

The Complete TherapyCraft System

Everything you need to go from "curious about gaming therapy" to confidently running premium Minecraft therapy sessions that families love and pay well for.

Table of Contents

Chapter	Title	What You'll Learn
Introduction	Welcome to TherapyCraft	My journey from skeptical stepmom to Minecraft therapist, what this really looks like in practice, getting supervisor approval
Chapter 1	Building Your Foundation	Why Minecraft works therapeutically, the science behind parallel play, your role as therapist, setting realistic expectations
Chapter 2	Building Your Technical Setup	Complete technical foundation: purchasing the right version, Microsoft accounts, Realms explained, session management protocols
Chapter 3	Building Your Session Space	Creative vs Survival modes, therapeutic implications, world design principles, creating safe therapeutic environments
Chapter 4	Building Your Legal & Ethical Framework	HIPAA compliance protocols, consent forms, privacy best practices, professional boundaries, risk management
Chapter 5	Family Communication Essentials	Parent onboarding process, session updates, tech troubleshooting, family engagement strategies

Chapter	Title	What You'll Learn
Chapter 6	Building Your Sessions	First session structure, therapeutic activities, treatment planning by diagnosis, long-term session roadmaps
Chapter 7	Building Your Marketing & Outreach	Marketing strategies from easiest to advanced, Psychology Today optimization, referral partnerships, social media, media outreach
Chapter 8	Troubleshooting and Growing Your Confidence	Common challenges, difficult client behaviors, technical problems, building expertise over time
Appendices	Templates & Resources	Copy-ready templates, consent forms, parent communications, marketing materials, session planning tools, quick reference guides

What's Included in the Appendices:

Legal & Ethical Templates:

- Supervisor approval letter
- Minecraft therapy consent clauses
- Parent technology setup agreements

Parent Communication Templates:

- Initial welcome emails
- Session reminder messages
- Technical troubleshooting guides
- Post-session parent updates

Marketing & Outreach Templates:

- School counselor outreach emails
- Physician/pediatrician referral letters

- Parent-facing marketing flyer content
- Social media post templates (3 variations)
- Website copy templates (homepage & service page)
- Psychology Today profile snippets
- Media pitch emails

Session Planning Resources:

- First session checklist
- 8-week treatment plans (Anxiety & Depression)
- Therapeutic building prompts by goal (emotional expression, coping skills, self-esteem, relationships, trauma processing, problem-solving)

Quick Reference Guides:

- Minecraft basics cheat sheet
- Session troubleshooting guide
- HIPAA compliance checklist

Clinical Documentation:

- Sample session note templates
- Progress note phrases for gaming therapy

Introduction: Welcome to TherapyCraft

If you're reading this, you've probably had that moment. Maybe it was watching a resistant teenager's face light up when you mentioned Minecraft. Maybe it was realizing that your traditional therapy techniques weren't connecting with today's digital natives. Or maybe you've seen a kid completely transform when they're teaching you something for once, instead of always being the one who needs help.

I'm Ashley Jangro, Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor, and I want to share how Minecraft transformed not just my therapy practice, but my entire understanding of how to connect with kids

and teens.

How TherapyCraft Developed

Years ago, I started playing Minecraft for one reason: to connect with my stepsons as we blended our families. They were around 9 and 11, and I was desperately looking for ways to bond with them.

My first time playing? I was completely overwhelmed. I thought it was the most boring game I'd ever seen. Blocks everywhere, no clear objective, and I kept dying to things called "creepers."

But something magical happened that I didn't expect.

My stepsons LOVED playing with me. Not because I was good at it, I was terrible. But they got to be the experts. They were patient, protective, and proud to teach me. They'd open up about their school day while showing me how to build a shelter. They'd share their worries while we explored caves together. They talked to me in ways they never did when I just asked "How was your day?"

That's when I first realized: Minecraft wasn't just a game. It was a communication bridge.

When Gaming Became Essential

During the pandemic, when our blended family couldn't see each other as often, Minecraft became our lifeline. For my 40th birthday in early COVID, when the whole world was shut down, the kids spent weeks secretly building something special in our world. On my birthday, we all got on video together and they threw me a massive birthday party inside Minecraft, complete with a roller coaster, a fireworks show, a room full of diamonds, and personalized gifts from each of the kids.

I was hooked.

Even as the kids grew older and moved on to other games, I didn't. I fell in love with Minecraft. My husband and I started streaming it. We'd spend entire weekends playing modded versions when the kids were at their other parents' houses. I became, unexpectedly, a genuine Minecraft enthusiast.

The Therapy Connection I Couldn't Ignore

When I transitioned into life coaching, and then later therapy, I'd casually mention my Minecraft hobby to clients. Every single teen's eyes would light up. "Wait, you play Minecraft? Can we play together sometime?"

At first, it was just the last 10 to 15 minutes of sessions. A reward, a way to connect. But I started noticing something profound: whatever we'd been discussing in therapy didn't stop when we started playing. In fact, they often opened up MORE while playing than during traditional talk therapy.

I began experimenting. What if we played for longer? What if I brought therapeutic themes into the game intentionally? What if building something together could help with anxiety? What if surviving the night could teach emotional regulation?

The results were encouraging. Kids started opening up more and being excited to come to therapy. They were able to describe their sessions to parents more effectively using Minecraft analogies. Families began requesting me because I was the therapist who would play Minecraft.

The Truth About What This Really Looks Like

Let me be completely honest about what TherapyCraft looks like in practice:

- **Not every session involves Minecraft.** Sometimes a kid has something big on their mind and we just talk. Sometimes we play for just a few minutes at the end.
- **Some sessions aren't overtly "therapeutic."** Sometimes we're just building together, and that collaborative time with a supportive adult is exactly what they need.
- **Kids become the experts.** They teach me new things constantly, and I bring those learnings to other clients who are then impressed by my "knowledge."
- **Parents get involved.** I encourage parents to play or at least watch their kids play. Watching parents struggle while kids excel is incredibly empowering for children. Even just watching a kid explain his or her build in Minecraft, even if the parent doesn't play, is so rewarding for kids.
- **Flexibility is key.** Some kids want full Minecraft sessions. Others want traditional therapy with occasional Minecraft. Both are perfectly fine.

What You're Really Signing Up For

When you implement TherapyCraft, you're not just adding a tool to your therapeutic toolkit. You're opening a door to a world where:

- Resistant teens suddenly want longer sessions
- Kids teach YOU for once, reversing the typical power dynamic

- Parents learn a new way to communicate with their kids
- You get to be genuinely curious and amazed by your clients' creativity
- Therapy becomes something kids actually look forward to

Some days, I can't believe this is my job. I spend my days playing Minecraft, helping kids and families heal, and making excellent money doing it. It's not because I'm a gaming expert, it's because I learned to meet kids where they are, in a world where they feel confident and in control.

Getting Approval: A Letter Template for Your Supervisor

If you're working under clinical supervision, in a group practice, or for an agency or organization, you'll likely need approval before implementing TherapyCraft with your clients. The good news? Most supervisors and practice owners approve this approach immediately once they understand it's a structured therapeutic framework, not recreational gaming.

The key is presenting TherapyCraft as what it actually is: a professional intervention grounded in established therapeutic principles, with proper training, risk management protocols, and clear clinical applications. Your supervisor needs to know this is methodical and ethical, not experimental.

Below is a comprehensive letter template you can customize based on your practice setting and supervisor's communication style. Feel free to adjust the tone, add specifics about your training, or emphasize aspects most relevant to your particular situation.

[Date]

[Supervisor/Practice Owner/Clinical Director Name]

I'm writing to request approval to implement Minecraft-based therapy interventions with appropriate clients in my caseload. I want to ensure you understand the clinical rationale, professional framework, and risk management protocols behind this approach.

Clinical Foundation

This intervention is grounded in established play therapy and expressive therapy principles, using technology as a therapeutic medium for engagement. Research supports the use of parallel activities and creative expression to reduce client resistance and increase therapeutic communication, particularly with children, adolescents, and young adults who struggle with traditional talk therapy modalities.

The approach aligns with our existing therapeutic frameworks while addressing a specific gap: reaching clients who are disengaged, resistant, or unable to effectively communicate through traditional verbal processing alone.

Professional Implementation Standards

- All sessions maintain traditional therapeutic structure, boundaries, and clinical documentation requirements
- Treatment planning, progress notes, and goal-setting remain unchanged and follow our current standards
- This intervention requires specialized training and technical setup (which I am completing through a comprehensive professional training program)
- Appropriate informed consent will be obtained from all clients and/or legal guardians, including clear explanation of the intervention approach and technical requirements
- Sessions will be conducted according to our practice's existing telehealth or in-office protocols
- This modality will be used selectively with clients who would benefit from this approach, not as a replacement for all traditional therapy

Risk Management and Compliance

- HIPAA compliance protocols are included in the training, with clear guidelines for using Minecraft (a non-HIPAA platform) alongside secure, HIPAA-compliant video and documentation systems
- Privacy settings and account management procedures follow professional standards and ensure client confidentiality
- Client safety measures are built into the technical setup, including age-appropriate content restrictions and secure connection protocols

- Professional liability considerations have been comprehensively addressed in the training materials
- All client interactions occur within the therapeutic relationship and session time; no independent client-therapist gaming contact occurs outside scheduled appointments
- Technical troubleshooting and support resources are provided to prevent session disruptions

Target Population and Clinical Indications

This intervention is particularly effective with clients who experience:

- Resistance to traditional talk therapy or verbal processing difficulties
- Social anxiety that makes direct eye contact and face-to-face conversation challenging
- ADHD, autism spectrum differences, or other neurodevelopmental profiles where parallel activities enhance focus and communication
- Depression, anxiety, or trauma-related symptoms that benefit from safe, controlled creative expression
- Low self-esteem or learned helplessness who benefit from competency-building and role reversal opportunities
- Family conflict where shared activities and collaborative problem-solving can rebuild connection

Expected Benefits to Our Practice

- Enhanced engagement with historically difficult-to-reach client populations
- Differentiation in the marketplace (families actively seek out gaming-informed therapists)
- Reduced client dropout rates and increased session attendance for resistant clients
- Stronger therapeutic alliance with digital-native children and adolescents
- Additional revenue stream with potential for premium session rates due to specialized training
- Increased family involvement and parent engagement in the therapeutic process

Training and Ongoing Support

I am completing (or have completed) comprehensive training in TherapyCraft implementation that includes technical setup, clinical applications, ethical considerations, session planning frameworks, and ongoing consultation resources. This is not an experimental approach—it's a structured, systematic methodology with clear protocols and professional support.

Next Steps

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further and answer any questions you may have. I can provide additional information about the training program, demonstrate the technical setup, or connect you with other licensed clinicians who have successfully implemented this approach in similar practice settings.

I believe this approach will significantly enhance our practice's ability to engage difficult-to-reach clients while maintaining our high clinical and ethical standards. I'm committed to implementing this intervention thoughtfully, professionally, and in alignment with our practice values.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to discussing this with you.

[Your Name and Credentials]

Tips for Getting Supervisor Approval

- **Schedule a meeting:** Don't just email this letter. Request time to discuss it in person or via video call so you can answer questions and demonstrate your understanding of the approach.
- **Offer a pilot period:** Suggest implementing with 2-3 appropriate clients as a trial period with regular check-ins about progress and any concerns.
- **Share success stories:** If possible, reference other therapists (without violating confidentiality) who have successfully used this approach in similar settings.
- **Address billing:** Be prepared to discuss how you'll bill for these sessions (typically using the same CPT codes as regular therapy sessions since the therapeutic work is equivalent).

- **Emphasize boundaries:** Make it clear that this is structured therapy, not casual gaming, and that professional boundaries remain firmly in place.
- **Demonstrate your training:** Show that you've invested in learning this properly, not just experimenting on clients.

Chapter 1: Building Your Foundation

Before diving into technical setup, let's establish why this works and what you really need to know as a therapist using Minecraft.

Why Minecraft Works (The Real Therapeutic Magic)

Forget the academic theories for a moment. Here's what actually happens in a Minecraft therapy session:

Parallel Play Reduces Pressure

When you're both focused on building or exploring, there's no uncomfortable eye contact, no feeling of being "examined." Kids will casually mention their parents' divorce while mining for diamonds. They'll share their deepest fears while constructing a fortress. The game provides just enough distraction to make vulnerability feel safe.

Creative Expression Without Words

Kids can build representations of their inner world, feelings, and family dynamics without having to find words first. A house with no doors might represent feeling trapped. Underground bunkers might show a need for safety. Elaborate castles could reflect dreams of power or control. The building itself becomes the communication.

Complete Environmental Control

In a world where kids often feel powerless, they have complete control over their Minecraft environment. They can create, destroy, rebuild, and modify anything. This sense of agency can be profoundly healing for children who feel helpless in other areas of their lives.

Low Stakes Experimentation

Mistakes can be easily undone, things can be rebuilt, and experimentation is safe. This creates an environment where kids can take emotional risks, try new behaviors, and explore difficult topics without permanent consequences.

Natural Therapeutic Metaphors

The game environment naturally lends itself to therapeutic metaphors without forcing them. Surviving the night becomes managing anxiety. Building bridges represents connection. Protecting villages reflects developing empathy. These metaphors emerge organically from gameplay.

Role Reversal When You're New

If you're new to Minecraft, you can turn this into a therapeutic asset rather than seeing it as a problem. Kids who feel stupid in school or powerless at home suddenly become confident teachers. They're patient with you in ways adults are rarely patient with them. This role reversal can open communication channels that traditional therapy can't access.

Progress Is Visible

Unlike traditional therapy where progress can feel abstract, Minecraft provides concrete evidence of growth. The kid who couldn't plan ahead now prepares for nightfall. The anxious child who only built underground creates their first house with windows. The angry teen who destroyed everything now protects villagers.

What You Actually Need to Know (Spoiler: Less Than You Think)

Minecraft Basics You Need (This Takes 30 Minutes to Learn):

- How to move around (W,A,S,D keys or controller stick)
- How to place and break blocks (right click/left click)
- How to access your inventory
- The difference between Creative and Survival modes
- That monsters come out at night in Survival

That's literally it. Your clients will teach you everything else.

What You DON'T Need to Know:

- Complex crafting recipes (kids love teaching these)
- Redstone mechanics (unless you want to, most therapists never touch it)
- Different biomes, mobs, or game updates
- How to build anything impressive
- Speed-building or advanced techniques

Your Secret Weapon: Genuine Curiosity

When a client shows you their creation, you don't need to understand the technical skill involved. Your genuine "Wow, how did you do that?" or "Tell me about this part" is therapeutic gold. They get to be the expert, explaining their choices, their process, their vision.

The Reality Check: This Isn't for Everyone (And That's Okay)

TherapyCraft Works Best When You:

- Are genuinely curious about your clients' interests
- Can tolerate not being the expert
- Are flexible with session structure
- Can maintain boundaries even in a playful environment
- See value in meeting clients where they are

TherapyCraft Might Not Be for You If:

- You need strict control over session content
- You're uncomfortable with technology to the point of anxiety
- You can't maintain therapeutic focus in less structured environments
- You see gaming as inherently problematic
- You're looking for a quick fix or gimmick

Your Mindset Matters More Than Your Gaming Skills

The therapists who succeed with TherapyCraft aren't the ones who are best at Minecraft. They're the ones who understand that:

- Being bad at the game can be therapeutic (modeling failure tolerance)
- Genuine interest in the client's creation matters more than understanding it
- The relationship is still the healing factor, Minecraft is just the medium
- Every "mistake" in the game is a potential therapeutic moment
- Kids teaching adults is profoundly empowering

Remember: I started this journey thinking Minecraft was the most boring game ever created. Now I stream it for fun and use it to transform young lives. Your starting point doesn't

| *determine your destination, your willingness to learn alongside your clients does.*

Chapter 2: Building Your Technical Setup

The Big Picture

There are dozens of ways to set up Minecraft for multiplayer use. You could use server hosting, local networks, third-party platforms, or various subscription services. Each has different privacy implications, technical requirements, and costs.

I've spent years testing different approaches, accounting for HIPAA considerations, client capacity, ease of use, and cost-effectiveness. What you'll learn in this chapter is the exact setup that gives you everything you need at the lowest investment while maintaining professional standards and supporting multiple clients.

You're creating a secure, professional virtual therapy space that exists entirely within Minecraft. This isn't just "playing games with kids" - it's a carefully structured therapeutic environment with built-in safety measures.

Purchase and Account Setup

Purchasing Minecraft

Go to [Minecraft.net](https://minecraft.net), click the Buy Now button in the header, and select **Minecraft: Java and Bedrock Edition** → **PC**. This is a one-time cost of \$29.99. Skip the "Deluxe" version, you don't need any of those add-ons.

Critical Mac Warning:

Realms do not run on Mac. If you're on a Mac, you'll only be able to purchase the Java Edition, which does not support cross-platform play or Realms. For TherapyCraft, you'll need to use a Windows PC.

Which Version Do You Need?

Version	Works for TherapyCraft?	Why/Why Not
Bedrock Edition	YES	Cross-platform compatible, supports Realms, works with all devices
Java Edition	NO	PC/Mac only, no Realms support, no cross-platform play
Education Edition	NO	Requires school licenses, too limited for therapy use

Setting Up Your Microsoft Account

Once Minecraft finishes downloading (be patient, it can take a while, especially if Windows needs updates), you'll be prompted to Sign in or Sign Up for a Microsoft Account.

I recommend creating a new account specifically for therapy. Keep it completely separate from personal accounts.

Choosing Your Gamertag (Critical for HIPAA)

Your Gamertag is what clients see in the game. This choice matters for confidentiality:

Good Gamertags	Bad Gamertags	Why It Matters
StoneRiver28	TherapistAshley	Identifies your profession

Good Gamertags	Bad Gamertags	Why It Matters
SkyGarden34	DrJangroMC	Contains your real name
BlueMountain7	CastleRockLPCC	Reveals location/credentials

Remember: Clients' friends can potentially see their friends list. A neutral gamertag protects everyone's privacy.

Privacy Settings (Non-Negotiable)

What happens if you skip this step?

Clients could see each other's gamertags through your friends list, violating confidentiality.

How to fix it:

1. Click your profile icon (top-right corner)
2. Select Settings
3. Navigate to Privacy & online safety
4. Under "Others can see your friends list," change to **Only me**
NOT "Friends only", must be "Only me"
5. Review all other privacy options, such as hiding your real name and limiting who can contact you

Understanding Realms (Your Virtual Office)

The Building and Office Metaphor

REALM = Your Practice Building (\$3.99/month)

- Permanent rental, can't be repurposed

- Houses up to 3 offices
- Named neutrally: "Realm A" or "Monday Sessions"

WORLDS = Individual Therapy Offices (3 per Realm)

- Can be completely renovated between clients
- Where actual therapy happens
- Can be reset, deleted, or rebuilt as needed

Why We Use Realms Instead of Regular Multiplayer

Regular multiplayer worlds create several problems:

- Clients could see each other's builds and discover who else you work with
- One client could accidentally or intentionally destroy another's creations
- You'd have to be online for clients to access the world
- There are advanced protection systems, but they get complicated quickly

Realms solve all these issues with simple, built-in privacy controls.

Getting the \$3.99 Realm (Not \$7.99)

Don't click "Create Realm" first, that only shows the \$7.99 option!

Instead, follow these exact steps:

1. Open Minecraft → Play → Create New World
2. Set it to Creative mode and turn off Multiplayer
3. Name it something neutral (you'll rename later if needed)
4. Save & Quit
5. Back on the Worlds tab, click Manage → Convert to Realm

6. NOW you'll see the \$3.99/month Realm option. Select it.

Understanding Your Realm Capacity

With one \$29.99 Minecraft purchase, you get:

Realm Type	How Many Available	Worlds per Realm	Total Client Capacity
\$3.99 Realms	Up to 3	3 worlds each	9 clients total
\$7.99 Realms	Up to 3 more	3 worlds each	18 more clients

Each \$3.99 Realm allows for you + one client in session. You are allowed up to 3 worlds live inside this one realm (only one world can be active at a time).

Most therapists start with one \$3.99 Realm and expand as needed. If you need more than 18 total clients, you'll have to purchase a new \$29.99 Minecraft game and create a second Microsoft login.

Session Setup and Management

Using a Realm During Sessions

Phase	Timing	Actions
Pre-Session	First 15 minutes	Start video call, do check-in and goal setting, keep Minecraft closed so client isn't distracted
Opening Realm	After check-in	Open Minecraft → Realms tab → Select client's realm → Settings → Advanced → Turn ON → Navigate to client's world
Post-Session	Immediately after	Exit world → Settings → Advanced → CLOSE realm (prevents access outside session)

This allows for you to have a check-in period to set goals before your client is off to the races.

Important World Settings

When you create a new World inside a Realm, you'll see options that control how the game behaves. Most can be adjusted later, but there's one big exception: **cheats**.

Setting	My Recommendation	Can Change Later?	Why It Matters
Cheats	ON	NO, locked at creation	Gives you flexibility for therapeutic interventions
PVP (Player vs Player)	OFF	Yes	Prevents clients from harming each other
Sleep Rules	One player sleeps	Yes (requires Cheats ON)	Allows you to skip night without both sleeping

Personal Preference Note: Most other world settings (hostile mobs, daylight cycle, weather, etc.) are matters of personal preference that you'll develop as you gain experience. I generally leave these at their default settings, but you'll discover what works best for your therapeutic style and your clients' needs as you go.

I generally leave most settings at their defaults, but it's worth taking a quick look when you create a World. If a client has specific needs (like high anxiety around monsters or darkness), you can adjust these upfront to create a calmer play space.

Scaling and Business Considerations

When to Add More Realms

At first, \$3.99 Realms are all you'll need. But eventually, you may fill those 9 office spaces and need more. Minecraft allows you to purchase three more Realms at a \$7.99 price point. These Realms allow for you + 10 other players at a time. However, you will only ever use them for you + one client at a time due to HIPAA practices.

Pricing Considerations

Though you can decide what's best for your practice, I do not pass these costs onto the client. I simply account for them when pricing my TherapyCraft sessions. I typically charge between \$150-\$250 a session (price varies due to sliding scale) and I consider the cost to pay for a realm included in that pricing.

Equipment Recommendation

Consider investing in a basic gaming laptop (around \$600 to \$800). Here's why:

- Keyboard and mouse give you much better control than controllers
- Easier to manage video platform and Minecraft on same device
- Tax-deductible business expense
- Pays for itself in 3 to 5 sessions at standard TherapyCraft rates

Personal note: I found laptop controls (WASD keys) much easier than joysticks once I got used to them. You have much more precise control over movement and building.

Your Physical Workspace

Your physical setup matters more than you might think. You'll be spending 45-50 minutes in these sessions, so comfort is important.

My setup has evolved over time to prioritize comfort and functionality. I play on my PC but sit on a couch rather than at a desk. I use a lap desk with a built-in mouse area, which lets me stay comfortable during longer sessions. This might seem casual, but remember - you're doing therapy, not office work. Being relaxed helps you stay present with your clients.

Managing Multiple Screens

Since Minecraft Bedrock doesn't run on Mac, I use my PC for the game and my other devices for video. Here's my typical setup:

- **Gaming:** PC with Minecraft running
- **Video:** Phone, iPad, or MacBook running Google Meet (with HIPAA-compliant business account) or my EHR's video system
- **Documentation:** MacBook beside me with EHR open for quick notes

Pro tip: When using my phone for video, I hook it onto the top of my computer screen using the pop socket. This keeps the client visible while I'm playing and creates a natural sight line.

Having my laptop beside me also lets me split the screen between video and my EHR, making it easy to jot down notes or check my calendar for scheduling at the end of sessions.

Common First-Session Troubleshooting

Problem	Most Likely Solution
"Can't find the Realm"	Check friend requests, make sure you accepted each other
"Says I need to update"	Both players need to update Minecraft to same version
"Client can't join"	Make sure you turned the Realm ON in settings first
"Wrong Microsoft account"	Parents often have multiple accounts, verify which owns Minecraft
"Connection issues"	Internet connectivity problem 90% of the time, have them restart

You've Got This

Setting all this up takes time, usually a full afternoon when you're focused. But here's what I want you to know: every therapist who implements TherapyCraft goes through this same process. You'll feel overwhelmed at first. The Microsoft account system will be confusing. You'll probably mess up a privacy setting and have to fix it.

That's all normal.

Within a few weeks, you'll be navigating these systems without even thinking about it. Within a month, you'll wonder why it ever seemed complicated. And the first time a silent client suddenly

won't stop talking because they're teaching you how to build a redstone door? You'll forget all about the technical setup hassles.

The investment, both time and money, is minimal compared to the therapeutic breakthroughs you'll witness. Trust the process, be patient with yourself, and remember: your clients will be incredibly patient with you as you learn. They're used to adults not understanding technology, and they love being the experts for once.

Chapter 3: Building Your Session Space

Now that you have your technical foundation in place, it's time to design the kind of world where your sessions will take place.

The Big Decision: Creative vs. Survival Mode

One of the most important decisions you'll make when setting up your therapeutic worlds is choosing between Creative and Survival mode. This choice fundamentally shapes how the therapy unfolds and what therapeutic opportunities become available.

This is largely a matter of personal preference both as a therapist and for your individual clients. However, understanding the therapeutic implications of each mode will help you make informed decisions that serve your clinical goals.

Can You Have Both in One Realm?

Yes! Within a single realm, you can create up to 3 different worlds, and each world can be set to a different mode. For example:

- World 1: "Creative Space" - for safe building and exploration
- World 2: "Survival Challenge" - for working on resilience and problem-solving
- World 3: "Mixed Mode" - where you switch modes mid-session as needed

You can also switch any individual world between Creative and Survival at any time through the Realm settings.

Creative Mode: The Therapeutic Sandbox

What it feels like: Complete creative freedom without any pressure or danger. Players can fly, have unlimited resources, and build anything they can imagine.

Creative Mode Features:

1. **No survival needs** - No hunger, no health bar, no death
2. **Unlimited resources** - Access to every block and item in the game
3. **Flight capability** - Can fly and move freely through space
4. **Instant building** - Break and place blocks instantly
5. **No monsters** - Mobs exist but won't attack or cause harm

Therapeutic advantages:

- Perfect for anxious clients who need emotional safety first
- Allows pure focus on creativity and self-expression
- No frustration from game mechanics interfering with therapeutic goals
- Ideal for symbolic and metaphorical work
- Great for rapport building and initial sessions

Survival Mode: The Therapeutic Laboratory

What it feels like: A world with real consequences, challenges, and emotional stakes. Players must gather resources, manage hunger and health, and face genuine obstacles.

Survival Mode Features:

1. **Resource management** - Must gather wood, stone, food, tools

2. **Health and hunger** - Players can take damage and need food
3. **Day/night cycle** - Monsters come out at night, creating urgency
4. **Crafting required** - Must learn recipes and combine materials
5. **Real consequences** - Death means losing items and respawning

Therapeutic advantages:

- Creates natural opportunities for emotional regulation practice
- Builds genuine resilience through overcoming actual challenges
- Allows for real-time coaching during frustrating moments
- Develops problem-solving and planning skills
- Provides authentic experiences of success and failure
- Mirrors real-world situations where things don't always go as planned

Why Survival Mode Often Provides More Therapeutic Opportunities

While Creative Mode has its place, Survival Mode tends to create richer therapeutic moments because:

Natural Emotional Activation

In Survival Mode, clients experience genuine emotions - excitement when finding diamonds, frustration when dying to a creeper, pride when completing a challenging build. These aren't manufactured therapeutic moments; they're authentic emotional experiences you can process in real-time.

Real-world skill transfer: The problem-solving, persistence, and emotional regulation skills practiced in Survival Mode directly translate to real-world challenges. When a client learns to stay

calm after losing their items in lava, they're practicing the same skills they need when facing disappointment at school.

Genuine accomplishment: Achievements in Survival Mode feel more meaningful because they required real effort and overcoming obstacles. This builds authentic self-esteem rather than empty praise.

Co-regulation opportunities: When challenges arise in Survival Mode, you can model calm responses, help clients develop coping strategies, and guide them through difficult emotions as they happen.

Making the Choice: A Therapeutic Decision Tree

Client Presentation	Recommended Starting Mode	Rationale
High anxiety, easily overwhelmed	Creative Mode	Build safety and trust first, then gradually introduce challenges
Depression, low motivation	Survival Mode	Natural goal-setting and achievement opportunities
ADHD, need for stimulation	Survival Mode	Built-in variety and natural consequences maintain engagement
Trauma history, hypervigilance	Creative Mode initially	Control and safety essential; can transition later
Oppositional behaviors	Survival Mode	Natural consequences teach better than adult-imposed rules
New to therapy, building rapport	Ask their preference	Giving choice builds alliance and shows you respect their expertise

The Flexible Approach

You don't have to pick one forever. Many therapists find success using a flexible approach:

- **Start where the client feels comfortable** - often this means asking their preference
- **Build safety first** - if unsure, Creative Mode provides a secure foundation
- **Introduce challenges gradually** - move to Survival Mode when the client has developed coping skills
- **Switch modes based on session goals** - use Creative for expression work, Survival for resilience building
- **Let the client guide the pace** - they often know when they're ready for more challenge

Clinical Note: Remember that both modes are legitimate therapeutic tools. A Creative Mode session focused on building a "safe place" can be just as clinically valuable as a Survival Mode session working on frustration tolerance. The key is intentional use based on therapeutic goals, not the complexity of the game mechanics.

Switching Modes Mid-Session

One of the powerful features of TherapyCraft is the ability to adjust the therapeutic environment in real-time based on your client's needs and emotional state.

How to Switch Modes

To enable mid-session switching:

1. Make sure **Cheats are enabled** when you create the world (this cannot be changed later)
2. During the session, open the pause menu
3. Select "Settings"
4. Scroll to "Game Mode" and switch between Creative and Survival instantly

When to Switch Modes

Switch From	Switch To	When	Therapeutic Purpose
Creative	Survival	Client feels safe and wants a challenge	Introduce manageable stress to practice coping skills
Survival	Creative	Client becomes overwhelmed or dysregulated	Provide immediate safety and emotional regulation
Creative	Survival	Session goal shifts to resilience building	Create authentic opportunities for problem-solving
Survival	Creative	Need to focus on expression work	Remove distractions to focus on therapeutic content

Framing Mode Switches for Clients

Empowering Language:

- "Let's try a small challenge. If you want to go back to Creative at any time, we can switch, no problem. This is your space to practice, not a test!"
- "I noticed you're feeling a bit overwhelmed. Let's switch to Creative mode so we can focus on what you're building without any pressure."
- "You've been doing great with the challenges. Want to try Survival mode and see how it feels? You're in control of when we switch back."

The beauty of TherapyCraft is that you can meet your clients exactly where they are emotionally, and adjust the environment to support their growth in real-time. Your therapeutic relationship remains the foundation; the game mode is simply the tool that serves that relationship.

Chapter 4: Building Your Legal & Ethical Framework



Important Disclaimer

I am not an attorney. The templates, examples, and guidelines in this chapter are for educational and informational purposes only.

Before using any template or modifying your intake paperwork, always consult your own legal counsel or practice advisor to ensure compliance with your licensing board, HIPAA, and local regulations.

Exception: Templates and consent language provided within this system may be adapted and used for your own clinical practice with your clients. However, you should customize them to meet your specific practice requirements and legal obligations.

Let's address the question every therapist asks: "Is this legal and ethical?" The short answer is yes, absolutely. TherapyCraft is a legitimate therapeutic approach that you can implement safely and professionally with the right framework.

The key thing to understand is that Minecraft is not HIPAA compliant, but don't let that scare you. It just means you need to be smart about how you use it: keep your therapeutic conversations on secure platforms and use neutral names for everything.

Understanding Platform Limitations (And Why They're Manageable)

Microsoft doesn't offer Business Associate Agreements for Minecraft because it's designed for gaming, not healthcare. This simply means you handle the privacy considerations upfront and use your secure systems for the clinical work.

What This Means in Practice

Simple Guidelines That Keep You Safe:

- **Use secure video platforms for all conversation** - Your therapeutic dialogue happens through Zoom for Healthcare, SimplePractice, etc., not through Minecraft chat
- **Keep clinical notes in your EHR system** - Document sessions in your secure systems, just like any other therapy session
- **Use neutral names for everything** - Gamertags, realm names, and world names should never identify you or your clients
- **Close realms after sessions** - This prevents access outside of scheduled appointment times

Think of it this way: Minecraft provides the therapeutic space, while your secure systems handle the private communication and documentation. It's like having therapy in a park - the location isn't HIPAA compliant, but your professional practices are.

The Two-Platform Setup

Your session setup uses two platforms simultaneously and protects everyone involved:

Platform	Purpose	Privacy Level
Secure Video Platform	All therapeutic conversation, session recording if needed	HIPAA compliant

Platform	Purpose	Privacy Level
Minecraft	Therapeutic activity space, building, exploring together	Public gaming platform

Documentation System

Separately from your session platforms, you'll use your standard clinical documentation system:

Platform	Purpose	Privacy Level
Your EHR System	Clinical notes, treatment planning, session documentation	HIPAA compliant

Informed Consent Made Simple

You'll need to explain the platform limitations to families, but this is a straightforward conversation. Most parents understand that gaming platforms aren't medical systems and appreciate your transparency.

Key Points to Cover:

- "We use Minecraft as our activity space while conducting therapy through secure video platforms"
- "All our actual conversations happen through secure video platforms"
- "Your child's progress notes and treatment information are stored in secure healthcare systems"
- "We use privacy settings and neutral names to protect everyone's identity within the game"

Complete disclosure templates are included below and in the appendices - you'll have ready-to-use consent language that you can customize for your practice and state requirements.

Sample Disclosure Templates

Here are the exact consent templates you can add to your existing intake forms:

Minecraft Therapy Consent Clause

Add this section to your existing therapy consent forms: → [Get editable template in Appendix A](#)

Gaming-Assisted Therapy Using Minecraft

I understand that [Therapist Name] may use Minecraft as a therapeutic tool during sessions. This approach can help with engagement, communication, and therapeutic goal achievement for children and teens.

Platform Information:

- Minecraft is a commercial gaming platform owned by Microsoft, not a healthcare system*
- The platform is not HIPAA-compliant but is used only for therapeutic activities, not private health discussions*
- All therapeutic conversations occur through secure, HIPAA-compliant video platforms*
- Clinical notes and treatment information are stored in secure healthcare systems only*

Privacy Measures:

- Neutral usernames protect identity within the game*
- Private game worlds prevent interaction with unknown players*
- Worlds are only accessible during scheduled appointments*
- No personal identifying information is shared within the gaming environment*

Session Structure:

- *Sessions typically begin with traditional check-in via secure video*
- *Gaming activities are integrated as therapeutically appropriate*
- *All clinical documentation follows standard mental health practices*

I consent to the use of Minecraft as a therapeutic tool and understand that I can discontinue this approach at any time without affecting the quality of traditional therapy services.

Client/Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Technology Setup Addendum

Include this technical information sheet for parents: → [Get editable template in Appendix B](#)

TherapyCraft Technology Requirements & Setup

Required for Participation:

- *Device capable of running Minecraft (PC, Mac, tablet, console, or phone)*
- *Minecraft Bedrock Edition (approximately \$30, one-time purchase)*
- *Stable internet connection*
- *Microsoft account (free to create)*

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

- *Ensure Minecraft is purchased and installed before first session*
- *Create Microsoft account for child if under 18*
- *Accept the friend request and confirm technology setup with therapist (note: you won't be able to enter the Realm before the session as it remains closed until session time)*
- *Provide backup communication method (phone) in case of technical difficulties*

- *Supervise any additional gaming outside of therapy sessions as you see appropriate*

Privacy and Safety Settings:

- *Child's gaming profile will use privacy-protected settings*
- *No interaction with unknown players during therapy sessions*
- *No personal information shared within gaming environment*
- *Sessions occur in private, therapist-controlled game worlds only*

Technology Troubleshooting:

- *Minor technical difficulties are normal and can be resolved quickly*
- *Backup communication ensures session continuity if needed*
- *Therapist will provide setup support and technical guidance*

Financial Considerations:

- *Game purchase (\$30) is parent responsibility*
- *No ongoing gaming costs required for therapy participation*
- *Session rates remain standard regardless of platform used*

By signing below, I acknowledge that I understand the technology requirements and agree to ensure proper setup for my child's therapy sessions.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Privacy Protection (It's Easier Than You Think)

Professional Identity Management

What to Protect	How to Handle It	Example
Your Gamertag	Choose neutral, non-professional names	"StoneRiver28" not "TherapistAshley"

What to Protect	How to Handle It	Example
Friends List	Set privacy to "Only me" in Microsoft settings	Clients can't see each other's gamertags
Realm Names	Use generic building names	"Realm A" or "Creative Space" not client names
World Management	Track client worlds in your private notes	Your EHR notes which world belongs to which client

Session Management Protocol

Your simple session routine:

1. **Start with traditional check-in** (first 10-15 minutes) via secure video - keep Realm closed
2. **Open the realm** only after completing check-in and goal-setting
3. **Keep therapeutic conversation** happening through your video platform
4. **Close the realm** immediately when the session ends (after reaching a safe place)
5. **Document the session** in your EHR system like any other appointment

This timing protocol serves as an important boundary tool: it prevents clients from skipping therapeutic check-ins, ensures they can't overlap in worlds, and maintains parental agreements about screen time limits.

Professional Boundaries in Gaming Spaces

Maintaining therapeutic boundaries in Minecraft is actually quite straightforward. The key is remembering that you're still doing therapy, just in a more engaging environment.

Common Boundary Questions and Responses

Situation	Professional Response	Why This Works
Client asks to connect on other gaming platforms	"I only game with clients during our scheduled therapy sessions"	Maintains clear therapeutic boundaries
Parent wants to observe mid-session	"Let's finish our session first, then discuss family involvement"	Preserves client confidentiality and session structure
Client shares inappropriate content in their build	"Let's talk about what this means for you"	Addresses therapeutically while maintaining professional limits

Documentation That Demonstrates Clinical Value

Your clinical notes for TherapyCraft sessions should highlight the therapeutic work being accomplished, making it clear this is legitimate mental health treatment.

Documentation Framework:

- **Clinical objectives addressed** during the session
- **Therapeutic interventions** used within the gaming environment
- **Client responses and progress** observed
- **Skills practiced** and insights gained
- **Plan for next session** and goals moving forward

Sample Note Structure

"Client engaged in structured Minecraft therapy session focusing on emotional regulation. Built collaborative shelter while discussing school anxiety triggers. Demonstrated improved

frustration tolerance when initial build was destroyed by game mechanics. Client identified parallel between rebuilding in-game and 'starting over' after difficult days at school. Practiced breathing techniques during challenging survival mode scenarios. Reports feeling 'more prepared' for upcoming social situations. Plan: Continue building confidence through structured challenges next session."

Supervisor and Agency Considerations

Most supervisors and practice groups are supportive of innovative approaches when they see clear therapeutic rationale and professional implementation.

Be prepared to discuss:

1. **Therapeutic benefits** you're observing with specific clients
2. **Professional safeguards** you have in place
3. **Documentation practices** that demonstrate clinical value
4. **Risk management** through proper training and protocols

Template materials for supervisor discussions are included in the appendices, including sample letters explaining the therapeutic rationale and safety protocols.

Risk Management Made Simple

Technical Safety Measures

Essential Protocols (These Become Second Nature):

- **Backup communication:** Always have phone contact for parents in case platforms fail
- **Regular world backups:** Save important client builds in case of technical issues
- **Update scheduling:** Install game updates outside of client hours

- **Emergency procedures:** Clear plan for continuing sessions if technology fails

You're Ready to Go

TherapyCraft is legitimate, effective therapy. You're providing professional mental health treatment using a medium that creates real engagement and breakthrough with young clients.

You're all set when you:

- Get informed consent that covers the platform basics
- Use secure systems for therapeutic communication and documentation
- Keep professional boundaries clear within the gaming environment
- Document the therapeutic work and progress you're seeing

Families who choose TherapyCraft want therapy their kids will actually engage with. They appreciate therapists who think creatively about how to connect with their children.

Trust your clinical skills and your professional judgment. The technical setup protects everyone's privacy, the informed consent protects everyone legally, and your therapeutic expertise ensures genuine healing happens within this innovative space.

Chapter 5: Family Communication Essentials

Parent communication for TherapyCraft follows the same professional standards as traditional therapy, with just a few key additions: technical support and encouraging family engagement with Minecraft outside sessions.

The main difference isn't how you communicate - it's being prepared to help with tech issues and guiding parents toward productive ways to connect with their child around gaming.

Welcome Email Template

This covers the technical setup parents need to know, plus the essential privacy and safety information specific to TherapyCraft.

Welcome Email Template

Subject Line: Getting Ready for Your Child's Minecraft Therapy Sessions

Hi [Parent/Caregiver Name],

I'm so excited to begin working with [Child's Name] in our upcoming Minecraft-based therapy sessions!

We'll be using a private Minecraft world called a Realm, which allows for safe, guided play in a setting that's engaging, creative, and therapeutic. Many kids find Minecraft to be a powerful tool for emotional expression, problem-solving, and connecting in a way that feels natural to them.

Below you'll find everything you need to help [Child's Name] get set up and ready for their first session.

What You Need:

- *Minecraft Bedrock Edition (on tablet, console, or Windows 10/11 PC)*
- *A Microsoft account linked to [Child's Name]'s Minecraft profile (**Please send me the username so I can send them an invite to their Realm**)*
- *For consoles: an active online subscription (e.g., Xbox Live Gold, PlayStation Plus, or Nintendo Switch Online)*
- *A quiet, private space where they won't be overheard*
- *Headphones for voice communication (essential if others are present in the room)*

 **Not sure which version you have?** *Let me know and I'll help you check!*

Session Time: *Our first session is scheduled for: [Insert Day + Time]*

How to Join the Therapy World (Realm)

At [Child's Name]'s scheduled session time:

- 1. Open Minecraft Bedrock Edition*
- 2. Click Play*
- 3. Go to the Friends tab*
- 4. Scroll to Joinable Realms*
- 5. Look for a Realm invitation from me (my Minecraft username is: [YourUsername])*
- 6. Click to join!*

We'll also be connected on [Zoom/Google Meet/your platform] for real-time voice or video communication throughout the session.

Privacy and Safety

- *[Child's Name] will have a private Realm used only for their sessions. No other clients will be invited to or have access to this world.*
- *I enable and disable access manually before and after each session for complete privacy.*

- *Minecraft is used as a creative therapeutic activity, not for storing personal health information.*
- *I'll be present in the world with [Child's Name] the entire time to guide, support, and reflect with them.*

Need Help?

If you have any questions, tech issues, or would like help walking through setup before the first session, I'm happy to help. Please note that you won't be able to access the Realm before our session - it remains closed until session time for privacy and security.

Looking forward to seeing [Child's Name] in session!

Warmly,

[Your Name]

[Your Practice Name, Email, Phone Number]

Session Support: Reminders and Troubleshooting

Pre-Session Reminder (Email or Text)

Quick Reminder Template

Hi [Parent Name]!

Just a reminder that [Child's Name] has their Minecraft therapy session scheduled today at [Time]!

Please have Minecraft Bedrock Edition ready, ensure you've accepted my friend request, and make sure [child's name] has headphones and a private space about 5 minutes before our session starts. The Realm will only be accessible during our scheduled session time.

Thanks so much!

[Your Name]

Technical Troubleshooting Email

Troubleshooting Template

Subject: Minecraft Session Connection Help

Hi [Parent Name],

I noticed there was an issue connecting to the Minecraft Realm today. Here are a few quick troubleshooting tips:

- *Confirm [Child's Name]'s device has the latest Minecraft Bedrock Edition update installed*
- *Make sure they are logged into the correct Microsoft account*
- *Check that any required online services (Xbox Live, PlayStation Plus, Nintendo Switch Online) are active*
- *Confirm they have accepted the Realm invitation*
- *Try restarting the device and relaunching Minecraft*

If you continue to have trouble, please let me know—we'll work through it together or adjust as needed!

Thank you for your flexibility,

[Your Name]

The Key Differences: Tech Support and Confidentiality

The main ways TherapyCraft communication differs from standard therapy:

Technical Support: Be prepared to help with Minecraft connection issues, Microsoft account problems, and platform troubleshooting.

Confidentiality: Because your child is the client, you won't receive regular updates on specific therapeutic content. This boundary is essential for therapeutic success.

Optional Family Connection: If interested, this can be a nice opportunity to explore Minecraft with your child in their own worlds outside of therapy, but this isn't necessary for therapeutic success.

Common TherapyCraft Questions

Q: Will my child be playing with other kids?

A: No. Each child has their own private Realm, accessible only during their scheduled therapy time.

Q: Is this HIPAA compliant?

A: Minecraft itself is not HIPAA-compliant, so no personal health information is stored in the game. I use secure platforms for documentation and therapeutic conversations.

Q: What if I don't know anything about Minecraft?

A: No gaming experience required! If you're interested, it can be nice to learn about your child's interests, but it's not necessary for their therapeutic success.

Q: How do you handle technical problems?

A: I'm prepared to troubleshoot connection issues, and we always have backup communication methods ready.

Subject: [Child's Name]'s Minecraft Session Today

Hi [Parent Name],

[Child's Name] and I had a wonderful session today inside our private Minecraft world.

We explored [brief session focus—e.g., building a safe place, working through frustration, expressing emotions creatively].

Minecraft offers a unique space for reflection, growth, and emotional safety, and [Child's Name] continues to make great progress.

If you'd like to connect about today's session or next steps, just let me know!

Warmly,

[Your Name]

Managing Expectations: What Parents Should Know

⚠ Important Reminders for Families

- **Technical hiccups are normal** - especially in the first few sessions while everyone gets comfortable with the setup
- **Progress looks different** - your child might be more excited to tell you about what they built than traditional therapy insights
- **Engagement varies** - some days your child might want to focus more on building, other days on talking
- **It's still therapy** - even sessions that feel like "just playing" are serving therapeutic goals

Encouraging Parent Involvement

Many families benefit when parents show genuine interest in their child's Minecraft world and therapeutic progress.

Parent Tips for Supporting TherapyCraft

Do:

- Ask your child to show you what they built in their therapy world
- Express genuine curiosity about their creations
- Consider learning basic Minecraft yourself to connect with their interests
- Celebrate their problem-solving and creativity
- Support the therapeutic process by maintaining session schedules

Don't:

- Try to access their therapy world outside of sessions
- Push for detailed reports of every therapeutic conversation
- Dismiss their excitement about builds as "just a game"

Your Standard Communication Practices Still Apply

Everything else about parent communication remains the same as your traditional therapy approach:

- Use your normal consent and intake processes
- Follow your standard confidentiality practices
- Maintain professional boundaries as you always do
- Document and communicate progress according to your usual protocols

The only real addition is being ready to help with tech issues. Family Minecraft engagement outside sessions is nice but optional.

Quick Checklist for Therapists

Before Starting Services:

1. ☒ Send welcome email with complete setup instructions
2. ☒ Confirm game version and technical access
3. ☒ Obtain client Microsoft username
4. ☒ Test connection if needed or troubleshoot issues
5. ☒ Answer any parent questions about the process

Ongoing Communication:

1. ☒ Send session reminders as needed
2. ☒ Provide technical troubleshooting promptly
3. ☒ Keep communication warm, brief, and professionally boundaried
4. ☒ Follow your standard confidentiality practices

Bottom Line

TherapyCraft parent communication = Your normal therapy communication + tech support.

Maintain your standard confidentiality practices. Parents won't receive detailed updates about specific therapeutic content - this boundary is essential for therapeutic success.

Chapter 6: Building Your Sessions

Your first TherapyCraft session will likely look similar to other intakes you've done with parents and teens, so expect to format them similarly.

Parents come in (or join virtually), you collect background information, review paperwork, discuss insurance if that's relevant, go over your practice policies and disclosures. You decide if you want the child/teen to join for this session based on what you've done for other sessions with clients of similar ages. The only difference? You'll add your Minecraft disclosure to the stack, and it's possible that in that conversation, if there is enough time, you may be working with the client to determine whether you're setting up a Creative or Survival world for next time and possibly jumping in to explore the world for a few moments. The last 10-15 minutes of this appointment is also a great time to ensure everything is set up properly on the client end so you are ready to play during the second appointment.

The First Session: Mostly Normal, Slightly Minecraft

Format your first session the same way you normally would with a family. You're still doing an intake. You're still building rapport. You're still gathering history and understanding what brings them to therapy.

The Minecraft-specific parts are minimal but important:

Determining the Game Mode

You may want to ask what the child prefers to do in the game:

"What do you typically play in Minecraft? Are you more of a builder, an explorer, or a fighter?"

Their answer tells you everything. If they say they exclusively play Creative mode and spend hours building elaborate structures and have zero interest in Survival, then start in Creative. But that's rare. Most kids, even dedicated builders, enjoy the full game experience.

If they've never played or don't have a strong preference? Default to Survival. It's simply more engaging for most kids, provides natural therapeutic opportunities, and prevents the "what should I build?" paralysis that can happen in Creative.

The Last 15 Minutes (Maybe)

If you have time at the end of that first session and if the technology is cooperating, you might spend the last 15 minutes getting into the world together. This isn't therapy yet. You're just checking out your spawn point. "Do we like this world? Should we try a different seed?" Maybe you'll run around for five minutes exploring, then dig a quick hole to survive the first night.

That's it. Nothing profound. Just getting acquainted with the space you'll be working in.

The Second Session: Where TherapyCraft Really Begins

Your second session is where things shift. This is when your therapy starts looking different from traditional talk therapy, though perhaps not as different as you'd expect.

Managing the Realm: An Important Protocol

Here's a crucial session management tip: I don't turn the Realm on until after we've talked for 10-15 minutes. Otherwise, eager clients will jump straight into the game and skip the important check-in and goal-setting portion of our session.

Similarly, at the end of the session, once we've reached a safe place in the game, I close the Realm immediately. This prevents clients from:

- Playing longer than their parents have agreed to
- Being in the world at the same time as another client (privacy breach)
- Using therapy time as unsupervised gaming time

This on/off protocol becomes part of your session routine and helps maintain clear therapeutic boundaries.

The First 10-15 Minutes: Setting Intentions

Just like in a typical therapy appointment, you may discuss goals their parents mentioned, you may discuss long term or short term goals, and you might even want to share with them how you see that working well inside of Minecraft.

During the first several sessions, I am still typically getting to know the child, so unless there is something very specific we're working on, I often just play alongside them and get to know their personality and their story. I'll ask questions that I would typically ask, the only difference is that we're also gathering supplies, maybe setting up a homebase, and maybe building a basic shelter.

Learning Through Play Styles

You can learn so much about a child or teen just by watching how they play! If they are therapy resistant or struggle to connect with adults, this is a great time to allow them to teach you how they typically start.

Most people who have played Minecraft before have a typical way they jump into the game:

- Some try to find a village to have a ready made home and supplies
- Some immediately start mining to get the supplies they need to uplevel their weaponry
- Some just dig a basic hole in the ground to stay safe at night
- Others like to immediately begin building an elaborate home

Follow their lead if you don't have a specific goal in mind! As you start, it will also inform your Minecraft style!

My favorite therapeutic question: "If you were to describe that family member as a mob, good or bad, what would they be and why?"

This one question provides some very powerful insights into the interactions of the family. I ask this later about friends, teachers, anyone the child or teen is interacting with.

As I'm playing, I may make notes on a notebook sitting next to me or quickly type into my EHR in another window.

As sessions go on, you can continue focusing on a bigger goal or open up each session questioning what the child would like to talk about/work on that week. I like to explain during the first 15 minutes of an appointment what we'll be doing that day in Minecraft. For example, I might say "I was thinking we could go explore some caves today to really build up our iron stores since we need to make some armor. I was thinking we might stick together so we don't get ourselves into trouble with the mobs. How does that sound?"

And then I would explain to them as we're playing, "This is really similar to what we were talking about last week when you mentioned you are having a hard time making friends. What are you doing now as we battle these guys that has made you a good friend?"

This is somewhat oversimplifying how I tie the game into therapy, but as a therapist, I have no doubt you will think of dozens of ways to tie it together!

Here are some other examples of connecting gameplay to therapeutic goals:

For anxiety: "You mentioned feeling really anxious about the test coming up. Today in Minecraft, we're going to work on getting a shelter built before nighttime. I want us to notice what emotions come up as the sun starts setting, because that time pressure might feel similar to test anxiety."

For grief: "You told me your grandma loved gardens. What if today we build a memorial garden for her? We can make it exactly how you think she'd like it."

For executive functioning: "You've been talking about how hard it is to finish big projects for school. Let's start a huge build together today, but first, let's think through all the steps. What needs to happen first? Then what? Let's break it down and figure out who's doing what."

Then add a bit of psychoeducation that frames the work:

"Today we're going to practice naming our emotions as they come up. Being able to name what we're feeling is the foundation for having some control over our emotions. So I'll model this: I'll tell you when I notice myself feeling something, and you can too if you want."

During the Session: Therapy Through Play

Once you're in the game, therapy happens organically. You're not forcing therapeutic moments - you're recognizing and using them as they arise.

Modeling Emotional Awareness

As you play, narrate your emotional experience naturally:

"Whoa, I just noticed I'm feeling really frustrated that I can't find any iron when you found some so quickly!"

"I'm feeling overwhelmed - there's so much to do to survive and it feels like we just started!"

"Okay, I'm noticing my body getting tense because night is coming and we're not ready. Let me take a breath."

Then gently invite them to notice their own experience:

"Are you noticing anything coming up for you? Maybe impatience or excitement or something else?"

If they identify an uncomfortable emotion, go deeper:

"Where do you feel that frustration in your body? What shape is it? What color would it be if it had a color?"

"You know how when an Iron Golem gets mad, its eyes turn red? What are the ways you know you're feeling a strong emotion?"

Using Natural Minecraft Moments

The game provides endless therapeutic opportunities. Here's a real example:

A client finds a village and starts looting it while you're waiting for them to collect their stuff after dying. You're standing there, managing their items, while they're getting all the good loot. Perfect moment.

"Hey, I want you to wait for me! I noticed I was starting to panic about missing out on the good stuff."

This could go several directions:

- Discuss what stories our brains tell us ("They don't care about me," "I'm being left behind")
- Practice expressing needs in the moment
- Explore body sensations that come with FOMO

- Connect it to real-life situations where they feel left out

You might process this right then, or save it for the beginning of next session: "Remember last week when you were getting all the village loot? Let's talk about what that brought up..."

When Talking Isn't Necessary

Here's a crucial nuance: sometimes the play itself is therapeutic enough. You don't need to process everything verbally.

A kid who struggles with collaboration? Just building together is teaching them turn-taking, listening, compromise. A child with social anxiety? Simply playing alongside an adult in a low-pressure environment is therapeutic. Someone working on trust after trauma? The act of playing together safely, session after session, builds that trust without words.

You might not say anything during the session, then next week open with:

"I know you've mentioned struggling to work with partners on school projects. I just wanted to point out how well we worked together last week on that castle. You were so good at sharing resources and taking turns with the building. That shows me you absolutely have the skills to be a great project partner."

You're using the gameplay to show them they already have strengths they don't recognize.

Working with Specific Issues

While every therapist will develop their own approach based on their theoretical orientation and clinical style, here are some starting points for common presenting concerns. Remember: these aren't prescriptions. Think about how you already work with these issues, then consider how Minecraft might support that work.

Anxiety

Minecraft naturally creates manageable anxiety through time pressure (nightfall), resource scarcity, and environmental threats. Use these moments to practice coping skills in real-time. Notice together how the anxiety builds, peaks, and subsides. Build safe spaces when needed. Practice brave behavior in-game before trying it in life.

Depression

Start small. Sometimes just placing a single block is an accomplishment. Focus on behavioral activation - gentle goals that create momentum. Build hope chests with positive memories. Create connections between isolated areas of their world. Add light sources as literal and metaphorical brightness. Celebrate tiny victories.

Trauma

Safety first, always. Let them control the environment completely. Build elaborate safe houses if that's what they need. Turn off hostile mobs if necessary. Create boundaries, walls, defensive structures - then process what makes them feel protected. Never push for Survival mode if they're not ready.

Grief

Memorial builds can be powerful. Gardens for grandparents, monuments for pets, special spaces for lost relationships. Let them describe every detail of why they're including certain elements. Take screenshots to preserve these spaces. Some kids want to revisit these memorials every session; others build them once and move on.

Executive Functioning

Minecraft is executive functioning practice disguised as play. Planning builds, organizing resources, prioritizing tasks, managing time - it's all there. Make the implicit explicit: "Notice how we broke this huge project into steps? That's exactly what you can do with your science fair project."

Social Skills

The parallel play aspect of TherapyCraft naturally builds social skills. You're practicing conversation while engaged in activity (easier than face-to-face for many kids). You're negotiating, compromising, sharing resources, taking turns. For kids with autism or social anxiety, this is often the perfect level of social interaction.

Common Situations and How to Handle Them

"I Just Want to Blow Everything Up with TNT"

Great! Build something specifically to destroy. This is especially perfect in Creative mode where there's no real loss. After the explosion:

"Why was that satisfying?"

"Is there anything disappointing about how the world looks now?"

"Everything we want to do, we do because we believe it will make us feel a certain way. What feeling were you going for with that destruction?"

Don't limit it or judge it. Explore it.

When Parents Ask "What Are You Actually Working On?"

Parents might see their kid excitedly talking about the cool house they built in therapy and wonder if any "real" therapy is happening. Help them understand:

"When your child is building that house with me, they're practicing sustained attention, planning, and frustration tolerance. When they're telling me about their design choices, they're building communication skills and self-expression. When we problem-solve together after a Creeper blows up our work, they're learning emotional regulation and resilience. The medium is Minecraft, but the skills are real and transferable."

Give specific examples from their child's work:

"Remember when they told you about fighting the zombies? That entire session was about facing fears in a controlled way. They literally said, 'If I can handle this, I can handle my presentation at school.' That's the work we're doing."

Ending Sessions Safely

Always end in a safe place. Get to shelter, make sure they won't die immediately when you log in next time. Save any important builds. Take screenshots of meaningful creations. This routine becomes part of the therapeutic frame - sessions have a clear beginning, middle, and end.

"Let's get somewhere safe before we log off."

"Want to screenshot that before we go?"

"Next week, should we continue this build or start something new?"

Documentation: Writing Your Session Notes

Your TherapyCraft documentation should look almost identical to your regular therapy notes - you're just adding "in Minecraft" to clarify the medium. The therapeutic work is the same; the setting is different.

Sample SOAP Notes

Example 1: Anxiety Treatment

S (Subjective): Client reported feeling "really nervous about the science presentation next week." States anxiety is "like an 8 out of 10." Expressed worry about "messing up in front of everyone."

O (Objective): Client appeared engaged throughout session conducted in Minecraft. Initially built walls "super thick" around base, stating "nothing can get in here." When nighttime approached in game, observed increased verbal pace and repetitive checking of doors. Successfully used breathing technique when surrounded by mobs, then stated "that actually worked." Built a "presentation practice stage" and role-played giving speech to villagers.

A (Assessment): Client demonstrating improved ability to identify anxiety triggers and implement coping strategies. Able to make connections between in-game experiences (managing mobs) and real-life stressors (presentation anxiety). Progress toward treatment goal of anxiety management evident.

P (Plan): Continue practicing coping skills through Minecraft challenges. Next session: build "confidence tower" with each level representing presentation preparation step. Assign homework to practice square breathing before bed. Parent consultation scheduled to discuss home support strategies.

Example 2: Depression Treatment

S: Client stated "I don't really feel like doing anything" but agreed to "just mess around in the game." Reported sleeping "maybe 12 hours" yesterday. Denied SI/HI.

O: Client logged into Minecraft session on time. Initially placed only 3 blocks, then stopped. With encouragement, began adding flowers to previously built structure. Smiled when dog in game approached. Spent 20 minutes creating small garden, stating "my grandma would like this." Energy increased slightly throughout session. Made eye contact via video 3x (improvement from last week's O).

A: Client showing small but significant increases in behavioral activation. Able to engage in meaningful activity (memorial garden) when provided gentle structure and support. Anhedonia still present but less severe than previous sessions.

P: Continue behavioral activation approach using Minecraft as engagement tool. Increase complexity of builds gradually. Explore meaning-making through memorial garden next session. Consider medication evaluation referral if no improvement in sleep patterns by next week.

Example 3: ADHD Treatment

S: "I kept forgetting to turn in my homework again even though I did it!" Parent reported via email that client had 3 missing assignments this week despite completion.

O: In Minecraft, client immediately began mining without gathering food first, then expressed frustration when hunger bar depleted. Collaborated to create organized chest system with signs labeling contents. Client excited about color-coding system, stating "this makes so much sense!" Successfully completed 3-step building project by following checklist we created together. Needed 2 reminders to check list but followed through independently after prompts.

A: Client demonstrates strong understanding when provided visual organization systems. Executive function challenges evident in both gameplay and school performance. Shows

improved task completion with external structure and reminders.

P: Transfer chest organization concept to homework folder system. Create visual checklist for school morning routine. Next session in Minecraft: practice time management by completing builds within set timeframes. Email teacher re: possibility of visual schedule support in classroom.

What to Include in Your Notes

Document TherapyCraft sessions just like any other therapy session:

- **Presenting concerns:** What the client discussed or worked on
- **Interventions used:** What therapeutic techniques you employed (even in-game)
- **Client response:** How they engaged with the intervention
- **Symbolic content:** Meaningful builds, metaphors, or themes that emerged
- **Progress toward goals:** Connect gameplay to treatment objectives
- **Risk factors:** Any safety concerns (assessed normally, not about game dangers)
- **Plan:** What you'll focus on next session

Phrasing for Clinical Legitimacy

Instead of: "We played Minecraft"

Write: "Engaged in structured therapeutic activity using digital platform"

Instead of: "Client built a house"

Write: "Client created representation of safe space, processing themes of security and boundaries"

Instead of: "Client got frustrated when creeper blew up their stuff"

Write: "Client practiced frustration tolerance and problem-solving when faced with unexpected setback in therapeutic activity"

Remember: You're not trying to hide that you're using Minecraft: just documenting the therapeutic work professionally. Many notes can simply state "Session conducted via Minecraft-based therapy" and then focus on the clinical content.

Developing Your Own Style

After a few months of TherapyCraft, you'll notice you've developed your own approach. Maybe you've become the therapist who loves redstone contraptions and uses them for logical thinking work. Maybe you're all about collaborative builds for social skills. Maybe you use different worlds for different emotional states.

Take time outside of sessions to think about:

- How does your existing theoretical orientation translate to Minecraft?
- What metaphors naturally emerge in the game that support your clinical work?
- Which game mechanics align with therapeutic goals you're working on?
- What creative interventions could you develop using this medium?

Share your discoveries with other TherapyCraft therapists. We're all figuring this out together, developing best practices, learning from each other's creativity.

The Reality of TherapyCraft Sessions

Some sessions will be profound - a child builds a representation of their anxiety and then literally breaks through the walls. Other sessions will be mundane - you'll spend 45 minutes mining and chatting about school.

Both are therapeutic. Both are valuable.

The magic isn't in forcing therapeutic moments. It's in being present with your client in a world where they feel competent and creative, where they can take risks and recover from failures, where they can express themselves in ways words don't always allow.

Your clinical skills don't disappear in Minecraft: they translate. Your ability to build rapport, to notice patterns, to reflect and interpret, to hold space for difficult emotions all comes with you into the game.

Trust yourself: *You already know how to do therapy. TherapyCraft just gives you a new space to do it in. Let the sessions unfold naturally, stay curious about what emerges, and remember - sometimes the best therapy happens when it doesn't look like therapy at all.*

Session Activity Toolkit

Here's your ready-to-use collection of therapeutic activities that naturally emerge through Minecraft gameplay. Each can be adapted based on age, presenting issue, and therapeutic goals.

Emotional Regulation Activities

The Lava Floor Challenge

Mode: Creative | **Ages:** 8-16 | **Time:** 20-30 minutes

Build a parkour course over lava (in Creative so no real danger). As they jump from block to block, discuss how this mirrors managing big emotions - one careful step at a time, and if you fall, you can always respawn and try again.

Process: "What helps you stay focused on the next jump? How is this like staying calm when you're angry?"

The Weather Machine

Mode: Creative | **Ages:** 10+ | **Time:** Full session

Build different rooms representing different emotional weather (thunderstorm for anger, sunshine for joy, fog for confusion). Create pathways between them and discuss how emotions shift and change.

Process: "What helps you move from the storm room to the sunny room in real life?"

Social Skills & Relationships

The Trust Bridge

Mode: Survival | **Ages:** 9-17 | **Time:** 30 minutes

Take turns building a bridge while the other gathers materials. One person can only place blocks, the other can only gather. Switch roles halfway.

Process: "How did it feel to depend on me for materials? What made it easier or harder to trust the process?"

Village Diplomacy

Mode: Survival | **Ages:** 11+ | **Time:** Multiple sessions

Find a village and create stories about the villagers' relationships. Build structures to help resolve their "conflicts" (a meeting hall for arguments, a party space for celebrations).

Process: "Which villager reminds you of someone you know? What would help them get along better?"

Self-Esteem & Identity

The Achievement Museum

Mode: Creative | **Ages:** All | **Time:** Ongoing

Create a museum with exhibits for real-life achievements. Each accomplishment gets its own display with items that represent it symbolically.

Process: "What should we add this week? How should we represent that accomplishment?"

The Many Rooms of Me

Mode: Creative | **Ages:** 12+ | **Time:** Multiple sessions

Build a house where each room represents a different aspect of their identity (the athlete room, the artist room, the worried room, the confident room).

Process: "Which room do you spend the most time in? Which room would you like to make bigger?"

Anxiety & Worry Management

The Worry Chest System

Mode: Either | **Ages:** 7-14 | **Time:** 20 minutes

Create a series of chests: one for "worries I can control," one for "worries I can't control," and one for "not sure yet." Use different items to represent different worries.

Process: "Let's sort through these worries. Which chest does this one belong in?"

Night Survival Practice

Mode: Survival | **Ages:** 10+ | **Time:** 30 minutes

Intentionally face nighttime without full preparation. Practice coping strategies while managing mobs and darkness.

Process: "Your breathing changed when you heard that zombie. What can we do to stay calm even when it's scary?"

Communication & Assertion

The Negotiation Trading Post

Mode: Survival | **Ages:** 9+ | **Time:** 20 minutes

Set up a trading post where you practice negotiating trades. Start with items, then practice negotiating boundaries and needs.

Process: "How did you decide what was fair? How could you ask for what you need without demanding?"

Sign Language

Mode: Either | **Ages:** All | **Time:** Ongoing

Communicate only through signs placed in the world for 10 minutes. Practice being clear and direct with limited words.

Process: "What was hard about being so brief? When might this skill be useful in real life?"

Trauma & Safety

The Lighthouse Project

Mode: Creative | **Ages:** All | **Time:** Multiple sessions

Build a lighthouse that can be seen from anywhere in the world. Fill it with things that help them feel safe and grounded.

Process: "When you see the lighthouse from far away, what does it remind you of?"

Layers of Protection

Mode: Creative | **Ages:** 10+ | **Time:** Full session

Build a base with multiple layers of walls. Discuss which people in their life belong in which layer, and what earned that level of trust.

Process: "Who gets to come all the way inside? What did they do to earn that trust?"

Problem-Solving & Flexibility

The Broken Bridge Problem

Mode: Survival | **Ages:** 8+ | **Time:** 20 minutes

Start building a bridge together, then "accidentally" break part of it. Work together to problem-solve fixes with limited resources.

Process: "We had a plan, but now it changed. How can we adapt? What's this like in real life?"

Three Ways to Win

Mode: Either | **Ages:** 10+ | **Time:** 30 minutes

Set a goal (reach the mountain top, get diamonds, build a house) then find three completely different ways to achieve it.

Process: "Which way was most fun? Which was most efficient? How do you choose your approach in real life?"

Mindfulness & Grounding

The Zen Garden

Mode: Creative | **Ages:** All | **Time:** 30 minutes

Build a peaceful garden with water features. Sit in it together and practice breathing exercises while listening to the water sounds.

Process: "Notice five things you can see, four you can hear... let's practice grounding right here."

Sunrise Watching

Mode: Either | **Ages:** All | **Time:** 10 minutes

Find a high spot and watch the sunrise together in silence. Practice being present without needing to build or do.

Process: "What did you notice while we were being still? Was it hard to just watch?"

Family Dynamics

The Family Village

Mode: Creative | **Ages:** 8+ | **Time:** Multiple sessions

Build a house for each family member based on their personality. Notice proximity, size, style choices.

Process: "Why did you put Dad's house up on the mountain? What makes Mom's house need to be so big?"

Dinner Table Dynamics

Mode: Creative | **Ages:** All | **Time:** 20 minutes

Build a dining room and use armor stands or beds to represent family members. Arrange and rearrange based on different scenarios.

Process: "Where does everyone sit when things are good? What about during an argument?"

Quick 5-Minute Activities

For when you need a quick intervention or the session is winding down:

- **Feeling Fireworks:** Launch fireworks that match current emotions
- **One Block Story:** Place one block and tell one thing from their week
- **Speed Sorting:** Organize a messy chest while discussing organizing thoughts
- **Color Check-In:** Build a small tower using only colors that match their mood
- **Gratitude Path:** Place three blocks leading toward something they're thankful for
- **Energy Meter:** Build a vertical line showing their energy level today
- **Before/After Snapshot:** Quick build showing feeling before and after session

Adapting Activities for Different Ages

Ages 6-8: Keep it simple and concrete. Focus on basic building, colors, and immediate experiences. Use more Creative mode.

Ages 9-11: Introduce more complex metaphors. Can handle Survival mode challenges. Love teaching you game mechanics.

Ages 12-14: Can process deeper connections between game and life. Enjoy collaborative projects and philosophical discussions.

Ages 15+: Appreciate the game as a communication tool. Can handle abstract representations and complex emotional processing.

Remember: These are starting points. Every activity can be modified, simplified, or elaborated based on your client's needs and interests. The best activities are often the ones that emerge spontaneously from gameplay.

Treatment Planning by Diagnosis

These treatment frameworks provide structure while maintaining flexibility for individual client needs. Each follows a general progression from safety and rapport building through skill development to mastery and maintenance.

The Four-Phase Framework

Most TherapyCraft treatment follows this natural progression:

- 1. Building Safety (Weeks 1-3):** Establishing rapport, learning the game together, creating safe spaces
- 2. Expressing Emotions (Weeks 4-6):** Identifying and expressing feelings through builds and gameplay
- 3. Facing Challenges (Weeks 7-9):** Practicing coping skills through game challenges

Anxiety Disorders Treatment Plan

Phase 1: Safety & Stabilization (Weeks 1-3)

- **Week 1:** Create a completely safe base in Creative mode. No threats, total control.
- **Week 2:** Build "worry containers" and practice putting worries away.
- **Week 3:** Design a "calm room" with everything that helps them feel peaceful.

Phase 2: Understanding Anxiety (Weeks 4-6)

- **Week 4:** Build anxiety as a creature - what would it look like? Give it a home separate from their base.
- **Week 5:** Create "brave bridges" between safe and slightly scary areas.
- **Week 6:** Optional introduction to Peaceful mode Survival (no hostile mobs).

Phase 3: Skill Building (Weeks 7-9)

- **Week 7:** Practice breathing techniques while doing timed builds.
- **Week 8:** Face manageable challenges (exploring caves with lots of torches).
- **Week 9:** Build monuments to times they were brave in real life.

Phase 4: Mastery (Weeks 10-12)

- **Week 10:** Graduate to normal Survival if ready (or continue building coping tools).
- **Week 11:** Create a "toolkit tower" with all their coping strategies.
- **Week 12:** Design a world for someone else with anxiety - what would help them?

Key Focus: Control, gradual exposure, coping skill development, confidence building

Depression Treatment Plan

Phase 1: Gentle Engagement (Weeks 1-3)

- **Week 1:** No pressure to build. Just exist in the world together. Maybe place a few blocks.
- **Week 2:** Small, achievable task (build a 3x3 shelter). Celebrate completion.
- **Week 3:** Add one thing that brings joy (flower, painting, pet).

Phase 2: Behavioral Activation (Weeks 4-6)

- **Week 4:** Daily task: add one block to a growing structure.
- **Week 5:** Create a "memory chest" with items representing good times.
- **Week 6:** Build connections between isolated structures (bridges, paths).

Phase 3: Meaning-Making (Weeks 7-9)

- **Week 7:** Design something for someone they care about.
- **Week 8:** Add light sources throughout their world - discuss symbolism.
- **Week 9:** Create a "future room" with hopes and goals.

Phase 4: Sustainability (Weeks 10-12)

- **Week 10:** Build a self-care station with reminders of what helps.
- **Week 11:** Create a growth garden showing their progress.
- **Week 12:** Design a guide for "future you" when feeling low.

Key Focus: Small wins, behavioral activation, hope building, gentle progress

ADHD Treatment Plan

Phase 1: Structure & Success (Weeks 1-3)

- **Week 1:** Quick, engaging tasks with immediate rewards. Lots of movement.
- **Week 2:** Create an organization system for items (labeled chests).
- **Week 3:** Build a "mission board" with clear, simple goals.

Phase 2: Focus & Planning (Weeks 4-6)

- **Week 4:** Break a big build into steps, complete one step at a time.
- **Week 5:** Practice switching between two different tasks.
- **Week 6:** Create a "distraction box" for things that pull focus.

Phase 3: Impulse Control (Weeks 7-9)

- **Week 7:** "Red light, green light" building - practice pause and think.
- **Week 8:** Resource management challenges - save materials for bigger goals.
- **Week 9:** Build a "patience garden" that takes time to grow.

Phase 4: Executive Function (Weeks 10-12)

- **Week 10:** Plan and execute a complex build with multiple components.
- **Week 11:** Create a time management racecourse.
- **Week 12:** Design systems that work for their brain.

Key Focus: Organization, task completion, impulse control, celebrating neurodiversity

Trauma/PTSD Treatment Plan

Phase 1: Absolute Safety (Weeks 1-3)

- **Week 1:** Creative mode only. Build whatever feels safe. No pressure.
- **Week 2:** Create multiple layers of protection in their base.
- **Week 3:** Design an "emergency exit" system for quick escapes.

Phase 2: Stabilization (Weeks 4-6)

- **Week 4:** Build a "container" for difficult memories (don't open it).
- **Week 5:** Create separate spaces for different emotional states.
- **Week 6:** Design a "grounding garden" with sensory elements.

Phase 3: Processing (Weeks 7-9)

- **Week 7:** Build representations of support people/resources.
- **Week 8:** Create a "strength museum" of times they survived.
- **Week 9:** Optional: build something representing the trauma from a distance.

Phase 4: Integration (Weeks 10-12)

- **Week 10:** Connect isolated parts of their world with safe pathways.
- **Week 11:** Build a "new chapter" area focused on present/future.
- **Week 12:** Create a lighthouse or beacon representing hope.

Key Focus: Safety above all, containment, gentle processing, empowerment

Autism Spectrum Treatment Plan

Phase 1: Predictability & Interest (Weeks 1-3)

- **Week 1:** Follow their lead completely. Learn about their special interests.
- **Week 2:** Create highly structured, predictable building patterns.
- **Week 3:** Build something related to their special interest.

Phase 2: Social Understanding (Weeks 4-6)

- **Week 4:** Create social stories using villagers and scenarios.
- **Week 5:** Build "social rules" signs around a village.
- **Week 6:** Design different spaces for different social energy levels.

Phase 3: Flexibility Practice (Weeks 7-9)

- **Week 7:** Introduce small, planned changes to routines.
- **Week 8:** Practice "Plan B" when first idea doesn't work.
- **Week 9:** Build multiple solutions to the same problem.

Phase 4: Self-Advocacy (Weeks 10-12)

- **Week 10:** Create a "needs communication" board.
- **Week 11:** Build sensory regulation stations.
- **Week 12:** Design their ideal supportive environment.

Key Focus: Predictability, special interests, social skills, sensory needs

Adjustment Disorders Treatment Plan

Phase 1: Acknowledging Change (Weeks 1-3)

- **Week 1:** Build representations of "before" and "after" the change.
- **Week 2:** Create a bridge between the two states.
- **Week 3:** Design a "feelings about change" monument.

Phase 2: Processing (Weeks 4-6)

- **Week 4:** Build what was lost or left behind.

- **Week 5:** Create what's been gained or discovered.
- **Week 6:** Design a "memory preservation" area.

Phase 3: Adaptation (Weeks 7-9)

- **Week 7:** Build new routines and structures.
- **Week 8:** Create connections to support systems.
- **Week 9:** Design coping tools for difficult days.

Phase 4: Moving Forward (Weeks 10-12)

- **Week 10:** Build hopes for the future.
- **Week 11:** Create a "new normal" comfortable space.
- **Week 12:** Design a celebration of resilience.

Key Focus: Acknowledging loss, processing change, building new normal

Long-Term Treatment Roadmaps

The 6-Month Journey

For clients who benefit from extended TherapyCraft treatment:

Months 1-2	Months 3-4	Months 5-6
Foundation Building rapport Learning the game Creating safety Initial assessments	Skill Development Coping strategies Emotional regulation Problem-solving Communication skills	Integration Real-world application Maintenance planning Relapse prevention Celebration of growth

Measuring Progress

Track therapeutic progress through:

- **In-game behaviors:** Risk-taking, creativity, persistence, collaboration
- **Emotional expression:** Naming feelings, managing frustration, celebrating success
- **Skill transfer:** Applying game strategies to real-life situations
- **Engagement level:** Initiative, enthusiasm, session participation
- **Symbolic content:** Themes in builds, metaphors used, stories created

When to Adjust the Plan

Be ready to pivot when:

- The client's interests shift significantly
- Real-life events require immediate attention
- The current approach isn't engaging them
- They've mastered current goals faster than expected
- Family or school situations change

Discharge Planning

When it's time to transition from TherapyCraft:

- **Gradual transition:** Alternate Minecraft and traditional sessions
- **Preservation:** Save their world, take screenshots of important builds
- **Skills summary:** Review all the coping tools they've developed
- **Future access:** Discuss how they can use Minecraft for self-soothing at home
- **Celebration:** Create a final "graduation" build together

Remember: These treatment plans are frameworks, not rigid protocols. Your clinical judgment, the therapeutic relationship, and your client's unique needs should always guide the work. The beauty of TherapyCraft is its flexibility - the game adapts to whatever therapeutic work needs to happen.

Chapter 7: Building Your Marketing & Outreach

Here's what you need to know about marketing TherapyCraft: parents are desperate for this service. You're not trying to convince anyone that gaming therapy is legitimate - you're offering a solution to parents who've been searching for something, anything, that will help their Minecraft-obsessed kid open up in therapy.

The demand is already there. You just need to let people know you offer it.

Pricing Your TherapyCraft Services

Before diving into marketing strategies, let's address pricing. TherapyCraft is a specialty service with high demand. Don't undervalue yourself.

Insurance-Based Pricing

If you accept insurance, your pricing will be dictated by reimbursement rates. However, you can still position TherapyCraft as a specialized service within your practice. Consider:

- Marketing it as an innovative specialty approach
- Using it to attract new insurance-based clients
- Building your reputation as a cutting-edge practitioner
- Leveraging the specialty to justify higher cash-pay rates for other services

Private Pay Pricing Strategy

For self-pay clients, remember: parents are desperate for this service. You're offering something unique that solves a real problem.

Pricing approaches:

- **Cost-plus model:** Take your current session rate and add enough to cover Realm costs (\$3.99-\$7.99/month per client)
- **Specialty premium:** Charge 10-25% more than your standard rate because this is specialized training and innovative technology
- **Market research:** Investigate what play therapists in your area charge as a comparison point
- **Value-based pricing:** Consider the high demand and unique outcomes you're providing

Sample Pricing Framework

If your standard session rate is \$120:

- **Basic approach:** \$125-130 (covering Realm costs)
- **Specialty approach:** \$135-150 (reflecting specialized service)
- **Premium approach:** \$150-175 (recognizing high demand and unique outcomes)

Ethical Considerations

Maintain your values while charging appropriately:

- **Continue sliding scale** if you currently offer it
- **Consider partial scholarships** for families who need this specific approach
- **Be transparent** about pricing during consultations
- **Remember:** Charging fairly for specialized services allows you to serve more families long-term

You're not just playing games with kids. You're providing breakthrough therapeutic intervention that transforms resistant clients into engaged participants. Price accordingly.

Real Example: Financial Impact

When I started offering TherapyCraft, I began charging \$150 per session because it felt right for the specialized service I was providing. As demand grew and my caseload filled, I raised my rate to \$250 per session.

At that rate, just 10 TherapyCraft clients per week generated \$10,000 monthly income. More importantly, I could control demand: when I was full, I could pause marketing. When I had capacity, I could turn the "referral faucet" back on.

I also maintained accessibility by continuing to take Medicaid clients (averaging \$100 per session reimbursement) and offering sliding scale rates to families who needed it. This combination allowed me to:

- Earn enough to eliminate financial stress
- Feel good about keeping the service accessible
- Control my workload and prevent burnout
- Choose clients based on fit rather than financial desperation

For therapists struggling financially: TherapyCraft can transform your practice economics while maintaining your values around accessibility and ethical pricing.

Your Elevator Pitch Variations

Before diving into specific strategies, master these essential talking points. You'll use these across all marketing approaches:

For parents:

"I help kids who love Minecraft work through anxiety, ADHD, and other challenges by conducting therapy inside the game they already love."

For professionals:

"I specialize in engagement-resistant youth using Minecraft as a therapeutic medium, achieving breakthrough results with kids who've struggled in traditional therapy."

For casual conversations:

"You know how kids are obsessed with Minecraft? I actually do therapy sessions inside the game. It's amazing how much they open up."

Addressing Common Concerns

Be ready with responses to skepticism you'll encounter across all marketing efforts:

"Is this real therapy?"

"Absolutely. We're addressing the same clinical goals as traditional therapy: anxiety, coping skills, emotional regulation. The only difference is the setting. It's like doing therapy through art or play, but using a digital medium."

"Aren't we trying to reduce screen time?"

"This transforms screen time from passive consumption to active therapeutic work. One hour of Minecraft therapy is worth more than weeks of resistance to traditional therapy."

"Does insurance cover this?"

"[Your insurance situation]. The therapy itself is covered the same as any teletherapy session - we're just using a different therapeutic tool."

Your Marketing Strategy: From Easiest to Most Advanced

This chapter is organized from the simplest, most effective strategies to more advanced marketing approaches. Start with Strategy 1 and work your way through as you're ready to expand.

Strategy 1: Start With Your Current Clients (Easiest)

Your fastest path to TherapyCraft success starts with families you're already serving. Look at your caseload and identify kids who:

- Love Minecraft (obviously)

- Struggle with traditional talk therapy
- Have mentioned gaming as an interest
- Need a fresh approach to re-engage

Simply mention: "I'm now offering therapy sessions inside Minecraft. Would this be something [child's name] might be interested in?"

Watch their faces light up. These parents have been trying to limit screen time, and here you are offering to make it therapeutic. The relief is palpable.

Strategy 2: Local Facebook Groups (Most Effective)

Local parenting Facebook groups are where desperate parents seek therapist recommendations daily. When someone posts looking for help with their anxious kid, resistant teen, or struggling tween, that's your moment.

Sample Facebook Response

"Hi [First name] 🙌 I'd love to chat with you about whether I might be a good fit for your child. I specialize in therapy that happens inside Minecraft: we actually play together while doing the therapeutic work. It's been incredibly effective for kids who are resistant to traditional therapy or who just connect better through gaming.

I have a few consultation spots open this week if you'd like to learn more: [your booking link]

Happy to answer any questions here too!"

Pro tip: One response like this typically generates 3-5 consultation requests - not just from the original poster, but from others reading the thread. Parents DM each other: "Did you see that therapist who does Minecraft?!"

Strategy 3: Word of Mouth Marketing (Highly Effective)

TherapyCraft is the ultimate conversation starter. Every therapist dreads the "what kind of therapy do you do?" question at parties. Now you have the perfect answer:

"I'm a child therapist, and I actually conduct sessions inside Minecraft."

Watch people lean in. They want to know more. They have a nephew who might need this. Their friend's kid is obsessed with Minecraft.

Places to casually mention TherapyCraft:

- At book club or wine night
- While at the doctor's office
- Kids' sports events (carefully, respecting boundaries)
- Networking events
- Coffee shop conversations
- On the ski lift or hiking trail
- Anywhere parents gather and chat

You're not selling - you're sharing something exciting that helps kids. The enthusiasm is genuine and contagious.

Strategy 4: Physical Flyers (Moderate Effort)

Create an eye-catching one-page flyer (template included in Appendix) and post at locations where parents of gaming kids spend time:

- Coffee shops near schools
- Library bulletin boards
- Community centers
- Pediatrician offices (with permission)
- Toy stores that sell Minecraft merchandise

- Game stores
- After-school program locations

Strategy 5: School Outreach (High Value)

School counselors are goldmines for referrals because they know exactly which kids struggle with traditional approaches.

Step-by-step approach:

1. **Create a one-page info sheet** (template included in Appendix)
2. **Research local schools** - elementary, middle, and high schools in your area
3. **Find counselor contact information** on school websites
4. **Email during school hours** (not weekends or breaks)
5. **Follow up with a brief phone call** if no response in a week
6. **Offer to present at staff meetings** once you've established relationships

Also contact:

- Special education coordinators
- Gifted program coordinators
- School psychologists
- 504/IEP coordinators

Sample Email to School Counselors

Subject: New therapy resource for Minecraft-loving students

Dear [Counselor Name],

I hope this email finds you well. I'm [Your Name], a licensed therapist in [your area] writing to introduce a specialized service that might benefit some of your students.

I offer therapy sessions conducted inside Minecraft for kids and teens who love the game. This approach has been remarkably effective for students who:

- Resist traditional counseling approaches
- Have ADHD, autism, or anxiety
- Are struggling with social skills or emotional regulation
- Love gaming but struggle to connect in other settings

Rather than fighting their interest in Minecraft, we use it therapeutically. Students work on real issues like anxiety management, friendship skills, coping with change, or grief processing while playing together in a safe virtual environment.

I've attached a one-page information sheet you can share with families who might be interested. I'm currently accepting new clients ages 7-18 and work with [insurance information OR private pay rates].

If you'd like to learn more about this approach or discuss how it might help specific students (without sharing confidential information, of course), I'd welcome a brief conversation.

Thank you for the crucial support you provide to students and families. I'd love to be an additional resource for you.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

[Your Credentials]

[Phone] | [Email] | [Website]

[Address if relevant for insurance]

P.S. I also offer consultation calls with parents to determine if this approach might be a good fit before scheduling sessions.

Strategy 6: Healthcare Provider Partnerships (High Value, Requires Time Investment)

One pediatrician office manager who believes in your service can keep your practice full indefinitely. This strategy requires relationship building but has the highest long-term payoff.

Step-by-step approach:

1. **Research local pediatric practices** - start with larger practices that see high volumes
2. **Call and ask to speak with the office manager**
3. **Request a brief 10-minute meeting** to introduce an innovative therapy option
4. **Bring professional materials:** your info sheet, business card, small flyers
5. **Offer to be available for questions** and provide consultation calls
6. **Follow up every few months** with updates or relevant information

Also target:

- Developmental pediatricians (often work with ADHD/autism families)
- Child psychiatrists (see therapy-resistant kids)
- Occupational therapists who work with kids
- Speech therapists (many kids have multiple services)
- Physical therapy practices with pediatric departments

Email Template for Healthcare Providers

Subject: Innovative therapy option for your Minecraft-loving patients

Dear [Name],

I wanted to reach out about a specialized service I offer that might benefit some of your young patients - therapy conducted inside Minecraft.

For kids who:

- Resist traditional therapy approaches
- Have autism, ADHD, or anxiety
- Love gaming and struggle to engage elsewhere
- Need a creative outlet for processing emotions

This approach has been remarkably effective. Kids who previously refused therapy are now asking for extra sessions.

I'm currently accepting new clients ages 7-18 and work with [insurance types OR private pay]. I'd love to be a resource for families who might benefit from this innovative approach.

Would you be interested in learning more? I'd be happy to:

- Send additional information for your files
- Meet briefly to discuss how this works
- Provide flyers for interested families

Thank you for the important work you do with children and families.

Warm regards,

[Your name]

[Credentials]

[Contact information]

Strategy 7: Social Media Marketing (Moderate Effort)

Use these proven post templates to build awareness on your existing social media accounts:

Instagram Post

"That moment when your client says 'I built this to show how my anxiety feels' 🎮✨

Minecraft therapy isn't just playing games - it's meeting kids where they are, speaking their language, and watching them open up in ways traditional therapy never could.

Now accepting new clients ages 8-17 who love Minecraft and could use support with anxiety, ADHD, autism, grief, or just navigating life's challenges.

#MinecraftTherapy #ChildTherapist #TeenTherapy #ADHDSupport #AnxietyHelp
#TherapyThatWorks #GamingForGood #[YourCity]Therapist"

LinkedIn Post

"Excited to share that I'm now offering therapy sessions conducted inside Minecraft for children and teens.

After extensive training and seeing remarkable results, I'm convinced that meeting young clients in digital spaces they love removes barriers to therapeutic engagement.

Recent outcomes include:

- Anxious clients practicing coping skills through gameplay challenges
- ADHD clients improving executive function through building projects
- Grief processing through memorial builds
- Social skills development through collaborative play

If you know a young person who might benefit from this innovative approach, I'd welcome the referral. Happy to connect with other professionals interested in learning more."

Facebook Page Post

"Parents: Is your child obsessed with Minecraft? 🎮

What if their favorite game could become a powerful therapeutic tool?

I offer therapy sessions inside Minecraft where kids can:

- Express feelings through building
- Practice coping skills through gameplay
- Process difficult experiences in a safe, creative space
- Connect with a therapist who 'gets' their world

Perfect for kids who:

- Are resistant to traditional therapy

- Have anxiety, ADHD, or autism
- Are processing grief or life changes
- Just need someone to talk to while they play

Now accepting new clients ages 8-17. Virtual sessions available statewide. [Insurance accepted OR Private pay rates available]

Comment 'INFO' below or DM me to learn more!"

Strategy 8: Community Partnerships (Time-Intensive but Valuable)

Build relationships with organizations that serve your target families. This requires ongoing relationship building but creates steady referral streams.

Gaming and Hobby Communities

How to approach: Visit locations, introduce yourself to managers, offer to leave flyers, volunteer for events.

- **Local game stores:** Leave flyers, offer to speak at family game nights
- **Comic book shops:** Often host gaming events and have bulletin boards
- **Libraries with gaming programs:** Partner with teen services librarians
- **Board game cafes:** Reach gaming families in a relaxed setting

Parent Support Networks

How to find: Search Facebook for "[your city] ADHD support" or "[your city] autism families." Contact group moderators.

- **ADHD support groups:** Parents desperately seeking engagement strategies
- **Autism family groups:** Looking for social skills interventions
- **Anxiety parent groups:** Kids who struggle with traditional therapy

- **Homeschool communities:** Often embrace innovative approaches
- **Special needs parent networks:** Always searching for what works

Educational Partnerships

How to connect: Call program directors, attend open houses, offer to present about innovative approaches.

- **STEM programs:** Minecraft is often used in education
- **After-school programs:** Directors know which kids love gaming
- **Summer camps:** Gaming camps and tech camps
- **Tutoring centers:** Work with kids who might need additional support

Strategy 9: Seasonal Marketing (Strategic Timing)

TherapyCraft demand follows predictable patterns throughout the year. Rather than marketing constantly at the same intensity, amplify your efforts during these high-demand periods when parents are actively seeking help. Use the messaging and timing strategies below to enhance whichever marketing approaches you've already implemented from Strategies 1-8.

Back-to-School Surge (August-September)

- School anxiety peaks create high demand
- Kids are transitioning, parents seeking support
- Market heavily in Facebook parent groups
- Reach out to school counselors before school starts

Winter Stress (November-February)

- Holiday stress affects many families
- Seasonal depression impacts kids and teens
- Indoor activities become more appealing
- New Year motivation for getting help

Spring Planning (March-May)

- Parents planning summer support
- End-of-school-year transitions
- Graduation and change anxiety
- Camp and activity planning season

Summer Availability (June-August)

- More flexible scheduling options
- Parents seeking structured activities
- Back-to-school preparation anxiety
- Family disruption from schedule changes

Strategy 10: Reviews and Testimonials (Variable Effort)

For Licensed Therapists: Be extremely cautious with reviews due to HIPAA requirements. Even positive reviews can create privacy concerns. Consult your licensing board and legal counsel before actively soliciting reviews.

For Coaches and Non-Licensed Practitioners: Reviews and testimonials can be powerful marketing tools. Consider:

- Google My Business optimization with "Minecraft coaching" keywords
- Requesting reviews from satisfied parents (with their permission)
- Using success stories in marketing materials
- Before/after engagement stories ("My kid used to resist our coaching sessions, now asks when the next one is")

Strategy 11: Online Communities (Advanced - Requires Patience)

These platforms require relationship-building before any promotional benefit. Only pursue if you enjoy online community participation.

Reddit Communities - How to Actually Use Them

Step-by-step approach:

1. **Join relevant subreddits:** r/Parenting (8M+ members), r/ADHD_partners, r/autism_parenting, r/Minecraft (7M+ members), your local city subreddit, r/specialneedschildren
2. **Spend 2-3 weeks just reading and upvoting** - get familiar with community culture and rules
3. **Start answering questions helpfully** - never mention your services initially
4. **Build reputation by being genuinely helpful** - answer parenting questions, share insights about child development
5. **After several weeks of helpful participation**, when someone asks for therapist recommendations for gaming-obsessed kids, you can mention your approach
6. **Always follow community rules** - some prohibit any self-promotion

Sample helpful comment: "Have you tried connecting with them through their interests? Sometimes kids open up more when they're engaged in something they love rather than traditional talking."

Discord Communities - How to Join and Participate

Step-by-step approach:

1. **Search for Discord servers:** Use Google to find "autism parent Discord" or "ADHD family Discord server"
2. **Join with appropriate username** - use your first name or professional name, not a business name
3. **Read server rules carefully** - many have strict no-promotion policies
4. **Introduce yourself genuinely** - "Hi, I'm a therapist and parent of a teen with ADHD"
5. **Participate authentically** - offer support, answer questions, share experiences
6. **Build relationships over time** - Discord is about community, not promotion
7. **Only mention your services when directly relevant** to someone's specific need

Reality check: Discord requires significant time investment with uncertain return. Only pursue if you genuinely enjoy online community participation.

Strategy 12: Media Outreach (Advanced - High Impact if Successful)

TherapyCraft is inherently newsworthy, but media outreach requires specific steps:

How to Contact Local News - Step by Step

Finding the right contact:

1. **Visit your local news station websites** (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX affiliates)
2. **Look for "News Tips" or "Story Ideas" submission forms** - most stations have these
3. **Find health/family reporters** - look for reporters who cover health, family, or human interest stories

4. **Check their social media** to see what types of stories they cover
5. **Get their email** from the station directory or contact page

When to pitch:

- **Back-to-school season** (August-September)
- **Mental Health Awareness Month** (May)
- **When screen time is in the news**
- **Slow news days** (avoid major news events)

What makes it newsworthy:

- It challenges assumptions about screen time
- Kids who "hate therapy" now ask for extra sessions
- Local innovation helping families
- Timely connection to ongoing screen time debates

Content and Speaking

- **Parent magazine articles:** "When Minecraft Becomes Therapy"
- **Podcast appearances:** Parenting podcasts, gaming podcasts, mental health shows
- **Conference presentations:** Gaming conferences, mental health conferences
- **Webinar hosting:** "Introduction to Gaming Therapy for Parents"
- **Blog guest posts:** Parenting blogs, mental health sites

Professional Speaking

- School district professional development
- Pediatrician continuing education events
- Mental health professional conferences
- Parent education workshops

Sample Media Pitch Email

Subject: Local Story: Therapist Uses Minecraft to Reach Kids Who "Hate Therapy"

Hi [Reporter Name],

What if the screen time parents worry about could actually heal their kids?

I'm [Your Name], a licensed therapist in [Location] who conducts therapy sessions inside Minecraft. While parents typically fight to limit gaming time, I'm using it therapeutically with remarkable results.

Kids who previously refused therapy are now asking for extra sessions. Parents report breakthroughs they never saw in traditional therapy.

This could be an interesting human interest story, especially given ongoing debates about screen time and kids' mental health.

I'd be happy to discuss how this works and potentially connect you with families willing to share their experiences (with appropriate privacy protections).

Best regards,

[Your contact information]

Website Copy Templates

Update your website to attract TherapyCraft clients with these proven copy templates:

Homepage Banner

Minecraft Therapy for Kids & Teens

Where gaming meets healing. Engage your resistant child in therapy through the world they love most.

Service Page Description

Minecraft-Based Therapy

Your child spends hours in Minecraft, building elaborate worlds and going on adventures. What if those hours could also be therapeutic?

I conduct real therapy sessions inside Minecraft, where your child and I play together while addressing:

- Anxiety and worry
- ADHD and executive function
- Autism and social skills
- Depression and isolation
- Grief and loss
- Trauma and adjustment
- School and peer issues

How It Works:

We meet virtually, with your child playing Minecraft while we talk via secure video. Through building, exploring, and surviving together, therapeutic breakthroughs happen naturally. Kids who refuse traditional therapy often can't wait for their Minecraft sessions.

Is This Right for Your Child?

This approach works best for:

- Ages 7-18 who already love Minecraft
- Kids resistant to traditional therapy

- Neurodivergent children (ADHD, autism)
- Anxious or depressed teens
- Children processing difficult life events

[\[Book a Free Consultation\]](#) [\[Learn More\]](#)

Psychology Today Profile Updates

Optimize your Psychology Today profile to attract TherapyCraft referrals:

Specialty Snippet

"I offer Minecraft-based therapy for children and teens who connect better through gaming than traditional talk therapy. Sessions occur inside Minecraft where therapeutic work happens naturally through play."

Detailed Description Addition

"For young clients who love Minecraft, I offer specialized therapy sessions conducted entirely within the game. This innovative approach helps resistant kids engage in therapy, express themselves creatively, and develop coping skills through gameplay. Particularly effective for anxiety, ADHD, autism, and kids who 'hate therapy.' Parents consistently report their children actually look forward to sessions and open up in ways they never have before."

Tracking What Works

Keep simple metrics:

- Where each referral came from
- Which Facebook groups generate consultations
- Which referral partners send clients
- What language resonates with parents
- What pricing converts best for your market

Double down on what's working. If one pediatrician sends you five clients, nurture that relationship. If one Facebook group drives consultations, become a helpful presence there.

The Reality Check

You might find yourself with a waitlist within three months. TherapyCraft fills a desperate need in the market. Parents have been searching for exactly this: they just didn't know it existed.

The challenge isn't finding clients - it's managing the demand. Be prepared to:

- Create a waitlist system
- Raise your rates as demand increases
- Possibly hire or train other therapists
- Set boundaries on your caseload

Remember: *You're not selling parents on a weird idea. You're offering a solution to the problem they've been struggling with: how to get their Minecraft-obsessed kid to engage in therapy. The relief and excitement in their voice when they say "Wait, you do therapy IN Minecraft?!" tells you everything you need to know about the demand for this service.*

Chapter 8: Troubleshooting and Growing Your Confidence

You already know how to help kids and teens. You've likely navigated meltdowns, resistance, and those moments when everything falls apart in session. You know how to follow a child's lead while maintaining therapeutic boundaries. You understand that sometimes the most healing happens in the unexpected moments.

TherapyCraft doesn't change any of that. You're still the same skilled therapist; you're just meeting your clients in a different room. A room that happens to be made of blocks.

This chapter addresses the unique situations you'll encounter in Minecraft and how to handle them with the same clinical wisdom you already possess. Most importantly, it helps you trust that your existing therapeutic instincts will guide you through whatever comes up.

When the Technology Fights Back

Let's be honest: the technology will fail you at the worst possible moments. Your client will be mid-breakthrough about their parents' divorce, and the internet connection will drop. They'll accidentally break the memorial they built for their deceased pet, and you'll watch their face crumble on video.

Here's what I've learned: these moments aren't interruptions to therapy; they ARE the therapy. Your client just experienced loss, frustration, or helplessness in real time. How you handle it together becomes part of their healing.

When connectivity issues strike mid-session, acknowledge the parallel: "Sometimes when we're talking about hard things, everything else seems to fall apart too. That's actually pretty normal." Keep talking while you wait for things to reconnect. The shared frustration often deepens the therapeutic alliance.

When they accidentally break something important they built, resist the urge to immediately problem-solve. Sit with their disappointment first. "I can see you're really upset about breaking that build. That feeling makes total sense; you put work into creating something meaningful." This is grief work in miniature, and it's incredibly valuable.

When their device starts lagging badly, use it therapeutically: "I notice everything is moving really slowly right now. Sometimes life can feel like that too, when everything feels harder than it should be. What does that remind you of?"

The key is normalizing these experiences rather than treating them as obstacles. Technology fails. Things get broken. Sometimes we have to start over. These are life lessons disguised as gaming problems.

The Destruction Phase (And Why It's Actually Good)

Your client might want to destroy everything. They'll blow up the beautiful house you built together, tear down walls, or start fires everywhere. Your first instinct might be to stop them or redirect to "appropriate" behavior.

Don't.

Destruction in Minecraft often represents something important. Maybe they're testing whether you'll still accept them when they're not being "good." Maybe they're expressing anger they can't verbalize. Maybe they're feeling overwhelmed by too many options and need to clear the slate.

I remember one 12-year-old who spent an entire session methodically destroying a village. As he worked, he talked about how angry he was that his parents were getting divorced. "Everything's getting wrecked anyway," he said, placing another block of TNT. We didn't stop the destruction; we explored what it felt like to have control over something breaking for once.

The beautiful thing about Minecraft is that destruction doesn't ruin your world. Even if they destroy an entire village, you can travel to a new area far away and your game remains unaffected. Later, you might revisit that destroyed area together and process what was happening emotionally when they needed to tear everything down.

Set gentle boundaries when needed: "You can destroy your own builds, but let's talk before we destroy things we've worked on together." But mostly, follow their lead. Ask what the destruction

represents. Sometimes we need to tear things down before we can build something new.

The Explorer Phase

After clients get comfortable with basic building, many want to venture off on their own. They'll disappear from your shared building area to explore caves, fight monsters, or search for rare materials. This can make it harder to maintain therapeutic connection because you can't see what they're working on or what's capturing their attention.

They may focus on just playing rather than playing with you. This requires some gentle redirection: "I notice you've been exploring for a while. What's it like out there? What are you finding?" or "Want to show me what you discovered? I'd love to see it."

The exploration itself isn't problematic. Sometimes clients need space to process independently, and their choice of where to go and what to explore can be therapeutically meaningful. The key is staying connected to their experience rather than losing them to solo gameplay.

Rage Quitting

Rage quitting is a well-known phenomenon in gaming, and it will happen in your sessions. Your client will die unexpectedly, lose valuable items, or encounter a frustrating setback, and their reaction will be intense. They'll throw controllers, slam laptops shut, or declare they're "never playing this stupid game again."

What makes this particularly devastating in Minecraft is that when they die far from their spawn point, they lose everything in their inventory. Items they spent sessions collecting, tools they were proud of, treasures they found. And they might never find that spot again to retrieve their stuff.

If you're not prepared for it, their reaction might catch you off guard. But think about what just happened: they took a risk, faced consequences, and experienced real loss. They're feeling the full spectrum of emotions that come with setback and failure. This is incredibly rich therapeutic material.

Stay calm and curious. "Wow, that was a big reaction. Tell me about what just happened for you." Help them process not just the loss of items, but what it felt like to fail, to feel angry about it, and to want to give up.

Some clients will want to immediately search for their lost items. Others will want to quit for the day. Both are valid responses to disappointment, and both tell you something about how they handle setbacks in real life.

Creative Mode Overwhelm

Creative mode gives players access to every block, item, and tool in the game instantly. For some clients, especially those with ADHD or anxiety, this can be paralyzing. They'll open their inventory, stare at hundreds of options, and shut down completely. "I don't know what to build," becomes "I can't build anything."

This overwhelm mirrors what many kids experience in real life when faced with too many choices or too much freedom. Use it therapeutically: "I notice you seem stuck with all these options. Where else in your life do you feel that same way?"

Practical solutions include starting with just a few blocks, building together so they don't feel alone with the choices, or setting specific challenges like "build something using only red blocks." The goal isn't to eliminate the overwhelm but to help them develop strategies for managing it.

The Comparison Trap

Your clients have seen Minecraft YouTube videos. They've watched people build massive castles, pixel art masterpieces, and elaborate redstone contraptions. When their simple house doesn't look like a tutorial they watched, they can become devastated.

"This looks terrible," they'll say about a perfectly lovely build. "I'm bad at this." Sound familiar? This is the same perfectionism and comparison thinking that shows up everywhere else in their lives.

Normalize their feelings while challenging the comparison: "It sounds really discouraging when your build doesn't match what you had in your mind. Those YouTube builders have been playing for years and often work on one build for weeks. What if we focused on what YOU like about your creation?"

Sometimes the most therapeutic thing you can do is build something deliberately imperfect yourself. "You know what? I think my house looks a little wonky, and I kind of like it that way."

When They Want to Teach You Everything

Many clients will become excited to show you every feature, explain every game mechanic, and teach you advanced techniques. Your first thought might be that you're getting off track therapeutically.

You're not. Teaching IS therapy for many kids. It's role reversal where they get to be the expert. It's confidence building. It's connection through shared interests. It's them feeling valued for their knowledge.

Let them teach you, and stay curious about what they choose to share. The kid who spends twenty minutes explaining redstone circuits might be showing you how they think about complex problems. The client who teaches you about different biomes might be expressing their love of exploration and discovery.

Balance is key. Some teaching time is therapeutic. Extended periods might mean they're avoiding emotional content. Trust your clinical judgment about when to follow their lead and when to gently redirect.

Hyperfocus and Time Management

Minecraft can be absorbing. Some clients, especially those with ADHD or autism, may become so engrossed in building that they lose track of time, don't respond when you speak to them, or resist transitioning to discussion.

This hyperfocus isn't necessarily problematic. For many neurodivergent clients, it's a state of flow that feels good and calm. The key is working with it rather than against it.

Give time warnings: "We have about ten more minutes of building time, then we'll talk about how this session felt." Use their building as a bridge to conversation: "I notice you've been really focused on getting this wall just right. What's it like when you're in that zone?"

Sometimes the most therapeutic thing is simply providing a space where they can experience sustained focus without interruption. That in itself can be healing.

Version Compatibility Chaos

Minecraft exists on multiple platforms (phone, computer, console), and sometimes versions don't match up perfectly. You might not be able to join their world, or features might work differently on different devices.

When technical compatibility becomes a barrier, acknowledge the frustration while problem-solving together: "This is really annoying that we can't connect. What should we try next?" Often, the process of collaboratively troubleshooting becomes therapeutic in itself.

Keep backup plans ready: they can share their screen to show you their builds, you can each work in your own worlds while talking, or you can transition to a traditional session while sorting out technical issues.

When Your Clinical Instincts Take Over

The beautiful thing about TherapyCraft is that your existing skills translate perfectly. That child who's building walls around everything they create? You recognize defensive behavior when you see it. The teen who keeps starting elaborate projects but never finishing them? You know avoidance patterns. The kid who insists on building underground bunkers? You understand their need for safety.

Trust your instincts. When you notice a pattern in their building, explore it the same way you would in traditional therapy. When they get frustrated and want to quit, use the same de-escalation techniques you always use. When they have a breakthrough moment while placing blocks, sit with that insight just like you would in your office.

The medium is different, but the work is the same. You're helping them understand themselves, develop coping skills, and practice new ways of being in relationship. The blocks are just tools, like art supplies or play therapy toys.

Age-Specific Considerations

Your approach will naturally adapt based on your client's developmental stage, just like it does in traditional therapy. Younger kids might need shorter building sessions with more structure. They'll create simpler representations but express complex feelings through basic shapes and colors. A sad house might be gray and small. An angry tower might be tall and red.

Tweens and young teens often use Minecraft to explore identity and social dynamics. They'll build representations of their ideal selves or create spaces that reflect their inner world. Pay attention to what they choose to build and how they want to share (or not share) their creations.

Older teens might create more sophisticated metaphors or use building as a way to process future planning. They're naturally thinking about independence, relationships, and their place in the world. Their builds often reflect these developmental tasks.

The key is following their lead while staying attuned to what's developmentally appropriate, just like you always do.

When Minecraft Isn't the Answer

Sometimes it doesn't work. Despite everyone's enthusiasm, some clients just don't connect with the medium. Maybe they become more agitated rather than more engaged. Maybe they hyperfocus on game mechanics and can't access therapeutic content. Maybe the technology consistently creates more barriers than bridges.

This isn't a failure; it's good clinical assessment. You tried an innovative approach, gathered data about what works for this client, and made a clinical decision to try something else. That's exactly what skilled therapists do.

The transition away from Minecraft can be therapeutic too. "I've been noticing that Minecraft doesn't seem to be the best fit for our work together right now. That's totally okay; different approaches work for different people. What are you thinking about that?" Often, clients will tell you what they need instead.

Building Your Confidence One Session at a Time

Your confidence will build naturally as you gain experience, just like it did when you first started doing therapy. In your early sessions, you'll feel like you're fumbling with controls while trying to stay therapeutically present. That's completely normal.

Remember that your clients aren't expecting you to be a Minecraft expert. They want you to be curious about their world and present with them in it. Some of my most powerful therapeutic

moments have happened while I was completely lost in the game, asking my client to teach me how something worked.

By your tenth session, the technical aspects will fade into the background, and you'll trust your therapeutic instincts more. By your twentieth session, you'll have developed your own style of Minecraft therapy. And somewhere along the way, you'll have that moment where you realize: "I'm actually really good at this."

Trust What You Already Know

The most important thing to remember is that you already have everything you need to succeed at TherapyCraft. You know how to build rapport with resistant teens. You know how to follow a child's emotional lead. You know how to hold space for big feelings and help clients develop insight.

Those skills don't disappear just because you're working in a virtual world. If anything, Minecraft amplifies your existing therapeutic abilities by giving you access to clients who might never open up in a traditional office setting.

Yes, you'll encounter technical problems. Yes, things will go differently than planned. Yes, you'll have moments of doubt where you wonder if you're really doing therapy or just playing games.

But every time you help a client process their anger through destroying blocks, or watch them build a representation of their healing journey, or see them practice problem-solving through collaborative building, you'll remember: this is absolutely therapy. It's just therapy that happens to take place in the most engaging, creative, and accessible medium many of these kids have ever encountered.

Trust your instincts. Follow their lead. Stay curious. And remember that your willingness to meet clients in their world, literally, is already transformative.

The bottom line: *You're not learning to be a different kind of therapist. You're learning to be the same skilled therapist you already are, just in a new location. And that location happens to be exactly where your clients feel most comfortable, creative, and ready to do the work of healing.*

Appendices: Templates & Resources

This section contains all the templates, forms, and communication tools referenced throughout the guide in clean, copy-ready formats. Each template includes [bracketed sections] for you to customize based on your practice, state requirements, and personal style.

Legal Disclaimer

These templates are provided for educational purposes and should be reviewed by your own legal counsel, supervisor, or professional advisor before use. Customize them to meet your specific licensing requirements, state regulations, and practice standards.

Appendix A: Legal & Ethical Templates

A1. Supervisor Approval Letter

[Date]

[Supervisor/Practice Owner/Clinical Director Name]

I'm writing to request approval to implement Minecraft-based therapy interventions with appropriate clients in my caseload. I want to ensure you understand the clinical rationale, professional framework, and risk management protocols behind this approach.

Clinical Foundation

This intervention is grounded in established play therapy and expressive therapy principles, using technology as a therapeutic medium for engagement. Research supports the use of parallel activities and creative expression to reduce client resistance and increase therapeutic communication, particularly with children, adolescents, and young adults who struggle with traditional talk therapy modalities.

The approach aligns with our existing therapeutic frameworks while addressing a specific gap: reaching clients who are disengaged, resistant, or unable to effectively communicate through traditional verbal processing alone.

Professional Implementation Standards

- All sessions maintain traditional therapeutic structure, boundaries, and clinical documentation requirements
- Treatment planning, progress notes, and goal-setting remain unchanged and follow our current standards
- This intervention requires specialized training and technical setup (which I am completing through a comprehensive professional training program)
- Appropriate informed consent will be obtained from all clients and/or legal guardians, including clear explanation of the intervention approach and technical requirements
- Sessions will be conducted according to our practice's existing telehealth or in-office protocols
- This modality will be used selectively with clients who would benefit from this approach, not as a replacement for all traditional therapy

Risk Management and Compliance

- HIPAA compliance protocols are included in the training, with clear guidelines for using Minecraft (a non-HIPAA platform) alongside secure, HIPAA-compliant video and documentation systems
- Privacy settings and account management procedures follow professional standards and ensure client confidentiality
- Client safety measures are built into the technical setup, including age-appropriate content restrictions and secure connection protocols

- Professional liability considerations have been comprehensively addressed in the training materials
- All client interactions occur within the therapeutic relationship and session time; no independent client-therapist gaming contact occurs outside scheduled appointments
- Technical troubleshooting and support resources are provided to prevent session disruptions

Target Population and Clinical Indications

This intervention is particularly effective with clients who experience:

- Resistance to traditional talk therapy or verbal processing difficulties
- Social anxiety that makes direct eye contact and face-to-face conversation challenging
- ADHD, autism spectrum differences, or other neurodevelopmental profiles where parallel activities enhance focus and communication
- Depression, anxiety, or trauma-related symptoms that benefit from safe, controlled creative expression
- Low self-esteem or learned helplessness who benefit from competency-building and role reversal opportunities
- Family conflict where shared activities and collaborative problem-solving can rebuild connection

Expected Benefits to Our Practice

- Enhanced engagement with historically difficult-to-reach client populations
- Differentiation in the marketplace (families actively seek out gaming-informed therapists)
- Reduced client dropout rates and increased session attendance for resistant clients
- Stronger therapeutic alliance with digital-native children and adolescents
- Additional revenue stream with potential for premium session rates due to specialized training
- Increased family involvement and parent engagement in the therapeutic process

Training and Ongoing Support

I am completing (or have completed) comprehensive training in TherapyCraft implementation that includes technical setup, clinical applications, ethical considerations, session planning frameworks, and ongoing consultation resources. This is not an experimental approach—it's a structured, systematic methodology with clear protocols and professional support.

Next Steps

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further and answer any questions you may have. I can provide additional information about the training program, demonstrate the technical setup, or connect you with other licensed clinicians who have successfully implemented this approach in similar practice settings.

I believe this approach will significantly enhance our practice's ability to engage difficult-to-reach clients while maintaining our high clinical and ethical standards. I'm committed to implementing this intervention thoughtfully, professionally, and in alignment with our practice values.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to discussing this with you.

[Your Name and Credentials]

A2. Minecraft Therapy Consent Clause

Add this section to your existing therapy consent forms:

Gaming-Assisted Therapy Using Minecraft

[Therapist Name] may use Minecraft as a therapeutic tool during sessions with clients who would benefit from this approach. This intervention is grounded in play therapy and expressive therapy principles.

Platform Information:

- Minecraft is a commercial gaming platform owned by Microsoft, not a healthcare system

- The platform is not HIPAA-compliant but is used only for therapeutic activities, not private health discussions
- All therapeutic conversations occur through secure, HIPAA-compliant video platforms
- Clinical notes and treatment information are stored in secure healthcare systems only

How It Works:

- Sessions occur via secure video conferencing while simultaneously playing in a private Minecraft world
- Worlds are private and accessible only during scheduled session times
- No other clients have access to your child's Minecraft world
- Parents/guardians must provide consent and technical setup (purchasing Minecraft, creating account)

Privacy Protections:

- Neutral usernames are used that do not identify the therapist or client
- Access to worlds is controlled and limited to scheduled appointment times
- No personal health information is stored within Minecraft
- All therapeutic conversations occur on HIPAA-compliant platforms

Consent:

- ☐ I consent to the use of Minecraft as a therapeutic tool during sessions
- ☐ I understand the platform limitations and privacy protocols
- ☐ I agree to provide necessary technical setup and supervision

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

A3. Parent Technology Setup Addendum

Include this technical information sheet for parents:

What You Need:

- Minecraft Bedrock Edition (available on Windows 10/11 PC, Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo Switch, iPad, iPhone, Android tablets/phones)
- A Microsoft account for your child
- For console players: Active online subscription (Xbox Live Gold, PlayStation Plus, or Nintendo Switch Online)
- Reliable internet connection
- Headphones for privacy during video calls

Setup Steps:

1. Purchase Minecraft Bedrock Edition (\$29.99 one-time purchase) on your child's device
2. Create or link a Microsoft account
3. Provide your child's Minecraft username to the therapist
4. Accept the friend request from the therapist's Minecraft account
5. Test the setup before the first session

Session Requirements:

- Join the video call on a separate device (phone, tablet, or computer)
- Open Minecraft on the gaming device
- Provide a quiet, private space for your child
- Ensure headphones are available if others are present

Important Notes:

- Your child will not be able to access the therapy world outside of scheduled session times
- The therapist controls when the world is accessible
- No other clients will have access to your child's world
- Technical support is available if you have setup questions

Cost Breakdown:

- Minecraft Bedrock Edition: \$29.99 (one-time)
- Console online subscription (if applicable): Varies by platform

- No additional fees or in-game purchases required

If you have questions about setup or technical requirements, please contact [Therapist Name] at [Contact Information].

Appendix B: Parent Communication Templates

B1. Initial TherapyCraft Welcome Email

Subject: Getting Started with [Child's Name]'s Minecraft Therapy Sessions

Hi [Parent/Caregiver Name],

I'm so excited to begin working with [Child's Name] in our upcoming Minecraft-based therapy sessions!

We'll be using a private Minecraft world called a Realm, which allows for safe, guided play in a setting that's engaging, creative, and therapeutic. Many kids find Minecraft to be a powerful tool for emotional expression, problem-solving, and connecting in a way that feels natural to them.

Below you'll find everything you need to help [Child's Name] get set up and ready for their first session.

What You Need:

- Minecraft Bedrock Edition (on tablet, console, or Windows 10/11 PC)
- A Microsoft account linked to [Child's Name]'s Minecraft profile (**Please send me the username so I can send them an invite to their Realm**)
- For consoles: an active online subscription (e.g., Xbox Live Gold, PlayStation Plus, or Nintendo Switch Online)
- A quiet, private space where they won't be overheard
- Headphones for voice communication (essential if others are present in the room)

Important: Make sure you purchase Minecraft **Bedrock Edition** (not Java Edition). Bedrock Edition works across all devices and is required for our therapy sessions.

Session Time: Our first session is scheduled for: [Insert Day + Time]

How to Join the Therapy World (Realm)

At [Child's Name]'s scheduled session time:

1. Open Minecraft Bedrock Edition
2. Click Play
3. Go to the Friends tab
4. Scroll to Joinable Realms
5. Look for a Realm invitation from me (my Minecraft username is: [YourUsername])
6. Click to join!

We'll also be on a video call during the session so I can talk with [Child's Name] while we play together.

Privacy and Safety

- [Child's Name] will have a private Realm used only for their sessions. No other clients will be invited to or have access to this world.
- I enable and disable access manually before and after each session for complete privacy.
- Minecraft is used as a creative therapeutic activity, not for storing personal health information.
- I'll be present in the world with [Child's Name] the entire time to guide, support, and reflect with them.

Need Help?

If you have any questions, tech issues, or would like help walking through setup before the first session, I'm happy to help. Please note that you won't be able to access the Realm before our session - it remains closed until session time for privacy and security.

Looking forward to seeing [Child's Name] in session!

[Your Name]

[Your Credentials]

[Contact Information]

B2. Session Reminder Email

Subject: [Child's Name]'s Minecraft Session Today at [Time]

Hi [Parent Name]!

Just a reminder that [Child's Name] has their Minecraft therapy session scheduled today at [Time]!

Please have Minecraft Bedrock Edition ready, ensure you've accepted my friend request, and make sure [child's name] has headphones and a private space about 5 minutes before our session starts. The Realm will only be accessible during our scheduled session time.

Thanks so much!

[Your Name]

B3. Technical Troubleshooting Email

Subject: Minecraft Session Connection Help

Hi [Parent Name],

I noticed there was an issue connecting to the Minecraft Realm today. Here are a few quick troubleshooting tips:

- Confirm [Child's Name]'s device has the latest Minecraft Bedrock Edition update installed
- Make sure they are logged into the correct Microsoft account
- Check that any required online services (Xbox Live, PlayStation Plus, Nintendo Switch Online) are active

- Confirm they have accepted the Realm invitation
- Try restarting the device and relaunching Minecraft

If you're still having trouble, let's schedule a brief tech check-in call before our next session to get everything working smoothly.

Thanks for your patience!

[Your Name]

[Contact Information]

B4. Post-Session Parent Update

Subject: [Child's Name]'s Session Today

Hi [Parent Name],

[Child's Name] and I had a great session today! Here's a brief update:

What we worked on:

[Brief, HIPAA-appropriate description of activities, e.g., "We built a safe space together and practiced problem-solving when facing challenges in the game."]

Progress I noticed:

[Specific observations, e.g., "[Child's name] showed great persistence when encountering obstacles and was able to express frustration verbally rather than shutting down."]

What to encourage at home:

[Optional homework or family suggestions, e.g., "You might ask [child's name] to show you what we built today. They were really proud of their work!"]

Next session: [Date and Time]

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns!

[Your Name]

Appendix C: Marketing & Outreach Templates

C1. School Counselor Outreach Email

Subject: New therapy resource for Minecraft-loving students

Dear [Counselor Name],

I'm [Your Name], a licensed [Your Credential] in [Location], and I wanted to share a resource that might be helpful for some of your students.

I specialize in working with children and teens who struggle with traditional talk therapy by using Minecraft as a therapeutic tool. This approach has been particularly effective with students who:

- Are resistant to traditional counseling
- Have difficulty with verbal expression
- Experience social anxiety
- Are on the autism spectrum or have ADHD
- Simply love Minecraft and would engage better in a familiar environment

This isn't recreational gaming—it's structured therapy that uses Minecraft's creative environment to help kids process emotions, build problem-solving skills, and develop therapeutic insights in a medium where they feel comfortable and competent.

If you have students who might benefit from this approach, I'd be happy to discuss how it works and whether it might be a good fit. I'm currently accepting new clients and can provide more information about my background, approach, and availability.

Feel free to pass my information along to families who might be interested, or reach out if you'd like to learn more.

Thank you for the important work you do supporting students!

[Your Name]

[Your Credentials]

[Phone Number]

[Email Address]

[Website]

C2. Physician/Pediatrician Referral Email

Subject: Innovative therapy option for your Minecraft-loving patients

Dear [Name],

I'm [Your Name], a licensed [Credential] in [Location], and I wanted to introduce a therapeutic approach that might be helpful for some of your pediatric patients.

I specialize in gaming-assisted therapy using Minecraft, which has proven highly effective for children and adolescents who are resistant to traditional talk therapy or who struggle with verbal processing.

This approach is particularly beneficial for patients with:

- Anxiety and depression
- ADHD or autism spectrum differences
- Social skill difficulties
- Emotional regulation challenges
- Therapy resistance or reluctance

Clinical Framework:

- Grounded in play therapy and expressive therapy principles
- Maintains traditional therapeutic structure and documentation
- Uses parallel activities to reduce resistance and increase engagement
- Particularly effective with digital-native children and teens

Sessions are conducted via secure telehealth platforms while clients engage in guided Minecraft activities that address therapeutic goals. The approach combines the engagement of gaming with evidence-based therapeutic interventions.

I'm happy to discuss specific cases, answer questions about the approach, or provide additional information about my background and clinical framework.

Thank you for considering this resource for your patients.

[Your Name]

[Your Credentials]

[Phone Number]

[Email Address]

[Website]

C3. Parent-Facing Marketing Flyer Content

[Large Heading]

Does Your Child Love Minecraft But Hate Therapy?

[Subheading]

What if therapy happened in a world where they already feel confident, creative, and comfortable?

TherapyCraft combines professional therapy with Minecraft to help kids who:

- Say therapy is "boring" or refuse to talk
- Struggle to express their feelings verbally
- Have ADHD, autism, or anxiety
- Would rather play than process emotions (but can do both!)
- Need a therapist who understands their world

This isn't just playing games together.

It's structured, professional therapy that uses Minecraft's creative environment as a tool for emotional expression, problem-solving, and building coping skills.

What parents notice:

- "My son actually ASKS when his next session is!"
- "She talks more in 30 minutes of Minecraft than months of regular therapy"

- "Finally, a therapist who speaks his language"

About [Your Name]:

[Brief bio including credentials, specialties, and personal connection to gaming/Minecraft]

Ready to learn more?

[Phone Number]

[Email]

[Website]

[Insurance accepted / Sliding scale available / Currently accepting new clients]

C4. Social Media Post Template

Template 1: Parent Pain Point

"Does your child love Minecraft but refuse to open up in therapy?"

What if therapy could happen in a world where they already feel confident and creative?

TherapyCraft uses Minecraft as a therapeutic tool to help kids process emotions, build coping skills, and actually WANT to come to therapy.

This isn't recreational gaming—it's structured, professional therapy that meets kids where they are.

Currently accepting new clients. Link in bio to learn more."

Template 2: Success Story (anonymized)

"Last week, a client told me: 'This is the only place I don't feel stupid.'

He was talking about the Minecraft world we built together in therapy.

For months, traditional talk therapy wasn't working. He'd shut down, say 'I don't know,' or ask to leave early.

But in Minecraft? He opens up while building. He processes anger by destroying blocks. He plans ahead and practices problem-solving.

This is why TherapyCraft works: kids feel competent, creative, and in control. And that's when real therapeutic work happens.

[Your practice name] • [Your credentials] • Link in bio"

Template 3: Educational Content

"Why does Minecraft work for therapy?

- 🎮 Parallel play reduces pressure - no uncomfortable eye contact
- 🏗️ Creative expression without words - build feelings instead of explaining them
- 💪 Complete control - in a world where kids often feel powerless
- 🔄 Role reversal - kids become the experts teaching me
- 🇮🇹 Visible progress - see growth in what they build and how they handle challenges

This isn't just playing games. It's using the environment where digital-native kids feel most comfortable to do real therapeutic work.

Currently accepting new clients for TherapyCraft sessions. DM or link in bio to learn more."

C5. Website Copy Templates

Homepage Banner:

Minecraft Therapy for Kids & Teens

Where gaming meets healing. Engage your resistant child in therapy through the world they love most.

Service Page Description:

Minecraft-Based Therapy

Your child spends hours in Minecraft, building elaborate worlds and going on adventures. What if those hours could also be therapeutic?

I conduct real therapy sessions inside Minecraft, where your child and I play together while addressing:

- Anxiety and worry
- ADHD and executive function
- Autism and social skills
- Depression and isolation
- Grief and loss
- Trauma and adjustment
- School and peer issues

How It Works:

We meet virtually, with your child playing Minecraft while we talk via secure video. Through building, exploring, and surviving together, therapeutic breakthroughs happen naturally. Kids who refuse traditional therapy often can't wait for their Minecraft sessions.

Is This Right for Your Child?

This approach works best for:

- Ages 7-18 who already love Minecraft
- Kids resistant to traditional therapy
- Neurodivergent children (ADHD, autism)
- Anxious or depressed teens
- Children processing difficult life events

[\[Book a Free Consultation\]](#) [\[Learn More\]](#)

C6. Psychology Today Profile Snippets

Specialty Snippet:

"I offer Minecraft-based therapy for children and teens who connect better through gaming than traditional talk therapy. Sessions occur inside Minecraft where therapeutic work happens naturally through play."

Detailed Description Addition:

"For young clients who love Minecraft, I offer specialized therapy sessions conducted entirely within the game. This innovative approach helps resistant kids engage in therapy, express themselves creatively, and develop coping skills through gameplay. Particularly effective for anxiety, ADHD, autism, and kids who 'hate therapy.' Parents consistently report their children actually look forward to sessions and open up in ways they never have before."

C7. Media Pitch Email

Subject: Local Story: Therapist Uses Minecraft to Reach Kids Who "Hate Therapy"

Dear [Journalist/Editor Name],

I'm reaching out with a story idea that might interest [Publication Name] readers: how one local therapist is using Minecraft to help children and teens who struggle with traditional therapy.

The Story:

I'm [Your Name], a licensed [Credential] in [Location], and I've developed a therapeutic approach that combines professional mental health treatment with Minecraft. This isn't recreational gaming—it's structured therapy that addresses the growing challenge of engaging digital-native kids who are resistant to traditional talk therapy.

Why This Matters Now:

- Youth mental health crisis continues to grow
- Many kids refuse traditional therapy or don't engage effectively
- Parents are desperate for alternatives that actually work
- Gaming is often vilified, but can be used therapeutically

Unique Angles:

- How I discovered this approach [brief personal story]
- The science behind why parallel activities reduce therapy resistance
- Parent testimonials about dramatic changes in their children's engagement
- The growing trend of gaming-assisted therapy nationwide

Story Potential:

- Interview with me about the clinical approach and framework
- Anonymized success stories and parent quotes
- Expert perspective on gaming's role in child development and therapy
- Visual opportunities (screenshots of therapeutic worlds, demonstration sessions)

I'm happy to discuss this story idea further, provide additional background, or connect you with parents who would be willing to share their experiences (with appropriate consent and anonymity).

Thank you for considering this story. I believe it would resonate strongly with parents, educators, and anyone interested in innovative approaches to youth mental health.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

[Your Credentials]

[Phone Number]

[Email Address]

[Website]

Appendix D: Session Planning Resources

D1. First Session Checklist

Before Session:

- ☐ Consent forms signed and filed
- ☐ Client's Microsoft username received
- ☐ Friend request sent and accepted
- ☐ Realm created and named neutrally
- ☐ World set to Creative mode
- ☐ Test connection from your end
- ☐ Video platform tested and ready

During Session:

- ☐ Start with video-only check-in (10-15 min)
- ☐ Explain how Minecraft therapy works
- ☐ Set expectations and boundaries
- ☐ Open Realm and invite client
- ☐ Do basic orientation and tutorial
- ☐ Let client explore and build freely
- ☐ Practice opening/closing session routine
- ☐ Process experience before ending
- ☐ Close Realm immediately after

After Session:

- ☐ Document session in EHR
- ☐ Note technical issues to address
- ☐ Plan therapeutic direction for next session
- ☐ Send parent update if appropriate

D2. Sample 8-Week Treatment Plan (Anxiety)

Client Goal: Reduce anxiety symptoms and develop coping strategies

Phase 1: Safety and Rapport (Weeks 1-3)

- **Week 1:** Free exploration in Creative mode, build "safe space" together
- **Week 2:** Create comfort items and calming spaces, practice breathing while building
- **Week 3:** Build representations of safe people/places, discuss what safety feels like

Phase 2: Anxiety Externalization (Weeks 4-6)

- **Week 4:** Build anxiety as a creature - what would it look like? Give it a home separate from their base
- **Week 5:** Create "brave bridges" between safe and slightly scary areas
- **Week 6:** Optional introduction to Peaceful mode Survival (no hostile mobs)

Phase 3: Skill Building (Weeks 7-9)

- **Week 7:** Practice "what if" scenarios in-game (what if we get lost? what if resources run out?)
- **Week 8:** Create coping skill "toolkit" building with different rooms for different strategies
- **Week 9:** Review progress, plan for maintaining skills, discuss real-world applications

Progress Markers:

- Client can identify anxiety triggers
- Client uses coping strategies independently in-game
- Client reports trying strategies outside of session
- Client builds with more confidence and less hesitation

D3. Sample 8-Week Treatment Plan (Depression)

Client Goal: Increase engagement, improve mood, develop sense of accomplishment

Phase 1: Activation and Engagement (Weeks 1-3)

- **Week 1:** Simple achievable builds, focus on completion and celebration

- **Week 2:** Create "mood house" with rooms for different feelings
- **Week 3:** Build something client finds genuinely interesting (their choice entirely)

Phase 2: Meaning and Connection (Weeks 4-6)

- **Week 4:** Build representation of important relationships or memories
- **Week 5:** Create collaborative project - something we build together
- **Week 6:** Design "future self" house - what would life look like if feeling better?

Phase 3: Agency and Hope (Weeks 7-9)

- **Week 7:** Set achievable in-game goals and complete them
- **Week 8:** Build "hope path" or "bridge to future" - representing progress
- **Week 9:** Review all builds from previous sessions, discuss changes noticed

Progress Markers:

- Client completes builds rather than abandoning them
- Client shows enthusiasm or pride in creations
- Client initiates ideas rather than waiting for direction
- Client discusses future-oriented plans

D4. Therapeutic Building Prompts by Goal

For Emotional Expression:

- "Build what anger looks like"
- "Create a house that shows how you're feeling today"
- "Design a place where sadness would live"
- "Build your worry and put it somewhere far away"

For Coping Skills:

- "Create a calming space you can visit when stressed"

- "Build a toolkit with different tools for different problems"
- "Design a fortress that represents your strength"
- "Make a path from 'scared' to 'brave'"

For Self-Esteem:

- "Build something you're proud of"
- "Create a museum of your accomplishments"
- "Design your dream house - what does it say about you?"
- "Build a monument to something you're good at"

For Relationships:

- "Build houses for each family member - what do they look like?"
- "Create bridges between people who feel disconnected"
- "Design a collaborative project we work on together"
- "Build your friend group - how close or far apart are they?"

For Trauma Processing:

- "Build a safe place that trauma can't reach"
- "Create 'before' and 'after' spaces"
- "Design a protective structure around vulnerable areas"
- "Build a path from past to present to future"

For Problem-Solving:

- "Build an obstacle course, then figure out how to get through it"
- "Create a maze with a solution"
- "Design a village that needs something - then provide it"
- "Build a broken thing, then fix it"

Appendix E: Quick Reference Guides

E1. Minecraft Basics Cheat Sheet

Essential Controls:

- W, A, S, D (or left joystick) = Move
- Mouse (or right joystick) = Look around
- Spacebar (or A button) = Jump
- E (or Y button) = Open inventory
- Left click (or RT) = Break blocks
- Right click (or LT) = Place blocks
- Shift (or right joystick click) = Sneak

Creative Mode Essentials:

- Double-tap spacebar (or double-tap jump) = Fly
- Hold sneak while flying = Descend
- Infinite blocks in inventory
- Can't die or take damage
- No hunger or health bars

Common Therapeutic Blocks:

- Colored concrete = Emotions (red=anger, blue=sad, etc.)
- Glass = Barriers, transparency, fragility
- Doors = Boundaries, transitions, openings
- Lights = Hope, safety, guidance
- Water = Calming, cleansing, flow
- Chests = Storage, keeping things safe, memories

Session Management Commands:

- /time set day = Make it daytime
- /weather clear = Clear weather

- /tp [player] = Teleport to client
- /gamemode creative = Switch to Creative
- /gamemode survival = Switch to Survival

E2. Session Troubleshooting Quick Guide

Client Can't Find Realm:

- Check friend request accepted
- Verify Realm is turned ON
- Confirm correct Microsoft account
- Have client restart Minecraft
- Check online subscription active (console players)

Client Is Disconnecting:

- Check internet connection stability
- Close other apps using bandwidth
- Move closer to WiFi router
- Switch to wired connection if possible
- Verify Minecraft is updated

Can't See Each Other In-Game:

- Confirm both in same world (not different slot)
- Check if one player is too far away
- Use /tp command to teleport together
- Verify multiplayer settings enabled

Audio Issues:

- Keep voice chat on separate video platform
- Don't rely on Minecraft voice chat

- Verify headphones connected properly
- Check video platform audio settings
- Test audio before opening Realm

Client Accidentally Changed Settings:

- Don't panic - most can be changed back
- Go to Realm Settings → World Settings
- Adjust as needed (except initial cheats setting)
- Save and reload if necessary

E3. HIPAA Compliance Checklist

Account Setup:

- ☐ Neutral Gamertag (no identifying info)
- ☐ Separate therapy-only Microsoft account
- ☐ Strong password and 2-factor authentication
- ☐ No personal information in profile

Realm Management:

- ☐ Neutral Realm names (no client names)
- ☐ Neutral World names (no identifying info)
- ☐ Close Realm immediately after sessions
- ☐ Only invite one client per Realm/world
- ☐ Track which client uses which world

Communication:

- ☐ All therapeutic conversation on HIPAA-compliant video
- ☐ Never discuss PHI in Minecraft chat
- ☐ Use secure messaging for scheduling

- ☐ Email only non-PHI information

Documentation:

- ☐ All notes in HIPAA-compliant EHR
- ☐ No PHI stored in Minecraft
- ☐ Document sessions like any other therapy
- ☐ Include modality in session notes

Client Management:

- ☐ Clients can't see each other's Gamertags
- ☐ No overlap in session times
- ☐ Clear boundaries about outside-session contact
- ☐ Informed consent obtained and filed

Appendix F: Clinical Documentation

F1. Sample Session Note Template

Client: [Name]

Date: [Date]

Session #: [Number]

Modality: Minecraft-Based Therapy (Telehealth)

Duration: [Minutes]

Presenting Concerns This Session:

[What client brought up during check-in, current stressors, mood]

Session Activities:

[Brief description of what was built/done in Minecraft, e.g., "Client continued working on safe space build, added protective walls and calming garden area"]

Therapeutic Interventions:

[What therapeutic techniques were used, e.g., "Used building activity as parallel processing while discussing school anxiety. Reflected on client's choice to build walls and explored metaphor of protection vs. isolation"]

Client Response/Progress:

[How client engaged, insights gained, skills practiced, e.g., "Client was more open during building than in previous talk-only sessions. Identified connection between in-game safety-seeking and real-world avoidance behaviors"]

Clinical Observations:

[Mood, affect, engagement level, any concerns, e.g., "Mood improved throughout session. More animated and engaged than typical. Demonstrated problem-solving when facing building challenges"]

Plan:

[What's next, homework if any, goals for next session, e.g., "Next session will introduce 'brave bridges' activity to address graduated exposure concepts. Encouraged client to notice real-world moments when they choose safety vs. challenge"]

Risk Assessment:

[SI/HI screening if applicable, safety concerns, e.g., "No current SI/HI. Safety stable."]

Next Appointment: [Date and Time]

F2. Progress Note Phrases for Gaming Therapy

Engagement/Rapport:

- "Client demonstrated increased engagement compared to traditional talk therapy"
- "Therapeutic rapport strengthened through collaborative building activity"
- "Client exhibited role reversal, teaching therapist game mechanics, which increased confidence"
- "Parallel activity reduced performance anxiety and facilitated disclosure"

Emotional Expression:

- "Client externalized [emotion] through building representation"
- "Used creative expression to communicate feelings difficult to verbalize"
- "Built metaphorical representation of [internal experience]"
- "Demonstrated emotional regulation while facing in-game challenges"

Skill Development:

- "Practiced problem-solving through [specific in-game challenge]"
- "Demonstrated persistence when encountering obstacles"
- "Applied coping strategies to manage frustration during gameplay"
- "Exhibited planning and goal-setting through multi-session building project"

Insight/Processing:

- "Client recognized parallels between in-game behaviors and real-world patterns"
- "Gained insight into [specific pattern] through discussion of building choices"
- "Processed [event/feeling] while engaging in parallel building activity"
- "Connected in-game metaphors to real-life situations"

Progress Indicators:

- "Demonstrated increased confidence as evidenced by more ambitious building projects"
- "Showed improved distress tolerance when experiencing in-game setbacks"
- "Exhibited greater willingness to take risks in safe environment"
- "Reported applying in-session strategies to real-world situations"