



# Play Therapy & Counselling

## **Play therapy** (the child)

Play therapy is a specific counselling approach aimed at helping children with emotional, social and behavioural problems. It is an approach used for the child between the ages of 2 and 12 years old. In a play therapy session games, toys and mediums such as the sand pit, clay, drawings and puppets are used to help the child express their emotions, thoughts, wishes and needs. Playing helps them to understand muddled feelings and upsetting events that they have not had the chance or skill to sort out properly. Play therapy also helps the child learn self-control by making choices and decisions for themselves; and helps the child develop more realistic ways of thinking. The play therapist works especially with the child's parents, the school and other professionals who may be involved with that child.

## **Counselling** (the adolescent)

The adolescent has a better ability to verbalise their difficulties which facilitate effective assistance. This minimises the use of play mediums as used in play therapy but it doesn't exclude it in its entirety, depending on the adolescent's preference.

**In particular, play therapy and counselling is suitable for children and adolescents who have experienced, or display:**

- Parental divorce or separation
- Bereavement: issues of loss
- ADD or ADHD
- Phobias or fears
- Low self esteem
- Poor social skills
- Bullies or being bullied
- Anxiety or depression
- Adoption or foster care
- School refusers and academic difficulties
- Autistic spectrum disorders
- Trauma through sexual, emotional or physical abuse
- Difficulties in building and maintaining relationships
- Failure to actualise his full potential