

Exploring Sandtray Play Therapy using Prompts and Directives with clients

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About Me





Sabra Starnes is a clinical Social Worker who has been practicing for 21 years in the DMV area. She worked for 13 years in the District of Columbia Public School System as a School Social Worker. She is the founder of Next Place Therapy Services a private practice that has offices in Largo, Maryland. She become a Registered Play Therapist in 2003. And a Registered Play Therapist Supervisor in 2015. She has a Certification in Sandtray from Dr. Dee Preston Dillon. She seeks ongoing consultation and tray processing with her. Sabra has been doing Sandtray for 10 years. She presents both in person and online play therapy trainings towards becoming a Registerd Play Therapist. Sabra's training still is engaging, humorous and fun. She has a strong passion for educating and supporting clinicians to become effective and highly skilled play therapists. She is a strong and active in prompting play therapy through informal meet and greets, networking, selling of her own play therapy products.

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•Learning Objectives for this webinar are: Understand Identify Discuss Explore Discuss the role Understand the Identify how to Explore the of the client different advantages and incorporatedirectives with and clinician prompts to use disadvantages when with children, clients during a of doing a incorporating teens, families sandtray play sandtray play and adults in prompts and therapy session therapy prompt directives doing sessions. to best support or directive a directive their sandwork. with clients. sandtray play therapy session Sabra Starnes 2020 sabrastarnes.com

The Power of doing Sand tray Play Therapy • Helps to empower clients to resolve loss and to move forward with their lives. • Functions as a natural language for children and a common language for use with all ages and cultures. Allows clients to share without the use of words. • Allows participants to creatively express their thoughts and feelings. • Allows participants to move from feeling afraid and helpless to experiencing activity and healing from within.

Reasons to use a directive sandtray therapy approach with clients

- Active engagement with the client
- Therapist may give voice to a miniature and dialogue with the miniature or with client
- Miniatures are seen for what they actually are to the client and as representations of the clients world view.
- Participation may include parents, siblings, peers
- Sand therapy is viewed as adjunct to talk therapy to actively express distress & solve problems
- Dialogue may occur during and after sand activity
- Preliminary suggestions for a sand scene may be specific to current problem or designed for therapist insight

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Boundaries: If client responds that **they do not want to talk** about the scene, we do not pursue **exploration** nor an **explanation**. We do not ask direct questions nor try to reframe sand scene. Boundaries limit projections of shame, clinician control, further oppression & alienation.

Protection: If Narrative approach would in any way distort, interrupt, intrude, impose, concretize, or displace the process we don't apply. Consider the essence of honoring grief with full presence, in silence. Narrative would be inappropriate and disruptive for example when moving the client's deep existential experience up to a cognitive concretization.

To Validate & Unpack: Rogerian acknowledgement offers safe boundaries, when gently paced . . . very powerful to validate, unpack, amplify therapeutic process.

-Dr. Preston Sand Therapy Competencies: Principles & Practices for Play Therapists & Others, and Symbols in the Sand: An Interactive Exploration for Play Therapists & Others 2016

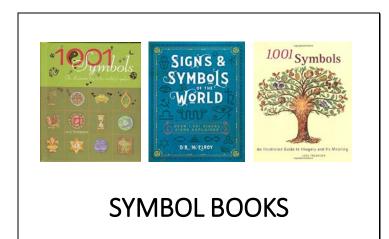
Providing Safety for Clients

Role of Clinician

- Attend: be fully Present, Mindful, Immediate & Open
- Mediate transcendent function and keep channel open between conscious & unconscious
- Offer suggestions on ways to live with the image, relate to it, be with it
- Link image to archeology, mythology, cross-cultural symbols
- Hold the opposites: How is clinician experiencing tensions & images
- -Dr. Preston Sand Therapy Competencies: Principles & Practices for Play Therapists & Others, and Symbols in the Sandi An Interactive Exploration for Play Therapists & Others 2016

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Personal Immersion & Competencies



Competencies Include the Clinician's Capacity to \dots

- Deeply Resonate (a heightened presence & somatic response to symbols in sand)
- Use Therapeutic Metaphors & Silence
- Respond to Layers, in depth, for trauma, grief, loss, existential experience
- Remain Mindful of Power Identity, Culture, Financial, Politics
- Be a Patient Witness/ Attend to layers of meaning, emotion, experience
- Keep a Personal Practice engaging imagination, creativity & flow,
- Attend to Boundaries, Validate

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Engage in Personal Immersion with feedback.

-Dr. Preston Sand Therapy Competencies: Principles & Practices for Play Therapists & Others, and Symbols in the Sand: An Interactive Exploration for Play Therapists & Others 2016

Sand tray Therapy is....

Healing with sand that is wet or dry and miniatures/figures and water.

- Sand tray... expressive and dynamic... used by children, adolescents, adults, couples, families and groups in the presence of a trained sand tray therapist.
- Sand tray... providing an actual physical creation which can be touched, viewed, pondered, discussed, emotionally experienced, and photographed.
- Sand tray... a way to communicate with symbols in a safe environment

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Using
Sand tray
to tell the
story can
helps
clients to
begin
to....

- √ Unpack lies
- √ Validate anger, fear
- √ Vindicate perceptions
- ✓ Open up truth, authenticity, and hope
- √ Reclaim and Re-Create authentic lifeworld
- √ Witness existential experience

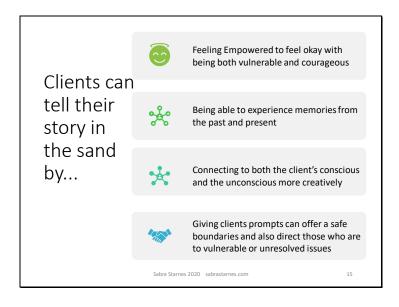
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[Dire	ctive Approach	
	A	With the directive approach you can ask them to focus on a specific issue, such as	
	•	"Show me what it's like to be a member of your family."	
		"What's life been like after the divorce?"	
	8	"Show me what your depression feels like?"	
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METAPHORS NEED NOT JUST BE IN THE TELLING OF A TALE BUT MAY ALSO BE IN THE DOING. WE HAVE PROBABLY ALL HEARD IT SAID THAT EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER.

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Introduce the sand-	At the beginning of session
tray and invite	During session
client to use it	As a closing activity

The story of the tray or the metaphor

Definition of a metaphor: a thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else, especially something abstract.

- The client may be able to introduce a difficult issue through the sandtray sconce
- The client may share something for the first time with out being aware of doing so
- The focus is on the sandtray and the miniatures not directly on the clients issues.

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Play
Therapy
and
Sandtray
therapy
together
can....

- Opportunity to teach and model new behaviors to assist our clients in learning how to react in their world outside of our play sessions.
- Teaching children to make thoughtful decisions and not to just react to the world around them.
- Impulse control and decision making is learned from others around us.
- By using games in play therapy we can teach a child to stop before acting or doing. Practice taking a minute to evaluate the decision before choosing the behavior.
- Repetition of interventions in play therapy helps build new synapses.
- So positive therapeutic targeted treatment planning combined with repetition is the key in play therapy.
- Perry, B 26

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Play Therapy and Sandtray work Creates a Safe Relationship with clients

- Safe secure play therapy relationships increase brain development and growth at any stage of development which is the process of neurobiology.
- When a child feels safe, they are able to process information at a higher level in which then they can start making connections of experiences and are better able to put words to experiences creating more a of a narrative in which they can define and understand.
- Creative unsolicited play is critical to child' development including cognitive, social emotional, neurobiological and physical aspects of the brain.
- Interpersonal neurobiology supports play therapy as it is interconnection between brain, mind and relationships with others. There is an energy between social environment and the nervous system of others and the informational flow of brain, mind, and relationships. (Siegal)

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Things that clinician needs to observe

- Use of sand, water and objects, movement toward or away from miniatures
- Manner of creating the world: speed, intensity, quantity of minatuters
- Patterns in the tray
- Language the client uses in naming the miniatures
- Buried and hidden objects
- · Use of space in the tray

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NON-VERBAL CUES

- Eye contact eye-to-eye (not avoiding their gaze)
- Facial expression calm and attentive (not distressed, angry, worried, sad, fearful, or distracted)
- Tone of voice tender, interested, calm (not harsh, indifferent or preoccupied)
- Body language sit with a relaxed, open posture, leaning towards your child (not with your arms crossed and your head back)
- Pace, timing and intensity need to be aware of their child's preferences for pacing and intensity, which are often slower and less forceful than the parent's.

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The World Test - Charlotte Buhler

- Aggressive Worlds: as projection of aggression.
- Empty Worlds
- Scarcity of items (<50): as projection of...
- dearth of ideas.
- an escape or withdrawal from life or a demand. Indicative of passive resistance.
- a feeling about the world as an unhappy empty place.
- Scarcity of types (<5): Repetition as projection of preoccupation with and fixation on a problem.
- No people: as projection of desire to escape others and be alone, hostility against people, or languages.
- Closed Worlds: as projection of active self-protection, and/or seclusion. Indicative of fear or hostility.
- Disorganized Worlds: as projection of inner confusion. Indicative of impotence in facing a situation.
- Rigid Worlds: as projection of primitive or perfectionistic attempt to create order. Indicative of profound anxiety.

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- Narrative therapy seeks to be a respectful, non-blaming approach to counselling and community work, which centers people as the experts in their own lives.
- It views problems as separate from people and assumes people have many skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments and abilities that will assist them to change their relationship with problems in their lives.
- Curiosity and a willingness to ask questions to which we genuinely don't know the answers are important principles of this work.
- There are many possible directions that any conversation can take (there is no single correct direction).
- The person consulting the therapist plays a significant part in determining the directions that are taken.
- It seems appropriate to begin any exploration of narrative therapy with a consideration of what is meant by the 'narratives' or 'stories' of our lives.



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Specific to the use of sand with narrative techniques, we ask questions about:	 Cultural Representation: How does the sand scene reflect the interconnectedness of identity, cultural integrity, and interpersonal relatedness? Voice: What is the role of attitude and language? How do we give primacy to the client's voice? How does the practice of cultural amplification bridge voice, image, and story? Mindful Attending: How do we cultivate presence, and attend to the client's personal and cultural life-world, while maintaining the integrity of the unconscious? Narrative Practice: What narrative approaches are non-invasive and respectful and maintain a safe process in sand? How do we amplify images in sand and story in order to co-construct a revitalized narrative? Competencies: What skills will support critical self-reflection, our cultural awareness, the utilization of symbols, and our ability to resonate, compassionately, to a combined sand and narrative process?



2. The control of the		
2. They teach by attraction.		
3. They bypass resistance.		
4. They engage and nurture imagination.		
The Magic of Metaphor		
5. They develop problem-solving skills.		
6. They create outcome possibilities.		
7. They invite independent decision making		
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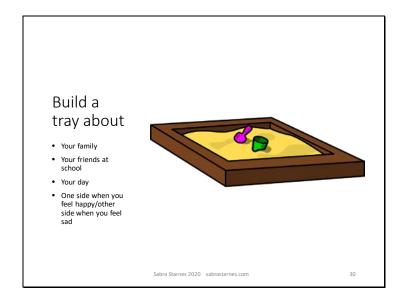
Through the work in the sand A client can express feelings and memories for which there are no words. There are experiences that children cannot explain and feelings for which a child has no words. Often the essence of the experiences can be expressed in an image or in a series of images in the sand tray. In this way, sandtray work facilitates the healing process.

Thing to remember when client is creating sandtray

- Create a safe, protected and frees space
- Do not get actively involved unless the client request it
- Pay attention to the sequence and manner of the creation of the sconce
- Direct client to let you know when finished
- Remain completely present
- Notice nonverbal cues
- Place yourself in a position form which you can observe the client

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Observation an Sandtray	d Assessi	ng Clients	
 Use of the Sand Boundaries Use of miniatur figures Worldview Resolve or unresolved 		Co.	
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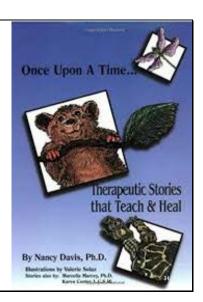


	rected Sand trays with children, ens and families	
A	Limiting the number of objects	
m	Games- hide and seek	
瞎	Mazes	
<u> </u>	Creating a story	
6	Directed topic	
E2	Individuation tray with Teens	
^	Resolving power struggles in families	
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	ussing or Processing the dtray Scene/World	
(Visually observe the completed tray	
•] L•	Emotionally observe the sandtray	
	Evaluate the organization of therapy	
	Sandtray Therapy A Practical Manual Homeyer and Sweeney 2017, 3 rd edition	
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Stories have many important characteristics of effective communication:	
1. They are interactive.	
2. They teach by attraction.	
3. They bypass resistance.	
4. They engage and nurture imagination.	
The Magic of Metaphor	
5. They develop problem-solving skills.	
6. They create outcome possibilities.	
7. They invite independent decision making	
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Using
Therapeutic
Stories and
Sand Trays by
Dr.Nancy Davis



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Biblotherapy and Sandtray



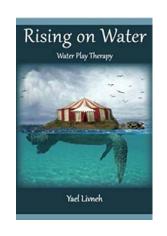


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Guided Imagery Activity -Floating on a Cloud

- Imagine a fluffy cloud floating. Notice it come down gently beside you.
- Image what your cloud looks like, what color is it, what shape is it, what does it feel like to your fingers and toes, what does it smell like. Climb onto your cloud and let it slowly float up. See where it takes you, notice what you see, what you hear, what your smell.
- No let your cloud float to a special quiet place where you feel safe and secure and loved. Notice what you see, what you smell, what you hear or feel.

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BOOK: RISING ON WATER-WATER PLAY THERAPY BY YAEL LIVNEH

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