

Nature Play & The Therapeutic Space

1st & 2nd April 2019

With Marina Robb & Kate Macairt

Nature Play and the Therapeutic Space: This two-day training has been created to help those working with groups of young people and children to understand why some children present difficult behaviours and are unable to participate in the group activities.

We address theories through direct sensory and nature play experiences. We explore the role of the adult with children, equip you with strategies and methods to enable the disenfranchised and alienated child to have a positive experience in the forest school or outdoor learning setting.

You will develop your facilitation skills and ability to work with children that present difficult behaviours and explore therapeutic nature-play skills (e.g. reflective communication and use of puppets & sand) which will engage the group of children and individuals building their emotional regulation, curiosity, imagination and well-being.

Many professionals who work with children face the difficulties of engaging those individuals who display emotional and behavioural problems. Emotional insecurity prevents children from positive participation in activities and relationships and unacceptable behaviour is often the way they have of coping with negative feelings. Nature Play is not a therapy intervention however it recognises that the needs of these children require a therapeutic approach held within the recognised benefits of the natural surroundings.

Marina Robb has been facilitating nature-based programmes for vulnerable young people for over 25 years, including Forest school training. Her knowledge and understanding of the benefits of working with children in an outdoor environment are well documented. Kate Macairt has been working as a Play Therapist for over 10 years and has taught on the post grad Diploma course in Play therapy (APAC/PTUK) for 7 years. She has facilitated several workshops and seminars on the importance of Play.

Training Summary

Day one

- Theory: Child development and attachment; How to grow a brain, Psych-ed; Importance of nature in childhood; Sensory Play and Stress; Group Dynamic: Importance of connection to others; 7 basic emotions; Exploring your own triggers & inner landscape.
- Activities: Role-play: The brain, baby to adult; group work to develop your skills and confidence. Group games and sensory experiences – forest school approach and the creative use of clay.

Day two

- Builds on the outdoor skills of participants – e.g. using ropes, puppets, story making.
- Setting up your space – tarps, shelters and safe dens.
- Importance of risk and challenge. Focus on the need for individual therapeutic play when working with groups and developing skills.
- Theory: The Axline principles; Toxic Stress; Eric Berne: Drama Triangle; Attunement; Principles of child-led play – nature play/therapeutic play; Communication skills – instruction/reflection; Safe boundaries & Health and Safety in the outdoors; Risk Assessment; Directive/non-directive.

Activities:

- Creating the safe space and the one to one relationship; use of puppets.
- The 2 'Joes' how to recognise when a child may need to leave the large group and benefit from therapeutic play.
- Group activity: Role-play, Joe2 in the safe space.
- Throughout day 2 group activities will be shown and you will learn more nature-based skills. You will be shown how to use creative activities to help build group.
- You will become attuned to when direct instruction is needed with children and when reflective child-led play is required.