

# Healing the Future

How evidence-based mental healthcare improves the lives of children



Child abuse and other forms of childhood trauma can have lifelong effects on children, families, and communities. Many studies have shown the strong relationship between childhood trauma and serious outcomes such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, substance use, physical health problems, and even poverty and early death.

But we can prevent these outcomes, especially when children receive services and support early on. Evidence-based mental health treatments like those delivered at National Children's Alliance's network of Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) to child victims of abuse can significantly reduce trauma symptoms and prevent the long-term effects of exposure to trauma.

## Abuse and other forms of trauma are common.

Nearly half of all U.S. children—some 34 million—have experienced at least one type of childhood trauma, while 16 million have experienced two or more types of trauma.<sup>1</sup>



- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Psychological Abuse
- Community Violence
- Domestic Violence
- Bullying
- Natural Disaster
- Bereavement

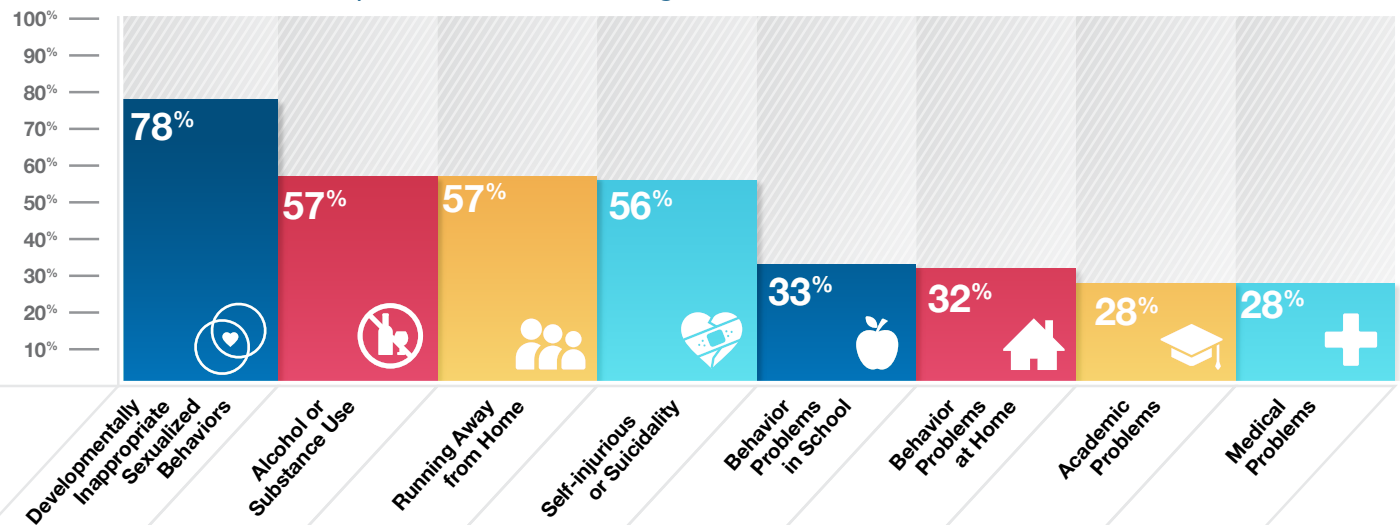
## Abuse carries a heavy cost.

The lifetime cost for each victim is **\$210,012**

Each year, total lifetime costs of new cases of child abuse reach approximately **\$124 billion**<sup>2</sup>

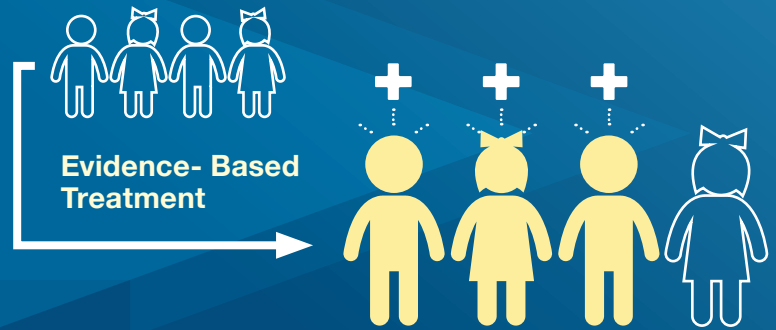
## Evidence-based treatments (EBTs) improve outcomes for children.

Below are percentages of children who stopped experiencing these major life problems after receiving EBTs.<sup>3</sup>



## EBTs can help reduce trauma symptoms.

**75%** of children who had PTSD when they started treatment no longer had PTSD at their last follow-up<sup>3</sup>



## NCA: The nation's largest network of care centers that support child victims of abuse

National Children's Alliance (NCA) is the national association and accrediting body for more than 850 CACs, representing the largest network of care centers that support victims of child abuse, in part by delivering trauma-focused, evidence-based treatments that help reduce the negative effects of the trauma of abuse. Serving more than 334,000 children each year, NCA's network of CACs delivers a range of evidence-based treatments.

Federal support for the work of NCA helps to meet the needs of children, families, and communities dealing with the effects of trauma.

### NCA and CACs:

- Are an existing, successful network of care centers that address the traumatic effects of child abuse nationwide.
- Increase access to treatment across the country, including in rural and underserved communities.
- Need more resources to deliver the treatments that help kids recover and thrive.

## How decision-makers can help children and families heal in the aftermath of trauma

Decision-makers at all levels of government and across child serving systems can help children and families by promoting and supporting timely and effective services and making them broadly accessible. Specific initiatives and policies that increase access to education and training in the use of trauma-focused EBTs can ensure an appropriately trained workforce that will help children, families, and communities recover from traumatic events.

### NCTSN Core Data Set

Treatment outcome data was provided by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN). Data were collected from participating centers, across the United States between 2004 and 2012. Clients in this NCTSN CDS analytic sample ranged in age from 0-18 and received an Evidence-Based Treatment. For more information about the NCTSN CDS, visit [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org).

<sup>1</sup> Bethell, C, Newacheck, P, Hawes, E, Halfon, N. Adverse childhood experiences: assessing the impact on health and school engagement and the mitigating role of resilience. (2014) Health Affairs Dec; 33(12);210-2016

<sup>2</sup> Fang, X., Brown, D., Florence, C., & Mercy, J. (2012). The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention. Child Abuse & Neglect, Volume 36, Issue 2, February 2012, Pages 156-165

<sup>3</sup> NCTSN Core Data Set Report on Evidence-Based Treatment, February 2018. More available at [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org).