



Teletherapy For Complex Kids and Families

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This resource was compiled by Angela Taylor on behalf of Inspire Community Outreach. Portions of this document were co-created with attendees of a workshop sponsored by the Canadian Association for Play Therapy and facilitated by Theresa Fraser. Inspire Community Outreach staff attended this training on March 29, 2020.

The workshop and this subsequent document are examples of how therapists across Canada came together to support families during the Covid 19 World pandemic of 2020.

We know we are stronger together.

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Inspire Community Outreach Inc. is an incorporated non-profit social services charity providing evidence and culturally informed, family-centered education and programming, designed to meet the needs of those living with mental health issues and neurological/cognitive differences.

Our **mission** at Inspire Community Outreach Inc. is to support the mental health of children, youth, and families.

Our **vision** is the development of a community that supports children, youth and families to recognize and celebrate their strengths and potential, and that puts them in touch with resources that benefit their overall well being.

Charity # 830697231RR0001

Training resources

- Supporting Complex Children Online
 - <https://youtu.be/Y0eM4mTK8aw>
- Pivotal Response Treatment
 - Tool to use, specified for children with autism, but has flexibility to use with all children. <https://www.slideshare.net/mobile/lDsandy/pivotal-response-treatment>
- Articles to support continued growth
 - <http://www.lianalowenstein.com/articles.html>
- Social emotional learning
 - <https://everydayspeech.com/>
- Services for traumatized children, their families and communities
 - <https://www.nctsn.org/>

Printable resources

- <http://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/?s=Emotions>
- [Www.Therapistaid.com](http://www.therapistaid.com)

Tips on how to use ZOOM

To share files you need: Dropbox, MS, OneDrive, Google Drive and Box. Prepare ahead of time and have a folder specific for your client folder so you can share the document on the screen.

Sharing Your Screen

1. On the main screen in the middle is an option to share screen
2. Click
3. There are a number of options basic advanced and files
4. In Basic there is a white board option
5. In Advanced there is a share a portion of your screen

How to share worksheets:

- At the top of the your screen are floating option box with Zoom options
- Mute
- Stop Video
- Manage Participants
- New Share, Pause
- Share Annotate
- Select Annotate - work on the sheet with the client.
- When the session is completed- click the floating meeting controls box then the red STOP SHARE button.
- It goes back to the being with the client and the files are no longer viewable to you or the client.

Safety

There can be safety concerns with some of the children or individuals we support. We can help mitigate the risk to the client in many ways.

1. Plan for what happens if the connection is interrupted. Can you call the caregiver? Can you ensure the caregiver remains home? Talk to the caregivers each session and remind them.
2. Discuss that mandatory reporting duties are still in place both with parents and with children.
3. Have easy access to hotlines and crisis numbers. People may be used to having these posted on their fridge (see #6 below).
4. Ensure where the client is at the beginning of every session. Have a child or parent confirm an address.
5. Discuss limits of confidentiality.
6. **Creating a safety plan for your family beyond session-** This should be discussed within the family when things are calm. Planning what to do when things are very hard, like when you'd call the police or a neighbor, for example, and when the other kids should go to a safe place, protecting them whenever possible. The plans can include coping skills the youth can try first when they believe they are about to get into a crisis or are overwhelmed. Depending on the severity of their symptoms, we may go over this at the beginning of every session and include or remove coping skills that were/are useful or not useful. This will be documented in notes.
7. Here are options that may work:
 - a. [https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Brown StanleySafetyPlanTemplate.pdf](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Brown-StanleySafetyPlanTemplate.pdf)
 - b. http://www.partneringforsafety.com/uploads/2/2/3/9/22399958/safety_planning_framework.pdf
8. In every session, have the youth show their room and their desk with the camera, so you can confirm they are safe and that there is no visible/physically accessible self-harming tools or drug paraphernalia (*and document in your notes that you had the client do this*).
9. Follow a "Respect and Privacy Agreement" for youth and family which includes being quiet and not streaming/playing graphics-heavy video games during the session (to prevent lag), not interrupting the space, and not listening at the door. The only exception is helping the child stay safe. .

- 10.** If the child is at high risk of self-harming behavior, discuss with them and parents about closing but not locking the door or having the parents have a key to the door.
- 11.** We can increase the number of sessions necessary to stabilize the client. Option: to offer support/messaging between sessions.
- 12.** Prepare the client by making sure they gave their coping/comfort objects available during the session (blankets, tissues, stuffed animals, fidget spinners, or "nice smelling stuff")
- 13.** Being invited in youth's bedroom via video chat can reduce high risks symptoms subside quicker, as follow through with safety plans and positive coping skills play. Ex calling a crisis line.

About Teletherapy

Speaking with our clients about the benefits and challenges will normalize what they are already thinking or help problem-solve challenges before they are a serious concern.

Benefits of TeleTherapy

- Clients are co-owners of the space, unlike our office.
- Child centered is about “being with”, which can be accomplished through video chat
- No travel time, waiting at an office for the session or waiting away from home during the session.

Challenges for TeleTherapy Service Providers

- No access to a printer
- Internet connections
- Secure/quiet spaces
- Not having access to our workspace and tools
- Creating or redoing a space to work in if we are at home

Challenges for Families

- Parents have to do more: get the space ready, activities, be there as a support at times
- Parents can get over-involved with role confusion

Preparing for Sessions

4 stages of engaging with clients during video chat

1. Engagement
2. Environment and connection to family
3. Building insight and why situation in their life are what they are
4. Practice new behaviour (with self/family/peers)

1. **Social stories** to say what will happen. Have the caregivers read this book prior to the session.
2. Session with **caregiver**
 - a. Ask about current preferred items and activities. How can you use them?
 - b. Making sure that the child is supported during the session. What materials are available? Who is available to help during the session?
3. **Send a Video** of you in the **space** you'll be doing teletherapy
 - a. Individual short videos are ideal
4. Share an authentic **smile** and be happy to see them
5. Have a **short session** with the child. It may take up to 2 months to get a child ready for 1 hour sessions, or they may do better staying at shorter sessions.
6. Planning to be **flexible** and ending earlier or later
7. Ending it on a **positive** note
8. **Planting the seed** for next time
 - a. What will you do? How can you invite choice? Do they feel in power/control?



ONLINE THERAPY CHECKLIST

1

FIND A QUIET SPACE

Find an empty room, a cozy blanket, and be wherever feels comfortable and has the least amount of distractions.

2

HAVE PRIVACY

It can be distracting to have other people around you, and you may feel more comfortable sharing when you're alone.

3

TECHNOLOGY

To have a successful session, make sure to check your internet connection beforehand, as well as have a headset with a microphone ready!

4

BE PREPARED

Have a notebook and pen ready as well as any materials or documents given before the session, snacks are recommended!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR FREE ONLINE SESSIONS SEE OUR WEBSITE:

INSPIRECOMMUNITYOUTREACH.COM

Child-Centred Therapy

Using play during online sessions is an excellent way to connect to children and youth, as well as the family unit and adults. Here are some examples that were shared with us, edited by some of the youth and families we work alongside.

5 Categories of toys/materials

- Family
- Nurture
- Fantasy
- Expressive arts
- Aggressive toys/Action based toys

Activities

- Child's is a "tour guide" in their home
- Child makes wish list of activities to discuss and draws one from hat
- Stuffed animals, roles, emotions, grief, use for comfort, breathing exercises
- Read books: Create activities based on books
- Role playing
- Mirroring: you move how they move, they move how you move
- Charades where they have to guess the feeling you are acting out or activities like doing a news report
- Using nature, bring in rocks and sticks, use for art, mandala, play with other toys
- Songs with different rhythms
- Making instruments with pots and spoons
- Share favourite songs and music videos
- Develop and practice gratitude. Ex. special journal, art, 3 things written per day
- Taking turns making silly faces. The other has to copy
- Scavenger Hunt for "cool tools for dealing with big feelings" - completion would be a toolbox with bubbles, gum, stuffy, windmill, lego, stress ball, pokemon card, lotion etc
- Writing - journaling, letter to future self etc
- "Google it" game - google how you are feeling, picture of X
- Play doh: I make X, you make X. I copy your creation, colours, make it from scratch
- Chair yoga

Stories activity

The 4 Sentence Story by Anthony John edited by Inspire

Age group: 8+

Materials: 3 sheets of paper, writing utensil

Instructions: "we will both make a short story about whatever you want.

1 st sentence is on one side of the first paper.

3 sentences will be on the opposite side of the paper. We each make 2 stories.

Share the first sentence and I'll try to guess the rest. We can tell each other how we are right or less right."

"Our minds are so good at making up the rest of the story, right?"

The last paper we can both write down a time we were worrying or got mad about something, today, yesterday or before. We can write other ways we could have thought about it differently."

Art

- Draw a brick wall and then create a graffiti tag/masterpiece of the message the world should know about the current situation
 - explore current feelings and thoughts about life as we are experiencing it.
- Mindfulness art: zen tangles, Mandalas
- **Iceberg activity** There are the feelings we see and what is underneath is often different. Naming various feelings and then choosing 1 or 2 feelings that are under the anger instead of anger itself.
- Creation using recycling and garbage
- Drawing: picture of before, present, and future, Tree of life drawing
- Squiggle drawings and fill them in with images that represent parts of self

Puppets

- Kids become more engaged with a puppet talks with them
- Puppet interview
- People in your world or draw your family and community
- Practice behaviour using stories and puppets
- Therapist and child and adult can all have puppets engaging together
- Playing pretend with my toys and there's and letting them play "director"
- Narrate the information they give, or tell the story they show

Game play

- Feelings
- UnGame
- Making Up own games – make relevant to current health crisis
- Inviting them to help me figure out ways to adapt and play a game they really love.
- CandyLand board game with each person rolling a dice for our turn but I move the game pieces for both of us. Or they could if they have the game

Non-board games

- Simon Says
- Hangman
- Alphabet Game
- I Spy

- Emotion labels on sticky notes and put them on different parts of the body. You can make them different colours, depending on what is available, to then as a race, to music and have fun with it.

Using Technology

- Online whiteboard: Try to draw the same item
- Can play video games together: Minecraft, roadblocks, just dance, Mario, "just dance" - can practice regulation, co-regulation
- Use share screen to share stories
- Photographs or a photography bingo, challenge, etc
- Coming up with our own app ideas
- Share playlist
- Find your "theme song"
- Picking which character you identify with
- Mentoring
- Make a videos
- Stikbots
- Free apps
- Mindfulness Apps: MindShift, InnerBalance, MoodMeter, CalmHarm, Breathe, Calm.com, Headspace, ZonesofRegulation, BreatheThinkDo with Sesame

Sandtray

Invite the child to tell you where to put each item, when to move or when to stop, controlling what is chosen/where it is placed.

- Using rice instead of sand and items they have at home: Images from printer, pictures, magazines on popsicle sticks.
- Virtual Sandtray app is an option as well, although there is generally a cost.
- **Challenges to Address:** if we are creating on our end, we are in their world and need to ask permission, if they are creating in their home, ask family to take pictures for us.

Using lego

- Create a world using lego, therapist asks the child to reflect on the story in the world, exploring if anything needs to be different in the world
- Use lego to create a safe space, a protective barrier, a helping world
- Use lego to represent what a feeling might be like, use similar to non directive/directive
- **Additional lego resources** <https://www.brickcounselor.com/emotion-management>
- **Challenges to Address with Lego:** Think about how we will see the child build the lego, how is their play area and where to put the item afterwards to keep it safe.

Using Play with Families

- Drawing pictures of me and a picture of them: in an aquarium, at the zoo, in a sports game, at the beach, etc.
- Drawing: What we can and cannot control
- Draw our hand: What are 5 things we do to feel good?
- Scribble and try to make it into something you all would recognize. Online options..
- Draw: Safe place/safe home. What would you put in your safe house? Toys/people can start coming into the house.
- Creating a safe space. Ex. a cardboard house with all the things you love. How long can you stay here, what do you need to stay here (Metaphor for quarantine).
- Parents decorate the child. Child decorates the parent. Decorate each other.
- Families can create storyboards, create videos of their story to send to friends and family

CHALLENGE: family members not getting along? We can lay ground rules in advance around being able to interrupt with conversations are not helpful.

Using Play with Adults

Many of the things we use for children are the same as what us as adults can enjoy. We can start by asking them what they enjoyed as children and offering a few ideas of things you think they may enjoy as options. Additional options:

- Any games they enjoyed is a great place to begin. Reminisce about this game and the joy from childhood.
- Mindfulness: Breathing, Grounding
- Scaling
- Bibliotherapy
- Narrative work
 - Journal, “wreck this” journal
 - Stories
- Dress up e.g., armor – what are your fears and worries
- Watch movie, read book, read article, then discuss
- Favourite song/dance, playlist – dancing together

Tips to engage with tough to connect to kids: Wear their favorite colour, draw them a special art piece, write then a note about what you like about them, use their preferred items, songs, sticky thoughts and cool ways of being.

Therapeutic Art

This sample is part of our Book, *Get Your Art On! Art-for-wellness Facilitation Guide*, which is intended for in person group support and can be adapted for virtual and individual support.

Session 1: Self-Care

Check-in:

- Ask participants what they do for self-care and stress-relief

Objectives:

- Participants will learn what the group is about and have the opportunity to ask questions or express their feelings using a low stress check-in method
- Participants will reflect on what they consider to be positive
- Participants will have the opportunity to work with another member of the class in a dyad relationship
- Participants will hear other's perspectives on positivity
- Participants will reflect on their expectations of the group

Activity Description: *The Art of Words* Shared View of Positive Words

- Divide the group into dyads
- Ask dyads to brainstorm words that they consider to be positive
- When the dyad groups have their words, ask them to go up to a shared word wall to paint their words together, in any style and colour (large piece of paper taped to the wall for the whole class to use)

Materials needed:

- Acrylic paint
- Paint brushes
- Wall length paper
- Tape
- Schedule of group sessions for participants
- Pieces of paper for check-in

Check-out:

- Give participants the opportunity to discuss why they chose their words for the word wall, if they feel comfortable enough to do so
- Allow the group to share any other reactions or feelings from the session
- If there are any current and relevant community resources relating to the type of art that was used during this session, or in reducing stress levels, pass this information onto the group

Therapeutic Art Session 2: Art Creation as a Way to Support Positive Emotions

Check-in:

- Ask participants to share their favourite song or musical artist or song and why
- Show techniques on how we can use pastels

Objectives:

- Participants will reflect on the art process of using pastels during each song
- Participants will reflect on the emotions that they felt during each song
- Participants will reflect on how the art process affected/changed their emotions

Activity Description: Music and Art Creation. Create art with pastels, to the sound of music.

- Ask participants to listen to each song and draw freely using pastels as they are listening
- A different piece of paper will be used for each song for comparison purposes

Materials needed:

- 5 songs to play for the group; 1 country, 1 blues, 1 upbeat pop, 1 classical, 1 rock
- Pastels
- Art paper
- Music player and/or speakers

Check-out:

- Ask participants to select which piece of art meant the most to them
- Ask participants to explain which song inspired their art and what they were feeling during the art process
- If there are any current and relevant community resources relating to the type of art that was used during this session, or in reducing stress levels, pass this information onto the group

Inspire Created Resources

Children's Activities (under 5)

Here are a variety of activities that you can do to enrich your experience with hard to connect to youth. We have put a variety of sources and ideas that may work for you from all the places we could find.

- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ehffAXtKBNqmR26YJwPqVyVq7gSkZpzWY1Y69Fg6-04/edit?usp=sharing>

Activities for Youth (at Home)

Here is a two week outline of daily activities you can do with your kids while at home, lots of crafts and activities with common household supplies

- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1COF07KMaGFzYdi2t0jNhpJT6s0PrVrioOtY-GtDwwMY/edit?usp=sharing>

Youth Activities Resources

This is a guide intended to help you connect to your child, while participating in activities together.

- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YAZ07xjdc2qHf-0jqZ9WyP6aaQXQdlSeVCwVcllwATA/edit?usp=sharing>

Self Expression Activities for at Home

Activities you can participate with your child, and learn about and be curious of their self expression, and allow them the opportunity to express themselves openly.

- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W09v0TBOKvelOCr2vdbOAUr_DzallHd03XmPTdGrr60/edit?usp=sharing

Inspire Youth Worksheets

This is a bundle of worksheets your child can do that focuses on topics such as “you're not alone”, “its okay to make mistakes”, and “practice makes perfect”

- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZThy0GU4VAYhV1cKfgocy2VGhflqoCzsXkq3WJ_Kg/edit?usp=sharing

Learning to Become a Behaviour Detective

Supporting a child with autism or other sensitivity can be difficult during stressful times. This document was created with and for families that include complex kids, c=because they know best.

- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Mlx-AIZaA0rEuzIDf8c1M6dRkwHmuwqj>

Challenging Behaviour Print Out

- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/169K0Ktrk8RXDGwtNhzkJXLSap7v2yfr7sJAqKVJARYc/edit?usp=sharing>

COVID-19 Specific Support

Supporting Sensitive Kids in Isolation: <https://youtu.be/cPUWZ2tEdeU>

Supporting ourselves in Isolation: https://youtu.be/V10KIKt_Y8k

Social Story for Children using Video Chat:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1TbVlyNadQy81WmFe_zHuDSw9I3Dkumf8s_P-fORH3p
!

Additional videos and other resources will be updated often on our website here:

<https://inspirecommunityoutreach.ca/covid-19/>