



DREAM WORLDS

Using Play Therapy in the Treatment of Childhood Sleep Disturbance



Presentation by:
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About Core Wellness

Core Wellness, LLC is a dynamic training group offering evidence-based, practical workshops via live/webinar and recorded webinar. Our passionate and knowledgeable trainers bring engaging CE materials that stimulate the heart and mind for client care and effective and actionable clinical skills.

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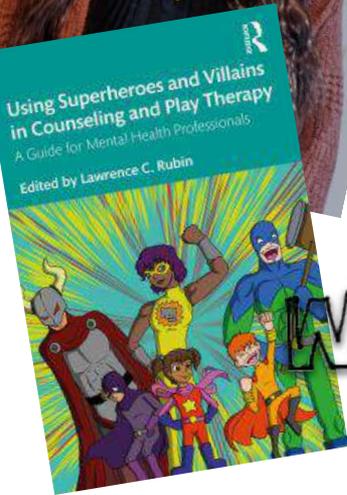
Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this training participants will be able to:

- Identify and describe two major play therapy theoretical approaches in assessing and treating childhood sleep disturbance (Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy and Jungian Play Therapy).
- Demonstrate six specific play therapy techniques to assist the child client in managing his/her maladaptive sleep symptoms.
- Identify the potential implications of digital play on a child's sleep hygiene and dreams; discuss the pros and cons of living in the digital age as they relate to sleep/dreaming.

Introductions & Icebreakers

Christina Scott graduated from Lindsey Wilson College with a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling and Human Development. Christina is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor Supervisor in Ohio. With a history in school-based therapy, she has been providing telecounseling and teleplay therapy since March 2020. Christina is a Registered Play Therapist, certified in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and she is a Nationally Certified Counselor. A proud geek therapist, Christina co-authored a chapter in the book, "Using Superheroes and Villains in Counseling and Play Therapy: A Guide for Mental Health Professionals" (edited by Lawrence C. Rubin). Her newest ventures include starting an online solo private practice and teaming up with her pal Elise Gambill in starting the Two Nerdy Counselors YouTube channel where they share free interventions. Christina strives to help her fellow geeks reach their full potential.



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WHAT IS THE MOST RECENT
DREAM YOU CAN RECALL?

Functions of Dreams

Theories

- Freud - unconscious bodily desires
- Jung - integrate conscious & unconscious
- Hobson and McCarly's (1977) activation-synthesis hypothesis
- Memory Consolidation
- Threat Simulation Theory (evolution)
- Promote insight & creative problem-solving

Dreaming is a universal language, one which speaks in images, metaphors, and emotions that can be felt in the body.

Curative Powers of Play

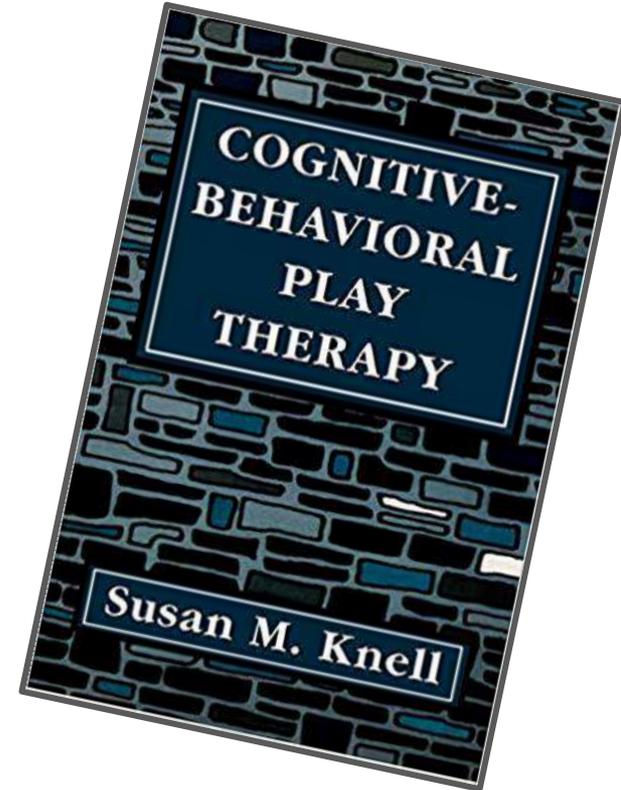
- Therapeutic Powers of Play
 - Facilitates Communication
 - Self-expression
 - Access to the unconscious
 - Direct teaching
 - Indirect teaching
 - Fosters Emotional Wellness
 - Catharsis
 - Abreaction
 - Positive emotions
 - Counterconditioning fears
 - Stress inoculation
 - Stress management

Curative Powers of Play - continued

- Therapeutic Powers of Play
 - Enhances social relationships
 - Therapeutic relationship
 - Attachment
 - Social competence
 - Empathy
 - Increases personal strengths
 - Creative problem-solving
 - Resiliency
 - Moral development
 - Accelerated psychological development
 - Self-regulation
 - Self-esteem

Play Therapy Theory and Treating Sleep Difficulties

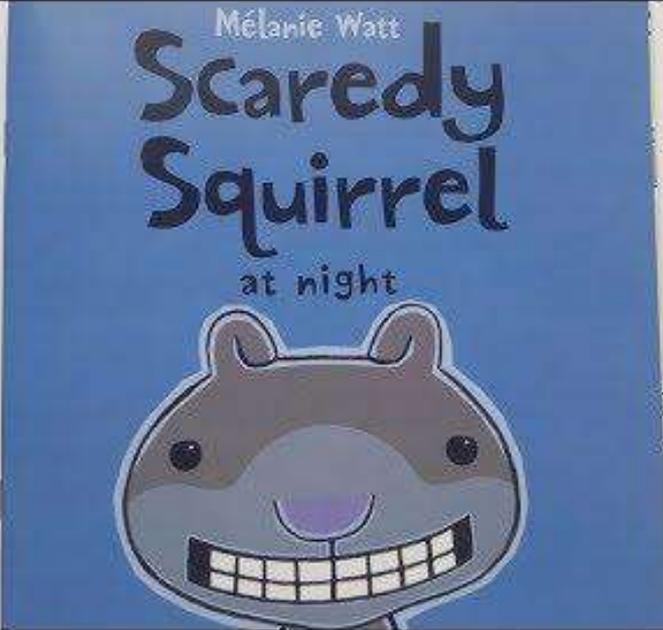
- Susan Knell (1993)
- Designed for children 2 ½ to 6 years old
- For those who might benefit from cognitive behavioral principles with appropriate adaptations
- Key elements
 - Playing out scenarios to reduce anxiety
 - Systematic desensitization, gaining mastery
 - Generalization



Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy inc. Parent Involved Play (CBT-PIP) showed improvements in behaviors associated with nighttime fears
- In case studies, CBPT showed improvements in anxiety related to sleep problems
- Psychoeducation
- Puppets
 - Psychoeducation
 - CBT triangle (dragon)
 - self-talk
- Role-play and gradual exposure
- Bibliotherapy
- Affect Regulation
- Calming Skills/ Relaxation
- Guided Imagery

Scaredy Squirrel at Night by Melanie Watt - Read Aloud



Psychoeducation on the harmful effects of sleep deprivation and benefits from a good night's rest.

Also tackles anxiety regarding bedtime due to fear of nightmares.

Activity

Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy and Sleep

Thoughts and Feelings Interview

- Choose miniatures to represent various dream figures.
- Provide the child with a toy microphone.
- Prompt the child to pretend she is a news reporter conducting an interview.
- Ask the child to first provide the news story (dream) and then go to interview.
- Have the child interview the different characters in her dream to find out what they were thinking and feeling.

Activity

Jungian Analytical Play Therapy

- Emphasizes symbolic meaning in play
- Non-directive or semi-directive interventions
 - Spontaneous drawing
- “Dreamplay - working and playing with a dream for therapy, empowerment, creativity, or fun.”
- “Led into dreamplay by a supportive adult, children can become “superheroes” in their dreams, and this empowerment carries over to their waking life.”
- Dreams can satisfy a variety of the child’s needs
 - Provide comfort after a difficult day
 - Refresh and revive spirits
 - Offer opportunity for problem-solving and practicing skills
 - Inspire
 - Provide insight into child’s interests
 - Behavioral rehearsal for waking life events
- Examining earliest dreams -Jung called these “big dreams”

Jungian Analytical Play Therapy

Self-Healing Archetype

- Critter companion / Dream doll / Dream guide
 - AWAKE
 - Favorite stuffed animal
 - Create a Popsicle Stick Person



Jung's *Personal Plays*

- Engage the client in creating a puppet show.
- Ask the client to consider:
 - Exposition
 - Mounting action
 - Crisis
 - Resolution
- If the child woke up before the perceived ending OR if the child did not like the ending, prompt the child to finish out the play as he would have liked for his dream to end.

Activity

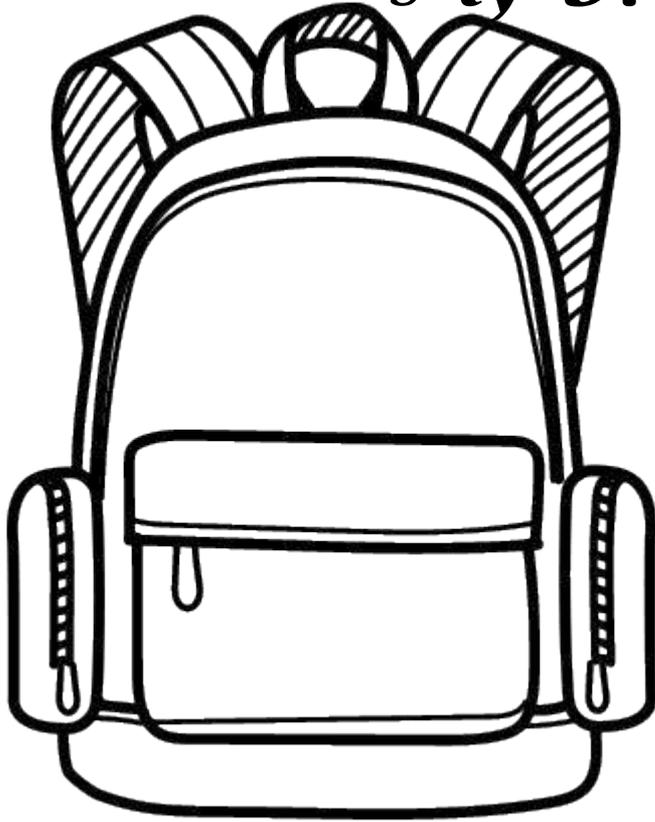
Dream Re-Entry

Processing Dreams

- Changing the narrative (drawing)
- What would you do differently? What would you change?
 - Ask yourself these questions after waking up from dream.

Re-dreaming allows child to see more clearly their emotions, reactions and behavioral patterns as well as motives.

“My Dream Duffle”



Create a magic backpack that will hold everything you need during your dream journey.

What will you put in your backpack?

How will you use it in your dreams or nightmares?

“Dream Wand to Wander”

Design a dream wand which will help you as you wander through your dreams.

Can be a drawing or use craft supplies.

How will you use it in your dreams or nightmares?

Dream Zoo

Create a dream zoo with monsters/ creatures representing the child's nightmare figures.

Draw the zoo or use miniatures for the figures and cages or fences to lock them up.

This is your zoo, so you make the rules. These are your dreams, so you make the rules.

*Intervention adapted from Care R. Johnson, "Dream Magicians: Empower Children through Lucid Dreaming", *Sleep Monsters and Superheroes: Empowering Children Through Creative Dreamplay* (2016)*

NIGHTMARES

- *As extremely frightening or upsetting dream that wakes the person up, often with carryover feelings of distress.*
- Normal and natural part of life and development
- Functions
 - Help you rehearse how to handle a situation
 - Help you vent out dysfunctional beliefs
- Shadow Creatures (zombies, monsters, ghosts) represent our dark sides
- Speak the dream. Draw the dream. Write the dream.

NIGHTMARE ACTIVITY



- Nightmare catcher
 - Write down nightmare
 - Discuss with counselor
 - Place in bag
 - Counselor is container
 - Let the nightmare go

NIGHTMARE - GUIDED IMAGERY

Ask the child to imagine a scary image from the nightmare. Invite the child to get more comfortable and begin with breathing and relaxing techniques. Now invite the child to go to their special place, also inviting their dream companion along.

Now that your dream companion is here, ask him/her to guide you from the scary dream to a new dream where you feel good with yourself and with whatever is happening. Imagine you and your guide are watching the scary dream from behind a magic screen. You can see out, but no one can see in or get in. You are totally safe. Notice that the dream is changing. Some things are becoming different. New things are happening and you are feeling and acting in a new way. Watch carefully. Breathe in for good feelings for as long as you like. When you're ready to come back, promise yourself that when you're practicing your breathing and relaxing, you'll come back and reimagine this new dream. Promise yourself you'll enjoy the good feelings and new actions over and over again.

Unmasking the Monster

- Discuss the monster or scary figure from the child's dream.
- Create a mask, with the front side representing the monster/nightmare.
- On the inside, have the child create a superhero mask depicting his/her strengths to be used in defeating the nightmare image.
- Alternatively, can create the inside to represent what the nightmare might be telling you.

Creating a safe space

- Dream Chest

- Supplies needed: a box, photos or magazine clippings, small keepsakes
- Decorate a box to serve as your dream chest.
- Put favorite items and calming objects in the box.
- Look through the box prior to bedtime.

- Other ideas:

- Draw a picture of what you consider to be a safe space.
 - Use sensory exploration strategies to process.
- Decorate your sleeping area (dream zone) to reflect a calm and safe space.

For Parents - Tips on Dreamwork

- Notice patterns in child's pleasant dreams (themes revealing interests/needs)
- To promote pleasant dreams,
 - Make a suggestion - "What will you dream of tonight? What would be fun?"
 - Provide a model - Share a fun, silly or pleasant dream you've had.
 - Read happy stories at bedtime.
- To reinforce child's pleasant dreams,
 - Listen to their dreams and discuss.
 - Draw your child's dreams or ask the child to draw them. Place in prominent place.
 - Write stories/poems based on dreams.
 - Incorporate dream content into daily life.
- Value your child's good dreams.
 - Children who are imaginative often have higher intelligence and more ability to cope with life.
 - Resist the urge to say "it's just a dream"

For Parents - Active Constructive Communication

Active Constructive Communication

Enthusiastic, authentic, eye contact

“Tell me about the dream you had last night.”

“What emotions and thoughts did you have during the dream?”

“How did you feel in your body when you woke up?”

Active Destructive Communication

Quashing the event, dismissive, demeaning

“It was only a dream!”

“Dreams don’t mean anything.”

“Why did you dream about **that**?!”

Passive Constructive Communication

Delayed response, low energy, quiet.

“That’s nice honey.”

Changes subject.

Passive Destructive Communication

Turns focus inward, ignoring speaker, avoiding

Ignores child

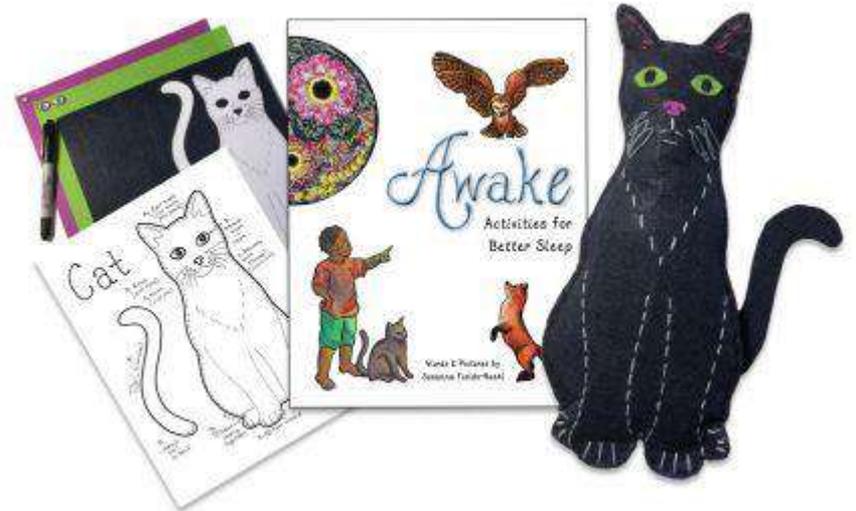
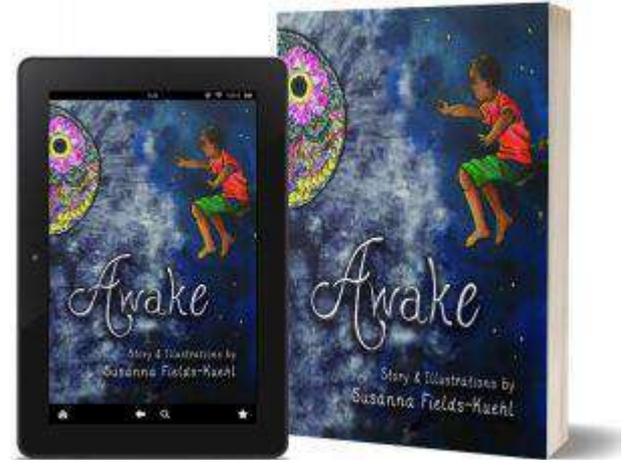
“You’re going to be late for school.”

“Did you finish your math homework last night?”

“What do you want for breakfast?”

“Awake”

- Bibliotherapy intervention
- Susanna Fields-Kuehl
- Story book and coloring/workbook



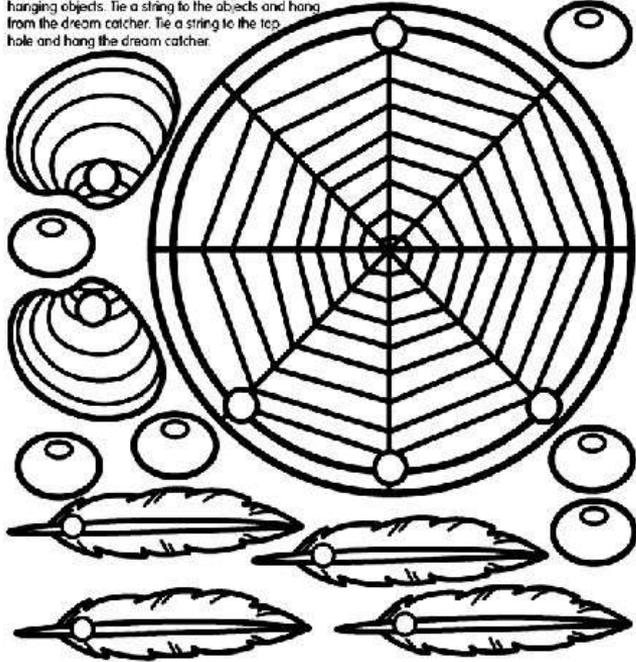
Dreams and Culture

- Iroquois Dream Therapy
 - Tribe members acted out dreams
 - “Dreams are secret wishes of the soul”
- Soul Retrieval - Native American term for putting together the pieces of yourself through dream analysis
 - PUZZLE *Activity*

Dream Catcher activity

DREAM CATCHER

The Ojibway Native American tribe hung dream catchers over their beds to prevent bad dreams. It was believed that the bad dreams could be caught in the net and the good dreams would flow through. Different objects were attached to the nets to encourage good dreams. Decorate the dream catcher, feathers, beads, and shells with Crayola® Crayons or Markers and cut them out. Glue the page to a piece of thin cardboard, such as a recycled file folder. With a hole punch, punch holes in the dream catcher and hanging objects. Tie a string to the objects and hang from the dream catcher. Tie a string to the top hole and hang the dream catcher.



- Color the page
- Cut out shapes
- Hole punch the pieces
- Tie the pieces together with yarn/string
- Possible additions
 - Web (catch evil)
 - Nightmares to catch
 - Feathers (symbol of breath)
 - Relaxation strategies
 - Rocks
 - Grounding mantras
 - Shells
 - Strong supports

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep

Sleep in the Digital Age

- In the 1930s, the average American child was exposed to less than 11 hours of media *per week*.
 - Now, the average child is exposed to at least that amount per day.
- Insufficient sleep (>9 hours) & Excessive screen time (<2 hours) = impulsivity
 - 4,524 children in longitudinal study (ABCD, Canada)
- Studies in Japan, New Zealand and the United States showed that the more exposure kids had to electronic media around bedtime, the less sleep they had.
 - Problem with kids watching exciting movies or playing video games before bed

Digital Play and Sleep

Pros

Tech, like FitBit, can monitor sleep.

Video games might provide a nightmare protection, leading to reduction in gamers feeling victimized by their dreams.

Dreams might appear more fun, perceived as playing.

Gamers report more lucid dreams.

Meditative, flow state

Increase creativity

Cons

~Blue light from screens reduce sleep ability.

~May stay up late playing games

~May influence dreams / nightmares

~Blurs line between fantasy and reality?

How to bridge gap in using digital play to help treat sleep probs:

- Encourage parents to engage in media use with the child, not only restrict it.
- Set limits on screens during evening.

Using Digital Play in the Play Therapy Room



- Using video games in therapy:
- allow you to meet the client where he is at
 - engage the client in his interests
 - use gaming for mindfulness and meditative purposes
 - flow state

<https://youtu.be/mPaBJ9-H95U>

Using Digital Play in the Play Therapy Room ~Activity



<https://youtu.be/ceHLBuBbSZ8>

Phone Apps for Sleep

Loona

The logo for the Loona app, featuring the word "loóna" in a stylized, rounded, light purple font against a dark purple background.

<https://loona.app/>

Phone Apps for Sleep



Dream Walker

Playlab Casual

★★★★☆ 5,612

Everyone

Contains Ads - Offers in-app purchases

This app is compatible with your device.

Add to Wishlist

Install



Phone Apps for Sleep



SpinTree 3D: Relaxing & Calming
Tree growing game

Storica, Inc Arcade

★★★★★ 11,402

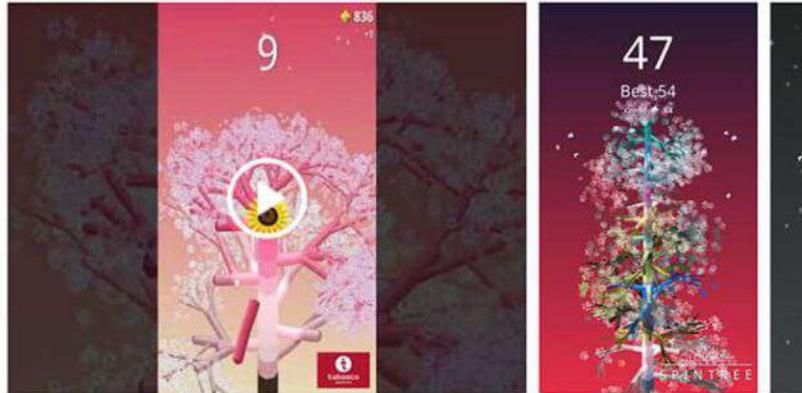
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SpinTree Sleep App Tree Growing Game

References

All photos are public domain

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