

## **What is play therapy?**

Play therapy is specially for young people. It is a safe, supportive place with art materials, toys and games where you can explore your feelings, thoughts and experiences using play and creative activities. You may have had some lovely things happen in your life and also some trickier things that might have left you feeling in a muddle. Play therapy can help you unmuddle those trickier things.



Play therapy is your time with a play therapist who wants to understand how you're feeling and help you feel better. Instead of talking about the things that are confusing or worrying, you can play, use creative activities 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 do during the sessions?**

When you first meet your play therapist, they will explain that the sessions are private. It is not a secret, so if you would like to tell people about what you do in the session, that is your choice, but you do not have to.

Your play therapist will explain to the adults in your life 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.

Your play therapist will not tell anyone the details about what you have talked or played about, but sometimes they might need to talk to an adult about general themes or to advise the adults in your life about how they can help you when you are 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.



## **What is Play Therapy?**

### **A leaflet for young people**

For more information about play therapy, please email [ella@futuresinmind.org](mailto:ella@futuresinmind.org)

For more information about BAPT, visit [www.bapt.info](http://www.bapt.info) or email [info@bapt.uk.com](mailto: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 adults around you think that you are finding some things difficult in your life, and they thought you might need some extra help. It might be that you are dealing with some difficult feelings, maybe that you have 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 could benefit from having 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 adults 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 in the same space every week.



## **What will we play with?**

There will be loads of resources that you and your play therapist can use during the session, like art materials, drawing and painting, fidget toys, figures, cars, Lego, sand and water. You can choose what you want to do, how you want to use the resources and if you want your play therapist to join in with you or not. Most young people find it easier to say what they need to, when they are playing, so the resources chosen are there to help you with that too.

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

During your sessions, you get to choose what to do with the resources 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 rules, such as not breaking the resources 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?**

Young people's problems can get better when they understand their feelings. This might happen quickly, or it might take a long time.

At some point, these sessions will come to an end, and this might feel hard, but your play therapist will support you with this.

