

*Enhance Early Engagement (E3) Training for CAC Victim Advocates*  
*Training Period: March -May 2024*  
**APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 14, 2024**  
**Successful applications will be notified by close of business February 15, 2024.**

***Description:***

Children’s Advocacy Centers (CACs) across the nation are at the forefront of addressing child maltreatment. We know that child maltreatment causes significant mental health effects on children, such as post-traumatic stress or disruptive behavior disorders. Further, as demonstrated in National Children Alliance’s (NCA’s) [Thriving Kids 2019](#) report, evidence-based mental health services (also collectively known as evidence-based practices, or EBP) make a huge positive impact on children’s well-being.

Yet not all families served by CACs receive these critical services. Through feedback from caregivers collected under NCA’s national [Outcome Measurement System \(OMS\)](#), we know some families report never receiving information about mental health services for themselves or their children. Thankfully, that number is falling, but even more concerning is that many of the families who do report receiving information about treatment options for children and caregivers still fail to follow up on referrals to these essential services after visiting a CAC.

Of course, sometimes this is due to concrete barriers—time, transportation, money, or availability concerns. But alarmingly, many family members report not seeking mental health services for themselves or their children because they’re not convinced it’s necessary or important, that non-evidence-based services are just as good, or that they can go it alone. CACs can offer the best mental health services in the world, but if children and families don’t use them, they may never have the chance to fully recover from the trauma of abuse. This is the critical role of the victim advocate<sup>1</sup> in the CAC setting: family engagement with treatment starts and ends with advocates.

***About The Project***

Enhancing early engagement of families in mental health assessment and evidence-base trauma treatment is a priority for CAC leaders through NCA. To address this need, NCA partnered with the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (OUHSC) on a training initiative, Enhance Early Engagement Training for CAC Victim Advocates, or E3. E3 aims to increase the proportion of children and their caregivers served by CACs who engage in mental health services.

CACs and their victim advocates helped us design this program to meet their needs and practice styles. In 2019, more than 1,500 victim advocates and CAC directors shared detailed feedback about current practices and remaining needs around family engagement in surveys. Victim advocates indicated the need for structured training in best practices for mental health screening, evidence-based treatment identification and referral, and evidence-based engagement strategies. **This training opportunity provides the new and enhanced version which was modified based on feedback from Victim Advocates and Senior Leaders from across the country who have participated in training.**

Please note that there is a requirement to submit project-related data. For NCAtrak users, it will be entered into NCAtrak. For non-NCAtrak users, Victim Advocates will submit data using a Qualtrics link. More information will be provided on data collection during the CAC team pre-call.

CACs trained through E3 will work toward common goals that all children and families served by CACs will be:

1. Screened and assessed for treatment needs.
2. Referred for treatment based on the needs identified through the screening and assessment.
3. Engaged in that treatment through attendance and participation toward successful completion.
4. Partnered and collaborate with the CAC to assess/monitor progress and celebrate success.

To bolster the important work victim advocates already do with families, the focus of the current project is to provide training to victim advocates in trauma responses, brief mental health screening, evidence-based trauma-focused treatments, identification of treatment needs, referrals for mental health services, and evidence-based engagement skills.

### *Training Schedule and What You'll Learn*

Victim Advocates will view five pre-recorded 60-minute webinars (one every other week) and participate in five – 90-minute live interactive calls which will be scheduled every other week (off weeks of the webinars). Senior Leaders and Victim Advocates will also participate in a 60-minute individual team pre-training call in September 2023. The active training phase is delivered over a 10- week period from October –December 2023. There are pre-work requirements for Victim Advocates and their Senior Leaders that need to be completed prior to the beginning of the E3 training. Please refer to list below

Through the training, victim advocates will learn:

- How research has informed CAC services.
- The expanded NCA mission to include healing, barriers to this mission, and NCA's response
- What family engagement is and why it's important.
- How NCA's 2023 *National Standard of Accreditation for Children's Advocacy Centers* on Victim Advocacy and Mental Health supports the NCA mission of healing and child well-being.
- The expanded role of the victim advocate to include family engagement in mental health treatment.
- How to use the Mental Health Treatment Roadmap to increase family engagement with mental health treatment participation and completion.
- Strategies from the family engagement research designed to increase family engagement in mental health treatment.
- The importance of building collaborative relationships with mental health providers.
- How to administer and utilize the screening instrument to identify treatment needs.
- The difference between screening and assessment, and how to introduce, administer and discuss results of screening with caregivers to facilitate referral for mental health services.

- Information on evidence-based treatments so advocates can explain the services to caregivers.
- Involving multidisciplinary team (MDT) members in the family engagement process.
- How to identify and refer to a qualified mental health provider for a trauma assessment and for evidence-based mental health treatment if indicated.
- The purpose of and how to use the virtual notebook/desk cards/resource material to support family engagement interventions and mental health treatment to completion.
- How to collaborate with a mental health provider to monitor and track services and gather metrics to inform treatment progress.
- How to gather and report metrics to inform service outcomes and to support the evaluation of this training.

### *Trainees and Their Project Requirements*

Victim advocates are the core of the family engagement response, but they can't go it alone in E3. They will also need senior leadership participation both to be trained throughout E3, to implement the E3 learning and, more broadly, to succeed at the project's real-world goals of increasing the number of child victims served through CACs who engage in mental health treatment to completion

### *Victim Advocate Project Requirements*

Here are the activities that will encompass the project requirements for victim advocates:

- Complete pre-training measures.
- Engage in the pre-training CAC team call with an E3 trainer.
- View five pre-recorded webinars -one every other week. **It is strongly recommended that a 60-minute time block is built into victim advocates' schedules during webinar weeks to ensure they have time to view the webinars prior to the live interactive calls.**
  - **Webinar weeks: March 4, March18, April 1, April 15, May6, 2024.**
- Complete assigned homework designed to support implementation of learning between webinars and to prepare for the interactive calls.
- Victim Advocates will engage in five-90-minute live interactive calls to be held every other week to support the implementation of their learning. There will be two groups and sign-ups will occur after Victim Advocates are accepted into the training.
  - **Live Interactive Call Group Tuesdays from 1:00-2:30PM EST: March 12, March 26, April 9, April 30, May14, 2024.**
  - **Live Interactive Call Group 2 Wednesdays from 1:00-2:30PM EST: March 13, March 27, April 10, May 1, May 15, 2024.**
- Complete post-training assessment measures.

## *Senior Leader Project Requirements*

A senior leader is a CAC staff member in a leadership role including responsibility for the outcome of services to children and families served by the CAC. This person should have administrative responsibility within the organization with authority to make systematic changes (policies, procedures, budgeting) to support the implementation of the E3 training in their organization and/or across the community. Because operational and systems support for changes to victim advocacy is critical to the success of this training, **senior leader participation is required**. For this project, the CAC director and/or clinical director should be designated as the senior leader. Here are the activities that will encompass the project requirements for senior leaders:

Complete:

The *CAC Directors Mental Health Guide* as pre-work <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/child-advocacy-center-cac-directors-guide-quality-mental-healthcare>

- Engage in pre-training CAC team call with an E3 trainer.
- Hold weekly meetings with the victim advocate(s) to gather metrics regarding E3 activities (i.e., homework, number of screenings completed, results of screenings, collaboration with mental health providers, referrals made, sessions attended by child and caregiver, barriers identified and resolved and the outcome of treatment services).
- Completion of the post-training feasibility assessment.
- Senior Leaders are encouraged to view webinars and are welcome to join the live interactive calls.
- We will have calls for Senior Leaders around preparation/adoption, active implementation, and sustainability: 12:00-1:00PM EST March 14, April 11, and May16\*

Trainers will be available to answer questions or consult regarding issues throughout the E3 training. Contact can be made via email.

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