

Helping Hearts and Minds combines Drawing and Talking therapy, sand play and other assisted Interventions, but what is the theory behind this effective approach to enhance wellbeing and improved mental health?

Below are some references to research/theory that evidences the success and effective use of both drawing and animal assisted intervention when supporting human mental health and well-being.

Carl Jung

Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (1875-1961) was interested in the way in which symbols and common myths permeate our thinking on both conscious and subconscious levels.

Jung looked at areas of the mind that constitute the psyche, and the way in which they influenced one another. He distinguished the persona, or the image of ourselves that we present to the world, from our shadow, which may be comprised of hidden anxieties and repressed thoughts. Jung also noted the relationship between our personal unconscious, which contains an individual's personal memories and ideas, and a collective unconscious, a set of memories and ideas that is shared amongst all of humanity. Shared concepts, which Jung described as archetypes, permeate the collective unconscious and emerge as themes and characters in our dreams and surface in our culture - in myths, books, films and paintings, for example.

Jung felt that disunity among thoughts in the personal subconscious and the conscious could create internal conflicts which could lead to particular personality traits or anxieties. Such inner conflicts could be resolved, claimed Jung, by allowing repressed ideas to emerge into the conscious and accommodating (rather than destroying) them, thus creating a state of inner harmony, through a process known as individuation.

To read more from this article: <https://www.psychologistworld.com/cognitive/carl-jung-analytical-psychology>

Sand Therapy

Play is the work of children. When the child chooses 10 or 12 characters from an array of over 1000 characters, you simply know that their choices have meaning for them. Using Sand Therapy as part of Drawing and Talking toolkit enables the unconscious to become conscious, enables healing and the ability to become resilient and in control.

Benefits of using Sand

1. Gives expression to non-verbalized emotional issues. Play is the language of children, and the sand tray provides a safe medium for expression, free from judgment.
2. Has a kinesthetic quality. Sand has a sensory quality and the experience of touching and manipulating the sand can be therapeutic in and of itself.
3. The therapeutic distance can allow the client to have a safe place to work through and process their experiences.
4. Provides a setting for the emergence of therapeutic metaphors.
5. Provides a needed and effective communication medium for the client with poor verbal skills. Beyond developmental reasons, there are clients of all ages who may have poor verbal skills for a variety of reasons. When unable to effectively communicate needs and process feelings it can create a great level of frustration. In Sandplay therapy expression of needs is not dependent upon words.

6. Provides a place for the client to experience control.

- Sori, C. F., & Robey, P. A. (2013). Finding reality in the sand: Transitions with children using choice theory, reality therapy and sandplay. *International Journal of Choice Theory and Reality Therapy*, 33(1), 63–77.

Choice theory and reality therapy, as developed by William Glasser, provide an effective treatment for individuals and couples of all ages, including children. However, there are some important issues to consider when counselling children, such as levels of cognitive and language development, as well as individuation. Play is the “language” children use to communicate, therefore, integrating playful techniques within the framework of choice theory and reality therapy is valuable when establishing a safe, trusting environment, facilitating an understanding of this approach and the concept of creating a quality world, and predicting better outcomes.

Sand, Water, and Universal Form in Sandplay and Art therapy

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Sandplay's Jungian origins have demonstrated its use as an invaluable tool for symbolic expression. In sandplay literature, much emphasis is placed on the symbolism and placement of the miniature objects used to create a sandworld. The sandplay process is less often tied to the sculptural qualities of sand and water and the universal forms that are created in play with them. The therapist's central focus might be to provide a place to create sand forms as well as to select and place objects in the sand.

Drawing and Talking

The Drawing and Talking therapy method encourages each side of the brain to work together to process difficult or painful memories by combining drawing, a right-brained activity, and talking, a left-brained activity. Over time, these painful memories are processed, which will often lead to more positive wellbeing and for children, improved behaviour and engagement with their life.

<https://www.itv.com/news/central/2017-05-09/school-based-therapy-helps-those-on-mental-health-waiting-list>