

Abstract

Sandplay, the Psyche, and the Brain: What Is Happening Here?

In this presentation, the author speculates on what might be happening neurobiologically when people engage in sandplay. Turning to recent research on brain development, she attempts to answer questions about certain sandplay phenomena, and to provide a grounded basis for sandplay principles and language that might be understood and accepted within non-Jungian clinical practice and research. In particular, certain questions propelled her investigation: *What happens when we simply sit by a sandtray, place our hands in the sand, and experience a flood of emotion? What happens when we know that a sandpicture is still unfinished even when figures fill up much of the tray? What happens when our body signals through a sigh or gesture that our sandpicture is complete? What happens when we intentionally place figures in relationship to others, without understanding explicitly what or who they represent? What happens when we perceive the presence of the divine in our sandpictures? What happens when we experience a seemingly spontaneous healing of a deep and long-present wound, or suddenly have an insight about a long-standing question?* In a non-reductionist manner, the author links the mystery of what may be experienced and expressed consciously and unconsciously in sandplay to current scientific research, exploring relationships between what happens in one's body/mind and within social interactions.

**Presenter: Brenda Weinberg, MA
ISST/CAST Teaching Member**