

**Family Service Society Professional Training Institute
2010 Workshop Series**

**IS IT IN YOU?
Using Playfulness to Heal & Strengthen
Children Impacted by Trauma**

Presenter: Steven Gross, MSW
Thursday, April 15, 2010
Radisson Hotel - Corning, New York

This high energy workshop will explore playfulness as a basic, adaptive human trait and how it can be utilized to foster healthy social and emotional development of children whose lives have been deeply impacted by acute and/or chronic trauma and other types of overwhelming life challenges. While the philosophy of playfulness can be applied to all youth, special focus will be given to pre-schoolers and school age children between the ages of 3 and 12. More specifically, the workshop will look at practical strategies to help survivors of early childhood trauma (as well as all children) engage in developmentally appropriate play activities that enhance feelings of joy, social connection, active engagement and safety. Additionally, we will discuss how to use activities and games to repair dysfunctional family relationships.

The workshop will also invite participants to take a thoughtful look at their own play histories and current play experiences to determine how these factors impact their work with children and develop strategies to enhance the playfulness and effectiveness of their interventions.

Workshop participants will: Explore the prevalence of early childhood trauma and its physical, social, emotional and psychological impact; Define and explore the trait of playfulness from a psychosocial perspective; Analyze how intentional, evidence-based play programming can be used as an "antidote" to experiences of psychological trauma in children; Develop tools (i.e., activities and games) that can be used to promote healthy social and emotional development; Participate in reflective experiential activities designed to nurture playfulness and inspire participants to "be the change" that they aspire to create in their clients.



Steven Gross, MSW, is the Founder and Executive Director of Project Joy, an organization that uses play to strengthen and heal children whose lives have been deeply impacted by trauma. He is a pioneer in utilizing exuberant, joyful play to promote resiliency in children and a leader in the field of psychological trauma response. He has consulted and trained nationally and internationally at schools, human service agencies, and universities. He is a dynamic, passionate and motivational speaker