

Chapter:	Service Delivery		
Title:	Multidisciplinary Team Child Abuse Response Protocol		
Policy: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procedure: <input type="checkbox"/>	Review Cycle: Triennial Author: CAC Director	Adopted Date: 06.2022 Review Date: 06.2023	Related Policies: Mandatory Reporting Legal & Regulatory Compliance Confidentiality & Privacy

Purpose:

Hopeful Horizons serves as the Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC) for the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit. In this capacity HH is responsible to facilitate adoption of a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Child Abuse Response Protocol. This policy further clarifies the requirements for the protocol and its adoption.

Scope:

This policy applies to

- All HH Staff Selected HH Staff, as specified: Employees of the CAC
- HH Board Members HH Volunteers
- Other: Members of the MDT

Policy:

The South Carolina Child Abuse Response Protocol Act of 2021 (A28, R41, S229) requires that in the investigation of a known or suspected crime against a child, the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) must follow the South Carolina Child Abuse Response Protocol as developed by the South Carolina Children’s Justice Act Task Force and the South Carolina Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers (SCNCAC)

A. MDT Child Abuse Response Protocol: The protocol details procedures for the CAC/MDT approach to child abuse by addressing the functions of the MDT, roles and responsibilities of each discipline and the interaction of the disciplines during the child abuse response process, including:

- Case acceptance criteria
- The mission and approach of the Fourteenth Circuit served by HHs’ CAC
- Case staffing and referral process
- Confidentiality and information sharing
- Confidentiality guidelines
- HH MDT Coordinator role
- Criteria and process for forensic interviews
- Approach to family advocacy
- Forensic medical evaluation access and record storage
- Access to mental health treatment
- Case tracking
- Prosecution guidelines
- Guardian Ad Litem guidelines
- Guidelines for alleged offenders
- Guidelines for the MDT advisory council

- B. **Memorandum of Understanding:** In adherence to the South Carolina Child Abuse Response Protocol, HH shall facilitate adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between itself and required members of the MDT to assure a common understanding of protocol requirements and agreement in its adoption.
- a. The MOU shall include agency name, representative name and title (printed), representative signature and date signed.
 - b. The MDT protocol shall be reviewed annually and updated and signed triennially. If changes are made, the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit Multidisciplinary Team Child Abuse Response Protocol will be updated accordingly.
 - c. Updates to the MOU may be indicated if there are changes to the agencies or designated representatives assigned. The MDT Coordinator along with the CAC Director shall facilitate any required updates and provide notice of substantive changes to designated representatives.

Communication and Training:

New employees to the CAC receive training on the MDT process and related protocol and policy as part of their new employee orientation. CAC employees receive notice and related training about any changes made to the protocol and/or policy.

Definitions:

1. **Child Abuse Response Protocol:** The Protocol helps to ensure that all children in South Carolina (SC) have access to an evidence-based and best practice response to child abuse to help provide healing and restore hope during the most difficult time in their young lives. SC statute requires that in the investigation of a known or suspected crime against a child, a multidisciplinary team must follow the Protocol as developed by the SC Children’s Justice Act Task Force and the South Carolina Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers.
2. **Children’s Advocacy Center:** The CAC coordinates the investigation, treatment, and prosecution of child abuse cases by utilizing multidisciplinary teams of professionals involved in child protective and victim advocacy services, law enforcement and prosecution, and physical and mental health.
3. **Multidisciplinary Team (MDT):** MDT is a group of professionals from specific and distinct disciplines that collaborates from the point of report and throughout a child and family’s involvement with the CAC. MDTs coordinate investigations and service delivery to mitigate potential trauma to children and families, to keep open the lines of communication and maintain transparency and foster trust, and to help optimize a quality response overall, while preserving and respecting the rights of the clients, and the mandates and obligations of each agency.

Other Related Materials:

Fourteenth Judicial Circuit Multidisciplinary Team Child Abuse Response Protocol
Protocol MOU
Forensic Interview Procedures

References/Legal Authority:

[Children’s Advocacy Centers, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2023](#)
[South Carolina Child Abuse Response Protocol, 2021](#)
[SC Code of Laws Section 63.11.2410: Establishing of Child Abuse Protocol, 2022](#)

Change Log:

Date of Change	Description of Change	Responsible Party
06.2023	New Policy	B. Godwin