

# Play Therapy at Penygarn



with Sarah Morgan

"Play Therapy offers the individual to be himself, to learn to know himself, to chart his own course openly and above board - to rotate the kaleidoscope so to speak, that he may form a more satisfactory design for living."

V. Axline

### What is Play Therapy?

Modern, non-directive play therapy is based on Carl Rogers' person centred approach and theories of child development, attachment and separation. Virginia Axline, a student of Rogers, was instrumental in developing 'client centred play therapy', which gives children and adults the opportunity to play out and express their feelings and problems.

Play Therapy provides a free and protected space where a child and therapist meet. Here the child has the opportunity to explore, at their own pace, those issues from the past or present, conscious or unconscious that are affecting their lives. Play Therapy enables the child to access inner resources and resilience and through the therapeutic relationship, allow growth and change to happen.





### How does it work?

Through the sessions, the child has the opportunity to work with whatever methods/materials s/he wishes e.g. sand, clay, music, movement, story, puppets and paint. This opportunity for play and creativity allows the child to work from their conscious and unconscious self.

The safe environment allows the child to play and work with as few limits as possible, but as many as necessary. These limits give the child a sense of protection and help build the relationship between the child and therapist.

### Who can it help?

People of all ages come for a variety of reasons, including loss and separation, stress, phobias, bullying, disability, trauma, autism, inappropriate behaviour, anxiety, depression, family breakdown. Play Therapy can offer a child space in which the feelings these experiences generate can be contained. It cannot change what has happened, but it can promote resilience to become more able to cope with how they feel.

## How do we know that it works?

Play Therapy International has carried out studies in a number of settings such as schools and primary health care facilities all with parents/carers permission. These studies measured the changes that had taken place in the children's behaviour and emotional state. The result was a marked improvement. Strengths and difficulty questionnaires are used to monitor change.

Colleagues have stated that they have been able to see the improvement in children's ability to concentrate and focus on their learning as well as be able to enjoy their day and have friendships.

If you require further information, please contact me on

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