



Victims • Outreach • Intervention • Counseling • Education

“Most of the girls that we bring into foster care ... have sexual assault trauma; and ...half of the boys. The more trauma-focused therapy we can provide [these children] the better.”

– John Lauterbach, Executive Director of CARING for Children, a nonprofit that places 150 children into foster care every year in Buncombe County.

## Counseling Services for Victims of Sexual Assault in the Foster Care System

In Buncombe County no counseling or support services specifically address the needs of foster children who have experienced sexual abuse. We know that this is a particularly vulnerable population in need of intervention and counseling:

- 70% of foster children have a documented history of abuse and/or neglect; and 80% of foster children have been exposed to significant violence. — *FosterClub*, a nonprofit advocating for young people in foster care.
- “Former foster children are almost twice as likely to suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as U.S. war veterans” — *The Harvard Crimson*, reporting on a study conducted by Harvard Medical School.
- “The number of children put into foster care by North Carolina's Division of Social Services has risen nearly 19 percent since 2012 — from 8,599 then to 10,228 this year [2015].” —*Asheville Citizen Times*
- In Buncombe County there are nearly 300 children in foster care.

## Project Summary

A full-time counselor will provide sexual assault intervention to children aged 13 years and older in Buncombe County’s foster care system, regardless of the age at which trauma occurred. Counseling will assist with social skills, academic progress and healthy sexuality by promoting positive coping mechanisms and minimizing the impact of trauma on the brain’s development, while increasing individual resiliency and the likelihood of leading productive lives.

**Seventy children** in the foster care system will receive specialized clinical care throughout the project year. Of the foster children receiving counseling, 80% will experience a reduction in trauma-related symptoms by utilizing newly learned coping skills and practices.

### – Our VOICE MISSION –

In the pursuit of a community that is free of sexual violence, Our VOICE serves all individuals in Buncombe County affected by sexual assault and abuse, through counseling, advocacy and education. (828) 252-0562 • ourvoicenc.org