

ELEVATE

COUNSELING SERVICES, INC.

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Important Information for Parents/Guardians Prior to the First Session

Questions you may have

➤ Why Parents play a vital role in the counseling process?

○ As therapists, we see the child as part of the family unit. Through this lens, we gain an understanding of the family dynamics and can better support both your child and you as parents. This approach allows the child to feel more supported when it is viewed as a team approach. Child-centered play therapy focuses on the relationship with the child and involving the parents in this process can facilitate positive changes in the parent-child relationship, as well as, the whole family's relationship. ➤ **What is Play Therapy?**

- The Association for Play Therapy (APT) defines play therapy as "the systematic use of a theoretical model to establish an interpersonal process wherein trained play therapists use the therapeutic powers of play to help clients prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development."
- A child's natural way of communicating is through play and this is an important part of their developmental process. It is the first language they learn and the most comfortable way for them to process their thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and experiences.

➤ What is appropriate to discuss in front of the child?

- It is important to recognize the child's developmental level when assessing the information to be discussed in their presence. While it is important for the therapist to know certain information it does not always mean it should be discussed with the child present as this may be triggering or create a negative association with the therapy process. We have provided you with some questions to answer prior to the first session to get a better understanding of the background in order to keep the focus on the child for the first session.
- Parent consults are also designed to have you as parents meet separately with the therapist to discuss certain topics. These can take place by phone or in person at any time during the therapy process. It is expected that you meet with your therapist for a parent consult on a monthly or bimonthly basis depending on the frequency of the child sessions.

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- Parent consults can help you understand your child's behaviors and gain insight into their emotional world. It also provides a space to discuss the effectiveness of treatment and help you support your child through this process.

➤ What is the role of the parent in the therapy session with the child? ○ The playroom is set up

in a way to provide an environment for the child to feel safe and comfortable. It is important to keep this space free from distractions. We encourage parents to join sessions as needed and it is important for the parent to be fully present in the session. This means no cell phones or other devices are to be used during the therapy session. It is also important for the child to see you engage in play with them and communicate on their developmental level. It is also important to let the child take the lead as this is their time to have control. ➤ **What are the expectations of the parent during a telehealth session?** ○ Just like in the therapy office the child should be provided with a safe and private space to engage with the therapist. The room should be free from distractions. Privacy can be ensured by the use of headphones or sound machines/music. The child should not be using other devices while in session. The therapist will provide you with more information as to the materials needed as each clinician has different approaches. It is important to have this prepared and easily accessible as to not interrupt the therapy process.

➤ **Will my clinician be meeting with my child alone?**

- Children under the age of 6 should have the parent present for the majority of sessions. At any age, it is key for the parent and the child to feel comfortable and the therapist will work with you on how to build this therapeutic relationship appropriately.