



Kerry Wharf- play & creative arts therapist
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What is Play and Creative Arts Therapy?

A child's natural and preferred way of communicating is through the language of play. Play and Creative Arts Therapy is a form of psychotherapy, and uses a child-centred approach. Therapy provides a confidential and safe place for a child to express themselves and process emotions, thoughts and experiences. It helps those who struggle to articulate themselves verbally, and generally helps children to make sense of their life experiences.

Therapy aims to enable children to acknowledge their feelings in a constructive way and to give them strategies for coping with the difficulties they face.

Types of play and creative arts therapy approaches used include Cognitive Behavioral Play and Creative Arts Therapy, combining play therapy with cognitive behavioral therapy techniques to help children develop adaptive thinking, coping strategies and resilience. Trauma Informed Play and Creative Arts Therapy addresses a child's specific needs who have experienced trauma, using play and art based interventions to promote healing and their ability to move forwards. Play and Creative Arts Therapy uses mostly a non directive and child centred approach but some of the above approaches can be used if the therapist believes it will support the child with their therapy journey.

What will happen during the child's session?

Each child will attend a 45 minute session, preferably at the same time each week. Generally, a child will receive their session within school, alternatively, if appropriate, sessions could be held in the child's home. Sessions will be fitted around the child's commitments as much as possible.

In the first session boundaries are set so that the child knows they must keep themselves, myself and the therapy room safe. The child can then choose to play and be creative as they wish in an unrestrictive and nondirective way. They will have access to a play and creative arts therapy tool kit, which includes various toys and figurines, art materials and mediums, and sand tray therapy.

I am there to build a trusting relationship with the child and to interact with them, when appropriate in their play. I will remain alongside the child to help them make sense of their world and when appropriate, specific activities will be introduced to give them the tools and coping strategies to help them progress.

Supporting the child?

When a child first comes for play and creative arts therapy their primary carer and/or referrer e.g teacher, social worker, foster carer, health practitioner, will be asked to fill out an assessment form highlighting the child's strengths and difficulties and attend a parent/referrer interview with myself. This is an opportunity for you as their primary carer and/or referrer to discuss any concerns you may have about your/the child and to ask any questions. You will also be asked to complete a similar form half way through the contracted sessions and again when the child finishes his/her sessions.

These regular meetings/follow up reviews will allow you as the primary carer/referrer to learn about your/the child's progress and the themes of the sessions, although not the content, and of course to ask any questions. Although play and creative arts therapy is intended to be enjoyable for the child, there may well be times that the child, even if they are not aware of it, may be faced with difficult issues and emotions. This often results in things getting worse before they get better. It is important as the child's primary carer and/or referrer to show that you are there for them without asking too many questions. I will also share with you any tools and strategies that I have found useful in supporting your child, for you to use at home/school. I

Who am I?

My name is Kerry Wharf and I am a qualified and certified Play and Creative Arts Therapist Practitioner with Play Therapy UK and the Academy of Play and Child Psychotherapy. I have a BA Honours Degree, and a Post Graduate Certificate in Therapeutic Play Skills and a Post Graduate in Play and Creative Arts Therapy Practice. I have spent the last 15 years as a Play and Creative Arts Therapist Practitioner working with children in various, different settings, including schools and social services, specialising in child protection, bereavement and loss and school refuser cases. I have monthly supervision with a qualified Play and Creative Arts Therapist Supervisor.

How much will it cost?

Weekly Sessions £45
This includes Initial assessment & mid / end reviews, and open door policy check ins.

Formal written reports on request.

Where can I find out more information?

If you would like any more information you can visit the Play Therapy UK website www.playtherapy.org.uk or if you would like to talk with me, arrange a meeting then please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below. I can also offer group therapy, therapeutic art workshops including workshops specialising in supporting mothers and daughters.

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