

AI Acknowledgement

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work.

I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Reflection on the play session – Word count 1096

The therapeutic play session took place on the beach at Swansea Bay. The plan for the session was to have a small group to attend, the group including children and young people who have experienced trauma in their life. The aim of this session was to explore the idea of relaxation and letting go of negative emotions and feelings and keeping their positive emotions safe. Due to unforeseen circumstances from the group that were invited only one young person was able to attend.

The first activity was a check in with everybody, ensuring that the participant was well at the start of the session, this took place in the form of simple questioning. This was then followed by a breathing exercise, focussing on the sea and breathing in time with the waves. By using the waves, it allowed for calm, deep breathing while enjoying the sound of the waves. This activity was based on the idea of mindfulness, Kuyken et al (2013) completed research on 522 young people aged twelve to sixteen years where they completed a mindfulness programme, the results showed that the participants showed lower stress levels, greater well following the programme.

The next part of the activity was the participant going on the beach to look for pebbles and shells from which they could build a tower on the shoreline, the next activity was to build a tower out of sand. The aim of this activity was to show how it is possible for the waves to come and wash away the sand tower, while the tower of pebbles was able to withstand the waves and was able to stand strong. This was then followed by a conversation about how the waves can wash away the sand.

Next the participant was asked to write how they were feeling in the sand, with the idea that the wave can come and wash their word away, along with their word, the sea can also then take their feelings away, washing it away with the sand. This

activity was based on the research that shows that writing down negative emotions and then destroying the paper can be beneficial to the person and relieve them of their negative emotions (After Being Insulted, 2024). The feeling that the participant chose was 'Angry,' they wrote this in the sand and watched as the sea washed away the word, as I explained about how they could let the feeling go with the waves.

The final part of the activity then was writing another feeling in the sand, further up the beach. This word would be how they were feeling now. The word that the participant choose was 'Relaxed,' this was followed by a conversation about the sea not coming up that far to wash away that word and so that feeling was kept safe and they could take it home with them. This was then followed by another deep breathing break in time with the sea to close out the session and another check in to make sure that the participant was well.

The experience was a disappointing one as it was made a lot more difficult due to the lack of participants, as there was only one participant for the session then the session was a lot quicker than I had anticipated. This was an issue when trying to talk about the activities with the participant as they were not very forthcoming with their ideas and was only giving short answers. Because of this I felt I could not extend the session for a period of time as the participant expressed feeling awkward being the only young person attending. I do not feel this gave me the opportunity to allow this activity to reach its full potential.

The plan for the session was positive; it had a natural flow and would have allowed for the participants to explore their feelings. The activity of writing how they were feeling in the sand and watching the waves wash it away was a highlight of the session as it was enjoyable for the participant to watch the waves come in close and

wash their feelings away. However, the activity of building a strong tower of pebbles and shells and another tower of sand was not successful as the sole participant did not want to collect many items to build the tower and so when we tried the experiment to see if the tower would stand strong, the wave knocked over the tower and washed away some of the shells that they had collected. This was not the desired outcome and following this the participant was discouraged and did not want to build a tower of sand to see if it would wash away, even when working together. For this reason, the activity of building a tower of sand to get washed away did not happen.

Eight children and young people were invited to the session which would have allowed for group work and more enthusiastic participation in the activities. I feel that if there were more people there, the participant that did attend would have felt less awkward and the activities such as building a tower may have been more of a success.

The use of the beach for the outdoor setting was a success as it allowed for a lot of free space and if there were more participants it would also have allowed for greater exploration and foraging for items to build with. Using both the sand and the sea in the activities worked well as it could have allowed for the children and young people to use all of their senses by using the sand and the sea to ground themselves as part of the relaxation portion of the session.

In order to improve this session for next time I would build an example of the towers of sand and items found on the beach to show the participants what they are working towards, this may encourage more participation and a sense of competition to try and make theirs bigger than mine before the waves come.

If I were to do this activity again, I would ensure that I had enough participants as I feel that this is what did not go well in the play session. The participant did well, taking part in the activities however they expressed feeling awkward and they did not seem comfortable taking part in the set activities. If I knew that the participants were not going to attend, I would then adapt the activities to suit the needs on the individual participant more, ensuring that they were comfortable taking part in all activities.

References

After being insulted, writing down your feelings on paper then getting rid of it reduces anger. (2024, April 28). NewsRx Science, 41.

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