

New Orleans Children's Advocacy Center

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Things have been busy at the CAC these past few weeks! The APSAC Conference (American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children), which is a national organization that our director helps run, took place last week at the Sheraton Hotel on Canal St.

In between manning the silent auction, shuttling catering trays from restaurants to the hotel to Bourbon St., and decorating parasols for a celebratory second line in the French Quarter (from which we can probably be found in hundreds of tourist's cell phone videos), the interns got to attend conference sessions of our choosing. I attended the following sessions:

"Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for LGBTQ+ Youth," "Deception Detection: Is it possible to tell when a child is lying?" (Spoiler Alert: It is not), "Child Sex Trafficking and the Risks Youths Face: An MDT [Multidisciplinary Team]Response," and "Child Sex Trafficking Screening Interviews vs. Forensic Interviews," taught by our very own Systems Coordinator and legendary Forensic Interviewer, Kate Homan!

Kate also went to Tulane, and recently she has been doing research on the difference between trafficked and non-trafficked victims. During her presentation, she played audio clips of a forensic interview she had done with a teenage girl who had been a victim of trafficking. I had transcribed the interview for her, which means I watched it on a DVD and wrote word-for-word what the interviewer asked and what the patient disclosed, so I had already heard the audio clips. It was an odd experience being in a room full of professionals, who murmured amongst themselves when they heard the clips, while Kate and I were hearing the disclosure for the umpteenth time.

I feel important at NOCAC. Even when transcribing interviews becomes tedious and paperwork burns my eyes, someone is explaining to me the higher purpose of the task, such as how transcribed interviews go to multiple agencies like NOPD, DCFS, and district attorneys in order to achieve the best protective outcome for a child, or inputting referral assessment forms ensure a child gets an appointment with a doctor, or filling out Crime Victims Reparations forms saves our center \$100,000 a year.

If you have interest in law enforcement, social work, teaching, public health, psychology, or simply think you would enjoy working in non-profit work, NOCAC is a great place to intern. I cannot describe how much I have learned about social work [and paper work], communication with children and families dealing with trauma, policy and law surrounding child protection, and the interaction between law and healthcare (since we are a satellite campus of the Children's Hospital).

Aside from the fast-paced, relevant, and applicable work in a variety of fields, my favorite part of interning at NOCAC is building relationships with the staff. I went from not knowing anyone in the field to having 5 case managers, 4 doctors, 3 nurses, 5 forensic interviewers, 2 amazing directors and 1 incredible supervisor (shout out to Hannah Gilbert) who mentor me and make me laugh on a daily basis, despite the sad nature of the work. I have learned a ton about the power of positivity, and I do not want the summer to end!