Mental health practitioners are often seeking therapeutic interventions to make their work with children and youth more engaging. Below is a list of common treatment objectives and creative activities.

**NOTE:** These interventions are for use by mental health practitioners who have been properly trained in clinical work with children and youth. Practitioners must use therapeutic activities in a clinically and theoretically sound manner, and pay special attention to the process underlying each activity.

**Treatment Focus: Rapport-Building**

**Objectives:**
- Articulate increased comfort with the therapist
- Verbalize positive thoughts about attending therapy
- Disclose information about self to the therapist

**Interventions:**

Rock, Paper, Scissors (Ages 4-10)
*Source: Structured Play-Based Interventions for Engaging Children and Adolescents in Therapy, Cavett, 2010, page 8*

Paper Bag Puppets (Ages 4-10)
*Source: More Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth, Lowenstein, 2002, page 5*

How About You? (Ages 6-12)
*Source: Creative CBT Interventions for Children with Anxiety, Lowenstein, 2016, page 27*

The "I Don't Know, I Don't Care, I Don't Want Talk About It" Game (Ages 7+)
*Source: More Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth, Lowenstein, 2002, page 3*

Five Favorites (Ages 6-12)
*Source: Creative CBT Interventions for Children with Anxiety, Lowenstein, 2016, page 28*

Google It (Ages 10+)
*Source: Sousa, in Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011, page 4*

Truth, Lie, Wish (Ages 10+)
*Source: LaRochelle, in Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011, page 36*

Therapeutic Magic Tricks (Ages 5+)

Funny Faces (Ages 6-10)
*Source: Snailham, in Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011, page 2*

Draw Switch (Ages 5+)

**Treatment Focus: Relaxation and Coping Skills**

**Objectives:**
-Verbalize an understanding of body responses to stress and how relaxation can reduce these responses
-Utilize an appropriate coping strategy to self-calm
-Decrease feelings of stress

**Interventions:**

**Cookie Breathing Game (Ages 4-10)**
Source: *Creative CBT Interventions for Children with Anxiety*, Lowenstein, 2016, page 49

**Wild Monkeys Can Be Calm (Ages 4-10)**
Source: Hartig, in *Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three*, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011, page 131

**Awesome App (Ages 11+)**
Source: *Creative CBT Interventions for Children with Anxiety*, Lowenstein, 2016, page 53

**Pinwheels (Ages 3-10)**
Source: *Play Therapy with Traumatized Children*, Goodyear-Brown, 2010, page 111

**Air Ball (Ages 5-14)**

**Hockey Life (Ages 8-16)**
Source: Sun-Reid, in *Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three*, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011, page 112

**Protective Armor (Ages 7-14)**

**Music Carpet Ride for Calming (Ages 4+)**
Source: *70 Play Activities for Better Thinking, Self-Regulation, Learning, and Behavior*, Kenney, 2016

**Grounding, Soothing, and Regulating Idea Cards (Ages 7+)**
Source: *A Therapeutic Treasure Box for Working with Children and Adolescents with Developmental Trauma*, Treisman, 2017

**Feel Better Bag (Ages 7+)**
Source: *Creative Interventions for Bereaved Children*, Lowenstein, 2006b

**Hug (Ages 3+)**

**Fabulous Frogs (Ages 4+)**
Source: Brace, in *Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three*, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011, page 109

**Sweet Dream Box (Ages 3-10)**

**Treatment Focus: Feelings Expression**

**Objectives:**
-Verbally articulate a range of feelings in various situations
-Identify the connection between different feelings and their appropriate facial expressions
-Articulate the intensity of various emotional states

**Interventions:**
Guess Which Hand Game (Ages 3-10)
Source: Creative CBT Interventions for Children with Anxiety, Lowenstein, 2016, page 63

Lego Emotion House (Ages 7-12)
Source: Play Based Interventions for Autism Spectrum Disorder and Other Developmental Disabilities, Grant, 2016

The Pick-Up Sticks Game (Ages 6-12)

Feelings Mish Mosh (Ages 4-8)

Feelings Photo Shoot (Ages 4+)
Source: Structured Play-Based Interventions for Engaging Children and Adolescents in Therapy, Cavett, 2010, page 64

Feelings Hide and Seek (Ages 5-10)

Mood Music (Ages 6-12)

Letting the Cat Out of the Bag (Ages 3-8)

Feelings Tic Tac Toe (Ages 8-12)
Source: Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth, Lowenstein, 1999, page 34

Basketball (Ages 7+)
Source: Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth, Lowenstein, 1999, page 29

Air Hockey Feelings Game (Ages 8-12)
Source: Creative CBT Interventions for Children with Anxiety, Lowenstein, 2016, page 65

Red or Black (Ages 6-12)

Mancala Feeling Stones (Ages 7+)
Source: Van Hollander, in Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011, page 60

Treatment Focus: Anger Management

Objectives:
- Verbally identify situations, thoughts, and feelings that trigger anger
- Verbally articulate feelings masked by anger
- Verbalize an understanding of the internal warning signs of anger
- Implement an appropriate self-calming strategy to reduce the frequency of aggressive anger outbursts
- Increase compliance with rules at home and school
- Increase verbalizations of acceptance of responsibility for misbehavior
- Parents to establish and maintain appropriate limits when the child reacts in a verbally or physically aggressive manner
- Parents will say an appropriate labelled praise statement to child at least once per day to increase the child’s positive behaviors
- Increase the frequency of positive parent-child interactions
Interventions:

I Get Angry When… (Ages 7-12)

The Mad Game (Ages 7-10)
Source: Davidson, in 101 Favorite Play Therapy Techniques, Edited by Kaduson & Schaefer, 1997, page 224

Warning Cards (Ages 7-12)

Core Feeling Cards (Ages 7-12)

If You’re Mad and You Know It (Ages 4-6)

Don’t Flip Your Lid (Ages 6-12)
Source: More Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth, Lowenstein, 2002, page 72

Rate It (Ages 9+)
Source: More Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth, Lowenstein, 2002, page 68

Road Rage (Ages 7-12)
Source: More Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth, Lowenstein, 2002, page 64

Balloons of Anger (Ages 7-12)
Source: Horn, in 101 Favorite Play Therapy Techniques, Edited by Kaduson & Schaefer, 1997, page 250

Angry Character (Ages 7-12)
Source: Bulak, in Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011, page 98

Angry Yes Calm Yes (Ages 7-12)
Source: Play Based Interventions for Autism Spectrum Disorder and Other Developmental Disabilities, Grant, 2016

Brag Journal (Ages 3-12)
Source: Source: Cory Helps Kids Cope with Sexual Abuse, Lowenstein, 2014, page 31

123 Magic Parenting Program DVD (3-12)
Source: Phelan

Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) (All ages)
Source: Sanders

Playdate (Ages 3-12)
Source: Creative CBT Interventions for Children with Anxiety, Lowenstein, 2016, page 127

Treatment Focus: Social Skills

Objectives:
Increase pro-social behavior such as following rules, good manners, active listening, turn-taking, sharing materials, assertiveness, respecting personal space, maintaining appropriate discretion when discussing personal information

**Interventions:**

Bubbles (Ages 4-6)

Getting Along with Others Game (Ages 7+)
Source: *More Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth*, Lowenstein, 2002, page 84

The Social Brick Road (Ages 7-12)
Source: *AutPlay Therapy for Children and Adolescents on the Autism Spectrum: A Behavioral Play-Based Approach*, Grant, 2017

The “May I… Thank You” Card Game (Ages 6-10)

Where Does it Belong? (Ages 4-10)

Work It Out Game (Ages 6-12)
Source: *Play Therapy: Engaging & Powerful Techniques for the Treatment of Childhood Disorders*, Mellenthin, 2018, page 130

Captain’s Quarter’s Game (6-10)

Stop, Slow, Go (Ages 6-10)
Source: Johnson, in *Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three*, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011, page 85

Hands Off! That’s the Rule (Ages 4-10)
Source: Reis, in: *Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families*, Edited by Lowenstein, 2008, page 134

Who, What, Where, and When (Ages 5-16)

Magic Carpet Ride (Ages 4-7)
Source: *Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth*, Lowenstein, 1999, page 58

Who’s Got the Turtle? Game (Ages 3-7)

Hugs (Ages 4-12)
Source: *Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth*, Lowenstein, 1999, page 67

Building Blocks (Ages 7-16)
Source: *Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth*, Lowenstein, 1999, page 70

InventoGame (Ages 12+)

Line-Up Game (Ages 8-16)
Treatment Focus: Self-Esteem

Objectives:
- Increase positive verbalizations about self
- Verbalize an understanding that self-worth is inside, not outside, of oneself

Interventions:

The Colors of Me (Ages 6+)

I Have Heart (Ages 7+)

Positive Postings (Ages 6+)

Positive Thinking Checkers (Ages 7-12)
Source: Anderson, in *Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three*, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011, page 155

Gift Bag (Ages 9+)

Blind Self Session (Ages 9+)

Empowering Bracelets (Ages 7+)

Inside the Special Box (Ages 4-12)

Kaleidoscope of Hope (Ages 10+)
Source: DeVries, in *Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three*, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011, page 148

Balloon Bounce (Ages 7-10)
Source: *Creative Interventions for Bereaved Children*, Lowenstein, 2006b, page 123

The Hero in You (Ages 9+)
Source: *Creative Interventions for Troubled Children and Youth*, Lowenstein, 1999, page 92

Write on Board (Ages 9+)

Treatment Focus: Termination

Objectives:
- Verbally articulate an appropriate understanding of why, when, and how therapy will end
- Verbally articulate positive gains made in therapy
- Verbally articulate a positive goodbye experience

**Interventions:**

Cookie Jar (Ages 3-10)
Source: *Creative CBT Interventions for Children with Anxiety*, Lowenstein, 2016, page 132

Saying Good-bye: Breaking the Links in a Chain (Ages 4-10)
Source: Lawrence, in *101 Favorite Play Therapy Techniques Volume Three*, Edited by Kaduson & Schaefer, 2003, page 77

What I Learned Layered Gift (Ages 7+)
Source: *Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families*, Edited by Lowenstein, 2008, page 177

Putting the Puzzle Pieces of Resiliency Together (Ages 12+)

Garden of Growth (Ages 8+)
Source: Cassano, in *Assessment and Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families Volume Three*, Edited by Lowenstein, 2011, page 176