

**A CULTURAL SENSITIVE THERAPEUTIC APPROACH TO
ENHANCE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN PRIMARY
SCHOOL CHILDREN**

by

MAGDALENA GERTRUIDE CALITZ

submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of

**DOCTOR OF DIACONIOLOGIAE
(DIRECTION: PLAY THERAPY)**

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PROMOTER: DR JP SCHOEMAN

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Promotor: **DR JP SCHOEMAN**

The difficulties experienced by children in their middle school age resemble problems with emotional intelligence. It is increased by cultural differences between the child, therapist and social environment.

This research problem led to a culturally sensitive Gestalt play therapy intervention programme, to enhance primary school children's emotional intelligence.

An intervention was developed, applied and the outcomes thereof studied. The outcomes relate to play therapy techniques, emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity.

The researcher made use of applied research, and thus focused on solving the social problem as stated above, and making a contribution to real life issues.

A literature study, related to the concepts of the unit of analysis showed the following: The primary school child has high energy levels and presents concrete reasoning abilities. His self-esteem is based on good interpersonal relationships and achieving tasks.

Emotions and other physical and cognitive systems are interdependent. Emotional intelligence is the awareness, management and control of emotions, relate to the functions of the frontal lobes and also to the requirements of a healthy individual according to Gestalt therapy.

Culture is connected to the field in Gestalt theory. Cultural sensitivity in this research study meant an attitude of acceptance of cultural differences.

Gestalt therapy is based on holism, which includes the environment or field. Gestalt play therapy in a group context was found to be an effective way to teach emotional intelligence skills in a culturally sensitive way to primary school children.

The intervention programme was applied to pilot- and research groups, compiled from children who were assessed with the Das-Naglieri Cognitive Assessment System and who presented weaker frontal lobe processes in relation to their other cognitive skills.

The outcomes of the research study identified the most effective Gestalt play therapy techniques, which are:

- The healing therapeutic relationship
- The use of experiential learning
- The Gestalt principle of “biding one’s time”

The study also delivered some unsuspected outcomes namely a relation between right-hemisphere processes and emotional intelligence.

This study is still open for further research relating to the concepts discussed above, the intervention programme as well as the unsuspected outcomes.

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To Whom It May Concern:

The following documentation is included in this package:

1. Three copies of the research report: A CULTURAL SENSITIVE THERAPEUTIC APPROACH TO ENHANCE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN
2. Three copies of the intervention programme: A CULTURAL SENSITIVE THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMME TO ENHANCE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN
3. One extra copy of the summary of the research report
4. One extra copy of the front page of the research report
5. One copy of the candidate's curriculum vitae
6. Cheque for microfilming
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