



Nicki &  
Little Bear

# The **NICKI** & **LITTLE BEAR** **SHOW**

Drama Therapy for children dealing with difficult life experiences



## **NICKI & LITTLE BEAR'S MISSION**

To reach out and provide new means of communication and interaction for individuals that are experiencing life events that are challenging and emotional.

To help children and their families find meaning and comfort in the simplicity of play and imagination.

## **THE CAST**

### **NICKI**



Known in the medical community, Dr. Nicholas Nicholas received his MB – Medicine Bear – from Foothills Bear Outreach Program. He has twenty years experience working with children and is devoted to his calling. Dr. Nicholas is the voice of the show and carries a large part of the dialogue. He is friendly, humorous, easy going, and he loves telling stories.

### **LITTLE BEAR**



Little Bear is Dr. Nicholas' close friend. Little Bear has spent the last ten years working with children and his strength is in his quiet communication. A non-communicative bear, Little Bear relies on gestures, movement, writing notes and whispering in Dr. Nicholas' ear to communicate. He is a wonderful representation for children that do not know how to share their emotions.



## **WHY DRAMA THERAPY IS IMPORTANT**

Drama offers one way to articulate difficult and painful emotions in the safety of the once removed.

Drama creates an opportunity for growth and understanding within a metaphor; this is important for those who are unable to face their issues directly.

Drama is a means of communication and it facilitates interaction between children and their families.

Drama allows individuals to play - to try on different roles, scenarios, and perspectives.

Drama is a communicative art; it attempts to bridge emotions to real life settings through the use of performance.

## **HOW TO USE DRAMA THERAPY WITH CHILDREN**

There are three ways that children will experience death:

- Through their own diagnoses with a terminal illness.
- Through losing a close family member such as a parent or sibling.
- Through an indirect source: a friend or family member's experience of death, or a death in the media/literature.

How we discuss death with children depends on two factors:

- The child's age and life experiences.
- Our own life experiences and our comfort level discussing death and dying.

Children do not want to be lectured or preached at.

They respond better to a lesson that they are unaware that they are learning, for example, an interactive environment that stimulates growth and creativity.

Drama offers that modality of communication and understanding.





## **NICKI & LITTLE BEAR**

Through the use of interactive theatre, Nicki and Little Bear can connect with their audiences. They offer laughter, imagination, stories, security, and therapy as children struggle to understand the poignant issues that they are facing.

This puppet show can both facilitate and promote emotional development and the understanding of death and dying for children.

## **THE NATURE OF THE WORK**

This show begins with an introduction and warm-up. The purpose of the warm-up is to engage the audience and also introduce several other ways that drama therapy can be helpful and therapeutic for children suffering from traumatic life events.

This is interactive theatre. The format of the show is framed by questions, themes and exercises, but the content is improvisational based on the level of interaction of the audience. Improvisation is important when working with children as their focus can shift quickly.

Nicki and Little Bear are teddy bears. They are not conventional puppets run by a puppeteer behind a light curtain, but instead they are everyday stuffed animals. This allows for performances in all settings including in a large room or one-on-one bedside performance. The goal of the puppet show is not to suspend the child's belief that the puppets are real, but instead to entertain the children with stuffed animals that elicit feelings of safety, warmth, and comfort.





## THE SHOW

There are two characters: Nicki and Little Bear.

This show can be modified and remodeled for all ages.

Nicki and Little Bear have worked with individuals aged from three to eighteen.

Each show is focused and directed toward three important factors:

- Age appropriate material based on the cognitive development of the individuals.
- The nature of the audience. This work can be applied to three distinct groups:
  - The terminally ill.
  - The bereaved.
  - The acutely ill.
- The size of the audience. Nicki and Little Bear will perform for as many as twenty individuals, but also do well working one-on-one.

## NICKI AND LITTLE BEAR'S GOALS

- Ask children questions about what is concerning them.
- Explore any other issues that the children may bring forth.
- Address what the children do not understand or need to know.
- Share stories of loss and learn ways to find meaning in these stories.
- Help the children to laugh.
- Offer support to parents by allowing them to see their children laughing and engaging in play.
- Facilitate and motivate difficult and important conversations with family.

Frederick Shiller, a German philosopher, said that

**“theatre must please and instruct.”**

This mandate is incorporated into Nicki and Little Bear's shows.

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Nicki and Little Bear can be booked for group presentations as well as one-on-one sessions. If you have any questions, or are interested in booking a performance of Nicki and Little Bear, please contact Andrea Halwas.

## **ANDREA HALWAS**

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