

Sandtray for Dementia Care

Have you heard of Sandtray as an activity for Dementia Care? Sandi Peters, MA at Sands of Time described and explained this interesting art and therapy based activity. Sandtray can be traced back to the ingenuity and inspiration of Margaret Lowenfeld, a British pediatrician, who founded one of the first psychological clinics for children in 1928. Dora Kalff, studied with Lowenfeld, added a spiritual component and called her method Sandplay. The term Sandplay® is now protected as a federally registered trademark of the Sandplay® Therapists of America™ (STA).



For elders and people with dementia, Sandtray begins with a tray of white or beach sand. A film developing tray can be used as an inexpensive Sandtray.



A collection of small figurines are then made available. The participant is encouraged to make selections and place items into the tray. Sandi describes that it is easy to begin a figurine collection by asking family members or facility staff for help to collect and donate miniatures: animals, furniture, houses, vehicles, people (realistic, imaginary and religious) or nature items. You might request that items be smaller than, or about the size of an apple.



It is easy to imagine the doors of pleasure that might crack open as participants select figurines and design their own Sandtray with freedom of expression. The temporary nature of the activity supports open creativity. As an interactive experience, Sandtray has potential to help access each individual's interior world. This can be particularly helpful for elders who have dementia and cannot express what they're feeling. This can also be important for elders who may have unresolved life experiences that they are reluctant to talk about.

To learn more go to www.sandplaydementia.com or www.sandplay.org

www.rtconnect.com