

Tammy and Emily

A WRC emergency advocate was requested to meet with a family at Carilion New River Valley Medical Center. Upon arrival the advocate was introduced to Emily, a 7 year old female and her mother, Tammy. Tammy and her husband, Jeff are separated but have joint custody of their daughter. Emily lives with her mom and spends alternating weekends with her dad. Tammy brought Emily to the hospital the day following a weekend visit with Jeff. During the visit Jeff became angry with Emily and became physically abusive. He caused Emily to fall into a table and injure her knee. He then spanked her with his belt. When Emily returned home she told Tammy she had fallen while playing and hurt her knee. During her bath time, Tammy observed bruising on Emily's buttocks as well as a belt imprint on her legs which caused her to bring her to the hospital.

When Tammy met with the WRC advocate, she was quite upset. The advocate was able to talk to Tammy about the forensic exam, the legal investigation, working with social services, and the forensic interview process. Getting this information helped alleviate some of Tammy's concerns. The advocate then spent time playing with Emily. This helped Emily feel more at ease and also allowed Tammy time to talk with the forensic nurse privately.

As the exam continued, the emergency advocate was able to stay with Emily to help her through the process. Emily felt comfortable with the advocate and this helped Tammy feel more at ease. Ultimately a safety plan was put in place and the advocate indicated that a WRC program coordinator would soon be in touch. Knowing that there was follow up support and help available was very comforting to Tammy. The following day, the sexual assault program coordinator spoke with Tammy. She answered questions about the forensic interview that was being scheduled.

She also indicated that an emergency advocate would be at the hospital for Emily's follow-up exam. Tammy also had questions about filing for sole custody. The WRC coordinator referred her to a WRC justice system navigator who was able to accompany Tammy while she filed the appropriate paperwork. The justice system navigator continues to work with Tammy as she continues through the custody process. Tammy has expressed multiple times that the support she and Emily received from the Women's Resource Center has been invaluable. Knowing she has somewhere to go when she needs information and support is a great comfort for Tammy. She values all that the Women's Resource Center has done and will continue to use the services offered.

Donations like yours help the Women's Resource Center of the NRV and other United Way partner agencies do meaningful, life-changing work around the New River Valley. When you give to United Way, you help people like Tammy and Emily learn to overcome their traumatic background.

For more information on Women's Resource Center visit <https://www.wrcnr.org>