

Play Be Therapy

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is Play Therapy?

Play Therapy is a model of therapy which helps children to explore their feelings, to express themselves and to make sense of their life experiences. Play Therapy gives a child means of communication that is natural to them; it is also how a child learns and explores their inner world. Children are provided with a range of play equipment and art materials which enables them to communicate their thoughts and feelings not only in words, which many find difficult, but also through play and art work.

Many children who struggle to recover from difficult life experiences find it very hard to find the words to talk about what has happened. The therapist allows the children the freedom to express themselves in a safe and trusting environment and assists the child in exploring and understanding their feelings in a way which helps them to feel supported, accepted and valued.

Play therapy sessions may be non-directive or focused or a combination of both. In non-directive play therapy the child chooses what s/he wishes to play with and leads the play. In focused play therapy, the therapist offers the child the opportunity to work with a specific media, for example, sand tray, art materials, small world figures, sensory play materials.

Who can benefit from Play Therapy?

Play Therapy is an effective intervention for children with a range of presenting difficulties:

- Children who have witnessed domestic violence or abuse of substances
- Children who have experienced loss through family breakdown, bereavement
- Children who have attachment difficulties, children who have experienced multiple placements
- Children or young people who have suffered from abuse/trauma
- Children who have been neglected and as a result are developmentally delayed
- Children who have witnessed accidents/experienced hospitalisation
- Children who have additional educational needs
- Children who experience emotional difficulties such as depression/anxiety.

Play Therapy can offer children who have suffered one or more of the above a space in which the feelings generated by their experiences can be expressed and contained. Play Therapy cannot change what has happened to a child, but it can help to promote resilience and enable the child the opportunity to feel better. One of the main benefits is in raising the child's self esteem and self confidence and enabling a child to begin to have a sense of self.

Play Therapy is appropriate for children of all ages, but is most often used for children aged between 3 and 12 years.