

# Shut Downs, Closures, Quarantines Oh My! A Closer Look at the Powers of Play Therapy with the Children of COVID-19

*A Closer Look at the Powers of Play Therapy*

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MISSISSIPPI COUNSELING ASSOCIATION 2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

# Overview

- ▶ This seminar will provide registrants with an overview of the impact of COVID-19 upon children and the utilization of play therapy to support them moving forward.
- ▶ COVID-19 has impacted many in various ways, but for children the impact touches on the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic realms.
- ▶ Play therapy's curative powers of play offer support to children during critical times such as the COVID-10 pandemic and its long lasting continued impacts.
- ▶ Registrants will review outcome studies and discuss the provision of play therapy connected to the support its has for children presenting with social, emotional, behavioral, and academic impairments due to COVID-19.
- ▶ A follow up panel discussion with invited board members of the Mississippi Association for Play Therapy and members of MCA will be facilitated to provide an open discussion with the registrants.

# Objectives

- ▶ Identify the impact of COVID-19 and the provision of play therapy as a medium of support.
- ▶ Discuss the provision of play therapy to COVID-19 children.
- ▶ Discuss the provision of the therapeutic powers of play in play therapy with children impacted by COVID-19.
- ▶ Identify the continued support play therapy can offer children of COVID-19 during the continued impacts it brings.

# Presentation Outline

## Part 1 (9:00am – 9:50am)

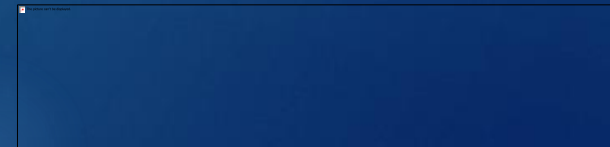
- Play Therapy & COVID-19 by Erin Dugan, PhD., LPC-S

## Part 2 (10:00-10:50am)

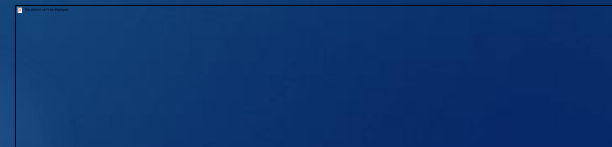
- Panel Discussion facilitated by Erin Dugan along with MSAPT members James Strickland, & Lynne Ethridge

# Audience

- ▶ School Counselors
- ▶ Community Agency
- ▶ Private Practice
- ▶ Hospital
- ▶ Play Therapists
- ▶ Other



Why did you sign up for this presentation?



A year and 8 months ago....



Hello! Dr. Dugan moved to  
my computer?



# New Service Provisions

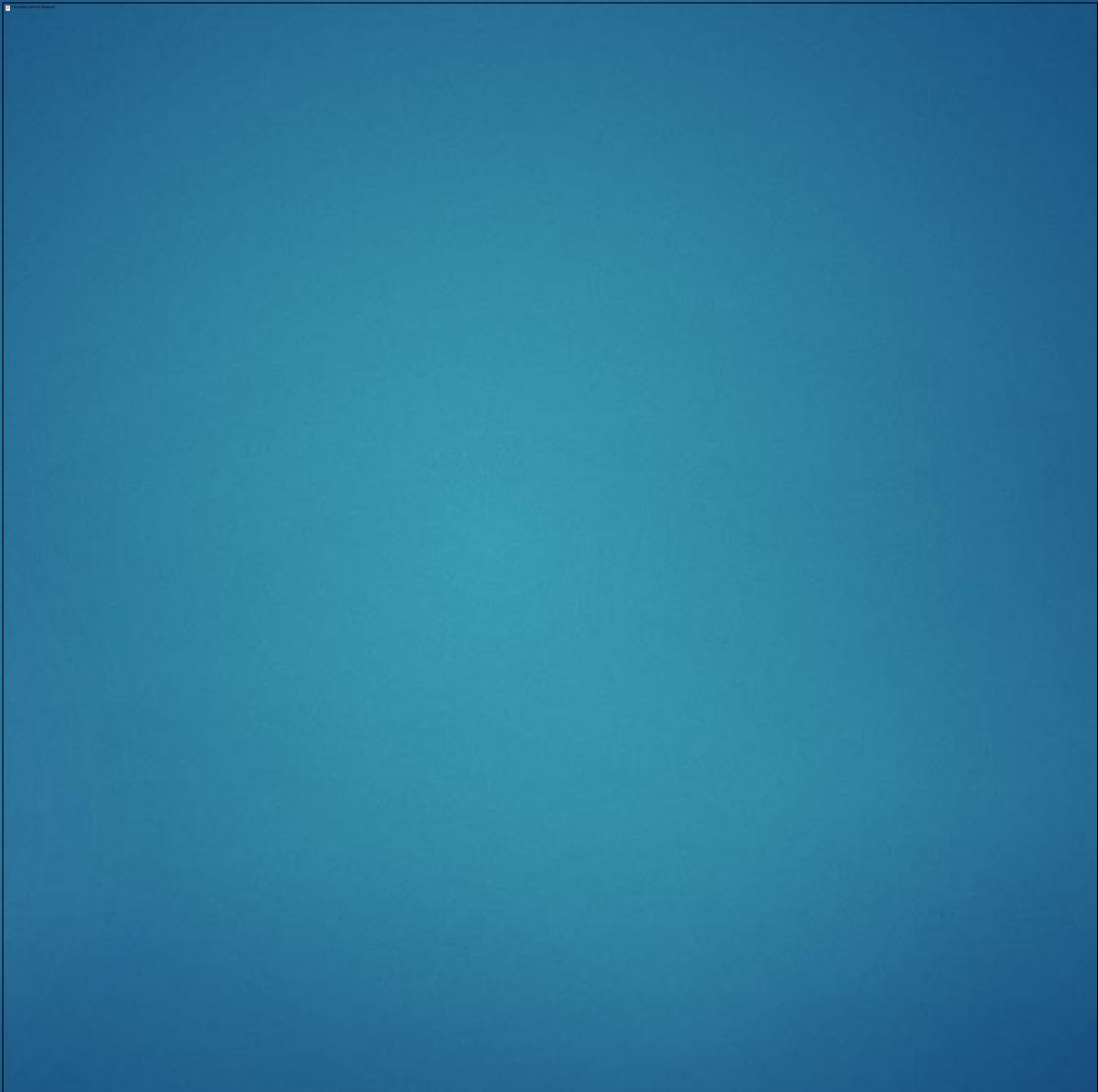
- ▶ What do we call it?
  - ▶ Telehealth?
  - ▶ Teletherapy?
  - ▶ Telemental Health?

# COVID-19's Impact

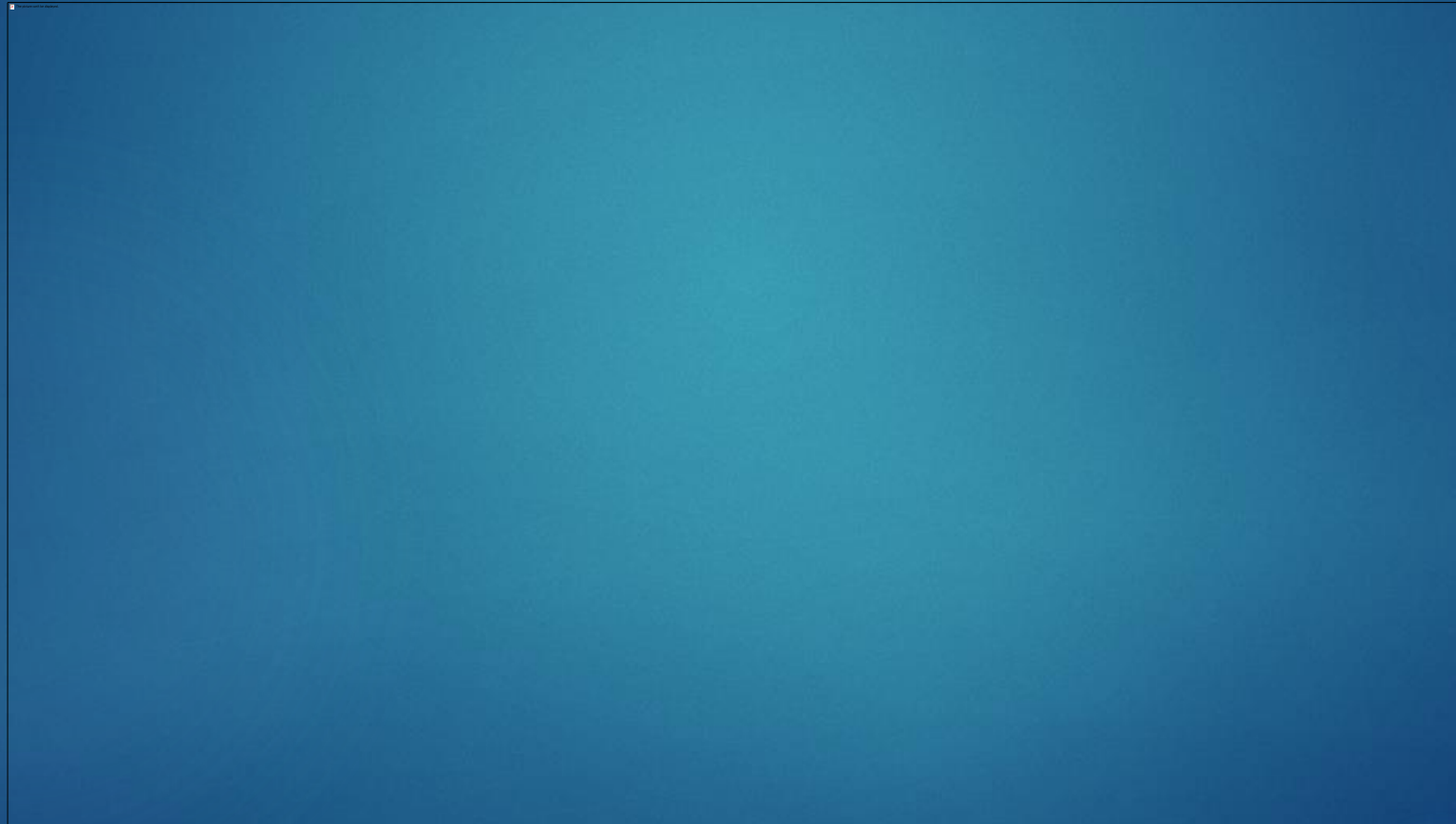
- ▶ Lack of Daily Typical Interactions & Physical Contact
  - ▶ Social
  - ▶ Emotional
  - ▶ Cognitive
  - ▶ Behavioral
  - ▶ Academic
  - ▶ Language

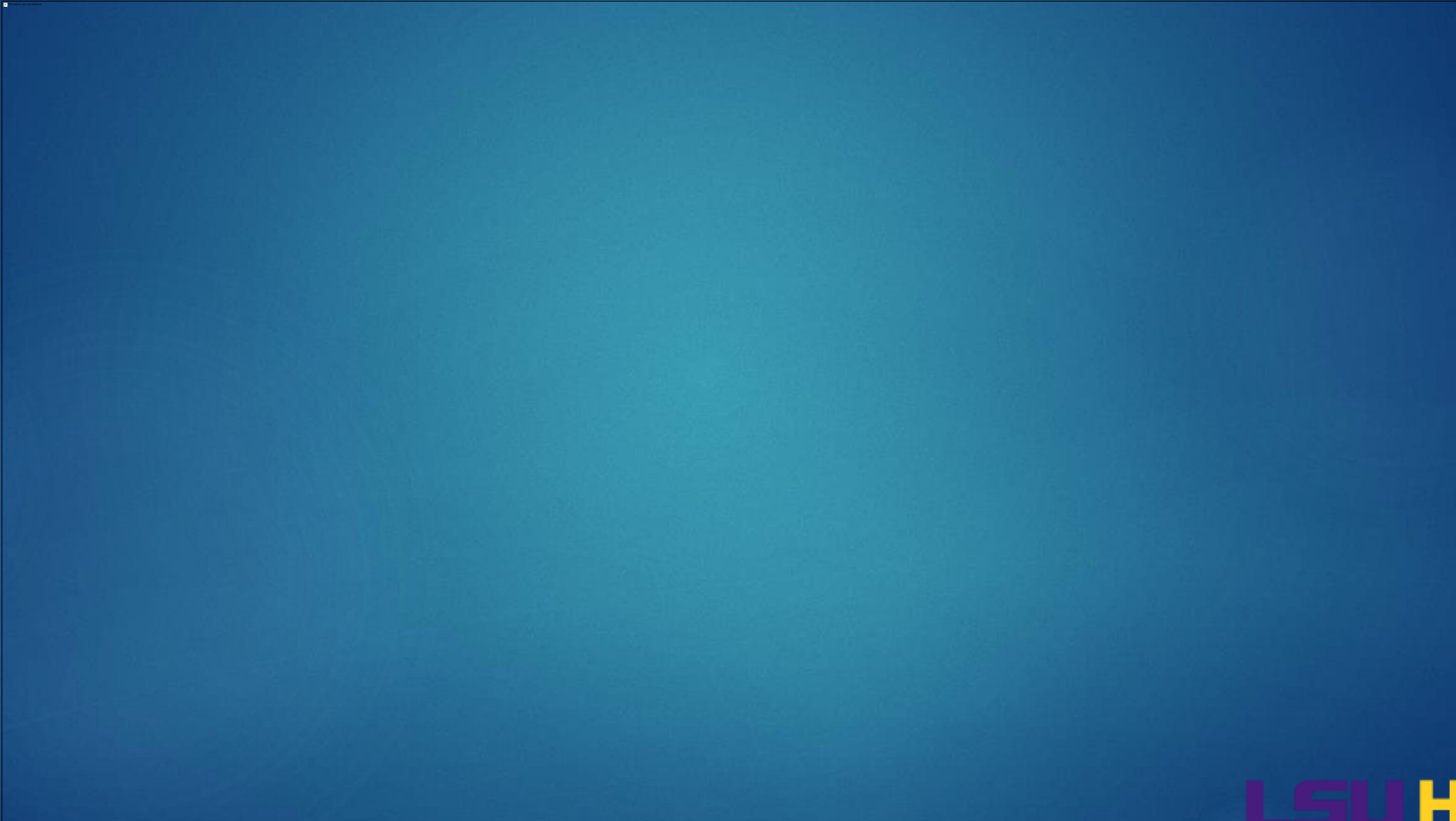
# Outcomes of COVID-19's Impact

- ▶ Social Decline & Isolation
- ▶ Emotional Turmoil
- ▶ Anxiety & Depression
- ▶ Lack of Understanding & Confusion
- ▶ Lack of Control from Parents
- ▶ Masks
  - ▶ Obstacles, behavioral problems, communication challenges, listening challenges
  - ▶ Sensory Implications
- ▶ Add in Typical Age & Stage Developmental Milestones
- ▶ Academic Regression or Stagnation
- ▶ Other



# Developmental Theories







# Play Therapy

“Play Therapy is based upon the fact that play is the child’s natural medium of self expression ... It is an opportunity which is given to the child to ‘play out’ his feelings and problems just as in certain types of adult therapy an individual ‘talks out’ his difficulties.”

*Virginia Axline*



# Telehealth

“All play therapists engaging in telehealth should be well-trained in the medium of providing mental health services online and should approach delivery with the highest level of ethical regard for confidentiality and ensuring client safety.”

- Dee Ray, March 2020

<https://thethoughtfulcounselor.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CCPT-Telehealth.pdf>

# Child Centered Play Therapy and Telehealth

- ▶ *“CCPT is heavily structured through the provision of the playroom (a contained environment of safety), the physical presence of the trained play therapist, and the child’s ability to lead the play. When the function of play for the child is symbolic expression, catharsis, and release, the potential for dysregulation within the child is likely. A child may become highly dysregulated in the context of working through their internal confusion, playing out their reactions to their perceived environment, or trying out various coping skills. During these times, the physical presence of the play therapist is necessary to send the message of physical and emotional safety. A real person who is there to walk with the child through this scary place of exploration. A play therapist who is breathing next to child. A play therapist who is connecting with the child through full body movement and facial expressions. A play therapist who can move closer to the child if needed. A play therapist that the child can touch if they need to feel grounded in reality and care. If done effectively, a child’s participation in CCPT evokes strong feelings and behaviors because the child is working on the edges of development, health, relationship, and regulation. Hence, the facilitation of CCPT sessions is rarely a good fit for an online medium.”*

- Dee Ray, March 2020

# Utilizing Play Therapy & Telehealth

## Ethical and Best Practice Considerations

- ▶ “Play therapists are ethically required to provide services within the scope of their practice, gaining the appropriate education, knowledge, and supervision to do so. Although typical laws governing mental health practice may be rescinded in times of crises, it is each professional’s ethical obligation to obtain appropriate education, training, and supervision.”

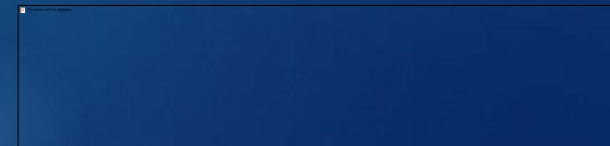
### ***Ethical Considerations for Implementing Telemental Health in Play Therapy: A Reflective Exercise for Play Therapists Based on the Association for Play Therapy’s Best Practice Guidelines***

Erin Dugan, PhD, LPC-S, RPT-S Dee C. Ray, PhD, LPC-S, NCC, RPT-S Sueann Kenney-  
Noziska, MSW, LCSW, RPT-S

[https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.a4pt.org/resource/resmgr/telehealth/Dugan\\_Ray\\_SKN\\_-\\_Telemental\\_H.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.a4pt.org/resource/resmgr/telehealth/Dugan_Ray_SKN_-_Telemental_H.pdf)

# Utilizing Play Therapy & Telehealth Ethical and Best Practice Considerations

- ▶ A.3 Rights of Clients Play therapists inform clients and/or their legal guardian, when applicable, of the purposes, goals, techniques, procedural limitations, potential and foreseeable risks, risks of inconsistent compliance, and benefits of the services to be performed.
  - ▶ 1. Have you informed parents of the procedural and therapeutic limitations and risks involved in telemental health delivery of play therapy?
  - ▶ 2. Have you informed parents that there is currently no research that examines the effectiveness of play therapy through a telemental health platform?
  
- ▶ A.3 Rights of Clients Play therapists inform clients and/or their legal guardian, when applicable, of the purposes, goals, techniques, procedural limitations, potential and foreseeable risks, risks of inconsistent compliance, and benefits of the services to be performed.
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# Alternative to Using CCPT in Telehealth

- ▶ “1. Conduct parent consultations in which the therapist engages in support and problem-solving with the parent to address immediate issues.
- ▶ 2. Engage in skill-building with parents in which you use the opportunity to teach relationship and communication skills.
- ▶ 3. Conduct Child-Parent Relationship Therapy/Filial Therapy with parents in individual or group online format. Caution: You should engage in CPRT/Filial only if you have been trained to do so.
- ▶ 4. Move to more directive techniques related to skill-building with the child. From a CCPT perspective, directive techniques are driven by the therapist’s agenda, and hence, would not be the optimal intervention for children who are struggling emotionally and behaviorally. However, directive techniques are likely to keep a child temporarily regulated which is a worthy treatment goal when helping children maneuver through a crisis period when emotional support systems are limited.”

- Dee Ray, March 2020

# Provide Emotional Support to Play Therapy Clients Via Telehealth with Parents

Sue C. Bratton and Garry L. Landreth

[Dr. Sue Bratton & Dr. Landreth](#)

1. Filial Therapy/Child Parent Relationship Therapy
  2. Parent Consultation
3. Parent Consultation & Special Play Time Support  
Videos + handouts

# Special Time Handout

## Special Time

Sue C. Bratton, Garry L. Landreth, and Mary Bennett

*Do's & Dont's of Special Time*

*Purpose*

*Skill Concepts*

# Therapeutic Powers of Play

- ▶ Self-Expression
- ▶ Access to Unconscious
- ▶ Direct and Indirect Teaching
- ▶ Abreaction
- ▶ Stress Inoculation
- ▶ Mastering of Fears and Counterconditioning of Negative Affect
- ▶ Catharsis



# Therapeutic Powers of Play

- ▶ Positive Emotion
- ▶ Competence and Self-Control
- ▶ Sublimation
- ▶ Attachment Formation
- ▶ Rapport Building and Relationship Enhancement
- ▶ Moral Judgment and Behavior Rehearsal

# Therapeutic Powers of Play

- ▶ Empathy and Perspective Taking
- ▶ Power/Control
- ▶ Sense of Self
- ▶ Creative Problem Solving
- ▶ Reality Testing
- ▶ Fantasy Compensation

# Play Reveals...

- ▶ What the child has experienced
- ▶ Reactions to what was experienced
- ▶ Feelings about what was experienced
- ▶ What the child wishes, wants, or needs
- ▶ The child's perception of self

# The Current Situation



# The Current Situation

- ▶ Hybrid Approach
  - ▶ In Person Services vs. Telehealth Services
  - ▶ Combination
  - ▶ Parent Consultations

# The Current Situation

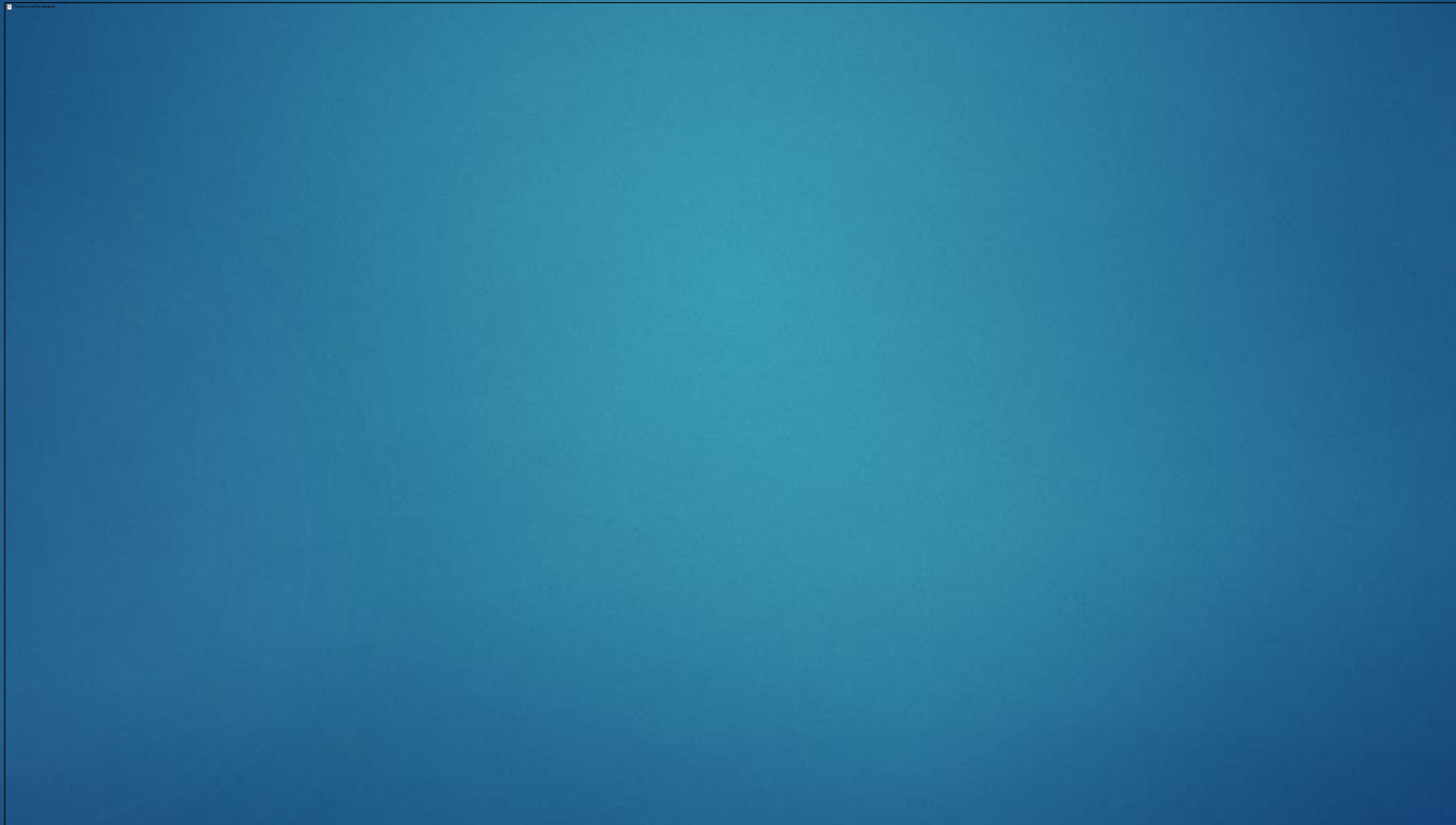
- ▶ COVID-19 Policies & Procedures
  - ▶ Temperature Checks
  - ▶ Washing Procedures
  - ▶ Masks
  - ▶ Screening
  - ▶ Proof of Vaccination

# Long Term Effects COVID-19

- ▶ Social
- ▶ Emotional
- ▶ Behavioral
- ▶ Cognitive
- ▶ Developmental
- ▶ Attachment
- ▶ Physical
- ▶ Academic

# Considerations

- ▶ Developmental Models





# Considerations

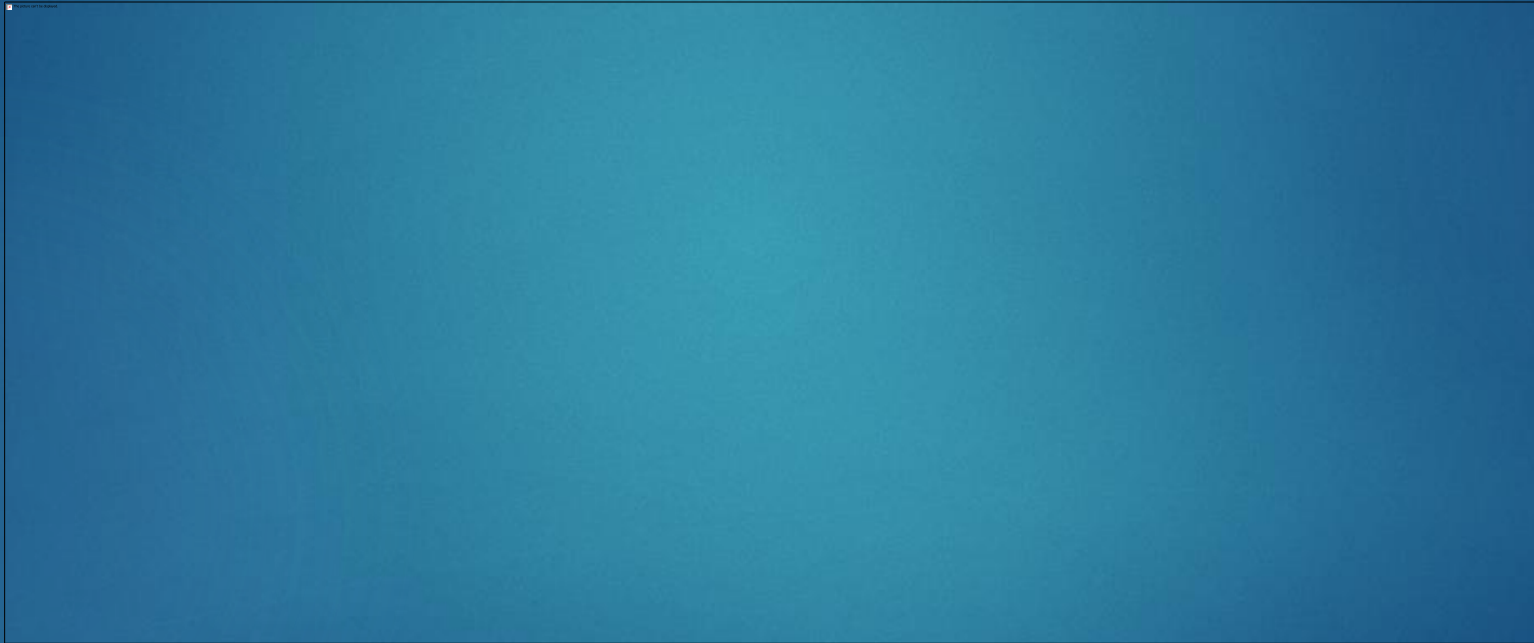
- ▶ Presenting Issues/Challenges
- ▶ Diagnosis(es)
- ▶ Biopsychosocial History
  - ▶ Demographics
  - ▶ Family
  - ▶ Medical
  - ▶ Educational
  - ▶ Social
  - ▶ Impact of COVID-19

# Before You Leave

- ▶ Scan your name badge as you leave at the back door
- ▶ Complete your survey/evaluation for CE credit

Need Help?  
Ask A Volunteer!!!

THANK YOU!!



# References

<https://thethoughtfulcounselor.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CCPT-Telehealth.pdf>

[https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.a4pt.org/resource/resmgr/telehealth/Dugan\\_Ray\\_SKN\\_-\\_Telemental\\_H.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.a4pt.org/resource/resmgr/telehealth/Dugan_Ray_SKN_-_Telemental_H.pdf)

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<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87465372229>

# Panel Discussion

▶ What have been your Clinical experiences of providing Play Therapy through COVID-19?

# Panel Discussion

- ▶ Which play therapy approaches did you use during COVID-19 early months? Now?
- ▶ CCPT, Filial, CPRT, Family Play Therapy, Group Play Therapy, Other

# Panel Discussion

- ▶ What areas of opportunity & discovery in Play Therapy did you experience?



# Panel Discussion

▶ What was the presenting symptomatology of clientele pre-COVID vs. current clientele?

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THANK YOU!!

