

Building a Better Case Review Together

Enhancing the impact for CACs and MDTs



Building a Better Case Review Together is created to help Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) expand and enhance your case review process. These guidelines, along with the accompanying video [Building a Better Case Review Together](#) will help your CAC and MDT evaluate your case review process and assess if any changes are needed.



THE VALUE OF CASE REVIEW

Since all CACs are multidisciplinary by nature, regularly scheduled case review (sometimes called MDT meetings) becomes the formal process through which professionals share facts and observations that assist team members to make plans and decisions about cases.

Case review is a core standard of NCA's [National Standards for Accredited Children's Advocacy Centers](#). Case review allows the CAC to monitor cases and bring the knowledge, experience and expertise of the team members together. Through case review, the efforts of all team members are maximized because knowledge is shared and cooperation is built among the participating agencies. Case review presents an opportunity for each professional to share their unique knowledge and skill with the other team members and allow for full discussion on determining the optimum case plan and next steps.

Every CAC, along with their multidisciplinary team, determines the criteria for case review – are all cases reviewed or just identified/complex cases. The more complicated cases may be reviewed on an ongoing basis until all efforts on the case have taken place and the case is closed.

Case review should present opportunities to:

- Evaluate the child's interview
- Discuss, plan, and monitor the progress of the investigation, including what has been done and what still needs to be done on the case
- Review findings from the medical examination, if any and/or discuss any future medical needs
- Discuss child protection issues and safety concerns, if any
- Discuss resources for the child and supportive caregiver
- Discuss cultural considerations related to the case
- Review the family's viewpoint about prosecution
- Provide an opportunity to discuss the treatment issues/needs for the child and other family members
- Review any criminal and/or civil proceedings
- Promote joint decision making on case management issues
- Determine appropriate time frames to accomplish tasks
- Provide an opportunity for formal and informal communication among all responsible agencies
- Discuss the important child development issues relevant to interviewing the child, assessing their ability to participate in court, and preparing them for court
- Provide support to professionals who work the child abuse cases to prevent burnout
- Build trust and support among team members
- Provide cross-training opportunities for team members

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Case review benefits:

- Provides an opportunity for new agency personnel to become acquainted with other team members and the case review process
- Allows each team member to retain their agency identity/mandate while becoming familiar with the other systems involved with abused children and their families
- Helps prevent cases from “falling through the cracks” in the system
- Enables team members to identify gaps in resources and conflicts in service provision
- Ensures proactive planning and case coordination in the best interest of the child and family

Case review challenges:

- Irregular attendance
- Turnover
- Lack of trust/respect
- Tension between individuals
- Tension between agencies
- Dominated by one individual/discipline
- Team burn out
- Reluctance to share information
- Unclear purpose
- Wrong people at the table
- Focus on investigation only and not ongoing services

Every CAC will set its own policies and procedures for case review. Case review should be coordinated, at least monthly, and scheduled by CAC staff, preferably at the CAC. Someone should be designated as the case review facilitator with at least 8 hours of initial training to meet the [NCA Accreditation Standards](#) for MDT facilitators. At some CACs, this facilitator is the CAC director/coordinator in others, an MDT member such as the prosecutor, is the facilitator.

All MDT professionals who have information about a case should be present at case review so that all issues pertinent to the case can be discussed, decision making can occur, and appropriate referrals made. Some agencies send the ongoing caseworker/detective, while others send the supervisors with the latest case updates. Each CAC should have a policy about confidentiality and a Confidentiality Agreement/Attendance Sheet should be signed by all participants.

The goal is for MDT professionals to see case review as a valuable use of their time. Strategies for success include: Highlighting CAC core values; providing orientation for new team members of the purpose of case review; celebrating success, providing mini trainings; using Outcome Measurement Survey (OMS) survey for the MDT to obtain feedback.

Tips for case review:

- Develop an agenda for each case review meeting that is distributed ahead of time to the attending MDT professionals.
- Create a case review list that outlines important issues to be discussed so attendees are clear about what activities should be done prior to the case review meeting.
- Ensure outstanding cases are regularly reviewed until the case is closed by all disciplines.
- Provide opportunity for case progress and discussion rather than placing blame on anyone.
- Remind all team members they can request a case to be put on the list for review.

CREATING/EVALUATING CASE REVIEW PROTOCOL

Case review should present opportunities to:

1. Identify case review practices/guidelines
2. Review purpose, location, case review criteria, documentation, confidentiality with MDT, create/review guiding principles
3. Evaluate how things are working at the present time (OMS MDT surveys)
4. Review/update protocol to fit your CAC needs

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EXAMPLE OF CASE REVIEW GROUND RULES/GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Note: These guidelines should be created to reflect the individuality of your team. Some teams do this exercise at the beginning of a regular scheduled case review and then post on the wall of the team room

- Case review discussions will remain confidential
- We will bring a positive problem-solving attitude to each meeting
- Everyone will engage in active participation and will allow everyone to contribute
- We will respect differences and will not discount others' opinions, be those personal or case specific
- We will support each other, rather than judge each other
- We will refrain from instructing other team members on their job responsibilities
- We will understand that each agency maintains ultimate authority for decisions appropriate to its own policies and statutory mandates and may not be able to adopt some team recommendations
- We will understand that each agency has its own policies and procedures and will refrain from using case review as a medium to criticize other agencies' procedures
- Feedback will remain open, honest, and constructive and will focus on the case and group process, not on personalities. Adverse personal comments or attacks are not acceptable
- Our focus will remain on the cases, subsequently avoiding sidetracks, sidebar conversations, personality conflicts, or hidden agendas
- We will make every attempt to use time wisely by arriving on time for case review
- We will notify the CAC of any absence from a scheduled review within 48 hours, when possible
- If a designated team member cannot attend a scheduled case review, a designee and/or their supervisor will come prepared to discuss the case in their absence
- Barring an urgent situation, we will make all attempts to not leave a case review until the meeting is adjourned
- If someone misses a meeting or must leave early, a responsible party will be designated to provide the missed information to the absent MDT member
- Each team member is responsible for what they receive from case review and will ask for what they need from the facilitator and/or other team members
- To minimize disruptions, cell phones will be turned to vibrate or silent

EXAMPLE OF A DRAFT PROTOCOL

Note: Each case review protocol should be created with the MDT to reflect the individuality of the program.

Purpose:

The purpose of case review is to bring together the multidisciplinary team (MDT) players to discuss the status of all child abuse cases or identified child abuse cases. Case review will allow the CAC to track the status of active cases in which both criminal and civil matters are pending and to coordinate inter-agency services.

Participants:

Representatives from the CAC, child protection, prosecutor's office, law enforcement, mental health agencies (or consultant), medical representative, and victim advocacy will attend and provide input at the monthly case review. If a team representative is not available to attend case review, they will ensure that the appropriate information is conveyed to the case review facilitator or another appropriate team member. Case review participants should be direct staff working on the case, or their supervisors, to ensure they are familiar with the case status and case review protocol. The CAC director or other team member will act as the case review facilitator and other team members will cover in their absence.

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Frequency:

The CAC hosts case reviews meetings monthly. Additional case reviews will be scheduled as needed, according to volume of case referrals and urgency of review.

Case Selection:

Cases will be selected by the CAC staff/team members. The case review facilitator will regularly consult with other team members to decide which cases will be reviewed at case review. After the cases are chosen, the case review facilitator will circulate the case list a week before scheduled to allow team members to prepare their updates. The list can be circulated via email (encrypted if need be). Case review may include sexual abuse, physical abuse, commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and/or child witness to violence cases, depending on your CAC protocol.

Meeting Format:

An agenda with the list of cases scheduled for review will be distributed at the beginning of case review by the case review facilitator. Each case will be discussed in accordance with the case review outline. One designated person will provide a summary of the case before each MDT member discusses their update and relevant information. **Depending on your state, mental health information or privileged victim advocacy detail may not be shared due to confidentiality.** Following the review, MDT members may decide to schedule a follow up case review meeting for a future date. Team members may rotate through case review as certain team members (i.e. law enforcement and child protection) may be different for each cases. At the end of the agenda, there is always an opportunity for the MDT team to discuss training, updates, issues, and needs.

Location of Meeting:

All case review meetings will be held at the CAC (or other location) unless otherwise specified.

Documentation:

It is the responsibility of each participant to gather the relevant information for their own agency. All updates from case review will be entered into NCA Trak or other tracking database. The case review agendas are returned to the case review facilitator or their designee at the end of each meeting to be shredded. A subsequent email will be sent to team members who were unable to attend.

Confidentiality:

Case review meetings will take place only for cases that have been formally referred to the CAC, **pursuant to _____**, that allows communication among agencies working on child abuse cases.

Additional Training Opportunity:

Case review meeting provide opportunities for MDT members to increase understanding of the complexity of child abuse cases. Case review can provide time for formal and informal training and sharing of information on a regular basis.

EXAMPLE OF CASE REVIEW AGENDAS

Agendas are needed to outline the list of cases that will be discussed. Some CACs print a report using NCA Trak or other database used. Agendas with case names may be circulated by email (sometimes encrypted email if needed) and may be collected for shredding at the end of the meeting if there is a concern about multiple copies of the list.

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Example 1

1. Discuss the Interview – disclosure and allegations (FI)
2. Identify and discuss other contributing factors (DA/LE/CPS/MD/MH/VA)
3. Identify and discuss the impact of cultural, cross cultural, development and disability issues present in the case (CAC/LE/CPS/MD/MH/VA)
4. Discuss the progress of criminal investigation (LE)
5. Discuss child protection and other safety issues (CPS)

Example 2

Case Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Type and nature of abuse (allegations)• Presence of other problems, such as domestic violence, substance abuse, etc.
Forensic Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outcome of interview• Issues related to the disclosure
Cultural Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family background• Cultural issues that may impact family's reaction and response to child's disclosure• Cultural issues that may impact family's reaction to the involvement of the criminal justice or child protection systems• Developmental disabilities
Child Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progress of the investigation• Child protection concerns• Safety issues
Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of interviews conducted• Status of the investigation• Next steps
Victim Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emotional support needs of the child/supportive family members• Strategies for meeting those needs• Resources/referrals provided
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical report, if exam conducted• If no exam, other questions related to the case• Any referrals needed
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Referrals for mental health services for the child/family, if known• General consultation about mental health issues related to child abuse cases, including delayed disclosures, recantation, child and family reactions, etc.
Prosecution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Status of investigation/decision about charges• Next steps, including who will talk with family about decision of charges/no charges

ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

The facilitator for case review has many responsibilities and requires a unique set of skills, including:

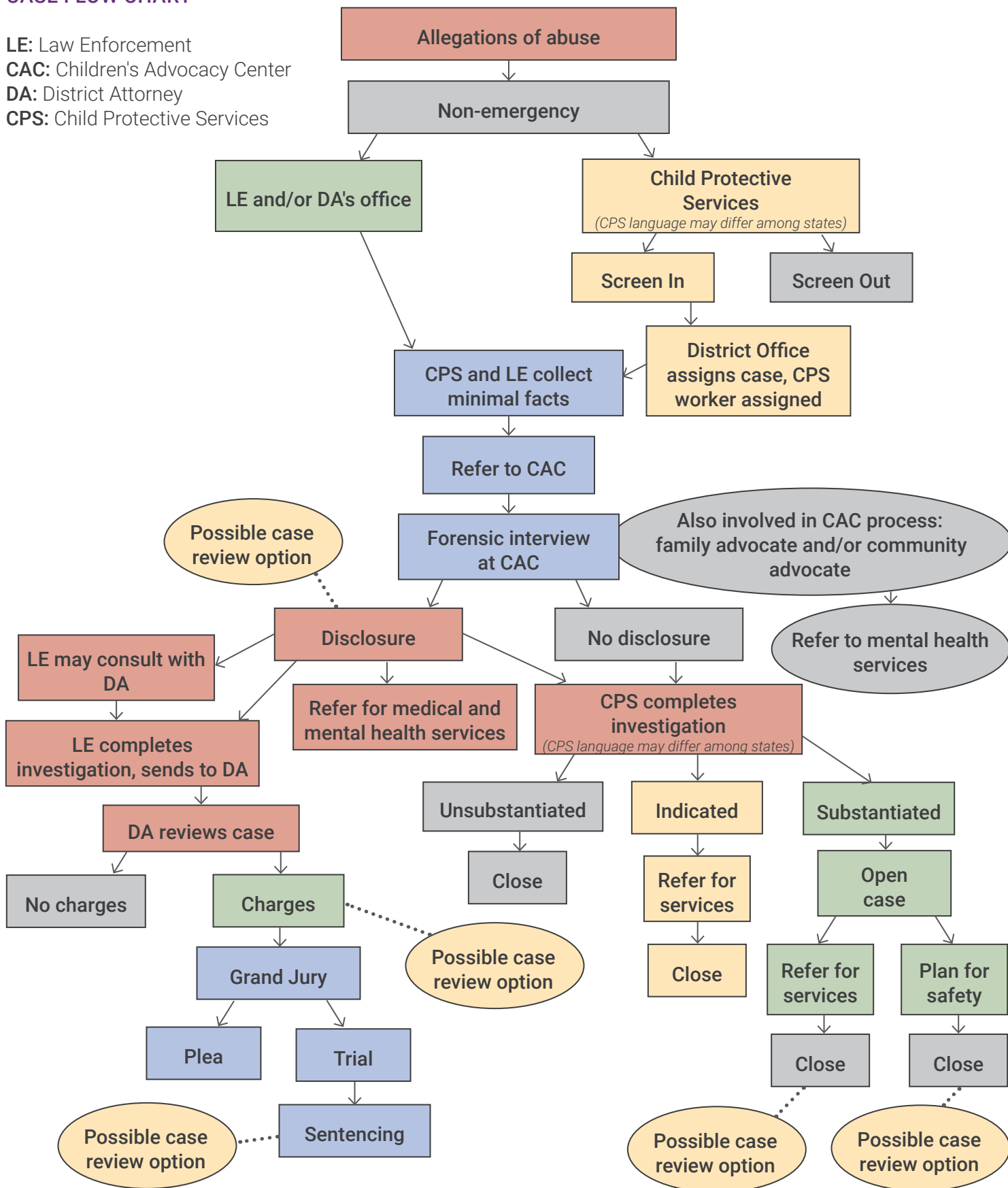
- Skills for facilitating groups
- Thinks of the group as a resource
- Observes keenly
- Remains flexible
- Paraphrases input
- Encourages divergent views
- Keeps discussion balanced
- Brainstorms
- Sets up and debriefs activities
- Implements decision making processes
- Evaluates meetings
- Stays impartial
- Tracks and manages pace
- Draws members out
- Tracks themes
- Uses silence intentionally
- Leads go-rounds in a structured manner
- Frames concepts, ideas, and instructions
- Comments on group process
- Manages conflict

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CASE FLOW CHART


LE: Law Enforcement
CAC: Children's Advocacy Center
DA: District Attorney
CPS: Child Protective Services





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RESOURCES


 **Beyond Case Review: The Value of the Role of Team Facilitator in the Multidisciplinary Team/Children's Advocacy Center Model**
The goal of [this paper](#) is to clarify and elevate the role of Team Facilitator and explain its value to the efficacy of the MDT.

 **Building a Better Case Review Video**
This [video training](#) highlights the importance of case review, provides an example of what case review can look like, and discusses the value of representatives from each discipline attending.

 **Case Review Checklist**
This [checklist](#) can be used to help ensure full MDT participation and optimize informed decision-making, case planning, and coordinated service delivery.

 **Confidentiality Agreement/Attendance Sheet**
This [template Confidentiality Agreement/Attendance Sheet](#) can be modified to use for your case review meetings.

 **Moving Beyond Case Review**
In this [NRCAC Team Talk Podcast episode](#), guests Sue Ascione, Vicky Gwiasda, and Brittnee Aten-Acheson discuss the importance of the role moving beyond case review to having the role be viewed as more of a leadership position within the CAC.

 **Online Accreditation Bootcamp**
This free, [self-paced video series](#) is produced with help from experts in all 10 disciplines for NCA's mandatory Standards and all three of the Optional Standards areas, including case review.

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