

## SANDPLAY

Sandplay is a process which allows the individuals to creatively express themselves by using miniature figures in a rectangular tray half filled with sand. Figures used can include people, animals, trees, houses and fantasy creatures which reflect a person's inner and outer worlds.

Dora Kalff, a Swiss Jungian Psychotherapist, developed and promoted this experiential, non-verbal technique in the 1960's and 1970's, after having studied with Margaret Lowenfeld in England, who developed the World Technique in 1935. Frau Kalff found that through Sandplay, her clients were able to connect with their self-healing powers. She felt that the psyche has the ability to heal itself, through what she called "the free and protected space."

People using the Sandplay work individually and choose whatever figures they wish to create a scene. Immersed in play, the person is able to make an inner picture visible in the sand. Thus, Sandplay becomes a bridge between our inner and outer worlds. This is a gentle way in which the deepest emotions have an opportunity to express themselves. The Sandplay provides a safe container allowing the individual to explore fears and anxieties as well as positive creative energies. Mistakes cannot be made in the Sandplay. Everything and anything that is done is acceptable. Some people talk and act out stories; others work silently and intently in building a scene or shaping the sand. Repressed needs can be expressed symbolically and safely. Fantasies can be played out and traumas relieved through their expression. Sandplay is a bridge between our conscious everyday reality and our creative inner lives.

The role of the Sandplay witness is to serve as a non-judgmental observer and to provide the protected space through which the Sandplayer can set her/his own pace and comfort level. Like the guardian of a precious treasure, the observer keeps the Sandplay session private.

Students who use Sandplay experience success which can lead to increased motivation and self-confidence which can reflect in their academic work. Teachers have noticed students become calmer and more able to focus. Adults often experience an increased feeling of energy and well-being – a sense of being more present for their lives and of better understanding themselves.

Mary Watson  
Sandplay in Education  
mwatson4@yahoo.com