

Pamela Dale- Rourke

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY/PROFILE

Enthusiastic and compassionate Art/Play Therapist with extensive experience in supporting children with additional needs, including autism, ADHD, and SEMH. Adept at creating engaging therapeutic sessions that incorporate gaming, creativity, and play to facilitate communication and emotional expression. Proven ability to collaborate effectively with children, families, and educational staff to develop tailored resources that enhance learning and well-being. Committed to fostering a supportive environment that encourages self-expression and personal growth. Registered with HCPC, ensuring adherence to professional standards.

SUMMARY

PD

Child Therapist

Collaborative and creative professional with a strong background in helping children communicate their needs and experiences, particularly through translating behavioural communication into messages that can be heard and understood. Experienced in working alongside children, parents, and teachers to create visual aids and engaging resources that make communication tangible and meaningful. Skilled at developing materials that support learning and well-being, using creativity to adapt communication for different audiences. While my direct professional experience has not been with AAC users, I bring relevant transferable skills, and I also have personal insight into AAC through supporting my uncle, who is an AAC user.

SKILLS

1. Expertise in Art and Play Therapy focusing on children with autism and SEMH needs.
2. Strong ability to create and adapt visual aids and therapeutic resources.
3. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills for effective collaboration with children, parents, and educators.
4. Proficient in facilitating engaging, child-centred sessions that encourage emotional expression.
5. Knowledge of therapeutic techniques and approaches for diverse learning needs.
6. Experience in supervising and mentoring other professionals in therapeutic practices.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Service Lead for Schools Child in Mind, Manchester | October 2016 - Present

- Developed and implemented tailored Art and Play Therapy sessions for children with autism, utilizing creative resources to enhance communication and emotional expression.
- Collaborated with educational staff to create accessible materials, ensuring that resources meet the diverse needs of children with communication challenges.
- Conducted psychotherapeutic assessments to inform individualized therapy plans and monitor progress.
- Supervised postgraduate Play Therapy students, providing mentorship in inclusive practices and resource development.

Play Therapist Barnardos, St Helens | January 2015 - October 2016

- Facilitated Art and Play Therapy sessions for children referred through CAMHS, focusing on enhancing emotional regulation and social skills through play.
- Engaged in multi-disciplinary assessment meetings, offering recommendations for tailored communication supports.
- Managed a caseload of school-aged children, employing creative methodologies to address social, emotional, and behavioural challenges.
- Led group supervision sessions, sharing effective child-centred communication strategies with peers.

Family Session Worker OJs, Preston | May 2023 - January 2024

- Supported families with children on the autism spectrum by creating adaptive resources that promote engagement and communication.
- Developed inclusive activities that encouraged participation in group settings, ensuring every child's voice was heard.
- Collaborated with families and educational staff to tailor interventions to meet individual and group needs.

EXPERIENCE

Service Lead for Schools Child in Mind, Manchester | October 2016 - Present

Designed and adapted communication and therapy resources to support children in schools, including visual supports and symbol-based activities.

Provided impactful 1:1 Play Therapy and Family Therapy, specialising in psychotherapeutic assessments that inform therapeutic pathways. Worked closely with teachers and therapists to create accessible materials for children with communication and learning needs.

Supervised postgraduate Play Therapy students, offering training and guidance in resource use and inclusive communication strategies.

Play Therapist Barnardos, St Helens | January 2015 - October 2016

Created tailored visual and therapeutic resources to support children referred through CAMHS.

Contributed to assessment meetings, recommending appropriate communication supports for referrals.

Managed a caseload of school-aged children, using creative and resource-based approaches to address a wide range of social, emotional and communication challenges.

Facilitated group supervision sessions, sharing best practice on child-centred communication strategies.

Family Session Worker OJs, Preston | May 2023 - January 2024

Supported families with children on the autism spectrum, creating and adapting resources to facilitate engagement and communication. Developed inclusive activities to ensure children with communication differences could participate meaningfully in group settings.

Worked collaboratively with families and colleagues to address individual needs, ensuring resources were both practical and user-friendly.

Plan and Resource Creator International school

Planned and developed literacy and learning resources for primary-aged children.

Created engaging classroom materials to support reading and writing development. Worked collaboratively with teachers to align resources with lesson objectives.

Adapted activities to suit different learning needs and levels.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Actively engaged in community workshops focused on art therapy techniques for children with special educational needs, promoting awareness and understanding of autism and SEMH.

EDUCATION

BSc Psychology and Criminology, University of Central Lancashire

Key Skills

Practical experience using AAC software platforms (Grid 3, Mind Express 5, Widgit Online). Knowledge of AAC symbol systems (PCS, SymbolStix, Widgit, Bliss, etc.).

Strong digital skills for resource creation, layout, and design.

Understanding of inclusive communication, SEN, and speech and language therapy.

Creativity and attention to detail in designing engaging and accessible resources.

Collaboration with therapists, educators, and families to ensure resources meet user needs.

Affiliations

Reiki Practitioner

I have a passion to help others and believe by providing the correct core conditions every individual has the potential power to help themselves heal. My own healing journey let me to eventually train in reiki. I also practice mindfulness and meditation on a daily basis. I am open to explore all kinds of self healing approaches and love to learn.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Member of the British Association of Play Therapists (BAPT), dedicated to professional development and adherence to best practices in play therapy.

CERTIFICATIONS

DDP (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy) Health & Social Care (Preston College)

Play Therapy (Canterbury Christ University)

Filial Therapy in Family Therapy (Manchester)

VOLUNTEER WORK

Volunteered at local autism support groups, providing art therapy sessions and resources for children and families, fostering community engagement and support.

HOBBIES

Exploring distant lands – I enjoy travelling and discovering new cultures, finding inspiration in how people communicate and connect in different parts of the world.

Getting lost in a good book – Reading is both an escape and a source of creativity, helping me bring fresh ideas into my work and personal life.

Capturing moments – Photography allows me to notice the small details and preserve meaningful experiences, which mirrors my approach to creative work.

Feeling the music – Music is a grounding influence for me, sparking creativity and offering balance in my day-to-day life.

Swimming – I value swimming as both exercise and mindfulness, a way to reset and recharge.

Massage & Balance – I take a holistic interest in wellbeing practices that promote physical and emotional balance.

Journaling – Writing regularly helps me process experiences, reflect, and generate new ideas.

Meditating – Meditation supports my ability to stay focused, present, and resilient when faced with challenges.

CERTIFICATIONS

DDP (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy), Health & Social Care (Preston College); Play Therapy (Canterbury Christ University); Filial Therapy in Family Therapy (Manchester).