

Powering Up with Play Therapy and Positive Psychology

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Ragan is a Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Worker and is a Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor. Ragan graduated from Wichita State University with her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and a Master's degree in Social Work. She also has a Master's degree in Education from Newman University. She has a post-graduate credential as a RPT-S. Ragan has worked in addictions, foster care and adoptions, private practice, medical social work and psychiatric social work and a behavior specialist for an agency for children with autism. Currently, Ragan works as a special education social worker in a public school and practices play therapy in the school setting.




Why Play?

Play is essential to human growth, development, learning, and cultivating relationships. Play is a natural process that:

- Builds trust and mastery
- Fosters learning and acceptable behaviors
- Regulates emotions
- Reduces anxieties
- Promotes creative thinking and problem-solving
- Encourages open communication
- Elevates spirit and self esteem

Play is our first language. Just as adults use words to communicate, children use play. When playing, we express thoughts, feelings that would otherwise remain hidden.



PLAY IS OFTEN TALKED
ABOUT AS IF IT WERE
A RELIEF FROM SERIOUS LEARNING.
BUT FOR CHILDREN PLAY
IS SERIOUS LEARNING. PLAY IS REALLY
**THE WORK
OF CHILDHOOD.
-FRED ROGERS**



It is actually good for you to goof off!

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.” -George Bernard Shaw

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/benefits-of-play-for-adults.htm>



What is Play Therapy?

APT defines play therapy as "the systematic use of a theoretical model to establish an interpersonal process wherein trained play therapists use the therapeutic powers of play to help clients prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development."

[-Association for Play Therapy](#)



A young boy with brown hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit jacket over a striped shirt and a blue and white striped bow tie. He is pointing his right index finger upwards with a serious, almost stern expression. The background is a textured, mottled grey.

This isn't how kids communicate.

APT's Statement on Evidence Based Practice

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.a4pt.org/resource/resmgr/about_apr/apr_evidence_based_statement.pdf



A4PT.org - Credential

Registered Play Therapist / Registered Play Therapist Supervisor - Clinical Social Workers/ Marriage and Family Therapists, Clinical Counselors

School-Based Play Therapist - school counselors or psychologists

-Post-graduate Credential - 150 Hours off Training and 35 Sessions of Supervision over min of 2 years



Create your “PLAY” list!

Create a playlist. Write down three activities you could do for hours on end. Mine are reading, editing photos on my computer and playing Ping-Pong with my family.

Now carve out time on your calendar for unstructured time. It's important to protect playtime the way you protect work, church or PTA meetings.

-Brene Brown article - [Goofing Off is Actually Good for You](#)



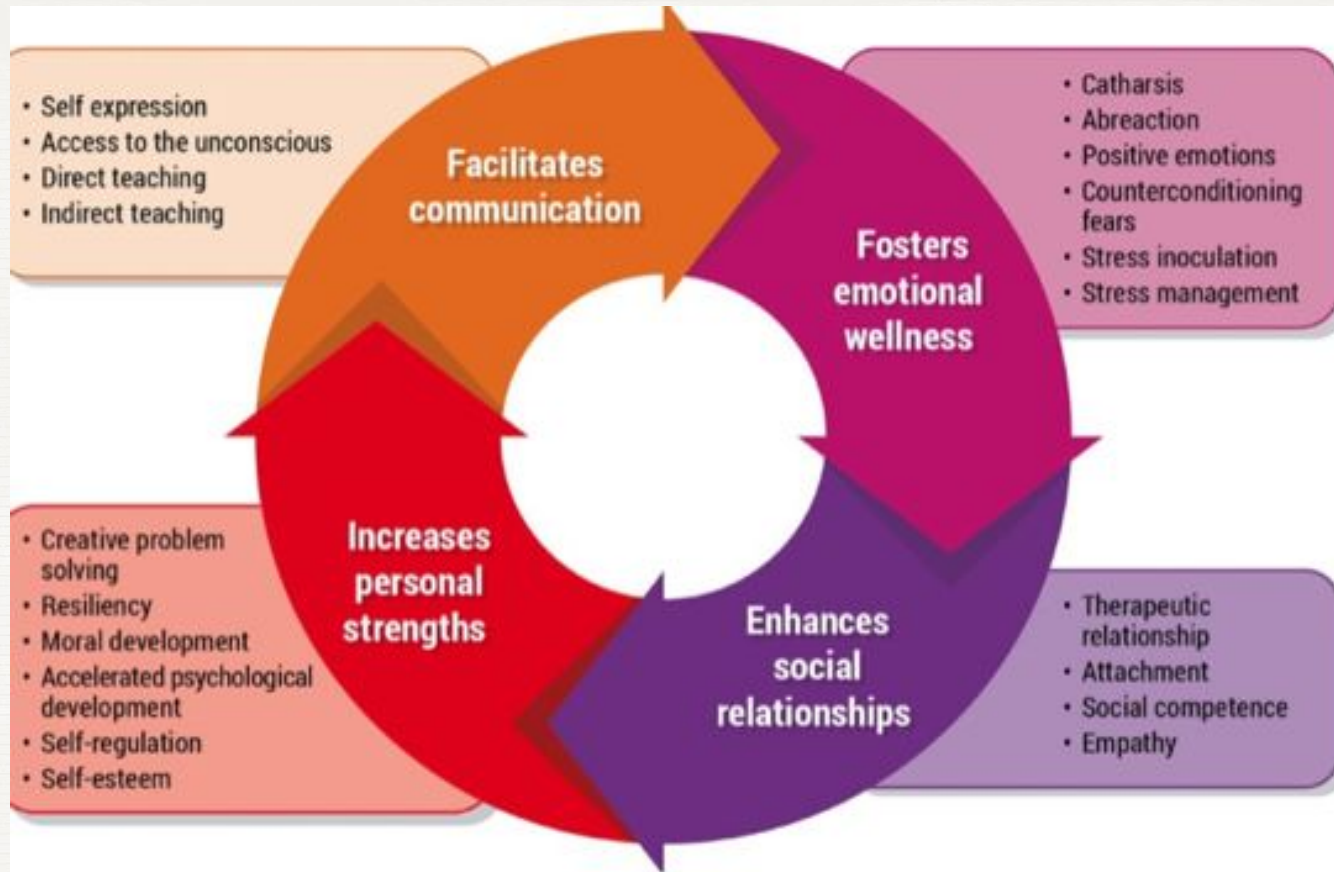


Figure 1. The 20 therapeutic powers of play. Graphic adapted and reprinted with permission from Dr. Judi Parson, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia

Positive Psychology

- The study of cultivating strengths, relationships, and finding meaning - what makes life worth living
- Instead of what's wrong with you, focus on what can go right
- Doesn't seek to deny importance of why things go wrong, but that strength is just as valid as weakness
- There are different routes to happiness: Passion, Purpose & Playfulness

Sophia Ansari

VIA Classification of Character Strengths

- ✘ 24 universally valued and cross-cultural character strengths
- ✘ Key ingredients to happiness, positive relationships, greater productivity, self-acceptance, less depression
- ✘ Valid and reliable tool
- ✘ VIA Survey and VIA Youth Survey
- ✘ Can be used with different theoretical approaches!


VIA Classification of Character Strengths



Greatness Sticks

- ✕ Intervention for child and parent, family sessions, groups
- ✕ Greatness Sticks Jars
- ✕ Can Combine with other PT techniques: Sandtray, use in house play, etc.

Tammi Van Hollander,
Mainline Play Therapy

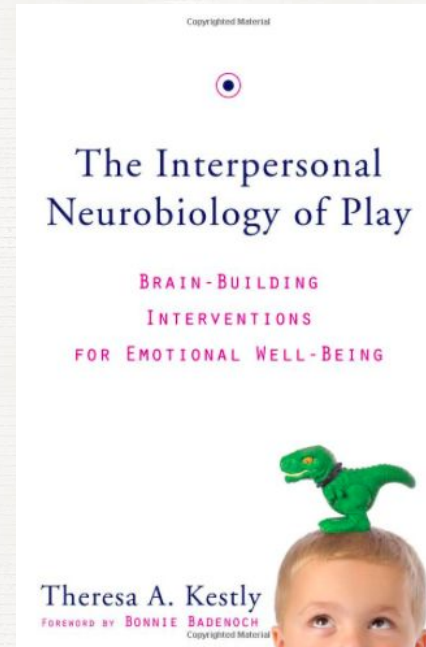
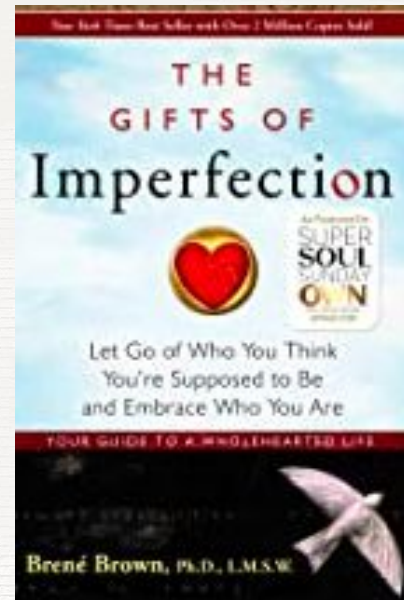
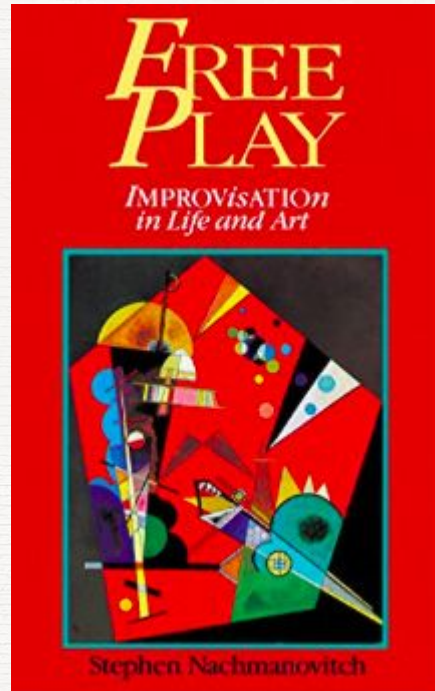
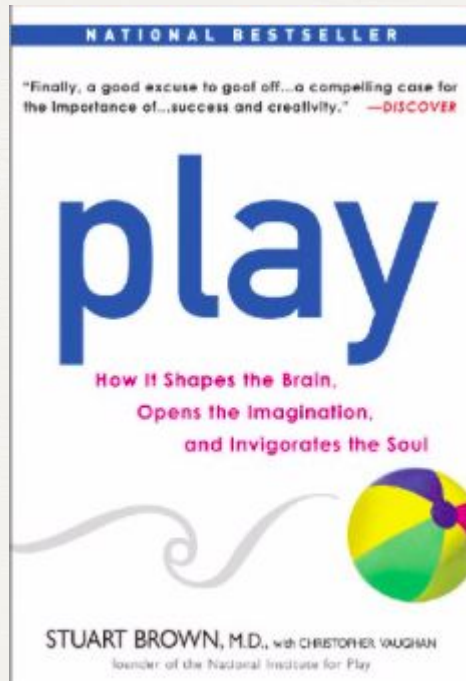
A close-up photograph of a child's hands holding a large, complex structure made of many overlapping, transparent bubbles. The child is wearing a dark, patterned sleeveless top. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

You can visit the
Association for Play
Therapy website to
learn more about play
therapy research,
credentialing, and
training programs

www.a4pt.org

OR

www.ksa4pt.org



Further resources

[International Association of Play](#)

[US Play Coalition](#)

[Genius of Play](#)

[Right to Play](#)

[Lego Foundation](#)

[Children and Nature Network](#)

[1000 of Outside](#)

Ted Talks - Peter Gray and Stuart Brown



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