

The logo consists of a large, light blue circle on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping a vertical line that divides the slide into two halves. The word "Theraplay" is written in white, sans-serif font, with a registered trademark symbol (®) to its upper right.

Theraplay®

Building strong attachments for children who have
experienced trauma

Welcome!



Please be aware that some of the sessions are being recorded for sharing later.

We want people to participate but please use the 'raise hand' facility to ask questions and contribute when others are talking.

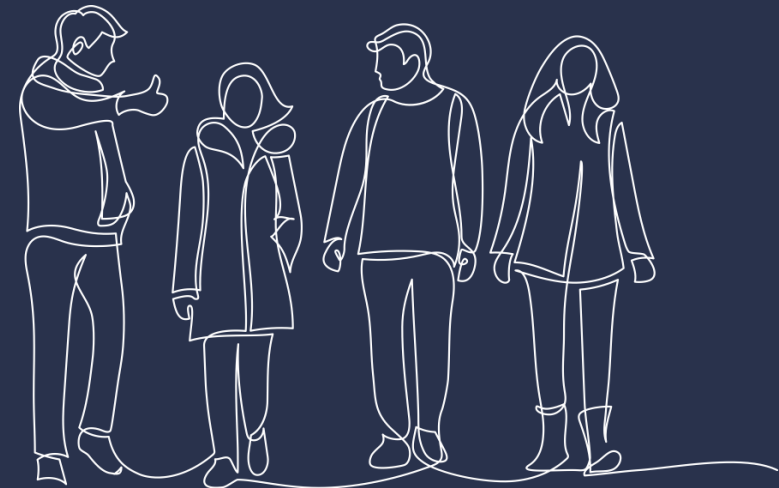
Please be considerate to others - together we want to create a safe, open and reflective space to learn.

You can turn on live captions on by clicking on the 3 dots at the top of your screen if you need this.

The link to the feedback form will be put in the chat.

Please do take the time to complete it after the session.

Thank you!



What is Theraplay®?

Theraplay® is a child and family therapy for building and enhancing attachment, self-esteem, trust in others, and joyful engagement. It is based on the natural patterns of playful, healthy interaction between parent and child and is personal, physical, and fun. Theraplay interactions focus on four essential qualities found in parent-child relationships: Structure, Engagement, Nurture, and Challenge. Theraplay® sessions create an active, emotional connection between the child and parent or caregiver, resulting in a changed view of the self as worthy and lovable and of relationships as positive and rewarding.

Who is it helpful for?

Children

Theraplay can be helpful for children who need additional support to build or secure attachment relationships. Within our team, Theraplay is used with children who are adopted or in Kinship Care. These children have all experienced early trauma – neglect, abuse, changes of carer etc. These early experiences impact the child's ability to form secure attachment relationships, to regulate their emotions, and to feel safe, lovable and worthy.

Parents/Carers

Theraplay can also be helpful for the parents and carers of children who have insecure attachments. Parents will be supported to increase their attunement to their child and develop a clear understanding of the causes of the child's behaviour and underlying needs. Parents and carers are supported to use structure, nurture, engagement and challenge in a meaningful and appropriate way and are supported to increase their ability to co-regulate their child.

How is it different to other types of Therapy?

- Parent or Carer is always involved in sessions, and is integral to the therapy
- It focuses on physical play. It is not a 'talking' therapy
- Sessions are highly planned and structured, and are lead by the therapist
- Focusses on the 'here and now' rather than past experiences
- Can be used with very young children and babies
- Can be easily extended into daily family life

What does Theraplay look like in practice?

Initial Parent Sessions:

- Gathering information
- Thinking about the Impact of Parent's own early experiences
- Psychoeducation
- Demo session

MIM Assessment:

Videoed session – parent and child only.
Followed up with a parent feedback session.

Sessions:

- Generally one parent/carer and one child
- Sessions are video recorded
- 20-60 minutes
- Up to 26 sessions
- Sessions focus on the 4 Theraplay Dimensions

Parent Feedback sessions:

- After every 3 or 4 sessions with child
- Video clips used to demonstrate
- Further opportunity for psychoeducation
- Parent/Carer working together

What are the core concepts?

Theraplay uses practitioner guidance to create playful and caring child-adult interactions that foster joyful shared experiences. These activities build attunement and understanding of each other – replicating early relationship experiences that are proven to lead to secure attachment. The interactions are personal, physical and fun – a natural way for everyone to experience the healing power of being together.

Theraplay interactions focus on four essential qualities found in healthy parent-child relationships

•**Structure:** The adult, the leader in the relationship, creates organization and predictability for the child which communicates safety

•**Nurture:** The adult provides caring that can calm and soothe the child in a manner that makes them feel good physically and emotionally

•**Engagement:** The adult is present in a manner that the child experiences being seen, heard, felt, and accepted

•**Challenge:** The adult supports the child in the acquisition and mastery of new skills, enhancing the child's sense of competence and confidence

With the support of the Theraplay practitioner, parents learn to play with their child in a way that establishes felt safety, increases social engagement, expands arousal regulation, and supports the development of positive self-esteem for both the child and the parent.

Structure:

The purpose of structuring activities is to organise and regulate the child's experience. The adult sets the limits, defines body boundaries, keeps the child safe, and helps to complete a sequence of activities.

Examples of Activities:

- ▶ Beanbag drop
- ▶ Cotton ball blow
- ▶ Hand stacks
- ▶ Pop the bubble
- ▶ Red light, green light
- ▶ Simon says
- ▶ Action songs

Nurture:

The purpose of nurturing activities is to reinforce the message that the child is worthy of care and that adults provide care without the child having to ask. Nurturing activities help to calm and regulate the anxious child and enhance feelings of self worth

Examples of Nurture activities:

- ▶ **Lotion**
- ▶ Cotton ball of feather
- ▶ Hand massage
- ▶ Feeding
- ▶ Feather match
- ▶ Lotion or powder prints
- ▶ Slippery
- ▶ Slipery slip slip
- ▶ Blanket swing
- ▶ Trace message
- ▶ Foil prints

Engagement:

The purpose of the engaging activities is to connect with the child in a playful, positive way. To focus intently on the child and to encourage her to enjoy new experiences. At all times it is important to attend to the level of the child's arousal and to modulate when needed.

Examples of Engagement Activities:

- ▶ Passing funny faces
- ▶ Special handshake
- ▶ Beep and Honk
- ▶ Hide and Find
- ▶ Action songs
- ▶ Pop cheeks
- ▶ Push me over pull me up
- ▶ Sticker match
- ▶ Hand clapping games
- ▶ Foil Prints
- ▶ Feather blow

Challenge:

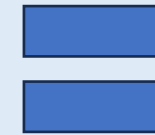
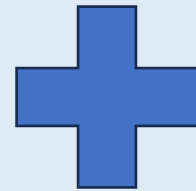
The purpose of the challenging activities is to encourage the child to take age appropriate risks in order to foster feelings of competence and mastery. Challenge activities also allow a child to accept structure, engagement and nurture that they might resist in more direct forms.

Examples of Challenge activities:

- Balloon balance
- Balloon tennis
- Karate chop
- News paper punch
- Thumb wrestle
- Wheelbarrow

Goals of Theraplay

Stimulate the emotional brain through Theraplay activities



Structure
Nurture
Engagement
Challenge

- Felt Safety
- Arousal regulation
- Appropriate social interactions
- Healthy sense of self
- Emotional connection and shared joy
- A more positive inner working model
- A more secure attachment

Theraplay 'Sunshine Groups'

- Shorter (6-8 sessions) intervention.
- Younger age group – toddlers-6yrs, child and parent together
- Older age group – 7-11 year olds, Child only – focus on peer relationships, teamwork, emotional regulation and window of tolerance.



Child's view



Any Questions?

Please let us know what you think



<https://forms.office.com/e/nFDzqZWk4i>

