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Policies and Procedures for the Organisation of Irish Play Therapy Community Association IPTCA

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Purpose of Policies

It is the policy of IPTCA to provide support and supervision of each member affiliated with the organisation. It is our aim to ensure that each member is delivering a safe practice with children and young persons.

This manual is the result of the review and amalgamation of the policies and procedures manuals for the safe practice of all members of IPTCA. The policies and procedures in this manual are intended to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of individuals providing a service for children and vulnerable persons.

Introduction

The IPTCA is an association of Play Therapists who are dedicated to establishing the highest possible standards of protection to the public and to promote the highest standards of personal and professional conduct within the Play Therapy profession. It is the aim of IPTCA to guide all members on the ethical principles, competence and issues relating to positive and safe practice.

The profession of Play Therapy refers to anyone who has successfully completed a recognised course of specific and comprehensive training in the profession. The Play Therapist must attend regular Supervision and CPD trainings to further their standards of practice.

The practice of Play Therapy requires the acceptance of responsible practitioners who are capable of exercising professional judgement. The ethical basis for good practice in Play Therapy has been produced to guide Play Therapists towards achieving the highest standards of practice.

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~Mission Statement

The Irish Play Therapy Community Association is a non-profit Association. Its main aim is to nurture and develop high standards of practice and training for play therapists by offering mentoring, support and guidance for students and qualified therapists. This is to ensure the greater community receives appropriate standards of professional practice. It aims to provide continuous professional development to increase standards of services provided. The Irish Play Therapy Community Association values the qualities of community, compassion, kindness, understanding, support, and encouragement. Self-care and self-awareness for all therapists is paramount to our practice. It aims to be inclusive of all members to ensure their needs are heard and met wherever possible and to be congruent and authentic in their professional practice. These core principles come from the roots of this professional body.

1. IPTCA's Definition of Play Therapy

Play therapy offers a safe space where a therapeutic relationship is built with children, using play as the main tool to communicate. This allows children to be as they need to be. Children present with difficulties that are fully accepted by the therapist as being not right and not wrong. The Play Therapist practices from an informed approach that includes attachment, developmental stages, and neuroscience. The Play Therapist observes and accompanies children through this difficult period in their lives, enabling them to reach their full potential.

Play Therapy is a process that goes at the child's pace. This is done through a variety of mediums such as Drama, Art, Sand, Music, Mindfulness and Clay. Children revisit early traumatic or difficult experiences, to allow for further healing to occur. Symptoms/behaviours/concerns may worsen for a short period of time, allowing for deeper often unknown causes to be resolved. Through the warm and caring relationship with the therapist they explore pushing boundaries, being empowered, being afraid, being good at something or not good enough. Through this they find healthier ways of communicating. By building their resilience they improve their social skills and emotional wellbeing. This helps them to regulate their emotions. Further areas of improvement include psychological, emotional, educational, social, and behavioural wellbeing. Children return to a happier, regulated self, often described as getting their spark back. Play Therapy has been demonstrated to be effective with children of all diagnostic categories. Research into the efficacy of Play Therapy has been shown to be a viable therapeutic intervention for children aged 4 to 12 years and with adolescents. It provides positive treatment outcomes in the following areas: Emotional adjustment of children of divorce, abuse, neglect, stress and anxiety in hospitalised children, speech disability, selective mutism, stammer, decreased maladaptive school behaviour, hair pulling, reading and social difficulties. Please refer to our website for further details on referencing of these findings.

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2. IPTCA Responsibilities

- ❖ Attend regular meetings as a board to ensure management is keeping up to date with any changes to Policies and Procedures.
- ❖ Provide, when necessary, a competent person to advise and assist in securing the safety, health and welfare of members. Encouraging personal self-care when necessary.
- ❖ Provide mentoring support for each member, when necessary, one evening per week. Provide CPD trainings throughout the year.
- ❖ Provide support for therapist setting up practice.
- ❖ Provide and process Garda vetting applications.
- ❖ Provide GDPR and legal support for members.
- ❖ Provide networks for professionals to meet and discuss their field of expertise
Issue a code of conduct to guide professional behaviour
- ❖ Deal with complaints against professionals and implement disciplinary procedures.
- ❖ Represent their members in lobbying government about relevant legislation.
- ❖ Promote fairer access to the profession to people from all backgrounds.

3. Members Responsibilities

- ❖ Be able to practice safely and effectively within the legal, ethical and practice boundaries of the profession
- ❖ Be able to identify the limits of their practice knowing when to seek advice and additional expertise or refer to another professional
- ❖ Be able to act in the best interest of service users at all times with due regard to their will and preference
- ❖ Be aware of current guidelines and legislation relating to candour and disclosure
- ❖ Respect and uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic, therapeutic and social care process
- ❖ Be able to exercise a professional duty of care
- ❖ Understand what is required by the Registration Board to become familiar with the provisions of the current Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for the profession issued by the Registration Board
- ❖ Recognise the importance of practicing in a non-discriminatory, culturally sensitive way and acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups
- ❖ Understand the role of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of service users, staff and volunteers

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- ❖ Understand and respect the confidentiality of service users and use information only for the purpose for which it was given and familiarise themselves with GDPR legislation
- ❖ Understand confidentiality in the context of the team setting
- ❖ Understand and apply the limits of the concept of confidentiality particularly in relation to child protection, vulnerable adults and elder abuse
- ❖ Be aware of current data protection, freedom of information and other legislation relevant to the profession and be able to access new and emerging legislation
- ❖ Recognise and manage the potential conflict that can arise with regard to confidentiality
- ❖ Be able to gain informed consent to carry out assessments or provide interventions and document evidence that consent has been obtained
- ❖ Be aware of current legislation and guidelines related to informed consent for individuals with lack of capacity
- ❖ Recognise personal responsibility and professional accountability for one's actions in order to justify professional decisions made
- ❖ Take responsibility to manage one's own workload as appropriate
- ❖ Understand the principles of professional decision-making to make informed decisions within the context of competing demands including those relating to ethical conflicts and available resources
- ❖ Be aware of and be able to take responsibility for managing one's own health and wellbeing
- ❖ Maintain professional boundaries with service users within a variety of social care settings and be able to identify and manage any associated challenges
- ❖ Be able to evaluate the effect of their own characteristics, values and practice on interactions with service users and be able to critically reflect on this to improve practice
- ❖ Developing an empathic stance to see the world as others see it, so as to practice in a non- judgemental manner. to understand another's feelings and be able to communicate that understanding.

4. Ethical Principles

Ethical Principles are established in order to ensure that Play Therapists are guided through their work ethically. This ensures ethical behaviour with students, supervisors, supervisees, employees, colleges, and associates.

5.1. Responsibility

Play Therapists must assume responsibility for their professional behaviour and actions. They must take responsibility to maintain these standards. Play Therapists are concerned with the ethical compliance of their own practice and their colleague's professional conduct. Should conflict arise, Play Therapists are encouraged to resolve such conflicts to ensure a responsible attitude and awareness of their professional responsibility toward their clients, society, and the community at large.

5.2. Beneficence

Play Therapists should always act in their client's best interests while and working within the limits of competence, training, experience, and supervision. Beneficence requires Play Therapists to use regular and ongoing supervision. They are responsible to enhance their practice by continuing professional development. This is an utmost

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consideration as clients are generally autonomous and depend on significant others to ensure that their best interests are met.

5.3. Non-Maleficence

Play Therapists are committed to not harming those with whom they work, understanding that their professional judgements and actions may affect the lives of others. They must commit to guarding against personal, financial, social, organisational, emotional, sexual or related factors that could lead to a misuse of their influence or exploitation of those with whom they work. This means not providing services due to personal impairment, including personal circumstances or intoxication. Play

Therapists have a responsibility to maintain an awareness of incompetence or malpractice of others. This could include contributing to investigations or adjudication involving professional practice and/or actions of others.

5.4. Fidelity

This principle obliges Play Therapists to uphold confidentiality. This includes restricting disclosures of confidential information to a standard appropriate within the workplace and legal requirements. Play Therapists establish relationships of trust and faithfulness to a client. This is demonstrated by continuing loyalty and support to those with whom they work and act accordingly with the trust placed in them.

5.5. Justice

- Play Therapists recognise fairness and justice is an entitlement for all persons. This principle obliges
- Play Therapists to ensure all persons have fair and equal access to benefit from the contributions of Play Therapy and to equal quality in the services being offered by Play Therapists.
- Play Therapists exercise judgement and care to ensure that their potential biases, levels of competence and limitations of their training and exercise do not directly or indirectly lead to bad practice.

5.6. Respect for People's Rights and Dignity

Play Therapists respect the dignity and worth of all people and the rights to privacy, confidentiality, and autonomy. Play Therapists who respect the autonomy of those with whom they work should ensure accuracy of advertising and delineation of service information. Play Therapists must seek the informed consent clear and foreseeable protect others of those legally responsible for clients. Where possible, assent from the client to engage in explicit contracts, include confidentiality requirements and inform those involved of any conflicts of interest. Play Therapists are aware that special safeguards may be necessary to the rights and welfare of clients who are non-autonomous and dependent upon significant others.

5.7. Respect for People's Needs and Relationship

Play Therapists respect the needs of individuals. This includes emotional, psychological, social, financial, educational, health and family needs. Play Therapists should be aware of people's needs and relationships. This awareness includes that the clients may be dependent upon significant others and that autonomous decision making may not be possible. Play Therapists respect the client's relationships and ensure, where

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possible, those in significant relationships to the client are included in the decision-making processes.

5.8. Self Respect

Play Therapists apply all of these principles to themselves. This involves a respect for Play Therapists' own knowledge, needs and development. This includes accessing opportunities for personal and professional development and to use supervision for development. This includes continuing professional development and appropriate insurance cover.

5. Code of Good Practice

6.1. Continue Personal Development

IPTCA recommend that members maintain 30 CPD points per annum. This is a continuous process throughout the 12-month period. Members are required to provide evidence of CPD training which is suggested to include two or more areas of development where possible. It is recommended that therapists complete a minimum of five self-care and self-development CPD points. This is separate to personal Therapy.

CPD enables learning to become conscious and proactive, rather than passive and reactive. It is the

holistic commitment of professionals towards the enhancement of personal skills and proficiency throughout their careers.

CPD training is an important component to continue to improve lifelong learning that encourages the members to develop and enhance their practice of therapy. This promotes therapists to provide a high standard of practice.

Optional: Building on practice skills in all areas of play therapy, such as sand, art, movement, music, clay, puppets, EPR and Drama and self-care.

Compulsory: Child Protection developments, GDPR and first aid.

Competencies: Knowledge- Theories in development and research or studies in all areas related to the work of Play Therapy, e.g., Trauma

Self-care. Creative Therapy, Therapy, Mindfulness, self-development workshops and training that focus on you and your inner world.

6.2. Supervision

Supervision is seen by the IPTCA as a collaborative process, vital for the well-being of the client and for the development of the practitioner. Supervision is a formal mutual agreement between the Supervisor and Supervisee, where the supervisee discusses his/her work on a regular basis.

All members of IPTCA, according to the IPTCA Code of Ethics and Practice, must monitor their work through regular Supervision to ensure competency, efficacy, ethical standards, and ongoing learning & education.

The term "Supervision" involves:

- Monitoring and safeguarding the interest of the client
- Providing support, presenting challenges, and a reflective learning space for practitioners

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- Ensuring that ethical standards are maintained

This code applies to all supervision models and arrangements. This code is encompassed within the IPTCA Code of Ethics and Practice for Practitioners

The Code of Ethics seeks to inform and protect Supervisees seeking Supervision. By agreeing to comply with this code, Supervisors and Supervisees reaffirm their assent to the IPTCA Code of Ethics and Practice for Practitioners. Supervisors accept their responsibilities to Supervisees and their Clients, their agencies, their colleagues, the wider community, and this Association.

6.3. The Supervisory Relationship

The Supervisor:

- ❖ Strives to create and maintain a collaborative relationship that nurtures the Supervisees' professional competence.
- ❖ Must be able to balance support with challenge so that the supervisee can benefit from new learning as appropriate to the Supervisee's stage of professional development.
- ❖ Must be aware and make explicit the power differential in the relationship and not exploit this power.
- ❖ Must clearly set, define, and maintain ethical boundaries between professional, personal, and social relationships with their Supervisees.
- ❖ Should refrain from engaging in dual relationships where possible bias and role confusion may occur.
- ❖ The Supervisor may not enter into any sexual relationships with Supervisees.

6.4. Supervisors Responsibility

Given that the primary purpose of supervision is to ensure the supervisee is addressing the needs of the client and their own professional learning needs; Supervisors are responsible for:

- ❖ Helping supervisees reflect on their work
- ❖ Adhering to the principles embodied in this Code of Ethics and Practice.
- ❖ Making sure Supervisees are not exploited financially, sexually, emotionally or in any other way in the supervisory relationship.
- ❖ Establishing clear working agreements and contracts, indicating the role of the Supervisor and the role of the Supervisee, and clarifying the responsibility of Supervisees for their own continued learning and self-monitoring.
- ❖ Declaring their specific areas of competencies and non-competencies.

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- ❖ Recognising the value and dignity of Supervisees and their Clients irrespective of age, class, disability, ethnicity, gender, party politics, race, religion, sexual orientation, or social standing.
- ❖ Holding appropriate malpractice and professional indemnity insurance as well as public liability insurance for their supervision work.
- ❖ Satisfying themselves that their Supervisees (other than trainees) have the following measures in place.
- ❖ Monitor their own professional supervisory competency.
- ❖ Supervisors are required to engage in supervision of their own supervisory practice, as well as ongoing continuous learning and development in relation to their supervisory competence.
- ❖ Where a supervisor has serious concerns regarding the quality of a Supervisee's work, they should take all reasonable steps to address and resolve the situation. This process includes options such as:
 - Bringing these concerns to the attention of the Supervisee
 - Seek Professional Consultation
 - Encouraging the supervisee to seek personal therapy or other professional help.
 - Refer the matter, if necessary, to the Supervisee's accrediting body

6.5. Supervisor and Supervisee dual responsibility

- ❖ Set and maintain clear boundaries between the Supervisory relationship and friendships or other dual relationships.
- ❖ Make explicit the boundaries between supervision, consultancy, therapy, and training.
- ❖ Distinguish between supervising and counselling of the Supervisee.
- ❖ Regularly review the effectiveness of the supervision arrangement and change it where
❖ necessary.
- ❖ Considering their respective responsibilities to the client and to each other in relation to the
❖ Supervisee's employment, training, or placement organisation (if any).
- ❖ Ensuring that maximum benefit is gained from supervision time.
- ❖ Adhering to and implementing mandatory reporting guidelines.

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- ❖ While it is the role of the Supervisor to facilitate the Supervisee to explore and reflect on their therapeutic work with clients, there is an understanding that the ethical and legal responsibility for the work remains with the Supervisee.
- ❖ Supervisees are responsible for their work with the Client, and for honestly presenting and exploring that work with their supervisor.

6.6. Contracting and Management of Supervision

- ❖ The Supervisor takes responsibility for establishing a supervision contract with their supervisees.
- ❖ When a contract is being co-created, there is an opportunity to clarify in more detail the expectations of both/all parties regarding tasks, roles, responsibilities, and competencies.
- ❖ Supervisors and Supervisees should make explicit their expectations and requirements of
- ❖ each other. This includes the manner in which any formal assessment of the Supervisees' work will be conducted. Each party should assess the value of working with each other and review this regularly.
- ❖ The Supervisor informs Supervisees of their supervision qualifications, theoretical approach, and method of working.
- ❖ A contract should cover an agreed time span and provide ongoing reviews
- ❖ The Supervisor should be explicit regarding practical arrangements for supervision and ensure
- ❖ this is an agreed arrangement by all parties. It will cover such practical arrangements such as:
 - Fees
 - Length of contact time and frequency of contact
 - Confidentiality and exclusions to confidentiality
 - Process of dealing with exclusions to confidentiality
 - Arrangements in the event of the illness or death of the Supervisee or Supervisor
 - Mediums in supervision
- ❖ How to monitor and report if there are concerns about professional competencies and fitness to practice.
- ❖ Supervisee notes, Supervisor notes (ownership, storage, use, research).

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- ❖ In relation to a Trainee Therapist, the establishment of a 3-way contract between Supervisor, Supervisee and the Training Institution including responsibility for written assessments.
- ❖ How to monitor and report if there are concerns about professional competencies and fitness to practice.
- ❖ Supervisee notes, Supervisor notes (ownership, storage, use, research).

6.7. Evaluation and Feedback

- ❖ The Supervisor provides regular feedback to supervisees on their work.
- ❖ The Supervisor clarifies that the purpose of feedback is to facilitate learning.
- ❖ Supervisors should provide feedback that is direct and clear while at the same time protecting the supervisory relationship.
- ❖ Supervisors should seek feedback from their Supervisees about the quality of the supervision they offer and use that feedback to improve their supervisory competence.

IPTCA Supervisors must:

- Be experienced Play Therapists.
- Have undertaken professional training as a clinical Supervisor and prove evidence of their training while making explicit their specific areas of competencies & non-competencies.
- Continuously seek ways of increasing their professional competence and development of their supervisory skills.
- Decide for their own consultancy and support to help them monitor and evaluate their supervision work.
- Monitor and maintain their own effectiveness. They may need to seek help and or withdraw from the practice of supervision if their competence and capacity to supervise is impaired.

IPTCA recommend that Play Therapists attend

Qualified: 1.5 hour monthly at professional accredited level.

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We require supervision to be completed by a qualified supervisor who uses creative mediums in supervision

5.8. Qualities of Practice

- ❖ Compassion: Non-judgemental, Acceptance, Understanding, Empath.
- ❖ Self-awareness: Ability to self-reflect and be accountable, knowing where you end, and your client begins
- ❖ Tenderness and kindness: Self-care, Kindness, and tenderness in all your practice towards self and others
- ❖ Congruence: Consistency within you, congruence in you and your practice. Allowing all of your learning to filter down into the body to integrate mind body and soul, the brain, and the body.
- ❖ Authenticity: Practicing from your ethical framework and qualities of practice ensuring sincerity throughout your practice.

6. Code of Ethics

Expectations of the members of the public using the services of a Play Therapist are agreed to by IPTCA.

7.1. Personal Conduct

IPTCA asks for their members to adhere to appropriate standards of personal and professional conduct. Should a Play Therapist, who is a member of IPTCA, undermine or bring the profession into disrepute, this may result in a charge of professional misconduct.

7.2. Avoidant of False or Deceptive Statements

IPTCA asks that members do not make false or deceptive statements in relation to:

- Their qualifications, training, or experience.
- Their credentials.
- Their professional affiliations.
- Their service.
- Their fees.
- Their publication of research findings.
- Their evidence for, or results, of their services.

7.3. Protecting the Public

It is good practice for Play Therapists to protect members of the public, should a situation arise where a member of the public is threatened by a colleague's conduct or health.

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Below are the expectations of the clients of the Play Therapists service, as agreed to by IPTCA.

7.4. Acting in the best interest of the client

IPTCA holds that the Play Therapist prioritises the best interest of the client as paramount in their work with that client.

7.5. Maintaining Confidentiality

Client confidentiality is fundamental to the Play Therapist to ensure GDPR is adhered to and respect given to the client.

7.6. Making Referrals

With the client's best interest in mind, if the Play Therapist feels that the client's needs of care are beyond their competencies, the Play Therapist will refer the client to another professional who can best meet their needs.

7.7. Providing information of the Limits of Confidentiality

The Play Therapist must inform their clients and those holding legal responsibility for the client, of the limits of confidentiality. This discussion should take place before beginning the therapeutic sessions with the client.

7.8. Disclosures and Consent

Should an issue arise where a therapist is concerned about a client and/or a disclosure has been made, it is therefore mandatory for a therapist to disclose information on said client without permission or without consent from the client or persons holding legal responsibility for the client.

The Play Therapist will use this information to:

- Refer to other professional services.
- Obtain appropriate professional advice.
- To protect the client, the Play Therapist and others from harm.

7.9. Use of confidential Information for Other purposes

Members of the IPTCA organisation are asked to not share confidential information about their clients through academic work, writings, or another public format, unless:

- The client and those who have legal responsibility for the client have consented to it.

This includes any information on the client's needs, reasons for referral or family members that would identify the client.

7.10. Service Information

The Play Therapist must ensure that information about their service is correct and honest. This information must be shared prior to the client beginning therapeutic sessions.

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7.11. Consent (please see our members website for consent form template)

Play Therapists must document written and oral consent, permission, and assent prior to beginning therapeutic sessions with the client.

The Play Therapist must provide information to the persons responsible for the client regarding:

- Time and day of Play Therapy sessions
- Type of Play Therapy
- Boundaries, rules, aims, costs, benefits and drawbacks of services and any available alternatives.
- The choice to change to an alternative therapy where available.
- The opportunity to ask questions and receive answers regarding the service.

7.12. Fees and Cost of Service

It is the duty of the therapist to inform clients and persons legally responsible for the client of the fees of the service, costs, billing, and payment methods.

It is the duty of the Play Therapist to follow consumer related laws and not misrepresent their fees and costs.

It is the duty of the Play Therapist to discuss, any financial limitations that may impact the service provided.

7.13. Extended Absence

It is the duty of a Play Therapist to notify their clients if there are reasons for absence, short term or for extended periods.

7.14. Managing difficult clients

In the interest of safety and respect for the Play Therapist they do not accept intimidation or abuse from those with whom they work.

When a Play Therapist is in a position where their client is putting themselves or others at risk, it is the duty of the Play Therapist to terminate the session. A discussion can be had between the client and Therapist and those responsible for the client. Future sessions can be arranged.

7.15. Informal Complaints

It is the duty of the Play Therapist to resolve complaints at an informal level. IPTCA follow a complaints procedure which ensures that the professional standard of practice is maintained. Please find a complaints form on the members page on www.iptca.ie.

Below is the expectation of professionals as agreed by IPTCA

7.16. Conflicts between Code of Conduct and Law

Play Therapists have ethical responsibilities within the law. If a conflict is unresolvable, then it is the duty of the Play Therapist to adhere to the obligation of the law.

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7.17. Conflicts between Code of Conduct and Organisations and Employers

In a situation where the Organisation, employer, or another authority that the Play therapist is associated with conflicts with this Code of Ethics, it is the duty of the Play Therapist to attempt to resolve this conflict that adheres to the Code of Ethics.

7.18. Informal Resolution

It is the duty of the Play Therapist to resolve a conflict, should they believe that there has been an ethical violation by another Play Therapist. In this situation where the violation requires immediate action, the Play Therapist must refer to IPTCA's board of management and the persons legally responsible for the client.

7.19. Complaints Procedure

In the event an informal resolution is not successful, or the violation has harmed or could possibly harm a person, it is the duty of the Play Therapist to take further action suitable to resolve the conflict. This should result in following the complaints procedure of IPTCA.

IPTCA requires Play Therapists to adhere to the step-by-step instructions of making a complaint.

7.20. Harassment

It is the right of the Play Therapist not to tolerate any form of harassment/sexual harassment or discrimination.

It is the duty of the Play Therapist to ensure that no harm is inflicted on their clients or those whom they work with including sexual harassment or discrimination.

7.21. Multiple Relationships

It is the duty of the Play Therapist to adhere to client and therapist boundaries. This includes:

- Not entering multiple relationships with their client.
- Not entering other roles with their client other than Play Therapist.
- Not engaging in outside contact with the client that is not therapeutic.
- Not entering into intimate relationships with parents, relatives, carers, spouses, client, or any persons related to the client/former client.
- Not terminating a client's process in order to evade this policy.

7.22. Competence

It is the duty of the Play Therapist to maintain their level of competence. It is the responsibility of the therapist to monitor and develop their professional skills and ethical awareness on an ongoing basis.

They recognize that their expertise and capacity for work are limited and are aware not to exceed their limits.

It is the duty of the Play Therapists who practise in individual play therapy, group therapy and supervision to maintain their levels of competence, if the needs of the client exceed their levels of competence the therapist must show humility and integrity to take actions to refer the client to other suitable professionals.

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It is the duty of the Play Therapist to uphold the continuous professional development per annum to ensure their levels of competence are sustained.

7.23. Working with Other Professionals

It is the duty of the Play Therapist to cooperate with other professionals so that the best interests and needs, of those whom they work with, are met or referred further.

7.24. GDPR

It is the duty of the Play Therapist to ensure they meet the requirements, by law, of the GDPR legislation.

8. Ethical Practise

Personal Qualities:

IPTCA values members who follow ethical values and adhere to Axline and Rogerian practice.

8.1. Humility

To assess, review and consider own competencies, strengths, and weaknesses as a Play Therapist.

8.2. Self-Responsibility

To operate and practice efficiently within own level of competencies.

8.3. Empathy

To empathise with the emotional and psychological expression, experience and needs of clients and significant others.

8.4. Sincerity

To have commitment to being honest and genuine to self and others.

8.5. Integrity

To act in a whole and sound manner towards self and others.

8.6. Respect

To acknowledge and respect people's understanding experiences and abilities.

8.7. Courage

To be able to disregard fear and act upon own convictions and beliefs.

8.8. Wisdom

To be able to apply knowledge and experience critically.

8.9. Congruence

To be congruent with clients and significant others.

8.10. Compassion

To be sympathetic, caring and concerned towards others.

8.11. In-depth Personal Reflection

To reflect upon the emotional, social, and psychological world of clients, significant others and self.

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8.12. Develop Professionally

To continue professional development in a responsible and effective manner.

8.13. Develop Personally

To continue personal development in a responsible and effective manner.

8.14. Diversity and equality

To continue to develop an understanding of how diversity and differences impact on our clients, the Play Therapy profession, and the therapeutic relationship we form with the client.

We require members to understand and recognise the impact of personal values and life experiences on professional practice and be able to manage this impact appropriately. Ensuring it does not impede on their practice.

9. Core competencies

IPTCA recognises their core competencies as:

- Are educated in the area of child and adolescent Play Therapy.
- Knowledge of developmental psychology and of family development and transitions and the ability to match interventions to the appropriate developmental stage
- Knowledge and understanding of developmental issues and mental health problems of children and adolescents
- Knowledge of the law related to working with under 18s
- Ability to operate within professional and ethical guidelines
- Ability to work with issues of confidentiality and consent, including ability to develop a contract with the guardians
- Ability to work with agencies
- Ability to work in culturally diverse environments
- Ability to engage and work with children and adolescents and their systemic world
- Ability to communicate with children and adolescents with consideration of different developmental levels and backgrounds
- Knowledge of psychopharmacology used in work with children and young people, including side effects
- Knowledge of when and how to refer
- Ability to foster and maintain a good therapeutic alliance and to grasp the client's perspective
- Ability to conclude counselling relationships

Generic therapeutic competencies:

- Knowledge of models of intervention, and their employment in practice
- Ability to work with the emotional content of the session

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- Ability to manage endings and service transitions
- Ability to work with groups of children or young people and/or parents/ carers
 - Ability to make use of measures (including monitoring of outcomes)
- Ability to make use of supervision specific for this type of work
- Reflective Practice

Assessment Competencies

- Ability to conduct a collaborative assessment
- Ability to conceptualise and formulate the case
- Ability to identify situations of concern and manage them appropriately

10. Report writing:

Play Therapy reports are used by a variety of professionals. Whatever the situation, the Play Therapy report serves as a record of the initial meeting with the parent/guardian, or of the client if over the age of 18 years. A well-written report provides accountability for the therapy process and aims achieved.

A Play Therapy report must be factual. It includes the basics of an intake form:

- Name of client/client code and date of birth.
- Start and end date of sessions
- Parent Name and contact number
- Workplace ID
- Include your own name on the report
- Start and end date of sessions
- Aims of Therapy sessions
- Outcomes
- Recommendations

Please note that for GDPR purposes, a report must be filed away safely with consideration for client confidentiality.

11. Register

IPTCA provides a register of Play Therapists within Ireland, organised by county.

This can be found on www.iptca.ie. This register is for members of IPTCA.

Please contact the board of management to become a member or to ensure your name and details are displayed correctly on the register at irliptca@gmail.com.

12. Members Personal Therapy and Self-care Practice

IPTCA board of management highly values the process of personal therapy as a parallel process to their practice and development. This supports the therapist in being present and fulfilling all necessary Axline and Rodgerian principles. This ensures accountability from a holistic perspective.

We, as a board, understand how personal therapy journeys are individual to each member. We trust that each person will take accountability for honouring the amount of

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therapy needed each year. It is suggested for qualified professional play therapists that, you check in with yourself, yearly for a minimum of six sessions.

For a trainee it is mandatory to attend a minimum of 30-40 therapy sessions per year.

We value all methods of therapy as a means of aiding each individual in their own personal way however creative therapy must make up 20 creative therapy sessions and 20 talk therapy sessions.

As an organisation we recognise:

- Sand tray therapy
- Play Therapy
- Talk Therapy
- Cranial therapy
- Music therapy
- Art therapy
- Any form of therapeutic intervention which is deemed beneficial for the personal growth of the therapist.

13. Membership

Each applicant is required to complete an application form.

13.1. IPTCA will request the following personal details:

- Name, Address and telephone number of applicants
- Email address
- Background (include education, professional qualifications and most recent employment)
- Employment's status and location of employment
- Member fee

Approval Authority: The board of management of IPTCA will be wholly responsible for the assessment of each applicant to the association

13.2. Membership fees

Membership fees are processed annually from January every year. If members decide to join throughout the year membership will be calculated monthly and then the year membership will be applied in January of the following year.

Student: €35

Full membership: €130

Non practising/ recognised supervisor: €60

In process of accreditation: €60

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14. Insurance

It is required that every member of IPTCA has compliant professional indemnity insurance of their field of practise. IPTCA will ask for a copy of insurance on initial application of membership.

Insurance companies who support Play Therapists members of IPTCA:

- ❖ Brian Mullins Insurance
27 Castle St,
Abbeyquarter
North, Sligo,
F91 NY01
Phone: 071-9141030
Email: info@bmib.ie
Web: <https://bmib.ie/>

- ❖ Psychologists Protection Society (yet to confirm)
Lime Tree House
North Castle Street
Alloa, Clackmannanshire
United Kingdom
Phone: 0044 0333 320 8074
Web: www.ppstrust.org

- ❖ OBF insurance group. (yet to confirm)
Bridge House
Baggot Street Bridge
Dublin 4
Phone: 0035316601033
Email: info@obf.ie
Web: www.obf.ie

15. Child Safeguarding Statements

IPTCA is an organisation of members practicing Play Therapy with children and vulnerable people.

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In accordance with the requirements of the Children's First Act 2015, Children's First: national Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Child Protection Procedures for Play Therapists and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, the Board of Management of Irish Play Therapists Community Association has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

Child safeguarding is about protecting the child from harm, promoting their welfare and in doing so creating an environment which enables children and young people to grow, develop and achieve their full potential.

1. The Board of Management has Adopted and will ensure the implementation of Child Protection Procedures for Play Therapists as part of the overall Child Safeguarding Statement.
2. The Designated Liaison Person for IPTCA is:
3. The Deputy Liaison Person is:
4. The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of the work with Children and vulnerable persons and must be reflected in the Play Therapists' practice of Policies and Procedures. IPTCA and their members must adhere to
 - Recognising that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance regardless of all other considerations
 - Full compliance with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children
 - Fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
 - Adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect
 - Develop a practice of openness with parents, encouraging parental involvement in the process of working with their children.
 - Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

16. Child Protection

It is IPTCA's aim to ensure safe practice and appropriate responses by members to concerns about the safety or welfare of children, with regard to Neglect whether it is Physical, Emotional or Sexual abuse.

As a mandated person, under the Children First Act 2015, the therapist is required to report any knowledge, belief, or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed.

Aim

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- To create a safe, trusting, responsive and caring environment for their clients
- To promote each child's well-being, thus safeguarding him/her from harm while in the session
- To develop awareness and responsibility in the area of child protection.
- To put in place procedures for good practice to protect all children and the therapist
- Making sure that our members are fully trained and supervised.
- Application for Garda Vetting for all members is mandatory.

Prevention

To ensure that our management and members avail of training on Child Protection provided by Tusla's online children's first. [https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/Guideline for recognition of child abuse](https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/Guideline%20for%20recognition%20of%20child%20abuse)

There are commonly three stages in the identification of child abuse.

These are:

- Considering the possibility, examined in the total context of the child's situation and family circumstances.
- An awareness of signs of abuse.
- Recording of information/disclosure.

Handling Disclosures from Children

When information is offered in confidence the Play Therapist will need to act sensitively in responding to the disclosure. The Play therapist will need to reassure the child, and retain his/her trust, while explaining the need for action and the possible consequences, which will necessarily involve other adults being informed.

It is vital to tell the child that everything possible will be done to protect and support him/ her but not to make promises that cannot be kept e.g., promising not to tell anyone else. The welfare of the child is regarded as the first and paramount consideration. Due consideration will be given, with regard to the age and understanding of the child.

The following advice is offered to Play Therapists to whom a child makes a disclosure of abuse.

- Remain calm
- Listen with sensitivity and openness
- Take all disclosures seriously
- Do not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the child
- Offer reassurance but do not make promises
- Do not stop a child recalling significant events
- Do not overreact
- Explain that further help may have to be sought
- Record the discussion accurately and retain the record of dates, times, names, locations, context and factual details of conversation.

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- The therapist may have to assess whether it is safe for the child to return to their parent/carer.

17. Complaints Procedures

A clear and effective Complaints Policy is an important part IPTCA's responsibility to the public

Although complaints can be difficult to receive and respond to, acting on a complaint appropriately, efficiently, and promptly will enhance the reputation of the service.

IPTCA defines professional misconduct as:

Unethical or unprofessional behaviour that falls short of the professional standards accepted by the profession of Play Therapy.

This includes:

- Not upholding ethical principles of practice.
- Misrepresentation of ones professional ability.
- Using offensive, racist, or sexual language.

The following Procedures apply:

- It is in the best interest of IPTCA to ensure that the professional standard of practice is adhered to.
- Where a member receives a complaint against them, they are required to inform IPTCA within 24 hours of receiving it.
- The member must follow up with the complainant as soon as they become aware of the complaint.
- If IPTCA is not informed immediately, this may impact on the outcome of the support provided.
- We encourage those who make the complaint, if possible, to discuss the issue with the therapist and attempt to come to a resolution. If a resolution is not accomplished in the interface, those who make the complaint can take a more formal approach by emailing IPTCA and/or use a complaints form found on www.iptca.ie.
- In the first instance, IPTCA will offer support to the Member, to resolve the issue themselves.
- IPTCA will furthermore, support the Member, in the form of mediation, where appropriate.
- Should an issue arise between members, all attempts will be made to resolve the issue internally and directly.
- If all attempts are unsuccessful to resolve the issue, external mediation or legal advice will be recommended.

All attempts to resolve issues will be made, in the hope of preventing an issue from developing further.

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IPTCA recognises complaints from:

- Clients of IPTCA members
- A parent or guardian representing a child under eighteen
- A representative for an adult who lacks physical or mental capacity

Please contact irliptca@gmail.com should you wish to get a copy of the policies and procedures.

IPTCA DOES NOT:

- Does not Investigate complaints regarding individuals who were not IPTCA members at the time of the event regarding the complaint.
- Does not Investigate complaints which have already been dealt with by IPTCA whether discontinued or not by the Complainant.
- Does not ask the Play Therapist to apologise to the Complainant.
- Does not provide a detailed explanation of what happened to the Complainant. This can only be produced and/or explained by the Play Therapist.
- Does not provide the Complainant/Member with financial compensation or aid in seeking a financial compensation claim.
- Does not provide the Complainant/Member with legal or professional advice or representation.

IPTCA will invite either person associated to the complaint to seek independent legal advice, should they wish to do so, at any stage of the complaint process.

18. Risk Assessment

The aim of this policy is to support members to manage risks associated with the practice of Play Therapy. IPTCA encourages members to maximise opportunities to provide quality services and support and minimise the potential for adversity.

- IPTCA recognises that risk cannot be eliminated but that it can be minimised through good management

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- IPTCA recognises the importance of adopting a proactive approach to the management of risk to support the achievement of objectives and compliance with governance requirements
- IPTCA encourages Play Therapists to comply with all relevant legislation and regulations regarding governance of safety, health, welfare, and protection of those who use their service.
- IPTCA will provide mentoring and training for Play Therapists to encourage safe practice.
- IPTCA will provide documents, should a therapist wish to utilise them, to ensure safe practice.

19. Covid Procedures for Play Therapists

Every workplace and service must have a safety statement. This should be reviewed annually or when the contents of the safety statements are no longer valid. It may be necessary to change risk and control measures when directed to by a health and safety authority inspector.

Returning to or providing service during Covid, Play Therapists must:

- Update existing risk assessments and safety statements
- Ensure that there are adequate supplies of hand washing materials e.g., liquid soap, disposable paper towels etc.
- Remove all soft furnishings until appropriate to reintroduce them to the room.
- Wear visor/mask during sessions
- Surfaces and toolkit cleaned after every session
- Temperature checks on staff and clients upon entrance to the building
- Adjust timetable to allow time for cleaning between sessions
- Ensure there are appropriate COVID 19 signage been prominently displayed throughout the work location, including hand washing guidelines, cough etiquette and covid symptoms procedure.
- All parents or clients are aware of Covid procedures should they have symptoms or have been in contact with someone with symptoms
- Waste bins emptied daily, cleaned and sanitised on a regular basis
- Parent permission forms updated to ensure their understanding of Covid procedures.

20. First Aid

Learning first aid is an invaluable skill working with children and vulnerable persons. It helps members to keep themselves and their clients safe in the possible case of a medical emergency. It helps members to become more risk aware.

IPTCA provides first aid training for their members annually. The cost of this is €50 and can be applied for through

Please email Helga: irliptca@gmail.com

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21. GDPR and Record Keeping

The European Data Protection Regulation is applicable as of May 25th, 2018, in all member states to harmonize data privacy laws across Europe.

IPTCA is committed to processing data in accordance with its responsibilities under the GDPR.

As a board we are compelled to collect and hold data about members to enable us to register them and process Garda vetting, membership cards and construct communications. The GDPR law places a new obligation on an organisation to inform members in more detail why we collect their data, what we do with it and how long members expect the organisation to retain it.

This is an overarching policy in relation to all information created, received and maintained in order to carry out the organisation of IPTCA. It applies to records of all formats including Paper based records Audio-visual records Electronic records i.e. records which are generated electronically and stored by means of technology.

- The board will ensure that all records are managed in accordance with this policy.
- The board will treat all records as important property of the organisation.
- Records will be kept as long as is required for IPTCA organisation and in line with current legislation and regulation.
- Third parties contracted to provide a service to IPTCA will have a Data Processor/Joint Controller Agreement which clearly states how any records they have access to as part of the contract will be managed and who has ultimate ownership of them.
- A Data Sharing Agreement will be established between IPTCA and public bodies/other service providers with whom it shares personal information for the purposes of carrying out its business. The Agreement will outline what data is being shared and how it will be used.
- The board will ensure that their staff/volunteers are trained in the creation and management of records as appropriate to their role.
- All Record Management systems will be developed and maintained in line with current best practice.
- Key Activity Owners will ensure that record management systems are in place as appropriate to support the proper management of associated information.

Article 5 of the GDPR requires that personal data shall be:

- a. processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to individuals;
- b. collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes; further processing for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes shall not be considered to be incompatible with the initial purposes;
- c. adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed;

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- d. accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date; every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data that are inaccurate, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed, are erased or rectified without delay;
- e. kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed; personal data may be stored for longer periods insofar as the personal data will be processed solely for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes subject to implementation of the appropriate technical and organisational measures required by the GDPR in order to safeguard the rights and freedoms of individuals; and
- f. processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.”

22. Garda Vetting

It is mandatory that every member affiliated with IPTCA is vetted through the organisation to ensure safe practice with children and young persons.

Policy

- IPTCA require Garda Vetting and overseas police vetting where applicable to be in place before an individual is issued membership.
- It is a requirement that re-vetting takes place every 3 years. It is a requirement to have parental consent from applicants aged between 3 – 18 years of age.
- The member will be entitled to make an access request for a copy of the completed Garda Vetting Form under Data Protection/Freedom of Information legislation.
- Where it is discovered that an member has made a false declaration in respect of their Garda Vetting Enquiry Form, the disciplinary process will be invoked. Any false declaration or omission will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- In the event of the Garda Authorities indicating the prospective member has a criminal conviction, the board, in consultation with the nominated Garda Vetting Liaison Officer, will decide whether to terminate membership.
- Garda and police vetting will be stored in a secure location managed by the board and will be kept for seven years from the date after the person’s membership with IPTCA ended.

If you have not been contacted about vetting by a member of our board please email iptcavetting@gmail.com.

Administration Duties

The incorporation of the board of management of IPTCA includes:

Yvonne Power:

Helga Behan:

Sorcha Cahillane:

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Audrey Gregan:

Helen Sholdice:

Aisling Murray:

Stephanie Barnes:

IPTCA's Policies and Procedures are subject to change on a yearly basis. Every member of the association will be updated on the changes and adjustments of the Policies and Procedures.