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Hello California Members of APT,

We hope you enjoy our final Newsletter of 2014. This issue will be jammed packed with great information. We hope that the information will be helpful. I will be attending the 31st Annual Association of Play Therapy International Conference in Houston, Texas. For anyone else traveling from California, I am excited to see you there. CalAPT has expanded and we are excited to have the San Diego Chapter join CalAPT. Please make sure to read the chapter updates to get more information on your local chapter.

We have had a great year thus far, and I would love to thank all the Chapter Officers for their hard work. CalAPT runs most effectively due to the officers that volunteer their time to organize trainings. If anyone is interested in joining the team of chapter officers please contact your current chapter president. We also hope that some of you will consider becoming apart of the 2015 Board. For interest in Board Positions please contact Mary Ruth at maryruthcross@comcast.net Being a chapter officer or a Board Member provides you with great networking opportunities within the play therapy field, and free trainings within the California region, for more information on chapter officer positions and trainings provided by different chapters please visit the CalAPT website leadership page at http://www.calplaytherapy.org/LEADERSHIP.html and email the current chapter officers.

Being an APT member provides you with discounted rates for full day trainings, Quarterly Journals, and the Play Therapy Magazine. Membership also allows for discounted rates for the Annual National Play Therapy Conference. To renew your membership please talk with your nearby chapter or visit the APT Website at http://www.a4pt.org/memberapp.cfm

Aseye Allah, CALAPT 2014 President

arkaa3@yahoo.com

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**President’s Message**

**Special Announcement**

**CALAPT LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES!**

Interested in networking, expanding your resume and attending FREE play therapy trainings? If so, then CALAPT leadership may be for you!

**Benefits of service as a CALAPT officer include:**

- Free attendance at all CALAPT Chapter Workshops throughout the state
- Free continuing education credits specific to play therapy for the BBS, APA, and APT
- Leadership experience to add to your resume
- Opportunities to network & strengthen your professional career while serving the play therapy community

Leadership opportunities are available at the local chapter level as well as the executive board level. Contact President, Aseye Allah at arkaa3@yahoo.com for more information

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**Coming in 2015!**

San Diego Chapter

Join us for a meet and greet in December 2014!

For more information Contact: sdcalapt@gmail.com
**Book Review:**

**Dinosaurs Divorce – A Guide for Changing Families**  
Karla Gonzalez, LMFT

I have found in my experience as a previous Child Therapist and currently as a Family Court Services Specialist, this has been a very helpful tool in helping children and parents normalize their experiences, facilitate their grieving process, and give them an understanding of how parents' responses as they go through their separation really impacts their children!

Divorces and separations are a life crisis, particularly when children are in the middle of it all, but understanding why it happens and knowing that all ranges of emotions are likely to be experienced could make a child's adjustment to his/her new family composition much smoother. Dinosaurs Divorce is a great illustration of what divorce is, why it happens, what can occur throughout the process, and how it can impact the family. It also serves as a guide to identifying different interactions the child might notice from their parents, what range of feelings they can expect to experience, and even what behaviors are ok or unacceptable! The book's animated descriptions are ideal for a child going through separation or divorce, making it easy to understand and relate to! It could also serve as a tool in therapy to help educate parents of what their child's experience could be like!

Karla Gonzalez, LMFT  
President-Elect, LA Chapter  
LA County; Family Court Services Specialist

**Featured Article:**

**Play Therapy - It's all in Those Little Moments!**  
Kristy Schadt, MFT, RPT-S

So often, as a Play Therapist who teaches (RPT-S), I am asked for tools/interventions to use with clients in the playroom. As therapists are learning the art of play therapy this request seems practical and relevant. How could one learn about "doing" play therapy unless you know what can be done? When I was a new therapist, I, too, was on the hunt for all those fun and interesting interventions. Why is it that I struggle so often with this request?

The answer is that I am concerned that the need for "what to do" seems to outweigh the importance of "how to be." I also think that we as therapists are pressured in so many different ways to focus on change that we may lose sight of what needs to guide our work. In a world filled with empirically based studies (which are needed if we are to continue to provide play therapy services to our clients), managed care demands, and busy parents with both limited time and resources, we must be mindful of these issues. The expectation is for behavioral changes (which are measurable) that happen fairly quickly.
Yet, so often our clients are hurting. They are injured emotionally and sometimes physically. Healing, unlike short-term behavioral change, involves trust and time. How can we rush through the healing process? Rushing and pushing a child to change before they are ready, may actually cause more injury to them. It is also important to keep in mind that resources are limited and reality is important to pay attention to. The goal is to find a balance between "what to do" and "how to be" with our clients. Taking advantage of those special moments and paying full attention to both ourselves and our clients will help with that task.

I am a Play Therapist with a nice pouch of tools. I have an great play room, filled with many toys and materials. I have been trained in Play Therapy, Somatic Experiencing (I am a Somatic Experience Practitioner) and also have training in EMDR. I have taken many trainings and read many books on play therapy so I have quite a few ideas of what kinds of interventions may be helpful with my clients. (If you attend any of the play therapy classes I offer you will walk away with many tools!).

I also believe that case conceptualization, goal setting, and writing a treatment plan are as important as the fun and interesting interventions. A good play therapist will also help parents learn how to implement and carry out a positive reward program and help them develop positive parenting skills.

I have found that by providing a variety of opportunities for the clients in my practice to engage in play therapy activities helps them re-wire their central nervous systems (balancing SNS-sympathetic nervous system with PNS-parasympathetic nervous system), and strengthen relationships within the family. Not a day goes by in my playroom without a sword fight, sandtray, or art activity. It is important to note that these experiences are chosen by my clients - in an environment that has been designed specifically and with a belief that my clients know the way to their own healing. My task, in addition to providing these opportunities, is to listen and be fully present.... and pay attention to those "Little Things".

It is very useful to have tools in your toolbox: Interventions for specific issues and symptoms and goals written and established with a clear sense of a plan in order to help a young child heal their hurts and mend their hearts. We also need to grow our awareness and pay attention to the way we are in response to the children we care for. Our clients need us to slow down so that we can be aware of ourselves and their responses to us. We need to listen to the path of healing that our clients choose, as this will be the best journey for them.

As a new therapist in the 1990's I read my second book on play therapy- Play Therapy -The Art of the Relationship by Garry Landreth. (Dibbs in Search of Self by Virginia Axline was my first read!) In that wonderful book Dr. Landreth shares on developing the therapeutic relationship:

"I have sometimes experienced a fantasy that the developing relationship with a child in play therapy is like going into a completely dark room, in which someone has placed a beautiful and very valuable vase on a stand. I enter the pitch black room knowing the vase is in there somewhere and wanting to make contact with it so that I can discover what it is like and appreciate its beauty. Under such conditions I would not stride right into the darkness of the room and begin to grope for the location of the vase. Neither would I swing my arms to try to make contact, least I unexpectedly and unintentionally strike the stand or the prized vase, causing it to topple to the floor. Such behavior would be unthinkable. Instead, I enter the darkness of the room with caution and first stand there to begin to adjust to these new surroundings, trying to sense the dimensions of the room. I focus all of my energy on being sensitively aware of the possible existence of nearby objects.
Having adjusted to the initial darkness of the room and guided by great caution, I proceed to gently explore what is available to me in the room. My movements are slow as I begin to get acquainted with what I experience in the room, to see clearly as I can in my mind that which I experience and sense with my total being... I proceed with patience to gently feel for the vase. I do not try to rush the discovery.... I persevere with persistent patience in my effort to make contact with the vase... Finally one of my gentle hand movements touches something: I am very still knowing it is here! ....Then I begin ever so slowly to touch the vase, allowing my hands to explore its shape and beauty... The play therapy experience with a child is like this experience with the vase, and in like manner I want to approach, experience and "touch" the emotionally vulnerable child “ (Landreth, 2002)

It was after reading and absorbing this description, I began to realize the importance in the little things. I began to learn how to "settle in my own bones." I did more of my own personal work and paid greater attention to my own responses in both life and when I was with my clients. I was able to begin to notice those little things that impact our lives, both in my personal life and in the play room.

What are the little things we need to focus on? They are sometimes subtle and sometimes blatant and powerful. It is in the things I do and in the way I am - my way of being with the child - genuine, open, connected and present. Do my clients know I respect them, feel honored to share their stories and try to understand their responses to life without judgment? Do they experience me as safe? Is my environment reflective of their age and cultural needs? The environment should be a safe and secure place for our clients that says: Be yourself. Explore. Be Free. Have Fun.

Kim Vander Dussen, Psy.D., RPT-S states:
"I think it’s moments of connection when the child feels seen, heard, and believed. It’s that rush of warmth a child feels when you see them, times when a child shares something with you that holds a deep truth for them. It’s when a child looks at me and says something like - I’m going to miss my mommy forever, or when they share how afraid they were and that they don't want to feel like that again. It's also when a child is engaged in projective pretend play with you and the play clearly echoes the child's experience and they know that you know what they have felt."

It is so important that we pay attention to the child's body language. Doing so will help us know how to proceed when we are wondering: Can the child play this out? Can she speak it in words (which is not necessary, by the way)? Does this child know when "it's too much," or do I need to help him listen to his own body cues and act accordingly? I have found that if I can slow myself down and match my energy and oftentimes my body language to the child's, I then notice that they are responding to my own settling (or lack thereof). As the child matches his energy and body language to mine he seems to calm and feel a bit safer and maybe a bit more able to move on.

Garry Landreth names several factors that promote therapeutic conditions for growth. They are: "Being Real, Warm Caring and Acceptance, and Sensitive Understanding.” (2002) The therapeutic relationship is considered the cornerstone of effective therapy. The key elements in this relationship are: "Belief in the child, respect for the child, acceptance of the child, hearing the inner child, acceptance of the child's will, focus on the child's needs, freedom for the child to set her own direction, opportunity for the child to make choices, respect for the child's boundaries, patience with the process.” (2002)
Working therapeutically with children in a play therapy setting requires play therapists to have more than interventions. We must be aware of ourselves and of the children we are working with. We need to keep in mind what human beings need and then be willing to set aside our own selves for long enough to experience the miracle of healing.

Here are a few case examples of the Little Things from a few play therapists:

A young girl whose mom states "you need to tell Kristy," pauses in the middle of telling me about her abuse to pet the dog. She scoops him up in her lap feeling the weight of his body and the texture of his puppy coat. She relaxes as she takes a break and calms herself, and I notice and reinforce the brilliant way she listened to herself. She took a break and found something that helped her settle and calm.

A frightened and confused 7 year old whose parents, now divorced, continue to fight finds ways to avoid any discussion of either parent (and the child abuse report that brought her in). She curls into herself, becoming smaller, and I settle into myself noticing her discomfort and feeling mine. I encourage her as she plays with the metaphor she loves feeling empowered and free, not fearful and disloyal! She moves toward finding her own center feeling safe beneath the head of a big puppy with a special blanket over her shoulders. She takes her time and finds her way.

A sword fight or crazy dart gun battle in full swing! We take periodic breaks to "notice our breath and how we are experiencing our bodies. I ask” do you feel hot or cold, tight or loose? Notice your breath“Okay, Now let’s keep up our battle.”

Gracie, my Golden Doodle is 2 years old. She has a serious case of "Ball OCD": when she gets "ball" in her head it is hard for her to "let it go". She also is a very high energy dog and often has difficulty with "her emotional regulation."

I have two child clients on the Autism spectrum and they love this dog. They watch her learn to settle herself.

One boy spent 6 weeks looking out of the window of my office, standing very still, as he and Gracie waited for the humming birds to come close enough to the feeder hanging from the window so he could take a photo. (I’m still shocked that Gracie held still for that long beside him!).
The second boy witnessed Gracie learn how to calm herself using a positive reward system called Treat and Train - a remote treat dispenser! Mom and son witnessed this change: the slowing of her breath and the lessening of her intense energy. Mom learned the value of positive rewards, and the boy was able to model calmer behavior in just a few weeks!

~Kristy Schadt, MFT, RPT-S

My playroom is filled with glow-in-the-dark stars and planets. I often will "introduce" the "magic" of the playroom by asking the child's permission to shut the lights off. The child's excitement and wonder can be felt in the darkness (often something young children fear). We then proceed to play "with", not just "in", the dark (I wrote an article for CALAPT years ago about this). Later when the child excitedly brings the parent(s) into the room to show them the magic the adults also share this experience with their child.

~Linda Rio, MFT

A 10 year old, developmentally delayed, emotionally disturbed, traumatized boy (call him Jimmy) in foster care had major separation issues and either clung to his foster mother or engaged in many destructive behaviors. At the beginning of therapy, he would not talk, although he could. He was dissociated from his body and also didn’t play. My consultant suggested I video tape and show the video to Jimmy. Accidentally I found a children’s book which he connected with and began acting it out-Miss Nelson is Missing, which has a substitute teacher who is a witch. Over numerous sessions he took on the role of the witch/substitute teacher with great glee, including drumming and mask and was able to work through much of his trauma and dissociative response through this playful role. His foster mother was present for a number of these sessions and Jimmy would give us impossible tasks to complete, which of course we could not do successfully. He would then watch intently and with joy when I played back the session.

~Karen Pernet, LCSW, RPT-S

I like the moments when a child shows you the presenting behaviors he came to treatment for. I see this as the child is feeling more comfortable being his or her self and with our relationship! The child's play is about to shift now that they are more fully open and able to be more vulnerable.

~Katie Glickman, MFT, RPT

I love the moments when siblings are able to really connect and build on their relationship and trust through play. I have a family of 3 sisters ranging from the ages of 7 through 14 that experience a lot of conflict in the home. In the beginning the girls didn't want to be in the same room with each other. Through the use of play here are some defining moments:
- Genuine laughter - the kind that makes your heart glow
- Openness - the moments where vulnerability is high and the heart continues to be open
- Communication - allowing the needs of individuals to become really heard so that the family can connect and grow
- Building and connecting - using the sand tray within the family when you can feel the excitement grow as family members explore the figures to add to their world. Then hearing the oohhhs and aahhhhs by the girls
Creativity - observing as a child or children begin to create. Which materials do they choose? Hmmm what will be created with that? Being able to experience the process as the creativity unfolds, the parents are watching, the child's facial expressions and sounds the excitement, the learning, the process all in the moments of play therapy.

~Annette Markowitz, MFT, RPT

I feel so blessed in my life. I go to work and am honored to be included in the lives of my clients, as they share their pain and their hope, their strength and their courage. I witness human beings revisiting difficult moments and shifting the outcome of their lives! I will forever be grateful for this wonderful career. And I take my dog to work and I get paid to play all day!

Special thanks to Kim Vander Dussen, Linda Rio, Annette Markowitz, Katie Glickman, and Karen Pernet for sharing some of those "Little Moments"!

References:


Perry, Bruce D. (2013). *Brief: Reflections on Childhood, Trauma and Society*, Houston Tx: Child Trauma Academy Press


References (cont):


**Author:**

**Kristy Schadt, MFT, RPT-S** is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Registered Play Therapist Supervisor, specializing in Play Therapy in private practice at Harmony- A Family Counseling Center in Simi Valley, California. Kristy has specialized training in Trauma – EMDR and Somatic Experience- She is a Somatic Experience Practitioner. Kristy is Director of Counseling for the Free Clinic of Simi Valley. She has developed a specialized play therapy training program for interns, trainees, and other licensed mental health practitioners, who are interested in working expressively with clients. Kristy is also on staff at UCSD Extension teaching Play Therapy classes.

Kristy is an AAMFT and CAMFT Approved Supervisor and has developed and taught Play Therapy classes for the past 7 years and presents these classes in conjunction with the Free Clinic of Simi Valley and her private practice in Simi Valley.

**2014-2015 Training Schedule**

9/22/14  Introduction to Play Therapy
10/24/14  Play Therapy with Children of Substance Abusing Parents
10/25/14  Somatic Experience and Play Therapy for Traumatized Children
11/7/14  Play Therapy with Adults
11/8/14  Play Therapy and Intro to Sandray Worldplay
1/16/15  Introduction to Play Therapy 1
1/17/15  Play Therapy with Blended Families
3/20/15  Introduction to Play Therapy
3/21/15  Teaching Kids Mindfulness in Play Therapy
4/1/15  Play Therapy with Children of Divorce
4/18/15  Family Play Therapy
5/15/15  Play Therapy and Intro to Sandray Worldplay

*See article written by Kristy Schadt in this month's issue. To register, please visit our website. Hurry, classes fill up quickly!*
## Chapter Updates

### Central Coast Chapter Leadership and Update:
*The Central Coast Chapter includes the areas of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara*

**President ~ Anne C. Harris, LMFT**  
**Email:** [anneandpoozie@yahoo.com](mailto:anneandpoozie@yahoo.com)

We are very happy to have Michelle Gaulden, LMFT, RPT-S, and Rachel McSpadden-Tarver, LMFT, RPT, return to present information from the International Play Therapy Conference on Interpersonal Trauma: An Integrated Object-Relations/TF-CBT Model and Trauma and the Body: Incorporating Body-oriented principles into Play therapy to our chapter on October 25, 2014. We know that the information they share will be fascinating and will be very useful in therapy work.

In 2015 our first Chapter meeting will be on March 21, 2015, from 10am-12 pm at Cal-Poly University in San Luis Obispo. The topic will be announced soon.

Thank you,
Anne C. Harris, MFT
President, Central Coast Chapter

### Central Valley Chapter Leadership and Update:
*The Central Valley Chapter includes the areas of San Joaquin County and Modesto*

**President ~ Lisa Huerta**  
**Email:** [Mslisa87@hotmail.com](mailto:Mslisa87@hotmail.com)

The Central Valley chapter held our third 1.5 CEU chapter meeting and training in September. Attendees received 1.5 free CEUs and we had great feedback on the presentation. Our chapter is now busy preparing for our first 6 CEU workshop, to be held November 8th, 2014. We are excited to have Susan Kelsey, MFT, RPT-S as our presenter and are looking forward to her training, “Play Therapy Interventions Galore!” We’ve had a wonderfully successful year and are already looking to 2015 and bringing more Play Therapy events to our valley. Our chapter is currently looking for officers to serve in the coming year and continuing to increase our presence in the Valley. We look forward to seeing you at our events and continuing to bolster awareness and support for Play Therapy in the Central Valley. For more information, please email us at [centralvalleycalapt@gmail.com](mailto:centralvalleycalapt@gmail.com)

-Central Valley Chapter Officers

### Los Angeles Chapter Leadership and Update:
*The Los Angeles Chapter includes the areas of Los Angeles, Ventura, & the San Fernando Valley*

**President ~ Deisy Rangel, LCSW**  
**Email:** [deisyrangel@gmail.com](mailto:deisyrangel@gmail.com)

The Los Angeles chapter is pleased to have had our 1.5 CE training provided by Christy Livingston, LMFT, RPT on "Creative Play Therapy Interventions for Families with Special Needs Children”. The training took place on September 25, 2014 at The Guidance Center in Long Beach. A warm thank you to the presenter and all those who helped in the process.

To close out the year we will be having our last 1.5 training from our very own, Aseye Allah, LCSW, RPT on November 13, 2014. The topic will be on Attachment- The Healing use of Attachment in Play Therapy.

Deisy Rangel, LCSW  
Los Angeles Chapter President
Orange County Chapter Leadership and Update:
(The Orange County Chapter includes all geographic regions of Orange County)
President~ Lisa Klipfel, LMFT   Email: lisa@lisaklipfelmft.com

Save the date for our 6.0 CEU workshop on January 24, 2014. We are solidifying the details, but I can tell you this…it is a highly requested topic. We would like to stay in touch with you this fall. We are arranging a playroom tour of CAST in the next few weeks. It is always inspirational to see how other therapists and agencies set up their rooms. Please look for our chapter emails for the details on our fall events.
Thank you,
Lisa Klipfel, MFT
President OC Chapter CALAPT

Sacramento Chapter Leadership and Update:
(The Sacramento Chapter includes Sacramento and outlying areas including Elk Grove, Folsom, El Dorado Hills, Roseville and Auburn and Davis, Yolo County.)
President ~ Sidonie Smith-Dustman, LMFT   Email: sasdustman@yahoo.com

The Sacramento CALAPT chapter would like to thank Kimberly VanderDussen for her wonderful presentation on September 13, 2014. We had a great turn out and the information provided is very useful to our day to day work. The Sacramento Chapter will be hosting our annual Meet and Greet on December 13, 2014. We are excited to end the year with a great networking event. We would like to thank the supporters and those who have been able to attend our events thus far.

Sidonie Smith-Dustman, MA, LMFT, IPMHS
Sacramento CALAPT Chapter President

San Bernardino Chapter Leadership and Update:
(The San Bernardino Chapter includes all geographic areas of San Bernardino County)
President ~ Gladys Dorantes Corado   Email: gladgeorgia@gmail.com

We were very pleased to have Albert Balderas present to our San Bernardino County chapter on teens and Tweens in August. He has a great amount of experience in the area of teens and he introduced us to some fun interactive interventions.

Our next SB Chapter meeting will be December 6, 2014 from 9-11 am at Argosy University in Ontario. The topic will be related to play interventions with children who have witnessed domestic violence.
Thank you,
Gladys Corado, LMFT
President SB Chapter

San Diego Chapter… NEW CHAPTER!!!!!

We are excited to announce that the San Diego Chapter will be up and running in 2015. The chapter will be led by Kate-Robin Shuart, IMF, Audrey Teshima, IMF and Aspasia Birmingham, IMF. In order to create interest in our chapter and share our enthusiasm about what is coming in 2015 we will be hosting a social event in December 2014. Any questions or interest please contact us at sdcalapt@gmail.com.

-2015 San Diego Chapter
**San Francisco Bay Area Chapter Leadership and Update:**
(The San Francisco Chapter includes all geographic areas of San Francisco Bay)
President ~ Jeannette Harroun, LMFT   Email: [Jeannettehar1@aol.com](mailto:Jeannettehar1@aol.com)

San Francisco Chapter presented a well-received 1.5 CE workshop on September 19, 2014. The workshop, entitled, “Playful Approaches to being a Workshop Presenter was presented by Mary Ruth Cross and Kate Rome.
John McGinnis will be presenting our final 2014 workshop on, “Using the Play Therapy Embodiment Drawing.”
Our workshops have been well-received and well-attended this year and we’re pleased to have had the opportunity to offer some great play therapy training.

-Jeannette Harroun, M.A., MFT 2014 Chapter President

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### 2014 California Association for Play Therapy
**Board of Directors**

#### Executive Board

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**MAL G / APA Oversight**
Elizabeth Schreiber, Psy. D  
Email: [easand@earthlink.net](mailto:easand@earthlink.net)
Do you see a need for increased representation and training events in your area?
To start a chapter in your area or to find out about chapters in the process of forming please contact:
Aseye Allah, LCSW, RPT at arkaa3@yahoo.com

We encourage all play therapists and CALAPT members to seek formal credentialing with the Association for Play Therapy.
For more information, go to http://www.a4pt.org/ps.credentials.cfm?ID=1637
OR
Contact Carol Guerrero, (559) 252-2278 x 1

The Association for Play Therapy (APT) is the parent organization of CalAPT. The Association for Play Therapy observes a dual membership policy. Dual membership requires:
- Persons joining CalApt to join APT
- Persons living in California who join APT also become members of CalAPT
The purpose of dual memberships is to increase collaboration and interaction between APT and its state branches – a partnership CalAPT supports!

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For information Email Aseye Allah at arkaa3@yahoo.com or
download the newsletter ad form at http://www.calplaytherapy.org/NEWSLETTER.html

DISCLAIMER: The aim of the CALAPT Newsletter is to provide a forum for discussion of a wide range of articles representing various theoretical models, treatment approaches, concerns and activities in play therapy. Inclusion of a specific article does not reflect CALAPT official position or endorsement unless otherwise stated. The data and statements herein are the sole responsibility of the authors concerned.