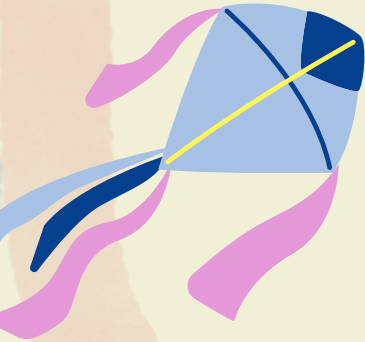
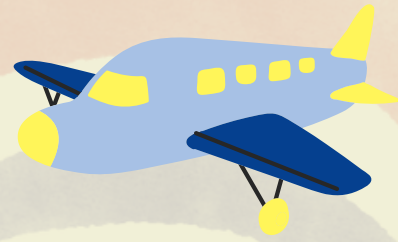


PADHOGE LIKHOGE TOH BANOGE NAWAAB, KHELOGE KUDOGE TOH BANOGE... KHARAAB?



WHAT IS PLAY?

What comes to your mind when you hear 'play'? Gilli-danda, chor-sipaahi, sitolia/lagori, kanche (Marbles), cricket, (Langdi taang, tikkar billa) hop-sotch? Are there any images, thoughts, feelings, any old memory that come up for you as you think about playing? Stay with it.

And when was the last time you played any of these or others? Play is an activity that one engages in for enjoyment, recreation, and/or relaxation without expectations about its end goal.

Play is about recognizing opportunities of fun in our daily lives and embracing them – right there and then. Extra soap water? Go make bubbles! See a pile of leaves? Kick. Seeing a cloudy sky? Go find shapes. You get the idea.

Look at the world as your childhood self would, with an eye for fun!



Characteristics of Play

- Is enjoyable
- No expectations about end goal
- Can mean different for each person
- Makes you feel present in the moment
- Can be free play (playing with leaves) or structured play (games with rules)
- To creatively express yourself while engaging your imagination
- Involves intrinsic motivation

Myth: Play is for kids

Thought: If so, I wonder why there are so many amusement parks, arcade games and play-based restaurants for adults? Play is for everyone! As kids, when playing ghar-ghar (doll house), play was serious business. And as we grow up, 'playfulness' as adults is looked down upon or is crowded by responsibilities. Saw a tree and wanted to climb it, but felt embarrassed? Let your inner child be, go play!

Myth: Play is different from work

Thought: Play is associated with recreation and pleasure and thus makes one dissociate it from 'work'. But, what if you were to work in a playful manner? Or, are there other forms of 'work' that would help you feel like its 'play' for you?

Myth: Play is same as games/sports

Thought: Whereas, Play can be a structured sport like playing football or running, it does not necessarily have to be so each time. Play can also be unstructured without any agenda. It can be as simple as tossing pebbles into a river as long as it brings you joy and/or relaxation.

How does play help children?



- Enhances critical thinking ability
- Develops problem-solving skills
- Improves language and communication skills
- Fosters creativity and flexibility
- Increases brain stimulation
- Develop new life skills
- Understand the world around them



- Toning and strengthening up of different muscle groups
- Improves muscle co-ordination
- Encourages an active lifestyle
- Channels excessive energy in a healthy manner
- Playing in the dirt improves immunity



- Teaches negotiation and self-regulation
- Become more self aware
- Learn about their likes and dislikes
- Become more spontaneous
- Helps practice different roles and build empathy skills
- Allows expression of difficult emotions -anger, sadness, fear, guilt



THE OTTER PHILOSOPHY OF PLAY

Otters are small, furry creatures that love to play, with themselves and with others. Is that why they look so happy all the time? Otters love water slides! You would find them on their bellies, sliding down to the bottom of a muddy slide and doing it all over again!

The otter philosophy is about finding your 'water slide', everyday.

While everything is quantified in terms of money and productivity, imagine if we would set aside time and energy for play, just like we do for social media, homework, exercise or anything else!

A group of otters on land is called a romp (in water it's called a raft). A romp is an appropriate collective noun if you've ever seen a bunch of otters hanging out. Are they sitting around discussing their investments? Or worrying about getting into a university of their choice? Nope.

They are having fun! While the above mentioned are important, so is play.

Go find you inner otter today!



- Improves Cognitive functioning and flexibility
- Improves problem solving skills
- Enhances creativity
- Better concentration



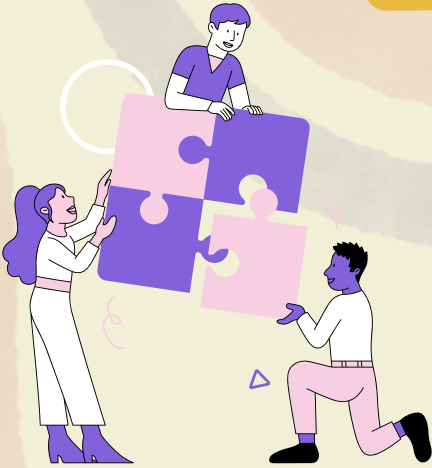
- Healthier body and mind
- Enhances cardiovascular health
- Improves sleep
- Releases happy hormones
- Improves Productivity



- Builds tolerance and patience
- Strengthens relationships
- Enhances empathy and soft skills
- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Increases Optimism
- Facilitates mindfulness



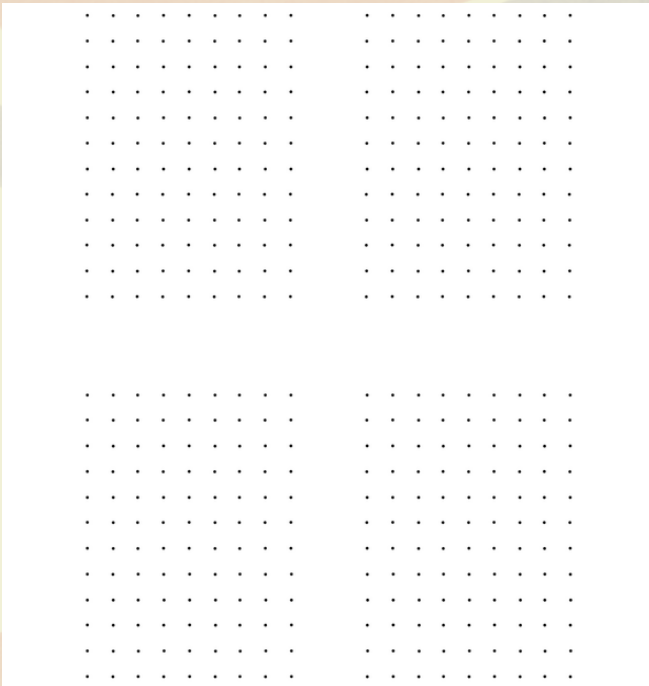
Play and relationships



A friendly match of cricket with your buddies, a game of scrabble with your partner, a simple game of catch with your pet can significantly improve your relationship with others and also yourself! When you engage in playing with others regularly, you open yourself to taking risks and trusting others. This helps make space for vulnerability and further leading to stronger bonds.

Remember, when your close friend gave you a Draw 4 card in a game of UNO?

KHEL KHEL MEIN...



DOTS AND BOXES

- This game requires at least two players but can be played by more.
- You basically draw dots and then each player takes turns connecting two dots with a straight line.
- The first person to make a complete square puts their initials in the box.
- Play continues until the last two dots are connected.
- Players get 1 point per box.
- The player with the most points at the end wins.

PEHCHAAN KAUN?

Q. WHAT HAS A FACE AND TWO HANDS
BUT NO ARMS OR LEGS?

A. CLOCK

Q. KALA GHODA, SAFED SAWAARI. EK
UTRA TOH DOOSRE KI BAARI. PEHCHAAN
KAUN?

A. TAWA AUR ROTI

TONGUE TWISTERS

पके पेड़ पर पका पपीता, पका पेड़
या पका पपीता, पके पेड़ को पकड़े
पिंकू, पिंकू पकड़े पका पपीता।

Betty bought butter but the
butter was bitter so Betty
bought better butter to make
the bitter butter better

Want to be more playful?

Pick one or two activities that you resonate the most with!



DANCING



**PLAYING CATCH
WITH YOUR PET**



**LISTENING/CREATING
MUSIC**



**DOODLING IN YOUR
NOTEBOOK**



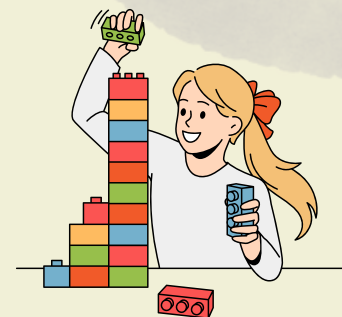
**CLAY
MODELLING**



**CROCHETING OR
KNITTING**



**GAME NIGHT (CARD
GAMES, BOARD GAMES.)**



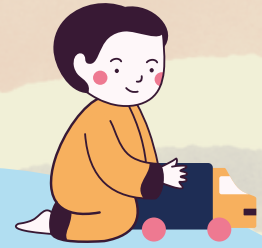
**BUILDING A LEGO
SET**



CYCLING

Play isn't something new that you have to do. It's unique and personal! So, play with sand, toss pebbles or jump in water puddles ...reflect on your childhood memories and discover what 'play' means to you.

PLAY AND PLAY THERAPY



By now you may be wondering, how such a simple activity like play could do so many wonders! So mental health went a step ahead and uses, 'Play therapy' as a tool in the therapeutic space.

"Play therapy is a form of psychotherapy approach that uses play to assess, prevent or treat psychological challenges faced by individuals."

On the outside it may look like just having fun with toys. However, it has been found to be effective to deal with various mental health challenges faced not just by kids, but adults as well.

Often, we as adults like children may find it difficult to communicate our feelings, especially the difficult ones. Play therapy uses stories, role-play of different characters, and props like puppets and toys to help individuals experience and express difficult emotions, but, with the safety of distance.

For example, a child who is experiencing emotional or mental concerns at home, while playing with a dollhouse may express how the baby is scared of a specific individual and sits alone in the corner. The play therapist would then intervene at such points to address these concerns that otherwise couldn't be spoken of directly in the therapeutic process.



What is play therapy used for?

Play therapy is often used with children and adults for these common concerns:

- Parent's separation
- Demise of a parent
- Abuse (physical, sexual)
- School related concerns
- Natural disasters or any other trauma incident

We don't stop playing because we grow old...we grow old because we stop playing.

-George Bernard Shaw

The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct.

-Carl Jung

Experts' Dialogue

Play is an activity that consists of a mixture of familiar and new ideas, of creative imagination and general thinking. The role of play is often seen in two forms :

- (1) a leisure activity for recreation or recuperation.
- (2) Structured activity focused on developing specific skills, including social and cognitive skills

As Dance Movement Therapy Psychotherapists, we often use movement-based play in our therapy sessions that involve the following themes:

Reflective Interactions: The child begins to move in a way that they desire, and the adult follows them like a mirror. This helps build a synchronous movement experience by creating a pathway of open communication and understanding. The child is encouraged to explore free initiation of movement while being able to have that movement accepted and shared with the adult. This parallelly allows the adult to explore and understand the child's perspective from their experience. It also gives an opportunity to learn the child's preferences and comfort zones regarding body movement.

Conversation / Dialogue interactions: The adult and child could engage in initiation action followed by response interaction. This gradually builds into a dialogue of spontaneous movement interaction which further enables communication and empathy building.

Prop Engagement: Sometimes, bringing in an additional prop helps in building playful intentions. These could be toys or games that have a present intention (jenga blocks, percussion instruments, building blocks etc) or free intention (scarves, balls, balloons, bubbles etc). Using a prop can help build and sustain the child's interest in the activity and help alleviate the pressure of initiating and responding to movement.

Learning-based play: Play in Dance Movement Therapy helps children involve using the whole body to engage with the space, grasp and absorb the information and understand their environment better.

Play for parents/caregivers:

Parents/caregivers while observing their children play can understand their preferences and work towards strengthening them further.

For Parents/ Caregivers, play is a medium of interaction that helps to build the child's level of independence and functionality.

When experiencing difficult emotions, play forms a strong support for regulating these emotions.

Play is a complex interaction between one's inner world and external environment. Play helps in using fantasy to receive new meanings/perspectives for real situations. These interactions can help build bridges of communication between the caregivers and the children, giving each an opportunity to share their world while learning more about that of the other.



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Tarana Khatri

M.Sc. Counselling Psychology
Dance Movement Psychotherapist

मैं ...

मैं हूँ/ I am _____
मैं आश्चर्यचकित हूँ/ I wonder _____
मैंने सुना/ I hear _____
मैंने देखा/ I see _____
मुझे लगता है/ I feel _____
मैं चाहता हूँ/ I want _____
मैं आशा करता हूँ/ I wish _____
मुझे चिंता है/ I worry _____
मैं कोशिश करूँगा/ I will try _____
मैं कहता हूँ/ I say _____
मेरा मानना है/ I believe _____
मैं समझता हूँ/ I understand _____
मैंने सपना देखा/ I dream _____

"I Am" poem is a sentence completion poem in which an individual describes themselves through a series of prompts. Writing and sharing these are a wonderful way for the individual to express themselves and feel known. Writing these may also help one develop self-awareness, a core competency for social-emotional development.

"मैं हूँ" कविता एक ऐसी कविता है जिसको हम अपने हिसाब से भर सकते हैं। ये कविता पूरी करते वक्त हम खुद के बारे में सोचने लगते हैं, खुद को सवाल पूछने लगते हैं, ये सवाल हमें खुद को और अच्छे से जानने में मदद करते हैं और जब हम खुद को पहचानना शुरू करते हैं तो जिंदगी में जो भी हमारे बाकी के रिश्ते हैं वो और अच्छे और मजबूत बनते हैं।

Help is just a call away!

- ICALL HELPLINE (GENERAL COUNSELLING)- 02225521111 (MON-SAT, 8AM-10 PM)
- HUMSAFAR TRUST (LGBTQIA+)- 0226673800 (MON-FRI, 10 AM-8PM)
- ARPAN (CSA)- +91-9819086444 (MON-FRI, 9 AM-6PM)
- AASRA (SUICIDE PREVENTION)- +91-9820466726 (7 DAYS A WEEK, 24 HOURS)

OUR MENTAL HEALTH TEAM



Neha Kathuria
(She/Her)
Project Head/Lead

Neha is a Counselling Psychologist & a Dance Movement Therapy practitioner. She has been working in the field of Mental health as a practitioner for the last 8 years. Her aim is to create mental health friendly spaces where everyone can share their remarkable stories which have shaped their behaviors and experiences. She works from a humanistic approach and believes that each one has the potential to grow. She strives to make a positive change in people's life by empowering them at a young age itself to make a healthy, happy world both mentally and physically.



Shreya Nanduri
(She/Her)
Project Officer

Shreya is a Counselling Psychologist based in Mumbai and has a Masters with a specialization in Clinical Psychology. She is trained in CBT-REBT modality of therapy & has an eclectic approach. As a Mental health professional, she has majorly worked with individuals and adolescents. She hopes to make a difference in the mental health community by reducing the stigma surrounding Mental Health and normalizing seeking support. As a professional, she tries to elevate the standards of Mental Health services being provided by making them as accessible as possible.



Radhika Maheshwari
(She/Her)
Project Intern

Radhika is a Counselling Psychologist based in Mumbai. With her belief in the mind-body connect and the therapeutic impact of the arts, she has trained in Expressive Arts Therapy. Taking on an integrated approach, she believes that mental health concerns arise due to multiple causes and conditions. With a strong belief in the client's unique needs, potential and self-expertise, she walks with you as you explore this process for yourself. As a Mental Health Professional she has worked with children, adolescents, young adults on the Autism spectrum, corporate employees, People with Parkinson's and their caregivers as well.

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

If you or someone you know is experiencing any mental or emotional distress, kindly call on our toll-free mental health helpline number:

SAMVAAD
1800-102-4040

This helpline is active from 8 am to 8 pm, seven days a week and is handled by counsellors with varied expertise.

In case of any mental health related concerns, please feel free to reach us on mentalhealth@projectmumbai.org

Content Curators
Neha Kathuria, Shreya Nanduri, and Radhika Maheshwari

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