victim (e.g., "John Doe is charged with sexual abuse. Investigators say the victim is his <step-daughter/niece/girlfriend's son>, etc.). (5,6,7,8)
- Will revealing a child's identity, even with the permission of the parent or guardian adversely impact the child in the future? (5,6,7,8,10)
- What is the viewer benefit of knowing all the facts on the case? Are some details too heinous? (9)
- Are you using correct, legal terminology for the crime? (12)



Story Angles

It's rare for someone directly involved with the case to agree to an interview. It's even more rare for anyone directly involved to produce meaningful statements. In order to keep the story in the public eye without compromising the case, consider expanding the story to include the impact of abuse and possible solutions. For example consider:

How is the community working to prevent child abuse? The Children's House Child Advocacy Center is the agency for Bradford and Sullivan County cases. Talk to local and state law enforcement officials, and/or child protective services.

How could this type of abuse impact a child later in life? How does therapy help a child heal from abuse? Speaking to mental health professionals specializing in childhood trauma and evidence based treatment.

What is a mandatory reporting law in Pennsylvania? Talk to local legal experts to explain who is covered, why, and what are the ramifications for violating the law.

Does the area have a survivors' network? Talk to a spokesperson about the resource available for the victim and the victim's family.

[Mandated Reporter Information](#)

What is the prevalence of this type of crime in the community? Talk to law enforcement officials, the District Attorney's office about the number of cases they see in a year or month.

What can the average person do to prevent child abuse? The Children's House Child Advocacy Center can provide an in-depth review of prevention.

How reports of child abuse are investigated? The CHCAC can walk you through what happens from the moment there is an outcry of maltreatment.

Guidelines

Here are six principles that are crucial to any story involving children.



1 Respect the dignity and rights of every child in every circumstance.



2 In reporting on children, pay special attention to each child's right to privacy and confidentiality and to be protected from harm and retribution.



3 Protect the best interests of each child over any other consideration. Including advocacy for children's issues and promotion of child rights.



4 When trying to determine the best interests of the child, give due weight to the child's right to have their views taken into account in accordance with their age and maturity.



5 Consult those closest to the child's situation and best able to assess it about the political, social, and cultural ramifications of any reportage.



6 Do not publish a story or an image that might put the child, their siblings, or peers at risk even when their identities are changed, obscured, or not used.

[Adapted from UNICEF's Guidelines for Journalists Reporting on Children](#)

Self-Care

No matter the amount of experience in the reporting field, you will more than likely be impacted by a story. The information revealed in testimony or court documents reflect humanity's darkest side.

Reporting on stories such as these can lead to Vicarious Trauma. This work-related trauma exposure can lead to long-term issues such as PTSD, depression, and substance abuse.

The Children's House Child Advocacy Center recommends those within the communications field to partake in the following self-care practices provided by the Dart Center (11).

- Debriefing with someone you trust
- Monitor for delayed reactions
- Maintain normal activities and routines, but slow down
- Seek professional help if distress continues 3 to 4 weeks after assignment.

[The Dart Center: Self Care Tips For News Media](#)

#TakeCareOfYourself

Fact Sheets

The following resources are provided by the
National Children's Advocacy Center:

[Economic Impact of Child Abuse](#)

[Efficacy of The Child Advocacy Center Model](#)

[What Parents Need to Know About Educator Sexual Misconduct with Students](#)

[10 Facts About Child Abuse](#)

[Child Sexual Abuse: Perpetrators-Manipulation-Disclosure-Prevention](#)

[Parents Can Prevent Child Sexual Abuse](#)

[The Relationship Between Child Maltreatment and Adult Health](#)

[The Relationship Between Child Maltreatment and Child/Adolescent Well-Being](#)

[The Relationship Between Child Maltreatment and Academic Achievement](#)

[Abused Children: The High Risk of Poly-Victimization](#)

[Children with Sexual Behavior Problems](#)

[Adolescent Disclosure of Sexual Abuse](#)

[Impact of Witnessing Intimate Partner Violence](#)

Resources

The CHCAC recommends the following resources for media reporting.

[National Children's Alliance: Media Kit](#)

[Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma](#)

[Global Investigative Journalism Network](#)

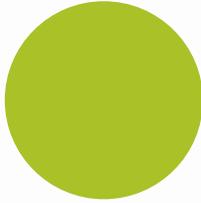
[National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#)

[National Association for People Abused in Childhood](#)

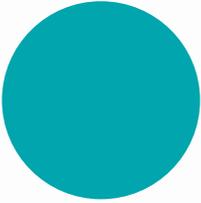
[Center for Disease Control](#)

[Poytner Institute for Journalism](#)

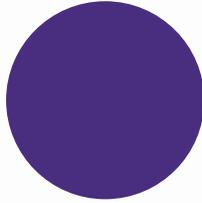
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[Credit to the National Children's Advocacy Center Media Kit](#)

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