



CROSSROADS
COLLECTIVE

CONNECTIONS

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From the Editor's Desk

The change in the seasons is upon us. As the leaves change colours sometimes individuals can be overwhelmed by new schedules, responsibilities, and stress. This is a prime opportunity to access the services of Crossroads Collective to help you deal with these new situations and stressors.

For parents, utilizing the play therapy services is an opportunity to help reduce interpersonal difficulties between parents and their children. Our counsellors who offer play therapy services are trained and competent to help children learn new skills to interact with others including their parents.

- Michael Zibauer

Checking-in for September

Crossroad's counsellor's schedules are set for September; feel free to take the opportunity to book your counselling sessions. Your counsellors will contact you through email to offer you your desired time slots. If you know what time works for you or are new to Crossroads and seeking counselling support, don't hesitate to contact us.

Crossroads offers a sliding scale for affordable counselling if finances are a concern. One of those areas is the Counselling Internship Program, which involves highly skilled and dedicated university students who are completing their Master's degrees and are training to become clinical therapists. Other means of financial support come from direct billing to Autism funding, CKNW, Children's Charity, Variety Club and other private benefactor grants.

-Loretta Thorgeirson

Play Therapy Explained

Play Therapy is a therapeutic approach that allows children the space to express, create and process their experiences freely. Play therapists apply this approach to support the individual to work through their psychosocial difficulties and to promote growth and development.

Within the Play Therapy session, the therapist's role is to allow the child the freedom to express themselves and to build and maintain a positive rapport that is fully respectful and accepting. The child is not directed or rushed during therapy. The counsellor facilitates the session by reflecting on the emotions and feelings of the child in the effort to help them gain insight.

Some of the key objectives of play therapy are that the child will improve their self-concept, self-acceptance, and self-reliance. They can improve their decision-making ability and build upon their coping skills, and increase their ability to have empathy for themselves and others. They can also improve their relationships, increase their social and problem-solving skills, and learn to be responsible. Anxiety, worry, and depression can also be reduced.

The relationship between family members can improve through play therapy. The therapist can help them process their emotions so the communication and empathy between the parent and the child can be created or restored.

Crossroads Collective uses Play Therapy to support children and to engage and allow them the opportunity to process and work through their feelings. There is meaning in the objects and toys used in play therapy. At Crossroads our play therapists have an assortment of objects, toys, games that allow the child to choose and explore during their session.

To become a certified Play Therapist, training must be completed. Counsellors can complete their certification through online programs, including coursework, instructional videos, exams and practical experience. Our therapists at Crossroads Collective have been trained in Play Therapy to provide this service to the clients.

-Loretta Thorgeirson



Lisa Moore: Our Owner

Lisa Moore is the Owner, Director of Business Management of Crossroads Collective, Langley, BC. She has her Master's degree in Counselling Psychology and has her RCC (Registered Clinical Counselling) and CCC (Canadian Clinical Counselling) certification. Additionally, Lisa has experience working as a Senior Executive in Sales and Marketing, which allows her to combine her knowledge of human development with her business acumen to serve her clients in our local community.

Lisa specializes and supervises in Child and Youth Therapy Program and is certified in Play Therapy program at the Collective and provides counselling to a variety of age groups ranging from kids, youth and adults. Her passion to help children stems from her personal narrative and journey raising her neurodiverse kids. Lisa derives great joy to support neurodiverse families and advocate for their needs and rights. Holding this noble vision at heart, Lisa partnered up to open her very own multi-disciplinary clinic and ensured the place offered all kind of services for the betterment of health and wellness for one and all.



Today, Crossroads Collective takes pride in offering multiple therapeutic services to heal and grow for their valued clients. Built upon four important pillars of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health, Lisa and her business partner, Marianne Cottingham, wish to provide people with holistic, professional, and most importantly, personalized experience at the clinic. Each day Lisa works diligently, to provide everyone at the Collective a strong sense of belonging and connection.

An Interview with Lisa Moore

Mansheel: Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule for this interview. It is quite the honor to catch you and ask you some exciting questions!

Lisa: It is my pleasure. Thanks for having me.

Mansheel: What an incredibly journey for you and Crossroads Collective! It wasn't too long ago that you began with just a seedling of desire to support individuals through their ups and downs in life. You rose to success with your counselling skillset and business background and opened up your very own clinic during a pandemic alongside your partner, Marianne Cottingham. It's remarkable how your vision has gradually expanded into a multidisciplinary clinic where you offer all kinds of services for your valuable clients. How do you feel, looking back?

Lisa: Yeah, it's been quite the journey. We officially opened up our clinic in 2019, but not too long after, we were hit by the pandemic. We didn't expect for the business to grow and expand in the way that it did considering the kind of impact Covid had on the world.

Marianne and I had a vision to make this place multidisciplinary simply because we were so connected with the community. That is exactly how we were able to provide a range of services. For me specifically, because I have special needs' children, I knew there was a need for behavior intervention, play therapy, music therapy, dietitian apart from counselling services. All these things I've mentioned come into play when you look at kids from a holistic framework. When Covid happened, Marianne and I felt that we really needed to give back to the community as there was lot of fear and grief. There was an overall need for mental health and wellness. This is when we opened up our internship program. I think much of it turned out in the way that when we gave to the community, the *community* gave back to us. Through word of mouth, clients coming in our door and through other therapists applying to work with us or other adjunct services that we offer, people began approaching us. When I talk about a wraparound approach for our clients, this approach occurred and developed naturally. We had people coming to us through our partnerships from other

associates and other organizations, like EAP's, Langley Community Services or CKNW, Variety Club, and local physicians. We had people collaborating with us by bringing in grants to support people in need. For me, it is remarkable that if you give to the community, they give back. I feel this has been instrumental in our growth.

M: That's beautiful. To grow the clinic exponentially at the time of the pandemic, that in itself is such a feat to accomplish. Crossroads Collective has only become bigger and better. Did you ever imagine it to be amazing and successful to this degree?

L: No, no [laughs]. I thought Marianne and I were just going to open up a counselling clinic and help people.

M: Yeah [laughs] What do you think makes Crossroads Collective so special that our clients wish to keep returning to us and continue to refer the clinic to their friends and family?

L: I think it's a sense of community; meaning that many of our clients are partners with us. For instance, the people we used for services around the clinic have returned to us for counselling services. It's almost like an internal cross referral. I remember this moment where I was walking up to the front desk and I saw one of my clients. Let's call her 'Alice'. Alice was sitting in the waiting room and I said, "Oh Alice, we don't have an appointment today." She responded saying "No no, we don't but I'm here to see Marianne for a massage." I was watching her interact and then for subsequent weeks afterwards, I saw her in the waiting room at the same time for her same appointment but this time she was talking to another lady that she did not know. They soon became friends because they would both happen to be at the clinic at the same time. That sense of communi-

ty, where people come and feel safe, is what matters. We've also been a safe haven for our LGBTQ+ community for a long time now; we had a sticker on our door that conveys the message that our space welcomes everyone. Crossroads Collective has been associated as an accepting space by our clients where people feel they're taken care of.



M: Yes, and that can make a huge impact. Connection goes a long way!

L: Yes, absolutely.

M: Lisa, your most unique quality as an owner of a clinic is that you take time to make personal conversations with each and every one of your staff members. You make connections and are highly involved in projects around the clinic irrespective of how big or small they are. You may not always be physically present but you're easily accessible. How do you remain so dedicated to the Collective despite having such a busy schedule?

L: I think there a couple of reasons for this. Having a business acumen helps and I am passionate about what I do. When you do something that you love, it doesn't feel like work. I'll sidestep here and refer to Alfred Adler. If you're in good mental health, how do you sustain happiness and stability in life? He mentions 3 Cs; the first one is you feel 'capable'. That means that you get up in the morning and you love what you do. It's knowing you're good at what you do and enjoying what you do. The second one is making it 'count'. That means the work you do matters to others, that *you* matter to others. The third piece is 'connection' that you have connection with others. I think that really would epitomize me. This is why I am so passionate about the Collective because I have a skillset to do what I do. I'm passionate about what I do because I want to help other people. Also, this helps me feel connected and bring people together.

M: That's wonderful. Yeah, and your work ethic and philosophy really comes through because you truly are hands on and we appreciate your knowledge about things around the clinic.

L: Haha, well, I'm always hanging in the peripheral...watching around.

M: That's extremely helpful because the clinic is always buzzing and it needs constant attention to ensure everything is running smoothly. [Laughs] Tell us what more we can expect in time to come?

L: I think we're going to expand to different locations. We wish to make our service accessible across the province. I even have some ideas to bring it Canada wide! The other aspect I would like to dive into is the realm of mobile services and supportive housing. There are several group homes, homeless shelters, and long-term care facilities. I'd like to explore how we can bring our services and make them portable and accessible to these agencies. Not all homeless shelters or community centers have access to the best counsellors and RCCs, so *how* do we bring our services outside the clinic and into other communities? How can we bring our program, our expertise, and our Associates [Counsellors] into the community? I don't feel we need to be this one stationary clinic that clients come to. I'm looking to expand our clinic in a way where the professionals take the initiative to reach to people, especially those who may not always be in a privileged position to come to the clinic.

M: That's amazing!

L: Exactly. Covid has been instrumental in helping us think creatively because counselling over Zoom was not as popular before and no one really conducted group sessions via computer prior to Covid. We can now satellite ourselves out to other communities. I'm finding creative ways to reach more and more people.

M: Wow, that is exciting, indeed, not to mention noble and well-intended.

Let's shift gears a little bit and talk about your experience as a Counsellor. You've been working in the field for several years now. What area brings out your greatest passion and why?

L: I think working with underprivileged people really fulfills me. In a sense, I feel underprivileged people don't have access to a lot of information and then take those people that have been through trauma-they can be dysregulated that they're not able to get the resources that are available to them. Taking the role of an advocate, on their behalf, is what brings me joy. I'll give you an example. I had a client this week and they came over on a worker program. They were being harassed and abused but they had no idea that they had the ability to stand up for themselves. They weren't aware of their rights of making a complaint to immigration or applying for EI or medical leave. To be able to advocate for them, educate them, and provide them with resources really drives me. This role of advocacy can be in any population, any client-adult, senior citizen, anyone really. To assist whoever is underprivileged and provide them access to vital information greatly fulfills me.

M: That's a great thought. We need more people to support those who may not always be able to stand up for themselves. What would you say are the greatest challenges that come up in your role as a Counsellor?

L: Finances! [laughs]

M: Oh yeah, I can see that presenting as challenge in our everchanging economy.

L: Not having access to mental health -the fact that MSP does not provide any kind of coverage is our biggest barrier.

M: Absolutely and those factors are beyond our control. Hmm.





M: Let's talk a little about your counselling skillsets. You've brought play therapy to life at Crossroads and have worked behind the scenes to make it so successful. Why is play therapy a popular choice amongst parents and kids, Lisa?

L: Well, I think because a lot of times children don't have a voice...or parents don't understand how to connect with them in a way that's meaningful. Maybe the parents are also going through their own trauma and don't have the bandwidth to support their children. I think what brought me to really love this particular intervention or therapy is the fact that I am able to provide support children who don't always have the words to convey their emotions.

I conducted my first Sandplay therapy and I was blown away at how effective it was in helping me understand and assist children in sessions.

I'll give you an example. I gave a child several animals to represent her immediate family members. She chose the mouse for her father and buried him deep under the sand, and then she took out a lion to represent her mother. Play revealed vital information about the relationship between her parents.

M: Hmm, that is so interesting...

L: A four-year-old may not always have the words for self-expression and often times, it takes children a lot of time to share what's on their mind.

M: Yeah..whereas play therapy can provide the opportunity and space for children to unravel their psyche and subconscious thoughts for collective processing. Showcasing it visually is far easier for children than to put it into abstract words or to explain it. I can totally see why it would be popular. Can you guide us through the process of choosing a specific technique within play, to cater to the specific needs of a child?

L: There are many different interventions, but often times, we rely on our 'go to' techniques because one has to develop the therapeutic relationship first. For my first session, I often choose 'Ungame'. Any time I've played this game, there are so many things that unveil organically. I have a spiritual side to me that makes me believe that children wish to unload things to trusted adults but they don't know how to. Any time I've played 'Ungame', there's magic in the room. I don't pre-choose the cards but the right questions *always* seem to fall in the hands of children and important themes prop up slowly.

M: That's beautiful.

L: If you offer safe space to a child and provide the therapeutic relationship through games and play, that's when true magic happens.

M: I'm a Teacher and I've played this game at school too, and I do agree that the elements you've mentioned really deepen conversations and allow emotions to come up. So powerful.

M: Okay Lisa. How does play therapy unfold within multiple sessions? Should parents keep a few things in mind when sending their children to play therapy?

L: I think things unfold *because* of therapeutic relationship. Once you build that trust, the child will feel like secure enough to talk to someone in a safe environment. The biggest component is trust. I have had kids who started seeing me when they were just 8 years old and now they are 13-14. They still come in once a month because they want to check in and talk about their feelings. As they continue to develop and grow emotionally, they just want to keep coming to this place just so they can be themselves. It might have been a place to

play Monopoly and eat Jellybeans once upon a time, but they still wish to come back to someone that *they* feel cares about them.

M: Awe, that is sweet. Perhaps parents can keep in mind that play therapy isn't a "one-off experience", where kids will come play and unleash their concerns and emotions all in one go.

L: Yes, therapeutic relationship is a gradual process and is built with time. There's another thing that parents should know. It is important to be very careful when connecting a counsellor and child for therapy. This will be the first experience that a child will have with the therapist, so I generally tell parents to stay outside during the session and to not berate their children in the car once the session is complete or force them to share what was revealed during the session. If we mess this up and children have a bad experience at age 7, they will never go to a therapist again. Therapy can become damaging if it is not done properly.

M: That's an important point to note. Can adults consider play therapy, too?

L: Well, I get play therapy every time I play with the children. [Laughs]

M: [Laughs]

L: My first response would be yes, absolutely. Many of us are neurotypical and many of us are neurodiverse. For instance, an ADHD person may play a game while they are talking because it may be hard for them to sit still with their own emotions. Play, in this case, can be very helpful and assist clients during therapy. I know neurodiverse adults who play 'Uno' as they speak because they are accessing a specific part of their brain as they engage in play. It gets them to start talking about stuff, whereas it can be intimidating sometimes to just sit on a chair and speak when asked to.

M: I see that games can act as a catalyst sometimes, to make our clients more comfortable. It's great that play can be integrated into adult counselling for those who are interested. Great! How involved are the counsellors during play therapy? Do they sit back and let the child engage in play or are they partaking in play too?

L: It depends on the activity. With very young children, it is more child directed. You provide children with toys, they direct the play and you observe. My approach is the same even with older children. I prefer older children exercising their autonomy and choosing a game of their choice that we can play together. As therapeutic alliance grows, you can insert yourself more often and be more directive in the conversation.

M: This makes sense. You connect and interact with the child and wait for appropriate moments to get more insight.

L: Yes, exactly. During 'Ungame', if a question comes up and I have more background about a specific issue, I may utilize the opportunity and ask the child to elaborate on it. Timing and therapeutic alliance is key and, in this case, I may even direct the conversation even though the child directed the activity.

M: Got it. You have immense experience with children and youth. Would you say every child benefits from play?

L: Whether we're using an actual game or not, I think the way we approach play matters. Whether or not we're playful in our interaction, matters. Counselling can be playful, humorous, lighthearted, and hopeful. In one way, we can embed play in all types of counselling across all age groups.

M: Right, I do agree that counselling need not be a solemn affair. We can bring our intrinsic, playful side in the way we interact and communicate with our clients.



L: One can have some really bad things happen to them, but we can still provide our clients with hope and show them the light at the end of the tunnel. I'm an Adlerian therapist and this is very much embedded in his counselling philosophy. I strongly feel our experiences don't define us. We can overcome our obstacles *if* we do the work.

This ties in with play therapy because we are teaching children at a very young age that things can get better provided they do the work. When kids learn to overcome their own obstacles, they feel a sense of accomplishment and pride for themselves. A lot of my young clients say to me that they would like to be like me when they grow up. They wish to be a therapist because they want to be able to help people in the way I helped them. Isn't that sweet?

M: That is beautiful and heartfelt. They recognize the feeling they were left with at the end of therapy, and that is what inspires them to do good for others someday. I am a teacher and let me tell you it's all about the connections. As a therapist, it's all the more important to ensure kids feel safe and comfortable to trust us with their tiny little hearts.

M: Are parents ever invited the play sessions to witness their children in action? Why or why not?

L: There are some rooms at the clinic with windows, where parents *can* observe their child in action. Some therapies such as Parent-Child Interaction Therapy allows parents to see their child interacting with the counsellor. Play therapy and behavioral therapy can work in combination to support young children and their parents/caregivers, under specific contexts. I tend to personally steer away from typical 'hand over hand' type of training and ABA therapy, but in some scenarios, parental observation and behavioral therapy can prove to be beneficial. Crossroads Collective likes to collaborate with parents in unique ways.

L: I usually work independently with the child and then collaborate and involve parents accordingly. Each counselling case is different. A 15-year-old child does not need too much hand holding whereas a 4-year-old may need some initial parental support to strengthen a connection with the counsellor at the clinic.

M: Yes, this is understandable. Such cool information nuggets about play therapy and its benefits on children and families. It's been so great chatting to you about your counselling philosophy and hearing about your rich counselling experiences. Thank you for your time, really. I have really enjoyed learning about you and your journey thus far. We are reaching the end of the interview, and I'm about to ask my last question. Are you ready? [Laughs]

L: [Laughs] Bring it on!

M: Lisa, how is Crossroads Collective unique and unlike any other counselling clinic in the area? Why should kids, youth, and adults choose our clinic for our services-play therapy or otherwise?

L: Basically, we're a multidisciplinary clinic. We look at wellness holistically and not just in terms of the services we offer, but also from a clinicians' base. We can talk as a team and come together to help our clients. We can have the Dietitian, the Intern, the Therapist, and the Speech Therapist working in collaboration, all at the same time. We offer support to children at home, their school and in the community. Other clinics aren't necessarily providing this kind of service. We are open to working collectively with other agencies to ensure the child is working on the same goals at home, school and in the community, using the very same strategies!

M: Yes, multidisciplinary team allows collaboration for sure!

What I personally love about Crossroads Collective is that every professional has the autonomy to exercise their own therapeutic and wellness philosophy. Often clinics can have one specific style to offer to clients whereas the Collective is very multifaceted and diverse in techniques, and styles and professionals.

L: Yes, absolutely. We are as diverse as our clients, really!

M: Thank you once again, Lisa. It was an absolute pleasure to interview you. I hope Crossroads Collective continues to grow and glow bigger and better with time! I know you have a client coming in soon, so I will let you go now.

L: Haha, thank you Mansheel. It was nice chatting with you as well. Have a lovely day!

- Mansheel Sawhney



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