**CHILDHOOD TRAUMA: PLAY THERAPY STRATEGIES FROM A NEUROBIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

Program Goals and Schedule

Presenter: Dr. Jennifer Shaw

This two-day didactic and experiential workshop provides rationale, theory, and practice for clinicians who work with traumatized children and youth, and their families. Special emphasis is placed on the neurobiological impact of early childhood trauma, ways in which affect and behavior are responses to a state of stress/distress, and the ways in which play therapy is well suited to address signs and symptoms of acute and chronic stress in children and youth.

An overview of normative child brain development is provided along with a review of ways in which chronic stress or toxic stress can arrest or disrupt typical development. With this foundation and review of current literature in place, participants will then learn specific strategies for approaching the current manifestation(s) of stress in the child, and learn ways to engage caregivers in activities that calm the brain so family-focused recovery work can begin. Each neurobiological domain of impact will be reviewed in detail with emphasis on what the stressed brain needs from caregivers and primary environments. Special considerations for sexual trauma will be provided. Several play and expressive arts techniques and activities will be presented and practiced with participants, with opportunity for role-play and group processing. This workshop will include experiential work as well as didactic presentation of material.

Specifically, this program will:

* Define the broad and specific impact of trauma and chronic stress on a child’s brain development
* Discuss the theory and practice of play therapy with traumatized children and youth
* Describe the neurobiological impact of Type I and Type II trauma on a developing brain.
* Define ways in which integrative approaches to play therapy meets the emotional needs of a traumatized child
* Review ways to engage caregivers in treatment, and in at-home practice of stress-reducing and parent-child strengthening activities during times of heightened stress
* Review and practice (role-play) play and expressive arts therapy activities
* Discuss special considerations and unique approaches to working with children with a history of sexual trauma
* Discuss a number of resources for working with traumatized children and youth

**Program Schedule**

The daily schedule will consist of didactic presentations, experiential work, clinical case presentations, and group work to process specific clinical material

**Day One**

9:00 – 9:30 Introductions and needs assessment: Review agenda and participant’s “wish list”

9:30 -10:45 Review of normative child brain development and a review of the literature on the impact of trauma and chronic stress.

10:45 -11:00 Break

11:00 -12:00 Overview of research on childhood trauma (types and definitions) and review of available research on play therapy approaches.

12:00 - 1:00 LUNCH

1:00 - 2:30 Setting the context for family-focused recovery (engaging caregivers with psychoeducation and coaching). Session transitions and mindfulness strategies reviewed and practiced to engage the children in the therapy hour and promote smooth transitions in and out of sessions.

2:30 - 2:45 BREAK

2:45 - 4:30 Play-based engagement and integrative approaches to working with children referred at a time of heightened stress (crisis or chronically stressed environements).

**Day Two**

9:00 – 10:30 Practicing playful ways to facilitate affect identification, exploration, and affective communication to convey needs during a time of stress.

10:30- 10:45 BREAK

10:45-12:00 Experiential work with expressive arts (directive and nondirective approaches), with group processing.

12:00 - 1:00 LUNCH

1:00 – 2:30 Case Presentation: Treatment Course with a Traumatized Child

 Family Engagement/Sessions; Art and Sand Tray

2:30 - 2:45 BREAK

2:45 - 4:30 Special Considerations for Sexual Traumatized Children; Cultural Considerations; Final Group Experiential Activity (clinician’s self-care)

**Course Objectives**

By the end of the course participants will be able to:

* + Define trauma and types of trauma
	+ Describe the domains of impact of chronic stress or significant trauma on a child’s brain development
	+ Describe the rationale for integratrive approaches to play therapy with traumatized children and youth
	+ State the theory that guides play therapy
	+ List two special considerations for sexually traumatized children
	+ List three ways acute or chronic stress can arrest or disrupt a child’s development without caregiver support and intervention
	+ Identify two reasons that treatment cannot be completed without caregiver support and participation
	+ Participate in expressive arts activities that utilize mindfulness strategies to enhance participation and promote relaxation within the play therapy setting
	+ Apply information and skills acquired to clinical work with this population by facilitating two expressive arts group activities
	+ Apply information and skills acquired to clinical work with this population by facilitating (3) play-based activities for children

**General Course Information**

This course is limited to 15 participants and is designed to facilitate experiential work and group processing of clinical material. Participants will have ample opportunity to discuss their specific needs and clinical questions. Participant feedback will be sought out throughout thetraining. Clinical case discussions will respect client confidentiality.

Power point presentations and other templates/handouts will be provided to each participant with resource information and supplemental reading material.

This event is co-sponsored by Starbright Training Institute and the Institute for Continuing Education. Starbright Training Institute is approved by the Association for Play Therapy to offer continuing education specific to play therapy (APT Provider No. 96-029). The Institute for Continuing Education is an approved provider by the American Psychological Association (Provider No. 823); the National Board for Certified Counselors (Provider No. 5643); the Association of Social Work Boards (Provider No. 1007); the National Association of Alcohol-Drug Abuse Counselors (Provider No. 00243); the Association for Play Therapy (Provider No. 98-040); and is recognized by most state boards of Marriage/Family Therapy. For questions regarding continuing education credit, please contact The Institute for Continuing Education at 251-990-5030; FAX 251-990-2665; email: instconted@aol.com.

Starbright Training Institute conducts two or three-day Intensives at its facility at 8626 Lee Highway, Ste. 200-A, Fairfax, VA 22031 (Located adjacent to Gil Institute)

Eliana Gil, Ph.D., Director, Starbright Training Institute. Phone:202-257-2783. Email: emgil@earthlink.net. Web Page: [www.elianagil.com](http://www.elianagil.com) and www.gilinstitute.com