

University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice

**SW 798 Section 304 Play Therapy
(Clinical Practice Elective) Spring, 2012
Thursday, 9 am to 11: 30 am**

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Course Description

Play is the method children use to master and understand their worlds. When working with children social workers often utilize play as a primary treatment intervention. This course will provide students with a foundation in play therapy theories, techniques, and practice intervention models. Play therapy philosophies will be critically analyzed. Play therapy will be presented for application in a variety of practice settings as well as with individuals, families, and groups. Students will be taught how to apply play therapy to address issues such as trauma, loss, behavioral issues, attachment, attention deficit disorder, pervasive developmental disorders, anxiety, and learning. Emphasis will be placed on approaching play therapy from perspectives of multicultural competence, empowerment, social justice, and inclusion.

Students will be taught how to apply play therapy techniques in both psychotherapy practice, as well as in other social work settings such as child welfare, schools, foster care, case management, aging, and hospital social work. Readings will be augmented by videotapes, role plays, and observations of play therapy assessments and play therapy sessions.

This clinical practice elective course builds on the content on direct social work practice with individuals, families, and groups learned in SW604 and SW614; theoretical knowledge about human behavior learned in SW602 and SW612; awareness of racism and other forms of discrimination learned in SW603; and social work policy learned in 601 and 611. It complements the advanced year clinical practice course, SW704, where students learn about clinical work with children but not with the depth of this elective. As an evidence-based intervention, this course also complements the research course SW715.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- 1) Gain an understanding of the development of play therapy in particular as the approach relates to social work practice;
- 2) Recognize how to use the DSM IV in tandem with a play therapy assessment;
- 3) Be able to utilize and apply play therapy with clients in individual, family, and group treatment as well as in diverse social work settings such as schools, hospitals, foster care, community mental health, etc.;
- 4) Recognize play therapy theory and its relation and intersection with other theoretical approaches;
- 5) Know the role and impact that difference (i.e. race, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation, class) has when practicing play therapy and how to practice play therapy from a place of sensitivity and empowerment with regard to difference (s);
- 6) Be able to practice play therapy in the treatment of both externalizing as well as internalizing disorders;
- 7) Apply play therapy to include family/caregiver focused treatment;
- 8) Think critically about the use and application of play therapy.

Methods

Readings, lecture, class discussion, case presentations, videotapes, observations, and written assignments. A reminder that class is not a book club; readings are used to prepare students for lectures. Completing the reading is an integral component to the student's learning experience of the course material.

Assignments-TBA in collaboration with the class at first class

Required Texts:

Axline, V. (1969). *Play therapy*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Green, R. (2005). *The explosive child*. New York: Harper Collins.

Timberlake, E. & Moore Cutler, M. (2001). *Developmental play therapy in clinical social work*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Recommended Texts:

American Psychiatric Association, pub. (2000). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th edition-TR. Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Association. (quick reference small version preferred)

Articles and Play Therapy practice resources will be posted to black board.

Part 1: Theoretical Aspects of Play Therapy

Class 1: (January 12, 2012)

Introduction to the Course

- Student & Instructor introductions
- Objectives, methods, and assignments
- Introduction to play therapy
- Experiential play
- Child Neurological development

Class 2: (January 19, 2012)

Developmental Therapy in Social Work Practice

- Play and therapy
- Therapeutic alliance
- Roles of parent, child, & therapist

Reading

Axline, V. (1969). *Play therapy*. New York: Ballantine Books. (Chapters 2)

Greene, R. (2005). *The explosive child*. New York: Harper Collins. (Chapters 1-4)

Timberlake, E. & Moore Cutler, M. (2001). *Developmental play therapy in clinical social work*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. (Chapters 1-2)

Class 3: (January 26, 2012)

Principles of Non Directive Play Therapy

- Creating a play environment
- The “8 basic principles”
- Play knapsack for play during a home visit
- Developmental themes in play therapy

Reading

Axline, V. (1969). *Play therapy*. New York: Ballantine Books.
(Chapters 7-15, pp. 73-128)

Timberlake, E. & Moore Cutler, M. (2001). *Developmental play therapy in clinical social work*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. (Chapters 3-4)

See black board for handouts labeled “Class 3, 8 basic principles & play therapy tips”.

Part 2: Assessment

Class 4: (February 2, 2012) Assessment and Planning from a Play Therapy Perspective: Starting with Parents/Caregivers

- Parent interview
- Parents as partners in play therapy
- Parent resistance or misunderstanding re: play therapy
- Cross culture considerations re: play therapy perceptions for parents
- Beginning a play therapy Biopsychosocial Assessment

Reading

Timberlake, E. & Moore Cutler, M. (2001). *Developmental play therapy in clinical social work*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. (Chapter 6)

On Blackboard:

Brumfield, K. & Christensen, T. (2011). Discovering African Americans Parents' perceptions of play therapy: A phenomenological approach. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 20(4), 208-223.

VanFleet, R. (2000). Understanding and overcoming parent resistance to play therapy. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 9(1), 35-46.

Class 5: (February 9, 2012) Assessment and Planning from a Play Therapy Perspective: The Child Assessment

- Child assessment techniques
- Child interview
- Biopsychosocial assessment
- Family Play Genogram
- Case formulation
- Cross culture considerations re: play therapy perceptions for children

Reading

Timberlake, E. & Moore Cutler, M. (2001). *Developmental play therapy in clinical social work*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. (Chapter 7)

On black board

Gallerani, T. & Dybicz, P. (2011). Postmodern sandplay: An introduction for play t therapists. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 20 (3), 165-177.

Kim, YK & Nahm, S. (2008). Cultural considerations in adapting and implementing play therapy. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 17(1), 66-77.

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., Petry, S. & Gil, E. (2008). Family play genogram. In *Genograms: Assessment & Intervention, 3rd Edition (Ch 10, pp. 257-274)*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Part 3 Clinical Application

Class 6: (February 16, 2012) Attachment Issues

- Neglect, Foster Care, Adoption, Loss
- Reactive Attachment Disorder
- Child & Familial approaches
- Neurobiology of Attachment

Reading

Timberlake, E. & Moore Cutler, M. (2001). *Developmental play therapy in clinical social work*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. (Chapter 9)

Blackboard

Ryan, V. (2004). Adapting non-directive play therapy for children with attachment disorders. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 9(1), 75-87.

Weir, K. (2008). Using interactive play therapy with adoptive families to treat Reactive Attachment Disorder: A case example. *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, 18(4), 1-16.

Suggested

Levy, A. (2011). Neurobiology and the therapeutic action of psychoanalytic play therapy with children. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 39 (1), 50-60.

Class 7: (February 23, 2012) Learning Differences & Attention Deficit Disorder

- Understanding Learning Differences & ADD
- Neurobiology & ADD
- Applications of play therapy

Reading

Timberlake, E. & Moore Cutler, M. (2001). *Developmental play therapy in clinical social work*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. (Chapter 10)

Blackboard

Cione, G., Coleburn, L., Fertuck, E., & Fraenkel, P. (2011). Psychodynamic play therapy with a 6 year old African American boy diagnosed with ADHD. *Journal of Infant, Child, & Adolescent Psychotherapy*, 10 (1), 130-143.

Class 8: (March 1, 2012) Anxiety Disorders & Loss

- Clinical Syndrome
- Clinical etiology
- Family Issues
- Application of Play Therapy
- Loss, grief, trauma

Reading

Timberlake, E. & Moore Cutler, M. (2001). *Developmental play therapy in clinical social work*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. (Chapter 11)

Blackboard

Dripchak, V. (2007). Posttraumatic play: Towards acceptance and resolution. *Clinical Social Work, 35*, 125-134.

Gold-Steinberg, S. & Logan, D. (1999). Integrating play therapy in the treatment of children with obsessive-compulsive disorder. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 69 (4)*, 495-503.

Spring Break March 3, 2012-March 11, 2012

Class 9: (March 15, 2012) PTSD: Sexual Abuse and Community Violence

- Context of traumatic events
- Trauma and neurobiology
- Sexual Trauma
- Community violence
- Somatic expression of trauma
- Grief

Reading

Timberlake, E. & Moore Cutler, M. (2001). *Developmental play therapy in clinical social work*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. (Chapter 12)

Blackboard

Hill, A. (2006). Play therapy with sexually abused children: Including parents in the therapeutic play. *Child & Family Social Work, 11 (4)*, 316-324.

Norton, B., Ferriegel, M., & Norton, C. (2011). Somatic expressions of trauma in experiential play therapy. *International Journal of Play Therapy, 20 (3)*, 138-152.

Class 10: (March 22, 2012) Play therapy for Children in Marginalized Contexts

- Domestic Violence
- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Immigration/Refugees

Reading all on Blackboard

Baggerly, J. (2003). Child-centered play therapy with children who are homeless: Perspectives and procedures. *International Journal of Play Therapy, 12* (2), 87-106.

Bevin, T. (1999). Multiple traumas of refugees-Near drowning and witnessing of maternal rape: Case of Sergio, age 9 and follow up at age 16. In Webb, N.B. (Ed) *Play therapy with children in crisis: Individual, group, and family treatment* (2nd ed.). (pp, 164-182). New York: Guilford Press.

Smith N. & Landreth, G. (2003). Intensive filial therapy with child witnesses of domestic violence: A comparison with individual and sibling group play therapy. *International Journal of Play Therapy, 12* (1), 67-88.

Tonning, L. (1999), Persistent and chronic neglect in the context of poverty-When parents can't parent: Case of Ricky, age 3. In Webb, N.B. (Ed) *Play therapy with children in crisis: Individual, group, and family treatment* (2nd ed.). (pp, 203-224). New York: Guilford Press.

Class 11 (March 29, 2012): Gender Variant Children in Therapy

- “My son keeps playing with *girl toys*”
- How to address issues of gender identity with children & parents
- Gender issues in play therapy
- Case Presentations by instructor
- Film: *Ma vie en rose*, “My life in pink” (1997) to be shown in class

Blackboard:

Mallon, G. & DeCrescenzo, T. (2006). Transgender children and youth: A child welfare practice perspective. *Child welfare: Journal of policy, practice, and program, 85*(2), 215-241.

Menvielle, E. (2009). Transgender children: Clinical and ethical issues in prepubertal presentations. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health, 13* (4), 292-297.

Vanderburgh, R. (2009). Appropriate therapeutic care for families with pre-pubescent transgender/gender-dissonant children. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal, 26* (2), 135-154.

Suggested Reading

Menvielle, E. & Rodnan, L. (2011). A therapeutic group for parents of transgender adolescents. *Child and adolescent psychiatric clinics of North America, 20* (4), 733-743.

Class 12 (April 5, 2012): Play Therapy with Children on the Autistic Spectrum

- Understanding Spectrum Disorders
- Working with Children on the spectrum and their families

Blackboard:

Joseph, O. & Ryan, V. (2004). Non-directive play therapy for young children with Autism: A case study. *Clinical child psychology and psychiatry*, 9 (4), 533-551.

Losh, M. & Capps, L. (2006). Understanding of emotional experience in Autism: From the personal accounts of high functioning children with autism. *Developmental Psychology*, 42 (5), 809-818.

Simeone-Russel, R. (2011). A practical approach to implementing therplay for children with autism spectrum disorders. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 20 (4), 224-235.

Class 13 (April 12, 2012): Special Topics Play therapy with:

- 1) **Explosive, Oppositional, & Disruptive Children;**
- 2) **Traumatic Brain injured children;**
- 3) **Parent education.**

Greene, R. (2005). *The explosive child*. New York: Harper Collins. (Chapters 5-10)

Black Board:

Cochran, J, Cochran, N., Nordling, W., McAdam, A., & Miller, D. (2010). Two case studies of child-centered play therapy for children referred with highly disruptive behavior. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 19 (3), 130-143.

Plotts, C., Lasser, J. & Prater, S. (2008). Exploring sandplay therapy: An application to individuals with traumatic brain injury. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 17(2), 138-153.

**Class 14 (April 19, 2012): Course Conclusion
Issues and wellness of the Play therapist**

Gil, E. & Rubin, L. (2005). Countertransference play: Informing and enhancing therapist self awareness through play. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 14 (2), 87-102.