



## Mining Report – February 2018

Which *change drivers* might rock the play therapy world? APT *mines* recent mental health *intelligence* (i.e. publications) and disseminates quarterly Mining Reports with cutting-edge trends, emerging wisdom, and other information to play therapy practitioners, instructors, and supervisors. Consult the publications or links displayed for answers to the questions.

### Intelligence

#### What are the outcomes and rates of participation of military families in the US Army Family Advocacy Program?

"The military has developed family advocacy programs designed to keep families safe and intervene to reduce the deleterious effects of exposure to family violence. This is one of the first studies to examine the quality with which a family advocacy program is implemented and the degree to which families engage with the program" (Aronson, Perkins, Morgan, Cox, & Robichaux, 2018, p. 218).

- Researchers reviewed 226 cases of families who came in contact with the Army Family Advocacy Program (FAP).
- Authors concluded that family engagement with the program was low and called for enhancements to programming for participant engagement.

Aronson, K. R., Perkins, D. F., Morgan, N. R., Cox, A., & Robichaux, R. (2018). Military Family Advocacy in the U.S. Army: Program service outcomes and family participation. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 27(1), 218-226. doi: 10/1007/s10826-017-0864-8.

Contributor: Elizabeth Burgin, MA, NCC, LPC Intern, Denton, TX

#### How does a play-based intervention that includes parents and playmates affect long-term social skills of children with ADHD?

"The present study investigated the social, play, social skills, and parent-child relationships of children with ADHD and their playmates (n – 13/group) aged 5-13" (Barnes, Wilkes-Gillan, Bundy, & Cordier, 2017, p. 457).

- Discussed short-term effect of play-based intervention incorporating 5 principles related to social skills.
- Results indicated significant long-term effectiveness of intervention as measured by several different instruments with parents and children.

Barnes, G., Wilkes-Gillan, S., Bundy, A., & Cordier, R. (2017). The social play, social skills, and parent-child relationships of children with ADHD 12 months following an RCT of a play-based intervention. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 64(6), 457- 465.

Contributor: Elizabeth R. Taylor, PhD, LPC-S, LMFT, RPT-S, Fort Worth, TX

#### Can expressive arts therapy work with children who are experiencing a medical epidemic?

"This article provided an overview of setting up an expressive arts therapy program during and after the Ebola epidemic. The article described, "an overview of current theory and research for expressive arts therapy and the impact of trauma, describe the process of how the program developed and was implemented, the process of partnering with the community, program components, the two pilot programs, and the large-scale community program" (Decosimo et al., 2017, p.176).

- Found a positive reaction to using play and expressive arts, connecting emotional aspects to the use of expression and mental health.
- Provided implications for developing large group expressive art programs.
- Discussed barriers that should be taken into consideration when working with children suffering from a medical epidemic.

Decosimo, C., Hanson, J., Boland, C., Slawson, D., Littleton, M., & Quinn, M. (2017). A process description of playing to live! A community psychosocial arts program during Ebola. *Journal of Social, Behavioral, and Health Sciences*, 11(1), 176-199.

Contributor Pedro J. Blanco, PhD, LPC-S, RPT-S, CHST, Denton, TX.

### **What common features do children suffering from grief and loss have?**

"The purpose of this study was to utilize psychometrically established instruments to examine the multivariate shared relationship between characteristics of bereaved children referred for counseling --their ages, genders, ethnicities, types of loss, and life stressors—and their behavioral manifestations as well as the relationship between these characteristics and levels of parent-child relational stress" (Ener & Ray, 2017, p.1).

- Results indicated a strong relationship between the age and bereaved children's behavioural manifestations.
- Authors discussed the findings in regards to child development and need to provide age related appropriate treatment.
- Described the impact of child bereavement has on the stress of the parent-child relationship. Findings indicate that younger bereaved children caregivers exhibit less stress than older bereaving children.

Ener, L. & Ray, D. (2017). Exploring characteristics of children presenting to counseling for grief and loss. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-017-0939-6>.

Contributor Pedro J. Blanco, PhD, LPC-S, RPT-S, CHST, Denton, TX.

### **How might infant mental health services be expanded through the integration of relational play therapy?**

"The expansion of infant mental health (IMH) to at-risk preschoolers and their families has contributed to the integration of relational play therapy (RPT) into IMH treatment services for this population. Integrating RPT allows access to specialized play and expressive techniques specific to preschool and family development, which improves the clinical ability to meet the multiple and complex needs of at-risk parent-child dyads and their families" (Farley & Whipple, 2017, p. 669).

- RPT included Theraplay, Filial Therapy, and Gil's Integrated Play Therapy.
- Outlined 5 phases of interventions with at risk families.
- Provided two detailed case studies that illustrate this model.

Farley, J. & Whipple, E.E. (2017). Expanding infant mental health treatment services to at-risk preschoolers and their families through the integration of relational play therapy. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 38(5), 669-679. doi:10/1002/imhj.21663.

Contributor: Stephanie Pratola, PhD, LCP, RPT-S, Roanoke, VA

### **What is the comparative benefit of play therapy treatment for children and adolescents?**

"...there was a significant moderate effect for play therapy interventions across all outcomes" (Jensen, Biesen, Graham, 2017, p. 390).

- Meta-analysis of 100 outcome studies.
- Explored how methodological differences impacts meta-analyses.
- "Measurement of Empathy in Adult Child Interaction (MEACI) resulted in much larger effects than other measures" (p. 396).
- Suggested that "greater clarity is needed on purposes and intent of play therapy interventions" to be considered an Empirically Supported Treatment (EST)" (p. 396).

Jensen, S.A, Biesen, J.N. & Graham, E.R. (2017). A meta-analytic review of play therapy with emphasis on outcome measures. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 48(5), 390-400. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pro000148>.

Contributor: Stephanie Pratola, PhD, LCP, RPT-S, Roanoke, VA

### **What were the outcomes of a case study that integrated play therapy into couple's counseling?**

"...relationship discord scores dropped dramatically ...both partners had higher satisfaction toward their spouse ...increase in three areas of intimacy for both partners" (Kennedy Gordon, 2017, p. 318).

- Research implemented a single case study design.
- Included specific in session and homework play therapy activities.

Kennedy, S.C., & Gordon, K (2017). Effects of integrated play therapy on relationship satisfaction and intimacy within couples counseling: a clinical case study. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 25(4), 313-321. doi:10.1177/1066480717732169.

Contributor: Stephanie Pratola, PhD, LCP, RPT-S, Roanoke, VA

### **How to help parents of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder become more aware of their unmet needs?**

“...with the rapidly increasing number of children diagnosed with ASD, addressing family unmet needs may guide prioritization and allocation of limited resources, thereby reducing the burden on healthcare, school, and community services” (Kiami & Goodgold, 2017, p. 2).

- Identified stressors that impact the entire family when caring for a child diagnosed with ASD.
- Discussed research findings of maladaptive coping strategies parents have indicated.
- Emphasized how pediatric practitioners can efficiently refer parents to effective resources or assist them in creating coping strategies that can benefit the entire family.

Kiami, S. R., & Goodgold, S. (2017). Support needs and coping strategies as predictors of stress level among mothers of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Autism Research and Treatment*, 2017, Article ID 8685950, 1-10. doi:10.1155/2017/8685950.

Contributor: Kenisha Gordon, PhD, NCC, LPC-S, ACS, RPT-S, Clinton, MS

### **How do the parental beliefs about play interact with the responsive parenting skills of mothers in low-income families with young children enrolled in Early Head Start?**

“Consideration of parents’ play beliefs has the potential to inform parent-focused efforts that incorporate parents’ use of play-based interactions with their child; this is particularly the case for low-income families who are often the target of programmes seeking to promote young children’s development and family functioning” (LaForett & Mendez, 2017, p. 1369).

- Lower levels of parental depression and hostile parenting behaviors were positively related to beliefs that supported play in their children.
- In this study, lower levels of parental efficacy and parent warmth/responsiveness were positively linked to belief that play should have an academic focus.
- Overall, respondents had more favorable views toward play that had an academic or learning context for their children.

LaForett, D. R., & Mendez, J. L. (2017). Play beliefs and responsive parenting among low-income mothers of preschoolers in the United States. *Early Child Development and Care*, 187(8), 1359-1371. doi:10.1080/03004430.2016.1169180.

Contributor: Laura Tejada, PhD, LMFT, LCPC, RPT-S, Chicago, IL

### **In what ways do play therapists benefit from a familiarity of psychiatric medications?**

“This article focuses on the side effects of medications commonly prescribed to children with psychiatric conditions” (Marvasti, Wu, & Merritt, 2018, p. 35).

- Provided terminology, definitions, and potential side effects of psychiatric medications, which are commonly prescribed to children.
- Discussed how play therapy may be utilized to assist the client in coping with the side effects of medications.

Marvasti, J.A., Wu, P., & Merritt, R. (2018). Psychopharmacology for play therapists. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 27(1), 35-45. doi:10.1037/pla000063.

Contributor: Vanessa Gaona, MEd, NCC, LPC-S, RPT-S, Sugar Land, TX

### **What does the use of shared discussion in social media by parents participating in a community play group indicate about their understanding of the play of their children?**

“...the parents’ knowledge of play was not limited to a descriptive level—but indicated what they believed children were learning through the play” (McLean, Edwards, & Morris, 2017, p. 206).

- Analysis indicated that social media provided an opportunity for sharing collective knowledge about play, demonstrating the potential of social media platforms as vehicles for extending parental learning about play.
- The authors advocated for increased use of collaborative social media to build the shared knowledge of parents about the importance of play in the home learning environment of young children.

McLean, K., Edwards, S., & Morris, H. (2017). Community play group social media and parental learning about young children’s play. *Computers & Education*, 115, 201-210. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2017.08.004>.

Contributor: Laura Tejada, PhD, LMFT, LCPC, RPT-S, Chicago, IL

### **How might empirical study of the contextual nature of young children's play within homeless shelters assist with improving the outcomes of families and children experiencing homelessness?**

"Homeless shelters are often environments with limited opportunities for young children and families to experience quality play interactions. Therefore, children and families most at risk of negative life outcomes are denied access to a primary medium capable of ameliorating the negative impacts associated with homelessness" (Schlembach, 2017, p. 1180).

- Although the largest group of the homeless population in the US is families with young children, there is a significant lack of empirical research on the play of children residing in homeless shelters.
- Cited the protective factors of play in helping young children adjust to diversity and build resilience, the author advocates for more research exploring the context-specific and need-specific play of young children residing in homeless shelters.

Schlembach, S. (2017). Young children experiencing homelessness: The overlooked medium of play. *Early Child Development and Care*, 187(7), 1170-1183, doi:10.1080/03004430.2016.1159559.

Contributor: Laura Tejada, PhD, LMFT, LCPC, RPT-S, Chicago, IL

### **In what ways can reality therapy be useful to play therapists?**

"In this article, [the authors] propose integrating reality therapy with play therapy" (Stutey & Wubbolding, 2018, p. 1).

- Provided an overview of reality therapy with examples of reality play therapy activities.
- Examined a case example utilizing reality play therapy techniques in the playroom.

Stutey, D.M., & Wubbolding, R.E. (2018). Reality Play Therapy: A case example. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 27(1), 1-13. doi:10.1037/pla0000061.

Contributor: Vanessa Gaona, MEd, NCC, LPC-S, RPT-S, Sugar Land, TX

### **What is the longitudinal impact of PTSD re-experiencing symptoms in children and adolescents following a residential fire?**

"Although the linkage between PTSD symptoms and aggression has been demonstrated among victims of interpersonal traumas, this relationship is rarely examined among child survivors of other traumas" (Sullivan, Muskett, Smith, & Jones, 2017, p. 333).

- Data collected from 135 children who survived a residential fire was analyzed using hierarchical linear modeling.
- Re-experiencing symptom severity predicted higher levels of aggression.
- Researchers concluded that higher attention should be given to the re-experiencing cluster among children who present with PTSD and aggressive symptomology.

Sullivan, C. P., Muskett, A., Smith, A. J., & Jones, R. T. (2017). Aggression in children and adolescents following a residential fire: The longitudinal impact of PTSD re-experiencing symptoms. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma*, 10(4), 333-341. doi: 10.1007/s40653-016-0129-5. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40653-016-0129-5>.

Contributor: Elizabeth Burgin, MA, NCC, LPC Intern, Denton, TX

### **How does the non-deployed military parent's mental health status impact adolescent behavior and perceptions of the non-deployed parent?**

"Youths need to be better equipped for the changes that lie ahead. This could begin by making them aware of the dynamics of how the physical absence of a parent will likely affect them and others in their family systems" (Thompson, Baptist, Miller, & Henry, 2017, p. 1054).

- Provided an overview of communication boundaries and behavioral responses to changing roles in the absence of a deployed parent.
- Defined and explained the symbolic interaction theory.
- Discussed the importance of clinicians to prepare the non-deployed parent and adolescent regarding communication and changes to the family system.

Thompson, D. E., Baptist, J., Miller, B., & Henry, U. (2017). Children of the U.S. National Guard: Making meaning and responding to parental deployment. *Youth & Society*, 49(8), 1040-1056. doi:0.1177/0044118X15570883.

Contributor: Kenisha Gordon, PhD, NCC, LPC-S, ACS, RPT-S, Clinton, MS

### **What role does play have in helping immigrant children navigate school and home life?**

"The aim of this article is to extend the concept of play as a social and cultural construct and to examine play as third space" (Yahya & Wood, 2017, p. 305-306).

- Play, the third space, bridges home and school, that is, first and second spaces of the child's life.
- Play provides children with understanding of own cultures and cultures of playmates, select like-playmates, explore identity, and generalize play from each location.
- Teachers act as facilitators for those who do not seem to integrate the cultures; suggestions provided.

Yahya, R., & Wood, E. A. (2017). Play as third space between home and school: Bridging cultural discourses. *Early Childhood Research*, 15(3), 305-322.

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Reader feedback regarding how the Mining Report might be improved and made more helpful for play therapy practitioners, instructors, and supervisors is welcomed. Mining reports are archived in the Members Only section of the APT website ([www.a4pt.org](http://www.a4pt.org)).