

# MY VOICE MATTERS

A SAFE PLACE TO TELL MY TRUTH



northern michigan  
alliance *for children*

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Created in partnership with the Northern Michigan Alliance for Children

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ISBN: 978-1-7370942-2-7

Printed in the United States of America

First printing, October 2021

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Books are available for customization to all accredited child advocacy centers and other entities approved in writing by the Northern Michigan Alliance for Children (NMAC).

*This is a support tool. This is not a guarantee of the members assigned to your advocacy team. Your team may be comprised of different individuals than those listed in the book. Any names, genders, and resemblances of characters may differ from the people you work with during your multidisciplinary team process.*

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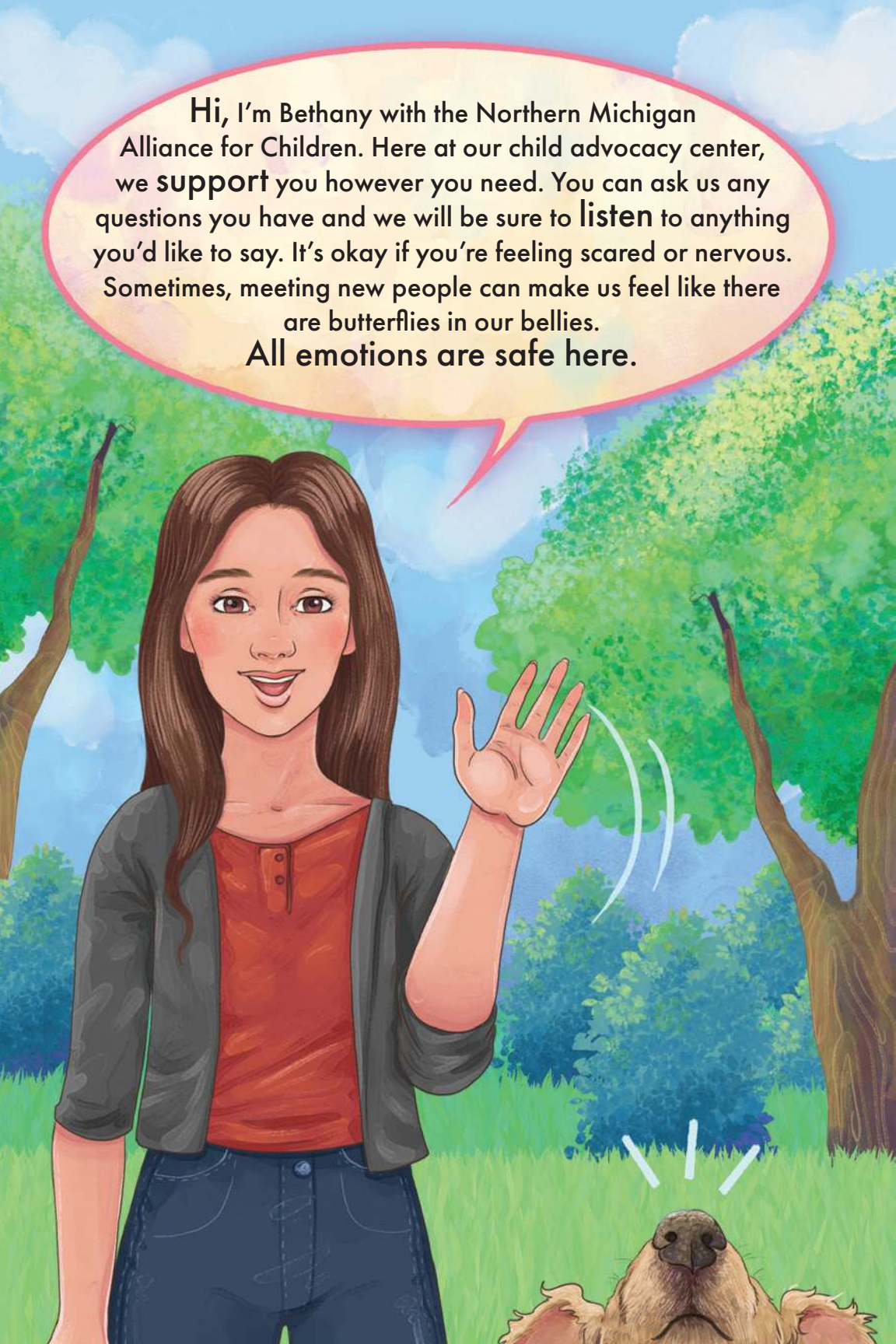
To all of the children who trusted us with your stories, thank you for believing in us. For all the children we have yet to see, we look forward to earning your trust.

– From your friends at the Northern Michigan Alliance for Children



*This project was originally supported by Federal Award 2018-V2-GX-0067 from the Department of Justice, administered by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Victim Services.*



An illustration of a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a red shirt and a grey cardigan, waving her right hand. She is standing in a park with green trees and a blue sky. In the foreground, the nose and part of the face of a brown dog are visible. A large speech bubble is positioned above her, containing text.

Hi, I'm Bethany with the Northern Michigan Alliance for Children. Here at our child advocacy center, we **support** you however you need. You can ask us any questions you have and we will be sure to **listen** to anything you'd like to say. It's okay if you're feeling scared or nervous. Sometimes, meeting new people can make us feel like there are butterflies in our bellies.  
**All emotions are safe here.**

I am going to tell you about some members of the team and what will happen when you visit the center. Your team is made up of **professionals** who work to keep you **safe**. Each of your team members has a special job, and they are ready to learn all about **you**.





This is Jessi. She is one of your advocates. When you come see us, Jessi will be here to welcome you and anybody you bring along. Jessi will stay with you most of the time you visit with us. But when she is not with you, she will make sure you **always** have someone from your advocacy team.



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If you'd like, Jessi can bring a special team member with her. His name is Trigger and he is the team's furry canine advocate. If you'd like to have Trigger join you, all you have to do is ask! I bet you've noticed I've said the word "advocate" a few times. An advocate's job is to support another person. An advocate also makes sure you are **comfortable** and **safe**. Trigger is a great advocate!



Trigger has a special job. He likes to snuggle up to kids to welcome them. If someone feels butterflies in their belly, he helps them feel better. He will also lay next to you so you can rub his head. So, don't be surprised if you feel Trigger's wet nose!





When it's time for you to meet the next member of your team, Trigger will stay behind with your advocate and your grown-up. Your advocate will make sure she helps support your grown-up too!







Next, you'll get to see our talking room. There, you will meet Katy, the forensic interviewer. A **forensic interviewer** is someone who talks to kids. They ask questions and listen carefully to the answers. They listen carefully because **your voice matters**.



Katy will have lots of questions for you, but she also knows you may not want to talk yet. **When you are ready to talk,** Katy will be ready to listen and learn more about you.



When you're done talking with Katy, Trigger will be excited to see you again. Jessi and Trigger will stay with you while Katy meets with the other advocacy team members.





Your advocacy team meets to make sure we take **very** good care of **YOU**. The team may meet with other people too, including a police officer. If you want to meet them, or have any questions, **you can always ask!**



Your advocacy team may recommend that you go and see some of our medical friends, like a **doctor** or **nurse**. Their jobs are to make sure **you** and **your body** are safe.





When you visit the **medical team**, you can ask them any questions about their jobs, your appointment, or your body while you are with them.





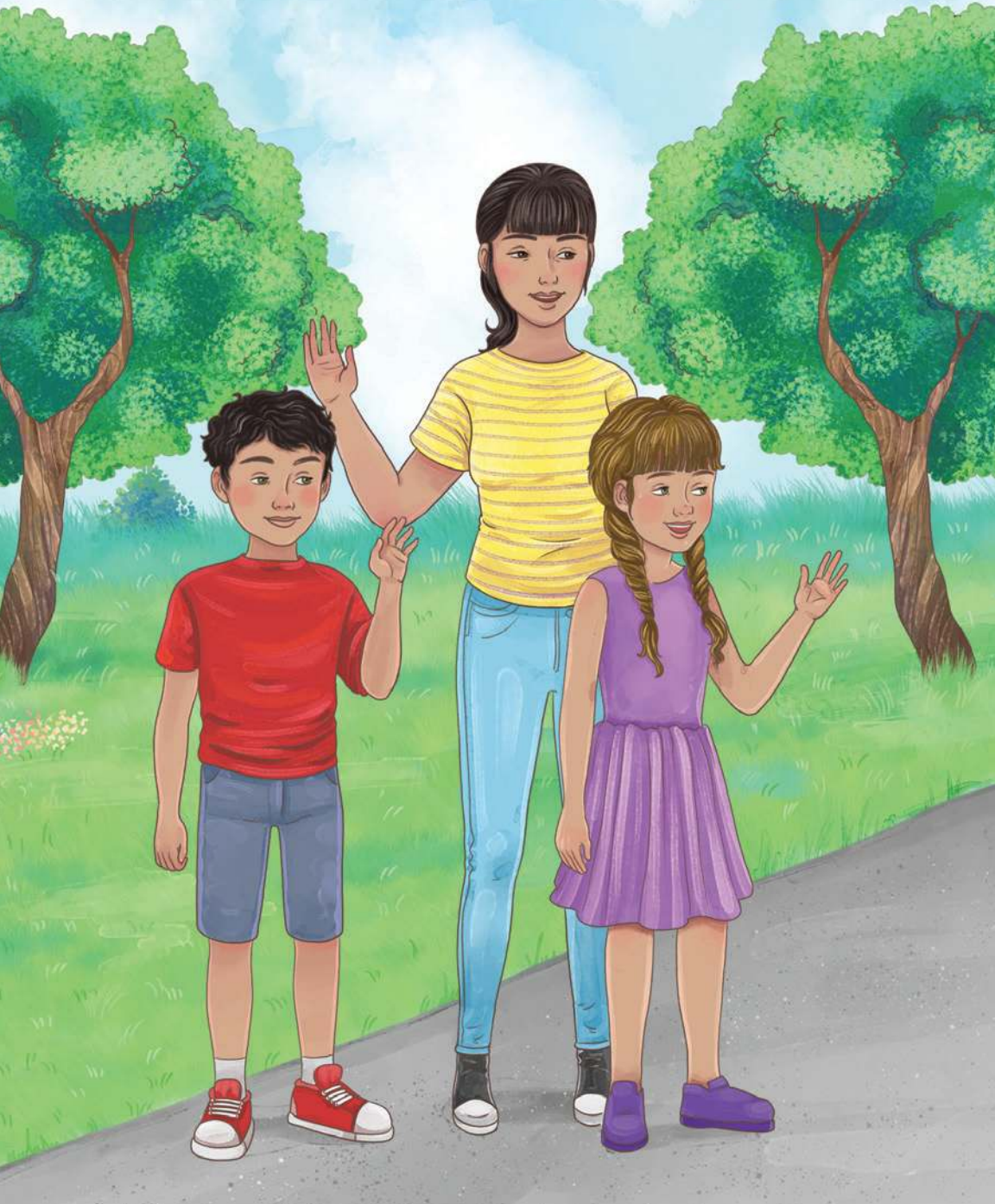
After your visit to our center, you may feel like you need someone to help you understand your feelings and work through them. We have special listeners that will do just that! They are called **counselors** or **therapists**.







Remember, **all of us** on your advocacy team are here for **you**. We are ready to answer any questions you have for us. We can't wait to meet you and say **hello!**







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## YOUR ADVOCACY TEAM

We are your advocacy team. We are here for you!  
Here's how you can reach us:



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**alliance *for* children**

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This book was created in partnership with the Northern Michigan Alliance for Children (NMAC), an organization that provides healing, hope, and justice to abused children in rural Michigan. It was their dream that the book could be replicated to help children across the world. If you have an organization in mind that might benefit from having their own customized copy of this book, please visit [www.mikids.org/book](http://www.mikids.org/book) or [www.booksbyrylee.com/my-voice-matters](http://www.booksbyrylee.com/my-voice-matters).







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