

Let's Play EMDR: HEALING the WOUNDS of TRAUMA and DISRUPTED ATTACHMENT in CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS

Ann Beckley-Forest, LCSWR, RPT-S

Annie Monaco, LCSWR, RPT

Program Description

Despite the potential benefits, children are often very reluctant to participate in EMDR therapy. Best standards for trauma work with children require a playful phase-based approach with the goal of supporting trauma exposure/trauma narrative work. This workshop will establish 8 essential considerations in fully integrating EMDR in a prescriptive play therapy setting. We will share clinical examples of using a play-based approach to developing internal resources in the preparation phase and examine the idea that active play may be the preferred avenue to access and reprocess with EMDR the implicit memories involved so often in complex trauma in children. Fully involving parents in assessment, preparation, processing and re-evaluation will be illustrated with case examples and scripted interventions. We will use attachment theory and polyvagal theory to understand how to use grounding and attachment repair to promote the interoception of safety for the child. Finally, we will apply dissociation theories through the use of play and expressive therapy interventions to prepare and support highly dissociative children in EMDR reprocessing.

Schedule All times EDT

Day One:

9:00- Play therapy as the setting for trauma work
10:30- Break
10:45- Play in the preparation phase
12:15pm- Lunch
1:15- Post traumatic play and bridges to assessment and processing
2:45- Break
3:00- Recognizing and repairing attachment wounds
4:30- Close

Day Two:

9:00 - Complex trauma and dissociation
10:30 - Break
10:45 - Guided experience of applying expressive techniques and play to identify the dissociated parts of the self which is especially applicable for older children and adolescents
12:15pm - Lunch
1:15 - Managing angry/hostile self-states in the playroom.
2:45 - Break

3:00 - In depth exploration of using sandtray prompts and miniatures for the playroom process for exploring parts of the self

4:30 - Close

Program Modules (90 min each)

1. Play therapy as the setting for trauma work
 - Emotional safety in the play room
 - AIP and the therapeutic power of play
 - 8 essentials for integration of EMDR and play therapy
 - Understanding the meaning of the child's behaviors using a self-guided case consultation format. This format will be referred to throughout the presentation
 - Demonstration of a play therapy approach to gathering trauma history from a child
2. Play in the preparation phase
 - Using movement in resource development
 - Preparing EMDR tools through play
 - Options for BLS in the play room
 - Games for soothing and grounding "state change"
 - Somatic resources and "bottom up" repair
3. Post traumatic play and bridges to assessment and processing
 - Video/transcript examples of building the bridge to EMDR processing
 - Using play for emotional distancing in child sensitive standard protocol
 - Involving parents
 - Parents in the Closure and Re-evaluation phase, "Popcorn night"
4. Recognizing and repairing attachment wounds
 - Attachment theory and tools for assessment
 - Attachment repair in preparation phase
5. Complex trauma and dissociation
 - Attachment wounds as the origin of dissociative symptoms
 - Signs and symptoms of dissociation in children
 - Using dissociative lens to understand behavior and help parents increase safety
 - Dissociation
6. Guided experience of applying expressive techniques and play to identify the dissociated parts of the self which is especially applicable for older children and adolescents
 - Dissociation doll demo
 - Using drawing/art as the medium
 - EMDR interweaves using parts

7. The problem of hostile introjects and how to recognize and manage
 - Extended case presentation on child DID case –
 - Understanding the formation of hostile internal parts
 - Differentiating between angry and “monster” parts, etc.
 - Experiential exercise to revisit the guided art project from above to attend to those internal parts experientially

8. In depth exploration of using sandtray prompts and miniatures for the playroom process for exploring parts of the self
 - Resourcing the parts
 - Cooperation between parts
 - Acceptance of parts
 - Last 45 min – case presentation and consultation using case consultation format we have been using throughout

Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Construct a framework of how to integrate the core therapeutic powers of play within the Adaptive Information Processing model with an emphasis on how play allows for the full body learning that is developmentally appropriate for younger children.
2. Utilize a play therapy scripted technique for obtaining a trauma history from the child in a developmentally sensitive way during Phase One of EMDR.
3. Apply a play therapy intervention to install and enhance positive beliefs and resources during phase two to make the client stronger.
4. Use props and play options to help children become familiar with bilateral stimulation (BLS) to notice their own feelings and body sensations during play therapy sessions in the preparation phase.
5. Explain 2 ways of inviting and guiding play narratives using prescriptive play therapy that titrate the approach to traumatic material during assessment, desensitization and reprocessing phases.
6. Apply an understanding about window of tolerance, dissociation theory, and a screening interview to evaluate children in the play room and educate parents about problematic behaviors through the lens of dissociation.
7. Utilize prescriptive play therapy activities and somatic resourcing to stabilize children and to decrease dissociative episodes in and out of the play room during preparation and reprocessing phases of EMDR.
8. Explore the practical application of polyvagal theory and how therapeutic presence in the playroom activates the conditions for the interoception of safety in EMDR therapy.

9. Learn to distinguish self-states and use developmentally appropriate ego-state language through play with a Dissociation Doll and drawing activity.
10. Utilize a play therapy version of the play conference table script and to identify different types of emotional parts and their roles and initiate internal cooperation through play in the sand tray.
11. Recognize and name the key differences between angry, defender and “monster” parts of the self through processing an art activity.

Key features:

- Presenters are credentialed play therapists and experienced EMDR therapists able to harness the therapeutic power of both approaches in trauma work with children
- Interventions and case examples which span age ranges from preschool children through adolescence
- Applying the AIP model in understanding post-traumatic play in children and how to use EMDR therapy with younger children
- A play therapy informed approach to making the key moments possible for EMDR processing while remaining within the child’s window of tolerance
- Demonstrations and video clips/transcripts of client sessions to show how a flexible approach to the standard protocol makes EMDR possible for children
- Demonstration of more than 5 tools for self-soothing and grounding to help children remain within the window of tolerance in and out of the session
- Multiple options of scripted interventions for participants
- A playful and creative approach to the complexity of dissociation and complex trauma
- Participants will receive a module with material to help differentiate between angry self-states and hostile introjects

Ann Beckley-Forest, LCSW, RPT-S, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice in Buffalo, NY and a Registered Play Therapist with the Association for Play Therapy. She is a supervisor and approved provider of play therapy continuing education through the Association for Play Therapy. She is certified in EMDR therapy, an EMDRIA Approved Consultant, an EMDR therapy trainer and a faculty member of the Child Trauma Institute. Her specialties include attachment and child and adolescent trauma, and she also works with adult survivors. She provides consultation in person and remotely and gives trainings locally and internationally. Her primary interest is in the intersection of play therapy and EMDR and has published on this topic including as co-editor of *EMDR with Children in the Play Therapy Room: An Integrated Approach* (anticipated 2020).

Annie Monaco, LCSW, RPT, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in practice in Buffalo, NY, a Registered Play Therapist with the Association for Play Therapy and a faculty member of

University at Buffalo School of Social Work. She is the Chair of the EMDRIA Child/Adolescent Special Interest Group. She is certified in EMDR therapy, an EMDRIA Approved Consultant, an EMDR therapy trainer and a faculty member of the Child Trauma Institute. Annie travels throughout the US and internationally providing a multitude of trauma-informed trainings and agency and therapist consultation. She has extensive training in complex trauma, family therapy, play therapy, restorative justice almost 30 years serving children, teens, families and adults. Her private practice includes a multitude of behaviors and issues including foster care, out of country adoptions, juvenile justice and dissociation and is co-editor of the upcoming book *EMDR with Children in the Play Therapy Room: An Integrated Approach* (anticipated 2020).

References:

Beckley-Forest, A. & Monaco, A., Eds. *EMDR with children in the play therapy room: An integrated approach* New York: Springer. <https://www.amazon.com/EMDR-Children-Play-Therapy-Room/dp/0826175929>

Bandbury, N. (2016) Case study: Play therapy and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing for Pediatric Single incident posttraumatic stress disorder and developmental regression. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 2 (3), 166-173.

Cloitre, M., Stolbach, B. C., Herman, J. L., Kolk, B. V., Pynoos, R., Wang, J., & Petkova, E. (2009). A developmental approach to complex PTSD: Childhood and adult cumulative trauma as predictors of symptom complexity. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 22(5), 399-408.

Cintron, G., Salloum, A., Blair-Andrews, Z. & Storch, E.A. (2018) Parents' descriptions of young children's dissociative reactions after trauma, *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 19:5, 500-513

Fleming, J. (2012). The effectiveness of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing in the Treatment of Traumatized Children and Youth. *Journal of EMDR Practice and Research*, Volume 6, Number 1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/1933-3196.6.1.16>

Hong, R., & Mason, C. M. (2016). Becoming a neurobiologically-informed play therapist. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 25(1), 35-44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pla0000020>

Swinden, C. (2018) The Child-centered EMDR approach: A case study investigating a young girl's treatment for sexual abuse. *Journal of EMDR Practice and Research*, 12(4), 282-295.