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PROMOTING THE ETHICAL PRACTICE OF SAND THERAPY

Focus on Miniature: Bridges

Theresa Fraser, Associate Editor
Canada

There is a stream or even larger body of water that needs to be crossed; there are two pieces of land with a gap that cannot be jumped; or perhaps there is a highway separating one place from another. Each of these barriers can be navigated by air if we fly. If we travel by land or on foot, we require a bridge. Sometimes bridges happen when something naturally falls and fills the gap. Bridges are also intentionally created to speed up or permit travel to places that could not be visited otherwise. Bridges carry us from where we are to where we hope to be.

As sand therapists know, sandtray work is powerful because it holds experiences encompassing different spaces, time zones, realities, social locations, and streams of consciousness. Bridges can help builder and witness cross-over from one stage of being to another, but we intentionally have to walk over. Bridges are not like escalators, where we stay stationary and are moved whether we want to or not. We move them over bridges on our own or journey over with another.



Therapists who have bridges in their sand tray collection share the following wisdom that has been shared from their sandtray clients.

For example, one sand therapist shared:

I had a middle-aged person use a bridge as an access point from the mother she felt she was to the one she wanted to be. The bridge allowed her to view it as an opportunity to still be able to accomplish her goal even after her children have temporarily been placed in foster care. The bridge became hope for both her and her family.

Another sand therapist share: A client struggling with addiction found the bridge helped to contextualize the back and forth they experienced from sobriety to substance misuse. Two states of being could be alive in the world at the same time, not unlike the internal conflict that the builder navigates in their body.

All sand therapists share that their builders have used bridges to process family-of-origin trauma, relationship shifts, or transitions. Also, bridges were used to communicate a shift from implicit to explicit and eventual acceptance. They could be viewed as connection, protection, if not safety.

Lastly, sand therapists also identified the importance of having bridges of different sizes and materials in the sand tray collection to help the builder come to terms with strong, solid, or vulnerable rickety transitions. Small and large bridges are equally important. One sand therapist indicated that in their practice, children from blended families used bridges to communicate the many places they must engage in simultaneously. Another sand therapist share that bridges helped the client navigate their cultural identities.

The bridge miniature helps clients bridge the gap they experience daily outside of the sand tray. Where will your next bridge travel take you?

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