



ALTERNATIVES FOR FAMILIES: A COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (AF-CBT)

(www.afcbt.org)

WHAT IS AF-CBT?

Alternatives for Families: A Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT) is a service to help families who struggle with anger, conflict, and aggression. It can also help families concerned about their use of harsh or abusive behavior; some children exhibit common behavior problems, and some children or caregivers may experience traumatic reactions.

AF-CBT promotes the use of positive coping and self-control skills, effective and safe discipline strategies, and useful family problem solving and communication skills that can improve child behavior and well-being, help families get along better, and maintain a safe and secure home environment.

WHAT ARE COMMON CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT, PHYSICAL FORCE, OR AGGRESSION?

- Strained caregiver-child relationships
- Traumatic reactions and symptoms
- Legal problems
- Placement disruption
- Emotional and/or physical injury

WHO IS APPROPRIATE FOR AF-CBT?

A family with any of the following may be eligible:

1. A family or a caregiver and child who experience frequent conflicts, arguments, or angry feelings.
2. A caregiver with concerns about their use of physical force or discipline, or who worries about doing something that could injure/hurt a child, or who has a history of physical or emotional abuse.
3. A child (5-17 years old) who exhibits challenging behaviors (e.g., not listening, fighting, hard to manage) or shows trauma symptoms (e.g., posttraumatic stress) related to #1 or #2 above.

Many eligible families who receive AF-CBT also experience other challenges such as living in different residences, domestic disputes, substance use, incarceration, and/or prior traumatic experiences.

HOW CAN AF-CBT HELP?

It can be challenging to care for a child who struggles with defiance, aggression, or other problem behaviors. Family conflict can easily lead to caregiver frustration and the use of harsh, but ineffective, discipline.

Alternatives for Families: A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT) helps families learn new, safe, and more effective ways to overcome or prevent these struggles. That's why AF-CBT includes specialized content and skills that are delivered in three phases: 1) Engagement and education, 2) Individual skill building, and 3) Family applications.

Families in AF-CBT can receive several important services from one provider (“one stop shop”). This eliminates the need to send the family to several different providers for parenting classes, anger management, family therapy, individual therapy, and trauma treatment. All of these services are offered in AF-CBT.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF AF-CBT?

- Support children and caregivers who are under stress and/or exposed to trauma
- Improve child behavior and well-being
- Enhance child and family safety
- Strengthen family relationships, skills, and routines
- Reduce the risk for high conflict interactions
- Help caregiver and children to find effective ways to manage their emotions and be flexible in their thinking
- Promote effective use of positive discipline strategies

WHAT IMPORTANT SKILLS DO CAREGIVERS AND CHILDREN LEARN?

- How to maintain a safe, stable environment
- Strategies for managing angry outbursts
- Skills for calming children when they are out of control
- Methods for solving problems together
- Communication skills that will help caregivers and children express what they want
- Social skills that children can use to make appropriate requests

HOW DO FAMILIES BENEFIT FROM AF-CBT?

- Improved caregiver-child relationships
- Healthy parenting practices
- Enhanced children's coping and social skills
- Reduced behavioral problems in children
- Better, healthier reactions to stressful or traumatic situations
- Feeling safe and secure at home

HOW CAN AF-CBT SERVICES BE PERSONALIZED?

Your provider will tailor the material to your family's needs and set up a flexible schedule that is convenient for you.

AF-CBT provides individual child, individual caregiver, parent-child, and family sessions. Any adult caregiver (biological, foster, adoptive, etc.) can participate with at least one child.

Some agencies see families in different settings, like a clinic, school, the home, or another community setting. Usually, families are seen once per week, but scheduling is flexible. Most families receive AF-CBT for at least 6 months, but this highly depends on your attendance and participation. Information on your provider is listed below:

Provider		Address 1	
Date(s)		Address 2	
Phone		City	
Fax		State/Province	
TDD/TTY		ZIP/Postal	

HOW CAN I REQUEST SERVICES?

AF-CBT is provided by trained professionals. To find one for you, please go to the AF-CBT website and look under the "Services" tab for a map of the world – the map shows where you can find a trained provider.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

To learn more about AF-CBT, ask your provider or visit us on the web at www.afcbt.org.