Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)

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31. mai 2012
What is TF-CBT?

• An evidence-based treatment for children experiencing trauma related difficulties
• Addresses wide range of traumas
• Developed for youth ages 3-18 years
• Components-based treatment protocol
• Time limited, structured (12-20 sessions)
• Parents are an integral part of treatment
TF-CBT Components

- Assessment
- Psychoeducation and Parenting skills
- Relaxation
- Affective Modulation
- Cognitive Processing
- Trauma Narrative
- Conjoint parent-child sessions
- Enhancing safety and social skills
Therapist’s Role

• Structure
  – Agenda setting and kid’s choice
  – Homework Assignment and Review
  – Watch for and manage COWS (crises of the week)

• Directive
• Active
• Supportive
• Fun!
Assessment

• Provides a picture of what’s going on with the child
• Helps to determine
  – Presenting symptoms
  – The need for treatment
  – What type of treatment is best fit?
• Helps in development of treatment plan
• Enables therapist to assess treatment progress

Methods:
  – Formal, Standardized Measures (UCLA PTSD R)
  – Clinical interview
  – Clinical observations
Psychoeducation

• Provide information about the impact of trauma and hope for recovery
• Facts about trauma/abuse (prevalence, who offends, why don’t children tell…)
• Informations about child´s symptoms and reactions
• Normalize emotional and behavioral reactions
• Educate family about the benefits of treatment

• Sometimes importance of psychoeducation is overlooked because we want to move on to the other parts of treatment!!
Parenting skills

• Teach parents positive parenting strategies to manage behavior problems, fears, sleep problems, sexual behavior problems
  – Attending skills and praise
  – Active ignoring / selective attention
  – Effective commands and time out
  – Behavioral management plan
  – Behavior charts

• Golden rules: Consistency, predictability and follow through
Relaxation

• Reduce physiological symptoms of stress and PTSD
• Explain body responses to stress
  – Shallow breath, muscle tension, headaches…
    “where do you feel stress in your body?“
• Not just one technique
• Important to include a caregiver
• Be creative
• Make it fun!
Cognitive coping

• Help children and parents to understand connections between thoughts, feelings and behaviors
• Help children distinguish between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors

• Help children and parents view events in more accurate and helpful ways
• Encourage parents to assist children in cognitive processing of upsetting situations and to use this in their own everyday lives for affective modulation
The trauma narrative

- A form of **gradual exposure therapy** that allows the child to experience the negative feelings, thoughts, memories associated with the trauma in small doses in a safe, controlled environment.

- Goal is for child to be able to tolerate traumatic memories without significant emotional distress and no longer need to avoid them
  - Child tells story gradually in sessions
  - Increasing detail about thoughts and feelings during the trauma
  - Stress management used throughout narrative
Organizing the narrative

- Help child put chapters in chronological order
- First chapter „About me“
- Include disclosure, legal procedures, forensic interview, medical exams, how therapy helped etc.
- If multiple episodes than include: first time, last time, one best remembered, most disturbing
- Re-read book for accuracy and dysfunctional thoughts
- Create positive ending
  - What was learned in counseling, personal strengths and resilience, expectations for the future
Conjoint parent child sessions

- Child reads the trauma narrative for caregiver
- Caregiver is well prepared
- Why?
  - Reduce parent’s own distress
  - Correct cognitive disortions
  - Help parent to tolerate own emotions
  - Help parent to tolerate hearing about the trauma
  - Help parent serve as a model
  - Show child that parent is fully supportive
Enhancing Safety Skills

- Develop children’s body safety skills
  - Right to say no (body ownership)
  - Assertiveness
  - Identification/recognition of “red flags”
  - Safe people/safe places
  - Telling what happens
  - Secrets and surprises

- Education about healthy sexuality
  - Ok/Not ok touch
  - Risk behaviors
Balance

Past, Present, Future

Past, Present, Future?

Create the Future?

Or

Dwell in

The Past?

Past, Present, Future

Storytelling Paths

Celebration, Challenge, Grieving, Somewhere, Someone, Somehow, Reality, Context, History, Culture, Foundation, Case, Context