Explaining TF-CBT to Parents/Referral Sources

- TF-CBT is a very structured, short-term (3-6 months) therapy designed for kids who have experienced trauma
- Trauma is defined as any event that is very upsetting to the child and causes feelings of horror and/or helplessness
- TF-CBT is appropriate for most kids who have had one or more traumas and are having symptoms of post-traumatic stress (such as nightmares, fears, anxiety, trouble paying attention, and not wanting to talk about the trauma)
- Parents are the most important people in the child's life and are very involved in their child's therapy; if parent is not able to participate (i.e.foster care), a stable caretaker who can support the child should participate
- Therapist meets individually with the child each week and then individually with the parents to teach them ways to help their child at home
- This type of therapy has been proven in research studies to be very effective in helping traumatized kids get better in only a few months
- Research suggests that PTSD symptoms need to be addressed as early as possible to prevent long-term difficulties
- The therapy includes:
  a. Education about trauma and common reactions
  b. Help with parenting and behavior problems
  c. Stress Management
  d. Learning about feelings and ways to express them
  e. Coping skills
  f. Learning about our thoughts, feelings, and actions
  g. Developing creative ways for kids to gradually tell their stories about the trauma
  h. Changing any unhelpful thoughts about the trauma and integrating trauma into child's life experience
  i. Family sessions to help the family talk together about the trauma
  j. Learning and practicing safety skills
- Talking about the trauma will be done in a gradual, supportive manner so that the child will be able to tolerate the discomfort associated with the discussion and will not occur until the child has learned some skills to cope with the discomfort.

Hendricks, 2006