



Play therapy.

At Uniting WA, our counsellors are trained to use a Child Centred Play Therapy Approach (CCPT). This is a non-directive process which allows children to work through difficult feelings, memories and experiences at their own pace in a safe and accepting environment.

Play therapy is an evidence-based therapy that is founded on Humanistic Theory, neurobiology research and is attachment and trauma-informed. Play is a natural way for children to express themselves, as often they do not have the ability to express their thoughts and feelings in words the way adults do:

“In play therapy, the toys are like the child’s words and play is the child’s language”

- Dr Garry Landreth.

Play therapy provides a child with a safe therapeutic space (playroom), along with a safe and accepting relationship with the therapist, to support them to make sense of and process their experiences of trauma and other life challenges. In this safe and supportive space, the child has an opportunity for growth and self-healing. By ‘playing out’ their experiences and feelings, children are given a choice about what, when and how they want to express their worries and wishes.

It is important to understand that processing trauma or other stress, such as grief and loss, takes time.

Who is play therapy for?

Play Therapy is suitable for children from ages 3 and up and may be helpful for a range of issues children may be experiencing, such as:

- Difficulty making friendships and bullying
- Difficulty managing big feelings like anger
- Aggressive behaviour
- Struggling with low self-esteem and confidence
- Family separation
- Family violence
- Social and communication difficulties
- Grief and loss
- Making sense of and recovering from trauma.

Benefits of play therapy.

Research has shown that children experience a range of benefits with play therapy, some of these include:

- Increasing confidence and skills in relationships
- Strengthening their self- concept
- Development of coping strategies and creative problem-solving skills
- Developing respect for themselves and others
- Making sense of trauma experiences and facilitation of recovery
- Learning to experience and express their feelings
- Development of self-control.

Useful resources.

Interplay/Play Therapy Australia:

www.interplaytherapy.com

Center for Play Therapy, University of North

Texas www.cpt.unt.edu

The Family Enhancement & Play Therapy

Center: www.play-therapy.com

Landreth, G.L. (2012). Play therapy: The art of the relationship. NY. Brunner Routledge

Call us on
0482 161 999

Or email
ccs@
unitingwa.org.au

What a play therapy session looks like.

Child Centred Play Therapy is child-led. The therapist does not decide on the activities or ask lots of questions during the session but instead follows the child's lead. The therapist observes, reflects, and participates as the child allows. The therapist does not have agendas for the session; however they do hold a safe space, which means keeping the child, the toys and the therapist safe.

During the session the child can choose toys and games as they see fit. There are a range of specific toys in the playroom to encourage the child to express a variety of feelings, for example: real life toys (such as dolls, kitchen, house and animals), acting out/aggressive toys (such as army figurines, weapons and handcuffs) and creative expression/tactile toys (such as sand, water and paints).

Sessions typically last 45 minutes and are held once a week.

The number of sessions recommended depends on the child and how they respond.

Talk to our experienced team today about how play therapy can help you and your child.