Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)

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**TARGET AUDIENCE**

This program is for youth who are 3 to 17 years old and their parents.

**SUMMARY**

Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), a community-based program, is designed to treat youth who have experienced traumatic events, such as sexual abuse or household violence. Children and parents learn skills to help them process thoughts and feelings related to the trauma.

**EVIDENCE**

Several randomized controlled trials of TF-CBT demonstrate positive results for children and youth who have full Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or sub-clinical PTSD as a result of exposure to a range of traumatic experiences. Results demonstrate reductions in the core set of PTSD symptoms (i.e., hyperarousal or hypervigilance, avoidance or numbing, and re-experiencing) and associated symptoms of depression, anxiety, and shame. Further, TF-CBT shows significant positive results in increasing parental supportive behaviors and decreasing parental distress related to a child's trauma.

**COMPONENTS**

TF-CBT intends to help participants cope with the aftereffects of extreme trauma through the use of therapies, such as stress management and behavioral management. The following are components of the TF-CBT program.

- **Psychoeducation** - Learn about the impact of trauma on children and family members, the nature of PTSD, and where to apply for victim's assistance;
- **Parenting skills** - Strengthen parenting skills and learn how to address behavioral difficulties;
- **Relaxation skills** - Explore methods of self-soothing, such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, blowing bubbles, yoga, or listening to music;
- **Affective regulation skills** - Expand range of affective expression;
- **Cognitive coping skills** - Recognize connections between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors;
- **Trauma narrative and cognitive processing of trauma** - Describe the trauma experience by writing a book, poem, or song or through another creative technique and learn to change thoughts about the experience to be more accurate and helpful;
- **In vivo mastery of trauma reminders** - Participate in graduated exposure to overcome generalized avoidance of innocuous cues;
- **Conjoint child-parent sessions** - Share trauma experience with parent and strengthen child-parent communication; and
- **Enhancing safety and future developmental trajectory** - Learn skills, such as healthy sexuality, domestic violence safety plan development, bullying safety skills, and drug refusal skills.

Separate sessions are held for youth and for the parent or guardian. Joint sessions are included as therapy continues.

**PREVIOUS USE**

TF-CBT was developed in the 1980s and has been implemented nationally and internationally with children of diverse backgrounds who have experienced multiple types of trauma. TF-CBT has also been used with military families who are affiliated with all service branches.
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TRAINING

Training is required. Licensed therapists facilitate the program, and they must participate in a free, online, introductory training and an on-site, 2- to 3-day full clinical training (i.e., introductory and advanced training). Training lasts 10 hours, but therapists can move at their own pace. After training is complete, therapists can continue to access online materials. Training events, conferences, and other optional materials are listed at [http://tfcbt.musc.edu/resources.php](http://tfcbt.musc.edu/resources.php) Some resources are also available in Spanish. Costs vary for optional trainings and conferences.

CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for implementing this program include hiring licensed therapists who are comfortable dealing with the sensitive program content; ensuring therapists receive the mandatory training and, possibly, having the choice to attend optional trainings; and obtaining parent and, when possible, child buy-in.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email [Clearinghouse@psu.edu](mailto:Clearinghouse@psu.edu)

IMPLEMENTATION

If you are interested in implementing TF-CBT, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email [Clearinghouse@psu.edu](mailto:Clearinghouse@psu.edu)

TIME

Therapy is generally provided in 12 to 16, 90-minute sessions.

COST

An optional intervention manual costs about $30. Consultation calls, required twice a month for at least 6 months, cost $200 to $260 per hour.

EVALUATION PLAN

To move TF-CBT to the Effective category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence at least one external evaluation must be performed demonstrating modest attrition rates and positive effects lasting at least two years from the beginning of the program or at least one year from program completion.

The Clearinghouse can help you to develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email [Clearinghouse@psu.edu](mailto:Clearinghouse@psu.edu)

CONTACT

Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program.
Phone: 1-877-382-9185 Email: [Clearinghouse@psu.edu](mailto:Clearinghouse@psu.edu)

You may also contact TF-CBT by mail National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Medical University of South Carolina, 165 Cannon Street, Box 250852, Charleston, SC 29425, email [tfcbt@musc.edu](mailto:tfcbt@musc.edu), or visit [https://tfcbt.musc.edu/contact_us.php](https://tfcbt.musc.edu/contact_us.php)

SOURCE

[http://tfcbt.musc.edu](http://tfcbt.musc.edu) and [www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ProgramProfile.aspx?id=96](http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ProgramProfile.aspx?id=96)