



CYAC ADVOCATE ROLE DESCRIPTION

A Child Advocacy Centre/Child and Youth Advocacy Centre is a collaboration between law enforcement, child protection, medical and mental health professionals, and victim advocates in a child-friendly facility where children, youth, and their families can receive an individualized response and services after the occurrence of child abuse. Services provided include prevention, intervention, prosecution, treatment and support for victims and their families.

CACs/CYACs bring together a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) to provide a coordinated and comprehensive response to address the needs of children, youth, and their families in cases where abuse is suspected. CACs/CYACs seek to minimize system-induced trauma and support longer-term well-being by providing a child-friendly facility for young victims and their families to seek services, ideally under one roof.

The Durham Region CYAC model will bring system and community-based service providers together to create a more coordinated, multidisciplinary approach in a welcoming, trauma-informed and age-appropriate environment for children and youth who have experienced abuse, and their families. The model minimizes additional systemic trauma and re-victimization by limiting the number of times children/youth must repeat their story, provides early and seamless access to services, and ensures families have adequate support and follow-up.

Victim Services of Durham Region (VSDR) is a charitable organization that provides crisis intervention services for victims of crime and sudden tragedy as well as extensive violence prevention programs. VSDR is currently the lead agency overseeing the developing CYAC in Durham. As such, the successful candidate will be employed by Victim Services of Durham Region.

The Child/Youth Advocate role is a unique position at the Centre. Interactions with legislated services (police, child welfare/wellbeing) can be complex. These interactions are informed by historical and present day realities. As a result, the Advocate holds a supportive role that is not affiliated with any legislated service. The Advocate will walk alongside the child/youth and

family throughout their engagement with the Centre. The Advocate will provide the child/youth and their family with culturally appropriate support as they move through various stages of the process from initial disclosure to investigation, therapy, and court preparation.

The Advocate will meet the family where they're at, and if needed, connect them with the supports and services they need (medical, mental health, shelter, food etc). The Advocate may also provide important, developmentally, and culturally appropriate psycho-educational support related to various processes such as investigation, child welfare/wellbeing, victims' rights, medical forensic evaluations, court support, therapy preparations, etc., where appropriate. The Advocate will also be responsible for keeping communication open with the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) to ensure that the family receives accurate information in a timely manner, and that any matters that could impact the overall wellbeing of the child and family are brought to the MDT.

Responsibilities:

Orient families

- Overview of CYAC and roles within CYAC (MDT partners)
- Explanation of the investigative process, criminal process, child welfare/wellbeing, court support
- Ensure individual and lived experiences of families are honored throughout process

Walk alongside families

- Ongoing risk and mental health assessment, safety planning (versus immediate risk and safety planning performed by child welfare/wellbeing staff)
- Psychoeducation around impacts of trauma
- Consistent review of victims' rights
- Referrals for mental health support
- Assessment of families' needs and provide appropriate support and/or referrals (food, shelter, financial)

Bridge between families and multi-disciplinary team (MDT)

- Organizing and leading case conferences on as-needed basis (as identified by team)
- Keeping lines of communication open between MDT members
- Bring new perspective to work being undertaken by MDT members

As a developing Centre, flexibility in the role is critical. The Advocate will support role definition and creation, as well as the development of the CYAC practices and protocols. Given this will be a new role and service within Durham Region, collaboration and understanding of program development processes are important. The advocate role may change or adapt as the model develops and dependant on the needs of the CYAC. As such, the role will entail flexibility.

Qualifications:

- Effective collaboration, teamwork, communication
- Self-awareness and proven ability to model positive, mature behavior and establish professional boundaries with community members/partners
- Good attention to detail within documentation, proof-reads, edits and formats a variety of documents.
- Uses computer software programs such as spreadsheets, word processors, databases, and statistical packages.
- Experience with children's mental health
- Experience working with children/families in crisis
- Experience with trauma-informed practices
 - ◆ Working knowledge of child welfare/wellbeing processes and justice system is an asset
 - ◆ Working knowledge of accessibility, diversity, equity and inclusion principles/practices recognizing individual and lived experiences of children, youth, and families
- Excellent communication and mediation skills
- Registration with a professional college (social work, occupational therapy, psychotherapy etc) is a definite asset

**** All offers of employment are subject to a Criminal Records Check satisfactory to the employer. Prior to making an offer of employment to a candidate, references will be verified and must be acceptable to VSDR. A comprehensive background check will include a police/criminal check, personal history evaluation, education check, license and insurance verification. Reference and background checks may not be limited to these and will be approved by the Organization.****

In accordance with the agency's employment equity plan and values, we are particularly interested in encouraging qualified applicants from all communities that reflect the diversity of the clients we serve. We are committed to a selection process and work environment that is inclusive and barrier free, with a commitment to cultural safety. We ask applicants to make any accommodation requests when contacted for an interview. The agency assesses all candidates in a fair and equitable manner.

Please submit all applications to victimservices@drps.ca, applications submitted on indeed or linkedin will not be reviewed. Please ensure your subject line is titled "ATTN: CYAC Advocate Application Submission."