

# An Introduction to Sand Tray Therapy for Adults and Adolescents

Sand Tray has the potential to be a very deep and sacred experience that is optional for adults and adolescents who are coming to the center for therapy.

The method is simple--there is a dry sand tray and a moist sand tray--generally the client selects objects randomly. The hand often leads and this selection process connects to a similar place that creates dreams. The client makes a picture in the tray using as many or as few objects as desired. The objects range from lower world or shadow objects to higher world or the spiritual realm. In between one finds animals, people, musical instruments, abodes of all kinds, bridges, doorways, foliage, sea life, etc.



The creation of the sand tray is powerful in itself and no words are necessary although people often use words to express what is happening in the picture. It reflects the client's conscious and unconscious present state. The sand adds a kinesthetic experience which allows for body-mind connection and deep healing. The client is invited to "be with" the tray silently and allow its unconscious significance to surface to the client. The therapist may ask a question or offer a reflection, but the therapist does not interpret, rather listens to the unique meaning that the picture has to the client.

Sometimes, I describe Sand Tray as, in part, a blend of dream work and art therapy. However, because the objects are available, there is not a need to draw. I also sometimes combine this with Focusing (a technique developed by Eugene Gendlin).

Clients are welcome to do sand trays as desired. Some people do a tray weekly, others bi-weekly or once a month. The sequence of the trays is important in that it provides a picture journey of the client's therapy process. (Taking a photo is optional.)

