Five Play Therapy Activities Using Telehealth

By Erin Peace, LCSW

This year, COVID-19 has impacted every part of our society, including the way we deliver mental health services. As a therapist who works with children, adults, and families, I’ve been able to witness both the benefits and challenges of providing therapy exclusively via video and phone. I have found teletherapy to be especially meaningful and eye-opening when working with children and adolescents, who have both a natural ability to adjust to the screen-time and an increased need for stimulating and engaging activities. In this post, I’ll provide an overview of five activities I’ve found both accessible and effective when working with children and adolescents:

1. Movement Activities:
   After staring at screens all day, children (and adults!) benefit from using their bodies to regulate by either releasing energy or restoring it through movement and breath. One of my favorite body-based activities with kids and adolescents is the Mindful Kids card deck, where I ask the person to choose a color in order to pick an activity to do together. Activities include playful breath work, mindfulness prompts, and games to do with groups or families.

2. COVID-19 Education and Social Stories:
   Children and adolescents feel safest when they have structure and clear
expectations for their days and weeks. With the constant transitions and changes resulting from COVID-19, individuals understandably feel an increased amount of stress related to the unknowns, especially as students transition back to school. Using play and social stories to educate students about COVID-19 and what to expect for school helps children increase their sense of self-mastery and emotion regulation skills. By screensharing social stories and books through video therapy, children can learn how to cope ahead and problem-solve in a structured, safe environment. I have especially enjoyed the social stories that can be downloaded from Autism Little Learners by Tara Tuchel.

**3. Emotions Activities:**
By using a little creativity, just about any game or activity can be transformed into an exploration about emotions and coping skills. For example, using games like Uno or Candy Land allows you to create color-coded prompts and activities that can be customized for any age group or presenting issue. Online resources like Uno Freak provide opportunities to play games while tailoring questions or activities around emotion regulation, self-esteem, communication skills, etc...

Read the rest of Erin’s blog here

Instead of a traditional shotgun start this year:
- Each team will sign up for an individual tee time on one of the two days,
- a virtual awards ceremony will follow play on Tuesday evening announcing winners, and
- for Omni’s current safety procedures, please visit [here](#).

Once registered, we will contact you to set up your tee time. Register NOW to lock in your tee time.

This year we need your help. Your support ensures that we can offer affordable and accessible mental health services for all ages, whole families, and the military community in Central Texas.

Consider sponsoring the event, forming a team, or purchasing an Honor Sign in honor of a veteran or in memory of a loved one.

If you’re unable to golf, you can still participate! Please consider covering the cost for veterans to play instead.

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Your sponsorship of this year’s Samaritan Cup includes signage on the course but it also includes extensive social media marketing. For example, the Presenting Sponsor will receive:
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For more information, view the sponsorship packet here

Vision
We envision a healthy and compassionate community in which every individual achieves mental, physical, spiritual and social well-being.

Mission
We heal hearts, provide hope and enhance lives with a holistic approach to mental health for all ages, whole families and the military community.