FAMILY PLAY THERAPY IN THE CONTEXT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: AN ECOLOGICAL AND GESTALT FIELD APPROACH MODEL

A FOURIE

23277920
Previous qualification (MSD Play therapy)

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Philosophiae Doctor in Social Work
at the
Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University

Promoter: Dr M van der Merwe

November 2013
This manuscript is presented in an article format in accordance with Rules A.11.5.3 and A.11.5.4 of the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) Yearbook. The context and technical requirements of the accredited professional journals Social work practitioner-researcher/Maatskaplike werk navorser-praktisyn, Families in society: A journal of contemporary social services, Child abuse research: A South African journal were used as basis to formulate the articles. Additional comments on this research are:

- Article 1 was submitted for review to the Social work practitioner-researcher
- Article 2 will be submitted for review to the Child abuse research: A South African journal
- Article 3 will be submitted for review to Families in society: The journal of contemporary social sciences

The Harvard method is used according to the requirement of North-West University; however, each individual article followed its own specific author guidelines.

Historical resources such as Finkelhor and Browne (1984, 1987, 1988, 1994), Germain and Gitterman (1980), Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979) and Axline (1969) were utilised and in some instances provided an extensive knowledge foundation, not because the researcher could not find more recent resources, but because the content and the value and the contribution to social work practice of these resources were deemed as important and profound for the goals and title of this research study.

In the opinion of the researcher, the social work educational curriculums should include such historical sources as they provide a straightforward explanation and foundational knowledge base for social work theory and practice.

The tables and figures that are part of article 3 will be included in the article for the purpose of this research report; however, the author guidelines of the journal, Families in society require for the figures and tables to be included as addendums. The researcher will submit the article according to the author guidelines and specifications of the journal.

I, Arina Fourie, declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own, original work, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of references. I also declare that I have not previously submitted this dissertation or any part of it to any university in order to obtain a degree.

Signed:

Arina Fourie
Research Student
North-West University
Student Number: 232 7792
LETTER OF PERMISSION

The candidate opted to write articles with the support of her promoter. I, the promoter, declare that the input and effort of Arina Fourie in writing these articles reflect research done by her. I hereby grant permission that she may submit the three articles for examination purposes in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree PhD in Social Work.

Dr. Mariette van der Merwe

PROMOTER
EDITOR'S LETTER
(LANGUAGE)

To whom it may concern

Cecile van Zyl: Language editing and translation
Cell: 072 389 3450
Email: Cecile.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za

5 November 2013

Dear Mr / Ms

Re: Language editing of manuscript: Family play therapy in the context of child sexual abuse: an ecological and Gestalt field approach model

I hereby declare that I language edited the above-mentioned thesis by Ms Arina Fourie (student number: 23277920) during the latter part of 2013. I also handled the technical editing of the manuscript according to the specifications of the North-West University as well as the different journals that the articles were submitted to.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any enquiries.

Kind regards

Cecile van Zyl
BA (PU for CHE); BA honours (PU for CHE); MA (NWU)
Language practitioner
EDITOR'S LETTER
(TECHNICAL FORMATTING)

To whom it may concern

Mrs CD Park
Cell no: 082 75 78 708
Email: cdp@sun.ac.za

7 November 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

I hereby declare that the thesis of Ms Arina Fourie:

Language editing of manuscript: Family play therapy in the context of child sexual abuse: an ecological and Gestalt field approach model was technically formatted by me.

Regards

CD Park
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincerest gratitude goes to the following:

• To God for giving me the courage, strength and perseverance to complete this study. Also for keeping me safe to reach this dream.

• To my father, mother and sister - this research would not have been possible without your unconditional love, dedicated support, and patience.

• To my research promoter - Dr. Mariette van der Merwe - for all your knowledgeable guidance, patience and support throughout this project and may I add, every moment of panic laughter. I will treasure this experience forever.

• To an organisation specialising in child sexual abuse (Western Cape) who made my study possible by providing the participants for this study and who lend me therapeutic space to successfully conduct the study.

• To all the participants in this research project - by taking part in this study, you have helped to expand services for child abuse victims and their families in South Africa and thank you for sharing your hurtful stories and experiences.

• To Herschel Girls School, especially Belinda Heidmann, Linda Martin and Almarie van Niekerk for all your ongoing support and understanding.

• To all my friends who have supported me throughout this research study, for all your patience and understanding.
SUMMARY

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a major concern in the South African society. Although policies and legislation are directed at the protection of children, the high incidence of child sexual abuse is indicative of problems in society which cannot be addressed adequately with current service delivery. Individual interventions with children directly affected with CSA are still the norm, and even such services are inadequate to accommodate the high numbers of children affected by CSA. There is a polarity in terms of the shortage of social workers versus the need for intervention for this vulnerable group. Innovative and effective approaches to intervention for families affected by CSA were clearly needed. Based on practical experience in the field of CSA the researcher was interested in family play therapy as a possible approach to address CSA. Not only would more people be reached with limited services, but by involving family members in intervention it was envisaged that family systems would be strengthened, family members would be more attuned to each other and that the family would be more able to provide a safe space for the direct victim between sessions. Furthermore family members would be enabled to attend to their own processes of integration regarding the CSA.

Intervention research guided this study aimed at developing tools for the helping profession. The research question focused on what the typical components would be of an integrated family play therapy approach. Participant groups included professionals working in the field of CSA. Focus groups and discussion groups with such professionals and also a literature review helped the researcher to identify functional elements to be included in a preliminary family play therapy model that was applied to four families who were affected by CSA. During the family play therapy sessions rich information was obtained on the experiences of families. Based on the data collection from the various participant groups an integrated family play therapy model was developed. Findings are reported in three articles. Article 1 outlines the views of professionals on family play therapy within the context of child sexual abuse in South Africa. The professional participants agreed that individual intervention in the context of CSA is not the ideal and that systemic, Gestalt-based family play therapy may offer avenues for trauma integration for family members. They also indicated that they do not have adequate knowledge and skills to engage in family play therapy. They made some suggestions for the incorporation of play in family play therapy interventions. The second article captured the experiences of family members as expressed in the family play therapy context and article 3 outlined an integrated family play therapy model based on the previous phases of the intervention research.

Key words: Child sexual abuse, field theory, family play therapy, Gestalt therapy
Die seksuele mishandeling van kinders (SMK) is 'n groot kommer in die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing. Hoewel beleide en wetgewing gerig word op die beskerming van kinders, is die hoë voorvalkoers van die seksuele mishandeling van kinders 'n aanduiding van probleme in die samelewing wat nie genoegsaam met die huidige dienstlewing aangespreek kan word nie. Individuele intervensies met kinders wat direk deur SMK geaffekteer word, is steeds die norm, en selfs hierdie dienste is onvoldoende om die hoë aantal kinders wat deur SMK geaffekteer word, te akkommode. 'n Polariteit bestaan ten opsigte van die tekort aan maatskaplike werkers teenoor die behoefte aan intervensie vir hierdie kwesbare groep. Innoverende en effektiewe benaderings tot intervensie vir families wat deur SMK geaffekteer is, is duidelik nodig. Gebaseer op praktiese ervaring in die veld van SMK was die navorser geïnteresseerd in familie-spetlerapie as 'n moontlike benadering om SMK aan te spreek. Nie net sal meer mense geraak word deur beperkte dienste nie, maar deur familielede by die intervensie te betrek, is die moontlikheid daargestel dat familiestelsels versterk sal word, dat familielede meer tot mekaar ingestel sal wees en dat dit vir die familie meer moontlik sal wees om 'n veilige ruimte vir die direkte slagoffer tussen sessies te verskaf. Verder sal dit vir familielede moontlik wees om hul eie integrasieprosesse ten opsigte van die SMK aan te spreek.

Intervensienavorsing het hierdie studie, gerig op die ontwikkeling van hulpmiddels vir die hulpverleningsprofessie, gele. Die navorsingsvraag het gefokus op wat die tipiese komponente van 'n geintegreerde familie-spetlerapie-benadering sal wees. Deelnemende groepe het professionele persone wat werk in die SMK veld ingesluit. Fokusgroep en besprekingsgroep met hierdie professionele persone sowel as 'n literatuuroorsig het die navorser gehelp om die funksionele elemente wat in die voorlopige familie-spetlerapie model ingesluit moet word, te bepaal, wat op vier families wat deur SMK geaffekteer is, toegepas is. Gedurende die familie-spetlerapiesessies is ryke inligting ten opsigte van die ervarings van die families bekom. Gebaseer op die data-insameling vanaf die verskeie deelnemende groepe is 'n geintegreerde familie-spetlerapiemodel ontwikkel. Die bevindinge word in drie artikels gerapporteer. Artikel 1 omlyn die sienings van professionele persone oor familie-spetlerapie binne die konteks van die seksuele mishandeling van kinders in Suid-Afrika. Die professionele deelnemers het saamgestem dat individuele intervensie binne die konteks van SMK nie die ideaal is nie en dat sistemiese, Gestalt-gebaseerde familie-spetlerapie moontlik weë kan bied vir trauma-integrasie vir familielede. Hulle het ook aangetoon dat hulle nie oor voldoende kennis en vaardighede beskik om familie-spetlerapie toe te pas nie. Hulle het 'n
aantal aanbevelings gemaak vir die inkorporasie van speel in familie-spelterapiere\-intervensies. Die tweede artikel het die ervarings van familielede, soos uitgedruk gedurende die familie-spelterapi-kontaksessies, vasgevang, en artikel 3 het ’n oorsig verskaf oor ’n geïntegreerde familie-spelterapiemodel, gebaseer op die vorige fases van die intervensienvorsing.

Sleutelwoorde: Seksuele mishandeling van kinders, veldteorie, familie-spelterapie, Gestalt-terapie
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface........................................................................................................................................ i
Declaration.................................................................................................................................... ii
Letter of permission ....................................................................................................................... iii
Editor’s letter (Language)........................................................................................................... iv
Editor’s letter (Technical formatting) ........................................................................................... v
Acknowledgements ....................................................................................................................... vi
Summary....................................................................................................................................... vii
Opsomming.................................................................................................................................... viii
Table of contents ........................................................................................................................... x

SECTION A:
ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH ......................................................... 1

PART 1: RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND METHODOLOGY ............................ 2
1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................... 2
2. ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT ............................................................... 2
3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES ......................................................................................................... 5
  3.1 General aim ........................................................................................................................ 5
  3.2 Objectives .......................................................................................................................... 5
4. CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT ................................................................. 6
5. PARADIGMATIC ASSUMPTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES ....................................... 6
6. SCIENTIFIC PARADIGM ............................................................................................... 9
  6.1 Theoretical frameworks .................................................................................................... 9
7. DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPTS ..................................................................................... 11
  7.1 Sexual abuse ..................................................................................................................... 11
  7.2 Family ............................................................................................................................... 12
  7.3 Family play therapy ......................................................................................................... 12
8. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION .................................................................................. 13
  8.1 Literature review ............................................................................................................... 13
  8.2 Research methodology ..................................................................................................... 14
  8.2.1 Design .......................................................................................................................... 14
  8.3 Research procedure ......................................................................................................... 16
8.3.1 Problem analysis and project planning ................................................................. 16
8.3.2 Identifying and involving clients ........................................................................... 16
8.3.2.1 Sampling ............................................................................................................ 17
8.4 Gaining entry and cooperation from settings ......................................................... 21
8.5 Information gathering and synthesis phase .............................................................. 22
8.5.1 Method of data collection ......................................................................................... 22
8.5.1.1 Using existing information sources .................................................................. 22
8.5.1.2 Identifying functional elements of successful models ........................................ 23
8.6 Design, early development, pilot testing and data analysis ........................................ 23
8.6.1 Data analysis ........................................................................................................... 24
8.7 Evaluation, advanced development .......................................................................... 25
8.8 Dissemination ............................................................................................................ 25
9. ETHICS ....................................................................................................................... 25
9.1 Informed consent ....................................................................................................... 26
9.2 Voluntary participation ............................................................................................ 27
9.3 Role of the researcher .............................................................................................. 27
9.4 Trustworthiness ........................................................................................................ 28
10. REPORT LAYOUT .................................................................................................... 30

SECTION A: PART 2 ..................................................................................................... 33

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ......................................................................................... 33
2.1 Problem statement ................................................................................................. 33
2.1.1 Child sexual abuse within the South African context .......................................... 33
2.1.2 Effects of child sexual abuse on direct victims .................................................. 35
2.1.3 Effects on family .................................................................................................. 36
2.1.4 Service delivery ................................................................................................... 37
2.1.5 Family play therapy and CSA ............................................................................. 38
2.2 Theoretical grounding for family play therapy ......................................................... 40
2.2.1 Gestalt therapy .................................................................................................... 37
2.2.2 Gestalt play therapy ........................................................................................... 41
2.2.3 Holism ................................................................................................................ 42
2.2.4 Awareness ........................................................................................................... 42
2.2.5 Dialogue .............................................................................................................. 43
2.2.6 Field theory ........................................................................................................ 44
2.2.7 Bio-ecological systems theory ............................................................................. 45
SECTION B:
PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL ARTICLES

Article 1: The views of professionals on family play therapy within the context of child sexual abuse in South Africa

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

2. MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4. APPROACH

5. DESIGN

6. DATA COLLECTION

7. DATA ANALYSIS

8. ETHICS

9. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

10. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

REFERENCES

Article 2: The experiences of families affected by child sexual abuse as expressed in a family play therapy context

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

2. FAMILY SYSTEMS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CSA

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4. APPROACH

5. SAMPLE

6. DATA COLLECTION

7. DATA ANALYSIS

8. ETHICS

9. FINDINGS

10. THEME 1: REACTIONS OF CAREGIVERS

11. THEME 2: OTHER TRAUMAS: VULNERABILITY FACTORS IN COMMUNITY

REFERENCES
Theme 3: Change in family dynamics ................................................................. 103
Theme 4: Experiences of court process .............................................................. 104
CONCLUDING REMARKS .................................................................................. 107
REFERENCES ...................................................................................................... 108

Article 3: An integrated family play therapy model within the context of child sexual abuse in South Africa .............................................................. 113

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE ......................................................................... 113
MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY ........................................................................... 113
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY ......................................................... 115
Approach ............................................................................................................. 115
Design .................................................................................................................. 116
Participants ......................................................................................................... 116
Data collection and analysis ................................................................................ 117
Ethics .................................................................................................................... 119
INTEGRATIVE FAMILY PLAY THERAPY MODEL ............................................... 119
Fundamentals of family play therapy model ....................................................... 121
Family play therapy techniques ......................................................................... 124
INITIAL PHASE .................................................................................................... 125
Icebreakers .......................................................................................................... 126
Dustbin metaphor ................................................................................................. 127
Assessment techniques ......................................................................................... 127
The family gift ....................................................................................................... 128
Family puppet interview ....................................................................................... 129
Family genogram .................................................................................................. 129
Feelings tree .......................................................................................................... 130
CHANGE ORIENTATED PHASE ........................................................................ 131
Garbage bag technique ......................................................................................... 132
Boat, storm, lighthouse technique ...................................................................... 133
Family sand play technique .................................................................................. 134
Monster technique ............................................................................................... 135
FINAL PHASE ....................................................................................................... 137
Healing drawing activity ....................................................................................... 137
’Toss the ball game’ ............................................................................................. 138
IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK .................................................................. 139
CONCLUSION ...................................................................................................... 140
REFERENCES ...................................................................................................... 140
Table 1: Participant family members who took part in this study .................. 116
Figure 1: Application of the preliminary family play therapy model .......... 123
Table 2: Process and problem goals based on Dennison practice model (1989) ................................................................. 124
Figure 2: Family play therapy techniques in different phases ............... 125

SECTION C:
SUMMARY, EVALUATION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ......................................................... 146

SECTION C: SUMMARY, EVALUATION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ........................................ 147
1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 147
2. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH .......................................................................................... 147
3. EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH/CONCLUSIONS ...................................................... 148
4. CONCLUSIONS .............................................................................................................. 151
4.1 Conclusions on information gathered from professionals working in the field of CSA (Article 1) ................................................................. 151
4.2 Conclusions on the families' experiences of CSA (Article 2) ......................... 152
4.3 Conclusions on the family play therapy intervention (Article 3) .............. 153
5. CONCLUSION REGARDING THE RESEARCH AIM ..................................................... 155
6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH POLICY AND PRACTICE ................................................................. 156
7. SUMMARY STATEMENT .................................................................................................. 158
REFERENCES .......................................................................................................................... 160

SECTION D:
APPENDICES ....................................................................................................................... 161
APPENDIX 1: AUTHOR GUIDELINES ............................................................................... 162
Appendix 1A: Author guidelines: Social Work Practitioner Researcher ........ 163
Appendix 1B: Author guidelines: CARSA - Child Abuse Research A South African Journal Publishing Policy ................................................. 166
Appendix 1C: Author guidelines: Families in Society ................................................. 169
APPENDIX 2: FAMILY PLAY THERAPY SESSION TRANSCRIPTION ........................... 170
APPENDIX 3: CONSENT DOCUMENTS ............................................................................. 182
Appendix 3A: Consent to participate in research: caregivers ....................... 183
Appendix 3B: Consent to participate in research: child participant ............. 185
Appendix 3C: Consent to participate in research: professionals of focus group .......................................................... 187
Appendix 3D: Consent to participate in research: professionals - discussion groups ...................................................... 189
APPENDIX 4: EVALUATION FORM: FAMILY PARTICIPANTS ............... 191
APPENDIX 5: PHOTO EVIDENCE ........................................................................... 192

SECTION E:
CONSOLIDATED LIST OF REFERENCES ......................... 199

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................. 200
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Phases of intervention research applied to study .......................... 15
Table 1.2: Participant group 1 ........................................................................ 17
Table 1.3: Participant group 2 ........................................................................ 18
Table 1.4: Participant group 3 ........................................................................ 20
Table 1.5: Participant group 4 ........................................................................ 21

LIST OF DIAGRAMS

Diagram 2.1: Illustration of family play therapy in the context of child sexual abuse ......................................................................................... 37