Safehouse Interviews and Family Advocacy
Service Code: S9986
Revised 03/01/10, 08/12/10

**Service Definition:** A Safehouse Interview is an investigative forensic interview of a child or adolescent. The intent of this service is to produce an interview that is of evidence quality, and visually recorded by electronic media and generate evidence that is forensically defensible, and provide advocacy services.

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<tr>
<th>Source of Funding</th>
<th>CYFD</th>
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**Target Population**
Consumers age 0 to 18 involved in alleged cases of child sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, sexual assault by a child, or child witness to crimes of violence at the request of Law Enforcement, CYFD Child Protective Services, or Tribal Social Services.

**General**
1. The goal of the Safehouse interview is to minimize the traumatic effect on the child of multiple interviews, and produce sufficient quality and quantity of information to enhance the investigation for law enforcement, or CYFD Licensing and Certification Authority, CYFD Child Protective Services, and/or Tribal Social Services.
2. The Safehouse interview must be guided by a multi-disciplinary investigative team, which shall consist of at least one of the following: Law enforcement (i.e. local/County/State Police, FBI, BIA, etc.), District Attorney’s Office, Licensing and Certification Authority (LCA), a Case Worker or Social Worker from Children, Youth and Families Department, Tribal Social Services, or Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner; and Safehouse Interviewer(s).
3. The Safehouse interview is observed by members of the investigative team who communicate and coordinate approaches to produce a complete understanding of case issues and the most effective system response possible.
4. The Safehouse interview process will be conducted in such a manner as to be free from any claims of impropriety or the appearance of impropriety.

**Intake**
1. This requires a “next working day” response to:
   a. the request for a Safehouse interview; and
   b. the scheduling needs of all necessary agencies.
2. Accept referrals from any law enforcement agency or CYFD Child Protective Services (CPS), or Tribal Social Services.
3. Schedule SafeHouse interview of child with Law Enforcement or CYFD or Tribal Social Services.
4. Assist in planning for children and families with bilingual, multi-cultural or special needs.

**Pre-interview staffing**
1. The Safehouse interviewer will meet with investigative team to establish a mutual understanding of the necessary topics to be covered and information collected during the interview and the general interview approach to be considered.

2. The Safehouse interviewer will meet with the child and legal guardian to explain the process and sign required paperwork.

3. The Safehouse interview will be conducted in coordination and cooperation with all involved agencies to prevent the need to re-interview the child.
   a. In order to ensure privacy for the child, observing the Safehouse interview should be limited to those directly involved in the investigation.
   b. Under no circumstances is the family permitted to observe the SafeHouse interview.

**Interview:**

1. A Safehouse interview specialist who has satisfactorily completed training (see Staffing Requirements below) performs the interview in a neutral, child-friendly setting to optimize the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the child’s account.

2. The Safehouse interviewer will have demonstrated competency and sufficient skills in child interviewing techniques to establish rapport, promote narrative and elicit information in a manner free from coercion or enticements. All techniques used should be reflective of best practices in the field. The information produced will attempt to meet the needs of all involved agencies and minimize the need to re-interview the child.

3. The Safehouse interview will be electronically recorded. The visual image will be free of distortion and provide a clear picture of the child’s behavior, expressions and interactions with the interviewer. The soundtrack will have sufficient volume and clarity for transcription and legal review.

**Post Interview Staffing:**

1. The Safehouse interviewer will conduct a brief post-interview staffing with the investigative team to discuss results, review hypotheses and psychosocial aspects that relate to the service needs of the child.

2. The investigative team may discuss and coordinate any additional activity each agency will conduct as part of the investigation, as well as the information to be conveyed to the caretaker regarding the Safehouse interview.

**Case Tracking, Case Review and Follow-up:**

1. Utilizing as minimum the standards of the National Children’s Alliance, the Safehouse interviewer will:
   a. Coordinate and track investigative, prosecutorial and treatment efforts.
   b. Provide the child and/or non-offending caretaker/family member(s) involved, with a Family Advocate contact person responsible for information and support.
**New Mexico Interagency Behavioral Health**  
Service Requirements and Utilization Guidelines

| c. Upon written request, share information with agencies involved regarding the investigation, case status, and services needed by the child and family as appropriate.  
d. Provide the electronic recording and supporting information to law enforcement and/or district attorney upon completion. |
|---|

**Family Advocacy Services:**  
Services to be provided by Family Advocate include, but are not limited to:  
1. Crisis services to child and non-offending caretaker/family member(s).  
2. Education to the child and non-offending caretaker/family member(s) about the investigative process in order to enhance cooperation with the investigation.  
3. Referrals made for the child and non-offending caretaker/family member(s) for needed services, and assistance with the referrals.  
4. Support to the child and non-offending caretaker/family member(s) throughout the investigation and subsequent legal proceedings.  
5. Inform the non-offending caretaker of victim’s rights and victim’s compensation.  
6. When a child is in the legal custody of CYFD, referrals and services are coordinated with CYFD.

**Provider Requirements**  
1. Safehouse Services must be delivered by a provider organization which must be a legally recognized entity in the United States, qualified to do business in New Mexico, and  
2. Safehouse Service providers must meet standards established by the State of NM or its designee, and requirements of the funding source.

**Staffing Requirements**  
**MINIMUM STAFF QUALIFICATIONS — Safehouse Staff Supervisors**  
1. Master’s Degree with two (2) years experience related to social work, education, criminal justice, nursing, psychology, sociology or counseling, (or)  
2. Bachelor’s Degree with three (3) years experience, including one (1) as a supervisor, related to social work, education, criminal justice, nursing psychology, as well as two (2) years of experience in child sexual abuse investigations, and interviewing children who have been abused or have witnessed crimes of violence (forensic or investigative).  
3. Demonstrated experience and/or sufficient training specific to interviewing children  
4. Continuing education through participation in national and regional conferences or training and peer reviews.  
   a. Training and continuing education must be in accordance with the New Mexico Children’s Safehouse Network standards.  
5. Meets all the requirements for Safehouse Interviewers below.  
6. Plus the general qualifications outlined below.
### MINIMUM STAFF QUALIFICATIONS – Safehouse Interviewers

1. Master’s Degree related to social work, education, criminal justice, nursing, psychology, (or)
2. Bachelor’s Degree with two (2) years experience related to social work, education, criminal justice, nursing, psychology, (or)
3. Six (6) years of relevant experience in a field related to social services.
4. Demonstrated experience and/or sufficient training with children
5. Completion of 40 hour state or national training specific to forensic interviewing and approved by the New Mexico Children’s Safehouse Network within the first year of employment.
6. Observation of a minimum of ten interviews, followed by discussion with a supervisor of the techniques demonstrated in the interview and the reaction of the child, prior to first solo interview.
7. A new interviewer must conduct a minimum of five “practice” interviews in the interview setting with equipment that will be used during actual interviews; including sexual-abuse role-plays observed, reviewed, and discussed with a supervisor. There should be no fewer than five practice interviews and as many as required to achieve competence.
8. Demonstrated ability to conduct satisfactory interviews, or child-abuse investigations.
9. Continuing education through participation in national and regional conferences or training and peer reviews.
   a. Training and continuing education must be in accordance with the New Mexico Children’s Safehouse Network standards.
7. Plus the general qualifications outlined below.

### MINIMUM STAFF QUALIFICATIONS – Family Advocates

1. HS Diploma or GED.
2. Two (2) years of relevant experience with the target population.
3. Demonstrated familiarity with accessing community services
4. Plus the general qualifications outlined below.

### GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALL

In addition, ALL staff persons must possess:

1. Demonstrated basic knowledge of child abuse and neglect (through course work, professional training, higher education, or volunteer work).
2. Ability to communicate with a wide range of cultures relevant to the specific community.
3. Knowledge of the child protection, law enforcement, and court systems.

### Documentation Requirements

**FILE MAINTENANCE**

1. Consumer File shall include:
a. Intake. Must include consumer eligibility and reason for referral (c.f.: Target Population above) and include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Information</th>
<th>Child Information</th>
<th>Interview Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tracking / Case #</td>
<td>Child’s Name</td>
<td>Who will transport child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Source</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Date of Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Reason</td>
<td>Social Security Number</td>
<td>Date completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating Individual</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Interviewer Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating Agency</td>
<td>Ethnic / Cultural Info.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Agencies Involved</td>
<td>Language preference</td>
<td>Alleged Perpetrator Info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>Special Needs</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.A. Staff</td>
<td>School / Day Care</td>
<td>Address / Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CYFD Staff</td>
<td>Legal custodian</td>
<td>DOB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial Jurisdiction</td>
<td>Relationship to custodian</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City, Cty, Military, State</td>
<td>Custodian address</td>
<td>Ethnic / Cultural Info.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who reported allegations</td>
<td>Custodian telephone</td>
<td>Relationship to Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of allegation:</td>
<td>Mother’s Name</td>
<td>Allegations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Abuse</td>
<td>Father’s Name</td>
<td>Date of incident(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Abuse</td>
<td>Mother’s address</td>
<td>Location of incident(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>Father’s address</td>
<td>Previously named?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator</td>
<td>Mother’s telephone</td>
<td>Named by whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness</td>
<td>Father’s telephone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has child disclosed info?</td>
<td>Sibling Name(s)</td>
<td>Family Advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To whom?</td>
<td>Sibling(s) DOB / Age</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sibling(s) Gender</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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b. Signed Forms which include:
   i. Rights/Responsibilities
   ii. Grievance Procedures
   iii. Informed consent to interview and electronically record;
   iv. Release of Information as requested

c. Case Synopsis of SafeHouse interview (includes running chronology of Family Advocate services provided).

2. Facility Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement file shall include:
   a. Child/Non-offending Caretaker Satisfaction Survey
   b. Community Partners Satisfaction Survey

3. Staff files shall include:
   a. Documentation of 40 hour New Mexico Children’s Safehouse Network approved training completion.
   b. Documentation of observation of a minimum of ten SafeHouse interviews, followed by discussion with a supervisor of the techniques demonstrated in the interview and the reaction of the child, prior to first solo SafeHouse interview.
   c. Documentation of demonstrated competence in the basic elements of Safehouse interviewing through review of “practice” interviews.
   d. Documentation of periodic review of electronically recorded Safehouse interviews with a supervisor.
### Service Exclusions
Referral from any other source **except** law enforcement agency or CYFD Child Protective Services (CPS), or Tribal Social Services.

### Admission/Service Criteria
Referral from any law enforcement agency, or CYFD Licensing and Certification Authority, or CYFD Child Protective Services (CPS), or Tribal Social Services.

### Continuing Service Criteria
Not applicable

### Discharge Criteria
Completion of Safehouse interview

### Service Authorization Period
Per product

### Service Authorization Unit
Per product.

### Benefit Limits
1. One (1) completed Safehouse interview per client plus Family Advocacy services. Additional Safehouse interviews may be conducted in the event that a new allegation of abuse arises in the same year.
2. Fees for Safehouse Interviews (includes Family Advocate Services) are determined by the CYFD fee schedule.