February 2023 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. How do child adjustments associate with parental triangulation after divorce?

"Parental triangulation is a particular risk to healthy child adjustment after divorce. However, detailed knowledge is lacking on how triangulation predicts child adjustment, and whether some children are more vulnerable to triangulation's effects" (van Diik et al., 2022, p. 1117).

- Reported partially a longitudinal Netherlands study of 135 children aged 7.8-16.9 years and 130 parents.
- Examined the impact of parental triangulation after their divorce on children's adjustments over two years.
- Revealed a stronger correlation between the triangulation and adjustment problems in children with higher levels of empathy.

van Dijk, R., van der Valk, I. E., Dekovic, M., & Branje, S. (2022). Triangulation and child adjustment after parental divorce: Underlying mechanisms and risk factors. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *36*(7), 1117-1131. https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0001008

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

2. How does cognitive-behavioral play therapy affect aggression and the symptoms of attention deficit disorder (ADHD) in children?

"Play-group cognitive-behavioral therapy reduces aggression in children and has a positive effect on improving the symptoms of attention deficit disorder" (Ezadpanahi et al., 2022, p. 98).

- Used a pre-test-post-test design with control and experimental groups (*n* = 90; 45 control, 45 experimental).
- Measured primary school children with *Shahim Aggression Questionnaire*.
- Found reduced aggression (physically, relationally, and reactively) and ADHD symptoms in experimental group.

Ezadpanahi, M., Baharvand, V., & Yousefipour, L. (2022). The effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral play therapy in reducing aggression children 9 to 13 years old in Shiza. *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology*, *13*(2), 98-101. http://www.iahrw.com/index.php/home/journal_detail/19#list

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

3. How well do counseling professionals care for children with medical complexities and their families?

"Without adequate knowledge and understanding of the intricate and complicated stressor facing these families, counselors run the risk of not providing an informed and safe place for clients to explore their experiences" (Holmes et al., 2023, p. 160).

- Identified characteristics that define a medical complexity.
- Described barriers to adequate medical, physical, and mental health care for children, their siblings, and parents.
- Encouraged clinicians pursuing training to enhance interventions that include all family members of children with medical complexities.

Holmes, C., Kimbrough, T., Davis, T., Samuel, A., & Smyth, F. (2023). Counseling families with children with medical complexity. *The Family Journal, 31*(1), 157–164. https://doi.org/10.1177/10664807221124134

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

4. How to better support daycare-aged children who have lost a parent?

"It is noteworthy that in our study, the majority of interviewed parents seemed to believe that their children understood the permanency of death even at the ages of three and four" (Lytje & Dyregrov, 2023, p. 994).

- Interviewed 13 parents, after the death of their spouses, about how parental decisions/experiences affect children.
- Identified the daycare as a potential asset to support younger children who are in bereavement.
- Emphasized more support is needed to assist younger bereaved children, their parents, and other childcare providers.

Lytje, M., & Dyregrov, A. (2023). When young children grieve: Supporting daycare children following bereavement—A parent's perspective. *Journal of Death and Dying, 86*(3), 980–1001. https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222821997702

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

5. What are possible factors influencing father engagement in family therapy?

"Research demonstrates that fathers are frequently the least engaged family member in family therapy, but qualitative research into the nature of father engagement in family therapy is infrequent at best" (Martin, 2023, p. 1).

- Used a qualitative grounded theory approach to explore what affects fathers' engagement during family/children's therapy.
- Discovered several factors: therapist role, therapy structure, fear of the unknown, and inherent difficulties in therapy process.
- Reported additional reasons: observation of therapeutic change, child's therapy enthusiasm, and father role in therapy.

Martin, J. (2023). Therapeutic influences on father engagement in family therapy. *Contemporary Family Therapy*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-022-09659-0

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6. How do anxious children and their parents influence each other's use of affective language?

"Mothers were more likely to use negative affect words if their child had just used negative affect words (over and above mothers' own language on their previous turn), and children were similarly influenced by mother affect word use" (Nook et al., 2023, p. 1).

- Conducted as part of a larger randomized controlled trial of psychosocial treatment for pediatric anxiety.
- Examined 93 dyads of anxious children aged 6-12 with their parents between 2018 – 2020.
- Observed bidirectional relation of negative affective word usage between parent and child.

Nook, E. C., Nardini, C., Zackarek, S. J., Hommel, G., Spencer, H., Martino, A., Morra, A., Flores, S., Anderson, T., Marin, C. E., Silverman, W. K., Lebowitz, E. R., & Gee, D. G. (2023). Affective language spreads between anxious children and their mothers during a challenging puzzle task. *Emotion*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1037/emo0001203

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

7. How might surf therapy help improve child and adolescent mental health?

"Surf therapy is an acceptable and feasible intervention for addressing symptoms of mental ill-health among children and adolescents" (Olive et al., 2023, p. 1).

- Examined a novel surf therapy program using one-on-one mentoring with 15 Australian children and adolescents.
- Reported greater reduced symptoms of mental health related issues among participants.
- Provided information on surf therapy although results were not sustained 6 weeks afterwards.

Olive, L., Dober, M., Mazza, C., Turner, A., Mohebbie, M., Berk, M., & Telford, R. (2023). Surf therapy for improving child and adolescent mental health: A pilot randomised control trial. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 65. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2022.102349

Contributor: Rebekah Byrd, PhD, LPC (TN), LCMHC (NC), NCC, ACS, RPT-S™, Marshall, NC

8. Is eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) an effective tool to work with young children?

"To reduce the acute and long-term effects of trauma, early and effective treatment is necessary. Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy is a brief treatment for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), with a substantial evidence base for children and adolescents aged 8 to 18 years" (Olivier et al., 2022, p. 1391).

- Showed 85.7% remission of PTSD symptoms among 9 children after six 1-hour sessions of EMDR treatment.
- Revealed reliable reductions in anger, anxiety, and depression; 50% improvement in Total Difficulty score.
- Found all therapeutic gains examined were maintained at follow-up 3 months afterwards.

Olivier, E., de Roos, C., & Bexkens, A. (2022). Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing in young children (ages 4-8) with posttraumatic stress disorder: A multiple-baseline evaluation. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development, 53*(6), 1391–1404. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-021-01237-z

Contributor: Tisha Way Gaynor, MSSA, LISW-S, RPT-S™, Cincinnati, OH

9. How could play-based groups for children with cerebral palsy (CP) make a difference on their mothers' well-being?

"This study demonstrated that interventions that combine practical and social support for the whole family can have a positive impact on the well-being of mothers of children with CP. It shows how health professionals' therapy input for the children can have a positive influence on mothers' well-being" (Prest et al., 2022, p. 584).

- Indicated mothers of children with CP experience elevated stress, depression, physical issues, and chronic health conditions.
- Reported favorable treatment impacts on mothers' well-being: practical support, connecting with others, transitioning journeys, and different motivators.

Prest, K. R., Borek, A. J., & Boylan, A. R. (2022). Play-based groups for children with cerebral palsy and their parents: A qualitative interview study about the impact on mothers' well-being. *Child: Care, Health and Development, 48*(4), 578-587. https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12962

Contributor: Laura Tejada, PhD, LMFT, LCPC, NCC, RPT-S™, AAMFT Approved Supervisor, Chicago, IL

10. How to protect our youth by advocating for them in the judicial system?

"Juveniles are entering the justice system at exceptional rates. Nearly 700,000 minors were arrested in 2019 in the United States, calling for a social justice movement" (Tadros & Vlach, 2022, p. 55).

- Explored some issues related to the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Cautioned African American students' detention and suspension rates may relate to racial discrimination.
- Offered implications for working in the juvenile justice system via incarcerated informed lens.

Tadros, E., & Vlach, A. (2022). Protecting our youth: Advocating for family services in the juvenile justice system. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal. 73*(4), 55-65. https://doi.org/10.1111/jfcj.12229

Contributor: Gail Rizzo, EdD, LMHC-QS, RPT-S™, CCAT, Deerfield Beach, FL

11. How does play-based intervention affect ADHD children's playmates?

"Typically-developing playmates of children with ADHD benefited from participation in a peer-mediated intervention" (Wiles-Gillan et al., 2022, p. 1).

- Examined 29 children diagnosed with ADHD and 29 of their normally developed playmates.
- Pre-and-post measured by Connors Comprehensive Behavior Rating Scales; Rated by independent observers for playfulness.
- Reported significant play-skill improvement in the playmates of ADHD children across a 10-week intervention.

Wilkes-Gillan, S., Cordier, R., Bundy, A., Lincoln, M., Chen, Y.-W., Parsons, L., & Cantrill, A. (2022). A pairwise randomized controlled trial of a peer-mediated play-based intervention to improve the social play skills of children with ADHD: Outcomes of the typically-developing playmates. *PLoS ONE, 17*(10), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0276444

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12. How might play therapists incorporate principles of anti-racism into the practice of play therapy?

". . . one may wonder what does anti-racist play therapy look like? How would these principles be implemented and translated into the playroom" (Yee & Cheng, 2022, p. 131)?

- Discussed clinical errors based in the individual play therapist and the therapy environment.
- Indicated practice errors including evasion of race in session, inflexible agendas, and avoiding race/ethnicity conversation in caregiver consultation.
- Identified environmental errors including insufficient toys for racial trauma and not advocating for children's rights.

Yee, T., & Cheng, Y. J. (2022). Racism in the playroom: Clinical errors that maintain racism. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Counseling, 8*(3), 128-143. https://doi.org/10.1080/23727810.2022.2113707

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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).