



Sample Linkage Agreement for Victim Advocacy Services

This sample linkage agreement is created to serve as a resource for CACs. Please note this is intended as a SAMPLE and should be carefully reviewed by the CAC Board of Directors or other governing entity so that it accurately reflects YOUR partnership with community agencies.

_____ Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) and _____ (victim advocacy provider) agree to collaboratively provide victim advocacy services to child victims of sexual and severe physical abuse for all children and their non-offending families. This linkage agreement outlines the following:

1. CAC staff _____ are responsible for notifying victim advocacy provider _____ of the case information, time & location of the forensic interview.
2. CAC staff _____ is responsible for making the initial referral to the non-offending parent/guardian for victim advocacy services for the child and non-offending family members.
3. The victim advocacy provider agrees to prioritize CAC referrals by placing these referrals at the top of waiting lists when they exist, and when no waiting list exists efforts will be made to schedule an appointment within a reasonable amount of time.
4. The victim advocacy provider agrees to protect confidentiality of their patients as outlined in their own agency policies and procedures.
5. The victim advocacy provider confirms that the advocates have 24-hour training on the following topics, and provide documentation to the CAC:
 - Dynamics of abuse
 - Trauma-informed services
 - Crisis assessment and intervention
 - Risk assessment and safety planning
 - Professional ethics and boundaries
 - Understanding the coordinated multidisciplinary response
 - Understanding, explaining and affording of victim's legal rights
 - Court education, support, and accompaniment
 - Knowledge of available community and legal resources, referral methods and assistance with access to treatment and other services, including protective orders, housing, public assistance, domestic violence intervention, transportation, financial assistance and interpreters, among others as determined for individual clients
 - Cultural responsiveness and addressing the implicit bias in service delivery
 - Caregiver resilience
 - Domestic violence/family violence/children's exposure to domestic violence and poly-victimization (NCA Standards of Accreditation • 2023 Edition)



6. The victim advocacy provider confirms that the advocates providing treatment to child victims of sexual and physical abuse and their families complete continuing education in the field of child abuse consisting of a minimum of 8 contact hours every two years.
7. The victim advocacy provider confirms the following constellation of services are provided:
 - Crisis assessment and intervention, risk assessment and safety planning and support for children and family members at all stages of involvement with CAC
 - Assessment of individual needs, cultural considerations for child/family and ensure those needs are addressed in concert with the MDT and other service providers
 - Presence at CAC during the forensic interview to participate in information sharing with other MDT members, inform and support family about the coordinated, multidisciplinary response, and assess needs of children and non-offending caregivers
 - Provision of education and assistance in ensuring access to victim's rights and crime victim's compensation
 - Assistance in procuring concrete services (housing, protective orders, domestic violence intervention, food, transportation, public assistance, civil legal services, etc.)
 - Provision of referrals for trauma-focused, evidence-supported mental health and specialized medical treatment, if not provided at the CAC
 - Facilitating access to transportation to interviews, court, treatment and other case-related meetings
 - Engagement with the child and family to help them understand the investigation/prosecution process and help ensure understanding of crime victims' rights
 - Participation in case review to communicate and discuss the unique needs of the child and family and associated services planning; and help ensure the coordination of identified services and that the child and family's concerns are heard and addressed
 - Provision of case status updates to the family, including investigations, court date, continuances, dispositions, sentencing and inmate status notification (including offender release from custody)
 - Provision of court education and support, including court orientation and accompaniment (NCA Standards of Accreditation • 2023 Edition)
8. The victim advocacy provider confirms that advocacy services are available and accessible to all CAC clients regardless of ability to pay.
9. The CAC will work with the victim advocacy provider to provide information about victim compensation.
10. As mandated reporters, the victim advocacy providers agree to report all suspected cases of child sexual and severe physical abuse to state/local office of child protection.



- 11. The CAC staff is responsible for notifying the victim advocacy provider or designee of regularly scheduled Case Review meetings. The victim advocacy provider or designee shall attend scheduled Case Review to provide consultation, expertise, and input on victim advocacy issues to the MDT and to discuss *(or not discuss)* specific case information.
- 12. The victim advocacy provider will provide active outreach and follow-up support services for caregivers on a consistent basis. This process is outlined in the VA protocol/MOU.
- 13. The CAC values diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) will provide access to DEI training and information and encourages attendance at trainings; the [MH PROVIDER/MEDICAL PERSONNEL/ETC] will provide services that are culturally informed and submit documentation of attendance at DEI training, as relevant.

The CAC believes in protecting the client’s right to confidentiality. To that end the CAC and _____ agree that all victim advocacy records are the property of the victim advocacy provider, records are maintained inside the victim advocacy provider’s offices, and records can only be accessed via authorized release of information signed by the child’s parent/guardian or by court order.

Children’s Advocacy Center

Date

Victim Advocacy Provider

Date

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SAMPLE

