

"A child's play is his work, and the 'toys' are his words"

- Gary Landreth, play therapist

Minwaashin Lodge—Aboriginal Women's Support Centre offers free, culturally based counselling for:

- ⇒ *Children ages 5-15 years old*
- ⇒ *Individual or Family Therapy*
- ⇒ *Short or Long-term Therapy*
- ⇒ *First Nations, Inuit and Metis*



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Minwaashin Lodge

Children's Counselling Program

Art Therapy
For children and Their Families



What is Art Therapy?

Children learn through art and play. When difficulties arise in a child's life, such as bullying, violence in the home or separation from loved ones, it may become a challenge for children to continue to develop as they normally would. Children may present their difficulties with aggression, inability to concentrate and listen at home or school, or withdrawal from pleasurable activities.



Art Therapy is a process of communication and expression through art-making. Through the use of drawing, painting, collage, sculpture and play, children learn to express and experience their emotions and work through their personal concerns. With the help of the art therapist, children are encouraged to find their own understanding and personal meaning to their artwork. The objectives of the art expression program are to facilitate communication, expression of the child's inner world, promote normal development and to improve coping skills in order to ease a child's well-being.



What to expect from counselling :

What will my child do and discuss?

The art therapy or counselling session is a special time that a child can fully express their concerns, fears and feelings. Your child will get a chance to use art materials, sandplay, role-plays to facilitate discussion around the concerns of your child. What is discussed and shared is private and confidential, unless there is reason to believe that the child is currently experiencing abuse or neglect.

What should I expect at home and at school?

Each child is unique in the way they may react to counselling and therapy. In most cases, when children have a space to share their feelings and concerns, their behaviours that are a cause of concern may diminish. However, sometimes children's behaviours may improve in one setting but continue in another, depending on what is being discussed in therapy. This is a natural response when children begin to open up and learn to deal with the emotions that are bothering them. Parents and guardians are always welcome to discuss with the therapist their on-going concerns and ways to deal with these reactions.



What can I discuss with the art therapist?

As the discussions within the therapy sessions are confidential, I will be able to share general progress of the therapy session and any information that the child has consented to share. Parents and guardians are more than welcome to share concerns they may have and how the child is doing at home or at school. We can discuss parenting skills and ways to approach your child around topics of concern.

What can I talk about with my child?

- Ask your child what they would like to share, but also respect that your child might want to keep things private until they are ready to share.
- When your child does share something, listen and reflect to your child what you understood. This will foster trust and encourage an open dialogue with your child.
- Materials and art images stay will stay with the therapist until the end of therapy, unless the child wants to take their images home. When they do share their images, ask them what they see in their images and never impose your own meaning.