

Sandtray 101 in Play Therapy

Cristina Alvarez, LPC
Sandtray Credentialed, EMDR Trained

<https://playtherapytrainingresources.com>

HOUSEKEEPING



MATERIALS

Sent this week to the email you used to register.



PARTICIPANTS

How many of us are together today?



SCREEN NAME AND CAMERA

Virtual: screen name needs to be your name and camera must be on at all times.



CHAT

Virtual: Keep your eye on the chat in case training staff has a question, especially for the first 15 minutes.



QUESTIONS

I will ask periodically for questions.
In Person: make a note for yourself to remember
Virtual: Send in the chat



AMENITIES

In Person: Bathrooms and WiFi password

TRAINING DESCRIPTION

This introductory training offers play therapists a hands-on exploration of Sandtray Therapy, a developmentally appropriate, expressive modality that supports children and adolescents in safely accessing and processing their inner worlds. Rooted in the principles of play therapy, sand tray work allows clients to use miniatures and sand to create symbolic scenes that reflect their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, often without needing words.

In this experiential workshop, participants will learn the foundational principles of Sandtray therapy, rooted in a trauma-informed and strengths-based approach, from setting up your space to guiding clients through transformative, nonverbal expression. Whether you're new to sand tray or looking to deepen your understanding, this training will provide the tools to begin incorporating sand tray into play therapy.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe how Sandtray Therapy aligns with the core principles of play therapy.
- Identify the developmental benefits of sand tray work for children in play therapy.
- Set up a sand tray environment that supports child-centered, experiential play therapy.
- Use miniatures and sand to support symbolic expression in play therapy.
- Explain the therapist's role in observing and responding while using sand tray in play therapy.
- Demonstrate two strategies for integrating sand tray into play therapy sessions across different stages of development, from a trauma-informed and strengths-based approach.

INTRODUCTIONS

1

Select a miniature that represents your unique therapist self and share.

2

Include how familiar you are with sandtray (1–10).

3

What drew you to this training?

4

What population do you most often work with or hope to work with?

5

What are you hoping to take away from today?

SANDTRAY vs. SANDPLAY

SANDTRAY

- No formal requirement for a designated therapy space and flexible for use in schools, groups, and other settings
- Meaning comes through the client's play and chosen words
- Respects symbolic expression within the play process and compatible with multiple play therapy theoretical orientations
- Allows for both directive and non-directive interventions

SANDPLAY

- Standardized sandtray dimensions, miniatures displayed on open shelving, and utilizes both a wet tray and a dry tray
- Meaning is attributed through the use of miniatures
- Rooted in a Jungian theoretical framework
- Fully non-directive therapeutic approach

Miniature Selection