

# Filial Therapy

Filial Therapy is an empowering intervention that gives control back to parents and carers by providing a set of skills which can be applied to lifelong situations. Filial Therapy has been a successful intervention since the 1960s. The Filial Therapist works directly with the parent/carer to enable them to conduct special non-directive play sessions with their child as part of a process that can strengthen the parent-child relationship. Filial Therapy is suitable for children aged between 18 months and 14 years old.

Filial Therapy usually takes 3-6 months to complete and may last longer with follow-up sessions. After the initial assessment of the family, the therapist spends two or three weeks training the parents/carers in the basic Filial skills. Parents/carers get to practice the skills several times before they hold the first play session with their child. Thereafter a parent will hold a 30-minute Filial session with their child every week.

Parents/carers continue to hold a weekly 30-minute Filial session with their child for as long as necessary. Filial therapy can help children to express their feelings and fears through the natural activity of play.

Over time, children may:

- Understand their own feelings better
- Become able to express their feelings more appropriately
- Be more able to tell parents what they need, what is worrying them
- Become more confident and skilled in solving problems as well as asking for help when they need it
- Reduce their 'problem behaviours'
- Feel more secure and trust their parents more
- Have a more healthy self esteem and increase their self-confidence.

Filial therapy can help caregivers to:

- Understand their child's worries and other feelings more fully
- Learn new skills for encouraging co-operation from their children
- Enjoy playing with their children and giving them positive attention
- Increase their listening skills and develop open communication with their children
- Develop self confidence as parents
- Become more able to trust their children
- Deal in new ways with frustrations in family life
- Filial therapy can help parents and children to form closer and happier relationships.



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