

Developmental & Experiential Play Therapy in the Treatment of Childhood Trauma and Attachment:

Friday March 9, 2012

Abstract: In this workshop participants will be informed about the neurobiology of trauma and its impact on the developing child and the ability to form healthy attachment relationships. Within this context therapeutic approaches that meet the unique developmental and neurological needs of traumatized children in therapy will be introduced.

Research has shown that early experiences critically impact the development of the brain. Developmental play provides children with critical neurosensory experiences essential to physical growth, neurological growth, and secure attachment in the child-parent relationship. Developmental Play Therapy is an effective method for creating therapeutic relationships and emotional engagements through sensory-motor play interactions, human touches and body movement (Brody). Experiential Play Therapy provides clinicians with a theoretical framework for engaging directly in the play experience with their clients through the direct use of play and metaphor (Siegel, Perry, Norton & Norton).

Trauma impacts both the architecture and biology of the brain on the most basic of levels (Perry, Siegel). Childhood trauma and the impact of trauma on neurological development, normal child development, and attachment relationships will be examined. Developmental Play Therapy (Brody), Experiential Play Therapy (Norton & Norton), the principles of the Developmental Individual Differences model (Greenspan), and

neurosensory integration (Ayers) strategies that address the treatment of disrupted attachment, post trauma stress disorder and developmental delays will be introduced.

Play therapy and child psychology research evidences that the parent's participation positively affects successful outcomes in the therapeutic process (Bratton, Ray, Rhine, & Jones, Schaefer, Guernsey, Van Fleet). Child trauma victims respond well to sensory motor play and have been shown to regain emotional and physical health and brain plasticity in overcoming early traumas because their central nervous systems are still flexible and resilient. Through child-parent interactions and neurosensory play activities neural connectors are increased, trauma induced brain damage and attachment relationships can be repaired.

Goals & Objectives:

1. After the session, participants will be provided with a neurobiological and psychological framework for understanding the impact of trauma on the brain of the developing child.
2. After the session, participants will understand the importance of utilizing play therapy interventions with children in a manner that addresses their developmental and neurological needs.
3. After the session, participants will understand the role attachment plays in supporting healthy child development within a neurobiologically based play therapy framework.
4. After the session, participants will be able to apply and utilize the principles of developmental play therapy, experiential play therapy, and neurosensory

integration approaches in the treatment of childhood trauma and attachment disorders in a way that is sensitive to each child's unique developmental needs.

Sensory Integration and Self Regulation in Play Therapy

Saturday March 12, 2012

Abstract: This course is designed to familiarize participants with sensory integration dysfunction and disorders of self-regulation. Symptoms of sensory integration dysfunction can cause impairment in multiple domains of functioning including, but not limited to emotional functioning, social interaction, school performance, developmental milestones, and family functioning. Sensory deficits are believed to be neurologically based. Its exact cause is unknown but correlations are found with numerous developmental disorders, trauma, and learning disabilities. Occupational therapists have been working with this population for decades to decrease oversensitivity to sensory stimuli or increase sensory receptiveness to sensory stimuli based on the particular sensory profile of any given child.

Participants are taught how to identify sensory and self-regulation issues in their clients through information gathering with the family, direct observation of the child, and interactions with the child in treatment. Additionally participants are provided with a list of recommended tools and toys to include in their playroom that will promote self-regulation in children with sensory integration dysfunction. Participants will also be provided with intervention strategies specifically designed to be sensitive to a child's unique sensory profile.

Goals & Objectives:

1. After the session, participants will be able to list symptoms of sensory integration dysfunction and disorders of self-regulation in children.
2. After the session, participants will be able to conceptualize those symptoms of sensory integration dysfunction into sensory profiles and disorders of self-regulation in order to design interventions that are sensitive each client's unique needs.
3. After the session, participants will be able to utilize at least six different play therapy intervention techniques, tools, and intervention strategies designed to promote self-regulation in their clients.