



Network News

Winter 2009

The Oregon Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

Ethical Issues in Play Therapy

By **Stephanie Meagher**
MFT Student, George Fox University

Although play as a therapeutic modality was introduced over 80 years ago, it is still considered new (Carmichael, 2006), and has only experienced major growth and development in the last 20 years (Bratton, Ray, Rhine, & Jones, 2005). Most research and writing in play therapy focuses on efficacy, with little available that addresses daily clinical issues such as ethics. In 2001, researchers Jackson, Puddy and Lazicki-Puddy were unable to find any published research that addressed the ethical practices of play therapists. Additionally, Seymour and Rubin (2006) state that less than half of current graduate level play therapy courses mention ethics in their syllabi. This problem extends beyond graduate programs. The APT's online training includes nothing on ethics, and this year's annual conference brochure shows just three of the sixty-two workshops devoted directly to ethical issues (www.a4pt.org).

Although the Association for Play Therapy (APT) has developed voluntary practice guidelines, they are general in nature and are relevant, but not specific, to daily clinical work. At the same time, ethical codes from licensing boards and professional organizations may not address the "unique, multi-layered ethical dilemmas" (Seymour & Rubin, 2006, p. 104) experienced by play therapists. It is important that play therapists have a plan for addressing ethical dilemmas.

The Principles, Principals, and Process (P³) Model is an integrative and play therapy-relevant model developed by Seymour & Rubin (2006). This model allows play therapists from diverse backgrounds to apply their historical ethical guidelines to specific challenges they face in their practice. This three-part model was developed in response to the suggestion that "... relational, as well as rational factors, should be considered..." (Seymour & Rubin, 2006, p. 105).

When using the P³ model, the therapist considers the historic ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficance, fidelity, justice, and veracity to guide him and help determine which is the primary concern in the particular case. Additionally, the clinician considers the specific guidelines from his therapeutic discipline as well as any other guidelines such as employer policies that may be applied (Seymour & Rubin, 2006).

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Interested in writing an article for the Network News? OAMFT is looking for articles for the Spring 2009 issue. Articles should be roughly 500-1,000 words in length and should include any references cited in the article. Please submit in Word format. The next deadline for articles and advertising is March 1st. Articles and advertising can be submitted via email to: oamftboard@gmail.com

Find us on the web at:

www.oamft.org



Editorial Policy

The **NETWORK NEWS** is the official newsletter of the Oregon Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (OAMFT), and is published four times each year in Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring. OAMFT is a state division of the American Association for Marriage and Therapy (AAMFT), 112 South Alfred Street Alexandria, VA, 22314-3061, www.aamft.org. Membership in OAMFT and subscription to the newsletter is provided to Oregon professionals upon their meeting the minimum educational and clinical requirements for membership in the national organization, AAMFT. Copies of the *Network News* can be made available to nonmembers upon request to the Editor.

Articles submitted by mail must be in Microsoft Word (or compatible program) and submitted by mail on a CD. Articles may also be submitted via email. See contact info below. Photographs must be submitted in .jpeg format and ready for use (no editing necessary). If return of materials is desired, please send a self-addressed envelope with sufficient return postage.

EDITORIAL POLICY: Opinions expressed by the Editorial staff of the *Network News*, in articles published and Letters to the Editor, do not necessarily reflect the views of AAMFT, the OAMFT Officers and Board of Directors or the OAMFT membership.

NETWORK NEWS OAMFT

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(Voicemail checked on a weekly basis.)

News items, articles of interest to MFTs, responses to published articles, and letters to the Editor are invited and welcomed!

Do you have a job posting to share? Please email us at oamftboard@gmail.com with the information. All job postings are free in the Network News!

Address Change??

Update your new contact information on AAMFT's website @ www.aamft.org.

OAMFT uses the AAMFT online database to send Oregon members information, such as this newsletter, Network News.

Stay updated on your state's association by keeping your address current at AAMFT.

ADVERTISE in the NETWORK NEWS

Advertise your programs, practice, conferences, job openings or office rental space. Display advertising must be submitted print-ready and prepaid at the following rates (add \$35 if setup is required):

<i>Full page:</i>	<i>\$150</i>	<i>Half page:</i>	<i>\$125</i>
<i>1/4 page:</i>	<i>\$75</i>	<i>Business card size:</i>	<i>\$35</i>

Classified ad rate: \$35 per 75 words (\$35 minimum charge). Discounts for multiple issue advertising. The Editor reserves the right to reject, abridge or modify any advertising or other submitted material as deemed appropriate and necessary.

Ethical Issues Cont'd.

By Stephanie Meagher
MFT Student, George Fox University

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The effect of a purely rational decision making process is balanced by inviting input on the case from the principals of the relationship: the client, the counselor, the collaterals, and the community. The client's voice is particularly vital in working through ethical decisions in play therapy, as it serves to remind the therapist of the power differential between child and therapist. Collateral voices including family members, teachers, and medical professionals add clues to the social context of the problem. Collateral voices may include colleagues and supervisors. Finally, the community voice adds to the therapist's understanding of the gender, race, ethnicity, and cultural influences that impact the therapeutic relationship (Seymour & Rubin, 2006).

The engagement of the principles and principals in dialogue defines the final step in this model. It becomes a natural integration of identifying all the principles guiding the ethical situation, as well as the principals whose voices are informing the final decisions. Seymour and Rubin (2006) explain that once dialogues have taken place, and the information has been synthesized, the therapist begins to develop a therapeutic response (the process).

Seymour and Rubin (2006) have developed a model for problem solving which gives play therapists from all disciplinary backgrounds a clear process for making ethical decisions. The Principles, Principals, and Process (P³) model addresses a multitude of ethical issues by taking into consideration the differences in educational background of the counselor, as well as the unique contributing factors to each therapist's ethical dilemmas. ▲

To read the complete paper, please visit OAMFT's website at www.oamft.org and look under "Newsletters".

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Miller Elected to AAMFT Board



Congratulations John Miller, Ph.D.,
LMFT!

In the spring of 2008, John Miller, Ph.D. (OAMFT past president, 2002 and 2003) was elected by popular vote of the national membership to the board of directors of the AAMFT. This is John's second position at the national level, having recently served on the AAMFT Elections Council from 2004-2006. When asked about his goals, John discussed "the importance of advocating for the profession in these difficult economic times. This advocacy includes representation on Capitol Hill and continuing the fight for vendorship, and other inclusion policies that will facilitate access between MFTs and the consumers we serve." John travels to Washington D.C. this December for the first meeting with the AAMFT Board of Directors.

THERAPISTS WANTED

FOR RESEARCH STUDY ON:

Therapist healing after client suicide

What: Research study as part of the thesis for M.A. Counseling degree for Pacifica Graduate Institute

PURPOSE: to gather information through personal interview on grieving and healing processes from psychotherapists who have experienced the suicide of a client who was currently in therapy with them

Who: Psychotherapists, Psychologists, Interns, & Trainees who have experienced a client suicide

For: 1 hour private and CONFIDENTIAL interview and optional 2nd interview; participation is voluntary; informed consent required.

When: Dec. 2008 to mid-Jan. 2009; interview scheduled at your convenience.

Where: Interviews conducted at **The Grotto Counseling Center**, 8840 NE Skidmore Street, Portland, OR 97294

For information contact: Anna B. Marin;
anna.marin@my.pacifica.edu; 503-872-6654

President's Corner

By Shelley A. Hanson, MA, LPC, LMFT
OAMFT President

Hello MFTs of Oregon!

I am anxious to share with you some thoughts that sprang from my trip to the AAMFT Annual Conference and Leadership Training which I attended in Memphis in October. What an amazing thing to be with thousands of MFTs from all around the world. It is truly a field of very good people and it is so encouraging to see so many people striving toward excellence in mental health care.

The plenary speakers were excellent and came from various professional realms who challenged us on how we might more fully serve our communities with purpose and the best standard of ethics. Workshops included fascinating topics such as the ethics of working within the judicial system as a therapist, Hope: its definition and the ethics we face as we promote hope within a system; to personality disorders and divorce. It seemed there was something there for any and everyone!

Memphis is certainly an American city worthy to visit. From the spectacular blues on Beal Street, to eating a year's worth of barbecued ribs, one truly gets a piece of Americana in Memphis. The most significant time for me was when I visited the Civil Rights Museum. It was profoundly moving to see the Lorraine Hotel, the cars, the history of this struggle here in our own country, and then the room and balcony where Martin Luther King was slain. As I walked through that history, I could not help but recognize that our presidential election was upon us: an historic event, with the possibility of the first black President of the United States.

In systems theory we MFTs understand the concept of homeostasis, of systems striving to stay the same. But on the eve of this election, with the images and voices of those who struggled to change the system that oppressed the minority and the marginalized, I was moved deeply to think that brave persons – in fact, brave parents – risked their lives to make a different system for their children.

This brings me back around to the conference on ethics, and the potent guideline that MFTs hold: the value to further social justice. What will that look like in the next decade? How will this new context stretch us, challenge us, and move us forward in truly living out what the Preamble states, "We hold it self-evident that all men are created equally"? Who will experience marginalization and who will know power? We live in challenging and changing times. MFTs, trained to conceptualize context and systems, may be in a place to equip and serve others unlike any other.

As 2009 approaches, some significant work is to be done by MFTs around Oregon. Approximately 1,000 National Guardsmen will be deployed to Iraq in May. MFTs may serve these families by signing up for militaryonesource.com where you can register as a therapist to sit with these families as they face ambiguous losses.

Additionally this year, we are focusing on the legislative work to bring consumer protection and consumer choice to Oregonians. This effort will hopefully broaden the accessibility of mental health services to more Oregonians throughout the state and provide legal guidelines for practicing as a counselor/therapist

in Oregon, thereby protecting the public from unqualified persons who simply chose to hang out a shingle. We hope that all MFTs will become more fully informed about this effort and take the opportunity to visit with your local representative about this.

Lastly, the OAMFT is seeking new and techno-current ways to serve members throughout Oregon. We are continually updating our website and hope you visit it regularly. We also have created a Google group where members may ask to join and this chat room is used to discuss relevant issues for therapists and/or students. We are currently exploring *Linked-In*, a sort of *Facebook* for professionals, to see if by creating a link amongst therapists would increase accessibility for the general population to find MFTs. Take a look yourselves and consider becoming *Linked-In*. We'll see how it works and see if we can reach more people! All of this, of course, can be linked from our website at www.oamft.org.

I hope that the holiday season is one of rich relationship for all of you and that 2009 is one of purpose and community for all of us marriage and family therapists of Oregon.

All the best,
Shelley A. Hanson



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The Wish to Stay the Same While Changing—Climbing Up the Brain

By Marti Olsen Laney, PsyD, MFT

OAMFT Member

“One of the secrets of life is to make stepping stones out of stumbling blocks.”

.....*Jack Penn*

As 2008 draws to a close we find ourselves living in a period of change and uncertainty. Change yanks people out of their comfort zones because it requires adapting, unfamiliar responses, energy, and the ability to stay calm. Therefore changes, like recessions and uncertainties offer potential growth. Picture a baby taking a few steps, falling, getting up, standing and forgetting how to sit down, finally learning to stagger forward like a drunken elf. Babies tire, return to crawling, refuel and try again. They learn to restrain their bodies, refuel energy, accept encouragement, fall down and relish growth. Finally, getting the hang of walking, proud as peacocks, they pitch forward, staggering toward the unknown. As therapists, we encourage practicing, learning and growth. But how do we help clients who wish their problems would disappear yet they are terrified of growth?

Brain Cycles: Creating Simple or Complex Perceptions

Neuroscience offers insights into the terror of growing. Let's lift the lid of the brain and peak at its inner workings. The brain's main task is to build perceptions. They help us make sense of the world. In the lower brain, perceptions are constructed with sensory data and old memories. These snap impressions are evaluated by the threat system, triggering fear. Unconscious fear drives, “do something”, “anger” or “freeze”, since the fight, flight or fright system is fired up. Emotions/actions are not separate. A simple cycle goes like this: John sees a shadow, he's terrified, positive it's a dangerous intruder, he grabs his gun and fires. Shooting his cat. This automatic pilot system, referred to as the ‘quick and dirty pathway’, was a survival strategy that evolved thousands of years ago.

The brain has evolved from simple to complex. If clients don't act, overriding the threat system, they build complex perceptions. A snap impression collects memories, associations, subtle emotions and experiences as it travels up pathways into networks. Feelings and actions take separate paths. Emotions loose intensity and soften into signals. Actions become choices. Soothing internal voices replace harsh ones. Complex perceptions increase flexibility, awareness, thinking and self-reflection. In this higher brain cycle, John sees a shadow, feels scared, pauses and remembers when a similar shadow turned out to be his cat, Mittens. He checks it out. Sure enough, it's Mittens. This complex cycle evolved to help us live in a complex social society.

Stranger and Strangeness Anxiety

When change or growth is required, clients in survival mode feel threatened; they become angry, shut down or run for the hills. Any change ignites “strangeness” anxiety. It's similar to “stranger” anxiety. At about eight months babies feel anxious around strangers. They see individuals: strangers and familiar people. Preparing for later two person relationships. “Strangeness” anxiety is a fear of being unfamiliar to *ourselves*. It's a fear of internal conflicts, mixed emotions, differences and changes. Clients feel threatened

when they become aware of their dissociated, denied or cut off parts. We can help them reduce the threat by recognizing and accepting internal or external differences.

Climbing up the Brain Stem

During this time of change we can practice these five suggestions (add to your own) to increase a client's brain integration:

1. **Recognize:** Acknowledge emotional reality, uncertain times are frightening.
2. **Calm Down:** Increase self-soothing by speaking in a calming voice, practice relaxing and deep breathing together.
3. **Feelings Don't Require Action:** Help your client notice their subtle feelings. Separate out feelings, thoughts and actions. Explain how emotions and thoughts create complex perceptions. Encourage reflecting before acting. Explain that they lead to healthier choices and more satisfying experiences.
4. **Whoa Nelly:** Sitting in our offices, clients can't take action so they tend to jump from topic to topic to avoid uncomfortable emotions and thoughts. We can slow them down. In the world of physiology, movement is activity in the body or the brain. Impulsivity is interrupted when clients move their brains instead of their bodies. Slowing down the body creates richer perceptions and increases brain integration. Brain movement is chatting, pausing, thinking, imagining, wondering, describing, writing, drawing, reflecting, discussing dreams and noticing subtle emotions.
5. **Distinct Language:** Language organizes our internal and external experiences. The quickest way to increase brain complexity is to

improve a client's ability to describe detailed experiences. Lower brain functioning is expressed in concrete or global words. Clients stuck in concrete

“Help your client to notice their subtle feelings...Encourage reflecting before acting.”

tend to report dry details, “I took Burnside, then I turned right, etc.”

With concrete language, the goal is to connect the person to bodily sensations. They are over-thinking. I might ask, “What does your chair feel like?” “What is the air like?” “What was on the radio?”

The goal is to increase sensory awareness and translate bodily emotions. “Butterfly's are flapping in my tummy.”

I might offer a guess, “Were you afraid?” Now they can balance thinking with feeling.

The other extreme is using global or polarized language. “I feel bad.” or “My son is great.”

With global language the goal is to tease out subtle emotions or thoughts. I might say, “When did you notice feeling bad?” “Where were you?” “Was your body tense?”

“Well, my stomach was tight, I guess I felt left out.”

“Did that start at the party?”

“Yes, my boyfriend was laughing with some girl.”

Bingo. Tracking emotional shifts and encouraging details fleshes out experiences, helping people climb up their brain stem.

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Movie & Book Reviews

Submitted by members of OAMFT

Book Review: *Sober Truths: The Making of an Honest Woman*, Jill Kelly, PhD

(2008 Oregon Book Award finalist for literary excellence)

Is an alcoholic born or made in life? When and how does a child learn to self-soothe to escape the terrors of what she cannot possibly control? In **Sober Truths: The Making of an Honest Woman**, Jill Kelly's eloquent memoir reveals how a child, then adolescent, then adult quelled her lack of connection and her fears. Kelly first learned to drown out her feelings of fear, loneliness, and disconnection by relaxing "into the soothing warmth of the chocolate," which "saved my sanity"; later she turned to alcohol. Her very personal and honest stories reveal the origins of her addiction, her struggles through mid-life with the progression of the disease, and then a long period of learning how to be and thrive in life without anesthetic.

This memoir, a finalist for this year's Oregon Book Award, is a great contribution to individuals, families, and therapists who are working to unlock the mystery that lies within the substance user/abuser, in particular, the woman who struggles with self-identity and emotional trauma. In the first half, Kelly, with a great deal of care, communicates to the reader exactly how she got to the bottom—relationship by relationship. By offering a window into her personal life, this book provides a revealing view of the struggle facing the individual grappling with addiction, all written in a clear, accessible style. Gradually Kelly learned to shift the emphasis from punishing herself for emotional wounding outside her control to trusting herself and doing the hard work of living sober. She describes her climb upward as stepping "... out of a dank, dark forest ... to choose a full life."

Human development occurs in relationship. After her decision to join AA and her work with a compassionate therapist, Kelly emerged out of the past and "reinvented" her life. Step by step, she learned that the body must be cared for, the heart needs inspiration, the mind will not flourish unless it is stimulated, and the spirit will suffer if it is not nurtured. She opened to the idea that "honest intimacy" might help her stay sober. She matured and learned "... when to let things evolve and when to ... take action, to speak what I need."

I have facilitated hundreds of programs that teach families how to nurture the child's developmental imperatives. The value of this book reaches beyond a private memoir and is an important reminder that with intentional effort and when nurtured with caring connection, humans return to the natural birthright of well-being and wholeness.

"There are times I still want to drink ... and each time it appears, I let that wash over me...and I let it go." Jill Kelly's book offers a rich array of stories and experiences that feed a deep understanding of the nature of resilience in the human spirit. Those treating women and families where addiction is a factor will find this book inspiring and useful as will their patients.

NOTE: Sober Truths: The Making of an Honest Woman



is available through amazon.com and in quantities from iuni-verse.com. Jill Kelly can be reached at sobertruths@gmail.com; she lives in Portland, Oregon.

Review by: Josette Luvmour, MA

Josette Luvmour (josette@encompassfamilies.org) is an author, consultant, and seminar leader specializing in human development and family dynamics. She has worked with families, educators, therapists, and schools on all facets of relationships with children for over 25 years. ▲

Rachel Getting Married

Shot with an unsteady cam, director Jonathan Demme simulates a home movie. The film is an advertisement for LMFTs because it shows the devastation produced when family trauma isn't treated. We enter the story when Kym (Anne Hathaway) leaves rehab to attend her sister's wedding. The multi-cultural musical Buckman family and their friends are gathering for Rachel's (Rosemarie DeWitt) marriage to a black musician. (Both actresses may receive Oscar nods). The movie is a reminder of the power of weddings to revive old emotional wounds. Hidden under the celebration, this shattered family has massive unhealed injuries. Hints are dropped: the family ignored problems, even before they suffered an unbearable tragedy. Now, years later, they are frozen in tense exchanges, tiptoeing around palpable pain. Trying to move on.

The film centers on 'good' Rachel, who will graduate with her Ph.D. in Psychology and the 'bad' Kym, an experienced rehab patient. Their fragile parents, Abby (Debra Winger) and Paul (Bill Irwin) are divorced and both have remarried. Paul married an African American earth mother and Abby married a slick fellow who is partial to shiny hair and suits. Paul is an anxious dad who means well, darting around offering sandwiches to anyone who flickers an emotion. Abby is a brittle woman who wears the role of Mother like a tight corset. She skates around the edges of her daughter's lives, communicating with corrections and platitudes. Grief has entombed her heart.

Kym has taken on two family roles, memory keeper and black sheep. She mentions touchy subjects. She attacks. She demands attention. She's like fingernails on the wedding chalkboard. Her haunted face jangles the celebrants; she is the ghost of tragedy past, rattling her memory chains. Her presence throws a shadow over any attempt to paint a happy family portrait.

I found this movie compelling but flawed. I wish more time had been spent on fleshing out the bones of the characters and less time on performing jarring music. I am prone to motion sickness so the wobbling camera made me queasy. It's sad to see Kym portrayed as a narcissistic brat. Her role in the family, her early addiction problems and her massive unspeakable burden wasn't shot through an empathetic lens. The screenwriter didn't seem to understand addictions, family systems dynamics or the agonizing psychological dam-

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Movie & Book Reviews Cont'd.

Hope

By Lara Barnes, MEd.
OAMFT Student Board Member

(Continued from page 6)

age such a tragedy would create. Incredibly, in some previews, this movie was marketed as a comedy. It is a drama with moments of humor sprinkled here and there.

The nuanced acting is impressive. With little back-story the actors craft authentic characters. I have known warm but illusive therapists like Rachel: clueless fathers like Paul, tense women like Abby, lacking mothering instincts and desperate lost souls like Kym. Deep sorrows flow beneath the story and there are moments when the pain is searing. Each family member was in an untenable position. Without empathy, the capacity to grieve or repair, they are trapped in the past forever. If you tend to cry in films, I suggest stocking up on a good supply of Kleenex before watching this film. It is a slice of life film, without a buttoned up ending. But it is satisfying to watch Kym and Rachel face disappointments, and the reality of their mother's frosty detachment. In the end, they take a tentative step toward renewing their relationship. ▲ *Submitted by Marti Olsen Laney, Psy.D, MFT*

Bella, written and directed by Alejandro Montevrde.

A soccer player, who is about to cross the threshold into fame and fortune, suddenly meets with a tragic event that changes his life forever. A waitress misses work due to illness and loses her job. With the backdrop of the bustle of New York City, two weary souls intersect in manner that brings them life, family, and redemption. This is a beautiful, poetic film with spectacular music (and you can't buy the soundtrack! I looked.) that will touch every heart. It brings a beautiful reminder that a gentle question can sometimes open a deep wealth of connection and meaning, creating a space for newness, even when it is most unexpected. This message of hope through relationship is timely in our society where economics and war fill our fear-bank and distract us from the wealth of one another. One rarely sees such a value-informed film that highlights the beauty of family. I highly recommend this film! ▲ *Submitted by Shelley A. Hanson, LPC, LMFT*

MEET OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBER

James Prather, LSW

OAMFT proudly welcomes its newest board member, James Prather, LSW. James has been a clinical member of AAMFT since 1984. He is currently employed by Children's Home



Society of Vancouver, WA. James joined the board in September 2008 as a General Board Member.

The focus of this winters newsletter is a word we are all familiar with, a battle cry for practitioners, policy makers, social reformers and survivors. Yet how often do we really stop to think about the meaning of the word and the implications of its true belief. During this past month's annual conference in Memphis I had the opportunity to visit the Civil Rights Museum there. What I found was beyond my comprehension: an entire legacy of people and movements devoted to the hope of a better future, a more inclusive present, and sustaining freedom.

The museum is carefully crafted in the place where Dr. King was shot; abutting the Lorraine Motel so seamlessly that before you know it you are looking out that same picture window, looking down at that singular spot on the balcony. What a moment to behold; the hope of millions transformed in a single act.

As I walked through the halls which honor the hundreds of men and women who have volunteered, lost their lives or worse I think about the role for each of us in social change. Even now, nearly 41 years after the death of Dr. King the world still faces many of the same injustices he fought. How can we build on the hope of each person we encounter to foster the change we want to see? As our national day of memoriam comes again this January 19th take a moment to reflect on the ways in which you engender hope, celebrate it and serve.

For more information on the Civil Rights Museum including links and pictures please see the Oregon Association website and click on Google Group. ▲

A warm thank you to all the of the Students, Professors and Administrators who have made my time as Student Board Members both possible and positive. I look forward to continuing with the Board and meeting the next generation of student advocates.

- Lara Barnes, MEd.

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The Wish to Stay the Same While Changing —Climbing up the Brain

Social Animal

Humans are social animals, unique because of our extended period of dependency, when intellectual growth outdistances our psychological development. The bottom of the brain organizes the world in similarities. The top of the brain organizes the world in a spectrum from similarities to vast differences. A broad grey area lies in the middle between the two poles. A multi-faceted mind, with plenty of grey area, produces complex and flexible responses to life. We can help clients slow down to grow up, developing higher brain functions to balance their own needs, adapt to change, grow and work and play well with others. ▲

Further Reading

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Announcing the OAMFT Google Group! To facilitate communication and networking throughout the state amongst MFTs, the OAMFT is starting a Google Group. If you would like to join, please email OAMFT with "Google Group" in the subject heading and you will be sent an invitation.