


Child Abuse Cases from a Multidisciplinary Lens




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Learning Objectives



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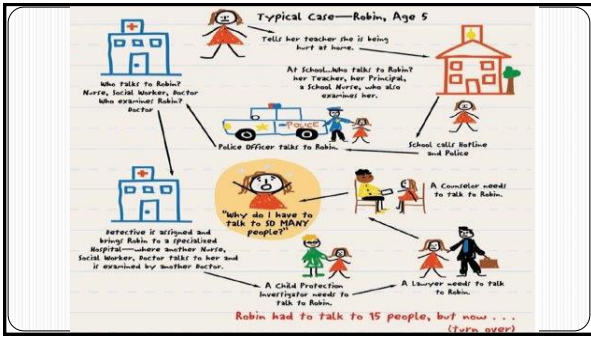
- Understand the complexity of child abuse investigations and cases
- Identify the role of different disciplines involved with child abuse investigations and cases
- Discuss components of a multidisciplinary child abuse investigation including interviewing victims, collecting medical evidence, legal issues, and child protection

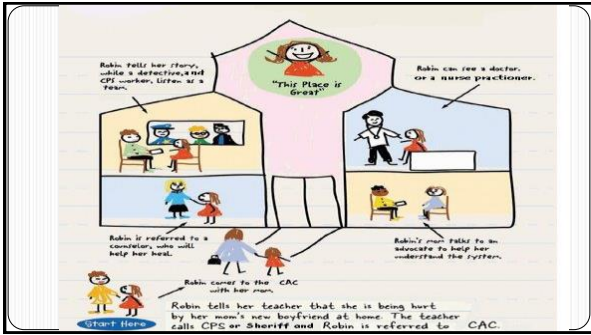


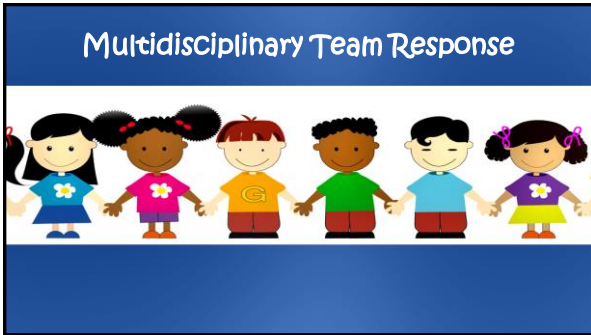


Children's Advocacy Center

- Brings together law enforcement, criminal justice, child protective services, medical, & mental health
- Joint investigation begins
- Forensic interviews
- Medical treatment & examinations









Multidisciplinary Team Response

- Multidisciplinary collaboration is best practice in child abuse cases
- A unique public-private partnership involving law enforcement, criminal justice, child protective services, medical, & mental health
- Joint investigation starting point
- United & collaborative effort but, within conflicting criteria



Multidisciplinary Response

- Child protective services/child welfare
- Law enforcement
- Forensic professionals
- Treatment
- Legal system/prosecution




Child Protective Services



Child Protective Services

- Ensures a child's home is safe
- If the family/caretaker is not the alleged abuser, CPS may not take action
- Priority is assigned
- A variety of outcomes



Law Enforcement



A horizontal illustration of six diverse children of various ethnicities and genders, holding hands in a line. They are wearing colorful clothing: a blue dress with a white flower, a pink shirt with a white flower, an orange shirt with a white 'G', a green shirt, a light blue shirt, and a purple shirt with a white flower and a yellow skirt.

Law Enforcement

- Grounded in public safety
- If allegations aren't criminal in nature, law enforcement may not take action
- Immediate response is typically from patrol
- Investigators/detectives assigned



A small version of the illustration of six diverse children holding hands, located at the bottom left of the slide.

Forensic Interview



A horizontal illustration of six diverse children of various ethnicities and genders, holding hands in a line. They are wearing colorful clothing: a blue dress with a white flower, a pink shirt with a white flower, an orange shirt with a white 'G', a green shirt, a light blue shirt, and a purple shirt with a white flower and a yellow skirt.

Forensic Interview

- Gather factual information regarding allegations of abuse or exposure to violence
- Conducted by a trained, neutral professional
- Forensic interviewing models
- Extended forensic interviews (EFI)



Forensic v Therapeutic



Forensic

- Purpose to discover truth
- Procedures governed by laws & courts
- Supportive but neutral
- Alternative explanations explored
- Details crucial

Therapeutic

- Purpose to promote well-being
- Governed by research & standards of practice
- Advocates for child
- Subjective reality accepted
- General idea of abuse is enough



(Based on conceptualization by Melissa Steinmetz)

<u>Forensic</u>	<u>Therapeutic</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal disclosure required • Techniques in which information is obtained are critical to outcome • Generally, only 1 or 2 interviews are considered forensically acceptable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonverbal is enough required • Techniques may or may not influence outcome • Process unfolds over longer period of time in successive sessions

(Based on conceptualization by Melissa Steinmetz)

Forensic Medical Examination



Forensic Medical Exam

- "Rape kit"
- Forensic medical examination (*VAWA, 1994*)
- Conducted by a health care provider with specialized education & experience
- Purpose is to collect evidence
- Document trauma

Forensic Medical Exam

- Adult exams are for victims 13 & older
- Include genital & vaginal swabs
- Similar to a gynecological examination
- 5-day protocol from the date of incident



Forensic Medical Exam

- Victims 12 & under
- **Not** intrusive examinations
- No swabs are internal/inserted
- 72-hour window for these exams
- STI testing is conducted in follow-up medical exam



Follow-Up Medical Exams



Follow-Up Medical Examination

- Not for evidence collection but for overall health
- Performed by MD, PA or NP with specialized training & experience conducts
- Helps child & family know that the child's body is ok
- Test for STIs



Questions & Answers



The Fight Attendant

