

## **EXPRESSIVE THERAPIES**

Expressive Therapies is an approach to counselling that uses emotions for healing. A range of methods is used to explore the hidden causes behind issues. It provides children with strategies for dealing with challenges and supports them in finding solutions to problems.

Intense emotions and traumatic situations are imprinted in the body and memory and can affect behaviour, attitude and happiness until resolved. This can include birth trauma, early childhood traumas and recent trauma.

Express therapies provide an experiential and holistic way of working that is empowering for children as they learn to understand their emotions and develop skills to help them explore and resolve problems. It allows non-verbal exploration of issues and provides opportunity for real and lasting change.

### **Methods used in Expressive Therapies**

#### ***Sandplay therapy and symbol work:***

Small objects (symbols) including figurines, ornaments, small toys, shells, stones, flowers and glass beads are used to create a picture or story in a sandtray. The child can use free play, or create a scene that represents a problem or issue. This can help the child process experiences, release emotions, gain understanding and achieve a different perspective. This helps children make sense of situations that can be difficult or for which they lack the language to describe.

Sandplay therapy and symbol work can help to:

- Resolve personal problems and conflicts in social relationships such as bullying or friendship and family relationships
- Make sense of situations
- Gain new perspectives
- Enhance self awareness and self esteem
- Improve communication skills and language development
- Assist children with the frustrations of learning difficulties

**Visualisation** – The use of visualisation assists with identifying and processing emotional and physical blocks. It assists with the development of self-awareness in children, which can help children to overcome problems in relating to others, behaviour, and self-esteem. Visualisation is also used as a method for relaxation.



**Gestalt self discovery** – A method of role-play, using significant symbols from sandplay and dreams.

**Body focus** – Body symptoms such as headaches, stomach cramps, backache and body pain, offer clues and vital information for identifying and working with emotional issues and can be a starting point or focus for a session. For children for example, a 'sore tummy' can be an indication of anxiety.

**Expressive Drawing and Writing** – Drawing is used for expressing and processing emotions through colour, shape and line. Journal writing can provide an opportunity for expression.

**Emotional release** – A safe way of working with and releasing strong emotions so often at the core of negative behaviour patterns. Movement and exercises help to release tension in the body from a variety of emotions including anger, sadness, frustration and excitement. Sometimes 'games' using cushions to kick and hit, crawl through or jump on help to release 'stuck' emotions.

**Sessions:** I encourage parents to commit to bringing their child for 3 to 5 sessions, of one hour duration each. It is preferable to have an interview with you prior to commencing sessions with your child, to complete consent forms and ensure I have a good understanding of the situation. The interview can be by phone or in person. A follow up interview of 30 minutes by phone or in person will be arranged at the completion of 3 or 5 sessions to review progress and create future plans.

**Fees:**

Children & Adolescents:       \$90 per one hour consultation

Adults:                               \$90 per one hour consultation or \$130 for 1.5 hour consultation

Parent Interview:               \$45 per half hour session

Late cancellations (less than 24 hours notice) will require payment of 50% of the scheduled fee. Forgotten appointments will require full payment.

