



# Filial Therapy

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## Abstract:

*Play is a kind of sacrament of childhood and it is a manifestation of children's inner thoughts and emotions. It is a not meaningless or random. The child creates her own meaning in the mysterious and sacred ways of play. Play therapy helps children resolves issues arising from traumatic occurrences. Children use play to express and resolve terrifying events. Children will recreate the original events in trauma inspired play. play therapy as an intervention is effective but filial therapy, a family focused play intervention that uses the relationship with the primary care giver is even more effective. No other relationship is more important in shaping a child's adjustment than that with primary care giver .children often have intense and complicated emotions after experiencing significant life event such as domestic violence, abuse ,homelessness ,natural disaster ,war and acts of terror. Many parents do not have the communication skills required to meet their child's emotional needs.*

**Keywords:** *Filial therapy,*

## 1. Meaning of Filial Therapy

**Filial therapy** is a special kind of play **therapy**. It is a unique **therapeutic** method that involves parents and caregivers directly as the agents of **therapy**

**Filial therapy** is a closely related form of child-centered play therapy that involves the parents or caregivers directly as the agents of therapeutic change in therapeutic filial therapy; the parent is present in every session and normally conducts the whole session themselves.

**Filial Therapy** usually takes 3-6 months to complete, and may last longer with follow-up sessions. **Filial therapy** is a very flexible model: providing that the essentials are taught to parents and followed through, it can be delivered and adapted in various ways to meet the circumstances. For instance, parents may attend a **Filial therapy** group (usually a minimum of 10 weeks) or be offered an individual **Filial therapy** intervention. **Filial therapy** can help children to express their feelings and fears through the natural activity of play.

**Filial therapy** is a therapeutic intervention to promote parent – child interaction and improves child’s behavior across culture.

## 2. Founder of Filial Therapy

**Filial therapy** was formulated by **Bernard Gurney** in 1964.

## 3. Definitions of Filial Therapy

Filial therapy is a unique approach used by professional trained in play therapy  
To train parents to be therapeutic agents with their own children through a



Format of didactic instruction, demonstration play sessions, laboratory play-sessions and supervision in a supportive atmosphere.

#### 4. Indications of Filial Therapy

- Parent child relationship problems
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties of children

#### 5. Contraindication of Filial Therapy

Filial Therapy is contraindicated when the parents are perpetrators of sexual abuse.

#### 6. Four Basic Techniques Taught in Filial Therapy

**Structuring:** Parents structure the play session by creating a specific play area and telling the child any of the toys provided in the space can be played with, in any way the child desires (with a few safety-based restrictions).

**Empathic listening:** Parents can develop skills to reflect a child's behavior and emotions during play and use these skills to provide reflective commentary on what the child is doing and what the child may be feeling or experiencing.

**Child-centered imaginary play:** The parent simply watches and follows as the child engages in imaginary play.

**Limit setting:** Although rules are kept to a minimum, parents provide limits to ensure safety and respect for property. Some aggression is permitted, but parents intervene if the child attempts to destroy toys or engage in dangerous behavior.

The goal of therapy is for the child to feel more accepted and to be able to express feelings in safe and appropriate ways.

#### 7. Benefits of Filial Therapy

##### 7.1 For Children

- 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.

##### 7.2 For Parents

- 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

## 8. Filial Therapy Process

### 8.1 Stage One

**Assessment phase:** The Initial Stage is an assessment of the family, which includes an interview with parents/caregivers, a family play observation session, and parental observation of the therapist conducting a non-directive play session with their children. The rationale for using Filial Therapy is explained at the end of this stage and parental consent to this process is acquired.

### 8.2 Stage Two

**Training phase:** Parents are taught how to conduct "special play time" sessions and then they carry out sessions with their child under the therapist's supervision. In the therapist's office, parents are trained how to conduct "special play time" sessions using the basic Filial skills of structuring, empathic listening, limit setting, and imaginary play. The therapist spends two or three weeks training the parents in the basic Filial skills through a playful, supportive method using lots of positive feedback to support effective learning.

Next, for 4-6 weeks, in the therapist's office, the parent gets to conduct 1:1 play sessions with their child while the therapist observes. After each session, the therapist meets alone with the parent to talk about what happened in the session (use of skills, play themes) and the therapist provides positive and detailed feedback and highlights maybe 1 or 2 skills to work on.

### 8.3 Stage Three

**Transfer phase:** The parent-child Filial sessions are transferred to home. The parent conducts a 30-minute Filial session with their child every week at the same time, on the same day, and in the same place. Parents continue to hold a weekly 30-minute Filial session with their child for as long as necessary or as long as the child wants to for a minimum of 6 months.

After the transfer to home, the therapist initially meets with parents once a week, discussing the sessions, exploring the themes in the child's play, and helping parents generalize the basic parenting skills used in the Filial sessions to real life problems in the home. As the parents progress and positive changes are seen in the family relationships and the behavior of the child, the office sessions with the parents becomes less frequent (every two weeks, one time a month, to once in several months) and are followed by a final "check up" with parent and therapist to

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