



Add Play To Your Work.... Winter 2009

New England Association for Play Therapy.



Starting Over ... Thoughts and Feelings About Starting a New Play Therapy Practice in a New Place.

by: Barbara van Hoff

Last year my family moved from Connecticut to New Hampshire. The movers actually came the day after Christmas to pack us up ... but that's another story! We moved because my husband took a job at the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. After closing up two private practice offices in CT, I wasn't sure what I wanted to be doing in this next phase of life (I'm 53!). I decided that this was essentially a "do-over", a chance to change what I wanted to change, and do things differently.

First I looked into doctoral programs. I love to learn, and I thought this would be a good time to do some schooling before work got too busy. Since I was moving to NH, I looked at the PsyD program at Antioch New England, in Keene, NH. After a visit day, and some soul-searching, I decided this was not for me. It was basically a full-time commitment for at least 3 -4 years, they did not give any credit for the masters level classes already done, the licensing, the hours, the experience ... no, it was really a "do everything over" requirement – no thank you. Also, it was really impossible to work and do the program at the same time – I really love my work and was not willing to put that on hold for so long either. So that was out.

Next, I looked into working for an agency. I really only wanted to work part-time ... we now live in this beautiful place where I want people to come and visit! It's like vacation land here! So I want to be able to have company and enjoy them! I called an agency that works with families, explained that I had moved into the state, was licensed in NH (another story!), and was a registered play therapist. They responded that they only had an opening for an addictions counselor – no thank you. They had a "full-time child counselor needed" listed on their web-site, what about that? The person in Human Relations that I was talking to said they were not hiring for that position now because they did not have enough hours. Didn't I say I only wanted a part-time job? OK, I'm not working anywhere that the HR person cannot figure out things like that.... One of the things that I learned in this process is that I can have pretty strong opinions about the way things should be done. My family, and also probably my friends, I'm sure would already know this about me ... but it was a pretty visceral experience in this job search!

After a few other calls (one to the psych floor at a hospital where I had been told they were looking for a therapist who works with children ... worse than the agency!), I decided that I really want to be my own boss (surprise!). The next step was starting to look for office space.

There was some space available in the small town where we live. It was close to the highway, easy to get to ... but look at the community. It isn't a retirement community, but when we go to neighborhood meetings and find we are about the youngest ones there ... well, you get the picture! I decided I needed to be close to both the medical center, and to the college (Dartmouth). Much more going on in the Hanover-Lebanon area, so that was where I would look. I found a great space, close to the highway, a nice building, my own entrance ... but way more space than I was thinking ... about 800 square feet! But they would build it out to what you want! I was thinking, an extra therapy room for someone to come and share space with ... a conference room for teaching classes. Did I mention I love to teach too! Not only way more space, also way more rent! My husband nixed that idea. By this time it was fall, and other than some workshops I had taught in CT, I had actually not been working for about 9 months, and now I really missed it! In the summer when I was busy planting flowers and making our house a home, I was ok with not working. By October I needed to find a place of my own! And, after making a pest of myself with a commercial realtor (hard to believe I'm sure!), I finally found my office in November! It is first floor, a nice office building, and on the Hanover-West Lebanon line, and (best of all!), floor to ceiling bookshelves along one entire wall for miniatures and books! Wow!

I signed a lease for starting in December. Hurray! First to be unpacked were the miniatures, then the books. Then I rented a U-Haul and went back to CT to get office chairs and stop at Ikea and buy a desk!

It is now almost exactly a year since we moved to NH. What I found with my "do-over" is that I really liked what I had in CT! I love to do therapy, and I love to teach! I love the freedom to do it on my own time. I brought the brochure from our New Hope Center in Guilford, CT, and had one made in NH with my new practice being called New Hope North! The incorporation into an LLC was easy, the attorney didn't even charge me (that I'm sure would only happen in NH!), just sent me the forms I needed. I still need to do business cards, forms, etc. I'm setting January aside to do some marketing – I'll let you know how that goes maybe in another newsletter.

Happy New Year, to you all:

Whatever your political orientation, I hope that you are feeling hopeful this week. Whether it is out of a respect for the historical significance, or an awe for the leader and process that chose him, it is my hope this winter that we can work together to answer his call for CHANGE.

We are the facilitators of so much positive change in families and communities around us. Daily, we help this change to be helpful and healing and hopefully to be productive. I believe we can use those same reflection and facilitation skills to help our communities; and hopefully our world to heal.

This is a time for big steps and big ideas. It is also a time to be consistent with our clients and with ourselves. The stress of the daily media invasion tells us we should be worried all the time, it takes hard and conscious work to stay calm and centered during this time of fear. I hope that you will take the time to be playful for yourselves and your loved ones, as well as to promote play in your community.

Personally, I haven't felt so hopeful and at peace in a long time.

It was wonderful to see many of you at the conference in Boston. Helen Benedict, PhD, RPT-S delivered a template of themes that I am finding very useful in my work with clients, parents and students. We are already at work planning the conference for Fall 2009. Watch your inboxes, as the date and details will be announced very soon.

I wish you a safe and playful winter!!!!

Sarah O'Brien, President, NE-APT

ASSOC



New England

NE-APT Training Guide: Upcoming Training Announcements:

The following workshops (unless otherwise listed) are offered by or in conjunction with the New England Association for Play Therapy. NE-APT is APT Provider #02-123.

January 30th, Doing Child Centered Play Therapy with Sarah O'Brien, LICSW, RPT-S. Rhode Island College School of Social Work, Providence, RI. 6 hrs. \$90. Register at: <http://www.ric.edu/socialWork/pdf/Spring09CESW.pdf>

February 27th Ethical Play Therapy Communication and Documentation With Kay E. Edwards, MEd, LCMHC, RPT-S. Amica Office Park, Lincoln, RI. 3 hrs. \$50. Register here. Co-sponsored by Adoption RI. Get your ethics ceu's. RI renewal is due April 1st, 2009. www.newenglandplaytherapy.org.

Objectives:

1. To become aware of some common ethical dilemmas in play therapy
2. To become familiar with at least two documentation styles
3. To become familiar with communication approaches that do not compromise confidentiality.

March 20-21st, 2009 Sandtray Worldplay with Gisela De Domenico PhD.

Day 1 – Exploring the Interface of Dynamic Expressive Play Therapy and various Sandtray-Worldplay methods. Presentation, experiential exploration and discussion of various therapy sessions. Experiential use of sandplay by workshop participants.

Day 2 Morning – Exploring multiple levels of meaning communicated in the sandtray. History, theory and training in the method. Application of the method. Demonstration and practice sessions.

Day 2 Afternoon – An advanced Sandtray-Worldplay experiential exercise for a small group of experienced therapists. Up to CEU 11.5 hours.

Objectives:

To introduce the theory and process of Dynamic Expressive Play Therapy and demonstrate the interface of Sandtray-Worldplay™ Therapy and Dynamic Expressive Play Therapy.

To explore ways of understanding the inherent meaning of a sandtray.

To provide an opportunity for participants to experience Sandtray-Worldplay.™

Contact: btosti@town.arlington.ma.us.

July 27 - 31, 2009 (Monday-Friday, 9:30-12:45, 15 CE hours) Skill-Building for Children with ADHD: A Play Therapy Approach Daniel Yeager, LCSW, RPT-S. Info and registration at www.playtherapyworks.com, APT# 00-098.

August 3 - 7, 2009 (Monday-Friday, 9:30-12:45, 15 CE hours) Sand Therapy Theory and Application: Integrating Sand Therapy and Play Therapy Eliana Gil, Ph.D., RPT-S. Info and registration at www.playtherapyworks.com, APT# 00-098.

Remember, regardless of whom the presenter is, if the workshop announcements do not state APT approval with a provider number, APT will not approve it for RPT/RPT-S application or renewal. If you are not a member, please join to receive the member discounts plus many more benefits outlined on

www.a4pt.org Check for updated announcements on www.NewEnglandPlayTherapy.org