

# Parent-Child Tele Play Therapy

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# Clinician Considerations

Creating the virtual play rooms (for you and client)

Therapeutic interactions over video/phone

Ethical Guidelines

# Creating the virtual play rooms

## The therapist's play room

- A quite and private space.
- Will you be in your play therapy office? If not, can you have play therapy tools to use with clients on hand or digitally?
  - Emotion chart
  - Jenga tower
  - Candyland or other board and card games
  - Balloons
  - Sand tray and figurines
  - Puppets/stuffies
  - Art Supplies (paper, pencils)

# The Child's Play Room

- Work with the parent to set up the play space
- Discuss toy kit, location of session, potential interruptions, time scheduling (possible period of limit testing at home and complaint about the toy selection)
- Create a separate bin of toys/items for special play time
- Basic Toy Kit: Art: Paper, markers, tape, crayons/pencils. Imaginative play: Dolls, cars, stuffies, puppets, figurines, dress up. Aggression/movement: Balloons, pillow/couch, Games: cards, board games. Mastery: legos, puzzles, etc. Sensory: playdoh. Favorite toys, family photos
- Examples of low or no cost toy substitutions: Dollhouse (box with dividers), doll family (clothespins with features drawn or glued on), furniture (blocks of wood), puppets (socks with yarn), bop bag (pillow with neutral face drawn on cover), and using other house hold items.

# Therapeutic interactions over video/ phone

**Need heightened presence and attunement from therapist to regulate the client and create containment**

**What do you need to do during and between sessions to stay present?**

*(movement, stretching, go outside, standing, closing all other tabs, turn off notifications)*

- Extra care to notice their nonverbal (body language, tone of voice)
- Managing that you WILL miss cues below the waist:
  - *“What’s happening with your feet as we talk? Your hands?”*
  - *Encourage movement, standing, breathing*

# Ethical Guidelines

From CAMFT California Guidelines for telehealth: “Inform the client of the potential risks and limitations of receiving treatment via telehealth.”

\*See Informed Consent for online therapy: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RO\\_0lkhcqzYztxmzLTb5MiHkH6dO-GqkjTXL5pv-k7c/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RO_0lkhcqzYztxmzLTb5MiHkH6dO-GqkjTXL5pv-k7c/edit?usp=sharing)

Each time a licensee or registrant provides services via telehealth, he or she shall do the following:

- (1) Verbally obtain from the client and document the client's full name and address of present location, at the beginning of each telehealth session.
- (2) Assess whether the client is appropriate for telehealth, including, but not limited to, consideration of the client's psychosocial situation.
- (3) Utilize industry best practices for telehealth to ensure both client confidentiality and the security of the communication medium.

## Using a HIPPA Compliant platform

## Scope of competence: Practice role-playing with a colleague!

# Tele Play Therapy for children ages 4-12

## **Create the container.**

Talk with parent before session about setting up the play space, if they will be able to talk for the first or last 15 minutes if needed, and the necessity of being available to help with tech issues

- Must ask: “Where are you right now?” (need to have the address of location)
- Assess if child is regulated enough for tele play therapy, parent-child therapy, or to offer parent support

## **Start with a ritual each time to set the tone:**

- Choose at least 3 kimoichis you felt over the week from the digital or actual poster, act them out, and therapist has to guess.

OR

- Start with the parent involved and have them each say what’s been going well/bright spots and one or two things that have been challenging. Assess if parent support before play therapy is indicated.

Orienting to a new way of working:

*“Even though we aren’t in the playroom together, this is still your special play time. We can play just about anything you’d like. Sometimes there will be activities I’d like us to do, and other times you can lead us. I have some ideas about how we can do that using the computer. Would you like to hear them?”*

*“Since the computer doesn’t have legs or a neck to move you may have to bring me with you if you move to another part of the room and help me face you.”*

*“There may be times the sound cuts out and I may need you to repeat yourself”*

*“If the internet drops have your parent help you sign in again”*



# Non-directive tele play therapy 4+

Invite child to show you their favorite toys, games, pets, art, photos of self and family to build connection. You may want the parent to hold the device while the client shares with you

Drawing; clay if they have it

Use toys on your end to engage with the toys on theirs (shared puppet plays or dress up)

Have them choose games from your office or their room to play. Have the person who has the game take the turn for both of you.

Each of you has a balloon of your own  
try to keep it up



# Directive Tele-Play Therapy 4+

- Interactive puppet show with client using their own stuffed animals to talk and play through their feelings
- Instruct client to draw their feelings on a piece of paper using lines, shapes, colors
- Bibliotherapy with your favorite therapeutic books or shared screen with youtube videos of readings
- Screen-sharing to explore emotions:
  - Inside out “How is she feeling?” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOkYKyVFnSs>,
  - Guessing emotions (4-6): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MeNY-RxDJig>
  - Sadness over loss Inside Out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdhjztWMnVw>
  - Dancing it out to different emotions (4+): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmMUCMesVtE>
  - Anger (5+): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbpTohPUhMw>
- Emotion-management (age 4-5, free): Breathe, think, do sesame street app

# Movement-Based Directive Tele-Play Therapy 4+

- **Teach Child 5,4,3,2,1 mindfulness activity:** 5 things you see, 4 things you feel, 3 things for hear, 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you taste.
- **Self Regulation Games:** red light, green light, yellow light, and purple light. Green means go, red means stop, yellow means slow motion, and purple means do a silly dance.
- **The Freeze Game:** Child and/or therapist dance to a song and then freezes once music stops.
- **Create a calm down corner** in their bedroom with pillows, blankets, stuffed animals, and anything else that helps them feel safe.
- **Worry stone activity:** Instruct child to find a stone from outside and put it places in their room that show what they are worried about right now.

# Directive Tele-Play Therapy 4+

- Animal Emotions: When child chooses a kimochoi, then act it out. E.g. Growl like a bear if you are feeling angry
- Guide child to choose a stuffed animal to represent each person in their family and allow them to express their feelings to each of those stuffed animals
- Instruct client to choose stuffed animal for each of their parts and/or feelings that are present that day and help facilitate a conversation with them

# Parent-Child Tele-Play Therapy with 4+ year olds

- Teach parent how to play therapeutically with their children
- Combination of Parent Child Interaction Therapy and Filial Therapy
- Begin session talking with parent, make sure play space is set up, connect for 10-20 minutes with child client, and then remainder of session is dedicated to parent-child therapy.

\*Recommendations from the Participant Manual for Filial Therapy by Rise VanFleet, Play Therapy Press\*

# Directive Tele Play Therapy (6+)



## Modified Jenga:

Therapist writes 1-4 on blocks and builds tower  
Child directs therapist which block to move for their turn

- 1= Answer Ungame question 1
- 2= Answer Ungame question 2
- 3= Talk about an emotion from the kimochi chart you felt recently
- 4= Get a physical challenge to do

\*Use answers as topic-starters



## Emotion Egg Hunt

Have child choose 4 toys that represent different emotions s/he has felt and show you without telling you the emotion. Have them hide them in their room while you look away. Have them carry the computer around the room while you direct them where to go to play “hot/cold” until you “find” one. Then child shares what the emotion was and when they felt it.

# Directive Tele Play Therapy 6+

## Friend Genogram:

Draw circles for friends, different size for perceived social hierarchy, list 3 qualities for each of them. Choose a toy in your room to represent

## Family Thought Bubbles (Source: Trudy Post Sprunk):

Draw or pick figures for each of your family members. Write down or say for each:

1. Funny things they do or say
2. Repeated comments
3. Feelings they have most often
4. Things they worry about
5. Things you believe they want to say, but can't for some reason (what do you think would make it easier for them to communicate?)
6. Something each thinks about a lot
7. How does each express their anger
8. How does each express their care and love
9. Perfect vacation for each family member
10. What makes each one sad
11. What does each do to cope with their worries
12. What client wishes each would say to him/her

**CBT for Anxiety:** Screen share using GoZen.com



# Family Therapy Ideas

- **Emotions Charades:** Instruct family to write feelings on small pieces of paper and take turns acting out the feelings to have family members guess that feeling
- **Solution Circles:** On paper or poster board draw two circles, a small one inside the larger one. Ask each person to use miniatures, draw, or write words to show the problem, worry, concern, tragedy in the smaller circle. On the outside circle, think of steps you can take towards resolving this problem, issue, or concern.
- **Questions you can ask in regards to thinking of the solution:** What's helped in the past? Who is a resource? What is the safest step to take? How to take that step safely?

\*Learned about Solution Circles from Eliana Gil\*

- **Balloon Game:** Blow up some balloons and instruct family members to draw/write feelings on the balloons. The goal is this game is to keep all balloons up in the air and when a balloon falls, each family member must share a time they felt that feeling.
- **Kids vs. Adults Games:** pillow fight, sword fighting
- **Physical Games:** Simon Says, Hot potato, Red light/green light, Musical chairs



# Family Therapy Ideas

- **Create a new game:** Help family create a new game with rules that whole family can play together.
- **Mirroring Activity:** Instruct family members to choose a leader and a follower. The leader moves their hands slowly while the leader tries their best to follow and mirror their movements.
- **Obstacle Course:** Instruct family to create an obstacle course together and cheer each other on as they all try to get through it.
- **Family Crafting project:** Make things out of cardboard such as shields and talk about how we all do things to protect ourselves. Think through times and share when they have each felt the need to protect themselves.
- **Puppet show:** Parents and children take turns putting on puppet shows for each other. Parents can think about bringing in the issues their children are currently experiencing.
- **Creating a world:** Create a rectangle out of tape on the floor to represent a contained sand tray and find things around the house/child's toys to use as objects to create a world together.

# Recommendations for Parents

- Find a Listening Partner from Hand in Hand Parenting where you can fully express your emotions during this stressful time and reduce isolation. Learn more about Listening Partnerships here :<https://www.handinhandparenting.org/article/how-to-find-a-listening-partner/>
- Creating a daily schedule for your family that includes walks, meal times, academic time, creative time, chore time, quiet time, screen time, and bedtime.
- Set up a school/work space for your child to do their school work
- Set firm and loving limits with children
- Set clear expectations about this extended time at home
- Special Time from Hand in Hand Parenting with each of your children. Learn about special time here:<https://www.handinhandparenting.org/2016/06/a-guide-to-letting-your-child-rule/>

# Recommendations for Parents

- Build a fort
- Make sensory bins
- Paint with various household objects
- Magnets on the fridge
- Make your own mandala and give it to someone else to color
- Play board games
- Trash can basketball
- Cooking contest using only the items in your pantry

# Recommendations for Parents

- Make a scrapbook
- Use tape to create a “laser” obstacle course down a hallway
- Dance party
- Pillow fight
- Card games
- Homemade play dough
- Art
- Write letters to elders who cannot have visitors in nursing homes