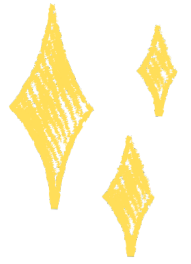


Understanding Therapy and Trauma Processing: Kids & Adults

Therapy for children and adults may share similar goals, but the approaches and processes often differ significantly. When it comes to trauma processing, these differences become even more pronounced. Here's a guide to help parents understand how therapy and trauma processing look different for kids compared to adults:

	Children	Adults
Developmental Considerations	Children are still developing emotionally, cognitively, and socially. Their understanding of themselves and the world is evolving, which affects how they process and express trauma. Therapy for children often involves age-appropriate techniques such as play therapy, art therapy, storytelling, and bibliotherapy (using books to explore feelings and experiences).	Adults have a more developed sense of self and better verbal abilities compared to children. They can often articulate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences more clearly, allowing for deeper exploration and reflection in therapy sessions.
Communication Styles	Children may struggle to express their emotions and experiences verbally. They may communicate through play, drawings, or behaviors rather than words. Therapists often use non-verbal techniques to help children express themselves and process trauma.	Adults typically rely on verbal communication to express their thoughts and emotions. They can engage in dialogue with their therapist, discussing past experiences, current challenges, and their emotional responses.
Parental Involvement	Parents play a significant role in their child's therapy process, providing support, guidance, and reinforcement of therapeutic techniques at home. Family therapy sessions may also be beneficial for addressing relational dynamics and family patterns.	While family dynamics may still impact an adult's mental health, therapy for adults often focuses more on individual experiences and personal growth. However, involving supportive family members or partners in therapy can be beneficial for some individuals.
Trauma Processing	Children may process trauma indirectly through play, storytelling, and creative expression. Trauma-focused interventions for children often prioritize safety, stabilization, and building trust before directly addressing traumatic experiences. It's important to note that children may take a longer time to process and integrate their experiences compared to adults.	Adults may engage in more cognitive processing of trauma, exploring the impact of past experiences on their thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors. Therapy for adults may involve techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), or narrative therapy to address traumatic memories.

Guidance for Parents



Avoid Questioning: Parents should avoid questioning their child about what was said or done in therapy sessions. Instead, encourage open communication and let the child share their experiences and feelings at their own pace.

Create a safe environment: Provide a supportive and non-judgmental environment where the child feels comfortable expressing themselves. Validate their feelings and experiences, even if they differ from your own perceptions.

Respect Privacy: Respect your child's privacy and the confidentiality of their therapy sessions. Avoid discussing therapy details with others without your child's consent, unless there are safety concerns that need to be addressed.



Therapy and trauma processing for children and adults differ in many ways due to developmental considerations, communication styles, coping mechanisms, parental involvement, and approaches to trauma processing. Understanding these differences can help parents support their children's therapeutic journey and navigate their own healing process effectively.

*Remember, every individual, whether child or adult, responds uniquely to therapy, and it's essential to work with a qualified therapist who tailors the approach to meet their specific needs.