

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

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The Problem

A **traumatic event** is one that threatens a child or their loved one's life, safety, or well-being.

More than half of all youth will experience a traumatic event by age 18. A national survey of U.S. teens found:

- 8% experienced sexual assault
- 22% experienced physical assault
- 39% witnessed violence

([National Center for PTSD](#))

Impact

While many children are very resilient in the face of trauma, research has repeatedly shown that childhood trauma is associated with a wide range of negative outcomes in adulthood including increased physical and mental health issues, substance use, and involvement in the justice system.

Multiple traumas and low social support put children at increased risk for poor outcomes.

TF-CBT Overview

Target Population

- Children ages 3-18 and non-offending caregivers.
- Appropriate clients have an identified trauma and exhibit trauma-related emotional or behavioral symptoms.

Treatment

- 9 treatment components, organized around the acronym PRACTICE, address clinical issues and concerns commonly associated with childhood trauma.
- A hybrid treatment model based on social learning theory and cognitive-behavioral principles.
- 8 to 16 treatment sessions (16 to 25 for complex trauma), with a combination of child, parent, and conjoint sessions.
- Can be delivered in office-based, home, school, and residential settings.

Training

Masters-level therapists and graduate students in training complete 10 hours of on-line and 2 days of in-person training, and participate in a series of 12 consultation calls with a TF-CBT Expert. Licensed therapists have the option of becoming TF-CBT certified after training is complete.

Core Values ("CRAFTS")

Components-based * Respectful of Cultural Values * Adaptable & Flexible * Family-focused * Therapeutic Relationship is Central * Self-efficacy is Emphasized

Outcomes

Child Outcomes

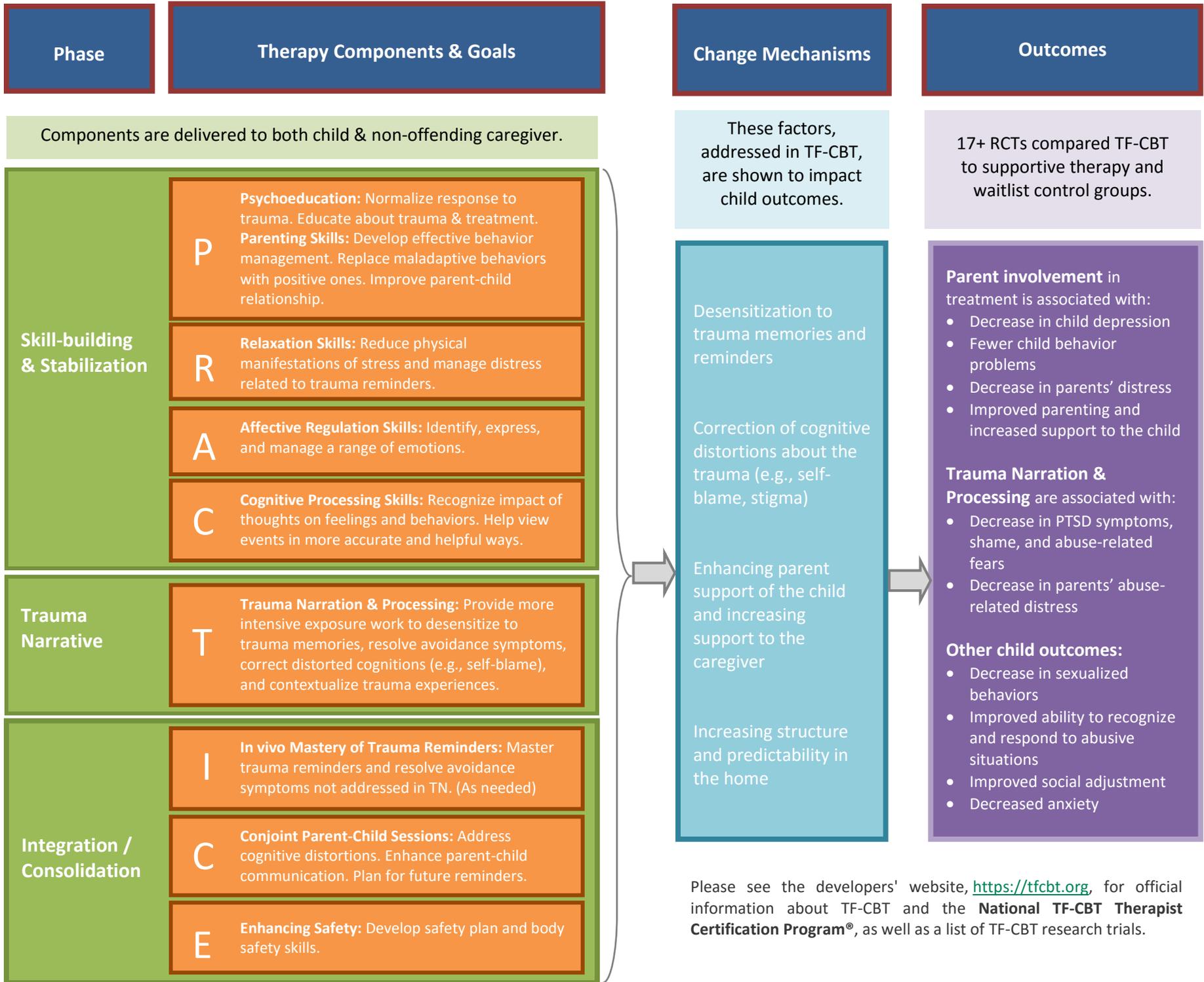
- Decrease in youth PTSD symptoms, shame, and abuse-related fears
- Decrease in sexualized behaviors
- Decreased anxiety and depression
- Decreased behavior problems
- Improved ability to recognize and respond to abusive situations
- Improved social adjustment

Caregiver Outcomes

- Decrease in abuse-related distress and posttraumatic symptoms
- Decreased depression
- Improved parenting skills
- Increased support to child

Follow-up studies show excellent maintenance of treatment gains up to 2 years after treatment ends.

Gradual exposure and habituation to traumatic memories occurs throughout TF-CBT.



Please see the developers' website, <https://tfcbt.org>, for official information about TF-CBT and the **National TF-CBT Therapist Certification Program®**, as well as a list of TF-CBT research trials.