

**Target Population:**

TF-CBT is intended for children 4 to 18 years of age, both males and females, English or Spanish speaking from cultural diverse groups and who have been exposed to a traumatic event in their life.

**Location:**

TF-CBT will be provided in a variety of community settings like the family resource centers, school settings or in the child's home, when appropriate.

**Referral Process:**

Referrals may be made by community agencies, physicians, school personnel, and parents/guardians/caregivers. Individuals making the referral will need to provide basic information of the child/adolescent being referred and information on the trauma history. The referral can be sent to the TF-CBT program via fax, mail or in person.



**Imperial County  
Behavioral Health Services  
Mental Health Services Act  
(MHSA)**

**Prevention and  
Early Intervention Plan**

**TF-CBT Program**

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**Imperial County  
Board of Supervisors**

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**Prevention and Early  
Intervention**

**Trauma-Focus  
Cognitive Behavioral  
Therapy**

**Andrea Kuhlen, Director**  
*“Funded by the  
Mental Health Services Act”*



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

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral is a psychotherapeutic intervention that is being provided as part of the Imperial County Prevention and Early Intervention Plan. TF-CBT is being implemented with the intent to prevent some of the long-term negative effects of child traumatic stress such as increased risk of substance abuse, suicide attempts, and social and relationship difficulties.

TF-CBT is designed to help children, youth, and their parents overcome the negative effects of traumatic life events such as:

- Child sexual, physical and/or emotional abuse
- Traumatic loss of a loved one
- Domestic, school, or community violence
- Illness, injury or medical procedures
- Exposure to natural disasters
- Terrorist attacks
- War

The program is provided by trained mental health professionals in individual, family, and group sessions in a variety of settings. It targets symptoms related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which often co-occurs with depression and behavior problems. The intervention also addresses issues commonly experienced by traumatized children, such as poor self-esteem, difficulty trusting others, mood instability, and self-injurious behavior, including substance use.

## Components of TF-CBT:

- Parent-Child Interactions: Parents learn how to provide optimal support to their children.
- Parent Training: Parents learn effective parenting skills geared towards understanding the trauma and being available to the child in a supportive, non-critical, non-judgmental manner
- Skill Development: Children learn skills in stress management, cognitive processing, communication, problem solving, and safety.



- Therapy: Children participate in a series of approximately 8 to 12 therapy sessions that address:
  - Feeling Identification
  - Cognitive Processing—Introduction of Cognitive Triangle to teach child and parent understand the connection between thoughts, feeling and behaviors
  - Gradual exposure by creating a narrative of the traumatic events the child experienced.

## Components of TF-CBT (Cont.):

- Other Parent Supports: Parents are assisted in exploring their own thoughts and feelings about the child's experience and resolving their personal trauma-related distress. Joint sessions encourages discussion of the traumatic experience directly with the parent, and both parent and child learn to communicate questions, concerns, and feelings more openly.

## Benefits:

- Develops adaptive skills for dealing with stress.
- Decreases children's anxiety about thinking or talking about the event.
- Enhances accurate and helpful cognitions.
- Enhances children's personal safety skills.
- Resolves parental distress about the child's experience.
- Enhances parental support for their children
- Prepares children to anticipate and cope with traumatic and loss reminders.

