



playspace-expressions

‘It’s never too late to have a happy childhood’

For children of all ages

## **What Is Play Therapy? Information for children. Information for supporting Children in the Play therapy process**

### **What is a Play Therapist?**

A Play Therapist is somebody who helps children with their mixed up feelings and the way these feelings come out. When you are hurt on the outside you get upset and someone might help you – they put on a plaster or take you to the doctor, sometimes you have to look after yourself until there is someone you can tell. The Play Therapist’s job is to help when you have feelings that can make you hurt and upset on the inside, and they will help you find a way to explain these feelings without lots of questions. Play therapists use playing to help them solve their own problems too.

### **Why am I going to see a Play Therapist?**

A Play Therapist has been asked to see you so that you can have some special time to play with all the toys and creative arts. There are lots of things available to create and play with so you won’t ever feel there is nothing to do in there. Sometimes children feel unhappy or cross or worried about things that are going on in their life or sometimes really bad things happen to them or their friends and families.

It can mean they can’t help crying or fighting even when they try to hold it in or they might feel rubbish or sick inside. Feelings like that make your life very hard and no fun.

The feelings can be hard to talk about and you may worry about telling your grown – up but a Play Therapist is someone who can help you play them out, and think about

your feelings. They can help you think about what you might choose to do to feel better. You can choose what you say to your Play therapist – they are not here to ask you lots of questions about your family and your life.

### **What Happens in Play Therapy?**

Your grown-ups meet the Play Therapist and they talk together to plan some playful ways to help make sense of things troubling you. . Then you meet the Play Therapist and you play together and get to know each other. Your play therapist and you will draw up a special contract (an agreement) so you know what happens in the playroom – you can add lots of things to this contract. Your Play Therapy sessions happen in the same room at the same time every week and last the same time for playing while your Play Therapist helps you understand your feelings while you play. Then the Play therapist will help you to think about going back to the real world and how to leave angry or sad feelings in the playroom. The Play Therapist will use all sorts of toys as well as sand, water, clay and creative arts for painting and drawing. You choose what you want to play and you decide what you want to do. As long as you and the Play Therapist don't hurt the toys on purpose and don't hurt each other, you are in charge of what you play with and how you play, so it is up to you how you use the time. The Play Therapist won't make you do anything you don't want to do and you can talk about things as much or as little as you want to.

### **Will the Play Therapist tell other people what I've been playing?**

Your Play Therapist will talk to your parents, teachers or carers that mostly everything you say and do in the playroom will stay private, so the play is just between the two of you.

Even if you say you don't like someone, they won't tell unless you want them to. That means your Play Therapist won't tell other people about your play but you can if you want to. If the Play Therapist finds out someone has been hurt or is going to be hurt, they will have to tell someone else. Sometimes the Play Therapist will talk to a grown up about how you are getting on, I will always tell you about the meetings and ask you what you want them to know, so you can help choose if you want to do this, or the Play Therapist do it with you or for you. This is so you can learn to trust your Play Therapist, and play just how you need to.

### **How will the Play Therapy help?**

As you come and play each week the Play Therapist will help you with your feelings and the ways you show your feelings. When children understand their feelings it can help problems get smaller and feelings get more under your control bit by bit. It might take a long time but in the end you and the Play Therapist will both feel you can manage without any more Play Therapy and you can choose when you'll be ready to say goodbye.

The ending might feel hard to do but your Play Therapist will help you with this and give you and your family some ideas of different things to do. You will be able to take home all the things you have made at the end or I can keep them for you.

## But I'm too old for Playing?

Play therapy is not just for young children, you can be 3 -100. When you go each week, you will be doing something you are interested in and whether it is music, art, drama, modelling or just chatting, that's up to you. Your Play Therapist can help you find ways to create or act out things and then help you understand more about your feelings and the things you like and don't like about the way you feel. When you relax and play, your imagination gets a chance to play too.

Information in this booklet is compiled with reference to  
What Is Play Therapy? A Leaflet for Children  
BAPT (The British Association of Play Therapists)  
Further information at [www.bapt.info](http://www.bapt.info)

Play Therapist contact details:

Diane Doyle

07860 577915

[www.playspace-expressions.com](http://www.playspace-expressions.com)

[diane@playspace-expressions.com](mailto:diane@playspace-expressions.com)

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