

'Sensory Stuff': The role of an occupational therapist within a therapeutic service for child protection clients

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Take Two provides a range of therapeutic services to children in the child protection system, aged 0-18 years living in Victoria who have experienced significant child abuse and neglect.

The OT Consultancy project (2015-2018) employs a full time Occupational Therapist to provide assessment & consultation services to families, carers, Take Two clinicians & educational staff.

Action Methodology Framework is utilised to develop and evaluate the OT consultant role. Feedback from stakeholders informs practice improvements in a continuous cycle.

Therapeutic recommendations include sensory motor activities, Psychoeducation and Environmental Modifications.

OT's knowledge of children's sensory processing patterns & the impact of trauma on the developing brain supports therapeutic intervention with TakeTwo clients, caregivers and caregiving systems. OT assessments provide strategies for emotional and environmental scaffolding to enhance key relationships and assist carers to sooth & co-regulate the children in their care.

Evaluation using clinician feedback and case studies demonstrates enhanced Take Two clinician knowledge about the interplay between trauma, attachment, brain development & sensory processing. Children are feeling more secure & supported to engage purposefully with others.

Rain...
food and nurturing.
Birds... people that come and go from the lives of these children.

Higher branches...
Take Two clinicians and specialist input.
Leaves...
care givers and significant others.

Tree trunk...
represents growth, development, health and experiences of childhood.

Mulch on ground...
child's growing resilience and internal resources.

Damage to the tree...
family, school and community disruptions.
Disrupted growth (sparse foliage)...
loss, fear and impact of trauma.

Roots of the tree...
represent aspects of the child's preconception factors such as genetic disposition, epigenetics and transgenerational trauma.

