



IL-APT • On The Go



A conversation with Dr. Terry Kottman

Elizabeth A. Gassin, Ph.D., LPC

On February 28 and March 1, Dr. Terry Kottman will be presenting at the annual conference of the Illinois Association for Play Therapy (IL-APT). Those who have heard Terry speak know what a dynamic presenter she is, and given her strong Adlerian roots, she brings a unique and important perspective to play therapy. *On the Go* set out to learn more about Terry.

Before studying counseling, Terry attended Grinnell College, where she received degrees in American Studies and English, and Colorado College, where she got a master's in Elementary Teaching. Through her experience in education, she fell in love with children in special education and pursued yet another master's degree to work with this population. She describes how this experience led her to her doctoral studies in counseling:

"I taught behavioral disordered and emotionally disturbed kids in inner city Dallas and was frustrated because there weren't any counseling

services that my kids could access. At that point, they didn't have elementary school counselors... we had a school psychologist who would tell me to do behavior modification, and my master's program taught me to do behavioral modification.... I was really frustrated because that didn't seem particularly helpful to my kids in the long term. It kept them in my room and...from stabbing one another and things like that, but it didn't really help with the real problems. And so I started shopping for a Ph.D. program..."

After experimenting with classes in a variety of subject areas, Terry settled in counselor education at the University of North Texas. Although initially leaning towards existential models of therapy, Terry ultimately found her professional niche in the Adlerian approach:

"When I was in doctoral practicum...I wound up with a play therapy client and tried to do child centered [play therapy] with the kid... and in the

process of doing that got some feedback from the kid that it wasn't working very well for her. And it wasn't working very well for me either, although I was getting lots of praise that I was doing it correctly.... I decided to figure out a different way to work with her that...was congruent with my personality and what I believe about people. That wound up becoming Adlerian play therapy. I really didn't set out to invent Adlerian play therapy, it just kind of happened."

Terry served on faculty at the University of Northern Iowa but left that position to open The Encouragement Zone in Cedar Falls, IA. She offers a variety of opportunities through this organization:

"I do play therapy training, lots of different classes. And if somebody wants a class and I can teach it, that's how classes get added... Or I get excited about something. I'm going to teach a class in 2013 on integrating dance and body movement into play

therapy... I do women's playshops and retreats... and I have a private practice in which I see adolescents and adults. I went back to school...and became a life coach, so I do that some. I do play therapy supervision and sometimes I do licensure supervision..."

Terry also provides play therapy as a volunteer in a local elementary school. She sees kids there individually and does social skills groups. Most of the children she works with there are in kindergarten or first grade. Some may be surprised by this, as some thinkers consider Adlerian play therapy to be developmentally inappropriate with younger children, given its strong cognitive component. Terry notes:

"People always wonder, can you do Adlerian play therapy with younger kids? That's a theme... I find it totally not the case [that one has to wait until children are in middle school before using an Adlerian approach].... I don't usually work with 2 and 3

Cont'd on back page

- Stagnitti et al. (2012) report a quasi-experiment that suggested participation in a pretend play program may improve language and social skills in young children with autism and other developmental disorders (see Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 59(4), 302-311)
- The American Psychological Association recently published a new book by Linda A. Reddy, titled *Group Play Therapy Interventions for Children: Strategies for Teaching Prosocial Skills*.
- Dr. David Crenshaw's website, childtherapytechniques.com, has many resources and ideas for those doing play therapy. Be sure to scroll down and look at all the techniques and activities he lists on the lower left side of his homepage!

President's Corner

Here's to 2013! May this year be a playful year for you and your family.

As play therapists we have an important role in the futures of children, whether it be helping children and their families learn to tolerate differences in others, or healing children and their families from the effects of intolerance, or healing from community disasters. Part of this healing process is to bring playfulness back into the lives of the children we serve. Play therapists are VERY important to children's futures. Thank you for your dedication.

Another way you can promote the value of Play Therapy is to become active in the Illinois Association for Play Therapy. Your contribution can be given through various means: Partici-

pating in surveys, voting for board members, suggesting conference presenters, giving articles for our newsletters, attending board meetings, participating in our annual state conference, mentoring another play therapist, providing PR in your community, and/or volunteering to be on the board. Without you IL-APT cannot exist.

This is the year when all of the officer positions come up for elections. Many of the officers will not be returning to their positions due to other commitments. The board NEEDS YOU to volunteer a few hours a month to maintain our commitment to the promotion of Play Therapy as a professional practice. Please take a few moments to contact me at

mawentling@hotmail.com and let me know how you think you could help IL-APT.

See you all at our annual conference on February 28th and March 1st!

Playfully -

M.A. (Mary Alice)
Wentling,
IL-APT President

And congrats to...

Charles Myers, IL-APT Treasurer, has accepted the position of clinical editor of the Association for Play Therapy Magazine. He will be juggling this position with his Assistant Professor position at Northern Illinois University.

Elizabeth (Lisa) Gassin, IL-APT Newsletter Chair, has accepted the task of reviewing research articles for the International Journal of Play Therapy. She also is a Professor at Olivet Nazarene University.

IL-APT congratulates both Charlie and Lisa on their success and dedication to Play therapy.

Don't Miss The Annual IL-APT Conference!

We invite mental health professionals working with children and families for a two-day training event featuring:

TERRY KOTTMAN, PhD, LMHC, NCC
Registered Play Therapist – Supervisor

*Day one: We Are Having Fun NOW: Using Active Games
and Challenge Activities in Play Therapy*

*Day two: Playful and Creative Techniques for Working with Preteens
and Teens*

February 28 & March 1, 2013, at the Holiday Inn in Bolingbrook, IL

Registration Deadline: To ensure your place in the trainings and to help us accommodate you, please register **no later than January 25, 2013. After January 25, a late fee applies.**

For a brochure, contact:

Erin Brumfield Grima at ecbrumfield@yahoo.com

Digging for Treasure

Did you know that in addition to publishing *Play Therapy* and the *International Journal of Play Therapy*, APT also makes mining reports available on its website? Mining reports are compiled by scholars in the field to review new topics and cutting-edge trends in the field. You may have seen blurbs about these reports in the email you receive from

APT, but you can also access back editions from the website. Go to the Programs & Publications section at a4pt.org for more information.



APT members:

Please complete the 2013 Survey for our national organization by Jan. 25, at www.surveymonkey.com/s/APT2013BigSurvey

It takes a few minutes to do & will help give our national organization direction. You might find some APT discounts along the way!

YT and PT

YouTube channels with videos that may appeal to play therapists:

Association For Play Therapy
(www.youtube.com/user/Assn4PlayTherapy)

Routledge Mental Health
(www.youtube.com/user/routledgetherapy)

Pam Dyson Play Therapy
(www.youtube.com/user/PamDysonPlayTherapy)

Play Therapy International
(www.youtube.com/user/PLAYTHERAPYTV)

AmyWickstrom1
(www.youtube.com/user/amywickstrom1)

Please note that mention of these sites does not endorse all of their content but is provided for informational purposes only. Therapists are responsible for using clinical, ethical, and legal judgment in applying such information to their own cases.

Terry Kottman, cont'd (from p. 1)

year olds, but with younger elementary kids and even 4 year olds...I believe Adlerian can work fine..."

At IL-APT, Terry will be leading workshops on Adventure Therapy and on Working with Pre-Teens and Teens. She had this to say about these compelling topics:

"I have written two books with my friends, Jeff Ashby and Don DeGraaf, on adventure games... You can play them with groups, you can play some of them with individuals, and you can play them with families. They're structured in a four-part process, which is kind of similar to the four-part process of Adlerian play therapy... There are ice-breakers...activities you can play just getting to know people, which have low psychological risk... Then you move into de-inhibitizers, which are more wild and fun games to get people to let go of some of their rules and be willing to step into acting silly... Those [have] a little bit more psychological risk, because we're asking you to step out of your comfort zone just a small amount. The third ones are trust activities; those ask people to step out of their comfort zone a little bit more, to trust one another, to trust themselves. And then the last ones are challenge and initiative games. Those are games that are designed to be problem-solving kinds of things that require some thinking outside the box and working together as a team... That class is a very, very, very, very experiential class!"

"[The] workshop on doing play therapy with pre-adolescents and adolescents... will be more Adlerian-based in terms of it being a whole bunch of techniques on top of the basic concepts of how you understand and conceptualize a child... We'll have activities to build the relationship, activities to explore the child's lifestyle, activities to help the child gain insight, and then we have activities to do re-orientation and re-education. And [this] workshop has some stuff on how to do consultation with parents of pre-teens and teens."

Terry and *On the Go* ended our interview exploring the lessons she's learned as a play therapist. She shared some of her wisdom with us:

"I used to think I would understand what everything the kid was doing meant. And more and more, I realized in many cases I have no clue. When I was young, I thought I needed to know what everything meant, or I couldn't be effective. And that actually turned out not to be so true... The other thing is that I used to care more whether the kid got angry with me, so I used to worry if I set limits that the kid didn't like or, in parent consultation, if I had some difficult things to say to parents... It really turns out that once I've established a relationship, I can say the difficult things, and the relationship will not only not be damaged but in some ways actually be strengthened, as long as I can say those things in a way that doesn't have any blame or judgment."

On the Go thanks Terry for her time. We look forward to her visit to Illinois!

Visit Terry Kottman's site at www.encouragementzone.com

Have feedback, questions, and/or ideas about IL-APT's *On the Go* newsletter? Wish to contribute an article or other content to future additions? Contact the newsletter coordinator, Lisa Gassin, at lgassin@olivet.edu.