Comprehensive services of the Barnahus

Ólöf Ásta Farestveit
Director of Barnahus
31. May 2012
Changing the Child Abuse System

WHAT USED TO HAPPEN WHEN KIDS NEEDED HELP FOR ABUSE

Typical Case—Robin, Age 5

Tells her teacher she is being hurt at home.

At School...Who talks to Robin? her Teacher, her Principal, a school Nurse, who also examines her.

Who talks to Robin? Nurse, Social Worker, Doctor
Who examines Robin? Doctor

Police Officer talks to Robin.

School calls Hotline and Police

A Counselor needs to talk to Robin.

Detective is assigned and brings Robin to a specialized Hospital—where another Nurse, Social Worker, Doctor talks to her and is examined by another Doctor.

A Child Protection Investigator needs to talk to Robin.

A Lawyer needs to talk to Robin.

Robin had to talk to 15 people, but now . . .
(turn over)
Mission of the Barnahus

• To facilitate collaboration and coordination of the CPS, Police, Prosecution and the Medical profession in the investigation of child sexual abuse

• To provide a child friendly settings for joint investigative interviews and medical examination

• To ensure professional implementation of investigative interviews
Mission of the Barnahus

• To ensure that the child victim and his/her family receives appropriate assessment, treatment and support
• To establish professional work practices and guidelines by interdisciplinary cooperation
• To enhance specialized knowledge on child sexual abuse and to mediate that knowledges as appropriate to professionals and the public alike
• Not to harm the child
Referral to Barnahus

Child tells about sexual abuse

- Reported to the police
- Witness debriefing
- Court
- The child's testimony

- Reported to CPS
- Preliminary interview
- Treatment in Barnahus
Basic functions

- Child sexual abuse from ages 3½ - 18 years.
- Joint forensic interviews
- CPS preliminary forensic interviews
- Medical examination
- Victim therapy and family counselling and support
Investigative interviews

• The court judge is in charge of the procedure
• The forensic interview is copied on DVD
• The questioner is educated in childrens development
Investigative interviews

• The court judge
• The prosecution
• The police
• The CPS representative
• The child’s legal advocate
• The defence
• The alleged offender
The CPS preliminary interview

- At the request of the CPS
- Disclosure is absent or very weak/ambiguous
- Offender has not been identified
- Offender is below the age of criminal responsibility (15 years)
The interview room

- Specially designed interview room
- Safety – child friendly setting
- Camera
- Information about all present
- Everyone can ask questions through the questioner
- IT-link to the courthouse
Medical examination

- Request of the police/CPS
- Experienced pediatrician, nurse and gynaecologist
- A child friendly examination room
- Using video-colposcope
Victim Therapy and family counselling

- The child and the non-offending parent(s) receive (legal) counselling immediately after the investigative interview.
- Victim therapy can start soon after.
- TF-CBT (Trauma-focused cognitive-behavioral therapy) [http://tfcbt.musc.edu/](http://tfcbt.musc.edu/)
- The DVD recorded child’s disclosure is used for initial assessment and treatment plan.
- Therapy is practiced in the child’s hometown.
- The therapist is most often important witness in court proceedings.
Iceland – one Barnahus
Changing the Child Abuse System

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Typical Case—Robin, Age 5

Who talks to Robin?
Nurse, Social Worker, Doctor

Who examines Robin?
Doctor

Tells her teacher she is being hurt at home.

At School...Who talks to Robin?
her Teacher, her Principal,
a School Nurse, who also examines her.

Police Officer talks to Robin.

School calls Hotline and Police

“Why do I have to talk to so many people?”

A Counselor needs to talk to Robin.

A Child Protection Investigator needs to talk to Robin.

A Lawyer needs to talk to Robin.

Robin had to talk to 15 people, but now...

(turn over)

WHAT HAPPENS TODAY WHEN KIDS NEED HELP FOR ABUSE

“This Place is Great”

Robin tells her story, while a detective,
CPS worker, and District Attorney listen as a team.

Robin can see a doctor.

Robin is referred to a counselor, who will help her heal.

Robin’s mom talks to an advocate to help her understand the system.

Robin comes to the Advocacy Center with her mom.
Tells her teacher that she is being hurt by her mom’s new boyfriend at home.

... Robin talks to 3 people
After 13 years of experience

- Efficient, professional and child-friendly work procedures and case management
- Re-victimization of the child victim minimized
- Appropriate therapeutic services secured
- Mutula professional trust among the different agencies
- Assimilation of knowledge and experience
- Increased public awareness and confidence in the authorities
- Increased „rate of discovery“
Barnahus in 13 years
1. nov. 1998-31.dec 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Average</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Forensic interviews”</td>
<td>2367</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>1320</td>
<td>101.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical examination</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>23</td>
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</table>
Total forensic interview

Graph showing the number of forensic interviews from 1999 to 2011 for CPS and court cases. The number of CPS cases varies, with notable peaks in 2006, 2008, and 2011. The court cases are represented by a different color and show a generally lower but consistent trend throughout the years.
Number of children 2008

![Bar graph showing the number of children in different age groups for 2008. The graph compares the number of children in each age group under three categories: CPS, Court, and Treatment.](attachment:image.png)
Difference between the sexes
2008- in interviews

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Treatment 2008

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Child-friendly testimony

Giving testimony (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Barnahus/CAC</th>
<th>Court House</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generally satisfied</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive to interviewer</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content with info before the interview</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content with info after the interview</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not harder to testify than expected</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt better after testifying</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Child-friendly environment

Environment for testifying (%)

- Good location: Barnahus 86%, Court House 42%
- Attractive facility: Barnahus 69%, Court House 23%
- Positive to waiting room: Barnahus 75%, Court House 44%

- A father was sentenced by the High Court to 5 years imprisonment for sexually abusing his daughter who was 3.5 years of age at the time of the hearing in spite of:
  - No medical evidence
  - No witness other than the child
  - Very limited verbal disclosure due to her age
  - Strong denial of the accused
We must think of

The child’s best interest!