

# WHAT DOES MY CHILD NEED?



My child is experiencing changes in their behavior or emotions after a traumatic event and I want to find help for them. How do I know which therapy to choose?

There are many trauma-informed clinical interventions available to children and families around our Kansas City metro and throughout Missouri and Kansas. Trauma-focused therapies are recommended for PTSD as an effective treatment. Trauma-focused therapies use different techniques to help the child process the traumatic experience. For example, some involve visualizing, talking, or thinking about the traumatic memory, using coping skills for affect modulation. Others focus on changing unhelpful beliefs about the trauma.

## What are signs of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?

- Avoiding people, places or things that bring back memories
- Withdrawal from family or peers
- Trouble with memory
- Not remembering directions from one homework page to the next.
- May not remember parts of the trauma
- Panic symptoms when not in danger, such as heart palpitations or rapid breathing
- Changes in appearance or not taking care of personal hygiene
- Feeling shame or blame, having "if only" thoughts
- Feeling sad or increased anger
- Nightmares
- Memories of the scary event even when they are trying not to think about it
- Using drugs or alcohol
- Defying curfew
- Thoughts or threats of self-harm or suicide
- Any other symptoms that interfere with daily activities

The therapies below have been studied to show success in reducing posttraumatic stress disorder (ptsd) responses in kids and families. When reaching out to counselors, you can ask them what therapies they use to treat trauma. Throughout the counseling process, your child's counselor may use assessment tools to measure your child's reactions. Some children will need only need a few counseling sessions, while others will need more.

## Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)

CPP is a family-based therapy for children ages 0-6 who have experienced at least one traumatic event and are showing symptoms of post-traumatic stress through attachment, emotion dysregulation, or behavioral problems. Therapy focuses on the ways the trauma has affected the child's sense of safety and development. Treatment generally is effective after 16-50 sessions. Research shows improvement in child trauma symptom measurements, child developmental functioning, and improvement in caregiver emotional functioning. This therapy is most helpful for young children who are affected by difficult experiences.

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

TF-CBT helps children (age 7-18) with post-traumatic stress symptoms such as fear, anxiety, depression, and behavior problems related to traumatic life experiences. TF-CBT teaches caregivers and their children/teens skills to regulate emotions, behaviors, and thoughts. TF-CBT develops skills to safely process trauma memories and enhance safety, trust, family communication and parenting support. It includes individual therapy for the child, as well as parent-child sessions. It is most helpful for children who have the verbal skills to talk about their traumatic experience.

## Child-Adult Relationship Enhancement (CARE) Workshops

CARE Workshops were developed for parents and caregivers of children ages 2-12 who have experienced traumatic events in their lives. It also is useful for parents whose children are, experiencing behavior problems, or parents who want to strengthen their relationship with their child. CARE may enhance other mental health treatments but is not a mental health therapy. These workshops are completely free of charge, for adults only, and are held in two sessions that are fun and interactive. CARE Workshops are offered throughout the year at different times and at a variety of locations in the Kansas City metro area. CARE Workshops are provided to families in both English and Spanish. If you are interested in registering for a CARE workshop please go to [childrensmercy.org/CAREWorkshops](http://childrensmercy.org/CAREWorkshops) or call **(816) 855-1720**.

## Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

EMDR is a mental health intervention for children and adolescents who have experienced trauma and have symptoms of PTSD. It uses standardized procedures with an external stimulus to distract the child or adolescent during trauma processing. This allows the children to split focus between the trauma narrative and processing along with the distraction. The most common forms of distraction include directed bilateral eye movement, hand-tapping and audio bilateral distractions. It may be most helpful for children or adolescents who need sensory support while processing their traumatic experiences.

## Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)

PCIT is designed for children ages 2-7 who are exhibiting aggression, non-compliance, defiance, attention and focus related problems, and excessive temper tantrums. PCIT is one of the strongest evidence-based treatments for young children with behavioral changes, including those related to trauma. PCIT teaches caregivers specific behavior management techniques as they play with their child, with the focus on improving the caregiver relationship while teaching caregivers effective child management skills. PCIT is fun for both the caregiver and the child. It is most helpful for parents of young children needing support for managing their child's behavior.

## Does my health insurance cover mental health?

On the back of your insurance card, you should see phone numbers to help connect you to care. Call the number for behavioral or mental health care and ask them to walk you through your specific coverage. If there are struggles getting connected to affordable treatment, please know that all Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) will serve anyone who walks through the door, regardless of their diagnosis and insurance status. Once assessed, they can help get you connected to on-going affordable care.

## Need help finding therapy resources for yourself or your child?

Call a referral navigator at **1-816-412-9421**. A trained mental health counselor will answer your call **24/7** and complete a short intake including demographic and safety questions. You will receive a call back within one business day to coordinate a referral to ongoing services. There is no charge for this referral service.



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