

Play Therapy with Adults

Introduction/ Description

Although Play Therapy has been recognized as an effective approach with children, few practitioners may be aware that adults can benefit from this approach too. Play Therapy assumes that clients of all ages remain child-like within their internal processes and that everyone can benefit from nonverbal self-expression. Play Therapy interventions can allow adults to access their inner selves and work through everything from childhood trauma to life transitions. Creating a safer, more distanced approach through play, and knowing how to use a variety of materials within a session, helps build the therapeutic relationship and the trust needed to work through presenting problems. These interventions promote healing and stress reduction by giving clients the permission they need to access the child within.

Research has demonstrated that Play Therapy techniques can also be effectively incorporated into therapy for adults with developmental disabilities, co-morbid mental health disorders or anyone who might struggle with traditional “talk therapy”. Play Therapy can assist adults in validating and interpreting their experiences without the defectiveness of therapeutic goals. It can lead to stress release, self-affirmation, insight, and improved communication.

In this one-day training we will explore the diverse approaches and clinical strategies employed by play therapists with adults and give participants the opportunity to practice some of these techniques with each other. This training encourages clinicians to make greater use of expressive play therapy activities to enrich their therapeutic interactions with clients.

Learning Outcomes

1. Will be able to describe the healing potential of play therapy with adult clients.
2. Will be able to list various techniques of play therapy with adults, including: dramatic role play, therapeutic humour, sand tray world play, doll play, art/ creating mandalas, therapeutic writing, client centred play, and play groups, bibliotherapy
3. Will be able to describe how various adult populations respond to play therapy
4. Will be able to explain when play therapy with adults is contraindicated.
5. Will be able to describe how to successfully incorporate play therapy into adult-client sessions.
6. Will have participated in play therapy activities taught in the presentation such as but not limited to: sandtray world play, games, mandala creation, therapeutic writing, and creative journaling techniques