

Attachment Theory In The Sandtray: Themes

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Source: Advanced Sandtray Therapy: Digging Deeper into Clinical Practice

By Linda E. Homeyer and Marshall N. Lyles

Attachment Woundedness Themes as Seen in the Sandtray

- Use of baby humans or animals in insecure manners
- Caregiving figures are absent, neglectful, or harsh
- Withholding food, medicine, etc, (or resources being out of reach)
- Fences, barriers, or boundaries separating figures when resources need to be shared
- Use of nesting dolls to depict stages or levels of struggle
- Houses being isolated/buried/broken
- Emotions moving to hyperactivation or deactivation
- Treatment of sand/figures becoming haphazard as client loses body awareness
- Narrative moves to judgment or rigidity and away from flexibility
- Pockets of grief/despair in the narrative become overpowering
- Stories/ phrases begin to feel rehearsed/ scripted
- Insisting that a vulnerable figure is at fault for “weakness”
- Preoccupying anger or rumination enters narrative
- Figures are idealized despite their destructive tendencies
- Client (or a figure) has sudden loss of memory

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Ready to Deep Dive into learning more about attachment? These are my top 5 books:

-Advanced Sandtray Therapy: Digging Deeper into Clinical Practice (2022) by Linda E. Homeyer, and Marshall N. Lyles (This book delves deep into how to promote attachment in the therapy session)

-Attachment Theory in Practice: Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) with Individuals, Couples, and Families

-Attached Centered Play Therapy by Clair Mellenthin

-The Circle of Security Intervention: Enhancing Attachment in Early Parent-Child Relationships by Powell, Cooper, Hoffman, and Marvin

-Attachement: 60 Trauma-Informed Assessment and Treatment Interventions Across the Lifespan by Christina Reese

EFT in the Sandtray

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What about me you ask???

So glad you asked!! As you all know by now, we as the therapist are the most important tool in the therapy room. We have attachments needs also! We can only help our clients process their own attachment story to the extent that we have processed our own. Take this opportunity to check in with yourself and complete your own sandtray either in a supervisory session or in a therapy session.

Directive: Build a tray that depicts your attachment journey. Share your tray with someone you trust to process your experiences. Identify what your attachments needs are today. Set an intention to work toward meaningful connection in your life that meets an unidentified need.