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

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) or Family Creative Therapy (FCT): Which Parent Management Training Program is more effective in treating child behavior problems?

"Parent management training (PMT) programs, which target parents as the primary agents of change, have been found to be the most effective strategy to turn children with disruptive behavior away from disadvantaged trajectories" (Abrahamse, Junger, van Wouwe, Boer, & Lindauer, 2016, p. 1606).
- Outlines the treatment protocol of PCIT and FCT, a Dutch-developed form of art psychotherapy.
- Utilizes families referred to a community mental health setting in Amsterdam as research participants.
- Incorporates multiple measures, including the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory, Anxiety Disorders Interview Schedule, Maltreatment Classification System, and Child Behavior Checklist.
- Determines the PCIT was a more effective approach to addressing child behavior problems.


Contributor: Alexis Sanghera, LCSW, RPT, Little Rock, AR

What hands-on activities might increase young children’s participation in Rational Emotive Attachment-Based Logotherapy family therapy?

"In R.E.A.L. therapy, RET and logotherapy activities are presented in a play, hands-on manner to enhance attachment and child engagement" (Armstrong, 2016, p. 166).
- Provides examples of developmentally-appropriate rational emotive activities for young children in family therapy sessions.


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

Trauma and Attachment Group (TAG) Program: What is it and is it effective?

"In addition to providing support for the proposed effectiveness of relational intervention for healing attachment related trauma with latency-aged youth, the results of this study contribute to current therapeutic recommendations that caregivers be included in treatment" (Ashton, O’Brien-Langer, & Silverstone, 2016, p. 41).
- Describes the Trauma and Attachment Group (TAG) Program, which is a dyad-based treatment approach for latency-aged children.
- Outlines the following components of the treatment model: Stabilization, Trauma Resolution, and Reconnection/ Generalization.
- Concludes the TAG Program is effective in enhancing attachment among caregivers and children.
- Indicates the TAG Program improves communication, discipline practices, involvement, and relational frustration.

Is it harmful for children who are disaster survivors to participate in research about their experiences?
“Children reported feeling more upset and less happy during participation than preparticipation, but their feelings of upset decreased and happiness increased to prelevels post-participation” (Hambrick, O’Connor, & Vernberg, 2016, p. 169).
- Assesses children and their mothers who had experienced an EF5 tornado.
- Indicates children slightly upset during their participation but returned to their pre-participation levels.
- Findings suggest importance should be placed upon preventing distress.

What are teachers’ barriers to and roles in suicide intervention for students?
“Teachers are identified as frontline participants in school-based suicide prevention efforts. However, their training and roles in these efforts are often not clearly defined. Because 25 states currently mandate suicide prevention training for teachers and 14 other states encourage this training, teachers’ perceptions about their role in suicide prevention are important to consider” (Hatton et al., 2016, p. 1).
- Reports 74 secondary teachers’ perceptions of actively intervening with suicidal students.
- Identifies barriers of limited suicide prevention training, fears of aggravating the situation, and fears of legal repercussions.
- Indicates teachers are the frontline school personnel that could encounter student suicide.
- Suggests that when compared to untrained teachers, trained teachers are twice as likely to be approached by suicidal students.

How does emotionally focused family therapy and play therapy work with children whose parents are divorced?
“EFFT should be used as an overarching framework in combination with play therapy techniques when working with young children who do have the cognitive abilities to fully participate in traditional EFFT sessions” (Hirschfeld & Wittenborn, 2016, p. 141).
- Discusses the effect of divorce in young children.
- Examines various developmental stages of young children.
- Describes Attachment Theory and how to use in family therapy.
- Integrates the use of play therapy with young children with emotionally focused family therapy.
- Provides examples that integrate the use of play therapy with emotionally focused family therapy techniques.

How do school counselors integrate child-centered play therapy (CCPT) into a comprehensive school counseling approach?
“Child-centered play therapy (CCPT) has a long and rich history of both practice and research within the school setting with many important lessons for school counselors and researchers. Furthermore, there are promising opportunities for continued development of a child-centered approach to school-counseling that extends beyond the counselor-student relationship to include more comprehensive, preventative, and systemic interventions within the school context” (Jayne & Ray, 2016, p.5).
- Summarizes the rich history of school-based CCPT research.
- Explaines practical strategies to overcome challenges of implementing a person-centered intervention in behaviorally-oriented schools.
- Explores applications for the use of CCPT in schools beyond individual and small group interventions.
- Focuses on the use of child-parent relationship therapy, child-teacher relationship therapy, classroom guidance, professional development, and discipline.
- Advocates for the advancement of person-centered school counseling utilizing CCPT as a comprehensive school counseling approach.


Contributor: Kasie R. Lee, PhD, LPC, NCC, RPT, Jonesboro, AR

**Why is mindfulness an important component in play therapy?**

“This integration provides a scientifically grounded explanation for the effects of play therapy relationships on the development of self-regulation, resilience, and healing” (Kestly, 2016, p. 14).

- Discusses the impact of presence in the play room.
- Explores positivity resonance and relational connections in the play room.


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

**What is the feasibility of adding social media and gaming features and access via smartphones to an evidenced-based parenting program?**

“This foundational implementation trial provides support for future rigorous evaluation of social media and gaming features as a medium for increasing parental engagement in evidence-based parenting programs online—a public health approach to protect and improve the development of vulnerable children” (Lovea et al., 2016, p. 95).

- Explores the feasibility of implementing an existing evidence-based parenting intervention.
- Examines the use of an online community incorporating social media, gaming features, and responsive design.
- Discusses parents’ patterns of use and reactions to the program.
- Explores the technical and organizational factors required to successfully deliver the program in a resource-poor environment.


Contributor: Rick L. Gunsallus, PhD, LMHC, ACS, RPT-S, Wilton Manors, FL

**Does electronics use pose a concern for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?**

“The vast majority of youth spend a considerable amount of time engaged in electronics use...there is research on positive and negative characteristics associated with these activities.” (MacMullin, Lunsky, & Weiss, 2016, p. 45).

- Provides statistical differences between genders of children and adolescents with ASD use of electronic technology.
- Identifies potential issues of problematic internet use and problematic game use in children.
- Encourages clinicians to be aware of potential issues when incorporating electronics use in sessions when working with children and adolescents with ASD.


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

**Can play therapy help students decrease outward problem behaviors in the classroom?**

“Government reports emphasize the dire need for counseling services to be accessible and effective for children in need in the United States. We employed a single case exploratory design and used group and individual Adlerian
play therapy (AdPT) as the independent variable to examine its effects on children with disruptive classroom behaviors and poor social skills. Results for each participant revealed effective to very effective treatment effects during the intervention and follow-up phases of the designs" (Meany-Walen & Teeling, 2016, p. 64).

- Explores through single case design the impact of AdPT with disruptive behaviors and poor social skills.
- Identifies positive results in minimizing disruptive classroom behaviors.
- Discusses the potential need to utilize differing forms of treatment interventions (individual and group AdPT).


**Contributor: Kasie R. Lee, PhD, LPC-S, RPT-S, Denton, TX**

**How do children who have been sexually victimized perceive their support systems as it relates to disclosure?**

“Sexual victimization stays invisible for professionals and the legal system, even though children and adolescents disclosed to informal recipients” (Munzer et al., 2016, p. 336).

- Identifies the potential barriers to disclosing victimization and to whom children/adolescents decide to disclose.
- Illustrates the impact of parental messages about sex as it relates to how children/adolescents perceive traumatic experiences.
- Emphasizes that clinicians and parents need more education about sexual victimization and interventions.


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

**What is the impact of a school-based creative arts therapy program with adolescents from refugee backgrounds?**

“The current study provided a controlled trial of creative arts therapy to address the psychosocial needs of students from refugee backgrounds...Findings suggested an effect for a reduction in behavioral difficulties for the treatment group. A significant reduction in emotional symptoms was found for the treatment group” (Quinlan, Schweitzer, Khawaja, & Griffin, 2016, p.72).

- Provides a theoretical rationale for use of school-based creative arts program with adolescents from refugee backgrounds.
- Facilitates a trial of Home of Expressive Arts and Learning (HEAL), a 10-week creative arts therapy program.
- Implements HEAL with high school students in Australia newly immigrated from Middle East, East Asia, and Africa.
- Provides empirical evidence to support creative arts therapy as an effective school-based intervention.
- Cites effectiveness in reducing behavioral difficulties, emotional symptoms, hyperactivity, and peer problems in adolescents from refugee backgrounds.


**Contributor: Kasie R. Lee, PhD, LPC, NCC, RPT, Jonesboro, AR**

**Does play therapy help young children with Autism residing in rural regions?**

“This rural Australian study explored the effects of child-centered play therapy (CCPT) on the social and emotional growth of 3 young children with autism ages 4–6 years. All children participated in 10 weekly, individual therapy sessions, which focused on targeted goals set by parents. Two instruments, the Adaptive Behavior Assessment System, Second Edition, and the Developmental Behavior Checklist, were used to formally measure social and emotional growth pre- and post-intervention. Data from both formal and informal measures showed positive improvements for all children in several areas of social and emotional functioning. Results indicated that CCPT was an effective intervention for this small sample of young children with autism. Limitations, implications, and recommendations are discussed” (Salter, Beamish, & Davies, 2016, p.78).

- Finds that parents of the children participating in CCPT reports increased social and emotional functioning.
• Suggests that CCPT can be an effective intervention for working with children with Autism.
• Reports improvement in overall behavioral functioning.


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

**How has neuroscience supported play therapy interventions and outcomes?**

“The magic of play therapy is a powerful and developmentally appropriate method of directing attention to the child’s environment, expanding awareness, and transforming children and adolescents” (Stewart, Field & Echterling, 2016, p. 4).

• Explores mirror neurons and their significance to the therapeutic relationship.
• Discusses the benefits of play in emotion regulation.


*Contributor: Vanessa Gaona, MEd, NCC, LPC-S, RPT-S, Houston, TX*

**How does the choice of toy (books, traditional toys, electronic toys) used in parent-child play session influence the quantity and quality of language used by the pair in their play session?**

“If the emphasis is on activities that promote a rich communicative interaction between parents and infants, both play with traditional toys and book reading can be promoted as language-facilitating activities while play with electronic toys should be discouraged” (Sosa, 2016, p. 136).

• Associates books most highly with quality of the language interaction.
• Suggests the lowest quality of language interaction occurred during play with electronic toys.


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

**What are the associations among marital hostility, parental hostility, and child aggression from the toddler to school-age period?**

“The spillover hypothesis suggests that childhood aggression results from spillover of interparental conflict to poor parenting, which promotes aggressive child behavior. This study was designed to examine the spillover hypothesis in non–genetically related parent–child dyads from the toddler period through age 6 years” (Stover et al., 2016, p. 235).

• Examines contextual factors of financial strain and parent antisocial traits and their associations with marital hostility and hostile parenting.
• Tests the spillover hypothesis over time from marital hostility to hostile parenting.


*Contributor: Rick L. Gunsallus, PhD, LMHC, ACS, RPT-S, Wilton Manors, FL*

**How can nature-based child centered play therapy (NBCCPT) assist elementary school children with behavioral issues?**

“We sought to expand on existing nature-based therapeutic interventions through an integration of the natural environment within a Client Centered Play Therapy approach” (Swank, Shin, Cabrita, Cheung, & Rivers, 2015, p. 440).

• Studies the treatment effects of a seven-session NBCCPT intervention with four elementary children exhibiting behavioral issues.
• Participants selected in this study were exhibiting behavioral issues in the classroom.
• Indicates improvements in behavior in two children during the post intervention phase.
• Encourages a new creative approach (NBCCPT) to use in schools with limited space and play materials.

**Contributor: Montse Casado-Kehoe, PhD, LMFT, RPT, Orlando, FL**

**Are children more at risk for maltreatment before, during, or after a parent soldier’s deployment?**

"Data such as these might suggest a need for a more intentional strategy during the immediate post-deployment period" (Taylor et al., 2016, p. 156).

- Focuses on children, ages 2 or younger, who had a military actively deployed parent.
- Reports higher rates of abuse for 6-month period during deployment and post deployment.
- Explores implications for interventions for families and soldiers during and after deployment.


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

**How does play mediate the effects of trauma in children who have experienced sexual abuse, and how is a child’s capacity for play related to development of reflective functioning later in life?**

"…these findings suggest that play may uniquely contribute to the development of mentalization about others, whereas alternate processes may be more important in the development of autobiographical mechanisms" (Tessier, Normandin, Ensink, & Fonagy, 2016, p. 73).

- Suggests pretend play increases reflective functioning in relationships with others in children who have experienced sexual abuse.
- Indicates play predicts later mentalization regarding others.
- Determines sexually abused children experienced more difficulties completing fantasy play narratives than non-abused children.
- Indicates integration of play and self-mentalization activities may foster resilience for these children.


**Contributor: Stephanie Pratola, PhD, LPC, RPT-S, Roanoke, VA and Laura Tejada, PhD, LMFT, LCPC, RPT-S, Chicago, IL**

**How might family therapists include preschool children in Emotionally Focused Family Therapy through the use of play activities?**

"The integration of play therapy techniques with EFFT presents clinicians with a developmentally appropriate and theoretically organized approach for helping families with preschool children work through attachment issues and increase emotional connection" (Willis, Haslam, & Bermudez, 2016, p. 13).

- Illustrates integration of play therapy techniques in Emotionally-Focused Family Therapy through a case study.


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

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