

## Play Therapy for adults

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”

George Bernard Shaw

Play therapy can be used with adults. Can this really be the case? Well, we play all the time as adults, commonly our hobbies. Sports, be it, football, gymnastics cricket, horse-riding, rugby, tennis or a host of others we increase our levels of enjoyment, cooperation, competitiveness, coordination, whilst reducing stress. Rock climbing, canoeing, flying we increase our risk whilst building awareness of our skill level and push the limits. Art therapy led the way with people creating images in 2D, 3D in isolation and groups, using their bodies to push that creativity. Board games, cards, darts, snooker and pool, swimming, running and target activities are all forms of play, we just stop seeing them as such.

Drama, psychodrama, dance and movement all utilise the body enabling people to create narratives symbolically. Music therapy allows people to develop sounds and rhythms, noise and silence to express the inexpressible. All these creative therapies are available within the medium of play alongside; yoga, mindfulness, sandtray/sandplay and a range of methods that allow a both verbal and non-verbal expression.

It can be helpful for adults who have experienced developmental trauma, live with developmental delay or learning disability as well as those who feel they are hampered by their childhood experiences within their work, competitive fields or family life

It Increases our capacity to connect, wonder, imagine, create, share, recall, regulate and practice. It provides the opportunity to decrease stress, project and take on different roles.

We can work through strong feelings and yet stay in our window of tolerance (our capacity to stay regulated).

## Why Does Play Therapy Work?

- Reduces anxiety about traumatic events in the person’s life
- Facilitates expression of feelings
- Promotes self-confidence and a sense of competence
- Develops a sense of trust in self and others
- Defines healthy boundaries
- Creates or enhances healthy bonding and attachments in relationships
- Enhances creativity and playfulness
- Promotes appropriate behaviour

“You are mistaken if you think we have to lower ourselves to communicate with children. On the contrary, we have to reach up to their feelings, stretch, stand on our tiptoes.”

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