**Information on Creative Therapy**

**Creative therapy may help people who…**

* Have suffered loss, bereavement or as a result of separation from parents, siblings or someone close or divorce of parents
* Suffer from attachment or separation issues
* Have experienced trauma, emotional, physical and or sexual abuse
* Moving area, home and/or school, struggling to settle/fit in
* Are withdrawn, depressed or anxious
* Display angry and aggressive behaviours
* Appear hyper vigilant, unable to concentrate, dissociate (zone out)
* Struggle to interact with others, converse or play
* Are not reaching their potential socially or academically
* Bully others or is/has been bullied
* Display inappropriate behaviour
* May be at risk from exclusion from education or job
* Sometimes seem irrational
* Are anxious, stressed, fearful or phobic
* Have nightmares, flashbacks, disturbed sleep
* Seem generally unhappy, distressed and often upset over small things

**Outcomes of creative therapy may be…**

* increased problem solving skills,
* increased empathy for others,
* better communication,
* improved negotiation and turn taking skills,
* learning to follow rules and stick to boundaries,
* experience positive social interaction,
* enjoying freedom self-expression,
* increased self-confidence and self-reliance,
* increased resilience to adversities

The outcomes of Creative Therapy may be general e.g. a reduction in anxiety and raised self-esteem, or more specific such as a change in behaviour, improved relations with family and friends and managing conflicts in more appropriate ways. Individuals may find it easier to concentrate, take in information and participate more fully in school work, learning, work tasks and activities.

Angerand other seeminglynegative behaviours can be explored in the safety of creative therapy. An individual that has experienced too much sadness and/or fear without the reassurance and validation of a caring other (parent in the case of children and young people) may become confused and overwhelmed, unable to regulate their feelings and emotions and so become anxious and angry, this anger can eventually turn into rage if the individual hasn’t received the attention needed to help them self-regulate, the anger can eventually become rage.

The warmth and acceptance of a caring therapist can help a client to express themselves creatively (which is often easier than verbally) without fear of rejection and or judgement (and punishment or exclusion for a young person) Reassurance and validation of feelings of sadness and fear in therapy can help the client to explore, understand and regulate their emotions and lessen emotional outbursts.

**Information on Creative Therapy** continued…

**Creative therapy** is generally offered to children and young people aged 3 to 17 although it may benefit adults too. Creative expression provides a way to express and explore experiences and feelings through a natural, self-guided, self-healing process. As children’s and young people experiences and knowledge are often communicated through play and creative expression it becomes an important way for them to get to know and accept themselves and others; creative therapy works in a similar way for adults too.

**Creative therapy sessions** are always client led, the client is given as much freedom as possible although there is a mutually agreed contract made at the beginning of therapy between the therapist and child/young person/adult to ensure safety and understanding of the sessions.

**Creative therapists** offer a variety of play and creative techniques for the client to use in the therapeutic environment of the play room. Creative therapists offer a range of art materials, movement opportunities, role play, games, toys, puppets, clay, a sand tray, books and other activities for the client to use to express, explore and process their feelings and experiences in a safe way without worrying about what others may think or say. If the client wishes to explore things verbally that may be bothering them the therapist is trained to facilitate that in a warm, non-judgemental way.

**Individuals** benefit from creative therapy in many different ways, if they have experienced any kind of trauma and/or missed stages of development through illness or learning difficulties they can revisit these and rebuild the gaps through play; it may be that the client is stuck emotionally at a certain stage in their life, therapy may help them move on. Trauma and adverse experiences can be explored and processed. Creative expression for children and young people may be different to that of adults the beauty is the individual chooses how they want to spend the time in the right way for them.

Negative emotions can begin from a very early age before the development stage when children are emotionally and cognitively unable to understand, verbalise and make sense of their world. Often negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours come about from the confusion felt from not knowing where they stem from especially for children, young people or adults with unresolved adverse childhood experiences. Creative therapy can help them explore and come to terms with their world.

If you have any further questions please, feel free to contact us, we are always happy to help.