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Power of Play—Part 1

Play is a basic human need that can benefit your healing journey by giving you opportunities to practice Mindfulness, connect with others, be creative, and experience feelings of awe and joy.



Each Saprea Support Group meeting begins with 'Group Leader A' reading the script while participants follow along. The script will be the same for every group meeting. **To find the script, visit saprea.org/support-groups.** Below are the additional meeting materials for this course.



To watch the intro video for this lesson, scan the QR code or go to <https://vimeo.com/showcase/10293739>.

Group Activity

EXPLORING PLAY

Below are some ideas of ways you can explore play as a group, whether you're in-person or online. **Feel free to pick 1-2 options** that will work best for the group's setting, preferences, and interests.

Person, Place, or Thing

ACTIVITY STEPS

- 01** Have a volunteer think of a common noun—such as a person, place, or thing—without saying it out loud. (You could also ask the group if they would rather play a variation of this game, such as “Animal, Vegetable, or Mineral” or if they want to pick a specific category, such as the name of a TV show or a brand of breakfast cereal.)
- 02** Next, invite the other players to guess which noun the volunteer is thinking about by asking them questions (“Is it something you can eat?” “Is it a place you can visit all year round?”). Set a certain limit of questions based on the size of your group. For example, if your group is smaller, you may want to allow each participant more questions to ask. Or perhaps you'd rather set a timer and see if one of the participants can guess the correct answer before the time is up.
- 03** Whoever guesses what noun the volunteer is thinking of within the allotted questions or before time is up gets to go next.

What Am I?

This is a variation of the activity “Person, Place, or Thing” from above.

ACTIVITY STEPS

- 01** Divide the group into pairs and give them a pile of sticky notes that each have a word written on them. Like before, you and your group can determine what category of nouns you'd like to use during the game.
- 02** For each pairing, both participants will place one of the sticky notes on their foreheads without looking at the word written on it.
- 03** Participants will then take turns guessing what word is written on their sticky note by asking their partner a set of questions. (“Am I found in the kitchen?” “Am I smaller than a cellphone?”).
- 04** You can wrap up the game when the timer goes off or after each pairing has finished guessing their assigned sticky notes.

What Happens Next?

Your group can spontaneously craft together an original story by taking turns filling in the blanks.

ACTIVITY STEPS

- 01** Ask one of the participants to be the narrator. Next, assign an order in which the group will rotate through their turns as the story progresses.
- 02** Begin the activity by having the narrator start reading the story below and then pausing when they reach the first blank.
- 03** Whoever is first in the rotation will fill in the blank with their own answer. Encourage participants to be as silly, random, and spontaneous as they wish.
- 04** Once the first participant finishes filling in the blank, the narrator will continue reading the story until they reach the next blank. Then, have the next participant fill in the gap to keep the story going.
- 05** Continue this until the story ends. Feel free to start the story over again until every participant has had a turn to fill in a blank. You may be surprised by how wildly different each version of the story will turn out to be!

Story

Life was going great until one day _____ . To help me figure out what to do next, I decided to call upon _____ for advice. They offered two suggestions. One was absolutely ridiculous, which was to _____ . I decided to be sensible and follow the second piece of advice, which was to _____ . Things were going better until, out of the blue, _____ . This reminded of that one time when _____ . But this was different, because it was _____ . In a perfect world, I would call upon the services of _____ because they are an absolute expert in solving this kind of problem. But today, I had to settle for _____ instead.

Play a Game of Charades or Pictionary

If the setting and resources allow, try playing a game of charades or Pictionary, with a volunteer choosing to draw or act out a specific word that their partner, team, or the rest of the group has to guess. If the group is meeting online, you can modify the game so that the volunteer acts out their word using facial expressions and hand gestures, or draws on a piece of paper and then holds the paper up to the screen for the rest of the group to see.

Beach Ball Toss



Note: For this option, the group leader will need to bring a beach ball or another item that would be easy to toss.

Toss one or more beach balls around the room. Every time a participant catches a ball, have them call out the name of an animal (or any category of your group's choosing) before tossing the ball to someone else. This activity is a great way to incorporate rhythm, movement, and play, as well as strengthen the connection between the brain and body.

Play a Go-To Classic



Note: For this option, the group leader will need to bring in whatever games they think would be fun for participants to play.

ACTIVITY STEPS

- 01** Set up a couple of easy-to-play games around the room. Some suggestions include:
 - Jenga
 - Barrel of Monkeys
 - Slap Jack
 - Pick-up Sticks
 - Spot the Difference pictures
 - Bop It
 - Tic-tac-toe
 - Jigsaw Puzzle
 - Catch Phrase
- 02** Next, divide the group into pairs and have each pair go to a different station to play one of the games. (Or, if your meeting is small enough, you can rotate through the different stations together as a group.)
- 03** After pairs are given a few minutes to play the game at their station, have them rotate to a different station to play a new game..
- 04** Continue this rotation until everyone has had a chance to play each game, or until the activity's time is up.
- 05** Afterwards, ask which games the participants enjoyed playing the most. Consider bringing those favorites back for the next Power of Play group meeting.

Grounding Exercise

STOMP AND CLAP

This activity utilizes elements of rhythm, play, and movement to help anchor your attention to the present.

Activity Steps

- 01** Group Leader A begins by performing a simple stomp-clap combination.
 - Example: Stomp, clap, stomp, stomp.
- 02** The rest of the group will then repeat the same stomp-clap combination in unison.
- 03** Repeat this back-and-forth dynamic between Group Leader A and the other participants a few times, allowing the group to fall into a natural call-and-response rhythm.
- 04** Next, Group Leader B will start a new stomp-clap combination for the rest of the group to follow.
- 05** Repeat the same call-and-response rhythm from steps 2 and 3.
- 06** Continue the activity as long as you'd like, allowing other participants the chance to lead the group with their own stomp-clap combinations.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

If you are interested in learning more, we invite you to explore the following articles in the Online Healing Resources section of our website at saprea.org.

- **MOVEMENT**
- **CREATIVE EXPRESSION**
- **MINDFULNESS AND ITS ROLE IN HEALING FROM CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

NEXT TOPIC:

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COPING SKILLS—PART 2

As you direct your thoughts and actions towards healing, it can be helpful to identify which coping strategies you'd like to continue and which coping strategies you may want to adjust or move away from.