

# **Clinical Guide**

## **TherapyCraft in Action: 3 Case Studies from Minecraft Therapy**

*Why Minecraft Works in Therapy*



*With Ashley Jangro, MA, LPCC, Life Coach, Founder of  
SteadyWithin and Creator of TherapyCraft*

**Minecraft isn't just a video game.** For many kids and teens, it's a familiar, meaningful world where they already feel competent, creative, and at home. Inside that world, they get to build, explore, and tell stories in ways that feel safe and natural.

As therapists, we know that change doesn't always happen when we sit across from a client and ask them to share. Here's what I've discovered: it is incredibly valuable to be able to meet clients where they already feel competent and safe. Change happens when trust is built, when defenses lower, and when kids feel *both seen and safe enough to express themselves*.

### **Minecraft gives us that bridge.**

And here's the best part: you don't have to be a video game expert to use it effectively. In fact, sometimes not knowing everything works in your favor. Clients light up when they get to be the teacher, guiding you through the basics and showing off what they know. That role reversal can build confidence and rapport faster than anything else. Whether you've never touched a controller or you've logged hundreds of hours, **Minecraft can become a therapeutic tool in your hands.**

Inside a single blocky world, clients can:

- Show us who they are without feeling judged.
- Externalize overwhelming feelings into metaphors they can literally see and touch.
- Practice regulation, problem-solving, and resilience in real time.
- Connect with us as collaborators, not just authority figures.

What happens in Minecraft isn't "just play." **It's therapy disguised as a familiar adventure.** And when used with intention, it can transform silence into conversation, fear into confidence, and resistance into trust.

In the following pages, you'll see three real stories of how Minecraft created breakthroughs for clients who were otherwise shut down, stuck, or unsure. These case studies show just a glimpse of what's possible when therapy meets the digital world kids already love.

## **Confidentiality Notice**

The following case studies are based on real therapeutic experiences. **The clinical themes and purposes are authentic**, but identifying details such as age, gender, family circumstances, and specific personal elements have been significantly changed, blended, or generalized. These stories are shared only for educational purposes. Any resemblance to an actual client is purely coincidental.

## Meet Your Guide



Hi, I'm Ashley Jangro, LPCC and Life Coach, therapist, educator, and the creator of TherapyCraft. My work blends counseling, coaching, and education to help kids, teens, and parents move from emotional overwhelm to steadiness and growth.

I first discovered the power of Minecraft in therapy by accident. A client who rarely spoke lit up the moment we started talking about the game. When we stepped into a Minecraft world together, her entire posture, tone, and openness shifted. She found a voice she hadn't been able to access in a traditional office setting. That moment changed how I approached therapy forever.

Since then, I've watched resistant teens build trust block by block, anxious kids create safe spaces they couldn't describe in words, and families use Minecraft to understand one another in new ways. What started as curiosity has grown into TherapyCraft, **a structured, intentional way to use Minecraft ethically and clinically with the clients who need it most.**

***Whether you're a seasoned gamer or brand new to the controller, you can learn to bring Minecraft into your therapy sessions in a way that feels authentic, professional, and deeply impactful. This guide will show you what's possible.***

## Case Study 1: The Anxious Teen Who Found Her Voice

One of the first times I brought Minecraft into therapy, I was working with a teen who carried intense anxiety. Our sessions were quiet, often filled with long silences or whispered “I don’t know” responses. When I gently asked about his discomfort, he would sometimes get teary but couldn’t put words to what he was feeling. It was clear he wanted connection, but traditional talk therapy left him feeling exposed and overwhelmed.



Everything shifted one day when I noticed an image from a video game on his T-shirt. I asked a simple question about gaming, and when Minecraft came up, his entire posture changed. He sat up straighter, his voice gained strength, and he told me about the world he had been building with a friend. It felt like meeting a different person altogether. He was suddenly confident and energetic as he spoke as an expert on the game.

**Here's the key principle I've learned: always let anxious clients take the lead in the virtual world.** When I invited them to play during our sessions, I asked him to show me how he typically starts in a world. He confidently guided me through his favorite parts of the game, and for the first time, he wasn't just my client, he was my teacher. The game gave him permission to step into a role where he felt capable, respected, and confident.

What was most powerful, though, was how we could use the game as a rehearsal space for real life. When he faced something in Minecraft that stretched his comfort zone, an unexpected challenge, a moment of fear, a risk he wasn't sure he could take, we paused to talk about how he might handle it. Slowly, he began to “wear” that confidence like a costume he could try on. And little by little, he carried those small successes outside the game, until they became part of his real identity. This has become a key question I use with TherapyCraft clients. I ask them: “how would you handle this real life situation if you were in the game?”

**Takeaway: Minecraft can act as a safe doorway for anxious or withdrawn teens to step into confidence, self-expression, and trust, and then carry that confidence into the real world.**

## Case Study 2: The Child Caught in the Middle

Another client I worked with was a young girl navigating the stress of family conflict and a changing home life. She carried enormous tension but rarely admitted to feeling angry. Instead, she tried to smooth things over, excused other people's behavior, and turned the blame inward. Her role had become keeping the peace, and in doing so she buried her own emotions so deeply that she couldn't name them in session.

Inside Minecraft, everything shifted. The game gave her a language she didn't have in real life. I used my favorite question to ask during TherapyCraft: "If you were to describe your different family members as a Minecraft mob, what would they be and why?" She began comparing certain characters in the game to people in her world, describing some as unpredictable like creepers with an explosive temper. Protective figures in her life were like iron golems, strong but sometimes damaging when they lashed out. Endermen, mysterious and powerful, reminded her of other family members who wanted connection but didn't know how to ask for it. These metaphors gave her permission to talk about painful dynamics in a way that felt safe, because she wasn't directly describing her family, she was describing the game.



I now use this mob assessment technique with most of my clients who seem stuck in family dynamics. It's become one of my most reliable tools for getting kids to open up about relationships they can't otherwise discuss.

Through these conversations, she started building tools she could use in both spaces. Just as armor protects you from explosions, she developed "emotional armor." She practiced naming her feelings, allowing herself to feel anger without guilt, and using breathwork to calm down before reacting. Each metaphor gave her a new way to understand that protecting herself didn't mean rejecting others, and that sometimes giving space could restore safety.

Minecraft became a container for emotions that once felt unbearable. Over time, she stopped seeing anger as dangerous and began recognizing it as information, something to notice, express, and work through.

***Takeaway: Minecraft provides natural metaphors that make it safer for kids to discuss painful dynamics and practice emotional tools they might otherwise avoid.***

## Case Study 3: The Resistant Teen Who Learned to Trust

Some clients enter therapy with walls so high it feels impossible to reach them. One young teen I worked with had shut down after a painful experience with an authority figure. Humiliated and misunderstood, they decided that adults couldn't be trusted. By the time they arrived in therapy, they were guarded, skeptical, and resistant to even trying.



When their parent suggested therapy inside Minecraft, they were suddenly open to the idea of therapy. Regardless, our first session together was nearly silent. I moved through the motions of starting a new world: gathering wood, building a basic shelter, preparing for nightfall. Slowly, they began to notice how I played. I wasn't fumbling through, I knew the game, and they respected that. For a child who didn't think much of adults, it mattered that I could hold my own in a space they valued. I

**wasn't just another grown-up who "didn't get it."** This became a key aspect to the success of Minecraft as a therapeutic tool.

But earning respect was only the first step. The success technique with resistant clients: intentionally share resources and avoid the expert role. What *sealed the connection* was not that I was good at the game, it was also how I used my knowledge. I never made suggestions or hoarded resources. When I mined diamonds, I shared them. When they hesitated to take what I offered (explaining that they were used to playing with people who got mad when they borrowed things) I reassured them that as teammates, we could look out for each other. They began to see that I could be skilled and knowledgeable, but also generous and collaborative.

The biggest breakthrough came when I got myself into trouble in a cave. Surrounded by mobs, I needed backup, and they rushed in to save me. **They felt capable and needed in front of someone they already respected.** In that moment, we weren't therapist and client, adult and teen. We were teammates. That respect, combined with trust, opened the door to real conversation, which has become a key aspect of using Minecraft in therapy.

This newly found trust with an adult outside their family helped the client be willing to try the tools I taught and suggested. Because in their eyes, I was a competent gamer (or willing to accept their help in the moments I wasn't), they trusted my suggestions in a way that they had been unwilling to do in other therapeutic settings.

With time, (and I see this pattern repeated over and over) Minecraft also became the bridge that allowed them to process their pain and rehearse new ways of navigating trust, authority, and courage.

***Takeaway: For resistant or mistrustful kids, Minecraft creates a space where adults can earn respect and build trust at the same time, turning therapist and client into teammates on the same side.***

 Therapist Note: You don't have to be a skilled gamer for any of this to work. Many clients feel empowered when they get to "teach" their therapist. Respect is built through authenticity, curiosity, and collaboration, not perfection.

What I wish I'd known earlier: this only works if you genuinely don't know everything about the game (because even if you have been playing for years, there's always more to learn!). If you're too expert, the power dynamic is unbalanced. The sweet spot is being competent enough to earn respect, but humble enough to accept a client's help. 

## Why These Stories Matter

These three stories may be different, anxiety, family conflict, resistance, but they all point to the same truth: Minecraft is more than a game. **It's a therapeutic space where clients feel safe enough to express what they can't always say in words.**

For one teen, it became the place where he could finally find his voice.

For another, it gave her metaphors and "armor" to face emotions she had buried for years.

For a resistant client, it built trust block by block until real conversations could happen.

That's the power of TherapyCraft. It turns silence into dialogue, frustration into problem-solving, and mistrust into teamwork. And because Minecraft is already deeply meaningful to so many kids and teens, it bypasses resistance in a way that traditional therapy sometimes can't.

But here's the important part: while these stories show the potential, they don't show the process. To bring Minecraft into therapy safely, ethically, and with confidence, you need more than inspiration. You need clear, HIPAA-aware systems, step-by-step setup instructions, and ready-to-use tools that let you focus on your client, not the tech.

**That's exactly why I created the Complete TherapyCraft System.**

Inspired by These Stories? Here's What Comes Next.

By now, you've seen what's possible when therapy moves into a world kids already love. But you may also be wondering:

- How do I actually set this up?
- What about HIPAA compliance?
- What needs to go in my disclosure forms?
- How do I explain this to parents so they see it as real therapy, not just screen time?
- How much should I charge, and how do I talk about it on my website?

These are the questions that turn a good idea into a professional service. And while Minecraft itself is powerful, using it inside therapy requires structure, clarity, and safeguards.

That's why I created the **Complete TherapyCraft System**, so you don't have to piece it together on your own.

For less than the cost of a single TherapyCraft session, you'll have everything you need to confidently offer Minecraft therapy in a way that's ethical, creative, and clinically sound. Read on to see all that is included.

# ✨ The Complete TherapyCraft System ✨

*Everything you need to bring Minecraft into therapy, without months of trial and error.*

You've seen how powerful Minecraft can be in therapy. But if you've ever thought about using it yourself, you've probably hit a wall of questions like:

- ✗ Do I buy Java, Bedrock, or the Educational version?
- ✗ Should I use Creative or Survival mode, and what's the difference?
- ✗ Which privacy settings keep me HIPAA-compliant?
- ✗ How do I explain this to parents without it sounding like "just screen time"?
- ✗ What do I actually DO during sessions?

Those choices alone stop most therapists in their tracks. But you don't have to figure it all out yourself.

I've already done the testing, troubleshooting, and refining. And now you can have my entire setup, complete with screenshots and video walkthroughs, so you don't waste hours researching or months experimenting.

With this system, you can be set up and ready to use Minecraft in therapy in a single afternoon.



## What's Inside the TherapyCraft System

### 1. Step-by-Step Technical Setup

- Exactly what to purchase (and what not to waste money on)
- The right game version for therapy (explained clearly)
- Privacy settings and protocols for HIPAA awareness
- Troubleshooting guide for common tech snags (No more trial and error, just follow the steps.)

### 2. Ready-to-Use Legal & Compliance Templates

- HIPAA-compliant Minecraft therapy consent forms (copy & paste ready)
- Parent communication templates and tech setup instructions
- Supervisor/agency advocacy letter with research citations
- Insurance documentation templates

### 3. Clinical Treatment Roadmaps

- Editable treatment plans for **Anxiety, Depression, ADHD, PTSD, Autism, and Adjustment Disorders**
- 12-24 week phase-based frameworks (safety → exploration → challenge → growth)
- Sample goals and interventions written for you
- Progress note language to make documentation easier

## **4. Complete Parent Communication System**

- Welcome emails with setup instructions
- FAQ addressing every concern parents have
- Troubleshooting guides and session reminders
- Scripts for explaining therapeutic value

## **5. Marketing & Practice Integration Kit**

- Psychology Today profile language (copy & paste)
- Website copy for your service page
- Referral one-pagers for schools and pediatrician
- Social media announcement templates
- Email scripts for introducing the service to families

## **6. Session Planning & Clinical Tools**

- Editable session planning templates
- 6 proven therapeutic activity frameworks
- Creative vs. Survival mode quick-reference
- Crisis management protocols for virtual play
- Real examples from actual sessions



**Total Value: \$1,600+**

**Your Investment: Just \$59.99**

Imagine if you didn't have to:

- ✗ Spend weeks researching which Minecraft version to buy
- ✗ Guess whether to use Creative or Survival for your clients
- ✗ Write your own consents, roadmaps, or parent handouts from scratch
- ✗ Wonder if your setup was private or HIPAA-compliant

**With the Complete TherapyCraft System, it's all done for you.** You'll skip the confusion, save hours of work, and be ready to run your first Minecraft session in an afternoon.

 **Get Instant Access Today**

For less than the cost of a single session, you'll have a complete professional system you can use for years to come.

# The Complete TherapyCraft System

*Everything you need to bring Minecraft into therapy, without months of trial and error.*

**Remember how that anxious teen found her voice? How the child caught in divorce finally expressed his anger? How the resistant client learned to trust?**

You can create those same breakthroughs. But here's what stops most therapists:

- ✗ "Which version of Minecraft do I even buy?" (Java? Bedrock? Education Edition?)
- ✗ How do I keep this HIPAA-compliant?" (Privacy settings are confusing)
- ✗ "What do I tell parents?" (They'll think it's just screen time)
- ✗ "What do I actually DO in sessions?" (I need a real framework)

**Sound familiar?** These questions keep brilliant therapists from using one of the most powerful tools available for resistant, anxious, and shut-down kids.

**Here's the truth:** Minecraft therapy works. You've just seen the proof. But trying to figure it out alone means weeks of research, expensive mistakes, and wondering if you're doing it right.

**I've already done all of that for you.**

## What You Get in The Complete TherapyCraft System:

 **Technical Setup Made Simple** Step-by-step walkthroughs (with screenshots) so you know exactly what to buy, how to set it up, and which privacy settings keep you HIPAA-aware. No guessing.

 **Legal Templates Ready to Use** Copy-paste consent forms, parent communication scripts, and supervisor advocacy letters. Protect yourself legally from day one.

 **Treatment Roadmaps for Real Diagnoses** Editable 12-24 week plans for Anxiety, Depression, ADHD, PTSD, Autism, and Adjustment Disorders. Goals, interventions, and progress note language already written.

 **Parent Communication System** Welcome emails, FAQs, troubleshooting guides.

Never wonder what to say when parents ask "Is this real therapy?"

 **Marketing Kit to Fill Your Caseload** Psychology Today language, website copy, referral one-pagers, social media posts. Everything you need to attract families searching for help.

 **Session Tools & Clinical Frameworks** 6 proven therapeutic activities, crisis protocols, Creative vs. Survival mode guides, and real examples from actual sessions.

## **Total Value: \$1,600+** **Your Investment: Just \$59**

Imagine starting your first Minecraft therapy session next week, confident, prepared, with every form, template, and roadmap already in place.

### **No more:**

-  Weeks spent researching
-  Wondering if you're HIPAA-compliant
-  Writing consents and treatment plans from scratch
-  Guessing what to do when a client gets stuck

**With The Complete TherapyCraft System, you'll have everything you need in an afternoon.**

 **Ready to Transform Your Practice?**

**Get instant access to The Complete TherapyCraft System**

*For less than the cost of a single session, you'll have a professional system you can use for years.*

# Find Your Calm. Reclaim Your Power.

A message from Ashley Jangro, LPCC & Life Coach

My hope is that these stories each gives you a glimpse into what's possible when therapy meets the worlds kids already love.

TherapyCraft grew from my belief that emotional mastery is a superpower, and that when we meet clients where they feel capable and safe, we unlock a whole new level of connection. Minecraft just happens to be one of the most effective tools I've found to do that.

Whether you're a seasoned gamer or a therapist who's never touched a controller, you can bring this into your practice. With the right systems, it's not only possible, it's simple, ethical, and effective.

If you're ready to take the next step, I'd love for you to explore the **Complete TherapyCraft System**. It includes everything you need to set up Minecraft with HIPAA-awareness, run confident sessions, and market your new service to families who are already searching for help.

Let's keep changing what's possible in therapy, one block at a time.



## About Ashley Jangro

Therapist | Life Coach | Educator  
Founder of *Steady Within Counseling* & Creator of  
*TherapyCraft*

Ashley blends counseling, coaching, and education to help kids, teens, and parents regulate emotions, strengthen resilience, and move toward steady, values-driven lives. She has spoken on national stages, developed therapeutic models like AERO and TherapyCraft, and works every day to make therapy both accessible and transformative.

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 **Contact:** ashley@steadywithin.com

 **Website:** [therapycraft.io](http://therapycraft.io), [steadywithin.com](http://steadywithin.com)

 Castle Rock, CO