

Play Therapy 2023 Conference Program



PLAY THERAPY

CHILDREN PLAY IT
BETTER THAN THEY SAY IT

Thank you to all the presenters, delegates and supporters connected
to the conference

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to this amazing National Play Therapy Conference. The initial planning was in 2019 to be held in 2020. We have tried to keep it as close to the plan as possible. We are thankful of course to our main sponsor "Life Without Barriers" and all of the amazing people who have been involved with donations, prizes for the lucky door prize and the like.

It is important to know that you are on Larrakeyah land and that we will do an official welcome to country for you all. Darwin is a wonderful place to be at this time of the year and that is certainly one of the main reasons we have kept the conference as being solely face to face. About our Keynotes. These amazing people have been known to me for many years. Dr Schumann has been my mentor and supervisor along with co presenter at other conferences nationally and internationally, over the years and she will certainly be an amazing person to hear during the days. Dr Gaskill, this was by chance as Dr Bruce Perry got called away to appear on The Oprah Winfrey Show. Dr Gaskill took over the keynote. My jet lag immediately subsided, and I totally understood how play therapy and the brain worked and how and why Play Therapy is really the best form of therapy for children who have experienced trauma, since then Dr Gaskill and I have connected frequently as well. Last but certainly not least. Yeal Livneh an amazing lady who is a true leader in water therapy she has published books and presented at many places. We meet in Fiji and continued to connect and hence she is here!. We thank our speakers for the distances that they have travelled. We have some wonderful paper presenters here as well and while their details are at the back of the program, they are amazing and leading Play Therapy into the future. We thank them for their efforts in getting here.

It goes without saying that you all should be thanked as delegates because the days a face-to-face conferencing have changed so without attendance we would not be here. PTNT has been strict in honouring this and we were begged by more than a few to stream, to record, to offer up online options but keeping the price real and offering support to have it face to face has meant we are in for an amazing 3 days.

It would be timely to thank my family and my staff, as they have lived and breathed this with me as the host. My daughters have grown up with my occupation/passion relating to Play Therapy. Lilly was born the year that APPTA started with the first conference being here in Darwin. Grace with the emergence of Play Therapy Day and Audrey attended her first play therapy conference when she was also just a few months old. They have all assisted you this morning with your name tags and goodie bags. Chris my partner has had to put up with my sleepless nights, early morning typing and preparation. He has grown to understand the importance of the work we do. My staff have assisted and supported where they can, and I will of course thank them individually. They have worked hard to get to where they are and are a true credit to being honourable Play Therapists. One of our staff can not be here as her due date is 21st of June, so could be literally today. We wish Jamie well and her baby!

Some housekeeping:

- Name tags please keep them on you over the three days. They have a number on the back for our random lucky door prizes. We will also be selling raffle tickets off to do some fundraising.
- Your coffee cups are reusable and ecofriendly. Ensure the lids are on correctly.
- There are dietary stations for people with food requirements of course in general the food will be labelled.
- Be sure to have your business cards and phone contacts with you as we will not be giving them out on your behalf.
- It would be good to ensure you have a cardigan and or top layer while its hot outside for some it can get cool inside.
- Please come and see me if you have any issues and concerns and compliments over the duration of the 3 days.

Thank you again for your attendance

Josephine Martin

Director of Play Therapy NT and Conference Chair

Wednesday June 21st Day One:

08:00 Registrations open be early “Grab a coffee and get your goodie bag”

08:15 Welcome to Country
Welcome to Conference

08.30 -10:15 **Dr Rick Gaskill** 1 hour 45 mins.

10:15 -10:45 Morning tea

10:45-12:30 **Dr Brandy Schumann** 1 hour 45 mins.

12:30-13:30 Lunch

13:30-15:15 **Yael Livneh** 1 hour 45 mins.

15:15- 15:45 Afternoon tea

15:45-16:45 Call for papers presentations

Please see the end of this program for more information

16:45 – 17:00 **Closing summaries will then be offered.**

-Delegates: Select workshops they want to be involved in.

-Some raffles to support fundraisers to support future works internationally and in remote communities and potentially support for Play Therapy Associations.

17:00 – 19:00 Welcome Drinks

(Children are welcome) Event will be at Hilton Garden just next door to our conference venue. The Pool Garden Party will provide music and drinks to welcome all delegates to our conference.

19:00: Conference Dinner 13th Birthday Party

This Party is designed to bring out the inner child in all of us! Bring your 10-year-old fun self, play games and dance with all! *With 3-day tickets dinner is included.*

Partners and/or children, Tickets available on the website

Children are welcome to attend this event

19:45: Cake and speeches

20:30: Dinner finishes

Thursday June 22st Day Two:

08:30 Registration Desk Opens and coffee is available.

09:00 Based on your selection you will then undertake an intensive workshop day with your nominated speaker.

-It will be important to attend the full day to gain the most out of the learning opportunity from your selected speaker.

10:00-10:30 Morning tea

12:30-13:30 Lunch

16:00-16:30 Afternoon tea

(Break times may vary depending on the day)

16:30-17:00 Lightening Round

-An opportunity for service sponsors and the likes that are working to support new initiatives in the Darwin and National regions.

-This will be a new introduction style to support communities with different ideas about how

We welcome Camp Kia, Phoenix Support, Territory Club House, Early Childhood, Play Therapy Institute

Mindil Beach Sunset Markets

Make sure to be there before 6:30pm and stay to see the after burn of the wonderful sunset

Delegates can enjoy the wonderful and relaxing sunset Markets.

This is a self-organised activity:

- Transport to and from is readily available from the conference venue

Friday June 23st Day Three:

08:30 Registration Desk opens and coffee is available.

9:00 Based on your selection you will then undertake an intensive workshop day with your nominated speaker.

-It will be important to attend the full day to gain the most out of the learning opportunity from your selected speaker.

10:00-10:30 Morning tea

12:30-13:30 Lunch

16:00-16:30 Afternoon tea

(Break times may vary depending on the day)

Closing

16:30-17:00pm Serving of drinks and closing/Thank you

Panel (speakers, APPTA/APTA Bod TBC) will discuss how to improve the professional understanding of the field of Play Therapy.

It will be well worth sticking around for closing on the Friday afternoon. A great opportunity to continue to network with some closing surprises at the end of the week while we do some fun evaluations and assessments to gain your views of the value of learning and summaries of the event. Bring your own business cards to hand out to the people you have enjoyed connecting with.

-The tickets are only set up for Day one or all three days, this is to support attendees with being able to come along to all welcome drinks and dinner events.

-We hope this helps with your decisions in coming along to the conference.

-There are discounts for members of APPTA, APTA and allied services.

-NB: All international registrations are entitled to register at member rates but on sign in need proof of international address. I.e. passport and or country of origin drivers licence etc.

Keynote Presenter Summaries

Dr Rick Gaskill

Biography

Dr. Gaskill is a RPTs working in mental health for 42 years and teaches at Wichita State University. He is a Child Trauma Academy Fellow. He has published and lectured extensively on the neurobiology of trauma and play therapy throughout the US, Canada, and Australia.

Workshop Information

The 6 core “R”s behind the how and why Play Therapy works across diverse environments. This workshop will be ideal for a wide range of professionals who work with children and will give an enhanced understanding of not just the benefits of Play Therapy but the neuroscience behind it. Relationships have been a therapeutic element observed and discussed in the play therapy literature for many years (Allen, 1942; Axline, 1947; Landreth, 2002; Moustakas, 1953; and Taft, 1933). In the late 1990's, new scientific information began to inform us of the emotional, social, cognitive, and behavioural impact of trauma on the developing brain of children. This research continues to influence the way play therapists conceptualize and treat complex trauma. As play therapists gain understanding of the changes in functional capacity of traumatized children, expectations for children change and became more realistic. This improved understanding of altered functional capacity of the brain, in turn has paved the way for viable trauma informed and developmentally sensitive interventions. Interestingly, this same neural scientific research confirmed that relationships are a powerful “driver” of effective interventions. Research demonstrated that trauma informed treatment interventions rely heavily on relationally rich experiences between the child and significant adults. Without warm relationships even well-conceived, functionally appropriate interventions don't work as well. In this vein, the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics described by Perry and Hambrick (2008) defined 6 core relational elements that promote positive neurodevelopmental experiences. They found employing relevant, repetitive, relational, rhythmic, rewarding, and respectful interventions greatly improved the effectiveness of play therapy interventions (Barfield, Dobson, Gaskill, & Perry, 2012; Gaskill & Perry, 2012, 2014, 2017; Hansen, 2011). This workshop codifies and operationalizes these concepts into workable techniques to maximize the healing potential in therapeutic experiences.

Dr Brandy Schumann

Biography

CPRT-Supervisor

Dr. Brandy Schumann is a Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor, Certified Child Centered Play Therapist-Supervisor, Certified Child-Parent Relationship Therapy- Supervisor, and Clinical Associate Professor at Southern Methodist University (SMU).

For decades she has provided play therapy in a variety of settings including private practice, agency, crisis, and schools. She has presented and served as an advisor for programs around the world international for the Play Therapy Infinity Association of Hong Kong, Australia's Pacific Play Therapy Association, and a budding association in Istanbul.

Brandy simultaneously succeeds and fails in the life she shares with her family, which includes three human children, three furry, four feathered, and two scaled ones.

Reaching Pre/Adolescents through Play Therapy

Think you are cool enough to work with pre/adolescents? If you're still using the word cool than probably not—but, you can be. Join us for a experiential workshop where we will explore the world of today's teens and their journey through play therapy, from the first session to termination.

Objectives:

Workshop will increase attendees' sensitivity to the world of the pre/adolescent.

- Attendees will learn why play therapy is a developmentally sensitive approach for pre/adolescent clients.
- Attendees will be able to identify at least three therapy characteristics unique to working with a pre/adolescent client in play therapy
- Attendees will identify multiple play therapy activities to use with pre/adolescents

The workshop presentations will be a mixture of lecture, experiential activity, group discussions, and

Yael Livneh

Biography

Yael Livneh, MA, is an Israeli expressive art therapist with over 20 years of practice in psychodrama and inter-modality approach. She owns a private clinic for children and adolescents. Yael is the developer of the WPT (Water Play Therapy) method, and in 2015 she published her book: "Rising On Water". She presents her method in front of medical and educational staff in hospitals and at Tel Aviv University. She does workshops of WPT for therapists around the world and gives supervision. Yael worked with communities in Africa through international organizations. Yael is a staff member in the academic program for play-therapy in Oranim College.

Workshop Information: The Secret of Water

This innovative approach of art-expressive therapy utilizes water as a main medium with which clients can express their feelings and project their personal narratives in an accessible and non-threatening manner. The use of water, colour and symbolic items has been successfully applied with children who suffer from sensory processing disorders, communication problems (Ruth E.1952 / Verneer 1955), with adults that suffers from attachment deficits and social anxiety and trauma. However, there has been no clear procedure that accounts for WPT. I have developed a WPT protocol that has shown to be effective with clients who suffer from affect-modulation difficulties. In this workshop we will provide the rationale for WPT and describe the procedure step-by-step.

Presenter:

Jana Panagakos

Children's Counsellor/Play Therapist – Psychology and Play Therapy Australia

Co-Author

Katherine Olejniczak

Director, Principal Psychologist, Play Therapist – Psychology and Play Therapy Australia

Title

“Who am I? Who could I be?” ... The power of an identity narrative in development of self-concept: Integrating cognitive restructuring principles in play therapy

Abstract

At the heart of all play therapy interventions is the promotion of a child's development of self-concept and identity – honouring the child as a whole person who is integrating an understanding of who they are, who they believe they could be, and what they can achieve (Davey et al., 2019). Yet children face a significant developmental vulnerability through this essential period of identity construction. A child's identity is largely developed through the reflected self-appraisals of others (Pfeifer et al, 2007; Pfeifer et al., 2009). They develop self-schemas in the context of their relationships, creating a unique opportunity for play therapists to utilise this process to support a healthy development of self!

Play therapy IS “the art of the relationship” (Landreth, 2012). It is not surprising then that one of the primary play therapy techniques that facilitates cognitive restructuring is the therapist's use of self. This presentation will identify 12 ways of therapist use of self to support children in the cognitive restructuring process of repairing negative self-schemas (i.e. internal working models).

This presentation will also highlight the important role of the play therapy technique of interpretations (often referred to as reflections) in facilitating the cognitive restructuring process. Four types of play therapy interpretations will be discussed.

Cognitive restructuring through play therapy? YES... it's possible! Integrating these play therapy techniques with the three components of cognitive restructuring – collaborative empiricism, verbal intervention, and empirical hypothesis testing – enables play therapists to facilitate the child's cognitive reprocessing of negative self-schemas, strengthen self-concept and a healthy emergence of self (Olejniczak, 2022). Children are able to develop a supportive and reparative identity narrative where they can more greatly participate, persevere, learn and play.

This presentation provides a language and framework to support play therapists to conceptualise and articulate the cognitive changes of a child's play therapy process. It addressed the underlying neurobiological mechanisms that facilitate cognitive restructuring in play therapy, highlighting the latest neuroscience research of the role of the Default Mode Network in the process.

A case study example will be used to bring to life this theory and practice.



Presenters:

Catherine Lucas

Profession: Registered Play Therapist

RN Sarah Berben

(Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner)

Working for the Alice Springs Sexual Assault Referral Centre, for the past eight years as a

Children's Counsellor: Registered Play Therapist (RPT) and Crisis Response Worker (CRW) – the opportunity arose to discuss the suitability to incorporate miniatures into the pre-examination stage of the Forensic Medical Examination (FME).

A plan was developed to introduce the miniatures (Consent Model) and to monitor its use over time and to review. Documents were created for the CRW to complete and all staff were advised of how to use and record the process.

This process also started just prior to COVID-19. Plans to review and develop this paper were put on hold temporarily, however the use of the Consent Model continued despite COVID-19.

The main objective of incorporating the Consent Model into the FME process was to have a clearer method of gaining informed consent. Many of SARC's FME clients are indigenous, with limited English-speaking capacity; some have cognitive delay, FASD, have travelled extensively to come from community for the FME in the middle of the night, are sleep deprived and highly traumatised. The use of the consent model gives an opportunity to use miniatures (toys) – speak the child/client's language particularly where there has been trauma which impacts on the client's ability to speak of the trauma or understand information put to them after a traumatic event. The use of the consent model is for the FME to explain what will happen during the 'top to toe' medical examination via the use of dolls: doctor, nurse, patient, bed, medical tools. It has proven to be highly successful in reducing anxiety of both families and clients.

We look forward to discussing the Consent Model with you at the Darwin Conference.



Presenter:

Bianca Bird

“Nest Counselling and Consultation”

Registered Play Therapist Supervisor

Child Centered Play Therapy and the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics
Presentation Abstract

The Neuro Sequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT) is a developmentally sensitive intervention through the Child Trauma Academy that integrates neurobiological science and the therapeutic work with children and their families. The NMT process examines both past and current experiences and functioning. A review of the history of adverse experiences and relational health factors helps create an estimate of the timing of developmental risk that may have influenced brain development and severity of risk and resilience factors.

Child Centered Play Therapy (CCPT) uses the natural language of children to process feelings, life experiences and their inner world through play. The therapeutic relationship provides a safety and consistency, where a child can experience full acceptance and empathy. The relational experience is the healing factor which creates meaningful and long-lasting change. Based on person-centered principles, CCPT facilitates the child’s healing and growth in a predominately non-directive and child led approach.

One of the biggest challenges for play therapists is finding a way to track and measure the progress we see in the playroom in a way that others will understand. How can we capture the therapeutic process in a way that others can recognise and value the important growth and changes that are occurring within the child’s body, brain and nervous system? How do we document the therapeutic progress and the unconscious processing that is occurring? How do we provide an evidence base for the sub-cortical processes we are working on and that we know is essential for long term behavioural and emotional changes?

NMT gives us the trauma informed and developmentally sensitive guidance to answer to the ‘what’, ‘why’, ‘how’ and ‘when’ in our clinical decision making and therapeutic interventions. Through this case study we will explore the evidence-based interventions of a 5-year-old child’s progress through CCPT as measured by her NMT brain map. Through the context of the therapeutic process, we will explore how NMT captures her progress in her functional domains of sensory-integration and self-regulation, as well as her relational and cognitive development.

We will also examine the strengthening of her Cortical Modulation Ration (CMR), which is one of the key measures of NMT; that not only gives us indications about a child’s developmental age, but also when they might be ready for more traditional, talk-based or behavioural approaches based on the cortical ‘strength’ and over-reactivity in the lower neural systems involved in the stress response. CMR is related to the concepts of self-regulation and executive functioning, which are the key elements for successful and meaningful engagement in a traditional or behavioural approach.

Together we will explore this play therapy case study and how NMT can provide the evidence base and clinical guidance to the CCPT framework. It provides an interim and post measure of a child’s progress through the CCPT stages, as well as indications of when a more targeted and directive approach was needed. We will discover what this looks like in an NMT brain metric, as well as future recommendations for therapeutic interventions.



Presenters

Laura West

Profession: Director of Camp Kiah
Registered Play Therapist

Fergus Russell, Renae Mohtadi & James Acret

100 hours of consecutive Kiah's therapeutic use of play

This conference presentation is aimed to help delegates gain an understanding of the therapeutic use of play outside of the playroom.

The hour will be a fun and insightful look at the ways in which Camp Kiah consistently provide support for 28 young people each School Holiday Camp, all of which present with emotional and behavioural difficulties, or a dual diagnosis of disability and mental health concerns or are living in an environment where these are daily contributing factors.

Camp Kiah are a therapeutic camp, created with a therapeutic play theoretical underpinning. As such we use diagnostically targeted and trauma informed attachment theory and focus on building a secure base for the children/young people while they are in our care. Camp Kiah aims to hold space with unconditional positive regard, using incongruence and congruence in conjunction to avoid young people feeling misunderstood, or confused. Our staff use tracking, empathy, structuring and attunement to ensure that during these vulnerable times, we're able to create a space where young people can verbalize within their capacity of understanding. The consistency in which we use play to engage and provide limits, is where we attribute most of our success in maintaining a calm and settled enough environment for young people to process some of what they are working through, in small doses across our 24-hour model of care.

As each camp day does, we will start with gratitude, or a mindfulness activity, provide you with some free time play activities, a trail of our structured therapeutic activities and then wrap it up with some insights into behaviour awareness and reflection. Join us, on a lightening fast version of 24hours at Camp Kiah!



Presenter:

Ardis Lo, MS, LPC-S, RPT-S, CTMH

Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor

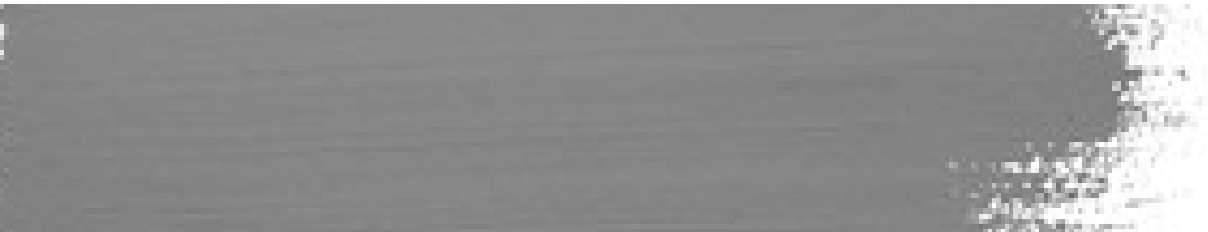
Registered Play Therapist Supervisor

Clinical Telemental Health Provider

Ardis is a Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor, Registered Play Therapist Supervisor and Certified Clinical Telemental Health Provider. She earned her Master of Science degree in Counseling from Southern Methodist University with specialty training in Play Therapy, Activity Therapy, Child Parent Relationship Training, Group Therapy, and Geriatrics. Ardis is currently working on obtaining Certification in Death and Grief Studies, as well as Certification as an End of Life Doula. Ardis has companioned people courageously seeking counseling for various life, family and mental health challenges from tiny tots to those with age spots. Ardis has worked with the adolescent populations in Frisco and Prosper ISD; grieving children and families with Journey of Hope, Camp Sol, and Camp Erin; end of life support with hospice; community support following hurricane Harvey, tornadoes in North Texas and suicide response support in the local community. Prior to counseling, Ardis dedicated eight years to Court Appointed Special Advocates of Collin County while staying home with her young children.

Ardis believes people are capable of change and growth when provided the opportunity of an accepting space to share their story and their perspective in order to gain insight and support through the challenges in their life. Ardis offers people of all ages a compassionate, warm presence while she walks alongside them on their path of seeking and discovery. Ardis's energy and care for people is felt in her genuine presence offered.

Outside of counseling you will find Ardis playing outside in nature either with a dog or attempting to pet any dog she meets. Ardis and her husband of eighteen years have two adventurous and kindhearted teenagers, two gerbils and one geriatric dog, Louie (who has been promised to live his last years as the only dog of the home). Ardis and her family love to explore life through gifts of experience and traveling near and far.



Presenter:

Sandi Phoenix

BPsychSc

Sandi is the founding company director and Principal Facilitator at Phoenix Support.

Play: A multi-Cup-filler

Through story and an analogy about Cups, Sandi will explain a theoretical framework to represent basic human life needs as motivators for all human behaviour, including play. Participants will be encouraged to deeply listen to the behaviours the child is using in their play, learn to identify unmet needs and tailor a plan to foster the child's wellbeing (fill their Cups). It's time to plan for fulfilment, not behaviour, and create meaningful and playful wellbeing plans with and for children & young people.

Participant outcomes:

1. A common language to share with children, young people and their families to discuss themes in play, and differences in needs and wellbeing.
2. Learn a new framework, The Phoenix Cups, based on ideas, theory, and research from humanistic psychology and emerging positive psychology.
3. Gain an understanding of the importance of sustained, uninterrupted time for play.
3. Walk away with a practical tool to observe play behaviour and plan for fulfilment and wellbeing.

Thank you to all our incredible stall holders and supports





Thank you to all our incredible
sponsor

**LIFE
WITHOUT
BARRIERS**



Blooming Heart
THERAPY

- Darwin Play Therapy
- Skyline Ferris Wheels
- Bumble bee Chocolates.