

Add Play To Your Work...May 2013

Dear Friends,

Happy Spring,

The days have finally gotten longer and warmer. I hope this means you are getting out more and enjoying the beauty of New England's best time of year (my opinion), and hopefully not sneezing your head off like I am.

I have been sending you more emails than usual lately in the wake of last month's horrible events in Boston. I hope you and your families and co-workers have weathered the storm and that your clients are also finding their resilience in the widespread community support. If not, or if you want to use this opportunity to reach out, please let us know. We are prepared to do training or have some supportive gatherings to help us all to re-ground our lives and our practices in the midst of the chaos.

Above all, remember to keep playing. Self care is your best defense in times of stress.

Playfully yours, Sarah

...PS... conference planning is beginning. If you are interested in helping with this endeavor, please contact Stefani at training@newenglandplaytherapy.org.

Congratulations to our new New Hampshire RPT's Lynda True-Carter and Beatrice Gove, both guidance counselors.

Supervision Group North New Hampshire meets the first Friday of each month from 8:00 to 9:30 am at 84 Main Street in Ashland. Contact djold@plymouth.edu



Like us on Facebook to hear about conference and event announcements first. Also, we plan to add discussion elements to our FB page. We hope to see you there.

Start planning now for November Conference!

NEAPT's Annual Meeting and Conference featuring Brijin Gardner

"Powerful Play Therapy"

November 1-2, 2013,

Natick, MA

(Friday workshops will include supervision and working with adults using Play)

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THERAPLAY

BY SUSAN GESTAL, MA, LPC, RPT

If you have traveled to a foreign country you may have experienced an unsettled sense of not knowing what to expect coupled with apprehension about where you are going and what you will do. That's the way I felt taking my first Theraplay training.

My training and practice centered on non-directive Child Centered Play Therapy when my supervisor (Barbara VanHoff) suggested I take Level One THERAPLAY & MIM. Shortly after Barbara made her suggestion I attended a conference where Paris Goodyear-Brown gave the same recommendation. Theraplay offered its training in NYC, an easy daily commute for me, so, wondering how this very directive style would fit in my practice, I traveled into unknown territory.

For those unfamiliar with Theraplay their website (www.theraplay.org) describes it this way: *“Theraplay is a child and family therapy for building and enhancing attachment, self-esteem, trust in others, and joyful engagement. It is based on the natural patterns of playful, healthy interaction between parent and child and is personal, physical, and fun.... Theraplay sessions create an active, emotional connection between the child and parent or caregiver, resulting in a changed view of the self as worthy and lovable and of relationships as positive and rewarding.”*

My work at the time included many children in the foster care system so I integrated Theraplay into much of my practice. I find Theraplay very helpful in strengthening the attachment between child and caregiver. I continue to be amazed at how much I learn about the parent-child relationship from the MIM, the assessment tool used in Theraplay. I am moved as I witness strengthened attachments through the use of Theraplay's playful interactions, and hear parent's report that there have been enormous changes at home as well. I've used Theraplay with clients ages 2-14. Wonderfully, I find adult caregivers as well as the child experiencing healing through Theraplay. I have even used Theraplay with great success internationally. It has provided a perfect fit for the caregivers, orphans and at risk children I work with in Jos, Nigeria. (More about that another time.)

Explaining brain development to parents, Bruce Perry M.D writes: “I discussed how the development of higher, more complex brain regions relies on proper organization of the lower, simpler areas” (Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog, p 222). Perry's neurosequential approach to therapy requires attention to the lower, simpler brain regions first, “but in order to develop properly each area requires appropriately timed, patterned, repetitive experiences” (p248). Theraplay addresses the lower areas of the brain (arousal, emotional regulation and attachment) using patterned repetitive activities with an attuned caregiver.

I am now a Level 1 Theraplay therapist. I still use nondirective play therapy at times, as well as other interventions, including Theraplay.

If you have questions about Theraplay let me know (susangestal@gmail.com). Contact myself or another NE APT board member if you're interested in attending Level One Theraplay training; New England APT will host the training if there is enough interest.

Technique Alert!

The Sandy Bottom

Reviewed by Laurel Hemmer

For those of you who saw David Crenshaw in New England a few years ago, this will not be a new technique, however sometimes it is helpful to be reminded of techniques we know and haven't used for a while. I have used this several times and it had a profound effect on two fifth grade boys I worked with. Hope you and your clients also benefit from it. Although I heard it from David, he learned this technique from Dan Siegel, MD and it is also used by Jon Kabat-Zinn.

"I would like you to imagine that you are standing on the sandy bottom beneath the sea. It is very peaceful, calm, and still. You can't help but enjoy being in this deep, still, and calm place. You look up at the surface, and you notice that it is choppy and the waves are all churned up. Perhaps there is a full force storm. But down deep where you are the water is just as calm, still, and peaceful as ever. You can see the turbulence at the top but you are not affected by it. Enjoy the feeling of being in that calm, quiet place as long as you want and if you chose to close your eyes open them when you are ready to do so."

Spark Plug Introduction

“building playful communities in each state”

At this year’s board meeting we talked a lot about how to build connections between members of New England’s APT Branch. Many of us had just been to the National Conference and we were pumped after spending so much quality time with other play therapists and with realizing the amazing amount of knowledge we collectively hold here in New England. We laughed a lot too!

Yet the New England Branch spreads over 5 states, many of us live and work far apart, and we have many other balls we juggle in our lives. SO, we now have a “Spark Plug” for each state and I will be your first “Spark Plug Coordinator.” We are hoping with 6 committed Spark Plugs we will be able to reach out more often to our members in order to create more playful and learning opportunities in each of our five states for you to participate in. Please feel free to contact your spark plug with any ideas you have or ways in which you’d like to become involved.

So, let me introduce you to our Spark Plugs!

Connecticut – Susan Gestal

New Hampshire - Kay Edwards (southern) and DeeDee Nold (northern)

Massachusetts - Amanda Trujillo

Rhode Island – Sarah O’Brien

Vermont – Still looking for that right person

We are all looking forward to stronger and brighter connections,

Laurel Hemmer (Mass), Spark Plug Coordinator

Upcoming Training Announcements: The following workshops (unless otherwise listed) are offered by or in conjunction with the New England Association for Play Therapy. NE-APT is APT Provider #02-123.

May 31, 2013, Londonderry, NH. **Introduction to Sandtray Play Therapy with Kay Edwards, Med, LCMHC, RPT-S.** 9:00-4:00. Birchtree Counseling Center. \$100 APT members, \$140 non-members. Call Linda at 603-425-2989

July 18-19, 2013, Cape Cod: **Pathways to Improved Self-Regulation: How Play Supports Development of the Brain's Executive Functions** with Daniel Yeager, LCSW, RPT-S. 9:00-12:15 Thursday and Friday. CE: 3 hours per day, 6 total. Provider #00-098. <http://playtherapyworks.weebly.com/cape-cod-seminars.html>

July 22-26, 2013, Cape Cod: **Children with Problem Sexual Behaviors: The Use of Play Therapy to Advance Assessment and Treatment Goals** with Eliana Gil, Ph.D., RPT-S. 9:00-12:15 Monday through Friday. CE: 3 hours per day, 15 total. Provider # 00-098. <Http://playtherapyworks.weebly.com/cape-cod-seminars.html>

July 22-26, 2013, Cape Cod: **New! Afternoon Session with Dr. Gil: Advanced Case Consultation & Treatment Planning.** 1:00-3:30 Monday through Friday. CE: 2.5 hours per day, 12.5 total. Provider #00-098.

July 29-August 2, 2013, Cape Cod: **Delight in Me: Bringing Back the Joy for Families in Distress** with Paris Goodyear-Brown, LCSW, RPT-S. 9:00-12:15 Monday through Friday. CE: 3 hours per day, 15 total. Provider #00-098. <http://playtherapyworks.weebly.com/cape-cod-seminars.html>

August 9- 10, 2013 **Dynamic Play Therapies.** Taught by DeeDee Nold. In Concord, NH This class will cover the history of Play Therapy and the major theory models. Contact djnold@plymouth.edu.

September through December 2013, Danbury, CT: **Intro to Play Therapy** with Gabe Lomas, Ph.D., RPT-S and Athena Drewes, Psy.D., RPT-S. Learn play therapy one Saturday per month through this and Advanced Play Therapy in the spring and earn all 150 hours needed to become an RPT. A November conference will feature nationally recognized speakers and 15 CEs. Contact Gabe Lomas at lomasg@wcsu.edu or 203-837-8512 for more information.

Save the date! November 1-2, 2013, Natick MA. Powerful Play Therapy: NE-APT Annual Conference and Meeting. Workshops to include supervision, Play Therapy with Adults, and more.

Remember, regardless of whom the presenter is, if the workshop announcements do not state APT approval with a provider number, APT will not approve it for RPT/RPT-S application or renewal.