



Happy Holidays!
December 2013



Register NOW for the VAPT Winter workshop!

Go to <http://vapt.cisat.jmu.edu/winter14/index.html>

This month's enote includes VAPT's winter workshop and registration information, guidelines on helping families and children struggling with grief during the holidays, as well as some playful activities and ways to use board games in play therapy. Also, note upcoming events listed below and contact the Regional Chapter Chairs to find out what is happening in your area!

VAPT Winter Workshop

**What Matters Most:
Play-based Interventions with Traumatized and Grieving
Children and Teens**

**Bill Steele, PsyD, MSW
January 16 and 17, 2014
Richmond, Virginia**

Dr. Steele is Founder of the National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children (TLC)

See the following website to learn more about TLC's evidence-based treatments!
<http://www.starrtraining.org/trauma-and-children>

You can begin or continue to earn **Certified Level One and Level Two Trauma Specialist credits** with the workshops he is planning!

AND

Playful Supervision

**Elizabeth Fong, PsyD, RPT/S & Sheri Mitschelen, LCSW, RPT/S
January 16, 2014 (6 to 8 pm)**

1. Information about Grieving and Traumatized Children



For kids and teens who are grieving the death of a loved one, the holiday season can bring up a variety of responses and feelings, including sadness, depression, anxiety, fear, anger, guilt, and/or apathy.

These feelings are often expressed alongside the usual excitement of this time of year, and can be a confusing contradiction for the child. Somatic responses - such as frequent headaches, stomach aches, and/or sleep disturbance - may be the only way a child knows how to respond to the variety and intensity of his or her emotional responses. Kids and teens often have a desire to keep family traditions the same as they were when the deceased was alive. This is a way to keep the person “alive” and to avoid the overwhelming feelings that may come up when the loss is acknowledged

Catherine McCall, MS, LMFT, shares that you may have concerns about whether or not the child's mourning is progressing normally, whether and how to recommend to the parents that their child may need professional help.

- the child frequently asks for help with things that she was previously able to do by herself
- normal reactions go on for a protracted period of time
- she cries a lot
- her performance declines and doesn't pick up again
- she seems preoccupied, worried, anxious, and nervous
- she develops fears that are unreasonable
- she can't concentrate on schoolwork
- play centers on family breakup & coming back together again, illness, death, touching of her genital area, or hitting
- she loses interest in playing; doesn't seem like a child anymore
- she isolates
- she seems to have low self esteem and little self confidence
- sleep problems develop
- bedwetting

For more information: <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/overcoming-child-abuse/201107/how-help-children-deal-lo>

2. Consult Pinterest!



Pinterest has resources on books and activities.

<http://www.pinterest.com/source/counselinghearts.blogspot.com/>

3. Creative projects to do with children and families regarding grief and loss issues

See: <http://thecreativecounselor.blogspot.com/>

Fantastic Foil Forget-Me-Nots by Michelle Privett



Here's a simple activity that I do with my grief groups.

During one of our meetings, we focus on a favorite memory. To save this memory forever, I have the students draw a picture of the memory on the back (non-shiny side) of the aluminum foil with a dull pencil.

It's best to use thick foil and a dull pencil so the foil does not tear. This creates a 3-D effect on the opposite, shiny side of the foil. The student then flips over the picture and colors in the picture with sharpies to make a vibrant, colorful, 3-D picture.



I wrapped the foil around an old thank you card, but any kind of cardboard to make it sturdy will do. Finally we used Popsicle sticks to frame the picture.

4. Games!

After the holidays is a great time to get games and play therapy toys on sale.

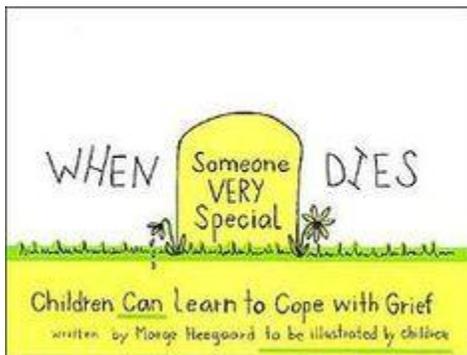
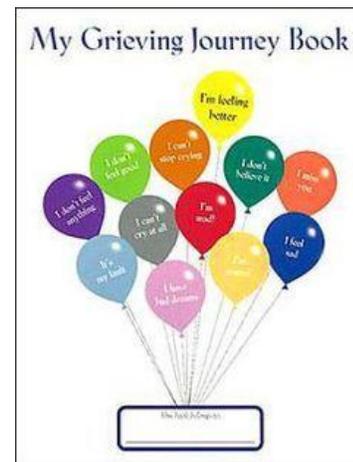
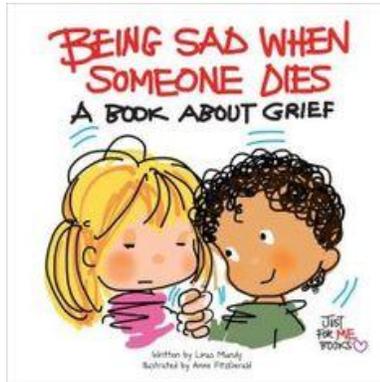
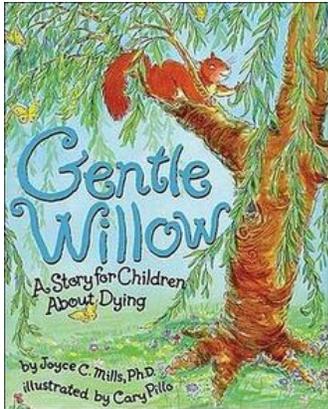


For more info on games and ways to use them therapeutically visit:

<http://myplaytherapypage.net/2011/01/06/using-board-games-in-child-and-play-therapy.aspx>

5. Books for Children

The following books can help children understand and process death and dying.



6. VAPT Chapters Around the Commonwealth

Are you active in your area VAPT Chapter? Are you looking for ways to find out more about play therapy and connect with play therapists in your area? Well, 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. If there is not a chapter listed that is close to you, please consider volunteering to serve in your area. Contact a chair close to you and offer mutual support to a playmate!

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