

# **Family Matters: Incorporating Family Systems in Play Therapy**

MPTI 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Boot Camp: Virtual  
Thursday, August 5, 2021 9am-4:30pm  
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Although individuals are shaped by unique experiences, families represent some of the most significant influences in one's life. In fact, family can serve as a fundamental source of support, as well as, a source of significant stress. Just as Virginia Satir recognized the importance of the family structure on the well-being of a child, Family Play Therapy understands the importance relationship as a curative power. Historically, family therapy has not included children in the therapeutic process and has missed an opportunity to include a key member (Daley, Miller, Bean & Oka, 2018). Through Family Play Therapy, the child is an integral part and must be identified as such within the family context. The use of play, as a medium, can identify and address problems, pitfalls and challenges in a familiar, non-threatening, pleasurable way (Gil, 1994). This training will explore the impact of family systems' functionality within the child's world. Furthermore, it addresses the experiences of the child as a family unit and provides therapeutic strategies to utilize in family treatment. Specifically, this curriculum will highlight common challenges that therapists may encounter when working with families who are plagued with stressors and impact on their functioning.

## **Objectives:**

At the completion of this training participants will have an:

- Increased knowledge of history of family therapy and inclusion of play.
- Understanding of children and adults functioning within the family system
- Identify how social stressors such as addiction, mental illness and trauma can impact familial health
- Identify how to assess and implement the role of play within the family system
- Learn play therapy strategies to assist family systems in reaching for healing and growth
- Understand role of play with specific familial pitfalls and challenges

## Timeline

9:00-10:30 Introduction; History of family therapy/ play therapy

10:30-10:45 Break

- 10:45-12:15 Family systems roles and functioning; Social stressors impact on families
- 12:15- 1:15 Lunch
- 1:15-2:45 Family assessment. Treatment planning and development of play strategies
- 2:45-3:00 Break
- 3:00- 4:30 Play strategies for families and challenging situations

Daley, Miller, Bean & Oka (2018) Family system play therapy: An integrative approach. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 46:5, 421-436, DOI: [10.1080/01926187.2019.1570386](https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2019.1570386)

Gil, E. (1994). *Play in family therapy*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Satir, Virginia (1973). *The Peoplemaking*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books.

*6 CEs will be awarded to those individuals who are present for the entire presentation, complete, and return an evaluation form. APT Approved Provider #15-422*



Julie Oates is a Professional Clinical Counselor-Supervisor (LPCC-S) and a Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor (RPT-S) with specialized training in counseling children, adolescents, and families impacted by trauma. Ms. Oates currently serves as an outpatient therapist with Adena Counseling in Chillicothe, Ohio. In addition to her clinical duties, Ms. Oates is a trained forensic interviewer and former Executive Director of a nationally accredited child advocacy center. Ms. Oates earned her master's degree in clinical counseling from Ohio University and is currently completing doctoral studies in Counselor Education and Supervision. With over twenty years of clinical experience, Ms. Oates has dedicated much of her career to working with children and families who have been impacted by trauma.

In addition to her clinical practice, Ms. Oates serves as an independent trainer and consultant. She has provided training and consultation services to various schools, social service agencies, court systems, and foster care agencies. Similarly, Ms. Oates often serves as an expert witness specific to cases that encompass child sexual abuse and has offered testimony in court systems throughout the state of Ohio. Ms. Oates is a frequent presenter at professional conferences and is recognized as an innovative, an exciting presenter on a local, state, national, and international level.