INTRODUCTION TO PLAY THERAPY

Presented by:
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Co-Founder of the Institute of Child Psychology
Our Vision

Our foundation is one of respect for all with a commitment to listen fully and learn from the diverse viewpoints of our team and those we service in our community.

At the heart of our work is the importance we place on insight, compassion, trust and warmth. We want to foster lasting change in the lives of families and transform our community. We believe that everyone should have access to affordable mental health resources.

We believe strongly in dismantling the stigma around mental health and in empowering caregivers and professionals to help children to reach their full potential. We continually identify important questions, seek out the answers, and evaluate and document what we learn.
What is Play Therapy

Play therapy differs from regular play in that the therapist helps children to address and resolve their own problems. Through play therapy, children learn to communicate with others, express feelings, modify behavior, develop problem-solving skills, and learn a variety of ways of relating to others.

Without Play

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Play Help Grow the Brain

- Increases functioning in pre-frontal cortex: regulates emotions,
- Helps children plan ahead, problem solving
- Play activates the ENTIRE neocortex (logical/new brain)
- Improves memory
- Increases attention span & language development
- Inoculates them to stress = Small amounts of risk
- Arena to practice certain behaviours with minimal risk

4 C's of Healthy Development

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Children Work in Their Window of Tolerance

Healing Power of Play

1. Increases oxytocin: hormone enhances feelings of wellness and trust
2. Mirror neurons are released during play, helping us to read a child more effectively
3. Optimal chemical environment for new neural pathways
4. A certain level of arousal is ideal to consolidate and integrate neural pathways
5. Integrate emotion and cognition - learning takes place
6. Play involves co-constructing wordless narratives of self-awareness and transformation
Child-Centered Play Therapy

- The therapeutic relationship is **dynamic and interpersonal**. A strong relationship is used for the child to be able to **express themself and explore**; thus, realizing the value within and becoming a positive, self-determining, and self-actualizing individual.

- **Limit setting**: Limits help a child to feel safe, valued, and accepted
The Play Room

Dr. Rise VanFleet

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Types of Toys

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A Few Key Tools for Non-Directive Play Therapy

Tracking

Reflecting

Limit Setting

Tracking

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Reflecting


Limit Setting

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Play & Projection: *Play is a Language*

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Training

- ICP is an approved provider (21-634) with the Association for Play Therapy (www.a4pt.org)
- www.cacpt.org is another great organization to register with
- ICP provider individual play therapy supervision (for registration with APT not CACPT)
The Institute of Child Psychology was founded to educate parents and professionals on issues pertaining to children’s mental health, and to promote the psychological and emotional well-being of children and adolescents.

Our mission is to empower parents, teachers, therapists, social workers and psychologists by giving them pertinent insights, skills, and tools necessary to help children thrive.