

Playful Times

MD/DC APT NEWSLETTER

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PLAYFUL TIMES



ISSUE 9

President's Message

Happy Spring Play Therapists!

I am delighted to announce that our chapter achieved Gold Branch status again this year! Congratulations to our members and our Board for going above and beyond!

I hope you are planning on attending our annual spring conference on May 5, 2018 from 8:30 am- 4:30 pm in Bethesda, MD entitled, *The Use of Digital Tools in the Play Room* with Dr. Jessica Stone, Ph.D., RPT-S and Dr. Rachel Altvater, Psy.D., RPT-S. If you haven't registered yet, here is the link: <http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=nvepklvab&oeidk=a07ef0gpd7a0434672>

As a preview of the upcoming training, we have included articles in this edition of the newsletter by both Dr. Stone and Dr. Altvater on different uses of technology in the practice of play therapy. Happy reading.

The MD/DC APT chapter is thrilled about being named a Community Champion this year for the Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign. We will kick off this special event during our spring training on May 5th. We will be hosting a green bake sale and sharing some fun mental health awareness activities during our breaks, as well as play therapy raffle baskets! Registrants are highly encouraged to wear green! This year, Children's mental Health Awareness Week is May 6-12th and Children's Mental Health Day is Thursday, May 10th. Make sure to wear your green all week to help spread awareness and end stigma but especially on May 5th (for our spring workshop) and May 10th. For more information, visit www.samhsa.gov and www.childrensmentalhealthmatters.org

On Children's Mental Health Awareness Day on May 10, 2018, The MD/DC APT Chapter will be attending the 2nd Annual Anne Arundel County Children's Mental Health Awareness Day community/family event featuring interactive wellness activities and a panel discussion at the Arundel Lodge, Inc. in Edgewater, MD. You can register for a free ticket at: www.eventbrite.com/e/2nd-annual-anne-arundel-county-childrens-mental-health-awareness-day-2018-tickets-43833131075?aff=es2

Be on the lookout for the APT Dude at our resource table!

Lastly, Please Save the date for a special 3 hour summer workshop in DC on Friday, June 15th with Xanthia Johnson, LPC, ACS, RPT-S entitled, *How To Teach Multicultural Paper Doll Making in the Play Therapy Room*. Looking forward to seeing all of you at our upcoming events! May the flowers bloom and bring us all joy!

Playfully Yours,

Niki Picogna, Psy.D, LCPC, RPT-S



**Niki Picogna Psy.D.,
LCPC, RPT-S MD/DC APT
President**

Members Spotlight



Rachel Bradley Williams, LICSW, RPT-S currently serves as the Interim Director of School Mental Health for DC Public Schools. In this role she oversees the school mental health team, which includes almost 300 clinical social workers and school psychologists, in 115 schools. In her former position of School Mental Health Manager, she managed 30 clinical social workers and provided mental health management and support to 26 schools. A highlight of her work is ensuring that all DCPS elementary schools offer Child Centered Play Therapy. Ms. Bradley Williams has trained DCPS social workers in CCPT for the past 5 years and has worked with the DCPS school mental health team to demonstrate the effectiveness of this intervention in schools.

Rachel has worked in school mental health, in all levels of schools from early intervention/Head Start through high school. She received her Master of Social Work degree from Howard University and completed a two-year, NIMH funded Post-MSW fellowship in Advanced Clinical Social Work with Children and Adolescents at the Yale University Child Study Center, in New Haven, Connecticut. She has over 20 years of experience working with children, adolescents and families, with a focus on school based mental health, play therapy and trauma. She has taught in the MSW Programs of the National Catholic School of Social Service and Howard University. Rachel also has a small private practice in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, DC.



Karen Scilio graduated with Honors from UMBC in 2006 obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and Psychology. She graduated from the University of Maryland, Baltimore School of Social Work with a Master's Degree in Social Work and a Concentration in Mental Health in 2008. She has been working in the mental health field since 2006, primarily with children, adolescents and young adults.

Karen is working towards becoming a Registered Play Therapist. Her interest in play therapy began when she was hired to work on a children's inpatient unit. Prior to that, she worked primarily with adolescents and young adults in group home and residential settings. She took some play therapy trainings in order to learn how to better engage with the children on the inpatient unit. She used the skills from those trainings to change the program groups, developed a behavior management system, and to help the nursing staff better communicate with the children. This was extremely rewarding and she became interested in becoming a play therapist. Eventually, she moved on to an outpatient setting, where she could more fully engage in play therapy with clients. She has been doing this while working on the necessary trainings and supervision needed to become a Registered Play Therapist.

Karen is passionate about helping young people thrive. She has developed the core beliefs of unconditional positive regard, permissiveness and full acceptance of my client's emotions from studying Child Centered Play Therapy. With this, she helps her clients to find their inner strength by helping them to develop effective coping skills. She also believe that true healing comes from within the client. She also engages the client's parents in parent skills training and in some cases Filial Play Therapy. Play is important to children and adolescents alike. Therefore, she utilizes play therapy concepts with all ages. It is something she truly loves to do

The Virtual Sandtray App

The Virtual Sandtray App

Jessica Stone, Ph.D., RPT-S

The Virtual Sandtray App is a new and exciting way to create, save, load, and share sandtrays with your clients, patients, students, supervisors and during trainings - wherever you may be. With a focus on accessibility, diversity, and portability, more of your clients will be able to access the amazing tool of sandtray therapy. In addition, with the Virtual Sandtray App you can go above and beyond what is possible in a traditional tray. This app is not a game, rather it is a professional tool designed to enhance and expand a traditional method to new heights and possibilities.

Traditionally a specialist has a box with sand in it and many miniatures available to be chosen by the client and placed in the sand. Some features of sandtray therapy vary with the approach and foundation of the specialist, however, in general the items are placed by the client into the sand depicting a representation of his/her world view, experiences, and/or difficulties. At times there is a verbal story to complement the tray and at times there is not. A specialist's primary job is to understand trays via this "nonverbal medium of communication" in a way that assists the person through the issues effecting his/her life.

The Virtual Sandtray App allows the client to have access to an amazingly creative tool to create sandtrays in numerous environments. The specialist assisting the client has the ability to manage the files in a professional manner. The features and models available can be customized to maximize the usefulness of the app for your needs. The research thus far supports the use of digital tools to attain and further therapeutic goals while maintaining the key features of the traditional tray.

With a deep respect for the various theoretical modalities of working with a sandtray, The Virtual Sandtray App's focus remains on the key aspects of the therapeutic value of this time honored tool. For instance,

The Virtual Sandtray App: Continued

the key aspects of Sandtray therapy include a "dynamic interpersonal relationship", an emphasis of promoting "play and relationship", and the Sandtray therapist "facilitates rather than choreographs the process" (Homeyer & Sweeney, 2011). Each of these, and more, can be achieved with the Virtual Sandtray App.

Times are changing and it is critical that our play therapy toolboxes expand to incorporate these changes. A significant concept of our work is the importance of speaking the client's language (Stone, 2015). Therapists frequently have educational instruction regarding this important concept. It is the creation of a safe holding environment for the client. In 2018 the majority of clients speak a digital language, speak it quite well and consider it a fun, familiar medium. To discount the importance of speaking a client's language merely because it is digital is a mistake, especially if that 'language' can lead to important clinical information and interactions.

Created by a psychologist and registered play therapist and a self-taught programmer, this professional app has an attention to detail which is unmatched. The cost is less than half the price of a traditional starter sandtray kit and new model packages will be added continuously to increase your model collection. The Virtual Sandtray App is an important addition to a specialist's toolbox to meet client needs. ☑☑ With The Virtual Sandtray App the possibilities are virtually endless!

Learn more about this at our upcoming training for MD APT in May. Save the date: May 5, 2018 For more in depth training, please watch for upcoming webinars which will be posted on our Facebook page. Please like our page and stay up to date!

Homeyer, L. & Sweeney, D. (2011). Sandtray Therapy: A Practical Manual. New York: Taylor and Francis Group.

Stone, J. (2015). Board Game Play Therapy In O'Connor, K., Schaefer, C. & Braverman, L. (Eds) The Handbook of Play Therapy, Second Edition. (pp. 309-323). New Jersey: Wiley.

The Virtual Sandtray App: Continued



Embracing the Sociocultural Evolution of Technology in the Playroom

Embracing the Sociocultural Evolution of Technology in the Playroom

By: Rachel Altvater, Psy.D., LCPC, RPT

Change is frightening. Why interrupt something that is comfortable, predictable, reliable, and effective? When a disturbance occurs with the status quo, people often feel a host of complex reactions. Feelings may include anger, confusion, fear, wonderment, excitement, and/or indifference. There is not a correct or expected way to experience change. As mental health professionals, we know this concept all too well. We continuously encourage expression and reflection of all thoughts, feelings, and experiences that accompany change for our clients. We often facilitate therapeutic environments that encourage and embrace all stages of growth and change within our clients' lives. So, how come it is so hard for us to digest our own personal and professional transformation?

Technology is an ever-evolving field. It has grown tremendously over the past few decades. Individuals who grew up in this technological age likely have more awareness and comfort with many forms of technology. But, what about the seasoned clinicians who did not grow up with technology and who are further removed? It is a multifaceted phenomenon and can bring about a lot of uncertainty and anxiety. Technology can also be quite dangerous and unpredictable at times. So, what is the point in learning about technology for treatment? If we are comfortable with what has worked for so many years, why should we deviate from that method? Many child clients are immersed in technology every single day at home and school. It is important for us to understand more about what they engage with outside sessions, so we can connect with our clients and understand more about their world inside sessions. Change is not always about altering our methods; sometimes change is as simple as modifying our perspective.

Mental health professionals should only incorporate tools in sessions that they are comfortable using. If a client can sense discomfort or apprehension, it could be detrimental to the therapeutic relationship or process. See below for tips on how to embrace change and develop comfort with technology in the playroom:

1 Explore technology on your own.

Before adapting technological interventions in the playroom, it is important to develop a sense of comfort with manipulating technology. Take the time to explore technology; investigate tablet and smart phone applications, the Internet (you can type "list of popular websites" into a search engine to discover which sites are most active), video and computer games, popular music, and any area of technology that sparks curiosity. Become familiar with what technology is available to and commonly used among your clients.

2 Research the use of technology in therapy.

Search for recent research about the use of technology in both general psychotherapy and play therapy. Information regarding ethical practices, technological interventions, and efficacy of these interventions within therapy are essential for establishing a sound theoretical basis for your work. It is our responsibility to provide clinically competent .

and ethically sound treatment. [The Association for Play Therapy Best Practices](#) has information outlining ethics surrounding technology in play therapy.

3 Establish ground rules, limits and boundaries regarding technology in sessions.

It is essential to set clear boundaries regarding technology in therapy sessions. Will you allow your clients to bring in their own technology, or will you solely provide the technology? Will you deliver the particular technological interventions, or will you encourage your clients to bring in their own intervention ideas? What technology is acceptable and unacceptable to use in your sessions? How long will you spend on technological interventions? How will you monitor the safety of technology use within the session? How will you deliver these rules, limits and boundaries to your clients? Consider all of your options.

4 Gradually expose yourself and your clients to technology.

Steadily introduce technology in your sessions. It is suggested to start with a simple technological intervention. Only incorporate what you are familiar and comfortable with using in session. For example, instead of playing a tangible, traditional board game, play a virtual version of the board game on a tablet. Or, prepare a therapeutic YouTube video for the session, then discuss the video with your client. The more comfortable you become with technology in session, the more you might be willing to make available for your clients.

5 Continue to self reflect on your feelings surrounding technology in general and in treatment.

Just because you feel open to, exhilarated about, or uncertain about using technology in sessions for a period of time does not mean that you will always experience these thoughts and feelings. After gradually incorporating technological interventions into sessions, continue to reflect on your thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Additionally, notice benefits and detriments to incorporating these interventions in your sessions. Make note of all these insights and adjust your technological interventions accordingly.

Training Opportunities

Chesapeake Beach Professional Seminars Upcoming events in 2018:



Live Webinar – Play Therapy Takes the Stand in Court
– 3 CE/CEU/Clock Hours
April 20, 2018 – 12:30pm to 4:15pm
Cost: \$69.00

IN PERSON - 2018 Maryland Play Therapy Boot Camp
July 16 to 28, 2018
Total Cost: \$1,700.00 for all workshops and 72 CE/CEU/Clock Hours
Topics include:
Child-Centered Play Therapy – Beginner
July 16 & 17 - \$298.00 – 12 CE/CEU/Clock Hours

Self-Regulation for Children with Aggressive Behaviors in Play Therapy & Equine Experience Field Trip – Beginner
July 18 & 18 - \$298.00 – 12 CE/CEU/Clock Hours

Taking Play Therapy Outdoors: Archery, Tape, Art, Yoga, Labyrinth Walk & more! – Intermediate
July 20 - \$175.00 – 6 CE/CEU/Clock Hours

Gestalt Play Therapy for Children & Adolescents: What I learned from the Master – Beginner
July 21 & 22 - \$298.00 – 12 CE/CEU/Clock Hours

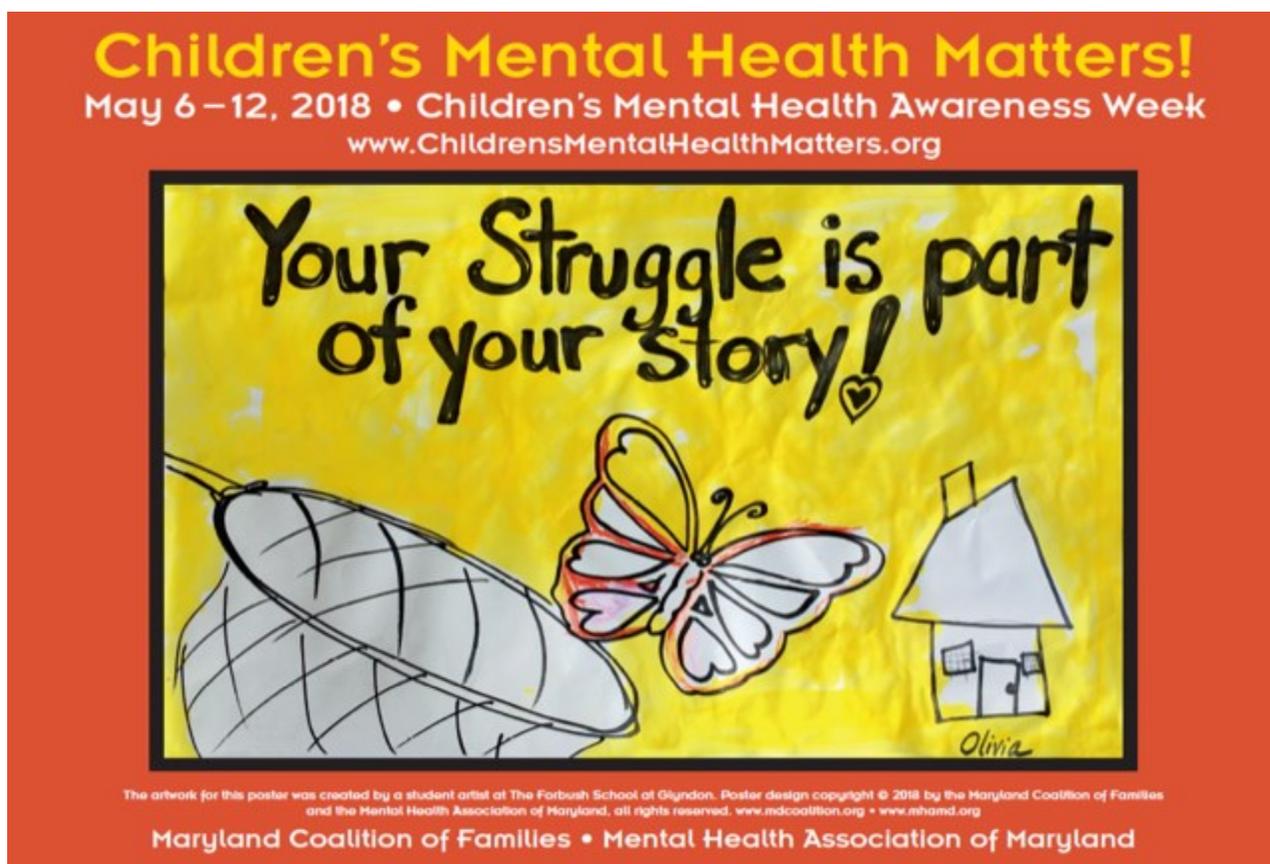
Play Therapy for Sexually Traumatized Children – Intermediate
July 24 & 25 - \$298.00 – 12 CE/CEU/Clock Hours

Traumatic Grief in Play Therapy – Beginner
July 26 - \$150.00 – 6 CE/CEU/Clock Hours

FUN Integrative Approaches to Trauma-Informed Art Interventions in Play Therapy – Intermediate
July 27 & 28 - \$298.00 – 12 CE/CEU/Clock Hours

For more information please see our website at: cbpseminars.org or email us at cbps2006@gmail.com

REGISTER EARLY, SPACE IS LIMITED!



Save the date:

What: Use of Digital Tools in the Play Therapy Room with Jessica Stone, PhD., RPT-S and Rachael Altvater, PsyD., LCPC, RPT

When: Saturday, May 5th from 8:30am till 4:30pm.

Where: Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Service Center
4805 Edgemoor Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814