Prairie Institute of Expressive Arts Therapy

Therapy

Trauma-Informed Expressive Arts Therapy:
A Sensory-Based Approach to Treatment

www.pieat.ca

Protecting the Vulnerable
Cultivating Resources

Chinese Proverb

“When you hear something, you will forget it,
When you see something, you will remember it,
But not until you do something, will you understand it.”
“The impulse to heal is real and powerful and lies within the client. Our job is to evoke that healing power, to meet its tests and needs and to support it in its expression and development. We are not the healers. We are the context in which healing is inspired.”

Trauma Review:
What is Trauma?

Trauma and the Brain:
Wired to Survive

- fight, flight or freeze
- alarm reaction is activated
- mid brain dominance
What this Means to Treatment

- restoration of confidence in their body
  “My body did what it was supposed to do!”
- need for sensory interventions to help regulate the survival response systems
- need for verbal and non-verbal processes

Memory & Trauma: The Journey from Implicit to Explicit Memory

- Explicit/Declarative (home is the Prefrontal Cortex)
- Implicit (home is the mid-brain)
  » Iconic Symbolization

“…trauma is essentially the inability to transform sensory memories of distressing events into explicit (cognitive) memory, where these memories could be reframed and managed and where what is happening now (no danger or threat) is distinguished from what happened then (traumatic event).”

» Trauma Informed Practices - Steele & Malchiodi, 2012, p. 152

What This Means to Treatment

- use sensory interventions
- expressive arts therapy
- verbal and non-verbal processes
Trauma and the Body: Nervous System Arousal

- The key to healing traumatic symptoms in humans is in our physiology. When faced with what is perceived as inescapable or overwhelming threat, humans and animals both use the immobility response. The important thing to understand about this function is that it is involuntary. This simply means that the physiological mechanism governing this response resides in the primitive, instinctual parts of our brains and nervous systems, and is not under our conscious control.
  - Waking the Tiger, Levine, 1997, p. 17

What This Means to Treatment

- body as resource
- manage arousal through repetition of stressed/relaxed body states
- mindfulness
- safe experiences

What is Trauma-Informed?

- understanding the impact of trauma on the individual - mind/brain & body
- understanding how symptoms of trauma are adaptive survival mechanisms
- creating body-focused, sensory interventions that are informed by neuroscience, attachment theory, and the psychophysiology of trauma
What is expressive arts therapy?
- visual art
- creative writing
- dance/movement
- drama
- music
- sand tray/play
- “intermodal” EXA

Why Expressive Arts Therapy Fits
- expressive arts is a sensory experience
- includes verbal and non-verbal processes
- active involvement in their healing
- increases sense of safety (containment, manageability, emotional distance)
- an act of externalization
- others can witness
- increases sense of power
- part of all phases of therapy
Resource-Oriented Perspective

- body as a resource
- clients own knowing as a resource
- both process and product as resources
- creativity as resource
- play as resource
- inspiration as resource
- discovering new self-stories as resource
- self-exploration as resource
- attitude of mindfulness as resource
- slowing the pace

Guidelines for use of EXA Interventions for Trauma: Safety, Safety, Safety

- structured
- primarily directive approaches
- trauma-focused themes
- therapeutic interventions are guided by trauma specific questions
- no interpretation, projection, judging

Goals of Expressive Arts Trauma Interventions

- stabilization
- identification of post-trauma reactions (if any)
- re-establish or establish sense of safety and power
- skill building
- processing trauma
- reclaim, reframe, repair, reorient
- celebrating strengths
Expressive Arts Therapy Four Phase Model: An Overview

- Phase One: Initial Assessment
- Phase Two: Cultivating Safety and Resources
- Phase Three: Trauma Processing
- Phase Four: Reclaim, Reframe, Repair and Reorient

Phase One: Initial Assessment

- Standardized Tests
- Arts Assessment Tools
- Arts-Based Information Gathering Tools
- Questionnaires
- Therapist Organizing Handouts

Goals of Phase One: Initial Assessment

- see the world from the child’s point of view
- understand how trauma has impacted their view of self, relationships and the world
- understand behaviors of concern
- begin to identify thinking errors
- track body activation
- learn about the child’s creativity
Phase One: Interventions

- Tracking Assessment and Treatment
- Managing Activation - Teens & Children
- How Trauma Impacted My World
- Amazing Body
- My Body and the Trauma
- Self-Portraits - Part One
- Sensory Awareness Skills
- Pieces of My Story

Goals of Phase Two: Cultivating Safety and Resources

- stabilization
- re-establish or establish sense of safety and power
- skill building
- learn to tune-in to the body
- identify and use resources
Phase Two: Interventions

- Pouches, Pockets, Bags & Boxes
- Building Resources
- Cultivating Hope

Resource Building Skills: Internal Resources

- intelligence
- determined
- clever
- confidence and competence
- creativity
- flexibility
- sense of purpose
- sense of humour
- defense mechanisms

External Resources

- functional
- friends/family/pets
- favourite places
- sports, musical talents
- clubs/organizations
- spiritual
- positive memories
- physical
Anchoring the Resources

- move between body sensations of helplessness and empowerment
- increases self-confidence

Goals of Phase Three: Trauma Processing

- to help children move the trauma experience from implicit to explicit memory
- engage in processes to desensitize the trauma material

Phase Three: Interventions

- The Wall
- Pieces of My Story
- My Expressive Arts Story
- My Body - What My Body Did
- My Body - What I Wished/Wanted My Body to Do
- My Body’s Voice
Pieces of My Story: Putting It All Together

Goals of Phase Four: Reclaim, Reframe, Repair, Reorient

Phase Four: Interventions
- Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviors
- My Healing Journey
- Before Therapy/Now
- Evidence of Growth
- Beyond the Trauma
- Victim-Survivor-Thrivel
- Self-Portraits - Part Two
- Therapy/Art Review
- Celebration/Ceremony/Ritual
Casey Halper, an Occupational Therapist who works at our school, recently gave a seminar to parents to teach us about sensory balance and activities for a sensory savvy schedule throughout the day. Many kids are now diagnosed with sensory integration issues, but the more I learn about this, the more I find that sensory issues are something that we all face and can all benefit from exploring.

For instance, I now realize that my engine tends to run too low and I need to work harder at energizing myself throughout the day. I have actually become more sensitive to when I am running low and have incorporated some of the activities below to help keep my energy up. I find this whole thing really interesting because I never really thought about actually trying to manipulate my energy level this way, and certainly for kids it can be invaluable as sometimes any kid can be too hyped up or having trouble getting going.

I thought it would be cool to put together a list of sensory activities. While these activities all revolve around sensory stimulation, I think they are just great all-around activities for any kid, and a great list to pull up when you are stuck at home and need ideas for how to pass that last hour in the day or when you need a calming or invigorating activity when your child is stuck in a bad mood. These sensory activities are perfect for any kid from toddlers on up and some are even good for babies.

If you are interested in other sensory topics check out our posts on sensory savvy snacks and OT recommended toys.

Sensory activities fall into different categories. Perhaps the most useful one for self-regulation is Proprioceptive Input. That's a fancy word for "heavy work" that engages your joints. These activities make you feel grounded and can be calming for a high-running child or invigorating for a low-running kid. This first batch of activities create Proprioceptive Input:

1. Jump (on a mini-trampoline, from a chair to a sofa, on the bed, etc.)
2. Wheelbarrow walking or races
3. Donkey Kicks
4. ABC Pushups (Push-up plank position, touch chest with hand and say a letter of the alphabet, all the way up to the letter Z. Each letter said, the student changes the hand that touches the chest)
5. Bear walk
6. Crab walk
7. Play leap frog
8. Tummy time push ups (for babies)
9. Toddlers can push their own stroller, the laundry or grocery cart
10. Have your toddler or child carry a backpack full of their own toys and books
11. Hammer ice cubes in a plastic bag (then use them for lemonade!)
12. Pillow Fight
13. Stuffed animal catch
14. Hanging from a chin-up bar
15. Bouncing on hopping ball
16. Tug-of-war
17. Hopscotch
18. Wrestling
19. Tickle fight
20. Drumming
21. Banging on pots and pans
22. Have a parade and march
23. Wiping the counters
24. Sweeping
25. Swiffering
26. Dustbusting
27. Unloading the washing machine and the dryer
28. Taking out the trash
29. Water balloon catch
30. Beanbag catch
31. Push-o-war (put palms against each other and push as hard as you can)
32. Animal footsteps (Child lays down and chooses an animal and using your fingers or hands try to make it feel like that animal walking over back and limbs.

**Vestibular Input** (swinging and spinning) is intense and long-lasting sensory input. It should be provided in doses and parents should watch and be sensitive to how their children react and help them learn to manage this type of input to keep them even.

33. Swinging: Try different types of swinging to see how it feels (tire, rope, belly, etc)
34. Spinning
35. Run in circles
36. Hang upside down
37. Swing your child around from their arms or legs
38. drag them on a sheet or blanket
39. Rock in a rocking chair

**Tactile Input. Many kids are overly sensitive to tactile input.** Tags, pant buttons, getting wet, or even the feeling of foods in the mouth can drive some kids batty. Doing these activities can help children get used to tactile stimulation gradually and can be fun for all kids.

40. Make a kid sandwich by pressing down on him between two pillows or couch cushions
41. Make a kid burrito by rolling her tightly in a blanket
42. Roll out the cookie dough by rolling a big ball firmly over the back and limbs
43. Make your own sandbox with a bowl full of dry beans or styrofoam peanuts.
44. Pour salt on a cookie sheet and paint with your fingers.
45. Spread beans out in a baking tray or pan and make a construction site for trucks. Bury small toys in rice and have them do an archeological dig.

46. Go on a texture walk.

47. Have a texture scavenger hunt at home.

In the bath: Some sensory defensive kids hate getting wet, but these activities make bathing more fun for all kids:

48. Add food coloring to the water.

49. Ladles, cups, strainers, squirters, funnels.

50. Play with shaving cream.

51. Soap crayons or bath paints.

52. Rub with different textures while in the bath, a smooth or nubby washcloth, a loofah, a nail brush.

53. Put shaving cream on a placemat to squish around.

54. Mix cookie dough or cake batter with hands.

55. Make play dough.

56. Make a touch book of different textures from your home.

57. Put single items in paper bags and let kids try to guess what they are.

58. Play with face paints.

59. Repot the plants.

60. Use a vibrating toothbrush.

61. Sip seltzer.

62. Lick lemons Some kids need extra oral-motor activities, but they tend to be calming for everyone.

63. Crunch ice.

64. Use chewelry.

65. Make smoothies and suck through a straw.

66. Practice chewing gum and blowing bubbles.

67. Use crazy straws Breathing is especially important for kids with low muscle tone, but we can all use to exercise our lungs and benefit from the therapeutic effects of breathing deeply.

68. Blow whistles.

69. Make and blow pinwheels.

70. Blow feathers off your hand.

71. Play soccer by blowing a cottonball across the table scoring if you can blow it off the other person's end.

72. Have a cottonball race.

73. Make bubble mountains in a bowl with a straw and soapy water.

74. Blow gently on each other's faces (see who can blow the longest).

Visual, Olfactory (Smell), and Auditory Stimulating Activities:

75. Sit quietly and listen to nature. (You can also use nature sounds recordings).

76. Play a listening game. Sit very quietly and try to guess the sounds you hear.

77. Let them play with the stereo dial to experiment with loud and soft sounds.

78. Play by candlelight.
79. Turn off the lights and play flashlight tag
80. Shadow puppets
81. Build a fort or tent
82. Hide under a blanket and read by flashlight
83. Play catch with a balloon
84. Do mazes or dot to dots
85. Trace your body or hands
86. Wear sunglasses
87. Explore how your child reacts to different smells. If you find some are soothing or alerting, get lotions, soaps, or candles to help regulate mood.
88. Using a blindfold have them guess different smells. (peanut butter, maple syrup, apples, etc)
89. Try giving a child a strong flavored candy or gum before trying a new food at dinner.
90. Eat sensory savvy snacks
91. Tickle Fingers (trace fingers lightly over the skin)
92. Put on lotion
93. Pet the cat
94. Butterfly kisses (eyelash kisses)
95. Give each other massages
96. Make extreme faces
97. Practice blowing out birthday candles on playdough cakes
98. Put dollops of different colored paints in a baggie and squish around to mix the paints.
99. Create a sensory savvy spot (beanbag chair or pile of pillows with soft lighting, soothing items such as books and stuffed animals, music with headphones and a snack)

Most of these activities are taken from *Raising a Sensory Smart Child: The Definitive Handbook for Helping Your Child with Sensory Integration Issues* by Lindsey Biel and Nancy Penske. This is the best book I have found on practical advice for parents on sensory issues and I think a really valuable book for ANY parent.

Most kids that I know tend to have at least one situation that makes them, well, pretty much freak. In addition to tons of advice on dealing with sensory issues, *Raising a Sensory Smart Child* has great tips and advice for how to be sensitive and help children negotiate whatever their particular tough spot is, whether it's bath time, brushing hair, getting dressed, loud noises, as well as sleeping better. This is a book worth having on every bookshelf.
Focusing with Children/Youth

Why?
- to increase sensory awareness inside the body
- to make contact with something in the body about something (positive or negative)
- to help a child learn to listen to this sensation and the story that goes with it
- to learn how to cope positively with feelings and sensations in the body rather than have to avoid
- for a child/youth/adult to learn about the bodies capacity to change/shift sensations

How?
Movements and Exercises - Make a game with the following
- stomp your feet then touch your heart and feel the beat
- shrug shoulders to your ears
- clench jaw and fist - what happens in the rest of your body
- when you swing as high as you can, what do you notice in your body
- put your hand on your belly as you breathe deep
- imagine biting a lemon/watermelon/stepping on pointy rocks/hot sand/sticky floor

Draw a picture of self and create or draw a safe place for this image.
- notice what goes into making it safe and what part of the body responds to that
  safe feeling/image

Going Inside
- feel feet on the ground, the chair underneath you and your breath going in and out
- if you like to and it feels safe and good, close your eyes, or leave them open
- let yourself go down inside your body, like an elevator to the middle of the building
- invite the person to say something like, “Hello dear one” which helps to create a warm
  and inviting environment
- encourage them to go slow and that it is like the reptiles who crawl very slowly and not
to rush this experience
- we will just begin to notice whatever is happening inside
  - if they get something and connect, you might invite them to draw the sensations
  - if not, offer to explore with these images:
    - imagine your favorite pet/animal/friend/caregiver
    - a time you were successful with something
    - a time you experienced a good surprise

Drawing the Sensation/Image/Experience
- remind the child/youth that it is not about creating a pretty picture, but to follow
  their own inner sense of what needs to be created
- invite them to think about what colors go with it, what size of paper or medium
  (clay, paint, pastels, markers)
- how do their hands/body want to move the colors on the paper

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-you might ask, “Is there anything more that wants to come?”

**Moving the Sensations/Experience**
- show with the body how the experience was (what body parts would you use, what would stay still, rhythm, tempo of the movement)

**Using OtherExpressive Arts**
- musical instruments - choose one or several to play the sensations
- use stories/poems

Both positive and difficult emotions can be evoked - encourage them to stay with whatever arises until it shifts - as it should. This helps them know that the inner landscape moves and changes.

**Difficult Sensations**
- when difficult experiences happen we feel emotions and we experience our body inside in different ways
- we can have good, excited places inside and we can have sad and scary places inside as well
- when something isn’t right we can know by what we feel in our bodies
- think about a time that was upsetting and what you noticed in your body, where, how would you describe it?
- sometimes we don’t want to feel that sensation ever again and so we try to avoid feeling the feelings and the sensations and we push those experiences into a far away place (we “swallow” our tears, close our throat to choke down tears
- it is good practise to learn to let those feelings/sensations come and say “hello” to whatever is there and we will feel better in the end
- if we pay attention to the “heavy” sensations or constrictions, and we stay with it long enough, we will learn the story that goes with it...
- if we allow ourselves to draw it out, just let our hand move in the way it wants to express it - even with just lines and shapes and colors, we can feel better inside

**Guiding the Focusing**
- feel feet on the ground, the chair underneath you and your breath going in and out
- if you like to and it feels safe and good, close your eyes, or leave them open
- let yourself go down inside your body, like an elevator to the middle of the building
- invite the person to say something like, “Hello dear one” which helps to create a warm and inviting environment
- encourage them to go slow and that it is like the reptiles who crawl very slowly and not to rush this experience
- we will just begin to notice whatever is happening inside
- when you start to notice something, maybe something that is bothering you from a long time ago or just today...anger, sad, whatever feeling....can you feel something in your body? Where do you feel that in your body? How does it feel inside there? Can you
describe that feeling...draw it...always check back in with your body if that image fits the feeling...is there anything else....go back and check...always check if there is more...and how it feels inside when you draw it out...do you feel more space....how does it change inside...
Intermodal expressive arts can begin with whatever art form the client feels comfortable with, or is wanting to explore, or may be decided together with the therapist.

- any of the art forms can then be responded to by another art form (i.e. if someone has created a painting, this can then be followed by one word responses that are written down and given to the client to create their own poem or story.

**Creative Writing:**
- creative writing can be where one begins with the intermodal experience or can be a response to another art modality (i.e. a painting)

Storytelling/progressive storytelling (one person starts the story, the next person adds to the story etc.)
Journal – open writing or themes
Poems – Haiku (5-7-5)
- One word responses then with those words create a poem or writing
- Chose a word – “HOPE” and a word for each letter

**Creation Stories**
In his book, *Art as Medicine* (2002), McNiff advocates writing “Creation Stories” about how the image came to be. Creation stories are described as a rite of passage that brings practitioners into the inner life of the image. This idea has been very meaningful in my work with clients. It emphasizes the honor that it is to work this closely with the suffering of others and being trusted enough to be let into their inner world.

Magazines – cut up strips of magazine articles from various magazines. Mix them up and take 5 strips and line them up and create crazy and imaginative poems and stories.

**Prompts:**
The me nobody knows...
I wish… I want… I am… I desire… I will… I secretly want… I feel… I need… I long for…
If I could live my life over….
Rage poem… I hate…
I want to control….
The inside me…
The outside me…
When I think of the ocean (mountains, prairies) I am reminded of….
How lying (other negative behavior) helps me… hurts me…
Those I’ve loved…
Those I’ve hated…
Your fortune says….

Deepen the experience:
- write poem, client reads it, therapist reads it, what word/phrase stands out – client reads again and therapist says that word/phrase after the end of each line.

Use of pre-existing poems
i.e Autobiography in 5 Short Chapters – Portia Nelson
The Journey – Mary Oliver
The Summer Day – Mary Oliver
The Road Not Taken – Robert Frost

Drama
- use photos/camera/video
- simple props (bubbles, clown hair, hat, mask)
- improv/client is the director
- write a soliloquy (act of talking while or as if alone) or monologue (dramatic soliloquy)
- take images from the room we are in to represent aspects of their life/place them/give them a voice

Music
- find a beat to your story
- write a song
- listen to a song and re-write (i.e What The World Needs Now)
- "musical quilt" (play music from different genres, move to the music for a minute, then create a drawing in response to the music, tape them all together to create a quilt)

Movement
- hand gesture
- move their body to the story or the art
- body-sculpting – essence of your poem/story/song
- group sculpture
- move different aspects of the visual art (the colors, the shapes, the lines, images)

Visual
- sculpting paper, clay, model magic
- paint, draw, collage
- before/after (trauma, illness etc.)
- where we are now/where we want to be and the journey in between
- Images over time
  - rework images
  - art review - put up their art like a gallery – may write about it all again – notice themes or changes in the art
- mural

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I’d rather stand on the edge of a cliff
And hang my toes over a bit,
And then jump when they dare me,
Even if it scares me and I get hurt.
I’d rather build my wings on the way down,
Do my best not to fall to the ground
and than laugh at my mistakes
‘cause there only lessons I’ll learn

Chorus:
I’d rather burn with desire deep in my soul,
And love like a fire that’s out of control, and laugh and dance and fall
and chance and kiss.
I’d rather live my whole life
with a sense of abandon,
Squeeze every drop out,
no matter what happens.
And not wonder what I’ve missed
I’d rather risk.

Well I guess I could just play it safe
and forget about love, hope and faith,
with my eye on the shore line,
keeping my boat tied and staying home,

ohhh but I’ll never discover new land
by keeping my feet on the sand
No I’d rather set sail
and get carried away by the storm.

Chorus:
I’d rather burn with desire deep in my soul,
And love like a fire that’s out of control, and laugh and dance and fall
and chance and kiss.
I’d rather live my whole life
with a sense of abandon,
Squeeze every drop out,
no matter what happens.
And not wonder what I’ve missed
I’d rather risk.
I would rather risk

I’d rather burn with desire deep in my soul,
And love like a fire that’s out of control,
I’d live my whole life
with a sense of abandon,
Squeeze every drop out
no matter what happens.
And not wonder what I’ve missed
Oh I just can’t resist,
The chance to risk.

Ohhh live, and love and laugh and dance and fall and chance and kiss
I’d rather risk (x6)
Trauma-Informed Expressive Arts Therapy: A Sensory-Based Approach to Treatment

Protecting the Vulnerable

Cultivating Resources

Prairie Institute of Expressive Arts Therapy
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Phase One

Initial Assessment
## Tracking Assessment/Treatment

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<th>Interventions</th>
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### Hard Feelings

Circle the number that shows how easy/hard it was in our session when working on the trauma. Underline the number that shows how you felt at the end of our time.

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## Managing Anxiety

Put a square around the number when first talking about the theme and a circle for how you felt at the end of the session.

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How Trauma Changed My World

There are many ways to express how the trauma has changed or impacted your life. First, explore the art materials and then come back to your body. What materials are you drawn to? Is there an impulse inside that guides your decisions about what to use and how to express your inner experience? You may paint, draw, use clay, create symbols, do collage, create mandalas, dance, listen to or write a song that has meaning, or write a play and act it out. What medium makes sense to you about how you might express this part of your story. What materials do you need (i.e. size of paper, which puppets or musical instruments)?
Pieces of My Story: Remembering
Write an incident that you remember on each piece of the puzzle. Rate out of 10 how upsetting it is to you now with 10 being most upsetting. You will soon create a special safety box/envelope to hold these pieces in while we are getting ready to work on them down the road.
Phase Two
Cultivating Safety and Resources
Pouches, Pockets, Bags and Boxes
(Therapist)

Let the child know they have the opportunity to create a safe place to put their puzzle pieces. There are many possibilities and they may have their own idea about what they would like to create to hold the puzzle pieces. Here are some ideas:

1. Pouches - Pouches can be made with the child. Using material, cut the shape desired and fold in half, sewing the side edges. Small pouches from local dollar stores work great too.

2. Pockets - Having pockets cut from an old jeans on hand can be options to use as well. The child can embellish the pocket using markers, embroidery thread, buttons and other materials.

3. Paper bags and envelopes also work well as containers and are easy to embellish.

4. Boxes - Have a collection of boxes for the child to choose from. Small wooden boxes are available at craft and dollar stores. The child is invited to paint and decorate the box. Ask what colors, symbols or words they might like to put on the container. They can paint both the inside and outside of the box.
Building Resources - 1

Identifying Inside and Outside Resources

1. My Inside Resources
Inside resources are my gifts/talents/personality traits/beliefs. For example, some inner resources could be your ability to talk about feelings, confidence, creativity, determination, cleverness, sense of humor, reliability, wisdom, expressiveness, dedication, sensitivity, caring, and intuitiveness. Sometimes it is hard to know if something is a resource. One way to decide if it is a good enough resource is if it makes you feel alive, content, peaceful, proud, excited, or comforted.

Make a list of your resources. As you speak about each resource, notice how you sense them in your body as you talk about this resource. For example, you might notice you stand taller when you think about how brave you were to stand up for your friend at school.

Rate each resource from 0-10 with 10 being the strongest, most positive sensation/feeling.

2. My Outside Resources
Outside resources are people (friends/family/heros/icons), favorite places, memories, nature, objects (stuffed animals, stones, special gifts), community (church, sports groups), animals or pets. Anything that makes us feel good inside when we think of them.

Make a list of your resources. As you speak about each resource, notice how you sense them in your body as you talk about this resource. For example, when I think about my cat I feel warm in my heart and a smile comes to my face.

Rate each resource from 0-10 with 10 being the strongest, most positive sensation/feeling.

3. Inside and/or outside resources I need and/or want to develop.

4. How might my life be different with these new resources?
Building Resources - 2
Strengthening Your Inside and Outside Resources

1. Resource Cards and Pocket
   - using recipe cards or half that size if desired, create small cards with images of specific resources on them using collage, drawing, writing and embellishing them with whatever materials are available
   - create a container for the resource cards by using a pocket cut out from an old or discarded pair of blue jeans, embellish the pocket with embroidery thread, fabric markers or glue on embellishments
   - practice using the resource cards by thinking of a mildly upsetting event and bring up the resource card and notice the shift in the body that happens naturally as we move to a more pleasant thought, image and resource

2. Resource Shrine
   - using the outline on the next page, cut out this shape on a card stock weight paper
   - the shrine naturally has both an outside and inside space that can be used to identify both inside and outside resources
   - embellish the shrine with collage materials that captures your resources
   - you may want to add the resources that you are developing, as a reminder of the ones you are needing

3. Resource Flags
   - prayer flags have long been used in the Himalayas to send prayers to all people as it is believed that when the flags are strung together and hung outside that the wind takes the wishes and spreads them over the countryside
   - we can create resource flags with cloth material cut in rectangular pieces and embellish them with meaning related to your resources
   - the cloth can be old sheets painted with acrylic colors that are meaningful to you
   - wet the sheet and add acrylic paint with a paint brush, mixing colors together as desired, dry and cut or rip into whatever size is wanted
   - once embellished, they can be attached by safety pins or loosely sewn directly on the string and hung where you will see them

4. Resource Stones and Pouch
   - if time and space permits, going out together to find the “just right” stones is a wonderful excursion - it could also be homework, for you and your caregiver to go and find stones together
   - stones should be washed with soapy water and dried, then painted with acrylics
   - once dry, the resources can be drawn or resource words written on the stones

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- make a pouch by creating a six inch diameter circle on cloth (i.e. old plain colored sheets, muslin, light weight canvas, etc)
- decorate your pouch with regular or fabric markers
- once the drawing is complete, take embroidery thread and using a simple stitch one inch from the edge of the fabric to create a drawstring for the pouch
Cultivating Hope

What is hope? Let’s brainstorm together! Some ideas of hope that other young people have shared with me are:
- “Hope is something that keeps you going, even when you don’t feel like it.”
- “Hope keeps you believing that things will turn out okay.”

We are going to explore more about hope and find a way to remember there is hope even as we go through the hard stuff together.

Detectives Searching for Hope
We will together create a story about hope. First, we will pretend we are detectives. Detectives are people who search for answers. They look around, ask questions, and find answers. We will go on a search together looking for hope. We will both go away and ask other people what they think hope is and then bring our answers back and either write a story together, create a poem with the ideas, or...

Use the following prompt and keep writing until you have no more ideas.
Hope is....
I believe in...
My faith tells me...

How does hope help you? How does it help you with the hard stuff we are working on?

What does hope look like? Sound like? Feel like?

Can you draw hope? Sound it on the drum?

I will remember.....

Symbol of Hope
A symbol of hope could be a song, a dance, a poem, words, a story, a memory of someone positive in your life or a memory of something good that happened to you that taught you about hope. It might be an image, or symbol like the butterfly, sun, stars, tree, etc. On paper or canvas draw/paint your symbol of hope (write the words to a song, photo of someone, image etc.). When you look at your image or words, where do you sense them in your body?

“Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all.” Emily Dickenson
Labyrinths, Mazes and Mandalas

Learning to soothe ourselves when we are having a hard time is an important skill to learn. Choose a mandala, labyrinth or maze and make it your own. Think about colors that soothe you or perk you up. You can add your own symbols and words to create something unique.
Phase Three

Trauma Processing
The Wall

At any time in our work together you may feel as though you can’t talk, do art, or think about the trauma any more. Many people describe that it is something like a wall that goes up. It might be different for you. Draw (use clay, build with pillows etc) what your wall (or whatever fits here) looks like. Where do you feel it in relation to your body (e.g. outside, inside). What sensations go with the wall? When have you felt like this before? What does it feel like when it disappears/shifts/changes in some way? How has this wall been helpful to you? How has it not been helpful to you?
Pieces of My Story: Putting it All Together

You have done so much work to get to this part. You are strong and brave and have developed important skills that show me you are ready to deal with the hard stuff. You are ready to take one piece at a time and start to put your unique puzzle story together.

Here are the steps:
1. Open the box and chose a puzzle piece. Check to see if you would rate it differently than you did when you first wrote it down.
2. Draw or paint a picture of the hardest part of this puzzle piece.
3. Tell me in as much detail as possible about your picture (including the details of the trauma, even if they only drew how they felt during the trauma). You can let me know if you would like to write it out or if you would like me to.

Tell me about your picture.
What was the hardest part of this experience?
What happened just before this?
How did you get there?
What were you thinking as it happened?
What were you feeling as it happened?
What did you notice in your body as it happened?
After it was over, what did you think/feel/notice in your body?
What are you thinking/feeling/noticing now in your body?
Map out the thoughts, feelings and sensations on a body outline.
Is there anything your body wants to do right now (move, shake, stand)?

4. We know that we can’t change what happened, but if you could magically change anything about this picture or incident, what would you change? If you would like, do that now to the image. If you could have anyone there that could have helped, protected, nurtured you, who would it be? Add that to your image if you like. What difference does that make now in your thoughts, feelings and body? Check inside to see if you have any impulse to do something to this image.

5. What rating would you give this puzzle piece now out of 10 on the upset scale? If less, what helped make it lower? If it is a 3 or higher, what might we do that will help make this one even less upsetting? What helps you feel even a little bit better? Let’s experiment by giving something or someone in the image a voice. What would it say? Who needs to hear?

6. Put the piece back in the box and close the lid.

7. Do an art-debrief if there is time and it is needed. This is a chance to do art in response to any left over yucky feelings or positive feelings.
My Expressive Arts Brave Story

Now that the hard and brave work of addressing all the pieces of your puzzle is finished, you have the opportunity to close this part of our work together by creating your own, original and unique expressive arts story. The theme of your story can be about your “bravery”. Not only have you lived through the trauma experiences, but you have faced them head on in our work together! Being brave does not mean one is fearless. In fact, being brave means you feel the fear and move forward in spite of it.

Here are some other words that can relate to bravery:

courage
lionhearted
warrior
champion
determined
luminary
hardiness
spirited
inspiration

Your brave story can have a title and a beginning, middle and end. It can be done in ANY way you can imagine! Some young people have expressed their story in the following ways:

-a story book about a caged bird who escaped and found freedom
-a written song about her strength as a girl
-a poem
-a six word story
-acting out the courage of the hero in a story with hats and dress up clothes
-a dance to a well loved song of inner power

There are SO MANY ways you could do this - let’s explore together!
Phase Four

Reclaim, Reframe, Repair and Reorient
My Healing Journey

Healing from the effects of trauma is like being on a journey. It requires that you have special equipment, skills and people supporting you. You have been learning how to deal with the challenges you faced so far on your journey, including difficult thoughts, feelings and sensations in your body.

Healing Scale
Circle the number that represents where you were on your healing journey before you came to therapy. Put a square around the number that represents where you are now.

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Create an image that represents your healing journey. You may know a special song that could represent your journey. We can listen to the song together. If you have a song, chose a line or lines from this song that really captures the meaning of your journey and use that line to write your own song/poem. If you have another idea, let me know.
Beyond the Trauma: Doll Making

Sometimes throughout the healing journey it can seem as though the trauma will always be part of your life. Then there are times when you see the evidence of how much you have grown through this experience. You are invited to create a doll that represents the part of you that has never been touched by the trauma. Give yourself permission to imagine this possibility. Begin to imagine moving forward in your life with all the strength and power of a thriver! This might be the part of you that has hopes and dreams, the part that carries your life force, and your love for life. You can write on the doll's body or add anything you want to it. There might be a special note you write and wrap it around the body or stitch it on.

To get started, begin to imagine the possibilities as described above. As you consider this, notice if any parts of you feel happy, peaceful, content, excited, fulfilled, full, light, or energetic. As you look at the doll, find ways to bring this alive in the body of the doll. Try not to think too much about all the meaning. It is more important to have fun creating and bringing it to life.

Write the story of how this doll came to be in the world or simply the story that goes with your doll. As you work on it, notice if you think of a name for it.

Some young people prefer to create action figures. Imagine what action figure would have meaning to you in your own experience of overcoming the traumas. Perhaps it has special powers to conquer whatever comes its way.

Write the story of this action figure. How did it come into existence? What is its purpose? Does it have a name?
Celebration or Ceremony

Together we will create a celebration or ceremony that honors your healing journey this far and marks the closing of therapy. In preparation, think about what might be important to include in the celebration:

Songs:

Poems/Stories:

Candles/incense/smudge:

Symbols of Strength for the center table:

Photos you want to bring:

Photos you want taken:

Art you want to include:

Something you might want to make (i.e. bracelet, clay piece, etc):

What you would like your therapist to do/say/bring:

Celebration/Ceremony Process:
Opening:

Middle:

Closing:
GUIDELINE 17

Creative Arts Therapies for Children

Description

The creative arts therapies (CATs) include art, dance/movement, drama, music, poetry, and psychodrama. They share a commitment to the value and use of creative arts processes to enhance, improve, and change physical, emotional, cognitive, and social functioning. The CATs have a tradition of use with children and teens (who often are accustomed to using the arts, or who have less sophisticated verbal skills) as a way to access nonverbal material or content that is unavailable to words. Hence, the CATs are especially well suited to work with children who have experienced trauma.

Significant advances in the past decade in the scientific basis and understanding of the relationship between brain functioning and processing of traumatic events has generated burgeoning interest in the role of the CATs in treating trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The kinesthetic and sensory experiences inherent in the CATs activate the right hemisphere of the brain, allowing access to nonverbal memory. The art making and engagement in creative activities allows the externalization of internal images, thoughts, and feelings, in addition to enabling titration and containment of affect.

General Strength of the Evidence

Historically, CAT research has been based on assessments and clinical experience. Although there is no empirical evidence supporting the efficacy of
the CATs, an abundance of CAT case studies describe treatment success, the majority published in academic CAT journals, and a preponderance using art therapy. To date, there is one small Level A randomized controlled art therapy study (Chapman et al., 2001) and other attempts at using objective measures to assess change.

Course of Treatment

Treatment has been conducted with individuals and groups in both inpatient and clinic settings. There are different schools of thought regarding theoretical orientation and practice. Interventions vary along a continuum from

- Therapist-directed activities and themes to more client-directed, unstructured sessions that are either time-limited or open-ended.
- An emphasis on the creative process as the agent of change to a focus on the product.
- Using verbal processing of creative output to foster hemispheric integration of past trauma to letting the process or product “speak for itself.”
- Using a single CAT to incorporating multiple CATs.

CAT clinicians and researchers differ in their assimilation of non-CAT theoretical principles and practices. Most notably, a number of creative arts therapists use or adapt cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) interventions to their work (e.g., “draw what you saw”). Likewise, creative arts activities are often integrated into many CBT therapy sessions (e.g., “Let’s role-play what you wish you had done”).

Recommendations

Currently, treatment protocols and research paradigms are sporadically being developed to measure the efficacy of the CATs in medical, mental health, and educational settings, among others. Future work should focus on the following:

1. Exploring the relationship between neurological functioning and creative arts processes.
2. Using existing standardized measures of PTSD, in addition to developing appropriate creative arts–based assessment tools.
4. Developing manualized treatment protocols to better delineate the format and structure of interventions that can then be compared across settings and with other treatments.

5. Conducting controlled outcome studies of CATs PTSD treatments.

Additionally, it is recommended that those who use the arts with traumatized children have knowledge and experience in the area, and be properly trained in the specific creative arts modality, the creative process, nonverbal dialogue, and containment and stabilization via the arts. The CATs can promote powerful access to trauma-related experiences, and extreme care must be taken to avoid retraumatization and to foster coping.

Collaboration with other professionals is recommended to engage in dialogue and debate, and to learn how the CATs and other professions can build on the strengths and knowledge of one another to develop the best practices for PTSD treatment.

**Summary**

As the emerging effective paradigms of PTSD treatment are formally investigated, the CATs have great potential to contribute in-depth knowledge of nonverbal dialogue and the kinesthetic, sensory, auditory, and visual processes and their role in perception, cognition, and change in therapy. More CATs studies and collaboration with other mental health professions in the future are essential for the progress of effective, evidence-based treatment. The CATs are unique in their focus on gaining access to traumatic content and affect via nonverbal modalities and provide a ready avenue to explore the new frontier of brain and experience-based trauma therapies.

**Reference**


**Suggested Readings**


References: Trauma and Expressive Arts Therapy


References: Trauma and Expressive Arts Therapy


**Related Websites**

www.tlcinstitute.org
The National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children

www.cftre.com
Canadian Foundation for Trauma Research and Education

www.trauma-pages.com
About trauma

www.childtrauma.com
Child Trauma Institute

www.coloringcastle.com
Free images to print for coloring, including mandalas

www.focusing.org
Children’s Corner

mindfullkids.wordpress.com/
Mindful Kids
Resource List

Bendee Dolls/Muslin Dolls  www.CPGbulksales.com  (California Paper Goods)
Blank Puzzles (same as above)
Musical Instruments  www.empire-music.com
Oh Cards  www.oh-cards-institute.org
Cope Cards  www.oh-cards-na.com/card-decks/cope