

# VAPT ENOTE

## NOVEMBER



Dear VAPT members,

Happy November! The VAPT membership was well represented at the October international Association for Play Therapy conference in Cleveland this year. We had over 10 VAPT members attending and several offering presentations, including **Eliana Gil**, **Kathrin Hartmann**, and **Anne Stewart** and **Lennie Echterling**. VAPT was again awarded **GOLD BRANCH** status for outstanding branch performance. APT Leadership graduation was held for VAPT members **Katherine Masey** and **Susanne Preston** - CONGRATULATIONS and thank you! **Debbie Sturm** is now participating in the APT Leadership Academy.

The chapter chairs in your area are available for consultation regarding RPT and RPT-S development and connecting with other play therapists in the area. A number of areas are offering periodic workshops. Chapter trainings that offer CE's will be listed on the APT training site - visit often to see what is available.

Our Winter Workshop will feature a day long Theraplay workshop in Richmond at the Crowne Plaza on January 18, 2013. Registration will open in early December. Check your email and the VAPT FB page for more information as the date approaches!

Playfully,  
Anne



**SAVE the DATE**  
VAPT Winter Workshop  
**Theraplay for Children with Sensory and  
Regulatory Disorders**

**Phyllis Booth** LMFT, RPT/S  
Crowne Plaza Hotel  
Richmond, Virginia  
Friday, January 18, 2013

Special thanks to **Chris Hill**, JMU graduate student, for collecting information and great resources to share!

### 1. The Theraplay Institute



Theraplay is a child and family therapy for building and enhancing attachment, self-esteem, trust in others, and joyful engagement. It is based on the natural patterns of playful, healthy interaction between parent and child and is personal, physical, and fun. Theraplay interactions focus on four essential qualities found in parent-child relationships: Structure, Engagement, Nurture, and Challenge. Theraplay sessions create an active, emotional connection between the child and parent or caregiver, resulting in a changed view of the self as worthy and lovable and of relationships as positive and rewarding.

In treatment, the Theraplay therapist guides the parent and child through playful, fun games, developmentally challenging activities, and tender, nurturing activities. The very act of engaging each other in this way helps the parent regulate the child's behavior and communicate love, joy, and safety to the child. It helps the child feel secure, cared for, connected and worthy.

We call this "building relationships from the inside out."

For more information about Theraplay, see: <http://www.theraplay.org>

## 2. Autism Spectrum Disorder



Autism is largely a social-communication disorder. Children with autism find it difficult to relate to others -- particularly to peers -- in typical ways. Instead of playing with toys in imaginative or symbolic ways (pretending a doll is really "my baby," for example) they may perseverate on objects, use them for self-stimulation, and become entirely self-absorbed.

Play is a wonderful tool for helping children (and sometimes even adults) to move beyond autism's self-absorption into real, shared interaction. Properly used, play can also allow youngsters to explore their feelings, their environment, and their relationships with parents, siblings and peers.

Very often, too, play therapy approaches, such as THERAPLAY, can allow parents to take an active role in their child's growth and development. Parents can be shown ways to develop and support their child's play, and, over time, help build stronger, more meaningful relationships.

## 3. Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)

While separations and reunions are everyday occurrences, the stress and uncertainty they pose can be a significant



hardship for all families to navigate. Children of military connected families have unique challenges due to the frequency and duration of separations or moves and the possibility that their family member may be in harms way.

Be sure to ask the families you work with about possible military service.

The Military Child Education Coalition is an excellent resource for families and professionals. The website <http://www.militarychild.org/> states:

"Military children generally move six to nine times during their K-12 school years. Many make multiple moves during high school years alone, some even during their senior year.

In addition to giving up friends and routines, students must deal with other frustrations as they move across state lines or even from school to school, such as:

- academic standards and courses,
- access to programs,
- promotion and graduation requirements,
- programs for children with special needs,
- transfer and acceptance of records.

Separation from a deployed parent (or parents) raises an additional issue. The role of the MCEC is to help families, schools, and communities be better prepared to support military-connected children throughout their academic careers"

### **The MCEC Parent to Parent Program:**

"The MCEC *Parent to Parent* program empowers parents to be their child's strongest advocate on educational and social issues through MCEC Parent Workshops. More than 100,000 parents have been trained since the program's beginning in 2006.

The MCEC Parent Workshops share practical ideas, proven techniques, and solid resources to support military-connected families. There are 20 Parent to Parent teams in the U.S., and 4 teams in Europe. Teams usually consist of 3 to 6 highly-trained professionals, and they concentrate on providing the Parent Workshops to families in their region; the Department of the Army has provided funding for many of these teams.”

For more information contact the Parent-to-Parent project:

<http://www.militarychild.org/parents-and-students/programs/parent-to-parent/>

#### 4. Spot It

I just discovered this new game - it is simple and fun and can be played with a child in play therapy or with a whole family. The Spot It game consists of 55 circular cards, each decorated with eight symbols. There are more than 50 symbols in all, including images of hearts, snowflakes, dragons, and lightning bolts, as well as words such as Stop, Art, and OK. The symbols are universal in nature, allowing everyone, including young children, to participate in the family fun.



Because the game requires quick mental processing, it moves fast, challenging your visual perception, memory, and matching skills. Your group of two to eight players will delight in spotting the matching symbols and agonize over getting beat to the punch by a faster player.

- Ages: Seven years and up
- Requires: 2 to 8 players

#### 5. VAPT CHAPTERS

Looking for ways to find out more about play therapy and connect with play therapists in your area?

VAPT has regional chapters around Virginia to bring play therapy resources and networking opportunities to your area. All our VAPT sponsored trainings that award CE's are posted on the national APT site--look under the directory for finding play therapy training and select Virginia! You may also contact your local Chapter Chair to find out more about what's happening in your area and around the state.

##### Chapters and Chapter Chairs

###### Central Virginia VAPT

Chairperson Amy Kale Fraitas

[play@mail.planetcomm.net](mailto:play@mail.planetcomm.net)

###### Harrisonburg VAPT - NEW addition - Welcome Debbie and thanks!

Chairperson Debbie Sturm

[sturmdc@jmu.edu](mailto:sturmdc@jmu.edu)

###### Forest VAPT

Chairperson Norma White

[norma.white@couplestandkids.com](mailto:norma.white@couplestandkids.com)

###### Northern Virginia VAPT

Chairperson Cathi Spooner and Sheri Mitschelen

[cspooner@phoenixfamilycounseling.com](mailto:cspooner@phoenixfamilycounseling.com)

[shmitsch@verizon.net](mailto:shmitsch@verizon.net)

**Richmond VAPT**

Chairperson Jan Williamson  
jlwilliamson@mindspring.com

**Roanoke VAPT**

Chairpersons Lisa Rochford and Kim Montgomery  
lisa@psychroanoke.com  
kim@botetourtounseling.com

**Rockbridge Area VAPT**

Chairperson Katie Masey  
[kmasey@racs.org](mailto:kmasey@racs.org)

**Southwest VAPT**

Interim Chairpersons Donna Callis and Teresa Viers - Thanks for helping, Donna and Teresa!  
dcallis@CACBWCV.ORG  
tviers@highlandscsb.org

Chairperson Sydney Peltier  
speltier@highlandscsb.org

**Tidewater VAPT**

Chairpersons Kathrinn Hartman and Shawn Ware Avant  
hartmak@evms.edu  
Shawn.Ware-Avant@theupcenter.org

**6. VAPT OUTREACH**

Spread the word about play therapy and the therapeutic powers of play in your professional community. VAPT has consistently been awarded Gold Branch status for our increase in membership each year, trainings and play therapy awareness outreach. If you have provided a presentation to non-play therapy professionals about play therapy and the therapeutic powers of play therapy, submit your information to Cathi Spooner at [cspooner@phoenixfamilycounseling.com](mailto:cspooner@phoenixfamilycounseling.com)

