



Primary Influences

“Synergetic” means systems in transformation. It refers to multiple systems coming together to create a “synergy” that each individual system could not have created on its own. Multiple theories (systems) and influences were drawn upon to create the synergy of information that is called Synergetic Play Therapy. The essence of Synergetic Play Therapy is a set of guiding principles that influence how to be in relationship with self and other allowing for transformation and integration. For this reason, its philosophy can be applied to other play therapy models and other models of play therapy can also be applied to it.

Synergetic Play Therapy has its roots in various play therapy models and is both non-directive and directive in its application. These models include Child-Centered Play Therapy created by Garry Landreth, Experiential Play Therapy created by Byron and Carol Norton, and Gestalt Play Therapy created by Violet Oaklander.

Synergetic Play Therapy draws the following from these models:

Child-Centered Play Therapy:

- The use of observation and tracking statements, helping the child know that the therapist is with them and following their play
- The understanding that the relationship is a key element in the healing process
- The understanding that children are wise and innately know what is needed inside to heal

Experiential Play Therapy:

- During dramatic play, it is important for the therapist to fully enter the child’s play instead of being an observer of the play

Gestalt Play Therapy:

- The understanding that healing occurs in the “here and now”
- The importance of authenticity in relationship with the child
- An emphasis on both the relationship with the self and with other
- An emphasis on the totality of integration of the total organism- the senses, the body, the emotions and the intellect

Beyond these roots, Synergetic Play Therapy has multiple other significant influences. These include mindfulness and the study of the mind itself, neuroscience and interpersonal neurobiology, physics, the work of Dr. John Demartini, and brain and nervous system states.

Other large play therapy and theoretical influences include Filial Play Therapy, Theraplay, EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing), Attachment Theory and Somatic and Body-Centered Therapies and Practice.