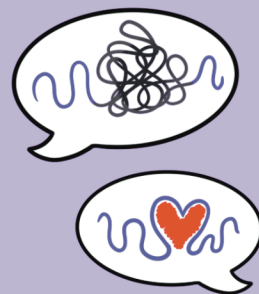


# How to support your young person through trauma-focused CBT: A guide for caregivers

## What is tf-CBT?

Trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy (tf-CBT) is a type of therapy for young people who might be struggling with symptoms of posttraumatic stress. This means they are struggling with memories, thoughts, and feelings about very frightening or traumatic experiences. Tf-CBT provides a safe space for young people to talk about what they've been through and their thoughts and feelings. They'll learn ways to help process their thoughts, feelings and memories, and learn new ways of coping, so these issues do not have such a big effect on their life. Tf-CBT is usually delivered 1-to-1, meaning the young person with their therapist. It can also be delivered in a group. It can sometimes be quite brief (6-10 sessions), but can be 20 sessions or perhaps more.



## Why is it being recommended?

Tf-CBT would have been offered to your young person after careful consideration by their mental health professional or team. It is the best-evidenced mental health intervention we have for young people experiencing trauma-related distress, including for young people who may have had very complex experiences (like abuse or neglect).

It's very normal that a young person struggling with trauma memories might not want to talk or think about their experiences. In fact, avoiding talking or thinking about these experiences is a core part of trauma-related distress. It is more common than not, but is linked to worsening mental health. Talking through and processing very difficult memories, thoughts, and feelings can be understandably challenging, but it can be fundamental in helping to overcoming distress. It is important to note that young people are never forced to talk through their experiences. This is a part of therapy that happens when they are ready.

## What can I do to help?

Often, a young person will attend sessions alone. There may be opportunities for you, as their caregiver, to be more involved. Even if you're not in the room you are still an important support person. Check-in with your young person and let them know that they can talk about their therapy if they want to. Think about what they like and see if you can build this into their routine after therapy (this might be going for a walk, having their favourite food, or listening to a particular song).



A great way to support a young person doing tf-CBT is by learning a bit more about what is involved in the therapy, what difficult topics they might be covering (if the young person is comfortable with sharing), and supporting them after sessions that may have been difficult with extra care and sensitivity. As they develop different ways of coping, talk to your young person (and their therapist) about what strategies work well for them, so that you can support them with this at home.

## Where can I find more information?

There are lots of online resources such as websites and educational videos that have been created with young people that talk more about what PTSD is and what tf-CBT involves. For videos follow the QR code below or visit:

<https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/trauma-and-ptsd>

For some more helpful information visit:

<https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-after-a-traumatic-event/>



Scan here to  
watch the videos