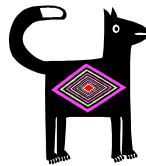




3B

**BUILDING  
Child Advocacy Centers  
IN  
NATIVE COMMUNITIES**



**Native American Children's Alliance**

**Children's Advocacy Centers  
In Tribal Communities**

## The Native American Children's Alliance (NACA)

- Started in 1999
- A national inter-tribal organization
- Support tribal multidisciplinary approaches and children's advocacy centers
- Tribal cross-mentoring & technical assistance
- Chapter of the NCA



## The History of Children's Advocacy Centers Began in the 1980's Because

- Multiple interviews
- Re-victimized by the system
- Prosecution unlikely
- Children didn't access services
- Offenders not held accountable



## Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) Changed Our System's Approach

### Philosophy

- Focus on child & family
- Agencies coordinated their approach
- CAC is a neutral facility
- Warm, non-threatening environment for children and families



## Benefits of the CAC Approach

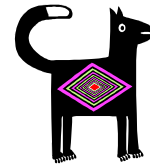
### Success of CACs

- Consistent approach with follow-up services
- Decrease numbers of interviews
- Multidisciplinary team approach
- Increase prosecution & offender accountability



## In Tribal Communities Today

- Not uncommon for tribal children to still be re-interviewed
- Often tribal children are not interviewed in a timely manner
- Some tribal children are not being interviewed at all
- Child victims seldom receive all of the needed services



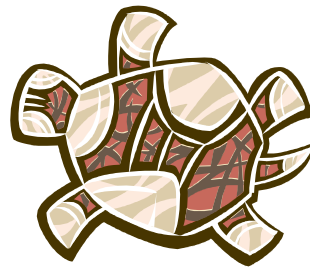
## In Tribal Communities Today

- Some tribal communities do not have follow-up services for children
- Prosecution remains a challenge
- Most offenders evade tribal, state & federal accountability and end up back in the home
- Children are re-victimized “by the system”



## Offender Treatment Challenges

- One of the biggest issues and community safety hazards in tribal communities is the lack of offender treatment programs
- Programs need to be available to address
  - Sexually reactive children
  - Juvenile offenders
  - Adult offenders



## Children's Advocacy Center Development in Tribal Communities

Began in the Mid-1990s NACA

- NACA creates a unique tribal approach
- Emphasis is on the child, family & tribal community
- Tribal Cross-Mentoring
- Sustainability "promoted"
- Ownership of child abuse is a tribal community responsibility



## Children's Advocacy Center Development in Tribal Communities

- Develop a holistic approach to child abuse & domestic violence
- View health and healing as important as investigation and prosecution
- Understand that tribes are the key to the solution
- Realize tribal representation must occur at the MDT level
- Promote tribal self-determination as “per” our current federal Indian Policy



## The Center of Every Children's Advocacy Center is the MDT

### Multidisciplinary Team

- Child Protection Services
- Law Enforcement
- Mental Health
- Prosecution
- Medical
- Victim Advocates & Domestic Violence providers
- Tribal
- CAC staff



## Getting It Together for Children & Tribal Communities

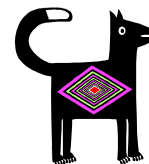
- CACs in Tribal communities require us to work together for our children
- Multidisciplinary & Child Protection Teams are made up of professionals that represent tribal, state and federal agencies with a duty to intervene in child abuse cases
- Cultural Competency becomes critical when tribal, state and federal agencies collaborate



## Developing a Children's Advocacy Center in Tribal Communities

### Diversity of Tribal Programs

- Organizational structures
  - Tribal non-profits
  - Tribal agency affiliated CWA or domestic violence shelters
  - Tribal sponsored CACs
- Service delivery one or multiple tribes
- Rural and geographically isolated
- Treatment and/or prosecution
- Not necessarily family cases
- Small to medium sized tribes



## Developing a Children's Advocacy Center in Tribal Communities

### Child-Friendly Facility:

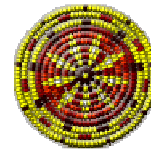
- Warm
- Comfortable
- Child-Friendly
- Culturally Welcoming
- Community staffed



## Developing a Children's Advocacy Center in Tribal Communities

### MDT & Agency Commitment

- Protocol development
- Information on sharing services
- Team decision-making on child abuse cases
- Commitments are formalized through cooperative agreements, protocols & intergovernmental agreements



## Developing a Children's Advocacy Center in Tribal Communities

### Joint Investigative Interviews

- Law enforcement
- Child Protection Services
- Protocol for process
- Eastern Cherokee – Joint interviews (Law enforcement takes the lead)
- Crow Creek Tribe – Child interview specialist conducts interviews while Law Enforcement & CPS observe



## Developing a Children's Advocacy Center in Tribal Communities

### Medical Exams

- Specialized medical services
- Provided on-site – Tulalip SANE nurses
- Provided by referral
- HIS and other providers – Arapahoe & Shoshone
- Telemedicine – Crow Creek on-site physician's assistant & second opinion

## Developing a Children's Advocacy Center in Tribal Communities

### Mental Health & Healing

- Culturally appropriate mental health services are needed for child victims and their families
- Provided on-site – Tulalip tribes, Eastern Band of Cherokee
- Provided by referral – Mashantucket Pequot
- I.H.S or private providers – Crow Creek
- Traditional Counseling – Navajo Nation



## Developing a Children's Advocacy Center in Tribal Communities

### Prosecution

- Prosecutors are involved in the interview process or participate via review of reports & case review
- Tribal
- State
- Federal



## Developing a Children's Advocacy Center in Tribal Communities

### Case Review

- Team review or staffing of all or complex cases
- Case Tracking
- Computer case tracking system
- Many tribes use non-computerized case tracking systems
- Navajo – Working towards consistent data collection system for the Navajo Nation

## Developing a Children's Advocacy Center in Tribal Communities

### Tribal Representation

- Role of tribal community
- Accountability & sustainability
- Community ownership
- Tribes may be represented by tribal professionals and/or the Tribal CAC



## Working With Non-Native CACs

- Urban Native communities
- Interagency & Intergovernmental agreements
- Cultural Competence
  - Child friendly facility
  - On-going training
  - Forensic interviews
  - Tribal representation on MDTs
  - Mental health treatment
  - Staff & board members



## Additional Services

- “BJ Goes to Court” or Court School programs – Eastern Band of Cherokee
- Telemedicine Programs –Crow Creek
- Tribal CASA Programs – Arapahoe & Shoshone
- Non-offending patient support or counseling groups –Sioux
- Co-located Domestic Violence Programs – Crow Creek
- Co-located ICWA Programs – Tulalip
- Training & Prevention Programs – Eastern Band of Cherokee and Crow Creek

## NCA Performance Standards

- 1 Child-Appropriate/Child-Friendly Facility
- 2 Multidisciplinary Team
- 3 Organizational Capacity
- 4 Cultural Competency and Diversity
- 5 Forensic Interviews
- 6 Medical Evaluation
- 7 Therapeutic Intervention
- 8 Victim Support/Advocacy
- 9 Case Review
- 10 Case Training



## National Children's Alliance Standards

- The MDT teams response to allegations of child abuse includes forensic interviews, medical evaluations, therapeutic intervention, victim support/advocacy, case review and case tracking.
- These components may be provided by children's advocacy center staff or by other members of the multidisciplinary team.
- To the maximum extent possible components of the team response are provided at the CAC in order to promote a sense of safety and consistency to the child and family.

## 1 Child-Appropriate/Child-Friendly Facility

- Standard: A children's advocacy center provides a comfortable, private, child-friendly setting that is both physically and psychologically safe for diverse populations of children and their families.
- Comfortable, private and child-friendly
- Physical safety
- Psychological safety
- Facility allows for observation of interviews



## 2 Multidisciplinary Team

- Standard: A multidisciplinary team for response to child abuse allegations includes representation from the following
  - law enforcement
  - child protective services
  - prosecution
  - mental health
  - medical
  - victim advocacy
  - children's advocacy center



## 2 Benefits of Coordinated Team Approach

- Improves communication among agencies
- Facilitates information gathering
- Broadens knowledge-base for decision making
- Written agreements & protocols guide team function
- All members of MDT routinely involved with investigation and intervention
- Procedures developed for routine information sharing

## 3 Organizational Capacity

- Standard: A designated legal entity responsible for program and fiscal operations has been established and implements basic sound administrative practices
- Legal entity
  - Independent 501(c3)
  - Government-based sponsorship
  - Component of nonprofit umbrella



### 3 Organizational Capacity

- Sound administrative practices
  - General and professional liability insurance
  - Personnel for coordinating program
  - Volunteer/staff screening policies, training & supervision
  - Broad representation of whole community
  - Written confidentiality policies and procedures



### 4 Cultural Competency and Diversity

- Standard: 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.



## 4 Cultural Competency and Diversity

- Statement of non-discrimination in CAC policies and/or procedures
- Ongoing training for team/staff on diversity
- Provisions for non-English speaking children and families



## 5 Forensic Interviews

- Standard: The CAC promotes forensic interviews which are legally sound, are of a neutral, fact finding nature, and are coordinated to avoid duplicative interviewing
- The CAC promotes quality interviews through
  - Appropriate/neutral interview setting
  - Written guidelines & agreements
  - Use of legally sound interview techniques (non-duplicative, non-leading and neutral)



## 5 Forensic Interviews

- Selection/training/supervision of interviewers
- Effective communication among team members
- Participation by all team members (with investigative responsibility) in the interview



## 6 Medical Evaluation

- Standard: Specialized medical evaluation and treatment services are available to all CAC clients and coordinated with the multidisciplinary team response to provide follow-up referrals and/or treatment as necessary
- Medical evaluation providers have pediatric and child abuse experience



## 6 Medical Evaluation

- Specialized medical evaluations are available regardless of ability to pay
- Written protocols include access to medical services for all CAC clients
- Medical evaluations are provided by health care providers with pediatric experience and child abuse expertise



## 7 Therapeutic Intervention

- Standard: Specialized mental health services must be made available as part of the team response either at the children's advocacy center or through coordination with other treatment providers
- Mental health services are available on-site or through linkage agreements, regardless of ability to pay
- Access to MH included in written protocol policies

## 8 Victim Support/Advocacy

- Standard: Victim support and advocacy are to be available throughout the investigation and prosecution
- Victim support included in written protocol/agreement



## 8 Victim Support/Advocacy

- Services routinely available
  - Crisis intervention & support
  - Client education
  - Information on victims rights/services
  - Court preparation
  - Crime victims compensation
  - Assistance with needed services
  - Information re ongoing case status
  - Referrals for mental health & medical services



## 9 Case Review

- Standard: Team discussion and information sharing regarding the investigation, case status and services needed by the child and family is to occur on a regular basis
- Criteria for case review included in team protocol



## 9 Case Review

- A forum for reviewing cases is conducted regularly
  - Every other week is common
  - Some meet weekly or monthly
  - Some review every case
  - Others review only complex, problematic or cases going to prosecution



## 10 Case Tracking

- Standard: Children's advocacy centers must develop and implement a system for monitoring case progress and tracking case outcomes for all team components
- Protocol includes how cases are tracked while pending in child protection or criminal justice systems
- Information tracked includes client demographics, case outcome and NCA statistical information



## Getting Started

- Is there an existing MDT or CPT
- Creation of CAC task force or committee
- Identify key agency and tribal community leadership
- Consider Community Readiness or a needs assessment
- Consider extent of services Tribal CAC will provide



## Getting Started

- Service population members, non-members
- Develop Mission & Goals
- Identify tribal community resources
- Identify grants for start-up
- Visit other tribal sites
- NACA: Informational materials, tribal site visits and Cross-Mentoring
- RCACs, NCA and state chapters



## Networking Opportunities

- CAC Cross-mentoring in Indian Country with other tribes – NACA
- Native American Children's Alliance
- NCA membership, conferences and tribal chapter (NACA)
- Tribal Law & Policy Institute
- Conferences (e.g. National Indian Child Welfare Association and OVCs Indian Nations Conferences)
- Regional CAC supports tribal CAC development in collaboration with NCA



## Resources

- Native American Children's Alliance  
(256-327-3875)
- National Children's Alliance  
(800-239-9950)
- Nat'l Children's Advocacy Center  
(256-327-3883)
- Regional CACs:
  - Southern Regional- 800-747-8122
  - Western Regional- 866-592-4272
  - Midwest Regional-888-422-2955
  - Northeast Regional- 800-662-4124

