



**Adult Advocacy
Centers**

Understanding the AACs' Staff and MDTs

Adult Advocacy Centers' (AACs') Permanent Staff

- **AACs' Director:** The director will ensure that the day to day operations of the AACs are running smoothly. The director will be the "go-to" contact for the department leaders of the regional MDTs. They are responsible for creating a trauma-informed environment and will ensure the ongoing longevity and effectiveness of the AACs' services.
- **Forensic Nurse Examiner:** The forensic nurse examiner is a specially trained nurse who will collect physical evidence from victims of crime with disabilities and answer questions about trauma. The forensic nurse examiner will also testify in court about the evidence that they collect.
- **Doctor:** The doctor may help with medicine, if necessary, and will answer medical questions. The doctor may also collect evidence and testify in court.
- **Mental Health Professional (Counselor):** This individual will be a licensed social worker or counselor. The mental health professional will provide on-site crisis counseling, as needed, provide referrals and resources, and ensure trauma-informed practices for victims of crime. This individual will also run and assist with support groups provided at the center.
- **Victim Advocate:** The victim advocate can support the victim or survivor through the criminal justice process and help with asking for accommodations, if needed. They will provide crisis intervention techniques (as needed) throughout the criminal justice process. The victim advocate will accompany the victim throughout the court process and collaborate with MDT members to ensure the victim's basic needs are met. The victim advocate typically will be the liaison between law enforcement, prosecutors and the victim.
- **Intake Coordinator:** This individual will be the first person visitors meet at the center. They will be responsible for compiling intake documentation before the appointment, greeting visitors, showing them where to go within the building and assisting with the completion of all intake paperwork.
- **Security:** This will be a plain dressed individual who will be trained in trauma-informed care and the needs of people with disabilities. They will ensure AACs property and building safety as well as protect and ensure person safety at each center.
- **Forensic Interviewers:** Interviewers will be certified forensic interviewers, uniquely trained to interview adult crime victims with disabilities. They will have specialized materials and training to ensure a non-leading fact-finding interview. The interviewers will work collaboratively with the MDT, specifically law enforcement, prosecutors and medical staff, to provide trauma-informed forensic services.

Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) Members

- **Prosecutors:** These individuals are attorneys that represent the local, state and federal governments and work closely with law enforcement and victim advocates to uphold the law and attempt to keep perpetrators accountable through the criminal court process. Prosecutors might be from a city or county office.
- **Law Enforcement Agencies:** Local police departments, county sheriff offices, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), or Homeland Security Investigation (HSI) may be involved if a detective is assigned to the case. The detectives will be in charge of their criminal investigation and will work collaboratively with the MDT.
- **Local Hospitals:** Hospitals and emergency rooms will participate in the MDT and will assist victims of crime through emergency medical response services. Local hospitals will work collaboratively with all investigative agencies and the AACs' medical staff.
- **Disability-Specific Investigative Agencies:** These individuals would be workers assigned to look into allegations of abuse and ensure the overall well-being and safety of the victim. Investigators would work closely with the other investigative team members and the victim advocate. Any of these agencies might be a part of the MDT: County Boards of Developmental Disabilities, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), Disability Rights Ohio (DRO), Adult Protective Services (APS), Mental Health Boards or the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS).
- **Victim or Survivor:** Adult individuals in need of services after a crime occurs. We use the terms victim and survivor interchangeably because some individuals prefer to be called one or the other. This is a trauma-informed practice that allows the individual to have control over their experience at the AACs. We want to respect the wishes of everyone we work with.
- **Non-Offending Support People (when applicable):** These individuals would be any identified person that the victim wants with them through the process. This could be a family member, a friend, a guardian, a caregiver or someone else the victim trusts who is not the offender.
- **Non-Profit Partners (when applicable):** These agencies would be any agency a victim is already working with when they start working with the MDT, and if the MDT finds it appropriate or there is a need for this agency to be involved. These agencies would only be engaged with the MDT with approval by the victim. Such agencies could be support service agencies, educational agencies, respite care agencies, etc.

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