

WHAT ARE SOME SYMPTOMS IN MY CHILD I MAY NEED TO WATCH FOR?

Children have a difficult time talking about what they are experiencing inside, so it often shows up in their behavior instead, as they “act it out”. Children who have experienced a traumatic event may have symptoms such as nightmares, crying, behavioral changes, anxiety, fear, regressing to behaviors they had when they were a bit younger, seem needy or clingy. They may try to be a “little adult” and anxiously watch over and take care of their siblings and even parents. They often experience guilt, sadness, fear. They sometimes feel guilty or afraid when they see their parents become emotional about the event, such as understandable crying or anger. This can often make a child believe they never should have told anyone what happened, be afraid to talk about it, fearful it will make the people they love upset. Some children experience symptoms such as bedwetting or hitting. Children often blame themselves for the trauma that happened to them, and a parent can often question themselves and wonder how this could have happened. Children may act out sexually.

Even young children can experience PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). Trauma can be as a result of anything, such as a death in the family, sexual assault, abuse, losing a family member, severe illness, to name only a few. Often, families, with the best of intentions, believe that it’s best to not talk about the trauma because it might upset the child. It can be helpful if a supportive family can let the child know that they are not at fault, they are not in trouble, they did nothing wrong, they were brave, and right to tell someone about their traumatic experience. One of the best things you can do is to make the child feel safe, not blamed, and not “shame” them for any behavioral changes.

HOW DO I BEGIN THERAPY FOR MY CHILD?

Our trauma therapy is offered at no cost whatsoever to the family. Every child seen at the CAC is given a Victim Advocate. Often the trauma that has affected a child also impacts the family as well; this therapy must involve a safe, supportive, non-offending parent/legal guardian in all aspects of the therapy, and this therapy can help the parent to help the child. After the first initial intake session, some of the therapy sessions can be virtual (such as by video) if you prefer. Sessions are 45 – 55 minutes each. We offer 3 types of evidence-based trauma therapy. After the assessment, the therapist will discuss with you the best method of therapy for your child. Please feel free to contact our therapist directly at (501) 438-5084 to schedule therapy, or ask any questions concerning therapy. Your questions are always welcome. Sometimes a child may be better served at another location other than our CAC and the therapist can help refer you if needed. We do not provide therapy if a child is already in, or is going to begin, therapy elsewhere, including school-based therapy. We are unable to provide medication management or prescribe medication.

WILL YOU GO TO MY CHILD’S SCHOOL TO PROVIDE THERAPY?

Our highly-specialized trauma therapy is best provided at the CAC. We do not provide this at the school. The trauma therapy at our Center is not typically the same type of therapy that is often provided in the school setting. This therapy directly addresses traumatic symptoms of the child and often the parent. It is most successful when a safe, supportive parent/caregiver is involved in all phases of the therapy.