

Ethical Considerations for Incorporating Artificial Intelligence in Play Therapy: **A Reflective Exercise for Play Therapists Based on the Association for Play Therapy's Best Practice Guidelines**



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The Association for Play Therapy (APT) established its professional identity in 1982, more than 40 years ago. Since its inception, APT has remained committed to advancing the professional development of its members, including Registered Play

Therapists™(RPTs), Registered Play Therapist Supervisors™ (RPT-Ss), School-Based Registered Play Therapists™(SB-RPTs), as well as the children and families they serve and the broader mental health community.

Play therapists have an ethical responsibility to practice within their professional scope, ensuring they acquire the necessary education, training, and supervision. While certain mental health regulations may be temporarily lifted during crises, the ethical duty to maintain competency remains unchanged. APT strongly encourages all members, including RPT/Ss and SB-RPTs, to adhere to APT's **Best Practices (2025)**.

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly integrated into mental health practices, play therapists must remain vigilant about its potential impact. AI tools, while useful for research, assessment, and administrative support, inherently reflect the biases and cultural norms present in the data they are trained on. This can lead to unintended ethical and clinical implications, particularly when working with diverse populations. Play therapists should critically evaluate AI-driven resources, ensuring they align with ethical standards and best practices. Moreover, while AI may offer insights or efficiencies, it does not replace the clinical judgment, cultural competence, and human connection essential to therapeutic work. Play therapists must also stay informed about evolving state and federal regulations governing AI use in healthcare, maintaining compliance to uphold ethical and legal standards in their practice.

The following information provides an overview of APT's **Best Practices (2025)** and presents key reflective considerations to help play therapists evaluate and enhance their service delivery. We encourage all play therapists to review these considerations thoughtfully and actively assess their current practices.

SECTION A: The Therapeutic Relationship

A.1 Commitments and Responsibilities to the Client

Play therapists will collaborate with the client and/or their caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s) in creating a therapeutic treatment plan. Play therapists may explain the developmentally responsive treatment plan in an understandable manner to the client and/or their caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s), if applicable. Play therapists review this plan regularly, which should contain measurable outcome goals, to ensure viability, effectiveness, and the continued support of the client and the involvement of significant others in achieving the therapeutic goals.

- Have you considered and reflected upon the client's background (i.e., adverse experiences, caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s) and relational history, cultural identities, belief systems, etc.) and technological skills when considering the use of AI technology?
- Have you considered and reflected upon the practitioner's background and technological skills when considering the use of AI technology?

A.1 Commitments and Responsibilities to the Client: Therapeutic Treatment Plans

Play therapists must collaborate with the client and their caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s) in creating a therapeutic treatment plan. Play therapists shall explain the developmentally responsive treatment plan in an understandable manner to the client and their caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s), if applicable.

- How can the use of AI support the primary goals of play therapy with the client, ensuring alignment with the treatment plan and safeguarding against any interference or harm to the successful completion of therapeutic objectives?
- Is the AI being used clinically appropriate?

A.1 Commitments and Responsibilities to the Client: Documentation

Play therapists will follow the state, federal and/or country licensing laws, and/or all legal and ethical codes of their professional organization regarding the necessary content of their clinical records.

- Are you reviewing AI-generated documentation to ensure that your note accurately documents details that were present in session? Additionally, are you taking time to reflect upon whether your AI software is capturing the nuance of the session, including the interventions used and client's response?
- Are you actively ensuring confidentiality and HIPAA compliance, as well as relaying limits to confidentiality and gaining consent for the AI used to aid documentation?
- Are you aware of the possible limitations, privacy and risks when utilizing any progress note/documentation generating software, and are you able to communicate these possibilities to your clients and their caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s)?

A.1 Commitments and Responsibilities to the Client: Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

When considering the use of AI in play therapy, play therapists will collaborate with the client and/or the caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s) to provide psychoeducation on how and when AI would be utilized, and the intended purpose for integrating AI technology.

- How and how often are you assessing the client's and caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s) understanding and comfort level with the use of technology and AI?
- How will confidentiality and privacy concerns be addressed before, during, and after using AI?
- Have you identified any possible change in dynamics in the therapist-client relationship, and/or the therapeutic process due to the use of AI?
- Have you considered the potential biases or limitations inherent in AI systems, to ensure equitable and culturally humble treatment for all clients? How will biases or limitations be addressed?
- What are the primary goals of play therapy with the client, and how might the use of AI support the achievement of these goals? Is AI

technology an appropriate method, and is its use likely to enhance the therapeutic process for this client? How do you determine the necessity for use of AI software and determine when it is appropriate?

A.3 Rights of Clients: Informed Consent

Play therapists inform clients and/or their caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s), when applicable, of the purposes, goals, techniques, procedural limitations, potential and foreseeable risks, risks of inconsistent compliance, and benefits of the services to be delivered.

- Have you considered all governing authorities in regards to the necessity of a separate consent form to utilize AI in your practice?
- Have you set up an initial caregiver/legal guardian consultation and obtained informed consent prior to initiating the use of AI technology during play therapy sessions with the client?
- Have you informed caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s) of the possible benefits, procedural and therapeutic limitations, possible risks involved in general, and the limited research of utilizing AI technology in mental health therapies while using AI, and if possible, specific to the platform(s) of AI that you will be using during play therapy sessions?
- How will confidentiality and privacy concerns be addressed before, during, and after using AI in play therapy treatment?
- How will you inform clients/caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s) of the privacy concerns and how you plan to address their concerns?

A.4 Clients Served by Multiple Resources

Play therapists must carefully consider the client's welfare and treatment issues when the client is receiving services from another mental health, educational, child welfare, or medical professional.

- Are you aware of the other providers' utilizations of AI resources in treatment?
- Have you considered informing the other providers of how and when AI is used with the mutual client and conducted an ongoing assessment regarding any contraindication of the client's additional services due to the use of AI in play therapy?

A.5 Therapist Needs and Values: Therapist Personal Needs

In a therapeutic relationship, play therapists are responsible for maintaining respect for clients and avoiding actions that meet the play therapist's personal or professional needs at the expense of the client.

- How will you evaluate the impact of generated resources from an algorithm and differentiate over time to ensure that the suggested resources for a client, matches the client's need(s) rather than suggested resources based on prior access? What part will algorithms play/influence the use of AI?
- Have you considered that a) suggesting the implementation of AI may be a personal attitude/belief?, b) your own response if a client or caregiver/legal guardian requests for you to utilize AI?, and c) your own comfort level with the use of AI in the therapeutic process?

A.9 Group Work: Confidentiality in Groups

Play therapists explain to group members, and/or their caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s) the importance of maintaining confidentiality outside of the group.

- How will you determine if AI resources will be impactful to the members of group?
- Have you reviewed generated resources prior to utilizing in the group setting to ensure cultural and developmental appropriateness of the resource?

A.11 Termination and Referral: Termination

Play therapists are obligated to terminate a therapeutic relationship when treatment goals have been met and/or it becomes reasonably clear that the client is no longer benefiting from treatment, when services are no longer required or are inconsistent, when therapy no longer serves the client's needs or interests, when the responsible party is negligent in paying fees or when the agency or institution in which the treatment is occurring limits or discontinues the therapeutic relationship. In all cases the play therapist makes good faith effort to provide proper termination or transition services for the client.

- How will you use AI to measure progress and readiness for termination of the clients?
- Does the AI in use consider developmental and cultural appropriateness of behavior being addressed in the termination process in therapy?
- Are you relying on your clinical judgement, applying your critical/disciplinary thinking skills, and assume the ultimate responsibility to conduct an on-going assessment regard to the effectiveness of AI and planning of the termination for the clients?

SECTION B: Caregiver(s)/Legal Guardian(s) and Family

B.1 Caregiver(s)/Legal Guardian(s): Differing Legal Rights and Responsibilities

Play therapists are cognizant of and recognize that caregivers/legal guardians of minor clients may have specific and differing rights and responsibilities under law for the welfare of the children, including, but not limited to access to records and involvement in treatment planning.

- Have you reviewed the state, federal, and/or country laws regarding how you would share the client's treatment with caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s) and non-custodial parents and the use of AI in your practice?
- Have you explained the risks and benefits of the use of AI to the caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s) and the client? Have you explained that AI may not be able to address issues related to socioeconomic status, family dynamics, or cultural factors that can impact a child's mental health and is not utilized in the diagnosis of children.

B.2 Family: Family Involvement

Play therapists recognize that clients often have family members and other significant adults who have influence in the client's psychosocial growth and development and strive to gain understanding of the roles and involvement of these other individuals so that they may provide positive therapeutic support where appropriate.

- Have you explained how you will use AI to the caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s) and the client as a resource for guidance on evidenced based treatment, best practices, and treatment planning?

SECTION C: Confidentiality

C.1 Right to Privacy: Legal Requirements

Play therapists are cognizant of and comply with, state, federal, and/or country laws and all legal and ethical codes of their professional organization related to confidentiality. Play therapists must keep information confidential except when disclosure is required by law. Play therapists will consult with other health care professionals, supervisors, and seek legal advice when in doubt.

- Are the AI or generative AI tools HIPAA and/or the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) compliant to ensure the confidentiality of the clients? Example, some products may offer more than one program, the play therapist MUST ensure the program they choose includes a specialized HIPAA Confidentiality statement.
- Are you relying on your clinical judgement, seeking legal and clinical advice as needed and taking ultimate responsibility when incorporating the use of AI or generative AI tools?
- How will you communicate the limitations, risks, and potential benefits of AI tools to clients and their caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s), and how will you ensure that informed consent is obtained and documented before integrating AI into therapeutic practices?
- What procedures will you establish to identify and respond to foreseeable situations where the use of AI might lead to a breach of confidentiality, and how will you ensure they are up-to-date with the latest ethical and legal standards related to the use of AI in therapy?

C.3 Documents: Confidentiality of Documents

Play therapists are responsible for the safety and confidentiality of any documentation they create, maintain, transfer, or destroy, whether the records are written, recorded, digitized, or stored in any other medium.

- Are the AI tools HIPAA/FERPA compliant and meeting the requirement of regulation for state, professional organization, or country, in order to ensure the security, privacy, and storage of personally identifiable information data?
- What protocols are in place to securely store and transfer client records (throughout the document's lifecycle, from creation to destruction) in various formats (written, recorded, digitized, etc.) when AI tools are being utilized?

- Based on state and/or country laws and regulations, are you storing client records, including AI-generated transcripts, for the legally required time after discharge?

C.3 Documents: Permission to Electronically Document or Observe

Play therapists must obtain written permission from clients and/or their caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s) before video or audio recording or observing the session and identify the use or purpose of the recorded media, how it will be stored, and procedures for disposal.

- If applicable, is the AI-generated transcript considered part of the clinical record, and if so, is there clear documentation in your paperwork explaining the clinical purpose and use of AI?
- How will you ensure that AI-generated transcripts of sessions are accurate and complete, given that AI transcripts may contain spelling and grammatical errors? Is this potential for errors documented in your notes? NOTE: AI notes should never be altered or edited as it can be considered tampering with records.

C.4 Telemental Health

Play therapists use HIPAA compliant telemental health platforms. Play therapists work with clients and/or caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s) to insure a confidential and private space for telemental health sessions.

- Have you obtained training and education in AI professional competence and literacy to use AI ethically in your telemental health practice?

SECTION D: Professional Responsibility

D.1 Knowledge of Standards

Play therapists maintain current and accurate knowledge of state, federal and/or country licensing laws, statutes, and regulations. Play therapists are responsible for reading and understanding these Play Therapy Best Practices.

- Are you familiar with your state's and/or country's laws regarding the use of AI in mental health settings?
- Are you familiar with your profession's current ethical codes, as well as APT's Best Practices related to the use of AI?

D.2. Professional Competencies: Boundaries of Competence

Play therapists practice only within the scope of their competence. Competence is based on training, supervised experience, professional credentials (i.e., state, federal, and international), and professional experience.

- Are you practicing within your scope of competence? Does your scope of competence include how to integrate AI into the play therapy process?
- Have you received the appropriate training, supervision (i.e., is your supervisor competent in the use of AI?), experience, to incorporate

and understand the use of AI in your practice and play room?

- Have you committed to knowledge acquisition and/or skill development pertinent to working with a diverse client population as you consider utilizing different AI components in your practice?

D.2. Professional Competencies: Monitor Effectiveness

Play therapists monitor their effectiveness as professionals and pursue ongoing peer consultation, training, education, and/or supervision.

- Do you conduct on-going, periodic assessments regarding the effectiveness of AI due to the nature of on-going changes and the relative newness of AI?
- Are you aware of AI updates, understand any changes and possible impacts on clients? Whenever an update occurs, are you able to articulate how it might benefit, change, or possibly harm the client and/or the way you are practicing?

D.2. Professional Competencies: Ethical Consultation

Play therapists consult state, federal, and/or country licensing laws, legal and ethical codes of their professional organization, professional standards, knowledgeable professionals, and/or supervisors concerning questions regarding ethical obligations or professional practices.

- When national/state/country certification and licensing boards develop rules and policies regarding the integration of AI when providing clinical services, are you still continuing to abide by the ethical codes and laws that were promulgated?

D.2. Professional Competencies: Continuing Education/ Training

Play therapists acquire continuing education to maintain awareness of current research and best practice in play therapy, are open to incorporating new assessment and treatment procedures, and keep current with research regarding diverse and/or special populations with whom they work.

- How will you incorporate new assessment and treatment procedures related to your use of AI in order to provide evidence of best practices?
- Have you received adequate training in the use of your selected AI platform, and are you considered to be competent in programming your AI? Are you willing to seek consultation when necessary to gain an understanding of how to program AI?

D.5. Public Responsibility: Third Party Reports

Play therapists strive to be aware of and minimize bias, present accurate information, and put forth honest reporting when disclosing their professional activities and assessments to appropriate third parties.

- How will you include the use of AI when disclosing your professional activities and assessments?

D.5. Public Responsibility: Media Presentations

Play therapists providing advice or comment through public lectures, presentations, and media programs take precautionary measures to ensure that: 1) information is based on current models of practice and relevant research; 2) information is consistent with these practice guidelines; and 3) receiving the information does not mean that a professional therapeutic relationship has been established.

- How will you incorporate explaining the use of AI based on peer-reviewed/research findings, during a media presentation?

SECTION E: Relationships with Other Professionals

E.1 Relationships with Employers and Employees: Definition of Role

Play therapists delineate for their employers and employees the boundaries, limitations, and levels of their professional roles.

- What role will AI play within your therapy and supervisory role, and how do you see AI within evaluative, therapeutic, supervisory, and consultative contexts?
- How does AI align or deviate from your theoretical orientation?

E.1 Relationships with Employers and Employees: Covenants

Play therapists may choose to establish working agreements with supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates regarding Play Therapy Best Practices.

- What are your boundaries regarding the use of AI? How will you address any conflicts or differing opinions regarding the use of AI?
- As an employer, supervisor, or consultant, do you have clear statements regarding AI within any formal agreements?
- How familiar are you with the advantages and potential harm stemming from the use of AI?
- What sources will you review regarding AI utilization within mental health settings?

E.1 Relationships with Employers and Employees: Disruptive or Damaging Conditions

Play therapists inform their employers about disruptive or damaging conditions in the work setting that may affect their ability to carry out their professional responsibilities.

- Are you familiar with the protocols regarding AI usage?
- How will you address any conflicts between the current use of AI and the best practices of using AI?
- What are your next steps regarding the use of AI, if a resolution to the conflict is not generated?

E.1 Relationships with Employers and Employees: Professional Development

Play therapists may be available for providing professional development to staff regarding the benefits and limitations of play therapy.

- What resources do you have access to regarding the use of AI? Where can you learn more about the use of AI within play therapy?
- If utilizing AI, have you committed to knowledge acquisition and/or skill development in AI literacy in order to possess professional competence and use AI ethically as a play therapist?

E.1 Relationships with Employers and Employees: Contracting Play Therapy Supervision

Play therapists who receive supervision must review the contract with their play therapy supervisor during the informed consent and intake process.

- If utilizing AI in your clinical work, is your play therapy supervisor aware and in agreement with the use of AI in your clinical work? Has your supervisor identified any limitations? Is there an established protocol to address any conflicts?

E.1 Relationships with Employers and Employees: Employer Policies

Play therapists are aware and informed of the employer's policies and procedures regarding the use and adaptation of AI in their workplace.

- Are you aware of your work setting and/or employer's policies and limitations regarding the use of AI with clients/patients?

E.3 Subcontracting

Play therapists subcontracting play therapy services to a third party inform clients of the limitations of confidentiality prior to or during the intake session.

- How will you monitor the effectiveness and integrity of the AI tool utilized by your employees, supervisees, and other third parties that may impact client care?

E.4 Relationships with Other Related Professions: Continuity of Care/Multidisciplinary Approaches

Play therapists are encouraged to collaborate with other professionals, with the intent of supporting client's well-being outside of the play therapy room.

- How will you stay informed about any AI technology that may be used for the continuity of care of your clients in other disciplinary approaches?
- How will the use of AI from multidisciplinary approaches enhance and/or facilitate the client's overall treatment and play therapy work?

SECTION F: Evaluation, Assessment, and Interpretation

F.1 General

Play therapists provide the client and caregiver/legal guardian appropriate information about: the assessments including the rationale, steps, and methods for assessment; the person who

will receive the assessment results; and/or feedback sessions on findings from the evaluation.

- Are you trained in the use of AI or generative AI tools to incorporate into your process of assessment, evaluation, and interpretation? Are you aware of how the use of AI or AI generative tools will impact the assessment results, and the reliability/validity of the assessments?
- As an assessor, have you discussed the use of AI or generative AI tools with your clients? Their caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s)?
- Are you aware of the bias in algorithms of AI or generative AI tools in order to prevent or reduce the unintended consequences or the action of potentially spreading misinformation when interpreting the results and making recommendations from the assessments? Have you considered the potential impact on social, cultural, and diversity bias for AI or AI generative tools in the use of assessments?
- Are you conducting an on-going assessment regarding the use and effectiveness of AI or generative AI tools in your mental health practice due to the nature of on-going changes and the unknown of the previously described tools?

SECTION G: Education

G.1 Educators and Trainers: Educators as Teachers and Practitioners

Play therapists are encouraged to facilitate education and clinical training as described in the Play Therapy Best Practices.

- As a play therapist educator, how will you maintain educational integrity regarding the use of AI by students and supervisees?
- What precautions will you utilize to ensure academic integrity has not been compromised by the use of AI?
- How will you ensure that academic references are accurate and true?

G.1 Educators and Trainers: Relationship Boundaries with Students and Supervisees

Play therapists clearly define and maintain ethical and professional relationships with their students and supervisees.

- How will you define the role of AI in play therapy, and what boundaries will you establish for students/supervisees to use within the playroom or therapeutic space?
- How will you clearly articulate your perspective on AI, including the sources and experiences that have shaped your viewpoint, as well as the expectations for students and supervisees regarding AI use?
- Have you sought out advanced continuing education to better understand the ethical and effective implementation of AI in play therapy?
- Have you consulted your professional code of ethics and APT's Best Practice Guidelines when integrating AI into play therapy?

(Please note: Given that many professional associations have not yet established formal ethical standards for AI use, please utilize this document for AI ethical standards in practice until such time that your profession's association update their ethical standards).

G.1 Educators and Trainers: Contributions to Research

Play therapists properly assign credit to students or supervisees for their contributions.

- How will you transparently document and report any use of AI in research while ensuring compliance with ethical and HIPAA/country standards?
- How will you educate yourself, students, and supervisees on the ethical obligation to prevent AI training and take steps to safeguard research integrity?
- What measures will you implement to ensure your clinical and research documentation aligns with best practices for AI use in play therapy?
- Have you consistently included "No AI Training" at the beginning and end of the statement to ensure that AI is not being trained, potentially compromising research integrity?

G.2 Training Programs: Orientation

Play therapists orient beginning students to program expectations.

- Does the orientation clarify the program's expectations regarding the use of AI and its ethical use?

G.2 Training Programs: Integration of Study and Practice

Play therapists who choose to provide training programs to other professionals, and to play therapists in particular, must integrate current scholarly research and, whenever possible, evidence-based clinical practice.

- How will you ensure the responsible integration of AI into your training programs by citing credible sources, addressing counter opinions, differentiating the quality of research using a currently acceptable metric and pursue training aligned with the Therapeutic Powers of Play standards to demonstrate your competency in meeting these standards?

G.2 Training Programs: Teaching Ethics

Play therapist supervisors or trainers educate students and supervisees with regard to the ethical requirements and standards of the practice related to their discipline and foster an understanding of how such ethics and practice standards uniquely apply in the practice of play therapy.

- Through your practice as a play therapist educator and/or supervisor, are you ensuring the healing human relationship element, attachment, and social competencies of play therapy are not compromised by AI usage?

G.2 Training Programs: Peer Relationships

Play therapist supervisors ensure that trainees who are involved in peer supervision adhere to the same ethical obligations as play therapy supervisors.

- How will you maintain the integrity of peer supervision in regards to AI usage of your trainees/supervisees/students?

G.2 Training Programs: Cultural and Social Diversity

Play therapists shall actively and continually participate in a process by which they strive to 1) become and remain aware of their own cultural backgrounds, influences, beliefs, biases and perspectives, including but not limited to, religion, political affiliation, gender, affectional/sexual orientation, ability status, ethnicity, gender identity/expansion, gender expression, and race; 2) acquire and continuously seek knowledge about how cultural backgrounds, influences, and biases operate in the lives of their clients; and 3) demonstrate culturally responsive therapeutic skills.

- Are you aware of the bias in algorithms of AI in order to prevent or reduce the unintended consequences or the action of potentially spreading misinformation regarding the use of AI?

G.2 Training Programs: Assigning ownership

Play therapists give credit to the work of other researchers and/or clinicians when making presentations that include or reference that work.

- Have you cited all uses of AI appropriately?

SECTION H: Supervision/Consultation

H.1 Supervision: Supervision Preparation

Play therapists offering clinical supervision services are adequately trained in supervision methods and supervisory skills. They may consider the use of AI in the supervisory relationship with respect to the following:

- As a supervisor, do you have training and experience in utilizing AI technology during play therapy and/or supervision services? Is there a clear purpose and rationale for using AI during play therapy supervision?
- If you are planning to use AI technology during play therapy supervision, have you discussed this in detail with your supervisee, included information in the supervision agreement, and discussed if your supervisee feels comfortable with use of AI in supervision?

H.1 Supervision: Responsibility for Services to Clients

Play therapist supervisors ensure that play therapy services provided to clients are professional and of high quality.

- Are you ensuring that your supervisee is offering the highest possible level of quality services, including the selection of

appropriate and trusted AI platforms to their clients?

- Is your supervisee able to identify possible benefits and risks to the client by using AI in clinical practice?
- As a supervisor, have you discussed the appropriate training, experience, supervision, and adherence to national, state, and/or country recommendations and guidelines that supervisees should be following if they are considering using AI in their clinical practice, and/or supervision?
- Will you require or recommend trainings for supervisees who wish to incorporate AI into their play therapy services? If so, what guidelines will you use to determine appropriate sources of instructional information?

H.2 Consultation: Consultant Role

Play therapists who serve as consultants to other mental health professionals should develop a comprehensive understanding of the problem and goals for change, recommend and discuss possible outcomes for their clients, and encourage growth in independent functioning.

- Are you able to identify the steps you have taken to ensure a high level of competence in the use of AI technology during play therapy, supervision, or consultation?
- How will you ensure confidentiality/adequate protection of a client's identity if AI is used during consultation?

H.3 Supervisees: Standards for Supervisees

Supervisees preparing to become a credentialed play therapist are familiar with the APT authored Play Therapy Best Practices and Paper on Touch, as well as ethical decision-making models specific to their educational, governing, licensing, and credentialing bodies.

- How will you monitor and/or assess the use of AI in your supervisee's practice? How will violations be addressed?
- Do you feel confident and capable that you understand the technology that they are using so you can be aware of when an ethical violation may have occurred?

SECTION I: Research and Publication

I.1 Research Responsibilities: Purpose of Research

Play therapy research is designed to enhance both the knowledge and clinical efficacy base of the discipline, utilizing the most appropriate and current empirical, statistical, ethical, and AI-driven procedures. The integration of AI tools in research is approached with careful consideration of ethical implications.

- Are you evaluating the ethical implications of incorporating AI tools into their research methodologies?
- What measures are in place to ensure that the use of AI enhances, rather than compromises, the integrity and confidentiality of the research process?
- How will you balance the integration of AI with traditional empirical

and statistical procedures to ensure rigorous and ethical research outcomes?

- Are you aware of the bias in algorithms of AI in order to prevent or reduce the unintended consequences or the action of potentially spreading misinformation regarding the use of AI?

I.1 Research Responsibilities: Deviation from Standard Practices

Play therapists pursue consultation and abide by rigorous criteria to safeguard research participants when a research problem necessitates deviation from standard research practices, including the use of AI tools. In such cases, play therapists carefully consider the ethical implications of integrating AI technologies, ensuring that any deviations are justified, thoroughly documented, and that participants' rights and welfare are prioritized throughout the research process.

- How will you evaluate the ethical considerations and potential risks when deviating from standard research practices, particularly when incorporating AI tools, to ensure that participants' safety and rights are not compromised?
- What steps have you implemented to document and justify deviations from standard practices, including the use of AI?
- How will you ensure these decisions are based on rigorous consultation and adherence to ethical and IRB guidelines?

I.1 Research Responsibilities: Principal Researcher Responsibility

The principal play therapy researcher is responsible for ethical research practice; however, co-researchers are responsible to ensure research practices are ethical and no harm is done to research participants.

- Is the principal play therapy researcher ensuring that the integration of AI into the research process adheres to ethical standards?
- Are both the principal and co-researchers collaborating to identify and mitigate any potential risks that AI tools may pose to research participants?
- In what ways are co-researchers actively involved in monitoring the ethical use of AI in the research?

I.1 Research Responsibilities: Diversity

Play therapist researchers take into consideration diversity in research issues with special populations, ensuring that their methodologies, including the use of AI tools, are sensitive and appropriate to the cultural, social, and individual differences of participants.

- How will you ensure that the AI tools used in research are culturally sensitive and do not inadvertently perpetuate biases or misunderstandings when working with diverse populations, while ensuring that the diversity of participants is respected and protected?

I.1 Research Responsibilities: Institutional Research

Play therapist researchers (PTRs) working in school or other institutional settings work closely with the respective Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that all research practices, including the use of AI tools, comply with ethical standards and institutional guidelines. PTRs collaborate with the IRB to address any potential risks associated with AI integration in their research, ensuring that participants' safety, confidentiality, and well-being are upheld throughout the study.

- How will you collaborate with the IRB to evaluate the ethical implications of incorporating AI tools into the research while mitigating potential risks associated with AI, particularly in terms of safeguarding participants' confidentiality and well-being?
- What steps are being taken to ensure that AI usage aligns with institutional and ethical standards?

I.2 Informed Consent: Topics Disclosed

Play therapist researchers (PTRs) use understandable and developmentally appropriate language when obtaining informed consent from research participants.

- How will you disclose the use of AI in a manner that is clear, comprehensive, and tailored to the developmental level of participants, so they fully understand its implications?
- In what ways will you address potential discomforts and risks associated with AI in the informed consent process?
- How will you ensure that participants feel empowered to ask questions and withdraw if they have concerns?

I.2 Informed Consent: Deception

Play therapists understand the complexities and ethical issues involved in the use of deception in clinical research, including when AI tools are part of the study.

- How will you evaluate the ethical implications of using AI in research involving deception?
- What steps will you take to assess alternative research methods, including the use of AI, that could potentially eliminate the need for deception while still achieving the study's objectives?

I.2 Informed Consent: Confidentiality of Research Data

Information obtained about research participants is confidential, and this confidentiality extends to any data managed or analyzed using AI tools.

- How will you ensure that AI tools used in the management and analysis of research data adhere to strict confidentiality protocols, and what specific measures are in place to protect participants' information from unauthorized access or breach?
- Have you obtained informed consent that fully reflects the potential risks and safeguards associated with AI usage?

I.2 Informed Consent: Explanations of Research Study

Play therapist researchers (PTRs) take all necessary steps to remove any misconceptions regarding the intent of the study, ensuring that participants fully understand the purpose and procedures involved. This includes providing a clear explanation of how AI will be used in the research processes and procedures.

- How will you communicate the role of AI to ensure that participants fully understand the research intent and processes?
- What strategies will you utilize to clarify any potential misconceptions?

I.2 Informed Consent: Agreements to Cooperate

Play therapist researchers (PTRs) who agree to be co-researchers or co-authors have an obligation to be complete and accurate with information. This collective accountability helps to maintain the integrity and quality of the research while protecting the rights and well-being of participants.

- In what ways will co-researchers and co-authors collaborate to 1) ensure they are adequately informed about the AI tools being used in the research, and 2) to monitor and evaluate the use of AI in the research process, ensuring that it enhances rather than compromises the ethical and methodological rigor of the study?
- What steps will be taken to stay current with the ethical considerations and potential risks associated with these technologies?

I.2 Informed Consent: Informed Consent for Grant Providers

Play therapist researchers (PTRs) gain informed consent in accordance with grant-funded provider guidelines at the beginning of the study and continue to renew and obtain consent as conditions warrant throughout the study, including clear communication about any AI tools or technologies being utilized in the research.

- How will you ensure that the use of AI is transparently disclosed to both participants and grant providers and such disclosures are fully integrated into grant reporting and compliance processes?
- In what ways are you aligning the use of AI with the specific guidelines and expectations of grant-funded providers?

I.3 Reporting Results: Information Affecting Outcome

Play therapist researchers (PTRs) clearly describe all relevant variables that may have affected the study outcome, avoid engaging in fraudulent research, distortion, or misrepresentation of data, or deliberately biasing their results. Researchers are transparent with the limitations of their research study.

- Are you aware of the bias in algorithms of AI or generative AI tools in order to prevent or reduce the unintended consequences or the action of potentially spreading misinformation when interpreting the outcome and making recommendations from the research?
- How does the AI tool you have selected generate content, and could it impact and/or skew the research outcomes? Has the AI generated content included any discredited/fraudulent data?

I.3 Reporting Results: Replication Studies

Play therapists cooperate with researchers wishing to replicate studies/research and are transparent and informative of any AI tool used in the research.

- Have you verified the AI tool has been validated for the type of research being conducted?
- When replicating a research study that has used an AI tool, do you have the appropriate level of knowledge and comfort utilizing the AI tool previously used in the research?
- Have you addressed any ethical concerns or considerations utilizing the AI tool in the replicated study?

I.4 Publication: Recognition of Others

Play therapists must not commit plagiarism. Play therapists cite previous works on the topic, adhere to copyright laws, and give appropriate credit for works cited. As such, play therapists should pay attention to the content produced in writing and in illustration to ensure accuracy.

- Have you included accompanying citations for all AI generated statements?
- Have you checked all AI statements for accuracy including any references produced by the AI tool?
- How does the AI tool being used obtain and reuse the content information from my research work?

I.4 Publication: Authors using AI in Manuscript Preparation

Play therapy authors utilizing AI in preparing a manuscript must be accountable for the content of AI generated. Play therapists will be transparent regarding the use of AI in their research.

- Have you verified all AI generated statements for accuracy, and included accurate accompanying citations?
- Have proper methodological details been included in the methods section of the manuscript if using AI as part of the study design.

I.4 Publication: Contributors

Play therapists credit joint authorship, acknowledgments, citations, or other significant contributions to research or concept development. AI is not to be listed as a co-author (Leung et al., 2023).

- Has the use of any AI technology for the research been discussed within all contributors?
- Have all contributors been transparent regarding the use of any AI technology in the publication including providing proper acknowledgement, citation, and references as needed?

I.4 Publication: Professional Review

Play therapist reviewers must respect and ensure the confidentiality and proprietary right of authors submitting manuscripts when

utilizing any AI assistance. Play therapist reviewers are accountable for any AI comments submitted in a peer review (Leung et al., 2023). Play therapist reviewers are aware and follow the policies of publisher/journal regarding rules and policies related to the use of AI as an assistance tool through peer review.

- Are you clear about the publisher and/or journal rules and policies regarding the use of AI as assistance in the peer review process?

SECTION J: Use of Technology and Telemental Health

J.2 Web Sites

Play therapists who maintain professional sites online are expected to comply with their state, federal and/or country licensing laws, and/or all legal and ethical codes of their professional organization. HIPAA formats and logins will be utilized whenever possible with regard to contacts with or related to client treatment and services.

- Are you aware that when utilizing AI, the provider is responsible for checking that information, images, and illustrations are accurate before posting it on a website?
- Have you checked with your professional liability insurance to ensure the appropriate coverage for the inclusion of AI in my practice is in place?

J.3 Social Media

Play therapists shall clearly explain to their clients, as part of the informed consent procedure, the benefits, limitations, and boundaries of the use of social media.

- What steps will you take to ensure the accuracy of AI-generated information?

J.4 Use of Technology in Session

Play therapists who utilize or plan to utilize AI, computer, or internet applications in play therapy, including but not limited to social networking sites, must become fully aware, and trained of the potential benefits and limitations of this technology, and review the content to ensure appropriateness.

- Have you considered, followed, reviewed, and discussed all the considerations related to the use AI with your client/client's, caregiver(s)/legal guardian(s)?
- Have you assessed the appropriateness of AI as it relates to each client, and does it align with treatment planning?
- What criteria are you using to determine the appropriateness for the use of AI? What is your decision-making model for determining each client's appropriateness and treatment plan when utilizing AI?
- What quality assurance measures do you have in place for the use of AI?

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- Association for Play Therapy. (2022a, May 4). *Play Therapy Competencies: APT Professional Credentialing Program*. https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.a4pt.org/resource/resmgr/credentials/play_therapy_competencies.pdf
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Reflections

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.