


Play Therapy with Teens and Tweens

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Objectives for Today's Presentation

- Participants will understand the benefits of play therapy for adolescents.
- Participants will be familiar with different types of play therapy interventions that can be helpful for adolescents.



Benefits of Play Therapy for Adolescents

- We never stop playing!
- Fun – great relationship builder
- Positive relationship with an adult
- Can be seen as less threatening than talk therapy
- Work through childhood issues and issues of separation and individuation to adulthood

Gallo-Lopez & Schaefer, 2005

**Therapeutic Environment:
Suggested Toys**

- Arts and crafts supplies
- Sandtray
- Cars, trucks, other vehicles
- Animals
- Army Figures
- Stickers
- Dollhouse
- Puppets

Gallo-Lopez & Schaefer, 2005

**Therapeutic Environment:
Suggested Toys**

- Baby doll and supplies
- Board games / cards***
- Music on ipad / computer or CDs***
- Sports equipment***

***=not included in a typical playroom

Gallo-Lopez & Schaefer, 2005

**Confidentiality and Interpretation
Considerations**

- Remind client that play activities are confidential
- Explain what happens in session is not a secret
- Cautions about interpreting play

Gallo-Lopez & Schaefer, 2005

Directive vs. Non-directive Play

- Directive if...
 - Client is goal-oriented and talkative
- Non-Directive if...
 - Client is quiet and disengaged

Gallo-Lopez & Schaefer, 2005

Directive Play Interventions with Teens and Tweens


- Play Interventions to Build Rapport
- Art Interventions
- Sandtray
- My Favorites
- Also, don't forget therapeutic games!

Introducing Play and Building Rapport

- Don't call it play therapy ☺
- To play or not to play – it's their choice
- Therapist should be playful and prepared for any reaction
- Build rapport!
 - Listen to music together
 - Play a game
 - Know what is important to adolescents (music, tv, etc.)

Play Interventions for Building Rapport: Topic Basketball

- Materials Needed: Markers, Paper, Can/Basket, Ball
- Purpose: Be active while building rapport and learning what interests the client



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Play Interventions for Building Rapport: Miniature Animals

- Materials Needed: Variety of miniature animals
- Purpose: Learn more about how the client perceives self, family and friends



Art Intervention: Collage

- Materials Needed: Magazines to cut, glue, scissors, paper/cardstock
- Purpose: Allows adolescent to express themselves and their interests, family and feelings through media

Art Intervention: My Future in the Crystal Ball

- Materials Needed: Round clear globe/ornament, markers, paper, glue, scissors, magazines to cut from
- Purpose: Helps increase the client's ability toward future-focused thinking. Helps increase the child's ability to problem solve ideas to help them reach their future goals.



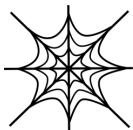
Sandtray Therapy

- Can work on transitioning from childhood to adulthood
- Helps tap into nonverbal thinking processes
- Helps to elicit creativity and a sense of identity
- Can be helpful with peer/family relationships when used in group or family therapy

Gallo-Lopez & Schaefer, 2005

Favorite Play Therapy Interventions: All Tangled Up

- Materials Needed: Yarn, pieces of paper, writing utensils, tape, scissors
- Purpose: Allows a visual for looking at problems/worries and how they make us feel



Goodyear-Brown, 2002

Favorite Play Therapy Interventions: MASH

- Materials Needed: Paper with MASH game, writing utensil
- Purpose: Focus on future goals while having fun. Discussion around what their future would be like if it was the results of the game.



MASH Example

Mansion	Deep breaths
Apartment	Listen to music
Shack	Call a friend
House	Journal
Mom	Play Therapist
Dad	Win millions
Both parents	Lots of friends
No parents	Lots of pizza

Favorite Play Therapy Interventions: Nail Polish Feelings

- Materials Needed: Nail Polish, Nail Polish Remover, Cotton Balls, Paper, Markers
- Purpose: Allows another way for teens to express their feelings and individuality



Favorite Play Therapy Interventions: A Lot on My Plate

- Materials Needed: Plate, Paper, Writing utensil
- Purpose: Be able to talk about the stress in his/her life, how it's impacting them and coping skills



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