

Inner Child Work

Connecting with your inner child to deal with trauma

We all have our inner child. With many of us it shows up when we are adults and we are hurt. Perhaps our hurt 5 year old self shows up when a friend doesn't answer the phone. Maybe our 15 year old self appears when we have a conflict at work. No matter how old we get, that inner child is always present.

What is Inner Child Work?

Inner child work is simply helping our inner child heal. It is a way to address our needs that were not met when we were growing up. We are basically healing attachment wounds that developed. We all have a younger part of ourselves that was never quite loved the right way or the way we needed. Inner child work is creating a space where your subconscious is allowed to take the lead and explore.

Inner child work is the act of going inside ourselves to explore our feelings and address issues that have been labelled as inappropriate by societal standards. As adults, we have learned coping mechanisms to address these issues, sometimes by using unhealthy behaviours.

Connecting with Your Inner Child

Here are some approaches that can aid in connecting with your inner child. Sometimes seeking the guidance of a counsellor can be beneficial.

1. **Breathwork and Mindfulness** – Connecting to our deep breaths and physical body can help us move out of the stresses that our adult body is dealing with. We need to recognize the signs of fight-flight-freeze in our sympathetic nervous system and overcome these urges. Use all of your senses to check in with your body. (54321 tool)
2. **Creativity** – Remember how we collected things when we were a child. Try going for a walk, along a beach as an example. Collect rocks or shells that catch your interest or a piece of interesting driftwood. These items can be simple reminders of pleasurable times.
3. **Visualization** – Visualizations help us tap into our inner child. Imagine yourself sitting in a meadow with flowers all around you. All the colours. What the grass feels like on your bare skin. This exercise is very grounding and can help during stressful and anxious moments.
4. **Journal** – Express your inner child through your journal. Try sitting down and ask your inner child how it's feeling today and document that feeling. Don't turn the thoughts away. Welcome them, understand them, and write them down. Mindfulness journaling is probably the best to practice. Just let your thoughts and emotions flow onto the paper. Write what all of your five senses are experiencing. You could also do gratitude journaling. Write about what you are thankful for. This helps take away negative thoughts and helps you appreciate the world around you for what it is.
5. **Meditation** – Studies have shown that 20 minutes of meditation is the same as 2 hours of sleep. Try thinking back to when you were a child and all the things you enjoyed. Bring back the good memories. They will help push away the negative thoughts you experience. Calmly allow your mind to flow through your childhood memories.