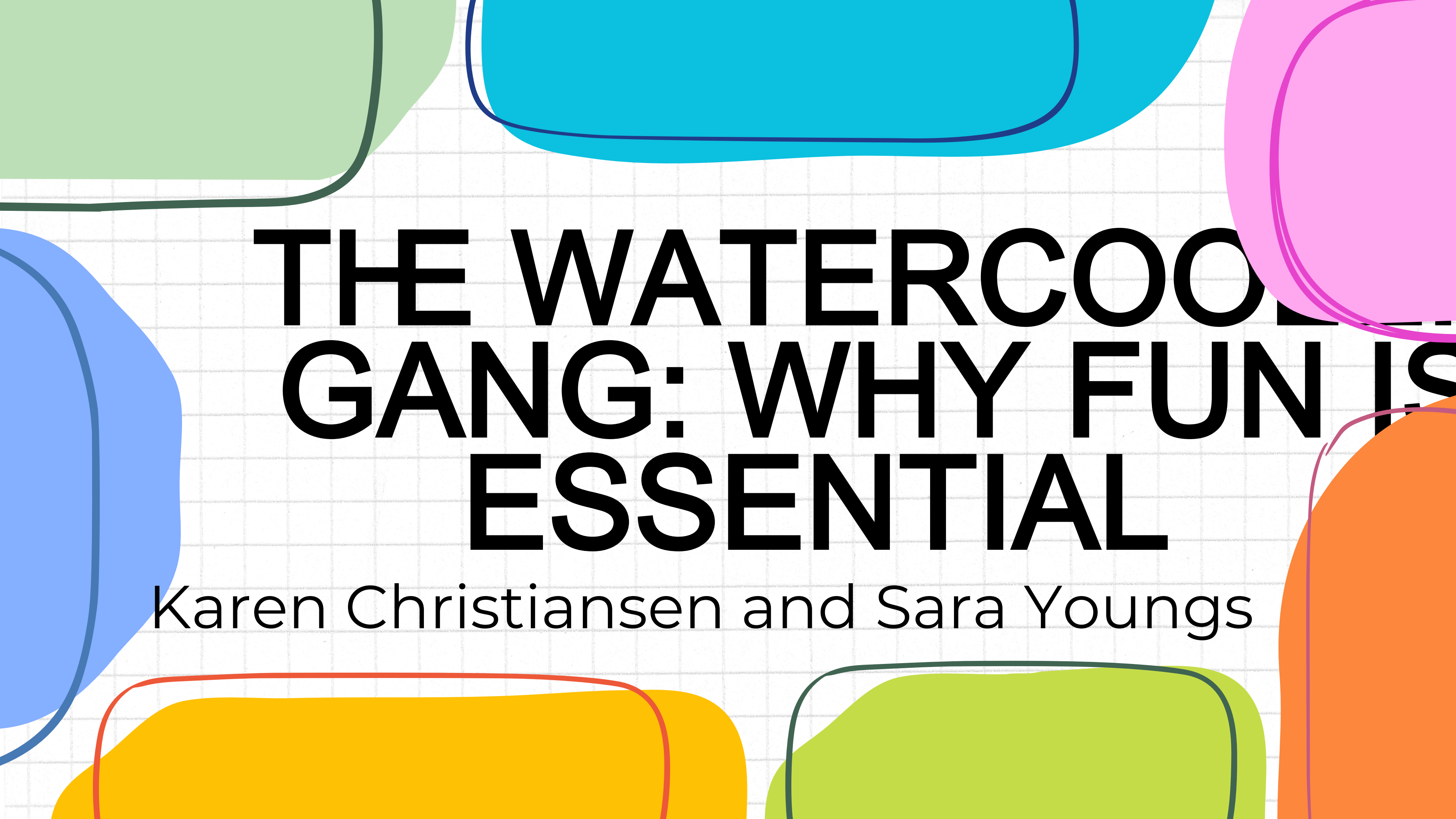
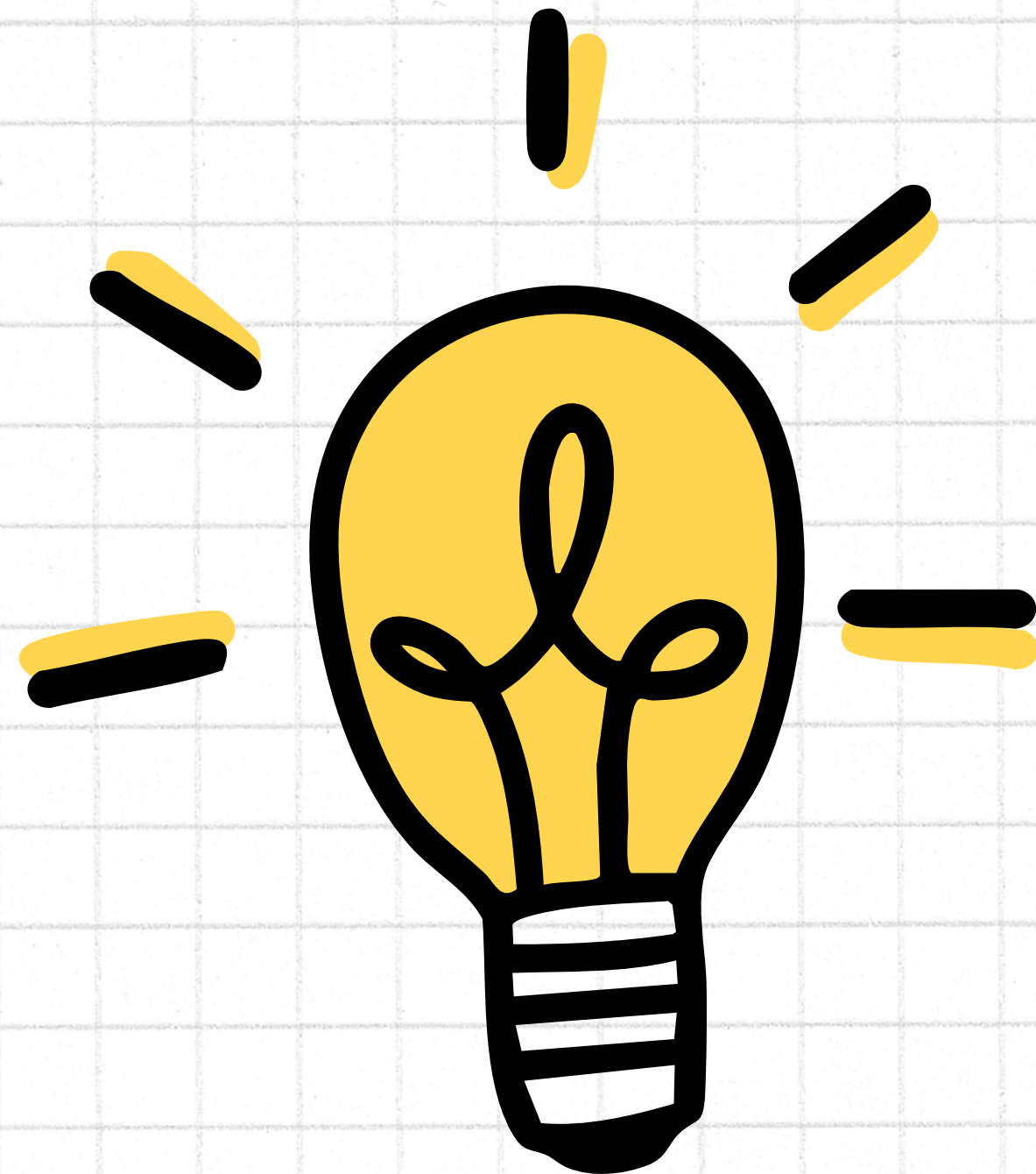


The background features a light gray grid pattern. Overlaid on this are several large, rounded, organic shapes in various colors: a light green shape in the top left, a bright blue shape in the top center, a pink shape in the top right, a light blue shape on the left side, a yellow shape in the bottom left, a lime green shape in the bottom center, and an orange shape in the bottom right.

THE WATERCOOL GANG: WHY FUN IS ESSENTIAL

Karen Christiansen and Sara Youngs

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PLAY IS IMPORTANT

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01

PLAY IS IMPORTANT

2013 STUDY: PLAYFUL ADVANTAGE

NOT JUST FOR KIDS

PLAY IN THE WORKPLACE

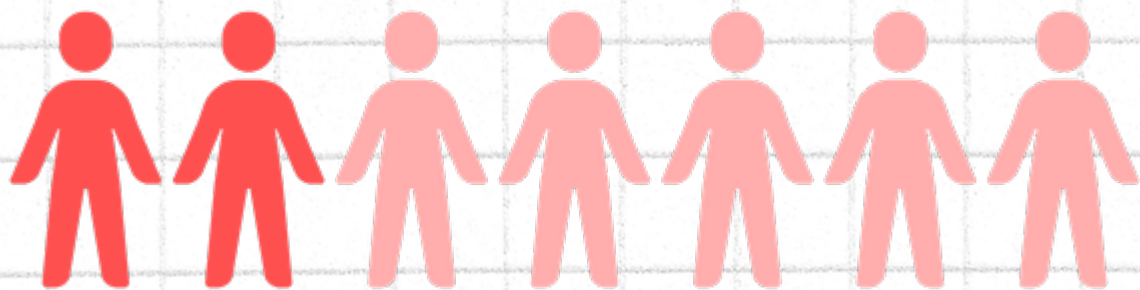


2013 STUDY: PLAYFUL ADVANTAGE

How Playfulness Enhances Coping with Stress



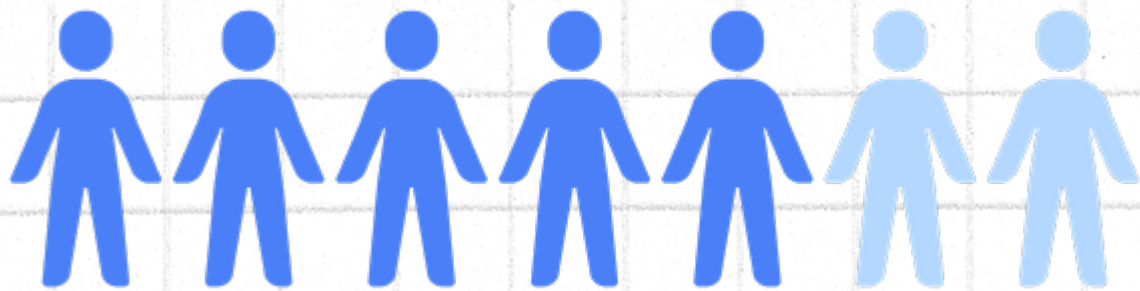
LOW PLAYFULNESS=HIGH PERCEIVED STRESS



LOW PLAYFULNESS=LESS USE OF ACTIVE
COPING & ACCEPTANCE



MED/HIGH PLAYFULNESS=LOW PERCEIVED STRESS



MED/HIGH PLAYFULNESS=GREATER USE OF
ACTIVE COPING & ACCEPTANCE

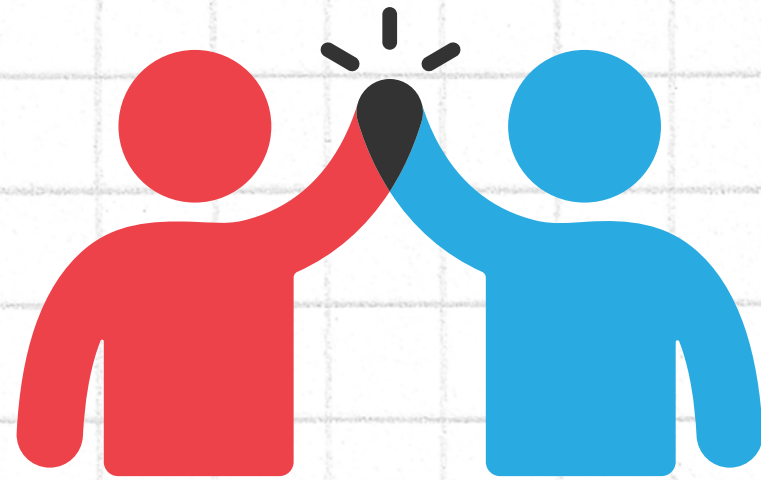


NOT JUST FOR KIDS

Societal pressure to view play as nonessential, frivolous, or nonsense in adults

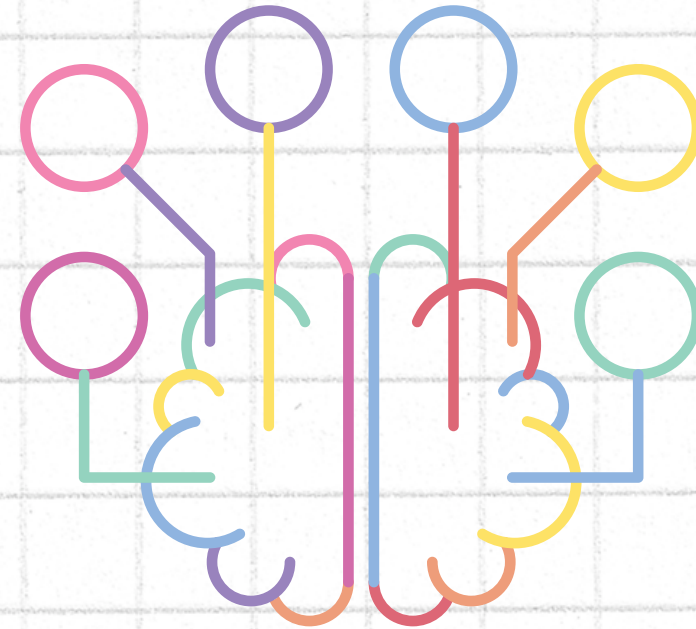
- Play in adults is often disguised under socially acceptable labels: competition or fitness
- Engaging in play builds the cognitive, physical, and social resources to survive and thrive in our lives

PLAY IN THE WORKPLACE



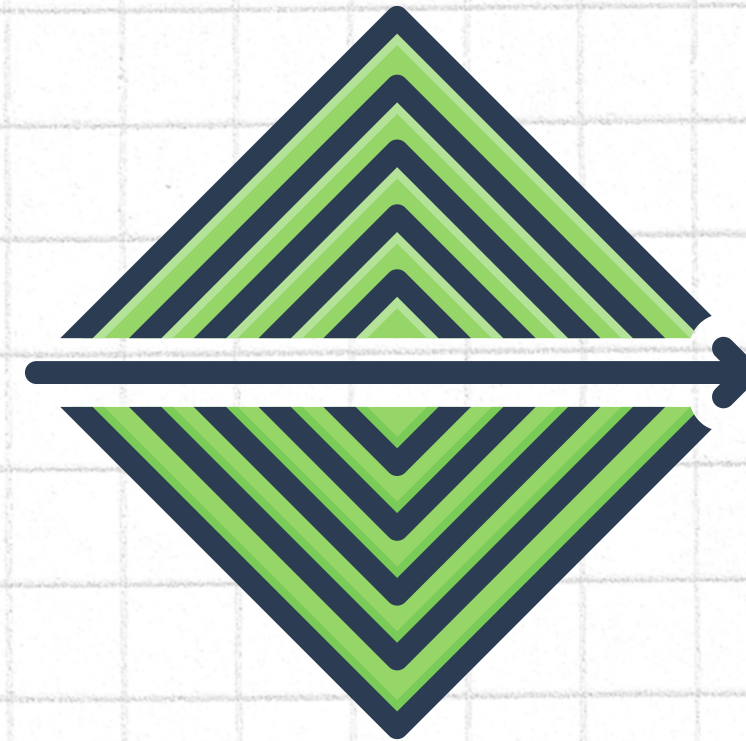
CREATING CONDITIONS TO FUNCTION AT BEST

Build moments of informal connection into the workday and design environments that invite spontaneity & interaction



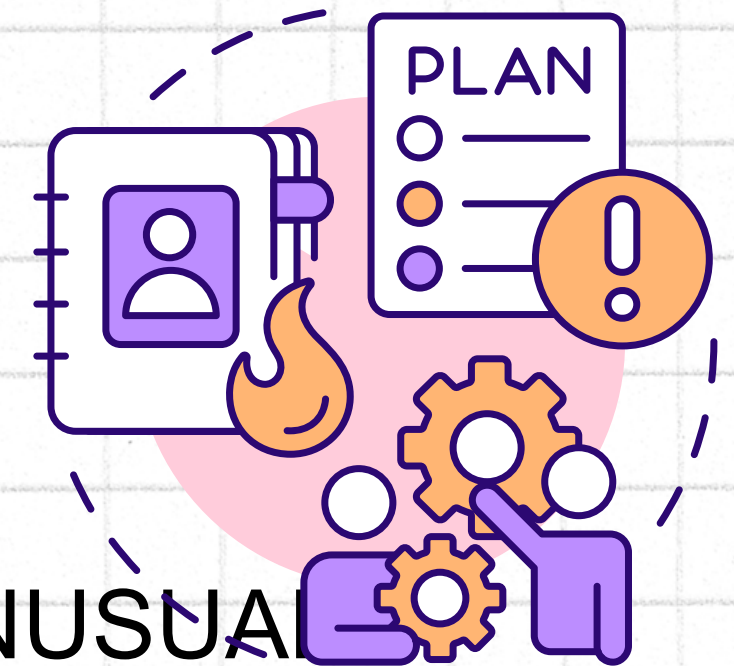
NOT A BREAK FROM WORK

Opportunity to think more flexibly, connect more authentically, and perform more sustainably



BUSINESS AS UNUSUAL

Post-pandemic, burnout out has increased & traditional work environments can hurt morale & retention



BESTRATEGIC

To be effective, be intentional about when to use play. Ensure it aligns with needs of team.

02

SCIENCE!

THE BIOLOGY OF IT ALL
WHAT PLAY DOES TO YOU
PLAY DEPRIVATION
WINDOW OF TOLERANCE



THE BIOLOGY OF IT ALL

PLAY AS A STATE

- Engaged, curious, and absorbed in an activity for its own sake
- Defined by how and why, not what
- Experience becomes the reward

PLAY AS A TRAIT

- Cognitive & emotional disposition toward life
- Quality of optimism, curiosity, humor, & adaptability
- Linked to creativity, resilience, and well-being

NOT A LEARNED BEHAVIOR

- As fundamental as drive to eat & sleep
- All mammals play
- Playful stimuli activate play circuits

NOT INCIDENTAL TO LIFE

- Core mechanism
 - Develop
 - Adapt
 - Thrive

UNIQUE

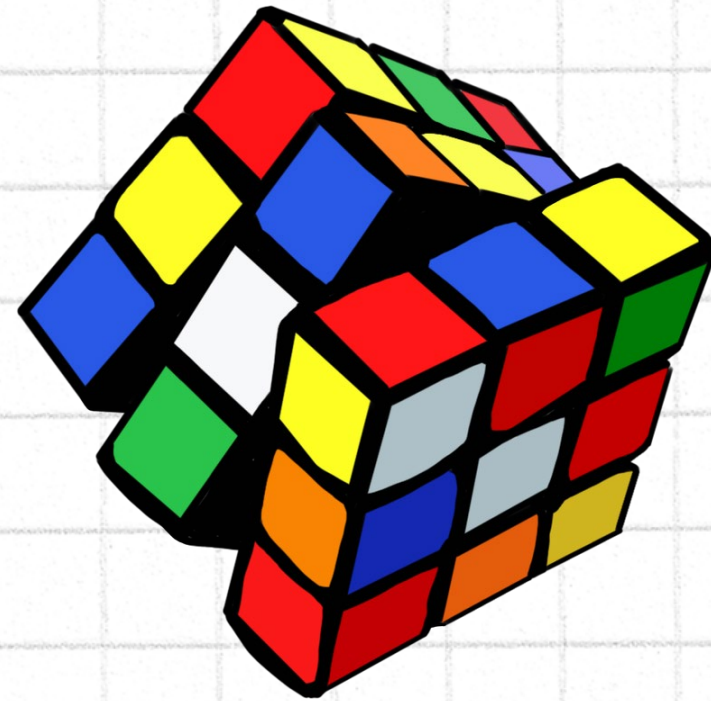
- How we play is different
- “Play nature” - distinct as a fingerprint
- Shapes how we engage, learn, and build bonds

WHAT DOES PLAY DO TO YOU?



ENHANCES CREATIVITY

Increases cognitive flexibility - new ideas generated and connections made



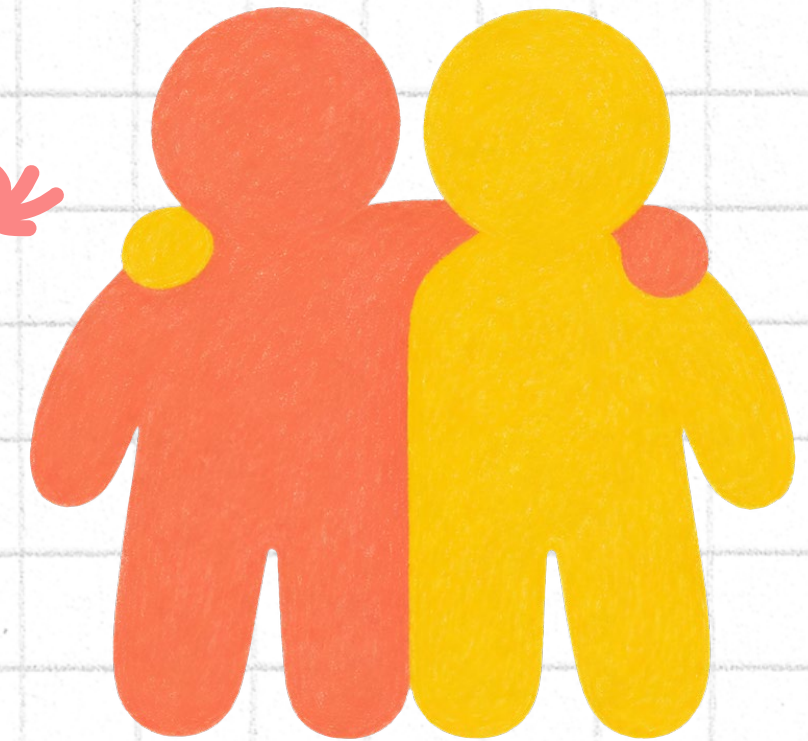
IMPROVES LEARNING & PROBLEM SOLVING

Empowers trial and error learning with low risk - accelerated skill development and insight



PROMOTES STRESS REGULATION

Pulls brain from chronic stress states - improved clarity, decision making and emotional balance



BUILDS CONNECTION & TRUST

Activates social bonds - strengthen relationships and psychological safety



PLAY DEPRIVATION CONSEQU

- Burnout
- Sustained stress
- Increased rigidity in thinking & behavior
- Reduced creativity & problem solving
- Feelings of disconnect or lack of purpose
- Lower resilience under pressure

High energy
Overwhelm/Out of control
Anger or Rage
Hypervigilance

Hyperarousal

(Fight/Flight Response)

Fear, Panic, Anxiety
Impulsivity
Flashbacks
Obsessions/Compulsions

Dysregulation

Feeling agitated, anxious, on edge, uncomfortable, but still in control

Grounded, able to regulate emotions and self-soothe, flexible, present.

Window of tolerance

In our optimal state. We can access reason and emotion.

Feeling demotivated, tired, shut-down, uncomfortable, but still in control

Dysregulation

Low energy
Dissociation
Zoned out/Numb
Autopilot

Hypoarousal

(Freeze Response)

Feeling Stuck
Low mood/flat affect
Unmotivated
Lethargic and fatigued

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

NOT FIXED- IT CAN SHRINK (STRESS) OR WIDEN (INTENTIONAL PRACTICE)

MINDFULNESS

- Build Awareness
- Be Open
- Be Accepting
- Be Present

INCREASE HAPPINESS

- Dopamine
- Oxytocin
- Serotonin
- Endorphin

BUILD RESILIENCE

- Build Connections
- Foster Wellness
- Find Purpose

REDUCE SHAME

- Name your shame
- Listen to how you speak to yourself
- Write about your shame
- Tell someone you trust
- Reframe it by using affirmations & self-compassion

03

TYPES OF PLAY

WORKPLACE FRIENDLY

OUTSIDE OF WORK

WHAT'S YOUR PLAYSTYLE?



PLAYTYPES: WORKPLACE FRIENDLY

SOCIAL

**What it is and
benefits**

Social Play at GEPL

- Share the Love potluck
- End of Summer Picnic
- Midday Matinee
- Holiday Parties



CREATIVE

**What it is and
benefits**

Creative Play at GEPL

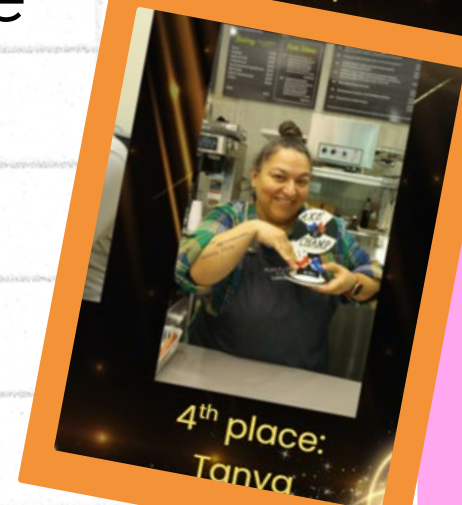
- Self portraits
- LS Team painting
- "What We Do" Inservice presentations

COMPETITIVE

**What it is and
benefits**

Competitive Play at GEPL

- Axe Throwing competition
- Youth "Pi Day" Pie Bakeoff
- Adult Inservice Jeopardy
- GEPL Inservice Pop Culture Trivia





PLAY TYPES: OUTSIDE OF W

- Attunement
- Physical
- Object
- Imaginative
- Risky
- Rough & Tumble
- Exploratory

WHAT'S YOUR PLAY STYLE?

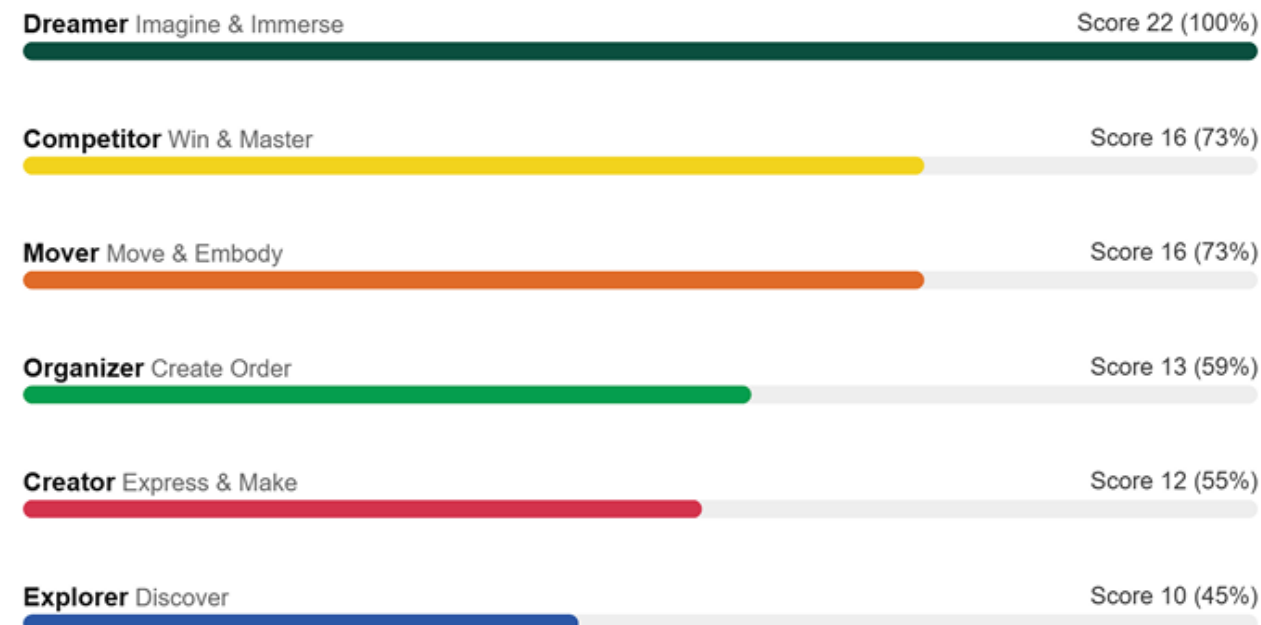
[PLAYSTYLES: DISCOVER YOUR UNIQUE PLAY NATURE | NIPLAY](#)

Dear Sara,

Thank you for taking the Play Styles Assessment. You're a Dreamer!

You live in the world of imagination and pretend, where reality bends to possibility. You find play in fantasy and stepping into alternate worlds through your mind's eye.

Your full play profile



Entry points to play

Spend 5 minutes doing absolutely nothing and call it research

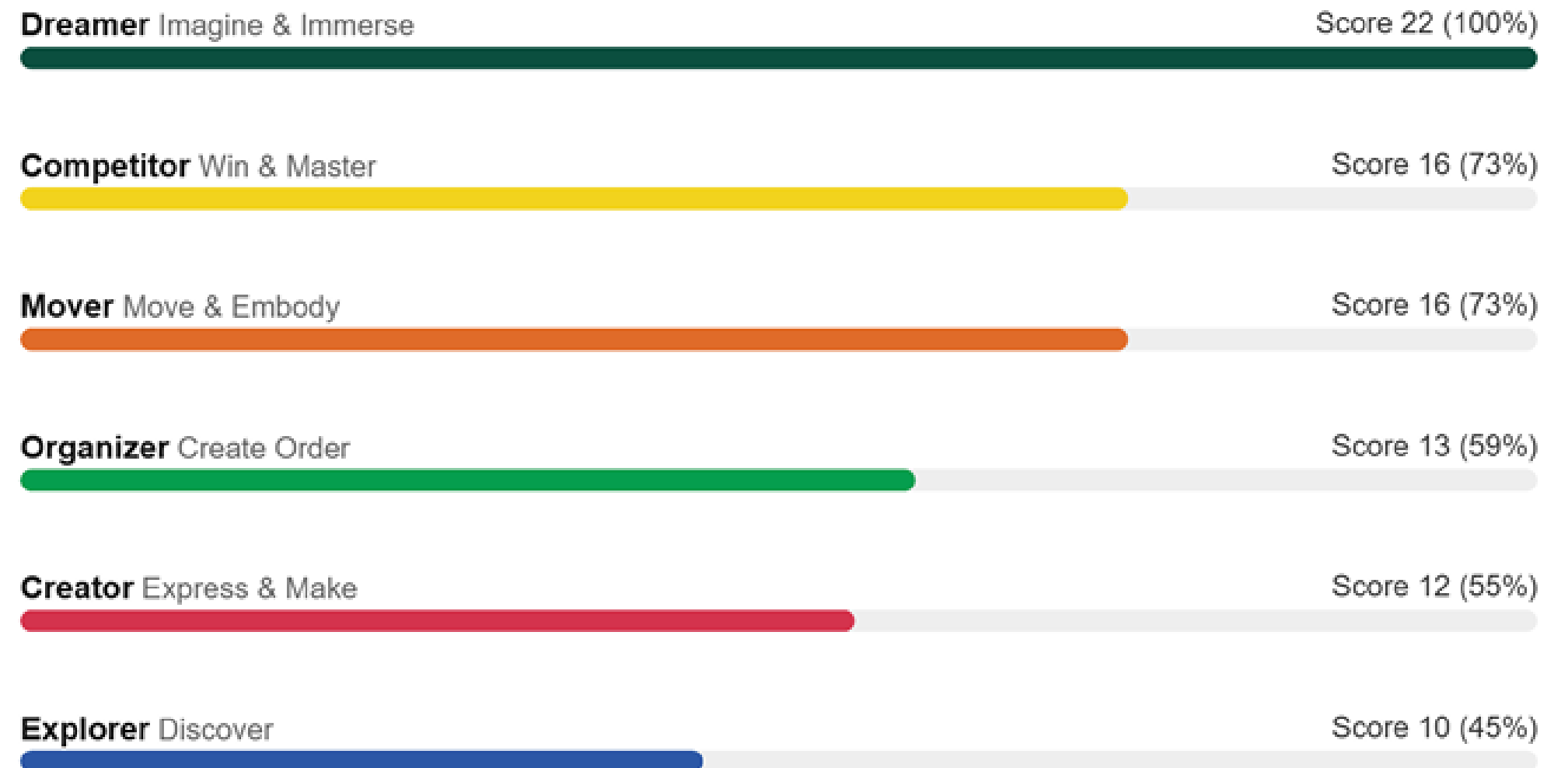
Keep a notepad by your bed to write down dreams as soon as you wake up

Book tickets to watch a concert, show, or sporting event

Your secondary style

Competitor
You're energized by challenge, games, and the pursuit of mastery or victory. You find play in testing yourself against others or your own personal bests, thriving on the structure of rules and the satisfaction of winning.

Your full play profile



Entry points to play

you

Benefits of knowing your play style

Strengths of different play styles

WHAT'S YOUR PLAY STYLE?

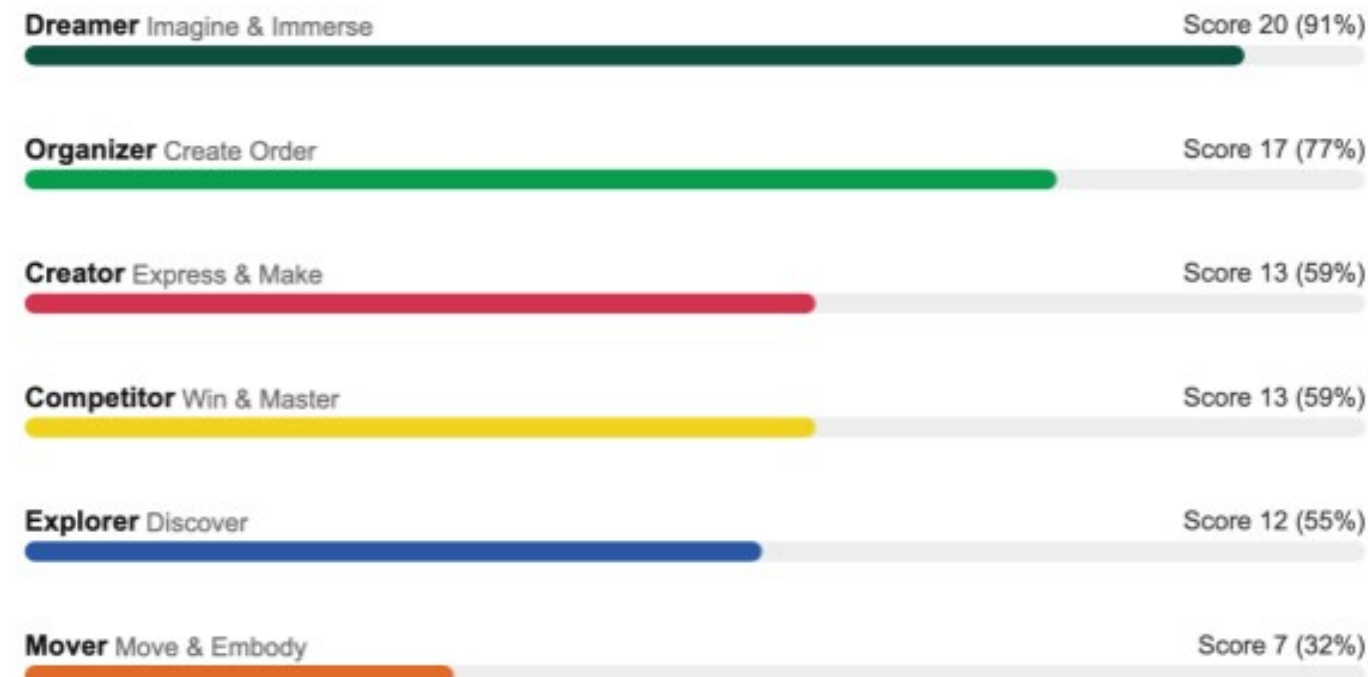
[PLAYSTYLES: DISCOVER YOUR UNIQUE PLAY NATURE | NIPLAY](#)

Dear Karen,

Thank you for taking the Play Styles Assessment. You're a Dreamer!

You live in the world of imagination and pretend, where reality bends to possibility. You find play in fantasy and stepping into alternate worlds through your mind's eye.

Your full play profile



Entry points to play

Spend 5 minutes doing absolutely nothing and call it research

Keep a notepad by your bed to write down dreams as soon as you wake up

Book tickets to watch a concert, show, or sporting event

Your secondary style

Organizer
You find satisfaction in creating order, systems, collections, and patterns. You play by sorting, categorizing, arranging, connecting people, and/or bringing structure to chaos.

Dear Karen,

Thank you for taking the Play Styles Assessment. You're a Dreamer!

You live in the world of imagination and pretend, where reality bends to possibility. You find play in fantasy and stepping into alternate worlds through your mind's eye.

Entry points to play

Spend 5 minutes doing absolutely nothing and call it research

Keep a notepad by your bed to write down dreams as soon as you wake up

Book tickets to watch a concert, show, or sporting event

Your secondary style

Organizer
You find satisfaction in creating order, systems, collections, and patterns. You play by sorting, categorizing, arranging, connecting people, and/or bringing structure to chaos.

WHAT'S YOUR PLAY STYLE?

[PLAYSTYLES: DISCOVER YOUR UNIQUE PLAY NATURE | NIPLAY](#)

Dear Catherine,

Thank you for taking the Play Styles Assessment. You're an Organizer!

You find satisfaction in creating order, systems, collections, and patterns. You play by sorting, categorizing, arranging, connecting people, and/or bringing structure to chaos.

Your full play profile



Entry points to play

- Color code your calendar, planner, or workspace
- Build a ritual around something you already do every day
- Host a small gathering to connect people

Your secondary style

Dreamer
You live in the world of imagination and pretend, where reality bends to possibility. You find play in fantasy and stepping into alternate worlds through your mind's eye.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PLAY

Dear Catherine,

Thank you for taking the Play Styles Assessment. You're an Organizer!

You find satisfaction in creating order, systems, collections, and patterns. You play by sorting, categorizing, arranging, connecting people, and/or bringing structure to chaos.

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04

PLAY AT GEPL

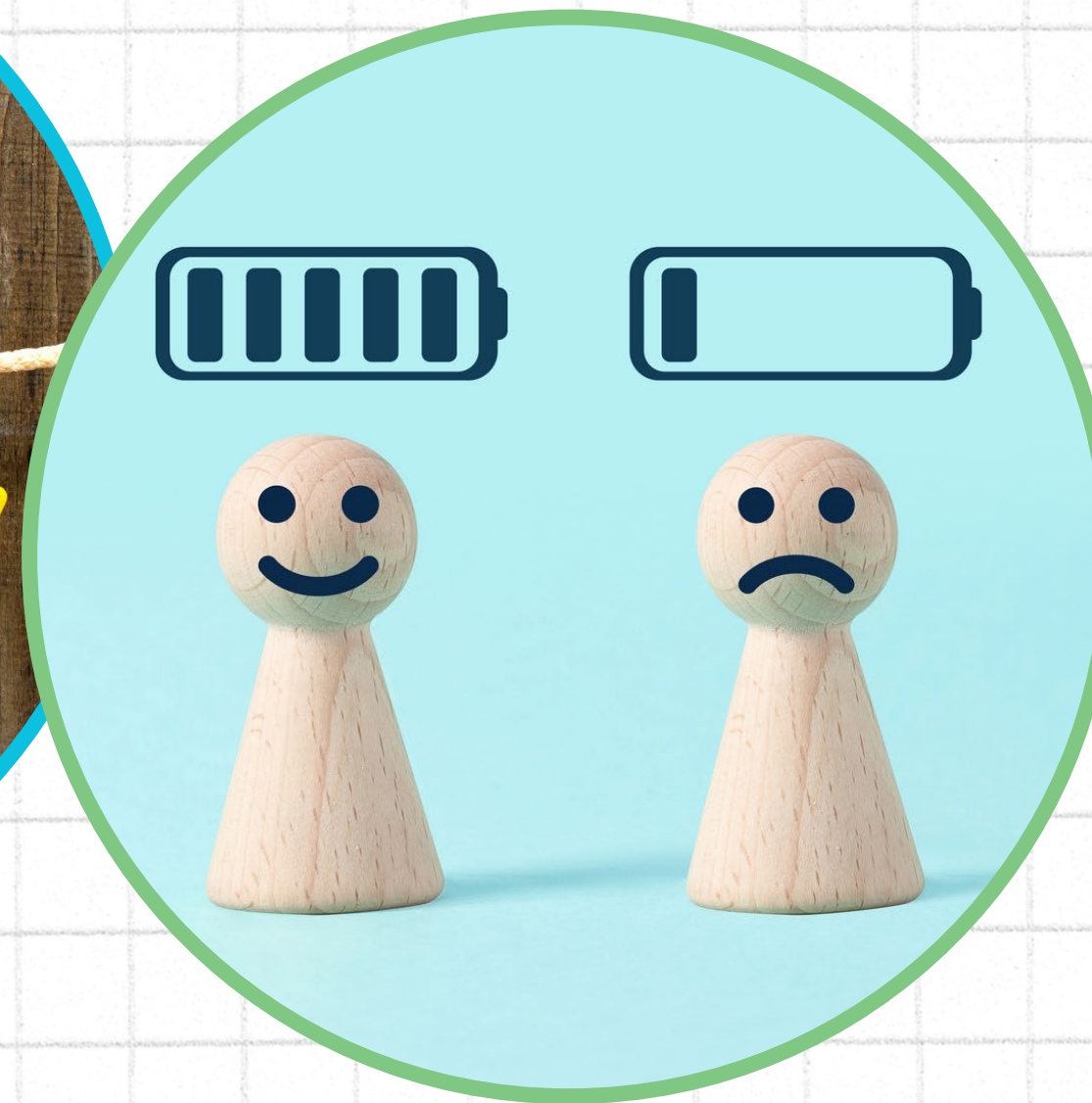
GEPLHISTORY

PLAYSTRATEGY

ADULT DEPARTMENT

GEPL SUCCESSES

WORK HARD
PLAY HARD



GEPL HISTORY

- Social Committee
- Department play
- Staff morale & staff surveys

GEPL PLAY STRATEGY



Adult Dept Water Cup Prank



2nd Annual "Share the Love" Potluck



Youth Scavenger Hunt



In-service Marshmallow Building Challenge



Youth Monthly Events

ADULT DEPARTMENT

DARREN



THE ADULT
DEPARTMENT
MASCOT



DEPT MEETING COLORING



THE ADULT DEPARTMENT
DIRECTOR INCLUDES A
MONTHLY COLORING PAGE
ON THE MEETING AGENDA
AND WE BRING MARKERS
AND COLORED PENCILS.

PORCH GOOSE

AD STAFF GET
CREATIVE
DECORATING
THEIR OWN
PORCH GOOSE



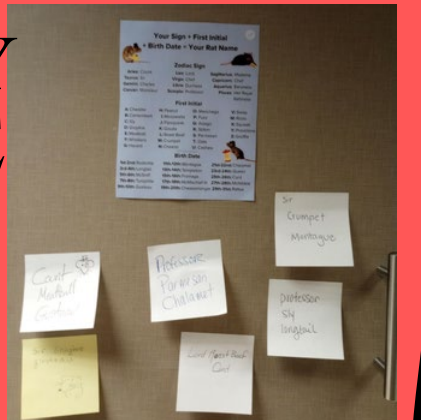
AXE THROWING



AD STAFF BLOW
OFF STEAM BY
THROWING AXES

NAME GENERATOR

STAFF PUT UP MONTHLY
NAME GENERATORS WE
FIND ONLINE AND TRY
TO GUESS WHO THEY
BELONG TO.



GEPL SUCCESSES



INCREASED PASSIVE
ACTIVITIES



GREW SOCIAL
COMMITTEE



EXPANDED EXISTING
TRADITIONS



UTILIZED STR
PLAN

05

IDEAS



SMALL STARTS

SOCIAL PLAY

- Quarterly snacks in a central locations
- Annual potluck

PASSIVE CREATIVE PLAY

- Decorate bookmarks, pumpkins, snowmen, etc.
- Dress up days
- Puzzles or Legos

BIGGER GAINS

COMPETITIVE PLAY

- Puzzle race at In-service
- Trivia for staff event



Library Appreciation Week Dress Up Day

06

RESOURCES



01

[National Institute for Play](#)

02

[Article: Understanding Your Window of Tolerance](#) (S.T.I.A.)

03

[Article: The Importance of Play for Adults](#) (Psych Central)

04

[Article: Understanding the Window of Tolerance and How it Affects You](#) (Mind My Peelings)

05

Article: How a Playful Mindset Can Boost Creativity on Your Team
(Author: Wardle, D;
Journal: *Harvard Business Review*)

06

Study: The Playful Advantage - How Playfulness Enhances Coping with Stress
(Authors: Magnuson, C. & Barnett, L, Journal: *Leisure Sciences*)



CONTACT



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Sara Youngs

Passport Coordinator
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630-790-6773



***THANK YOU AND
GO HAVE SOME FUN***