

Touching Small Lives: Attachment Disorder, Bonding & Play Therapy

Presenter: Helen Benedict, Ph.D., RPT-S

Date: Friday, June 6, 2008

Time: 9:00am - 4:00pm

Location: Radisson Hotel - Corning, NY



This workshop presents current understandings of Attachment Disorders, including Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) and other attachment problems. The focus will be on the three major aspects of using play therapy with attachment disordered children: 1. building a secure-base relationship between the therapist and child, 2. challenging the child's internal working model of attachment and 3. relationships. This approach is then individualized depending on the type of attachment problems presented by the child. The prevailing play themes and appropriate therapeutic techniques shown by such children will be described using case examples and video. In addition, approaches to the family-caregiver systems will be discussed.

Learning Objectives:

- ◆ Summarize the recent research on the development of attachment and attachment disorders and describe seven distinct presentations within the broad category of attachment disorders including those in DSM IV and extending beyond to include subtypes identified in recent research.
- ◆ Describe four key features of therapist's behavior in establishing a secure-base relationship and explain the importance of the child's internal working models for self, other, and relationships, and describe the distortions commonly seen in attachment disordered children.
- ◆ Describe the most commonly seen play themes of attachment disordered children, describe several responses by the therapist to specific themes that effectively challenge the child's working model and describe techniques used to make termination a key therapeutic experience.
- ◆ Describe several types of disordered attachment relationships commonly seen with attachment disordered children and the therapeutic needs of each situation.
- ◆ Describe the factors which must be considered when selecting the caregiver interventions.

Helen Benedict, Ph.D., RPT-S, is a Professor of Psychology, Director of Clinical Training, and Director of the Thematic Play Therapy Research program at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Dr. Benedict has been a Registered Play Therapist since 1993 and has taught many undergraduate and graduate level courses in this specialty area. Dr. Benedict's special interest in treatment is in young children and their families, primarily through play therapy techniques. Dr. Benedict has been published in several journals. Her current research focus involving play therapy with young children is the examination of early intervention for the parent-infant attachment relationship for very high risk infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. She has offered workshops on aspects of play therapy both nationally and internationally. Dr. Benedict is currently working on a book Attachment, Interpersonal Trauma, and Play Therapy: an Object-Relations Approach.