Therapeutic Humor with Children & Teens

Dr. Susan Mathieu, RTC/CTRS
Recreation Therapist
Or- Are *You* Pulling My Leg?
Getting Started: Playing with Your Own Pain

1. Begin with a smile
2. Let yourself enjoy life
3. Leave your ego at the door
4. Don’t take yourself so seriously
5. Laugh for no reason hahahahehe
6. Become an overnight optimist
7. Laugh at yourself
Why Humor?

- Humor:
  1. is the ultimate expression for being positive
  2. helps develop rapport
  3. gives us a different perspective
  4. is a marvelous vehicle to happiness
  5. promotes playfulness
• Humor is a powerful cognitive tool to facilitate emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological well-being
Develop Your Tool Kit

• 1. Discover what makes you laugh
• 2. Find one cartoon that really makes you laugh
• 3. Sing loudly with an upbeat song
• 4. Collect knock-knock jokes
• 5. Keep a journal of humorous moments
• 6. Every time something funny happens, notice
• 7. Collect props, rubber chickens, hats, etc.
NEWS FLASH!! Abandoned tantrum-physical comedy followed, woo-hoo
Patch Adams Primer

• 1. Pain can be tolerated when one laughs
• 2. A red nose makes children laugh
• 3. Exaggerate Funny sounds
• 4. Kazoos & slide whistles add to the silly factor
• 5. Wigs of all colors welcome
• 6. Costumes work well, too
Aristotle trying “her best” to lighten lecture on philosophy

Has anyone seen this woman?
Live Your Life Like a Dog!??

6:00 AM  At last I walk outside, my favorite thing
7:00 AM  A ride in the car!! My favorite thing
8:00 AM  A walk in the park, my favorite thing
8:30 AM  A drink of water, my favorite thing
9:00 AM  Run around the backyard barking

my favorite thing
Fact & Fiction of Laughter

Fiction:  Must have reason to laugh

Fact:   We are happy because we laugh
Humor Do’s & Don’ts

• Don’t use as the sole intervention

• Do ask yourself, “Why am I using humor at this moment?” “How will this intervention be beneficial to my client?”

• Don’t use sarcasm, embarrassment, or teasing even if YOU think it’s funny
• Q: How many ears did Davy Crockett have?
• A: Three-his left ear, his right ear and his frontier

Knock, knock...
Who’s There?...
Ashe..
Ashe who?
Bless You
Intervention Methods

Children & Pre-Teen

1. Make funny voices, Yoda, Dogs, Cars
2. Knock-Knock jokes
3. Clowning (Caution not for young children)
4. Repeat words in a creative pattern
5. Bend it like letter B
6. Grin It
7. Push Your Hands on the Wall or How to Prevent a Meltdown
Funny Voices, Silly Dances
Intervention Methods Cont.

Teens
1. What Bugs Me?
2. Balloon Juggle
3. What Song Am I?
4. Mirror Silly
5. It Annoys Me When You
6. Hilarious Present
7. Life 101funny
W.C. Fields Says,
“Start every day with a smile
and get it over with!”

THE END
REFERENCES


Berk, R. (2003). *Professors are from mars, students are from snickers.* Sterling, Va: Stylus Publishing.


