

Margaret Lowenfeld Day Conference, University of Cambridge 7.11.87

There is a spectrum of interest in play. An outer world there are outcome measures.

1. Competence
2. Coping

Competence is domain specific. Capacity for effective action with the elements intellectual, motivational and do=ability. This is restricting destruction and resistant to distractions.

Coping- resilient children can meet stress. It is intellectual and depends on some planning. They are not swamped by their negative emotions, eg. The competent child has a backlog of skills to work with. To them what is inconvenient can be nightmares for others.

How do you become resilient? Experiences cause these changes.

Research in 1984 – Reinhart- experiment with three modes of play.

Susan Isaacs free play.

Guided play.

Behaviourist training.

Second research – Pre-school Programmes 3-4 year olds. Sharing has lasting effects on the children for the rest of their life.

Certain types has different effects:

1. Pain of discomfort
2. Stress of treatment
3. Develop and maintain relationships with the carer
4. Separation from parents
5. Perceive emotional balance
6. Pressure in integrity
7. Have some masking

Support and information are all needed. It was interesting that pre visits to children before operations at home did not seem to have an outcome. Early school play produced confidence, eg. World seemed to think they were all right.

Hospitalisation experiences need more than competence to manage with their inner fears. This is where play programmes help.

Coping helps over the immediate stress, but adaptation can occur with stress afterwards, eg. In the home conditions.

What helps to diminish stress after the event without preparation?

1. Play or story for the non-anxious
2. Fantasy play for the anxious child
3. Group peer contact with the non-anxious

Young children- the preparation should be at the time of the problem and not visiting at home.

Making links to inner self and outer world can be? Too dangerous and too dangling. Instead the search for self can be with in term of waste products