

Treatment of complex developmental trauma in children and youth

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Children and adolescents in foster care and institutional settings often face complex developmental trauma related to multiple or continuous traumatic experiences. However, successful clinical interventions are difficult to implement because of barriers to accessibility, time constraints, insufficient diagnostic criteria, and other limitations. A new, open access study in Child & Youth Services explores the benefits of Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), a program designed for caregivers working closely with traumatized children.

Developed at the Texas Christian University Institute of Child Development, TBRI trains caregivers in building safe, nurturing environments and responding effectively to behavioral issues. TBRI assumes that caregiver training is essential to improving the child's response to everyday challenges and uses the guiding principles of empowerment, connection, and correction to enable positive development. Unlike traditional clinical interventions, TBRI is adaptable to multiple environments and provides programming for a variety of structural and relational needs, including nutrition, physical activity, relationship-building, and caregiver response.

The authors, led by Karyn Purvis, PhD, describe the benefits of the intervention: "Holistic in nature, cost effective to implement, and developmentally respectful of the impact of trauma, TBRI appears to hold significant potential for creating positive impact in the lives of [children](#) and youth who have come from the hard places." TBRI is a promising program for children and youth who cannot access clinical

care or who require a greater level of support in their daily environment. In its unique design, TBRI is one of the only programs effective in treating complex developmental trauma, as opposed to acute trauma, in children and youth.

More information: "Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI): A Systemic Approach to Complex Developmental Trauma." Karyn B. Purvis, David R. Cross, Donald F. Dansereau & Sheri R. Parris. *Child & Youth Services*, Volume 34, Issue 4, 2013. pages 360-386, [DOI: 10.1080/0145935X.2013.859906](https://doi.org/10.1080/0145935X.2013.859906)

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