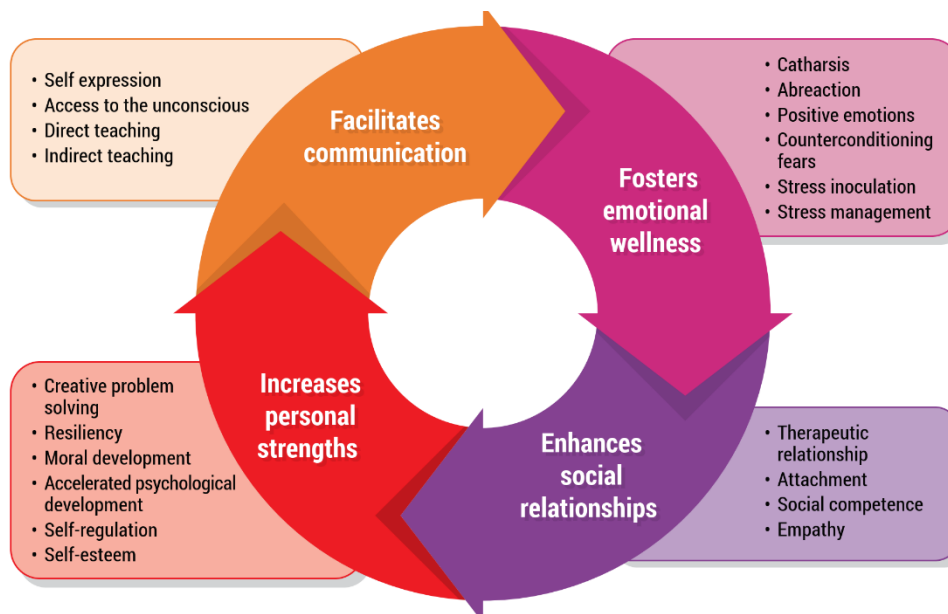


PLAY THERAPY

Principles and Theoretical References

Play therapy is helpful in treating a wide variety of problems due to stressful and destabilizing events for the child, such as: the divorce of his parents, a complicated family reconstitution, an adaptation to a new life context, the bereavement of an important person, a lack of motivation at school, relational difficulties, mobbing, a shock experienced, the loss of self-esteem, etc.

The therapeutic powers of play (Schaefer & Drewes, 2014):



The 20 therapeutic powers of play. Graphic adapted and reprinted with permission from the Association for Play Therapy, Play Therapy™, 14(3) from the September 2019 issue. Original graphic from Dr. Judi Parson, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia.

Play Therapy is a person-centered and mindful process, which:

- Is attentive to what the child expresses without focusing on the problem or the symptoms present
- Focuses on the present rather than the past
- follows the rhythm set by the child
- Tries to understand rather than to explain
- Accepts rather than seeks to correct or change the child
- Trusts the process and the child (cf. Landreth, *The art of relationship*, 2023)

The therapist:

- Establishes a warm therapeutic relationship that allows the child to work in confidence
- Accepts the child as he or she is (without judgment or flattery)
- Provides a space to feel free to explore and express oneself
- Observes and reflects back what has been perceived and felt, in order to help the child understand himself better
- Leaves it up to the child to make his own choices
- Follows the child's lead
- Avoids trying to speed up or direct the therapeutical process
- Establishes only a few essential secure limitations
- Helps the child to stay grounded in reality and feel responsible in the relationship.

(Principles developed by Virginia Axline, the first therapist to have written about the practice of play therapy (1969))

References

Play and Creative Arts Therapy is an integrative approach that draws inspiration from the following researchers and practitioners:

- Virginia Axline (adapted C. Rogers's person-centered approach to the child)
- John Bowlby (attachment theory)
- C.G. Jung (the world of symbols with the practice of sandplay therapy)
- Terry Kottman (Adlerian play therapy)
- Garry Landreth (Specialist in person-centered non-directive therapeutic play and its application in the context of child-parent relationship therapy, CPRT)
- Clarke Moustakas (pioneer of play therapy)
- Byron and Carol Norton (experiential approach)
- Violet Oaklander (develops the diversity of therapeutic tools and Gestalt in play and creative arts therapy)
- Judith Aron Rubin (for Art Therapy more specifically)
- D.W. Winnicott (The Transitional Object and Play in Therapy)