

Sandtray Eco-Art Therapy in Clinical Practice

Online Homestudy Course

presented by

Charlton Hall, MMFT, PhD



Mindful Ecotherapy Center

www.mindfulecotherapy.org

Sandtray Eco-Art Therapy in Clinical Practice

- **Target Audience: Mental Health Professionals**
- **Online Home Study Continuing Education Hours: 20 (Twenty)**

Course Description

This comprehensive online home study course in Sandtray Eco-Art Therapy in Clinical Practice delves into the unique synthesis of Sandtray Therapy and Eco-Art Therapy, guiding professionals in integrating these powerful modalities to foster emotional healing and personal growth. The course covers the following key topics:

- *Foundations of Sandtray Therapy*: Explore the core principles, techniques, and benefits of using sandtray in therapeutic settings.
- *Introduction to Eco-Art Therapy*: Learn how nature-based art practices can enhance emotional expression and mindfulness.
- *Integrating Sandtray and Eco-Art Therapy*: Discover how to combine these two modalities into a cohesive therapeutic approach.
- *Setting Up a Sandtray Eco-Art Therapy Space*: Gain practical guidance on creating a healing environment that supports SEAT interventions.
- *Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy and SEAT*: Understand how mindfulness and nature connection enhance the effectiveness of SEAT.
- *Conducting Sessions with SEAT*: Learn the structure and flow of SEAT sessions, from initial assessment to closure.
- *SEAT Step-by-Step*: A detailed guide for implementing SEAT interventions, including preparation, facilitation, and processing.
- *SEAT Interventions*: Explore a variety of interventions designed for different client needs and therapeutic goals.
- *Case Studies and Applications*: Review real-world applications of SEAT with diverse populations and clinical settings.
- *Assessing and Evaluating Outcomes*: Learn methods for tracking progress and measuring the effectiveness of SEAT interventions.
- *Ethical and Cultural Considerations*: Address the ethical implications and cultural sensitivities involved in SEAT practice.
- *Future Directions and Innovations*: Explore cutting-edge developments and potential future trends in Sandtray Eco-Art Therapy.

This course is ideal for therapists, counselors, and mental health professionals, as this course equips you with the tools and knowledge to effectively integrate SEAT into your clinical practice, promoting healing through creativity, mindfulness, and nature-based therapy.

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Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to

- Explain the core principles, techniques, and benefits of using sandtray in therapeutic settings.
- Discuss how nature-based art practices can enhance emotional expression and mindfulness.
- Explain how to combine these two modalities into a cohesive therapeutic approach.
- Create a healing environment that supports SEAT interventions.
- Describe how mindfulness and nature connection enhance the effectiveness of SEAT.
- Explain and facilitate the structure and flow of SEAT sessions, from initial assessment to closure.
- Fully implement SEAT interventions, including preparation, facilitation, and processing.
- Implement and facilitate a variety of interventions designed for different client needs and therapeutic goals.
- Describe and discuss real-world applications of SEAT with diverse populations and clinical settings.
- Utilize methods for tracking progress and measuring the effectiveness of SEAT interventions.
- Address the ethical implications and cultural sensitivities involved in SEAT practice.
- Explain some of the cutting-edge developments and potential future trends in Sandtray Eco-Art Therapy.

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Instructor Qualifications and Contact Information

Charlton Hall, MMFT, PhD
c/o Mindful Ecotherapy Center, LLC
9524 E E St.
Tacoma WA 98445

Mindful Ecotherapy Center, LLC
www.mindfulecotherapy.org
chuck@mindfulecotherapy.com

(864) 384-2388

This course was created by Charlton Hall, MMFT, PhD.

Charlton Hall, MMFT, PhD is a former Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor (now retired from that role) . In 2008 he was awarded a two-year post-graduate fellowship through the Westgate Training and Consultation Network to study mindfulness and ecotherapy. His chosen specialty demographic at that time was Borderline Personality Disorder.

Dr. Hall has been providing training seminars on mindfulness and ecotherapy since 2007 and has been an advocate for education in ecotherapy and mindfulness throughout his professional career, serving on the South Carolina Association for Marriage and Family Therapy's Board of Directors as Chair of Continuing Education from 2012 to 2014.

He served as the Chair of Behavioral Health for ReGenesis Health Care from 2014 to 2016 and trained all the medical staff in suicide risk assessment and prevention during his employment at that agency.

Dr. Hall is also a trained SMART Recovery Facilitator and served as a Volunteer Advisor in South Carolina for several years.

Dr. Hall's area of research and interest is using Mindfulness and Ecotherapy to facilitate acceptance and change strategies within a family systemic framework, and he has presented research at several conferences and seminars on this and other topics.

For a complete list of Dr. Hall's credentials, visit

<https://mindfulecotherapy.org/charlton-chuck-hall-mmft-phd>

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Glossary

acceptance refers to the practice of embracing the present moment, including all thoughts, emotions, and experiences, without trying to change or resist them. It involves recognizing and allowing whatever arises in both the natural environment and within oneself, leading to a sense of peace and harmony. Acceptance in this context encourages individuals to let go of judgment and the need to control, facilitating a deeper connection with nature and a more compassionate relationship with oneself.

amplification - In Jungian psychoanalysis, amplification is a technique used to explore and expand upon symbols and images that arise in dreams, fantasies, or other unconscious material. The goal of amplification is to uncover deeper meanings and connections by relating these symbols to broader cultural, mythological, or historical contexts. This is done by exploring what the symbols mean to the client, expanding (amplifying) that meaning by connecting the symbolic explanations to Jungian archetypes, and finally by integrating any insights learned through this process into the overall therapeutic intervention. In essence, amplification is a way of enriching the interpretation of symbols by exploring their broader significance and contextualizing them within a larger psychological and cultural framework. This technique helps clients understand how their personal experiences relate to universal patterns and themes, promoting deeper self-understanding and integration.

being effective through the power of intention means purposefully aligning your actions and mindset with a clear and positive goal or purpose during therapeutic activities in nature. It involves setting a focused intention, such as cultivating calm, healing, or connection with the environment, and then engaging in practices that support that intention. This approach enhances the effectiveness of the therapy by channeling energy and awareness towards meaningful outcomes, helping individuals achieve greater clarity, purpose, and personal growth in their ecotherapy experience.

being mode refers to a state of mind characterized by present-moment awareness, acceptance, and non-judgmental observation. Unlike “doing mode,” which focuses on tasks and goals, “being mode” emphasizes simply existing in the moment, fully experiencing the natural environment without the need to change or achieve anything. This mode encourages a deeper connection with nature and oneself, promoting relaxation, self-awareness, and inner peace during the therapeutic process.

being non-judgmental refers to the practice of observing one’s thoughts, feelings, and experiences in nature without labeling them as good or bad, right or wrong. It involves accepting whatever arises in the present moment with an open and neutral attitude, allowing oneself to fully experience the natural environment without the filter of preconceived notions or evaluations. This non-judgmental approach leads to greater self-awareness, reduces stress, and enhances the therapeutic connection with nature.

being one-mindful refers to the practice of focusing all of your attention on a single activity or experience in the present moment. This means fully immersing yourself in the natural environment or a specific task without letting your mind wander to other thoughts or distractions. Being one-mindful helps deepen your connection with nature, enhances mindfulness, and allows you to experience the therapeutic benefits of the moment with clarity and intention.

biophilia is a concept that refers to the innate human affinity for nature and living organisms. The term was popularized by the biologist E.O. Wilson in his 1984 book *Biophilia*, where he proposed that humans

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have an inherent tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life. This connection is believed to be rooted in our evolutionary history, where our survival depended on a close relationship with the natural world. Biophilia suggests that this connection to nature is essential for our psychological well-being. It influences our preferences for natural environments, our attraction to animals, plants, and landscapes, and even our desire to bring elements of nature into our living and working spaces, a concept seen in biophilic design.

centering refers to the practice of grounding oneself in the present moment, often through focused breathing or connection with nature. This process helps individuals calm their minds, align with their inner selves, and regain a sense of balance and stability. Centering is used to cultivate mindfulness, enhancing one's ability to engage fully with the therapeutic experience in the natural environment.

client autonomy in therapy refers to the principle that clients have the right and responsibility to make their own decisions regarding their therapeutic process and personal growth. It emphasizes respecting the client's ability to direct their own life and therapeutic journey, including setting goals, choosing methods, and making decisions about their care. Therapists support client autonomy by providing guidance and resources while allowing clients to take an active role in their healing and self-discovery. This approach fosters empowerment, promotes self-efficacy, and acknowledges that clients are the experts of their own experiences. By honoring client autonomy, therapists help create a collaborative and respectful therapeutic relationship, which can enhance engagement, motivation, and overall therapeutic outcomes.

client-centered therapy, also known as person-centered therapy, is a humanistic therapeutic approach developed by Carl Rogers. It emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive and empathetic therapeutic relationship to foster personal growth and self-actualization. In this approach, the therapist provides an accepting and non-judgmental environment where clients feel free to express themselves openly and explore their feelings and experiences. In client-centered therapy, the focus is on the client's self-perception and the belief that individuals have the inherent capacity for growth and self-improvement when provided with the right conditions. The therapist's role is to facilitate this process by creating a nurturing and empathetic therapeutic environment.

congruence is a client-centered therapy principle in which the therapist is genuine and transparent, expressing their true feelings and thoughts in the therapeutic relationship, which encourages authenticity and trust.

connecting refers to the process of fostering a deep relationship with nature, oneself, and others. This involves being fully present and attentive to the natural environment, which can enhance a sense of belonging and interconnection. Through connecting, people may experience greater empathy, self-awareness, and a profound sense of unity with the natural world, which can be healing and transformative in the therapeutic process.

describing refers to the practice of putting into words the observations and experiences one notices, both internally and externally, in a clear and non-judgmental manner. This might involve verbally or mentally labeling thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, or aspects of the natural environment. Describing helps to deepen awareness and mindfulness by creating a deliberate focus on what is being experienced in the moment, fostering a greater connection to both the self and the natural world.

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doing mode refers to a state of mind focused on tasks, goals, and problem-solving, often driven by the need to achieve or fix something. It contrasts with “being mode,” where the emphasis is on present-moment awareness and acceptance. While “doing mode” is necessary for daily functioning, in the context of ecotherapy, it is important to balance it with “being mode” to foster a deeper connection with nature and oneself, allowing for reflection, relaxation, and healing.

eco-art therapy is a therapeutic approach that combines principles of art therapy with ecological awareness and environmental consciousness. It involves using artistic processes and materials derived from nature to explore and express one’s connection to the natural world. This approach encourages individuals to engage with natural elements, such as leaves, stones, and branches, as part of their creative process, fostering a deeper sense of connection to the environment and promoting ecological mindfulness. Eco-art therapy aims to enhance emotional and psychological well-being by integrating the healing aspects of creativity with environmental sustainability. It helps individuals reflect on their relationship with nature, express their environmental concerns, and cultivate a sense of harmony and balance with the natural world. This therapeutic practice supports both personal growth and environmental stewardship, emphasizing the interdependence between human health and ecological health.

ecological mindfulness refers to a heightened awareness and deep, non-judgmental attention to one’s relationship with the natural environment. It involves being fully present to the interconnectedness of all living systems, recognizing the impact of human behavior on the ecosystem, and cultivating a sense of responsibility and care for the Earth. In therapy, ecological mindfulness emphasizes the role of nature in promoting well-being, encouraging individuals to engage with natural surroundings in a mindful way, leading to a sense of harmony with the environment and greater environmental stewardship.

ecological self refers to the concept of an individual’s identity as deeply interconnected with the natural environment. It emphasizes the idea that a person’s sense of self is not separate from nature but rather embedded within it, recognizing that human well-being is intrinsically linked to the health of the ecosystems around them. This perspective encourages a broader understanding of self that includes relationships with the natural world, fostering a sense of responsibility and care for the environment.

ecopsychology is a field of psychology that explores the relationship between human beings and the natural environment, emphasizing the psychological benefits of reconnecting with nature. It seeks to understand how the disconnection from the natural world contributes to mental health issues and how restoring this bond can promote psychological well-being. Ecopsychology also examines the ways in which the health of the environment and the health of the human psyche are interconnected, advocating for both personal and ecological healing.

ecospiritual - for the purposes of Sandtray Eco-Art Therapy is a type of spirituality where "spiritual" is defined as a connection to self, to others, to nature, and to a higher power, emphasizing a transcendent relationship with the environment that nurtures all these dimensions of connection. It integrates the understanding that one’s personal well-being and spiritual growth are deeply tied to the health of the Earth and the natural world. In ecospirituality a "higher power" doesn’t have to be any sort of divinity. It could just be a feeling of being connected to something larger than self. In ecospirituality this could mean nature itself. In this context, connection to self involves recognizing

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how personal healing and growth are linked to one's relationship with nature and the environment. Connection to others highlights how community, relationships, and collective well-being are nurtured through shared experiences in and care for the natural world. Connection to nature emphasizes a reverence for ecosystems, animals, plants, and the Earth, seeing them as essential to spiritual fulfillment and as manifestations of the sacred. Connection to a higher power involves perceiving nature as a reflection or embodiment of nature, where the environment becomes a conduit for experiencing the transcendent. This worldview inspires practices that harmonize personal spirituality with ecological consciousness, leading to actions that protect, honor, and engage with the Earth as a vital element of spiritual life.

ecospirituality refers to a belief system or spiritual practice that emphasizes the interconnectedness between nature, others, self, and a person's own concept of a higher power, integrating ecological awareness with spirituality. It often promotes the idea that all living beings and ecosystems are sacred and interconnected, encouraging a deep respect for the environment. Ecospirituality is practiced by individuals and groups who seek to align their spiritual lives with environmental ethics, advocating for sustainable living, environmental conservation, and reverence for the natural world. In ecospirituality, the term "spiritual" equates to "connection." When one feels connected to nature, to others, to self, and to their own higher power, they are being spiritual.

ecotherapy is a therapeutic approach that integrates nature into the healing process, promoting mental and emotional well-being by fostering a connection between individuals and the natural environment. It includes various practices, such as outdoor therapy, gardening, wilderness experiences, and mindfulness in nature, all aimed at reducing stress, improving mood, and enhancing overall health. Ecotherapy is based on the idea that reconnecting with nature can have restorative effects, both psychologically and physically.

empathy is a client-centered therapy principle in which the therapist actively listens and strives to understand the client's perspective and emotional experience, reflecting this understanding back to the client.

Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development is a theory proposed by psychologist Erik Erikson that outlines eight key stages of human development throughout the lifespan. Each stage is characterized by a specific conflict or crisis that must be resolved for healthy psychological and social development. The resolution of these crises impacts an individual's overall sense of identity and social functioning.

expressive arts therapy is a therapeutic approach that utilizes various forms of creative expression—such as art, music, dance, drama, and writing—as tools for healing and self-discovery. This form of therapy emphasizes the process of creation rather than the final product, allowing individuals to explore and express their emotions, experiences, and inner conflicts in a nonverbal and often symbolic manner. By engaging in artistic activities, clients can tap into their unconscious mind, gain insights into their emotional states, and facilitate personal growth. Expressive arts therapy is used to address a wide range of psychological and emotional issues, and it can be particularly effective for those who find verbal communication challenging or insufficient. The therapeutic process aims to foster self-awareness, emotional resilience, and a deeper connection to one's inner self.

family ritual - a repeated, meaningful activity or tradition that brings family members together, creating connection, shared values, and a sense of belonging. These rituals can be daily, weekly, or tied to

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specific events, holidays, or milestones, and help create lasting memories and strengthen family bonds.

Gestalt therapy is a form of psychotherapy that focuses on helping individuals become aware of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in the present moment. Developed by Fritz Perls, Gestalt therapy emphasizes the importance of experiencing and integrating these aspects of oneself to achieve personal growth and self-awareness. The therapy often uses experiential techniques, such as role-playing and guided visualizations, to help clients explore unresolved issues and gain insight into their current emotional and relational patterns. By developing greater awareness and understanding of their immediate experience, clients can work through internal conflicts and develop healthier ways of relating to themselves and others.

individuation - In Jungian psychology, “individuation” refers to the process of integrating different aspects of the self to achieve a balanced and whole personality. This journey involves reconciling the conscious and unconscious parts of the psyche, including integrating the *shadow* (repressed or denied aspects of oneself) and embracing the *true self*. Individuation leads to personal growth and self-realization, allowing individuals to become more authentic and self-aware by aligning their inner world with their external life. It is considered a key component of achieving psychological maturity and personal fulfillment.

integration refers to the process by which a client absorbs and applies the insights, emotions, and experiences gained during the therapeutic session into their broader understanding of themselves and their life. After creating a sandtray scene or engaging in eco-art activities, the client works with the SEAT therapist to reflect on the symbolism, themes, and feelings that emerged. Integration involves connecting these insights to the client’s personal experiences, values, and goals, allowing the therapeutic work to have a meaningful and lasting impact. It is the process of making sense of the therapeutic experience and using it to inform and guide the client’s actions, decisions, and emotional growth in their everyday life.

Integrative Sandplay Therapy is a therapeutic approach that combines traditional sandplay therapy with other psychological and therapeutic methods to address the emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs of clients. Developed by Ruth Ammann, this method expands on the classical Jungian approach to sandplay therapy by integrating elements from other schools of thought, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), psychoanalysis, and mindfulness-based practices. In Integrative Sandplay Therapy, the therapist works with the client to create a safe and contained environment where they can express their inner world through the symbolic use of sand and miniatures. The integration of various therapeutic techniques allows for a more tailored and holistic approach to treatment, addressing the unique needs of each client. This method is particularly useful in helping clients explore unconscious material, process trauma, and develop greater self-awareness and emotional resilience.

letting go involves releasing attachment to thoughts, emotions, or situations that cause stress or suffering. It is the practice of allowing experiences to pass without clinging to them or trying to control the outcome, fostering a sense of inner freedom and peace. This concept encourages individuals to trust the natural flow of life, accepting changes and uncertainties as part of the therapeutic process in a natural environment.

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Little World Test - Developed by Hedda Bolgar and Liselotte Fischer in the mid-1930s, the Little World Test (also known as the *Bolgar—Fischer World Test*) was a nonverbal, cross-cultural a projective diagnostic instrument similar to the Rorschach Ink Blot Test or the Thematic Apperception Test. The test was developed as a nonverbal projective instrument using sandtrays through which a clinician could observe symbolic representations of human motivation, selection and creative behavior.

Living in True Self refers to the practice of aligning with one's authentic nature, free from societal expectations, ego-driven desires, or conditioned behaviors. It involves connecting with the core essence of who you are, often through mindful interaction with nature, which reflects and nurtures this authenticity. Living in True Self encourages a deeper sense of purpose, inner peace, and harmony with both the natural world and yourself.

mindfulness is the practice of paying deliberate, non-judgmental attention to the present moment. It involves being fully aware of your thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, and surroundings without trying to change or avoid them. By cultivating this awareness, mindfulness helps individuals respond to experiences with clarity and calm, rather than reacting automatically or impulsively. It is often used in therapeutic settings to reduce stress, improve emotional regulation, and enhance overall well-being.

Narrative Therapy is a therapeutic approach that views individuals as the authors of their own lives and focuses on the stories or narratives people create about themselves and their experiences. Developed by Michael White and David Epston in the 1980s, narrative therapy is grounded in the idea that people make sense of their lives through the narratives they construct, and these narratives can influence their identity and behavior.

natural attraction in eco-art therapy refers to the innate, instinctive draw that individuals feel toward certain elements of the natural world. This attraction is based on a deep, subconscious connection to nature, which often manifests in the way people are drawn to specific colors, textures, shapes, or objects found in the environment. In eco-art therapy, this principle is used to help clients select materials that resonate with them on a personal level, facilitating a therapeutic connection between their inner experiences and the natural world. By honoring these natural attractions, clients can engage more fully in the creative process, leading to deeper self-exploration and emotional healing.

nature as metaphor refers to using elements of the natural environment to symbolize and explore personal experiences, emotions, or life situations. A tree's resilience in a storm might represent a person's ability to endure challenges. This metaphorical approach helps individuals gain insight and perspective by relating their inner experiences to the natural world, facilitating deeper understanding and healing during the therapeutic process.

nature as nurture refers to the idea that the natural environment provides a healing and supportive space for emotional and psychological well-being. Nature is seen as a nurturing presence that offers comfort, reduces stress, and promotes a sense of safety and care. By spending time in and connecting with nature, people can experience a restorative effect that fosters inner peace, relaxation, and overall mental health.

nature as teacher refers to the concept of learning life lessons and gaining wisdom directly from observing and interacting with the natural environment. Nature is seen as a guide that offers insights into resilience, adaptability, balance, and interconnectedness. By paying close attention to natural

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processes and patterns, individuals can draw parallels to their own lives, gaining valuable understanding and inspiration for personal growth and healing.

non-directive therapy, also known as person-centered therapy, is a therapeutic approach developed by Carl Rogers. It emphasizes the therapist's role as a facilitator rather than a director of the therapeutic process. In non-directive therapy, the therapist provides a supportive, empathetic, and accepting environment, allowing clients to lead the direction and pace of their own therapy.

nonverbal expression refers to the use of physical actions and symbolic representations in the sand tray to convey thoughts, feelings, and experiences without relying on verbal communication. Clients use miniature figures, objects, and sand to create scenes or scenarios that symbolize their internal world. This form of expression allows clients to communicate complex emotions and psychological states that might be difficult to articulate with words. By arranging and interacting with these symbols, clients can explore and externalize their inner experiences in a tangible and visual way. Nonverbal expression in sandtray therapy facilitates deeper emotional processing and self-discovery, as it taps into the client's unconscious mind and creative processes. This approach helps bridge the gap between what is consciously known and what is felt or experienced internally, offering valuable insights and promoting therapeutic progress.

observing refers to the practice of attentively and non-judgmentally noticing one's inner experiences and the natural surroundings. This includes observing thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, and external stimuli like the sights and sounds of nature. The goal is to cultivate awareness without getting caught up in reactions or interpretations, allowing for a deeper connection to the present moment and a greater understanding of oneself and the environment.

participating refers to the active engagement in the present moment, fully immersing oneself in the experience of nature without self-consciousness or distraction. This involves wholeheartedly taking part in activities, such as walking in the woods, gardening, or simply observing the natural world, with a sense of presence and involvement. By participating, individuals can deepen their connection with nature, enhance mindfulness, and experience a sense of flow and harmony with their surroundings.

Persona - In Jungian psychology, the "Persona" refers to the social mask or facade that an individual presents to the outside world. It represents the roles and identities people adopt in various social contexts to fit in, be accepted, and interact effectively with others. The Persona is a necessary aspect of social functioning, helping individuals navigate different social situations and roles. However, it is not the true self but rather a constructed image that may obscure one's deeper, authentic personality. Overreliance on the Persona can lead to a disconnect between one's true self and external identity, potentially causing inner conflict and psychological issues. Jungian therapy often involves exploring and understanding the Persona to achieve greater self-awareness and integration.

person-centered therapy – see "client-centered therapy."

play therapy is a therapeutic approach primarily used with children, where play is utilized as a medium for expression and communication. Through structured and unstructured play activities, children can explore their emotions, experiences, and thoughts in a way that feels natural and non-threatening to them. This form of therapy allows children to express and process complex feelings and issues they might not be able to verbalize. Play therapy can involve various techniques, such as using

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sandtrays, toys, games, art, and role-playing, to facilitate emotional expression and problem-solving. The goal is to help children develop coping skills, resolve psychological issues, and improve their overall well-being in a supportive and engaging environment.

qualitative measures refer to non-numerical methods used to assess the therapeutic process and outcomes. These measures focus on understanding the experiences, emotions, and personal transformations of clients through their interactions with sandtray elements and eco-art materials.

quantitative measures refer to the use of numerical data and statistical analysis to assess the effectiveness and outcomes of the therapeutic process. These measures are focused on objective, measurable changes in the client's emotional, psychological, or behavioral states, allowing for a more standardized comparison over time or across individuals.

radical acceptance refers to the practice of fully embracing and accepting one's thoughts, feelings, and circumstances as they are, without judgment or resistance. It involves acknowledging the present moment, including any discomfort or challenges, and letting go of the need to change or control them. This acceptance enables a deeper connection with nature and oneself, allowing individuals to experience a sense of peace and resilience in the face of life's difficulties.

sacred space is a designated area that holds spiritual or religious significance, where individuals or groups engage in practices like meditation, prayer, or rituals. It is often considered a place of reverence, reflection, and connection to the divine or the inner self. In ecospirituality it is often a place set aside in nature for spiritual contemplation and meditation.

sandplay therapy is a specific form of sandtray therapy that is an expressive therapy where clients use sand and miniature figures to create scenes and narratives in a sand tray. This technique allows individuals to express and explore their inner world symbolically and nonverbally, facilitating self-discovery and emotional healing through the tangible representation of their thoughts and feelings.

Sandtray-Worldplay Therapy (STWP) is an integrative therapeutic approach developed by Gisela Schubach De Domenico, Ph.D., in 1984. This method builds on traditional sandtray therapy by incorporating a more comprehensive framework that considers the client's cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. In STWP, clients use sand and miniature figures to create symbolic representations of their inner and outer worlds, allowing them to explore and express complex emotions and experiences in a safe and structured environment. The "worldplay" aspect of this therapy emphasizes the idea that clients are actively engaging with and reshaping their worldviews through the process of creating and interacting with their sandtray scenes. STWP is particularly noted for its cultural sensitivity and adaptability, making it an effective tool in diverse therapeutic contexts. STWP offers a holistic approach to healing and self-discovery by integrating various aspects of the human experience.

sensing mode refers to a state of awareness that focuses on directly experiencing the present moment through the senses—sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste—rather than through thoughts or judgments. This mode encourages individuals to engage fully with the natural environment, noticing the sensations and stimuli around them. By immersing in sensing mode, one can cultivate a deeper connection to nature and enhance mindfulness, leading to greater relaxation, presence, and insight during the therapeutic process.

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Shadow - In Jungian psychology, the “shadow” refers to the unconscious part of the personality that contains repressed weaknesses, desires, and instincts. It represents the aspects of the self that are typically denied or hidden from conscious awareness because they are socially unacceptable or personally uncomfortable. The Shadow includes traits and impulses that individuals may not acknowledge or accept about themselves. Jung believed that confronting and integrating the Shadow is essential for personal growth and self-awareness, as it helps individuals reconcile these hidden aspects with their conscious identity, leading to a more complete and balanced self.

solution-focused therapy is a goal-oriented, brief therapeutic approach that emphasizes finding solutions to problems rather than focusing on the problems themselves. It is based on the idea that clients already possess the resources and strengths needed to create positive change. The therapist collaborates with the client to identify and build on these strengths, helping the client envision a desired future and develop practical steps to achieve it. The focus is on what is working well and how those successes can be replicated, rather than delving into past issues or the root causes of problems. Sandtray Eco-Art Therapy takes a solution-focused approach, preferring to focus on what is working in the client’s life rather than focusing on problems.

symbolic communication - In the context of sandtray therapy, “symbolic communication” refers to the process of using symbolic representations to express and communicate inner thoughts, feelings, and experiences. During a sandtray session, clients use miniature figures, objects, and sand to create scenes or scenarios that symbolize various aspects of their internal world. These symbolic representations provide a nonverbal language through which clients can convey complex emotions, conflicts, and narratives. By arranging and interacting with these symbols in the sand tray, clients can externalize and visualize their psychological experiences, making abstract or unconscious aspects of their psyche more accessible and tangible. This form of communication allows for a deeper exploration of emotional issues and can reveal insights that might be difficult to articulate through verbal means alone. Symbolic communication in sandtray therapy facilitates self-expression, emotional processing, and therapeutic insight by engaging with the symbolic language of the sand tray.

symbolic play, also known as pretend play or imaginative play, involves using objects, actions, or ideas to represent something other than their literal meaning. This type of play allows individuals, particularly children, to explore and express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences through imagination and creativity. For example, a child might use a stick as a pretend sword or turn a box into a spaceship. In symbolic play, objects and actions are imbued with symbolic meanings that reflect the player’s internal world and experiences. This form of play helps develop cognitive, social, and emotional skills by allowing individuals to experiment with different roles, scenarios, and problem-solving strategies. It is an important aspect of child development, fostering creativity, empathy, and self-expression, and is often used in therapeutic settings to facilitate emotional and psychological growth.

Symbolic representation – see “*symbolic play*”

symbolic representation refers to the use of symbols—such as images, objects, or actions—to represent and express underlying thoughts, emotions, and experiences. This process involves translating abstract or unconscious aspects of the psyche into concrete forms that can be explored and understood. In sandtray therapy, clients use miniature figures and objects in a sand tray to symbolize different

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elements of their inner world. Similarly, in art therapy, individuals might create drawings or sculptures that represent their emotional states or personal experiences. Symbolic representation allows clients to express complex and often difficult-to-articulate feelings in a tangible way, making it easier to explore and address these aspects within the therapeutic setting. This method facilitates deeper insight, emotional processing, and healing by providing a visual or physical manifestation of internal experiences.

thinking mode refers to a mental state where the mind is actively engaged in analyzing, planning, or problem-solving. This mode is often characterized by cognitive activity, including ruminating on past events or worrying about the future. While thinking mode is useful for decision-making and navigating daily life, in ecotherapy, it is important to balance it with “being mode” to avoid becoming overly absorbed in thoughts and to create a more direct, mindful connection with the natural environment.

This concept blends ecological science with spiritual or religious traditions, seeing the Earth as a source of wisdom, healing, and spiritual nourishment. Many practitioners of ecospirituality view environmental stewardship as a spiritual duty and engage in practices that foster harmony between humans and the planet, such as mindfulness in nature, rituals honoring the Earth, and activism aimed at ecological restoration.

tracking is a technique used by therapists to monitor and follow the client’s emotional, cognitive, and behavioral processes during sessions. The primary aim of tracking is to stay attuned to the client’s experience, ensuring that the therapeutic work is responsive to their needs and evolving understanding. Tracking involves observing and noting changes in the client’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors over time. This helps the therapist gauge the effectiveness of interventions and adjust the therapeutic approach as needed. Therapists use tracking to stay attuned to the client’s emotional state and overall experience during sessions. By being sensitive to shifts in mood, tone, or content, therapists can better respond to the client’s needs and facilitate a more supportive therapeutic relationship. Through tracking, therapists can also identify patterns or recurring themes in the client’s narrative, which can help in understanding underlying issues and developing targeted interventions. Tracking helps ensure that the client remains engaged and actively involved in the therapeutic process. It involves paying close attention to how the client responds to various topics or interventions and adjusting keep the therapy aligned with their goals. By tracking the client’s responses and progress, therapists can facilitate reflection and self-awareness, building the therapeutic alliance. This helps clients gain insights into their own processes and understand how their experiences are evolving.

trauma therapy is a specialized form of psychotherapy designed to help individuals process and heal from the effects of traumatic experiences. This type of therapy aims to address the emotional, psychological, and physiological impact of trauma, which can manifest as symptoms such as anxiety, depression, flashbacks, and hypervigilance. Trauma therapy often involves techniques to help individuals understand and process their trauma, reframe their perceptions of traumatic events, and develop healthy coping strategies. The goal is to facilitate recovery, restore a sense of safety, and help individuals regain control over their lives and emotional well-being.

True Self - In Jungian psychology, the “true self” refers to the authentic, integrated core of an individual’s personality that emerges from the process of individuation. It represents the synthesis of all aspects

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of the self, including both conscious and unconscious elements, and reflects one's genuine identity and potential. The true self embodies a harmonious balance of personal values, beliefs, and inner resources, allowing individuals to live authentically and fully. Achieving this state involves integrating various aspects of the psyche, including the Shadow, and aligning one's inner life with external actions and relationships. The true self is seen as the ultimate goal of personal development and self-realization.

Unconditional Positive Regard – a client-centered therapy principle in which the therapist offers acceptance and support regardless of the client's behavior or feelings, helping the client feel valued and understood.

web of life is a concept that illustrates the interconnectedness of all living organisms within an ecosystem. It highlights how each species, including humans, plants, animals, and microorganisms, plays a vital role in maintaining the balance and health of the environment. Changes or disruptions to one part of the web can affect the entire system, demonstrating the interdependent nature of life on Earth. This concept emphasizes that all forms of life are linked through relationships such as food chains, energy flows, and ecological interactions.

World Technique in sandtray therapy is a specific method used to help clients create a visual and symbolic representation of their internal world. In this technique, clients use sand and miniature figures to construct scenes or scenarios that reflect their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. This creative process allows clients to externalize and organize their internal experiences in a tangible way. During a sandtray session using the World Technique, clients are invited to select and place various figures and objects within the sand tray to represent different aspects of their life or emotional state. The resulting "world" in the sand serves as a metaphorical space where clients can explore and gain insights into their personal challenges, relationships, and inner conflicts. The technique promotes self-expression and self-discovery by allowing clients to visually and interactively engage with their issues, often leading to greater clarity and emotional relief.

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ABOUT THE MINDFUL ECOTHERAPY CENTER, LLC

The Mindful Ecotherapy Center trains mental health professionals and the general public in the skills of Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy.

Founded in 2007 by Charlton Hall, MMFT, PhD, the Mindful Ecotherapy Center, LLC offers continuing education in ecotherapy and mindfulness.

Mindfulness in its simplest definition means paying attention to the present moment with intention. Think about all the things that may have stressed you out. How many of them had to do with events in the past? How many of them had to do with events that may or may not happen in the future? How many of them had to do with the present moment, right now, as you are reading this paragraph?

Mindfulness is a way to use the present moment to choose what to focus on about the past or the future. The present moment is where we can make positive changes in our lives.

Ecotherapy taps into the healing power of nature to facilitate mindful states of being. Being outdoors in nature makes mindful states easier to achieve while enjoying natural environments.

Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy combines the skills of mindfulness with the techniques of ecotherapy to create a coherent program that allows participants to make a change for the better.

Charlton Hall, MMFT, PhD founded the Mindful Ecotherapy Center, LLC in South Carolina when he was still a Marriage and Family Therapy Intern. He went on to become a Marriage and Family Therapist, a Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, a Registered Play Therapist, and a Registered Play Therapist Supervisor. In 2020 Dr. Hall retired from his roles as a therapist and supervisor to concentrate on his role as the Executive Director of the Mindful Ecotherapy Center, LLC.

Since its founding in 2007, the Mindful Ecotherapy Center has trained hundreds of mental health professionals. We now have certified facilitators in seventeen states in the United States and five countries worldwide.

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