

Becoming and being a play therapist

Edited by Ayling Peter, Armstrong Harriet, Clark Lisa Gordon (2019). *Becoming and being a play therapist. Play therapy in practice* | Abingdon: Routledge.

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The Play therapy

The play therapy is mostly concerned with the wellbeing of children. It is based on the assumption that the play is the language of the children. While the adults need to talk about their troubles, children need to play about them. The verbal therapies are not sufficient to children, instead of helping them the verbal therapy can be more stressful to children who are not capable of fully using verbal language in psychotherapy till they are twelve (Landreth, 2012). While the use of play therapy can be traced back to the work of Anna and Sigmund Freud, the most influential for the growth of play therapy was the work of Virginia Axline (1964). In 1964 Axline published case study Dibs in search of himself, which described her use of person centered psychotherapy by Rogers in the work with a little boy. Axline allowed us to witness the power of nondirective approach in this touching book, which became one of the most influential case studies in psychotherapy. In the United Kingdom the growth of play therapy has been mostly significant since the first training in the nineties by the dramatherapists Anna Cattanach and Sue Jennings and the establishment of the British Association of Play Therapist (BAPT) in 1992.

The idea for this book was conceived at the occasion of the 25th anniversary of BAPT in 2017, and two years later was published by Routledge. The result is stunning. The book captures the essence of the Play therapy field in Britain. This book is divided into the three parts: Becoming play therapist, Being play therapist and Play therapy in practice. Overall it contains 20 chapters by 22 authors. The editors managed to create a really understandable structure of the book and to contain the most important themes of play therapy in the UK.

The first part Becoming a play therapist is concerned about training of therapists and their own therapy and supervision. Also it deals with the theme of setting

independent practice and about the ways how to prepare a play therapy room. The second part Being a play therapist is concerned about ethics, playfulness and improvisation in play therapy, and about setting limits and containing aggression in therapy. The last and longest part Play therapy in practice deals with special settings: school, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS); themes: sexual abuse, bereavement; and approaches: narrative, integrative, relational, EMDR, working with the parents and children and the use of Polyvagal theory.

List of chapters

Part one: Becoming a play therapist

1. Training issues: before, during and after (Lisa Gordon Clark)
2. The play therapist's personal therapy (Julie McCann)
3. The role of clinical supervision in play therapy practice (Carol Platteuw)
4. The play therapy room: why it matters (Anne Fullalove)
5. Setting up in independent practice as play therapist (Harriet Armstrong)

Part two: Being a play therapist

6. Being an ethical play therapist (Linda St Louis)
7. Being a playful therapist (Karen McInnes)
8. Being an improvisational play therapist (Simon Kerr-Edwards)
9. Containing feelings and setting limits in play therapy: working with aggression (Peter Ayling)
10. Time-limited play therapy (Jenny Reid)

Part three: Play therapy in practice

11. Play therapy within CAMHS setting (Ruth Lazarus and Carrie Waldron)
12. Play therapy in schools (Sonia Murray)
13. Narrative group play therapy in a school setting (Sharon Pearce)
14. Play therapy with children affected by sexual abuse: developing awareness, safety and trust (Tim Woodhouse)
15. Working with bereavement and loss in play therapy (Chris Stone)
16. Integrative approaches to working with trauma (Lisa Waycott and Clare Carbis)
17. Play therapy and polyvagal theory: towards self-regulation for children with paediatric medical trauma (Stuart Daniel)
18. Working with child trauma through EMDR and play therapy (Debra May)
19. Relational approaches to play therapy: supporting adoptive and foster carers and their families (Berni Stringer)
20. Working with parents and carers: Child Parent Relationship Therapy (Trudi Cowper)

Who is this book for?

This book is a must read for anyone interested in play therapy from the UK or abroad. It gives the reader the essence of the training, requirements and profession of play therapist in the UK. For people abroad the book offers big inspiration and lots of thoughts about how it works in the UK. The book can be also interesting for anyone working with children, whether it is a social worker, special educator or teacher.

References

- [1] Landreth, G. L. (2012). *Play therapy: The art of the relationship*. Brunner-Routledge.

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