

WILL IT BE CONFIDENTIAL?

Information that you share about your child and family will usually be kept confidential. I may share information with other professionals for the benefit of your child with your permission. A Play Therapist must share information with other professionals if they are concerned that a child is being harmed, hurting others or themselves. They will usually talk to you about this first. I also have clinical supervision once a month where I discuss my work with the children.

I will meet with you at regular intervals to discuss progress in therapy sessions and any changes and developments you have witnessed or experienced at home.

However I 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.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

You are very important in supporting your child through the process.

- ★ Be consistent and encouraging to your child about attending sessions regularly.
- ★ Resist the urge to ask your child what they did, as this will put pressure on them to comment on something they may have

difficulty understanding themselves.

- ★ Please don't ask your child to 'be good' or check they have been. Therapy is not about being 'good' or 'bad' and your child must feel free to express 'bad' feelings in an uncensored way.
- ★ Don't insist that your child tell certain things: it is their time and they must feel free to express themselves at their own pace. Instead tell your concerns to the Play Therapist on a separate occasion.
- ★ Play can be messy and it is helpful if your child can wear old clothes to minimise their anxiety about this.
- ★ During any therapeutic intervention behaviour may appear to get worse before it gets better - please tell your child's Play Therapist if you have any concerns. Please also feel free to ask your child's Play Therapist any questions throughout the process.

If you would like to receive more details about Play Therapy or have any questions please contact –

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Play Therapy

Starfish Therapeutic Services

Information for parents and carers



WHAT IS PLAY THERAPY?

Children use play to communicate and understand muddled feelings and upsetting events that they haven't had the chance to sort out properly in a non-verbal way.

HOW CAN PLAY THERAPY HELP MY CHILD?

Play is vital to a child's development and as they play they learn.

Play therapy gives them emotional support to learn to understand more about their own feelings and thoughts. During sessions they may re-enact or play out traumatic or difficult life experiences, helping them 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.

Play Therapy may result in a general reduction in anxiety and raised self-esteem as well as more specific outcomes such as a change in behaviour and improved relations with family and friends.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN MY CHILD'S PLAY THERAPY SESSIONS?

I have a large selection of play materials for your child to choose from. They include art and craft materials, sand and water, clay, small figures and animals, musical instruments and puppets. I will enable your child to use these materials so that they can express themselves without having to verbally explain.

WHAT DOES A PLAY THERAPIST DO?

Play Therapists receive extensive training in subjects such as child development and attachment (the bonding process). They are trained to use play to understand and communicate with children about feelings, thoughts and behaviour.

I will carefully listen to your concerns about your child and family. I will review your history and find out about the stresses the family have been through so that I can help your child make sense of it.

I may ask to seek information from school and other significant adults in their lives. An assessment is made of your child's strengths as well as their difficulties. I will talk to you about what to tell your child about their Play Therapy and how to foresee and answer your child's questions. I may suggest a referral for other

professional intervention as part of the support and this might include support for you.

HOW LONG DOES PLAY THERAPY TAKE?

Some children will respond to a short period of play therapy for up to 12 sessions, however, when problems have gone on for a long time or are complicated a longer period may be required. In these circumstances some Play Therapists have worked with children for two years or more.

Sessions will be once a week, in term-time and consistently on a regular day and at the same time and place. This enables a trusting relationship to develop. Unplanned missed sessions may disrupt the progress.

WHY IS THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP SO IMPORTANT?

The therapeutic 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 also crucial that your child knows you are supporting the process.