

California Association for Play Therapy
CALAPT Newsletter

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How To Involve Parents So That Play Therapy Can Be As Successful As Possible

By Kathryn de Bruin

**So it's play therapy with children you've come to select
Then it's their parents you've got to RESPECT**

Have you ever had a child yanked out of play therapy just when you thought it was going well? I have, and it happened to me all the time! I was always able to connect well with children so I was eager to do play therapy as a young therapist. I often would just be making progress when the parents would question the efficacy of play therapy, or even worse, just stop bringing their child to sessions. Alliance with child? Check! Alliance with parent? Obviously something was wrong.

I have come to learn that building relationship with parents is just as important, if not more so, than with the child. Not just because parents pay the bill and have the authority to end therapy, but because they go home with their child. They'll spend a lifetime doing "therapy" with their child and we have them only for a brief moment. Parents will pull their child from therapy if they don't feel empowered or if they feel threatened by our connection with their child. Perhaps, as with a child experiencing trauma, the parent is experiencing their own "play disruption" with nowhere to work out their own stuff.

Seligman (2000, 213) talks about the importance of including parents. He says, "To the extent that the parents feel that they have been collaborative partners in the assessment, they will be better able to embrace the treatment process." Scheel and Rieckmann (1998) agree that parents who feel less empowered will participate less in the therapy. So all my attempts at first to win over parents by demonstrating to them what a passionate, skillful and serious therapist I was with their child backfired. The very connection I was building with their child set them up to feel excluded. Therapy? Game over.

Here are some of the lessons I've learned in how to effectively involve parents in the process of their child's therapy. The acronym **RESPECT** helps me to remember these important lessons.

R: Reflect

E: Empower

S: Show Interest

P: Parent Consultations

E: Equip Parents

C: Compact

T: Trust

Reflect On Your Part In It

I brought a lot of my own countertransference into parent interactions. I approached them all with skepticism and expectation of premature termination. My insecurity made me emotionally unavailable to the parents. I cut them off before I even gave them a chance to connect with me and build a team of support for their child. It helped me to think systemically; the parents and I were all part of the same team.

Empower Parents by Involving Them

In private practice every referral source is important. I was recently speaking to a church counselor who decided to send referrals my way. The counselor told me that he refers to me because I don't set children up against their parents. By the time parents bring children to treatment they sometimes feel distant from them, and are fearful of this growing distance expanding even more. Parents are desperate to know that you will help them reinstate their relationship with their child. As a family therapist my long term goal is to strengthen family ties. My personal policy now is that I only work with children if their parents will be involved (of course where this is possible and appropriate). Let parents know that they are your biggest resource, that their role is important, and that you need their involvement for therapy to work. I frequently tell parents that after the assessment phase, we will sit down together and decide what treatment will be best for their child. It takes the three of us to do this together.

Show Interest

Ask questions about the child. Potential customers often interview multiple therapists before choosing which one they will go with. Recently I spoke with a mother after she'd already interviewed three other therapists. Obviously she knew what she was looking for. She chose me. Later, she said it was because I was the only counselor who showed interest in her child. I had asked questions not only about the child's symptoms but also about the child's interests, strengths, and general personality. As a parent myself, I can relate to this need to have people simply like my child. I have an internal radar that lets me know who is genuinely interested in my son. If you're in this field, you enjoy working with and playing with children. Don't hesitate to show that passion.

Parent Consultations

Wherever possible, I meet with both parents before the play therapy begins. I let parents know that our first few meetings will give them an opportunity to get to know me and decide if I will be the right counselor for their family. I take time to explain play therapy to them, show them the playroom, and get them ready to explain therapy to their children. This sets the parents up for success and gives them time to formulate and satisfy any questions they might have. This time with the parents before therapy begins is valuable assessment time and enables me to get to know the child's system, even the parent relationship.

Ongoing parent consultations are essential and it is my goal to build and maintain secure attachment with each parent. This means being responsive and accessible. I see parents on a regular basis, make myself available by telephone between sessions, and regularly check in with parents to assure myself that we're all still tracking together.

Equip Parents To Do The Work

As each child is effected by their environment, we want to attend to family dynamics which will mediate or support the effects of the child's progress. As we broaden our focus beyond the identified patient and treat the system, we set the family up to attend to the child's future needs as well as the needs of other family members. I find that Child-Parent Relational Therapy (CPRT) is useful to teach parents the basic skills of attunement and help them to build more secure attachments within the family. Parents feel empowered and even grateful!

Guerney (1991) writes about the importance of involving parents in play therapy and recommends doing so in the form of filial therapy. She writes that when parents are left out of treatment they resent the exclusion and this can result in premature termination. She believes that empowering parents as active partners in the process will not only assure their continued involvement but would bring about therapeutic change more quickly. Scheel and Rieckmann (1998) agree that unless parents come away from therapy feeling more capable of helping their child, the effects of therapy will not generalize as effectively outside of the counseling setting.

Compress Information

Parents carry a lot of responsibility and by the time they have contacted us for help, they are very concerned about their children. Many parents are tired, worn out, and often have ideals that they are not able to achieve for sheer lack of time and resources. Prior to becoming a parent myself, I idealistically gave parents elaborate handouts and tutorials, contributing to their burden and feelings of failure when they were unable to follow through on my instructions. Now I keep suggestions as short and sweet as possible. The books that I find most valuable as a parent are those that present one idea at a time and are easily skimmed. Since quiet reading time at home is often short-lived and frequently interrupted, I provide parents with a comfortable place to sit while their child is in therapy, and set up videos or give them simple handouts that can be completed in the time their child is in session.

Trust Is Cultivated

If there was ever a time to delve into deep psychological work with a person, it's when they're involved in an intimate relationship. Relationships tend to surface all of our insecurities and wounds, and parenting even more so. Parenting is a humbling experience but also a great opportunity to learn more about ourselves and begin to make changes. As I meet with parents for ongoing consultations, opportunities arise for them to talk about their own emotional journey. Parents begin to feel safe with me and will share more as this trust is developed. The focus expands even more within the family system. Scheel and Rieckmann (1998) found that parents who have young children with emotional disorders tend to experience themselves as being less efficient and disempowered in their parenting roles. They go on to show that parents who feel less empowered have families that operate less adaptively and are not as close. Since these are often the families we see on our caseload - all the more reason to RESPECT them!

Summary

These are some lessons I have learned along the way. As I have implemented RESPECT for parents, I have grown to enjoy the process a lot more and have become more effective in working with children and their families. It's really not outside of our reach. We simply Reflect on our own part in the alliance with parents, Empower parents so they know their importance in the process,

Show them our passion and interest in their child, involve them in ongoing Parent consultations, Equip them do to the work, Condense any information we give them out of respect and empathy for their overloaded lives, and build Trust by being accessible and available to them. Parents will in turn respect and receive our work with their child. They may even bring their child back for more sessions.

References

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President's Message

Sarah Yeung, MSW

Dear CALAPT Members,

This is my last President's Message as January will usher in a new President and leadership team for 2010. I have so enjoyed serving as President of CALAPT. My favorite parts of the position have been interacting with our 7 chapters, meeting many of our members, and being able to provide high quality play therapy training across the state. I am very excited for next year. In January, Kim Vander Dussen, Psy.D., RPT-S will take over as President. She has done a great job this year as President-Elect and will continue to do a great job as President.

Thank you to all our members who participated in the Membership Survey. Your answers were insightful and will help us continue to meet your needs. The following is some information about CALAPT members. When asked what you appreciate most about APT membership, most of you value the RPT/RPT-S credential. For local CALAPT membership, most appreciate local, affordable workshops throughout California. 56% of the members who completed the survey are affiliated with a local chapter (for the rest of you, check out our chapter updates in this newsletter and see if a local chapter fits your needs!). 97% of those completing the survey attended a CALAPT workshop in the past year and found it beneficial. There were tons of great ideas for workshop topics that I will pass along to Chapter Presidents and the Conference Chairs. Finally, many of you would like to see Chapter meetings that are closer to you and think that would help increase attendance. This year, the chapters are trying different forms of outreach including satellite meetings at different locations. I encourage you to contact the chapter closest to you to find out if they are planning anything in your area. If you are interested in starting a new chapter in an area that currently does not have one, please email me and I can send you more information.

I'm excited to let you all know that our website is being updated and will be ready to go shortly! The address won't change, but everything will look different. In the meantime, continue to check out www.calplaytherapy.org for information on everything CALAPT including upcoming trainings, chapter meetings, past newsletters, contact information and much more. We hope to see you at upcoming chapter meetings and trainings.

Come play with us!

Sarah Yeung, MSW
CALAPT President, 2009

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

Colleen Sebastian, LMFT
(805) 305-0631
coanse@earthlink.net

President-Elect

Leslie Barber, MFT-I

Secretary

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

The Central Coast Chapter continues to grow. We have welcomed many new members and have outgrown our chapter meeting location! Special thanks to Felicia Carroll for the wonderful 6 CE training, it was attended by members from all over the state. Leslie Barber has accepted a leadership role and has been handling the president elect duties and will be the chapter secretary next year. Dana Francis will be taking over the president-elect position and Colleen Sebastian will continue as chapter president for another year. Our goal is to give the chapter a solid foundation and recruit more leaders, members and presenters in the next year. Upcoming events include a chapter meeting and free 1.5 CE training on October 3rd. We are busy planning trainings for next year. We are looking for guest presenters for both our 1.5 and 6 CE trainings. Contact Colleen Sebastian at coanse@earthlink.net if you are interested in presenting, or would like more chapter information.

For additional information about the Central Coast Chapter, please contact the Chapter President, Colleen Sebastian at (805) 305-0631 or coanse@earthlink.net.

Central Valley Chapter Leadership and Update

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

President

Lee Jones, MFT
(209) 550-5880
leejonesmft@sbcglobal.net

President-Elect

Raman Dhaliwal, MSW intern
rdhaliwal@svcs.org

Secretary

Barbara Mendez, MFT
barbmendmft@att.net

Immediate Past President

Ann Marie Washington, MSW, LCSW
amariew@sbcglobal.net

This has been a busy year for the Central Valley Chapter of CALAPT. As the chapter needs to grow, we decided to have meetings each month. We have been meeting the first Friday of each month since February, except for July when we held the annual workshop. We have offered 1.5 free CE's per meeting/workshops. It has been fun and exciting. More participants seem to attend when the meetings are interactive with business first then workshops, providing interesting interventions about play therapy. For example, in June, we provided a free 1.5 CE workshop called "Enhance the Therapeutic Environment for Children and Families with Food in Fun Ways in Play Therapy." Members were given supplies to make fruit flavored cereal figures, using pretzel sticks and fruit roll ups. In addition to sharing edible interventions, everyone watched as the chapter president demonstrated how to make the royal icing (acts like glue) that is effective in many edible interventions that enhance the therapeutic process. The edible interventions benefit play therapy in promoting listening skills, motivation to stay on task, self-prompting to regain attention, and a great environment to practice social skills in group settings. Using food in therapy can increase attention and build rapport and develop communication skills in most age groups. Also, helpful hints for assisting children and families in enjoying each others' company were presented while learning about nutrition. The ADHD Clinic has incorporated the edible interventions in many children's groups.

The Central Valley Chapter saved the month of July for our Annual Workshop. This year, we were proud to have Marielle Brandt, Ph.D., C.P.T., as our presenter. Marielle presented, "Limit-Setting and the Therapeutic Relationship in Play Therapy," on July 10, 2009. Marielle is a professor at the California State University of Sacramento. Marielle plans to help build a bridge with the Central Valley Chapter and The San Francisco Chapter of CALAPT to the Sacramento area.

Save The Date: October will be a workshop for 1.5 CE's, with a guest speaker.

Finally, the Central Valley Chapter is currently focusing its energy on obtaining officers for the 2010 year. We are excited to have many new members and many more new participants this year. Having the same location to meet each month, the ADHD Clinic of Sierra Vista Children and Family Therapy, in Modesto, CA, and having wonderful presenters have helped our Chapter's success. We believe our new officers will enhance the opportunities to make the new year something to look forward to with increasing membership, knowledge of play therapy, and networking with students and professionals.

For additional information about the Central Valley Chapter please contact Chapter President Lee Jones at (209) 404-7741 or leejonesmft@sbcglobal.net.

Los Angeles Chapter Leadership and Update

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

President

Paulina Miller, LMFT
(805) 607-3965
pinatherapy@earthlink.net

President-Elect

Vacant

Secretary

Annette Markowitz
annetteim@hotmail.com

Immediate Past President

Leonore Shuetz, MA, LMFT
schuetz@roadrunner.com

One of our Chapter goals is to continue to broaden our services to both pre-licensed and licensed members. We would love to hear your suggestions, ideas and questions on how we might better serve the Los Angeles area play therapy community. Please contact Paulina or Annette for more information or to be added to our email list.

For additional information on the LA Chapter, please contact the LA Chapter President, Paulina Miller, MA, LMFT, at (805) 607-3965 or pinatherapy@earthlink.net.

Orange County Chapter Leadership and Update

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

President

Annica Nilsson, MSW, LCSW
(714) 875 2310
swedannica@aol.com

President-Elect

Valerie Wilson-Lindberg,
LCSW, RPT
vlindberg@earthlink.net

Secretary

Reena Patel, MA
reenacspatel@gmail.com

Immediate Past President

Kim Vander Dussen, PsyD, RPT-S
kvanderdussen@argosy.edu

Please join our meetings for some free training in play therapy and networking. Our next meeting and training will be held in November. The date has not been set so be sure to be on our email list to get the current information. To join our e-list please contact our Chapter Secretary, Reena Patel, MA; Ph.D. student at Phone: (949) 212-2142 or Email: reenacspatel@gmail.com. For further details about our Chapter please contact Chapter President Annica Nilsson, LCSW at Therapy@AnnicaNilsson.com. We had a very successful full day workshop in April with Gita Morena, PhD, MFT, CST-T who presented on *Traveling through Oz: Journey Home in Sandplay and Play Therapy*. We also had another chapter meeting in June with free training. Christy Livingston presented on group therapy with adolescent girls and the use of play therapy. Keep an eye open for the next meeting in November by being on our email list.

For additional information about the Orange County Chapter, please contact Chapter President, Annica Nilsson at (714) 875 2310 or Therapy@AnnicaNilsson.com.

Riverside Chapter Leadership and Update (The Riverside Chapter includes all geographic areas of Riverside County.)

President

Claudia Moon Perez, M.S., LMFT, CEAP
(951) 369-9990
perezmoonperez@sbcglobal.net

President-Elect

Mayada Marzouk, MA
mayadamarzouk@hotmail.com

Secretary

Shasta Weingard, BA
Shasta.Michelle.Weingard@gmail.com

Immediate Past President

Sandra Herrera, MSW, LCSW
sherreralcsw@gmail.com

We in the leadership team of the Riverside Chapter are very excited to announce our upcoming events.

On Wed September 16th, Maxine Bowden, an LMFT and School Based Counselor Specialist will be presenting a much needed topic about "Playfully Supporting Children at Risk of School Failure". This event offers free 1.5 CEs and will take place at the La Sierra Police Station from 6-8pm.

On Friday November 13th, Jodi Smith, an LCSW and RPT-S will be presenting a full day workshop (6 CEs) about a very interesting topic: "Superheroes and Princesses: Incorporating Modern Myths into your Play Therapy Work". This event will take place at the Grove Community Church at 19900 Grove Community Drive, Riverside, Ca 92508.

Look out for the flyer in your emails and you may contact any of the leadership team for more information or to be included on our email list.

For additional information on the Riverside Chapter, please contact Chapter President, Claudia Moon Perez at (951) 369-9990 or perezmoonperez@sbcglobal.net.

San Bernadino Chapter Leadership and Update

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

President

Marisa Rivera, MS, MFT
(909)921-9982
marob4895@charter.net

President-Elect

Yvonne Quesada,
bonnieq21@hotmail.com

Secretary

Rosalina Layaye, MS
rlayaye@yahoo.com

Immediate Past President

Maxine Bowden, MA
mmccleerybowden@roadrunner.net

The San Bernadino Chapter has once again had wonderful attendance at our meetings. Thank you to all who attended Wendy Concepcion's training on utilizing art in play therapy and Fidelis Garcia's training on relational aggression ("Mean Girls") training.

Save the date: Our next meeting will be on November 9, 2009. The topic is to be determined. We hope to see you there!

For additional information on the San Bernardino Chapter, please contact Chapter President, Marisa Rivera at (909) 921-9982 or marob4895@charter.net.

San Francisco Bay Area Chapter Leadership and Update

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

President

Rene Lewellyn, MA, MFT
(925) 470-6407
renelewmft@comcast.net

President-Elect

Karen Pernet LCSW, RPT-S
kepernet@yahoo.com

Secretary

Claire LaScola, MFT
clairelascola@yahoo.com

Immediate Past President

Catherine Pfister, MSW, LCSW
catherine.pfister.lcsw@gmail.com

Thus far 2009 has been a very busy year for the SF Bay Area Chapter. The chapter is celebrating a very successful full-day workshop, "Playing with Art: Creative Approaches to Play Therapy with Adolescents and Families" with presenter, Eleanor Ruckman, that was held in June. Additionally, the new inclusion of "mini" trainings at the bi-monthly chapter meetings has been met with rave reviews. Meetings now provide 1.5 FREE CE's. Since the change, participation in meetings has doubled!

October marks the date for the chapter's yearly outreach event, the 5th Annual Play Therapy Gathering, also a FREE event. Traditionally, The Gathering has included a host of demonstrations of various play therapy interventions as well as two free one hour workshops. This year Gathering participants will be eligible to receive 2 FREE CE's. This event always proves to be a wonderful opportunity to learn new play therapy interventions, network with other therapists and is also a whole lot of fun.

Finally, chapter officers have been busy considering ways to achieve more long-term vision and planning. To that end, officers now meet several times per year to discuss long-term chapter objectives. So, all in all, 2009 promises to be a banner year for the SF Bay Area Chapter. We hope you will join us for our meetings!

For additional information about the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter, please contact Chapter President, Ren'e Lewellyn at (925) 470-6407 or renelewmft@comcast.net.

California Association for Play Therapy (CALAPT)

Board Of Directors

~ 2009 ~

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President

Sarah Yeung, MSW
(909) 557-4455
sarahanneyeung@yahoo.com

President-Elect

Kim Vander Dussen,
PsyD, RPT-S
(714) 329-6080
kvanderdussen@argosy.edu

Immediate Past-President

Anna Loza, MSW, LCSW
(909) 732-2011
aannaa_gram@yahoo.com

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Tracy Shroeder, MSW, LCSW
(909) 518-9818
ccschroeder@yahoo.com

Secretary

Debra Solseng, MFT, RPT-S
(949) 701-5930
dhsolseng@cox.net

Members at Large

Area A/Registrar

Jennifer Wentz, MA, LMFT
(925) 682-1055
jenniferwentz@hotmail.com

Area B/Southern CA CE Oversight

Eva Miller, MSW
eva_miller22@hotmail.com

Area C/Southern CA Conference Coordinator

Ryan Froelich, MSW, ACSW, PPS
(714) 322-2007
froelich95@gmail.com

Area D/Northern CA CE Oversight

Myrysha Rose, MSW
mrosa@usc.edu

Area E/Northern CA Conference Coordinator

Mary Ruth Cross, LMFT
(925) 600-4818
jmscross@sbcglobal.net



Ask The Expert: Exploring Sexual Abuse Issues with Children with Autism

by Carmela Wenger, LMFT

Question:

I am seeing an 8 year old boy who is developmentally delayed. His primary diagnosis is autism and he is the mid range of cognitive functioning. His social development is like a three year old child. Recently another child in his circle of friends and schoolmates was raped by a caretaker who was part of the staff in an agency providing services to autistic children. "Brian's" mother has been very upset by this and she has asked how to explain to him about protecting himself from sexual abuse. Although there is plenty of literature about the treatment of autism, I have not found help about how to talk to this population about sexual abuse. Do you have any ideas?

Response:

Begin with the mother's reaction. The most important predictor of a child's recovery is the emotional availability of his/her primary care taker, usually his/her mother. Process with mom everything about her response to this crime. Her emotional state when she talks to Brian is more important than what she says to him. Offer to be with her when she talks to her son so that she has some support

My experience has been that most parents are grief stricken about their child's loss of innocence, whether or not their son/daughter will be a predator, whether or not the child will be homosexual (if the predator is the same sex as the youngster), and whether or not their child can still have a "normal" childhood after such an experience. It is possible that Brian has also been victimized (if this perpetrator had access to him). Clarify this if you can.

Begin talking to Brian with concepts he already understands. If he knows about privacy build on that. Start with a house metaphor. The bathroom is more private than the kitchen. Act this out. Build a house with bathroom, bedroom, front room, kitchen. On which door do you knock before entering? Because so many developmentally delayed children are sexually abused in public bathrooms the concept of closing the bathroom door and locking it is important.

Your goal in using the house metaphor is to find out how well Brian understands the idea of privacy. Expanding the idea to his body will then seem natural. Use a drawing of a body and talk about some parts being more private than others. Parts no one can see when we are dressed are private. We cover them because they are private. We keep them covered unless we have to take a bath or use the toilet. We do this in a private room.

Use the concept of size to differentiate a big rule from a little rule. Be concrete. Not chewing with you mouth open is a little rule. Not going to the bathroom in the kitchen is a big rule. Nobody touching your private parts is a very, very, big rule. Again, act this out. How about touching his hands, feet, neck, etc.

Because a major challenge with autistic children is getting them to engage emotionally with others it is important not to instill suspicion or fear about other people. I would not talk about "good touch" and "bad touch." This is an abstract concept. Keep it as simple and as concrete as you can and do not introduce more than once concept at a time. Be consistent in the examples you use. I have used the bathroom for each example. If you use multiple metaphors and/or examples there is a risk of confusing Brian.

If some of you work with this population please share your experiences and/or ideas. I found nothing regarding discussing sexual abuse with autistic children even when I attended a conference about autistic spectrum disorders. This is strange, given the rate of sexual abuse among children with developmental delays.

About the Author: Carmela Wenger has been a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist since 1980. She is the author of *"The Suitcase Story: A Therapeutic Story for Children in Foster Care,"* published in the American Journal of Orthopsychiatry and, in December 2006, authored a chapter entitled "Superheroes in Play Therapy With an Attachment Disordered Child" in the book *Using Superheroes in Counseling and Play Therapy*, edited by Larry Rubin. Carmela is currently in private practice and offers seminars in play therapy, trauma treatment, and couples therapy. She is a CAMFT Approved Supervisor and a BBS education provider. For readers interested in submitting a question or for those who use these ideas and would like to provide feedback, please contact the author at chwenger@suddenlink.com.

**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:
www.calplaytherapy.org
and www.a4pt.org

*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:

Sarah Yeung, MSW
(909) 557-4455
sarahanneyeung@yahoo.com

HELP WANTED!!

As a new feature to
our website, CALAPT
would like to provide
information on parent
trainings being held
throughout the state
as well as parent
resource
both online and
offline.

Contact Sarah Yeung, MSW
(909) 557-4455
sarahanneyeung@yahoo.com
with any information that you
think may be of interest to
parents in your area!

**Would You Like
to Teach?**

**Are You Interested
In Building Teaching
Experience?**

Breaking into teaching
can be difficult. You usually
have to have experience
to get experience.

How about starting with
your local CALAPT chapter
and try it out!!

We continue to accept
resumes for our presenter
portfolio. Share your
knowledge with others!
Network!

We need your resume,
contact information and
topic of interest to start.

Please submit your
information to:

Sarah Yeung, MSW
(909) 557-4455
sarahanneyeung@yahoo.com



Play Therapy Intervention

Smelly Collage

Based on an Intervention by: Lucille Prouix, MA
Presented by: Eva Miller, MSW

Materials

- Self adhesive shelf paper - 2 pieces cut in 18" lengths
- Colorful tissue paper and/or other colorful paper cut into small pieces of various sizes and shapes
- Spices such as cinnamon, coriander, paprika, dill, etc. - choose 3 or 4 spices that are different colors. Be sure to choose some which are fragrant but don't choose something that would be very unpleasant if tasted such as very hot chili's
- Glue stick
- Masking tape

Treatment Modality: Individual with Family Member Present

Goals

- Increase client's self expression
- Provide opportunity for bonding
- Observe parent/child interaction

Description

This is a non-directive play therapy activity. Encourage the parent to participate with the child but to let the child take the lead on making the artwork and selecting materials.

The therapist should take the backing off a sheet of the shelf paper and place it on the table sticky side up, then tape down the corners with masking tape to hold it in place. The client and his parent/caregiver should be seated side by side at the table. Give them the pre-cut tissue paper pieces and encourage them to decorate the sticky paper with the paper. Also provide a glue stick because often children will want to put layers of paper on their collage. After a few minutes give them the spices and encourage them to use those as part of their artwork. If time allows, you can provide a second sheet of shelf paper for a second project.

Discussion

This art dyad project encourages the parent and child to work together with a medium which has no rules or right or wrong. It can be very useful with parents who have difficulty being non-directive. The different textures and colors add interest to the activity. Using spices with strong smells and encouraging the participants to sniff them adds to the interaction and smells like cinnamon may trigger conversation about memories of things they have baked or foods they like. When the art project is complete the therapist can have a brief discussion with the parent and client about what they liked about the activity and get the parent's insights about what they noticed about their interaction with their child. The Therapist may also provide some insights about strengths and challenges in the process.

This activity can also be used in a group, which includes multiple clients each with a parent or caregiver.

About the Author: Eva Miller, MSW, works for a non-profit community mental health agency in San Bernardino County. She runs a program for children aged 0-5 who are experiencing significant behavioral and/or development issues. The program uses a multidisciplinary team to assess and treat these children and treats them with relationship focused play and art therapy. Eva is currently a Member at Large on the CALAPT Board of Directors.

Book Review



Filial Therapy: Strengthening Parent-Child Relationships Through Play 2nd Edition 2005

By Dr. Rise VanFleet
Reviewed by Karen Pernet LCSW, RPT-S

Rise VanFleet has written a concise but informative and detailed book on Filial Therapy. This evidence based therapy, which integrates play therapy, family therapy and parenting skills, was developed in the 1960s by Drs. Louise and Bernard Guerney and has been used nationally and internationally since that time. (The word *filial* means parent-child.) In filial therapy, the parent is the agent of change and the relationship with the therapist is collaborative. The therapist trains the parents or caregivers to do dyadic play times with each child in the family, supervises the play sessions in the office, helps the parent move the sessions to the home and to generalize the parenting skills embedded in the play sessions. The special play times are based on Child Centered Play Therapy and are usually meant for children from ages 3 to 12, although there are variations for older and younger children.

Dr. VanFleet clearly describes the phases of filial therapy: the assessment of child(ren) and family, the recommendation of filial, the teaching Child Centered Play to parents, the supervising of the play sessions, moving play sessions home and generalizing skills and the discharge process. She describes each phase in detail and uses one case example of a 2 parent, 2 child family to illustrate the didactic material. The use of one case example allows for understanding the development of the therapy, the changing of the parents' attitudes toward the IP child and her sibling, improved relationships between all dyads including the siblings and the resolution of symptomatic behavior.

The book contains additional chapters on the values, principles and goals of filial therapy, on research over a 50 year period, on variations of the original Guerney model including the 10 week group model developed by Gary Landreth and on applications to specialized populations. I agree with Dr. Louise Guerney who states this book "will be of great value to anyone, anywhere who has any interest in learning about or expanding their knowledge of filial therapy" and that Dr. VanFleet is "a leading filial therapy expert who continues to enhance and disseminate the method."

About the Author: Karen Pernet, LCSW, RPT-S has been in practice for over 20 years and provides psychotherapy and play therapy for people of all ages, consultation and supervision in her Oakland office. She is a Certified Filial Therapy trainer and was the recipient of the *2009 Outstanding Contributions to Filial Therapy Practice and Training Award*. She is the President Elect of the SF Bay Area Chapter of CALAPT. She has a special interest in using filial therapy with adoptive and foster families



RPT-S Interview
Debra Solseng, MFT, RPT-S
Interviewed by Anna Loza, MSW, LCSW

A registered play therapist (RPT) is a mental health professional with training and experience working with children and families through the use of play therapy. While the latter is a formal definition of an RPT, it takes much more than training and experience to make a quality play therapist. A quality Registered Play Therapist Supervisor (RPT-S) is exactly who I have the opportunity of introducing to the CALAPT community. Debra Solseng is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Registered Play Therapist Supervisor practicing in Costa Mesa, California. In her private practice, she offers her expertise to children, adolescents, adults, and families. Debbie is a native of Southern California and earned her graduate degree from Chapman University in Orange. Debbie has worked in the mental health field using play therapy since 1993 and earned her recognition as an RPT-S in 2005. Prior to her private practice, Debbie shared her knowledge and skills with families and children in a foster family agency and then in an outpatient clinic serving children and adolescents.

Debbie's warm and peaceful disposition only adds to her quality as a play therapist. She describes her use of play therapy as "eclectic," citing client centered, cognitive and Gestalt as a few of the approaches she gleaned from. When asked what she likes about play therapy, Debbie answers, "I like giving children the opportunity to learn how to express their feelings and giving them the opportunity to be themselves without censure."

"What types of play interventions do you find most useful?"

Debbie: "I usually let the child take the lead to choose their play. I have a variety of toys from which to choose, such as food, dishes, doctor's kit, doll house, baby dolls, puppets, miniature figures, art supplies, and board games. When a child chooses a board game, I modify it to elicit the child's feelings about what makes them happy, sad, mad, scared, etc."

"Are there any play therapists you particularly admire or whose work you frequently reference?"

Debbie: "I admire Gary Landreth. His respect, calm demeanor, and honor for the child's natural healing abilities are inspiring. I try to emulate the manner in which he reflects the child and addresses the child." Debbie adds that while she admires Mr. Landreth's manner of engaging with a child, she tends to join in the interactive play of the child versus remaining completely client centered.

Outside of her private practice, Debbie generously volunteers her time to CALAPT. She has held positions at the local chapter level for the Orange County Chapter of CALAPT and currently serves as secretary for the CALAPT State Executive Board. Debbie also serves as secretary for the California Association of Marriage Family Therapists (OC-CAMFT). These organizations are fortunate to benefit from the experience, practicality and sincerity of such a quality individual. Outside of her professional life, Debbie is married and in her spare time, enjoys walking at the beach and reading novels. I have had the pleasure of being acquainted with Debbie for the past few years through CALAPT and am pleased to share her story with the play therapy community.

About the Author: A licensed clinical social worker, Anna Loza has over 10 years of experience serving children and families in Riverside County. Anna is a product of Southern California earning her undergraduate degree from UC Riverside and her graduate degree from Loma Linda University. She currently works for the Riverside County Department of Mental Health at a children's outpatient clinic in Moreno Valley, CA. Anna has been actively involved in the leadership of the California Association for Play Therapy for the past six years. She has held positions at the Riverside Chapter level and is currently the Immediate Past President of the CALAPT Executive Board.

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For more information about the Southern California Conference, please contact Anna Loza, Immediate Past President/CALAPT Conference Chair at aannaa_gram@yahoo.com.

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Contact Kim Vander Dussen, PsyD, RPT-S at (714) 329-6080 or kvanderdussen@argosy.edu for more information.

California Association for Play Therapy (CALAPT)

Calendar of Upcoming Events

~ 2009 ~

October

- October 2 Central Valley Chapter Meeting
- October 3 Central Coast Chapter Meeting
- October 6-11 APT Annual Play Therapy Conference, Atlanta GA
- October 24 San Francisco Play Therapy Gathering

November

- November 9 San Bernardino Chapter Meeting
- November 13 Riverside Chapter Full Day Workshop
- November 20 San Francisco Chapter Meeting

December

January

February

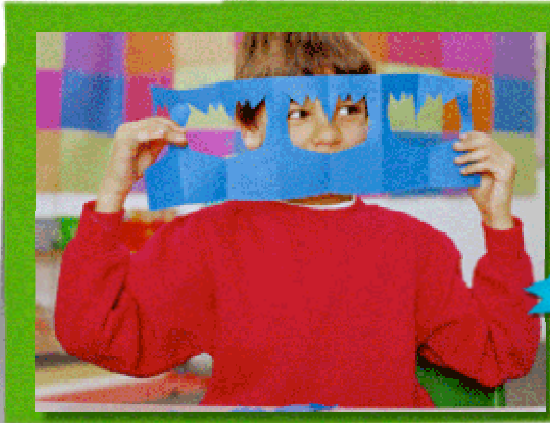
- February 19 Northern California Regional Play Therapy Conference

March

- March 12-13 Southern California Regional Play Therapy Conference

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PLAY THERAPY

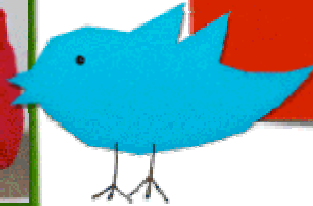


SAN DIEGO

619 298 8722 EXT 124

WWW.KATHRYNDEBRUIN.COM

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Schedule of Play Therapy Workshops

The Free Clinic of Simi Valley and Harmony Counseling Center are pleased to present the following Play Therapy Workshops for 2008 -2009

Presented by Kristy Schadt, MFT, RPT-S



Play therapy with:

Children of Divorce: October 16, 2009 -

Traumatized children: October 17, 2009

Intro to Sandtray Worldplay: November 20, 2009

Adults: November 21, 2009

Introduction to Play Therapy 1: January 15, 2010

Children with Medical Conditions: January 16, 2010

Introduction to Play Therapy 2: March 5, 2010

Children of Substance Abusing Parents: March 6, 2010

The Traveling Play Therapist: April 30, 2010

For more information call (805) 578 2425 or visit our website at <http://www.harmonycounselingcenter.org>

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