

**SPT Certified Therapists Information for the Caregiver Practice Sessions  
North American Retreat 1**

**North American Presentation Day:**

August 30th, 2022

1:00 pm -4:30 pm MDT

Sign on 12:45 pm MDT

Sign off 4:30 pm MDT

**Registering**

You will receive an email from the Synergetic Play Therapy Institute about registering for the retreat via zoom. Please register *with the \*name and email address that you will log into zoom with* so Janelle can prepare your small group for you. Once registered you will get a confirmation email with your unique zoom link...save this as this is how you will log in!

\*Note that the Zoom registration prompt will ask you for your first and last name. Following your last name, please write "SPT Certified Therapist" or if you've completed the SPT Supervision course please write "SPT Consultant".

**"Mini Course"**

SPTI's Program Director, Janelle Langeteig, has given you access to a course called: "Synergetic Play Therapy® Certification - Retreat Presentation Support" Please refer to this course for all details regarding your help with the presentations.

Included within this course are the following:

- 1) Instructions and videos for the students to prepare for their STP Presentations.
- 2) *SPT Certified Therapists Information for the SPT Presentations*, with relevant information to support your leading of the small group.
- 3) Please check back before the start of your retreat and you will find a pdf document with your small group participants. Please note the participants in your group so when you're in the small breakout group at the retreat you'll know who to expect and if anyone is missing.

**General Timing**

The afternoon session of the SPT retreat will start at 1:00 pm MDT. Lisa will lead the large group of students in explaining the Process of Change. You will then go into your own small groups and complete the additional three SPT topics. You will return to the large group around 4:10 ish pm MDT (Lisa will determine final time and let us know before heading into the groups) for a group process (ending at 4:30 pm MDT).

To assure promptness, please sign on 10-15 minutes early. You will be asked to join a breakout group for the SPT Certified therapists to "hangout" as a group. Lisa will briefly meet with us before we join the "big group".

## General Information/Guidelines

- Each small group will have no more than 5 people in it. You will be assigned to a “break-out group” beforehand and when it is time for us to start the small groups, you will get a notice that pops up on your screen inviting you to join your small break-out group. All you have to do is click on the prompt and it takes you to your group. Janelle will post the names of your group as a pdf, in the mini course. Please note the participants in your group so when you're in your breakouts you know who to expect and if anyone is missing.
- Your main job as facilitator will be to help *regulate and ground* the group as this can be an anxiety producing experience.
- You will also be in charge of time keeping. Alloted time for each presentation is approximately 8 - 10 minutes.  
It is important to take a short break in the middle (10-15 min), when to take a break is at your discretion of what your group needs.
- You will have 4 - 5 people in your small group, doing 3 presentations. You will spend 40-50 minutes per presentation topic. Please take a 10 - 15 minute break in the middle of the 3 hours, that puts it at a little over 2 1/2 hours. It gives a bit of wiggle room.
- SPT Topics
  1. Explaining the Process of Change to a Parent- ***this will be explained in the large group***
  2. Explaining the Nervous System Handout to a Parent
  3. Explaining the SPT Therapeutic Stages to a parent
  4. Explaining SPT to a parent
- Begin the presentations with first an introduction of who you are and then move into grounding the group. Please explain what will happen in regards to format and time (make the unknown known). For example:

*“Each of you will have approximately 8 - 10 minutes to present the Nervous System Symptoms of Regulation and Dysregulation handout. After each of you has gone, we will debrief for a few minutes and then move onto the next person/topic.”*

Please let your students know that the goal is for them to feel supported and you, as the facilitator, will be the only one offering feedback and if necessary, clarifying comments. After all the students have presented on one topic, and if you have time, you might ask the group:

“What was something you heard that you can incorporate into the way you explain this concept?”

“What is something new you learned?”

“How was sharing about this topic helpful?”

- You will also let your students know that because we are on Zoom they have the option to speak to the entire group or choose one of the other therapists to be “the parent”. If a student wants to speak to one person, they may pin that person so the other participants’ Zoom squares are minimized.
  1. While the student is presenting, the rest of the group will be observing, and it’s important they keep their cameras on.
  2. Please let the students know that when presenting they can ask the rest of the group for help if they feel stuck.
 After the presentation, you will offer some positive feedback/affirmation. If some of the content shared was blatantly incorrect, gently clarify.
- Offering our students the opportunity to present on the three SPT topics supports empowerment as they find their voice through these presentations.
- Listed below are a few of the ‘tips’ the students received regarding preparing for their presentations. In italics I’ve included some things for you to consider as the facilitator:

1. Explaining the Process of Change- We will be practicing the explaining The Process of Change with the whole group -

**For Student:**

2. Explaining the Nervous System Handout-

Student Tip # 1: Don’t forget to explain the back of the sheet with all of the regulation activities.

**For You:**

1. *The video prep they watch is based on the old NS chart with the freeze response under Parasympathetic. Please clarify that the freeze response is actually present in both Parasympathetic and Sympathetic branches and is no longer on the handout.*

*A) Please review the latest NS handout.*

*B) Please watch the provided video with Lisa explaining the freeze response.*

*C) Make sure that the student really understands and it is highlighted that regulated does not mean “calm” and “calm” is not the goal of therapy or dealing with emotions.*

**For Student:**

3. Explaining the SPT Therapeutic Stages (aka The Curve)-

Student Tip # 1: Make sure to explain all of the stages, including empowerment.

Student Tip # 2: You may also want to address the following:

A parent asks, “When will I see the symptoms start to change?” and/or “How long will this process take?”

**For You:**

1. *Sometimes people come to the retreat and have not prepared for this one, or feel stumped with what to do with it. Just let them either take a shot at it, or have someone else go first who is feeling a little more confident with it. If by the end, there were some key components left out, you can help give a little info on it.*

2. *The testing stage is often missed or misunderstood. When offering positive feedback you can remind them about the testing stage and that it happens very quickly at the very beginning (therapist likely won't even know) as the child is attempting to answer two questions:*

- A) *Can I be myself?*
- B) *Are you going to be yourself?*

*Behaviors that often feel like testing after this initial assessment are likely part of "The Set Up/The Offering" and not necessarily testing the therapist directly.*

**For Student:**

3. Explaining SPT to a Parent-

Student Tip # 1: You will have left-brain parents and right-brain parents. Consider how would you describe SPT to a parent that needs more left brain/heady/research/brain dialogue and how would you describe SPT to a parent that is touchy feely, more emotional and doesn't really care how it works?

Student Tip # 2 When you describe how SPT works, leave yourself out of it (i.e. don't talk about how the child sets you up to feel how they feel or that you are the filter for their emotions, etc. This makes you an easy target if they don't like what you have to say.

**For You:**

1. *This presentation topic is designed to not have a "right answer". This is the student's attempt at finding their own language and explaining SPT in a way that works for them. Your feedback can simply be around supporting clarity of what they are communicating and making sure that what they are explaining is indeed SPT or aspects of SPT.*

*You can use any of the components of Lisa's description of SPT to help people who are asking for a way to "describe" it:*

*"Synergetic Play Therapy (2008) is a research-informed model of play therapy combining the therapeutic powers of play with nervous-system regulation, interpersonal neurobiology, physics, attachment, mindfulness and therapist authenticity. Its primary play therapy influences are Child-Centered, Experiential and Gestalt theories. Although Synergetic Play Therapy is a model of play therapy, it's also referred to as a way of being in relationship with self and other. It's an all-encompassing paradigm that can be applied to any facet of life, and subsequently any model of play therapy can be applied to it or vice versa. Synergetic Play Therapy is both non-directive and directive in its application." Lisa Dion.)*

If you finish early, consider different reflective questions you could ask to deepen their knowledge and make sure you do some kind of group closure. Closure might look like a group high five and taking a photo together.

\*\*\*THANK YOU for helping support this process. This is an invaluable time of the retreat where you get to see the new group of SPT students stepping into trusting themselves and their knowledge around SPT. We could not make this happen without the help of our experienced SPTers!

Please reach out if you have any questions!

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