



AutPlay® Therapy Theoretical Underpinnings and Research

AutPlay® Therapy is an integrative family play therapy approach for working with autistic and other neurodivergent children, as well as children with developmental and physical disabilities.

An integrative approach is defined as a progressive form of psychotherapy that combines different therapeutic tools and approaches to help address the mental health needs of the individual client.

The theoretical underpinnings of AutPlay include humanistic, family systems, developmental, and cognitive behavioral theory. Play therapy theories/approaches and interventions are also integrated into AutPlay protocol along with evidence-based practices.

- Underpinnings/integration from play therapy theories and approaches include:
 - Child Centered Play Therapy (research support for addressing various mental health needs of autistic and neurodivergent children).
 - Filial Therapy (research support for addressing various mental health needs of autistic and neurodivergent children).
 - Theraplay® (empirically supported as a therapy approach for working with autistic children and their families).
 - Gestalt Play Therapy (research supported as an approach for working on sensory processing and integration needs).
 - Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy (research supported and incorporates multiple evidence-based practices for addressing various mental health needs of autistic children).
- Underpinnings from family systems, developmental, and cognitive behavioral theory:
 - Wide research support and multiple evidence-based practices for addressing mental health needs of autistic children, neurodivergent children, and their families.

It is important to remember that autistic and other neurodivergent children do not need any particular therapy just because they are neurodivergent. Instead, therapy should be sought out for and help with specific needs of the child and those needs addressed through a neurodiversity affirming framework?

Several case studies and clinical outcome trials have been conducted using AutPlay protocol. Results have shown significant gains and improvements in targeted therapy goals. Parent reports have also been positive and supported therapy gains for their child, parenting skill gains, and improvements in the child/parent relationship.

Play Therapy and Autism Research

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