

# Playful ways to develop neurodivergent identity and increase family communication and connection

## Workshop

Autistic children experience and engage with the world in unique and meaningful ways. However, being neurodivergent within a predominantly neurotypical society can present significant challenges. The family home may serve as a source of safety and regulation, or conversely, contribute to the child's stress and dysregulation. Play therapists can harness the therapeutic powers of play to support children in developing a positive neurodivergent identity, while also fostering awareness, understanding, and respectful communication around differences within families. Greater awareness of a child's autistic differences can enable parents and carers to better support and co-regulate their child.

This workshop illustrates the unique role of play therapists in helping children and families understand neurodivergence, facilitating opportunities for improved communication and interaction.

### Presenter: Dr Fiona Zandt



Dr Fiona Zandt is a Clinical Psychologist and Registered Play Therapist who has worked with children and families for over 20 years. She has a highly regarded private practice in Melbourne, Australia, has worked at the Royal Children's Hospital for over 20 years and is currently working as a Clinical Educator within the Mental Health Service. Fiona loves to write and has published a number of best-selling books for therapists. Her latest book, *Creative Ways to Help Children Regulate and Manage Anger* was released in 2024. Fiona also works as a guest lecturer and co-founded Creative Child Therapy Workshops in 2014, offering workshops and online courses with her colleague Suzanne Barrett.

### Presenters Professional Affiliations

Clinical Psychologist and Registered Play Therapist  
Creative Child Therapy Workshops