Sand Tray "Cheat Sheet"

Miniature Categories

People: family groups, bride & grooms, occupation, hobbies, stage of life figures, historical figures

Animals: Prehistoric, zoo/wild, farm/domestic, birds, insects, sea life

Buildings: houses, business/civil schools, religious, historical

Transportation: cars, trucks, flight vehicles, nautical & other (e.g. Motorcycles, trains)

Vegetation: tres, bushes, hedges, cacti, flowers

Fences/gates/signs: Fences, gates, barricades, signs, railroad tracks & nets

Natural items: seashells, vegetation, rocks

Fantasy: magical, magical animals, monsters, folklore, cartoon & comic book figures, movie characters

Spiritual-mystical: Western (e.g. pastors, rabbis), Buddhas, Day of Dead, magic/crystal balls, gold, crystals, pyramid, gargoyles & other (e.g. Venus, Isis)

Landscaping & other accessories: sky/celestial, topographical, monuments, wishing well, treasure chests, coffin, bridges

Household items: furniture, tools & other (e.g. food, mailbox, benches)

Categories of Construction

Empty world: ⅔ or more of the tray has no miniatures

Rigid world: tray has a schematic arrangement or world of rows

Unpeopled world: no people in the sand tray

Disorganized world: miniatures are placed in an impulsive, chaotic manner

Aggressive world: battle scenes with soldiers or characters fighting

Closed fence world: the majority of miniatures are inside the fence

Key Things for Sand Tray Documentation

- Identify any sand tray categories
- Note the client's interaction with the medium
- Identify any play themes
- Note any sand tray progress
- Include any theoretical orientation utilized

Sand Tray Documentation Example:

*"The therapist encouraged the client to create a solution-focused sand tray **(see note below).** The client was given a prompt to create a sand tray showing a victory parade for when she has successfully addressed her grief. The client was hesitant in her construction and but did place her miniatures in a purposeful manner. She spent time manipulating the sand to the way she liked it prior to her construction, and when she was completed, took time to make sure they were placed in the sand in the way she desired.*

The client's construction of her sand tray could be classified as a rigid sand tray, as there were schematic arraignments that appeared in her

construction. The client also took the time to make things were "perfect" before beginning to process the tray. There were several categories of miniatures represented in the tray including people, buildings, transportation, and magical/fantasy. It should be noted that in previous sessions, the client created sand trays that were more appropriate for a chaotic category, so the creation of this sand tray with more order and control could be a sign of the client gaining more control in her life. The therapist will conduct the GAD-7 screening again to assess the client's level of anxiety since the application of sand tray in her sessions."

*Note: another way to word this is "the therapist used a combination of sand tray and solution-focused therapy in today's session."