

Book review: Handbook of Play, Therapeutic Play, and Play Therapy

书评：《国际游戏、治疗性游戏和游戏治疗手册》

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Abstract

This paper reviews the title: Jennings, S., & Holmwood, C. (Eds). *Routledge International Handbook of Play, Therapeutic Play and Play Therapy*. Taylor & Francis. <https://bookshelf.vitalsource.com/books/9781000228656>. This International Handbook is a new, unique, timely examination of play, therapeutic play, play in therapy, and play therapy with chapters from 16 countries. The contributors to the 35 chapters are drawn from therapists, counsellors, and play specialists with vastly different ideas, backgrounds, and beliefs that share a common valuing of play in its different forms.

Keywords: Play, therapy, therapeutic play, play in therapy, arts

摘要

本文为Jennings, S和 Holmwood, C.主编的《国际游戏、治疗性游戏和游戏治疗手册》的书评。该国际手册由泰勒-弗朗西斯出版社出版 (<https://bookshelf.vitalsource.com/books/9781000228656>) 这本国际手册对游戏、治疗性游戏、治疗中的游戏和游戏治疗进行了全新、独特、及时的详细探讨，包含来自16个国家的章节。该书35个章节的撰稿人来自治疗师、咨询师和游戏专家，他们有着截然不同的想法、背景和信仰，他们对不同形式的游戏有着共同的价值观。

关键词: 游戏，治疗，治疗性游戏，治疗中的游戏，艺术

This International Handbook is a new, unique, timely examination of play, therapeutic play, play in therapy, and play therapy with chapters from 16 countries. These countries include Japan, Cameroon, India, the Czech Republic, Israel, Canada, Ireland, Greece, Turkey, the UK, the USA, Romania, Malaysia, Singapore, Argentina, and South Africa. In addition to working in different countries, contributors to the 35 chapters are drawn from therapists, counsellors, and play specialists with vastly different ideas, backgrounds, and beliefs that share a common valuing of play in its different forms. Within the inspiring series of chapters, diversity of views is encouraged and there is no judging, or making hierarchical in nature, any particular philosophy or approach to play.

The importance of play has long been written about and advocated for and the creation of a text entirely dedicated to taking us on a “journey through the world of play

in its many forms” is extremely exciting. The power of play that is at the heart of creative expression and is intrinsically linked to the Arts and Arts therapies is articulated and explored in a range of different ways and contexts. The book contributes enormously to the giving of credence and recognition to the notion of play beyond the early years of education and throughout the human lifespan.

This book is invaluable for anyone who wishes to use play to enrich and extend their work in any aspect or level of education and therapy and beyond. While this book is an ideal reference for counsellors, play therapists and arts therapists, if you are in the field of Arts education, this book is also for you. In fact, all teachers, pre-service teachers, students, and therapists would benefit from reading chapters from the book and particularly those that value play as a crucial educational and therapeutic tool. The description of the book as a “gem” in the afterword (p. 406) is indeed apt and I feel greatly privileged to have been able to review this “gem” and share it with, and recommend it to, the readers of this review.

The Handbook is divided into four sections: Part I: Play; Part II: Therapeutic Play; Part III: Play in Therapy; and Part IV: Play Therapy. These sections do not need to be read in any order as they are each stand-alone sections of the book. The first section (Part I: Play) describes and examines play in its generic, basic forms. Beginning with research in play (Chapter 1) it moves towards the use of play and ultimately its “applied” use within specific contexts. These include: in an educational context in Argentina (Chapter 2); in a mental health centre in Delhi (Chapter 3); working with street children in Cameroon (Chapter 4), “differently abled” children in Malaysia (Chapter 6); and working with street children in Japan (Chapter 9). Chapter 5 is a reflection of the authors’ sense and experience of the “ness of being playful.” Chapter 7 offers useful tools and practical solutions for professionals working with children. Chapter 8 highlights a particular “place of play” and its implications in India.

As the title, Part II: Therapeutic Play, suggests the chapters in this section are specifically focused on the therapeutic nature of play beginning with an extremely knowledgeable and experience-based exploration of “playwork as a therapeutic tool” (Chapter 10). In Chapter 11, Sue Jennings connects her experience of in the forests of Malaysia and characters from Shakespeare’s, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* to the “altered states of otherworldliness in children’s play.” We are then taken on an informative, important and interesting journey through using play as a “mediation between levels of physical and learning ability” (Chapter 12) to “messy play” and the feeling/emotion connection (Chapter 13) and practical ideas and activities using messy play (Chapter 14). Chapter 15 was an especially inspiring and worthwhile read for me concerning Neuro-Dramatic Play (NDP) and the use of “attachment” puppets and props to build confidence and reduce anxiety.

Part III: Play in Therapy focuses specifically on therapy or counselling contexts with all the authors in this section being qualified counsellors or therapists. In Chapter 16 the multiple language and religious complexities and sensitivities of cultural differences in therapy are considered. Culture also colors Chapter 17 where drama therapy is used with Palestinian men in Israel. We then move context to the UK and dance therapy with autistic children and young people (Chapter 18); sandplay with criminals who have

complex identity issues (Chapter 19); and “Dyadic Art Therapy” with children and their caregivers (Chapter 20). Chapter 21 is again located in Israel with an explanation of the use of six key models in drama therapy with a single client. Chapter 22 is about Filial therapy with children and their families in Turkey. The context of the next two chapters is the USA with two play therapy case studies with children and their families (Chapter 23) and further case studies centering around children who panic. The connection between drama therapy and play therapy in Chapter 25 of this section leads us into the final section focusing on play therapy.

Part IV: Play Therapy focuses on the work of therapists specifically trained in play therapy. The authors are mainly from the USA, Canada, the UK, and South Africa, where play as a specific profession is said to be more clearly defined due to training and licenses to practice. The section begins with a consideration of the use and benefits of a combined drama therapy and play approach with children at risk of exclusion from mainstream education in the UK (Chapter 26). This is followed by different perspectives on play therapy with: young people who have been traumatized (Chapter 27); children on the autism spectrum (Chapter 28); and as a way of repairing play deprivation (Chapter 29). Chapters 30, 31 and 32 are more theoretical chapters examining the role of the conscious/unconscious and directive/non-directive approaches; definitions between different forms of play and what role nature and the environment bring to play; and how play therapy should occur in schools. The fairly new and uncharted terrain of Animal Assisted play Therapy (AAPT) as an intervention for childhood bullying in South Africa and the guiding principles of AAPT are considered in Chapter 33. The notion of “creating a safe space in a safe place” is unpacked and extremely well developed in Chapter 34. Play therapy practice and healing in a “Creativity at Heart” arts center is examined in the last chapter (Chapter 35) of the book. This reminder of the potential of play is indeed a “fitting end to the volume” (p. 286).

The book is highly successful in inviting the reader to “embark on a playful journey and be ready to take risks, find new notions and generally have fun along the way” (p. 2).

The summarized biographies of the editors of this Handbook are:

Sue Jennings (UK) is Professor of Play, a life-time award from the European Federation of Dramatherapists, and Distinguished Scholar, University of the Witwatersrand and a Senior Research Fellow, The Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham. She has pioneered dramatherapy and Neuro-Dramatic Play for many years, both in the UK and overseas. Sue has written over 50 books on group work, trauma and play, and dramatherapy.

Clive Holmwood (UK), PhD, is a dramatherapist with 25 years’ experience, and an Associate Professor in the Discipline of Therapeutic Arts at the University of Derby, where he lectures and researches in dramatherapy and in the area of creative arts health and wellbeing. He gained his PhD in education from the University of Warwick and is also the co-editor of *The Routledge International Handbook of Dramatherapy* with

Sue Jennings, published in 2016. His most recent edited publication is *Learning as a Creative and Developmental Process in Higher Education*, published by Routledge in 2019.

About the Author

Carol Beck Carter is a Senior Lecturer and Master of Teaching coordinator in the School of Education at Curtin University, Perth, Australia. She has extensive experience as a teacher educator at universities in both Australia and South Africa, She is regional director of the IACAET Australia/New Zealand area. Her research interests and publications are linked to teacher education, particularly in the field of Drama Education and Early Childhood Education.