Managing Trauma in the Acute Phase

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What is trauma?

Trauma is an event, either witnessed or experienced, that represents a threat to an individual's physical safety. Responses to this trauma are individual and how a person assigns meaning to the event, depends on the perception of the individual, and is often just as important as the event itself.
Types of Trauma

- Extreme forms of child abuse
- MVAs
- Peds vs Auto
- Natural disasters
- Medical trauma from frequent invasive treatments
The Acute Phase

- Crisis and Stabilization
- How long will this phase last?
- Symptoms of trauma: Delay in processing, lack of insight, reasoning, and judgement, inability to make decisions, loss of control, feeling unsafe, inability to meet basic needs, inability to protect their child
The Acute Phase

- Avoid “retelling” the story
- Limit exposure to outside entities
- Update families away from the patient
- Have social work present during the update to assist caregiver processing, provide support, and help anticipate next steps
- Coordinating the next steps
When is the right time to start therapy?

Pacing and assessment of needs

Not everyone will decide to go to therapy

Reasons can be related to fear of feeling around the event; trying to push forward and forget, family shame; parental barriers