



# The Treasure Basket Association

Prioritising Therapeutic Projects and Services

## GUIDANCE BOOKLET





# Play

Children naturally play. They run, they jump, they dig, they build and make dens, they pretend, they hide and seek as they explore their world. Children have a natural inquisitive urge to learn how their world feels, smells, tastes, looks and reacts.

We value play and creative arts as they are vital to the mental health of children, young people, and adults. Regular exploration promotes the development of creativity, imagination, self-confidence, intrinsic values, self-efficacy as well as physical, social, cognitive and emotional well-being. Play is an essential tool for good health and development due to its ability to promote learning, self-expression and an opportunity for children to naturally develop problem-solving skills and develop relationship with others.

Play is still an underrated, misunderstood and undervalued experience. Play is an essential activity that helps to relax and unwind the mind and is vital to health, happiness and to self-fulfilment. Play naturally seems to be the way that children learn to understand their world and confront their challenges. This is a young child's single most important activity with play deprivation having a highly detrimental effect on children, communities and societies.

**“Birds Fly, Fish Swim and Children Play”  
Dr Gary Landreth.**

Everything  
is going to be  
okay.



# The Treasure Baskets Intervention

The Treasure Basket intervention has been designed for children to have a space at home to develop the idea of freedom within play and creativity.

Your child will receive a Treasure Basket and then five Top-Up-Parcels the week before each school holiday for one year. The richly stimulating treasures gifted to children are hand-picked by young adolescents to create awe and wonder, encourage heuristic play, creativity, exploration and problem solving. This basket may support your child if they are struggling with anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, low confidence, separation, loss or bereavement or other forms of challenges. We believe this intervention can provide palliative or curative care for children experiencing mild to moderate emotional and or behavioural distress.

## SETTING UP A CREATIVE ARTS AREA

We hope to advocate how a play and creative arts area, within the family home, can support emotional well-being for children and young people. We believe that it is the parents and carers who are the most important people in a child's life and should feel confident in being the agent of therapeutic change.

We believe that setting up a creative space is a positive step to enrich mental, emotional and physical development while laying out strong foundations for children to become studious. This space will be unique to your home layout and living situation. Once established, ►

## The Treasure Baskets Intervention . . .

your children will know where they can go to be free and creative. Ideally this place will remain set-up and open but we understand this is not always possible.

Creative play is about freedom to play and learn. Ideally the space is an area where mess can occur: a corner of their bedroom, dining room or lounge. Alternatively: provide your

child with a box that they can pull out and use, from a consistent place, for bursts of creativity on the kitchen table or outside, if weather permits.

### CRAFT IDEAS

There has been a significant shift to how children play over the years and we hope to return back to simplicity and a less is more approach, recycling, up-cycling and imagination.

### NON DIRECTIVE PLAY

The Treasure Basket is intended to be used by the child or young person with light adult supervision. We value the importance of play and how it is also important to play and engage with children. The most important thing in your child's life is you. However, there is a way to maximise the support you can offer your child through play therapy techniques:

- Focus on what your child wants to do, follow your child's instructions and listen to their story, ideas and opinions;
- Reflect what your child is doing, sound out the actions of their play and openly wonder about their play;
- Maintain the boundaries of time, space and mess. Confine messy play to an area. Let your child know how much time they have to play, set a five minute reminder and then a one minute reminder before expecting them to finish;
- Let your child show you their play and resist, the natural temptation, to take over and direct the play.

### MANAGING MESS

Creative play does not come without mess and we understand that mess can cause stress. We do also understand that children need to make mess to promote their freedom and learning. Therefore, we need to find ways that we can contain the mess. Within this containment, children can practice learning boundaries which are essential for healthy development. To reduce Mess Stress try and experiment with:

- A space, perhaps a corner, for children to be creatively contained;
- A protective wipe clean PVC table cloth for table or floor surfaces. Old shower curtains cut to size work just as well as does old bedding sheets;
- Storage boxes for material, these can be cardboard boxes or smaller, old shoe boxes;
- Have an agreement on where dripping wet work can go after completion, ideally in the bin but only on their terms. Creative art is about process not product;
- Have an apron that goes on before starting;
- When you notice the messy play coming out, quietly organise a soap and water tub with a towel for hands and any other messy body part;
- Suggest a boundary area outside, when the weather is warm and dry.

Anything that is of interest to your child can make its way into their Treasure Basket. Their basket is their design and to be celebrated with individuality and uniqueness,

just like them. Their basket and Top-Up-Parcel will include many of the creative art material that they will need to undertake exciting projects. ►

# The Treasure Baskets Intervention . . .

## TROUBLESHOOTING

- If it is difficult for your child to stay within an area for a length of time, due to distractions and limited attention span, then relax, have no expectations and observe this change over time. They soon will become more invested, motivated and interested in their creations. Allow them freedom to revisit their creative corner again and again, whenever the time may feel right for them.
- To help with the expense of creative arts, we need to think of ways we can be savvy and create for less. We can look to our natural environment for this: flowers, mud, sticks and stones. We can look in our recycling bin: cardboard, pots, old cards. We can look to make our own: games, play dough, glitter and fun. For a child who loves messy play with

paint, it's a good idea to water these down or limit the waste by using smaller bottles. I also find it helpful to buy in bulk and produce 'rations' over time to keep things fresh but plentiful.

- Be a creative hoarder and stash creative opportunities, as you never know when you may need a shoe-box, that ribbon or the plastic from the old helium balloon. This will help support the creative budget too and also help to save our planet.
- Children love to create mess but need help learning the boundaries of containment. It is only natural that children want something to be really really messy and to them it is not mess, its play. We can use a clear container, the old sweet shops have the large jars which are excellent for this and they are usually very happy to give them to you as they would only

- be throwing them away. Hold the container for your child and allow them to fill it with all the mess they can find. There is a natural limit to the container and a lid for security. Allow your child to tighten the mess and explore it through the plastic. They may want to pour it into a box for a deeper exploration which is understandable and also offers a lot of containment and boundaries.
- Creative arts is a process and not necessarily a product. When the finished products start piling up then naturally ask your child which pieces they want to keep. Let them go through their work with you and reminisce over their projects.

This can do wonders to their confidence. Have a keeping pile and decide together what to do with the bits they have finished with. They may be happy to put them straight into the recycling or have another creative avenue for them. We always hope the first, but the later can be exciting too.

- If you have more than one child sharing a space, creative arts can be used as a good opportunity to coach good sharing of space and being mindful and respectfulness of others belongings and desires. Although difficult and tiring, when empathy is shared they will soon be able to work creatively alongside each other.

**Don't forget to email your creations to us**

✕ You are not alone in this.



# Play Therapy

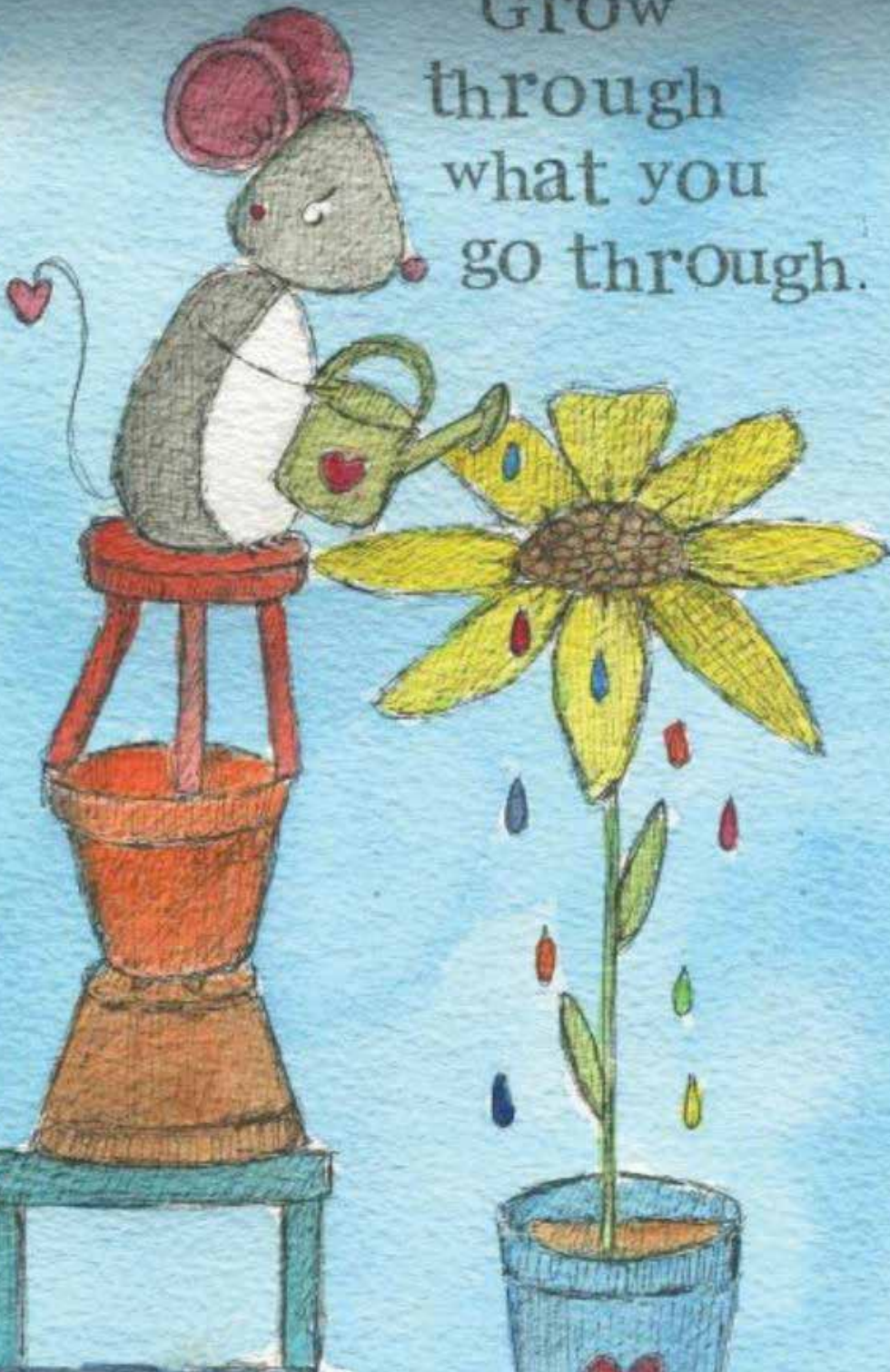
Sometimes life events impact on our children in ways they find difficult to cope with or we may see our child is struggling but not know why or how to help them.

A Play Therapist will use play, the child's natural medium for self-expression, to express difficult feelings and work through challenging experiences. Play Therapy offers a child a safe place to play out- rather than talk out- their thoughts, feelings and challenges. A Play Therapist is specifically trained to work with children and has a range of techniques available to them, to help children express their emotions. Play, art, sand stories, music, dance, movement and other creative approaches are used to support children in therapy. A therapist will see a child once a week, using the same date and room to promote consistency and continuity,

essentials for a healthy development. There are many individual reasons why a child may be referred for therapy such as: grief, divorce or separation, poor relationships, underdeveloped social skills, withdrawn, lack of confidence or self-esteem. Our assessment, based on Goodmans Strength and Difficult Questionnaire, identifies changes within the child's emotional difficulties, conduct disorders, peer problems, hyperactive or anti-social behaviour. The therapeutic process can help work through problems to reach a state of emotional health that is comfortable for your child.

We can define Play Therapy as the "process between child ►

Grow  
through  
what you  
go through.



## Play Therapy . . .

and Play Therapist in which the child explores at his or her own pace and with his or her own agenda those issues, past and current, conscious and unconscious, that are affecting the child's life in the present. The child's inner resources are enabled by the therapeutic alliance to bring about growth and change" (BAPT 2008). Play Therapy for children is what talk therapy is for adults. Play Therapy is to help children resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development. Play Therapy provides an opportunity for children to play out their experiences and associated feelings. This process allows the therapist to experience, in a personal and interactive way, the inner dimensions of the child's world.

The therapeutic relationship is what provides dynamic growth and healing for the child.

The Play Therapist works therapeutically on a one-to-one basis and in small groups with children and with their parents and professionals.

The Treasure Basket Association supports subsidised Play Therapy as we understand that funding an intervention is difficult for parents, schools and agencies.

PTUK's clinical evidence base, containing over 12,000 cases, shows that between 77% and 84% of children show a positive change through the use of play and creative arts therapies when delivered to PTUK standards (PTUK, 2011).

**As psychologist Jean Piaget observed  
'We can be sure that all happenings, pleasant  
or unpleasant, in the child's life, will have  
repercussions on her dolls' (Piaget 1962).**

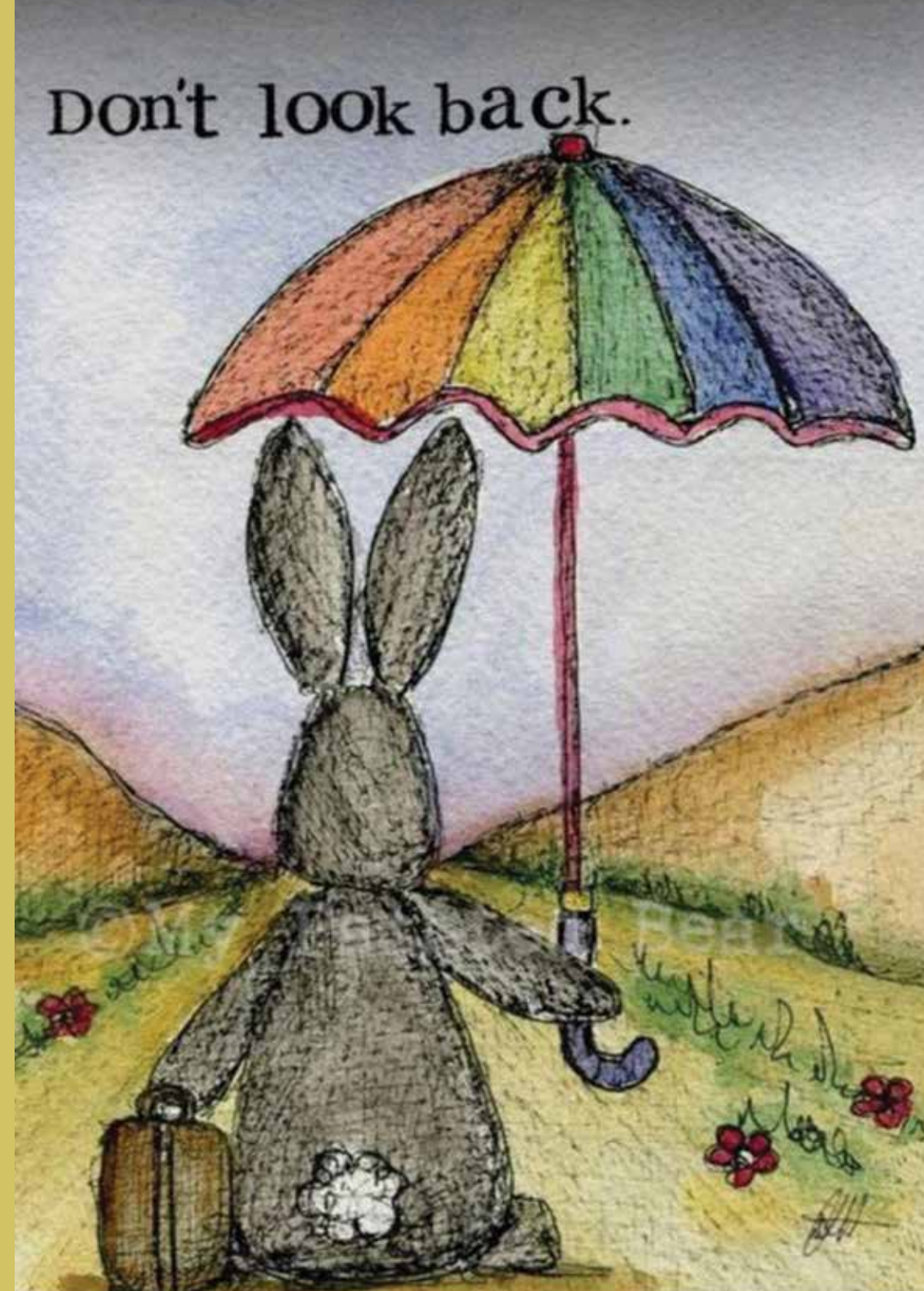
“We believe all children experiencing emotional distress should have fast direct access to emotional support”.

Our work supports the emotional well-being of children and young people within our community. We offer subsidised Play Therapy to schools and therapeutic interventions developed by therapists to children, parents and professionals. Working across Worthing, Littlehampton and Bognor our mission is to increase access to Play Therapy and therapeutic resources for children 4-11 years old. Our work helps create clarity and calm for many children experiencing emotional distress.

Research has proven that children can learn to manage and overcome emotional and behavioural difficulties through Play Therapy and our history supports this further. Our work helps children to live their full potential socially, academically and physically and draws families closer together as they understand themselves and each other better. We came together for many reasons but mainly because budgets for schools have become increasingly restrictive and, therefore, Play Therapy support for children has suffered.

#### MENTAL HEALTH STATISTIC IN THE UK

- 1 in 4 adults are currently experiencing a mental health problem
- 1 in 5 children are living with emotional distress
- 50% of long term mental health problems are established by age 14 and 75% by age 24
- 68% of women and 57% of men with a mental health problem are parents







Together we can help support access  
to Play Therapy for all

### **Volunteer with our services**

There are many ways you can support us to reach out for stronger emotional well-being in our children and community.

Are you a natural writer and are you able to compose letters for material, donations and sponsorships? Or are you able to oversee social media accounts including Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn? Could you organise and collaborate a sponsored run or bike ride or community event? Can you or a family member knit teddy bears or make wooden toys for our children? If the answer is yes to any of these or if you have any creative ideas of your own, then please get in touch.

**YOUR CONTRIBUTION WILL MAKE SUCH A DIFFERENCE.**

### **Stay In Touch**

Visit us online: [www.treasurebasketassociation.co.uk](http://www.treasurebasketassociation.co.uk)

Or find us on Facebook: [Fb.com/thetreasurebasketassociation](https://fb.com/thetreasurebasketassociation)

Email: [info@treasurebasketassociation.co.uk](mailto:info@treasurebasketassociation.co.uk)

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