



WORLD JOURNAL FOR SAND THERAPY PRACTICE

PROMOTING THE ETHICAL PRACTICE OF SAND THERAPY

Editor's Commentary

Sand Therapy Publications Around the World!

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U.S.A.

One goal of my *Editor's Commentary* is to help keep us aware of what else is happening in the sand therapy world. This issue's *Commentary* is dedicated to other sand therapy publications! While I am always seeking manuscripts to come our way, there are many quality, informative, and interesting publications elsewhere.

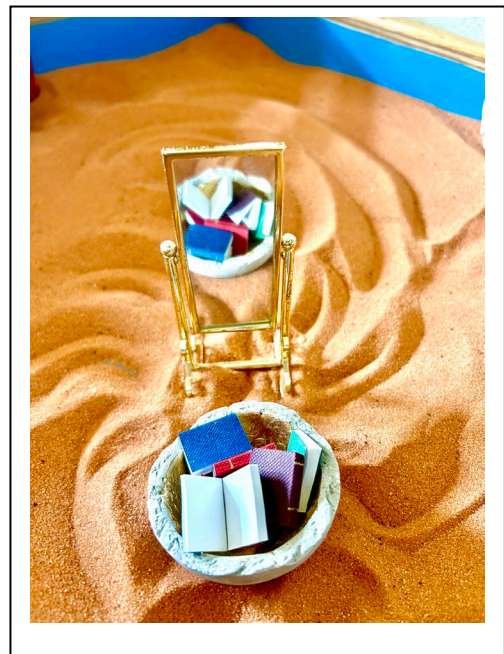
Enjoy – these come from China, Italy, Malaysia, Taiwan, Turkey, and the U.S.A. These include research articles, a literature review regarding the use of sand therapy in career development, a theory (Jungian), and the use of technology.

RESEARCH

1. Dong, J., Liu, L. & Liang, Q. (2024). Analysis of mental health problems of hospitalized sick adolescents guided by psychology and intervention with sandplay therapy. *Current Psychology*, 43, 18960–18970).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-05704-3>

Kunming Children's Hospital, Kunming, China

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the effect of psychological guidance and sandplay therapy in the intervention of adolescent mental health. In this study, adolescents aged 12 to 18 hospitalized for various illnesses, accidents and other reasons were taken as the research objects, and then the application of sandplay to the mental health intervention of hospitalized sick adolescents was proposed. The collected research objects were randomly classified into experimental and control groups through a questionnaire survey. The experimental group used a combination of psychological guidance and sandplay therapy. Lastly, statistical analysis was conducted on four dimensions: emotional state, social function, self-awareness, and psychological adaptation using psychological assessment scales. The results found that after psychological counseling and sandplay therapy intervention, only about 22% of participants in the experimental group showed low mood, nervousness, and anger, and significantly improved scores in social function, self-recognition, and psychological adaptability. In terms of emotional state, the experimental group scored lower, indicating that participants in the experimental group were less likely to experience depression, anxiety, and anger. In contrast, the control group scored higher, suggesting a noticeable intervention effect of psychological guidance and sandplay therapy. These results suggest the comprehensive application of psychological guidance and sandplay therapy positively impacts adolescent mental health intervention's emotional state and psychological adaptation. Integrating the use of psychological guidance and sandplay therapy can provide useful enlightenment for the follow-up exploration and optimization of adolescent mental health problems

2. Schoonover, T. J. , Jha, P., Romito, M., Arogundade, B., & DePinto, A. (2024). Sandtray therapy's impact on trauma symptoms in adults. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15401383.2024.2377410>

Northern Illinois University, USA

ABSTRACT

Adults exposed to trauma report symptoms that harm their emotional and behavioral health affecting their functioning for a prolonged period. Creative interventions have been suggested as a unique expressive approach to assist adults with trauma symptoms. Sandtray therapy is one such technique; however, there is limited literature showcasing the effectiveness of the technique when working with adults with trauma symptoms. In this article, we assess the effectiveness of sandtray therapy on trauma symptoms for five adults with trauma exposures, using an A-B-A single-case research design. Participants completed seven to nine, 50-minute sandtray therapy sessions throughout the study. Results showed a decrease in trauma symptoms for four of the five participants. Thus,

sandtray therapy could be an effective intervention for counselors to use with adults with trauma symptoms.

3. Zelcek, B., & Pouya, S. (2024). Investigation of the effect of the sandplay therapy in the open area to improve the social behaviour of children with autism spectrum disorder. *Support Learn*, 00, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12486>

Inonu University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Sandplay therapy helps the person develop social skills and acts as a therapy method where they can reflect and repair their inner world. This study aims to test the feasibility of sandplay therapy method in an open area for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and investigate its effect on the development of social skills. In addition, the reorganization of sandplay areas where children with disabilities receive education and treatment, and the introduction of design proposals for integrating them with sandplay therapy in the open area, have been one of the other objectives of this study. The study group of this research has a quasi-experimental design in which pre-test and post-test measurements are made on the experimental groups of children between the ages of 8 and 12 years with autism diagnosed were formed. This research consisted of five stages: the planning of the study, the implementation phase, the post-tests, the analysis of the data and the explanation of the design proposals. As a result of the studies conducted on children with ASD, increasing their interaction with society contributed to the development of children with autism socially and psychologically. In this context, group sand therapy was applied to the experimental groups for 7 weeks, one session a week and a total of seven sessions of two children with autism were selected using the selective assignment method. The effect of open area sandplay therapy method on the development of autistic-disabled people was compared with the values taken before and after the sandplay therapy sessions. The findings revealed that increasing interaction with society contributed to the development of children with ASD socially and psychologically. In addition, the development of suggestions for the design of barrier-free sandplay areas and the evaluation of the connection between sandplay therapy and design in the open area was made.

4. Sawetz-Glasener, K. (2024). Stories in the sand: Use of play and the arts with siblings of children with cancer. *Expressive Therapies Dissertations*. 136.

https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/expressive_dissertations/136

Lesley University, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study was to explore how siblings of children with cancer utilize the expressive therapy technique of sandtray to express their lived experience. Using child-centered and creative research approaches, this study provided participants an opportunity to use art, play, and sandtray, in addition to verbal responses, to communicate what was important to them about their experience in ways that also respected participant's emotional safety and developmental age. Phenomenological and arts-informed methods were used throughout the research process, so that verbal accounts, sandtray creations, photographs, drawings, and poetic inquiry, were integrated to amplify the unique perspectives of five child participants (aged 7-18) who have experienced having a sibling with cancer. Audio- and video- recordings, transcriptions, and photographs served as data and were analyzed to reveal emerging themes and observations about the creation process. Results of this study indicated that when given the opportunity to express their experience creatively, participants explored major themes of the sibling relationship, loss of "normal childhood," and feelings of confusion. These themes were revealed in final creations, verbal reflections, and during actual sandtray construction. These results may highlight feelings of change, loss, and confusion in siblings. Results may also indicate the potential of using sandtray and other creative methods in helping children express complex experiences. Future research on targeted interventions and the use of creative approaches when researching children may be particularly helpful to siblings of children with cancer.

THEORY

5. Loscalzo, Y. (2024). Sandplay therapy and active imagination: What are the similarities and differences? Reflections about Jung's writings on active imagination. *Behavioral Science*, 14, 553. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14070553>

Italy

ABSTRACT

Jung stated that active imagination is a fundamental component of the second phase of an analysis that can continue even outside the analytic setting. Since it can be conveyed through various expressive techniques, such as writing, drawing, and painting, it is possible to argue that all forms of psychotherapy based on art (e.g., poetry, dance, and theater) originate from Jung's contribution about active imagination. This paper focuses

on Sandplay Therapy as one of the forms of expression rooted in active imagination. Apart from some critical differences between the two analytic processes (e.g., active imagination is usually prompted in the last phase of the analysis, while Sandplay Therapy might be used since the first sessions), there are several convergences. Among the principal analogies, consciousness lends its expressive means to the unconscious, which decides what to depict. Also, the resulting image is determined from both the consciousness and the unconscious and is related to the person's conscious situation. Finally, I suggest that Sandplay Therapy—aside from contributing to the subsequent development of active imagination itself (as suggested by Dr. Carducci)—might also be used to practice active imagination in a “facilitated” and protected setting. It would help let the unconscious come up while creating the image in the sandtray, and it fosters the confrontation between the unconscious and the consciousness through the contemplation of the image in the sandtray.

LITERATURE REVIEW: CAREER DECISION MAKING

6. Zang, J. (2024) From sand to success: Exploring sand play therapy as a tool for enhancing career decision-making self-efficacy and career adaptability. *Social Space*, 24(01).

School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang. and

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ABSTRACT

Career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) and career adaptability are pivotal concepts in the realm of career development, influencing individuals' adeptness in navigating their professional trajectories. Sand play therapy (SPT) has emerged as a promising intervention, offering individuals a creative and non-verbal platform for self-expression, exploration, and introspection. However, the extent to which SPT enhances CDMSE and career adaptability remains relatively unexplored. This review paper seeks to investigate the impact of SPT on CDMSE and career adaptability, while also examining the mediating role of self-regulation and the moderating influence of personality traits in this dynamic. Through a systematic examination of 150 relevant research papers, this review identifies and analyses 55 papers to extract key insights and discern gaps in the existing literature. Previous studies have underscored the potential of SPT to bolster CDMSE and career adaptability across various demographic groups, spanning from children to adults. SPT interventions have been linked to enhancements in emotional expression, self-awareness, and problem-solving capabilities, thereby fostering greater confidence and clarity in career decision-making processes. Furthermore, investigations have delved into the mediating role of self-regulation and the moderating impact of personality traits in

shaping the relationship between SPT and career-related outcomes. By synthesizing past research findings and pinpointing areas of knowledge deficiency, this review paper contributes to the existing literature, offering valuable insights for theoretical advancement, practical application, and future research endeavors in the realm of career counselling and intervention.

TECHNOLOGY

7. Yan Shi, Lidan Gong, Yiwen Lu, and Lijuan Liu. (2024). *DiSandbox: A Low-cost Digital Sandbox Tool to Support Psychological Analysis and Therapy for Left-behind Children*. In Extended Abstracts of the 2024 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI EA '24). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, Article 107, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3613905.3650906>

Hangzhou Dianzi University, China

ABSTRACT

This paper introduces DiSandbox, a low-cost digital tool designed to support left-behind children in rural China facing psychological challenges. Comprising a range of miniature molds within a sand tray, children can freely express themselves, with an inbuilt camera capturing their creations. These images are sent to their parents' mobile application, where an AI assistant interprets the works and assesses the children's psychological conditions. The platform also offers professional psychological counseling, delivering personalized support. Our research shows that DiSandbox can effectively analyze children's creations to provide initial psychological assessments, encouraging parents to take greater interest in their children's mental health.

8. Wu, Y. G., Chen, J. J., & Xie, J. Y. (2024). *Applying intelligent system to sandplay psychological status detection – transdisciplinary collaboration*. [Conference proceedings]. The 15th International Multi-Conference on Complexity, Informatics and Cybernetics. <https://www.iiis.org/CDs2024/CD2024Spring/papers/ZA694PX.pdf>

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ABSTRACT

Sandplay psychotherapy, employing sand, water, and miniatures, facilitates the non-verbal expression of clients' inner worlds. Challenges include a lack of standardized tools and interpretation difficulties. Applying intelligent systems addresses these, enhancing assessment accuracy, providing feedback, and reducing training costs. Transdisciplinary collaboration is essential, merging psychology, computer science, and art. Our project integrates AI into sandplay diagnosis, aiming for improved therapeutic outcomes.

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