

EXPERIENTIAL PLAY INTENSIVE JULY 2023

Playful Therapy: Matchmaking Play & Emotion

FACILITATORS: Tamara Strijack with Tracy Azevedo

Course Registrar: Rebecca (rebecca@neufeldinstitute.com)

Class Times: July 17 to July 21, 2023 [8:30 am to 4:30 pm Pacific Time]

Prerequisite: Neufeld Intensive I: Making Sense of Kids

Course Description

Developmental science has long been championing the healing power of the play mode, whether one is a child, an adolescent or an adult. However, in the field of therapy play is often overlooked and undervalued, often focused more on cognition and behaviour. Play can become marginalized or isolated into a particular model or approach, eclipsing its natural power. In this course, we will explore the purposeful dynamics of emotion and the inherent properties of play — and most importantly, the magical interplay of when they come together. We will play with the practical application across the lifespan. What does it look like to bring true play and playfulness into practice personally and professionally? What does it look like to matchmake play and emotion for those you care for and for yourself? With this insight of true play, we can see how play is nature's design to take care of us, no matter what one's role. We look forward to playing together with you!

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, the participant should:

1. Foster a deeper understanding of the purpose of emotion and to recognize the emotional roots underlying behaviour - for children, adolescents and adults.
2. Be able to recognize the inherent properties of play, and how play serves emotion.
3. Be able to facilitate practices that encourage the processing of emotion through the play mode.
4. Be able to identify one's own emotional playgrounds and matchmake others to the emotional playgrounds necessary for their emotional health and healing.

Course Learning Outcomes

- to cultivate an appreciation of the pivotal role of emotion in development, perception and behaviour
- to be aware of the overall purpose of emotion as well as the purpose of individual emotions
- to build a working model of emotion that can be applied across situations

- to outline the five stages of emotional development so healthy maturation can be fostered
- to be able to recognize and address the emotional roots of behaviour problems
- to increase our understanding of emotion and play and the relationship between them
- to appreciate play as a basic human need for both children and adults
- to bring play to our consciousness so we can compensate for its loss in our society
- to help those in our care find the play they need for emotional health and well-being
- to nurture our own playfulness
- to recognize playfulness as a key indicator of optimal functioning and well-being
- to see play as Nature's 'cocoon' for inner transformation
- to understand that play was meant to take care of our emotions
- to see play as natural therapy
- to integrate practices that facilitate outlets for emotion
- to find our own emotional playgrounds
- to matchmake those in our care to their own emotional playgrounds

Required Text and Materials

MacNamara, D. (2016). *Rest Play Grow*. Vancouver, BC: Aona Books.

Selected articles, readings, and supplemental resources to be provided.

Course Outline

Day 1: The purpose of emotion

Day 2: The emotional work of play

Day 3: Bringing play and emotion together

Day 4: Fleshing out the practices of play-full therapy

Day 5: Matchmaking to emotional playgrounds

Suggested Exercises for Reflection and Equipping

- A. Choose something from the course that impacted you personally and apply it in a creative way of your choosing (eg. song, poem, collage, painting, dance, sculpture, etc.). If you feel inclined, write some reflections to go along with your project describing how it ties into the course material and reflecting on what the process was like for you. You can also include how this might impact those in your care.
- B. Develop a play kit (or a tickle trunk) of activities/primers/prompts/creative expression materials that facilitate emotional playgrounds for those you work with throughout the lifespan.