Multicultural Competence Seminar: Ethnicity & Racism Awareness for the Play Therapist

Live, in person with 3 APT Contact Hour CEs
Friday, December 4, 2026 – 9:15 AM-12:30 PM, ET

When: Friday, December 4, 2026 – 9:15AM to 12:30 PM, ET
Location: ***Live in person at the Family Center -- earns Contact Hour CEs for APT.***
Instructor: Dottie Higgins-Klein, LMFT, RPT-S, AAMFT Supervisor, Director of the Family & Play Therapy Center, Philadelphia
CEs: 3 Contact Hour CEs for APT--Play Therapy Specific CEs that apply to **APT Multi-Cultural Competence requirement.**
3 PA State CEs for PA Social Work Board for LSW, LMFT, & LPC. May be accepted by other states.
Tuition: $110 for registration made by November 20: includes $25 early registration discount.
After November 20, tuition is $135.
APT Approved Provider 96-030
To Register: Email jerry@fptcenter.com *There are 10 spaces available—register soon!*
Questions? Call jerry at 215-844-4321

Many years ago, pioneer Play Therapist Kevin O'Conner addressed the issue of play therapists becoming more culturally competent. "Play therapists are called on both to address cultural issues in play therapy and to facilitate children's pride in, and preservation of, their culture." He encouraged play therapists to understand the concept of culture and its impact on the therapist's own life. In a more recent exceptional resource, *Multicultural Play Therapy Making the Most of Cultural Opportunities with Children,* 2022, Dee Ray, Yumiko Ogawa, and Yi-Ju Cheng expand play therapists' cultural awareness, humility, and competence to work more effectively with children of diverse cultures, races, and belief systems.

Other valuable books on the topic of culture and racism include *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies,* by Resmaa Menakem; *Caste*, by Isabel Wilkerson; and *How to be an Antiracist*, by Ibram X Kendi. Foundational references for cultural awareness are *Ethnicity and family Therapy* by Monica McGoldrick; and *Re-Visioning Family Therapy: Addressing Diversity in Clinical Practice,* by Monica McGoldrick and Kenneth V. Hardy.

Class Highlights – Meeting the challenges of race, caste, and ethnic differences:

- Basic Definitions to create a theoretical framework.
- The *ongoing nature* of cultural competence – with appreciation of MCO, Multicultural Orientation Framework of Cultural Humility, Competence & Comfort (Owen et al).
- The therapists' awareness of the client family and of the therapist's own racial/ethnic/cultural history.
- Cultural Humility that includes the therapist's willingness to learn from each client's experiences.
- The Playroom as a Multicultural experience.
- Practical applications for the play therapist to engage children and their families and to open to a personal, transparent experience *with* self that may or *may not* be shared in the seminar.
- Struggle with both identity and affirmation for both the therapist and child, and also for the people in the child's life system. (E.Gil, A.Drewes)
- Play therapy that can specifically enact a child's conscious and unconscious injustices.
- Issues of immigration, adoption, and the value of biculturalism.

- Affirming the strengths of multiracial families.
- Effects on the limbic system in persons of white privilege and in victims of prejudice.
- Acknowledging historic injustices: for example, toward Native Americans and other indigenous peoples, toward African Americans, Great Famine vs. Irish Genocide, Japanese Internment, the Holocaust … and many others in our world history.
- Attention to present day racism and the impact of ICE raids on families and children.
- Seminar includes a video addressing the emotional and development l reverberations for the child of his father's anger, and the relational impact on the bi-racial couple.

Objectives – Participants of this class will be able to:

- Define basic concepts of Play Therapy related to racial, ethnic, and cultural competence.
- Demonstrate how the play therapist can integrate cultural awareness in their play therapy and when working with families.
- Nurture a play therapy environment that can be multiculturally friendly.
- Demonstrate, in the play therapy, cultural humility, which includes the therapist's willingness to learn from each client's experiences.
- Recommend and review literature that can guide parents of children in play therapy in their understanding of the transmission of values appropriate for the world of today.
- Describe the need for the somatic (not just cognitive) play therapy interventions for families attending Play-Family Therapy with their children and teens.
- Predict how the steady continuity of healing opportunities in Play-Family Therapy can help the problem of ethnic disparity to create a more equitable society.
- Address issues of immigration and adoption, affirming the value of biculturalism and the strengths of multiracial families.

Presenter: Dottie Higgins Klein LMFT, RPT-S and AAMFT supervisor, is the director of the & Play Therapy Center in Philadelphia, where the program. She is author of *Mindfulness-Based Play-Family Therapy: Theory and Practice*, Norton, 2013. Dottie has also been clinical and administrative director of the counseling center at the FPT Center since 1995. She was awarded the APT Professional Training and Education Award for 2015. At present, Dottie is semi-retired, working 10 hours per week seeing adult clients and giving supervision.

Dottie has been dedicated to multicultural awareness throughout her adult life. As a young woman, Dottie was an elementary school teacher in two ethnically diverse areas and spent her summers as assistant director of a summer camp that brought together 150 children from three racially distinct neighborhoods into a beautiful campus on the edge of the city.

She and her husband chose to live, work, and raise their children in the Philadelphia neighborhood of Mt Airy, "one of the first successfully integrated neighborhoods in America. Mt Airy residents organized to resist blockbusting, panic selling, and redlining, especially during the period from the late 1950s to the early 1970s when those practices were prevalent." (Wikepedia) She has had a lifelong interest in travel aimed at encountering people in other cultures, including a year teaching high school in Zaire, Africa (now Congo).

Dottie immersed herself in the Asian/Hindu culture of Bali, Indonesia, over a period of 4 months. This included mentoring seven days a week for seven weeks with a Balinese shamanic healer.

In her career as a therapist, Dottie has kept the conscious intention of working to heal the effects of the caste system in America that come from many generations of social inequity and prejudice. This class in multi-cultural competence is intended to help further the development of each therapist's individual mode of navigating this challenging area in our contemporary society, starting from an attitude of humility and respect.

FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS PARTICIPANTS -- When this class was last offered in March, 2023, there were 37 participants and 35 of them gave the class a rating of 5 (out of 5)!

"I'm so grateful for this seminar. I always thought of myself as accepting of others without bias, however that barely scratches the surface. This seminar has awakened my desire to research this subject more. Thank you for the many resources you provided and I will be following up for my own personal and professional growth. DR

"I really appreciated the case study video and discussion about the brain and fight/flight/freeze reactions that the boy's father had in his experiences with white individuals. I have never thought about the element of triggers and the brain as it relates to racism and an individual's experiences. This was a fascinating concept and it helped me empathize more with those of different races/cultures who do face injustice and challenges on a daily basis. HM

"It's a topic that I already think about regularly but the workshop has increased my motivation to read more books on multiculturalism and to continue with important DEI work in my school." JC

"The video was more emotional than I anticipated. During the video, I was able to relate to the therapist, mother and father. However, I realized that the child was not present and that it is truly my job to represent the child during the parental meetings. The video to me highlighted how to look out for the child's emotional and physical well-being as a representative for the child. Dottie's sensitive and calm nature allowed that to happen. LL

"I appreciate the term cultural humility used in some of the handouts. This term encompasses not only learning about other cultures as a group and as individuals. To be culturally competent or operate with cultural humility requires me to also reflect on my own story, including my biases and privileges." CG

"There were so many great resources offered in this class." CG

"I think the biggest takeaway for me was the realization that there will be value in my further exploring the experiences of my ancestors. …. Tending my own ethnic identity development will help me be a more culturally responsive clinician. I also always find it tremendously valuable to watch Dottie's sessions, and I have been thinking about the clips we watched and the clinical decisions Dottie made to be multi-partial, including to the children who weren't even in the room. JS

"Multicultural competence is important because the therapist needs to understand that cultures other than their own view the world in different ways. They have different experiences and values, and they may have different communication styles. It's important that the client feels safe enough to share about their culture and that the therapist remains unbiased and non judgmental." MC

"I think that understanding the importance of religion was something that Ihad not seriously considered before this course. …understanding a person's belief systems about death and life and birth and suffering, and how all that can impact play therapy is valuable." TC

"A final thought Dottie, thank you for sharing your life experiences and photos you've taken on your vacations. I told my husband I want us to go to our ancestral countries, Italy, Ireland, and Mexico with the goal of experiencing the culture, studying the history, and visiting museums to learn more about these countries. A wonderful seminar. Thank you again." DR

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TO REGISTER, EMAIL jerry@fptcenter.com Questions? Call Jerry at 215-844-4321

Payment can be made using credit or debit card or PayPal

Certificates of Attendance will be emailed to participants within one week after the class.

Payment TUITION -- $135

Early Reg. (by 11/20/2026) **$110.00**

Tuition after 11/20/2026 $135.00

DISCOUNTS

Early Reg. Disc. (by 11/20/2026): $25 discount*

Additional discounts—apply one only

Full-Time Student: 10% discount

Full-Time Parent: 10% discount

Retirement Discount: 10% discount

3 CREDIT HOURS AVAILABLE

Association for Play Therapy** -- 3 hours Play Therapy Specific Contact Hours AND Multicultural Credit

PA Social Work Board for LSW, LMFT, & LPC** -- 3 hours