



We provide free individual and group therapy for children who display any of the **SIGNS OF TRAUMA** (listed inside). Our on-staff therapists will evaluate your child for symptoms of traumatic stress, depression, or anxiety, and identify any unrealistic beliefs/ideas (known as cognitive distortions) that can cause problems in their life.



## TRAUMA RESOURCES

**National Child Traumatic  
Stress Network**  
[www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org)

**Recognize Trauma Symptoms**  
[www.recognizetrauma.org](http://www.recognizetrauma.org)

**National Center for Disaster  
Preparedness**  
[www.ncdp.columbia.edu](http://www.ncdp.columbia.edu)



WILL COUNTY  
**Children's**  
ADVOCACY CENTER

HOPE, HEALING, AND JUSTICE FOR ABUSED CHILDREN.

501(c)3 Charitable Organization · Established 1995

**JAMES W. GLASGOW**  
WILL COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

304 N. Scott Street  
Joliet, IL 60432

(815)774-4565

[www.willcountycac.org](http://www.willcountycac.org)

## Coping With

# TRAUMA

## In Your Family



WILL COUNTY  
**Children's**  
ADVOCACY CENTER

HOPE, HEALING, AND JUSTICE FOR ABUSED CHILDREN.



**JAMES W. GLASGOW**  
WILL COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY  
Founder/Chair, Will County CAC

## WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma can be many things, violent or dangerous, that happen to one or many family members.

Some examples of traumatic events are:

- Sexual abuse and assault
- Physical abuse
- Violence within the family
- Accidents or injuries
- Fires
- Crimes
- Community or school violence
- Sudden loss or death of a loved one
- Neglect
- Homelessness
- Natural disasters
- Acts of terrorism
- Living in or escaping a war zone

Child traumatic stress occurs when children and adolescents are exposed to traumatic events or traumatic situations, and when this exposure overwhelms their ability to cope with what they have experienced.

Depending on their age, children respond to traumatic stress in different ways. Many children show signs of intense distress—disturbed sleep, difficulty paying attention and concentrating, anger and irritability, withdrawal, repeated and intrusive thoughts, and extreme distress—when confronted by anything that reminds them of their traumatic experiences.

Some children develop conditions such as posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and a variety of behavioral disorders.

## SIGNS OF TRAUMA

While some children "bounce back" after adversity, traumatic experiences can result in a significant disruption of child or adolescent development. Signs include:

Bedwetting	Fear of Strangers
Easily startled	Unusually High Level of Anger
Irritability	Nightmares/ Sleep Disorders
Imitating the Event	Avoidance of Eye Contact
Verbal Abuse Towards Others	Problems in the Classroom
Clinginess	Sleeplessness
Headaches	Loss of Appetite
Increased Competition	Anti-Social Behavior
Stomach Aches	Loneliness or Alienation
Poor Self-Esteem	Poor Physical and Emotional Boundaries
Running Away	Suicidal Thoughts or Actions *
Self-Harming *	Sexually Problematic Behaviors *

*\* If you or your child experience any of these, seek professional help.*

Repeated exposure to traumatic events increases the risk of low academic performance, engagement in high-risk behaviors, and difficulties in relationships.

## HOW TO HELP

- Give verbal assurance
- Create comfort and bedtime routines
- Allow child to temporarily sleep in parent or guardian's bedroom
- Encourage expression of emotions through play, such as drawing and telling stories about the experience
- Return to your normal day-to-day routine as soon as possible
- Give additional attention
- Provide praise and positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviors
- Temporarily lessen standards for school and home activities
- Provide outlet for structured responsibilities
- Encourage physical activity and emotional expression
- Rehearse safety measures
- Encourage social activities or sports
- Encourage participation in counseling

Adult survivors of traumatic events may have difficulty in establishing fulfilling relationships, holding steady jobs, and becoming productive members of our society.

Fortunately, there are effective treatments for child traumatic stress.

**FOR FREE THERAPY SERVICES, CONTACT:**

**Will County Children's Advocacy Center  
(815) 774-4565  
cac@willcountyillinois.com**