



Marie-Vincent's Child and Youth Advocacy Centre

Marie-Vincent is a Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC) that supports child and adolescent victims of sexual violence, providing them with all of the services they need – from police and medical to psychosocial, socio-legal and psychotherapeutic services – **under one roof.**

By consolidating all services under one roof and providing a warm and inviting environment that meets the needs and abilities of children, adolescents and their families, we are able to mitigate the potential trauma associated with the entire socio-judicial process.

This grouping of services helps streamline the coordination of interventions done by partners, always with the child's best interests at heart.



The police investigation interview

The aim of the police investigative interview is to gather, in a non-suggestive manner, as accurate an account as possible of the events disclosed by the child and to determine whether or not sexual abuse has occurred.

How it works:

The police investigation interview

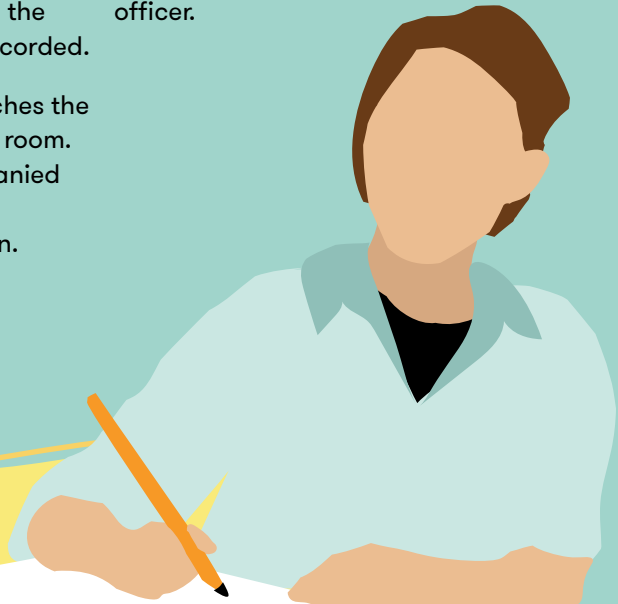
During the police investigation interview, an investigator asks the child about the incident of sexual violence, without ever suggesting an answer or influencing the child's memory. The interviewer begins with general questions designed to put the child at ease.

The interview with the child takes an average of 45 minutes. It is held in a small room where the child's testimony can be recorded.

Another police officer watches the interview live from another room. He or she may be accompanied by a case worker from the Director of Youth Protection.

Parents and/or significant adults accompanying the child are always informed of the identity of other professionals present at the interview.

During the police investigation interview, the parent may be required to make a written or verbal statement about the disclosure to the investigating officer.



The medical consultation

Medical consultations at the Marie-Vincent CYAC are first and foremost an opportunity to assess and reassure the child or teenager about their overall state of health. The reasons for seeking medical advice can encompass all health needs, including sexual health, physical health and mental health. Following the consultation, referrals may be made to specialized professionals. In situations of sexual violence, a medical examination may be required to reassure the child or teenager of their physical integrity.

How it works:

The medical consultation

The total duration of the visit varies between one and three hours. During the visit, a doctor and/or a clinical nurse will carry out an assessment of the child's or teenager's health, based on the reasons previously expressed for the consultation.

A gynecological examination may be performed, but this is not the same type of examination as the one for adults. Although certain types of sampling may be required, there will be no intrusive touching of the genitals or insertion of medical equipment into orifices. The doctor will examine and, if necessary, take photographs of the child's or adolescent's external genitalia.

Particular attention is paid to the modesty of the patient, who may cover up under a blanket during this procedure. **Medical consultations are always carried out with the child's or adolescent's consent and respectful of their needs.**

The parent or teen must sign the consent form given and explained by the nurse, as well as the authorization form to take photographs of the genitals. If the person accompanying the child is not the person with parental authority, they must obtain the required consent in writing prior to the medical consultation.

Clinical Services

→ The Specialized Intervention Program in Sexual Violence

At Marie-Vincent, child and adolescent victims of sexual violence receive specialized services customized to their needs. The treatment provided is founded on best practices and recognized as being highly effective.

Children exhibiting problematic sexual behaviour also benefit from the specialized intervention program in sexual violence's services.

Following a disclosure of an incident of sexual violence, a child or adolescent is referred to Marie-Vincent and an **intervention service is available to be launched promptly** for the family.

Immediate Intervention

These support services are provided to families by a team of specialized professionals. Meetings are held with parents or the significant adult and/or the teen victim to determine the circumstances of the crisis, dispatch the information about the various procedures, identify support needs and determine the parent's ability to coping mechanisms and develop an intervention plan that encourages them to take action.

Needs assessment

A clinical evaluation is done by a Marie-Vincent professional (psychotherapist or psychosocial clinician) to establish the child's or adolescent's needs. Recommendations arising from the evaluation will guide the child and their family to internal and external services best suited to their needs.

The CYAC works in cooperation with the **Marie-Vincent Interuniversity Research Chair on Child Sexual Abuse**. The clinical evaluation of needs, in tandem with standardized questionnaires, yields a global portrait of the child's or adolescent's strengths and weaknesses that will help steer them through our array of services.

The Psychosocial Intervention

The process, implemented for the young person who has experienced violence, their parents or a significant adult, is designed to minimize the negative impacts on their ability to function. Based on the objectives established during the evaluation, the parent or significant adult can be included in the meetings.



Psychotherapeutic Services

Individual Psychotherapy

When necessary, Marie-Vincent provides treatment based on the cognitive-behavioural approach focusing on trauma resolution. The treatment has been recognized for substantially reducing trauma symptoms in young victims of sexual violence, and particularly a decrease in anxiety and guilt feelings as well as an increase in self-esteem.

Group Psychotherapy

Group therapy sessions held by two professionals (a psychotherapist and a psychosocial clinician) are also based on cognitive-behavioural therapy, to which is added activities founded on play and art therapy. Like the individual intervention, group therapy is known to substantially ease trauma symptoms in child and adolescent victims of sexual violence.

The Child Witness Program (CWP)

This program, conducted at the Marie-Vincent CYAC by a CAVAC professional, is a structured approach to readying a minor witness (age 5 to 17) to testify in a criminal or youth court.

The Child Witness Program is designed to...

- **Minimize the stress experienced by minor witnesses** before appearing in court and during their testimony.
- **Ensure a quality testimony;** that is to say, enable young witnesses to clearly explain what they recall about events.
- **Familiarize minor witnesses with the court and various key terms.**
- **Help ease the fears of minor witnesses about testifying.** Increase their self-confidence about their role as a witness. Explain the skills called into play when testifying.
- **Practice the skills during simulated rehearsals.**

For more information
about the CWP:

Source: cavac.qc.ca/pte/



Locate all information about the Child and Youth Advocacy Centre at marie-vincent.org



4100, rue Molson, 4th floor
Montréal (Québec) H1Y 3N1

265, boul. D'Anjou, Suite 201
Châteauguay (Québec) J6J 5J9



Montréal: 514 285-0505

Montérégie: 579 977-4681



info@marie-vincent.org

