

Therapy Kits for Young Patients Serve via Telehealth

The Chicago Child Trauma Center(CCTC) at La Rabida Children’s Hospital is excited to be able to create therapy kits for all of our remote clients. Therapists have been getting very creative with online resources throughout the pandemic but we have been greatly missing some of the therapeutic supplies we typically use in interventions with our clients in the office. Thanks to a generous donation we have been able to assemble therapy kits to send home to clients so that we can utilize many of the interventions and activities we typically do in the office.

Here are some of the supplies we are excited to add into our therapy kits to send home to families:

With children trauma is often processed through play. Children will re-enact traumas using dolls or a dollhouse, puppets, or even drawing pictures of what happened. We have purchased legos, puppets, art supplies, small family/people so that children can create a narrative through play at home over the video and be able to process their trauma without needing to rely on all verbal communication.



Learning to identify one’s feelings and express them in a safe way is an important step in therapy for many kids. We usually start our sessions with checking in on how children are feeling. Teaching children to attune to their emotions and notice how they feel is an important step to healing as many children’s behaviors are actually linked to feelings and thoughts that they are having. The kits will include Emoji stickers where children can create emotional expressions with their therapist to work on emotion identification. We also plan to put an emotion check in chart on the lid of each container that will hold these therapy kits

Feelings and Emotions Chart



			
HAPPY	DISAPPOINTED	EMBARRASSED	SCARED
			
SICK	HURT	ANGRY	SURPRISED
			
COOL	SAD	ANNOYED	LOVED

Another component of trauma therapy work is identity work. Often with trauma children have learned to hide or disconnect from who they are, how they feel, what they need, to be able to survive in stressful situations. Activities such as creating masks to show what we hide behind or cut out figures that represent who we are inside are often used as art activities to aid in children's healing.



When children become triggered by an upsetting reminder of what happened or experience overwhelming feelings we often work with the caregiver to help the child use relaxation or regulation techniques. In our office we have many activities to help children learn to regulate. In our therapy kits we have added supplies we would have in a calm-down kits.

Calm down kits may include stress balls, stress putty, fidget toys:



We encourage finding ways to let out stress or tension in a safe way, for example using a punching balloon to let out stress/tension and regulate through rhythmic movement.





-Blowing bubbles, or a pinwheel helps children learn to take deep breaths and control their breathing. Children and parents can also create pinwheels together and therapist can talk them through different kinds of blowing/breathing exercises to learn to regulate.



Parents can learn to use Meditation and Affirmation cards with their children to help guide children through relaxation and/or positive affirmations and encouragement.



Journals are regularly used in therapy as a way for a child to write about what they are thinking and feeling. Connecting your thoughts and feelings to certain actions and behaviors helps children come up with ways to improve and manage actions/behaviors by working on improving thoughts and feelings.



We often color with children in sessions. Coloring is not only relaxing and good stress management but is something for children to do while they are talking to the therapist about things that might be stressful or uncomfortable. These coloring books not only have positive messages, they also give parents an activity they can join their children in, also building special time together.



Typically, in trauma therapy one of the things we do is complete a trauma narrative. We work with children to be able to tell their story, not only the story of the trauma itself but also recall other positive happy moments as well as other upsetting moments in their life. We put these stories together into a book for children. These blank books and art supplies will allow children to write and illustrate these stories very similarly to how we would in the office.

