

An Investigation of the Efficacy of TF-CBT for Fear Reactions in Children Exposed to a Conflictual Parental Separation

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Past Research

- Little past research examining the efficacy of TF-CBT in children, most have examined sexually abused children:

Cohen et al (1996, 1998)	TF-CBT vs NDST	Sexual abuse, 3-7 yrs
Cohen et al (1998)	TF-CBT vs NDST	Sexual abuse, 8-14 yrs
Deblinger et al (1996, 1999)	TF-CBT child TF-CBT parent TF-CBT both community services	Sexual abuse, 7-13 yrs
Deblinger et al (2001)	TF-CBT vs NDST	Sexual abuse, 2-8 yrs
Cohen et al (2004)	TF-CBT vs CCT	Sexual abuse, 8-14 yrs
King et al (2000)	TF-CBT with family treat TF-CBT no family treat Wait list control	Sexual abuse, 5-17 yrs
Smith et al (2007)	TF-CBT vs waitlist	Various single incident traumas, 8-18 yrs
Shooshtary et al (2008)	CBT 3 day class vs waitlist	Earthquake victims, 11-20 yrs

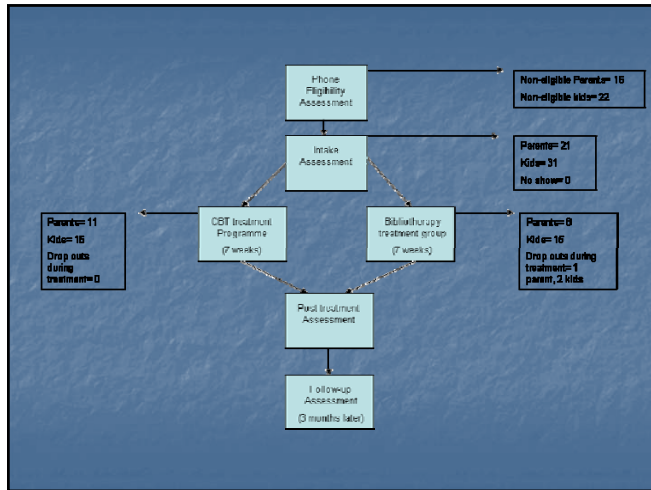
Note: NDST= Non-Directed Supportive Therapy, CCT= Child Centred Therapy

The Current Research

- Aim:
 - to investigate the effectiveness and efficiency of a TF-CBT treatment, in comparison to a Bibliotherapy control group, for children aged 5-11, showing fear reactions following a conflictual parental separation.
- Many children experience parental conflict- no research examining this type of sample to date
- TF-CBT needs to be Effective and Efficient
- Research must be replicable with manuals and guidelines
- Treatment manuals were developed to form a comprehensive 7 week programme
- Concurrent individual and group therapy sessions for the children while the participating parent attended concurrent parenting groups.

TF-CBT

- Child programme includes elements of:
 - Imaginal Exposure
 - Stress Inoculation Training (SIT; breathing and muscle relaxation techniques)
 - Cognitive Processing Therapy ('stinking thinking')
- Parent Group:
 - Not a treatment group for the parents themselves but, rather, a group focused entirely on helping the children
- Methods only today- Follow up data is still being collected



Eligibility: Parents

- Eligibility requirements for Parents:
 - Formally separated from ex-partner
 - Access arrangements must be reasonably stable
 - Must have been in a conflictual relationship
 - Must be able to read English at a competent level

Eligibility: Children

- Eligibility requirements for the Children:
 - Age 5-11
 - Not currently receiving treatment for fear reactions

Any one of the following, occurring at least twice in the past week:

 - Upsetting thoughts or memories about the conflict
 - Upsetting dreams about the conflict or other symbolic behaviour or play
 - Acting or feeling as though the conflict were happening again
 - Feeling upset by reminders of the conflict
 - Bodily reactions (fast heart beat, nausea, dizziness) when reminded of the conflict
 - Difficulty falling or staying asleep
 - Irritable or outbursts of anger
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Heightened awareness of potential danger to both themselves and others
 - Jumpy or easily startled at something unexpected

SYMPTOMS MUST BE DUE TO WITNESSING CONFLICT

Assessment: Children

- Anxiety: The Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (RCMAS) (Reynolds & Richmond, 1978)
- Depression: Children's Depression Inventory, CDI (Kovacs, 1981, 1985, 1992)
- PTSD Symptoms: Children's PTSD Symptom Scale-Revised (Self-Scored) – CPSS (Foa et al 2001)
- Perceptions of Conflict: Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPICS) (Grych & Fincham, 1992)
- Feeling Identification: Pictured Feelings Instrument (PFI; Shack Stone, 2004)
- Satisfaction with Relationship with Parents

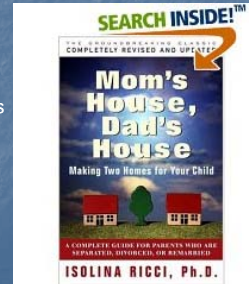
Assessment: Parent

- Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL) (Achenbach, 1991): Completed by Parent
- Psychological Adjustment to Separation Test (PAST) (Sweeper & Halford, 2006)
- Depression: Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)
- PTSD symptom evaluation: Posttraumatic Diagnostic Scale (PDS; Foa, Cashman, Jaycox, & Perry, 1997)
- Satisfaction with Relationship with Child
- Credibility Expectancy Questionnaire (CEQ; Devilly & Borkovec, 2000)
- Distress Endorsement Validation Scale III (DEVS III; Devilly, 2004)

Bibliotherapy Condition

'Mom's House, Dad's House: Making Two Homes for your Child.'
Author: Isolina Ricci PhD., 1997

- Covers 5 content areas:
 1. Two homes with no fighting
 2. Making tough times work for you
 3. The legal business is your business
 4. Your family, your future
 5. References and Resources



TF-CBT

Week One: Combined Parent/Child session- 60 minutes.

- *Parent & Child*
Introductions and discussion of the programme
Problematic behaviour identification (trauma-related) in the child
Setting up of a reward system for child engaging in more adaptive behaviour
- *Parent alone*
Clarify that the child is the focus of the programme
Affirm importance of parent's role
Answer any questions
- *Child alone*
The magic wand task
Answer any questions
Measuring distress: SUDS
- *Parent & Child*
Setting up a regular time for homework to be done

TF-CBT

■ Week Two

- Child Individual session- 60 mins
Identifying feelings and 'stinking thinking'- negative cognitions
- Child Group- 60 mins
Kids get to know each other, confidentiality discussed
- Parent Group- 120 mins
The impact of the conflictual parental relationship on the child
How children react to parental separation

TF-CBT

■ Week Three

- Child group session- 90 mins
Children share experiences of parental separation
Children share strategies to cope with unpleasant feelings
Unpleasant feelings – what are they and how do we recognise them?
Stress Inoculation Training (SIT)- Diaphragmatic breathing, Progressive muscle relaxation
- Child Mini assessment- 30 mins
PDS, CDI and RCMAS
- Parents group- 120 mins
Providing stability and security
Improving my relationship with my child

TF-CBT

■ Week Four.

- Child Individual session- 60 mins
Review SIT
Graded Imaginal Exposure – child is assisted to tell their story, and to repeat it throughout the session
- Child Group- 60 mins
More on Stinking Thinking & Anger Identification and Expression
- Parent Group- 120 mins
Minimising the child's exposure to parental conflict
Conflict reduction and communication skills training
Self-regulation – my triggers and conflict style
The triggers and conflict style of my ex-partner
Problem solving in difficult situations

TF-CBT

■ Week Five.

- Child Individual Session- 60 mins
Exposure – child continues to tell their story, with increasing detail
Identification of child's own 'stinking thinking', with appropriate challenging
- Child Group- 60 mins
More on Stinking Thinking & Reducing Immediate Anger
- Parent Group- 120 mins
Identifying how their role as parent has changed post-separation, and areas of difficulty
The importance of effective management of behaviour
Managing their child's behaviour positively

TF-CBT

■ Week Six.

- Child Individual Session- 60 mins
Exposure – child continues to tell their story, with increasing detail
More on child's own 'stinking thinking', with appropriate challenging
Planning for future stressful situations
- Child Group- 60 mins
More on Stinking Thinking & Challenging angry thoughts and implementing more effective behaviours
- Parent Group- 120 mins
How to respond to undesirable behaviour; how to set negative consequences for children (when positive reinforcement isn't effective)
The importance and benefits of a parental coalition
How to break down barriers to a parental coalition

TF-CBT

Week Seven: Combined Parent/Child session- 60 minutes.

- *Parent & Child*

Review of the problematic behaviour – how it has progressed
Parent & child share what they have learnt, what has changed and how?
Discussion about future planning

- *Parent Alone*

More elaborate review of child's and parent's programmes in the child's absence.

- *Child Alone*

Further comments from child in parent's absence (where applicable).

Current Stage of Research

- Currently waiting on final follow up data from families
- Results expected in coming months