



THE HAWAII PLAY TIMES

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE HAWAII ASSOCIATION FOR PLAY THERAPY

August 2004

A MESSAGE from the BOARD

Dear Members,

Aloha ! Elections are coming up in September, and soon our tenure as your agents on the Board will come to an end. This has been a challenging and satisfying year for all of us. As with many Boards before us, we struggled to do what we had to do to keep HAPT running smoothly. Then we threw in that extra effort, to add to the efforts of all those who came before, to make HAPT a stronger, more responsive organization for all members.

Of course, as a Board, we couldn't have functioned without the efforts of many people. Thanks to Sue Bergman and Monica Evans and their committee members who put on such a successful annual Conference. Heidi's training was first-class, surely remembered with a chuckle by many who attended.

Mahalo also to our program chairs, Nami Anne Dolan and Blyth Poai Kozuki. They were responsible for our two great free-for-members workshops. They're the ones who made sure that the workshops ran smoothly, that the presenters had everything they needed, that there was enough good food and drink for everyone, etc. What a job ! Imagine shopping for, preparing, carrying in to the site, enough food for 50 to 75 people, and then cleaning up afterwards, carrying out the leftovers, etc. We are truly impressed. And appreciative.

There are so many others to thank—all the people who helped on these committees. All the people who contributed to the newsletter. All the people who mentored us, shared the benefit of their experiences, stepped in whenever asked. Too many to mention by name, but you know who you are. Give yourselves a pat on the back from all of us.

Remember to vote in the upcoming elections, and give your wholehearted support to the new Board as you did to us.

Mahalo, and see you in October at the next membership meeting and training.

Fall HAPT Membership Meeting and Training

On Sat., Oct. 2nd, *Anita Trubitt, CSW, RPT-S*, will be presenting on "Play Therapy Goes to Court: Implications and Applications in Child Custody Evaluations." This workshop is an introduction to a protocol for conducting a child custody evaluation. It will focus on the specific play therapy techniques that are an integral part of the evaluation. Participants will be introduced to the scope of conducting a custody evaluation that reflects current family court standards; learn how, when and where to incorporate the play therapy techniques; and learn how to organize the custody evaluation report into a concise format, and how to present the play therapy techniques that have been used to draw conclusions and recommendations.

Anita Trubitt is one of our charter HAPT members and past president. She is a respected play therapist supervisor, and has presented at APT, PTI, and AFCC national and regional conferences since 1964. She has been developing the protocol for conducting child custody evaluations in her private practice since 1987.

The workshop will be held at Makiki Christian Church, 829 Pensacola St. (Take the elevator to the second floor to the upper social hall.) The time is 12:30 to 4:30. Free parking is available at the church parking lot on Rycroft St.

This workshop is free to HAPT members. Registration deadline is 9/22/04. Three CE credits will be awarded to participants who attend at least 80% of the workshop. If you would like to join HAPT or renew your membership, application forms will be available on-site, or can be downloaded from the HAPT website, www.hawaiiplaytherapy.net.

For more information, contact us at 440-4624, or e-mail Nami-Anne Dolan at DOLANL001@hawaii.rr.com.

SPRING MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND TRAINING

Assessing and Treating Attachment Issues in Play Therapy With Dr. Barbara Rutter

By Sue Bergman

Dr. Barbara Rutter attests that healthy attachment equals trust. Trust equates to "I'm happy and secure." Dr. Rutter gave a straight forward presentation regarding assessing and treating attachment issues of children who visit our playrooms. Her talk included an overview of attachment and trust theory; the initial parent interview format; the nest drawing technique; therapists' interaction with children with attachment issues; the use of baby dolls; and the role of a parent. Many of the key points presented here were "lifted" from Dr. Rutter's excellent handouts.

Overview of Attachment and Trust Theory (key points covered in presentation and handouts)

During the first year, infants are totally dependent on their caretakers for survival.. When needs are not met, the tension expressed grows to a level of rage, because the sense of survival is being threatened. When emotional and physical needs are met, the tension is relieved. In normal attachment, the infant develops Basic Trust: "I matter," "I can count on you," "The world is O.K."

During the second year, the child is able to interact with and manipulate his/her environment to meet her/his needs. The child's actions require limit setting by care takers for safety and to meet social expectations. Children learn through good parenting, to make choices within reasonable limits and develop a "win-win" view of human relationships. The associated tension-relieving stimuli of eye contact, a smile, touch, or being held, allow the child to relax within the control of their parents. Children develop trust in control: "I have reasonable power," "Care takers act for my good."

Facts about Attachment and Infant Growth and Development:

- Attachment is primarily instinctual.
- Babies need 7–12 inches between mother and baby, face to face.
- Babies prefer the human face.
- At ten days they turn toward mother's/father's voice and can distinguish mother's smell.
- Eight week old infants begin to respond to a smile and mother's body movements.
- Change of care takers makes a difference to infants 10 days of age.
- By five months babies are able to distinguish and grieve when there are multiple care takers.
- Children with good attachment have better impulse control, better self-esteem and are friendlier.
- Soft carriers help babies to feel more secure and form better relationships than plastic carriers.
- When there is a healthy attachment, children can handle reprimands.
- Without attachment strength, children react negatively to discipline due to insecurities.

The Interview

Dr. Rutter feels it is important to go back to the birth mother's childhood history to understand the child's patterns, because attachment starts with a mother's mindset. Other topics covered in the interview include: psychological and physical aspects and stressors of the pregnancy; labor and delivery history of the birth mother; the birth experience; any separation experiences the child may have had; and any medical/emotional problems or resource scarcity that may have occurred.

Healthy Attachment (key points covered in presentation and handout)

According to Dr. Rutter, if there are several moves between care-takers, children have attachment issues. We know this is often the case for children in foster care. Four major observable patterns of behavior in school and therapy settings were described by Dr. Rutter, that she feels are important for pre-school to kindergarten children with healthy attachment:

- 1) **Eye contact** when meeting a new adult and visual following the adult's movement.
- 2) **Proximity** (i.e. plays near an adult, is physically relaxed when close to an adult).
- 3) **Seeks adult appropriately as a resource for basic needs** (i.e. safety, food, etc.)
- 4) **Developmentally appropriate interactions with adults.**

The Nest Drawing and Story

When using nest drawings as a diagnostic tool, it is important to have some nest representations in the playroom. The therapist needs to be sure the child knows what a nest looks like and how it is used. Dr. Rutter advises to wait until at least the third or fourth session before using this technique. Colored pencils seem to work best. The therapist instructs the child to draw a nest and tells him/her that after the drawing is finished, the therapist would like her/him tell a story about the nest. The therapist observes the child while drawing, allowing the child to take his/her time. Upon completion, the therapist asks the child to tell a story about the nest and writes it as the child relates it. The drawing and story give an idea of the child's perception of his/her relationship with his/her family.

I tried the nest technique with some students with whom I had well-established relationships. I followed the instructions noted above. The students' pictures carried an overall theme of either a mother bird being with the eggs or baby birds with or without food present, or of the mother/parents off finding food when the babies emerged from their eggs. Most of the children I see are from single mother families or are left alone or with a caretaker who may or may not be physically present while mother or parents are at work. I found the similarity of the nest life and the children's home life intriguing to say the least. The stories the children told were equally interesting in metaphor, of their perception of family and/or life. Even my children, with limited English, were able to understand and tell me about their nest.

Therapist Interaction with a Child with Attachment Issues (from presentation and handout).

When children with attachment issues come to a playroom, a goal is to help them form a bond with their parent(s), not with you, the therapist. The experience between child and therapist needs to be one that will help him/her feel safe and accepted by the adult in charge, and to know that everyone is working together on her/his behalf.

When working with children with attachment issues:

- 1) *Provide a safe and protected therapy space*, comfortable space, no interruptions.
- 2) *Accept the child for simply "being"*: lots of empathy; active listening; "noticing" rather than evaluative statements; avoid global positives, be careful about demands for products, goal lists, or behavior charts.
- 3) *Be an empathic caretaker*: Notice what the child needs and offer help. Assist in picking up toys, cuddle up for and select comforting stories, have a rocking chair for you and the child or a child size rocking chair. (Gum chewing quiets the right hemisphere of the brain so allows for a thinking state.)
- 4) *Be consistent and predictable, establish clear boundaries*: appointment day and time; how you start and end sessions; keep to rules within the session, turn taking between siblings.
- 5) *Establish yourself as a strong powerful adult*: Set up a strong container and be very directive. (This is key with a child suffering from RAD.) Pay attention to body language; a child does not sit in your chair or take over your materials; you direct the session; a child chooses limits you offer; don't allow manipulation to extend the session; be watchful to prevent stealing or destruction.
- 6) *Teach the child to be respectful* (includes modeling for parent and adoptive parents also): a child needs to give you good eye contact when you speak, come when called, answer you respectfully (not informally, inaudibly or by mumbling), hear what you say the first time. Don't allow interrupting. Make a list with the child of what it means at home and school for him/her to be respectful. Give direct directions ("I want you to ____;" when given a direction, a child should not answer with "Why?") No gifts of food should be given to children. They need to receive these from the mother or parent.
- 7) *Let the child know you are "on her/his team" with his/her parents and teachers*: Meet alone with a parent for an initial session to get history and align with them: inform the child of this meeting. Meet with parents and child together if the child lies or manipulates.

Use of Baby Dolls in Play Therapy (key points covered in presentation and handout)

Baby dolls give more reality to play. Dr. Rutter's contention is that baby dolls need to be displayed with great care and well cared for like a baby would be cared for in a loving way.

A Baby Doll is not a Truck. A doll represents the child, so it needs to have its own name and be introduced to a child. It is best to have lots of props available that consist of "real baby things." (Feeding: real bottles, baby food jars, dishes, spoons; Toileting: diapers, wipes, potty chair, powder; Bedtime linens, crib; Medical: real stethoscope, Q-tips, band aids, wraps, medicines, shots; Clothing: girl and boy, night, dress-up.) Barbara states that if things are well organized, children will keep them in order.

There are many ways of using Baby Dolls. It is important for the therapist to stay in the role with Baby Dolls so the child can see modeling/corrective parenting. Baby Dolls give a child a way to express their understanding and feelings about babies and family relationships. Dolls allow children to re-create real life events, especially trauma, and to ask for nurturance for themselves. Dr. Rutter suggests using anatomically correct boy and girl dolls. The dolls are a natural way to elicit sexual and gender issues, provide education, and demonstrate your own comfort with the topic. Most important is to teach for the future by **modeling nurturing parental care**. Interactive dolls that require empathic responding are a great asset for teaching and practicing nurturing parental care because the child needs to respond to the baby's signals. Dr. Rutter purchased her Baby Annabell, Zapf Doll, (19 inch interactive doll, around \$40.) from Amazon.com. She stated that K-Mart carried them for awhile.

Tips for Play with Dolls:

- Always stay "in role" – don't switch back and forth between real and toy
- You can be a grandparent when a child is playing mom or dad
- Encourage boys to nurture, to learn how to "be a good dad"
- If a child is mistreating a doll, provide empathy for the doll, interrupt serious mistreatment – Explain why the baby is acting the way it is, if you know the history, provide empathy for the child directly
- Enlist the doll's help in moving a child to activities you want him/her to do
- Use dolls to help get a child to rock, snuggle with a blanket for a story etc.
- Play Separation/Attachment baby games with a doll and a child, i.e. peek-a-boo, hide baby, rock-a-bye-baby, hide and seek (a handout list with activity descriptions was provided)
- If a child can't take care of the doll, put it away (in foster care) until the child can take proper care of the baby.

Role of Parent

Parents also require assistance with appropriate modeling of parenting skills. The therapist needs to serve as a parenting coach. Parents are generally exhausted and overwhelmed. Meet with parents regularly, collect information tactfully, and listen to parents' concerns. Teach parents to be aware of self-care, to take a break or rest. Avoid triangulation, check on needs, teach how to live with children, teach love and logic. Most important, support parents, model for parents and believe parents.

I had heard of Barbara Rutter and her work with children with attachment issues for well over a decade. I appreciated her down to basics, informative and practical presentation of what is real when working with young children who have not experienced appropriate parenting or a safe home environment. Most of us have these children coming to our playrooms. We are fortunate to have people like Barbara within our reach to use as resources and impart what they have learned through their wealth of experience. Thank you Barbara for the wonderful work you do and your dedication to our island children.

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2005. . . . . .

Conference co-chairs *Nami Anne Dolan* and *Corrine Matsumoto* are busy as bees these days preparing for the 2005 annual conference, Feb. 25 & 26<sup>th</sup>, at the Radisson Waikiki Prince Kuhio Hotel. You're in for a treat from our nationally known presenter, **Eliana Gil**, Ph.D. Mark your calendars NOW !

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Let It Be Known That.

Members are welcome to put text ads in the HAPT newsletter. E-mail member-at-large@hawaiiplaytherapy.net.

RPT and RPT-S members with web sites are welcome to link from the HAPT website to their own personal websites. For information, contact Scott O'Neal at webhead@hawaiiplaytherapy.net

GRANTWRITER NEEDED:

HAPT is looking for a kind person with knowledge of grant writing, who would be willing to volunteer a few hours a month to help write grants to support setting up a HAPT office/ therapist training center. If interested, please contact Inga Park-Okuna at ingapark@aol.com.

MEMBER NEWS

Anita Trubitt will have a poster presentation at the national APT conference in October in Colorado. Her presentation is titled "Play Therapy Goes to Court: Implications and Applications in Child Custody Evaluations."

Carla Sharp will be presenting two workshops at the APT conference. Her workshops are titled "Reattachment Play Therapy: Using Play with the Adopted Child/Parent Dyad", and "Use of Play in Family Assessment: The Build-a-House Technique".

PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

Ongoing training in Play Therapy with Carla Sharp, CS, APRN, RPT-S. For start dates and course content for all of Carla's classes in Play Therapy and Sand Play Therapy, please visit her website at <http://www.carlsharp.com>. Beginning Play Therapy will begin Sat., Sept. 25, 2004. This course will be posted on the web site by mid August. For further information, email Carla at carlsharp@hawaii.rr.com

Hawaii Counseling Association workshop on "Counseling Licensure: The Next Steps to Maintain Your Ability to Practice". Friday, Sept. 3rd, 8:00 to 10:30 am. Wisteria Restaurant, 1206 S. King St. For more information, call Diane Sakumoto at 586-8705.

Dyslexia Screening Center of Hawaii presents "Dyslexia in Depth", a two day workshop on Sept. 16 & 17 at the Pagoda Hotel. Early registration is \$150.00, or \$175.00 on site. Contact Frances Shimotsu at 533-6649 or by email – shimotsua001@hawaii.rr.com.

Free to Good Home:

Past issues of Psychotherapy Networker. Call Pat at 839-4981, or email patriciakayeyuen@aol.com.

Newsletter Contributions Welcomed:

As always, we welcome contributions to the newsletter: letters to the editor; articles; tips or techniques that you have found helpful; announcements; resources; toys wanted or for sale, etc., etc. Please contact member-at-large@hawaiiplaytherapy.net

A Reminder:

If you received this edition of the newsletter by regular mail and prefer to receive it by e-mail, send your name and e-mail address to member-at-large@hawaiiplaytherapy.net. To ensure that you receive all HAPT news in a timely manner, please inform us of any name or address changes. THANKS!!

*“Childhood is life’s first gift. Whatever your age, acknowledge your child within.
Let your child within run free. A child kept from play
Is an abused child”.*

Michael Joseph

Contacting HAPT

Visit the HAPT Website: www.hawaiiplaytherapy.net, call our voice mail at 440-4624, write to P.O. Box 1428, Kailua, Hawaii 96734; or email members of the HAPT Board of Directors.

HAPT 2003-2004 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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