

*Violence In The Lives Of Adolescents* is highly recommended for therapists and counsellors who work regularly with young people who have experienced violence in their lives. To effect successful interventions, the therapist must work with the client, utilizing a global approach. Martha Straus' book provides the practitioner with a way to put their knowledge, and what works, into useful practice.

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Gil, E. (1994). *Play in Family Therapy*. New York: Guilford Press. 226 pp., (soft cover).

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*Reviewed by:* Tamara Schuld, University of Alberta

In *Play in Family Therapy* (1994), Dr. Eliana Gil presents us with a useful, creative compendium of play techniques that engage the expressive abilities of both children and their families. Dr. Gil is a marriage, family, and child counselor who specializes in abuse issues. The book is especially valuable in that it provides practical means for keeping younger members of families involved in the therapeutic experience.

By starting with three chapters on "The History of and Rationale for Family Play Therapy," Gil places her work in context. She first provides "A Historical Perspective on Play Therapy." Adapting material from a previous book, she highlights how psychoanalytic, humanistic, behavioural, group, and Jungian (sandtray) frameworks utilize play as a means of understanding and treating children. Then, in a brief history of the development of family therapy, she follows the thread of the inclusion of play in treating the family. Those who made a special point of including young children, therapists such as Satir and Minuchin, are noted. Recent contributors to family play therapy such as Combrinck-Graham, Zilbach, Scharff and Scharff, and Ariel are given consideration. As well, the thread of disinterest in and resistance to the use of play in family therapy is visible in Gil's history. Finally, Gil provides a rationale for integrating play therapy and family therapy. She suggests that often, family therapists ignore younger children or give them something to keep them busy while the adults talk. When an attempt is made to include children, it often takes the form of imposing adult modes of communication on them. Gil argues that it is more appropriate for adults to move into children's world of meaning. Beyond providing information for the therapist, Gil suggests that this sort of parent-child interaction enhances the family's communication, and that the inclusion of younger children in family therapy facilitates treatment by actively involving all members of the system and by lowering resistances.

In the second portion of Gil's book, her extensive experience as a child and family therapist and her abilities as an author bear fruit. She presents five chapters describing play therapy techniques accompanied by engaging, fully realized clinical examples. We are given a balance of the theoretical and practical reasons for specific techniques, and numerous detailed examples of applications of the techniques. Gil helps clinicians by giving suggestions on how to present the task so as to interest the family, and how to specify what

the rules of the task are. She also provides specific suggestions, for instance, on the types of puppets a clinician might purchase. In the first chapter, two examples of puppet family interviews feature the diagnostic and therapeutic value of this creative, interactive task. Gil's chapter on family art therapy highlights eleven drawing exercises and three case examples. The chapter describing Gardner's Mutual Story-Telling Technique provides two poignant case examples of a child telling a story and the therapist telling the story back. A further chapter on other story-telling techniques gives examples of how a clinician can introduce stories that are helpful for a child. The final chapter reviews a collection of other techniques such as "the Typical Day Interview" and use of various games with families.

I found *Play in Family Therapy* to be a practical, inspiring book. Gil describes the techniques in sufficient detail to imagine how they may be applied in a variety of settings, even by clinicians to whom the techniques are new. More exploration of how clinical decisions are made to utilize one technique over another would have been appreciated. Gil provides a great many ideas, but fairly limited information on how to choose between them. A related issue is that the book contained very limited reference to research on the efficacy of the various techniques. Because Gil supports every chapter on technique with a review of available literature, this is most likely a shortcoming of the state of clinical research rather than a failing of Gil's book.