

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy

Catholic Charities' Family Growth Program in Monmouth County offers Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT), an evidence-based treatment appropriate for children who have had one or more traumas and are experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress.

The therapy is provided at three locations in Monmouth County: Red Bank, Keansburg and Neptune and in Ocean County at our new Toms River location.

Payment should not be a barrier to treatment. The Family Growth Program will bill Medicaid or third party insurance when available, but is also grant-funded if assistance is needed. The program also contracts with the state's Department of Children Protection and Permanency (DCP&P).

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT) helps children, teens and their parents cope with trauma. The therapy is typically provided to children ages 3 to 18 years.

Talking about the trauma is done in a gradual, supportive way and is not done until the child has learned some coping skills. TF-CBT helps families manage feelings, talk about the trauma and develop plans for feeling safe in the future.

Research shows that not talking about traumatic events can prevent healing. Children often have inaccurate beliefs about the event that cannot be corrected if the topic is avoided.

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is an unexpected or sudden event that creates feelings of extreme fear or helplessness for a child that witnesses or experiences it. These events are often in situations where the child feared for his/her life or the lives of others. Trauma can include:

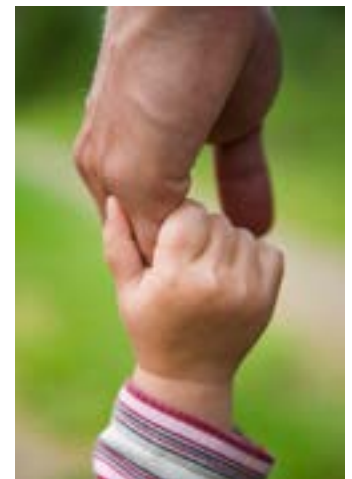
- Exposure to violence
- Loss of significant loved one
- Natural disaster
- House fire
- Car accident

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

WHAT ARE SOME REACTIONS TO TRAUMA?

Each child's reaction to a traumatic event is different and is based on many factors, such as age when the trauma occurred, severity of the trauma and the amount of time that has passed since the trauma. Some possible symptoms of trauma include:

- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and/or not wanting to sleep alone
- Difficulty not thinking about the event
- Increased fear in both safe and risky situations
- Feelings of shame or guilt
- Difficulty concentrating and/or staying still
- Thoughts about death or dying
- Low self-esteem
- Mood swings and/or irritability



- Drop in grades/performance at school
- Efforts to avoid talking about the event or doing things that remind the child about the event

WHAT IS TF-CBT?

TF-CBT is a structured therapy that has been shown to decrease the short-term and long-term negative effects of trauma. The therapy includes:

- Education about trauma and its effects
- Parenting strategies to address common behavior problems
- Training in relaxation/stress management
- Learning about feelings and ways to express them
- Finding and changing the thoughts about the trauma that can postpone or prevent healing
- Developing creative ways for the child to gradually talk about what happened.
- Helping the child and caregiver(s) talk together about the trauma.
- Planning for future safety and success.

WHY USE TF-CBT?

- TF-CBT is well researched and numerous clinical trials have demonstrated that the treatment is effective.
- Treatment meets the accreditation standards of the National Children's Alliance for provision of trauma-informed evidence-based mental health treatment for children.
- TF-CBT engages the family, includes caregiver education and facilitates ongoing support for the child after treatment has been completed.
- Treatment includes standardized assessment resulting in an individualized treatment plan.

WHAT IS THE CAREGIVER'S ROLE IN TF-CBT?

With TF-CBT, the caregivers are involved in every step of treatment. Caregivers are asked to help the child practice skills

at home and are the primary support person as the child gets ready to tell his/her story. In fact, research has proven that caregiver involvement in trauma therapy is the single most important factor in a child's recovery. Caregivers are encouraged to participate in a psycho-educational support group concurrent with their child's treatment.



- TF-CBT is time limited, with treatment often completed in 12 to 18 sessions.
- Treatment generalizes to other traumas, so if there are multiple traumas, the child does not need to engage in the process for each.
- Clinicians work in collaboration with various disciplines on the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office Multidisciplinary Team to ensure a coordinated response to child abuse allegations.
- TF-CBT results in a reduction of acting-out behaviors, with reduced incidence of placement disruption.
- Treatment results in reduced likelihood of a child recanting the disclosure of abuse.

For more information about Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT), contact Catholic Charities' Family Growth Program in Monmouth County at **732-747-9660**.

To make a referral, call **1-800-360-7711**.