

Benefits to child and family

- Develops and improves skills for dealing with stress
- Reduces child's anxiety about thinking or talking about the trauma
- Addresses behavioral problems associated with trauma
- Builds children's personal safety skills
- Resolves parental distress about the child's experience
- Enhances parent/caregiver support for their children
- Prepares children to cope with traumatic and loss reminders



TF-CBT services are provided through a collaborative agreement between the University of Massachusetts Medical School's Child Trauma Training Center (CTTC) and trained clinical providers who offer TF-CBT treatment throughout Massachusetts.

For a referral please call:
1.855.LINK.KID

Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)

A Parent's Guide



Child Trauma Training Center

Linking Families, Training Providers, Informing Communities

1-855-LINK-KID



*Funded by the CBH Knowledge Center @
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Dealing with trauma is hard. Each trauma is unique. Caregivers want to offer the best support they can for a child, but sometimes it's hard to know where to start.

What is TF-CBT?

Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT) is an evidence-based treatment created for youth who have experienced traumatic life events such as sexual or physical abuse, traumatic loss of a loved one, domestic, school or community violence, witnessing natural disasters, terrorism or war, and/or neglect. Children and caregivers learn new skills to process these traumatic events, to control unwanted feelings, and to enhance safety and communication.

Why choose TF-CBT?

TF-CBT is the most rigorously tested treatment for trauma in children. Research indicates that TF-CBT is more effective than therapy as usual for traumatized children – and children get better faster. Studies show that 80% of traumatized youth experience significant improvement after 12 - 18 weeks of treatment.

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Who can use TF-CBT?

TF-CBT is designed for children and adolescents between the ages of 3 and 18* who have significant emotional and behavioral problems related to a traumatic event or a series of traumatic events. TF-CBT can be used with children in many settings such as foster care, group homes, or parental homes.

*UMMS-CTTC is also able to refer youth ages 18-21 to TF-CBT.

What happens in TF-CBT?

- Children and parent or caregiver attend weekly sessions for an average of 12 - 18 sessions.
- A caregiver component is an important part of TF-CBT and includes parenting strategies to help the child cope with the trauma.
- A youth treatment component includes symptom relief, coping skills and personal safety, as well as assists youth in talking about the trauma.
- Joint caregiver/child sessions practice skills, provide additional knowledge and enhance positive outcomes.
- TF-CBT can also be conducted without a caregiver, if necessary.

What results will I see?

Children receiving TF-CBT experience significant improvement in:

- Posttraumatic stress symptoms
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Defiant behaviors
- Self-blaming
- Social skills and competence