Cornwall Creative-ME

Play & Creative Arts Therapy

What is Play Therapy?

It is an effective therapy that helps children modify their behaviours, clarify their self-concept and build healthy relationships. In Play Therapy children enter into a dynamic relationship with the therapist that enables them to express, explore and make sense of their difficult and painful experiences. Play Therapy helps children find healthier ways of communicating. develop fulfilling relationships, increase resilience and facilitate emotional literacy.

Why Play?

Play is the language of children and their behaviour a message. They do not readily have the words to describe their thoughts, feelings and perceptions of their internal and external world.

Since the 1920's play has been used in psychotherapy to help children express themselves. Play is vital to every child's social, emotional, cognitive, physical, creative and language development. It helps make learning concrete for all children and young people

How it helps

Play Therapy helps children in a variety of ways. They receive emotional support and can learn to understand more about their own feelings and thoughts. Sometimes they may re-enact or play out traumatic or difficult life experiences in order to make sense of their past and cope better with their future. Children may also learn to manage relationships and conflicts in more appropriate ways. The outcomes may be general e.g. a reduction in anxiety and raised self esteem, or more specific such as a change in behaviour and improved relations with family and friends.

What does a Play Therapist Do?

Your child's Therapist will have a large selection of play materials from which they may choose. These will include art and craft materials, dressing up props, sand and water, clay, small figures and animals, musical instruments, puppets and books. The Play Therapist will enable your child to use these resources to express him or herself without having to provide verbal explanations. Play Therapists receive extensive training in child development and attachment. They are trained to use play, a child's natural form of expression, as a means for understanding and communicating with children about their feelings, thoughts and behaviour.

How long does it take?

Some children will respond to a short term intervention of around twelve sessions. However, when problems have persisted for a long time or are complicated, it may take considerably longer, in some cases therapists have worked with children for over a year. Sessions are usually once a week on a regular day, at the same time and place. This is very important for developing a trusting relationship, unplanned or missed sessions may disrupt the progress.

Where will it take place?

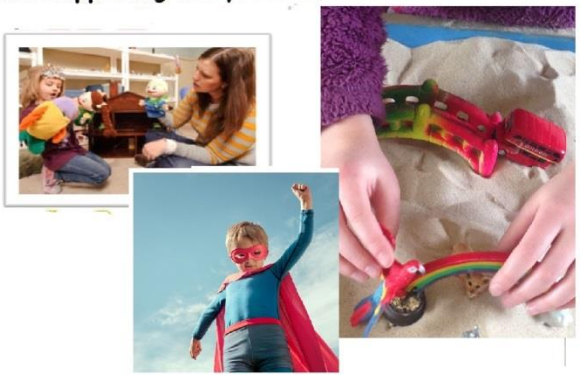
Play therapy sessions may be held in a school, a designated room or at home. Most importantly, must be in a space that allows freedom of expression within safe boundaries and within an uninterrupted time.

Play Therapy in Schools

Schools are often attempting to cope with children with complex emotional and behavioural difficulties and teachers may be the first to identify concerns and worries for their pupils. Play Therapy helps children to be more receptive to learning and therefore enables the educational needs to be better met. Schools ar a familiar and safe environment for both childre and their parents. Staff often have a unique perspective on children in their care and can identify difficulties and changes early on. Staff interact closely with children in their care and therefore can help modify their development, learning and behaviour.

Why is the therapeutic relationship so important?

The relationship that develops between your child and their Play Therapist is very important. Your child must feel comfortable, safe and understood. This type of trusting environment makes it easier for the child to express his/her thoughts and feelings and to use the therapy in a useful way. It is crucial that your child knows you are supporting the process.



Will it be confidential?

Information that you share about your child and family will usually be kept confidential. A Play Therapist may share information with other colleagues and professionals for the benefit of your child with your permission. They must share information with other professionals if they are concerned that a child is being harmed, hurting others or themselves. They will discuss this with you first.

How will I be involved?

Your child's therapist will meet with you regularly to discuss progress and any changes and developments you have witnessed or experienced at home. However they will not disclose specific details of what your child has played. This is important in order to maintain your child's trust and feelings of safety with the therapist.

Play it safe!

For the safety of the child a play/creative arts therapist must have:

- have an up-to-date, clear Police Check (CRB)
- have completed or are undertaking a training programme recognised by PTUK
- be receiving clinical supervision of their play therapy practice - the therapist's work is reviewed regularly by someone who has considerable experience
- conduct the sessions in a safe environment
- work to PTUK or BACP or a similar ethical framework

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Enabling Childrens Potential

"Toys are children's words and play is their language" Landreth

Our greatest natural resource is the minds of our children Walt Disney

Do you know a child who..

- is not realising their full potential socially or academically?
- has nightmares or has disturbed sleep
- has suffered trauma
- suffers from anxiety, stress or phobias
- has suffered loss or bereavement
- suffers because of separated or divorced parents
- is withdrawn or continually unhappy
- finds it difficult to make friends
- quarrels frequently with peers or siblings
- bullies others or is bullied themselves
- displays inappropriate behaviour
- doesn't play?

Then you need to know how Play and Creative Arts Therapies can help

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