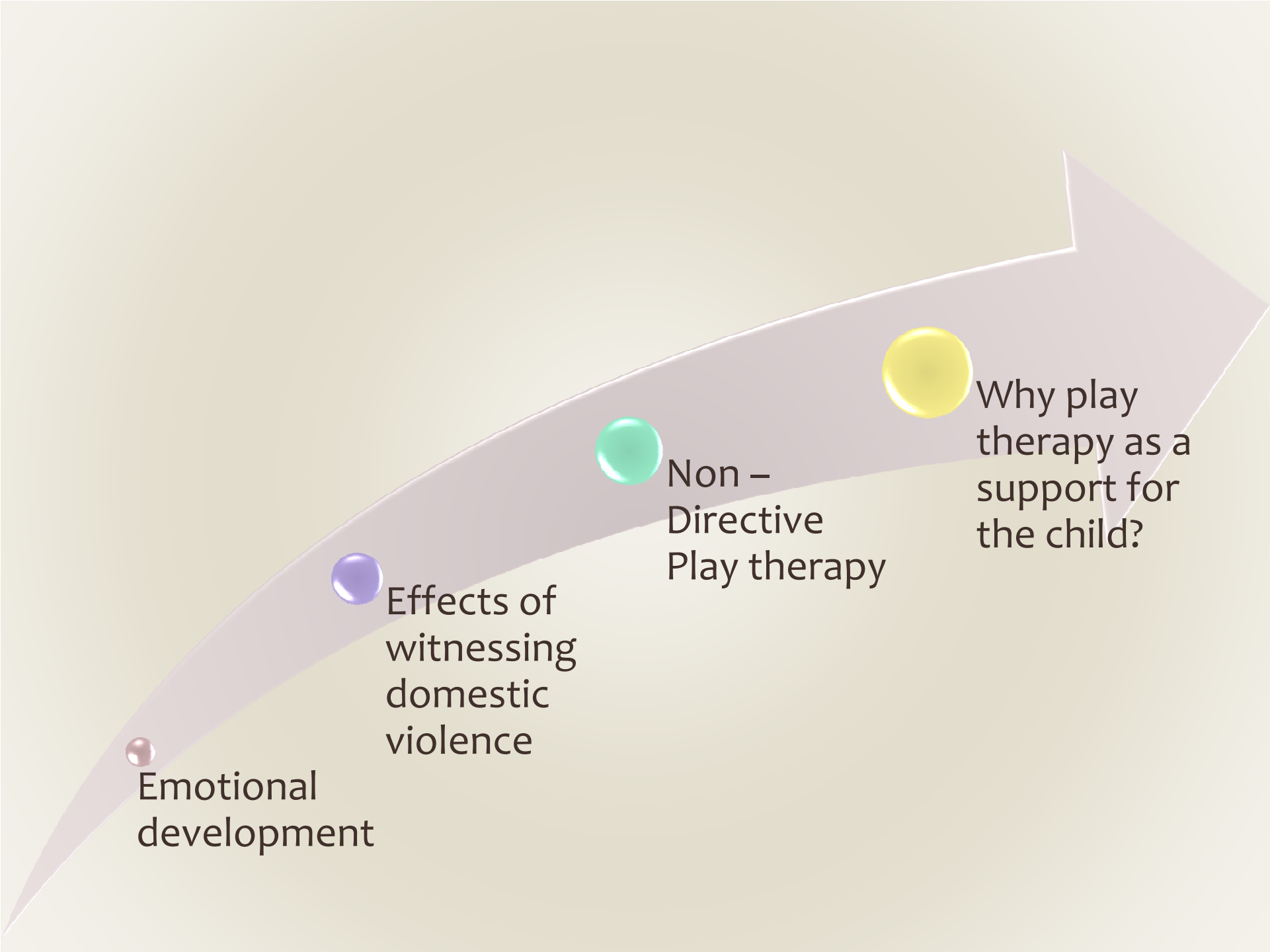


**Non-directive Play Therapy as a Crisis
Intervention for
Pre-school Children in Women's
Domestic Violence Refuges
in Ireland**

Presented by

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Emotional
development

Effects of
witnessing
domestic
violence

Non –
Directive
Play therapy

Why play
therapy as a
support for
the child?

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn,


If children live with hostility, they learn to fight,

If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive,

If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy,

If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilt.

Introduction

 Pre-school child is “a child who has not attained the age of six years...not attending a national school..or educational programme similar”(Department of Health and Children; 1996; pp11)

 **Emotional development**

Emotional Abuse

- ✿ Children's first (1999) suggests exposure to domestic violence is **emotional abuse**
- ✿ Found in a relationship between the parent/ guardian and the child
- ✿ More damaging effects than sexual or physical abuse as evidence of harm is not clear

Effects of Witnessing Domestic Violence

- * Behavioural
- * Ambivalence towards their father
- * Risk of abuse/ violence

Non-directive Play Therapy

 Virginia Axline (1947; 1949)

“play is a natural medium for self-expression”
(ibid; pp16).

“He is out in the sun, and the only shadows are
the ones which he himself wishes to cast”

(ibid; pp17)

Eight Principals for Non- Directive Play Therapy

- ✿ A warm and friendly relationship must develop
- ✿ The child is accepted for who they are
- ✿ The relationship is permissive
- ✿ The therapist is alert to the child's feelings and actions
- ✿ Respect the child's ability
- ✿ The child leads the sessions
- ✿ The sessions progress at the child's pace
- ✿ Clear boundaries are set

Continued.....

 **Group therapy**

 **Constraints of Non-directive Play Therapy**


 Time

 Parents

 Expectations

Application towards Women's refuges

Information on the child

 “the timing of intervention is crucial when a child needs help, intervention should follow quickly and intensively”
(Buckley; 2006;27)

The physical setting

 Designated room

 Clear roles

Continued.....

Frequency, timing and length of sessions

 30-40 minutes

 Individuality of each child

Confidentiality and referring agents

“the child lives in a world of his own and very few really understand him. There is such a rush and pressure in modern times that it is difficult for a child....many people are tempted to exploit his personality, and so he defends his identity”

(Axline; 1947; pp23)

Why play therapy in Women's refuges for pre-school children?

- ✿ Section 3.1 of the Care Act (1991)
- ✿ Gap in the system
- ✿ It does not cure the child, it helps to develop understanding of their experience and feelings
- ✿ Children can take this 'skill' with them upon leaving the refuge

If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.

If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If children live with security, they learn to have faith in
themselves and in those about them.

If children live with friendliness, they learn the world
is a nice place in which to live.

Dorothy Law Nolte (1924-2005)

Thank you for your time

Any Questions?