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**TRAUMA FOCUSED-COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY**

**HELPING FAMILIES HEAL**

No one wants bad things to happen to their children or loved one — yet they do. Whether it's a serious motor vehicle crash, an injury, illness, witnessing violence, physical or sexual abuse, children and adults often develop troubling reactions to what they experience. When children or adults hurt — physically, emotionally, or psychologically — caregiver support and influence is critical. These caregivers (parents, spouses, extended family, or other significant persons) are the most important and powerful people in their life. But sometimes caregivers find it hard to give the level of support which is needed. Trauma focused-cognitive behavioral therapy is an effective treatment option designed to help reduce present and future problems.

**WHAT IS TF-CBT?**

TF-CBT is a therapeutic intervention designed to help children, adolescents, adults and their caregivers overcome the impact of traumatic events. It is designed to help with trauma related to sexual abuse, physical abuse, domestic violence, violence within the community, an unexpected death of a loved one, natural disasters, or war. The focus of treatment is to assist the individual to develop coping strategies for traumatic stress reactions. It helps reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety, or acting out behavior which are common when someone is exposed to trauma.

TF-CBT is provided by a professional who has received advanced training in TF-CBT. The treatment sessions typically lasts between 12 to 16 sessions. Lori offers TF-CBT to children from 3 to 18 years of age and Bethanne works primarily with adolescents and adults (16 and older) who may have experienced trauma earlier in their life.

When working within the context of TF-CBT, the therapeutic process includes individual sessions for the person who has experienced the trauma, individual sessions for the caregiver, and joint sessions between the individual and their caregiver. Numerous studies have demonstrated that TF-CBT is more effective in helping individuals overcome trauma than other therapeutic intervention.

**WHAT ARE SOME REACTIONS TO TRAUMA?**

A person who has been traumatized can develop intense fear regarding reminders of the event. They may become isolated, not express feelings, and feel emotional numbing and tension. This stressful state can cause symptoms such as the inability or unwillingness to recall trauma details, difficulty stopping thoughts about the trauma, emotional and physical numbing, recalling physical sensations that occurred during trauma, difficulty staying still or fidgeting, disturbed sleeping routine (nightmares, waking, not wanting to sleep alone, etc.), rapid changes in mood, difficulty concentrating, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, inability to trust others, drug use, or a desire to hurt oneself or others. These symptoms or behaviors place the person at risk of having problems and conflicts. And, if left untreated, may impede the normal developmental process.

**WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED FROM TF-CBT?**

The client will learn that the trauma was not their fault and they are not the only ones who have survived a similar traumatic event. They will identify feelings and learn to manage them. As we work together they will learn how to relax and tolerate trauma reminders. TF-CBT helps the person identify negative thoughts that may cause depression and anxiety and then they will learn how to replace negative thoughts with more helpful ones. They will learn how to resolve problems while they learn safety skills and reduce the risk of future problems.

**HOW IT WILL HELP.**

An important goal in treatment is to provide the opportunity to discuss details about the trauma in a supportive and nurturing environment. In developing a trauma narrative, their mind begins to replace traumatic memories with more helpful thoughts about the trauma they have experienced. In time, these powerful traumatic reminders will become less frequent and the reminders will begin to lose their impact.

**WHAT ROLE DOES THE CAREGIVER PLAY?**

The caregiver's participation is tremendously important in treatment. Studies show that children whose parents participated in their treatment improve more rapidly. The same is likely to occur for the adult who has experienced trauma. With caregiver participation, the client gains a sense of safety and gains much needed support from those closest to them. The structured nature of TF-CBT requires that the client and caregiver agree to the process, to keep appointments, complete between-session activities, and to use what you learn both in our regular sessions and at home.