

Hello

You might be wondering what play therapy is and why you are going to see a play therapist. Play therapy is your time with someone who wants to understand how you're feeling and help you feel better. Sometimes, we have big feelings inside us, like when we're sad, angry or worried, and it can be hard to talk about them with words. That's where play therapy comes in!

Play therapy is specially for children. It is a safe, supportive place with toys, art materials and games where you can explore your feelings, thoughts and experiences using play. Instead of talking about the things that are confusing or worrying, you can play and choose what you might want to do while working on them.



You can play in many different ways and can ask the play therapist to join in your play if you want them to. Therapists may speak differently to other adults in your life, but they will listen to what you say and help you understand your feelings and experiences.

Will my play therapist tell other people what we have been playing?

When you first meet your play therapist, they will talk to you about what is private and just between the two of you and what they might sometimes need to let other people know about. Your play therapist won't tell anyone all the actual details about what you have played or talked about, but sometimes they might need to chat to a grown-up about how you are doing or to advise the adults in your life about how they can help you when you're struggling.

Sometimes you might decide that you want your play therapist to share something important with other people, and they will do that. The only time your play therapist does have to tell someone else something is if they think you, or someone else, is being hurt or is not safe. Your play therapist will talk to you about this.

Do I have to keep it private too?

That is up to you – play therapy is not a secret. You can talk about what you have been doing to anyone you want to, but you don't have to. If you feel like keeping it to yourself, that's OK. Your play therapist will explain to your grown-ups that they should not ask you about what you did in your session and that you do not have to tell them what you have been doing.



What is Play Therapy?

**A leaflet for children
and parents/carers**

For more information about play therapy, please email ella@futuresinmind.org

For more information about BAPT, visit www.bapt.info or email info@bapt.uk.com

Leaflet created by BAPT and adapted by Ella Manning, BAPT Registered Play Therapist®

Why am I going to see a play therapist?

Your play therapist has been asked to see you because the grown-ups around you think that you are finding some things difficult in your life, and they thought you might need a bit of extra help. It might be that you are dealing with some big mixed-up feelings, maybe that you've not had before. Or perhaps something horrible has happened, and it is not easy to cope.

You deserve to have a place to be whoever you want to be and do whatever you need to do, as long as you are safe. The adults around you feel you need a place like that right now.

Sometimes it is hard to find the right words to say how we feel or to explain what had happened. Play allows you to 'say' things in a way that feels much easier for you. Play therapists are experts in listening so they will listen to your stories, feelings, play and experiences and will help you to understand.



What will my play therapist do?

Your play therapist will first meet the grown-ups who know you best to learn more about you and why they think play therapy could be helpful for you. The play therapist will talk to the adults and explain how they can work with you. Once everyone agrees that play therapy is a good idea, you will get to meet your play therapist, and you can decide if you are happy to give it a go. Your play sessions will usually last about 50 minutes and happen at the same time and play space every week.



What will we play with?

There will be loads of toys that you and your play therapist can play with, like toy people and animals, dressing up things, musical instruments, cars and construction toys, sand and water, drawing and painting stuff and fidget toys. You will be able to choose what you want to do, how you want to play and if you want your play therapist to join in with you or not. Most children find it easier to say what they need to, when they are playing, so the toys chosen are there to help you with that too.

Are there any special rules I've got to remember?

In the play therapy room with the play therapist, you get to choose what to play with, and you can do or say nearly anything that you want. Your play therapist will let you know if there is something that you cannot do.



Play therapy is very different from school and home: your play therapist may have a few special rules, such as not breaking toys on purpose, but the biggest one is that you do not hurt each other, so that you both stay safe.

How long will I keep going for?

Your play therapist will help you to understand your feelings while you play. Children's problems can get better when they understand their feelings. This might happen quickly, or it might take a long time, but in the end, you and your play therapist will need to say goodbye. This ending might feel hard, but your play therapist will help you with this.