

# Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy



## Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

(TF-CBT) is a short-term treatment for children and adolescents experiencing significant emotional and behavioral difficulties related to traumatic life events. It is research-based and is conducted in a supportive environment where children learn coping skills, gradually talk about the trauma, and develop plans for feeling safe in the future.

### What Is Trauma?

Trauma is when something very scary or upsetting happens. Each person responds differently to potentially traumatic events.

Examples of traumatic events may include:

- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Neglect
- Witnessing Violence

## Benefits of TF-CBT

- Starts the healing process after trauma.
- Teaches relaxation and coping skills to deal with the impact of trauma.
- Helps to re-establish safety.
- Helps address other mental health concerns like depression and anxiety.
- Allows the expression of feelings that may otherwise come out as behaviors.
- Gives the child the opportunity to tell their story in a safe place.
- Improves child's self-esteem and confidence.
- Enhances future safety.
- Builds resiliency to handle future stress.
- Increases communication and trust.

**80 percent of traumatized children experienced significant improvement with TF-CBT treatment.\***



# How Do Children React to Trauma?

Each child reacts to trauma in their own way. Trauma symptoms may include:

- Trying not to think or talk about what happened
- Isolating oneself from others
- Intense emotional and physical reactions to reminders of the event
- Nightmares
- Flashbacks
- Difficulty concentrating
- Being on the lookout for danger
- Irritability
- Sleep difficulties

## Caregiver's Role in Treatment

One of the most important predictors of healing after trauma is support from caregivers. Caregivers play an integral role in helping a child heal and ultimately treatment works best when caregivers are involved. Caregivers play an active role in sessions and are aware of the treatment goals and skills learned. Caregivers can assist children by helping them practice learned skills at home. Trauma impacts the whole family and so part of treatment will include support for the caregiver.



**Children are resilient, and with the help of our trained professionals they can learn to effectively cope with their experiences.**

## What is TF-CBT?

- P** **Psychoeducation and Parenting**  
Psychoeducation about the trauma and Parenting Skills to help caregivers deal with the effects
- R** **Relaxation Skills**  
Relaxation skills for the child and caregiver
- A** **Affect Regulation**  
Emotion regulation skills adapted to the child, family, and their culture
- C** **Cognitive Coping**  
Connecting thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
- T** **Trauma Narration and Processing**  
Assisting the child in the sharing of their story and trauma experiences
- I** **In Vivo Exposure**  
Mastery of trauma reminders
- C** **Child-Caregiver Sessions**  
Practice skills and enhance trauma-related discussions
- E** **Enhancing Safety**  
Enhancing future safety with safety planning and social skills training



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