

Assessing for Progress and Themes in Play Therapy

Presented by Stephanie Williams, MSW, LCSW, RPT-S



www.playtherapystlmo.com

Stephanie@playtherapystlmo.com

APT Approved Provider 15-432

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Disclaimer

- This workshop is conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationship that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.
- No warranty or guarantee is made as to the accuracy of the information contained in this webinar for your specific circumstances.

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Objectives

- Assess and measure change in the play therapy therapeutic relationship.
- Discuss guidelines for measuring progress in child-centered play therapy.
- Discuss play therapy themes and how these can help guide play therapists in determining progress is being made.

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Treatment Planning

- Traditional treatment goals do not fit with CCPT
- What about background information?
- CCPT does not support diagnosis.
- Work with the parent to incorporate the following into the treatment plan:
 - Parental concerns
 - Objectives that are easily obtainable by the child – strength based!
 - Intervention – why CCPT is most appropriate.
- Example treatment plan

Ray, 2011
Goicoechea & Fitzpatrick, 2019
Ray & Landreth, 2019

Resources for Treatment Planning

- The Child Psychotherapy Treatment Planner: Includes DSM-V Updates. (5th Ed). By Jongsma, A.E., Peterson, L.M., McInnis, W.P. & Bruce, T.P.
- Advanced Play Therapy: Essential Conditions, Knowledge and Skills for Clinical Practice. By Ray, D.E.

Assessing for the Therapeutic Powers of Play

- https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.a4pt.org/resource/resmgr/education_&_training/therapeutic_powers_of_play_2.pdf

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Assessing for Change in the Child-Therapist Relationship

- Are my client and I capable of establishing and maintaining contact?
- Is my client in need of and able to make use of therapy?
- Can I be congruent in the relationship with my client?

Ray, 2011

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Assessing for Change in the Child-Therapist Relationship

- Can I experience unconditional positive regard for this client?
- Can I experience an empathic understanding of the client's internal frame of reference?
- Will the client experience at least to a minimal degree my unconditional positive regard and empathy?

Ray, 2011

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

What The Child's Play Will Reveal

- What the child has experienced
- The child's feelings or reactions about that experience
- What children need in their life
- Child's self concept

Landreth, 2012

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Guidelines for Measuring Progress in CCPT

- Is there less dependence on the therapist?
- Is there less concern about other child using the room/seeing the therapist?
- Can the child see and accept both good and bad in the same person?
- Have there been changes in attitude?
- Has there been a change in reactions to cleaning up the room?

Ray, 2011

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Guidelines for Measuring Progress in CCPT

- Does child accept self?
- Is there evidence of insight and self-evaluation?
- Is there a change in the quality or amount of verbalizations?
- Is there less aggression with toys?
- Does the child accept limits more readily?

Ray, 2011

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Guidelines for Measuring Progress in CCPT

- Have the child's forms of art expression changed?
- Is there less need to engage in infantile or regressive play?
- Is there less fantasy and symbolic play, and more creative-constructive play?
- Has there been a decrease in the intensity and number of fears?

Ray, 2011

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

What to Look for in the Child

- More positive self-concept
- Internal locus of evaluation
- Greater responsibility
- More self-direction, self-acceptance
- Self-determined decision-making
- Greater sense of control in their lives

Kottman & Meany-Walen, 2018

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Additional Resources for Measuring Progress

- Play Therapy Worksheet
- Pediatric Symptom Checklist
- Child Behavior Checklist
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Determining Therapeutic Movement

- What if the child repeats the same play session after session?
- When we feel the urge to make a change in the way we are working, be patient and consistent.
- Change/growth is a slow process. We must wait for children to grow!

Landreth, 2012

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Determining Therapeutic Movement

- Look for...
 - Firsts
 - Changes in verbalizations
 - Changes in affect
 - Changes in engagement with therapist
 - Themes – repeated play over time.

Ray, 2011

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Themes in Play Therapy

- Play behavior – child’s actual behavior in the room
 - Can represent many different themes!
- Themes – the meaning the child assigns to the play
 - Typically start being revealed once child is comfortable in therapy
 - Can be shared in client and caregiver consults
 - Help us gain a better understanding of the child and to focus our responses.

Ray, 2011

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

How Do We Know There’s a Theme?

We look for...

- Repetition – behaviors occur multiple times in one session or across sessions.
- Intensity – the energy and focus the child demonstrates
- Context – Background information and presenting issues

Ray, 2011

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Determining Progress with Themes

- Is there a different tone of voice?
- Has a problem been resolved – different ending to the play?
- Has the intensity changed?
- Is there more or less verbalization?
- Is there more or less time spent on the theme in session?
- Is there similar meaning behind the play, even if the play is different?

Ray, 2011

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Caution About Themes

- Therapeutic relationship is still most important!!!
- Analysis should occur outside the playroom during supervision and when writing case notes.
- ***How does our own experience impact the themes we see?

Ray, 2011

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Play Theme Examples

- Relationship	- Separation
- Power/Control	- Reparation
- Dependency	- Chaos/Instability
- Revenge	- Perfectionism
- Safety/Security	- Integration
- Mastery	- Hopelessness
- Nurturing	- Helplessness
- Grief/Loss	- Anxiety
- Abandonment	- Self-sufficiency
- Protection	- Resiliency

Ray, 2011

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Practice Scenario #1

For several sessions in a row, a boy chose to have battles between pirates in a castle. After first asking to draw, he would move quickly to the pirates and play with these the remainder of the session. At first he played quietly, talking to himself. As time went on he began to make fighting noises and then verbalize what the pirates were doing.

Background: Parents in a highly conflictual divorce with a history of domestic violence. Child aggressive at school with peers.

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Practice Scenario #2

For several sessions in a row, a girl begins by taking care of a baby – diapering, rocking and feeding. She then leaves the baby to sleep on her own. Later she comes back, and without any emotion, explains she is tossing the baby in the trash.

Background: Parents in a highly conflictual divorce with a history of domestic violence. Child aggressive at school with peers.

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Practice Scenario #3

For several sessions in a row, a boy takes all the military figures and creates a war in the sandtray. He puts “bombs” and “razor fences” between the two sides. Each time he uses loud sound effects to show the battle ensuing. At the end, the “good guys” are defeated and leave dejected. As time goes on, the battles are longer and the good guys keep coming back until they are ultimately defeated.

Background: Parents in a highly conflictual divorce with a history of domestic violence. Child aggressive at school with peers.

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

Stephanie Williams, MSW, LCSW, RPT-S
stephanie@playtherapystlmo.com
www.playtherapystlmo.com
APT Approved Provider 15-432

Copyright 2020 by Stephanie Williams

- Learning Objectives, along with scientific and professional references, support the accuracy and content of this workshop.

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

References

Goicoechea, J. & Fitzpatrick, T. (2019). To know or not to know: Empathic use of client background information in child-centered play therapy. *International Journal of Play Therapy, 28(1)*, 22-33.

Kottman, T. & Meany-Walen, K.K. (2018). *Doing play therapy: From building the relationship to facilitating change*. New York: Guilford Press.

Landreth, G. (2012). *Play therapy: The art of the relationship*. (3rd ed.). New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams

References

Ray, D. (2011). *Advanced Play Therapy: Essential conditions, knowledge and skills for clinical practice*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Ray, D. C. & Landreth, G. L. (2019, September). Child-centered play therapy. *Play Therapy, 18-19*.

Schaefer, C.E. & Drewes, A.A. (2014). *The therapeutic powers of play: 20 core agents of change*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Copyright 2020 Stephanie Williams
