



August 2024 Mining Report

APT Publications

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. What elements of play therapy are directly related to the mental health and behavioral needs of intellectually disabled children?

“Common factors have been found in the literature that relate to the relationship between therapist and client and the therapeutic skills of the play therapist. Clues have also been found for specific factors of play therapy, such as the use of play as a language and a connection with the child's inner world” (Bent et al., 2024, p. 315).

- Reviewed 30 articles revealing play therapy's non-verbal nature could be a core factor of therapeutic change.
- Highlighted children with intellectual disabilities need to experience a sense of autonomy in therapeutic relationships.
- Called for outcome research investigating play therapy efficacy for children with intellectual disabilities.

Bent, D., Schalk, R., Van Regenmortel, T., & Noordegraaf, M. (2024). Systematic review of common and specific factors in play therapy for young people with intellectual disability. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, 70(3), 315–328. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2022.2086433>

Contributor: Caitlin Frawley, PhD, LMHC, Orlando, FL

2. Do we know enough to differentiate children's mind-wandering from inattentiveness?

“Thought-probing procedures that only distinguish between on-task and off-task thoughts might not provide a true estimate of ‘pure’ mind wandering, which may lead to erroneous inferences” (Cherry et al., 2024, p. 911).

- Contextualized mind-wandering as it relates to an interruption in the task completion process.
- Studied the impact of mind wandering on children's ($N = 60$, ages 8-9) delayed memory retention.
- Urged professionals to explore mind-wandering to further assist children with awareness and task refocusing.

Cherry, J., McCormack, T., & Graham, A. J. (2024). Listen up, kids! How mind wandering affects immediate and delayed memory in children. *Memory and Cognition*, 52(4), 909–925. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13421-023-01509-0>

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

3. Does crying during psychotherapy deepen the therapeutic relationship?

“These findings replicate and extend previous international studies in a U.S. sample, providing support for their cross-cultural relevance and previous evidence that clients' crying experiences are related to both change and alliance” (Katz et al., 2024, p. 258).

- Surveyed 124 clients revealing crying in therapy enhanced therapeutic change and working alliance with therapists.
- Noted instead of quantity, crying quality (episodes experienced/handled properly) is the key to the improvement.
- Recommended supporting crying events through therapeutic compassion—staying with (vs. quickly moving past) the tears.

Katz, M., Hilsenroth, M., Johnson, N., Budge, S., & Owen, J. (2024). “Window of opportunity”: Clients' experiences of crying in psychotherapy and their relationship with change, the alliance, and attachment. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 55(3), 258–268. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pro0000559>

Contributors: Athena A. Drewes, PsyD, MA, MS Ed, RPT-STM, Ocala, FL

4. How might parent involvement affect child counseling intervention outcomes?

“The purpose of the current study was to consider the omnibus magnitude and direction of treatment effects associated with parent-inclusive interventions (PII) when compared to no treatment and nonparent-inclusive interventions (NPII) alternatives” (Line et al., 2024, p. 62).

- Applied meta-analysis on 59 randomized controlled studies published between 1995 and 2019.
- Found parent-inclusive treatment groups reported fewer symptoms than no treatment groups.
- Discovered parent-inclusive treatment groups reported fewer symptoms than nonparent-inclusive treatment groups.

Line, A. V., Lenz, A. S., Warwick, L., Branch, M. L., & Lemberger-Truelove, M. E. (2024). A meta-analysis of parent-inclusive child therapy interventions for decreasing symptomology. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 31(1), 62–77. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cps0000180>

Contributor: Kimberly Autrey, PhD, LMHC, NCC, Shoreline, WA

5. Do Black LGBTQ+ Students feel safe, and their intersectional identities being promoted in school?

“Little to no research has examined the psychological or structural mechanisms that underlie Black LGBTQ+ students’ low sense of belonging, leaving us without an empirical base to effectively address this issue. . . We address this gap in the literature by using an intersectional framework to center the experiences of Black LGBTQ+ youth in schools where the majority of the student population is Black” (Lloyd et al., 2024, pp. 82–83).

- Found non-Black LGBTQ+ students had higher sense of school safety than straight Black students.
- Discovered Black LGBTQ+ students felt less valued for their identities than straight Black students.
- Recommended developing affirming sexual identity programs and increasing gender and sexuality alliances within majority-Black schools.

Lloyd, A., Granot, Y., Rovegno, E., Bazin, A., Bryant, A., & Richards, M. (2024). How schools can bolster belonging among Black lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer youth. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, 10(1), 82–93. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tps0000391>

Contributor: Athena A. Drewes, PsyD, MA, MS Ed, RPT-S™, Ocala, FL

6. How important should situational couple violence and coercive control be considered in child protection practices with families?

“Child protection practice frameworks should address the risk of harm to children and young people posed by situational couple violence, not just coercive control” (Marwitz et al., 2024, p. 1).

- Qualitatively studied the experiences of six child protection practitioners in Australia.
- Found six themes: mutual aggression violence, complexity, coerciveness, mother blame, poor services, and need for child focus.
- Discovered the need for nuanced services due to factors impacting families (e.g., substance abuse, mental health).

Marwitz, U., Higgins, D. J., & Whelen, T. (2024). “Kids are in the middle of it” – Child protection practitioners reflect on indicators of coercive control and situational couple violence. *Child and Youth Services Review*, 160, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107596>

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

7. Can Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) improve mental health for the caregivers of autistic people?

“ACT focuses on increasing psychological flexibility, which is the ability to be mindful and accepting of difficult thoughts and experiences, shown to be important for mental wellness” (Maughan et al., 2024, p. 367).

- Examined ACT with 54 caregivers (27 in treatment; 27 in waitlist) of Autistic people aged 3–34.
- Discovered reduced family distress/depression and increased positive affect and personal goal attainment in treatment group.
- Concluded ACT may benefit the mental health of parents caring for children suffering from Autism.

Maughan, A. L., Lunsy, Y., Lake, J., Mills, J., S., Fung, K., Steel, L., & Weiss, J. A. (2024). Parent, child, and family outcomes following acceptance and commitment therapy for parents of autistic children: A randomized controlled

trial. *Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice*, 28(2), 367–380.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613231172241>

Contributor: Nicole R. H. Baker, PhD, LMFT, AAMFT-S, RPT™, Elk River, MN

8. What is family-centered play therapy (FCPT), and how do we use it?

The author provides “a detailed description of family-centered play therapy, along with a case example and procedural guidelines” (McClintock, 2024, p. 107).

- Defined FCPT and philosophically connected it with child-centered play therapy, and child-parent play therapy.
- Emphasized matching the means of communication with the developmental level of the youngest child.
- Focused on whole family in play, instead of just the child using toys in the playroom.

McClintock, D. (2024). Family-centered play therapy: Integration of child-parent relationship therapy and family play therapy. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 33(2), 107–116. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pla0000217>

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

9. How may outdoor play spaces benefit children?

“To investigate the relationship between environmental characteristics of outdoor play spaces and children’s outdoor play and to develop an environmental taxonomy to support the analysis of play affordances in community play spaces” (Morgenthaler et al., 2024, p. 1).

- As evidenced by the analysis of 45 articles, proper physical environment shapes children’s outdoor play activities.
- Prompted practitioners to value the knowledge of play-space users, environments, and play.
- Discussed diversified play space may afford diversified play catering to diversified populations for inclusion.

Morgenthaler, T., Lynch, H., Loebach, J., Pentland, D., & Schulze, C. (2024). Using the theory of affordances to understand environment–play transactions: Environmental taxonomy of outdoor play space features—a scoping review. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 78(4), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2024.050606>

Contributor: Lisa Zaffarese, MS, LPC, ACS, RPT™, Manalapan, NJ

10. What is parental deportation like for children?

“Participants identified that having someone to talk with about their emotions would have reduced confusion, made them feel more comfortable with what was happening, and prevented them from negatively internalizing the situation” (Muruthi et al., 2024, p. 367).

- Qualitatively studied the retrospective accounts of 10 adult-participants who experienced parental deportation as children.
- Uncovered three main themes/wishes: knowing what was happening, emotions being cared, being supported and informed/included.
- Discussed clinical implications concerning how to respond to and support children impacted by parental deportation.

Muruthi, B. A., Taschman, K., McRell, A. S., Zarate, J., Cañas, R. E. T., Romero, L., & Hernández, D. (2024). Things that could have helped me cope: Adults reflect on what they needed as children after the deportation of a parent. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 32(3), 363–370.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/10664807231225212>

Contributor: Alyssa M. Swan, PhD, LCPC, RPT™, Bloomington, IL

11. How may declarative questions benefit mental health assessments for children?

“In mental health settings, before a child can be diagnosed with a mental health condition, they must initially be assessed. These assessments are characterised by question-answer sequences with the child and family members” (O’Reilly & Kiyimba, 2024, p. 1).

- Explored mental-health-assessment procedure with youngsters 6–17 from 28 families through Jefferson approach and conversation analysis.

- Focused on clean language, short declaratives and reformulation declaratives for assessment questions.
- Noted the process of using declarative questions allows engagement with children and alignment with family members.

O'Reilly, M., & Kiyimba, N. (2024). Investigating question-answer sequences in child mental health assessments: Engaging children and families through declarative question design. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 121, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2023.108105>

Contributor: Elizabeth Derickson, MSW, LCSW, RPT-S™, Jackson, MO

12. How is parental usage of digital devices for regulating the emotions of children related to their self-regulation?

“Parents often use digital devices to regulate their children’s negative emotions, e.g., to stop tantrums. However, this could hinder child development of self-regulatory skills” (Konok et al, 2024, p. 1).

- Conducted the first longitudinal study on digital usage regulating children’s emotions and on self-regulation skills.
- Surveyed parents ($N = 265$) of children aged 2-5 in Canada over 2 years.
- Revealed the digital usage as an emotion-regulation tool may hinder children’s self-regulation, including anger management.

Konok, V., Binet, M.-A., Korom, Á., Pogány, Á., Miklósi, Á., & Fitzpatrick, C. (2024). Cure for tantrums? Longitudinal associations between parental digital emotion regulation and children’s self-regulatory skills. *Frontiers in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 3(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frcha.2024.1276154>

Contributor: Elizabeth Wine, LSCSW, RPT-S™, Wichita, KS

13. How may eCoaching help parents understand and respond to pretend play development?

“Shannon elaborated in her post-interview, ‘I liked to have [the coach] watch while we played and then report back. It was interesting that she was able to pick up on stuff I was not. That I had not really been thinking about’” (Passmore & Hughes, 2024, p. 214).

- Highlighted the importance and potential impact of pretend play on various areas in life (e.g. problem solving).
- Examined four mother–child dyads in remote coaching to help parents understand children’s needs through pretend play.
- Encouraged service providers to understand adult learning and family culture for facilitating better rapport and outcomes.

Passmore, A. H., & Hughes, M. T. (2024). Using eCoaching to support mothers’ pretend play interactions at home. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 52(1), 207–219. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-022-01420-4>

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

14. How could Child-Parent Psychotherapy mitigate the adverse effects of intimate partner violence (IPV) on parents and children?

“Research evidence for the effectiveness of Child–Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) among IPV-exposed families is reviewed as are specific treatment components which seek to restore relational safety following familial violence” (Ponting et al., 2024, p. 112).

- Reviewed literature revealing CPP improves relationship outcomes in children exposed to IPV and other trauma.
- Described CPP leads to parenting improvements, such as changes in parenting attitudes and attachment.
- Encouraged including both parents in CPP, when it is safe, to increase coparenting capacity.

Ponting, C., Tomlinson, R. C., Chu, A., & Lieberman, A. F. (2024). Mitigating the impact of intimate partner violence in pregnancy and early childhood: A dyadic approach to psychotherapy. *Family Court Review*, 62(1), 112–130. doi: 10.1111/fcre.12766

Contributor: Nicole R. H. Baker, PhD, LMFT, AAMFT-S, RPT™, Elk River, MN

15. What can narrative inquiry research do for transgender youth’s gender identity development?

“There are biases within research regarding gender identity development; therefore, using a case example, the author

attempts to address these concerns as elements to address throughout the entire research cycle, specifically with narrative inquiry with trans children and adolescents” (Wade, 2024, p. 1).

- Equipped investigators through their personal justifications, practical justifications, social justifications, and structural considerations.
- Addressed ethical considerations, such as state-level research prohibitions, vulnerabilities of the population, and cultural contexts.
- Emphasized narrative inquiries may help contextualize transgender youth’s stories via developmental, political, and cultural lenses.

Wade, M. E. (2024). Let our stories be told: Conducting narrative inquiry with trans youth. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Counseling*, 10(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23727810.2024.2362118>

Contributor: Caitlin Frawley, PhD, LMHC, Orlando, FL

16. How much do counselors know about infant and early childhood mental health?

“Perhaps most concerning is the lack of parental engagement when working with children 3 and under. This may reflect the counselors’ stated lack of child development knowledge” (Woodliff et al., 2024, p. 322).

- Surveyed 212 counselors on their knowledge/training related to infant and early childhood mental health.
- Found few counselors being identified as competent to properly serve very young populations.
- Highlighted counselors’ needs for clinical training specific to infant and early childhood mental health.

Woodliff, T. A., Jacoby, R., & Danielson, R. (2024). Counselors’ knowledge of serving the birth to six population. *The Family Journal*, 32(3), 319–325. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10664807241235322>

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