

Play Therapy History, Models, and Process

Overview:

This two-day course will begin with a review of the major theories that constitute the frameworks for the major models of play therapy, particularly the psychoanalytic influences in the early part of the twentieth century, the person-centered work in the middle and the didactic theories that have been developed in the latter part of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. The history of play therapy will be carefully presented so as to observe the evolution of this method of child intervention, allowing the members of the class to participate with case vignettes and small group discussions. The play therapy process will be examined with a particular focus on understanding basic themes by observing a play therapy puppet show, discovering and sharing these themes in small groups and learning how to record themes. Particular attention will be placed on how to respond to child client's need for pacing of emotional content. Selected research studies supporting the effectiveness of play therapy will also be presented, thereby being aware of the attention to current efficacy based research, qualitative studies and the need for future studies.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Summarize the history of play therapy as a profession.
- 2) Identify the major theoretical models of play therapy, including the pioneers, major components, role of the therapist, and empirical support.
- 3) Explain the tenets of prescriptive play therapy and how to match the approach to the child's needs.
- 4) Describe the guidelines for developing a personal theoretical model.
- 5) Describe the stages in the play therapy process and how to pace sessions according to the child's readiness to address issues.
- 6) Describe basic themes in children's play and how to tie them to children's life experiences.
- 7) Identify how to record themes in children's play.
- 8) Explain how to determine therapeutic movement within therapy and when a child is ready to terminate.
- 9) Cite recent research studies supporting the effectiveness of play therapy.