THERAPYCRAFT

TherapyCraft 101: A Complete Beginner's Guide to Minecraft-Based Sessions

For Therapists, Coaches, and Mental Health Professionals

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Meet Your Guide: Ashley Jangro, LPCC & Life Coach

Hi, I'm Ashley, a Licensed Professional Counselor Candidate (LPCC), certified life coach, and longtime educator. I specialize in helping kids, teens, and parents navigate emotional overwhelm, trauma, identity, and relationships using a mix of evidence-based modalities… and yes, sometimes video games.

I created *TherapyCraft* after watching my Minecraft-loving clients light up in session, communicating in ways they never could in a traditional office. Once I saw how powerful it was, I started developing session tools, safety systems, and frameworks for using Minecraft as a legitimate therapeutic space. Now I teach other therapists how to do the same, ethically, confidently, and creatively.

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Welcome to TherapyCraft

Whether you've never picked up a controller in your life or you've spent hours watching your own kids build castles and fight creepers, you're in the right place.

Some of the therapists reading this have **never played Minecraft** and aren't even sure where to start. Others have **played casually**, or maybe have kids or clients who talk about it nonstop but haven't considered how it could be used therapeutically. And a few of you may already be **seasoned gamers**, looking for ways to bridge your clinical skills with a platform you know well.

This guide is for all of you.

Wherever you are on the Minecraft learning curve, you'll walk away with:

- A clear understanding of how to **set up private sessions** using Minecraft Realms
- Guidance on how to keep your work **safe, ethical, and engaging**
- Ideas for creative, meaningful ways to integrate Minecraft into your therapeutic goals
- And the confidence to either begin—or expand—your Minecraft-based work with kids and teens

🧠 Why Minecraft Works in Therapy

Minecraft isn't just a game. It's a **creative sandbox** where kids and teens can express emotion, explore identity, regulate nervous systems, solve problems, and even rebuild trust.

It's non-threatening, familiar, and flexible. And most importantly—it's already deeply meaningful to many of the clients we serve.

Therapists can use Minecraft to:

- **Build therapeutic rapport** by entering the client's world
- **Use metaphor and play** to explore difficult topics safely
- **Promote emotional regulation** through structured, goal-based tasks
- **Co-create** visual representations of feelings, relationships, and memories
- **Practice communication, frustration tolerance, and repair** in real-time

You're not replacing traditional therapy—you're expanding the room you do it in. Minecraft becomes your **digital playroom** or **interactive sandbox**, where growth is visible, collaborative, and often joyful.

💡 But It's Not Just About "Getting It Working"

This guide isn't just going to show you how to launch the game and invite a client. We're going to help you:

- Set up Minecraft in a way that supports **emotional safety**
- Create a world that's **structured, private, and responsive** to your client's needs
- Choose **the right settings, game modes, and tools** to match your clinical goals
- Establish protocols so that each session is **therapeutically sound**—and never just "screen time"

- Avoid ethical pitfalls, tech stress, or safety compromises

You'll be able to confidently say:
✅ *"Yes, I offer Minecraft-based therapy—and I do it in a way that is intentional, trauma-informed, and grounded in best practices."*

Now that you know the "why," let's talk about what version of Minecraft to use—and how to set it up the right way.

🧱 Let's Build Your Setup

Everything you need to confidently, ethically, and smoothly get Minecraft ready for clinical use.

Before we get into the step-by-step setup, let's clear something up:
There are *multiple* versions of Minecraft—and choosing the wrong one can lead to frustration, confusion, and wasted time.

Most therapists don't realize this at first, and it's often the #1 source of tech headaches when trying to get started with Minecraft-based sessions.

So here's the big picture:

Minecraft has **three main versions** you'll run into:

🧱 1. Minecraft Bedrock Edition

- This is the most *versatile* and *cross-platform* version.
- It runs on:
    - Xbox
    - PlayStation
    - Nintendo Switch
    - iPads and tablets
    - Windows 10/11 PCs
- This version is the **only one** compatible with **Minecraft Realms** for consoles.

✅ **This is the version we recommend for therapy.**

🖊️ 2. Minecraft Java Edition

- PC-only (does *not* run on consoles or tablets)
- More customizable, with access to mods and plugins
- Not compatible with Realms for console users
- Requires a separate setup process

Use this only if you and your client both play on PCs and you're tech-comfortable setting up your own secure server (not covered in this guide).

🏫 3. Minecraft Education Edition

- Built for classroom learning
- Requires special school login credentials
- **Not compatible** with Realms or private therapy worlds
- Not suitable for therapeutic use

Avoid this version—it won't work for therapy.

🧠 Why We Use Minecraft Realms (Bedrock Edition)

There are many ways to set up a Minecraft world—you could build your own server, use a local LAN connection, or use mods and plugins.

But for therapy? **Simplicity, safety, and accessibility are everything.**

Minecraft Realms (Bedrock Edition) is the best choice for therapists because:

- 🎮 **It works on consoles, tablets, and PCs**
  (Most kids play on consoles, and Realms is the *only* way they can join a private game without jumping through complicated hoops.)

- 🔐 **It's invite-only**
  You control who has access, when they can join, and what they can do in your world.

- 🌍 **It's always online**
  Your Realm is hosted on Minecraft's secure servers—no need to keep your device on or open. Just toggle access before/after each session.

- 💻 **It doesn't require technical setup**
  No messing with ports, IP addresses, or custom plugins. Just create a Realm and invite your client.

🛑 A Quick Note About Timing

Setting up Minecraft takes more time than you might expect, especially if you're brand new.

You'll need to:

- Create or access a Microsoft account
- Purchase Minecraft Bedrock Edition
- Download the game (which can take a while depending on your internet speed)
- Install it, set up your Realm, and learn how to navigate the basic menus

Please do all of this *well before* your first Minecraft therapy session.
Don't wait until 10 minutes before a client logs in—it will lead to unnecessary stress.

Think of this as setting up a new therapy office. You wouldn't buy a couch, hang a painting, and test the lights all five minutes before your first session. Minecraft setup deserves the same care.

🎮 Minecraft Platform Overview Checklist and Step-by-Step Setup

Before anything else, let's make sure you're using the right version of Minecraft—and know which ones to avoid.

✅ Use This:

- **Minecraft Bedrock Edition**
  Available on:

  - ○ Windows 10/11 PC
  - ○ Xbox
  - ○ PlayStation
  - ○ Nintendo Switch
  - ○ Tablets / Mobile (iOS/Android)

This is the only version that:

- Works across platforms (so your client can play from their tablet or console)
- Supports **Minecraft Realms**, the easiest way to create a private, secure therapy world

🚫 Avoid These:

- **Java Edition:** PC-only, not cross-platform
- **Minecraft Education Edition:** Requires a school login, doesn't support Realms
- **Mac Computers:** Bedrock isn't available on Mac. You'll need a Windows PC or console to host a Realm.

🛠️ Creating a Realm – Therapist Setup

Step 1: Buy Minecraft Bedrock Edition

You can purchase through the Microsoft Store or directly from your device's game store.

Step 2: Create a New World (Not a Realm Yet!)

1. Open Minecraft
2. Select **"Create New"** → **"Create New World"**
3. Choose the following:
   - ○ Game Mode: **Creative**

- - Difficulty: **Peaceful**
  - Turn OFF multiplayer and PVP settings

Click **"Create."**

Step 3: Upgrade to a Realm

Once your world is created:

1. Go to the home screen → click **Play**
2. Click on the world you just created
3. Choose **"Edit"** → **"Play on Realm"**
4. Choose the **2-player Realm for $3.99/month**
   (This is the most affordable and easiest option. It's hard to find unless you go through this flow.)

This upgrades your single-player world into a private Realm.

🔒 Managing Client Access

Once your Realm is live, you'll need to **invite your client's gamertag** (Microsoft username):

1. Go to **Play** → **Edit Realm** → **Members**
2. Type in the child's gamertag and click **Invite**
3. Toggle access ON before session, OFF afterward
4. Repeat this process for all clients (up to 300 invites!)

Important: Players can only interact if they're online at the same time. To ensure privacy, only activate access for one client at a time.

🧾 Therapist Setup Checklist (Printable)

Before a Session:
✅ Confirm you're on the correct Realm
✅ Toggle access ON for that client
✅ Disable access for others
✅ Log in and check the world for session readiness
✅ Open your communication platform (Zoom, Discord, etc.)

After a Session:
✅ Gently end the interaction in-game
✅ Toggle access OFF

✅ Log out
✅ Document session notes (outside Minecraft)

💡 Pro Tips

- Use the same Realm for all clients, or **create separate Realms** if you prefer not to toggle (this is best practice and recommended).
- Rename your world with a therapist-only note (e.g. "Client A Realm – Thursdays 3pm") to stay organized.
- You can switch game modes (Creative ↔ Survival) later, per client needs.
- Use nonverbal tools like signs, teleport pads, or a hidden therapist room for session control.

Section 3: How to Set Up Minecraft Realms for Therapy

Once you've got Minecraft Bedrock Edition, it's time to set up your Realm—the private game world you'll use for therapy sessions.

This step-by-step guide assumes you've **never done this before**, so if you're brand new, you're in good hands.

🛒 Step 1: Purchase Minecraft Bedrock Edition

Where to Buy:

Go to https://www.minecraft.net and choose **Minecraft for Windows** (not Java Edition).

> If you're on a tablet or console, you'll purchase through the App Store (iPad), Microsoft Store (Xbox), PlayStation Store, or Nintendo eShop.

Price ranges:

- Mobile: ~$6.99
- Windows 10/11 PC: ~$29.99
- Console (Xbox, PS, Switch): ~$19.99–$29.99

💾 Step 2: Download and Install Minecraft

Once you've purchased the game:

1. Follow the download instructions on your device.
2. Allow time for installation—it may take 15–30 minutes depending on internet speed.
3. Log in with your **Microsoft account**. This account is what you'll use to manage your Realm and invite players.

   Pro Tip: Use a **professional-sounding Minecraft username** that doesn't include personal info. This is what clients will see when they join your Realm.

🌍 Step 3: Launch Minecraft and Create Your Realm

1. Open Minecraft.
2. From the main menu, click **Play**.
3. Select the **Realms** tab.
4. Choose **Create New Realm**.

You'll be asked to:

- **Name your Realm** (this can be simple like "Therapy World" or "Client Sessions")
- **Choose a world template** (you can pick a flat world or a generated one—we'll talk about customizing later)
- **Select game mode** (start with Creative for now—you can change it later)

You'll be prompted to purchase a Realm subscription. We recommend the **2-player Realm ($3.99/month)** for 1:1 therapy. **Create one Realm per client to maintain total privacy and simplicity.**

🔄 **Alternate Option: Shared Realm (Not Recommended)**
 Another option is to use a single Realm for all clients by toggling access between sessions. If you choose this route, you'll need the 10-player Realm subscription ($7.99/month). However, maintaining privacy in a shared Realm setup is significantly more complex and comes with added risks.

To protect client identities, each client would need to:

- Create a therapy-only Microsoft account not linked to their personal gaming identity
- Purchase a separate copy of Minecraft using that new account

This reduces risk in the event that a username is accidentally exposed, but it does not eliminate the possibility that one client could attempt to contact another via username.

While this approach lowers costs, it requires careful session management, advanced knowledge of Realm settings, and explicit consent around potential risks. If you choose this method (against our recommendation), make sure you:

- Thoroughly understand the risks
- Toggle Realm access before and after every session
- Include specific language in your consent and disclosure forms

💡 **Best Practice: Use One Realm Per Client**
 While it's possible to rotate clients through the same Realm by toggling access, this approach can be complex and poses privacy risks. Creating a dedicated Realm per client:

- Eliminates all access toggling
- Keeps usernames 100% confidential
- Simplifies your therapist workflow
- Offers parents peace of mind

The 2-player Realm ($3.99/month) is affordable and purpose-built for 1:1 therapeutic work.

👤 Step 4: Add Yourself to the Realm

Once your Realm is created:

1. Click the **Edit pencil icon** next to your Realm.
2. Go to **Members**.
3. Add your own username (if it's not already there).
4. Click **Play** to enter the Realm and explore.

   This is a great time to look around and get familiar. You're the host—there's no pressure to build anything yet.

👫 Step 5: Invite Your Client

When you're ready to invite a client:

1. Go back to the **Edit Realm** screen.
2. Click **Members**.
3. Click **Invite Player**.
4. Enter their **Microsoft GamerTag** (their Minecraft username tied to their account).
5. Once invited, their name will appear in your list.

Now here's the important part:

✅ **If you're using a shared Realm (not recommended) toggle access ON for one client at a time.**

- Before a session, **enable their access** by clicking their name and selecting **Allow**.
- After the session, **disable access** to keep the Realm private and secure.

✅ **However, best practice is to create one unique Realm per client,** which avoids toggling access altogether and eliminates any risk of client crossover or username exposure.

🔄 Step 6: Manage Access Between Sessions

Think of each Realm as your client's private therapy room. **The preferred model is to have a dedicated Realm for each client**. This way, there's no need to toggle access or worry about mistakes.

If you're using one Realm for all clients, think of your Realm as a virtual therapy office. Only one client should be allowed 'in the door' at a time. **You must manually enable and disable access before and after every session—and carefully avoid any overlap**.

Before each session:

- Log in to Minecraft.
- Toggle access **ON** for that day's client.
- Disable all other client access.

After each session:

- Toggle their access **OFF**.
- Log out of the Realm.

This keeps the experience private, emotionally safe, and HIPAA-conscious (more on that later).

🎧 Step 7: Set Up Your Communication Tool

Minecraft's in-game chat is not private and is not encrypted. Instead, use a secure platform like:

- Zoom (with waiting rooms)
- Discord (if HIPAA compliance isn't required)
- Google Meet (Business version is HIPAA compliant, can be used for therapy or coaching clients)
- Your EHR video platform (for therapy clients)

Have your client log into voice chat at the start of the session so you can talk while exploring the world together.

📝 Summary

To set up your therapy Realm:
✅ Purchase Minecraft Bedrock Edition
✅ Download and install it early
✅ Create a Realm with your therapist account
✅ Invite clients by their GamerTag
✅ If using one Realm for all clients, toggle access ON/OFF for each session.
✅ Best practice: use one Realm per client to avoid access toggling altogether.
✅ Use a secure video platform for all verbal communication

Section 4: What is Creative Mode vs. Survival Mode?

When setting up your Minecraft Realm, one of the first choices you'll make is:
 Should I use Creative Mode or Survival Mode?

These two game modes completely change how the world feels—and how your client experiences it. Choosing the right mode depends on your goals, your client's emotional needs, and the kind of interaction you want to foster.

🎨 Creative Mode: Calm, Safe, Unlimited

In Creative Mode, your client:

- Cannot die
- Cannot be hurt by anything
- Has access to every single block and item in the game
- Can fly, build instantly, and break blocks in one tap
- Experiences **zero danger or pressure**

Think of Creative Mode as a giant digital sandbox. It's ideal for **expression, safety, and imagination**.

💡 Use Creative Mode when:

- You're working with **anxious or highly sensitive clients**
- A child struggles with **frustration tolerance or emotional overwhelm**
- You're building rapport and want the client to feel in control
  You want to explore **symbolic play** or metaphors (e.g., "build what sadness looks like" or "create your dream safe space")
- You're helping clients **rebuild trust or autonomy** after trauma

🧠 Why It Works in Therapy:

Creative Mode removes all threats and scarcity, making it an ideal space for:

- **Trauma processing**
- **Play therapy techniques**
- **Family system metaphors** (e.g., building a home, mapping out roles)
- **Confidence-building**—especially when the therapist asks questions and lets the child "lead" the world

🧗 Survival Mode: Challenging, Emotional, Real-Time Responses

In Survival Mode, your client:

- Must gather their own resources
- Can be hurt or die (from falling, drowning, or mobs like zombies)
- Needs to craft items in order to build tools or shelter
- Cannot fly or instantly access blocks
- Feels the emotional impact of loss, fear, success, and persistence

Survival Mode introduces **risk, consequences, and unpredictability**—which can be powerful therapeutic tools in the right context.

💡 Use Survival Mode when:

- You're helping a client **practice emotional regulation**
- You want to explore themes like **perseverance, disappointment, or problem-solving**
- The client is ready to navigate challenges with support
- You want to reflect on **impulsivity, risk-taking, or frustration tolerance**
- You're doing structured or goal-oriented sessions, like **"can we build shelter before nightfall?"**

🧠 Why It Works in Therapy:

Survival Mode naturally brings up emotions—anger, fear, pride, surprise, defeat. This gives you powerful in-the-moment material to work with:

- "How did you feel when the creeper destroyed your build?"
- "What made you keep going after you died?"
- "Did you notice when you got overwhelmed? What helped you stay calm?"

It's **real-time emotional regulation practice** with natural consequences—and a perfect opportunity to observe patterns and offer coaching or reflection.

🔄 Can You Switch Between Modes?

Yes! You can switch a Realm between Creative and Survival mode **at any time** in the Realm settings.

This means you can:

- Start in Creative Mode to establish safety and rapport
- Shift to Survival Mode later to introduce healthy challenge
- Tailor the world to each individual client, or even switch modes within a single session

🧘 A Note on Emotional Readiness

Just like in real life, not every client is ready for challenge and stress. Survival Mode is best used:

- Once trust is established
- When clients have regulation skills or are practicing them
- When the game setting aligns with your clinical goals

And even then—you may choose to **"co-regulate"** by playing alongside them, modeling calm responses, and guiding their thinking with reflective prompts.

🎯 Summary

Creative Mode	Survival Mode
Calm, safe, unlimited	Risky, dynamic, emotional
Can't die or be hurt	Can be hurt or die
Access to all materials instantly	Must gather, craft, and survive
Ideal for symbolic play and rapport-building	Ideal for emotional regulation and problem-solving
Great for trauma work and younger clients	Great for older kids or goal-based sessions

Section 5: Practical Session Ideas

Now that you've got your Realm set up and you understand the difference between Creative and Survival Mode, let's talk about what to *actually do* in session.

Minecraft is a beautiful blank canvas—and that's exactly why it can feel overwhelming at first. There's no agenda unless you set one. So this section gives you specific, intentional ways to use Minecraft as a **therapeutic tool**, not just a digital playground.

These ideas can be adapted for 1:1 sessions, parent-child dyads, or even small therapy groups.

🏡 1. Build a Safe Place

Mode: Creative
Purpose: Emotional safety, trauma work, self-regulation
Instructions: Ask your client to create a space that feels safe to them. It could be a house, a bubble, a treehouse, a floating island—anything. Let them choose the materials and style.

Therapy Prompts:

- "What makes this feel safe?"
- "Who's allowed inside?"
- "Where would you go in here if you were scared or upset?"
- "Does this place remind you of anywhere in real life?"

🧱 2. Emotion Blocks

Mode: Creative
Purpose: Emotional awareness and expression
Instructions: Assign different emotions to different block types (e.g., red wool = anger, blue glass = sadness). Invite your client to build a structure using blocks that represent how they've been feeling.

Therapy Prompts:

- "What part of this structure feels the strongest?"
- "Which emotion is taking up the most space today?"
- "If you wanted to change this, what would you add or remove?"

🧟 3. Family as Mobs

Mode: Creative or Survival
Purpose: Family systems work, projective play
Instructions: Ask the client to assign Minecraft creatures (called "mobs") to people in their life. A creeper might represent someone unpredictable. A villager might be someone who feels safe but distant.

You can use a pen-and-paper drawing for this or act it out in-game by spawning mobs into a fenced area and labeling them.

Therapy Prompts:

- "What's it like being around this 'mob'?"
- "How do the mobs interact with each other?"
- "Which mob do you relate to most right now?"

🌸 4. Memory Garden

Mode: Creative
 Purpose: Self-esteem, identity, grief/loss work
 Instructions: Plant a garden. Place a sign near each flower with a memory, hope, strength, or affirmation.

Therapy Prompts:

- "Let's plant a flower for something you're proud of."
- "Is there a memory you'd like to remember by planting something here?"
- "Would you like to plant a flower for someone you miss?"

This is especially powerful as a grief ritual or ongoing therapeutic tradition.

🧭 5. Reflection Trail

Mode: Creative or Survival
 Purpose: Mindfulness, narrative work, self-reflection
 Instructions: Create a path out of blocks (e.g., gold, glowstone, stone) and place a sign every few blocks with a reflective prompt or question.

Therapy Prompts (on signs):

- "What was something hard this week?"
- "When did you feel brave?"
- "Who helped you recently?"
- "What's one thing you wish adults understood about you?"

Let the client walk the path and pause at each stop to reflect, aloud or silently.

🧱 6. Challenge Quest: Survive the Night

Mode: Survival
 Purpose: Emotional regulation, frustration tolerance, teamwork
 Instructions: Set a shared goal like "Let's build a shelter before nightfall" or "Let's go mining for 15 minutes without dying." Play alongside your client or let them lead while you observe.

Therapy Prompts:

- "What did you do when you got overwhelmed?"
- "What helped you keep trying after that setback?"
- "What was your strategy for staying safe or calm?"

Great for kids who need help tolerating distress, facing fears, or learning persistence.

🧘 Bonus Tip: Let Them Lead

If you're unsure what to do—or you're still learning the controls—it's okay to ask your client:

"What would you like to show me today?"
"Can you teach me something new in Minecraft?"
"If you could build anything to help you feel better, what would it be?"

You'll be amazed at the insight, confidence, and connection that emerges when kids get to be the expert.

📌 Summary

You don't need to plan a "perfect" activity to have a powerful session in Minecraft. Even simple moments—like choosing a block, planting a tree, or digging a tunnel—can open doors to emotional connection and meaning.

The key is to:

- Stay curious
- Ask reflective, open-ended questions
- Trust the client's creativity
- Use your clinical lens to guide the meaning-making

Section 6: Privacy, Consent, and HIPAA

Let's get real for a second: Minecraft is not a clinical platform. It was not designed with HIPAA in mind, and that means therapists have a responsibility to set clear boundaries around how it's used.

But here's the good news—when you understand its limitations and put intentional systems in place, you *can* use Minecraft ethically and safely as a therapeutic tool.

🔐 Is Minecraft HIPAA-Compliant?

No. Minecraft (including Realms, Java, and Bedrock editions) is **not HIPAA-compliant**.

It does **not** offer:

- End-to-end encrypted communication
- Audit trails or session logs
- Secure storage of Protected Health Information (PHI)
- A Business Associate Agreement (BAA)

That's why we treat Minecraft as a **therapeutic activity tool**, not a platform for discussing or storing sensitive health information.

🚫 What NOT to Do in Minecraft Therapy

To stay aligned with HIPAA and ethical standards, avoid:

- Typing clinical content or client details into the in-game chat
- Storing client notes or names in Minecraft
- Using real names as usernames
- Using Minecraft voice chat or open public servers

✅ What TO Do Instead

Here's how to protect your client's privacy and stay compliant:

- Communicate via a **secure video platform** (Zoom, Google Meet, or your EHR's system) during Minecraft sessions
- Use **anonymous or non-identifying usernames**
- Disable access to your Realm between sessions
- Take notes **outside of the game** in your secure EHR or system
- Treat Minecraft like a **digital playroom**—not a records system

🧾 Consent and Transparency

Because Minecraft isn't HIPAA-compliant, it's essential to:

- **Explain this clearly to caregivers** during intake
- **Get specific consent** for using Minecraft in therapy
- **Provide a written clause** in your informed consent or as a separate agreement

You'll find a sample clause in the next section, but here's what it should communicate:

Parents and clients should know that:

- Minecraft is being used **as a therapeutic activity**, not a platform for clinical records or diagnosis
- All personal/clinical information will be handled through **secure channels only**
- The therapist will take **appropriate privacy steps**, including disabling client access outside of session
- Minecraft is a creative, expressive space—not a place for PHI storage or sensitive disclosures

🧍‍♀️ One Client at a Time

While Realms can host many invitees, we recommend creating a **separate Realm for each client**. This guarantees that usernames, session data, and access are kept entirely private, with no possibility of accidental exposure. It's simpler, more secure, and aligns with the privacy expectations of therapeutic work.

If you're using one Realm for all clients, even though Realms allow up to 300 players on the invite list, only one client should ever have access at a time. This prevents accidental overlap and ensures no clients see or interact with each other.

Before each session:

- Enable access for one client
- Disable access for all others
- Confirm your Realm is empty before starting

After each session:

- Log out
- Disable client access
- Document your session elsewhere (never in Minecraft)

🎧 Don't Rely on In-Game Chat

In-game chat is not encrypted and is visible to anyone online at the same time. Even in a private Realm, it's not private enough.

Instead:

- Use a separate secure tool (Zoom, Google Meet, Doxy, etc.) for voice/video
- Use **signs**, **NPCs**, or **journaling stations** in-game to offer reflective prompts
- Keep all verbal discussion in your secure session space

🧠 Framing for Families

Families may have questions about how privacy works in Minecraft, especially if their child is accessing it on a console or shared device. Reassure them by letting them know:

- Their child will only be able to access the Realm **during their scheduled session time**
- They will have a private realm for only themselves, or access is turned **on and off manually** for each client
- Their child will never be in a session with another client
- No personal data or names are stored or displayed
- Minecraft is used intentionally and ethically as a **tool for emotional exploration**

📌 Summary

Minecraft is a powerful therapeutic tool—but only when handled with care.

To stay compliant:
✅ Never discuss or store PHI in Minecraft
✅ Use secure video for real-time communication
✅ Disable Realm access between sessions
✅ Include consent language in your intake paperwork
✅ Frame Minecraft sessions as creative, regulated, and therapeutic—but **not clinical record-keeping**

Section 7: Therapist Session Checklists

Running a Minecraft therapy session involves more moving parts than a traditional in-person session—but with a good system in place, it becomes simple and repeatable.

These **Pre-Session** and **Post-Session Checklists** are designed to help you stay organized, protect client privacy, and make sure every session runs smoothly—from start to finish.

✅ Pre-Session Checklist: Before the Client Joins

Task	Notes
✅ **Confirm session time**	Double-check your calendar to ensure the client is scheduled for today
✅ **Toggle Realm access ON (If using one realm for all clients. This step isn't needed if each client has their own Realm.)**	Log into Minecraft > Play > Realms > Edit Realm > Members > Allow access for this client only
✅ **Disable access for all other clients (If using one realm for all clients.This step isn't needed if each client has their own Realm.)**	Prevent accidental overlap or chat exposure
✅ **Log into the Realm early**	Make sure the world loads correctly and that you're in the right place before the client arrives
✅ **Teleport or guide client to their area** *(optional)*	Use a command block or walk them to a private, calming space designed for their session
✅ **Open your secure communication tool**	Start Zoom, Google Meet, or whatever you're using for real-time conversation
✅ **Have reflection prompts or session goals ready**	Keep a few questions, metaphors, or challenges on hand depending on the client's needs that day

✅ Post-Session Checklist: After the Client Logs Out

Task	Notes
✅ **Gently end the session**	Thank the client, wrap up gently, and help ground them if needed
✅ **Toggle client access OFF**	Immediately remove Realm access for privacy and safety
✅ **Log out of Minecraft**	Always exit the Realm when finished
✅ **Document the session in your EHR**	Record observations, mood, insights, and any therapeutic moments that occurred
✅ **Note any world updates to follow up on next time**	For example: "Client started building a 'safe space'—follow up on meaning of glass walls next week"

🧠 Optional Therapist Tools to Have Ready

These aren't required—but many therapists find them helpful to keep nearby:

- A notebook or digital doc with:
    - Common reflective prompts
    - Session goals or tracking notes
    - A list of Minecraft metaphors or ideas

- A timer or visual countdown (for transitions or breaks)
  A calming ritual for session closure (e.g., walk to the edge of the world together, place a final block, "close the door" to their safe place)

🔄 Consistency Builds Safety

When clients know what to expect each time they log in, their nervous system relaxes. You don't need to run a rigid structure—but following a repeatable routine (like showing up early, greeting them in the same place, or ending sessions with a calming ritual) helps build trust.

This checklist helps you do that consistently, even on busy or back-to-back session days.

Section 8: Caregiver + Client FAQ

This section gives you clear, therapist-approved answers to the most frequently asked questions about Minecraft therapy—especially from caregivers who are curious, cautious, or totally new to this idea.

You can copy, paste, and adapt any of this for your intake forms, email replies, or website.

🧠 What is Minecraft therapy, exactly?

Minecraft therapy uses the familiar world of Minecraft as a **therapeutic tool** to support emotional expression, communication, problem-solving, and self-regulation. Clients enter a private world, guided by their therapist, where gameplay becomes a doorway to deeper conversations, emotional processing, and healing.

It's not just about playing a game—it's about using creativity, metaphor, and shared experience to support meaningful therapeutic growth.

💻 What version of Minecraft do we need?

We use **Minecraft Bedrock Edition**, which works on:

- Xbox
- PlayStation
- Nintendo Switch
- Windows 10/11 PCs
- iPads and tablets
- Android phones

  ✅ This is *not* the same as Java Edition (PC-only) or Minecraft Education Edition (for schools).
  ❌ Java and Education Editions are not compatible with the private therapy worlds we use.

👩‍🏫 Can we use Minecraft Education Edition?

No. Minecraft Education Edition is designed for schools and requires a special login. It is not compatible with Realms or private sessions and is not supported in this therapy format.

🎮 What is a Realm?

A **Realm** is a private Minecraft world hosted by Microsoft. It's available by invite only, and the therapist controls who can access it and when.

Realms allow for:

- Private, invitation-only access
- Safe spaces for therapeutic play
- Cross-platform compatibility (console, tablet, PC)

Your child will only be able to access the Realm during their scheduled therapy session.

🛑 Will my child be playing with other kids?

No. Each child is assigned their **own private Realm**, accessible only during their scheduled therapy time. They will **never play with other clients** or have visibility into anyone else's information.

==(Note: if you are using one realm for all clients, you would use the following language)== Each Realm is used **one client at a time**. Only your child will have access during their session window. There is no group play or overlap with other clients.

💬 Can my child talk to the therapist inside Minecraft?

Yes—but not through Minecraft's built-in chat. For privacy reasons, we use a secure video or voice platform (like Zoom, Google Meet, or your therapist's EHR system) for real-time conversation during Minecraft sessions.

🧾 Is this HIPAA compliant?

Minecraft itself is **not HIPAA-compliant**, so no personal health information (PHI) is ever entered or stored inside the game.

Your therapist will:

- Use secure platforms for documentation and conversation
- Keep Minecraft usernames anonymous
- Disable access to the world between sessions
- Treat the Minecraft world like a digital therapy office—never as a storage system for sensitive data

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⌛ When can my child access the Minecraft world?

Only during their scheduled therapy time. The world will appear in the "Joinable Realms" section of Minecraft once the therapist enables access. After the session, access is turned off. The therapist will manage access on the backend. ==(NOTE: If you are using a shared Realm, change this language to)== If one Realm is shared between clients, access will be manually turned on and off before and after each session.

🧘 What will they be doing in session?

That depends on your child's needs! Some examples:

- Building a "safe space" to explore safety and trust
- Mapping family roles using Minecraft mobs
- Exploring emotions through colors and blocks
- Practicing regulation and frustration tolerance in challenge-based activities
- Engaging in metaphor-rich creative play guided by their therapist

Minecraft allows kids to express big feelings in a safe, creative way—often without needing to "talk about it" directly.

💸 Do we need to buy anything?

Yes. You'll need:

- A copy of **Minecraft Bedrock Edition** (prices vary by platform: ~$6.99–$29.99)
- For console users (Xbox, Switch, PlayStation): an **online subscription** like Xbox Live Gold or Nintendo Switch Online may also be required to enable Realms access
- ==(NOTE: If you are using a shared Realm, add this language)== If your child is using a separate Microsoft account for therapy (sometimes required in shared Realm setups), a second copy of Minecraft may need to be purchased for that account.

Your therapist can help walk you through this based on your child's device.

📲 How does my child join the session?

Your therapist will send you instructions with the exact steps, but in general:

1. Open Minecraft Bedrock Edition
2. Click **Play**
3. Go to the **Friends** tab
4. Scroll to **Joinable Realms**
5. Click the Realm with your therapist's username to enter the world

If needed, the therapist will guide you through this setup during your intake process.

📞 What if we have trouble logging in?

Reach out to your therapist! They'll help troubleshoot access issues and make sure your child can join smoothly.

💁 Will the therapist be in the game with my child?

Yes! The therapist is always present inside the Minecraft world during sessions and is also available for voice/video chat. This helps guide the session, provide support, and ensure safety.

Section 9: Sample Message to Send Families

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

Hi [Parent or Caregiver Name],

I'm so excited to begin working with your child 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 your child 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 your child's Minecraft profile
- For consoles: an active online subscription (e.g., Xbox Live Gold, PlayStation Plus, or Nintendo Switch Online)
- A **quiet space** and headphones for voice communication during the session

    🎮 *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 your child'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

- My child will have a private Realm used only for their sessions. No other clients will be invited to or have access to this world.
- <mark>(OR, if you are using one realm for all clients</mark>) My child is the **only person allowed into the Realm** during their session. No other clients can join or see them.
- 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 your child 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.

Looking forward to seeing your child in session!

Warmly,
 [Your Name]
 [Your Practice Name, Email, Phone Number]

Section 10: Sample Consent Clause

You can add this directly into your main consent for treatment form or provide it as a separate addendum when offering Minecraft-based sessions.

📄 Minecraft Therapy Consent Clause

I understand that Minecraft will be used as a therapeutic tool to support my child's emotional, behavioral, or social development. Minecraft sessions may include activities such as creative building, guided challenges, or symbolic play, all led by a licensed or supervised mental health professional.

I acknowledge that while therapeutic strategies and clinical insight will be used during these sessions, the **Minecraft platform itself is not HIPAA-compliant** and should not be used for discussing or storing sensitive medical or mental health information.

By signing below, I give permission for my child to participate in Minecraft-based therapy sessions and agree to the following:

- No personal health information (PHI) will be entered, stored, or discussed within the Minecraft platform.
- Minecraft will be used as a **supplementary activity** in therapy, not as a standalone treatment or documentation platform.
- All clinical notes, records, and communications will be handled through HIPAA-compliant systems outside of Minecraft.
- My child's access to the Minecraft world (Realm) will be limited to their scheduled session time, and they will not interact with other clients.
- The therapist will provide all necessary setup instructions and will be present in the world during sessions to guide and monitor the experience.
- I understand I am responsible for ensuring my child's device meets the technical requirements and for purchasing the appropriate version of Minecraft (Bedrock Edition).

I agree to support my child's participation in this form of therapy and understand that I can withdraw consent at any time.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Next Steps

You made it to the end of *TherapyCraft 101*!

🎒 Ready to Go Deeper?

If this guide gave you a good foundation, my **paid TherapyCraft Package** will take you all the way to confident, client-ready implementation.

You'll get:

- 📄 **Editable intake forms**, disclosures, and consent templates
- 💬 **Swipe files** for emails, parent communication, and Psychology Today profiles
- 🧠 **Therapist scripting & activity guides** for sessions
- 📸 **Marketing materials** to explain Minecraft therapy to caregivers, schools, and referral sources
- 🎥 **Screen-share walkthroughs** showing exactly how to set up, navigate, and personalize your Minecraft world
- 📱 A **session planning system** with printable worksheets and world-building prompts
- 💼 Real-world examples of how I use TherapyCraft in my own caseload

Whether you're still nervous about jumping in or already seeing Minecraft clients but want to level up your systems, this toolkit will help you deliver sessions that are safe, effective, and *extraordinary*.

👉 Join the Waitlist or Get Instant Access

You can [click here to purchase] or [join the waitlist] if we're between launches. I'll send you an invite as soon as the doors open.

Thank you so much for trusting me to guide you through your first step into Minecraft therapy. I believe in this work—and I believe in your ability to do it with purpose and heart.

Let's build something amazing.

—

Warmly,
Ashley Jangro
LPCC | Life Coach | Creator of TherapyCraft