Flexibly Sequential Play Therapy (FSPT): A New Model of Trauma Treatment

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Type II trauma conceptualizations

- Complex trauma
- Complicated PTSD
- Disorders of Extreme Stress NOS
- Developmental trauma disorder
Key concepts for treating traumatized children

- Psychosomatic symptoms
  - Amygdala alarm
  - Decreased reactivity to physical injury
- The portals for therapeutic learning
- Follow the child’s need
- Kinesthetic involvement
- The dyadic dance: towards and away from the trauma content
- Identifying and handling post-traumatic play
Commonalities in current trauma treatments

- Safety
- Stabilization
- Affect regulation
- Addressing cognitive distortions
- Some form of exposure
COMPONENTS OF FSPT

Flexibly Sequential Play Therapy for Trauma Treatment

Flexibly Sequential Play Therapy (FSPT)
A components model for play-based trauma treatment

- Enhancing Safety and Security
- Assessment and Augmentation of Coping
- Soothing the Physiology
- Increasing Emotional Literacy
- Play-Based Gradual Exposure
- Addressing the Thought Life
- Making Positive Meaning of the Post-Trauma Self

- Relaxation and Stress Management
- Parents as Soothing Partners
- Continuum of Disclosure
- Experiential Mastery Play
- Trauma Narrative
Treatment Goal/ Interventions

Assist the client in re-establishing a sense of safety and security

Learning to Bear It
(transitional object)

Therapist as Megaphone
(Amplify safety messages)
(Allign self with client)

Containment of Perpetrators
(Helping clients empowerment experiences through manipulation of perpetrator symbols)

Safe Place Productions
(Creating an external image that can become an internalized resource)
Assessment of coping and augmentation of positive coping strategies

Coping Tree

Crowning Community

Coping Umbrella

Copecakes
(Detailing components of healthy coping)

Family Play Genogram

Coping Bubble Wrap
Physiological systems

- The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical (HPA) axis is an integral part of how the body responds to stress.
- The autonomic nervous system (regulating heart rate, respiration, the galvanic skin response)
- The neuroimmune system which regulates the body’s response to sickness and disease
- Psychosomatic symptoms
“…the extreme nature of the external threat is often matched by an extreme and persisting internal activation of the neurophysiological systems mediating the stress response and their associated functions”

-Bruce Perry, 1999
Treatment Goal/ Interventions

Assist client in managing anger, anxiety and stress reactions through relaxation and guided imagery

- The Balancing Act
  (Encourages relaxation through focused attention)

- The Bubble Fall
  (Gives clients concrete visual images that induce relaxation)

- Chum Chants
  (CBT skill rehearsal)

- Five Count Breathing
  (Encourages relaxation through targeted deep breathing process)

- The Big One
  (Encourages Deep Breathing)

- Pinwheels
  (Providing an external focal point for deep breathing exercise)
Assist protective parents to enhance their protective, supportive function

SOOTHE Strategies
PCIT
"You're a Star" Board
Filial Therapy

Theraplay
Good Behavior Book
Sweet Dreams Lotion Potion
Child Parent Relationship Therapy
Treatment Goal/ Interventions

Assist client in completing full spectrum feelings identification and verbalization

Color My Heart

Take Your Temp
Treatment Goal/Interventions

Assist client in completing full spectrum feelings identification and verbalization

- **Butterflies in My Stomach**
  (Targets fear and anxiety)

- **Fruit Loops Feelings Necklace**
  (Allows for assessment of events/situations that trigger various feelings)

- **The Sands of Time**
  (Allows for uncovering layers of feelings)
  (Is process based)

- **Clearing It Up**
  (Demonstrates that a multiplicity of feelings can exist simultaneously)
  (Empowers clients to face their feelings)
“Anyone can be angry, that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way—this is not easy.”

-Aristotle
Treatment Goal/Interventions

Assist the client in identifying the nuances of anger escalation

- Volcanos
- Anger Buttons
- Anger Thermometers
- Blow It Up, Blow It Out
Continuum of Disclosure

The glimpses that children show us: making sense of the snapshots
Treatment Goal/ Interventions

Inviting Disclosure

- Zip It
  (Implants message that secrets can be shared in the playroom)

- Finding Your Voice
  (Sends a message that the child will eventually find the strength to tell the story of the trauma)

- The Creep and the Creepy Crawly
  (Invites clients to pinpoint body parts that have been made to feel uncomfortable)

- Gabby the Gecko
  (Uses a therapeutic metaphor to give the child powerful permission to tell the secret)
Experiential Mastery
Play
A form of gradual exposure
Create a trauma narrative

Help client re-create the facts of the trauma, followed by thoughts, feelings and body sensations
Key Structures in Memory

- Brainstem
- Amygdala
- Hippocampus
- Corpus collosum
- Prefrontal cortex (includes the Orbitofrontal cortex)
## Memory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implicit</th>
<th>Explicit</th>
<th>Integrated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal memory present at</td>
<td>Semantic or factual memory—begins at one and</td>
<td>Requires the transfer of info across the corpus collosum</td>
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<tr>
<td>birth, generates emotions and</td>
<td>a half years of age</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>perception</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral responses, bodily</td>
<td>Autobiographical (episodic) memory, develops</td>
<td>More difficult to impact change in emotional responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>sensations, and mental models</td>
<td>after 2nd birthday</td>
<td></td>
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The Right Hemisphere

- Dominant during the first three years
- Holistic, parallel, visual spatial
- Self-soothing
- Non-verbal aspects of language (tone, gestures)
- Encodes facial expressions
The Left Hemisphere

- Linear
- Logical
- Linguistic
- Sequencing of events using words
Coherent Narratives

“To have a coherent story, the drive of the left to tell a logical story must draw on the information from the right. If there is a blockage, as occurs in PTSD, then the narrative may be incoherent.”

Anchoring Activities

- Name five objects in the room
- Draw two objects in the room
- Name two sounds you hear
- Count the number of holes in your tennis shoes
- Sing a simple song together
- Play “I Spy”
- Provide a grounding touch, if appropriate and pre-arranged
- Work in the sand or with clay
Treatment Goal/ Intervention

Build coherent narratives for the child

- Timelines
- Sandtray Stories
- Memory Books
- "I Remember When"
- Puppet Plays
- The Toddler Book
Treatment Goal/Interventions

Assist clients in processing somatosensory memories related to the trauma

- See No Evil, Hear No Evil
- Putting the Pieces Together
- Monster Ears
- Google Eyes
Treatment Goal/ Interventions

- Identifying and challenging trauma related cognitive distortions
  - The Why Wheel
  - Repairing Self-Esteem
  - Erase the Place
  - Put a Positive Spin on It
  - Punching Holes in that Theory
  - Thinking Caps
Extinguish trauma induced avoidance symptoms

Help client successfully overcome anxiety induced avoidance patterns
Graduated Exposures-Building Stepladders by Scenario

- Help the client make a hierarchy of fear inducing stimuli
- Help the client rank these in order of difficulty
- Begin with the easiest task first
- Make the tasks small enough that the client experiences many initial successes

-as adapted from Wolpe as described by Shapiro, 1989
Making Positive Meaning of the Post Trauma Self

While encouraging a meaningful goodbye
Before, During and After

Helping the client make meaning of the trauma that includes a positive sense of self
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References


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Creative Child Therapy Resources

Resources by Paris Goodyear-Brown (www.parisandme.com)

1) Play Therapy with Traumatized Children: A Prescriptive Approach
2) The Worry Wars: An Anxiety Workbook for Kids and Their Helpful Adults
3) Digging for Buried Treasure: 52 Prop-Based Play Therapy Interventions for Treating the Problems of Childhood
4) Digging for Buried Treasure 2: 52 More Prop-Based Play Therapy Interventions for Treating the Problems of Childhood
5) 10 PEAS in a Pod (DVD)
6) Gabby the Gecko
Creative Child Therapy Resources

Resources By Liana Lowenstei (www.lianalowenstein.com)
1) Creative Interventions for Troubled Children & Youth
2) More Creative Interventions for Troubled Children & Youth
3) Creative Interventions for Bereaved Children
4) Creative Interventions for Children of Divorce
5) Paper Dolls & Paper Airplanes: Therapeutic Exercises for Sexually Traumatized Children
6) Assessment & Treatment Activities for Children, Adolescents, and Families: Practitioners Share Their Most Effective Techniques

Resources by Sueann Kenney-Noziska (www.playtherapycorner.com)
1) Techniques-Techniques-Techniques: Play-Based Activities for Children, Adolescents, & Families