



Every year more than 3 million cases of child abuse are reported in the United States. To assist in the recovery of children affected by something as horrible as this, the CAC of Oswego has made it their mission to provide compassionate care, and services. Below is just one of the many cases in which we do so. For confidentiality purposes, the names of all parties involved have been changed.

At 10 years old, Mia was sexually assaulted by her father, a fact that became known only after a sleep over at a friend's house. It was during this sleep over that Mia told her friend that her father would come in to her room at night and touch her private parts. She talked about how she was scared, and how lately he had started to take an interest in one of her younger sisters. As you can imagine, Mia was not only scared, but she didn't know what to do to stop it, and at 10 years old how could she. Thankfully, Mia's friend ended up telling her own mother, who made the call to Child Protective Services.

Like all cases of abuse, an investigation was immediately launched by the New York State Police and CPS, along with help from the CAC of Oswego. After long hours, an amazing State Trooper was able to gain Mia's trust, and Mia found the courage to talk about the sexual abuse by her father and his advances on her little sister. Unfortunately, Mia's mother, Michelle was unwilling to accept that her husband of 12 years could do something so horrible to his own daughters. What made the mothers reaction worse, though, was that she called her husband to let him know that law enforcement was on the way to talk to him. This gave him time to destroy valuable evidence, while simultaneously giving him time to come up with a story.

A few days later, the Trooper and CPS investigator went to talk to Mia at school, and by now, she was recanting her story. She didn't want her Mom and Dad to be mad at her...they told her she would probably go to foster care and be separated from the family. What would happen to her sister then if she wasn't around to protect her? As investigators, both knew that they had an obligation to continue pursuing the case, so they asked the family to go to therapy at the CAC.

At the CAC they talked to a trauma specialist about familial sexual abuse, and over time, Michelle began to realize that the warning signs of sexual abuse were there for her husband. She realized the secrecy and grooming behaviors that her husband, James, would use to isolate the girls. When she would confront him, he would tell her that she was "crazy." But one day, when she was calm and able to hear her daughters, Michelle asked Mia and her sister Megan the important question, "What has been happening to you?" And the girls told her what had been happening, they told her about the sexual abuse, and she finally believed them. Michelle called the Trooper, to tell him that she was now willing to press charges and support her daughters.

With the help of her CAC Therapist, Mia found a way to cope and not be afraid when she spoke up to tell her story. At her father's trial, Mia's testimony was powerful, truthful, and believable. That day the Jury convicted her father of sexual assault and sent him to prison for 10 years. Family court issued orders of protection for all the children, and Michelle was able to secure a divorce.

Eleven years later, Michelle has remarried to a wonderful man, and Mia and all her siblings were adopted by him and took his last name. The end of this story is that despite a twisty, complicated journey, Mia and her family could finally put that chapter behind them and go on to live their life free from abuse, due to the help provided by the wonderful people who work out of the CAC.

Contact Information:

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8:30AM – 5:00PM
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NYS Child Protective Services

1-800-342-3720

For Emergencies Dial 911