

# Mental Health Services



Child abuse and other forms of childhood trauma can have lifelong effects on children, families, and communities. Many studies have shown the strong relationship between childhood trauma and serious outcomes such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, substance use, physical health problems, and even poverty and early death. But these outcomes can be prevented when children receive evidence-based services and support early on. Evidence-based treatments (EBTs) like those delivered at the Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) can significantly reduce trauma symptoms and prevent the long-term effects of exposure to trauma.

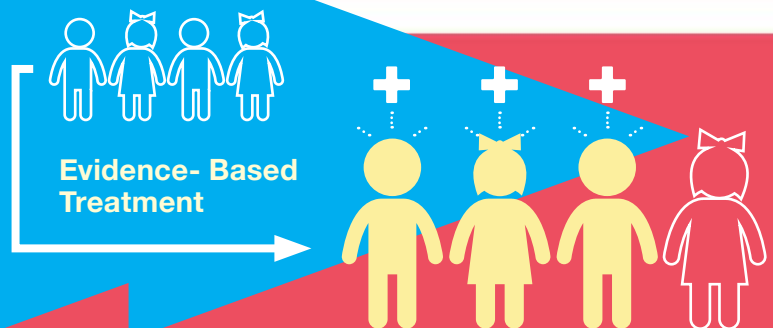
The CACs are committed to using evidenced-based and trauma-specific screening, assessment and treatments proven in research to be effective so that children and families can heal.

## BENEFITS OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- Starts the healing process after trauma.
- Teaches relaxation and coping skills to deal with the impact of trauma.
- Helps to reestablish safety after trauma.
- Helps address other mental health concerns like depression and anxiety.
- It allows the expression of feelings that may otherwise come out as behaviors.
- Gives the child the opportunity to tell their story in a safe place.
- Improves child's self-esteem and confidence.
- Enhances future safety.
- Builds resiliency to handle future stress.

## EBTs can help reduce trauma symptoms.

**75%** of children who had PTSD when they started treatment no longer had PTSD at their last follow-up



# Helping Children and Families Heal with treatments that work!

## CAC Mental Health Services

The CACs offer mental health screening, brief assessments, and treatment. Screening is a brief inquiry of potential mental health and safety concerns to inform the caregiver and team whether assessment for treatment may be needed. Assessment is more comprehensive and utilizes a clinical interview and assessment measures to identify areas of concern and provides tailored treatment recommendations. The brief assessments inform the clinician what trauma-specific EBT will best meet the identified needs. Various trauma-specific EBTs are offered on-site at each CAC.

## Accessing CAC Mental Health Services

Mental health services at CAC's are provided at no cost to families. Reimbursement for services is accessed through third-party payers, grants, and crime victim's compensation funds.

## What is Mental Health Treatment?

Mental health treatment, sometimes referred to as therapy, is a unique opportunity to meet with a trained professional who will help a child and caregiver establish goals for treatment and utilize an EBT to achieve those goals. It is important to remember that healing is a process and occasionally, a child may leave a session feeling temporarily worse before experiencing the full healing effect. Treatment relies on everyone's willingness to be open, to participate in the process, and the child or caregiver should feel welcome to voice any concerns, discomfort, and scheduling issues with the clinician.

## Caregiver's Role in Treatment

One of the most important predictors of healing after trauma is support from caregivers. Caregivers play an integral role in helping a child heal and ultimately treatment works best when caregivers are involved. The level of caregiver involvement varies depending on the treatment type, but in every treatment, caregivers play an active role in sessions and are aware of the treatment goals and skills learned. Caregivers can assist children by helping them practice learned skills at home. Trauma impacts the whole family and so part of treatment will include support for the caregiver.

## EVIDENCED-BASED TREATMENTS

- **Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)** – An intervention that integrates cognitive behavioral techniques with trauma-specific interventions for children ages 3-18. Effective at reducing trauma symptoms, and emotional and behavioral problems.
- **Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention (CSTSI)** – A brief (5-8 session) early intervention for children ages 7-17 and their caregivers. Enhances coping with traumatic stress reactions.
- **Alternatives for Families Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT)** – An intervention that improves the relationship between children ages 5-17 and caregivers in high-conflict families.
- **Problem Sexual Behaviors Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (PSB-CBT)** – A child and caregiver group intervention to reduce or eliminate incidents of problematic sexual behavior in children 12 and under.
- **Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)** – A caregiver coaching intervention for children ages 2 - 8 with disruptive behavior problems.
- **Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)** – An intervention that supports and strengthens the relationship between the caregiver and children ages 0-5 who are experiencing traumatic stress reactions, attachment, and/or emotional and behavioral problems.



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