

PLAY THERAPY INFORMATION PACKET

Andrea Mann, LMHC, RPT, NCC

Website: mindspacebehavioral.com

E-mail: andrea@mindspacebehavioral.com

Text/Phone: (941) 404-1800

WHY PLAY THERAPY?

Young children frequently have difficulty talking about what is bothering them. This is not because they do not *want* to discuss their thoughts and feelings, but because they have not yet developed the vocabulary or insight that they need to be able to do this.

WHAT IS PLAY THERAPY?

Play therapy is an approach to counseling children that allows them to use toys and other play and art materials to express their thoughts and feelings. In a play session, children can use their play to *show* the counselor what they are thinking and feeling. The counselor can use the play to communicate with the children about what is happening in their lives and to help them explore alternative behaviors and attitudes.

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREPARE MY CHILD?

Before the first session, parents/caregivers will need to explain the details of how often the children will be coming to play therapy, where it is, and basically what happens. Children seem to feel more comfortable if adults let them know that they do not have to talk to the counselor if they do not want to do so and that the main thing they will be doing is playing. It is also important for the adults to give children a simple explanation of their perception of the presenting problem and to suggest that generally children feel better about themselves and other people after going to play therapy for a while. This helps get rid of children's fears about coming to counseling.

WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR MY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN PLAY THERAPY?

Since children frequently play in the sand or paint, they should wear comfortable play clothes rather than "good" clothes to play therapy. It is a fun process, and sometimes it is messy.

Please encourage your child to use the bathroom prior to the start of session.

DO THE RULES AT HOME APPLY TO THE COUNSELING SESSION?

Limiting access to specific toys, games, art activities, and other tools used in play therapy outside the counseling room is at the discretion of the parents/caregivers. Inside the therapy room I do not limit the access to materials that are used to engage in play therapy barring a safety concern. Limiting access to



material that a child may use to express what they are thinking or feeling can hinder the counseling process.

HOW WILL I KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE SESSION?

After a session, while it is appropriate for parents/caregivers to let children know they are interested in the children's experience in the play session, they should not question them about the experience. If children draw or paint pictures or produce other art work, parents/caregivers should avoid questioning them about the art. Praise and/or criticism should also be avoided.

In order to help build trust in the relationship with the child, I keep what I do and say in the play therapy session private. Instead of talking about specifics, I will consult with parents/caregivers about different ways to understand children and strategies to help them feel better about themselves and get along with others.

Parents/caregivers will receive a brief recap with the child in the room at the end of each session (approximately 5 minutes). At this time, we will also reschedule for the next session.

WHAT IF I NEED MORE TIME WITH YOU?

Every 4-8 weeks parents/caregivers are *expected* to attend a session without the child present. This can be completed over video to accommodate scheduling challenges. Please note, not all insurance plans cover telehealth. If you choose to use video without insurance coverage, it will be charged at \$125.

It is strongly encouraged that all parents/caregivers impacting the child's daily life attend if possible. In between meetings with parents/caregivers, information you feel may be pertinent to the next specific session can be e-mailed or text to me directly.

CAN WE HAVE CONVERSATIONS, MEETINGS, AND LETTERS OUTSIDE OF SESSION?

Text or e-mail is the best way to get in touch with me, as I often am able to answer swiftly between sessions. Please be aware of private medical information that is sent through these modes of communication, as not all carriers/messaging services are HIPAA compliant.

If you need to speak to me outside of session regarding a concern you have with your child, we can schedule a 15-minute conversation. After the first 15-minute conversation, parents/caregivers will be charged \$35 for every 15-minute increment thereafter. These fees are not covered by insurance and must be paid prior to the next session.

School visits are not covered by insurance. If you would like a school visit or online meeting for your child to consult on 504-plans, IEPs, or other concerns, the fee is \$125/hour including travel time plus \$0.60/mile (round trip). This fee must be paid in advance.



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Letters are not covered by insurance. Fees begin at \$75 and increase from there based on the scope of the letter, page count, and amount of research required. Fees must be collected for you to receive the letter.

HOW DO I CANCEL APPOINTMENTS WITHOUT A PENALTY?

All cancellations must be completed at least 24 hours prior to the appointment in order to avoid penalty. Anything less than 24 hours is considered missed/late cancel. Mindspace Behavioral Health maintains a very strict cancellation policy. To cancel, you can contact my reception team at (786) 755-1863, or you may reach me directly via text, e-mail or phone.

For Medicare/Medicaid clients, you may only miss/late cancel 3 appointments in 90 days before you will be terminated. There is no charge for missed/late cancelled appointments.

For self-pay and private insurance clients, you will receive a charge of \$75 for all missed/late cancelled appointments. This balance must be paid in full prior to the next session for the session to occur.

I FEEL THERE IS MORE TO KNOW AND DISCUSS. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Most of your questions will be answered during the intake appointment. If you have additional questions, please bring them to intake or any subsequent appointments. If you feel you need an appointment without your child present to discuss sensitive information, we can always set up a parent/caregiver appointment.

A book that can help parents/caregivers and children learn more about play therapy and what happens in the play session is: A Child's First Book about Play Therapy by Marc A. Nemiroff and Jane Annunziata.



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