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Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in Children and Adolescents: History, Symptoms, and  
Cognitive-Behavioural Treatment for Child Survivors of Trauma

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Abstract of Literature Review

This paper reviews the literature related to child and adolescent trauma. It begins by examining definitions of, and the variables that impact upon the child or adolescent after being exposed to a traumatic event. The symptoms of trauma and their ultimate conceptualisation into what we now refer to as post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms are reviewed, and the applicability of the DSM diagnosis for children and adolescents is questioned. A recent model of post-traumatic stress symptomatology is discussed and will be compared to the conceptualisation of these symptoms that are defined in the most recent diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders. It is concluded that a recent classification system is preferable in relation to symptoms seen in children and adolescents. It is argued that this approach offers a more systematic framework for evaluating treatment for childhood trauma, an area that is under-researched. Finally, this paper will present the proposed research that has been guided by the current literature in the area. This section will include the aims and hypotheses of the research being undertaken.

The subject is covered under the following headings:

## **1. Trauma: Experience and Response**

- 1.1. Conceptualisation of post-trauma symptoms over time

## **2. The DSM and Trauma**

## **3. Trauma in Children: Some Issues of Definition**

- 3.1. Variables that Impact Upon Symptom Presentation in Children

## **4. Terr's Childhood Trauma Classification System**

- 4.1. Characteristics Common to all Traumas in Childhood
  - 4.1.1. Visualised or Otherwise Repeatedly Perceived
  - 4.1.2. Repetitive Behaviours
  - 4.1.3. Trauma-Specific Fears
  - 4.1.4. Changed Attitudes About People, Life & the Future
- 4.2. Differences between trauma type and Symptomatology
  - 4.2.1. Characteristic Features of Type I Traumas
  - 4.2.2. Characteristic Features of Type II Traumas
  - 4.2.3. Characteristic Features of Crossover Traumas

## **5. Research in PTSD Treatment**

- 5.1. Treatment of Child & Adolescent Trauma Survivors
  - 5.1.1. Group Treatment

## **6. Proposed Research**