

What You Should Expect from Treatment: **Building Stronger Parent-Child Relationships**

When you or others have concerns about the health of the parent-child relationship, the most effective treatment involves the entire family. While guilt, blame, and shame are natural reactions to family conflict and aggression, these responses are not productive. Change usually comes by shifting the entire family dynamic. Research has shown that the most constructive approaches to reducing family conflict focus on building stronger relationships between parents and their children. These approaches usually include specific skills to enhance individual coping and family functioning. They improve communication and give parents the tools they need to help change their children's behavior and to manage their own emotional reactions when their children do not behave as they would like.

We encourage families to request treatment programs in which the provider:

- Works to understand the views of caregivers, including their likes and dislikes about the child's behavior
- Takes into consideration caregivers' attitudes and beliefs about proper child rearing
- Attempts to satisfy caregivers' goals for treatment
- Helps the family develop a plan for keeping everyone safe during crises
- Supports caregivers in finding effective ways to gain a child's cooperation and modify a child's behavior. These programs usually share effective techniques for:
 - ◆ Praising and rewarding positive behaviors, such as listening and following directions
 - ◆ Disciplining unwanted behavior, such as being disrespectful or endangering self or others
- Teaches strategies for improving communication between parent and child
- Helps the caregiver and child to identify what they each can do to resolve problems in the family and to make the home safer and happier for everyone
- Gives caregivers an opportunity to practice these skills, either through role plays or through direct interactions with their children during appointments
- Helps caregivers cope with their own challenging reactions and emotions such as sadness, frustration, and anger
- Welcomes periodic feedback from caregivers about the successes and limitations of treatment

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Established by Congress in 2000, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) brings a singular and comprehensive focus to childhood trauma. NCTSN's collaboration of frontline providers, researchers, and families is committed to raising the standard of care while increasing access to services. Combining knowledge of child development, expertise in the full range of child traumatic experiences, and dedication to evidence-based practices, the NCTSN changes the course of children's lives by changing the course of their care.