



The Therapeutic Powers of Play Core Agents of Change in AutPlay® Therapy

Schaefer & Drewes (2014) presented twenty core change agents of the therapeutic powers of play. Therapeutic factors refer to specific clinical strategies. Therapeutic powers of play refer to the specific change agents in which play initiates, facilitates, or strengthens their therapeutic effect. The change agents include self-expression, access to the unconscious, direct teaching, indirect teaching, catharsis, abreaction, positive emotions, counterconditioning fears, stress inoculation, stress management, therapeutic relationship, attachment, social competence, empathy, creative problem solving, resiliency, moral development, accelerated psychological development, self-regulation, and self-esteem.

Through specific consideration and selection of the cores change agents, children with ASD can learn social skills, develop relationships, learn how to communicate and express themselves through verbal and nonverbal means, improve emotional regulation ability, and develop problem solving abilities.

The AutPlay® Therapy protocol can potentially incorporate and address any of the 20 core agents of change of the therapeutic powers of play. AutPlay® utilizes structured play therapy interventions that are specifically chosen and or created for the individual child. Each intervention embodies one or more of the 20 core agents of change depending on the child's assessed needs. Although any of the core change agents could be identified and addressed with a child with ASD, typically children with an ASD diagnosis benefit from a focus on:

Primary Agents of Change in AutPlay® Therapy Protocol

Direct Teaching	Positive Emotions	Therapeutic Relationship	Stress Management	Social Competence
Positive Peer Relationship	Stress Inoculation	Empathy	Counterconditioning Fears	Self-regulation

Reference:

Schaefer, C. E. & Drewes, A. A. (2014). *The therapeutic powers of play: 20 core agents of change*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley and Sons.