

## Addressing Family Conflict and Coercion: An Overview of AF-CBT

### Brief Summary

**Alternatives for Families: A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT) is a trauma-informed, evidence-based practice designed to improve relationships between children and caregivers in families with a history or risk for child physical abuse. The skills target anger control, cognitive flexibility, parenting, social skills, communication, and problem solving . Caregivers and therapists work together to build on caregiver strengths and goals, including monitoring conflict, managing stress, and being intentional about positive, safe parenting practices.**

### Title

This webinar will provide an overview of the core components of Alternatives for Families: a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT) and relevant populations and settings. AF-CBT is a trauma-informed behavioral intervention for families who exhibit or are at risk for problems with anger, aggression, and/or child physical abuse ([www.afcbt.org](http://www.afcbt.org)). AF-CBT seeks to improve relationships between children and their caregivers using a comprehensive approach that targets the risks for conflict and coercion and the clinical consequences of its exposure. As such, AF-CBT is designed to work with a broad range of families engaged in verbal and/or physical aggression, whether the referral focuses upon the caregiver who has used harsh physical discipline, the child who has behavior problems, or the highly conflictual or “at-risk” family. The webinar provides a comprehensive overview of the model and its content, research outcomes, and training opportunities. Examples of appropriate families will be provided and discussed to highlight key family processes that underlie the use of coercion and hostility (e.g., relationships, reframing, rules and roles, family routines). Participants are encouraged to raise questions and request further information.

### Objectives:

1. Describe the AF-CBT model, including targeted skills and treatment phases.
2. Communicate to one’s agency the clinical considerations for agency-wide implementation of AF-CBT.
3. Identify families who are appropriate for AF-CBT.

Bio: David J. Kolko, Ph.D., is Professor of Psychiatry, Psychology, Pediatrics, and Clinical and Translational Science, at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He directs the Special Services Unit at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital, a program devoted to the development and dissemination of evidence-based practices for children/adolescents who are victims and/or perpetrators of physical/sexual aggression being served in diverse community settings, such as juvenile justice, child welfare, pediatric primary care, and mental health. He is co-developer of Alternatives for Families: A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT; [www.afbt.org](http://www.afbt.org)), an

intervention to improve family relationships for those experiencing anger and conflict, aggression and punitive discipline, and child physical abuse, or child behavior problems.

Dr. Kolko is board certified in Child and Adolescent Psychology (ABPP) and a Fellow of the Society for Child and Family Policy and Practice (Div. 37), the Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology (Div. 53), and the section on Trauma Psychology (Div 56) of the American Psychological Association. He served 2 terms on the Board of Directors of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC), was Co-Chair of its Research Committee, received its Research Career Achievement Award for 2001, and received its William Friedrich Memorial Award in 2014.

His treatment research interests include the study and treatment of child abuse/family conflict, child behavior disorders/antisocial behavior, including firesetting and sexual offending, and the integration of pediatric behavioral health services in primary care.

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