



As department of Barnstable County Government, Children's Cove is regularly updated on the regional impacts and response to COVID-19 here on the Cape & Islands. Children's Cove has emergency response planning in place for this situation as it unfolds and evolves in order to continue to provide the highest quality services and supports to our community. This outlines some the steps and processes we currently have in place.

- We have a developed and continue to improve an in-person emergency response to cases involving child sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, witness to domestic violence and commercial sexual exploitation. The response includes increased screening questions related to health of all individuals, and forensic interviews will be conducted in-person with all safety precautions available for us. This includes:
 - Required use of face masks, handwashing stations and sanitizer available throughout the building, a plexiglass partition in the forensic interviewer, limiting staffing in regions of the building, air-purification technology, daily cleaning of the facilities including disinfection of all surface areas.
- Staff members continue to work most of their time remotely, except for case related work and scheduled in-person office time. Members of the direct care team respond for each case in a way which minimizes the direct service contact with children and their families, however, still provides all the immediate needs for the date of interviews.
- Multi-disciplinary team members continue to participate in the forensic interview process and meetings via use of secure real-time technology, lowering the risk of exposure or violating ratios.
- Staff members at Children's Cove continue to be available by their publicly accessible email address (listed [here](#)), or by calling our main phone number, 508.375.0410. The main line is still functioning as normal, with the exception that all calls will be routed to our voicemail system. Callers can leave a message for who they are looking for. Messages will be returned as soon as possible.

During times of stress and isolation, instances of abuse can increase. Additionally, individuals who have undisclosed trauma may be further challenged by their trauma experience with a reduction of their natural supports.

- **If you are in immediate danger call 911 and provide as much detail about yourself, your location and how you are in danger.**
- The DCF Child at Risk Hotline is [800.792.5200](tel:800.792.5200) and the local Hyannis office is [508.760.0200](tel:508.760.0200)
- If someone is abusing you, or has abused you in the past, **you are not alone**. You have not done anything wrong and you are not in trouble. If you have a safe trusted adult to talk to, ask them to call for help with you. If you do not, call Children's Cove, the Department of Children and Families, or your local police department.
- If you are a parent or caregiver and have learned that someone you care about has been abused: **The most important first step is to stay calm**. The child has undergone a potentially traumatic experience and could be more frightened by your response than the abuse itself. Be sure to thank the child for being honest and courageous enough to tell someone, then call Children's Cove, the Department of Children and Families, or your local police department.
- To learn more about signs of child abuse, or how to have the conversation about body safety, visit our website at: www.ChildrensCove.org/Parents