

CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OF COMAL COUNTY

NEW BRAUNFELS, TX

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— **Susan White** :: *CACCC Lead Forensic Interviewer*

ABOUT THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OF COMAL COUNTY (CACCC)

Located in New Braunfels, Texas, the Children's Advocacy Center of Comal County was founded in 2004 "to provide a neutral, child-friendly agency to the community that facilitates a multidisciplinary approach in the prevention, detection, investigation, and treatment of child abuse." This nonprofit organization's mission is to help abused children feel "less scared, less intimidated, and less confused by the system that is meant to protect them." CACCC services include counselling, forensic interviewing, forensic medical examinations, and their prevention program, Prevention: Darkness to Light, which helps teach adults in the community how to keep children safer from sexual abuse.



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LESS TRAUMA. BETTER EVIDENCE.

Susan White, lead forensic interviewer at CACCC, lauds the CaseCracker system for capturing quality recordings of the critical interviews she and her team conduct. "Recording interviews results in less trauma for the children because they will not have to be interviewed over and over again," she explains. "[CaseCracker] produces better evidence that can help with investigation and prosecution, [allowing] families to move on and begin the process of healing independent of the judicial process." Even more hangs on a recorded interview, White says, including obtaining pleas and convictions as well as bolstering public safety. Without a recorded interview, the court won't have access to a child's statement, a crucial piece of evidence.

EASY, RELIABLE & ADAPTABLE

Children's Advocacy Centers across the country acknowledge the unpredictable nature of their work—which was especially complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the flexibility of CaseCracker systems allowed the team at CACCC to continue working as close to normal. According to White, "[CaseCracker] is incredibly easy to use and the ability to securely watch [a forensic interview] from anywhere in the building is very helpful, particularly during Covid when we had to put our team members in separate rooms." Early in the pandemic, when the staff was displaced from the Center, they switched to a portable system that required zero new training. "It was very easy to set up and was exactly the same as our stationary system, so there was no learning curve," praises White.



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WHEN THEY SAY "WE CAN'T," CASECRACKER SAYS "WE CAN"

CACCC made the switch to CaseCracker because they were having issues with their existing system and it was time for an upgrade. After deciding to go with CaseCracker, White says that the process of receiving and integrating their new interview recording system was smooth. After learning that Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas (CACTX) had extra funding to apply to CACCC's interview recording system upgrade, White formed a committee and spent a year looking at systems and other technology that would improve their forensic interviewing process. White says CaseCracker met all of their tech requirements, including being a fully digital, self-contained system that was easy to operate, utilized high-definition covert cameras, and captured quality audio. However, it was CaseCracker's outstanding customer service that was the biggest selling point. "When I mentioned our needs to the other providers I was told "You don't need that," but with CaseCracker, we were told "We can absolutely do that," says White. "I cannot emphasize enough how helpful [the CaseCracker staff] were and continue to be."

For other CACs both big and small looking to upgrade their interview recording systems, White says it's essential that they take their time finding and demoing a solution that's right for them, and to hold their ground when it comes to getting what they want. "Be very clear about your needs and find a company that is willing to accommodate those needs."