Preface

When I first had the idea for this book, I was really hoping to publish an edited book on just the consultation requirement in play therapy. I thought it would be amazing to focus the talent of our authors and researchers in understanding this aspect of our job, as play therapists and child counselors, that gets too little attention in the field: consultation.

What is consultation? Consultation is the work that we do outside of the playroom: when we seek professional supervision and case consultation; when we meet with caregivers and teachers; or call an allied health professional, pediatrician, or other professional working with the child whom we are seeing in play therapy and child counseling.

But, as I considered the book I realized, leaving out the important research, both conceptual and empirical, in play therapy would also deduce the reality of the consultation process. These factors, the work we do inside and outside of the play room, work in concert for the seasoned play therapist to create the best standard of care and continuity available to the child client, their caregivers, and family.

So, the purpose of this book is to consider that play therapy is an eco-systemic form of therapy, and integrating these topics is essential in modern day play therapy conceptualization. In saying that it is eco-systemic, I am not speaking of the actual relationship or interventions. I am talking about the reality of the complexity of working with children and their families. A play therapist is responsible for being competent to work with a variety of populations and to engage in consultive supervision, as is any counselor or therapist working with any individual clients. But, for play therapists, working with children, we are responsible for working with a variety of caregivers and professionals who are often connected to the child in meaningful ways.

Brofenbrenner (1979) first developed the concept of ecological systems theory as a means for understanding children developmentally, but within the context of their multi-systemic experience. The child is at the center (developmental age, gender identification, etc.); he or she is immediately surrounded by the microsystem (family/ caregivers, school church, friends); then the next layer surrounding the child is the mesosystem (the interconnections between microsystems like caregivers and teachers); then the exosystem (social services, neighbors, media, politics); and finally the macro system (culture and ideology).

The play therapist must attempt to join the child in their inner circle, by meeting the child both developmentally and with awareness of the relationships and systems impacting the child. Our role is to reach out to these caregivers and other professionals, to be the voice, to understand the services, to collaborate, to ensure there is not over duplication, and create supportive systems around the child. When working with caregivers, we need to engage them and respect their need for support and the diversity that they bring to the table too. As a child centered play therapist, I focus on my role in recognizing this
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Following the status of play therapy research, this book has outlined an entire play therapy theory based on the eco-systemic concept.

In this spirit, I have invited authors to write about emerging research in the field of play therapy, child counseling, and consultation. By including the consultative, I feel this book takes a more holistic perspective of the reality of play therapist’s needs in the play therapy research and available literature. These are the practical implications, of being informed by the literature, as it pertains to the reality of play therapy. In addition, the book has a strong emphasis on the neurobiological implications in play therapy, and there are several chapters on specific theory and specific populations, including both empirical and conceptual studies that increase the evidence for best practice.

The target audience for this book includes play therapists, play therapy educators, students, and mental health providers of children and families.

Below, there are detailed short descriptions of each chapter. Here, I will outline the order and layout of the book. The opening chapter discusses the status of play therapy research. This chapter is very beneficial for play therapists who need to validate play therapy to individuals in the child’s mesosystem, and exosystem. The next four chapters are from authors discussing the neurobiological interface with play therapy. I find it fascinating that the classic play therapy tenets, taught for decades, are being evidenced by research in neurobiology. The following five chapters are a combination of theory, research, empirical studies, and special populations.

The second half of the book is comprised of the chapters dedicated to consultation. The consultation portion of the book starts with a chapter outlining the ethics in play therapy supervision and consultation. Following the ethical exploration, there is a chapter on mental health consultation, including caregivers, and school settings. The following is a chapter on multicultural caregiver consultation. The final four chapters are focused on foster families, working with allied health professionals, teachers, and finally, preparing play therapists for court.

Here is a description of each chapter, outlining the importance for this book.

CHAPTER DESCRIPTIONS

The Status of Play Therapy Research

In this chapter, the authors present up to date and recent play therapy research, in particular, randomized control group studies. In this chapter, the authors promote the evidence based treatment of children using play therapy. It is important to note that the authors, in particular, are hoping to help practitioners promote play therapy to caregivers, school teachers, and other adults and professionals who interact with the children who may receive play therapy. There are two very helpful tables included in the chapter: Randomized Control Group Experimental Studies & another one outlining Studies by Target Outcome Variables. This chapter is a great resource for play therapists, in practice, consultation, and for play therapy promotion.
The Impact of Trauma on Brain Development: An Neurodevelopmentally Appropriate Model for Play Therapists

In this chapter, the authors describe the scope of trauma with children and outline a model for play therapists to understand children neurodevelopmentally, including: the impact of neurodevelopment stages & brain development; appropriate treatment strategies; and educational implications in the classroom. This chapter is exceptionally helpful in that play therapists have an opportunity to understand more about trauma as well as what that means, or how to apply practical adaptations in evidence based practice for trauma, in both the play room and classroom.

Theraplay: The Evidence for Trauma-Focused Treatment for Children and Families

In this chapter, the authors focus on evidence based use of Theraplay as an intervention for children who have experienced trauma. The authors argue that Theraplay has neural relevance in remediation of attachment disruptions. This chapter is especially important because of the focus on trauma and evidence based practice and expansion of understanding of attachment and parent-child psychotherapy, to include a neurobiological perspective. The authors also include a brief history of Theraplay and the theoretical and conceptual framework.

Integrating Interpersonal Neurobiology Into Play Therapy Process: Advancing Adlerian Play Therapy

In this chapter, the authors argue that Interpersonal Neurobiology (IPNB) and Adlerian Play Therapy are similarly conceptualized, therefore, understanding the IPNB of children will facilitate a neurobiological evidence based adlerian play therapy practice. In this chapter, basic tenets of Adlerian Play Therapy are explored as well as the primary tenets of IPNB. Practical implications are explored, including several integration strategies for play therapists that supports interpersonal neurobiology while increasing social interest.

The Safe Space: An Examination of the Neurobiological Benefits of Play Therapy With Traumatized Children

In this chapter, the authors discuss the neurobiological impact of trauma on children. They illustrate the neurobiological benefit in using client centered play based interventions and the benefit of play therapy on neural integration, memory assimilation, and the limbic system.

Adlerian Play Therapy: Practice and Research

In this chapter, the authors outline multiple studies where the findings indicate the efficacy of sustained change in children after participation gin Adlerian Play Therapy. Researchers in all of the studies examined used the Adlerian Play Therapy Treatment Manual procedures. All of the studies examined occurred between 2014 and the present. Additionally, the authors review some of the tenets of Adlerian Play Therapy tenets and practice.
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Pre-Therapy in Child Centered Play Therapy: A Model for Treating Children With Autism

The authors outline a model for adapting Child Centered Play Therapy for children with Autism and other developmental disorders, using pre therapy. CCPT is hypothesized to facilitate functional communication and imitation and play in children with neurodevelopment disabilities. Three phases of pre-therapy are outlined, including therapeutic responses. The history of person centered therapy and child centered play therapy is included.

A Cognitive-Behavioral Play Therapy (CBPT) Approach for Adolescents’ Pro-Social Skill Development in the School Setting

Using peer group orientation, the authors outline how to create a cognitive behavioral play therapy social skills group with adolescents in schools. The benefits of group therapy for adolescents, as well as applying play based interventions to develop pro-social skills in schools, is explored. Several CBPT Techniques for application are also explored and an eight week case study is included to exemplify the material. Self esteem is found to increase which furthers social and academic success in the school setting.

Toy Guns in Play Therapy: An Examination of Play Therapists’ Beliefs

An empirical study outlining play therapists believes about the use of guns as an aggressive release toy in standard playrooms for play therapy. Four research questions were explored around play therapists beliefs regarding guns in the play room, gun violence, comfort with guns, and limit setting around toy guns. Findings indicate that play therapists have a variety of beliefs about guns and gun violence, however, most play therapists believe that guns and aggressive release toys are essential toys in play therapy.

Expanding the Range of Puppetry in Expressive Play Therapy

Case study design with a participant researcher conducting this pilot study. Vignettes are explored with a variety of child clients and adolescent clients. Field notes, artifacts, and session notes were analyzed in a four consecutive sessions. The purpose of the study is to highlight the use of puppetry as a communication tool in child and adolescent counseling an play therapy. The types of puppets, including homemade and commercial are thoroughly explored, as well.


This empirical and Fullbright funded study of Uganda school children explored the effectiveness of using a play based intervention known as Story Telling/Story Acting (STSA). Children were randomly assigned to participate in the STSA intervention or a story reading activity for one hour, twice per week, for six months. Although this chapter is not specifically about play therapy or child counseling, I felt it was important to include as it discusses diversity, play based interventions for school readiness, and the caregiver’s role. In the findings, the caregiver role is very important.
Ethics in Play Therapy Consultation and Supervision

The authors explore the nature of the play therapist in the consultant and supervision relationships, and supervisor responsibilities from an ethical perspective. Some of the topics include informed consent, competency exploration, confidentiality and dual relationships. This informative chapter is essential in understanding the complex variables and responsibilities evident in the supervisor and supervisee roles and responsibilities from an ethical and legal perspective.

Integrating Play Therapy and Mental Health Consultation

This chapter is unique in that the authors outline how the play therapist can act as a mental health and behavior consultant in the home and the school in order to help develop treatment plans and behavior plans for practice, home, and in the school setting. Step by step strategies are explained, including assessment strategies and using a strengths based perspective. Finally, challenges in consultation, including caregiver consultation and ethical considerations are explored.

Multicultural Considerations in Play Therapy Caregiver Consultation

In this chapter, the authors give up to date information regarding the literature, research, and practice of working with diverse clients in play therapy caregiver consultation. Ethical competency requirements are reviewed. Additionally, a thorough literature review is used to understand the special considerations necessary for the culturally competent play therapist and child counselor. Practical implications, including guidelines are included at the end of the chapter.

Consultation Strategies for Working With Professionals Supporting Foster Families

This chapter is very informative, including mental health needs of foster care children and their families, the involvement of advocates and the court system, roles of varying persons and systems, and multiple definitions in order to understand the complex nature of the foster care system and the courts. Additionally, play therapists and child counselors are given hands on practical application strategies for collaborative practice of holistic wellness. The chapter finalizes with an exemplary case study to facilitate understanding.

Teachers Can Play Too: Teacher-Child Relationships, Social-Emotional Development, and Academic Engagement

In this chapter, the authors introduce four play-based teacher intervention training models: Kinder Training, Child-Teacher Relationship Training, Relationship Enhancement for Learner and Teacher, and Teacher-Child Relationship Building. The authors also illustrate these models’ goals, training structure, research support for their effectiveness with teacher-child relationships, children’s behavioral issues, academic engagement, and teachers’ classroom management skills.
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Play and Speech Therapy in Schools: Toward a Model of Interprofessional Collaborative Practice

Based on the healthcare field’s model of interprofessional collaborative practice, the purpose of this chapter is to define areas of common practice among speech and play therapists and to propose a model of interprofessional collaborative practice within a school-based context. Because the play therapist and the speech therapist share philosophical foundations in child centered approaches, and the importance and value of play in speech development is well researched, this chapter is extremely relevant in context of today’s scholastic interventions for primary services.

The Play Therapist in the Courtroom: Preparing Yourself and Your Client for Court

Play therapists often work with children with a history of abuse which means play therapist are extremely likely to receive a subpoena for notes or testimony. This chapter outlines how to prepare for court, even from the first client session, and best practices when testifying in court. The impact of the court experience on the child is also explored as well as how to help children and families recover after court.

In conclusion, I am extremely excited about the impact of this book. I believe that the research and practical implication of the research are eminently important for play therapists. Indeed, I believe that this is the first edited book that takes into account holistic and eco-systemic nature of play therapy in inviting author to also speak about consultation from a multi-systemic perspective. I hope that this book will be helpful to practitioners, educators, academics, and students alike, due to this feature.

Thank you for buying the book. I hope you enjoy it.

Sincerely,

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REFERENCES
