



Mining Report – May 2021

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

1. Are we remembering to care for the children who survive a sibling's death to a chronic or life-threatening illness?

“...society should acknowledge that siblings are an inextricable part of the childhood cancer journey, they will live with and beyond the diagnosis of their sibling's cancer” (Bara, 2021, p. 21).

- Offered a detailed narrative of a family's experience of losing a sibling to cancer.
- Provided examples of how surviving siblings can exhibit characteristics similar to post-traumatic stress.
- Encouraged professionals to take a multidisciplinary approach to engage and support the entire family mentally, emotionally and physically.

Bara, D. E. (2021). The hidden cost of cancer: The siblings story, a mother's narrative of how three of her children journeyed through their 14-year-old sister's 9-month journey from ill health to death and beyond. *Illness, Crisis, & Loss*, 29(1), 19-36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1054137318755281>

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

2. Can robots replace real therapy dogs?

“In this study, we aimed to investigate the effect of animistic beliefs and levels of social interaction on the evaluations of two potential therapy adjuncts: a living dog (TD) and the MiRo-E robot (TR). Participants reported a preference and a degree of greater enjoyment for the living therapy dog over the robot...” (Barver et al., 2020, p. 9).

- Asked participants to complete a questionnaire on their beliefs and attitudes about dogs and robots.
- Observed children enjoying the session more when they attributed mental states and sentience to both the living and robot animals.
- Found the use of biomimetic robots may address typical challenge experienced when dealing with real animals in therapy.

Barver, O., Eszter, S., McBride, A.E. (2020). Children's evaluations of a therapy dog and biomimetic robot: Influences of animistic beliefs and social interaction. *International Journal of Social Robotics*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12369-020-00722-0>

Contributor: Anissa Howard, PhD, LPC, LMFT, ACS, RPT-S, Warner Robins, GA

3. How does CBT Grief-Help compare to non-directive psychotherapy for children and adolescents experiencing prolonged grief disorder in the Netherlands?

“A main finding was that CBT Grief-Help led to significantly greater improvements in prolonged grief disorder symptoms from pretreatment assessment to posttreatment assessment and 3-,6, and 12-month follow-up assessments” (Boelen et al., 2021, p. 300).

- Randomly assigned participants (N=134) to a group receiving a manualized CBT intervention or supportive counseling.
- Reported moderate to large effect sizes for both treatments in most outcome measures.
- Suggested changes in thinking patterns and improved coping and problem-solving abilities as possible moderators.

Boelen, P. A., Lenferink, L. I. M., & Spuij, M. (2021). CBT for prolonged grief in children and adolescents: A randomized clinical trial. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 178(4), 294–304.
<https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2020.20050548>

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

4. How can international organizations serving children and families adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic?

“Our model is driven by our members, and they co-create and deliver services which are often the front line of response in an emergency situation. In COVID-impacted areas, local civil society organization are likely to be the only service providers on the ground, who understand the local context” (Clulow et al, 2020, p. 302).

- Reported how three nongovernmental organizations across different continents acted to assist children during the pandemic.
- Detailed challenges faced and action taken in the service of children and families.
- Recognized social distancing and virus phobia impeded frontline organizations.

Clulow, S., Dimitrouka, N., & Zamora Zapata, I. (2020). COVID on three continents: How local children’s organizations in Africa, Europe and South America are adapting to the coronavirus challenge. *Journal of Children’s Services*, 15(4), 295–303.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JCS-07-2020-0046>

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

5. Does parental school involvement impact rates of substance use in Latinx youth?

“Parental school involvement is a promising target for prevention efforts to reduce early-onset substance use” (Cox et al., 2021, p. 3).

- Collected data from seventh graders via self-report measures.
- Compared school-wide parent involvement with individual student parent involvement.
- Reported higher levels of parent involvement resulted in decreased substance use in Latinx youth.

Cox, R. B., Washburn, I. J., Croff, J. M., & Ringwalt, C. L. (2021). Parental school-involvement and substance use? A novel family-based prevention strategy for Latino youth. *Family Relations*, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12533>

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

6. What are barriers perceived by parents to accessing child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)?

“The aim of this study was to investigate parent perceived barriers to accessing services for their child’s mental health problems to identify potential areas for improvement of access to CAMHS” (Hansen et al., 2021, p.1).

- Interviewed 244 parents of children and adolescents referred for outpatient psychiatric assessments.
- Reported primary barriers were lack of information about services, the perception that helping professionals did not listen, and lack of referrals and interventions initiated by professionals.
- Concluded lack of knowledge, stigmatization, and unavailability of services may explain treatment gaps and duration of mental health issues prior to referrals.

Hansen, A. S., Tell  us, G. K., Mohr-Jensen, C. & Lauritsen, M. B. (2021). Parent-perceived barriers to accessing services for their child's mental health problems. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 15(4), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-021-00357-7>

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

7. How are school-based health centers (SBHCs) supporting adolescents' mental health?

"School-based health centers (SBHCs) are well situated to support students' mental health needs because they provide crisis intervention, mental health care, and broader interventions to improve school climate. This study examined the association between urban adolescents' use of SBHCs and their receipt of mental health supports" (Hodges et al., 2020, p.1).

- Analyzed data from 3,909 high school students attending urban schools with SBHCs.
- Found SBHC involvement increased youth's access and receipt of mental health services.
- Reported youth seeking services at SBHCs were more likely to speak with a healthcare professional about mental health concerns.
- Reported users identifying as female were more likely to receive mental health services.

Hodges, M., Guendelman, S. & Soleimanpour, S. (2020). Adolescents' use of school-based health centers and receipt of mental health supports, *Children and Youth Services Review*, 120, 1-7, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilcyouth.2020.105700>

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

8. How were children impacted by the shift from in-person to telehealth (TH) services?

"Findings support TH as less preferred for children than adults while indicating that child TH is favored for psychiatry and support services, less so for psychotherapy" (Hoffnung et al., 2021, p.1).

- Collected data from over 40,000 sessions conducted at outpatient facilities during the first half of 2020.
- Reported children utilized TH services less than adults due to decreases in service requests, increases in termination, and return to in-person services.
- Suggested potential limits of TH for children including difficulty engaging and cognitive fatigue and interventions such as providing breaks.

Hoffnung, G., Feigenbaum, E., Schechter, A., Guttman, D., Zemon, V., & Schechter, I. (2021). Children and telehealth in mental healthcare: What we have learned from covid-19 and 40,000 sessions. *Psychiatric Research and Clinical Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.prp.20200035>

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

9. Can video games lower depression risk for boys in the UK?

"We found that using video games most days, at least once a week, and at least once a month were associated with 24.2–31.2% lower depressive symptom scores compared to less than once a month/never in boys, but not in girls" (Kandola et al., 2021).

- Reviewed data from 11,341 teens participating in the UK Millenium Cohort Study.
- Found 11-year-old boys who played video games were least likely to develop depressive symptoms.
- Suggested potential benefits for social interactions and problem solving.

Kandola, A., Owen, D., Dunstan, W., Hallgren, M. (2021). Prospective relationships of adolescents' screen-based sedentary behaviour with depressive symptoms: The millennium cohort study. *Psychological Medicine*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291721000258>

Contributor: Anissa Howard, PhD, LPC, LMFT, ACS, RPT-S, Warner Robins, GA

10. Do Family Treatment Courts (FTCs) improve permanency outcomes in rural settings?

"This study used treatment and matched comparison data to test foster care exit patterns of families with children in foster care due to parental substance use. Treatment group data were collected on a sample of 91 children with open dependency cases in an integrated FTC in a rural Midwestern town" (Lloyd Sieger et al., 2021, p. 1).

- Conducted a quasi-experimental longitudinal design over the course of approximately two years.
- Found cases involved with FTCs significantly increased a child's likelihood of reunification.
- Reported shorter periods of time before achieving placement permanency for children in FTCs.

Lloyd Sieger, M. H., Becker, J., & Brook, J. (2021). Family treatment court participation and permanency in a rural setting: Outcomes from a rigorous quasi-experiment. *Child & Family Social Work*, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12836>

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

11. Does experiencing microaggressions impact stress levels in young adults?

"This study examined whether the frequency of experiences of ethnic microaggressions and the sensitivity to such experiences were associated with cortisol responses to an acute social stressor among an ethnically diverse sample of young adults" (Majeno et al., 2021, p. 135).

- Collected a total of five saliva samples to assess cortisol response in 109 young adults.
- Found more frequent experiences of microaggressions correlated with blunted cortisol responses.
- Reported blunted cortisol response as less pronounced among Asian American and non-Hispanic White participants.

Majeno, A., Urizar, G. G., Halim, M. L. D., Nguyen-Rodriguez, S. T., & Gonzalez, A. (2021). Examining the role of ethnic microaggressions and ethnicity on cortisol responses to an acute stressor among young adults. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 27(1), 135–144. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000401>

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

12. How can a transdiagnostic model be used to understand childhood trauma and psychopathology?

"Transdiagnostic processes confer risk for multiple types of psychopathology, explain comorbidity of different disorders, and provide targets for early intervention and treatment. Childhood trauma exposure is a powerful transdiagnostic factor that is associated with elevated risk for virtually all commonly occurring forms of psychopathology" (McLaughlin et al., 2020, p. 7).

- Presented a model of core processes underlying development of psychopathology including social information, emotional and biological domains.
- Identified higher levels of social support as a protective factor.

McLaughlin, K., Colich, N., Rodman, A., & Weissman, D. (2020). Mechanisms linking childhood trauma exposure and psychopathology: A transdiagnostic model of risk and resilience. *BMC Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-020-01561-6>

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

13. Do cognitive problems in childhood contribute to mental health challenges in adolescence and young adulthood?

"Deficits in cognitive function, ranging from decreased attention and working memory to disrupted social cognition and language, are common in individuals with psychiatric disorders and severely compromise quality of life, including social and professional integration." (Morales-Munoz et al., 2021, p. 2).

- Conducted a longitudinal study spanning 23 years with a total of 5,315 participants.
- Examined the executive functions of sustained attention, inhibition and working memory during childhood with later psychopathology.
- Reported cognitive deficits may serve as a means of predicting and intervening in the treatment of mental health struggles such as Borderline Personality Disorder and depression.

Morales-Munoz, I., Upthegrove, R., Mallikarjun, P. K., Broome, M. R., and Marwaha, S. (2021). Longitudinal associations between cognitive deficits in childhood and psychopathology symptoms in adolescence and young adulthood. *JAMA Network Open*, 4(4), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.4724>

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

14. Does excessive use of electronic media negatively impact the social-emotional functioning of young children in Finland?

"We studied longitudinal associations between e-media use at 18 months and psychosocial symptoms at 5 years of age, as well as cross-sectional associations between e-media use (programme viewing and electronic game-playing) and psychosocial symptoms at 5 years." (Niiranen et al., 2021, p. 2).

- Reported 95% of preschool sample exceeded screen time recommendations.
- Found excessive screen time usage at five-years-old was associated with increased psychosocial problems.
- Reported excessive program viewing had a greater negative impact than electronic game use.

Niiranen, J., Kiviruusu, O., Vornanen, R., Saarenmaa-Heikkilä, O., and Paavonen, E. J. (2021). High-dose electronic media use in five-year olds and its association with their psychosocial symptoms: A cohort study. *BMJ Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-040848>

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

15. How might the child welfare system incorporate lessons learned from the pandemic to improve their service to families and children?

"Services and relationships cannot merely pick up where they were left off before the pandemic. The child welfare system needs to acknowledge and own the impact of interrupted family time and make meaningful, diligent efforts to repair what has been broken" (Pisani-Jacques, 2020, p. 959).

- Reported isolation and scarcity of resources in the child welfare system were exacerbated during the pandemic.
- Identified youth exiting foster care were particularly vulnerable due to reduced availability of housing and employment opportunities.
- Reported creative solutions to sustain engagement with children in care such as virtual family time had positive outcomes.

Pisani-Jacques, K. (2020). A crisis for a system in crisis: Forecasting short- and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the child welfare system. *Family Court Review*, 58(4), 955-964. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12528>

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

16. What are play therapist attitudes and qualities as identified through document analysis of published literature November 2018 and January 2019?

"In this study we reviewed 221 statements in 16 sources, which resulted in 10 themes. . ." (Purswell et al., 2021, p. 48).

- Reviewed book and article titles addressing individual play therapy with children ages three to nine years old.
- Themes of therapist qualities included "attunement to the child," "attunement to the self," "composure/demeanor," "acceptance of child," and six others.
- Concluded different themes may be related to certain theoretical approaches.

Purswell, K. E., Ayala-Carlson, A. K., & Spada, M. (2021). Play therapist qualities: A document analysis of current literature. *Journal of Professional Counseling: Practice, Theory, and Research*, 48(1), 43-57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15566382.2020.1871258>

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

17. What impacts decisions for children and adolescents to seek or not to seek assistance for mental health concerns?

"We conducted a systematic review of quantitative and qualitative studies reporting barriers and facilitators to children and adolescents seeking and accessing professional help for mental health problems" (Radez et al., 2021, p. 183).

- Reviewed 53 eligible studies (22 quantitative, 30 qualitative, 1 both).
- Reported four main themes: 1) individual factors, 2) perceived social stigma, 3) perception of the therapeutic relationship, and 4) systemic and structural barriers and facilitators.
- Identified the need for better access to treatment, reduced stigma, and an increase in knowledge of concerns and available support.

Radez, J., Reardon, T., Creswell, C., Lawrence, P. J., Evdoka-Burton, G. & Waite, P. (2021). Why do children and adolescents (not) seek and access professional help for their mental health problems? A systematic review of quantitative and qualitative studies. *European Child Adolescent Psychiatry*, 30(2), 183-211.

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

18. Can we use what we know about adults' trauma recovery to guide our work with young adults who have been traumatized?

"...more research is needed to illuminate the recovery processes of the wider community. Such work could advance the applicability of current recovery principles, in turn, enabling the translation of important adolescent-specific recovery values into trauma-informed treatment services for young people." (Siling et al., 2021, p. 294).

- Provided a rationale for the ways adult trauma recovery is difficult to generalize to the adolescent population.
- Provided narratives of young people who described their inter- and intrapersonal relationship during their recovery from trauma.
- Encouraged clinicians to use creative interventions that allow young adults to create their own journey toward healing.

Siling, J. L., Truss, K., Philips, L., Eastwood, O., & Bendall, S. (2021). Young people's journey of recovery from trauma: A qualitative study of narratives from internet forums. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 13(3), 293-301. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000990>

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

19. How effective is Theraplay© with mothers and their children in a residential facility?

“...by implementing Whole Family Theraplay, in addition to individual and group counseling in substance abuse treatment, subjects showed demonstrated improvement in attachment relationships and mental health outcomes” (Weir, et al., 2021, p. 115).

- Included 175 total participants representing diverse racial and ethnic identities and living significantly below the poverty line.
- Used t-tests to compare pre- and posttest scores on three instruments at five different points.
- Reported reductions in mothers' and children's symptoms of distress and improved mental health functioning following involvement in Theraplay.

Weir, K. N., Pereyra, S., Crane, J., Greaves, M., Childs, T. S., & Weir, W. B. (2021). The effectiveness of Theraplay© as a counseling practice with mothers and their children in a substance abuse rehabilitation residential facility. *The Family Journal*, 29(1), 115-123. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480720980988>

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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).