

THE POWER OF ONSITE MENTAL HEALTH

ASHLEY'S STORY

Ashley was 13 when she visited the One Place Child Advocacy Center. After enduring years of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse she was finally ready to share her devastating story.

Her emotions overwhelmed her as she struggled through the forensic interview. Stopping the interview early, she ran to the bathroom, her cries echoing through the thin walls, overhead by her heartbroken family.

As she emerged from the bathroom, she was met by a medical provider from the One Place team. Sarah fostered a connection with Ashley and received her permission to proceed with the comprehensive medical evaluation.



During the exam, the teen shared the full extent of her trauma: five separate perpetrators of sexual abuse and countless episodes of physical abuse.

As the medical exam continued, Sarah uncovered fresh signs of self-harm on Ashley's arms. Her cries in the bathroom had been more than just tears; she had intentionally cut herself. Ashley disclosed the constant barrage of thoughts about ending her life, and admitted she had them in that moment. Her self-harm was not an isolated event but a direct consequence of being forced to maintain contact with one of her abusers.

Sarah immediately realized that additional help was necessary, as her medical expertise had reached its limit. She reached out to Mary, One Place staff member and mental health clinician. Ashley was assured that she would not have to re-tell her painful story and that Mary would treat her with kindness and understanding.

Access to onsite mental health support made all the difference for Ashley. Instead of spending hours in a hospital waiting room and re-telling her painful story after an already traumatic day, she received immediate, trauma-informed, supportive care and was connected to critical resources to help begin her journey to hope and healing.

Months later, Sarah testified in court on behalf of the teen. Because of the support she received, Ashley no longer has contact with her abuser and is working toward renewal and restoration.