

Information for Parents and Carers

Hello and welcome! I'm aware there is a lot of information here, so to help you navigate to what you really want to know, this information is set out in four main sections.

1. Child and adolescent therapy and counselling
2. Supporting you as a parent or carer and supporting you all as a family
3. Session information - all the administration info
4. About Elaine and Orca

1. What is Child and Adolescent Therapy & Counselling? (and how does it work?)

At Creating Calm, both therapy and counselling are person-centred, integrative, and holistic. They draw on many types of therapy and counselling techniques. These types of therapy or counselling put your child or teen at the centre of anything we do together and can work alongside most other kinds of support that your child may have in school or through your GP. Therapy works with all clients, regardless of age or individual needs. Counselling tends to work best with pre-teens, teens and adults who prefer a more talking based approach but often a blend of both is used to support each client in a holistic way that responds to their needs.

Client-led therapy and counselling means your child decides what they do in the studio and how they approach the issues and concerns they want to work through. Depending on how we decide to work together, time in the studio may sometimes be more directive and may involve working with you as a parent/carer.

As well as Creative Arts and Play Therapy, there are lots of other ways of implementing therapy or counselling can be used to support your child. How we propose to work together can be discussed at the initial intake meeting, when we can discuss what has brought you and your child to meet me and plan the best way forward for them together. Depending on the approach we take, sessions may include working 1:1 with your child, working together with your child and you or working with just the key adult/s for the child.

Creative Arts and Play Therapy forms the main part of their time in the studio for many children, regardless of the therapeutic approach. It includes drawing, painting, creating, working with clay, and creating sand trays but other creative aspects are also used. Play Therapy can also be integral to an individual child's therapy, because play supports a child (or young person's) development physically, emotionally, and socially. A lot of the techniques used in the studio are also adult therapies, and I do work with some adults too, especially those who dislike talking therapies.

Play allows children to develop their imagination and creativity and it encourages confidence and concentration. It helps children to make friends and to make sense of their ever changing and growing world and allows them to make mistakes safely. Working through play and creative arts is a symbolic communication – a child will often communicate through the arts and/or play what they cannot express with words. It allows them the safety of showing their worries without having to talk about them when they may not have (or want to use) the words. They can talk too, and many do, but this way of working allows children to say as much or as little as they need, or choose, to say.

Much of how we work also acts as a bridge between the conscious awareness and emotional experiences, allowing children to explore 'what is me' and 'what is not me' in a safe environment as they work through the issues or concerns that have brought them to therapy.

Combining therapeutic skills with counselling skills is a particularly effective way of supporting children and teens.

Therapy and counselling are not a quick fix – each client has weekly sessions. Sessions will ideally be at the same time each week. Just as what has brought the child to therapy is unique, so is the length of time each child needs therapy and the balance of modalities (ways of working) that are used.

Therapy and counselling help children to:

- ✓ Understand relationships
- ✓ Experience and identify emotions
- ✓ Act out troublesome issues
- ✓ Practise roles
- ✓ Explore situations
- ✓ Learn, relax, and have fun
- ✓ Develop physical skills
- ✓ Find out what is 'me' and what is 'not me'

Time in sessions enables your child to consider and acknowledge their feelings. It helps them learn that it is OK to feel and teaches them to cope with big feelings in a safe and constructive way.

Therapy has very few rules, but as many as necessary:

- Everyone in the room is safe
- Everything in the room is safe
- You can choose to tell anyone anything about therapy as long as it is the truth

The equipment offered in each session includes:

- ✓ A sand tray with dry sand (each child can add water if they choose)
- ✓ A selection of symbols that will encourage the child to create any story in the sand tray, on the floor, or a table
- ✓ Clay – usually grey and red
- ✓ Art and drawing materials – paints, glue, glitter, collage etc.
- ✓ Small world figures including people, animals, vehicles, and houses
- ✓ Music and movement equipment, including instruments
- ✓ Creative arts activities
- ✓ Games
- ✓ Dolls and caring equipment
- ✓ Medical equipment for role play

If you have any questions about keeping your child safe and what to do if they are unwell, I can answer these at our initial meeting.

Please be aware that your child may get a little messy when visiting the studio. I do provide aprons, but because therapy is generally non-directive, I won't insist your child puts one on (although I may suggest it...).

SandStory Therapy is based in the tradition of narrative storytelling and was invented by Margaret Lowenfield in the 1920s as part of her work. SandStory Therapy offers a safe, gentle, and unique way for a child, teen, or adult, to 'tell their story in the sand', encouraging a dialogue between the conscious and the unconscious, so that inner wisdom is seen and heard as well as being experienced, leading to organic changes in ways of thinking, being and acting.

If your child is coming to see me because of issues like trauma, anxiety, or anger management, the **TraumaPlay** approach is a great way of working for them because they have a chance to develop specific skills and techniques that will help them, even if there is not a traumatic experience involved in them coming to therapy. TraumaPlay combines effectively with other therapy and counselling techniques. Children do not need to have a PTSD or C-PTSD diagnosis to be included in this way of working.

TraumaPlay was created to support children and teens who have experienced trauma, either as a one of event such as a bereavement, or over a longer time. It is component based, allowing for your child's specific needs to be met.

I have used TraumaPlay extensively and very successfully with numerous clients and their families. I am the first person to become a TraumaPlay certified therapist in the UK and I am currently the only UK supervisor for the TraumaPlay model.

Over time we work through these things together:

- Building safety and security
- Developing coping strategies
- Enhancing emotional literacy
- Play based gradual exposure to the trauma
- Experiential mastery play
- Trauma narrative work (around telling the story of what happened)
- Making sense of the post trauma self (creating a new identity)

The family (or caregivers) are also involved in TraumaPlay and as well as helping parents (or other key adults) be better partners in regulation, TraumaPlay helps them learn how to hold the hard stories of the children they care for. Towards the end of therapy, when the child is learning about their new post trauma identity, the family are encouraged to also look at their post trauma selves, both as individuals and as a family.

Children's Accelerated Trauma Training (CATT) is an integrative trauma-focused therapy that helps children, teens and young people with a PTSD or C-PTSD diagnosis to overcome PTSD and complex trauma by helping them to process their traumatic memories in a safe and age-appropriate way. CATT is NICE and WHO guidance approved and was specifically designed for supporting this age group as young people have different mental and emotional capacities to process trauma when compared to adults. CATT combines creative arts therapies with cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and human rights principles into a 10-step programme and it is a holistic and client-centred intervention.

All the interventions mentioned above are suitable for working with children and young people aged 7 and above.

Creative Arts and Play Therapy can be used with younger children too.

Counselling using Creative Arts uses established skills and techniques based in Gestalt therapy as well as drawing on the work of Carl Rogers, Virginia Axline and Phenomenological Theory. Traditional 'talking therapy' skills are used, but often clients are asked to explore ideas and themes using play and creative arts including sand, clay, paint and drawing to further deepen their understanding. It's not about being an amazing artist but more about representing something complex in colour, line, and shape so that things that are unspeakable can be voiced.

Counselling works best with older children, teens, and young people so it is generally offered to clients from the top end of primary school upwards. However, I work in client-centred way, so often just blend therapy and counselling to meet the needs of my clients. The CORE 34 is used as an assessment tool at the start and the end of an episode and CORE 10 is used in each session if a client is happy to complete them.

2. Supporting you as a parent or carer and as a family

Parent-Child Attachment Play (PCAP) was created by Debi Maskell-Graham and it is a playful ten-step model that helps parents and carers be 'change agents' in their own families. PCAP helps parents and carers to strengthen their relationships with their child/ren and enjoy spending time with their child/ren wherever they are. PCAP supports the adults around the child and is adult only sessions, and is designed to help them enhance their play, containment and reflective functioning skills and establish a weekly 'you and me' time with their child/ren at home. PCAP sessions involve just the adult/s and the therapist in sessions, not the child.

Parents as Partners is a component of TraumaPlay that is focused on working with parents. It looks at parenting styles and reflects on the ways to best support everyone in the family dynamic. This element of family support works with the adults around the child or teen and can be used to support the whole family alongside separate work with the child or the teen. Parents as Partners supports the adults around the child and is adult only sessions, often done alongside or after child or teen therapy but it can be a 'stand-alone' for adults wanting to reflect on how they parent or care for children and young people. Parents as Partner sessions involve just the adult/s and the therapist in sessions, not the child.

Filial Therapy is an approach that teaches parents (or other adults) to support their child or teen in a way that enhances and strengthens their relationship with each other. Parents are coached and supported to use important therapeutic skills that include empathetic listening and limit setting so that they can then enjoy a more positive relationship with their child or teen. This approach supports both the adults and children or teens in the family. Some sessions are adult focused, some involve the adults and the children or teens. Sessions are longer than normal therapy sessions and so they are charged at a different rate.

Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) is an approach developed to help parents and carers who are struggling with managing their child or teen's behaviour and helps them build a safer family environment that is more emotionally aware. NVR supports the adults around the child and is adult only sessions, helping parents and carers to feel more confident and empowered to support their child or teen without getting into power struggles. NVR supports adults to respond effectively to effectively manage aggressive, violent, self-destructive, and controlling behaviours. NVR sessions involve just the adult and the therapist in sessions, not the child.

All these approaches can be used with children and teens and all family dynamics including blended, foster, and adoptive families and for children or teens in kinship care. NVR can also be used by professionals working with families.

If you are interested in any of these ways of supporting you or your family, please talk to me before we start sessions and we can work out a plan together.

3. Session information

How does therapy work?

Once we have had an initial chat over the phone or Zoom, we will arrange a 'hello session' before we start working together so you can come to the studio and become familiar with it. Each weekly therapy session will generally last for 40 minutes. Please park on the drive when you arrive, not on the road and do not arrive more than 5 minutes before your session.

If you are not in the session, you are welcome to wait in my 'Coffee Cupboard'; a garden building next to my studio, with comfy chairs, drinks, and Wi-Fi, or in the courtyard garden if the weather is nice. If you are going into town, please be back in good time to collect your child! Occasionally, children want to finish a bit earlier than planned and it's important they can get to you if they need you. Therapy is hard work, so please be understanding if they are tired when they come back to you and let them share, if they want to, in their own time.

During sessions, big feelings can come up for a child and this may mean their behaviour can get worse before it gets better as they process those feelings. This is quite normal. If you're worried, or there is anything you think I need to know, please send me an email (or text me if it is urgent - I don't generally check emails in my working day). Likewise, if there is anything important that I need to tell you, I will of course let you know too. I know it's tempting to ask what is happening in sessions, but please don't quiz your child.

Children coming to therapy are always told they can tell anyone anything they like about their time in the studio provided it is the truth, so please let them tell you, rather than asking them.

Conversely, I will generally give you little information about 1:1 sessions, in order that they are confidential for your child. When we meet formally (usually around session 10-12) I will say a little more about themes and things I may have noticed. Obviously, if there is a safeguarding concern, I would share this immediately, as appropriate. I will also give you a cue, such as a 'thumbs up' at the end of each session and we can follow up by phone if it's needed.

When it comes to session times that are available, I won't always be able to offer you the exact time and day you want so please be as flexible as possible. If a session that's available is not ideal it's often worth starting as I will offer you others as they become available if I can, so we can make sessions at the most convenient time possible. Generally, I work during school terms and have some of the school holidays off. I will give you plenty of notice if I am taking holiday and will let you know as soon as I can if I need to reschedule a session with you. I send out a monthly update which always has my holidays and other key information in it. Please look out for it in your in box.

What happens once you start sessions, how much do they cost, and how can you get hold of me?

If you decide therapy is for you and your child, we initially will contract for 20 consecutive weekly sessions but often the need for therapy extends beyond that and we can discuss this at our initial meeting. Depending on how we move things forward, sessions may involve you too, but we can discuss this at the intake meeting. Sessions for therapy cost £75 each and are paid for at the start of each session using card payment via Zettle. (This means an initial episode of 20 sessions of therapy will cost £1500.00 in total, but you don't have to pay this all at once!). I do not currently offer concession spaces. My cancellation policy is in my contract that you sign.

For Filial Therapy the cost is £100 for a 60 minute session and £150 for a 90 minute session. The session set up and organisation for Filial Therapy is different to the other ways of working, so if you are interested, do contact me and I will send you my separate information sheet.

Should you need to contact me between sessions, please feel free to email and I will answer when I can and set up a meeting or call with you if it is needed. If anything is urgent or on-the-day, please also send me a text. My work phone number is 07512 749504.

I will make time to talk with you towards the middle of your child's sessions – usually around session 10-12, so that we can review progress so far and plan together what is going to happen next. Depending on why they have come to therapy or counselling, some children only need one episode of therapy (20 sessions), but others may need a lot longer. Children are always welcome back for another episode of sessions at another time if they need it.

All calls and meetings outside of sessions are booked through an online diary system called SetMore. This allows you to book introductory calls, hello sessions at the studio and reviews (when we have agreed one is due) at a time to suit you. My online diary can be found here <https://creatingcalm.setmore.com/bookclass>. Everything is set up as a 'class' so the times are fixed. If you click on 'Book Appointment' by mistake, it will show no times available – you want 'Book Sessions @ Creating Calm'.

There are lots of short videos on my website answering commonly asked questions, but you are welcome to ask me anything you need to know. I'm always happy to chat, if I can, or answer emails. The videos can be found at www.creatingcalm.co.uk/youask. There are also a series of FAQs (frequently asked questions) for parents, clients, and professionals on the website blog: www.creatingcalm.co.uk/blog.

4. About Elaine (and Orca)

About Elaine

My name is Elaine Hutchinson and I have worked with children and their families for over 30 years. I am a trauma-informed child and adolescent psychotherapist. If it is important to your family, I am a straight ally and I welcome everyone to my studio.

My practice is integrative and holistic. It is grounded in several other modalities and psychodynamic psychotherapy and is also informed by many other ways of working, meaning I have completed hours of training in these modalities and approaches, but they are not my main ways of working.

Before I was a therapist, I was a SEND teacher and I worked in a variety of educational settings including mainstream primary and secondary education, alternative provisions, pupil referral units and as a medical tutor.

I am a creative clinical supervisor too. I offer creative supervision from my studio in Wells and offer 1:1 and group supervision for professionals and parents. I currently supervise and train other therapists and mental health practitioners both in the UK and internationally.

I am currently completing a Doctorate at Exeter University, where I am also a Post Graduate Researcher. I have written several pre-publication papers on topics including companion art in therapy, reflexivity in clinical work and research and a research paper looking at how therapists help clients move through their therapeutic process when the work feels stuck. My thesis topic is looking at countertransference, companion art, response art and art in clinical work, supervision, and research. I also have a personal interest in the role of neuropsychology, and it is a key part of much of my work. If you are interested in knowing more, please ask, I will happily talk about what I am doing!

My background training is in:

- Play and Creative Arts Therapy
- Counselling for Children and Young People
- CATT (Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique)
- MBT-C (Mentalization-Based Treatment for Children)
- PCAP (Parent-Child Attachment Play)
- TraumaPlay
- Filial Therapy (Gurney Model)
- SandStory Therapy
- NVR (Non-Violent Resistance)
- NDP (Neuro-Dramatic Play)
- Emotional Logic Coaching
- Lego Serious Play
- AutPlay Therapy
- Psychodynamic Psychotherapy (as part of my Doctorate)

My client, parent and supervision practices are also informed by:

- Art Therapy
- IFS (Internal Family Systems)
- EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprogramming)
- AAPT (Animal Assisted Play Therapy)
- TA (Transactional Analysis)
- Gestalt Therapy
- EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique)

About Orca

Orca is my therapy dog, she often works in my studio with me, but you can decide if this is right for your child when we meet. There is lots of research supporting animal assisted therapy (AAT) and how a dog can make therapy more effective for a client – even if the dog is asleep in the corner! If Orca is working with a child, they always meet first and I will share with them how best to play with Orca.

Orca is half collie, half miniature poodle and she looks like a little black rug! She loves people and her favourite snack is cheese. She loves popping bubbles for children in the studio, playing ball and being fussed – under the chin scratches are her favourite.

We both look forward to sharing the studio with you.

Elaine's email: hello@creatingcalm.co.uk
Elaine's mobile: 07512 749504
Elaine's office number 01749 599066

Finding us

I will have sent directions separately, but for ease of finding, the studio is at

7 Welsford Close, Wells, BA5 2JE

Please park on my drive when you arrive, even if you are just dropping off and leaving – it keeps my neighbours happy!

Please could you also arrive no more than 5 minutes before your session or meeting. Confidentiality is important to some clients, and this helps maintain that and allows me time to make your child 'front of mind' for our meeting or session. Thank you for your understanding.



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