

Peer Review

Review of: "Creating a Child-Centered Playroom for Marshallese Children"

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The authors highlight the experience of Marshallese American families, including elevated mental health concerns and low access to mental health care. They describe the process used to identify toys that could create a culturally inclusive classroom for Marshallese Kindergartners and provide a list of suggested toys. These recommendations can be useful for other schools and therapists looking to provide an inclusive and therapeutic experience for Marshallese youth.

I appreciate that the authors begin with a description of the Marshallese people's historical context, including the United States' devastating nuclear testing and the impact of this historical trauma. I also appreciate that they describe their position as people who are not Marshallese but work in a region with a high Marshallese population, and their transparency in the voices they sought in selecting these toys.

My primary question is, where are the voices of the Marshallese in this commentary?

There are currently no quotes from Marshallese leaders or families, and no reflections on their goals or strengths. It appears the Marshallese cultural liaison provided the driving insights in identifying the toys for the group; was the liaison invited to be an author, or to share any additional insights in sharing the information in the article? The authors recommend a book on the Marshallese people written by someone who is a long-time resident but is not native; are there any other voices and stories they would like to elevate in working to understand Marshallese people?

I appreciate the authors' transparency that they were invited to but could not initially attend a class on Marshallese language and crafts. Have they been able to attend since that time? Could those insights and materials be shared? Those seem like crucial materials to be able to create an inclusive and healing environment. Such a meeting or discussions might also offer insight on areas outside of toys that are key to building cultural responsiveness in play therapy, such as the meanings behind the reticence

mentioned, or differences in nonverbal communication. The importance of understanding differences in nonverbal communication is highlighted by one of the articles cited, O'Conner (2005).

A thorough assessment of the classroom responsiveness might include attention to language, persons, metaphors, content, concepts, goals, and context (Bernal et al., 2005). Notably, this would include a reflection on how play group therapy might fit (or not fit) with the Marshallese families' goals and current methods of promoting wellbeing.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.