

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Helping children heal after trauma

What are signs my child needs help?

Some children “bounce back” quickly after a trauma. However, many children develop post-traumatic symptoms. These symptoms might include:

- Nightmares or trouble sleeping
- Trouble concentrating
- Being jumpy or startling easily
- Avoiding reminders of what happened, or getting very upset when thinking about it
- Frequent stomachaches or headaches
- Becoming moody or irritable
- Withdrawing or losing interest in things
- Behavior problems
- Trouble getting along with others
- Re-enacting what happened with toys, or bringing it up over and over
- “Freezing up” or seeming “spaced out”

If your child is showing changes in mood, behavior, or personality following a traumatic experience, he or she may need help to cope with what has happened and begin to heal.

“I am not what happened to me. I am what I choose to become.” ~C. Jung

TF-CBT heals trauma

It is a therapy model designed to treat the effects of trauma in children, such as posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, behavior issues, and more. TF-CBT helps parents and caregivers too, by reducing the distress that many caregivers feel. Over 20 research studies show that TF-CBT works, making it the treatment of choice for traumatized children.

How does it work?

Assessment - Your child’s therapist will start by doing an assessment to better understand how the trauma is affecting your child. He or she will provide you with feedback and a plan.

Weekly therapy sessions - Children and caregivers attend weekly outpatient session that last 55 minutes. If you attend regularly, TF-CBT can usually be completed in less than 6 months, although it may take longer if your child has had long-lasting or repeated trauma.

Caregiver involvement - Your involvement as a caregiver is important. Children benefit more from TF-CBT when a caregiver participates along with them.

3 phases - In TF-CBT, there are three phases (or “steps”), which work like building blocks. Each step prepares your child for the next one. TF-CBT does involve talking about what happened, but this is done gradually, with lots of support and preparation. This is a key part of healing and many children say it is one of the most helpful parts of therapy!

Children’s Advocacy Center of NEPA

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Call to get started: (570) 969-7313

Learn more: www.cacnepa.org

