



Services For Victims and Witnesses: Strengthening Justice and Social Welfare Links

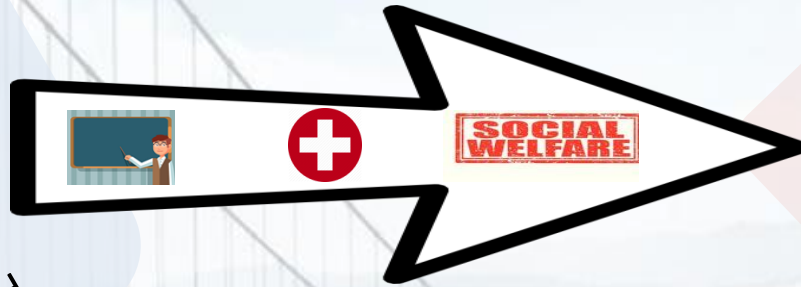
Sarajevo, February 26th, 2020

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BRIDGING THE GAP

CHILDREN'S NEEDS

SAFETY
PREDICTABILITY
SUPPORT
INDIVIDUAL APPROACH



JUDICIARY
SYSTEM

Child – friendly justice is justice that is:

- ✓ *accessible;*
- ✓ *age appropriate;*
- ✓ *speedy;*
- ✓ *diligent;*
- ✓ *adapted to and focused on the needs of the child;*
 - ✓ *respecting the right to due process;*
- ✓ *respecting the right to participate in and to understand the proceedings;*
- ✓ *respecting the right to private and family life;*
- ✓ *respecting the right to integrity and dignity;*
- ✓ *.....*

FLEXIBLE BRANCHES:

Child – friendly justice begins way before and contains way more than justice system.



SOLID ROOTS:

providing child victims and witnesses of violence rapid access to justice and care (PROMISE)

Role in misdemeanor court proceedings in cases of domestic violence against children and youth: Personal experiences of the judge

Cases at the Municipal misdemeanor court that refer to children who are victims and/or witnesses of domestic violence, require particular specialist knowledge when interviewing children, with the aim of protecting them from further re-traumatization.

Zagreb Child and Youth Protection Center has a child-friendly, adapted premises (the entrance to the Center is lively, colourful, with children's drawings), it has technical equipment (videolink and IT experts) and Center's professionals – psychologists and social pedagogues who in pleasant child-friendly premises prepare children for an interview. In such circumstances, children usually want to tell their story, express themselves freely, speaking about the event as it happened, and after the interview they do not feel the burden of the interview. The interview is recorded and becomes an evidence, filed as an integral part of the court document, and can be subsequently reviewed and evaluated for the credibility of the child's testimony.

Courts and courtrooms are not acceptable nor child-friendly if we want a relaxed interview for the child. Child enters the courtroom that is not child-friendly and looks rigorously ascetic, that may cause fear in children, who cannot relax nor remember the event they are here to talk about. The risk for additional re-traumatization in those circumstances is much higher.

Therefore, I find (Child and Youth Protection) ***Center invaluable and important*** if we want to conduct forensic interviewing in domestic violence cases correctly, that has a large impact on regular decision making for us judges as well.


What When We Fail?

*I was raped when I was 13, now I am 15. First I was at Children's Hospital where I was examined and questioned by **a gynecologist and a psychiatrist**. Later I went to the Child Protection Center where I spoke to **a psychiatrist, a psychologist and a social worker**. Then I had to go to the Police where I was interrogated **4 times**. I also had to talk **twice** about what happened to Social Services. At the Court I was questioned **once via video link**. I also had to undergo a forensic evaluation and I spoke again to **a psychiatrist and a psychologist**.*

*Altogether, I had to talk about what happened to me **11 times**.*

*It felt terrible to talk about it
so many times,*

AS IF IT WAS MY FAULT.



„The judge does not have to be an expert in every field, but has to be aware of who the experts are and where to find them”.

(Ernest Ryder, judge; 7th European Forum for Child Protection, Bruxelles, 2012)

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