

Unleashing potential: Bobby’s journey of healing and discovery of Self in sandplay Workshop

Trauma responsive practice is essential in underpinning effective therapeutic work with children who have experienced interpersonal trauma through abuse, neglect, and family violence. The effects of this trauma on the developing child are well documented, and therapeutic intervention and recovery are critical to minimise the impact of long-term sequelae.

As a Psychologist and Play Therapist based in Australia, my trauma and play therapy work occurs within a socio-political context where both play therapy and a trauma paradigm rooted in interpersonal neuroscience are still young and emergent, relative to well accepted evidence-based, primarily cognitive-behavioural interventions. Despite a quiet revolution unfolding, bringing play therapy into the arena as an appropriate developmentally and neurobiologically sensitive way of working with children and their families, scepticism still exists about its effectiveness in addressing the cognitive reprocessing required in trauma recovery.

“Can you really do this work without talking about the trauma?”

“If you’re not explicitly working with the trauma, how is it possible to address their cognitions?”.

Presenter: Katherine Olejniczak



Katherine Olejniczak is Director of Psychology and Play Therapy Australia. She is an experienced psychologist, play therapist, supervisor, trainer, consultant, mentor and leader, and a published author. Her specific interest areas include childhood trauma and recovery; play therapy; interpersonal neuroscience; and integrating interpersonal neuroscience into play therapy process, supervision and leadership development. She is committed to the growth of play therapy in Australia and is a respected leader in this field. Katherine has extensive experience in the provision of counselling and play therapy to children, young people and families in the areas of abuse related trauma, family violence, grief and loss, and drought and bushfire disaster recovery. She has worked extensively with children, young people and their families involved with child safety services and living in out of home care (i.e. foster care, kinship care, therapeutic residential care).

Presenters Professional Affiliations

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