



“Offering voice to the voiceless”

Introductory primer to Sandplay/Sandtray Therapy

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet provides a basic overview for therapists who consider integrating sandplay into their work.

The term “**sandplay**” is often used in a more general context than referring specifically to Jungian Sandplay. Sandplay is based on Jungian analysis. The therapist sits, observes and draws what the client is doing in the sandtray and acts as witness to the unfolding drama that is being created. The therapist needs to have extensive knowledge in Jungian symbolism and analysis. Very little dialogue occurs between the therapist and client. On the other hand, **Sandtray Therapy** is all other kinds of play that utilise sand. This includes Eriksonian and Gestalt sandplay. For the purpose of this Primer, however, we will use the term SandPlay generically.

What makes SandPlay different?

The symbols of the objects and materials used in sandplay can serve as a common language. Children often do not have the capacity to articulate or name what is happening to them. They often have no words for their feelings - Sandplay provides a language for those that cannot express their pain, desires, happiness, fears, loss, and joy and so on, via language.

Figures and objects from culture and nature, symbolize events and situations in our inner and outer lives. We select and place objects and move the sand itself to create scenes that express our deepest concerns.

Sandplay can therefore provide an avenue for clients (even adults!) to express their innermost thoughts and feelings. Because sand and water tap prenatal, perinatal, and preverbal consciousness, language skills are not necessary for understanding the expressions of the psyche. For this reason sandplay can be used across languages, cultures, races, ages, and developmental levels.

Sandplay creates a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious. During sandplay, the conscious mind relaxes control and allows material lying underneath the unconscious to emerge. The unconscious awakens through the selection of the figures and the shaping of the sand whilst simultaneously silencing the ambitiousness and purposeful qualities of the conscious mind. Sandplay helps clients address their fears that stems from a number of psychic injuries that destroyed positive self-development. The deeply disturbed and often more primitive aspects of the personality can be expressed in sandplay where the client develops an understanding and re-ordering of the terrifying qualities. During the course of sandplay, inner integration develops gradually out of chaotic circumstances observed in earlier sand work of the client. Sand pictures that originally expressed emptiness and loneliness may begin to show new life and growth, hidden despair can become expressed via silent nurturing, thereby decreasing its destructiveness.

Sandplay can be effectively used with children, adults, couples, families, and groups.

HOW IT WORKS

The client is encouraged to explore the shelves and trays of sand during his visit to the office. The Sandtray session begins with the clients being invited to select figurines to which they are drawn - the therapist may encourage clients to suspend for a while all judgments, intentions or goals and "let the figure pick you." This refers to the power of the Sandtray process to open the clients to re-experience pre-verbal and non-verbal states. As adults we may have forgotten or never learned words for some of our inner experiences. Yet we may recognize a figurine intuitively without conscious recollection why or what it is.

There is no limit to the number of objects the clients can select. There is no right or wrong way of doing this. The selection stage ends when the clients have a sense of having picked enough objects to start building their World. However, we find it more productive to limit the initial figurines to for instance, to fit in a small plastic container. Clients can always return to the shelves for more figurines if they feel they need them. But by limiting the initial figurines we attempt to prevent sand boxes from becoming too full for the client to benefit by the process (it happens especially with children who most of the time, want to use *all* the figurines!)

During the building stage, the sandbox is placed between the client and therapist. The client develops a "language of figurines" and begins to explore a new realm of inner wisdom. She/he constructs a portrayal of the World that is closest to her/him by placing the objects in the sandbox, and/or by molding sand, pouring water or igniting fire. No attempt is made to alter the process, influence the choices the client makes or to modify the client's behavior. In the tray the client is confronted with his/her own thinking and feeling made manifest. The communication that takes place in the process is first a communication from the client to his or her self, that is, objectifying an inner reality and then secondly, from the client to the therapist.

There are two phases for processing: silent reflection and verbal association, followed by joint experiencing. In other words, the client and therapist are looking silently at the World together; then the client takes the therapist into the World, the client makes connections, brings it home and shares her/his experiences in response to the World and the process.

If the participant chooses to talk about his or her tray, the therapist is encouraged to listen and take notes, and withhold any interpretations or guided interventions. This gives the client an opportunity to experience and work through the images on an unconscious level without interference from the therapist. Any necessary verbal response by the therapist to the client's questions or comments, should follow a person-centered, reflective listening model.

During the concluding phase, the client explores the psyche's message/gift/guidance, becomes aware of the growing edge, and does some journaling. At the end, clients are given (or e-mailed) photos and notes of their sand Worlds, if they want them.

METHODS

There are different theoretical orientations and methodologies which employ the use of sand trays in their clinical interventions with clients. Gestalt, Adlerian, and Constructivist therapists have integrated the use of sand trays in their work.

Gestalt Sandplay

Gestalt Therapy deals with the whole person in his/her life-situation (**Holism**). It is an existential approach. In some cases it is also referred to as an “insight” approach. It assists the client in experiencing his or her existence and way of being in the world more fully, and in assuming full responsibility for that. It deals with present [foreground] problems and connects them with past and future concerns. Gestalt doesn't ask clients “*why* did you do that?” because it arouses defenses and encourages rationalisations. Instead, it asks people to experience all of their selves, to accept all their alienated parts and, thus, become whole - a Gestalt. Although many of the Gestalt techniques used in sandplay with children encourage projection, they are not used for the purpose of interpretation. Though it is almost impossible for a therapist to avoid some interpretation, particularly in work with children, it is important for the therapist to use them as tentative translations, guesses, and hunches that children can verify. It is through this verification that children feel listened to and understood and thereby gains strength. One might say, “The figure left all alone in your sand tray looks lonely to me —do you ever feel that way?” and if the child responds affirmatively, Gestalt therapist indicate that a kind of therapy is occurring that could never happen had this “interpretation” been hidden as a notation in a chart. A child may also say, “Oh, no,” to such a statement, or want to do something else, or seem puzzled. In Gestalt theory, it is postulated that very young children have a wisdom about themselves that is awe-inspiring. The therapist is to assist children in sharing this wisdom. The therapist is to gently open the doors to self-awareness and self-ownership, it is through open and contactful sharing that the child strengthens his or her own self. Gestalt play therapy with children is fairly directive. The therapist will make determinations regarding the therapeutic needs of children in pertinent activities.

This method of Sandplay differ from Jungian Sandplay as there is not the same emphasis on the symbolic and metaphorical content in the play. The therapist in this method can have more interaction and guide the play than a therapist would in Sandplay therapy.

Adlerian Sandplay

The Adlerian method of sand tray can be either directive or non-directive. Adlerian sandtray therapy can be used as the sole technique throughout the course of therapy or in conjunction with other tools. According to Adlerian theory, neurosis occurs when individuals move away from social interest and lack the courage to face the tasks of life. This means that for Adlerians it is, therefore, not enough only to understand the meaning of the tray, it is also important for the client to make movements toward change. The initial tray can be used to identify the movement towards change, or it can be used to process the meaning of possible changes for the future. Once clients have processed the possible changes they can make through the tray, they may actually make those changes in their lives. The Adlerian model as allows for therapist intervention and interpretation by moving pieces, introducing pieces, and suggesting possible meanings to the client. There are also occasions in which the Adlerian sandtray therapist will complete a sandtray for the client as a means of providing lifestyle feedback. The therapist may intervene and offer a suggestion that the client is able to accept or not accept. Efforts to interpret sand trays from an Adlerian perspective should follow the methods used to interpret early recollections, metaphors, or dreams.

Narrative therapy is a postmodern, post-structuralist approach. It seeks to be a respectful, non-blaming approach to therapy which centres people as the experts in their own lives. People create life stories and/or “scripts” which determine how they interact with others and lead their lives, as based on interpretations of external events. Both the stories as well as the scripts function as pre-determined “rules” according to which people live their lives, confirm their interpretations, and expectations. In therapy clients are supported to create and internalise new stories, draw new assumptions about themselves, and open themselves to future possibilities by re-authoring their stories. Ways to use sandplay therapy through a **constructivist – narrative framework**: They have asked clients to (i) create the problem in the sandtray, ii) show the effects or influences of the problem in the sandtray, and (iii) create a sandtray without the problem. They have also invited clients to create a series of trays, mutually discussing and encouraging changes in the sandworlds related to changes in the way clients are dealing with their problem(s). A “child’s experience shifts as she (or he) make(s) the various sandtray(s) and as she (or he) performs new meanings in this tangible form”.

Jungian Sandplay

The theoretical foundation of Sandplay therapy is based on the Jungian Concept that the psyche has a natural propensity to heal itself and to grow towards fullness. It is also based on the understanding that unresolved conflicts as well as traumatic events search for a way to resurface in areas where they are not threatening such as dreams or play. Sandplay provides the proper conditions this tendency is activated while using a contained small environment. The use of the tray, the miniatures, and the sand to create a picture or “world”, encompass the therapeutic process which is the Sandplay intervention. The therapist is simply there to witness the process silently while being “fully present”. This honors the client and creates a “holding” environment for the clients to present their scene. The therapist should be able to interact comfortably with the client creating a “free and protected space”.

In Sandplay, the miniature figures represent various archetypes, which correspond with Jungian constructs such as **the animus** (the masculine in females - Figurines here could include female motor mechanics, female pilots, female builders, female architects, female warriors etc), the **anima** (the feminine in males - Figurines include for example a red heart, bunch of flowers carried by a male, a male pushing a pram, holding a baby, ballet dancer, dancing, cooking etc), or the shadow – Because of **the shadow** we have a strong tendency to be immoral, aggressive and passionate. Like all archetypes, the shadow seeks outward manifestation and is projected onto the world symbolically as *devils, monsters, or evil spirits*. It can be projected onto a person. Jung believed that we should recognise our shadow and use it rather than overcome it. He maintained that the animal nature of the shadow was a source of vitality, spontaneity and creativity. People that do not use their shadow tend to be dull and lifeless. As the client chooses his or her figurines, we assume that the choice includes the aspects of self and shadow. The **self** is an archetype that motivates man to integrate the various components of the psyche into a harmonious whole. It represents humankind’s striving towards unity, integration, completeness and wholeness. The self surfaces when the conscious and unconscious are no longer in opposition to each other. Figurines representing the Self include religious figurines, mystical and magical figurine.

The therapist will have the room with their collection of miniatures in open shelves or in drawers. It is important for the client to have the accessibility to which ever figures “speak” to them at the time of the session. Especially with a large collection it is beneficial to have the miniatures and other objects grouped together in some fashion which will allow the client to be able to find the figures they are looking for e.g. by developmental level and then by Archetype.

12 MOST COMMON ARCHETYPES

Although there are many different archetypes, Jung defined twelve primary types that symbolize basic human motivations. Each type has its own set of values, meanings and personality traits. Also, the twelve types are divided into three sets of four, namely Ego, Soul and Self. The types in each set share a common driving source, for example types within the Ego set are driven to fulfill ego-defined agendas. Most, if not all, people have several archetypes at play in their personality construct; however, one archetype tends to dominate the personality in general.

The EGO Types

<p>The Innocent Motto: Free to be you and me Core desire: to get to paradise Goal: to be happy Greatest fear: to be punished for doing something bad or wrong Strategy: to do things right Weakness: boring for all their naive innocence Talent: faith and optimism The Innocent is also known as: Utopian, traditionalist, naive, mystic, saint, romantic, dreamer.</p>	<p>The Orphan/Regular Guy or Gal Motto: All men and women are created equal Core Desire: connecting with others Goal: to belong Greatest fear: to be left out or to stand out from the crowd Strategy: develop ordinary solid virtues, be down to earth, the common touch Weakness: losing one's own self in an effort to blend in or for the sake of superficial relationships Talent: realism, empathy, lack of pretense The Regular Person is also known as: The good old boy, everyman, the person next door, the realist, the working stiff, the solid citizen, the good neighbor, the silent majority.</p>
<p>The Hero Motto: Where there's a will, there's a way Core desire: to prove one's worth through courageous acts Goal: expert mastery in a way that improves the world Greatest fear: weakness, vulnerability, being a "chicken" Strategy: to be as strong and competent as possible Weakness: arrogance, always needing another battle to fight Talent: competence and courage The Hero is also known as: The warrior, crusader, rescuer, superhero, the soldier, dragon slayer, the winner and the team player.</p>	<p>The Caregiver Motto: Love your neighbour as yourself Core desire: to protect and care for others Goal: to help others Greatest fear: selfishness and ingratitude Strategy: doing things for others Weakness: martyrdom and being exploited Talent: compassion, generosity The Caregiver is also known as: The saint, altruist, parent, helper, supporter.</p>

The Soul Types

<p>The Explorer Motto: Don't fence me in Core desire: the freedom to find out who you are through exploring the world Goal: to experience a better, more authentic, more fulfilling life Biggest fear: getting trapped, conformity, and inner emptiness Strategy: journey, seeking out and experiencing new things, escape from boredom Weakness: aimless wandering, becoming a misfit Talent: autonomy, ambition, being true to one's soul The explorer is also known as: The seeker, iconoclast, wanderer, individualist, pilgrim.</p>	<p>The Rebel Motto: Rules are made to be broken Core desire: revenge or revolution Goal: to overturn what isn't working Greatest fear: to be powerless or ineffectual Strategy: disrupt, destroy, or shock Weakness: crossing over to the dark side, crime Talent: outrageousness, radical freedom The Outlaw is also known as: The rebel, revolutionary, wild man, the misfit, or iconoclast.</p>
<p>The Lover Motto: You're the only one Core desire: intimacy and experience Goal: being in a relationship with the people, work and surroundings they love Greatest fear: being alone, a wallflower, unwanted, unloved Strategy: to become more and more physically and emotionally attractive Weakness: outward-directed desire to please others at risk of losing own identity Talent: passion, gratitude, appreciation, and commitment The Lover is also known as: The partner, friend, intimate, enthusiast, sensualist, spouse, team-builder.</p>	<p>The Creator Motto: If you can imagine it, it can be done Core desire: to create things of enduring value Goal: to realize a vision Greatest fear: mediocre vision or execution Strategy: develop artistic control and skill Task: to create culture, express own vision Weakness: perfectionism, bad solutions Talent: creativity and imagination The Creator is also known as: The artist, inventor, innovator, musician, writer or dreamer.</p>

The Self Types

<p>The Jester Motto: You only live once Core desire: to live in the moment with full enjoyment Goal: to have a great time and lighten up the world Greatest fear: being bored or boring others Strategy: play, make jokes, be funny Weakness: frivolity, wasting time Talent: joy The Jester is also known as: The fool, trickster, joker, practical joker or comedian.</p>	<p>The Sage Motto: The truth will set you free Core desire: to find the truth. Goal: to use intelligence and analysis to understand the world. Biggest fear: being duped, misled or ignorance. Strategy: seeking out information and knowledge; self-reflection and understanding thought processes. Weakness: can study details forever and never act. Talent: wisdom, intelligence. The Sage is also known as: The expert, scholar, detective, advisor, thinker, philosopher, academic, researcher, thinker, planner, professional, mentor, teacher, contemplative.</p>
<p>The Magician Motto: I make things happen. Core desire: understanding the fundamental laws of the universe Goal: to make dreams come true Greatest fear: unintended negative consequences Strategy: develop a vision and live by it Weakness: becoming manipulative Talent: finding win-win solutions The Magician is also known as: The visionary, catalyst, inventor, charismatic leader, shaman, healer, medicine man.</p>	<p>The Ruler Motto: Power isn't everything, it's the only thing. Core desire: control Goal: create a prosperous, successful family or community Strategy: exercise power Greatest fear: chaos, being overthrown Weakness: being authoritarian, unable to delegate Talent: responsibility, leadership The Ruler is also known as: The boss, leader, aristocrat, king, queen, politician, role model, manager or administrator.</p>

PROCEDURE

(extracted from: Procedure_Manual_Research_Using_Sandplay_Therapy.pdf)

During the first therapy session, the therapist needs to explain the procedure for sandplay therapy with the following statement:

"This is sandplay therapy. You can make a picture in the sand any way you want, to express yourself in a safe way."

The therapist then moves towards the tray to demonstrate while continuing: "One tray has dry sand in it, and the other has wet sand. You can move the sand around like this, and shape the sand in the wet tray like this (DEMONSTRATE WHILE TALKING). The trays are blue on the bottom, so you can make a river or a lake like this (DEMONSTRATE). You can also add water to the wet tray if you want." (BE SURE TO SMOOTH THE SAND BACK DOWN BEFORE CONTINUING).

"You can use as many of the figures as you want from these shelves to create your sand scene. You may or may not have an idea of what you want to do."

Choose whatever you are attracted to. Sometimes it will feel like the figures are picking you. There is no right or wrong way to do this. You can do anything you want to express yourself."

"I will be sitting here quietly while you work, and making a few notes about the figures you pick. If you have a question or need help, just ask. You will have plenty of time, and I'll let you know a few minutes before we need to end. After you leave I will take a picture of your tray."

(DECIDE HOW LONG EACH SESSION WILL BE AND GIVE WARNING ABOUT 10 MINUTES BEFORE END OF SESSION. DO NOT DISSEMBLE TRAY WHILE PARTICIPANT IS IN ROOM. PHOTOS ARE TAKEN AFTER PARTICIPANT LEAVES)."

"You can start whenever you are ready. Let me know when you are finished."

When the sandplay is complete, stand beside the participant, in front of their tray, and say:

"Would you like to say anything about your tray?"

Make a note of what the participant shares. After the participant leaves the room, the therapist needs to take the following photos of the tray:

1. Overview from participant's perspective
2. Central area of tray
3. Right and left sides of tray
4. Diagonals and other areas of interest in tray
5. Significant images in tray

The tray is never to be disassembled while the client is still in the room.

"The symbolic content of the client's heretofore, unseen and unknown inner world has manifested in a three dimensional form within the boundaries of the tray...To disassemble the client's budding transformation in his or her presence is unthinkable" (Turner, 2005, p.401).

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- **Sand Trays:**
Number: One, two, or more; one dry and one wet
Size: 20" X 30" X 3 "; larger for families and couples
Shape: Rectangular, square, round or other
Type: Wood, metal, or plastic; with blue button and sides
- **Tables:**
Number: One or more
Size: Large enough to hold tray, water, tissues, and objects
Height: Various heights; if only one, at waist level
- **Display:**
Open shelves, storage containers, drawer, and or cabinets
- **Workspace:**
Separate sandplay area or room
Neat and orderly
- **Sand and Water:**
Grit of Sand: 20 to 90 mesh
Colour of Sand: White or natural silica, black, red, etc
Water: Pitcher of clean water to wet sand and wash hands
- **Other Materials:**
Miniatures/objects
Paper towels, tissues
Tarp to protect floor
Construction materials/
Pitcher/container of water
Camera: Polaroid, 35mm

Objects for the Sand Tray

- **Arrange:**
Carefully and in categories
- **Collect:**
A few objects from each category
As many aversive and attractive objects
A wide array of sizes, colors, textures, and materials
Duplicates and defined miniatures
Natural and artificial items

- **Create:**
Figures you can't find, or suggest clients create figures
- **Encourage:**
Clients to bring in pertinent personal objects
- **Multipurpose Material:**
Construction materials: String, plasticine, clay, Play-doh, paper, colouring materials, fabric, confetti, scissors, glue, sky hooks, water containers, sifters, small serving trays; symbol dictionaries

Categories of Objects

- **People:**
Ordinary; in recreational activities; in a variety of occupations; from the past and present; fantasy, mythological, and magical; fighting etc.
- **Animals:**
Wild animals of the land, sea, and air; domestic; extinct; mythological, and magical and fantasy; animal habitats; bones, shells, and feathers.
- **Plant life:**
Natural and artificial; complete plant life cycle.
- **Minerals:**
Rocks; natural and artificial germs; marbles and beads.
- **Environments:**
Habitats of various cultures and areas; fences and bridges.
- **Transportation:**
Land, water, and air; emergency and military vehicles.
- **Miscellaneous Objects**
Containers; food; addiction and medical symbols etc.

Recording

- **Why Record?**
To train your mind to remember the process
To enhance attention
To guide therapy
To have a map to which to refer later for clarification
For research purposes or scientific evidence
To lend credence to the client's process.
- **Ways or recording:**
Videotaping
Process photography
Brief not-taking
In-depth notes and diagrams.
- **What to record:**
Tray, grit, and colour of sand; wet/dry
Sequence and placement of objects

Direction and spatial relationships of objects
Movement and changes of sand and objects
Objects selected but not used
Buried objects
Clients body language, verbal; and non-verbal expressions
Therapist's feelings and thoughts
Other relevant observations and thoughts.

BUILDING YOUR OWN SANDTRAY

Things You'll Need

- 1 plywood sheet, 24" x 48" x ½"
 - 2 pine craft boards, 4" x 24" x 3/8" each
 - 2 pine craft boards, 4" x 36" x 3/8" each
 - Tape measure or yardstick
 - Pencil with eraser
 - Circular or hand saw
 - Wood glue
 - Hammer
 - 4d finish nails
 - Nail set
 - Medium sandpaper
 - Fine or very fine sandpaper
 - Superfine sandpaper
 - Tack cloth
 - Synthetic bristled paint brush
 - Water-based enamel primer
 - Medium blue latex paint
 - Water-based polyurethane
 - Fine sand
 - Toys and figurines
 - Drill (optional)
 - Safety goggles
 - Dust mask
1. Measure 20 ¼ inches on the shorter sides of your plywood sheet and make a small mark on each edge with your pencil. Draw a straight line connecting these two marks. Repeat this process along the longer sides, this time measuring 29 ¼ inches.
 2. Cut the plywood sheet along the lines you have measured using your circular or hand saw. The dimensions of this rectangle should now measure 20 ¼ inches by 29 ¼ inches.
 3. Measure and cut the two shorter craft boards to 19 ½ inches long. Cut the longer boards to 29 ½ inches long. If you wish to match traditional dimensions of sand trays exactly, trim the width of all boards to 3 inches.
 4. Attach the two longer boards to the plywood base with wood glue, making sure that the edges of the boards are flush with the base. Measure 3/16 inch from the outer edges to guide the finish nail placement. Secure corners and roughly every inch along the perimeter with nails. Use a nail set to drive nails below the surface of the wood.
 5. Insert remaining boards between the two longer boards on each side to form a rectangle, again securing the edges with wood glue and finish nails. Allow the glue to dry.
 6. Sand edges with medium sandpaper to smooth rough spots, progressing to fine or very fine sandpaper to ready the sand tray for finishing. Remember to follow the grain of the wood when sanding.
 7. Wipe wood with the tack cloth to remove dust.
 8. Apply a coat of water-based enamel primer and allow to fully dry; or, Apply a thin coat of medium blue latex paint to inner surfaces of the sand tray and let dry, then repeat with another layer and allow to dry. This simulates sky and water in the miniature world of the sand tray.

9. Or, apply a thin layer of water-based polyurethane to all surfaces and let dry. Sand lightly with superfine sandpaper and wipe with the tack cloth to remove dust. Apply another coat of polyurethane to finish the project.
10. Select fine-grain sand for your tray. If you purchase it, Grade 30 is best because it is easily molded. If you collect it from the ocean, rinse it several times with water to remove any salt that could dissolve the paint on your tray.

SYMBOLIC MEANING OF TOYS AND ANIMALS

TOY/ANIMAL	POSITIVE ASPECTS	NEGATIVE ASPECT
<u>Airplane</u>	Search, freedom, safety, protection	Escape, distance, speed
<u>Wild Animals</u>	Survival, power, strength	Aggression, fear
<u>Domestic Animals</u>	Protection, family, relations, compliance	Vulnerability, dependency
Baby bottle	Nurturing, Orality, coping issues, babies, siblings	Regression, Orality, coping issues, dependence, urinating
Ball	Interaction, relationships, trust, reassurance, re-evaluation, competition	competition
Binoculars	Perspective, hunting, finding, searching, intimacy, self-examination	Relationship (closed and distant), surveillance, hunting
Blanket	Security, protection, boundaries, defence, construction, limits, closure, structure, protection	Regression, blocks, defence, rigidity, barriers, vulnerability
Boats	Support, stable, emotionality, balance, security,	Unstable, emotionality, unconscious
Books	Bibliotherapy, future, present, identity, knowledge, metaphors	Identity, metaphors, secrets
Box	Known, control, containment, boundaries, belief, confirmation, gift, Self, dignity	Unknown, control, belief, Self, secret, non-content existence
Broken toys	Adjustment, Change, Compensation	Issue, Self, Identity, Compensation, defeat, ineffectual, loss
Camera	Proof, validation, conformation, Past, truth, evidence, change, memory, knowledge	Conformation, Past, memory, change
<u>Cars</u>	Mobility, power, safety, protection, travel, defended	Power, escape, defended, family issues, conflict
Chalk Blackboard	Environment, world, creation,	Environment, world,

	emotional expression, creativity, integration,	emotional expression
Clay	Creation, self-esteem, expression, contact, change	Contact, aggression, manipulation, pressure, change
Costumes	Relationships, communication, fantasy,	Relationships, communication, anonymity, fantasy, impulses, disguise
Gloves	Safety, control over content	Avoiding, distant, control over content
Hats	Identity, roles, expectations, fantasy, power	Identity, roles, expectations, fantasy, power, denial
Masks	Relationships, Communication,	Anonymity, fantasy, impulses, disguise, Relationships, Communication
Sunglasses	Safety,	Bidding, avoiding, distant,
Wigs	Relationships, Communication, person	Relationships, Communication, anonymity, fantasy, impulses, disguise, person
Dinosaurs	Past, History, power, survival, environmental	Past, history, power, extinction, environmental, death, fear, conflict, loss
Doctors Kit	Healing, repair, respect, power, life-death, body image, changing	Power, life-death, Body image, changing, internal, pain, crisis, intrusion
Syringe	Healing, contact, impact	Impact, intrusion, violation, fear, penetration, contact
Stethoscope	Validation, Internal feelings	Internal feelings, unknown, un-disclosed
Thermometer	OK-ness, need for change, internal feelings, need for help	Sickness, internal feelings, crisis
Blood Pressure	State of mind, need for change, calm	State of mind, internalised feelings, anger
Operation	Intervention, Action, control, healing, resolution, risk	Action, control, intrusion, crisis, risk, vulnerability
Dishes/Cooking	Nurturing, celebration, security, orality, attention	Orality, attention, neglect, demands
Dolls	Self-Identity, friendship, sibling, anatomy, competition	Closedness, sibling, anatomy, regression, competition
Dolls House	Family, family interactions – attitude, environment, security	Family, family interactions – attitude, environment
Family figures	Authority, power, nurturing, protection, relationship, security, acceptance	Power, perpetrator, dependency, relationship, rejection, competition
Male Family Figure	Male role model, modelling, brothers, uncles, teachers, and sitters	Issues with father,
Female Family Figures	Female role model, modelling, sisters, aunts, teachers and sitters	Issues with mother

Girl	Self, sister, sitter, identity, image, friends, peer relationship, social	Self, identity, image, peer relationship, social
Boy	Self, brother, sitter, identity, image, friends, peer relationship, social	Self, identity, image, peer relationship, social
Baby	Nurturing, sibling, competition, needs, history, past	Competition, regression, needs, history, past
Finger paints	Contact, involvement, impact, security, grounding	Contact, impact, regression
Flashlight	Control, leadership, scanning, searching, observing,	Control, dependency, scanning, secrecy, fear, observing
Games	Control of life, competition, success, compliance, empowerment, structure, change, competency, cooperation	Competition, failure, change, resistance
Grooming	Self-Image, Self-concept, change, thoughts, validation, caring, nurturing	Self-Image, Self-concept, change, thoughts,
Guns	Power, protection, boundaries, control	Power, control, aggression, anger, hostility, pain, intrusion, impact
Keys	Control, containment, protected, boundaries	Control, secrets
Kitchen Set	Home, nurturing, care, relationship, family, respect, family process, emotional support	Home, sibling conflict, relationship, family, family process, neglect
Knife	Utensil, power, defence, protection	Power, intrusion, sexual, aggression, pain
Lights	Control, power, escape, change	Control, power, escape, denial, change, secret, hiding, miserable
Magic Wand/ Crystal Ball	Fantasy, wishes, goals, future, change	
Mirror	Self-Image, Self-concept, memories, past, change, thoughts, validation	Self-Image, Self-concept, memories, past, change, thoughts
Models	Consistency, completion, motivation, focus, persistence, goal, validation	
Money/Poker Chips	Security, power, control	Power, control, loss, cheated
Monster figures	Friendly, power, fantasy, relationship, mysterious, ambivalent	Power, fantasy, relationship, fear, frightening, unknown, secretive, ambivalent, aggression, conflict, perpetrator, revenge, attack
Musical Instruments	Self-Expression, internal, communication, creativity, contact	

Paints	Expression, environment, attitude, view of world	Environment, attitude, distance, inaccessible, view of world
Pillow	Bed, safety, territory, throne, parent, relaxation	Monster, burden, aggression
Paying cards	Money, control, power, spontaneity	Money, control, power, secrets
Puppets	Relationships, communication, fantasy,	Relationships, communication, fantasy, impulses, disguise, anonymity
Puzzles	Problem-solving, completion, accomplishment, solving, getting the picture, getting it together, integration, decisions	
Sand	Construction, environment, community, change, creativity, feelings, emotional world	Environment, community, change, destruction, feelings, emotional world
Shark	Powerful	Powerful, aggression, fear, perpetrator
Soldiers	Life, people, grouping	Force, grouping, conflict, attack, aggression, death, struggling
Space (box/tent/house)	Be-and-not be, respect, contact, acceptance, trust, boundaries	Be-and-not-be, hidden, shame, distance, contact
Sword	Protection, Power, defence	Intrusion, aggression, distance, conflict, power
Tape Recorder	Self, relationship, evidence, existence, validation, reassurance, consistency, control, observation, confirmation	Intrusion
Targets	Self-confidence, goal-setting, appropriateness, expectations, need for success, competition, adjusting, adaptability	Competition, adaptability, fear of failure
Teddy bear	Warmth, nurturing, security, companionship, self, protection	
Telephone	Communication, safety, control, power	Distance, communication, power, control, disconnect
Tinker toys-lego	Structure, construction, completion, closure, goal attainment	
Tools	Resources, change, impact, construction, security, authority, confidence, problem-solving, decisions	
Water	Emotionality, flexibility, freedom, orality, depth,	Emotionality, enuresis, orlaity, internal, regression,

	internal	primitive, unconscious, anxiety, sadness
Alligator/Crocodile	Seeking	Aggressive, frightening, oral aggression, lurking, impulsive, violating, hungry, controlling, Devouring Mother
Bear	Strength, power, masculine, father, independent, contact, confrontative, fearless	Power, aggression, intimidation, withdrawal, fighting, confrontative, fearless, loner, wanderer, internalised, moody
Beaver	Stability, persistent, eager, structure, organised	Workaholic, compulsive
Birds	Freedom, perspective, escape, on-top-of-things, searching, gliding	Escape, alone, distance,
Bull	Strong, masculine	Aggressive, mean, strong, territorial, intrusive, masculine, angry, tumultuous, raging, forceful
Butterfly	Searching, freedom, beauty, transformation, renewal, exploring, flightily	
Cat	Gentle, independent, warm, agile, curious	Lazy, moody, calculating, aloof
Cheetah	Swift, fast, escape, agile	Loner
Cow	Nurturance, food, conforming, mother	Docile, conforming, non-assertive
Dolphin	Friendly, social, helpful, likeable, rescuer	
Deer	Swift, feminine, graceful, sure-footed, gentle	Withdrawal, vulnerable, flight
Dinosaurs	Past, history, power, environmental	Death, extinction, fear, conflict, environmental, past, history, power,
Dog	Protection, friend, pet, nurturance, companion, loyalty	Aggression
Dragon	Powerful, wise, mysterious, fantasy	Powerful, unknown, fear, misunderstand, unexpected, fight, anger, rage
Eagle	Freedom, respect, admired, surveillance, independent, autonomous	Escape, hunter, distant, surveillance
Elephant	Powerful, gentle, stable	Slow, constricted, awkward
Fish	Primitive, swift	Vulnerable, primitive, regressive, slippery, escape
Fox	Observant, alert, business, task-oriented	Manipulative, cunning, sneaky, distrustful
Goat	Stability, sure-footed, well-grounded	Distant, aloof
Gorilla	Power, strength, father,	Fearful, power, primitive

	masculine, primitive, instinct, human	
Giraffe	Perspective, aspirations, non-aggressive	Avoidance, naïve, hyper-vigilant
Guinea Pig	Cute, beauty, stable, endurance, contact, support, internal, respect	Defenceless, vulnerable, docile, trusting, victim
Horse	Power, speed, beauty, stable, endurance, contact, support, internal, respect	Escape, flight, power, internal
Kangaroo	Security, mother, nurturing, protection, mobility, birth/baby, pregnancy, bonding, attachment, closeness	Closeness, attachment, pregnancy?
Kitten	Playful, soft, innocent	Vulnerable, naive
Koala	Loveable, cuddling, huggable, non-aggressive,	clinging
Lamb	Nurturing, protection, innocent, baby, rescue	Vulnerable
Lion	Power, control, speed, majestic, regal, proud, father, authority, nobility,	Power, dangerous, control, speed, stalking, predator, wanderer, prowler, aggressor, intimidation
Mouse	Observant	Quiet, fearful, meek, afraid, hiding, frantic, vigilant, secretive, anxious
Monkey	Playful, social, happy, mobile, childlike, silly	Anxious, territorial, silly, fearful, clinging, aggressive, stubborn
Owl	Wise, Knowing, alert, nocturnal, observant, witness	Nocturnal, quiet, internal, aloof, uninvolved, distant
Parrot	Identity, expectations, conformity, reflection, routine, structure, validation	Conformity, imitation, routine
Pig	Earthy	Dirty, hungry, rejection, scavenger, docile, lazy, undesirable
Rabbit	Nurturing, protection, alert, quick, curious, surveillance	Vulnerability, surveillance
Rat	Adaptable, survival	Dirty, untrustworthy, calculating, undesirable
Rhinoceros	Tough, protected, powerful	Defensive, belligerent, reclusive, unknown, loner
Shark	Powerful, persistent, perseverance	Aggression, fear, perpetrator, cunning, unpredictable
Sheep	Friendly, member, warm, belonging, insulated, follower	Docile, insulated
Snake	Mysterious, transformation	Sneaky, phallic, cunning, evil, dangerous, lonely, unattached, aloof
Squirrel	Quick, security	Nervous, hyper-vigilant, hoarding

Swan	Elegant, beauty, admiration, grace, respect	
Tiger	Swift, power, control, speed, self-sufficient	Fighting, alone, stalking, dangerous, control, predator, wanderer, prowler
Turtle	Persistent, patient, defended	Shy, quiet, defended, slow, passive, abandoning mother
Unicorn	Magical, fantasy, wishes, unknown, beauty, Archetypal Mother figure	Alone
Frog	Transformation	
Wolf - Symbolically the wolf appears to represent our instinctive nature that is wild and natural. The wolf can also represent the union of opposites and contradiction. The lone wolf may symbolize the acceptance of natural instincts that had been cut off by family and society and the process of growth and individuation. And the howling wolf illustrates the reclaimed inner voice of the soul.	<p>The nurturing and protective goddess mother appearing as the great she-wolf who nursed Romulus and Remus</p> <p>The wolf in sheep's clothing who attempts to hide its instinctive and wild self by developing a persona of meekness and innocence.</p> <p>The howling wolf who has a voice to celebrate and share with others about successes or to encourage closeness.</p> <p>The wolf and lamb lying together which represents inner peace.</p> <p>The differentiated wolf who has accepted her role in life and is enjoying the present.</p>	<p>Aggressor, perpetrator, distrustful, selfish, hungry, cunning, loner</p> <p>The lone wolf that is alienated by the family or pack of wolves which allows for differentiation of the young adult in becoming a mature adult.</p>
Zebra	Contrast, clear, unique, decisive	black/white, limited power

Note: Toys can be a need for, or lack of, some feeling, emotional state, or competency. Underlined toys are basic toys to have in the playroom.

Symbolic meaning of animals will be basically the same whether used as puppets, plastic figures, acting, drawing or talking. Take cognisance of the setting of the play when interpreting or analysing e.g., forest, air, swamp, jungle, desert, home, city, farm, underwater, outer space, day/night etc. Animals and their meanings can and will change with the course of therapy. Selection of animals can be helpful in metaphorical use.

MEANINGS OF OTHER OBJECTS

Object	Meaning
Sand	Soft, dreamy, infinity, impermanence, change, indifference, range of imagery
Water	Formless, effortless, healing, nurturing, sustenance, calm, uncontrollable, shallow, deep, calm, turbulent
Metals	Embryo in womb, planets, or gods
Gold	Sun
Silver	Moon
Lead	Saturn
Iron	Mars
Quicksilver	Mercury
Copper and Brass	Venus
Stone	Bones of mother earth, indestructibility, immortality, eternal, foundation, upright stones represents phallic powers, a world centre, an omphalos, the place where heaven and earth meets
Crystal	Purity, healing in therapy, clarity, insight, constant love, joy
Glass	Transparent purity, insight, spiritual perfection
Gemstones	Magical powers, hidden treasure, beauty, natural
Wood	Transformation, order, containment, coffin, marriage bed, organic growth of person
Shells	Sexual symbols, birth canal or spiritual), womb, lunacy, fertility
Bones	Mortality, limited time, life, structure, re-birth
Feathers	Truth, air, wind, flight (also to other realms – also take note of depressed clients. Also spiritual desires), Knowledge of birds, Colours and the birds they originate from have specific significance in spiritual ceremonies (ask client) or in shamanism
Plastic	Packaging and design, attitude of material society that sells an impression or idea.
Clown	Wisdom
Rainbow	Grief, tear, hope
Ballerina	True femininity
Snow White	Divine rebirth, fairest in the land
Passage in the sand	Birth or emotional transition
Entombment	Rot, decay, death, sand as a tomb cause feelings of imprisonment, choking, restfulness, eternal peace at end of a struggle. Sand also protects, holds warmth, intimacy, a womb for new life, concealing

	<p>embarrassing qualities by burying them is another reason for symbolically hiding them under the sand. Secrets of value can also be concealed, protected or saved until one returns to claim them. Represents mourning the loss of a loved one. Some resolution of death of a close but conflictual person may also be achieved by dramatic enactment in the sandtray. The client can imagine and build his/her own funeral or the funeral of someone living whom 'you wished were dead' and begin to understand emotions centring around a death wish.</p>
<p>Exhumation</p>	<p>Uncovering, bringing into consciousness, reveal treasure, something meaningful and ripe after a sojourn of underground growth, bringing new insight to light in a pleasurable way, remember what was forgotten, release something from the darkness born anew. Represent a child's search for a lost valuable such as parental love, or self-love and its retrieval. Where a child burry something and cannot retrieve it and asked the therapist to help search for it, it may mean that the child is ready to allow his/her subconscious to release material into consciousness and the child believes this can be done with the help of the therapist. The sand may be experienced as mother's body and the object placed within in it, as being in then womb.</p> <p>Some children may want to leave something buried in the sand until the next session, or for someone else to find. Whatever the reason, this becomes a mysterious communication with unseen others who also visit the therapy room, and perhaps shows curiosity what others do in therapy.</p>

CONCLUSION

Sandplay takes many forms. Sandplay often takes a person back to some childhood memory, traumas, dreams or unfulfilled ideals. Some clients use no objects at all; they touch, move, and make formations in the sand. Some use few objects; some use many. Some use the sand dry. Some wet the sand with water. Some build their scene quickly, others work slowly. Some create a static world, some create an ongoing, moving story and some report the experience as very centering and tranquil. Some simply enjoy the playfulness of the sandplay. Some experience very deep emotions, re-experiencing past pain. There is no right way outcome right outcome. It is important to trust that each client will do what she or he needs to do at that moment in time.

So doing, Sandplay offers *Voice to the Voiceless* -

People tell their stories, play out their beliefs and emotions, and envision change in their lives as they create three-dimensional worlds in trays of sand using toys and miniatures. Because this type of therapy is a physical process, it accesses awareness from the body. Because it involves thinking in symbols, the sand tray reflects preverbal, primary levels of awareness, where there are no words. As mentioned during the Introduction, Sandplay provides a language for those that cannot express their pain, desires, happiness, fears, loss, and joy and so on, via language. It is also a suitable approach to use in the South African context as its focus is on exploring the meanings which the child gives to the symbols in the tray.

In developing our therapeutic tools, however, we will need to decide which approach suits our theoretical framework. And when working with Sandplay it is advisable *to be well trained in Jungian theory*.

Note - Everyone can integrate sandplay therapy into their practice, but In order to be trained as an effective Play Therapist, it is essential that you must already have obtained a Master's Degree.

STAGE	TIME	EXPLANATION	INSTRUCTIONS
1. Creating the World Introducing Sandtray		Place hands in tray and shift sand. Show blue bottom. Show items placed in categories. All responses must be reflective only. Ask permission to record.	You may build any world, make any picture or scene, or create any story in the sand that you wish. You don't have to think about it or understand it. Just do whatever comes. Take whatever objects seem to call to you. Sometimes taking things without much thought reaps some insights you would never expect. You may choose objects you like or don't like. No matter what you do, there is no right or wrong way of doing sandtray.
Constructing the world	15-30 minutes	Remain silent unless client invites you to speak. Objectively observe the process without interference or interpretation.	Immobility in client. This is something new for you. Sometimes people have no idea what to do. But then after they take a moment or two, they begin doing something and get right into it.
2. Experiencing & Rearranging Experiencing	5 mins	Sit quietly as client reflects on the scene. Time of deepening the experience. If clients share, use reflective responses only. Allow time for client to experience the changed world.	This sand world is your world. Just take time to be in it. Let it touch you inside. Experience it not just with your eyes but with all your senses. Explore it and get to know it. You may remain silent or you may share anything that comes to you.
Rearranging		Attend to language & nonverbal cues. Stay outside the tray. Encourage client to stay with emotions that arise otherwise allow the tour to be completed without interruption. Only when strong emotions or superficial depiction that you take active role.	Now that you are fully experiencing the world, you may find that something needs to change in the world. You may move any of the objects or add or remove whatever seems fitting for the world right now.
3. Therapy Touring the world	5-10 minutes		You are the creator of this world. I don't know much about it. I wonder if you would be my guide through the world and teach me about it. Perhaps you could take me on a tour, recount how this world came into being, and acquaint me with the people and objects in this world. Reluctance: Could you tell me something about this object etc or could you tell me a story about the world. Strong emotions: What are you experiencing in your body? And NOT: Where do you feel anger in your body?

Therapeutic Interventions	15 mins	Ask questions about world, reflecting only what client has related. Co-explorers of client's world. KEEP FOCUS ON OBJECTS IN THE TRAY (e.g. that man not your husband)	<i>Because it is the content of the client's psyche and ego that have been objectified in symbols in the tray, it is the creation, not the therapist that should confront the client.</i> Employ techniques & theoretical approaches of your own eg. Gestalt, imagery, psychodrama, art therapy, cognitive restructuring e.g. if the bird could speak, what might it say to the cat? Or What would happen if the child moved away from the man? Or is there anything in this world that could help XXXX not be so frightened. Or is there an object that you could bring to help him?
4. Documentation Photograph		Client may take photograph home. Ask permission if you can keep photo for future reference – good to review client's psychological journey alone or with her by reflecting on series later.	When people have finished their worlds for the day, they always have the opportunity to take a photograph of their world. Would you like to have a photograph of your world?
5. Transition Meaning-making		Consultation area Help client's transition to real world prior to leaving. Help apply the insights that have become conscious.	Your role to aid in client's understanding and application of material – symbol or mythology dictionaries. If confused about use of repeated material/themes create amplification tray next session. Let client know that s/he should determine for herself whether interpretations have relevance.
Connecting two worlds		Let the client know that dreams, memories or feelings may or may not surface as a result to the sandtray experience. Discuss ways to integrate these into consciousness if this should happen e.g. keep a journal – to find a thread & discover meanings.	World focus on past: You have just created and experienced a world. I wonder what things that happened in the tray brought up memories for you? World focussed on current issues: You have just created and experienced a world. How are the occurrences in the tray similar to what is going on in your life now?
6. Dismantling the World		Give client the choice of dismantling – if chooses to disassemble do so prior to transition stage.	I you help the client, it is important that you allow her to remove the first piece – important for the energy placed in the tray to be broken by client and also observe the object as it often holds much importance/power for her.

Resources Relating to Sand Tray Therapy

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- [The Sand Tray Network](#)
- [Sandplay Therapists of America](#)
- [The Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism](#)
- [Vision Quest into Symbolic Reality](#)

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[How to Build a Sand Tray for Sand Tray Therapy | eHow.com](#)

http://www.ehow.com/how_5794955_build-tray-sand-tray-therapy.html#ixzz2NVJ6KldM