



December 2010

Dear WAPT Members,

Happy Holidays to you all!!! I apologize for corresponding with you so late in the season. A special thank you goes out to Ku Suhaila Ku Johari and Heather Sanford for assisting me in writing to you. Ku wrote about her play therapy dreams when she returns to Malaysia and Heather attended the APT Conference in October of 2010 for the first time.

The current WAPT officers are: Tonya Yelton, President; Pat Stoehr, Secretary; Linda Butts, Treasurer. The Board Members-at-large are: Connie Day; Bob Skaggs. In July of 2011 at the annual meeting in Laramie, Wyoming, we will be seeking new officers and board members. Darcie Wisheart is assisting Linda Butts on the nominating committee for new Board Members, President, President-Elect, and Secretary. We are always in need of members to write play therapy articles. WAPT compensates \$25.00 to the writer of each article. Please submit your voice/article to childfamilycounseling@gmail.com.

Our current bank account balance is: \$ 4,244,87. The board is planning the 2012 WAPT Conference and would like your input on presenters. Would you like to have vendors at the next conference? What location would you prefer for the next conference?

Play Therapy Supervision Opportunity

I am offering group supervision to WAPT members. We will be meeting on the following dates at 136 North Nichols in Casper, Wyoming. Please contact me by email or by telephone (307-265-6420) to reserve a space (spaces are limited). I will send you a supervision packet to complete. Supervision is at no cost. Compensation will be for you to write a play therapy article for the WAPT communications – 1 article for every 10 hours of supervision. All articles will be sent to the WAPT Membership.

- Saturday, January 8th from 9AM to 5 PM
- Saturday, February 5th from 9 AM to 5 PM
- Saturday, March 5th from 9 AM to 5 PM
- Saturday, April 2nd from 9 AM to 5 PM

Attached are the handouts from the September WAPT Conference from my workshops on sandtray. At the end of the conference there was a confusion about who wanted JoEllen's handouts. Please contact me, if you are in need of her handouts. Thank you.

TOY TIP: During the winter months – take the same \$10.00/wk that you were using at garage sales during the summer months and go to estate sales for miniatures.

Thank you. Tonya L. Yelton, MA, LPC, RPT; WAPT President

I Cross My Fingers for Play Therapy in Malaysia

By: Ku Suhaila Ku Johari, University of Wyoming

Professional counseling in Malaysia is considered young and poised to transition into its pubescence. In 1982, the Malaysian Counseling Association, known as PERKAMA (Persatuan Kaunseling Malaysia) was established. Currently PERKAMA has more than 2000 members and regularly organizes counseling training workshops, conferences, and other professional developmental programs related to counselor professionalism. Consequently, play therapy in Malaysia is in the introductory stage. To my knowledge, only one private play therapy center exists, and it is not inclusive in educational syllabus. According to the Department of Statistics, Malaysia (2010) showed a population of 28.35 million of which 27.2 percent (7.7 million) is under the age of 15. According to a psychologist from a college in Malaysia, Dr. Brendan J. Gomez, 28% of children in Malaysia experience mental illnesses issues such as depression, violence, negligence, and attempted suicide. This statistic keeps increasing, and solutions need to be found to help these children thrive.

As far as I am concerned, there is a lack of psychological assistance and support for children and their families in Malaysia. My passion is to become an expert in play therapy and benefit my community in many ways. For the next few years, I hope to join others and lead efforts to establish a play therapy association in Malaysia, institute play therapy courses in undergraduate and graduate counseling programs, and train more play therapists in various

settings. As a counselor educator, my dream is to contribute as much energy as I can to the counseling profession in my home country. My desire and interest is to support all children. Children are the asset of our nation and our foundation for upcoming excellent generations.

APT 2010- A First-Timer's View

By Heather Sanford

Wow! So much information, education, discussion, books, and TOYS crammed into six days! My week in Louisville for the 2010 Association for Play Therapy was unforgettable—until, of course, I got to the airport and tried to remember what workshops I attended during the week and drew a complete blank! This was NOT, however, because the experiences were “less than memorable” but because my brain was FULL—full of amazing speakers, new information, tried and true approaches, new friends, and plans to infuse my practice with fun, wonderful strategies to help my young clients and their families. So FULL that I couldn't quite access the mass of it until I got home and back to my office. I'm thankful for the opportunity to write this newsletter article, because it provides me the “excuse” to take the time to review the information and training that I acquired in Kentucky.

As I indicated in the title, this was my first time at an APT conference. I felt like a rookie among “hall of famers” and I'll admit I was a bit “star-struck” by some of the speakers (I had to fight the urge to follow Eliana Gil around after she stopped in at the APT booth to check in).

Tuesday, I attended a full day workshop called “Creative Family Play Therapy Techniques” led by Liana Lowenstein and Trudy Post-Sprunk. It was a high energy, active workshop with many

“hands on” activities to help families grow through play. We split up into “families” (complete with roles like “achiever” “enabler” “controller” etc) to do many of the activities, and gained a deeper appreciation for the importance of involving the whole family in treatment, rather than just the “identified client”. This workshop reminded me of the importance of breaking through some of the barriers to family therapy when treating individual children, and encouraged me to “play” with different techniques to engage the family (especially resistant members).

On Wednesday, I was excited to hear Diane Frey speak on “Play Therapy Strategies for the Treatment of Anger Management”. She had us do several “hands on” activities to encourage healthy expression of emotion, as well as examining our own “self-talk” (try to set 10 pennies on their edges and pay close attention to what you say to yourself—it’s an interesting exercise in frustration and concentration).

Thursday, I had the opportunity to learn more about brain development in Rick Gaskill’s workshop, “Biologically Informed and Developmentally Appropriate Play Therapy”. Although the title seemed a bit “technical”, the information was presented in an understandable and “user-friendly” fashion. The importance of matching the play therapy model to each area and level of brain development was very helpful.

After learning about brain development all day, I wasn’t sure about attending a late afternoon session for another two hours (could my brain handle any more information?). Despite my hesitation, I thoroughly enjoyed the group presentation, “The Best & Worst: Learning from our Mistakes” by Liana Lowenstein, Janine Shelby, Scott Riviere, and Paris Goodyear-Brown. The

topics included: being prepared, choosing an appropriate treatment approach, boundaries, supervision, and countertransference issues. The four presenters were clearly enjoying themselves and presented their “worst” with a balance of humility and humor. Fortunately, they each offered some of their “best” by demonstrating a favorite technique or approach that we could use in our own setting. They ended the session with a lively song and procession, leading the audience to the APT reception in the exhibit hall.

After hearing Paris Goodyear-Brown speak the day before, I decided to switch into her Friday workshop, titled, “Flexibly Sequential Play Therapy (FBST): A New Model of Trauma Treatment” (the APT folks were very accommodating and didn’t even grumble when I changed my mind). I remember seeing her picture on flyers for the Summer Institute in Laramie a couple of years ago, but it seemed like she wasn’t able to present at that time. After seeing her presentation in Kentucky, I am very hopeful that she will be invited to speak in Wyoming again sometime. She was an excellent speaker and very “down to earth”.

Saturday morning, I attended “Essential Skills and Methodology of Child-Centered Play Therapy” by Garry Landreth and Phyllis Post. It was a wonderful review of basic play therapy, presented by “masters” of the child-centered approach. I was delighted to have the opportunity to sit in the same room with these people and absorb what was presented.

I flew out of Kentucky Saturday afternoon. I had extra time at the airport, and good intentions—I was going to sit down with my laptop while everything was “fresh in my mind” and write this newsletter article. Unfortunately, as I mentioned before, my mind went blank. Eventually,

things started to settle in and I've been able to process and apply some of what I learned at the conference. One thing is certain, the more you learn, the more you realize what you DON'T know. I want to encourage everybody to try to attend an APT conference at some point. It was expensive (I have a small private practice, so I had to pay for everything), but I trust that it will be well worth the cost!

If you are considering attendance at a future APT conference, here's a list of the dates and locations over the next few years:

2011 - Sheraton Hotel & City Convention Center, Sacramento, CA, Oct. 11-16

2012 - Renaissance Cleveland Hotel, Cleveland, OH, Oct. 9-14

2013 - Sheraton Bloomington Hotel, Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN, Oct. 8-13

2014 - Westin Galleria Hotel, Houston, TX, Oct. 7-12

For more information, please visit APT's website at www.a4pt.org.

SEPTEMBER 2010 WAPT CONFERENCE

Masking Tape Activity – Floor Games

