

WAPT Communication – Spring 2011



Dear WAPT Membership,

Welcome to Spring in Wyoming!!! I would like to thank everyone for their support in furthering the Wyoming Association For Play Therapy. WAPT provided both the support and the professional connections that I needed to further both my personal and my professional interests in counseling beginning in 2002. I joined the WAPT Board in 2003. I was still in graduate school and I had one 2-day training in Play Therapy completed. As a board member-at large I wrote articles for the communications/newsletters, assisted behind the scenes with workshops and conferences, attended meetings, and furthered my understanding of play therapy over the past years. I will be stepping down from both the Board and as the President of WAPT in July of 2011. As a President, I have learned more about the APT organization, presented play therapy workshops, and offered supervision. In addition, I had the benefit of meeting all of you -wonderful professionals in the mental health community. Thank you for the opportunity and I encourage WAPT members to take advantage of the upcoming elections for both officers and members-at large opportunities in July at the UW/Laramie, Wyoming Conference.

The Spring 2011 Communication has featured articles from two board members: Connie Day and Linda Butts. Also, two of our new members wrote an article about their experiences going into private practice: Coleen Meade and Tricia Miller. You will receive a postal mailing with an election nomination survey and a satisfaction survey combined. It will be accompanied by an envelope with a return address to be forwarded to the nomination committee (Linda Butts and Darcie Wisehart).

A special thank you goes out to Linda Butts, Pat Stoehr, Bob Skaggs, and Connie Day for attempting to do our last board meeting via email – they are a very flexible and innovative group. At the meeting the Board approved for WAPT to gift the University of Wyoming Counselor Education and Supervision Clinic \$100.00 for the advancement of play therapy in Wyoming. The check will be given to their department at the July Conference in Laramie, Wyoming. There was a suggestion at the meeting to have WAPT members bring a small toy and/or symbolic miniature to the conference to gift to the UW Clinic Sandtray Collection – all gifts can be left at the WAPT Booth at the conference.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DARCIE WISEHART on becoming the mommy of a new baby boy in January!

CONGRATULATIONS TO LINDA BUTTS on receiving her RPT in March of 2011! Linda will be retiring from the Natrona County School District at the end of May 2011 to join me in my private practice in Casper, Wyoming.

Thanks again and happy playing! Tonya L. Yelton, MA, LPC, RPT, WAPT President

REFLECTIONS ABOUT PLAY THERAPY FROM CONNIE DAY

Hello to all of you who are Play Therapists or interested in becoming a Play Therapist. Becoming a Registered Play Therapist has been one of the most rewarding experiences I have had in my professional career. It was also very time consuming/intensive and expensive but I have learned oh so much about children and about myself.

I graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1974 with a master's degree and began working as a counselor in the Youth services programs in Oklahoma as there were very few mental health programs in that state at the time. Youth services provided crisis therapy, shelter/group home and family therapy to children 12 and older. In 1980 I began full time work in a regional mental health center in western Oklahoma and in that setting provided services to many children in the center and at school. I quickly found out that kids needed and wanted something more than sitting in a chair talking so I brought toys from home to use in the sessions. In 1987 I obtained my LPC in Oklahoma and since that time have been licensed in Montana and Wyoming. I have provided services to children and their families in Montana (Northern Cheyenne reservation) in Shawnee, Oklahoma for Red Rock Behavioral Health Services and at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation (tribal) for 8 years. I now live and work on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Ft. Washakie, Wyoming and provide services only to Native children their families (this is Indian Health Services) a federally operated Health and Human Services facility where we are lucky enough to have a staff of 4 psychologists, including a Forensic Psychologist, a multitude of physicians, dentists, optometrists, a nutritionist, physical therapist, pharmacists, and Public Health nurses and nurse educators and an Audiologist—all in one building.

I have a small room to use as a play therapy room. None of the rooms here are very large as this building is over 130 years old but I make all of the space count. As this reservation is isolated and the only one in Wyoming we are very busy. I often see 7-8 children a day. This reservation has about a 75 % unemployment rate, housing is scarce so there are multiple families living in the same residence, transportation is a problem but somehow the kids make it to their appointments. I believe that 4 years ago when I arrived here at Wind River Service Unit the parents and guardians were skeptical regarding play therapy outcomes but with education (lots of handouts and brochures) and word of mouth it is accepted as "play that works".

The Wyoming Association for Play Therapy does a great job in letting the community know what is available and providing training to those who want to become a Registered Play Therapist. We truly have a gifted, talented and dedicated group of professionals here in Wyoming.

CREATIVE BEHAVIOR PLAN IDEAS FOR HOME & SCHOOL SETTINGS FROM LINDA BUTTS

Parents, counselor, and teachers want students to be intrinsically motivated to achieve academically and behaviorally, however the reality is that extrinsic motivators are often needed for modification of problematic behavior. The temporary use of external motivation built into creative and fun behavior plans can help to change inappropriate behavior. The key to transitioning from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation is in the slow phasing out of external rewards when the targeted behavior is changed enough to allow for the internal satisfaction of success to be the reward. This timeline differs from child to child. In the meantime, plans that are fun and creative can help students keep an interest in the process.

Behavior contracts identify specific behaviors that are targeted for change. Teachers or parents work in partnership with a child to draw up a contract that outlines an agreement on the behavior that is to be changed. In many behavior contracts, a menu of rewards can be created. The Mystery Motivator Menu is a fun way to incorporate extrinsic rewards in a behavior contract.

Color Changeable Markers by Crayola or *Color Changers* by ALEX are valuable tools in creating a Mystery Motivator Menu of reinforcers. Sometimes these can be found at department stores, but often I order them online through the Crayola web site or on *Amazon.com*. The “magic wand” or clear marker in each box of markers is used to make a symbol on a designed white Board game layout using a mixture of straight and curved pathways. The clear marker dries quickly and the symbol cannot be seen until one of the other colored markers is used over it. Using colored post-it strips to mark which symbols are in specific locations will assist in keeping track of the already marked spots on the white game board. Be warned, once dry you will not be able to see the symbols, so keeping track with post-its or an alternative is a must. Once dry, the chemical reaction of the two markers causes the symbol to show up on the game board. When children exhibit the appropriate behavior choice according to the criteria set forth on the behavior contract, they earn a chance to color in a box on the board game grid with one of the Changeable Markers and then receive the incentive attached to whatever symbol shows up.

Students help create the menu of items and what the symbols will earn; however the parent or teacher privately places the symbols on the game board. The mystery of what will show up and when it will show up is an exciting part of the incentive for the child. The game board is heavily designed with frequent symbols in the beginning. Later squares on the game board can have some random blank spots, where incentive symbols do not show up. Children are advised of this possibility in the beginning and do not know when the blank spots will show up. On those days, behavior is reinforced with praise, but not a specific reward. I advise children that the non-symbol days are practice for the good feeling of achievement of their goal. When one Mystery Motivator Game board is completed, another can be designed with more random “feel good” days included. I try to maintain an 80% incentive reinforcement on each game board created. After the child has colored in all the spots on the game board and earned the rewards for the symbols, the game board can be used with some tokens and dice as an actual game with the game guidelines created by the student.

Another form of a token reinforcement system is using play money as part of the reward system. There are several Internet sites that allow for free printing of play money. I like *MoneyInstructor.com* as a resource. Once printed, the play money can be modified to fit the behavior plan needs. I cut and paste pictures of SMILING school staff on the \$1 play money bills, and paste a picture of the SMILING principal on a \$20 play bill. The student gets his/her SMILING picture on a \$1 bill, too. I have even given a mom some “parent bucks” to give to her child for appropriate home choices. These can be used at school or at home for rewards. Students can repeatedly look at the smiling faces of staff, parents, and themselves for an additional reinforcement factor. This also can correlate to the beginning of an extrinsic to intrinsic reinforcement transition.

The “bucks” can be earned from each staff member for criteria met on a behavior plan. The staff member writes the date and the appropriate behavior choice on the back of the buck with their face and gives that buck to the student. The chance for doubling the reward happens on occasion and at the staff

member's discretion. The student can earn one of their "student bucks" by doing a self-assessment, again writing the date and appropriate behavior on the back of the buck.

Once \$20 in single "bucks" are earned, the student may trade the singles for a \$20 "principal buck." The student keeps the earned "bucks" in a money pouch in a designated safe location and can spend the bucks on items from a child created and adult approved menu. Once traded for a \$20 "principal buck" the principal gives the collected singles to the adult that is tracking the behavior plan progress. Behavior plans are a reality in our schools and homes. They might as well be fun and creative.

BEGINNING YOUR PRIVATE PRACTICE FROM COLEEN MEADE & TRICIA MILLER

Going into private practice is a challenge that many practitioners in the mental health field have set as a goal. We have recently made that move and would like to share our story with you. We are still in the process of developing our business and have much success and many challenges to share with any of you who are thinking of making this move.

First of all, if you are working for an agency, don't think they are going to be happy you are leaving! We envisioned our supervisor being happy and encouraging us in our choice to leave. We told her together only to hear her discourage us in making this move and encouraged us to abandon this crazy plan and stay at the agency. A wise colleague put it into perspective when he said, "Well think about how you would feel if they were happy you were leaving!" Our recommendation is to have your move planned out thoroughly before given notice to your current employer. Also, don't let them talk you into an extended leave notice as it becomes difficult to stay when all you can think about is your own plans.

Paperwork is another challenge. Our advice is to seek out other professionals in the community and ask them to help you. We have found tons of support from colleagues in our community. They have been willing to share anything they can to help us get started. We were able to use their paperwork to develop our own which made this issue much easier. We recommend taking care of this challenge before you open your doors. Be sure and cover your bases with all required intake paperwork! You will be able to develop progress notes and some other forms to whatever you are comfortable using, however, be sure to cover your state or federal requirements. If you are billing insurance or Medicaid make sure you are covering all requirements.

Billing is important! There are several factors to keep in mind. Most importantly is the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System. The Administrative Simplification provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) mandated the adoption of standard unique identifiers for healthcare providers and health plans. The purpose of these provisions is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the electronic transmission of health information. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has developed the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) to assign these unique identifiers. There are two types of NPI that one can register for. Type one is issued to individuals and Type 2 is issued to organizations. You can visit their website which is nppes.cms.gov for more information on this topic. We have learned for our practice we will use both Type one and two for our

billing needs. Billing is a very complicated process and we are still working on this issue. We are both LCSWs and therefore can bill Medicare independently but must have supervision from a physician in order to bill Medicaid. Some mental health professionals may not care if they can bill Medicaid, but it is important to us because the majority of our clients are covered by Medicaid. The State of Wyoming Medicaid office has been very helpful to us and has walked us through setting up a Medicaid Provider Number and sorting out how to bill with our supervising physician. We chose a psychologist to serve as our supervisor and it took us some time to figure out how that system works.

To the best of our understanding the supervisor (medical physician/psychologist) is the person who is assigned the Medicaid Provider Number. When they enroll with Medicaid they designate that they are both the treating provider and the pay to provider. This allows mental health professionals to provide therapy services under their supervision and submit the charges through Medicaid. Medicaid then processes claims and pays the claims to the supervisor. We chose to set our billing up with our supervisor being an employee of our practice, the money billed out paid directly to our practice and then us paying him what he charges us for supervision. This process takes time and we recommend you have this issue planned out early in your development.

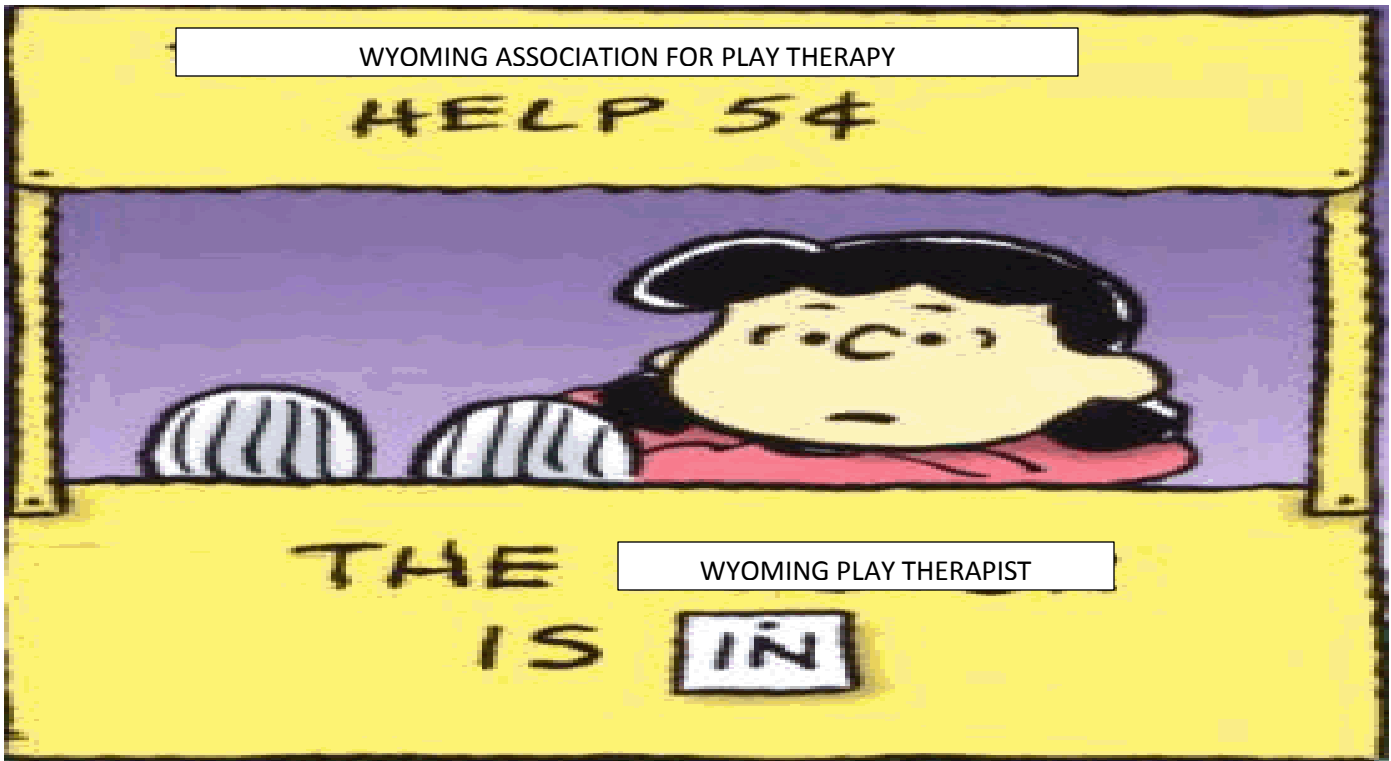
Another factor concerning billing is to decide if you want to contract with insurance companies. When exploring this option we took advice from our billing person. Based upon his recommendations, we chose to contract with some insurance companies and not with others.

Another piece of important advice: Be prepared for when the client wants to make a payment. A cash box and receipt book is a must. It is very easy to overlook the obvious in the beginning when you get bogged down with other details of the business.

We had our office built and we are very excited to move in and see our clients. As with most construction projects things went slower than planned. The office was scheduled to open in February and the opening date has been pushed to May of 2011. This means we get to share a small office together in the meantime. This can be very challenging. Be ready to roll with the punches and work out issues as they come. Things eventually do work out.

Even with all of the challenges, we both agree that this is an exciting career move and we are happy we did not let our doubts and fears stop us. We were lucky to have many colleagues in our community to encourage us and offer support along the way. Our last and most important recommendation is to work with the other mental health professionals in your community. They can offer support and assistance, but more importantly this is where your future clients will be coming from. It is the other professionals in your community who refer clients to you. We spent time in the community networking with professionals telling them of our plans and our excitement. If you speak loud enough there is no need to advertise. If you are a therapist thinking of private practice, we hope this information is helpful and would like to say congratulations!

LIST OF CURRENT WAPT MEMBERS:



Dorothy Daum	Rebecca Luhm	Marsha Wilkerson	Cindy Parrish
Darice Orpet	Donna Alvarez	Ku Shuhalia Kulohari	Liz Sanderson
Coleen Meade	Linda Brandt	Laura Helmerick	David Stratton
Tricia Miller	Stacie Thoma	Rebecca Sandoval	Denise Lubken
Jamie Straessler	Leslie Stringham	Ellen Menke	Kari Skordas
Tonya Yelton	Vicki Martin	Katherine Davis	Linda Butts
Donna Sigward	Heather Sanford	Kara Carnes-Holt	Darcie Wisehart
Elizabeth Butts	Michael Morgan	Connie Day	Nancy Todd
Rose M. Harriet	Pat Stoehr	Marilyn Montville	JoEllen Jorgensen
George Brown	Bob Skaggs		

Go to the a4pt.org website to keep updated on Wyoming Membership Information.

The highlighted members have received their RPT-S certification from APT.

WAPT NOMINATING COMMITTEE INFORMATION

We are seeking WAPT members to take leadership and advocacy roles on the WAPT Board to promote play therapy and support in the State of Wyoming. We need your assistance in volunteering personally or nominating an officer position or member at-large position. We have several positions open. Your commitment is to meetings via

computer conferencing 3-4 times annually, joining a committee of your choice as needed within the WAPT organization, contributing to the planning of communications and the play therapy trainings for members and potential membership. Please watch for the nomination form and survey in your postal mail.

Currently the WAPT Board Members are as follows:

President: Tonya L. Yelton (Vacancy in July of 2011)

President Elect: Currently Vacant

Secretary: Pat Stoehr (Vacancy in July of 2011)

Treasurer: Linda Butts (Vacancy in September of 2013)

Member At-Large: Connie Day, Bob Skaggs

WAPT MEMBER SATISFACTION AND NOMINATING SURVEY

WAPT has grown rapidly over the past few years and with the growth we have been provided more opportunities. We are in need of our membership to complete the following survey so that trainings and conferences are tailored to your needs. The survey will be sent to you via postal mail and a convenient return addressed envelope will be enclosed. Thank you.

Questions on the survey to review:

1. I am currently certified as a Registered Play Therapist and/or Supervisor? Yes No
2. I am currently working toward my certification as a Registered Play Therapist? Yes No
3. I would like to serve on the Wyoming Association For Play Therapy Board in the position of: (fill in the desired position and your name)
4. I would like to nominate, _____ (fill in a person's name) for _____ (position).
5. I am interested in learning more about play therapy in the areas of: (fill in your suggestions)
6. I am in need of supervision opportunities? Individual Group ; For RPT-S

Other Comments:

Thank you for your time and we look forward to seeing you in July in Laramie.