

Therapeutic Engagement of Children and Adolescents

**THERAPEUTIC
ENGAGEMENT OF
CHILDREN AND
ADOLESCENTS**

*PLAY, SYMBOL, DRAWING, AND
STORYTELLING STRATEGIES*

DAVID A. CRENSHAW

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出版者:

出版时间: 2008-2

装帧:

isbn: 9780765705716

This book addresses the issues that child and adolescent therapists struggle with the most—how to meaningfully engage and create conditions for transformative change with children and teens who are unwilling participants at the outset and who regard any allowed influence by the therapist to be a competitive defeat. To engage these particularly reluctant children, Dr. Crenshaw has expanded the variety of stories offered in a previous book *Engaging Resistant Children in Therapy*, and added not only drawing, but symbol work and play therapy variations to offers choices and a range of tools to involve them in a meaningful collaborative therapeutic process. The book begins with a review of research and a rationale for using tools consisting of symbolic play for younger children and the therapeutic use of symbols, drawing, and storytelling in order to create portals of entry to reach disconnected children. The book is organized in chapters along major therapeutic goals as follows with specific tools described to meet the objectives: the challenge of therapeutic engagement with reluctant children; relational strategies to engage heart and mind; the therapeutic use of symbols to access the internal and relational worlds of the child or teen; building the therapeutic alliance with strategies that honor strengths; strategies to strengthen the self-observer; facilitating empathy for self and others; strategies to access the pain of social rejection; tools to address grief and traumatic loss; the 'quest for home' strategies; and the delicate operation of facilitating hope. The strategies described were chosen and developed based on and informed by a vast developmental psychopathology.

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