Indian Country Child Trauma Center (ICCTC)

• Established at the Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (CCAN) in 2003

• The mission of the ICCTC is to improve and adapt evidence-based treatments for Native children and adolescents in Indian Country who have experienced traumatic events

• A member of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network

• The ICCTC is a Category II Intervention, Development and Evaluation Center funded by SAMHSA

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Indian Country Child Trauma Center (ICCTC)

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www.icctc.org

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Mission

To raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families and communities throughout the United States.

www.nctsn.org
Evidence-Based Practices

**EBP’s**

- Clinical Trials
- Peer Reviewed
- Robust Outcomes
- Efficacious
- Safe
- Replicable
- Science-to-Practice

**Concerns**

- Limitation on AI/AN Community Understanding of Healing
- Question Effectiveness with AI/AN
- AI/AN not part of research population
- Question of harm
- Question of cultural appropriateness
- Question of cultural relevance

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Trauma in Indian Country

Accidental Death

Incarceration

Violence

Substance Abuse

Child Abuse and Neglect

Suicide

Domestic/Family Violence

Cumulative (Collective) Trauma

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Child & Parent Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy

Developers:
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What is TF-CBT?

• A hybrid treatment model that integrates:
  ▪ Trauma sensitive interventions
  ▪ Cognitive-behavioral principles
  ▪ Attachment theory
  ▪ Developmental Neurobiology
  ▪ Family Therapy
  ▪ Empowerment Therapy
  ▪ Humanistic Therapy
Difficulties Addressed by TF-CBT

• CRAFTS
  • Cognitive Problems
  • Relationship Problems
  • Affective Problems
  • Family Problems
  • Traumatic Behavior Problems
  • Somatic Problems
Core Values of TF-CBT

• CRAFTS
  • Components-Based
  • Respectful of Cultural Values
  • Adaptable and Flexible
  • Family Focused
  • Therapeutic Relationship is Central
  • Self-Efficacy is emphasized
TF-CBT Model

Cognitive Triangle

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TF-CBT Sessions Flow

Entire process is gradual exposure

1/3

Sessions 1 - 4
✓ Psychoeducation/Parenting Skills
✓ Relaxation
✓ Affective Expression and Regulation
✓ Cognitive Coping

Sessions 5 - 8
✓ Trauma Narrative Development and Processing
✓ In vivo Gradual Exposure

Sessions 9 - 12
✓ Conjoint Parent Child Sessions
✓ Enhancing Safety and Future Development

Clinical trial cases typically 90 min/session Likely equates more to 18 –one hr. sessions
A Learning Resource for TF-CBT

TF-CBT Web

Access at:
www.musc.edu/tfcbt

• Web-based learning
• Learn at own pace
• Concise explanations
• Video demonstrations
• Clinical scripts
• Cultural considerations
• Clinical Challenges
• Resources
• Links
• 10 hours of CE
• Free of charge

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Process of Adaptation

- TF-CBT Training Manual
- Treatment Manual
- Training
- Feedback
- Consultation
- Breakthrough Series

- HC-MC Training Manual
- Treatment Manual (in development)
- Training
- Feedback
- Consultation
- Implementation Plan
Wellness and Trauma
Honoring Children - Mending the Circle: Adapting Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Treatment of Native American Child Trauma Victims

Indian Country Child Trauma Center (ICCTC)
Evidence-Based Treatment Adaptation for Indian Country
- Identification of core concepts of evidence-based treatments
- Collaboration with developers on the adaptation process
- Identification of Native traditional teachings and concepts
- Consultation with Native cultural consultants
- Team training
- On-going consultation with teams on implementation of treatment adaptations
- On-going treatment adaptation process

Goals:
- Identify and locate the child’s support system
- Validate the child’s emotional and physical safety
- Strengthen the child’s relationship to the natural and structured world
- Provide ongoing support and advocacy for the child
- Strengthen the family relationship through educating caregivers in positive parenting skills
- Ensure that therapeutic needs of family members are addressed
- Establish necessary linkages to systemic supports (legal, medical, educational)

Physical
Animals have always been our teachers. They teach us how to take care of ourselves in a safe way.

Mending the Circle
Trauma is a part of the circle of life. There is a long history of trauma in Native American families, communities, and nations.

Goals:
- Ensure balance in physical well-being through the reinforcement of a healthy lifestyle
- Explain the body’s response to stress (e.g., shallow breathing, muscle tension, sensory responses)
- Reduce physical reactions of stress and PTSD (e.g., sleep problems, anxiety reactions, hyperarousal)
- Teach new therapeutic applications of traditional Native practices

Relational
Trusting
- Normalize children’s and parent’s reactions to severe stress
- Provide information about trauma
- Identify various factors that contribute to trauma for the child and family
- Provide information about common emotional and physical responses to trauma and stress
- Guide family for child and family recovery
- Educate family about the benefits of treatment and the treatment process
- Provide information about the child’s symptoms and diagnosis

Coping
- Family youth methods for positive coping
- Help children and parents understand the connections between thoughts, feelings and behaviors
- Help children and parents view events in more accurate and helpful ways
- Children learn how they think about things

TF-CBT is a model of psychotherapy which combines trauma-sensitive interventions with elements of cognitive behavioral therapy into a treatment designed to address the needs of children with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other problems related to traumatic life experiences. TF-CBT is the most rigorously tested treatment for traumatized children, with several randomized trials. Studies have found improved PTSD symptoms, depression, anxiety, shame and behavior problems compared to supportive treatments. TF-CBT also resulted in greater improvements in parental distress, parental support, and parental depression compared to supportive treatment.

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

HC-MC is based on an Indigenous orientation of well-being.
The Circle of Life - The circle symbolizes that all applies to all forms of life – no form is greater or lesser than any other form.
We all share a common journey or “life on Earth.”

Wellness is considered balance within the Circle: the spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, and relational dimensions of a person.
Unwellness results from disharmony within the Circle.
When trauma occurs, a person’s pathway may be hindered. If the trauma is not sufficiently addressed, an inadequate pathway and disharmony and imbalance may result.

Healing occurs through re-integration of balance, harmony, respect, connectedness, and wellness.

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Orientation to Well Being

Well-being is considered balance in the spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, and relational dimensions of a person. The goal is to achieve and maintain balance.
Model of Well-Being

- Balance
- Harmony
- Respect
- Connectedness
- Wellness
Impact of Trauma on Well-Being

- Spiritual confusion and/or depletion
- Unhealthy behaviors
- Inability to handle daily stressors
- Harsh and punitive toward self
- Withdrawal
- Disconnectedness
- Inaccurate views of world and self
- Poor decision-making
Disharmony and the Trauma Pathway

When trauma occurs, a person’s pathway may be hindered. If the trauma is not sufficiently addressed, an inadequate pathway of disharmony and imbalance may result.
How to explain trauma?

Unwellness is disharmony in body, mind, or spirit. When an individual experiences disharmony, it may be manifested through unhealthy behaviors and attitudes.
Important Characteristics of Trauma Exposure

- Intensity, length and frequency of exposure
- Type (natural, accidental, purposeful)
- Range of exposure (siblings, family, community)
- Location
- Degree of invasiveness (to person, home, family)
Important Characteristics of Trauma Exposure

• Responsiveness of others to trauma (immediacy of aid/relief)
• Responsiveness to child disclosure of harm (child, family, community)
• Responsiveness of system (medical, legal, child welfare)
Although disharmony may stem from boundary violations by another person or due to life circumstances, it is our responsibility to heal ourselves, with the support of others, by working to re-establish our own inner balance and harmony.
What is Therapeutic?

• Identification of therapeutic Native practices
• Identification of ways of explaining the world
• Identification of ways of explaining how things happen
• Identification of ways of explaining when things do not go well

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Therapeutic Native Practices

Resiliency

- Ceremonies
- Honoring
- Society/clans/bands
- Extended Family
- Naming
- Ceremonies
- Listening/watching/doing
- Storytelling
- Offerings/gifts
- Historical rides/walks
- Smudging
- Meditation
- Drumming
- Singing
- Dancing
- Vision seeking
- Sweatlodge
- Humor/teasing
- Talking Circle

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Role of Helper in Trauma Healing

• Serve as guide on pathway toward healing
• Impart a sense of confidence in the healing process and the methods utilized
• Call upon helpers and healers to assist child and family
• Call upon the family’s wisdom to assist in their own child’s and family’s healing
• Affirm the child and family’s sense of well-being and balance
## Treatment Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Honoring Children – Mending the Circle</th>
<th>Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>Psychoeducation, Cognitive Coping, In Vivo Desensitization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Affect Regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Psychoeducation, Parenting Skills, Safety Skills, Social Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mending the Circle</td>
<td>Trauma Narrative, Cognitive Processing, Conjoint Parent-Child Sessions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Treatment Goals: Spirituality

- Teach that wellness is spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, and relational balance and that these are all interconnected aspects of ourselves.
- Help the family to draw upon traditional healing practices to assist child and family in working toward spiritual balance.
- Help instill an enthusiasm for life, a sense of hope, and a willingness to meet new challenges.
- Increase child’s self-identity/self-esteem.
Children’s Spiritual Responses to Trauma

Examples:
- Anger toward God/Creator
- Reluctance to seek spiritual guidance
- Feelings of shame, stigmatization, isolation, hopelessness
- Question the existence of a Creator/God
- Question one’s own worthiness
- Question religious and spiritual teachings
- Question family’s spiritual values and traditions
Therapy Goals: Spiritual

• Spiritual Balance
• Comfort through Spirituality
• Spirituality Provides a Support Network
• Spiritual Connectedness
• Capacity for Hope and Joy 😊

Understanding and accomplishment of these goals should be defined by the child and family.
Relational

Spiritual

Mental

Physical

Emotional
When animals are hurt in the wild, sometimes they need to find safety and support to heal. Animals may not know how to adapt to unexpected changes in their environment or life. Some animals haven’t been able to adapt, so people have helped them. Once they’ve healed, they’re ready to return to the wild, to their circle of life.

In the same way, sometimes we need help adapting to unexpected changes in our life. We have learned that to heal from trauma (to mend the circle) the path is easier when we lean on the strength and support of others - our family, tribal community, and other healers and helpers. With their guidance and support, we can heal and restart our path on the Circle.
Children’s Relational Responses to Trauma

• Withdrawal
• Mistrust, Fearful
• Social Anxiety
• Poor Interpersonal Boundaries (too rigid or too loose)
• Oppositionality, Delinquency
• Increased Risk-Taking
RELATIONAL
Therapy Goals: Relational

• Child
  – Enhance the child’s emotional and physical safety

• Caregiver and family
  – Identify and bolster the child’s support system (i.e., parents, extended family, peers, tribe, community).

• Others
  – Assist the child in learning to develop and maintain healthy interpersonal boundaries
  – Teach conflict management skills
  – To reinforce safety skills acquisition, teach in individual sessions, review in family sessions and practice through homework
HC-MC Methods: Relational Relationship to Natural World

- Use of animal stories
- Incorporating winged ones, two-legged ones, and four-legged ones
- Use of Medicine (sweetgrass, tobacco, cedar, corn pollen)
- Nature walks
- Vision Quests and retreats
- Coming of Age ceremony
- Lodge Ceremony
Trauma is a part of the circle of life. There is a long history of trauma in Native American families, communities, and Nations.

Trauma is like a roadblock or burden in our path. Healing is the way to make the roadblock or burden more manageable or to make it go away completely.

Healing means that the circle is whole again. One must know how to change one’s thinking, feelings, and beliefs about a traumatic experience in order to regain balance or harmony.

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Children’s Mental Responses to Trauma

• Inaccurate or negative thoughts
  – Causation of trauma
  – Limited power to decide the future

• Negative self-image (unworthy, “damaged goods”)

• Accurate, but unhelpful, thoughts

• Distorted view of past and future events
Therapy Goals: Mental Teaching

- Normalize child’s and parent’s reactions to severe stress
- Provide information about trauma (general & specific)
- Identify various factors that contribute to trauma for the child and the family
Therapy Goals: Mental

- **Coping**
  - Teach youth methods for positive coping

- **Thought Stopping**
  - Help children and parents understand the connections between thoughts, feelings and behaviors, as they relate to everyday events

- **Thought Reframing**
  - Have them consider how an animal helper would respond to take care of themselves
  - Teach the child to leave bad thoughts behind through offerings or rituals
Animals have always been our teachers. They teach us when to stay and fight, to run, to fly, to form a circle, to become a herd, to escape danger.

We have to be aware of what we see, think, feel, and how we respond. By understanding our body’s reaction to a situation, we can understand that it’s nature’s/Spirit’s way of telling us how to care for ourselves in a safe way.
Children’s Physical Responses to Trauma

• Developmental delays
• Somatic symptoms (e.g., stomach aches, headaches)
• Sleep problems (insomnia, nighttime awakenings, nightmares)
• Hyperarousal
• Heightened startle response
• Poor attention
• Dissociation (e.g., daydreaming, zoning out)
• Impulsivity

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Therapy Goals: Physical

- Restore balance in physical well-being through the reinforcement of a healthy lifestyle
- Explain the body’s response to stress (e.g., shallow breathing, muscle tension, somatic responses)
- Reduce physical reactions of stress and PTSD (e.g., sleep problems, anxiety reactions, hyperarousal)
- Teach new therapeutic applications of traditional Native practices
TraditionaL Activities:

• Beadwork/Quilting
• Woodwork
• Leatherwork
• Herbs and Gardening
• Drumming

Additional Ideas:

• Tending animals/pets
• Family/Extended Family Time
• Singing
Use of Images in Relaxation

Ensure that images are appropriate and not a violation of tribal or cultural mores.

Image ideas:

- Controlled Breathing - the sway of a shawl, trees swaying in the breeze, birds in flight

- Muscle Relaxation – flexing and releasing a fishing rod, tensing and releasing a bow, in and out motion of paddling a canoe
Our feelings are important tools that give us needed information about situations we encounter. For example, fear tells us to protect ourselves because danger is near and happiness tells us that we are safe and can relax.

Sometimes when problems occur, one’s feelings become confusing and overwhelming. When a person doesn’t understand or is overwhelmed by their feelings, the feelings may no longer guide that person’s thoughts and actions toward a good direction.
Children’s Emotional Responses to Trauma

- Moodiness
- Irritability
- Sadness/Tearfulness
- Emotional Withdrawal
- Anxiety
- Fearfulness
- Anger
- Oppositionality
- Confusion
- Shame
- Guilt
- Emotional Regression
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Hopelessness
Help the child and parent to identify feelings and emotions:

• Accurately identify a range of emotions in themselves and others
• Talk comfortably about feelings
• Identify differing levels of emotional intensity
• Learn to regulate their emotional responses
• Develop strategies for safe and healthy emotional expression
HC-MC Methods: Emotional
Feelings Identification

Traditional Activities:
• Use of Stories (Animal, Elements)
• Use Native Language for Feeling Words
• Use of Colors/Directions
• Use of Relevant Pictures of Expressions of Feelings
• Dolls

Additional Ideas:
HC-MC Methods: Emotional

Feelings Expression

Traditional Activities:

- Use of Sound
- Music, Song, Drum
- Masks
- Carvings (Totem)
- Weaving, Pottery
- Dance, Movement

Additional Ideas:

- Record Keeping
  - Drawing
  - Painting
  - Writing
  - Beading
  - Shield Making

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Mending the Circle
HC-MC Methods: Mending the Circle

Healing and Storytelling
Using a story format to facilitate healing
Animals incorporate wisdom gained yesterday into the skills for tomorrow’s survival. Each experience can be used as preparation for future experiences on the Circle of life.

We learn from our past and work toward our future. We don’t always choose our experiences, but we can choose how we understand and use them. By revisiting yesterday, we can learn today and prepare for tomorrow.
Beliefs That Support Healing and Balance

• Fear helps one to learn, but one must face their fears in order to learn.
• To be balanced, one must resolve those symptoms that create imbalance.
• One’s understanding of traumatic experiences can be distorted. In sharing your story, you can learn through the eyes and ears of others.
Therapy Goals: Mending the Circle

- Help the child and family recognize hope and anticipation for, and a commitment to a better future.
- Help the child and family assign personal meaning to the traumatic event.
- Help the child and family gain mastery over trauma reminders.
HC-MC Methods: Mending the Circle

• Therapist will use technique of storytelling to help child address the trauma(s) by understand how to incorporate the trauma event(s) into a story format.

• Use of the story format will allow the child to be successful in overcoming the physical, emotional, mental, relational, and spiritual confusion/effects left by the trauma.
Warriors have to be courageous as they face uncertainty and danger when confronted by an enemy. Warriors challenged their enemies by uniting together.

Confronting one’s trauma experience can also create feelings of uncertainty and danger. Uniting with All my Relations will provide one with the spiritual strength to move forward in a healing way.
HC-MC Methods: Mending the Circle

Therapist should be aware of the following aspects:

• As the family re-enters the Healing Circle, they will invite past experiences (memories, thoughts, feelings) into their journey.

• Unanticipated trauma memories may also resurface during this process.

• They may utilize this opportunity to confront their own trauma history.
HC-MC Methods: Mending the Circle

• The therapist may work with the family to determine how to address the historical trauma and grief through this healing journey.

• The family may seek opportunities with helpers and healers to symbolically and ceremonially help their ancestors to complete their journey.
HC-MC Methods: Mending the Circle

Therapy Considerations:

• Are there ceremonies, rituals, symbolisms that are particularly meaningful to the child and family?

• At what pace will the child and family want to create and tell their story?

• How will the child and family know when this portion of the journey is complete?
HC-MC Methods: Mending the Circle

Ways for Creating and Telling the Trauma Story to Promote Healing

- Story Stick
- Writing
- Music/Song/Dance
- Carving
  - Totem
  - Soapstone
- Beading
- Mask
- Pottery
- Figurines
- Oral
- Acting
- Painting/Drawing

Other Ideas:

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These are our gifts for you to use on your journey...
Honoring Children

Mending the Circle

Indian Country Child Trauma Center

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