



Play Therapy in Schools:

Implementing a Fun Effective Program.

Kenneth Schmitt, LPC, Registered Play Therapist
Adrienne Frischhertz, Ph.D., LPC-S, CRC, RPT-S

Overview

- o Introduction and Purpose
- o Explaining Play Therapy to Administration and School Staff
- o Engaging Parents
- o Groups or Individual Play Sessions
- o Toy Selecting
- o Obstacles
- o Questions

Introduction and Purpose

- o Play is the child's language and toys are their words (Landreth 2002)
- o Play therapy is a culturally responsive intervention (Bratton, Ray, & Landreth 2008)
- o Schools are a learning environment and what better way to learn about the student than to observe their play

School Mental Health Professionals Can use play therapy too...

- o Communicate with the student
- o Help students build skills in many areas
- o Improve students' adjustment to school environment
- o Improve peer relationships
- o Prevent bullying, school violence, aggression
- o Address needs of at risk students
- o Remove emotional and behavioral obstacles to learning.

Getting School Administration and Teachers on Board

- o Presentation for School Board/Charter Board
 - o Important to speak their language of “dollars and cents”
 - o Use simple language to explain what play therapy is and how effective it can be.
 - o Present research and facts.
 - o Speak to cognitive stages.

School Staff Presentation

- o Time to “sell” play therapy
- o Make the presentation fun and playful!
 - o Bring toys to show the power of play.
 - o Share experiences and general case studies.
 - o Create a brochure about Play Therapy!

Group Activity

- o Ice Breaker
- o Beach Ball Toss



Engaging Parents

- o Parents are one of the most important aspects of a successful play therapy program in schools.
- o Communication is key!
 - o Consults with Parents
 - o Newsletter Information
 - o Parent Organization Meetings
 - o CPRT



Group or Individual?

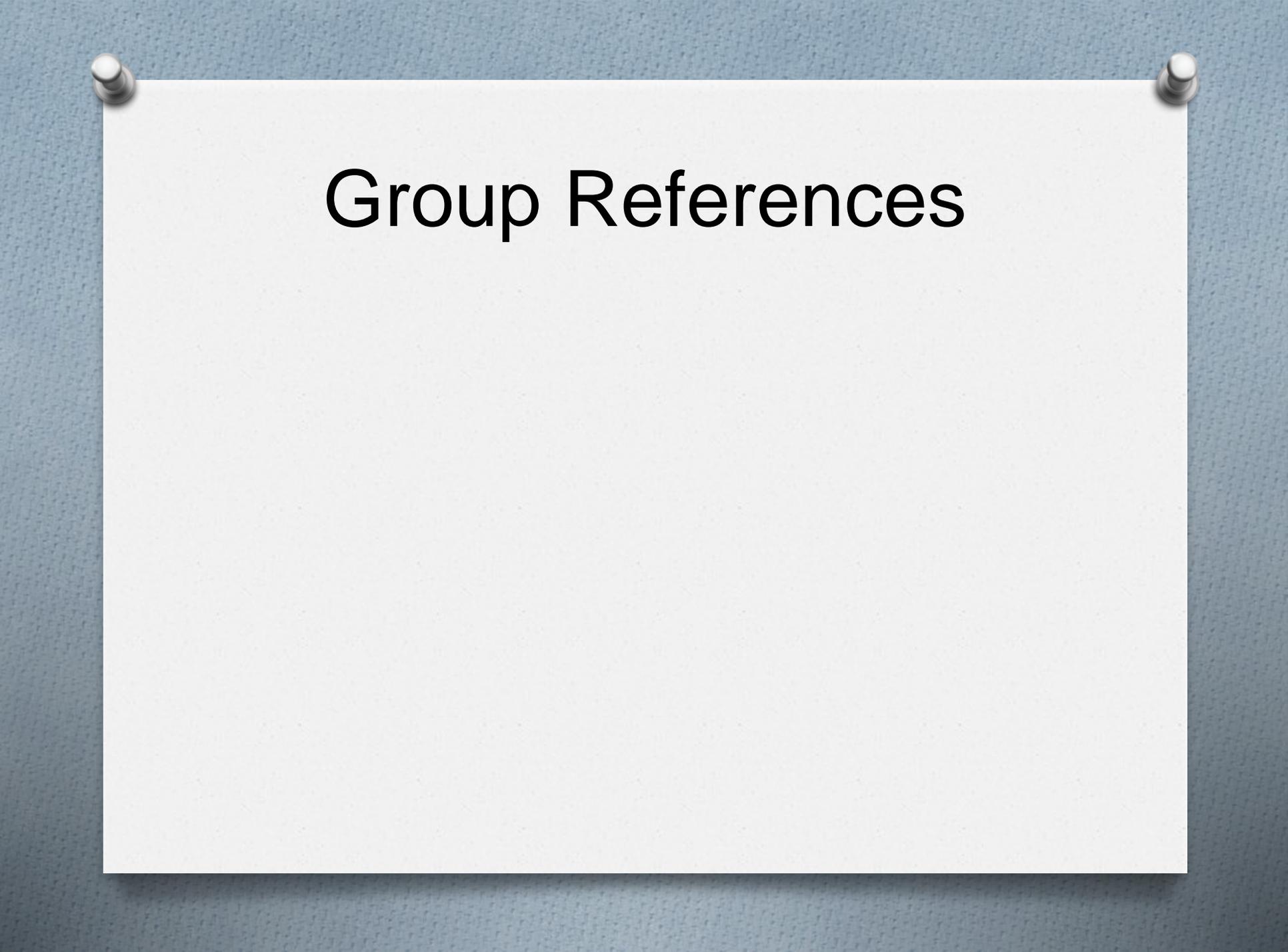
What is best for student?

Are students available for individual sessions?

Is clinician comfortable with child centered or directive?

Groups work for...

- o Social Skills Needs
- o Building Friendship
- o Building Empathy
- o Same grade level students
- o Servicing many students



Group References

Individual Sessions

- o Aggressive Students
- o Bullied Students
- o Student who are the bully
- o Students who are new to “seeing the counselor”

Toy Selection

- o Certain factors to consider when selecting toys
- o Space- Will it be a permanent space or a traveling space
 - o Cost of Toys
 - o Will certain toys be restricted
 - o Guns? Weapons? Handcuffs?

Playroom Suggestions

o Child Centered

- o Puppets (aggressive and real life)
- o Real life toys (doll house, dolls, toy phones)
- o Creative (art supplies, crayons, markers)
- o Aggressive (handcuffs, toy soldiers, animal figures)

o Directive

- o Board Games (Candy Land, Chutes and Ladders)
- o Books (Julia Cook, Bucket Filler)
- o Mini Dry Erase Boards and Markers

School Play Room

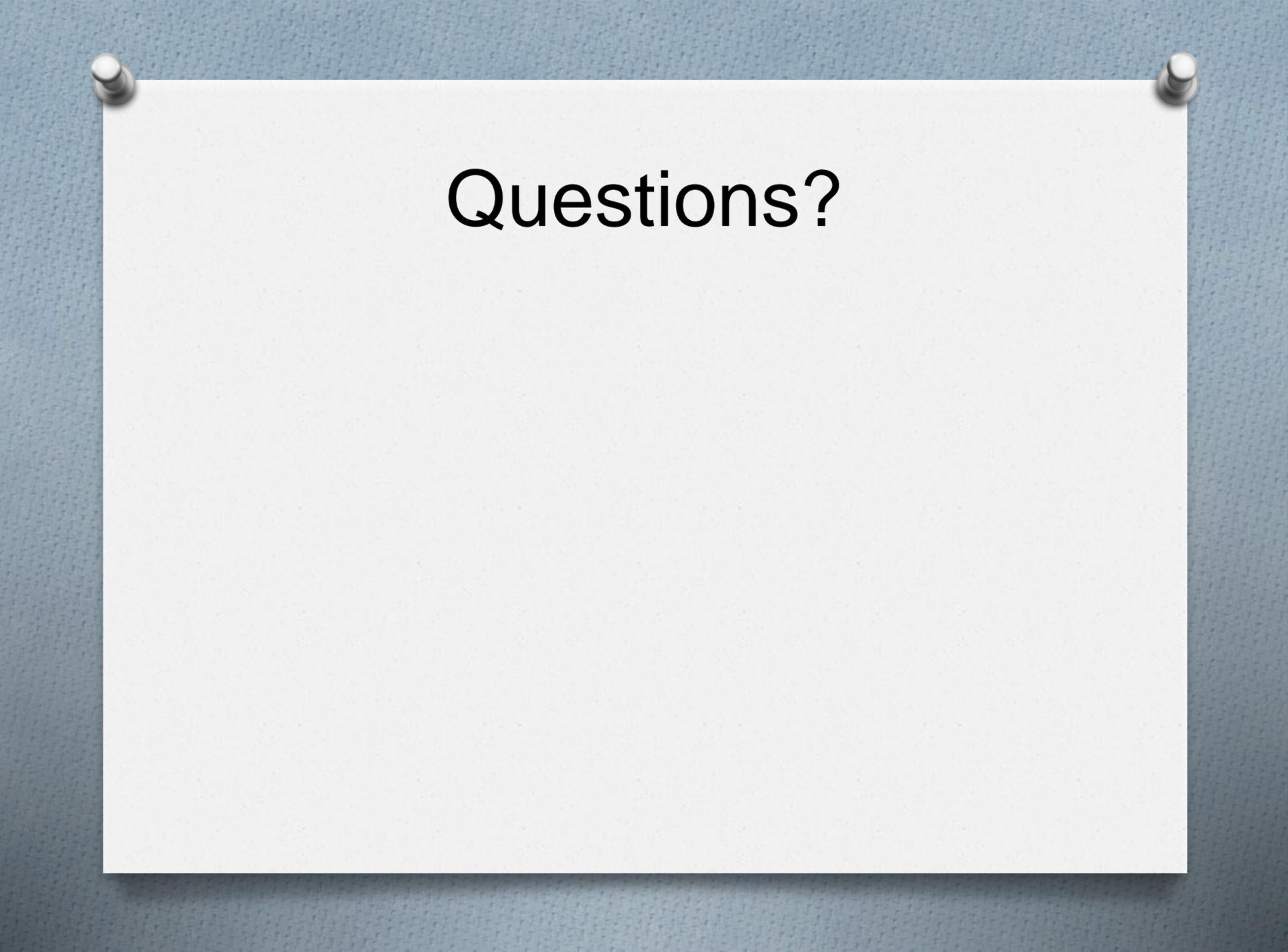


School Play Room



Obstacles

- o Scheduling
- o Time
- o Consistency
- o Parent Follow up
- o Child's Presentation



Questions?

References

- Drewes, A. A., & Schaefer, C. E. (2010). School-Based Play Therapy. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons