

## **Calming the Storm Working with Traumatized Children**

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Childhood is supposed to be a time of laughter; a time for learning; and a time of innocence. However, each year more than five million children experience some type of a traumatic event. Tragically this violent world we live in can shatter a child's sense of security and alter their childhood experience. Children may be impacted by the experiences of natural disasters, community violence, domestic violence, and child abuse. These traumatic events can have devastating effects in the lives of children.

A child's exposure to trauma may precipitate a host of mental health challenges.

Children may experience regressive behaviors after exposure to a traumatic situation. Similarly, traumatic experiences have been linked to depression, anxiety, conduct disorders, academic difficulties, and well as physical complications. Research has also documented the long-term impact that trauma may have in the lives of children without appropriate mental health interventions. It is essential for children exposed to traumatic events re-establish a sense of safety, security, and develop mastery over their environment. Consequently, mental health professions must continually explore treatment avenues for serving traumatized children.

The presentation will address the various types of trauma and trauma classifications. Participants will be offered an overview of the symptoms that traumatized children may experience. In addition, an overview of the diagnostic criteria for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, and Conduct Disorders will be reviewed. Specific intervention strategies will be demonstrated for working with traumatized children in crisis.