

Sandplay Therapy



Sandplay therapy is a nonverbal, therapeutic intervention that makes use of a sandbox, toy figures, and sometimes water, to create scenes of miniature worlds that reflect a person's inner thoughts, struggles, and concerns. This is a form of play therapy; other methods include imaginary play with toys and puppets or bibliotherapy that uses literature to help a client interpret stories or fiction and how such writings may relate to the clients own difficulties and inner world.

Sandplay therapy is a hands-on therapy, often used with those who have experienced trauma, neglect, or abuse. Although sandplay is especially well suited for working with young children, who often cannot express their feelings in words, it is also a technique that is helpful for some teens and adults who are having trouble expressing themselves and who may have suffered some form of severe emotional wounds. This method may also be used for anger, mood and anxiety, relationship problems such as divorce, or learning disabilities.

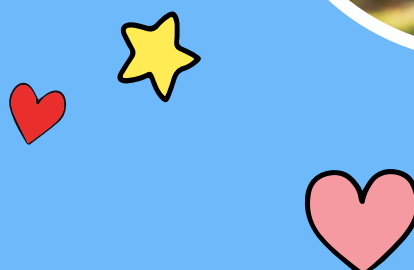
Sandplay therapy takes place in box-like containers referred to as sand trays. The trays are filled with sand that clients use, along with miniature toys, to create a play world that reflects some aspect of real people and real experiences in their own lives. The client chooses from a large collection of toys and builds a small "world" in the tray that reflects what is going on in their lives. The therapist observes the choice and arrangement of toys without interruption.

After sandplay is completed, the client and therapist analyze and discuss the client's toy choices, their arrangement pattern in the sand, and their symbolic or metaphoric meanings. Upon discussion, the client often chooses to make changes to the world they have created in sand. Sandplay therapy may consist of a few sessions or last as long as several years.

With the help of sand trays, clients, guided by a therapist, begin to understand the connection between the world they created in sand and their own inner world. By making changes in their make-believe world, clients are often empowered to make similar changes in their real world.

Sandplay is often incorporated into Play Therapy and other Creative Therapy sessions.

Sandplay can also be used as part of consultation, supervision and Therapeutic Parenting sessions.



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