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President's Message

Annette Markowitz, MFT, RPT



Greetings Play Therapists,

Happy Spring!

Do you know what CALAPT strives for? We strive to provide continuing education units for play therapists that are easily accessible and reasonably priced. To this end, CALAPT succeeds. We just completed 2 successful regional conferences and by the end of the year will have provided over 75 CEs for the play therapy community.

Our volunteers are very important to our success and I thank them as a group. Without volunteers, CALAPT would not be able to offer the trainings we've been able to provide over the years. Next time you see a CALAPT volunteer, thank them for the time they've given to the play therapy community. Please consider volunteering with CALAPT to keep us as a strong organization.

There are many days set aside for a variety of events to honor and celebrate. Did you know that there is "Find-A-Rainbow Day" and "Pigs-in-a-Blanket Day"? There are three events in April that I hope everyone celebrates. First, there is "Pet Owner's Day" on April 18th. I celebrate this day with my diabetes service dog, Colin who is constantly with me and has attended enough play therapy classes to be an RPT. If you don't have a pet to celebrate, hopefully you can celebrate "Hug a Friend Day" on April 26th. This paragraph is my attempt at celebrating National Humor Month, which happens in April. LOL =)

I'm looking forward to continuing the laughter-filled adventures of CALAPT. Wishing everyone a playful Spring!

Warmly,
Annette Markowitz, MFT, RPT
CALAPT President, 2011

Trauma and Play - How do Play Therapists support Children in the Playroom as they Heal from Traumatic Experiences?

By Kristy Schadt, MFT, RPT-S, SEP

This past week, I watched as images of families, adults and children walked amidst the wreckage of their once beautiful and safe neighborhoods in the Northern Region of Japan. I saw children, with soft faces, playing in the middle of the rubble that used to be their home. Mothers were searching for lost children and family members, crying - their faces reflecting the experience of severe trauma and loss. My heart aches at how much pain, both to their physical bodies and to their souls, that they are enduring.

In my work as a practicing therapist, in both play therapy and trauma, I am aware of just how much their lives will be impacted. They will, in the coming months, begin a slow return to normal as they find homes to live in and begin to deal with the losses of loved ones and the loss of so much that was familiar. They will also have to deal with the effects that a traumatic event will have on their nervous systems.

Some of these children will be supported in this healing process; they have had strong emotional bonds with their significant caregivers and have great predispositions. They are resilient! They will struggle at first but many will return to normal lives. Some children will have greater difficulty in the recovery process. Many will not return to their original states. Trauma will have changed each and every one of them. Some more than others.

I would like to define trauma: a horrific event – either witnessed or experienced – that is perceived as threatening to a person's life or physical integrity. Peter Levine and Maggie Klein in their book "Trauma Proofing Your Kids - A Parent's Guide for Instilling Confidence, Joy and Resilience" state "Trauma happens when an intense experience stuns a child like a bolt out of the blue; it overwhelms the child, leaving him altered and disconnected from his body, mind and spirit. Any coping mechanisms the child may have had are undermined, and he feels utterly helpless." (Levine, Peter & Kline, Maggie 2008).

When we experience a traumatic event that is over whelming, our bodies react. We are hard wired to survive! Our brains are programmed to automatically respond in ways that will upgrade our chances of making it! We have an autonomic nervous system that helps us deal with trauma.

Our Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) activates the adrenal responses of fight or flight. Heart rate and blood pressure rise, respiration increases, which increases the oxygen in our bodies. Chemicals such as adrenaline and norepinephrin are increased. Our pupils dilate. The list goes on to include as many as twenty-one body responses to a traumatic event. The amygdala is part of the limbic system of the brain and is the center for basic emotions. This part of the limbic system rapidly pushes the body into a readiness for response - "a body wide emergency response" (Doctor, Ron and Shiromoto, Frank 2010). These body responses, if not utilized by our survival, (or if our only choice is to freeze) may end up as un-discharged energy in our bodies.

Our Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) follows the SNS and normally helps our bodies return to a normal state. When the SNS charges us for survival, the PNS helps us back to where we began, both working in conjunction with one another.

What happens when the un-discharged energy (that the SNS used to mobilize us to fight or flee) is not released? What happens if the event was so overwhelming that our body/brain response was to shut down (dissociation or hypo-arousal)? Some people have the ability to discharge this energy naturally. They may revisit the experience and talk about it. Children play it out, often with aggressive play. Some people have the support of others and a biological system that has learned how to regulate itself. Others have a more difficult, if not impossible time, in this process.

Our bodies remember the fear and sense of overwhelm we may have experienced in the event. These memories can trigger body responses of hypo-arousal/shut down or hyper-arousal/high activation. Remember that these responses are tied to a biological response to trauma. Our bodies are responding automatically as they are triggered by our brains to move toward survival. These are the symptoms that many of our clients experience as they attempt to heal from traumatic events.

As a Play Therapist, I have worked with many children who have had their lives impacted by traumatic events. Many children do well and return to normal lives. Some live with trauma symptoms their entire lives. What factors are present that make it more difficult for a child to heal from trauma?

Vulnerability to trauma can be the result of several factors: age of the child, attachment with caregivers, the type of trauma experienced, previous traumatic experiences, and a genetic predisposition. If a natural disaster occurred, then how impacted was the family? Did the child lose their family or a primary caregiver or their home? If the trauma involved a perpetrator, did the child have a relationship with this person? Other factors may include the child's current support system and current safety levels.

Children arrive in our play rooms in many different conditions. Some children are eager to play out the story of the event, ready to process, and able to regulate their nervous systems because they have stable environments, supportive and open caregivers, and practice at regulation. Some children are fearful and shut down. Other children are easily overwhelmed or flooded as they re-tell their story and impact their nervous systems.

In the model of Somatic Experiencing, Peter Levine teaches that we need to help people who have been traumatized learn how to recognize traumatic response, learn how to ground themselves, and return to a more natural way of healing. How does this happen in the play room? How can we help this happen in the child's home? How can we, as therapists, support children and their caregivers in their natural process of play and healing? How can we assist them in learning how to re-regulate their nervous systems after a traumatic event?

In healing from a traumatic event, Peter Levine states that "slower is faster"(Levine, Peter 2007). In working with children we must learn how to recognize when they are slowing down the process, allowing their nervous system to work at the re-regulation process. Last week, as I played with a young child who had experienced sexual trauma, she shifted her play and changed the topic. She began to giggle as she noticed my therapy dog "Patches", lying on his back in front of her. She stopped the play (which was intense) and knelt down to pet a very willing doggie, who was lying on his back, tummy exposed, just waiting for her. As we continued our time together I shared with her how wonderful it was that she really knew how to take care of herself - by reaching out for something in her world that gave her comfort and joy - the petting of a soft and comforting doggie!

In my early years as a therapist I might have seen this child as resistant or avoidant when she slowed down the play or changed the subject. I now see these actions as self care or a natural response to our nervous system in overwhelm. I now support these actions and help children see how smart and intuitive they really are.

I believe that as therapists, we must help parents to be actively involved in their child's recovery process. Parents can learn about trauma and can learn how to recognize symptoms in their children. They can then respond to the overwhelm their child is feeling, providing the healing touch at the right moment. This will strengthen the attachment between parent and child and re-assure the child when they may be experiencing a nervous system over load. Including parents in the treatment process may also facilitate the repair of disrupted attachment. (Schwartzengerger, Ken 2011)

In play, children can learn sensory awareness skills - building a sensory vocabulary and learning how to read body signals suggesting that they may be feeling overwhelmed, that they need re-assurance or to slow down the process. Children also need us to notice and support them in this process. We can provide activities and experiences that help with the sensory awareness skills as we follow children in their journey.

Helping children to discharge the un-expended energy in their bodies from the traumatic exposure is also a part of the treatment from a somatic experiencing perspective. This is done in many ways spontaneously in play. As therapists, we can learn to recognize the many ways this un-discharged energy impacts the child's body. We can then provide activities and experiences that will support the discharge of this energy therefore facilitating the return of the body to a more normal state.

Trauma impacts us in many ways, yet we are wired to recover from this impact. Children are, in so many ways, resilient. As a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner and a Play Therapist I am so often in awe of the magic that occurs when a supportive relationship, with a therapist and parent, joins the creativity and resilience of a small child. I am grateful for the role I have in the lives of my clients. I am blessed to be able to watch human healing in action.

I am hopeful that the children of Japan will be able to find ways to move toward their own natural path to healing. I am always struck, in times of a natural disaster, by the ways humans find to support others in need. We, as a species, have the capacity to love and support one another. Our hearts hurt to see pain and suffering. We are reaching out to provide what many need right now. I have hope for the future of Japan. I know that the Japanese children, in fact all children, find ways to heal. Our bodies are naturally wired to survive - they just work that way sometimes!

About the 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. She is also an AAMFT and CAMFT Approved Supervisor. Kristy 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. **Kristy will be presenting speaker at the Los Angeles Chapter of CALAPT on April 9th, 2011. The title of the workshop is: Awakening the Miracle of Healing: Somatic Experience and Play Therapy for Traumatized Children.**

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Chapter Leadership and Updates

Central Coast Chapter Leadership and Update

(The Central Coast Chapter includes the areas of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara)

President

Dana Francis, MA, PPS, MFT-I
dfd@charter.net

Secretary

Kayla Monson,
kaylamonson@live.com

President-Elect

Cheri Love
lovinslo@yahoo.com

Immediate Past President

Colleen Sebastian, LMFT
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The Central Coast Chapter of CALAPT is 4 years young and 75 members and associates strong. We have grown from 3 passionate leaders and a meeting of 6 professionals into a thriving and energetic chapter dedicated to providing quality empirically based play therapy trainings.

We recently played and created masks with Teresa Pardini, LMFT and Certified Expressive Arts Therapist. As a result we can now use mask making with children and teens to assist them in experiencing and processing emotions. Our free 1.5 CEU workshops are offered in association with San Luis Obispo Cal Poly Psychology and Human Development Department. Kudos to Dr. Lisa Sweatt for partnering with us, promoting CCC CALAPT to her graduate students and providing rooms free of charge for our workshops.

With summer just around the corner our Central Coast Chapter officers extend a warm welcome to our Saturday, July 23rd 6 CEU training with distinguished presenter, Sueann Kinney-Noziska. Come play with us and enjoy our fabulous location along the central coast of California. We are located in San Luis Obispo, which is 4 hours north of LA and 4 hours south of SF. Arrive on Friday and book a tour of Hearst Castle or enjoy the free sightseeing of elephant seals on San Simeon Beach. After Saturday's workshop tour the Mission of San Luis Obispo and dine at a nearby eatery. Before leaving on Sunday make time for a short tour of the wineries in Paso Robles or visit the apple orchards in See Canyon. Mark your calendars now; we look forward to welcoming you!!

Central Valley Chapter Leadership and Update

(The Central Valley Chapter includes the areas of San Joaquin County and Modesto)

President

Vacant

Secretary

Vacant

President-Elect

Vacant

Immediate Past President

Raman Dhaliwal, MFT Intern
rdhaliwal@svcfs.org

The Central Valley Chapter is currently without leadership for 2011. We are looking for members who are interested in joining the leadership team and promoting play therapy around the Central Valley! If you are interested in leadership opportunities, please contact CALAPT's President-Elect, maryruthcross@comcast.net.

Los Angeles Chapter Leadership and Update

(The Los Angeles Chapter includes the areas of Los Angeles, Ventura, & the San Fernando Valley)

President

Aseye Allah, ASW, MSW
Arkaa3@yahoo.com

Secretary

Georgie Wisen
gawisen@hotmail.com

President-Elect

Laia Vincens-Fuste, ASW, MSW
laiavicensfuste@hotmail.com

The Los Angeles Chapter has greatly appreciated all the support in this new year. We hope that all those who attended our 1.5 CEU training "Superhero Play" with Jodi Smith, LCSW, RPT-S learned new ways to apply Play Therapy to practice. Please look forward to our April 9th, 2011 6 CE training "Awakening the Miracle of Healing: Somatic Experience and Play Therapy for Traumatized Children" with Presenter Kristy Schadt, MFT, RPT-S, S.E.P, AAMFT and CAMFT Approved Supervisor. We will also be providing future training on Termination by Quint Page on May 21st, and Sand Tray by Rie Rogers on October 22nd. Please look forward to our chapter emails and reminders in order to learn further details.

We continue to search for members of the Los Angeles Chapter and would love to provide interested parties with more information. Once again we thank everyone for their support and are excited about the New Year!

For additional information about the Los Angeles Chapter, please contact the Chapter Secretary, Georgie Wisen at lacalapt@calplaytherapy.org

Orange County Chapter Leadership and Update

(The Orange County Chapter includes all geographic regions of Orange County)

President

Nubia B. Echavarria, Psy.D.
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Secretary

Danielle Haener, Psy.D. Student
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President-Elect

Nancy James, Psy.D.
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Immediate Past President

Valerie Wilson-Lindberg, LCSW, RPT
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Our annual day-long play therapy training will be held on May 7, 2011. Our presenter is Maxine McCleery Bowden who will be conducting a presentation titled "Using Play Therapy With Kids Who Think School Sucks"

We will be having three 1.5 workshops this year. Please check your emails and www.calplaytherapy.org for workshop updates.

Please make sure you are on our chapter email list to be notified of upcoming trainings in play therapy and networking.

To join our email list please contact our Chapter Secretary, Danielle Haener, Psy.D. student, at occalapt@calplaytherapy.org

Riverside Chapter Leadership and Update

(The Riverside Chapter includes all geographic areas of Riverside County)

President

Mayada Marzouk, MA
riversideplaytherapy@live.com

Secretary

Rebecca Fletcher
spunkyfaith@yahoo.com

President-Elect

Cynthia Moore, MA
cmoon1244@live.com

The Riverside Chapter will be holding their quarterly Chapter meetings on March 17th, June 9th, July 21st, September 22nd and the full day workshop on Nov 4th.

Come join Chapter President Mayada Marzouk, President-Elect Cynthia Moore, and Secretary Rebecca Fletcher for our meeting on March 17th at the Riverside Police Department Community Room located at 10540 Magnolia Avenue Suite B Riverside, CA 92505.

As usual, expect to learn new therapeutic interventions and have some fun. Please contact me at riversideplaytherapy@live.com for more information.

The Riverside Chapter serves all areas of Riverside County including cities such as Riverside, Corona, Temecula, Banning, and Blythe. We invite and welcome all professionals interested in using play therapy. Feel free to bring coworkers, colleagues, and students to our Chapter meetings. Now is a great time to get involved with the Riverside Chapter and network with other professionals who provide play therapy to their clients!

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 Co.)

President

Lyla Tyler, LMFT, RPT-S
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Secretary

Sidonie Smith-Dustman, MFT
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President-Elect

Ann Burke, MFT, RPT
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The Sacramento Chapter is off to a great start! We had 30 people attend our first meeting on Jan 29. Lyla Tyler, LMFT, RPT-S presented "5 Play Therapy Assessment Techniques." We received lots of positive feedback and interest in joining APT! We have booked presentations for the rest of this year with our next presentation being "That's So Mean: Integrating Play Therapy Techniques to Cope with Bullying," by Leslie Baker, MA, MFT on April 16, 2011. We are very excited about our upcoming 6 CE workshop that will be presented by Linda Chapman in September.

We welcome therapists, interns and students to join us at our next meeting on April 16. It's a fun group of people and you receive free CE's. For more information please feel free to contact Lyla Tyler, Sacramento Chapter President at mslylat@comcast.net.

San Bernardino Chapter Leadership and Update

(The San Bernardino Chapter includes all geographic areas of San Bernardino County)

President

Christy Livingston, MS
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Secretary

La Quenta Long, MS
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President-Elect

Angela Talbot
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Immediate Past President

Yvonne Quesada, MSW
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We recently had our first training for the 2011 year. On January 14th, Quint Paige, MFT, RPT-S, presented for the San Bernardino Chapter on "Opening Up to the Possibilities in Play and Sand Tray: An Experiential Workshop". We had a great turnout, and I want to thank everyone who was able to attend. As the New Year begins, I also want to thank our Immediate Past-President, Yvonne Quesada, and Past-Secretary, Amy Smith, for their support and guidance in helping set-up this year for success. Your help has been essential in the success of the San Bernardino Chapter of CALAPT. I want to take the time to welcome Angela Talbot and La Quenta Long to the San Bernardino team as our newest officers.

Please save the date for our upcoming 1.5 CE trainings. We will be holding trainings on May 9th, September 12th, and November 14th.

Please make sure you are on our chapter email list to be notified of upcoming trainings in play therapy and networking. To join our e-mail list please contact our Chapter Secretary, La Quenta Long, MS at sbcalapt@yahogroups.com.

For additional information about the San Bernardino Chapter, please contact Chapter President, Christy Livingston, MS at christy.livingston@yahoo.com.

San Francisco Bay Area Chapter Leadership and Update

(The San Francisco Chapter includes all geographic areas of San Francisco Bay)

President

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Secretary

John McGinnis
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Immediate Past President

Karen Pernet LCSW, RPT-S
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The San Francisco Bay Area Chapter has had a wonderful year so far. Mary Ruth Cross, MFT did a presentation at our January meeting entitled "Wait, What Do I Do Next?" Play Therapy Techniques and Interventions for Everyone. At this first meeting of the year we also announced a contest that we will run through September where the person who attends a minimum of three meetings and demonstrates the most creative therapeutic use for a Fushigi Magic Gravity Ball will win it. Our March meeting included a panel and discussion on doing play therapy with immigrant families. We continue to increase our membership and attendance at our meetings. Our next 1.5 CE meeting will be on Friday, May 20th. We are delighted to announce that our annual 6 CE workshop will be held on Friday, June 24th with distinguished presenter, Leslie Baker, MFT on the topic of play therapy and bullying. Please join us for these events to increase your play therapy knowledge and network with those that are enthusiastic about the therapeutic powers of play!

2011 California Association for Play Therapy Board of Directors

Executive Board

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SANDPLAY THERAPY

A Step-by-step Manual for
Psychotherapists of Diverse Orientations.
Barbara Labovitz Boik and E. Anna
Goodwin, Authors

A Book Review by Dana Francis, MA, PPS,
MFT-I

Authors Boik and Goodwin have created a practical guide for therapists who wish to provide Sandplay Therapy. While they caution their book is not a substitute for experiential training; they do provide the reader with specific step-by-step instructions for conducting Sandplay Therapy with children, adolescents, adults, couples and families. The reader is provided an overview of the history, theory and value in using sandplay therapy and an opportunity to review and strengthen therapeutic skills used in the application of Sandplay Therapy.

I find myself carrying the book with me from home to office to use a quick reference. As a teaching tool SANDPLAY THERAPY delineates between the use of spontaneous vs directed sandtrays and summarizes key points for the new or seasoned therapist to use in supporting the client's journey with

miniatures in the sand tray. They describe the stages of a Sandplay therapy session with directions on the role of the therapist during each stage. The authors also share their personal and professional experiences using Sandplay Therapy and include a chapter on countertransference and a chapter on the contraindications to using this therapeutic method.

Like other expressive therapies, Sandplay Therapy invites the child in all of us to use images to communicate in an alternate language. If the therapist trusts the client's unconscious wisdom there can be healing, individuation, growth and behavioral change. As C. G. Jung explained in 1960, "Often the hands know how to solve a riddle which the intellect has wrestled with in vain".

If you are in need of trusted guides in order to grow as a therapist who uses Sandplay Therapy, this book and the authors will show you the way.

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-Elect Mary Ruth Cross at maryruthcross@comcast.net for more information.

CALAPT Calendar of Upcoming Events

CALAPT CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 2011

- **April 9th**- Los Angeles Chapter 6 CE Workshop
- **April 16th** – Sacramento Chapter 1.5 CE Meeting
- Play Therapy Supervision Group: San Diego. Ellen Lacter, Ph.D., RPT-S, Academic Coordinator, Play Therapy Certificate Program, UCSD-Extension. Earn 14 group supervision hours plus individual-in-group hours. For details: ellenlacter@earthlink.net

May 2011

- **May 7th** – Orange County Chapter 6 CE Workshop
- **May 9th** – San Bernardino Chapter 1.5 CE Meeting
- **May 20th** – San Francisco Bay Area Chapter Meeting
- **May 21st** – Los Angeles Chapter 1.5 CE Meeting

June 2011

- **June 4th**- Central Coast 1.5 Chapter Meeting
- **June 9th** – Riverside Chapter Meeting
- **June 24th** – San Francisco Bay Area Chapter 6 CE Workshop
- **June 25th** – Sacramento Chapter 1.5 CE Meeting

For more upcoming CALAPT events visit our website at www.calplaytherapy.org

Being an APT member means you are also a
CALAPT member

Take advantage of all your dual membership
has to offer!

Check out the websites:

Do you see a need for increased representation
and trainings closer to home in your area?

To start a chapter in your area or
to find out about chapters in the process

of forming please contact:

We encourage all play therapists and CALAPT members to seek formal credentialing with the Association for Play Therapy. For More Information, go to www.a4pt.org or Contact Carol Guerrero, (559) 252-2278 x 1

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.