Which change drivers might rock the play therapy world? APT mines recent mental health intelligence (i.e. publications) and disseminates quarterly Mining Reports with cutting-edge trends, emerging wisdom, and other information to play therapy practitioners, instructors, and supervisors. Consult the publications or links displayed for answers to the questions.

**Intelligence**

**What is the relationship between sex of the adolescent and parents' mental health, parenting, and adolescents' mental health concerns?**

"Mothers' anxiety predicted adolescent girls' anxious symptoms 5 years later, and moderation by adolescent sex was observed such that maternal harsh parenting was associated with an increase in girls' depression and anxiety, while maternal positive parenting was associated with a reduction in boys' depression and anxiety. Fathers' symptoms did not directly or indirectly predict adolescent symptoms, and when fathers' variables were treated as predictors, no moderation by adolescent sex was observed" (Apsley & Padilla-Walker, 2020, p. 890).

- Sex of adolescent was examined as possible moderator, whereby mothers’ and fathers’ variables were evaluated independently.
- Evaluated parenting as possible mediator between parental mental health and adolescent mental health symptoms.
- Concluded that adolescent sex influences parenting and mental health symptoms in the family system.


**Contributor: Rebekah Byrd PhD, LPC (TN), LCMHC (NC), NCC, RPT-S, Fairfield, CT**

**What are the potential impacts of COVID-19 on child development?**

"The tools used to mitigate the threat of a pandemic such as COVID-19 may very well threaten child growth and development. These tools - such as social restrictions, shutdowns, and school closures - contribute to stress in parents and children and can become risk factors that threaten child growth and development and may compromise the Sustainable Development Goals" (de Araújo et al., 2020).

- Suggested epidemics may cause high levels of stress in parents and children.
- Suggested children may experience anxiety, depression, acute stress disorder, and post-traumatic stress as a result of epidemics.
- Suggested exposure to adverse childhood experiences is related to increased adulthood developmental and health problems.


**Contributor: Yih-Jiun Shen, DEd, NCC, CSC, Edinburg, TX**

**Adlerian Play Therapy and Adventure Therapy: Complementary Interventions for Comprehensive Theory**

"Adventure therapy techniques offer a panoply of opportunities to facilitate and enter into the child’s playful spirit. Using icebreakers, de-inhibitors, trust and empathy exercises, and problem-solving initiatives can provide the play therapist with an easy avenue to develop an egalitarian relationship with the child and a window into understanding the child’s lifestyle" (Ashby et al., 2020, p. 198).

- Adventure and Adlerian therapies may be well-suited as complimentary treatments.
- The Crucial C’s are congruent with adventure therapy techniques.
- Adventure therapy may be an effective modality to utilize encouragement and metaphor.


**Contributor: Gail Rizzo, EdD, LPCC-S, LICDC, RPT-S, Amelia, OH**
How does racial discrimination in children and adolescents play a role in long-term mental and physical health outcomes?

"Statistically significant adverse effects were also reported in 63% of associations with health-harming behaviours including substance use, and 61% found associations with mental health outcomes. Consistently significant associations were reported between accumulated racism and later health outcomes, and the health effects of racism were reported to vary with developmental periods, although few studies featured these analyses" (Cave et al., 2020, p. 1).

- Reviewed findings for longitudinal associations between child and adolescent mental and physical health and racism.
- Identified duration and timing of exposure to racial discrimination may have adverse health implications.
- Concluded the experience of racial discrimination had a stronger impact on mental health compared to physical health outcomes.


Contributor: Rebekah Byrd PhD, LPC (TN), LCMHC (NC), NCC, RPT-S, Fairfield, CT

How can we help youth when transitioning from children to adult mental health services?

"Obtaining both the pre- and post-transition experiences of youth is crucial for developing a more complete understanding of youth perspectives and implementing guidelines that improve transition quality and experiences" (Cleverly et al., 2020, p. 2).

- Qualitative longitudinal study of 22 youth aged 16-19 years to explore their experiences leading up to and following the transitional phase in services.
- Findings support the need for transitional services to be individualized and co-designed with youth and their caregivers.


Contributor: Jennifer L. Gregg, EdS, LPC, RPT, NCC, Huntsville, AL

How can rural family counselors utilize interprofessional collaboration and telehealth to maximize services for clients?

“This conceptual article describes issues faced by many families and children in rural areas, and how family counselors can serve as leaders in connecting families to health care providers through telehealth and interprofessional collaboration” (Johnson & Mahan, 2020, p. 215).

- Outlined steps to utilize interprofessional collaboration and telehealth.
- Provided a case study of rural family counselor.
- Proposed rural health focuses on promotion, prevention, and innovation to improve access to care.


Contributor: Cathi Spooner, LCSW, RPT-S, Mesquite, NV

How can play therapist help parents of young children learn co-regulation skills to help their child regulate strong fear emotions?

“…as toddlers demonstrate more dysregulated fear, both mothers and toddlers engage in more behavior to manage this fear. It is also possible that, rather than regulation, some of these behaviors (particularly caregiver-focused strategies) represent the fear response itself” (Kiel et al., 2020, p. 800).

- Examined attention-shifting, caregiver- and self-focused behavior between 117 pairs of mothers and their 24-month-old toddlers.
- Found dysregulated fear is related to toddlers’ use of attention regulation, maternal comforting, and regulatory behaviors.
- Dysregulated fear was negatively correlated with maternal physical comfort.


Contributor: Cathi Spooner, LCSW, RPT-S, Mesquite, NV
Can targeting mentalization help play therapists provide more effective treatment to children who have experienced trauma?

“The literature suggests the role of mentalization treatment in the remission of symptoms for internalizing and externalizing disorders and shaping mentalization deficits over time. Mentalization focused treatments may also improve reflective functioning, emotional regulation capacity, and the quality of treatment” (Oehlman Forbes et al., 2020, p. 1).

- Examined mentalization as an explicit process and focus in childhood trauma.
- Identified themes of experience of trauma, measurement and charting recovery of mentalization.
- Noted potential biases in publication and methodology in application to children.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pst0000341

Contributor: Cathi Spooner, LCSW, RPT-S, Mesquite, NV

Does parent burnout predict parents’ expression and experience of anger?

“Multiple regression analyses revealed parent burnout predicted parent anger experience and expression. Specifically, burnout contrast and exhaustion predicted anger experience. Additionally, burnout contrast predicted anger expression. The contrast subscale is associated with comparing oneself as a father or mother with oneself in the past” (Prikhidko & Swank, 2020, p. 283).

- Correlational analyses demonstrated burnout predicted parent anger.
- Shame was a contributing factor to parental anger.
- Suggested counselors provide psychoeducation on emotion regulation, validation, and accurate expression of emotions.


Contributor: Cathi Spooner, LCSW, RPT-S, Mesquite, NV

What is the current evidence base for Adlerian play therapy?

“Although discrepancies exist regarding the degree to which Adlerian play therapy (AdPT) contributed to successful changes in children’s behaviors, the studies overall supported the use of AdPT” (Meany-Walen, 2020, p.183).

- Credited a treatment manual developed in 2009 and subsequently updated as a tool to measure treatment fidelity.
- Cited 10 published research articles including one randomized control study and nine single case design.
- Summarized specific strengths of AdPT for children exhibiting social and emotional challenges in classroom environments.


Contributor: Stephanie Pratola, PhD, LCP, RPT-S, Roanoke, VA

How do messages of racial identity impact our work with marginalized youth?

“...a student with different worlds must manage the crossing between worlds by developing strategies to cope with feelings of dissonance, such as between family and school worlds” (Mims & Williams, 2020, p. 758).

- Addressed and explained the Multiple Worlds model and the intersectionality theory.
- Presented qualitative data of how race was tied to lived realities for Black girls and how messages from school and peer groups were more heavily weighed than other areas.
- Encouraged stakeholders to continue to examine ways to understand experiences of marginalized youth and the messages they receive about identity.

Mims, L. C., & Williams, J. L. (2020). "They told me what I was before I could tell them what I was": Black girls’ ethnic-racial identity development within multiple worlds. Journal of Adolescent Research, 35(6), 754-779. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558420913483

Contributor: Kenisha Gordon, PhD, NCC, LPC-S, ACS, RPT-S, Clinton, MS
Is there a relationship between workplace policies and perinatal depression among low-income mothers?

“The current study revealed that scheduling flexibility and parental leave were related to low-income mothers’ postpartum depressive symptoms, and associations differed depending on work context and relationship context” (Newkirk et al., 2020, p. 775).

- Collected data on length of leave, family-friendly policies, work-to-family spillover, and depressive symptoms.
- Concluded relationship status impacted how beneficial family-friendly workplace policies were in decreasing symptoms of depression.


Contributor: Crystal Amundson, MS, LCPC, RPT-S, Billings, MT

Can incentivizing participation in Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) impact outcomes among Latinx and low-income populations?

“Advancements in the implementation of evidence-based family therapies have yielded successful reductions in child disruptive behavior. Unfortunately, effective interventions such as Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) are plagued with high rates of attrition and low rates of homework completion in community clients” (Quetsch et al., 2020, p. 1).

- Provided incentives to members of a randomly-assigned group for attendance, homework, skill mastery and completion.
- Found incentives did not influence study variables, though reduced rate of session no-shows.
- Reported no difference between Latinx and non-Latinx participants.


Contributor: Gail Rizzo, EdD, LPCC-S, LICDC, RPT-S, Amelia, OH

How does a Single Point of Access (SPA) meet the needs of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in England?

“The introduction of a SPA has the potential to improve young people’s access to mental health services. By resolving some of the confusion over where to get help and by making it easier to speak to someone directly in CAMHS, a SPA can help more people access timely support. However, in itself, it cannot expand the capacity of specialist CAMHS” (Rocks et al., 2020, p.10).

- Utilized an observational mixed methods study of two CAMHS using a SPA to evaluate impact on therapeutic process.
- Found service accessed by parents, teachers, other professionals and self and online referral as unexpectedly popular.
- Identified both benefits, such as increased awareness of services and limitations, such as resource challenges.


Contributor: Jennifer L. Gregg, EdS, LPC, RPT, NCC, Huntsville, AL

What factors influence parent-child relationships in African immigrant families?

“We conducted a critical ethnographic study of African immigrant parenting practices in Alberta, Canada. More specifically, we explored parent–child relations among African immigrants in the province and sought to identify factors that influence these relationships” (Salami et al., 2020, p. 744).

- Interviewed African community leaders, service providers and policymakers, and African immigrant parents of minor children.
- Found children often adopt Western belief systems while parents maintain African belief systems, creating conflict.
- Reported child protection laws and language barriers often shift power away from parents and to children.


Contributor: Crystal Amundson, MS, LCPC, RPT-S, Billings, MT
What are the psychological impacts of quarantine on children and adolescents due to COVID-19?

“One hundred twenty-one children and adolescents along with their parents were interviewed regarding their compliance and psychological distress during the quarantine period. A comparable data was also obtained from 131 children and adolescents who were not quarantined” (Saurabh & Ranjan, 2020, p. 532).

- Revealed quarantined children and adolescents experienced greater psychological distress than those who were non-quarantined.
- Reported worry, helplessness, and fear being the most common feelings experienced under quarantine.


**Contributor:** Yih-Jiun Shen, DEd, NCC, CSC, Edinburg, TX

How can therapists apply reality group play therapy?

“We have expanded on the Reality Play Therapy model and developed an 8-week small group therapy intervention that can be used when working with youth ages 9-14” (Stutey et al., 2020, p. 237).

- Presented different expressive materials (puppets, drawing/art materials, sandtray, etc.) to use to illustrate the five basic needs, quality world, total behavior ideas.
- Provided specific details about processing each activity with a group.
- Included a case illustration.


**Contributor:** Elizabeth R. Taylor, LPC-S, LMFT, RPT-S, Fort Worth, TX

How can play therapists integrate nature into the counseling process?

“Nature is a powerful partner in the counseling process; however, it is not always feasible to take clients outside for sessions. Nonetheless, practitioners may still involve nature within the counseling process by integrating natural materials within the counseling room” (Swank et al., 2020, p. 155).

- Discussed values of nature and bringing nature inside using natural elements, such as water, plant and building materials, live animals.
- Offered ideas for spaces, materials, and limit setting.
- Provided considerations and cautions, such as tolerance for messiness and avoidance of toxic materials.


**Contributor:** Elizabeth R. Taylor, LPC-S, LMFT, RPT-S, Fort Worth, TX

How does personal and vicarious police contact impact mental health in adolescents?

“In this paper, I used data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study... to investigate the relationship between personal and vicarious police contact and depressive symptoms in adolescence” (Turney, 2020, p. 15).

- Analyzed data specific to depressive symptoms and police contact from a longitudinal survey (N = 3,437) of individuals followed over a 15-year period.
- Concluded both personal and vicarious police contact are positively associated with depressive symptoms in adolescents.
- Found depressive symptoms were concentrated among female and Black participants.


**Contributor:** Crystal Amundson, MS, LCPC, RPT-S, Billings, MT

Can telehealth be used effectively to deliver behavior analytic-based services and train caregivers in behavioral procedures?

“This systematic review provides an update on current research pertaining to the use of telehealth to provide behavior analytic-based services and train caregivers in implementing behavioral procedures. This review also describes information on reported training components and caregivers’ procedural fidelity” (Unholz-Bowden et al., 2020, p. 276-277).

- Reported positive outcomes for child participants in 14 studies and 4 studies with mixed results of 30 total studies.
• Found caregivers demonstrated improved performance implementing services in 15 studies, one study had mixed results, and one study reported a decrease in caregiver performance.
• Caregivers successfully implemented Functional Assessment (FA) in 11 studies.


**Contributor:** Stephanie Pratola, PhD, LCP, RPT-S, Roanoke, VA

How do parents of children with intellectual disabilities interact with their children in natural play?

“The aims of this study were to analyze the interactions of mothers and fathers with their children with intellectual disabilities, focusing on certain parental behaviors previously identified as promoting child development, and to explore the relations between parenting and some sociodemographic variables” (Vilaseca et al., 2020, p. 1).
• Found parenting behaviors of mothers and fathers during play were very similar, with differences associated more with the type of play activity than the child’s age.
• Found fathers engaged in less parenting behaviors in the teaching domain of assessment instruments.
• Recommended providers use strategies to engage fathers more in early-intervention services with their child with an intellectual disability.


**Contributor:** Laura Tejada, PhD, LMFT, LCPC, RPT-S, Chicago, IL

Can adolescents be taught dimensions of social justice against human self-trafficking?

“The danger is that this topic is so sensitive; some are apprehensive to teach or talk about it. But they don’t realize that they are adding more danger by leaving students unarmed and unaware. And when that happens, they fall right into predator traps” (Zhu et al., 2020, p. 1362).
• Provided history and current statistics about human trafficking.
• Described how politics often creates a lack of implementation of sex-trafficking education in schools.
• Suggested schools may incorporate other sources to help teach anti-human trafficking material.


**Contributor:** Kenisha Gordon, PhD, NCC, LPC-S, ACS, RPT-S, Clinton, MS

Authors

**Clinical Editors:** Elizabeth Burgin, PhD, NCC, LPC, RPT, Williamsburg, VA, eeburgin@wm.edu
Carol Quinn, MEd, Denton, TX, clquinn2013@gmail.com

**Publisher:** CEO Kathryn Lebby, CAE, CMP, Association for Play Therapy, Clovis, CA, klebby@a4pt.org

**Contributors:**
• Crystal Amundson, MS, LCPC, RPT-S, Billings, MT
• Rebekah Byrd PhD, LPC, (TN), LCMHC (NC), NCC, RPT-S, Fairfield, CT
• Kenisha Gordon, PhD, NCC, LPC-S, ACS, RPT-S, Clinton, MS
• Jennifer L. Gregg, EdS, LPC, RPT, NCC, Huntsville, AL
• Stephanie Pratola, PhD, LCP, RPT-S, Roanoke, VA
• Gail Rizzo, EdD, LPCC-S, LICDC, RPT-S, Amelia, OH
• Yih-Jiun Shen, DEd, NCC, CSC, Edinburg, TX
• Cathi Spooner, LCSW, RPT-S, Mesquite, NV
• Elizabeth R. Taylor, LPC-S, LMFT, RPT-S, Fort Worth, TX
• Laura Tejada, PhD, LMFT, LCPC, RPT-S, Chicago, IL

Reader feedback regarding how these Mining Reports might be improved and made more helpful for play therapy practitioners, instructors, and supervisors is welcomed. Mining Reports are archived in the Members Only section of the APT website (www.a4pt.org).