



CHILDREN, PLAY AND CRISIS.

ROBYN MONRO MILLER
ON BEHALF OF PLAY AUSTRALIA

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"Children have a spontaneous urge to play and participate in recreational activities and will seek out opportunities to do so in the most unfavourable environments. However, certain conditions need to be assured, in accordance with children's evolving capacities, if they are to realise their rights under article 31 to the optimum extent."

(Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013:10)

IPA WORLD RESOURCES

WWW.IPAWORLD.ORG

Parents and
Carers
Resource

9 languages

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TOOL KIT

IPA Play in Crisis:
support for parents
and carers

ipa international
play
association
promoting the child's right to play



**NOW I
AM 5..**



Pandemic

COVID 2020-2021
masks, lockdowns
7,926 deaths, 6.76 million affected.

War

Ukraine 2022
...but 27 more conflicts raging
Ethnic Cleansing in Myanmar
,Civil War in Syria and Yemen

Climate Emergency

Bushfires 2018-2019, Floods 2021- 2022
Drought.
96 Local Governments in Australia have
declared a climate emergency.



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CRISIS

An unstable situation that may result in an abrupt change

TRAUMA

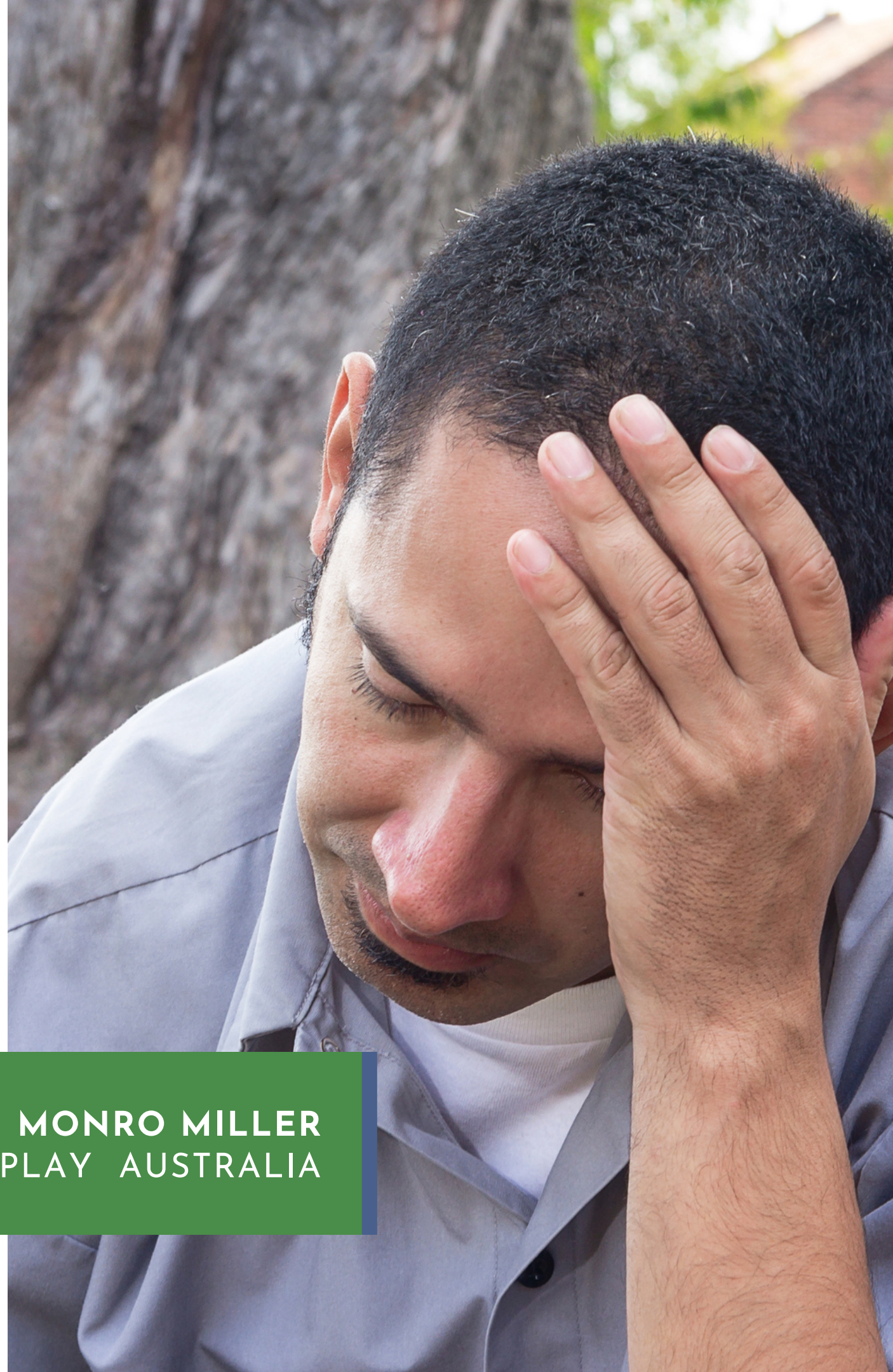
Harm either or physical or mental.

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WHEN THINGS GO WRONG..

1. What if I had done x, y or z, instead?"
2. "What will happen now?"
3. Replay' the event and invent different outcomes in order to be prepared should it happen again.

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The world of pretend play is one in which children can be free to express themselves, their ideas, their emotions, and their fantastic visions of themselves, of other people, and of the world.”

Sandra Russ
Psychologist

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Young Children lack the ability for abstract thought - play is how they can process their responses to stress.

PLAY HELPS CHILDREN COPE

**Provides the process for
cognitive adaptation to reality.**

Via one of 2 ways

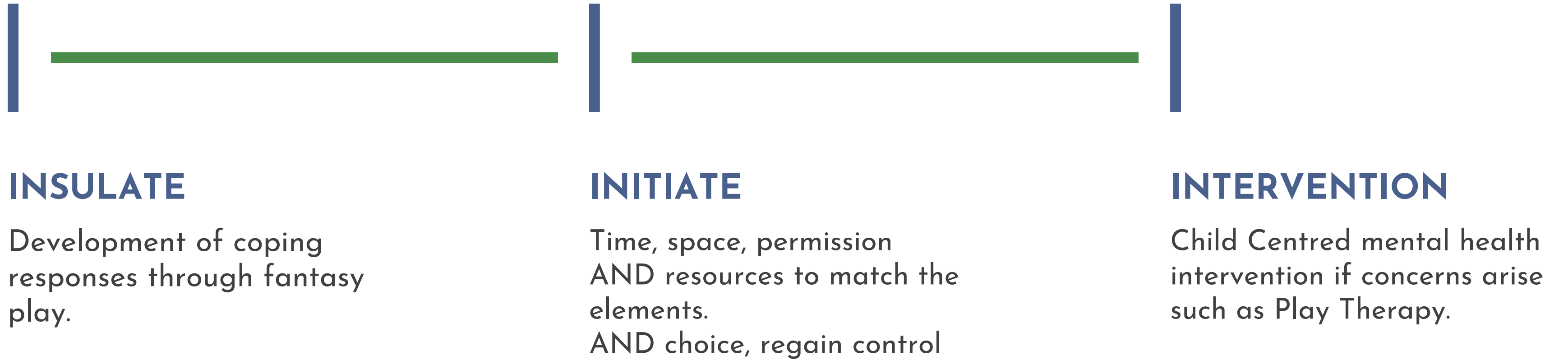
Assimilation - fit to existing ideas or
concepts

Accommodation- change perception
(Piaget)

**A mediator between the coping and
the stressor**

Capurso and Ragni 2016.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH CRISIS ..



PLAY, CHILDREN AND CRISIS

Play is a coping mechanism.

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Important in the absence or still developing abstract thought.. Childhood stress confers vulnerability for developing psychiatric disorders in later life.

A coping response is more important than the stressor. It determines if the crisis results in trauma.

How our brain perceives the crisis is what can be damaging. Play supports cognitive adaptation.

We dont have to wait to support children through crisis. Play is a protective factor.

Children who are "good at playing" have increased ability for cognitive adaptation.

Studies link this to higher pain threshold, increased well being and increased coping strategies . A longitudinal study revealed enhanced coping skills in participants 4 years later, after high levels of imagination in play were exhibited.

What will play
provide for our
children?

A world full of
Zelenskys with
not a Putin in
sight.

Robyn Monro Miller



THANK YOU!

BY ROBYN MONRO MILLER
PLAY AUSTRALIA

INTERESTING READING.

PRETEND PLAY, COPING AND SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING
((FIORELLI AND RUSS)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ985605.pdf>

PLAY AS A COPING MECHANISM (CAPURSO AND RAGNI)

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01953/full>

PLAY AUSTRALIA RESOURCE SHEET ON PLAY, CHILDREN AND CRISIS

https://www.playaustralia.org.au/sites/default/files/LibraryDownloads/PlayAus_Children%2C%20Play%20%26%20Crisis-2.pdf