

**Creative TF-CBT Techniques for
Traumatized Children**



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TF-CBT Treatment Components

- Psychoeducation and Parenting skills**
- Relaxation**
- Affective expression and regulation**
- Cognitive coping**
- Trauma narrative development and processing**
- In vivo gradual exposure**
- Conjoint parent-child sessions**
- Enhancing safety and future development**

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006

Rationale for Playful TF-CBT

- Play-based interventions, such as art, games, puppets, and stories, have proven to be effective for children
- Because play is the language of children, it can be utilized to help gain their interest and maintain attention as well as process and comprehend treatment components through a multimodal approach that developmentally taps into the natural learning style of children
- Blending structured play techniques into TF-CBT allows effective implementation of TF-CBT while not changing its theoretical underpinnings
- Playful TF-CBT techniques motivate children to participate in treatment, facilitate skill building, and lead to a greater sense of enjoyment in the therapeutic process

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Psychoeducation

- Materials should be relevant, developmentally and culturally appropriate
- Present information in an easily accessible, understandable, engaging manner
- Cover the following:
 - Define terms
 - Normalize feelings and reactions associated with the trauma
 - Process and benefits of TF-CBT

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Psychoeducation

Overview of treatment

- Benefits of early, effective treatment
- Explain model and rationale (skills and gradual exposure)

Trauma

- Definition
- Normalize common responses and symptoms
- Normalize avoidance
- Dispel myths
- Instill hope for future

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Psychoeducation

Sexual abuse:

- Types of sexual abuse
- Who sexually abuses
- How abused children often feel/think/behave
- Disclosure

Physical abuse:

- Discipline vs. abuse
- How physically abused children often feel/think/behave

Domestic Violence:

- How children who have witnessed DV often feel/think/behave
- Conflict resolution: how to resolve conflict
- Healthy expression of anger

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Psychoeducation

Activity: Crumpled Paper Throw

Source: Cory Helps Kids Cope with Sexual Abuse: Playful Activities for Traumatized Children, Lowenstein, 2014

Goals:

- 1) Verbalize an understanding of trauma-related issues
- 2) Identify common feelings and reactions associated with the trauma
- 3) Increase ability to talk openly about the trauma

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Crumpled Paper Throw

Crumple a piece of paper into a ball and toss the paper ball into the hoop. If you get the crumpled paper through the hoop, you earn two points. If you miss, answer a question. Your therapist will read each question to you. Once you have answered the question correctly, you get one point. If your answer is incorrect, your therapist will read the answer to the question, and then you will have the chance to answer again and earn a point. At the end of the game, trade in points for prizes:

1–10 points = 1 prize, 11 or more points = 2 prizes.

Parent Skills Training

- Motivate by explaining that consistent use of parenting techniques will improve child's behavior
- Increase nurturing and praise
- Teach active listening and increase open communication
- Establish age-appropriate rules and routines
- Teach effective negative consequences: Time out, loss of privileges

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006
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Parent Skills Training

Praise and Active Ignoring
 Be specific when giving praise
 Be consistent
 Extra statements (criticism) with praise
 Decrease attention to negative behaviors (only for behaviors that are dangerous)

Time out
 Remove the child from an environment where reinforcement is occurring
 Last only a few minutes

Contingency management
 Behavioral charts
 Positive goals
 Reward immediately

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Parent Skills Training

Activities: Table Talk

Source: Creative CBT Interventions for Children with Anxiety, Lowenstein, 2016

Goals:

- 1) Increase open communication between parent and child
- 2) Increase positive interaction between parent and child

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Table Talk

Sit with your child and ask, "How was your day today? Was it a happy or sad day? (Or a happy and sad day?) What happened to make it a happy or sad day?" Listening to your child and responding in a supportive manner will invite more open communication. Here are some tips:

- Listen carefully, focus on your child's feelings, and avoid talking about your own feelings
- Do not change the subject or ask a lot of questions
- Validate your child's feelings using a soft tone of voice (i.e., "You must have felt sad when the other kids wouldn't let you join their game")
- Repeat what you heard (i.e., "You felt sad when the other kids wouldn't let you join their game")
- Ask open-ended questions to invite more discussion (i.e., "Tell me more about your sad feelings")

Don't feel you have to make it all better. Just listening, validating feelings, and offering comfort is what your child needs from you. And try to have Table Talk every day.

Brag Book

Source: Cory Helps Kids Cope with Sexual Abuse, Lowenstein 2014, page 31

- Get a notebook and keep it beside your child's bed.
- Catch your child being good (aim for at least 4 times per day) and focus on this good behavior by using labeled praise. This means telling your child exactly what he/she is doing that you like, for example: *I like the way you asked nicely for a treat, I'm proud of the way you shared your toy with your friend, Great job calming yourself when you felt angry.*
- Each night at bedtime, write in the Brag Book one positive thing that your child did that day, then read the "brag" statement to your child.
- Since praise is most effective when given as soon as possible after the positive behavior occurs, try to use labeled praise at the appropriate time during the day, and then reinforce the praise statement at night when you do the Brag Book.

Severe Behavioral Problems

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy

Cohen, J.A., Berliner, L., and Mannarino, A. (2010). Trauma focused CBT for children with co-occurring trauma and behavior problems. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 34, 215-224.

Cohen, J., Mannarino, A., and Navarro, D. (2012). Residential treatment. In: Cohen, J., Mannarino, A., & Deblinger, E. (Eds.) *Trauma-focused CBT for children and adolescents: Treatment applications*, (pp. 73-102). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Relaxation

- **Goal: Decrease physiological reactivity**
- **Teach the strategy to child and parent**
- **Enlist parent as the coach**
- **Practice at bedtime or otherwise calm**

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006

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Relaxation

Activity: Cookie Breathing Game

Source: Creative CBT Interventions for Children with Anxiety, Lowenstein, 2016

Goals:

- 1) **Understand the concept of diaphragmatic breathing**
- 2) **Implement diaphragmatic breathing when feeling stressed or upset**

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Cookie Breathing Game

Step 1: Put your hand on your tummy, where your belly button is. Slowly breathe in and out. When you breathe in, your hand should move up. When you breathe out, your hand should move down. Breathe in and out like this 5 times.

Step 2: Continue this special way of breathing, but now when you breathe in, do it through your nose for 4 seconds, and when you breathe out, do it through your mouth for 4 seconds.

To help you do this, pretend that there is a yummy delicious batch of chocolate chip cookies that just came out of the oven. As you breathe in, smell those yummy cookies! But they're hot, so you have to blow on them to cool them down. As you breathe out, blow on the cookies to cool them down.

Cookie Breathing Game

Now let's play the Cookie Breathing game to help you practice. To play, role the dice. If you role an even number, do Cookie Breathing two times. If you role an odd number, pick a piece of the puzzle from the bag. Play until you have collected all 4 pieces of the puzzle. Then put the puzzle together.

Relaxation

Activity: Wild Monkeys Can Be Calm

Source: Hartig in: Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Vol 3, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011

Goals:

- 1) Understand the importance of self-calming
- 2) Implement an appropriate self-calming strategy when feeling stressed or upset

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Wild Monkeys Can Be Calm

Pretend your fingers are wild monkeys. (Demonstrate the monkeys acting wild e.g., shake hands, agitate fingers, make wild and loud noises for the monkeys.)

Say: "There is a trick that calms the monkeys down. I'm going to teach you this special trick!"

Touch pinky finger to thumb while stating "I"

Touch ring finger to thumb while stating "CAN"

Touch middle finger to thumb while stating "BE"

Touch pointer finger to thumb while stating "CALM "

Repeat the whole thing then take a breathe at the end: "I CAN BE CALM" (Big deep breath)

Relaxation

Activity: Awesome App

Source: *Creative CBT Interventions for Children with Anxiety*, Lowenstein, 2016

Goals:

- 1) Understand the concept of diaphragmatic breathing
- 2) Implement diaphragmatic breathing to reduce anxiety

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Awesome App

When you feel anxious or worried, your breathing might speed up. This can feel uncomfortable and make you feel even more anxious. Deep breathing exercises are an easy and effective way to reduce stress and anxiety. Although deep breathing may seem like an easy thing to do, many people actually do it wrong—they take deep breaths using their chest and shoulders rather than their diaphragm. Taking deep breaths using your chest and shoulders isn't relaxing at all! Proper breathing can be hard to learn. Fortunately, there's an app for almost anything, including deep breathing.

Awesome App

Since there are many deep breathing apps to choose from, it's important to find the one that's right for you. Explore two or three deep breathing apps (make sure the apps teach diaphragmatic breathing), note what you like/don't like about each app (see below), then choose your favorite.

Name of app:

Features I like:

Features I don't like:

-

Awesome App

Once you have chosen your favorite app and used it to learn diaphragmatic deep breathing, it's time to practice. Have your deep breathing app ready to go. Run in place for one minute. Notice how your breathing speeds up. (Your breathing also speeds up when you are anxious, so it's good to be aware of these physical feelings.) Then use your app to guide you through diaphragmatic deep breathing. Do diaphragmatic deep breathing until your breathing slows completely back to normal. Notice how you are able to relax your body.

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Awesome App

Diaphragmatic deep breathing is a technique you can use anywhere, anytime. It can help lower anxiety and give you a sense of control. Diaphragmatic deep breathing can also give you more energy and leads to better concentration. But in order to use it effectively, you have to become good at it. Practice each night before bedtime. This is the best time to practice because it will relax your body in preparation for sleep. You can use the deep breathing app or do it on your own. It's a good idea to do ten rounds of diaphragmatic deep breathing each night so your body really becomes relaxed.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness helps client focus full attention on present moment

Benefits:

- Increased awareness of feelings, body sensations, thoughts
- Attentional control
- Tolerance of strong emotion
- Mental and physical grounding

Resources:

- The Mindful Child: Kaiser Greenland, 2010
- Sitting Like a Frog: Snel, 2013
- Moody Cow Meditates: Maclean, 2009

Relaxation: More Activities

Cool and Calm Feather Breathing Dragon: By Gobeil in: Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Two, Edited by Lowenstein, 2008

Tighten and Relax Dance: Structured Play-Based Interventions for Engaging Children and Adolescents in Therapy, Cavett, 2010

The Cool Down: Simon Says Pay Attention: Yeager & Yeager, 2008

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Affective Expression and Regulation

- Identify range of feelings and link to appropriate expression
- Identify physiological responses to emotions
- Learn to rate feelings at different intensities
- Implement strategies to improve/calm affect (modulate affect)
- Identify feelings associated with the trauma

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006

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Affective Expression and Regulation

Activity: Guess Which Hand

Source: Cory Helps Kids Cope with Sexual Abuse: Playful Activities for Traumatized Children, Lowenstein, 2014

Goals:

- 1) Increase feelings vocabulary
- 2) Verbally express a range of feelings
- 3) Increase ability to talk openly about the trauma

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Guess Which Hand

Practitioner chooses a Feeling Square (i.e., happy), folds it several times to form a small paper clump, and places it in one hand. Practitioner puts hands behind her back, moves the folded Feeling Square from hand to hand a few times. Child tries to guess which hand is holding the Feeling Square. If child guesses the correct hand, both child and practitioner take turns telling a time they experienced the feeling. Child earns a point for telling about the feeling, plus a bonus point for guessing the correct hand. (If child did not guess correct hand, child earns one point for telling about the feeling.) At end of game, trade in points for a prize:
1-15 points = 1 prize; 16 or more points = 2 prizes.

Feelings: Guess Which Hand

- Happy: Something good happens
- Sad: Something upsets you
- Angry: You don't like what happened
- Scared: Something scary or dangerous is happening
- Guilty: Feeling bad about what you did wrong
- Lonely: You have nobody to be with
- Brave: You did something that's scary to do
- Relieved: Feel better when something bad stops

Affective Expression and Regulation

Activity: Mancala Feeling Stones

Source: Tammi Van Hollander, in: *Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children Adolescents, and Families Vol Three*: (Edited by Lowenstein, 2010)

Goals:

- 1) Increase feelings vocabulary
- 2) Verbally express a range of feelings
- 3) Increase ability to talk openly about the trauma

Mancala Feeling Stones

Have the client sort the colors of stones into piles. The client identifies a feeling with each stone color. For example, they may choose red to be angry. The client picks up the red stone and says, "I'm angry when my mother yells at me." The practitioner then says, "Can you put the number of stones in the hole for how angry you get when this happens?" The client may put three or four stones in the hole. Sticking with the angry feelings the practitioner can ask of a time when they were just a little angry and one stone would represent their anger or a time when they were so angry that all the red stones would be used. The activity proceeds in the same manner with other feelings.

Affective Expression and Regulation

Activity: Balloon Boxing

Source: ?

Goals:

- 1) Increase ability to talk comfortably about angry feelings
- 2) Reduce frequency and intensity of angry, aggressive outbursts
- 3) Express anger through healthy physical outlets

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Affect Regulation

Activity: Don't Flip Your Lid Anger Management Program

Source: More Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth, Lowenstein, 2002

Goals:

- 1) Increase ability to talk comfortably about angry feelings
- 2) Reduce frequency and intensity of angry, aggressive outbursts
- 3) Express anger through healthy physical outlets

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Prize Bag

Everyone gets angry sometimes. Our bodies give us clues when we are starting to get angry. If you use your calming technique as soon as you notice yourself getting angry, you will calm yourself before losing control. You get a point each time you use your calming technique as soon as you notice yourself getting angry, and you successfully stop yourself from losing control. Once you earn 5 points, you get to pick something from the prize bag.

1. ___ 2. ___ 3. ___ 4. ___ 5. ___ PRIZE!

Prize Bag

Write each reward item on a separate slip of paper, fold it, and place it in the bag:

- Family board-game night
- Search a new recipe and cook together
- Pajama party
- Movie night
- Reverse dinner

Affective Expression & Regulation: More Activities

Feelings Hide and Seek: Techniques – Techniques – Techniques: Play-Based Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families, Noziska, 2008

Feelings Detective: AutPlay Therapy Handbook, Grant, 2012

Feelings Ring Toss by Dyson, In Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011

Go Fish: More Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth, Lowenstein, 2002

Angry Yes, Calm Yes: Play Based Interventions for Autism, ADHD..., Grant, 2014

Affective Expression: Tips for Parents

- Label your emotions to help your child learn a Feelings Vocabulary (e.g., “I feel frustrated because I am trying to open this jar and I can’t” or “I feel proud of you for playing so nicely with your friend.”)
- Label your child’s feelings and invite open discussion (e.g., “You look angry right now. Tell me about your angry feelings.”)
- Talk with your child about how you are feeling, but only share information that is appropriate and helpful for your child (e.g., “I feel sad that you were sexually abused. But I am happy we are getting help now and learning ways to feel better.”)

Lowenstein, 2014
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Anger Regulation: Tips for Parents

- Verbalize your feelings and role-model self-calming strategies (e.g., “You’re not listening to me and I’m getting angry. I’m going to do Cookie Breathing to get calm”)
- If your child is throwing a tantrum because you set a reasonable limit, do not give in or renegotiate as this teaches your child that it is worth it to act out. Instead, ignore the tantrum and attend to your child when he/she is calm (e.g., “I really like how you calmed yourself”)
- Don’t get physical with your child. That just teaches your child to solve his/her problems with aggression. If you do lose control and get physical, model taking responsibility and apologizing (e.g., “I lost control and it was wrong for me to shove you. I apologize”). If your anger escalates to abuse, seek help
- Use a behavior chart to encourage your child to utilize a safe anger strategy

Lowenstein, 2014
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Cognitive Coping

- Explain the connection between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
- Change inaccurate/unhelpful thoughts to accurate/helpful thoughts
- Generate coping self-statements
- Explain internal dialogue
- Teach how to control thoughts

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006
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Cognitive Coping

Activity: Helpful Thoughts

Source: Cory Helps Kids Cope with Sexual Abuse: Playful Activities for Traumatized Children, Lowenstein, 2014

Goals:

- 1) Articulate an understanding of the connection between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
- 2) Replace maladaptive cognitions with more adaptive cognitions

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Cognitive Coping: More Activities

Lose the Bruise: Digging for Buried Treasure: 52 prop-Based Play Therapy Interventions for Treating the Problems of Childhood, Goodyear-Brown, 2002: Youtube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSdZMKxfopE&list=UU8GvOEKqaxtrHuzBSMFHCsg>

Positive and Negative Thinking: Techniques – Techniques – Techniques: Play-Based Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families, Noziska, 2008

Positive Thinking Checkers By Anderson in: Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011

Perfection: Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth, Lowenstein, 1999

Cognitive Coping: Tips for Parents

- **Play the freeze game:** When your child says an inaccurate or unhelpful thought, say Freeze! Then challenge your child to replace the inaccurate or unhelpful thought with a more accurate, helpful thought.
- **Decorate Helpful Thought Cards:** Help your child write helpful thoughts on index cards or cardboard, then decorate them with stickers and glitter.
- **Have a contest:** Compete with your child to see who can be the "Positive Thinker" of the day.

Lowenstein, 2014

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Trauma Narrative: Goals

- Gain mastery over the experience
- Feel heard and understood
- Gradually become desensitized to thoughts, feelings, and reminders of the trauma
- Alleviate extreme negative emotional reactions and physiological reactivity
- Gain control over intrusive thoughts related to the trauma
- Decrease avoidance of trauma triggers
- Identify, challenge and replace unhelpful/distorted cognitions

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006

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Trauma Narrative: Parent Sessions

- Re-iterate rationale and benefits of conducting a trauma narrative
- Assure parents the narrative is progressive and child's distress will be monitored and addressed
- Prepare parents for possible increase in distress symptoms as the trauma narrative is done
- Predict child may resist attending therapy and provide strategies the parent can use
- Share narrative with the parent as it's being created and carefully process the parent's feelings and reactions
- Encourage the parent to discuss his/her own experience of the trauma
- Ensure the parent leaves the session in a positive frame of mind and able to attend to emotional needs of the child

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006

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Trauma Narrative: Tips

- Present rationale for completing the trauma narrative (TN) using age-appropriate explanation*, repeat in subsequent sessions
- Provide engaging options for how to do the TN
- Initially allow child to tell story without interruptions or questions, then re-read the TN and ask open-ended questions, clarify child's experience, use reflective and summarizing statements
- If the exposure becomes too distressing, take a break to do relaxation strategy, then return to the story or to easier trauma
- Be attuned to affective numbing and dissociation and coach child to utilize self-regulation skills
- Be patient with pauses and silence
- Don't rescue child from the hurt: Goal of gradual exposure is to create discomfort so child can eventually overcome it

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006; Lowenstein, 2014

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Trauma Narrative: Tips

- Encourage child to face painful experiences (e.g., "I know it is really hard to do this, but you're strong enough to talk about the worst parts, and I'm strong enough to hear it").
- Label your emotional reactions to child's TN, praise the child's strength, and encourage continued disclosure (e.g., "I'm getting a little teary because what you're saying is very powerful and I'm proud of how brave you are talking about such sad experiences. What else was really sad or scary about what happened?")
- Have child read each chapter before progressing to next part so gains mastery in verbalizing the details of trauma
- Reflect child's decreased anxiety (e.g., "You're feeling less and less scared about the sexual abuse.")
- End with relaxation and discussion about here and now
- Approach the TN differently with complexly traumatized children

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006; Lowenstein, 2014

Trauma Narrative: Rationale for Play/Art

- Children typically lack the cognitive and verbal abilities to adequately describe their traumatic experiences, but they can show what happened
- Play reenactment/drawing provides a developmentally appropriate means for children to communicate, and allows for the external, concrete, and manageable representation of the trauma experience
- Play reenactment/drawing facilitates the reduction of anxiety to trauma memories through repeated visual re-exposure in a safe therapeutic environment

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Sample Narrative Hierarchy

- General info about the child
- Non-abusive interactions with offender
- The disclosure and investigation
- First or most recent traumatic episode
- Other specific episodes of trauma
- Worst moment (i.e., scariest, most disturbing, most embarrassing)
- Positive ending (i.e., what was learned in therapy, advice to other kids, personal strengths and resilience, hopes for the future)

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006

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Trauma Narrative: Process Questions

- *When is it happening? (Date and time of day)*
- *Where is it happening? (Show me with the toys in the room)*
- *Who is there and what are they doing? (Show me with the toys in the room)*
- *What is happening? (Show me with the toys in the room)*
- *What happened next? (Show me with the toys in the room)*
- *Tell me more about it. (Show me with the toys in the room more about what happened)*
- *Tell me again the part about... (Show me again with the toys in the room the part about...)*
- *So you saw your dad hit your mom and then...(Show me with the toys in the room what happened after dad hit mom)*

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006; Steele & Raider, 2001

Trauma Narrative: Process Questions

- *What are you saying? (Show me with the doll that's you what you are saying)*
- *What is the abuser saying? (Show me with the doll that's the abuser what s/he is saying)*
- *What are you thinking when it is happening? (Hold the doll that's you and describe what you are thinking when it's happening)*
- *What are you saying to yourself when it's happening? (Hold the doll that's you and show what you are saying to yourself)*
- *How are you feeling when it is happening? (Hold the doll that's you and describe how you feel when it's happening)*
- *When the sexual abuse happened, where did you feel the hurt/fear the most in your body? (Hold the doll that's you and describe where you feel the hurt/fear the most in your body when it's happening)*
- *What else do you want to say about what happened? (Show me with the toys in the room anything else you think is important about what happened)*

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006; Steele & Raider, 2001

Trauma Narrative with Complex Trauma

Do life narrative, focus on themes rather than chronological details. Include negative and positive life events. Use engaging technique.

Example: 13 year old girl who was neglected, witnessed domestic violence, was sexually abused, placed in multiple foster homes:

1. When I was a baby
2. My mom didn't take good care of me
3. When dad hurt mom
4. When Uncle Joe sexually abused me
5. Places I lived
6. The scariest moment of my life
7. The happiest moment of my life
8. People who took good care of me
9. My proudest moments
10. Advice to other kids

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Factors Underlying Child's Resistance

- *I don't trust you*
- *You can't help me*
- *I'm not ready to deal with this*
- *I need to feel in control*
- *You'll think I'm crazy*
- *You don't understand me / my culture*
- *I have a secret I'm nervous to share*
- *I don't have permission to talk openly*
- *My parents don't like you so why should I?*
- *I lack the skills to verbalize what I'm thinking and feeling*

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Questions to Ask the Client

- What are you worried might happen if you tell me?
- How might you feel if you talk about it? Do you think you might feel better, or do you think you might feel embarrassed, scared, guilty, or maybe even a bunch of different feelings?
- How do you think I might react if you tell me?
- Who might be upset to hear more about it?
- How might your parents (or other people) react if they know more about it?
- Is there anyone who might get in trouble if you tell more about what happened?
- Is there anyone who thinks you should keep what happened a secret?

Lowenstein, 2014₅₆

Responses to Client's Resistance

- Normalize:** Lots of kids feel embarrassed talking about it
- Empathize:** I know it's really hard to talk about it
- Reassure:** Kids usually feel better after they talk about it
- Educate:** TF-CBT is a therapy approach that helps kids tell what happened a little at a time so eventually when they think about the trauma they don't feel so scared
- Empower:** You get to choose when you feel ready to talk about it
- Postulate the worst:** What's the worst that could happen if you talk about it?

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Trauma Narrative: Managing Resistance

- Give child appropriate options/choices
- Repeat treatment rationale
- Praise child for his/her effort
- Slow down pace or take a step back
- Empathize with the difficulty of telling about a trauma and emphasize the positive attributes of the child (i.e., bravery, courage)
- Encourage creative method

Deblinger, CARES Institute, 2007; Lowenstein, 2014

In Vivo Gradual Exposure

- Identify the feared situation and sensory triggers then develop an effective plan for the child to gradually get used to the feared situation so that each step is tolerable
- Separate harmless conditioned fear responses (e.g., trauma reminders or triggers) from real danger
- Ensure plan is agreed upon by child and parents (and relevant community supports) so they follow through with the steps of *in vivo* exposures
- Practice in session then practice at home
- Make sure the situation is really safe; if necessary have a back-up safety plan

Cohen, Mannarino, and Deblinger, 2006

In Vivo Gradual Exposure

- Use incentives and rewards in session and at home (coach parent to appropriately praise the child)
- Remind child to use coping skills learned in earlier sessions
- Predict resistance and help the parent and child persist with the plan so child learns he/she can tolerate the feared situation
- If child becomes distressed, ask: "What would make this easier?" or "What's the worst that can happen?"
- Ultimately, the goal is for the child to be in the feared situation with minimal or no fear

Cohen, Mannarino, and Deblinger, 2006

Sensory Triggers

Activity: Five Senses Game

Source: Cory Helps Kids Cope with Sexual Abuse: Playful Activities for Traumatized Children, Lowenstein, 2014

Goals:

- 1) Identify situations related to the trauma that trigger anxious reactions and avoidant behavior
- 2) Decrease anxious reactions to innocuous stimuli associated with the traumatic event

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Five Senses game

Pretend you are at the zoo. Make a list of the things you see, smell, taste, touch, and hear at the zoo. You get a point for each item you list that is in the correct category. (For example, if you put lions roaring for the taste category, you would not get a point because that obviously belongs under things you see or hear). You cannot repeat the same thing twice.

At the end, trade in points for prizes:
 1-5 points = 1 prize
 6 or more points = 2 prizes

You have two minutes to make your list—okay, go!

Five Senses game

Things I see at the zoo:

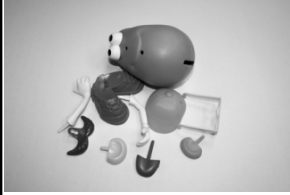
Things I smell at the zoo:

Things I taste at the zoo:

Things I touch at the zoo:

Things I hear at the zoo:

Mr. Potato Head
Cavett, unpublished



Trauma Narrative: Process Questions

- What do your eyes see when it is happening? (Hold the doll that's you and describe what you see when it's happening)
- What do your ears hear when it is happening? (Hold the doll that's you and describe what you hear when it's happening)
- What does your nose smell when it is happening? (Hold the doll that's you and describe what you smell when it's happening)
- What does your mouth taste when it is happening? (Hold the doll that's you and describe what you taste when it's happening)
- What do your hands touch when it is happening? (Hold the doll that's you and describe what you touch when it's happening)

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006; Steele & Raider, 2001

In Vivo Gradual Exposure: Steps

- Create a fear ladder
- Choose one unrealistic fear to start (e.g., separating from parent, going to school, sleeping in own bed)
- Face one low-level activity for first weekly practice
- Rate feelings of fear before/after
- Stay in the situation/activity/thought until anxiety comes down
- If anxiety is low, keep taking steps UP the ladder right away
- Practice in session to "prove" to client that exposure works!
- Praise effort and encourage child to really do it

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In Vivo Gradual Exposure: Steps

Discuss/assign weekly practice:

1. What step will you/your child practice this week?
2. When would be a good time to try it?
3. What might get in the way?
 1. How can you overcome these potential problems?
 1. If you feel less afraid on this activity, what would be the next step?
2. What can you do if it is harder than you thought it would be?
3. Rate your feelings before and after and report back

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In Vivo Gradual Exposure: Sample Plan

Girl (9) sexually abused in bath by babysitter. Fear of taking a bath.

1. Sit on the side of the tub with mom for ten seconds / 1 minute / 5 minutes. Talk about taking a bath
2. Fill tub with water, put feet into tub with mom holding your hand
3. Take a bath in bathing suit while playing with bath toys with mom sitting beside bath
4. Take a bath with no clothes on, with mom sitting beside bath
5. Take a bath with no clothes on, mom outside bathroom
6. Take a bath with no clothes on, mom downstairs

Cognitive Processing

- Cognitive processing: Helps children identify negative self-beliefs and enables them to develop more helpful or accurate ways to think about the traumatic exposure, self, family, abuser, worldview, and the future
- Review the trauma narrative including feelings and thoughts
- Discuss whether thoughts are helpful and/or accurate
- Discuss what the thoughts were and are
- Stay alert to thoughts related to guilt, shame and responsibility
- Stay alert to thoughts about consequences of abuse: foster care, value of the person (I am a bad kid), self-esteem, trust-worthiness of self and others, safety (I am not going to be safe)
- Use Socratic questioning to help clients challenge maladaptive, unrealistic, thoughts

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006
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Cognitive Processing

Activity: Write On Board

Source: Waddell, in: Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Two (Edited by Lowenstein, 2010)

Goals:

- 1) Increase positive statements about self
- 2) Articulate that the trauma does not define who they are

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Write On Board

1. Think of things you like to do that make you feel happy. Write the words on the board in various positions (straight, diagonal, etc.).
2. Name some things you can do well. Add the words to the board.
3. Identify some important positive life events you have experienced and write them on the board.
4. Think of some places where you like to go where you feel safe. Write these places on the board.
5. List some people in your life who love and care about you, and whom you trust. Add these names to the board.
6. Stick this little blue dot in one corner of the board. This little blue dot represents the sexual abuse. The sexual abuse happened, and you cannot make it go away. But it is only a little part of your life, compared to all the wonderful things in your life, such as:
 - > The things you enjoy doing that make you feel happy
 - > The things you do well that make you feel proud
 - > The positive life events that give you happy memories
 - > The places you like to go that make you feel safe
 - > The people in your life who love you and whom you can trust
7. How do you feel as you look at the board?

Cognitive Processing: More Activities

Abuser's Bag of Tricks: Paper Dolls and Paper Airplanes: Therapeutic Exercises for Sexually Traumatized Children: Crisci, Lay, & Lowenstein, 1998

Guilt Trip: Paper Dolls and Paper Airplanes: Therapeutic Exercises for Sexually Traumatized Children: Crisci, Lay, & Lowenstein, 1998

Pfft, It's Just What Bodies Do: Structured Play-Based Interventions for Engaging Children and Adolescents in Therapy, Cavett, 2010

Trick Hat: Group Work with Sexually Abused Children, Grotsky, Camerer, & Damiano, 2000

Starting Over Wedding Gown Ceremony: By Grigoryev In 101 Favorite Play Therapy Techniques Edited by Kaduson & Schaefer 1997

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Conjoint Sessions: Preparing the Child

- Child is prepared for the parent-child sessions prior to starting the narrative
- Child does narrative with therapist first
- Explore any resistance child may have regarding sharing the narrative with the parent*

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006

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Conjoint Sessions: Preparing the Child

Sample questions to prep child for conjoint session:

- Go through your story and say which part you think will be the easiest / hardest to share with your parent.
- How do you think you will feel when you share your story with your parent?
- How do you think your parent will react to hearing the details of the sexual abuse?
- Make up some questions to ask your parent. These should be questions related to feelings about the sexual abuse, things that happened in your family since people found out about the sexual abuse, or about things you feel confused or upset about and you want your parent to try to explain. (Your parent may not be able to answer all your questions, but he/she will try.)
- What other things do you think are important to talk about when we meet with your parent?

Lowenstein, 2014

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Conjoint Sessions: Preparing the Parent

- Use clinical discretion regarding the appropriateness and pacing of sharing the narrative with the parent
- Gradually read the child's complete narrative to the parent, process their feelings, and discuss their questions
- Process parent's emotional reactions so can emotionally tolerate during conjoint session
- Prepare parent to respond to child's questions and possible anger
- Create opportunity (if appropriate) for parent to make amends (e.g., failure to believe/support child's disclosure)
- Role-play ways to appropriately support their child

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006

Conjoint Sessions: Preparing the Parent

Sample questions to prep parent for conjoint session:

- What can you say if your child seems reluctant to share the narrative?
- How do you think you will feel and react to hearing the details of the trauma? What can you say to your child if you start to cry?
- How can you show support to your child during the session?
- How can you praise your child for sharing the narrative?
- What can you say to your child about why she kept the abuse a secret or told someone else instead of you?
- How might you respond if your child asks...
- What other things do you think are important to talk about when we meet with your child?

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006
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Enhancing Safety and Future Development

- Teach personal safety skills after the child has completed the trauma narrative so child won't blame self for not preventing the trauma
- Involve parents in the teaching and practicing of safety skills
- Provide parent with additional safety information
- Encourage the parent to practice safety skills at home

Cohen, Mannarino, Deblinger, 2006

Enhancing Safety

Activity: Popsicle Stick People

Source: Cory Helps Kids Cope with Sexual Abuse: Playful Activities for Traumatized Children, Lowenstein, 2014

Goals:

- 1) Identify warning signs of danger
- 2) Develop and practice communication, assertiveness, problem-solving, body safety, and other safety skills

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Popsicle Stick People

Situation: You're at your friend's house and he says he will show you his private parts if you show your private parts.

Inappropriate solution: Take off your clothes and show each other your private parts.

Appropriate solution: Say: "It's not okay to show our private parts." Tell your parents about what happened.

Safety Strategy: Use your words to keep your private body parts private. Tell your parents if another child asks to see your privates, even if your friend tells you to keep it a secret.

Popsicle Stick People

Situation: You're "texting" with a boy in your class. He sends you texts with sexual comments and he asks you to send him a naked picture of you.

Inappropriate solution: Reply to his text with sexual comments and send him the naked picture.

Appropriate solution: Ignore his text and his request for the naked picture and get off the phone. Tell your parents about this, even if you're worried they will be angry at you for texting with this boy.

Safety Strategy: Stand up for yourself to prevent inappropriate online behavior.

Enhancing Safety: More Activities

Okay to Say No Game: Paper Dolls and Paper Airplanes: Therapeutic Exercises for Sexually Traumatized Children: Crisci, Lay, & Lowenstein, 1998

Sticky Situations: Paper Dolls and Paper Airplanes: Therapeutic Exercises for Sexually Traumatized Children: Crisci, Lay, & Lowenstein, 1998

Megaphones to Make a Point: Digging for Buried Treasure: 52 More Prop-Based Play Therapy Interventions for Treating the Problems of Childhood, Goodyear-Brown, 2005

Lifesavers: Techniques – Techniques – Techniques: Play-Based Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families, Noziska, 2008

Termination

- Discuss termination with client well in advance by outlining how and when therapy will end
- Honor the relationship that has been established by communicating to the client some of the special interactions that were experienced together
- Provide clients with the opportunity to give feedback about what the therapeutic journey has been like for them
- Affirm use of coping skills when setbacks occur
- Emphasize caregiver’s ongoing supportive role
- Plant the seed for treatment tune-ups
- Devote sessions specific to termination in last phase of intervention. These activities should help the client express feelings about termination, review therapeutic gains, and celebrate accomplishments

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Termination

Activity: Cookie Jar

Source: Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three: Practitioners Share Their Most Effective Techniques, Lowenstein (Ed.), 2011

Goals:

- (1) Verbalize an understanding of when therapy will end
- (2) Provide a positive termination experience

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Termination

Activity: What I Learned Layered Gift

Source: *Creative Interventions for Bereaved Children* (Lowenstein, 2006)

Goals:

- (1) Review therapeutic gains
- (2) Provide a positive termination experience

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Termination: More Activities

My Survivor Flag: *What Color is Your Hurt*, Steele & Ciocco, 2011

Putting The Puzzle Pieces of Resiliency Together: Structured Play-Based Interventions for Engaging Children and Adolescents in Therapy, Cavett, 2010

Aloha Lei: By Lewis & Schumann in: Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011

Termination Party: By Leben in: Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families, Edited by Lowenstein, 2008

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Further Training

Free online course on TF-CBT: <http://tfcbt.musc.edu>

CARES Institute: www.caresinstitute.org

Center for Traumatic Stress: www.pittsburghchildtrauma.org

National Child Traumatic Stress Network: www.nctsn.org

Canadian Association for Child and Play Therapy: www.cacpt.com

Association for Play Therapy: www.a4pt.org

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Liana's Training Topics

- Creative TF-CBT Interventions for Traumatized Children
- Creative Interventions for Children Coping with Grief and Divorce
- Creative Family Therapy Techniques
- Creative CBT Interventions for Children with Anxiety
- Play Therapy Theory and Techniques

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MEEBIE: orkidtoys.com

Lori Lite relaxation books and CD's: stressfreakids.com

Applause Button, fidget toys: officeplayground.com

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