

Exploring Sandplay as an intervention with early adolescence in a resource-poor environment

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER EDUCATIONIS

(Learning Support, Guidance and Counselling)

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PRETORIA

May 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

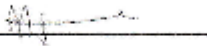
I would not have been able to complete this study without the support, encouragement and guidance of several people. Firstly my gratitude and thanks to my family, husband, Derek and children, James and Jess for their unfailing support and encouragement that made it feasible for me to study. My parents, Cedric and Molly Hayward for nurturing and providing me with a stable, farm home environment as a child. Maureen Jackson, for spending considerable time assisting me with reading and editing. Dr Michelle Finestone, my supervisor and academic mentor, for putting me at ease and for guiding and supporting my academic progress and process. Julie Manegold, for introducing me to the Jungian world and for supporting my insight into the completed sand images. I am indebted to the children's home project for welcoming the new activity, Sandplay, into their environment. Thank you for allowing the repurposing of the computer room for Sandplay and for supporting and facilitating the exploration of group Sandplay with the children under your care. To the five children that participated in Sandplay and showed up to each session for six consecutive weeks, thank you. It was a privilege to be a witness to the creation of your sand images that are now forever inscribed in me.

RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



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DEGREE AND PROJECT	Med Exploring sandplay as an intervention with early adolescents in a resource poor environment
INVESTIGATOR	Mrs Lindi Redfern
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APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY	16 July 2021
DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	25 April 2022
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- Informed consent/assent,
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- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Lindi Redfern (student number 21649503), declare that the dissertation, entitled: Exploring Sandplay as an intervention with early adolescence in a resource-poor environment, which I hereby submit for the degree of Magister Educationis in Learning Support, Guidance and Counselling at the University of Pretoria, is my work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.



Lindi Redfern

May 2022

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITOR



On Track Editing

24 May 2022

In my professional capacity as an academic English language and technical editor, I can confirm that the submitted dissertation, authored by Lindi Redfern, has been professionally language edited, the document structure correctly formatted, citations and references cross-checked, and tables, figures, citations and references formatted according to APA 7th edition specifications.

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Exploring Sandplay as an intervention with early adolescence in a resource-poor environment

Kind regards

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ABSTRACT

Exploring Sandplay as an intervention with early adolescence in a resource-poor environment

by

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Degree: MEd (Learning Support, Guidance and Counselling)

The focus of this study was an in-depth exploration of early adolescent Sandplay (SP) in a resource-poor environment. The participants aged 9–14 were selected for their age from a children’s home environment. Silent, group SP was offered weekly for six consecutive weeks. SP was tendered in multiple layers of temenos. Of interest was the experience of SP during early adolescence. The qualitative exploration was considered from a Jungian perspective and conducted as a single case study. Research methods included researcher observation, the generation of six sand images of each of the five early adolescent participant’s SP process, interviews with childcare staff and researcher reflections. Initial sand images and childcare staff descriptions of the children highlighted themes of wounding. Initial sand images portray chaotic, overwhelming and threatening scenes, indicative of trauma and vulnerability and the need for containment. Final sand images display balanced, harmonious scenes that support healing. Varying encounters with the Self were depicted in centring actions and subsequent sand scenes included signs of integration and belonging. Indications of transpersonal encounters were characterised by numinous scenes and supported by childcarer descriptions of outstanding interactions with the children. Positive changes included activation and desire to play, increased cooperative and collaborative behaviour as well as a more open and calm demeanour, which reinforces the positive effect of silent group SP. The implications are potentially far-reaching in terms of the relative affordability, accessibility and suitability of this intervention that is not reliant on the verbal skills of the participant or the therapist.

Keywords: Early adolescence, resource-poor environment, silent group Sandplay intervention, temenos, Jungian perspective

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	ii
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	iii
DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITOR	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xvi
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	xviii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND GENERAL ORIENTATION	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 PERSONAL MOTIVATION AND RELEVANCE	1
1.3 THE BACKGROUND	2
1.3.1 Early adolescence	4
1.3.2 Creative expression	5
1.3.3 Inner resources.....	5
1.3.4 The South African context.....	6
1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	7
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	7
1.6 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS	8
1.7 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION	8
1.7.1 Early adolescence	8
1.7.2 Sandplay (SP).....	9

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	9
1.9 PARADIGMATIC AND METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES	10
1.9.1 Phenomenological research design	10
1.9.2 Qualitative approach	11
1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	11
1.10.1 Single Case Study	11
1.10.2 Selection of participants	12
1.10.3 Generation of data	13
1.10.4 Data analysis and interpretation	15
1.10.5 Trustworthiness	16
1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	17
1.12 REFLECTION	18
1.13 CONCLUSION	18
CHAPTER TWO	19
LITERATURE REVIEW	19
2.1 INTRODUCTION	19
2.2 EARLY ADOLESCENCE	20
2.2.1 A distinct period of development	20
2.2.2 Physical, cognitive, psychological, social and spiritual development	21
2.2.3 An opportune period of development	23
2.3 THE ESSENTIAL FUNCTION OF BOTH PLAY AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY	24
2.3.1 Play	24
2.3.2 Creative activity	25
2.4 INNER RESOURCES FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESILIENCE	26

2.5 THE IMPACT OF A RESOURCE-POOR ENVIRONMENT	28
2.5.1 Deprivation, neglect and trauma	28
2.5.2 A need for intervention and positive youth development	29
2.6 PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION	31
2.7 SANDPLAY	32
2.7.1 Introduction and origins of Sandplay	32
2.7.2 Description of Sandplay	33
2.7.3 Sandplay equipment	34
2.7.4 Jungian Sandplay	35
2.7.5 Sandplay methods and techniques	36
2.7.6 Sandplay stages and intrapsychic processes	38
2.7.7 Benefits of Sandplay	40
2.7.8 Group Sandplay with early adolescents in a resource-poor environment	41
2.8 A JUNGIAN THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	42
2.8.1 Jungian concepts and principles	42
2.8.2 Temenos	44
2.8.3 Symbolism	45
2.9 CONCLUSION	46
2.9.1 Conclusion of the literature review	46
2.9.2 An overview and summary of key aspects in the literature review	46
2.10 REFLECTION	47
CHAPTER THREE	49
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	49
3.1 INTRODUCTION	49
3.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	49

3.3 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES	50
3.3.1 Methodological approach.....	50
3.3.2 Research design.....	51
3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	52
3.4.1 Single Case Study	52
3.4.2 Strengths and challenges of a single case study	53
3.4.3 Unit of analysis	54
3.4.4 Reflection on the role of the researcher	54
3.4.5 Selection of the participants and sampling procedures.....	55
3.4.6 Data generation and documentation.....	57
3.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION	66
3.6 QUALITY CRITERIA AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY	68
3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	69
3.8 CONCLUSION	71
CHAPTER FOUR.....	72
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AS PERTAINING TO SANDPLAY	72
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	72
4.2 THE NEED FOR CONTAINMENT AND EXPRESSION AS DESCRIBED IN SANDPLAY.....	72
4.3. SANDPLAY 1: SUB-THEME 1: THREATS, CONFLICT AND CHAOS	73
4.3.1 Square's first SP	74
4.3.2 Triangle's first SP.....	75
4.3.3 Oval's first SP	76
4.3.4 Circle's first SP	76
4.3.5 Diamond's first SP	77
4.3.6 Reflection on the Sandplay 1	79

4.4 SANDPLAY 2: SUB-THEME 2: THE NEED FOR PROTECTION AND CONTAINMENT	80
4.4.1 Square’s second SP	80
4.4.2 Triangle’s second SP	81
4.4.3 Oval’s second SP	82
4.4.4 Circle’s second SP	83
4.4.5 Diamond’s second SP	84
4.4.6 Reflection on Sandplay 2	85
4.5. SANDPLAY 3: SUB-THEME 3: REVEALED VULNERABILITY	85
4.5.1 Square’s third SP	86
4.5.2 Triangle’s third SP	87
4.5.3 Oval’s third SP	88
4.5.4 Circle’s third SP	89
4.5.5 Diamond’s third SP	90
4.5.6 Reflection on Sandplay 3	91
4.6. SANDPLAY 4: SUB-THEME 4: PROGRESSION AND REGRESSION	91
4.6.1 Square’s fourth SP	92
4.6.2 Triangle’s fourth SP	93
4.6.3 Oval’s fourth SP	94
4.6.4 Circle’s fourth SP	96
4.6.5 Diamond’s fourth SP	97
4.6.6 Reflection on Sandplay 4	98
4.7 SANDPLAY 5: SUB-THEME 5: UNIQUELY CREATIVE TOGETHER	99
4.7.1 Square’s fifth SP	99
4.7.2 Triangle’s fifth SP	100
4.7.3 Oval’s fifth SP	101

4.7.4 Circle's fifth SP	103
4.7.5 Diamond's fifth SP	104
4.7.6 Reflection on Sandplay 5	105
4.8 SANDPLAY 6: SUB-THEME 6: CONTAINMENT AND ACTIVATION OF MOVEMENT	106
4.8.1 Square's sixth SP	106
4.8.2 Triangle's sixth SP	108
4.8.3 Oval's sixth SP	109
4.8.4 Circle's sixth SP	110
4.8.5 Diamond's sixth SP	111
4.8.6 Reflection on Sandplay 6	112
4.9 CONCLUSION	113
CHAPTER FIVE	115
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AS PERTAINING TO INTERVIEWS WITH ADULT PARTICIPANTS.....	115
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	115
5.2 REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH CONTEXT AND PROCESS.....	115
5.3 DATA ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF RESULTS	116
5.4 WOUNDING AS DESCRIBED BY CHILDCARE STAFF	118
5.4.1 Overview of wounding and before interviews with childcare staff	118
5.4.2 Sub-Theme 1: Vulnerability and wounding	119
5.4.3 Sub-Theme 2: Constrained resources, systems and support	122
5.4.4 Sub-Theme 3: The need for change	125
5.4.5 Sub-Theme 4: The need for culturally appropriate, accessible intervention	128
5.4.6 Sub-Theme 5: Unknown knowledge and experience of Sandplay.....	130

5.4.7 Reflection on before interviews.....	131
5.6 DESCRIPTION OF HEALING IN AFTER SANDPLAY INTERVIEWS	132
5.6.1 Sub-theme 1: Activated to play.....	133
5.6.2 Sub-theme 2: Cooperation and sharing	137
5.6.3 Sub-theme 3: Open and responsive to others	140
5.6.4 Sub-theme 4: Increased understanding and awareness.....	143
5.6.5 Sub-theme 5: Centring and grounding.....	147
5.6.6 Sub-theme 6: Belonging	152
5.7 RESEARCHER'S REFLECTION ON HEALING	156
5.8 CONCLUSION	156
CHAPTER SIX	158
DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	158
6.1 INTRODUCTION.....	158
6.2 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.....	158
6.3 SUMMARY OF THE WOUNDING AND OVERWHELMING NEEDS.....	159
6.4 DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY OF SANDPLAY THEMES.....	162
6.5 REFLECTION OF SANDPLAY THEMES	170
6.6 DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY OF HEALING THEMES	171
6.7 REFLECTION OF HEALING AND WOUNDING THEMES	175
6.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	177
6.9 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	178
6.10 CONCLUSION	180
6.11 FINAL REFLECTION	182
REFERENCES.....	184
APPENDICES	206

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	206
APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT .	210
APPENDIX C: PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SANDPLAY ROOM AND MINIATURE COLLECTION	223
APPENDIX D: INVENTORY OF MINIATURES	232

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Data generation sources and strategy	14
Table 2.1 A summary of the literature review	47
Table 4.1 Group sandplay themes	73
Table 4.2 Individual sandplay themes	73
Table 5.1 Themes and sub-themes.....	117
Table 5.2 Roles and experience of the childcare staff.....	119
Table 5.3 Healing sub-themes	133
Table 6.1 Relatedness of wounding and healing.....	176

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1a Primary research question	58
Figure 1b Secondary research questions.....	58
Figure 2 A dangerous world	74
Figure 3 A split world.....	75
Figure 4 Bombs dropped in a rigid world.....	76
Figure 5 Overwhelming chaos and the need for containment	77
Figure 6 Isolation and religious rigidity	78
Figure 7 Completed sand trays of SP 1.....	79
Figure 8 A portion of the miniature display before commencement of SP 1	79
Figure 9 The depleted miniature display at the end of SP 1	80
Figure 10 Protection and containment.....	80
Figure 11 An attack on the right	81
Figure 12 Division of fantasy and reality.....	82
Figure 13 A messy, uncontained war zone	83
Figure 14 Identification of different aspects.....	84
Figure 15 Minimised danger and vulnerable people.....	86
Figure 16 The prey faces the predatorial attack.....	87
Figure 17 No people are present in the chaos	88
Figure 18 Finding containment.....	89
Figure 19 A beautiful angel	90
Figure 20 Forward-facing dragonfly.....	92
Figure 21 Three areas develop	94
Figure 22 A re-ordering from the left	95

Figure 23 Searching and exploring the limits	96
Figure 24 Primal carnage	97
Figure 25 Feminine undulations	99
Figure 26 Construction of farmlands	101
Figure 27 Protection by the military	102
Figure 28 A beautiful backdrop	103
Figure 29 Differentiation of spirit and domestic	105
Figure 30 Abundance in the foreground	107
Figure 31 Less division and more balance	108
Figure 32 A convoy to the community	109
Figure 33 Centring in a peaceful place.....	110
Figure 34 A pilgrimage to integration and wholeness.....	112

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview schedule

Appendix B: Participant information and informed consent

Appendix C: Photographs of the Sandplay room and miniature collection

Appendix D: Inventory of miniatures

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter One begins with the researcher's personal motivation for researching Sandplay (SP) therapy and continues with the relevance of this topic in the circumstances of dire, unmet needs of children, particularly early adolescent children in resource-poor contexts in South Africa. The main purpose of the chapter is to provide the outline and implementation details for the study. The research problem, research question, aims, design and methodology are supplied as well as clarification of key concepts. The chapter concludes with a reflection and overview of the contents contained in the dissertation.

1.2 PERSONAL MOTIVATION AND RELEVANCE

The researcher was introduced to Sandplay (SP) in 2019 while enrolled in a play therapy course. This exposure intrigued and resulted in the researcher's attending further SP courses, facilitating a fascination with the concepts and principles of SP. The ignition of a stirring within whilst learning about SP complemented an existant interest in and attraction to Jungian principles. This was informed by previous youth development work conducted in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) before and after democracy in South Africa. Added to this is a long-standing interest in identity development and the life stage of early adolescence. It is proposed that further exploration of SP in the South African context is required given its worldwide effectiveness as a multi-sensory expressive technique that does not require verbal communication and which lends itself to widespread usability (Roesler, 2019).

In addition, there is a paucity of research and a lack of SP interventions for early adolescence in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

In South Africa in the past decade, there has been an increased interest in different forms of expressive sand tray interventions, and several researchers have called for this non-verbal technique to be used more widely in the country (Ayres, 2016; Bruce,

2020; Ferreira et al., 2014; Knoetze, 2013; Smit, 2015; Snelgar, 2018). As a creative, non-threatening, non-directed, supportive intervention, SP can be offered by trained volunteers to groups so that more people can benefit (Bruce, 2020; Ferreira et al., 2014; Zoja, 2018). Through SP, self-discovery takes place with minimal influence from the facilitator of the SP process (Pearson & Wilson, 2019; Weinrib, 2004; Zoja, 2018). The value of interventions offered more widely for South African children is pertinent (Ferreira et al., 2014).

In 2005 SP was described as a suitable therapeutic intervention given the country's context of a variety of people, cultures and languages and the tremendous need for appropriate, effective, efficient and sustainable therapeutic support in circumstances where long-term psychotherapy is not affordable, accessible or feasible (Davids, 2005). In 2022 the South African context has changed in that the political and governing structures in operation are more established in the democracy; however, the need for emotional, psychological and developmental support remains the same, if not more urgent, 17 years later (Mokitimi et al., 2018). Although knowledge regarding SP is existant in South Africa, it remains relatively unknown and unprescribed as a group activity in KwaZulu-Natal, despite its universal qualities that transcend cultural limitations (Ferreira et al., 2014; D. M. Kalff, 1996; Snelgar, 2018). The potential for SP to be used developmentally in South Africa remains; more especially in severely constrained, desperate circumstances. Further exploration is required, particularly in the early adolescent life stage which is when identity formation and self-reflection start occurring (Esnaola et al., 2020; Fomina et al., 2020; van der Aar et al., 2018). Healthy self-esteem is crucial for psychological well-being and resilience (Garaigordobil, Perez, & Mozaz, 2008; McGibbon, 2021). An exploration of the role of SP in early adolescence may contribute to reinforcing the value of expressive, creative activities, offered to facilitate and support development in rural settings.

1.3 THE BACKGROUND

The background includes further discussion of the South African context, the developmental period of early adolescence, the function of creative expression, what is meant by inner resources, and the research setting.

South Africa is the most unequal country in the world where a multitude of needs are unmet due to pronounced unequal socio-economic discrepancies and inadequate

education and mental health provision (Mokitimi et al., 2018; Natal, 2020; Statistics South Africa [StatsSA], 2020a). As such, the term resource-poor environment refers to the impoverishment and lack of resources of the community where the study was conducted. Almost a third of the population is younger than 15 years with the average age of dropout from school being 13 years (Adams et al., 2019; StatsSA, 2019). Notably, South African youth development assets are on a par with Rwanda, which is rated as the least developed country in this respect (Schwartz et al., 2017). KwaZulu-Natal is the second-largest province by population, with isiZulu being the most widely spoken language in the country (Alexander, 2018). To this end, KwaZulu-Natal has the largest child population and the highest orphan numbers, with 17% of children recorded as having lost both parents (Hall & Sambu, 2018). As a province, KwaZulu-Natal faces unique challenges, starkly highlighted recently by the Covid-19 pandemic, the unrest of July 2021 and the continued constrained, constricted and limited educational and organisational social development structures in rural settings (Solomons, 2021; Somdyala, 2021). The problems in this province will not dissipate without the processing of the pervasive underlying issues, including collective poverty, deprivation and trauma. The wounds remain until they are acknowledged and processed, and thereby inter-generational effects will be perpetuated. Child protection organisations that operate in this realm of desperate needs and waning enthusiasm do so within a severely constrained and limited system with meagre resources of both human capacity and monetary provision. Appropriate intervention and external provision of support for such organisations and individuals within them can make a difference in offering connection, and in role modelling and assisting with capacity building to break the automatic perpetuation of deprivation and neglect. There is an immense need for youth development programmes that build self-esteem, promote learning and reduce school dropouts (Children's Institute, 2020).

As school attendance is one of the few, limited opportunities to work with, develop and support young people in South Africa, interventions must be built into and set up alongside existing supportive structures, whether they be schools or temporary protective accommodation shelters. In short, opportunities for the provision of support are scarce and the window of opportunity is narrow. Once children leave school there is very little scope for intervention. Opportunities for personal development can give young people a chance not only to survive but to thrive (Schwartz et al., 2017). It is

proposed that in the face of poverty, limited opportunity for intervention and dire outer world circumstances, the development of interiority has the potential to transform human behaviour (Ives et al., 2020).

1.3.1 Early adolescence

In early adolescence, there are profound physical (pubertal) and cognitive changes (Caskey & Anfara Jr., 2014). These changes contribute to what is often described as a turbulent period in the lifespan (Adams et al., 2019). An increased ability to understand and reason begins to occur. Capacity for abstract and reflective cognition, as well as differentiated and enhanced self-thinking, develops (Esnaola et al., 2020; Lindo & Ceballos, 2020; van der Aar et al., 2018). As such, early adolescence is a fertile stage of self-development, and self-concept is noted to be a protective factor against problem behaviour (Schwartz, 2008). This is a crucial period for the development of conscious self-regulation that contributes to positive development (Fomina et al., 2020).

Early adolescence is a transitional period between childhood and adolescence when the innocence of childhood starts giving way to greater awareness and the realities of life. Jung (1958) refers to the “gradual awakening of consciousness” in childhood (p. 48). Neuroimaging supports changes in brain activity associated with self-processing and the medial prefrontal cortex plays a vital role in self-reflection (Sebastian et al., 2008). As abstract thinking develops adolescents become more aware of themselves in all respects, including spiritually, and they begin to ask questions about the meaning of their existence (Lingley, 2019).

This propensity for meaning-making together with profound bodily changes can be particularly challenging in unsupported circumstances. In early adolescence, the world expands beyond home/family and school. Added to this, schools tend to focus on children’s intellectual and physical development, whereas their social and emotional development lags (Caskey & Anfara Jr., 2014). Thus support for emotional and social development in early adolescence is crucial, especially in circumstances where home/family life is unstable.

Early adolescence is characterised by identity formation, and a positively developed identity enables the integration of self-perception into a stable personality (Caskey & Anfara Jr., 2014; D. M. Kalff, 1996; Rageliene, 2016).

1.3.2 Creative expression

Expressive, creative activities support meaning-making and self-esteem development in early adolescence by facilitating the navigation of abstract and concrete, inner and outer and verbal and non-verbal (Anderson et al., 2020; Barbot, 2020; Lindo & Ceballos, 2020). Creative activity brings the inner symbol alive in the outer world and strengthens the thinking processes involved in identity formation while in-depth exploration enables stable identity development (Arnold, 2017; Barbot & Heuser, 2017; Humphris, 2019). In addition, there is no distinction between left and right brain thinking, the left and the right are inter-related, each supporting the other (Coch, 2021). The psyche's capacity to regulate itself through expressive creativity is well-reported as well as its effectiveness in increasing well-being (Pearson & Wilson, 2019; Punnett & Canfield, 2020; Roesler, 2019; Weinrib, 2004; Yahaya et al., 2018; Zoja, 2018).

SP as a creative, expressive activity is proposed to support early adolescence and, as such, facilitates the development of inner resources, thereby protecting against problematic learning and behavioural issues. Studies have found that a 10–12 week SP process of non-verbal, creative expression is sufficient to provide a bridge for self-regulation (Roesler, 2019).

During times of distress, early adolescents revert to concrete thinking and require support to negotiate between abstract and concrete (Lindo & Ceballos, 2020). As such, SP is proposed as a suitable activity to strengthen inner resources when self-consciousness and awareness are increasing in early adolescence.

1.3.3 Inner resources

Inner resources are personal resources related to spirituality that give meaning and value to life including inner peace and harmonious interpersonal relationships (Wright et al., 2018). They can be likened to a reservoir from which a person can draw in times of need. Inner resources provide a feeling of strength and are beneficial for enhancing well-being and building resilience (van Dierendonck et al., 2009). In addition, inner resources lie at the heart of sustainable actions and are potentially transformative (Ives et al., 2020). Internal assets like self-awareness are vital for well-being and academic performance (Adams et al., 2019; Esnaola et al., 2020). Added to this, ego-identity and self-perception contribute significantly to career decision making, a major developmental task (Shirima et al., 2021). The more positive the self-concept of the

individual, the more protected and resilient the adolescent (Artuch-Garde et al., 2017; Garaigordobil et al., 2008; Masselink et al., 2018).

Whilst distinct self-views begin to emerge in early adolescence, a more critical view of self also starts occurring. A drop in general self-esteem occurs from the higher self-esteem levels of childhood. Grade nine, age 14, is a notable time when self-esteem starts dropping, and it is suggested that early adolescence may be an optimal time to provide emotional support and intervention, primarily as self-perceptions are essential for psychological well-being (Esnaola et al., 2020; Fomina et al., 2020). The identity of a person in Jungian terms, the self, consists of the total personality of a person (Jung & Hull, 2014). The self and all related self-terms fall under the banner of personality development (Orth, 2017; Scalabrini et al., 2018). Inner resources such as a sense of self, play an important role in the ability to remain calm in stressful circumstances (van Dierendonck et al., 2009).

Greater awareness and activation of inner resources improve the chance of locating the transformative capacity to bring about change (Ives et al., 2020).

1.3.4 The South African context

South African adolescents generally do not receive adequate schooling, let alone developmental support. Although the national policy is in place for such provision, this does not manifest as implementation (Mokitimi et al., 2018). The need for developmental support is pervasive amongst children in South Africa (StatsSA, 2020a). Given the dire need for support and development, programmes provided by teachers, volunteers and caregivers should be pursued (Children's Institute, 2020). It is documented that self-esteem predicts improved quality of life, better relationships and less deviant behaviour and young people are more likely to thrive with the strengthening of internal assets (Adams et al., 2019; Knox & Muros, 2017; Masselink et al., 2018; McGibbon, 2021; Schwartz et al., 2017). South African researchers have recommended further investigation of SP in terms of the extent of its effectiveness in improving well-being and assisting in the prevention of psychological issues (Bruce, 2020; Camelford & Dugan, 2016; Doyle & Magor-Blatch, 2017; Yahaya et al., 2018). Researchers have indicated that future studies should consider more extensive samples and include group studies (Ayres, 2016; Smit, 2015; Snelgar, 2018; Van Der Merwe, 2015). Added to this is a call for urgent intervention and support for the many

vulnerable children in places of safety, including the recommendation to train volunteers to facilitate SP (Ferreira et al., 2014).

Other notable South African studies by de Beer and Knoetze support the positive impact of SP on their respective individual participants (De Beer & Thom, 2013; Knoetze, 2013). Given the background, this study seeks to explore group SP with early adolescent participants living temporarily at a children's home in a resource-poor setting in rural KwaZulu-Natal.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to explore SP as an intervention for early adolescents in a resource-poor environment. As established, early adolescence is an important developmental stage to provide support, mainly as self-perceptions are essential for well-being (Esnaola et al., 2020; Fomina et al., 2020). The more self-aware, the more protected and resilient the individual (Artuch-Garde et al., 2017; Garaigordobil et al., 2008; Masselink et al., 2018).

To this end, the study involved early adolescent participants from a children's home that provides temporary accommodation and protection for children in need between the ages of nine and 19. The project is based in rural KwaZulu-Natal, in a resource-constrained community. Group SP for early adolescent children was provided at the home. The group of five children experienced silent SP once a week for six weeks. The researcher sought to observe and understand how SP is experienced by early adolescence in a resource-poor setting. Given the dire educational, emotional and developmental needs of young South Africans, the study was interested in the value of SP as an accessible, cross-cultural, non-verbal, expressive and creative activity facilitated by trained teachers, professional interns, childcare workers and volunteers.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question is:

How do early adolescents from a resource-poor environment respond to SP as an intervention?

To answer the primary question, the following secondary questions were asked:

What does a comparison of each early adolescent participant's first and final SP show?

What is observed in the behaviour and demeanour of early adolescent participants?

1.6 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

The researcher sought to undertake this study on the assumption that SP is a suitable non-verbal, non-threatening and effective intervention (Roesler, 2019; Snelgar, 2018). Further, it was assumed that non-verbal, creative expression lends itself to self-awareness and development. Added to this is the principle of self-regulation of the psyche and the concept of SP providing a contained space in which to explore, express and regulate. What was unknown is the role of SP in the above processes, specifically with early adolescent rural KwaZulu-Natal participants. Another assumption was that all the selected participants would be willing to express themselves in the sand, and secondly, once they began, remain in the study for the duration. Added to this was the assumption that the childcare staff and the organisation would be willing to support a free, protected and contained environment for the participants to engage in SP as a creative activity. Consideration of potential challenges was given regarding the above assumptions. Finally, the overall assumption was that if SP plays a positive role in early adolescence, this study would join the call to encourage more widespread use of SP as an accessible developmental activity facilitated by trained volunteers, teachers, professional interns and carers.

1.7 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

The concepts of early adolescence and SP are key in this study and are described and clarified as they pertain to this report.

1.7.1 Early adolescence

In the context of this investigation, early adolescence is a transitional stage of development between childhood and adolescence. The study will focus on children aged nine to 14 years. During early adolescence, noticeable bodily changes occur due to the pubertal process as well as expanded cognitive ability that results in increased abstract thinking and consequent self-awareness.

At this time children increasingly expand their social interactions at school and in community settings and naturally move towards greater independence from their parents before embarking on their adult lives. It is therefore suggested that early adolescence is an optimum time to support and encourage already emerging self-exploration and discovery (Esnaola et al., 2020). Early adolescence is a natural germinating space for self-awareness and increased self-consciousness and is, therefore, an ideal time to jump in with support and facilitate creative expression and discovery.

1.7.2 Sandplay (SP)

In the context of the study, SP is the expressive, creative, non-verbal activity in which to observe and consider early adolescent development and its effect. This study is concerned with SP, as developed by Dora Kalff, to promote growth and development by offering a free and protected, non-directed, developmentally universal space for expression and discovery (Amman, 1972; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004; Zoja, 2018). Through self-discovery, SP is a means of engaging in a metaphorical world of enrichment, opportunity and meaning and thereby building a pathway to ego consciousness (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). Through expression in the sand, a personal process involving both the conscious and the unconscious takes place (Pearson & Wilson, 2019; Punnett & Canfield, 2020; Weinrib, 2004). In undertaking the study, the researcher wanted to explore and consider the role and value of SP as a creative activity in early adolescence.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is agreed that theory determines the strategies for data generation and analysis, and to this end, a Jungian theoretical framework was engaged to guide the research. The overarching principles are Jungian as per the tenets of Carl Gustav Jung and those that formed Dora Kalff's Sandplay (D. M. Kalff, 1996).

Jung viewed the self as the totality of a person, including the conscious (ego) and the unconscious, the whole of the person (Franz, 1964; Jung & Hull, 2014). Added to Jung's views, Kalff noted that the emergence of the self is the most significant starting point in personality development and that the self steers the developmental processes of the psyche. In addition, healthy ego development takes place once the self has

shown itself (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Weinrib, 2004). Further to this, the showing through of the self, or centring, as depicted in SP actions and the use of objects, is a “guarantee” (D. M. Kalff, 1996, p. 4) for personality development. Centring of the self can be observed in SP by both actions and the use of objects that symbolically depict the self, and healing can be brought by the ego toward the self (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004). The self becomes more visible once the ego is strengthened (D. M. Kalff, 1996). It is suggested that the process of emergence of self, ego development and a more visible self is interrelational and cyclical. Personality develops around the centring point of the ego (D. M. Kalff, 1996). The self shows itself, the ego develops and the feeling of the self is enhanced. As the ego grows and becomes integrated, so the self becomes increasingly enhanced. The above processes are facilitated by the contained, protected, temenos space of SP (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). The Jungian view of the total self and the Kalffian observation of the significance of the self for healthy ego development are amongst the concepts considered in SP with early adolescents.

1.9 PARADIGMATIC AND METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Paradigmatic perspectives orientate and guide how the research is approached.

1.9.1 Phenomenological research design

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, its methods, scope and validity. This study is concerned with an in-depth exploration of the meaning and essence of lived experience (Frost & Shinebourne, 2011; Gitchel & Mpofu, 2012; Seabi, 2012; Wilson, 2015); as such, seeking meanings from appearances and arriving at essences through internal intuitive understanding and reflection (Moustakas, 2011; Van Manen, 2016).

Phenomenology focuses on the appearance of things as they present themselves, and is concerned with wholeness and examining a phenomenon from all perspectives. This requires immersion in the research process as it presents itself to the other, the participant (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Moustakas, 2011). Phenomenology aims to grasp a singular aspect of a phenomenon and is committed to complete descriptions of experiences, for accentuation and illumination (Van Manen, 2016). Underlying principles are intuitive, empathic sensing and unfolding of shared meanings (Bongaardt et al., 2019; Wilson, 2015). Phenomenology assumes that the self sees

what is present and, to this end, the suspension and bracketing of preconceptions is fundamental (Moustakas, 2011; Wilson, 2015).

The researcher tried to set aside theoretical knowledge about SP to focus on the topic openly and from a fresh perspective, and thereby allow essences to unfold as they were consciously experienced in the field (Frost & Shinebourne, 2011; Moustakas, 2011). As such, the researcher became immersed in the study to seek enhanced understanding, uncover deeper aspects, attend to mood, sensations and emotions, and empower the understanding of others by allowing vicarious lived experience (Wilson, 2015), until finally surrendering to a state of wonder at the capabilities of SP (Van Manen, 2016).

1.9.2 Qualitative approach

This exploratory investigation is qualitative, being concerned with understanding how people construct their worlds and the meaning they attribute to their lived experiences (Morgan & Sklar, 2012). An interpretive, postmodern perspective is the ontological position and its primary interest in understanding a phenomenon, accepting that knowledge is acquired subjectively and that context is relevant (Sefotho, 2018b). As such, considering multiple meanings of what is being studied and agreeing that meaning is constructed, not discovered and that it is relative and subjective (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). In addition, qualitative research is concerned with describing what happens without predetermined variables and to achieve its objective it is reflective and involves a variety of different approaches (Silverman, 2017).

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The conceptualisation of how to carry out the research is illustrated in the design.

1.10.1 Single Case Study

A descriptive, single case study (SCS) design was employed to facilitate in-depth descriptions of complex phenomena and to explain the findings of the how and the why (Yin, 2018). SCS is primarily interested in what can be learnt from a bounded case within the same organisation and is explicitly concerned with the phenomenon of SP (Abma & Stake, 2014; Baxter & Jack, 2015). As such, the study is interested in the unique, complex, in-depth experiences of SP, and exploring its role in early adolescent self-development (Creswell, 2019; Seabi, 2012; Silverman, 2017; Yin, 2015). This

enables the capturing of concepts and meaning which in turn contribute to logical, theoretical expansion (Silverman, 2017; Yin, 2015). Further to this, SCS provides illumination of the case being studied (Yin, 2018).

1.10.2 Selection of participants

As this study is concerned with in-depth descriptions, the selection method was non-probability purposive sampling (Farrugia, 2019; Morgan & Sklar, 2012; Schreier, 2018; Silverman, 2017). A children's home organisation located in rural KwaZulu-Natal near the researcher was willing and curious to be a part of an SP study as they felt it could be enriching and developmental for some of the children to be involved. The children's home project is a child and youth care centre that provides shelter and care for vulnerable children deemed by the courts to need care. The selection of the organisation was based on their willingness and the convenience of their location. As there are early adolescent children aged nine to 14 years living in the children's home it was a suitable setting for the study and to this end, homogenous sampling (Etikan et al., 2016; Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Silverman, 2017). In terms of time management, the number of participants selected was crucial; the more participants the less time for thick descriptions (Abma & Stake, 2014; Schreier, 2018). Added to this, a practical limitation was that only five sand trays were available for the study. As a result, five participants, aged nine to 14 years, were selected from within the children's home. The organisation provided a list of children that fitted the age criteria. Initially, there were only five early adolescent children at the home which made the selection easy for the available five sand trays however just before the study commenced another early adolescent child was placed at the home. The researcher reiterated that any of the children were welcome provided they met the age requirement of the study. The children's home then decided which of the six children and provided the list of five participants to the researcher. In addition, the children's unwillingness to participate would have meant exclusion, as no child would have been coerced to take part. Furthermore, before the SP commenced the researcher was not given any information about any of the children including the reasons for their placement at the home. The only information provided was the birth dates of each child.

1.10.3 Generation of data

Four data generation methods were employed, the first being the observation of SP sessions. Observation is the first-hand gathering of open-ended, subjective, multi-sensorial information (Creswell, 2019; Morgan & Sklar, 2012). Key principles include: striving for detail, noticing and looking for actions and sequences as well as being aware of a change in energy or atmosphere (Wästerfors, 2018; Zoja, 2018). In addition, not every single observation can be reported. Thus, observations take into consideration the context, the research questions and the corroborative and reflexive qualities of the researcher (Silverman, 2017; Wästerfors, 2018). Observations provide the opportunity to get up close, limit and ascertain what stands out; all of these assist in providing illumination (Baxter & Jack, 2015; Sefotho, 2015; Wästerfors, 2018; Yazan, 2015). As the SP sessions were conducted in silence, observation was essential, and more so when participants cannot adequately verbalise their experiences. It is only from the observation that a sense of the atmosphere can be gleaned. This intuitive component offers deeper insight (Sefotho, 2018a; Van Manen, 2016; Wästerfors, 2018).

The second major source of data was the research journal in which thoughts, processes and experiences, assumptions, biases and worldview were recorded (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). In addition to writing in the journal, recorded voice note observations of concepts, theories and principles were transcribed and added to the journal. Voice observations and reflections were recorded by the researcher whilst looking at completed sand trays and when dismantling trays and preparing for the next session.

Thirdly, photographs were taken of each child's completed sand scene after every SP session.

No photographs were taken of the participants, only of their completed sand trays. Photographs complement observations of SP and permanently and accurately record the spatial arrangement of each sand image. On their own, photographs are incomplete records. However, they provide accurate images of created sand scenes and contribute to answering the research question, whilst enriching and substantiating observation and reflection notes (Eberle, 2018). In this study photographs of completed sand images take centre stage.

Interviewing the childcare staff on their observation of participants' day to day behaviour and demeanour is the fourth source of data generation. To facilitate rich interview data, the researcher established a good rapport with the interviewees and attentively sought lived experience material by trying to obtain concrete stories or anecdotes of particular situations involving the participants (Van Manen, 2016). As such, interview questions were semi-structured (open-ended, conversational style). General questions were asked first, followed by more intentional questions (Eberle, 2018; Seabi, 2012). A pre-determined protocol of questions (pertaining directly to the research questions) guided the before and after interviews and verbatim transcriptions of audio recorded interview responses were actioned (Creswell, 2019; Silverman, 2017). Table 1.1 illustrates a summary of the data generation sources and strategy.

Table 1.1

Data Generation Sources and Strategy

<p><u>Observations:</u> <i>Multi-sensorial:</i> Observation of SP sessions.</p>	<p><u>Source 1:</u> <i>Short field notes:</i> Noticeable actions of individuals and the group.</p>	<p><u>Source 2:</u> <i>Expanded notes:</i> After sessions: reporting atmosphere, feelings etc. (Wästerfors, 2018).</p>	<p><u>Source 3:</u> <i>Research Journal:</i> Before and after SP sessions, including interactions within the research field.</p>	<p><u>Source 4:</u> The reported observations of childcare staff.</p>
<p><u>Reflections:</u> <i>Running record:</i> Simultaneous and provisional analysis & interpretation (Silverman, 2017).</p>	<p><u>Source 1:</u> Handwritten journal notes.</p>	<p><u>Source 2:</u> Electronic audio recordings of reflections.</p>	<p><u>Source 3:</u> Transcriptions of audio recorded voice reflections.</p>	<p><u>Source 4:</u> Electronic notes were made while reading literature or when insight emerged.</p>

<u>Interviews:</u> <i>Semi-structured:</i> In-person, audio-recorded interviews with nine adult childcare staff.	<u>Source 1:</u> Notes handwritten on interview sheets.	<u>Source 2:</u> Audio recordings.	<u>Source 3:</u> Verbatim transcriptions.	<u>Source 4:</u> Observations of interviews were recorded in reflections and the research journal.
<u>Photographs:</u> Taken at the end of each SP session (30 photographs of sand images from six sessions).	<u>Source 1:</u> Photographs of each completed SP image of each of the five participants.	<u>Source 2:</u> <i>Each photograph:</i> Accompanied and complemented by observation notes made whilst dismantling sand trays.	<u>Source 3:</u> <i>Detailed descriptions:</i> Of every sand image/photograph of each participant from all the sessions.	<u>Source 4:</u> Discussion of the sand images/photographs with a Jungian Analyst.

1.10.4 Data analysis and interpretation

The credibility and transferability of research rely on accurate data and mindful analysis and interpretation allow the researcher to make sense of the data (Creswell, 2019). An inductive approach was followed where assumptions about SP were considered in detail and universality was employed (Rashid et al., 2019).

The SP sessions and sand images were considered and examined in a simultaneous interpretive process (Creswell, 2019). Experiences/data were coded by hand and categorised into “agreed-upon features”/themes of the SP (Di Fabio & Maree, 2012, p. 139). Notes about evolving ideas concerning organisation and categorisation of data were kept (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Data analysis was conducted manually by thorough descriptions and repeated reading of transcripts, examination of photographs, summarising and highlighting, using excel spreadsheets for ordering, illuminating and organising purposes (Creswell, 2019). Processes were repeated and refined until patterns started to emerge. Descriptions of sand images/photographs were written in detail and developed from innumerable attention. The emerging patterns and themes that were identified were cross-checked and referenced with

existing, relevant literature, including original¹ sources of SP literature, research and projects (Creswell, 2019; Rashid et al., 2019).

The researcher employed reflexivity regarding her position as a researcher with the participants (Merriam & Grenier, 2019), thus being aware that interpreting the SP actions is complicated by the researcher's subjectivity and that self-awareness is essential (Abma & Stake, 2014; Creswell, 2019). In this regard, supervision sessions were attended to assist with self-awareness and growth (Theron & Malindi, 2012). The role of power in a study that involves vulnerable participants and the impact this might have on the way data is provided and interpreted was noted (Sefotho, 2015). The researcher consciously attempted to nurture an attitude of thoughtfulness and tact throughout the investigation (Van Manen, 2016).

1.10.5 Trustworthiness

Challenges to credibility, dependability and transferability of the study include researcher subjectivity, bias and time management (Baxter & Jack, 2015; Creswell, 2019; Schreier, 2018; Silverman, 2017; Yin, 2015, 2018). As SP is a creative process, participants (including SP participants, childcare staff and the researcher) became involved in simultaneous brain processes, incorporating themselves not only cognitively but in other ways (Kowen, 2020; Zoja, 2018). These countertransference experiences of both the researcher and the participants are acknowledged and considered.

Another consideration was that significant personal investment in the study can perhaps facilitate seeing things that are not there, which is why the researcher consulted literature widely and considered views that suspend and challenge her preconceived ideas (Sefotho, 2018a; Yin, 2018; Zahavi, 2019). The strategies of purposive sampling, the recording of thick, rich descriptions, reflexivity, converging evidence, rival thinking and triangulation were all employed (Baxter & Jack, 2015; Di Fabio & Maree, 2012; Seabi, 2012; Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2015, 2018). Repeated attempts at time management were used by returning to the methodological framework of the study to be reminded of its parameters, tasks and guidelines (Yin, 2018). Multiple data generation sources and methods ensured triangulation (Silverman, 2017; Yin, 2018).

¹ The original source of Sandplay literature is Dora Kalff and includes subsequent Sandplay authors, namely, Weinrib, Ryce-Menuhin, Pattis Zoja, Mitchell and Rogers.

1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations were foremost, particularly as the participants of the study are children. In addition, the children were encouraged to express themselves freely and creatively, and as such, they were assured that their responses would be treated sacredly, sensitively and ethically. Sand images/photographs are tantamount to soul pictures (Weinrib, 2004; Zoja, 2018).

The researcher's professional disclosure and commitment to the children's home community ensured discussions about the purpose, methods and intentions of the study were ethical (Creswell, 2019). Applications for approval and ethical clearance were submitted to the University of Pretoria's Education Faculty Ethics Committee and ethical approval was granted.

Voluntary, informed consent was obtained from the children's home, who are acting as guardians of the children and report to the Department of Social Development. Individual children participants' assent forms and the consent of participating staff were signed and obtained from all participants (Creswell, 2019; Silverman, 2017). As the study participants were aged nine to 14 years and lived temporarily in protected accommodation, they were designated vulnerable, and as such, their welfare was foremost. Their rights, safety and well-being were safeguarded and care was taken to ensure that no harm occurred. The researcher kept the organisation's social worker, educational psychologist, and general manager informed to ensure the children were supported during the SP study and that they received appropriate intervention if required. The researcher is aware of the fact that SP can sometimes evoke unconscious processes that can be startling, painful and/or powerful (Silverman, 2017; Zoja, 2018).

Furthermore, the identification of the participants was and will be kept confidential. All information obtained and the personal experiences of the participants were treated respectfully and confidentially and used only for research purposes, as disclosed at the outset of the study. The anonymity of the participants (by not using their actual names) has been ensured as an additional protective measure. Throughout the study, the best interest of the children was foremost.

1.12 REFLECTION

The unfolding process that evolved with increased knowledge and understanding brought about by the research process is reflected in the presentation of the chapters. The research commenced with more questions than answers and the desire to explore unknown SP and early adolescence in a rural, resource-poor setting. In addition, the undertaking of this academic endeavour came after 24 years of being out of the academic realm, which is reflected in the conceptualisation and commencement of this report. As such, Chapter One took considerable time to coalesce whilst the researcher was immersed both in the requirements of academic rigour as a novice and in adapting to the online era.

In addition, the researcher's exploration involved both a personal experience of SP as well as an encounter with SP in the research field, whilst simultaneously undergoing the life stage of menopause. With the uncertainty that comes with transitional circumstances, pursuing a longstanding desire to study, the beckoning beacon of SP and the realities of the lived-in context of KwaZulu-Natal came the convergence of factors as the researcher entered the unknown realms of both research and the second half of her life, while being drawn and propelled into an unknown and unexplored world of SP. A personal and academic journey merged and activated within the framework of research requirements and immersion within the limits of the world of SP.

1.13 CONCLUSION

Chapter One provides the outline and structure for the explorative investigation and describes the parameters that inform, guide and support this endeavour. Chapter Two is a review of the literature, particularly the original SP authors whose work has inspired and directed this study. Chapter Three is concerned with how the research was conducted in the field and provides details of how a set of SP protocols evolved and was established as a model of SP in a context for children who had never before experienced SP. Chapter Four and Chapter Five contain detailed descriptions of the research findings and Chapter Six is a culminating discussion of the findings and discoveries learnt, acquired and integrated.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The introductory chapter provided an overview of the study, outlining the rationale and defining the purpose, research questions and key concepts of the study. Chapter Two presents a review of the literature which informs the study. Relevant topics and concepts of the study include early adolescence, the essential function of play and creativity, the development of inner resources, projective identification, SP, Jungian theory and principles and the need for development and support in resource-poor environments.

SP has been studied and used for more than six decades, cross-culturally and worldwide (Freedle & Gita, 2020). The therapeutic benefits of SP are well documented in a range of studies across various countries investigating its role and value in self-esteem, career decision making, anxiety, depression, aggression, correctional settings, risk and resilience, trauma, meaning-making, amongst others (De Beer & Thom, 2013; Foo et al., 2020; Knoetze, 2013; Nickum & Purgason, 2017; Olaniyi et al., 2021; Pearson & Wilson, 2019; Roesler, 2019; Ferreira et al., 2014; Rozina, 2020; Sangganjanavanich & Magnuson, 2011; Shen & Armstrong, 2008; Yahaya et al., 2018). The role of self-regulation in SP is also well-considered and explored and in South Africa, the Southern African Association of Jungian Analysts' (SAAJA) expressive sandwork project is based on the above principle (SAAJA, 2018). The concept of play is fundamental to SP. Play and independent discovery activities underpin the inculcation of knowledge and skills which enable cooperation, collaboration and competition that is characteristic of social engagement (Jarvis et al., 2014). This review discusses and explores the potential role of SP as a non-verbal, creative, expressive activity in early adolescence, specifically in ages nine to 14 years.

2.2 EARLY ADOLESCENCE

2.2.1 A distinct period of development

Early adolescence falls into the overarching category of adolescence and is not always acknowledged as a distinct stage of development. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescents as individuals in the 10 to 19 year age group and youth as the 15 to 24 year age group, and combined, as young people. Different societies have their ways of defining adolescence from legal entitlements, voting age, driving age, etc., and there is a notable widening gap between biological maturation and social transition into adulthood which has called for the expanding definition of adolescence (Toska et al., 2019). Adolescence is defined by Statistics South Africa as between 10 and 19 years, whilst young adolescents are generally considered to be 10 to 14 years of age (Toska et al., 2019). In some societies, children are classified as children up to the age of 19 years, and although adolescence is recognised it is not necessarily categorised as early middle or late adolescence. As a result, young adolescent children are sometimes overlooked and not supported appropriately given their distinct developmental characteristics. This is evident in a paucity of research that focuses on early adolescence (Blum et al., 2017). In African culture, development is not compartmentalised, it is integrated and determined by the ability to give and receive social support and notice the needs of others (Nsamenang, 2006).

As a distinct stage, early adolescence is a period of transition between childhood and adolescence, a bridge between the two life stages (Salgado et al., 2021). Young or early adolescence is characterised by major neurobiological and social changes that are likely to impact future development (Van Zalk, 2020). Potentially this is a period of dramatic developmental transition from puberty-related changes in hormones, bodies and brains to an increasingly complex social world (J. H. Pfeifer & Allen, 2021). Thus an intense and unpredictable period of development when the young adolescent might exhibit erratic and inconsistent behaviour (Caskey & Anfara Jr., 2014). In addition and as a result of heightened self-awareness and profound biological changes, early adolescence can be a time of increased sensitivity and vulnerability. Neuronal plasticity is elevated in adolescence and plays a role in the pubertal remodelling of the brain (DePasquale et al., 2021). As such, it is a critical time to develop resilience and protection from risk (Toska et al., 2019). For children who experienced severe

deprivation in infancy but had a supportive caregiving environment during puberty, the functioning of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical (HPA) system equates that of children who were not exposed to early deprivation (DePasquale et al., 2021).

In this investigation, early adolescence is considered from nine to 14 years when development is marked by significant physical, cognitive, social and emotional changes, each developmental facet affecting the other, and is a fertile period for self-development (Caskey & Anfara Jr., 2014; Salgado et al., 2021; Schwartz, 2008).

2.2.2 Physical, cognitive, psychological, social and spiritual development

Development is the acquisition and growth of the physical, cognitive, social and emotional competencies required to engage fully in family and society (Nsamenang, 2006). Physical changes are noticeable in early adolescence with the onset of puberty. Puberty is the first reproductive milestone and refers to the sexual maturation that indicates the passage from childhood into adolescence, a time of many new stressors (McGuire et al., 2019). Coupled with this, gender expectations contribute to and shape development (Blum et al., 2017). As puberty occurs early in the life span, the complex changes and experiences during this period have the potential to alter developmental trajectories (McGuire et al., 2019). In terms of cognitive development, the young adolescent starts moving from concrete to formal operational thinking (Piaget, 1977). As the ability to abstract starts emerging, so too does the capacity for self-reflection and awareness (Sebastian et al., 2008). Increased ability to understand and reason facilitates self-reflection and heightened self-consciousness (Cameron, 1996; Sebastian et al., 2008). In addition, growing evidence of puberty-brain associations indicates that brain development is a potential mediator of puberty's impact on mental health in adolescence (J. H. Pfeifer & Allen, 2021). Awareness/consciousness is the first step towards the uniquely human, multi-faceted phenomenon of self-regulation while mentalisation is the engagement of imaginative mental activity that enables perception and interpretation of human behaviour (Bandura, 1991; Fonagy & Allison, 2013; Oehlman Forbes et al., 2021).

In puberty, and by the 12th year, dreams are very important, supporting the salience of psychological development in early adolescence (Jung, 2008). One of the fundamental aspects of early adolescence is identity development, which is a key process for adolescent well-being and, according to Erik Erickson, is necessary for a

person to experience wholeness (Arnold, 2017). In addition, the ego is the master orchestrator of personality and identity and the same psychological processes underlie ego and identity development (Syed & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013). The attainment of self is an ideal for which humans instinctively strive, to be reborn into a new, whole personality (Akam & Yahya, 2018).

Early adolescence is a time of separation and individuation marked by increased self-awareness and desire for social acceptance (Anderson et al., 2020; Salgado et al., 2021). Concern and regard for others gain strength during this period (Malin et al., 2017). More time is spent with peers and good relationships with peers impact positively on identity development (Rageliene, 2016). Notwithstanding the need for autonomy, strong bonds with parents also show better personal outcomes (Salgado et al., 2021). It is clear that despite the pull of autonomy, the need for security and protection is still very much evident in early adolescence. Increased abstracting often brings with it questions about the meaning and inception of life. Spiritual connection/meaning-making plays a positive role in youth development, offering the development of protective resources (Arnold, 2017; Wright et al., 2018). To this end, spirituality has a direct, positive effect on adolescent health, leading to higher levels of life satisfaction and lower rates of depression (Wright et al., 2018).

This transitional period of development is potentially an opportune time to provide opportunities for engagement with internal processes of expression, exploration, processing and integration. The early adolescent is neither child nor adolescent and is at a stage of self-discovery and identity formation. Through an expressive creative activity, it is anticipated that opportunities for self-awareness and growth will enhance the prospects of young people who have endured neglect, deprivation and exposure to violence. Children with absent parents struggle on many different levels, including emotionally, psychologically, mentally and physically (Rubin, 2018).

Developing increased capacity from within to negotiate the demands and challenges of life is a sustainable way to contribute to positive youth development, particularly when external resources are severely limited and constrained. Opportunity to explore and discover the inner self can strengthen and enhance resourcefulness and assist in finding a purpose or meaning in life. The facilitation of self-awareness is critical, especially as self-perceptions are essential for psychological well-being and are an

important mediating factor in psychological, social, behavioural and educational outcomes (Esnaola et al., 2020).

2.2.3 An opportune period of development

Early adolescence is cited as an ideal time for creative expression when access to the unconscious is indicated by the “importance” of dreams in childhood and puberty (Jung, 2008, pp. 1–2). Early adolescence is a time of dynamic brain development that sets the scene for adult well-being and is simultaneously a critical time for achieving human potential in a period of many new stressors and psychological risks (Discovery, 2021; McGuire et al., 2019). Adolescence is marked by heightened brain plasticity and the development of key neurobiological circuitry as well as sensitivity to the social environment and is therefore an opportune time for intervention (Méndez Leal & Silvers, 2021). Jung refers to consciously submitting to unconscious impulses activated in early adolescence through a creative, building game and its essential value (Jung, 2019).

Protective life skills and coping mechanisms are still developing which further contributes to the vulnerability and sensitivity of early adolescents (Discovery, 2021; Toska et al., 2019). However, researchers do not agree with the self-esteem levels of young adolescents. Some indicate that self-views are more positive during early adolescence, whilst others, such as Esnaola, suggest that self-esteem is at its lowest point in the 14 to 15 year age group (Esnaola et al., 2020; Orth, 2017; van der Aar et al., 2018). According to WHO, half of the mental health conditions start at the age of 14 years, with most cases going undetected (Discovery, 2021; Kessler et al., 2007).

Promoting well-being and protecting adolescents from risk factors is crucial for their development and also for their physical and mental health as adults (Best, 2008). It is well known that traumatic experiences foster dissociation and psychopathology, creating disconnection in the mind-brain-body system which leads to emotional dysregulation, impulsivity and lack of effortful control (Scalabrini et al., 2018). When trauma happens before ego development it is emotionally catastrophic and results in unmet needs, fear of separation, hunger for mother/father, depression and hopelessness (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021).

Moving from primary to high school occurs within early adolescence, requiring adaptation and adjustment, and is normally marked by significant personal

development. Thus the development of self-concept should be one of the major aims of education, especially in the transition period of preparing for and moving into secondary school as self-perceptions are essential for psychological well-being (Esnaola et al., 2020). This is an opportune time to provide supportive interventions to facilitate personal development, especially in the face of trauma and deprivation. Life's transitions, such as the onset of puberty, must be acknowledged to foster acceptance and avoid psychotic disorders from developing during a natural, normal life process (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). Development and relationship are two interdependent basic human needs and both are especially pertinent in early adolescence (Zoja, 2018).

2.3 THE ESSENTIAL FUNCTION OF BOTH PLAY AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Both play and creative activity serve a vital function in growth and development by connecting the inner being and the outer world and assisting in meaning-making (Dominey, 2021). As such, pretending and creating are relational activities in which children fine-tune and adjust their reactions to others (Chylińska & Gut, 2020).

2.3.1 Play

Play is essential, it is not just a fun activity; children need to play to explore and learn how to work with others (Engel, 2015). Play is the child's natural way of self-expression, providing the opportunity to play out feelings and problems and is a cultural universal (Axline, 1994; Jarvis et al., 2014). Play is the language of children and transcends pre-verbal trauma thereby improving verbal and non-verbal communication (Ferreira et al., 2014). To this end, play is an activity of primitive identity in which omnipotence predominates through internal images and external objects (Fordham, 1985). Play is creative and essential for well-being and helps with neural maturation that benefits higher executive brain development (Humphris, 2019; Jarvis et al., 2014). Winnicott (1994) indicates that it is only in playing that the child can be creative and use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the self is discovered. The opportunity for catharsis as a result of imaginative play supports growing awareness of physical and emotional needs and the ability to improve expression as this new consciousness develops (Dominey, 2021). Further to this, non-directed play is an opportunity to experience growth under the most favourable conditions (Axline, 1994).

During play the ego submits in service to creative imagination, freeing and allowing the self to emerge (Weinrib, 2004). Only the true self can be creative and only the true self can feel real (Winnicott, 1990). Added to this, play is a feature of attachment that is important in acquiring mentalisation, and expressive activities develop self-esteem and psychosocial functioning and serve as a powerful antidote to suffering (Coholic et al., 2009; Fonagy & Allison, 2013). Further to this traditional African play involves manipulative cognitive physical games with rules and is under threat in modernised African education settings (Ogunyemi & Henning, 2020).

Exploration is the basic process that drives identity formation and creativity thus opportunities for expression and exploration are essential during early adolescence (Arnold, 2017; Barbot, 2020). Healing can shift when the individual can completely surrender to play (M. Kalff, 2019). It is agreed that when children are invited to play freely, they make the environment and they learn the rules; only fear prevents them from moving forward (Dominey, 2021). To this end, the provision of a safe space, diligent supervision, and enforcement of specified standards with culturally conscious, trained and knowledgeable facilitators are necessary for play-based activities to be effective (Ogunyemi & Henning, 2020).

2.3.2 Creative activity

People exist because of their creative capacity, while being creative is integral to sustainability (Humphris, 2019). Creativity facilitates negotiation between abstract and concrete and allows navigation between verbal and non-verbal expression (Lindo & Ceballos, 2020). Added to this, imagination is a critical aspect of creative activity and it is impossible to activate one hemisphere of the brain and not the other, therefore engaging in activities that promote whole brain development in a period of increased, latent cognitive ability is significant (Coch, 2021). To this end, arts-based methods can help children feel better about themselves and develop coping skills without involving direct discussion. Spontaneity and creativity bring about the capacity to use symbols (Val Richards & Wilce, 2018). The relationship between self-esteem and creativity is reciprocal which implies the need for creativity-based interventions designed to bolster self-esteem (Barbot, 2020). The need for meaning-making is paramount in the process of creative engagement and necessitates active exchange between learner and environment whilst creative activity develops all of the brain (Anderson et al., 2020;

Coch, 2021). Art is important for creating meaning and for reintegrating trauma into the life of the person (Rubin, 2018). By creating images and narratives the psyche has an astonishing ability to regulate itself (Zoja, 2018).

When children have experienced inadequate mothering they struggle to use imagination while playing and fantasy can feel like reality, thereby causing chaotic, overwhelming and impulsive behaviour (Muller et al., 2013). As the false self develops compliance by introjections it is a defence against that which is unthinkable, namely exploitation of the true self which would result in annihilation (Val Richards & Wilce, 2018). To this end, SP is an engaging activity that promotes creativity and understanding and facilitates problem-solving (Nickum & Purgason, 2017). Inner experience is superior to belief and more likely to occur through creative engagement (Jung, 1958).

2.4 INNER RESOURCES FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESILIENCE

Inner resources are personal, inner attributes that provide individualised awareness of the inner self and are beneficial to well-being by building resilience and providing a feeling of strength (van Dierendonck et al., 2009). Intrinsic factors are held within the individual, including the need for security and belonging (Zarobe & Bungay, 2017). Further to this, internal assets refer to the positive traits of an individual such as skills and competencies (Shek et al., 2019). Unfortunately, the capacity for inner experience is conditioned out of people at an early age when they are trained to seek and heed outer or external guidance (Weinrib, 2004). However, when a person becomes aware of the part they play in directing their life and accepts the responsibility that goes with the freedom of inner authority, then they can see a course of action more accurately (Axline, 1994). Conscious self-regulation has a significant influence on various manifestations of the individual (Fomina et al., 2020). Self-regulatory systems mediate the effects of most external influences and self-knowledge provides direction for self-regulatory control (Bandura, 1991). None of us are born with the capacity to regulate our emotional reactions, and we learn to do so by play and attachment (Fonagy & Allison, 2013). The ability to self-regulate is one of the most important protective factors concerning resilience and should be encouraged (Artuch-Garde et al., 2017). Self-regulation prevents negative scenarios and predicts personal well-being, and

adolescents with high levels of well-being are more resilient (Artuch-Garde et al., 2017; Fomina et al., 2020).

Preoccupation with external and collective social structures has led to the neglect of the inner worlds; emotions, identities and beliefs of individuals (Ives et al., 2020). Today's world is extroverted, technological and outer focused and not much time is afforded to the inner world (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). Internal assets like positive identity, self-esteem and purpose aid learners to perform better at school (Adams et al., 2019). In addition, inner resources presuppose a universal capacity through which strength and support can be uncovered (van Dierendonck et al., 2009). As inward discovery facilitates outward exchange, self-awareness and social acceptance become heightened (Anderson et al., 2020).

Outward behaviour is dependent on the integration of all past and present experiences and relationships and is pointed toward the fulfilment of the inner drive of self-realisation that continues through life (Axline, 1994). People's inner lives underpin external change and have the potential to shape human behaviour and perhaps also social systems (Ives et al., 2020). Therefore, as adolescents are limited in their ability to express verbally their childhood experiences and emotions, providing opportunities to connect to the inner world is essential (Han et al., 2017).

In socio-political contexts that are not conducive to well-being, learners who draw on internal assets, such as positive identity, self-esteem and purpose, perform better while cultural dimensions play less of a role (Adams et al., 2019; van Dierendonck et al., 2009). Added to this, inner spirituality is a buffer against stressful life events and spiritual connection protects and increases positive youth adjustment and well-being (Wright et al., 2018). Deliberate opportunities for youth to harness personal and social resources can have dramatic effects (Schwartz et al., 2017).

However, it is worth noting that building rugged individualism is more effective when external resources and support systems are adequate (Ungar & Theron, 2020). If individuals are not on good terms with their inner being then the desire for social exchange with others is low and it is desirable to avoid an increase in internalising problems for future psychological functioning (Van Zalk, 2020; Zoja, 2018).

2.5 THE IMPACT OF A RESOURCE-POOR ENVIRONMENT

2.5.1 Deprivation, neglect and trauma

Being poor undermines cognitive development, academic performance and future employment (Shung King et al., 2019). Deprivation and quality of education are of serious concern in South Africa, particularly in rural areas of the country. The greatest number of children live in provinces with large rural populations like KwaZulu-Natal (Hall & Sambu, 2018).

Persistent and pervasive inequalities limit the life chances of children and adolescents, preventing them from living to their full capabilities (Shung King et al., 2019). Severe deprivation is related to alterations in the adult brain structure and sometimes linked to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), autism and lower IQ (Mackes et al., 2020). Early life adversity leads to poor physical and mental health outcomes and is implicated in 30% of adult mental illnesses (Méndez Leal & Silvers, 2021). The highest deprivation rates are observed for education, housing and health among children aged five to 17 years (Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), 2020b). Multidimensional poverty is faced by 88.4% of children living in rural areas, and this is highly prevalent amongst orphans (StatsSA, 2020b). Only 3% of children live in households where both their mother and their father are present (Hall & Sambu, 2018). Added to this, there is an increase in youth who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) (Hall, 2019). School attendance is a protective factor. In South Africa, schooling is compulsory only until the end of grade 9, around the age of 14, and mental health issues start emerging at this time; it is, therefore, imperative that appropriate support and development are provided when children are still at school where they can be more easily assisted (Discovery, 2021). South African adolescents are exposed to high levels of violence and trauma, including community violence, abuse and neglect, with more than one in three adolescents reporting experiences of violence (Nöthling et al., 2016; Toska et al., 2019). Interpersonal violence prevails in South Africa with mortality rates reaching seven times that of the global rate (Swain et al., 2017). Collective, shared trauma is a growing problem in South Africa and generations of neglected children lead to adult problem behaviours, and on the collective level, retardation of democratic processes and perceptions of the world (Solomons, 2021; Zoja, 2018). Advocates at all levels have a critical role to play in contributing to

breaking the inter-generational cycles of poverty, ill-health and violence by getting involved during these sensitive stages of development (Children's Institute, 2020). To this end, there is an urgent need for interventions during the transitional period of early adolescence to fill the gap between late childhood and adolescence (Toska et al., 2019). Added to this, there is an increasing need to care for vulnerable children, and caregiving responsibility plays a significant part in their well-being (Omidire et al., 2015). Severe deprivation in early life affects the adult brain structure despite enrichment in adoptive homes (Mackes et al., 2020).

Children's home circumstances may result in instability and continuous inconsistencies that compromise the quality and quantity of caregiving (Omidire et al., 2015). In addition, identity and a sense of belonging are confused and disruptive and culminate in cultural and language difficulties, loneliness and disconnection (Roche, 2019). The experience of greater levels of deprivation during critical periods of neurodevelopment lowers neurocognitive function and development (Vargas et al., 2020). To this end, preparing young people to leave their children's home environments and transition to adulthood is inadequate (van Breda & Frimpong-Manso, 2020).

2.5.2 A need for intervention and positive youth development

Children who have endured deprivation and trauma require interventions that firstly attend to basic needs like food, shelter, health care and education. Thereafter the provision of opportunities to process trauma, and explore and discover a future for themselves, is optimal. The formation of identity is an inherent dimension of adolescent thriving and is the most important outcome of youth programmes (Arnold, 2017). This opportunity lies in safe, protected spaces that hold and facilitate inner processing. To dream of a future is untenable in the context of trauma (Ratcliffe et al., 2014). The need for privacy is closely linked to psychological functioning and is particularly vital for children living in communal homes (Gwandure, 2010). Society requires that individuals engage socially, live in a community and work together with others. Age and stage appropriate interventions are needed to equip youth with tools and skills that build long term resilience for success as adults (Toska et al., 2019).

In South Africa, the more systems that resilience enabling interventions influence simultaneously, the more likely individuals are to build the psychological capacity that

they require to cope with severe and chronic exposure to adversity (Ungar & Theron, 2020). As such, child and adolescent health are vital as it is a critical time for resilience building and protection from risk as experiences in adolescence shape long term outcomes across multiple domains of well-being and development (Toska et al., 2019). Positive youth development is mainly concerned with the strengths of young people, and their plasticity; internal assets like psychosocial competence and external assets such as community influence are also important (Shek et al., 2019). In addition, helpful interventions assist children spiritually in finding a purpose for living and life meaning (Arnold, 2017; Wright et al., 2018).

When behaviour and the self-concept within the individual find adequate outward expression, the individual is said to be well adjusted and there is no longer a split focus or inner conflict (Axline, 1994).

The provision of opportunities for youth to harness personal and social resources that allow them to not only survive but thrive must be established, as intentional efforts to change developmental circumstances can have dramatic results (Schwartz et al., 2017). However, it is also noted that developing inner resources that contribute to resilience should not take place alone as resilience grows from access to and use of all resources needed to support mental health and well-being (Ungar & Theron, 2020). The poor quality of many South African schools suggests that interventions for the development of the whole child are sorely lacking whereas feeling connected at school during early adolescence can help protect against depressive symptoms (Van Zalk, 2020). Providing engaging opportunities to learn that are not concerned with the development of either/or left/right hemispheres are hallmarks of successful teaching (Coch, 2021). Holistic education emphasises the development of the whole child and nurturing the inner potential of every child (Rudge, 2016). Striving towards wholeness and making connections between mind-body, self and community, the earth, and our deeper selves is holistic development (Pearl, 2018). In addition, inner resources provide a sense of being a part of a deeper spiritual dimension (van Dierendonck et al., 2009). In this study, spirituality is considered from an internal point of view and focuses on the importance of life meaning and thriving (Shek et al., 2019).

A significant aspect that starts developing in early adolescence is the confidence of engagement in career curiosity requiring an in-depth understanding of self (Lindo &

Ceballos, 2020). As such, high self-esteem contributes significantly to career aspiration and drives the realisation of goals, whilst low self-esteem is a vulnerability factor (Masselink et al., 2018; Shirima et al., 2021). Furthermore, life skills training facilitates the development of inner resources such as increased self-efficacy, self-awareness, self-confidence, increased responsibility and decreases depression (Sagone et al., 2020). Developing internal assets also leads to better academic performance (Adams et al., 2019).

Finally, the development of personal assets is amplified in communities that care (Schwartz et al., 2017).

2.6 PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION

Traditionally, projective tests have been used by psychologists for the assessment of personality and to understand the unconscious mind. Projective identification is a complex unconscious imagining of self-representation, concerning the other (Braddock, 2018). David Rapaport indicates that all behaviour provides insight into the person, telling us something even if that something is hard to define (Eby, 2021). To this end, African play involves social modelling and develops children as they experience and internalise the views of others through play (Joseph et al., 2014). As such, projection is a process whereby a person sees an unconscious quality of their own as belonging to an outer world object or someone else and this can be positive or negative (Weinrib, 2004). An unconscious mechanism that is triggered leaves the individual and goes out onto the other and, if not made conscious, will keep on repeating in cycles (Hollis, 2015).

Originally projection was attributed to Freud who described it as a defence process in which wishes and aggressive ideas are externalised (Dubey et al., 2018). Michael Fordham's fluctuating projective states and the role of projective and introjective processes in creating self-representations assert that whole objects precede part objects and that the depressive position is the first step in individuation (Midgen, 2017). In time, projections dissolve and return to the unconscious (Hollis, 2015). Withdrawal of projection makes possible a relationship with the reality of the other person (Weinrib, 2004). In addition, projection is interpreted intuitively while psychologists explain this unconscious endowment of human fantasy onto an inanimate object as projection (Eby, 2021; Merrell, 2008; Moore, 2016). As such it allows entry into the person's

private world of meaning-making and the process of memory is affected by the meaning given to what is remembered (Eby, 2021). Added to this, visual imagery and symbolic thought are basic forms of thinking and expression, and projective techniques are helpful when working with those who speak a different language or whose verbal skills are limited, like children (Dubey et al., 2018).

Creative, expressive activities provide the opportunity to project and process both conscious and unconscious material. Projective identification is prominent in conflict projection and symbolic reliving assists with self-regulation and helps with overcoming aggression (Braddock, 2018; Rozina, 2020). In SP the person's inner world is projected into and manifested in the sand tray image (Roesler, 2019). Thus SP provides the opportunity to understand the intrinsic value of the self and offers the space to resolve conflicts, make links and solve problems (Amas, 2006).

2.7 SANDPLAY

The non-verbal, non-invasive nature of SP lends itself to widespread use across countries and cultures, with significant potential for the treatment of traumatic stress, disabilities or language problems that are difficult to treat with conventional methods (Roesler, 2019). A Ukrainian study found that SP was the most effective technique in assisting with mastering skills like self-control and self-regulation (Rozina, 2020). Analysis of archetypal sandplay themes from a Hawaiian study following the natural disaster of the Kilauea volcano eruption shows a substantial decrease in wounding, an increase in healing and, despite the perception of continued threat, participants discovered new resources and felt less isolated and more connected to support and protection (Freedle et al., 2021). In addition, participants accessed deeper dimensions of their internal life, such as movement toward organisation, integration and balance (Freedle et al., 2021). A Sao Paulo study of children in protective care shows a significant change in internalising and externalising behaviour problems that was maintained after six months and points to SP's capability for promoting changes in self-regulatory processes developmentally (da Matta & Ramos, 2021).

2.7.1 Introduction and origins of Sandplay

This study is based on the theory and practice of SP therapists of the Jungian and Kalfian persuasion, as well as the SP literature of Kalff, Ryce-Mehunin, Weinrib, Pattis

Zoja, Mitchell and Friedman and others (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Mitchell & Friedman, 2021; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004; Zoja, 2018). SP is a method of psychotherapy and self-experience developed by Dora Kalff that has roots in Jung's analytical psychology, Margaret Lowenfeld's World Technique and Eastern contemplative traditions (M. Kalff, 2019). Encouraged by Jung to devote herself to working with children, Dora Kalff adapted Lowenfeld's technique. Contact with Donald Winnicott and Michael Fordham further informed Kalff's development of SP (Sandspiel) (M. Kalff, 2019). Jung knew the value of playing, creating and building whilst processing inner turmoil (Jung, 2019). SP is a psychotherapeutic process whereby the sand player creates three-dimensional scenes in a tray of a specific size, using sand, water and realistic figures. Interaction with the sand, water and miniatures allows the sand player to access the unconscious and give concrete expression to unconscious material through the creation of an image in the sand (Davids, 2005; D. M. Kalff, 1996; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004).

2.7.2 Description of Sandplay

As mentioned above, SP occurs with sand trays, with dimensions corresponding to the human visual field, and many miniature objects that can be played with within the sand trays. In so doing, SP facilitates connection with the unconscious and provides a creative way to use sand and miniatures to express interpersonal issues. The size of the tray limits what can be represented, thereby providing the experience of a free and protected space and transformation happens within these bounds (D. M. Kalff, 1996). The small objects represent all kinds of things in both the inner and the outer world, allowing the sand player to construct their world. Metaphors and miniatures enhance self-understanding and illuminate multiple factors (Sangganjanavanich & Magnuson, 2011). As such, SP provides a container for the non-verbal, symbolic expression of a person's inner world in the process of playing (Roesler, 2019).

Play is often neglected as an essential activity for the emotional, social and neuro-cognitive development of both children and adults (Freedle & Gita, 2020). SP allows individuals to connect with the unconscious and provides a creative way to use sand and miniatures to express interpersonal issues. Four key elements of Kalff's SP include:

1. The provision of a free and protected space.

2. The process of making successive sand images.
3. The dual process of concrete and unconscious, and regression to the preverbal, matriarchal level where the wounds of inadequate mothering can be soothed.
4. Delayed interpretation as SP is most effective when the therapist or facilitator is a silent, empathetic witness (Bradway, 2006; D. M. Kalff, 1996; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004; Zoja, 2018).

Consideration is given to the symbolic function that unfolds when a child depicts the inner world in the sand. The bond between the child, the witness and the group holds the process together (Zoja, 2018). The former aspects are cornerstones for expressive sandwork and include the concepts of self-regulation and Bowlby's assertion of the absolute importance of the primary relationship (between mother and child) for the development of inner models of togetherness (Zoja, 2018).

Similar to the body, the psyche has a tendency to heal itself provided the environment is conducive (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021; Weinrib, 2004; Zoja, 2018). Healing begins to take place as soon as the psyche is provided with a free and protected space that accommodates expression, and SP facilitates the psyche's self-regulatory capacity that serves as a source of energy (SAAJA, 2018). The strong connection between supported creativity, imagination and play suggests endless possibilities for growth (Dominey, 2021).

2.7.3 Sandplay equipment

The basic equipment for SP consists of a shallow rectangular tray, sand, water and realistic miniature figures.

2.7.3.1 Sand trays

Kalff's sand trays were 50 x 72 x 7.5 cm deep, providing boundaries that function as an ordering and protecting factor within which the sand player freely expresses imagination (D. M. Kalff, 1996). The inside of the sand tray is painted blue and by moving the sand away from the bottom of the tray the impression of water (a river or ocean) is gleaned (Weinrib, 2004). Sand trays are waterproof so that water can be used with the sand by the sand player in the tray (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015).

2.7.3.2 Sand

The sand trays are half-filled with sand representing the earth, the border between the unseen unconscious depths of the sea and the consciously protruding landscape that marks the footprints of time (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). Choosing to work with dry or wet sand may be significant, with choosing dry sand possibly indicating resistance to touching emotional issues whereas wet sand might suggest a willingness to explore emotional depth (Davids, 2005).

2.7.3.3 Miniatures

Hundreds of miniature figures and small objects are arranged on open shelves and are available for use in making sand scenes (Weinrib, 2004). An array of miniatures representative of human, animal, plant, and mineral life, as well as a wide variety of cultural, historic and symbolic figures, prehistoric, fantasy, vehicles (land, air and water) and a range of buildings for all purposes, are provided (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). Miniatures must be representative of a wide range of psychological expressions and are arranged in categories like a library.

The collection should include a breadth of symbolic objects and must be of good quality so that they appeal to and stimulate the sand players' aesthetic and creative sensibilities (Weinrib, 2004). Miniatures are real-life symbols (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015).

2.7.4 Jungian Sandplay

SP² is based on the basic Jungian premise that there is a fundamental drive toward individuation and healing in the human psyche, with the self constituting a natural symbol of wholeness (Jung & Hull, 2014; D. M. Kaff, 1996). The sand tray provides a temenos or sacred space for healing that is further facilitated by the freedom to create whatever comes to mind. The sand tray defines the place where the person takes up an interactive role in their change process (Pearson & Wilson, 2019). In the free and protected space, the SP therapist is an empathic, silent witness while the client creates sand scenes with the sand, water and miniatures (Davids, 2005). Sand images are representative of both inner (unconscious) and outer (conscious) dimensions of the inner world and the creation of SP scenes releases transformative energies that

² Certain authors are referenced multiple times in this study as they are a source of original information on Jungian theory and the principles of Sandplay. These authors include Jung, Kaff, Weinrib, Ryce-Menuhin, Pattis-Zoja and Mitchell and Friedman.

resolve symptoms and initiate a natural movement toward wholeness (Freedle & Gita, 2020). Through active imagination, the process of deliberately and actively fantasising, the person symbolically acts out what they might not be able to express verbally (Weinrib, 2004).

Making a series of sand scenes allows the opportunity for individuation which is the ongoing process toward the realisation of selfhood and wholeness (Jung, 2019; D. M. Kalff, 1996; Weinrib, 2004). A person is born as a totality, at first, recognised or experienced within the mother, the primary relationship of unconditional security and safety (mother-child unity) (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004).

The self is located in the unconscious, the place of wisdom and is the central ordering principle of the personality, while the ego is located in the conscious part of the psyche which is the centre of consciousness but less than the whole personality (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). As the self becomes consolidated in the child's unconscious and begins to manifest itself in symbols of wholeness, such as the circle or the square, this inner order or integration of the self is the most important moment in the development of personality and is the turning point (D. M. Kalff, 1996). As such, the constellation of the self is the point where consciousness (ego) and the self (the spiritual centre or soul of the psyche) are in harmony (Davids, 2005; Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). To this end, a self sand scene is described as numinous and can only be explained as an awesome, wondrous transcendent experience similar to having a profound insight or deep spiritual awakening (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004). In addition, symbolic images (sand trays) are imbued with numinosity, divine power, energy and possibility (Humphris, 2019). In situations of inadequate and insufficient parenting or maternal protection, the self does not appear, however, in creating the right conditions mother-child unity can be accomplished, thereby facilitating the self to appear (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Weinrib, 2004).

2.7.5 Sandplay methods and techniques

Sandplay therapists do not give directions nor do they ask questions; they place their trust in the psyche's process of creating images and movement regardless of understanding or meaning (Zoja, 2018). Choosing from among hundreds of small figures that are symbolically representative, the sand player makes an image in the sand that can be understood as a three-dimensional psychic depiction (D. M. Kalff,

1996). The sand player is completely free to create whatever they want using their choice of miniatures, and just as real freedom presupposes limitations the sand tray contains the process (D. M. Kalff, 1996). Concentration is much deeper in a free and protected space and serves a meditative purpose similar to that of the mandala (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004). Soothing art tasks include the creation of mandalas which meaningfully transform chaos and appear in all cultures (Loumeau-May, 2019; Weinrib, 2004).

SP provides a safe space for the unconscious self to be seen and known by the conscious ego through the use of symbolic miniatures (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). The feminine, as presented by the sand, is a life-giving, earth element, a source of creativity and meaning, concerned with organic growth and, like women, bears life and nourishment (Weinrib, 2004). Water represents the unconscious, the invisible underwater currents (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). The sand player uses their hands to work in the sand and to place and arrange objects to their satisfaction. Thus, SP is a kinaesthetic activity that invites a regenerative relationship to the body which might have been numbed by trauma or abuse (Pearson & Wilson, 2019; Zoja, 2018). Since trauma is located in the body, healing from trauma is possible only when the body is included in the therapy (M. Kalff, 2019).

The sand images and miniatures are representations or symbols that form a bridge between what is familiar and what is strange and can relate reason to passion, the past to the present and the present to the future (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). In addition, symbols can have a holistic (embodied) effect if manifested as a tactile sensation (Zoja, 2018). Experiencing the symbol in a safe and protected space is most important (D. M. Kalff, 1996). Non-verbal expression creates direct access to the unconscious and therefore language is not a barrier (Ferreira et al., 2014; M. Kalff, 2019). Furthermore, SP impacts the psyche beyond culturally defined borders and is used cross-culturally worldwide (Freedle & Gita, 2020; M. Kalff, 2019). As a form of *non-directed* play, SP provides the most favourable conditions for growth (Axline, 1994). The creation of a free and protected space can be understood as a description of a positive transference situation (M. Kalff, 2019).

If the art object is shared with a witness it can be used as a sacred container to engage in a journey towards self-knowledge, healing and/or psychological transformation

(Jordan, 2021). The countertransference experience of being a witness to SP facilitates union in the chaos of memory and allows wounds to awaken and heal together (Kowen, 2020). The SP method is a personal quest with intense sand trays often reflecting the numinous, which is the possible point of healing (M. Kalff, 2019; Van Dyk, 2018).

Delayed interpretation is when verbal interpretation is withheld to preserve the process from premature interruption or direction (Pearson & Wilson, 2019; SAAJA, 2018).

2.7.6 Sandplay stages and intrapsychic processes

2.7.6.1 Overlapping stages in Sandplay

The creation of a series of sand images stimulates the process of individuation (Davids, 2005; D. M. Kalff, 1996; M. Kalff, 2019; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004). Kalff emphasised the value of successive SPs in which the concrete makes way for the unconscious to be released and made conscious (Bradway, 2006). Kalff and Neumann agree that people are born as a totality preserved at birth by the mother-child unity and that three stages of ego development are evident in SP (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). The first is the vegetative or animal phase, followed by the fighting/confrontational phase and finally adaptation to the collective (D. M. Kalff, 1996). The stages in SP are not necessarily sequential or consecutive, Weinrib (2004) describes them as overlapping. Trays that represent each of the stages may appear at several different times in an SP process (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). Stages are well documented by various authors, including Weinrib (2004), Zoja (2018), Davids (2005), van der Merwe (2015) and Mitchell and Friedman (2021).

The creation of successive SP trays is a fluid process that takes place over time and five distinct stages are apparent but do not occur in a particular order. The process may start at any of these stages and adaption to the collective tends to occur towards the end (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). The five stages are:

1. Chaos scenes that indicate the real problem or trauma

The first trays reflect disorganisation and provide content closely related to the first trauma or present clues to the problems faced by the sand player.

2. The animal-vegetative stage

This stage is dominated by plants and animals.

3. The battle or fighting stage

Scenes of battles indicate opposing forces.

4. Adaptation to the collective

Images of ordinary life, home, school, sporting events and a new sense of order. This stage also provides a preview of the next phase.

5. The resolutions stage

The process of SP is nearing completion when there are signs indicating a return to the collective or suggestions that the sand player may be approaching life more effectively.

The first sand image indicates the problems and reveals the situation while the sixth tray often involves centring, the constellation of the self and the union of opposites (D. M. Kaff, 1996; Liu et al., 2021; Weinrib, 2004).

2.7.6.2 Intrapsychic processes

As the psyche consists of consciousness, the unconscious and the interaction between them, intrapsychic processes are evident in SP sessions and are noticed within the different stages of SP (Weinrib, 2004; Zoja, 2018). The self is the central organising factor of the psyche out of which the ego evolves and is the centre of consciousness (Jung & Hull, 2014; Weinrib, 2004). Thus the various intrapsychic processes and relatednesses play a crucial role in psychic healing and are evidenced in all stages of SP. Of significance is the centring of the self and the dynamic principle of deintegration and reintegration which is continuous and fluctuates.

2.7.6.2.1 Centring of the self

SP encourages the reconstitution of mother-child unity that establishes the constellation of the self and leads to a stronger ego (Weinrib, 2004). Centring of the self can be observed in SP by both actions and the use of objects that symbolically depict the self (D. M. Kaff, 1996; Weinrib, 2004). The majority of people create a tray in which manifestation of the self occurs, represented by a circle/mandala or finding

treasure; all of which support the true inner worth of the self (Van Dyk, 2018). Sometimes the self is represented as quadrants in the tray or as religious symbols which is also a sign of centring and depicts wholeness. Added to this, the emergence of the self enables the ego to strengthen (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004). Jung and Fordham held contrary views regarding the ego's relationship to the self, however they both agreed that the self is the integrator or synthesiser of experience (Leahy, 2018). The showing through of the self or centring is a "guarantee" (D. M. Kalff, 1996, p. 4) for personality development. Once the self is restored, the prognosis for a positive outcome to problems is good (Van Dyk, 2018).

2.7.6.2.2 Fluctuating self process

The self process is dynamic. As such the self will develop and emerge into what it will or can become (Midgen, 2017). Fordham's principles of deintegration and reintegration explain how the self develops and emerges; with deintegration, the self unfurls from itself to interact with the external world and this experience feeds back and is absorbed into the self, maintaining wholeness and contributing to its expansive growth and development (Midgen, 2017). These are inherent, archetypal processes that are essential to human development (Midgen, 2017). Deintegration and reintegration describe a fluctuating state of learning in which the child opens itself to new experiences and then withdraws to reintegrate and consolidate these experiences (Leahy, 2018). Integrated states of the self are periodic as the self organises, integrates and also divides itself up (Fordham, 1985). These states are visible in varying degrees of completion in sand trays and, although difficult to confirm in the absence of verbalisations and interpretation, they are salient in sand images.

2.7.7 Benefits of Sandplay

Offering a range of potential benefits, SP in its various forms has seen extensive growth worldwide over the last 15 years, and for some has provided sanctuary for self-reflection and healing and has become a way of life (Freedle & Gita, 2020; Roesler, 2019). A picture can communicate more than words, offering a vocabulary for preverbal or nonverbal experience without the constraint of words (Sangganjanavanich & Magnuson, 2011). In this way, SP is empowering for children (Knoetze, 2013). SP differs from verbal analysis as it encourages a creative regression that enables healing and is a vehicle that allows the therapist to enter the world of the

client (De Beer & Thom, 2013; Weinrib, 2004). As an art activity, SP may help to regulate and calm the individual whilst being able to tell their story and provide a sense of control (Rubin, 2018). SP increases emotional well-being, thereby promoting hope in circumstances of limited or no help (De Beer & Thom, 2013; Roesler, 2019). In addition, it can establish an inner peace that supports the development of the self (Ferreira et al., 2014).

Group SP significantly reduces internalising problems such as anxiety and depression and improves resilience (Olaniyi et al., 2021). Furthermore, SP is a way to the spirit which is why it is sometimes called a wonder-filled therapy (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004). SP provides the opportunity to rediscover and reintegrate individual aspects most feared and repressed and is capable of promoting changes in developmental self-regulatory processes (da Matta & Ramos, 2021; Van Dyk, 2018). SP is shown to increase levels of choline in both hemispheres of the brain, helping with childhood trauma and with symptoms of anxiety (Foo & Pratiwi, 2021). Further outcomes of SP include improved peer relationships, decreased behavioural problems and improved resilience, and the potential to treat problems that are difficult to treat through conventional psychotherapeutic measures (Lee & Chun, 2017; Roesler, 2019; Snelgar, 2018). Group SP is effective in assisting with post-traumatic symptoms and reports of improved sleep and reduced anxiety are noted (Freedle et al., 2021).

As a multi-sensory activity SP promotes neural integration and stimulates the activation of cortical and subcortical brain networks in both hemispheres to reprocess memories, quieten the stress response and promote well-being (Foo et al., 2020; Freedle & Gita, 2020). Multifaceted SP is creative, productive, constructive and relational and enables more positive verbalisation in early adolescence (Punnett & Canfield, 2020). Most notably, the increase in interest in SP is a result of its non-verbal and cross-cultural suitability (Freedle & Gita, 2020; Roesler, 2019).

2.7.8 Group Sandplay with early adolescents in a resource-poor environment

Group SP is an efficient means of providing the opportunity for early adolescent children to process their experiences of deprivation, neglect and trauma (Leinberger, 2019). Early adolescence is potentially an opportune time to provide expressive processing opportunities as self-awareness is naturally increasing. Added to this, while

early adolescent children are still in school and/or in organised care facilities they can be reached for intervention. In children over the age of eight individual differences in the content of sand images become apparent and from the age of 12 sand images are similar to adult scenes, being more complex and using many miniatures (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). In South Africa, whilst there is sound legislation in place for ensuring human rights, unfortunately accessibility and implementation of programmes and support on the ground are severely lacking, especially in terms of health care and education provision for adolescents (Jonas et al., 2019; Mokitimi et al., 2018). Group programmes reach more children simultaneously, give children the confidence to attend, are more accessible, affordable and assist with integration (Leinberger, 2019).

2.8 A JUNGIAN THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.8.1 Jungian concepts and principles

The overarching principles that guide and inform this study are Jungian, specifically that of C.G. Jung and Dora Kalff.

Jung's work was primarily devoted to the second half of life, whereas Kalff had a great ability to respond to children (M. Kalff, 2019). Jung viewed the self as the totality of a person including the conscious (ego) and the unconscious, i.e., the whole of the person (Franz, 1964; Jung & Hull, 2014). The individual is preformed by the psyche and nourished by the gradual awakening of consciousness during childhood, and on this complicated base the ego arises (Jung, 2019; Jung, 1958). A fundamental Jungian concept is that consciousness is a precondition to being in the world and the unconscious is powerful and plays a crucial role that cannot be ignored (Jung, 1958). Furthermore, fear of the unconscious impedes self-knowledge and is the gravest obstacle to wider understanding and knowledge (Jung, 1958). The shadow refers to the personal unconscious attributes, both negative and positive, of which the person is unaware and which can be made conscious and integrated into the personality (Weinrib, 2004). Whilst archetypes are a part of the collective unconscious and are fundamental patterns in every culture, they are to the psyche what instincts are to the body and have been present from the beginning (Jung, 2019). Archetypes are universal, they show up in dreams and are products of active imagination (Jung & Hull, 2014; Weinrib, 2004). Jung started formulating archetypal theory when he encountered in his patients unconscious content that resisted integration into

consciousness, therefore the effect of archetypes is strongest where consciousness is weakest (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). Archetypal processes are autonomous and numinous (Jung, 2019).

Kalff noted that the emergence of the self is the most significant starting point in personality development and that the self is the centre of the psyche, steering developmental processes (Akam & Yahya, 2018; D. M. Kalff, 1996; Ladkin et al., 2016). The self is discovered through the individuation process and once attained the individual is considered whole or complete (Akam & Yahya, 2018). Integration of archetypes and shadow aspects forms an essential part of the individuation process (Jung & Hull, 2014; Jung, 2019).

Furthermore, individuation is ongoing and helps the individual acknowledge what is, rather than what is desired, while the persona mediates between the ego and the world (Jung, 2019; Weinrib, 2004). Jung saw the mandala as a manifestation of the psyche's self-regulating system, which helps to maintain orderly functioning and can, when needed, restore stability (Green et al., 2013). As such, circles are powerful shapes connoting healing, integration, unity and wholeness and the mandala is a universal archetypal image, a symbol of the self (Jung, 2019; Pearl, 2018; Weinrib, 2004). In addition, in the journey toward psychic wholeness, Jung stresses the necessary role of religion or the self archetype in integrating opposites, including the conscious and the unconscious (Jung & Hull, 2014).

Healthy ego (conscious) development takes place once the self has shown itself (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Weinrib, 2004). Moreover, the self becomes more visible once the ego is strengthened (D. M. Kalff, 1996). The ego has an ideal personality, by ignoring the weakness or unwanted aspects the ego ideal is satisfied, and to deal with the unwanted or inferior aspects the persona and shadow both play a role (Akam & Yahya, 2018). The battle with the shadow/personal unconscious is an ego battle that requires the integrating and synthesising function of the self (Leahy, 2018).

Shadow elements are inferior personal and collective aspects because of their incompatibility with consciously (ego) chosen attitudes and are therefore denied expression in life, thus coalescing into autonomous splinter personalities with contrary tendencies in the unconscious (Ladkin et al., 2016). Unacknowledged and unprocessed these dark tendencies can erupt into dysfunctional behaviour (Ladkin et

al., 2016). In addition, dealing with the shadow requires moral effort but once the shadow is accepted it becomes a helpful friend (Akam & Yahya, 2018).

The individuation process is cyclical and lifelong, involving building up and pulling down, death and rebirth, disintegration and integration (Jung & Hull, 2014; Ross, 2019). Further to this, individuation requires conscious effort, involvement and awareness to bring it to fruition (Ross, 2019).

Jung made use of the numinous to refer to a variety of psychological phenomena that involve archetypal manifestations and experiences of the person; independent of their will and belonging to an invisible presence that causes alteration of consciousness (Jung, 2019; Miranda, 2018). The realisation that there is a healing and organising function within that transcends ego consciousness is concrete evidence of the numinous and the experience that accompanies it (Weinrib, 2004). That which is numinous is deeply emotionally stirring, difficult to manage intellectually and fundamental to understanding the individuation process because of its association with experiences of synchronicity (Jung, 2019; Schlamm, 2007). Whatever self is discovered, the numinous is present as a gift and must be contained in a safe, ritual space in which the power of the experience can be safely protected (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015).

2.8.2 Temenos

The above processes are facilitated by the contained, protected, temenos space of SP (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). The primary function of creating a temenos is to provide emotional safety where deeper and more vulnerable layers of human experience can be revealed within a space that provides personal containment and a sense of privacy (Phillips, 2017). A temenos is a sacred space, a sanctuary or a protected inner circle that represents the wholeness of the personality (Di Rezze, 2020). Containers or held spaces create an environment conducive to learning or healing and they can be physical, social, or relational processes (Pearl, 2018). Much of what happens in a temenos is beyond language and beyond the rational mind (Di Rezze, 2020). In this study, the concept of “temenos” refers to multiple aspects of a temenos. The temenos is a space in which a physical symbolic enactment develops in the sand tray within a temenos room, thus creating containment within containment (Weinrib, 2004). Additional layers of containment can be achieved by offering different

aspects of a temenos; the SP activity, the relationship of the witness and the SP room in which the activity takes place (Pearson & Wilson, 2019). Jung refers to a temenos as the safe space to encounter the unconscious and the self (Abramovitch, 2002). A temenos can be considered as an alchemical space containing the potential for transformation (Di Rezze, 2020).

2.8.3 Symbolism

Transformation only happens in the presence of a symbol or image, and everything of which we are conscious is an image, and image is the psyche (Jung, 1964). The symbol is the best way of describing an unknown object (Jung & Hull, 2014). Symbols connect the conscious to the unconscious, the literal to the more abstract and the part to the whole and allow the invisible in a person to emerge into the light (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). Symbols are the natural language of the unconscious and a powerful stimulus to consciousness that cannot be made fully conscious (Leahy, 2018; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). The child, in all cultures, has played in the language of symbols for thousands of years thereby expressing the experience of wholeness (D. M. Kalff, 1996).

To understand the functional role of symbolism, Winnicott's concept of the transitional object that leads the child into the world is significant (Weinrib, 2004). Objects or symbols play an important role in developing personality and the need to relate takes precedence over the desire for satisfaction (Val Richards & Wilce, 2018). The true self does not become a reality without the mother successfully meeting the infant's gesture, thus enabling the capacity to use the symbol (Val Richards & Wilce, 2018). In young people, symbolism can assist with discovering unexpected treasures in the unconscious and bringing these to consciousness, strengthening the ego and releasing psychic energy needed for growth (Jacobi, 1964).

If there is a high degree of a split between the true self and the false self there is a poor capacity for using symbols whilst the use of shadow symbols is positively related to psychological symptoms (Liu et al., 2021; Val Richards & Wilce, 2018). The conflict between opposites can strain a person to the breaking point and through symbols, the imagination liberates itself from the concreteness of the object (Jung, 2019). The symbol arises spontaneously from the unconscious and is a healing agent that is also manifested somatically (Weinrib, 2004; Zoja, 2018).

2.9 CONCLUSION

The literature indicates that a large number of early adolescents in South Africa suffer from deprivation of external circumstances and resources. The potential of a creative expressive activity like SP to harness and develop inner resources shows promise during early adolescence. A conclusion and summary of the literature reviewed are herein provided.

2.9.1 Conclusion of the literature review

A review of the literature concludes that SP, as a part of, or as a stand-alone intervention, is beneficial for children, adolescents and adults (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). Numerous SP studies worldwide and in South Africa have investigated and explored the effectiveness, role and value of this versatile intervention for a range of issues, namely: trauma, resilience, aggression, as an art activity, in a rural school setting, etc. (Ayres, 2016; Humphris, 2019; Olaniyi et al., 2021; Oosthuizen, 2017; Pearson & Wilson, 2019; Roesler, 2019; Rozina, 2020). The scarcity of access to psychologists and quality education for the majority of young people in South Africa is also verified by the literature. Accessible, effective and efficient programmes are required within communities to support and enrich young people (Hall, 2019; Mokitimi et al., 2018). Furthermore, the literature supports that early adolescence, as a transitional stage of development, is an ideal time for supportive, expressive and creative interventions. At the same time, the author is mindful of Snelgar's (2018) caution regarding crude implementation of psychological interventions in communities, as well as the issues highlighted by Bruce (2020) regarding task-shifting whereby professional services are shifted to community care workers and volunteers who are not sufficiently trained or qualified. However, there is an increasing need in society to care for vulnerable children, and added to this is the increased need for professional caregiving skills development, tailor-made for the South African context (Omidire et al., 2015).

2.9.2 An overview and summary of key aspects in the literature review

A summary of the key aspects discussed in this review namely: early adolescence, a resource-poor environment, SP, play and creative expression and the development of inner resources are overviewed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

A Summary of the Literature Review

Early adolescence	Resource-poor environment	Sandplay (SP)	Play and creative expression	Inner resources
Transitional period of development between childhood and adolescence	Rural KwaZulu-Natal	Free and protected space	Universal language of the child	Personal resources and internal capacity
Developmental changes: cognitive, physical, psychological and spiritual	Deprivation, neglect, violence and trauma	Non-verbal expressive activity is potentially transformative	Non-directed, non-threatening and free	Potentially self-regulatory, protective and enabling
Sensitive and opportune time in the lifespan for support and intervention	A volatile and unpredictable outer world	The unconscious made conscious	Access to the unconscious thereby connecting the inner with the outer world	Consciousness and self-awareness developed
Increased capacity for self-thinking	The need for protective accommodation	Activation of self-regulatory processes	Discovery of the self	Supports inner strength and positive development
Increased body awareness due to pubertal changes	Inadequate health care including psychological and social services	Somatic sensory activity involving the hands	Involvement of the whole person through touch, sight, sound and smell	Enables integration
Identity (ego and self) development	Inadequate education (focused only on academics)	Facilitates the emergence of the self and subsequent ego-self processes	Antidote to suffering	Facilitates wholeness and positive self-esteem
Social and relational processes (separation, individuation and belonging)	Exit school after grade 9	Cross-cultural (universal)	Relational and connecting	Source of sustainable inner resources that facilitate outward exchange
Search for spiritual (life purpose)	Constrained children's home environment	Temenos (sacred space)	Meaning-making	Provides life meaning and purpose

2.10 REFLECTION

The review of literature occurs at a verbal, and cognitive level. However, there are different ways of knowing and understanding something. The literature is informative

and guides the process. Experiencing and encountering the people and SP in the field takes understanding to another level. As with the development of increased awareness in early adolescence, so the novice researcher's awareness is increased, enhanced and expanded as a result of the studies and the literature that preceded this study. Much excitement and anticipation await discovery at a deeper, spiritual and somatic level. It is good and well to have read about something but quite another thing to encounter and experience it, holistically and with all the senses.

An in-depth exploration succeeds the discussion of the research methods and the literature review. As such, Chapters Three, Four and Five proceed with the details of the exploratory investigation and the fieldwork process. The immediate next chapter describes how the research was conducted in terms of design and methodology and how that relates to the research questions in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three provides a detailed discussion of the research methodology. Including the purpose, perspectives, paradigms, research design, strengths and limitations, the role of the researcher, sampling of the case, data generation and the data analysis process. The chapter concludes with a review of the quality criteria and ethical considerations as well as a reflection on the research process.

3.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Early adolescence is a period of significant pubertal and cognitive development resulting in increased consciousness and awareness (Brix et al., 2019; Caskey & Anfara Jr., 2014; Eckert-Lind et al., 2020; Esnaola et al., 2020; Méndez Leal & Silvers, 2021; Pfeifer & Allen, 2021; Scalabrini et al., 2018). It is a vital stage of development since ideas about identity and self begin crystallising. It is also a vulnerable time in the life span as the young adolescent negotiates puberty and begins to interact ever-increasingly beyond family at school and among peers. Access to primal energy sources must remain open to guarantee the development of personality (D. M. Kalff, 1996), and identity formation evokes thoughts about the purpose and meaning of life. Almost a third of the South African population is under the age of 15 years, with KwaZulu-Natal being the second-largest province by population (StatsSA, 2020a). Furthermore, overwhelming poverty could result in neglect and deprivation (Mokitimi et al., 2018). Significantly, more than one in three adolescents in South Africa report experiencing violence (Toska et al., 2019). In addition, as a result of years of stifling inequality and institutional and structural violence, collective trauma is a growing problem in South Africa, and if not acknowledged or processed will lead to more trauma (Solomons, 2021).

The looting and riots in KwaZulu-Natal in July 2021 highlighted the need for accessible and culturally suitable interventions that potentially can reach young vulnerable adolescents in circumstances where parental, educational and psycho-social support is severely limited and in many cases non-existent (Solomons, 2021; Somdyala, 2021;

TimesLIVE, 2021). SP as a non-verbal, non-invasive and culturally suitable technique seems to be a feasible option as it is not dependent on education or spoken language. Furthermore, SP can be conducted in groups thereby reaching more children simultaneously, and interpretation is delayed which suggests that trained volunteers can be involved in facilitating the activity (Leinberger, 2019; Zoja, 2018). SP has the potential to assist in the processing of emotionally draining and uncomfortable collective trauma (Freedle et al., 2021; Olaniyi et al., 2021). To move forward as a country, South Africa's collective trauma must be processed (Solomons, 2021).

The purpose of this study is to explore silent group SP with early adolescents in a resource-poor setting.

3.3 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

Paradigms are comprehensive frameworks that guide the researcher (Sefotho, 2018b). As such the research paradigm contains ontological, epistemological and methodological premises (Bruce, 2020). Acknowledging these and the role of the self of the researcher in the research process is vital (Kowen, 2020; Sefotho, 2018b). This study's research paradigm is interpretivism as it seeks to uncover and interpret the meanings of individuals (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The process of making sense of experience is inevitably interpretative (Frost & Shinebourne, 2011). Interpretivism submits that reality is socially constructed and thereby offers multiple meanings of said reality (Morgan & Sklar, 2012).

3.3.1 Methodological approach

To this end, qualitative research methods are appropriate for exploring individuals' experiences and interactions with their world and the meaning it has for them (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Therefore, a qualitative approach is a suitable methodology to explore SP with early adolescent participants and the childcare staff through semi-structured interviews, thereby ascertaining multiple subjectively constructed realities of the SP activity (Morgan & Sklar, 2012).

The researcher-participant provided and set up the SP room and in so doing endeavoured to create a safe, private space (temenos) within the children's home for the SP activity to take place each week. SP was conducted in silence thereby facilitating presence, the non-intellectual act of being that can be seen as a re-

enactment of the maternal gaze, thereby initiating containment (Hayter, 2021). Silence facilitates focus and concentration on the task at hand, diminishes distraction and allows the researcher to focus on the actions, anecdotes and feelings (intuition) of the process. Silence facilitates the opportunity to experience and understand inner worlds (Hayter, 2021).

Insight from childcare workers through semi-structured interviews enabled a collaborative interaction between the researcher and the adult participants, thereby providing a window into the experience of each childcare worker of the children's behaviour and demeanour before and after the SP sessions. Meeting with the childcare workers also provided access to body language, expressions and reactions to questions, emotions, etc. In addition, listening carefully to recordings and drafting transcriptions verbatim facilitated in-depth exploration. The in-depth exploration of the SP sessions involved taking notes of the process of sand image creation including distinct actions and chosen miniatures, as well as documenting photographs of each completed sand tray after every session. The value of exploratory inquiry whereby knowledge and meaning are associated with interpretation as opposed to objective truth fits with interpretivism and phenomenology (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Van Manen, 2016).

3.3.2 Research design

The research design is phenomenology which describes the meaning of a lived experience of a phenomenon for several individuals (Hall et al., 2016). In this respect, the researcher is concerned with the uncovering of the essence of phenomena and participants' subjective, emotional experiences and interrelatedness with the world (Merriam & Grenier, 2019), focusing on the appearance of things, being interested in wholeness, and examining a phenomenon from all perspectives.

This requires immersion in the research process, as it presents itself to the other, the participant (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Moustakas, 2011). A phenomenological study begins with a description of another person's experience, and the most crucial aspect of comprehending a human phenomenon is description (Kowen, 2020).

Phenomenology strives to grasp a singular aspect of a phenomenon and is committed to complete descriptions of experiences, for accentuation and illumination (Van Manen, 2016). To this end, intuitive, empathic sensing and unfolding of shared

meanings are underlying principles (Bongaardt et al., 2019; Wilson, 2015). In addition, phenomenology assumes that the self sees what is present and to this end, the suspension and bracketing of preconceptions is fundamental (Moustakas, 2011; Wilson, 2015). The researcher consciously tried to disengage from previous theories about SP to focus on the topic openly, from a fresh perspective, and to allow essences to unfold as they were consciously experienced (Frost & Shinebourne, 2011; Moustakas, 2011). Although the extent to which a person can step aside from immersion in the process is questionable (Wilson, 2015).

Phenomenology seeks enhanced understanding, uncovering deeper aspects, attending to mood, sensations and emotions, and empowers understanding of others by allowing vicarious lived experience (Wilson, 2015). Finally, phenomenological research requires surrendering to a state of wonder and therefore is a suitable lens for the researcher's intrigue with SP, sometimes titled, "the wonderful therapy" (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Van Manen, 2016).

Further to this, knowledge is acquired subjectively, context is relevant and meaning is constructed relatively (Sefotho, 2018b). Phenomenology begins with wonder at what and how something reveals itself and is further characterised by a tension between order and disorder, system and openness, passivity and activity, and analysis and imagination inherent in all phenomena (Van Manen, 2016).

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.4.1 Single Case Study

Thoughtful consideration of a suitable research design assists with the structuring of a study and with ensuring credibility (Gitchel & Mpofo, 2012; Yin, 2015). Research design links data generated, and conclusions drawn, to the initial research questions of the study, thereby providing a framework and plan that facilitates the research process (Yin, 2018). An SCS is deemed appropriate for this study. The case in question was selected purposefully to include a phenomenon in its natural environment. The experience of any individual that qualifies to have the experience is considered a case in point and the experience is assumed to be universal (Schreier, 2018). Furthermore, this design was chosen as it corresponds to an intensive, holistic description and analysis of an institution, person, process or social unit (Eddles-Hirsch,

2015; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The study documents and describes a process that acknowledges the researcher's involvement within a real-life context over a period of time (Morgan & Sklar, 2012; Theron & Malindi, 2012).

An advantage of case studies is that they facilitate an in-depth understanding of the case in its natural setting, whilst acknowledging its complexity and context (Seabi, 2012). Case studies are employed when looking to answer "how" and "why" questions and that corresponds with the research questions underpinning this study (Yin, 2015). The case in question was engaged in exploring SP as an activity with early adolescent participants at a fifteen-year-old Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) established in 2007. The NPO is concerned with the children's welfare and is situated in a resource-poor rural environment. The researcher was interested in acquiring extensive and in-depth descriptions of the SP activity as well as observations of the children's behaviour and demeanour before and after participating in SP, from the childcare workers (Silverman, 2017; Yin, 2018).

3.4.2 Strengths and challenges of a single case study

The strength of a case study is that it allows the researcher to focus in-depth on a case and retain a holistic and real-world perspective (Yin, 2018), thereby allowing detailed focus on the SP activity and completed sand trays as well as gaining insight from a real-world point of view from childcare workers and staff who interact with the children daily. A limitation to take into account is the particularistic nature of the study which may be a challenge for generalisability; however, transferability could be attainable and will be sought (Yin, 2015). Providing rich, thick descriptions that are enough information for readers to determine how closely there is a match with their situations is essential for ensuring transferability (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Validity or credibility is a strength as the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis and interpretations of reality are accessed directly through observations and interviews (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). In terms of challenges, it is noted that an in-depth study, interested in the subjective experiences of the participants, is time-consuming, all-consuming and labour intensive. This was taken into account especially for obtaining and processing information. The employment of delineated data collection strategies, adherence to focus and ensuring accurate descriptions of observed actions and choices was instrumental in determining the credibility of the study (Gitchel & Mpofo, 2012; Mouton, 2001; Yin, 2015).

3.4.3 Unit of analysis

Specifying the unit of analysis is important as it is the reason for which data is being collected (Yin, 2018). The unit in this study is five early adolescent participants aged nine to 14 years placed in a children's home project that is situated in a resource-poor community, in rural KwaZulu-Natal. Collectively the children have suffered neglect, deprivation and trauma.

3.4.4 Reflection on the role of the researcher

The researcher must be reflective and aware of their role and the context in which the study is being conducted (Silverman, 2017; Theron & Malindi, 2012). The researcher's interest in SP and the children's home located relatively close to where the researcher lives are significant. More than twenty years ago the researcher worked in the field of youth development and education. Since then the researcher has pondered the lingering question of how to address sustainable, effective development of young people in South Africa given the country's lack of resources. Subsequently, a developing passion for SP that is not dependent on language and is universal has emerged as a possible way of supporting and facilitating personal development. The researcher's collection of miniatures and sand trays was collected over several years (added specifically for the SP study to ensure sufficient miniatures for group SP). In addition was the provision and creation of the SP room as well as immersing herself as a witness to the SP process of the group of children. All these factors are acknowledged and included herein as they contribute to the study. The SP room is a converted container situated on the property of the children's home. It used to be the computer laboratory, the latter now being outdated and non-functional. It was time-consuming and labour intensive to set up the SP room and establish it as a sacred space at the research site. However, this proved to be essential and fortuitous and enabled additional containment, a temenos, for the SP study. Initially, the concern was to preserve the space to ensure all miniatures and the display thereof were the same or similar each time the participants entered the SP room. The other children not involved in the SP activity were curious and eager and determined to try and enter the room to join in the SP activity. Keeping focused on the study participants was essential and not always easy as there were constant requests by children and staff for the SP activity to be extended to the other children and also to the childcare workers. The

researcher repeatedly reminded herself of her specific research role and to remain focused on the task at hand.

At first, it felt conspicuous, the white, resourced lady arriving in her bakkie³ with countless boxes of miniatures, very heavy sand trays, and restricting access to the room. However, with each visit involvement and the feeling of belonging was established and the SP room soon became a normal part of the children's home environment. Bringing figurines and small objects and the sand trays to a place that had never heard of let alone encountered SP requires mention. This new activity also translates into the provision of external resources to a resource-poor context and invites the participants to access their inner resources.

3.4.5 Selection of the participants and sampling procedures

Data were generated from non-probability, homogenous, purposive sampling where a specific purpose is distinguished, in this case, SP with the early adolescent age group, nine to 14 years from a resource-poor context, in particular a children's home project (Silverman, 2017). Five children were selected and their SP data (a nine-year-old girl, 11-year-old boy and older girls aged 12, 13 and 14) was generated. The only age not represented is 10. In addition, data included the interview data of five childcare worker participants as well as the general manager/principal, the chairperson, educational psychologist and cook. Therefore, nine adult participant interviewees, the majority being childcare workers and the others for their insight and perspective of being involved with the children less directly but regularly, and also indirectly through working closely with the childcare workers. The NPO is fifteen years old, which is incidentally the same age as the oldest sand player participant.

In addition, three adult participants had worked at the organisation for three and four years, two for six years and four for seven to eleven years. Added to this, some of the participants had worked with vulnerable children before joining the children's home project. The participants were all experienced and knowledgeable in the field of childcare. No biographical or case information was provided on any of the children before the SP commenced. The only information provided was the ages of the children.

³ A bakkie is the South African name for a light truck or pickup truck.

3.4.5.1 The research context

The research context is significant and in this study is an NPO that provides temporary accommodation and care for vulnerable children placed at the shelter by the courts (Theron & Malindi, 2012). As such, the children's home works closely with the Department of Social Development and is located on a smallholding on the outskirts of a rural community in KwaZulu-Natal. The children at the home are aged four to 18 and the maximum number of children living there at any time is 30. At the time of the study, 21 children were living at the home. Collectively the children have experienced trauma.

3.4.5.2 Participants

Initially, convenience sampling took place as the children at the research site are appropriate ages for the study and the home was very interested and available to be a part of the research study (Schreier, 2018). The main selection method was a homogenous purposive selection of the early adolescent children aged nine to 14 years. The researcher was seeking instances that could provide information-rich data to answer the research question, specifically about early adolescent participants (Schreier, 2018). Thus five participants aged nine to 14 years were selected to take part from the population of 21 children at the home.

The final process of selecting the children was left to the children's home social worker, educational psychologist and general manager, with the researcher having indicated that the limits were five sand trays and any children could participate providing they were in the age range of the study, i.e., nine to 14 years.

The researcher had to be clear about participation as there were many discussions during the early meetings held with the organisation about which children would benefit most and which would unlikely participate well (as they were not capable cognitively). The researcher was able to indicate that neither cognitive ability nor education level or language is relevant as suitability for SP. Only five children to five sand trays limit worked well as the container/SP room would not have fitted in another tray, due to insufficient space. Initially, it was perfect as there were only five children aged nine to 14 years at the home, however another child, aged 12, was admitted just before the study was due to begin which meant that the staff had to think carefully about who to exclude from the study. Being mindful of not wanting children to feel unnecessarily

excluded the researcher suggested that the oldest child (one who would turn fifteen during the study period) be excluded, which was an objective reason for the exclusion.

At the outset, it was intended that the childcare workers and the chairperson and the general manager would be interviewed. However, after being interviewed, the general manager asked if all the staff could be interviewed as he felt it would be beneficial for them to experience the interview. The researcher felt torn, wanting to involve everyone but also being concerned about time constraints, especially as the gardener would have required interpretation to isiZulu which had not been requested in the ethics application. It was agreed that the cook would be included as she speaks English whereas the gardener and cleaner do not speak English. As more time was spent at the research site it was realised that the educational psychologist, who is at the organisation twice a week working with the children individually, would be able to offer unique insight into the behaviour of the children. She was approached and agreed to be interviewed. The sampling of adult interviewee participants and child sand player participants was to ensure that as much as possible relevant information was acquired until saturation was reached (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). All the adult participants completed informed consent forms (Appendix B). Interviewing nine adults is time-consuming but necessary as the organisation works on a shift system, and wider interviewing offers the opportunity for more descriptive and richer insights which assists the researcher to understand the participants' social reality and saturates data (Seabi, 2012).

3.4.6 Data generation and documentation

A range of data methods and sources were employed to answer the research questions and to support converging evidence.

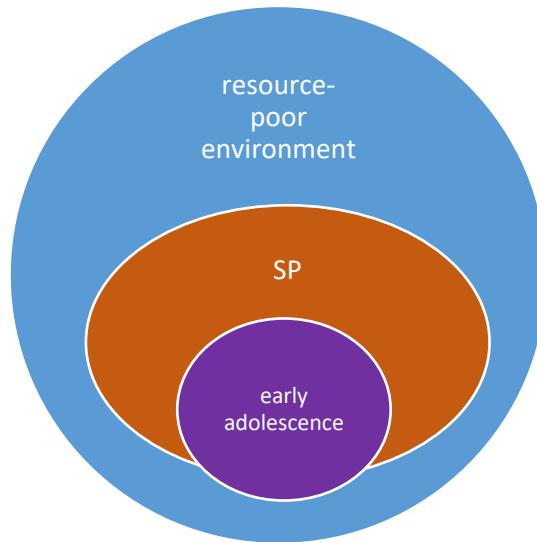
3.4.6.1 Research questions

The primary research question was:

How do early adolescents from a resource-poor environment respond to SP as an intervention? Figure 1a illustrates the three aspects of the primary research question namely early adolescence, SP and a resource-poor setting.

Figure 1a

Primary Research Question



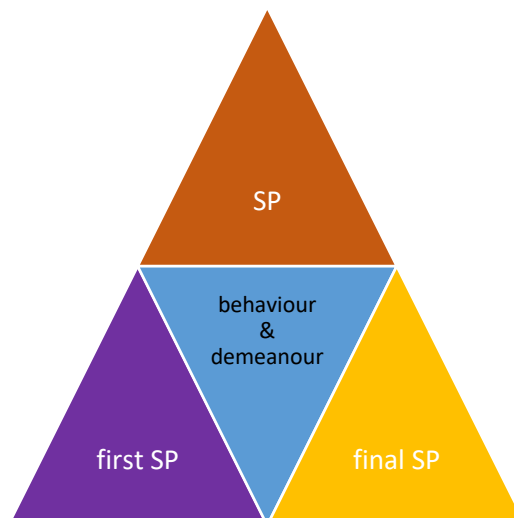
The secondary research questions were:

- What does a comparison of each early adolescent participant's first and final SP show?
- What is observed in the behaviour and demeanour of early adolescent participants?

Figure 1b highlights that the first and final SP and the observations of behaviour and demeanour are key components of the secondary research questions.

Figure 1b

Secondary Research Questions



Field notes from observation of SP sessions, photographs of completed sand trays, observations and descriptions of sand trays, semi-structured interviews with adult participants and researcher reflections were the primary data generation methods. The SP sessions were conducted in silence to limit distractions and facilitate each participant's SP process within the group session. Silence significantly fosters relaxation and provides a space for the self to emerge spontaneously (Chiaia, 2020; Pfeifer et al., 2020). Detailed attention will be focused on the first and the final SP in data analysis.

3.4.6.2 Semi-structured interviews

Data were generated by conducting two semi-structured interviews with each of the nine adult participants. Semi-structured interviews are flexible, begin with a defining question plan and use a more conversational style of interview (Seabi, 2012; Silverman, 2017; Yin, 2018). Opening questions were the same for each participant and were asked to encourage descriptions of perceptions of the children's experiences (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015).

The first interviews took place before the SP commenced and the second interviews took place after all six SP sessions had been completed. The two interviews with each of the nine adult childcare workers and staff were audio recorded on the researcher's device and transcribed verbatim with assistance from Otter.ai. The majority of the interviews took place at the children's home in the privacy of the childcare worker manager's cottage which is tucked away from the hub of life at the research site. The chairperson's first interview was conducted online with Zoom, as she was located outside of the country at the time. Two interview protocols (Appendix A) were designed and these guided the first (before SP) and the second (after SP) interviews (click on the link for [Appendix A](#)). In addition, the first interview was pre-tested with a volunteer childcare worker known to the researcher and this provided helpful insight in terms of the timing of the interviews and the interview process (Silverman, 2017). The pre-planned questions were mostly adhered to for each participant and the researcher tried to put the participants at ease and to track and respond to the participants in a non-threatening, engaged and conversant manner (Seabi, 2012; Silverman, 2017). Verbatim transcriptions were generated from audio-recorded interviews with the help of Otter.ai. The researcher kept a journal in which reflections, ideas and thoughts were

recorded during fieldwork. In addition, related audio recordings and transcriptions from reflections during the study period were added to the journal. The researcher was motivated to pay careful attention in the field and to show appreciation and respect to the organisation that had welcomed involvement in the study.

Reflecting on power dynamics is particularly relevant in South African studies where the researcher and most of the participants inhabit different socio-economic contexts as well as racial classifications imbued with historical dynamics of power and marginalisation (Bruce, 2020; Sefotho, 2018a). These dynamics play a role in the research and interview process. Furthermore, intersections of race and gender also need to take into account the multiple grounds of identity that warrant consideration when trying to understand how people construct their social world (Sefotho, 2018b). To mitigate the risk, interviews were approached with awareness of the power and intersectionality dynamics. Added to this, the researcher listened, observed and showed appreciation to the participants to assist with building rapport and creating a comfortable atmosphere for authentic engagement (Theron & Malindi, 2012).

3.4.6.3 Generation of Sandplay data

The SP data were generated from SP sessions conducted once a week for six consecutive weeks. Before the commencement of the SP several meetings took place with the general manager, social worker and educational psychologist as well as video calls with the chairperson. During these meetings, discussions were held about how and when and where the SP sessions would take place.

3.4.6.3.1 Starting Sandplay

D. M. Kalff (1996) felt strongly that treatment or intervention should not be separated from the environment, however she also emphasised the importance of a free and protected space. Conversely, Ryce-Menuhin (2015) advocates that a special room separate from the verbal analytic space should be created for SP.

3.4.6.3.2 Setting up Sandplay as a new activity

For SP to occur the researcher had to set up an SP venue from scratch. Initially, it was thought that the SP could take place outdoors, especially in the light of the Covid-19 third wave, however this was not a practical solution as a result of unpredictable weather and the onerous logistics of trying to transport five sand trays and a

comprehensive library of miniatures to each session. The children's home has limited space and consists of only a few buildings that house the children's dormitories (one for the boys and the other for the girls), a kitchen and dining area, the manager's office and the childcare worker manager's cottage. The bathrooms, social worker's office, computer laboratory and marimba rooms are set up in converted containers. Apart from the challenge of finding a space in which to conduct the SP sessions, the question of where to keep the sand trays and the miniature collection had to be solved. Fortunately, the old computer laboratory was available and suitable to accommodate the five sand trays, five participants, the miniature collection and the researcher.

3.4.6.3.3 The creation of a sacred space for Sandplay

Bearing in mind SP best practices, the children's deprivation backgrounds and the volatile weather, the researcher sought to establish a safe, private and sacred space within the children's home environment for the SP activity. The general manager understood the concept of sacred space/*temenos* and gave the only key for the SP room to the researcher. It seemed fitting that within the protection being offered to the children by the home, the organisation where they reside, they would also benefit from the additional *temenos* of SP whereby the individual's creative process or inner/magic circle is further encapsulated by the sacred ground of the sand tray (Weinrib, 2004). The containment provided by the newly created SP room offers an additional *temenos*. Hereby the space is protected for both personal containment and a sense of privacy, referring to both the physical space and the relational aspect (Phillips, 2017).

One of the primary functions of creating a *temenos* is to create a sense of emotional safety where deeper and more vulnerable layers of human experience can be revealed while being securely contained. The children at the research site are there because of deprivation and trauma and therefore the importance of safety and protection is fundamental. The children's home offers protection and safety to the children, however it was felt by the researcher that within the commune the SP venue had to be a sacred space just as the sand tray is sacred. The children do not experience privacy at the home. They are monitored, supervised and constantly in the company of each other, therefore the provision of some privacy and personal space is essential (Gwandure, 2010). The childcare workers are tasked with the job of protecting the children, keeping a close eye on them and seeing to their basic needs. A *temenos* within a *temenos* and

the creation of a safe, sacred space at the children's home is more than a rational act of design, it is about intentionality, to provide a space for transformation (Phillips, 2017; Di Rezze, 2020). Providing the children participants with privacy and the opportunity to work freely and safely on their own is fundamental.

3.4.6.3.4 The Sandplay room and miniatures

Several trips were made to set up the SP room. The room was cleared of the old computers (some remained in the room and were stored underneath the countertops) and the five sand trays were placed on top of the counters spaced about 60 cm between each tray. The sand tray dimensions are 50 x 72 x 7.5 cm and they provide boundaries that offer an ordering and protection for the sand player, to freely express their imagination (D. M. Kalff, 1983). Two trays were placed on the left side of the room and three on the right side. The rest of the counter space was used to make a display of the miniatures. The floor was also used for miniature displays as there was no shelving in the room. Unfortunately, there was not enough display room to display all items clearly (the domestic animals and wild animals, as well as other categories of miniatures, were contained in open boxes as there was insufficient countertop and floor space for displaying all the miniatures). The researcher worked hard to provide a comprehensive library of miniatures to try and get closer to Dora Kalff's collection as depicted in photographs on pages 13 and 14 in her book, *Sandplay* (D. M. Kalff, 1996). Appendix C is a series of photographs of the SP room and miniature collection before the commencement of the first SP.

A collection of miniatures should offer a broad range of miniatures and be of good quality to appeal to and stimulate the sand player (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004). The SP collection contains symbolic representations of the world including the following broad categories: construction, housing, fences, wild and domestic animals, people, objects associated with religion, natural world objects, food, fantasy items, treasures, zombies, modes of transport, etc. The importance of symbols in SP cannot be overemphasised. Symbols are the best possible expression of something unknown that cannot be made fully conscious and are a powerful stimulus to consciousness (Leahy, 2018; Weinrib, 2004). As symbols are imbued with real life they hold a dynamic force of conceptual and emotional values (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). (See an inventory of the SP miniature collection in Appendix D.)

3.4.6.4 Observation and visual documentation of the Sandplay sessions

3.4.6.4.1 Setting the scene for the new Sandplay activity

Before the children entered the room for their first SP session, the new activity was briefly explained to them. Since the SP in this study is non-directed, the researcher gave very few instructions. None of the children had heard about SP until the researcher met with them to obtain their informed assent. They were naturally curious and uncertain about what was expected of them. The guidelines for SP were given minutes before they walked into the SP room (which they had not yet seen). They were told that they would see five sandboxes and some miniatures or little toys/objects that they could use to create a sand world for themselves in their tray. To this end, each child was given a coloured shape and told to find the sand tray that was labelled with the same shape they had been given and that would be their sand tray for the duration of the SP study. The shapes were given randomly and included a blue triangle, yellow circle, green rectangle, orange diamond and red square. The children were told that they should work in silence and use only their trays. In addition, they were told that they may move the sand and use a little water (provided in three containers).

It was conveyed that since the activity was a group activity it was important to respect each person's opportunity to work freely in their sand tray. The SP session would be no longer than an hour but they had permission to leave when their trays were completed.

3.4.6.4.2 Observation of Sandplay sessions

Through careful attention and observation, using multiple senses, the researcher became a silent witness to the SP sessions (Creswell, 2019; Oosthuizen, 2017), bearing in mind that not everything can be observed and absorbed and that reflexivity and context must be taken into consideration (Wästerfors, 2018). This was a useful reminder as there were times when there was much going on and it was overwhelming and tricky to know which thread to follow. The researcher must be able to assimilate the feeling and atmosphere of the process and have a deep, personal encounter with the SP (Weinrib, 2004). Added to this, as a witness of the SP, the researcher is aware of the emotions of the sand players as well as her own (Zoja, 2018), therefore allowing herself to be attuned to the SP session. Furthermore, being guided by research

literature to remember to capture what stands out, look for sequences or the unfolding of activated contexts and to gauge the atmosphere (Wästerfors, 2018).

The researcher made notes on her device during the SP sessions and at the end of each session; voice notes were recorded of what was observed in the completed sand trays. Often whilst dismantling the trays noticeable actions are uncovered, like treasure contained inside the closed treasure chest that would not be picked up from photographs. Every action is potentially significant, especially those that stand out or are noticeable (Van Manen, 2016). Journaling before and after SP sessions is another source of data from SP. Intuitive observation of the atmosphere is significant in a study that is concerned with the process of SP (Sefotho, 2018a; Van Manen, 2016; Zoja, 2018). To this end, acknowledging that the process of being within something, ourselves, within others and correlating these outer and inner experiences and meanings is infinite, endless and eternal (Moustakas, 2011).

3.4.6.4.3 Photographs of completed sand trays

In addition to observation of the SP sessions, photographs of each participant's completed sand tray were taken at the end of every session. Photographs are a record of psychic material that is held for symbolic and dynamic interpretation and are an accurate depiction of more than and different to a thousand words (Eberle, 2018; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). In this study, photographs are primary and field notes complement photographs as visual images communicate more vividly and concretely spatial arrangements than language (Eberle, 2018). Photographs operate as a memory device and are an accurate reminder of what happened (Eberle, 2018). However, images do not tell a story by themselves, they must be interpreted, and in this study, the researcher's interpretation is supported by the literature and reflexivity which is the self-organising character of all interaction so that any action provides for its context (Silverman, 2017). The researcher's interpretation of the visual images of the SP is supported by consultations with a Jungian analyst, the photographs of completed sand images and the researcher's experience of the SP study.

3.4.6.4.4 Sandplay data generation protocol

The researcher adopted a protocol for generating SP data from the six SP sessions as follows:

1. Entry into the SP room after a very brief reminder about the SP guidelines and only once everyone had arrived.
2. Observation notes of SP, using the researcher's device.
3. The children participants left the SP room of their own accord when they were finished.
4. A description of each completed sand image using voice note recordings.
5. Dismantling of sand trays and setting up the display for the next SP.
6. Whilst dismantling sand trays further observations occurred that elicited additional voice recordings.
7. All voice notes were transcribed and processed by Otter.ai and the researcher's editing to enhance the accuracy and thoroughness of descriptions.
8. Journaling before and after SP sessions.
9. Descriptions of each participant's sand tray photograph from each SP session. These descriptions were recorded using voice notes and were later transcribed with the assistance of Otter.ai.
10. Journal reflections, as well as voice, recorded reflections and transcriptions throughout the research period.

3.4.6.4.5 Methodological model for group Sandplay as a new activity

The earlier discussion reflects on the process of setting up and creating an SP room in an organisation that had never before experienced SP. A summary of the methodological model used for initiating and proceeding with SP as a new activity in a children's home environment is listed:

1. Adult participants were interviewed to provide insight into the organisation's daily routines, roles of staff and a baseline of the children's demeanour and behaviour before SP commenced. This was also an opportunity for interviewees to ask questions about the activity.
2. This was followed by the creation of a temenos room in which the SP sessions would take place.
3. A part of the different layers of a temenos was the researcher's request that six consecutive weeks be set aside for SP, on Tuesday afternoons.

4. Nobody entered the SP room other than the researcher and the five children participants.
5. The SP room was purposefully preserved as a sacred space for the children participants and the witness (researcher).
6. An appealing and broad range of miniatures, sufficient for the group, was provided.
7. Five sand trays purposefully labelled for each child were positioned for the duration of the six sessions.
8. After the six SP sessions, the researcher interviewed all the adult participants to ascertain their observations of the children's response to the SP activity. The adult participants had not seen the SP room and neither had they witnessed SP.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

Data analysis is about making sense of text and images to form answers to the research questions (Creswell, 2019). In this study, the essence of the experience was explored and a phenomenological approach was used whereby the researcher attempted to understand what the world is like from the point of view of the participants (Frost & Shinebourne, 2011; Morgan & Sklar, 2012; Seabi, 2012). The process of making sense of experience is inevitably interpretative and complicated by the researcher's conceptions (Frost & Shinebourne, 2011). Once data were generated it was immediately prepared for analysis by systematically labelling, organising and filing photographs, field notes, and transcribing audio recordings of interview responses, observations and reflections, etc. Through the organising process, the researcher immediately started gaining a general sense of the material. Listening to recordings and preparing transcripts and descriptions of SP helped the researcher become more familiar with perceptions and individual experiences (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). Organising the descriptions and themes of the SP study was the next step. The data generation and analysis processes were experienced as iterative and simultaneous and did not occur in a linear, step by step way (Creswell, 2019; Frost & Shinebourne, 2011). The more the researcher engaged and became familiar with the data the more awareness and understanding unfolded. Data were simultaneously generated and analysed, and

the researcher constantly cycled back and forth between data generation (descriptions of completed sand trays), observation, interpretation and analysis (Creswell, 2019; Silverman, 2017; Yin, 2018).

Data were ordered, processed and analysed as follows:

- Each interview with every adult participant was meticulously filed as a voice note, transcribed verbatim with the assistance of Otter.ai and then filed as a transcription. Each completed sand tray of every participant at every session was attributed to the participant and filed accordingly together with the voice notes/recordings of observations (during each SP session and immediately after each SP session). Thereafter the researcher described each SP tray of each participant for each of the six SP sessions. These recordings were also transcribed and attributed.
- Observation notes were produced as voice notes from observations during SP, after SP and while dismantling sand trays and returning the SP room to its ready state for the next SP session. The room was locked and only opened the following week when the researcher returned for the next session.
- Reflection notes were mostly recorded in a journal. However, reflections were also voice recorded using VoiceMemos, when the researcher was struck by something and her journal was not accessible. Attention to researcher reflexivity is important throughout the analysis process (Miller et al., 2018).
- Photographs were generated by using the researcher's iPad and occasionally a digital camera.
- Analysis was initiated by referring to the protocol questions from the interviews and by playing with the data (Yin, 2018).
- Interviews and sand play descriptions and observations were read and re-read, and pertinent and repetitive themes were highlighted and noted (Miller et al., 2018). Tables and matrices were produced to further organise data and to ascertain patterns, insights or promising concepts. From this patterns and themes emerged (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).
- Searching for connections across themes, abstracting and integrating patterns and themes and using metaphors to make interpretations to deeper levels (Miller et al., 2018).

3.6 QUALITY CRITERIA AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Various strategies were employed to enhance the trustworthiness of the study, including *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability*.

Credibility is the extent to which research has been based on evidence (Silverman, 2017). To strengthen *credibility*, triangulation or corroboration of the data collected was employed by comparing the adult childcare workers' interview data with the data generated from the six-week SP process as well as with the literature (Creswell, 2019; Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

Dependability (reliability) is a challenge in research as human behaviour is dynamic. However, through consistent, thorough application of the research process and by triangulating the multiple data generating sources of observation notes, the researcher's journal and other reflections, interview transcripts and careful analysis of photographs of sand trays, as well as descriptions of photographs, this was pursued so that the study can be repeated (Creswell, 2019).

Confirmability (bias) is addressed by admitting biases and assumptions and acknowledging limitations in the study's methods (Creswell, 2019). This can be further achieved by ensuring a logical, traceable and documented process that includes transparency and makes provision for an audit of the methods, procedures and decisions carried out in the study (Creswell, 2019). Further to this, the researcher discussed her observations and the photographs of completed sand trays with an external Jungian analyst. Added to this, the researcher's stance is declared in terms of paradigmatic perspectives and most importantly, the research process of this study is academically supervised and reviewed (Di Fabio & Maree, 2012).

A limitation of purposive sampling is *transferability* (Oosthuizen, 2017). *Transferability* (external validity) refers to the concept of replicability, whether or not the study can be applied to another context or case. This is attained by providing vivid and detailed descriptions of procedures and writing findings supported with quotes (Creswell, 2019).

Another way of ensuring *confirmability* is by taking data and tentative interpretations to academic and Jungian supervisors to check plausibility (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Silverman, 2017; Yin, 2018). The researcher's subjectivity is checked through a commitment to the process of reflection (the self-organising character of all interactions so that any action provides for its context) (Silverman, 2017).

In addition, the researcher's engagement in the study is of long duration, from the initial contact with the organisation at the end of 2020 until after interviews have been conducted and the dissertation is submitted. Such extended submersion in the fieldwork process is to ensure saturation is reached (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical approval and permission to conduct the study were granted by the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Education's Research Committee, reference EDU058/21. Following the research proposal submitted to this committee, the ethical principles of autonomy and respect for the dignity of participants, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice guided the processes of data collection, analysis and the reporting of findings (Elias & Theron, 2012).

Before commencing the study, informed consent was obtained from the adult participants and informed assent from the children participants. During these meetings, the aims and purpose of the study were discussed and voluntary participation was emphasised. The principle of confidentiality was also discussed and participants were offered copies of the information and were informed that electronic copies of the information were also available from the general manager and chairperson of the organisation. Participants were not coerced and neither did they receive any incentives to participate. The anonymity of participants and their right to confidentiality has been protected. Participants' real names have been substituted with pseudonyms and additional identifying data has been minimised.

All data is secured on the researcher's devices and laptop which are not accessible to anyone else.

Recordings and transcripts will be stored for 15 years in a locked cabinet at the University of Pretoria so that if queries call for scrutiny of the original data recordings

and/or transcripts, these can be made available. Further to this, the researcher ensured that data were only utilised for its intended purpose.

Low-resourced environments tend to correlate with social marginalisation and this is the experience of the children and the adult staff who work and live at the research site and in the surroundings of the local community (Elias & Theron, 2012). As such, this study was conducted with awareness of the politics of consent, how power dynamics are constructed and sustained, and in support of socially marginalised people speaking their accounts and being heard (Bruce, 2020). Interactions were respectful and endeavoured to promote dignity, voice and agency, and active involvement in the unique world of providing care and protection for children that have been neglected and abused. The study has been conducted with the best interest of the participants in mind, both the children participants and the adult participants.

To ensure that participants were protected from psychological harm the researcher arranged with the organisation's social worker and educational psychologist that they would be available if SP evoked any emotional distress or discomfort. Both social worker and educational psychologist were on-site whilst the SP was being conducted. No one apart from the researcher was involved in the SP process and this was by design to ensure that the SP was contained and provided by a person "outside" of the temporary home of the children.

It was evident from the interviews that the carers of children who have been deprived, neglected and traumatised are themselves profoundly affected and that the role of the carer is extremely demanding and difficult (Omidire et al., 2015). The researcher flagged this from the first interviews as something to discuss with the chairperson before withdrawing from the research site.

Participants were treated with fairness and equity and they were not wronged by any deceptive practices nor placed at risk of harm or exploitation. SP is known to generally be of benefit to participants with the positive effect also extending to the child's environment (Zoja, 2018). Finally, the researcher endeavoured to conduct the study objectively, rigorously and systematically and was open to contrary evidence and to avoid bias (Yin, 2018). Participants were selected appropriately with the research questions in mind.

3.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the various aspects of planning and conducting the study were described. The chapter commenced with a discussion about paradigmatic perspectives that guided and motivated the study. Qualitative research methodology has been described regarding design, context, data generation methods and the process of data analysis and interpretation. In addition, the creation of an SP room for the study was discussed in detail and a methodological model provides a synopsis of how the study was conducted. Data were generated through observation, photographs, audio recordings, transcriptions and documents. Developing patterns and themes reduced the data, and both the manifest and latent contents of photographs were analysed. Issues of validity, reliability and ethics were also addressed.

Introducing and being witness to the children and adult participants' experiences of SP as a new activity in a low-resourced setting is noted and appreciated as a significant occurrence for the researcher. The findings are discussed in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AS PERTAINING TO SANDPLAY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed how the research was planned and implemented and related the research design and methodological processes to the purpose and research questions of the study. Chapter Four and Chapter Five describe the findings and themes that emerged during the study. In Chapter Four descriptions include visual images and details of SP sessions and Chapter Five includes accounts of the before and after interviews with adult participants and extracts of data that support and highlight identified themes. Three main themes emerged and each theme fits with the different sources of data. The before interviews highlighted the theme of wounding and overwhelming needs while the SP accentuated the need for containment and the after interviews depicted healing. As a result, Chapter four focuses on the SP and the theme of the need for containment while Chapter five discusses the other two main themes; wounding and overwhelming needs and healing. The need for containment comes through strongly both in the before interviews with childcare staff and is reinforced by the children in their SP creations.

4.2 THE NEED FOR CONTAINMENT AND EXPRESSION AS DESCRIBED IN SANDPLAY

The main theme, the need for containment and expression as provided by SP, is described herein. Following the SP, six sub-themes correlating with each group SP session were identified and include threats, conflict and chaos, the need for protection and containment, vulnerability revealed, progression and regression, uniquely creative together and containment and movement. The group and individual SP themes are illustrated in Table 4.1. The five early adolescent participants simultaneously experienced six consecutive weekly SP sessions. The sessions were held in a safe, private and protected, temenos (sacred) space, a converted container that became the SP room. Each participants' SP is identified by a shape that corresponds with their sand tray. Each individual's sand scene from each group session is described and reflects a theme thus themes within themes. The six SP sessions of the five

participants and 30 photographs of completed sand trays are described. Themes are discussed and highlighted as they emerged and correlate to the SP sessions. Table 4.1 depicts the group SP themes and Table 4.2 the individual SP themes.

Table 4.1

Group Sandplay Themes

Six sessions	Themes of Group SP
SP 1	Threats, conflict and chaos
SP 2	The need for protection and containment
SP 3	Revealed vulnerability
SP 4	Progression and regression
SP 5	Uniquely creative together
SP 6	Containment and activation of movement

Table 4.2

Individual Sandplay Themes

Sandplayer	SP 1	2	3	4	5	6
Square	A dangerous world	Protection and containment	Minimised danger and vulnerable people	Forward-facing dragonfly	Feminine undulations	Abundance in the foreground
Triangle	A split world	An attack on the right	The prey face the predatorial attack	Three areas develop	Construction of farmlands	Less division and more balance
Oval	Bombs dropped in a rigid world	Division of fantasy and reality	No people are present in the chaos	A re-ordering from the left	Protection by the military	A convoy to the community
Circle	Overwhelming chaos and the need for containment	A messy uncontained war zone	Finding containment	Searching and exploring the limits	A beautiful backdrop	Centring in a peaceful place
Diamond	Isolation and religious rigidity	Identification of different aspects	A beautiful angel	Primal carnage	Differentiation of spirit and domestic	A pilgrimage to integration and wholeness

4.3. SANDPLAY 1: SUB-THEME 1: THREATS, CONFLICT AND CHAOS

The first SP was frenzied and chaotic. Initially, the children were uncertain about what they were allowed to do and when they realised that they could use the space freely as indicated in the briefing they began to load up their baskets to the brim and started working in their respective sand trays.

Threats and the need for protection are noticeable. The perimeter is marked with spikey porcupine quills providing additional fencing inside the outer limits of the tray. Three large snakes are prominent in the tray.

The horizontally placed snakes divide the foreground and the background of the tray. Home is in the background. There is danger in the background and the foreground. A horse is lying prone in the home area and there are three bushes and a tree prone, in the foreground. The tray is full and there is little organisation. The army men and the dangerous wild animals are a threat.

4.3.2 Triangle's first SP

Triangle is the second youngest participant in the group. He is the only boy in the group and is 11 years old. Figure 3 is a photograph of Triangle's first sand scene.

Figure 3

A Split World



The world is split, a divided left and right. A battle of opposing forces is taking place. A boundary line divides two opposing countries (Germany and Japan). The fence is almost perfectly a central division. The left side (Germany) is warmer in colour whereas the right side (Japan) is colder. The "colder" right is heavy and grounded, being reinforced with land vehicles, and the army men are spaced out. The "warmer" left contains more aircraft, the army men are close together. The left side is lighter, the aircraft are more modern and advanced. The left side has the advantage over the right.

4.3.3 Oval's first SP

Oval is the third youngest participant in the group. She is 12 years old. Figure 4 is a photograph of Oval's first sand scene.

Figure 4

Bombs Dropped in a Rigid World



Bombs (by how they were dropped onto the tray) distinguish the left from the right. A home yard area is on the left side of the bombs. A fairy on the back edge of the tray watches over the home area. To the right of the home yard (almost in the centre of the tray) are two graves (side by side). Next to the graves is a circular constellation of an emerging game of soccer made up of army men and working men. Overlooking the graves and soccer game is Buddha enclosed except for a small access opening. Below that is another circular formation comprising Captain Hook, a helicopter, an Indian pointing a gun at Captain Hook, and two cacti. Domestic animals (cows) are enclosed and face dangerous wild animals that are not contained. A big black spider on a spider's web is in the foreground opposite the Buddha in the background. The right side is not as ordered as the left. Bombs are scattered on the right side. There are no bombs in the constellated areas.

4.3.4 Circle's first SP

Circle is the second oldest participant in the group. She is 13 years old. Figure 5 is a photograph of Circle's first sand scene.

Figure 5

Overwhelming Chaos and the Need for Containment



This is an extremely full sand scene, containing lots of representations of food. Chaotic and uncontained with minimal organisation. The centre is demarcated by two beaded necklaces. In the silver area is a small amount of money. Food is everywhere. Different types of bread in the upper right and lower left corners. Butter, milk and cheese in the central area. Two empty alcohol bottles on the right side up against the edge. In the upper right corner are two graves with slices of bread as headstones. Underneath each headstone is a cross. A bird is lying between the graves. Someone is kneeling on one of the graves. In the upper central area, an army man is pointing a gun at a zombie and a black cat. In the lower right corner is an accident, a vehicle lying on its side, and in the upper right area, an army man is lying prone (defeated) at the foot of the two graves.

4.3.5 Diamond's first SP

Diamond is the oldest participant in the group. She is 14 years old. Figure 6 is a photograph of Diamond's first sand scene.

Figure 6

Isolation and Religious Rigidity



Diamond's first sand tray appears desolate and isolated and contains three areas. A no-access, rigid religious area, a no-access sea area, an uncontained area in the foreground where there is a coffin on the left, two adults far apart from each other in the middle and unattended babies to the right. The no-access religious area contains regimented Nativity figures. Two distinct rows resemble church pews. Below the religious area, on the left side, is an embossed coffin (grave) partially exposed and demarcated by poles. There is no access to the sea area, the solid gate is shut and a policeman is on guard.

Figure 7 is a photograph of the five completed sand trays at the end of the first SP session. The session was chaotic and overwhelming, especially in the beginning when the children were choosing miniatures. Once they began to work in their trays they became absorbed in what they were doing and the frenzy subsided.

However, throughout the session, countless trips were made to the display to collect more miniatures.

Figure 7

Completed Sand Trays of SP 1



4.3.6 Reflection on the Sandplay 1

The grabbing and piling up of baskets in the first SP (Figure 7) highlights the extent of the children's deprivation and wounding. A palpable tension in the air about whether they were allowed to truly play and use the miniatures freely. Assurances were given reminding them that they could use any miniature, in any way they chose, in their respective sand trays. The restraint and withholding in the atmosphere were like holding back a horse that is ready to bolt out of the stable. Once the stable door was open they could not get enough objects for their respective sand trays. They kept on returning to the display to look for more objects. Figure 8 is a photograph of a portion of the miniature collection before the SP and Figure 9 shows the depleted miniature collection at the end of SP 1.

Figure 8

A Portion of the Miniature Display before Commencement of SP 1



Figure 9

The Depleted Miniature Display at the End of SP 1



4.4 SANDPLAY 2: SUB-THEME 2: THE NEED FOR PROTECTION AND CONTAINMENT

SP 1 provides an overview of the threats, conflict and chaos while SP 2 is dominated by protective fences, particularly additional fences inside the perimeter of the sand tray limits. Each sand scene has a uniquely constructed fence. The individual SP themes include protection and containment, an attack on the right, division of fantasy and reality, a messy uncontained war zone and the identification of different aspects.

4.4.1 Square's second SP

Figure 10 is a photograph of Square's second sand scene highlighting the need for protection and containment.

Figure 10

Protection and Containment



Square's second sand scene is ordered. Thicker, more prominent fence stumps mark the inside of the tray's perimeter. The left and the right are differentiated. Two distinct areas are within the left. In the upper left area, demarcated by a silver beaded necklace, are six wild animals and a snake biting a Zebra on its rump. Below the wild animal area, in the foreground, is a wishing well, a windmill, a man pointing to a baby and a woman carrying a lamb. An indigenous hut and a military man are in the area. The left side is contained by porcupine quills and flat fence poles. In the centre against the back limit is a mirror. On the right is a big pallet of food items and next to it is a big copper water pitcher. There are also three army men and a green dragon. Early signs of a constellation forming on the right with the army men, dragon, water pitcher and food pallet. There are three references to water in this tray: the copper pitcher (filled with water), the windmill and the wishing well. The need for water is reinforced.

4.4.2 Triangle's second SP

Despite selecting cars from the display they were not used in Triangle's second SP. He completed his tray early, possibly as it was his birthday. In this second sand scene, the left attacks the right. Figure 11 is a photograph of Triangle's second SP scene.

Figure 11

An Attack on the Right



The left is comprised of aircraft ready to take off in the direction of the right. The right side contains watercraft. The same fence line is between the two opposing sides, except this time the left has more space than the right. The right side is retreating. In SP 1, the opposing forces were facing each other. In this scene, the left is advancing on the right. On the left, runways for take-off are marked. The helicopter doesn't need a runway but all five aeroplanes have got runways. The boats on the right side retreat.

4.4.3 Oval's second SP

Figure 12 is a photograph of Oval's second sand scene depicting a divided world loaded with miniatures. The larger right side portrays danger whilst the left is more fantastical and does not contain any threats. This sand scene highlights a division between real and imaginary. Oval had the binoculars around her neck and she kept looking through them. During the making of the tray, it was noticeable that she held small snakes in her hands whereas in SP1 she dramatically shied away from the snakes on display when she walked past them.

Figure 12

Division of Fantasy and Reality



A joined-up fence separates the left fantasy area from the right, realistic area. The left is mostly comprised of animals and nature with only three people figures featured (Rapunzel, a fantasy figure and two fishing boys). It is a place of dreams, it is imaginary. On the left is a treasure and a bell and there is no evidence of danger. The right has many different people and many babies and is more realistic. There is small access at the upper part where a bridge connects the two areas making movement between the two sides possible. On the right, threats include empty alcohol bottles, snakes and two Indians fighting. There are several vehicles on this real-world side. Two aeroplanes are ready to take off from the outer edge towards the left. The movement in this tray is from right to left. In the real world a circular gathering of adults, children, babies and fantasy figures. A game of soccer is taking place within a circle of people where there is no obvious threat. The snakes, warring Indians and alcohol bottles are outside of the circle.

4.4.4 Circle's second SP

Circle's second tray is messy and uncontained and the use of empty containers is noticeable. She was the first to arrive for SP 2 and the last to leave. Baskets were loaded to the brim but she also looked carefully at the objects and miniatures. Studying the treasure chest's lid (opening and closing mechanism) and systematically placing objects. Throwing down money (notes) deliberately.

She worked on her tray quietly and with focus. Her final touch was the pouring out of the firewood into the tray, putting down the basket and declaring "*I am done.*" (Observation notes of SP 2) Figure 13 is a photograph of Circle's second sand scene.

Figure 13

A Messy, Uncontained War Zone



Despite the messiness, there are two sides to the empty scene. The left has within it a large messy, chaotic fenced area resembling a fire. This firewood was poured into the area from the collection basket. The fence is in disrepair. Around the outside of the messy area in the upper left corner are a Shepherd and a Wiseman kneeling head to toe at the feet of baby Jesus. On the lower outside of the messy area is money and below that is a Buddha and a Wiseman both lying prone (defenceless). Three piled up army men and two big military vehicles are to the right of these defenceless figures. On the right is a big grave and an Egyptian goddess is lying prone on top of a demarcated grave. To the right of the grave, in the upper right corner, is an empty

birdcage and two empty containers⁴ that normally contain miniatures when they are bought or transported. An empty alcohol bottle is with the empty containers. The use of empty containers in this tray is noticeable.

4.4.5 Diamond's second SP

Shows restraint, order and five differentiated enclosed areas. During the making of this scene, Diamond whispered to Square about the porcupine quills. It looked as though she was asking Square to leave enough quills for her scene. Diamond spent considerable time placing the quills in her sand tray. She also gestured to Circle about needing picket fence sticks. Figure 14 is a photograph of Diamond's second SP.

Figure 14

Identification of Different Aspects



Five enclosed areas; three on the left and two on the right. The upper left corner enclosure is demarcated by very sharp porcupine quills. This area comprises various zombies and two graves and an enclosure that resembles a short-handled pickaxe. There is no access to this area. Nestled into the corner of the no-access zombie area is an enclosed home yard area where access is from an archway at the right-hand corner. In the home yard area are a rondavel⁵ and two smaller ceramic houses. A girl from Moana, two indigenous people (a woman carrying a baby on her back and a man). The girl is looking away towards the other house area that is in the upper right

⁴ The toob containers are not a part of the display. Circle rummaged and searched in boxes and packets under the counter, found the toob containers and decided to use them in her sand scene.

⁵ A traditional circular African dwelling/house.

corner of the tray. The girl is distanced, alone. In the left corner of the home yard area is a vegetable garden.

In the lower left corner of the tray, below the zombie area is a regimented religious area demarcated by a fence that does not offer access. Wooden crosses have been used to construct this fence. In the centre of this enclosed area is Mary kneeling and facing an angel flanked by two fairies. A Shepherd is doing the same. In the row behind Mary and the Shepherd⁶ are two Wise Men, also kneeling and facing the angel and the fairies. In the far right upper corner is a second replicated home yard area containing a house and two smaller ceramic houses. A vegetable garden, an indigenous man and the girl, Moana. Access to this enclosed area is also in the lower right corner. Below that is another enclosed area with the gate wide open. Inside is a big male lion, with musical instruments piled onto him. Looking at him are a young woman, a young man and an official-looking person and pointing towards the lion is Captain Hook. Duplication of two home yards, one on the left and one on the right. Both of these contain a big house with two little houses, an indigenous young woman, an indigenous man and a woman carrying a baby on her back and food gardens, and both are accessed from the lower right corner.

4.4.6 Reflection on Sandplay 2

Before the start of SP 2, the researcher had to guard, protect and preserve the sanctity of the SP room. Many of the children who are not a part of the study wanted to and tried to enter. Being a visible sentry at the door showed the participants and everyone at the home that the activity occurring inside the SP room was preserved, protected and sacred. The children participants arrived eagerly. They ran to the room and waited outside until everyone was gathered. On instruction, they hastily entered the room. Each one claimed their sand tray and waited for permission to begin. As a group, they were more composed and their attention was focused on playing and creating. SP 1 set the scene and in SP 2 they got down to the serious business of play.

4.5. SANDPLAY 3: SUB-THEME 3: REVEALED VULNERABILITY

In SP 3 fewer fences are required highlighting the vulnerability whilst the dynamic process of expression and exploration shows shifts. In addition, the beauty of

⁶ Mary and the Shepherd are next to each other as in Diamond's SP 1.

authenticity is exposed. Before miniatures were selected and placed there was much preparation, pounding and patting of the sand amidst humming and occasional whispering. The themes of SP 3 are minimised danger and vulnerable people, prey faces a predatorial attack, no people present, finding containment and a beautiful angel. Diamond's SP was noticeable in this session. She completed it quickly and dusted off her hands as she exited the SP room with a flourish.

4.5.1 Square's third SP

Square's third sand scene has a more porous, less serious perimeter fence than the previous two sand scenes. Isolation and vulnerability of the people are exposed with the fence reduced. The danger is still evident but it is less threatening. Much dust was created whilst preparing this third sand scene. The binoculars were used. Square thought about taking a snake from the display and dramatically pulled her hand away. Her SP is messier, highlighted by the bombs that she carelessly threw into her tray. In SP 3 Square and Rectangle declared that they were done and left the SP room together. Square's third sand scene is portrayed in Figure 15.

Figure 15

Minimised Danger and Vulnerable People



A large circular area is in the left upper central area of the tray. The right side of the tray is less constellated. In the left column against the limit of the tray and to the outside of the circular area are an elephant and a leopard facing the constellated area. The circular area is comprised of gemstones, a grandmother, a mother and a girl child. Four army men are mostly around the mother, however they are also rounding up the babies and the women. The left side family members are all female. On the right are eight babies. The babies are alone with some money coins. Money also features on

the left side where a wad of R10 paper notes is placed. The right side is richer and contains R200 notes. The family members on the right (richer side) are all men. A grandfather, a father and a boy child. The men are playing soccer and are freer from the military than the women. The babies are between the males on the right and females on the left. The females and males are separate. On the right side is a big snake, the back of its head is next to the boy child. Above the snake is a ratel military vehicle. In the upper right corner is a set of binoculars guarded by an army man. This area is demarcated. The upper edge of the tray is a military area. The binocular's case is flanked by a military helicopter carrier and a commando carrier land vehicle and the binoculars are protected by an army man.

4.5.2 Triangle's third SP

Triangle's SP 3 shows some shifts in the use of animals and vegetation for the first time. In this scene, the movement is still left to right with the right side being trapped but facing the left (not retreating anymore). See Figure 16 for Triangle's third sand scene.

Figure 16

The Prey Faces the Predatorial Attack



In this scene, the movement is the same but the content is different. There are no vehicles and no army men. The left side (five large predators, wild cats and a younger cub) has gained ground and advanced towards the right. The six predators have advanced towards a protected treed area containing bushes and shrubs, and behind these, right up against the edge of the tray with nowhere to go, are the prey animals; antelope, giraffes, zebra, Kudu and two other buck. They are in danger from predators except for the protection offered by rows of vegetation. In the lower, left far corner facing towards the right is a large owl perched on the edge of the tray. The owl is

watching from the left. The direction of movement is left to the right. The right side faces the left. The more vulnerable right is offered some protection by the trees and bushes and is facing up to the danger, no longer retreating.

4.5.3 Oval's third SP

Oval was the first to arrive for SP 3. While creating SP 3, Oval cooperated with Square and used the same dropping technique with the gemstones as with the bombs in the making of SP 1. There are no people present in this SP scene. It is flooded with miniatures and reflects overwhelmedness. Figure 17 is a photograph of Oval's third SP.

Figure 17

No People are Present in the Chaos



The left side of the tray is wet and cold and dull in colour whilst the right side is bright and warm, on land and in the air. There are three contained areas in the tray. In the upper left area are two enclosures. A third enclosure is in the upper right corner. The two left side enclosures contain water creatures and the right side enclosure contains colourful food. The two crocodiles (reptiles) in the left enclosure are facing mammals, a black bear and a black gorilla. Next to the croc enclosure is a snake, a shark and three fish. An owl and an eagle are in the same area and together with the black mammalian animals, money, a rock and a boat, a circular constellation is emerging. Next to the money are five boats facing towards the back on the left side of the tray. In the middle of the scene are R100 notes held down with a gemstone. Above the money are a home yard area containing a wishing well, two houses and a treasure chest containing coins. The treasure chest is protected by the houses. A pathway

leads from the house, past the money towards another circular area in the foreground with a cactus in the middle, bollards, rocks and objects around the cactus. On the upper right is an enclosed, colourful, nutritious food area. To the left of that is a circular cage and placed around the cage is a cat, Rapunzel, a frog and a koala bear with its baby. Below that area is more money, a hang glider, aeroplane, helicopter and a hot air balloon (aircraft between water and land vehicles). To the right of the aircraft are cars (land vehicles) and three aeroplanes. There are no people present. The warmer right is showing potential.

4.5.4 Circle's third SP

Circle's third sand scene shows signs of hope and containment in an upside-down world. During the making of the scene Circle carefully considered miniatures before placing them. She studiously studied the little bell and rang it a few times before she used it in her tray. Circle tried to fit big wooden objects into a glass container that was too small. She was determined to make the mirror stand upright in the sand. Figure 18 is a photograph of this SP.

Figure 18

Finding Containment



Circle's third sand scene is more organised and structured. More life is evident and this sand scene is more vibrant. There are no graves. The silver and gold necklaces are back, located in the central area. This time there is a fairy godmother and a smaller fairy contained in the silver area; they are both standing. An uncontained fairy is lying (prone) face-up between the gold and silver areas. The gold enclosure is empty, there

is nothing inside it. To the right of the silver area is a fairy lying (prone) face-down. Above the beaded necklaces, in the upper left quadrant is Wonder Woman contained behind bread, meat, an egg, and two shells, one within the other. Underneath that area is an empty upside-down glass and an upside-down bell, a treasure chest⁷ with a key on top of it and an octopus to the left.

Below the beaded central area is a seashell containing a hermit crab. Around the shell and crab is centring. To the right is Moana facing the beaded area and to the right of Moana is a windmill. In the upper right quadrant is a prominent brass urn. A girl carrying eggs in a basket offering them to seashells within seashells, a mirror, and an alcohol bottle, all of which form a circle. A porcupine quill is lying on the sand offering a line to the area in which the two shells containing smaller shells is located. In this scene, there are four shells (two on the right and two on the left) each holding/containing smaller shells and in one case the hermit crab.

4.5.5 Diamond's third SP

The making of Diamond's third sand scene was done very quickly. During the process, she looked at Circle's tray to her left, seemingly for reassurance. Her early departure and absence from the room were noticeable. Diamond's third sand scene shows vulnerability and fragility. In its authenticity, it is beautiful and has a numinous quality. Figure 19 is a photograph of Diamond's third sand scene.

Figure 19

A Beautiful Angel



⁷ Inside the treasure chest is an owl.

Diamond's third sand scene was completed in record time. This scene stands out and evoked emotion for its gentleness and beauty. In the centre of the tray, an angel has been created in the sand. An encapsulating angel, a containing angel.

The wings of the angel (its outline) are seashells in the circular shape of wings, as they come to rest around the feet. In the middle is the angel's heart, where the wings begin. This heart area is particularly special looking and is encapsulated by five crosses. Inside the crosses area are an angel and Mary and they are both at either end facing a beautiful purple flower placed on the sand. Below this area just above the angel's legs/knees is a red butterfly. The red butterfly is noticeable for its colour and its distinct placement. Inside the seashells outline and also in a circular formation is the smaller winged area marked by butterflies. A display of vulnerability and tenderness. It is an authentic, moving tray. The kind of tray that a person does not want to dismantle.

4.5.6 Reflection on Sandplay 3

SP 3 brought about shifts and revealed vulnerability. The scenes created were noticeably different both for use of miniatures (content) and form (shape) for all of the participants. The sand scenes created were beautiful and moving and evoked feelings of openness, vulnerability and realness. Diamond's tray stood out.

I was struck by the beautiful trays that I discovered the children had made.... I was amazed despite only playing for about ten to fifteen minutes her tray was beautiful and it came across as being very special, sacred...so different to the prior trays...reflected natural things...as I was leaving...the children were congregated where my car was parked...one of the boys remarked to his friends and the social worker...this white lady with the beautiful heart is here...he was teenage awkward, I felt uncomfortable. I joked back and said bye-bye beautiful children. (Journal entry 22/09/2021)

4.6. SANDPLAY 4: SUB-THEME 4: PROGRESSION AND REGRESSION

On the day of SP 4, the Chairperson of the children's home arrived to visit. The children had not seen her for 18 months and there was much excitement at the home. In addition, there was a delay in the bus bringing the children from school and SP 4 began later than normal. Nevertheless, once the children entered the room they

In this scene, no perimeter fence or boundary has been erected. The sand is hollowed out and a gentle mound is on the right. Each corner is a mound. In the middle towards the back is a dragonfly. The dragonfly is made with silver and gold beaded necklaces. At the end of the body of the dragonfly is a fairy godmother and in front of her is a small snake followed by a zebra. (The same zebra that was bitten by a snake in SP 2.) The fairy godmother, snake and zebra make up the body of the dragonfly. The left wing of the dragonfly is silver and smaller and inside it is a dinosaur. The right wing is gold and larger and inside it are two crocodiles. Two primitive concepts on the right wing and one prehistoric concept on the left wing. The fairy godmother is the tail of the dragonfly. The snake is part of the body and the head of the dragonfly is the zebra contained inside a circular shape. In front of the dragonfly in the forefront is a family; grandparents and parents, a mother and a father, grandmother, grandfather and a sheep. There is a beaded line in front of the family that they cannot cross. In the background, upper left corner is a small snake and a shark and they are both facing towards the foreground, as is Superman. Everyone is facing forwards except a red motorcar and a red chicken that is facing towards the left side. The colour red is evident in Superman, the chicken, Wonder Woman and the red car. In the lower right corner lying on her side (prone) is Wonder Woman. Her head is facing in the same direction as most other objects in this tray. In this scene, the snakes are smaller and outside of the constellated dragonfly. The prehistoric and primitive creatures are contained within the wings of the dragonfly. This is a numinous sand scene.

4.6.2 Triangle's fourth SP

It was noticeable in SP 4 that Triangle selected different miniatures than before, his body movements being less concise and more languid and more time was being spent with his tray. Shortly after he spent time searching for an object he was done and left the sand room. Triangle's fourth sand scene shows a progression from the split scenes of the previous SPs to a scene displaying three areas; an additional area. Figure 21 is a photograph of Triangle's fourth sand scene.

Figure 21

Three Areas Develop



This fourth SP is comprised of three sections that have developed from the previous split sand scenes. In the left-hand section, lined up against the back boundary are six horses ready to move. The middle section has been fenced and contained in this area are six sheep. Most of the sheep are facing towards the left area and one is looking towards the right. Six horses, six sheep. The right-hand area contains many trees and bushes and no animals, except a frog. The frog is red and sitting facing left towards the sheep and horses.

4.6.3 Oval's fourth SP

In this play, wild animals were selected and Oval was involved in a grabbing frenzy for the mirror which Circle managed to get. Once everyone had selected their miniatures they settled down and concentrated on their sand creations. Oval looked at Diamond's tray and was shooed away. She carefully set about constructing fences and was absorbed in her work. She was the last person to complete her tray. Oval's fourth sand scene is ordered, colourful and vibrant and shows progression. It is less rigid than previous scenes and acknowledges more aspects. Figure 22 is a photograph of her fourth SP.

Figure 22

A Re-Ordering from the Left



SP 4 is organised and methodically constructed. Every area is fenced and there are nine contained areas. The upper background area is divided from the lower foreground area by a row of cars. In the upper, left corner is a home yard area with two houses with a chicken on top of each house as well as some dogs and flowers. It is noticeable that the fenced areas do not have any gates or access openings. The middle upper enclosure contains a rhino, an elephant, a camel, an ox and a donkey facing forwards. The enclosure to the right, in the upper right corner, contains a lioness with a cub and a second young cub facing forwards, and at the far right in the same enclosure is a male lion facing backwards in the opposite direction. The male lion is alone and facing a different direction. Separating the upper three enclosures from the lower four is a row of cars. The cars are journeying towards the right. The six cars are separated by a windmill with three cars on either side. In front of the convoy are a motorbike, a tractor and a deer all heading right. The lower foreground area contains four enclosures. The right corner contains Nativity figures and a Buddha up against the limit presiding over the Nativity figures. The Nativity figures are not arranged in the normal way; in this scene, baby Jesus is isolated in his crib, away from the rest of the Nativity figures. None of the Nativity figures is attending to baby Jesus. Joseph, Mary and the Shepherd are kneeling and facing the Angel as are the Shepherd and the sheep. The Wise Men are looking at each other. The baby is not at the centre of the scene.

In the middle of the foreground area is a Meerkat standing up looking towards the left. In the same section are water and boats. In the enclosure to the left of the boats are three elephants, a zebra and two hippopotamuses and they are looking towards the right facing the Meerkat. In the lower left corner of the foreground area are two large snakes coiled up, contained. Colourful gemstones are carefully placed. A meticulously constructed colourful scene.

4.6.4 Circle's fourth SP

SP 4 began with the sand being moved and shaped. Circle was involved in a grabbing frenzy for the mirror which she won. She opened and looked in the empty boxes and packets stored under the counter, took the entire cash tray from the display and spent time trying to see with the binoculars. Circle's fourth sand scene has a big hill in the upper left area while the right is emptied of sand down to the blue base. This scene explores the parameters from all aspects. Up, down and inside. Figure 23 is a photograph of Circle's fourth sand scene.

Figure 23

Searching and Exploring the Limits



On the hill, in the background, against the limit of the tray is a set of binoculars. In the middle of the hill is a bell around which Rapunzel, a mirror, a fairy, a rugby ball and some musical instruments are placed. The mirror reflects the rugby ball and Rapunzel is looking in the mirror. A circle is formed around the top of the hill. The circular shape of the hill is enhanced with rocks, a flag, two violins stuck in the sand (one small and one big right next to each other) and other instruments, a flute and a tuba. Maui, a

demigod, is at the bottom of the hill and a horse is coming down the hill. When the tray was dismantled a bell and a baby dressed in a yellow baby grow were found buried in the hill. The right side of the tray is down to the blue base. A large stack of food is in the upper right corner. Below the blue depths, in the foreground near the lower limit of the tray is an indigenous woman carrying a baby on her back. She is isolated and looking across the empty part towards the hill.

4.6.5 Diamond's fourth SP

In SP 4 Diamond assisted Triangle and Circle by rolling up their sleeves so that they could get into the business of constructing. She loaded her tray three times and exhibited different energy from previous SP sessions.

She was focused on loading her basket with large animals. No people feature in this tray. Diamond's fourth sand scene depicts a carnal and primitive world filled with prehistoric and wild animals. It is a regressive tray, inspired by a different layer of energy. It is vastly different from the soft, gentle beauty of the previous sand scene of SP 3. Figure 24 is a photograph of Diamond's fourth sand scene.

Figure 24

Primal Carnage



In the making of this tray, the “shopping” basket was loaded to the brim with miniatures and this has resulted in a very full and chaotic tray. There are two clear areas in this scene. The left side is comprised of dinosaurs and amongst the dinosaurs, some constellations are starting to take shape. In the upper left area, is the beginnings of a circular formation with six little dinosaurs around a big dinosaur. Below this constellation, another is starting to form with a big dinosaur and six smaller dinosaurs.

Below them are two big dinosaurs and two small dinosaurs facing back towards the upper part of the tray. To the right of the dinosaurs, is a big square area that is marked by two plinths facing each other. The left plinth elevates a big green dragon flanked by two big green dinosaurs. The dragon and the two dinosaurs are facing towards the opposite plinth on the right-hand side where a male lion is elevated and flanked by two large predator cats. In the middle of this area are trees, and a big leopard is lurking amongst the trees. The trees are the central area around which a circular constellation is developing. The Leopard is face to face with an owl. Various animals, prey and predators (tiger, bear, buck and cheetah) are walking around the trees whilst facing in different directions, but mostly towards the upper right area where a buffalo, snake and bird of prey are situated. A kudu is under a large tree and a big male lion is stalking the kudu. Two rhinos (mother and calf), a gorilla and a koala bear with a baby are amongst the trees and are part of the big constellation whilst also forming a smaller constellation with the kudu and lion (constellations within constellations).

In the upper left part of the square area in which the circular formations are emerging, is an elephant facing a snake, buffalo and a bird of prey. A giraffe and a blue coiled snake are in the lower right corner and a large eagle is on the edge of the tray in the right foreground area. The right side comprises of snake, eagle, owl, eagle, owl, snake. In the central area, a large owl faces a leopard. Three's: a male lion on the plinth with the two smaller cats next to it, the dragon on the plinth with the two dinosaurs next to it. Another set of dinosaurs, two big ones and a little one between them. Two's: the koala bear with a baby and the Rhino with a calf (mother-child).

4.6.6 Reflection on Sandplay 4

There was changed energy in SP 4 resulting in noticeable actions. Perhaps this energy was prompted by the much-anticipated arrival of the Chairperson of the organisation who had been confined in America (due to Covid-19) and had not been able to visit for 18 months. Nonetheless, the children again settled into their play quickly and became absorbed in their sand creations. Despite concern that the visit might disrupt the SP session, this did not happen. Concentration and absorption in creating and exploring were the same as in the other sessions. Some sandplayers displayed progress whilst others reflected regression in their trays. Every sandplayer is showing up and working in a focused manner in their respective trays. The researcher is mindful

that sometimes regression precedes a significant shift in progress and can facilitate ever-deepening exploration and discovery. Trying out and coming back to the centre, to and fro, back and forth, up and down, exploring to the limits.

4.7 SANDPLAY 5: SUB-THEME 5: UNIQUELY CREATIVE TOGETHER

The children were gathered and ready to play early as they were on holiday. Their play was relaxed and there was no rushing, no frenzy. The sand is being worked, miniatures manipulated and the noise from the various sand activities noticeable. However, the silence is also palpable. The silence between them and within them amplifies the rummaging, grinding sound of the activity in the sand trays. Filling baskets with lots of miniatures and concentrated effort continues.

SP 5 highlights the creativity of each sandplayer's unique image made in their way in their tray and in their time. The themes of SP 5 are feminine undulations, construction of farmlands, protection by the military, a beautiful backdrop and differentiation of spirit and domestic. There is a distinct flavour to individual sand scenes as well as an overarching impression of the group SP. The uniqueness of the individual creations shines through whilst the atmosphere and sense of the group play hold it all together. Individual and collective inner work at play.

4.7.1 Square's fifth SP

This tray was completed in under 10 minutes. It was the first tray to be completed in SP 5. During the making of this scene, dust was generated. Deft and graceful movements created the undulated landscape before miniatures were selected and placed. Each mound highlights a cluster or constellation of aspects. Figure 25 is Square's fifth sand image.

Figure 25

Feminine Undulations



There are no fences or enclosures in this sand scene. The left side is more resigned while the right side is more confrontational and lively. The colours on the left side of the tray are colder, darker and duller than the colours on the right side of the tray.

In the left, background area Moana is on top of a mound. Around Moana and the mound are a butterfly, an elephant, a female zombie at a grave, a soccer ball and a zebra. A female zombie is standing on the grave facing a cross. Moana is looking forwards at the back of the zombie. In the lower left corner are two musical instruments, a cello and a violin, an elephant, a horse and another elephant. The two elephants are facing the horse from different sides. In the upper, central right area is Captain Hook and behind him on top of a mound is a fairy. Captain Hook, a big shiny marble, a fairy, a Buddha, babies and a koala bear form a circle around a mound. Captain Hook is pointing to Buddha with three babies lying at the feet of Buddha (one baby is contorted backwards pleading with the Buddha). Further down the Buddha mound are more fairies. In the far right area against the limit is a rhino flanked between musical instruments. The rhino, a male lion and a tiger (three large wild animals) are a part of a circular formation facing towards the upper left area. Constellations are centred around the mounds, especially around the mounds on which the Buddha and Moana are situated. Movement from the more colourful right side is towards the upper left area. The tiger, lion and rhino advance diagonally from the lower right towards the upper left. Whereas the direction of movement on the left side converges towards the lower-left corner.

4.7.2 Triangle's fifth SP

This sand scene has nine enclosed areas. During this SP Triangle asked to use the available water. The first time anyone had used water. He grabbed fistfuls of the sand and used wooden blocks and tractors to move and manipulate the sand. This was a kinaesthetic and physical play. Much attention and energy were given to one of the nine areas in the tray. Active constructing and ploughing of that area. When the tractor wheels clogged up there was banging and clanking against the outside of the tray to unclog the wheels so that ploughing could continue. The ploughing actions were deliberate and repetitive. For the first time, Triangle was one of the last to leave the sand room. His fifth sand scene is depicted in Figure 26.

Figure 26

Construction of Farmlands



In the upper left enclosure is a windmill with an opening to an enclosure below where there are four sheep. Below the sheep is another enclosure with four cows. All the sheep are facing in the same direction. The cows are each facing in different directions. To the right of the windmill in the upper left area is a wishing well. Three horses are in the enclosure below the wishing well and to the right of the well and the horses are carefully constructed farmlands with two tractors. Below the lands are two goats facing towards the upper left area (same direction as the sheep and the horses). To the right of the goats are three motorcars each in its parking area. The cars are facing forwards to the limit of the tray, they are parked, not going anywhere. Next to the farmlands, in the upper right corner, is a home yard containing three trees, two houses and no people. The sand image holds two houses, three trees, three cars, two tractors, two goats, three horses, four sheep and four cows. Two sources of water. Plus the water that was requested and emptied and replenished. Apart from the army men in the first SP, Triangle has not used any people in his sand scenes.

4.7.3 Oval's fifth SP

This sand scene was carefully and meticulously constructed. Rectangle and Triangle both spent considerable time on their respective sand scenes in SP 5.

They were last to leave the SP room and they left together. Rectangle chose every miniature carefully and she systematically placed them in her tray. She lingered over

the making of this tray and seemed reluctant to leave. Her fifth sand scene is depicted in Figure 27.

Figure 27

Protection by the Military



This scene is militaristic and structured, organised by colour. The military (army men) have arrived and have been placed according to their different colours. The right side contains pink men and behind them are both aircraft and land vehicles. The right side is stronger, more resourced than the left. The army men form a square perimeter around the inside of the tray. Inside the military protected perimeter is a beautiful square formation. It is a special area and contains colourful boats, gemstones and seashells. In the lower left foreground is a man and a woman holding hands with a motor car next to them and another motor car with a grey-haired man and woman also holding hands. On either side of the family members are army men. They are protecting the special area. All the boats and the military vehicles on the right are facing towards the left (the right-side is advancing on the left).

This is a regimented and ordered scene where the provision of protection is from the outside for the inside centre, a special area. The military vehicles include a motorbike and a ratel and on the edge of the tray; ready to take off towards the left is the battlement of aeroplanes. The direction of movement is from the right towards the left. The left side does not contain any vehicles. The people are on the left. The special square area in the centre starts with the family members holding hands.

4.7.4 Circle's fifth SP

Circle loaded up two overflowing baskets of miniatures as well as procuring a backdrop. The backdrop is a landscape image on a plastic sheet that comes in the packaging of the farm animals when they are purchased. The sheet of plastic was on the countertop underneath miniatures that were on display. Inventive use of an object that is not a miniature. Circle's use of empty containers that she found in packages underneath the counter was also inventive and a pattern of her SP. Further to this, she is the least able to restrain herself from taking as many miniatures as she can. Circle is compelled to grab what she can although she does try to restrain herself. Her fifth sand scene is portrayed in Figure 28.

Figure 28

A Beautiful Backdrop



This sand scene is highlighted by the creation of a backdrop against the back frame of the tray. Behind the backdrop is a mirror sticking out on the left and an owl partially visible on the right. The carefully placed landscape looks like a theatre backdrop. The sand scene is very crowded and contains six areas. In the upper left column area is an upside-down empty glass container and below that is a crocodile. Beneath the crocodile are two closed empty treasure chests, an upside-down bell, a baseball bat, a ball, and a baby. The baby is close to the crocodile but the croc is facing away from the baby. To the right of this area is a silver beaded enclosure containing two wild cats (a cheetah and a leopard) and two prey animals (a zebra and a buck). The two pairs of predator and prey are in the same enclosure. Below the silver enclosure is a gold

necklace area and it contains a fairy godmother, a stack of three stars, two empty alcohol bottles, an indigenous hut, and an army man. The army man is shooting towards the back of the animals in the silver enclosure. The fairy godmother is facing the same direction as the prey and predator animals. The fairy godmother, the army man, the antelope, zebra and cats as well as the crocodile are looking towards the landscape backdrop. Below the gold necklace enclosure is a food garden and a big green snake. The food garden includes a place to fish. The fish are jumping out of the sand (they are upright, standing on their tails).

Above the fishing spot is a big green snake biting an orange. The fish and the food are in the foreground of the tray. In the upper right centre is a big pile of food consisting of cheeses, different types of bread, meats, bananas and fish. Behind that in the upper right area is an owl, a cage (with a hockey stick through the top of the cage) and binoculars with the strap of the binoculars utilised to create an enclosure. Within the binoculars' strap is firewood. (This time the fire is on the right whereas in SP 2 it was on the left enclosed by a neglected fence.) The binoculars' case is also in the sand scene.

4.7.5 Diamond's fifth SP

Before making this sand scene, Diamond waited for everyone else to collect miniatures and to start their creations. The tension in Diamond's waiting was palpable. Once she started with her sand scene it did not take long and she was done. Diamond's scene reflects a differentiation between the left and the right.

The left is comprised of horses that look wild whereas the right is ordered and contains domestic animals. Figure 29 is a photograph of Diamond's fifth sand scene.

Figure 29_[u1]

Differentiation of Spirit and Domestic



The entire left part of the tray contains horses, big horses and small horses. In SP 4 dinosaurs inhabited the left area. The horses are separated from the domestic side in SP 5. There is a gate for the horses and at the gate is a turkey perched on the top of the wall. Two horses peer over the wall looking at the domestic side of the tray. Circular formations are beginning to take shape with the horses. The right side is divided into four different areas. In the upper left part of the right side is an enclosure with seven goats and one cow. The bigger central area comprises cats, dogs, geese, chickens and another turkey. In the lower left of the right area are three little goats huddled together. In the right corner, there is an enclosure with two pigs. This scene is about animals, wild horses on one side and domestic animals on the other. There are no people in this scene.

4.7.6 Reflection on Sandplay 5

At the end of SP 5, with only one more SP session to be held, the researcher felt exhausted, depleted and wondered about the value and role of holding and facilitating SP in this way for six consecutive weeks. On the one hand, it was evident that the children were processing and each child was actively engaged in their unfolding story. However, the researcher wondered whether the inner work would make a sustainable positive difference internally and if it would reflect in external behaviour. To this point, there was no feedback from adult childcare staff. Setting up this new activity and being

a witness to the individual and group SP processes was a big task and a huge responsibility. These questions and concerns are articulated in reflection immediately after SP 5:

I'm tired.... I have no idea if there might be any impact on these children internally, ...evidence of a shift for the childcare workers to notice. I can see that they are using the sandplay and they're showing up and they are creating in the sand...using the miniatures and getting stuck in...but will any of that translate into behaviour shifts and mood shifts? I don't know. So I'm wondering if all of this will help. What will it come to?... Six weeks of protected, free play. Can that make a difference? (Researcher's reflection on SP 5)

4.8 SANDPLAY 6: SUB-THEME 6: CONTAINMENT AND ACTIVATION OF MOVEMENT

SP 6 is the culmination of the provision of the SP sessions. In SP 6 the children take time over their sand creations, lingering and making the most of the session. Their play is deliberate yet relaxed. Their demeanour as well as the scenes created are vastly different to SP 1. The five sand scenes from the sixth SP session are softer and more gentle. The danger and the conflict are reduced and there are noticeable shifts in energy and movement in all of the sand scenes. In this session the children are relaxed and their SP actions are deliberate, whereas in SP 1 the chaos was potentially overwhelming. The children were frenzied and desperate to get as many miniatures as they could into their sand trays.

4.8.1 Square's sixth SP

Square's sixth SP is colourful and vibrant. The danger is minimised and contained. A lot of time was spent preparing and working with the sand. Firm patting and pounding could be heard. Wooden pallets from the display area were used to stamp the sand. Thereafter an ornamental perimeter fence, inside the limit of the tray, was constructed. Figure 30 portrays abundant nourishment in the foreground, and the background depicts the home yard area and containment of dangerous animals.

Figure 30

Abundance in the Foreground



This scene is divided horizontally (background area, middle strip area and immediate foreground area). This is the same as the first SP that was also divided horizontally by snakes. The foreground area contains a constructed wooden platform where an abundant fresh produce food market is displayed and contained. The food market is enclosed by a wooden fence. A home yard area containing a variety of different miniatures is in the upper section of the tray. In the centre is a house with two black women next to it. Also situated between the forefront and the background, and in front of the two women and the main house, is Mary, to her left is baby Jesus and next to the baby are an angel and a Wise Man. (The Nativity figurines were added at the end of the session.) Mary is kneeling and looking towards the food market area. The baby is lying in its crib, next to her but not too close to her. The Wise Man is on his knees with an offering towards an angel. Above and behind the nativity figures, to the left is an officious man dressed in black. The man is lying prone caught between the fence and a pathway to the houses. Above the prone man is sports equipment. Rugby balls, soccer balls, basketballs, a tennis ball and a baseball bat, a hockey stick, a racket as well as two ceramic houses. Money is dotted around and there is a dog. In the right upper corner, enclosed in a silver necklace, are a horse, a tiger, a lion and a cheetah. The cheetah is separate from the horse, lion and tiger and is looking in a different direction to them. These wild animals are contained. In front of the contained animals are musical instruments and two ceramic houses. There are two houses on either side

of the bigger house with two black girls next to them. To the right is Superman presiding and next to him is an upside-down bell.

4.8.2 Triangle's sixth SP

Triangle's sixth SP is conducted in a relaxed fashion with every army man carefully considered before selecting and placing it. Upon completion of the sand scene, Triangle returned the miniatures that were not used to the display. This sixth sand scene, Figure 31, is a photograph that indicates a less divided world, the direction of movement has shifted and the right seems to have gained strength with the ability to retaliate.

Figure 31

Less Division and More Balance



Two sides, the colder left and the warmer right side. The right is no longer trapped by the left. It has advanced toward the left.

Army men are up on the edge of the left side of the tray shooting over the heads of the right side. On the right side, the army men are protected behind thick bushes and trees, the left side is more exposed. The division is not as rigid as in SP 1 and SP 2. This is a much softer tray. There are no fences in this tray. There is less potency in the battle. Respect for differences has developed. The left side has more vehicles (without anyone manning them). The right side has only one big, powerful firing vehicle (a ratel). The left side has three military vehicles. There's one army man on the left

side who has come down from the edge and is advancing towards the right. The left side is shooting over the heads of the right who have gained ground from the first two SPs. There is no apparent best-equipped side to win this battle. In SP 1 the left side was warmer, lighter and stronger whilst the right side was colder, heavier and weaker. In SP 6 the right has grown in strength and the two sides are more evenly balanced.

4.8.3 Oval's sixth SP

In SP 6 Oval interacted silently with the other sandplayers. There was a collaboration with Square who gave a house to Oval. In addition, Oval inspected the miniatures carefully before placing them. She also put the binoculars around her neck and tried to see through them by looking through the wrong end.

In SP 6, Figure 32, the photograph shows a convoy of cars flanked by aeroplanes and a tractor is moving from the upper left corner towards the community on the lower right side. The procession is led by a motorcycle. Movement is through the left.

Figure 32

A Convoy to the Community



The convoy of cars is driving to where the people are congregated in a safe community area. In the lower left corner are two tractors. One of them is parked. The other is parallel with the convoy. To the right of the convoy are aeroplanes and helicopters parallel and moving in the same direction. Movement is through the left side and on the right are three enclosed areas. The main area is larger and contains a house, chickens and lots of fairies at the back of the house – the fairies are holding hands on the perimeter. There are babies and adults are interacting with the babies. There are

cats and dogs but no threatening animals. It is a happy place, a safe place. To the right of the square home yard area, there are some goats and cows and sheep in an enclosure making a total of nine animals. Below that enclosure is another containing two pigs, a sheep and five geese. Entering this home area is a man, a father with a dog. This scene is very different to any of the previous trays. It is colourful, less rigid, there is movement, people are living in community and there are no threats or danger.

4.8.4 Circle's sixth SP

Circle's sixth tray (see Figure 33) took a long time to make. She could not get enough miniatures in her tray.

She loaded her basket until miniatures were spilling out and then she kept on returning to the display to select more, dropping miniatures as she gathered them from the display. The sand scene is chockablock. Circle was the last sandplayer to leave the room. She lingered and lingered and seemed to not be able to get enough. Despite the flooded tray, a colourful circular arrangement gently dominates the centre of the tray. The movement in this scene is circular.

Figure 33

Centring in a Peaceful Place



In the centre of the tray is a vibrant circular area. Trees, flowers and gemstones shape the circular area. In the circle are a variety of miniatures. Dogs looking up on their hind legs, a white horse, a lioness with a cub in her mouth. Rapunzel, some musical instruments, an indigenous woman with a baby on her back, an indigenous man and an official-looking man. There is an Indian warrior with a bow and arrow, aiming

towards the right corner to a large brass pitcher. Wonder Woman and a large brass urn are prone. Both fell over when Circle shut the door and left the SP room at the end of the session. The Indian warrior is contained by two official people and is not threatening. On the upper right side of the tray, a white bird cage is empty and upside down with two Egyptian figures on top of it.

In the lower central area is a stack of five stars. SP 5 contained three stars stacked together and in SP 1, one star that wasn't completely visible. The five stars are packed tightly together and firmly placed into the sand. To the left of the big circular area are porcupine quills, Captain Hook, two fishing boys, money and two treasure chests one on top of the other. Captain Hook and the boys are facing the upper left side towards the treasure chests and the money. To the left of them is a goose on top of an upside-down empty glass. And below that is a horse, a cow and a goat. Across the foreground area, are a donkey, a camel, a dog and a zebra. They're all facing towards the right. Leading them is a sheep. In the lower left corner against the limit of the tray is an indigenous hut. There are no dangerous, predatorial animals in this tray except for the lioness carrying her cub. The left area of the tray is demarcated with the gold necklace containing the two treasure chests and the two fishermen, R260 in notes and Captain Hook. The money was carefully counted, more than once before it was placed in the tray. The money is made up of R20 and R10 notes. The central circular area and the right area in which the lioness and cub, birdcage and brass urns are to be found also features two feathers and some porcupine quills. The urns, pitchers, quills and feathers are prominent, erect objects in the tray. Circle is the only person to have used feathers in any of the SP sessions. She also opened up a silicone packet (kept in the miniature box to keep items dry) and she gently sprinkled some of the tiny silica beads into the circular formation adding a soft shimmer to the scene.

4.8.5 Diamond's sixth SP

Again, Diamond waited until last before she began to choose miniatures and work in her tray. She was the first to complete her tray and the first to leave. Both SP 3 and SP 6 contain seashells and natural elements and both are authentic, moving sand scenes. SP 6 (Figure 34) is particularly touching, showing vulnerability but also signs of hope. It is fitting to end the sand tray descriptions and the theme of the need for containment with this numinous and sacred tray.

Figure 34

A Pilgrimage to Integration and Wholeness



Two conjoined areas dominate this sand scene. One is round and on the left side, and the other is square and on the right side. Horses are walking in a circular formation, in single file around the hill that is connected with the square. On top and in the middle of the hill is a dam with seashells in it. An eagle is perched in the middle of the dam. In the lower left corner area is a large black spider's web. The big spider and smaller spiders are situated along the left side of the tray. The horses are on a journey, two of the horses have riders on them (these are the only people in the tray). The spiders are the outer part of the circular formation, a different aspect to the horses. The spiders encapsulate the horses from the left corner. In the upper left corner are three big shells clustered together in a beautiful formation. The right side of this tray is a square area marked by shells with butterflies and larger shells in each corner. In the centre of the square is a white butterfly and shiny marbles reflect like water in the square. It's a beautifully soft and gentle scene. In the lower right corner are three vehicles starting to move around the dam similarly to the horses around the hill. Three butterflies form a bridge between the hill area and the square area. The hill looks like the head and the square is the body of a person with the cars being the feet. The bridge of butterflies is the neck, joining the head to the torso.

4.8.6 Reflection on Sandplay 6

The children knew that SP 6 was the final SP. It is proposed that this played a role in them making a concerted effort to use all of the time and to make the most of the

session, even more than in previous sessions. At the same time, they were relaxed, contained and almost nostalgic. This was noticeable by them not rushing and their lingering afterwards. There seemed to be a reluctance to finish. Possibly considering how they will continue their playing now that the study is completed. Although processing and inner work have occurred through the playing it is clear that the work is not yet done. Inner processing is continuous and for them and the researcher, the journey has just begun.

The mirroring of the children's and the researcher's respective journeys. Similarities and differences between the two transitional life stages of early adolescence and menopause. Early adolescence between childhood and adolescence, menopause between the first half of life and the second. The fading of childhood freedom as conscious awareness gradually grows and identity and ego development strengthen. Fostering confidence with which to negotiate the first half of life. Through menopause the potential for inner freedom with a deeper understanding of the role of ego and an allowing of the self to shine through. Both life stages are reliant on increased consciousness and the interplay between ego and self. In early adolescence, the self facilitates the strengthening and development of ego for identity formation and the menopausal passage facilitates a fading of the worldly ego function to the background as the self shines through and offers life meaning and purpose through expressive creativity.

4.9 CONCLUSION

The provision of SP sessions facilitated recognition that the children are presently in a more conducive environment than the one that was the source of their wounding. Added to this is the additional containment and support provided by the conducive environment of the SP and a purposefully created SP room. Providing conducive environments is crucial for inner processing and self-development.

The question then is the sustainability of inner activations and development when the additional conducive and enabling environment is withdrawn. This is unknown and is potentially a suggestion for future studies. The childcare staff observations and accounts offer further insight.

The literature, in particular the original authors and sources of SP, prepared the groundwork for the descriptions in Chapter Four. Themes and descriptions of before and after SP interviews are contained in Chapter Five. Discussion of themes and the linking of Chapter Four and Chapter Five descriptions with the research objectives and the literature are discussed in the final chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AS PERTAINING TO INTERVIEWS WITH ADULT PARTICIPANTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter described the SP of the children participants and Chapter Five recounts the observations as reported by the adult childcare staff. Chapter Six discusses and links the themes in SP images and sessions and the accounts of adult interviewees described herein. This chapter commences with a reflection of the research process, including the context and role of the researcher.

5.2 REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH CONTEXT AND PROCESS

A researcher's previous experiences influence the framework in which the research is organised, considered and analysed. These experiences include all resources available to the researcher, including self-knowledge and prior knowledge that helps to better understand the experience (Bruce, 2020; Nieuwenhuis, 2015). The researcher's experience of work in various educational and psychological settings is worth mentioning. Previous work positions include working in youth development for NGOs in the 1990s through to 2002, school counselling positions in two high schools (one in a government school and the other in a private school), followed by owning and running a learning support, extra lessons business. In addition, it is pertinent to consider from a reflexive stance the researcher's perspective as a mature student, returning to work in a resource-poor setting where incidents of violence are potentially imminent (Krämer, 2020; Solomons, 2021). Reflexivity means that the researcher is conscious of biases, values and experiences that might contribute to the study (Creswell, 2019; Oosthuizen, 2017). Most of the researcher's early career life (1991–2002) was spent working for NGOs in development education where there was an emphasis on creating youth development programmes and opportunities focused on skills development which the South African government was unable to do (Mlambo et al., 2021).

Then and now NGOs play a vital role in South Africa, creating and providing programmes and structures to support education and youth development (Volmink & van der Elst, 2019). After a decade of working in the NGO sector in the 1990s, the researcher considered the sustainability of the above, directed activities and to what extent individuals are being empowered and enabled from within. Exposure and training opportunities in new skills play an important role in developing individuals but activation of inner worlds and inner resources might enable and facilitate the transformative capacity required to bring about change that is necessary for a safe, just and sustainable future (Ives et al., 2020). In South Africa, development should focus on self-help at the grassroots level as major social ills such as poverty and unemployment still exist (Mlambo et al., 2021).

The researcher is in the second half of life and cognisant of being a product of white privilege. Working at a low-resourced NPO that is providing shelter to deprived and abused children highlights the differences in economic and life stages. Perhaps between these juxtaposed positions of researcher and research site, a more sustainable model for personal inner development and growth can be found.

5.3 DATA ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF RESULTS

Thematic analysis was used to analyse data within and across all data sources including interview transcriptions, observation notes of six SP sessions, 30 photographs of individual sand scenes, detailed descriptions of each sand tray photograph provided in the previous chapter, and reflections of the researcher from handwritten journal entries and voice recorded transcriptions. Three main themes emerged. The first is the theme of wounding described as overwhelming needs; the second is the need for containment and expression as provided by SP; the third is the theme of healing as reflected in the after interviews with adult childcare staff. Sub-themes occur within each of these main themes. An overview of themes is provided in Table 5.1

Table 5.1

Themes and Sub-Themes

Main Themes	Wounding: Overwhelming needs	The need for containment and expression: Sandplay (SP)	Healing: Energy activated
Sub-themes: 1	Vulnerability and wounding: Deprivation, neglect and abuse	SP 1: Threats, conflict and chaos	Activated to play: Energy and desire to play, engagement in play and play at work
2	Constrained resources, systems and support: Both material and human capacity	SP 2: The need for protection and containment	Cooperation and sharing: Willing to comply with others, helpfulness, sharing, less bullying and less fighting
3	The need for change: Pressure from within and without	SP 3: Revealed vulnerability	Open and responsive to others: Communication with adults and other children, less reserved, more interaction, less aggressive, more receptive
4	The need for culturally appropriate, accessible intervention: Cost-effective and sustainable	SP 4: Progression and regression	Increased understanding and awareness: Consciousness (ego) strengthening, learning and growth, increased tolerance of the world and others

5	Uknown knowledge and experience of Sandplay: A new activity	SP 5: Uniquely creative together	Centring and grounding: Calmer, more composed, present and focused, relaxed, showing through of the self-system and being more content
6		SP 6: Containment, and activation of movement	Belonging: Together, family, kinship, adaptation/change, fitting in, absence of fighting

In this chapter, two of the three main themes and their subsequent sub-themes are discussed and described as they occur and correlate with the before and after adult interviews. The main themes of wounding and healing are highlighted in the before and after SP interviews.

5.4 WOUNDING AS DESCRIBED BY CHILDCARE STAFF

Wounding is one of the main themes depicted by the overwhelming needs and is accentuated in childcare staff interviews at the outset of the study. When something is overwhelming it is felt powerfully and needs are distinguished from wants in that they are required urgently. Interviews with the childcare staff as well as SP images and actions bring to light the theme of wounding reflected as overwhelming needs. The sub-themes of wounding and overwhelming needs are constrained resources, vulnerability and wounding, the need for change and the need for appropriate, cross-culturally accessible intervention. In addition, SP as an unknown, new activity is discussed.

5.4.1 Overview of wounding and before interviews with childcare staff

The before SP interviews with the nine adult participants revealed that the children at the home are from different backgrounds having experienced early wounding and are vulnerable. Pseudonyms are used, not the real names of the childcare staff. Table 5.2

summarises the pseudonyms and roles of each adult interviewee and indicates the number of years worked at the organisation. Most childcare staff have worked in childcare longer than the years at the children’s home. They are experienced in childcare work. The children’s home has been in operation for 15 years.

Table 5.2

Roles and Experience of the Childcare Staff

Childcare staff member	Role	Years at the children’s home
Tim	General Manager / Principal	3
Sam	Childcare worker	3
Jane	Educational Psychologist	4
Nancy	Childcare worker	6
Con	Childcare worker	6
Lyn	Chairperson	7
Tracy	Childcare worker	8
Zane	Childcare worker manager	10
Mary	Childcare worker and cook	11

It is the role of the adult participants who are the children’s carers to look after them temporarily and to help them in their return to a normal life. Zane indicates the primary role of childcare workers is to effect positive behavioural change and Mary speaks into the fact that the children are from different backgrounds that have impacted on them:

... because that is the main thing that we are here, to bring change in the behaviour of the children. (Zane)

... they come from different situations ... it worries me sometimes. ... when they talked to me, they said, my parents are drinking alcohol. My parents are hitting me. (Mary)

5.4.2 Sub-Theme 1: Vulnerability and wounding

The children are vulnerable and at risk. They are at the children’s home for temporary shelter and care as a result of neglect, deprivation and abuse. Each child has a different wounding experience that has brought them to the home. Their vulnerability and wounding are reflected in the following extracts from the childcare staff:

... there is a lot of psychological damage, emotional baggage that they come with ... the emotional issues that they are dealing with as a result of their abuse, or abandonment is, is something that needs a lot of intervention. (Lyn)

... they are all here for something painful ... all probably didn't want to be here in the beginning ... they are vulnerable because of their history. (Jane)

... vulnerable children ... you are not working with normal children ... kids in our care.... They come in with a broken background. (Tim)

... where they come from ... have been beaten. ... beaten at home by my parents ... (Zane)

The children's behaviour is observable and a way of gauging them psychologically and emotionally. Tim and Zane describe the role that the children's behaviour plays in informing the childcare staff:

... we use the behaviour to measure the process of a child. That behaviour will tell us if the child is responding towards the programme or not ... (Tim)

But you will see it through the behaviour ... (Zane)

The children's behaviour is described as variable, unstable and challenging. In short, their behaviour indicates that they are emotionally dysregulated. Challenging behaviour includes bullying, fighting/aggression and withdrawal/passivity. The most notable behaviour of concern is bullying. Insights and descriptions of the children's variable and aggressive behaviour are provided by adult childcare staff:

It's problematic because they're acting out unresolved issues and they want to be with their mom and their dad ... have either died or were abusive or couldn't or neglectful. So they are aggressive and they fight and they try to stand up for themselves.... it's unfair, everything is.... So they're all so scared someone else is going to get more than they're gonna get ... there is a deprivation history. They are ... fighting for what they can get. (Jane)

... kids they are rude ... have unstable emotions ... kids who are violent ... emotional regulations, they are a challenge ... in our culture, the black culture ... fighting someone who's done you wrong ... if you want to swear you just swear ... rude, reckless, abusive, bullying. (Tim)

... their behaviour is different ... some have anger issues ... others they don't want to participate with others ... sometimes they cry. When you ask them why are you crying, they say they miss their parents. It's up and down. Sometimes when it is time to eat, maybe the other one says no, I am full ... I don't want to eat today. (Nancy)

Worrying or alarming behaviour includes fighting, self-harm, suicidal ideation and violence. Jane, Tim and Zane indicate the propensity for alarming behaviour when working with wounded children:

... sometimes there is fighting going on ... a hostile atmosphere amongst the older children. Sometimes the little ones and the big ones they get out of hand, they hype each other up ... it's sort of like a warzone ... they all have so much buried inside them ... they fight and they shout ... and there's very little calmness. (Jane)

Oh, she's amazing. And then the next thing he's telling you oh, I have broken up with the girlfriend and he's depressed, now that depression can lead to self-harm, suicide. I don't trust these young people. Ja. Because small things is a trigger to them to see that. No, someone hates me. Oh, he doesn't like me. Then, let me kill myself. Ja. So there's suicide. It's a big thing for me with the young people. (Tim)

... would want to express themselves ... in most cases ... in a violent manner. (Zane)

... the child was breaking in and then he take out the petrol ... and he took the bicycle ... that was a big concern for me ... the child would have maybe light or put the petrol around the buildings here and ... burned the organisation or himself. (Tim)

When asked about the demeanour and mood of the children, childcare staff described it variably, mostly unpredictable and changeable; including good, bad, happy, sad, alone/isolated, together/belonging, uncooperative/refusing and cooperative.

The volatility of mood supports the woundedness and vulnerability. Mood and behaviour are a measure of the children's emotions. Unpredictable, ever-changing mood and behaviour suggest emotional dysregulation. The following extracts offer insight into the mood and demeanour of the children:

The mood differs ... without even talking to them, sometimes you get to know the mood is not right that day. (Sam)

... we do everything together ... when there is no problem it's good. (Tracy)

... not easy to read ... the facial expression says something different from what he or she has said out of her mouth. (Tim)

The erratic mood and behaviour of the children are indicators of their deprivation, neglect and abuse.

5.4.3 Sub-Theme 2: Constrained resources, systems and support

The children's home operates in a constrained resource context and is not well supported by government structures despite the urgent and desperate need for large numbers of children to receive protection and care. Resources are inadequate, both material, monetary resources and human capacity. Some of these system constraints and frustrations are expressed here by Lyn:

... the department made it very clear that they would not be funding us for any additional children ... there's a need ... if we were to find outside funding we could accommodate more ... and they didn't give us permission to do that either.... we continue to reach out to them because the need is huge for children out there ... but again they won't be funding us ... huge pressure because of the need ... (Lyn)

Another challenge is that staff are ill-equipped to deal with some of the children's psychological and emotional problems, staff are not adequately trained and do not always have the necessary skills required for this aspect of childcare.

Added to this, supporting significant psychological and emotional issues requires tremendous commitment, passion and special skills. Tim expresses the constrained capacity of childcare staff:

... some of our staff they are not trained or equipped to deal with those special behaviour issues.... for example, taking a child who's struggling mentally, we don't have staff, who has done a special needs case ... the staff does not have the skills, the staff will hurt the child more, or the staff will be discouraged.... we need to make sure that the staff has enough and necessary skills to deal with cases ... (Tim)

Childcare workers are the primary carers. They are constantly with the children, monitoring, supporting, managing, nurturing and facilitating their behaviour. Zane, Tracy and Nancy describe the ever-present monitoring role of childcare workers while Lyn indicates the nurturing and healing role:

... children ... always with their childcare workers ... (Zane)

... to manage their behaviour.... to play with them, to get along with them ... we do everything together. (Tracy)

... you have to learn to love children, all of them. The same way and respect them as you want them to respect you. To take care of them. Teach them about life.... take care of them in every, every everything and to listen to them to encourage them when they have problems. (Nancy)

... our role is to nurture them, and help them heal ... (Lyn)

Caring for the children is very demanding and challenging, requiring passion, commitment and extraordinary abilities, capacity and skills, including the capacity for restraint as illustrated by Tim, Con, Lyn and Sam:

... the interaction with such a child should be an outstanding kind of interaction.
(Tim)

This is the challenging work. We learn different things every day. But it needs the passion. (Con)

... vulnerable children ... it's been very eye-opening.... they can be incredibly manipulative ... it's hard work ... not a quick fix ... its commitment ... it takes a lot of commitment. (Lyn)

... I calm down ... I give myself space ... walk around to calm down ... so that I don't show ... they mustn't see. (Sam)

So, it is not fun. But I think I've got a passion to hang in there. (Tim)

It is clear from the above extracts that the demand on childcare workers and staff is onerous. A scarcity of resources (equipment, materials, funding) and a lack of capacity (people skills and support and development for staff) significantly exacerbate the situation. In addition, childcare workers are under pressure and profoundly affected when the children present with worrying behaviour as they are expected to facilitate change in the children:

It's sometimes, it's hard ... the children ... with different behaviour ... we tried to change their behaviour. Sometimes, I feel like I'll cry. Yes. Sometimes I feel like I have to quit the job ... it's very hard. (Mary)

It makes me feel so bad that I have to talk to the children, to the child and find out what is the problem so that we can solve the problem. (Nancy)

Sometimes I even cry.... I feel painful. I mean, they are small and they're experiencing a lot of things at their age ... it's too much for them ... but I have to be strong for them ... tell them it will be okay. It's not gonna stay like this.
(Tracy)

The expectation to facilitate and effect change in the children is driven by the fact that when they are discharged they need to be able to function and cope in their home communities.

5.4.4 Sub-Theme 3: The need for change

The before interviews with adult childcare staff provide insight into the children's deprived and traumatic backgrounds, their daily routine, behaviour, mood and the nature of their lives at the children's home. In addition, the childcare worker's role and the function of the children's home are highlighted. The NPO provides protection and shelter, attends to basic needs and also strives to facilitate healing and growth so that children can return home. The therapeutic function is built into how the childcare workers and staff interact, monitor and spend time with the children. All the adult participants described their primary role as caring for the children, whilst actively trying to facilitate improved changes and healing in the children so that they can return to normal life. As such, staff are expected to be change agents.

There is pressure (both from within and external) on them to effect positive changes or alterations in the children's behaviour. The need for change is profoundly on the minds of all the childcare staff. It is a measure of their success as childcare staff. This is illustrated by Zane and Lyn here below:

... by getting to know the children, creating that relationship between ourselves and the children. At the same time, we try now to change the thinking of the child or even the behaviour so that the child becomes positive in life. That is what we try to do. Sometimes we succeed, sometimes we don't succeed as much as we want to. (Zane)

... because that is the main thing that we are here, to bring about change in the behaviour of the children. (Zane)

... that ideal situation ... involves the disengagement of the children back to their communities, ... in the shortest possible time. (Lyn)

The pressure for a shift or change is ever-present as there is concern about the welfare of the children when they are discharged from the organisation. When the children have to leave it is of deep concern to the staff. The children make progress under their

care and inevitably return to the community where the abuse occurred. Added to this, the pressure to effect positive change in the children before they are discharged is compounded by time. The following three participants articulate these concerns here below:

... it worries me. They won't spend the rest of their lives here. There is some certain time they have to go back to their homes. But we need to help them ... their behaviour, to change their behaviour. (Con)

I always get this fear or this concern that what will happen to this child when he leaves or becomes just a normal person in the community because of the behaviour, to an extent that I always think that either this child ends up in jail or will be killed because of his behaviour among other children, other people ... the behaviour is uncontrollable. (Zane)

So the work that we have done is like, it is useless because the child goes back to that, still the same community, the same family that was abusing the child, or that was neglecting the child. (Tim)

Working with vulnerable children is not easy and it helps when staff feel it gives them purpose, as Zane, Mary, Lyn and Con express:

... I am happy in the sense that they are here for a reason. And, I am expected to make a change or to bring about change in their lives. Which is what I'm hoping to do ... to try by all means to make that difference in their lives ... to change the way they ... approach life ... that is what I'm trying to achieve. (Zane)

... Auntie, this is confidential ... it's between you and me. (Mary)

... they experience a lot of things in their lives from their home. And we ... give them love, caring, supporting them, helping them with everything, all the dynamics and make sure they feel safe, they feel they are still important. They mustn't lose hope. They must tell themselves they are still human beings like others. They are important and we teach them to be self-dependent. (Con)

... it's nice that I am having input into their lives ... though there are challenges ... sometimes their memories do flashback but since we are here, we calm them down. But nje, we are also learning from them. (Sam)

... it's very hard not to get attached ... (Lyn)

In addition, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the daily lives of the children have become less stimulating than before in terms of limited extramural activities and time with friends outside of the home. One of the noticeable needs identified is for the provision of stimulating, safe, engaging and interesting activities for the children:

... bringing stimulation which they are starved of because I am quite sure they never had all these toys that we've been given ... (Jane)

I'm just hoping ... to seeing children getting involved or engaging them in this sandplay. Because I'm hoping that this will make a difference in their lives. (Zane)

... they thrive on interaction with others. (Lyn)

To be happy and to play with the sand ... enjoy to play in the sand. (Mary)

... to experience to use their hands, to build something. (Con)

... if the play is getting too long they get bored they start bullying behaviour ... most of the children if it's 30 minutes then ... taking too long ... they can't concentrate, concentration shifts you see. You'll find them mumbling. (Sam)

Wounded and vulnerable children require extraordinary care (Basu, 2018). To this end, there are several challenges for organisations working with vulnerable children in a resource-constrained environment. One of the profound difficulties is that the organisation is a temporary custodian of the child and they are under pressure to discharge the children, often prematurely:

... we discharged a child that went back to the community ... how am I going to face that community because the community did not believe me. They thought I was making up stories but the child has to go back.... the major decisions are

not made by our social worker ... if the case social worker says no, the situation is okay back home, even if you know the situation is not okay ... this year we discharged another child, we all felt that the child is not ready to go back to the family ... the case social worker said ... you can't keep the child in your institution forever ... We trust God, that He could exercise His power in miracles. (Tim)

5.4.5 Sub-Theme 4: The need for culturally appropriate, accessible intervention

At present no arts-based or creative activity is being offered at the children's home. The younger children are encouraged to play but creative, arts-based activity is not explicitly encouraged, supported or facilitated. The use of creative activity can facilitate the processing of trauma in a non-threatening manner, especially in a contained space, thereby assisting children in developing coping skills, self-awareness and aspects of self-esteem (Van Westrhenen et al., 2019). The children's home recognises that how they work with the children needs to be therapeutic and that an important part of their role and function is to facilitate healing. Trying to provide a therapeutic, healing home environment for vulnerable children requires special skills and not all the staff are adequately trained. Funding for specialised intervention is limited. When children require specialist intervention they are placed on a waiting list and it can take weeks or months before they are seen by a professional. In addition, accessing culturally appropriate therapists is also an issue. It is essential that children be allowed to process their trauma so that they can have a future and hopefully break the inter-generational cycles that play a role in perpetuating trauma (Isobel et al., 2019; Solomons, 2021; Welford, 2019).

As such, there is a desperate need for cost-effective culturally appropriate interventions on-site (accessible) that can be run by suitably trained and supervised volunteers (preferably professional interns: educational, psychological or social work interns). Communication and language are not always forthcoming and not all the children speak isiZulu whilst some children battle to express themselves verbally regardless of their home language. Zane and Jane express their delight that SP does not require language:

... there is no language as such ... even if they come from different backgrounds ... they can still do something together and communicate ... with their hands. (Zane)

... what is fantastic is that language is not needed. Because, you know, cross-culturally, that's such a gift ... (Jane)

The children exhibit body language and behaviour that is different to what they are saying; their inner world has its own story. Therefore it is difficult to know what is going on internally and how to reach and communicate with the children at a deeper, more meaningful level. This observation of the incongruence in the children between their inner world and outer expression is articulated by two of the adult participants:

... some of these behaviours are not obvious ... you cannot see them. They're not visible. You ... have no idea what's going on internally ... that is the challenge.... they plan it outside and what we see has been already planned and done. It's just a matter of manifesting it you know. (Tim)

... doesn't speak enough ... so reclusive.... That's all inside there and acted out. (Jane)

In addition, access to specialised, culturally appropriate psychological or psychiatric services is difficult to arrange, especially when required urgently and private services are not affordable for the children's home. In addition is the question as to whether or not the talk therapy intervention helps sufficiently:

... we have booked the psychiatrist for the child ... but it is sometimes next, next month ... we have to book through the state, we can have privates, but again, the private would be someone who doesn't understand the cultural ... but ... the organisation isn't in a state to afford it ... it is delaying because it's only coming ... the challenge is, is that intervention actually helping the child? (Tim)

Finally, the children do not have privacy in the home. All activities are done communally and under constant supervision or observation of childcare workers. Childcare workers are with the children all day and all night. A protected, private and safe space in which individual children can express themselves and be allowed to process their inner worlds is sorely needed (Gwandure, 2010).

5.4.6 Sub-Theme 5: Unknown knowledge and experience of Sandplay

It is noticeable that apart from the general manager and the educational psychologist, none of the adult participants had heard about SP. Although the general manager and educational psychologist had heard about SP, neither of them had any experience with it. As an activity, it was mostly unheard of and for every participant never experienced nor witnessed. There was curiosity and interest in the new activity and no concerns about the SP activity. In addition, participants wondered if this activity was suitable for the black, African culture whilst a childcare worker thought it was a good thing that the children would be using their hands in the sand. Another participant hoped that the activity would make the children feel special:

... we Africans, we also believe in cultural stuff ... I am a Christian but he is not ... world view, things like that ... what I am struggling with is their context ... to these kids with such a background ... how the SP is going to relate with the kids of this culture.... I want to believe that bringing it to a black culture ... to this kind of broken background child is unique. (Tim)

Adult participants were unsure of what to expect from SP and hoped that the children would enjoy it and that it would be good for them; providing a platform for expression and that this would change their behaviour and that they would be calmer afterwards. Changes hoped for as a result of SP included knowing and understanding each other, a better purpose in life, emotional regulation, engagement, creativity, expression and enjoyment. Below are excerpts from discussions with participants about what they hoped the SP activity might bring to the children:

... help them get a purpose of living. (Tim)

It can help them with their emotions? (Con)

Emotional regulations, a sense of belonging, because currently, they are not being themselves.... there is a victim or event there ... they are on the other side ... so now they are trying to come a flush. (Tim)

I am hoping that they will be calmer and that they will understand their issues more because they are so young, and so not at the level of intellectualisation. (Jane)

I hope they will understand themselves better ... be better persons ... there will be some kind of understanding as to who I am. (Zane)

They'll be more creative. They learn, they know that out of something, you can do something. (Sam)

I think they be able to get to know each other well and to behave and to understand each other and to participate well with everybody. (Nancy)

The above extracts highlight the need for interventions that are non-verbal, creative and culturally relevant. Interventions that will assist the children with processing their wounding and with finding themselves.

5.4.7 Reflection on before interviews

What struck the researcher is how vulnerable the children are and how deeply the childcare workers and staff care for and are affected by the children. The needs of an NPO such as this are potentially overwhelming and working in such an environment is emotionally challenging. Childcare workers reported how they are called to restrain themselves and not to react badly to difficult behaviour:

... the adults that I grew under ... how patient they were ... then you need to apply that kind of skill ... they have got so much energy that you cannot bear with ... sometimes you don't want to answer those questions ... they are stupid questions ... (Tim)

The childcare workers provide protection, shelter and nourishment to the children and it is evident that they as childcare workers also require support and debriefing to keep

functioning effectively in their very demanding roles. The emotional toll is expressed in the following extracts:

It is exhausting. And it affects me. It disturbs me, the plan of the day ... to be involved to be part of whatever issue that we need that needs to be addressed ... it's exhausting. (Zane)

I feel down ... let down ... if I am angry I try to hide it from them ... the self-control... I need to be condensed because they are looking to me. (Sam)

I feel I can cry sometimes but I do pray. I am sticking to my praying ... it worries me ... they won't spend the rest of their lives here ... they have to go back to their homes ... we need to help them with their behaviour ... to change their behaviour. (Con)

Overwhelming needs require support and intervention and the need for containment and expression is considerable, not only for the children but also for the adult childcare staff.

5.6 DESCRIPTION OF HEALING IN AFTER SANDPLAY INTERVIEWS

Second interviews with adult childcare staff provide insight into their observations of the children's behaviour, mood and response to the SP activity. Childcare staff did not experience the SP activity themselves nor did they see the SP room. In their roles as childcarers interacting with the children daily, they were asked for insight into the children's response to SP. They were asked about the children's behaviour, attitude to SP and mood during and after having attended six weekly sessions of SP. The theme of healing is reflected in the responses of the childcare participants to the children's experience of the SP activity. Table 5.3 illustrates the healing sub-themes.

Table 5.3

Healing Sub-Themes

Sub-themes of healing	Expressed as
Activated to play	Energy and desire to play, engagement in play and play at work
Cooperation and sharing	Willing to comply with others, helpfulness, sharing, less bullying and less fighting
Open and responsive to others	Communication with adults and other children, less reserved, more interaction, less aggressive, more receptive
Increased understanding and awareness	Consciousness and ego strengthening, learning and growth, increased tolerance of the world and others
Centring and grounding	Calmer, more composed, present and focused, relaxed, evidence of the self-system and being more content
Belonging	Together, family, kinship, adaptation, change, fitting in and the absence of fighting

Feedback from childcare staff is described as it relates to their observations and insight of the children's experience of the SP activity. The feedback from childcare workers is reported through the themes that emerged from the after interviews. The childcare staff indicated that they had not discussed with each other the SP activity as they work to a shift system and the after interviews were conducted the day after the sixth and final SP session.

5.6.1 Sub-theme 1: Activated to play

The children responded positively to the SP activity. Notably, their participation in SP activated a desire to play and energy for play. This release or activation was noticeable for childcarers. The children's enjoyment and connection with the activity ignited in

them the urge to play and to properly engage in play. These extracts from childcare staff describe the children's collective response to SP:

Ja, they really fell in love with the activities ... I remember the other day, one of the kids was actually upfront helping me to get the other kids because I think she fell in love with whatever is happening.... when is ... coming in ... oh, I want to go and play with the toys... (Tim)

... to be creative and to express their thoughts ... they were very happy ... when you came, they were ready to go and be part of the sandplay ... (Zane)

They enjoy everything about the sandplay. (Tracy)

They like it because they told me they doing something nice. They said that to me ... they enjoy it. (Mary)

... it looked like they were queuing up to attend basically. So that for me looked like something they were finding positive. They wanted to engage in or participate... they were keen, they enjoyed it. (Lyn)

... they thought it was fun. They weren't resistant. (Jane)

... they were looking forward to doing it. They're not avoidant. (Jane)

Zane, Tim and Lyn notice new energy in the children:

... after the session ... just to make an example or a picture. You know, when the cattle have been in the kraal⁸. When you open the gate for them. They get out, they jump and that's what I've noticed especially with Triangle and his sister, Circle. They will always come out so happy from the session, the sandplay. Ja, that is one thing that I've noticed. (Zane)

... there was a positive energy behind the sand therapy because the child was running calling them come, come, come.... As an adult I could see that oh they like it. (Tim)

⁸A kraal is an enclosure for cattle and sheep.

... they were keen, they were excited to me, that's what it looked like. Yeah, full of energy. That was before. And then afterwards, their mood was, I would say, energised ... maybe thoughtful ... (Lyn)

Tim indicates his thoughts and understanding of the children's reaction to SP as they build their stories in the sand week to week. As he sees it, their "need" to continue with the story that they are creating in the SP room is evident. This is possibly what drives them to want to play:

... while we are talking about the mood ... I think they started to see the need or to feel that actually, I need to go there ... then they say well, this family will visit this family next week. And then, they can't wait now until next week that family is visiting this one. And then they conclude whatever they conclude. (Tim)

Nancy reflects on how the children plan and discuss their sand creations with each other. Suggesting the SP continues beyond the SP room:

... excited then talk about it till late ... discuss what is happening here ... they said they build so many things like ah, they were talking alone ... they were discussing about what they were making with their sand ... they told me that each and everyone has their own thing to make. They are not working as a group ... (Nancy)

The release of energy and the desire to play is a significant change in the children. Before SP they had not played in the same way since they started SP. Childcare staff attribute this positive re-connection and change in their play to the SP activity:

They like to play together. Especially the smaller ones. They play together and they get along, that's what I noticed. ... they were not good at playing together before. Now, they're good at playing together. That is what I have noticed. So, since they started this sandplay, they are now good. Even to talk to each other, they talk to each other in words. (Tracy)

They are now able to play well with each other rather than before. They can able to share their toys with each other ... before they used to argue and fights for the toys but now they know how to play together and share. (Nancy)

... because they like to play with the puzzles. They play with the cars. Ja. And do the drawings ... after when they came here ... (Mary)

... I want to go and play with the toys ... they fell in love with the activity more especially interacting with different toys, different types of toys. Think that has given them another insight of life. Another perspective. (Tim)

Triangle is more active than before ... but playing you see ... he is enjoying what he is doing ... (Sam)

Furthermore, the value and function, the essentialness of play as acknowledged by childcare staff. Sam and Con articulate the essential function and value of play as they describe the children's changed, activated play behaviour:

... recently they are more open with their dolls like they're playing the mother, the house mother. Recently that's what I noticed all over the grounds you'll find their dolls, all that. Like they are making groups. We were visiting house Bani, we are visiting Square's house. You're visiting Circle's house like we are preparing some kind of food for the visitors.... that's different ... they used before to play with their dolls. But it's like they're taking it seriously. This place is mine. Here's my house. This table, outside toilet. Ja, it's like they're cooking now. Serious. (Sam)

Con expresses his thoughts on the children's experience of SP, and the learning function in it for them:

I think for them it's like a game. It's a learning game. It's a game, it's very funny for them. And, at the same time they're learning on it. (Con)

Con also describes a change that he observed in the children wanting to read books and to help the younger children read; especially after an SP session this was noticed:

They like to play with the books, especially in the dining halls and they like to help the younger ones.... the books help them, to show them. They are happy.

(Con)

Tim reflects on a series of interactions with the group of SP children after their final SP session. The children's persistence in requesting to play is unusual for them. They arrived several times to ask if they can play with toys that had been donated to the home. He indicates their strong interest and the need or urges they have to play. He had not before witnessed this level of interest in play by any of the children at the home:

... the group is coming here ... asking if they can play with the toys ... asking if they can use the toys ... I thought they were saying, you don't even have to know how to use them. We know how to use them. So, why don't you allow us? Because you could see when I was saying, no ... they were like haaibo! ... they didn't want to leave ... there is a huge interest. There is a huge interest. (Tim)

Tim reflects on the children returning to his office, again and again, to request to use the toys:

Maybe what they did for the last three days after the sandplay stopped, which is basically coming into my office asking if they could play or if they could have the toys. It speaks loud. Maybe it says to them, we want to carry on with the toys? Ja. (Tim)

5.6.2 Sub-theme 2: Cooperation and sharing

The second sub-theme of healing that emerged from the interviews is cooperation and sharing. Cooperation and sharing suggest a willingness to work together, to help and to give some of what I have. This indicates capacity. Childcarers notice that the children are more cooperative than they were with each other and with the adult staff.

In addition, they help one another as well as the other younger children and they are sharing. Cooperation is thereby reflected in being willing, helping, sharing and also by the noticeable reduction in bullying and fighting amongst each other:

... they're becoming more cooperative. And they, they easily now engage with other children ... (Zane)

... they cooperate, they work as a team ... they have been a team, each and every child participate in this activity. (Con)

Circle will come out not being so cheeky or pushy. She just comes out.... she'll join in and see what's going on instead of ... impulsive, acting on feeling emotions ... and grabbing. She comes out a little bit less doing that. (Jane)

I noticed Circle and Diamond in the kitchen for their cleaning performance, they like to help in the kitchen, wash dishes. Helping the cook to prepare, cooking things ... Triangle, he is doing his washing, he helps washing his clothes and making the cars, with wire and kites. Yes, I noticed those things. And the behaviour has start to change in Triangle. (Con)

... he sees himself as an adult now because what I have noticed he likes to help the younger one ... helping him on his shoes with the shoelaces ... waking him up ... they go together to bath ... (Sam)

Circle, she's always at my door asking if she can help me with something. (Tim)

Oval seemed to be so willing to meet her family members, especially her father ... there was a contact with her and the father ... I noticed that difference ... in general ... they're becoming more cooperative ... easily now engage with other children.... Diamond, willing to engage and to be helpful to both the staff and the other children. (Zane)

Tracy also indicates that the SP children spend more time with each other since the SP activity and that there is less arguing now:

They did not spend much time together ... and they argue, but now they spend a lot of time, not arguing all the time. (Tracy)

In addition, she mentions their willingness to interact with each other and that they want to play together:

...I think they are all, they are easy to interact with them. They are very good, they have time to play. They see a need of playing together. (Tracy)

Tracy describes the cooperation and sharing that she has noticed in the children since the SP activity:

Spend a lot of time together, watching TV together. Even sharing stories how they even help each other with school homework. They even sharing food maybe if someone is full, they are sharing. (Tracy)

Sharing is also illustrated in reflections from Mary and Nancy:

Because they now they like to share with other kids there's something that I noticed with that kids who came here ... (Mary)

I saw that they like to talk about what they were doing here. And they stay together and discuss it.... Talk about it till late.... They said they build so many things like ... they were discussing about what they were making with their sand. (Nancy)

Perhaps the ultimate indication for cooperation is the fact that there is less bullying and fighting and no reports of any untoward behaviour during the six weeks of SP:

... there's less bullying now, so far there is less of bullying ... they can even share the toys without any noise because sometimes being stuck there I need to speak to others defuse then they start fighting So, so far there's none of that. (Sam)

... the childcare workers interact mostly with the kids ... when they've seen something not good, they will bring it into my attention.... I was saying to you

I've never received any report regarding each of the kids that are attending the sand therapy. Even myself, I've never picked up anything. (Tim)

... even in our meeting there is not too much of bad behaviour report now.... No, so far the behaviour it is good.... All the children are behaving now. (Sam)

Con refers to the noticeable change in the sibling relationship of Circle and Triangle. There is a reduction in fighting between the brother and sister:

... they used to fight a lot ... Circle is older than Triangle but Triangle is more aggressive with his sister. But since they started this activity, they stopped. (Con)

5.6.3 Sub-theme 3: Open and responsive to others

Childcare staff reported that the children are more open and responsive to others. Being open and responsive requires the capacity to receive as well as the ability to give, to respond. Some children are reported as less reserved than they were whilst others are less aggressive and some are more assertive.

In short, the children's receptivity to engage and respond to others is evident as conveyed by adult interviewees:

... it's ... made them more responsive, open to what's going on.... Oval's ... a bit more connecting, and like, open to connecting. So she's more responsive, ... she's less withdrawn, she's more open ... Circle's a little bit more fitting in and Diamond is a bit more assertive.... I'm pleased because she was very passive. (Jane)

Nancy also reflects on a change in Oval:

Oval was the quiet one. But now she's easy, she talks. (Nancy)

Jane describes an interaction with Triangle after the sixth SP that was different:

... he always says no, he's got no problems. He's quite fine. He doesn't want to have a session with me.... and he came and sat down and spoke and told me his problems.... he was responsive and receptive. (Jane)

The children's communication with each other, as well as with staff, is improved. Nancy talks about how she would hear the children late at night discuss with each other their respective SPs. Discuss what they made and plan to make in the sand. Listening and sharing:

Excited then talk about it till late.... They said they build so many things like ah, they were talking alone ... (Nancy)

Sam's observations of SP and the effect on the children in terms of their receptivity to new things:

I think it is very interesting in terms of developing children as well. It opens up their minds, it opens, it brings up new chapters in their mind and in their daily lives. Ja. I think it is good for them. (Sam)

Sam also mentions improved communication with the children and the childcare staff:

... like who is not happy about something will come and they report to us that I am not happy about this and that. They know the proper channels now ... they are learning how to communicate with who at what time. (Sam)

Tim describes an interaction with Triangle after the final SP session that stood out for him in terms of Triangle's more lighthearted easy-going mood. He indicates that this ability to joke (to give and take) is a rare kind of interaction:

But the mood, his mood yesterday was amazing. For him doing those funny things, you know, making stupid jokes, things like that. I think his mood was in a very positive position. Yesterday, while the others were laughing, also making

a joke.... So that's one thing.... so lucky you know, to have that kind of a positive response. (Tim)

Nancy reflects on what she has noticed about some of the children in terms of responsiveness and openness to each other:

... they respect each other ... sing together, even tell stories ... with other children, I think they are all, they are easy to interact with them.... Circle is more open. She can share everything with us as careworkers. She even asks, ask me to come and play with them, to do some activities. Yes. (Nancy)

Zane's description of the differences in terms of responsiveness and openness noticed in some of the children:

... I saw the difference in some of them.... Diamond,... was a bit reserved, somehow. But I noticed that she was opening up lately. She was opening up and she was talking now more about her family. Something she didn't do before. The same with Oval ... so willing to meet her family members ... Circle, also became more of being open so as well, and so willing to, to wanting to help wherever her help is needed. Whereas before, she was reluctant, if you will ask her to do something. (Zane)

At the time of the SP study, Square was involved in her court case about her abuse. Zane reflects on her being more open and happier despite attending court on a number of occasions during the SP study period:

Square also, I think I could see the difference now that she was more open and more happier.... she was in a happy mood during the sandplay sessions. But at the same time, she has also been attending court cases concerning the case of her abuse, but she seems, during those weeks that she seemed more happier. I think she got a chance to meet him at court. (Zane)

Tim indicates how he has found Circle to be more open, less reserved and more confident:

... she is upholding herself now, she is more outspoken. She's more free than before she was more reserved. Now she's like ... more confident. (Tim)

Finally, Zane comments on what he noticed about the children being willing to communicate and engage:

... they are so happy they were jumping around ... talking to us, they'll say something you will notice the child is happy and is willing to talk to just to say something to somebody. That is what I noticed to all of them. (Zane)

5.6.4 Sub-theme 4: Increased understanding and awareness

Understanding and awareness refer to increased consciousness and ego strengthening, the capacity to comprehend and interact in the world. It also suggests alertness, curiosity and interest. The childrens' display of increased awareness and understanding is reflected in their discussions and actions with adults and with each other. In addition, their ability to learn, incorporate and acquire increased understanding and knowledge. SP is a learning experience for the children and the staff. Opening their eyes to new perspectives and increasing their awareness of themselves, the world, and others. Evidence of growth. Tracy, Nancy and Tim reflect on the fact that the children are learning new things about each other and themselves:

I think it's they are affected very good, it was perfect.... To know each other.... If there's something is maybe the child is bothering they come and tell us there's something, they are open.... They were happy and excited to learning new things. (Tracy)

I noticed that they like to play with the sand. Because I think it's teaching them different things and teach them how to concentrate on doing their own things. (Nancy)

... so that has given them another perspective in life. ... something to help them to plan their lives. (Tim)

Sam indicates an increase in understanding in the children for performing their daily chores before playing or engaging in activities:

... and now they've got that understanding to that what are the chores that they need to do before they can think of anything like play or activity. (Sam)

Circle and Triangle, the siblings, also appear to have acquired increased curiosity, understanding and awareness. Circle by expressing herself verbally more than before and Triangle by showing interest in how cars work. Before the study commenced Circle was discussed as possibly not being a suitable candidate for SP as she has cognitive and learning difficulties (poor verbal skills). On the other hand, Triangle is very capable academically, possibly gifted:

I have seen some enlightenment though.... I know Circle, when it comes to her coordination, she's not good ... but the fact that she, like now she's very verbal, we are asking ourselves is it's because she's soon ... becoming a teenager ... or if it's the result of this programme, but she's like, very outspoken. She can even crack a joke.... I've observed those changes during the course of the sand therapy. (Tim)

Triangle's curiosity and interest in how cars work are seen as a significant shift by Tim who describes a conversation he had with Triangle:

... we had a very exciting conversation with him. I was I've never had such a deep conversation with Triangle.... he asked me ... What makes a car to, to move or go?... So I thought that was a very deep question because I had to answer with my mind connected to tell him exactly why the car is moving.... He hasn't asked such questions before. (Tim)

Zane observes that the activity helps the children to process and develop an understanding of what has happened to them:

I think from what I've observed is that they come to terms with what has happened in their lives and especially with the family, the relationship with the family members. It makes that difference.... they come to terms with what has happened.... seemingly they want to more to be in contact with their families.... I think the fact that they are on their own each one is on his or her own. By playing it's expressing something from inside, some emotion, some emotions.
(Zane)

In response to a question about why he would recommend SP as an activity for children, Con responds by indicating that he has noticed that the thinking ability of the children has improved, which not only develops them but also helps the childcare workers:

It stimulates their thinkings, their brain will grow up quickly and it helps us, childcare workers, for us to do it easy. It will be easy for us. (Con)

Childcare staff indicated that they have learnt and acquired new knowledge and insight as a result of the children's involvement in the SP. They learnt about a new creative activity of which they were previously unaware and through this exposure they had the opportunity to consider the children and their role as childcare workers. Staff observed the children's response to experiencing this new activity and had the opportunity to reflect on the children in new ways and to consider carefully their observations of the children's experience of SP. Their understanding and insight had grown:

... it's been eye-opening, okay because I didn't know about sandplay therapy before all of this ... it's quite thought-provoking. There's lots, lots of things to think about, and potentially, I think there could some positives that come more positive that come out of it ... (Lyn)

For me, it was an eye-opener ... then when now I heard the children ... when I engaged with the children, I interacted with them, just to hear what is going on. They told me, then I thought ... they must be enjoying it ... the toys and the sand ... (Zane)

Sam reflects on SP as a safe activity. For him who is terrified of snakes, this is comforting:

It is indoors. You know ... for me I think it is safer for them and more convenient. Because there are not risk of like the reptiles outside there like I have mentioned as I am also very scared of you know. They are very safe ... I think it is very interesting ... I enjoyed it I can tell you. Even for myself ... (Sam)

Nancy reflects on how it has been helpful for her to know the children are experiencing SP:

It's helped me to know that children are happy because they've experienced some kind of games that they didn't know. (Nancy)

Tim reflects on feeling replenished from being a part of the SP study, and Tracy and Sam indicate an interest in participating in SP themselves:

... I feel honoured ... contributing where I can contribute and get an opportunity to speak my mind in terms of what I have observed ... I feel refreshed. (Tim)

I wish I was a part of the sandplay, but unfortunately I was not, maybe next time? I would like to join you and see what the sandplay is and what you do there. What you teach the children. I would enjoy it to get a chance to see what's happening. (Tracy)

I enjoyed it I can tell you. Even for myself, because I think I lost an opportunity. Because if I was here, I was going to sit here and see how they are doing this. I am missing an opportunity ... it is for the first time ... for myself ... (Sam)

Jane reflects on her increased knowledge of SP and interest in doing SP with the children. Con realises a deeper insight into his role as a childcare worker:

What I know is theoretical, essentially, and it can only do a lot of good... processing emotions and these children all come from hectic backgrounds and this is a way of processing them.

So your unconscious issues your unconscious stuff can only emerge here symbolically and I just think that's so valuable ... interesting and I'm dying to know feedback ... I would like to be able to do it, you know, and be involved in it with the children. (Jane)

To see myself how I take care of these ... children. If there is anything needed to be done so it will be easy for me.... shows that I'm with the children all of the time.... have to know them ... (Con)

5.6.5 Sub-theme 5: Centring and grounding

Centring and grounding are indicated by the children's ability to focus and concentrate in the present and by their behaviour being more aligned and appropriate and of them being calmer, anchored and secure, sensible and reasonable. Signs of the healing self as displayed by self-regulatory actions and balance as it relates to the ego (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021; Weinrib, 2004). This includes composure, a more relaxed less hyped state and them being content to perform daily chores and to help each other. Peaceful and less warring. Before Tim was asked any questions in the interview he volunteered that at the staff meeting when they were discussing that the sandplay was coming to an end there was agreement that a shift has occurred. Tim expresses his preliminary thoughts on this difference in the children as follows:

... the kids that were coming to the therapy. There is something that is happening in their lives. So I can't wait to sit down with the therapeutic team and ask if they observed any new things more especially from those kids ... but each time I interact with them, they're different. I am not buying your eyes but there's something new, something is happening, something different. (Tim)

A feature of being grounded and centred is the ability to be present, to concentrate and focus on the task at hand. Lyn, Con, Zane and Jane speak about the children's increased ability to focus and concentrate:

Maybe their ability to focus a little bit more ... that's what I'm seeing... maybe it's the focus, calm, I'm just feeling that a lot of the time, just less, definitely less, sort of, I don't want to say, aggression but maybe less friction, less friction between ... whatever's going on. (Lyn)

... before there used to be a lot of complaints about these children but since almost a month and a half they didn't say anything. (Con)

To be happy presupposes contentment which in turn suggests grounding and balance. A state of happiness implies that there is the freedom to be happy and not to be burdened. Zane comments:

... there is a difference ... after the sessions of the sandplay, they are almost outside in general, the children now their behaviour has changed. They are more happy, happier than before. (Zane)

Mary comments that she thinks the children feel happy and good when they are busy with SP. Con talks about how SP helps the children with their mood:

... they feel happy and good here. (Mary)

It helps the children's mood. It's very useful to them... I wish they if they can practice this activity all the time. (Con)

When asked how SP has affected the children Tracy talks about happiness and being more open (receptive). Jane reflects that the children are less tense and hyped:

They are always happy. They are always happy. If there's something is maybe the child is bothering they come and tell us there's something... they are more open. (Tracy)

... I see them coming out a bit more relaxed. (Jane)

Zane identifies the opportunity for expression as helping the children to feel more accepting and grounded and Con refers to the effect he thinks SP has had on the children's ability to adapt and find balance, thereby capacitating them:

... it helps them to come to terms with their emotions, for whatever has happened in their lives ... I think they were able to express themselves during sandplay sessions, they were able to express themselves in whatever they were doing.... on its own,... expressing or expression of the emotion makes that difference ... (Zane)

... it's easy for them to balance their life.... to adjust the situation.... its helped the child to do the things by him or herself. (Con)

Jane's feedback about the children and the sandplay activity was the most guarded of the childcare staff. However, she indicates in the extract below that the children are a bit calmer and more integrated as a result of SP. Her feedback is significant due to her professional insight, her caution and her desire to reflect accurately what she saw in the children concerning their experience of sandplay:

... a little calmer, perhaps a little bit more stable, stable is not the right word, perhaps a little bit, calmer and they are more centred, a bit more themselves, who they really are. (Jane)

Tim's view that sandplay offers the children a new way of seeing and doing things suggests that the activity has given the children the opportunity to show up for themselves, thereby unlocking their creative (fundamental or true self) capacity:

Let me try to find the better words to use ... the experience has brought them maybe another purpose of living because ... with the toys which could trigger the reality.... Maybe they see soldiers as I don't know, maybe cruel people. But now when they are playing with soldiers,... see himself or herself as a commander, now giving instruction to the soldier. So that's a totally another new experience ... a new version of doing things. (Tim)

In addition, Tim's reference to Square's court case and how she coped despite the onerous nature of such a case is significant.

His surprise is that she retained herself in such a process and that she has continued to be playful by joking, wanting to play and teasing him about his daughter, her friend. Despite the court case, Square has remembered who she is:

Square, she has been going through a rough time because of her court case. ... but she hasn't lost herself. Often she has been in my office well wanting the toys and wanting to ... seeking my attention.... She's a good friend with my daughter. They are going to the same school. Sometimes she will be just teasing me about how smart she is. She has passed this subject and my daughter didn't do well. Things like that ... you've got your daughter but I am here you know. You are looking after me too. (Tim)

References that suggest the self-regulatory system in operation are indicated by an increase in confidence and by the children identifying themselves with the SP activity. The strengthening of ego and identity is reflected in the improved confidence and the building of houses, the construction of homes with which to identify. Places to find shelter, protection and nourishment. Homes are where people live wherein they are contained and fed. At home, people can usually relax and are free to express themselves authentically. Con notices the increase in confidence, Tim refers to the children identifying themselves with the SP activity and Mary and Sam reflect on the children playing and making houses:

... more confidence. They've got more confidence, more confidence. (Con)

... I think during the course, the mood changes, they started now to identify themselves with the programme ... the programme started to have the meaning ... (Tim)

The children tell Mary that they are building houses in the sand and Sam observes that the children visit each other's constructed and imagined homes and how they prepare and plan their visits with one another. My place and your place:

... because I asked them what you were doing there they said they make some houses like houses with the sand. (Mary)

... they're playing the mother, the house mother ... we are visiting Square's house. You're visiting Circle's house like we are preparing some kind of food for the visitors ... it's like they're taking it seriously. This place is mine. Here's my house. This is the table, outside toilet ... (Sam)

Tim reported that for him the change in Circle is most noticeable. He articulates this change as Circle being more confident, of having found herself:

Circle has started being, I think, started to find herself... how she is upholding herself now, she is more outspoken. She's more free than before, she was more reserved ... more confident. (Tim)

Contentment, groundedness and balance are now seen in the children and they are described as being more easy-going. Contentment and groundedness are also evident by the absence of arguing and crying previously mentioned by Tracy and Con. Tracy noticed that the children are friendlier, less threatened and that her job has been made easier because the children are easier:

They're friendly, they're friendly to everyone.... It is easy to play with them. Easy to talk. Easy to do everything with them. (Tracy)

Lyn noticed that the children are calmer and more relaxed while Con refers to the fact that they are happy when they know they will be going to the sand and that they organise themselves to get there:

... I don't know if it's due to the sandplay therapy but I found them a lot calmer and relaxed....less of a frenzy. (Lyn)

... on the day they are doing the sand, they feel happy, they just they organise themselves. (Con)

5.6.6 Sub-theme 6: Belonging

Features of belonging include acceptance, inclusion and kinship. It is about being a part of something. In this study, belonging is highlighted with references to family, togetherness, teamwork, adaptation and the absence of misbehaviour. In the after interviews, these words are used and repeated by childcare staff when they describe shifts and changes in the children. Childcare staff refer to the increase and improvement in the togetherness of the SP children. Tracy and Con notice the togetherness and how the children work and play well together, as a team:

... they play together, very well. (Tracy)

... they cooperate, they work as a team. I think so, they have been a team, each and every child that participates in this activity. (Con)

In some cases, children who previously had played alone are now playing together with the others. Nancy and Jane illustrate this by reflecting on Oval as an example of a child who has begun to play with others:

Oval ... she likes to play alone but since they've started this she is now with the other girls. They can play together.... most of the time they like to play together so when they go to the trampoline all together. When they play the dolls they are together. (Nancy)

... she's relaxed more and she's more participative ... more joining in and to feel more connected to the home. (Jane)

Another characteristic of belonging is reflected in the concept of family. Family is the first place of belonging in the world, it is home. In the context of the participant children, it is also the place where the wounding occurred. When the children start identifying with the children's home as a place where they belong, it suggests a shift towards healing and moving away from woundedness. Tim and Sam highlight the deepening of family bonds amongst and with the children:

For me, I can see that, that family bond now amongst them, not that there was not that family but now it's like they know, like I was making an example of

Triangle helping the little one. There's like he has got that understanding now that okay even though we are not biological but we are brothers. He is my brother, you know that sense of family thing ... it's helping. (Sam)

Tim reflects on a conversation he had with Triangle that struck him as being significant. Triangle showed an interest in cars and started discussing this with Tim; they had never interacted in this way before. For Tim, this conversation felt like he was being a father to Triangle. Here are two different extracts concerning the same conversation as relayed by Tim:

But for me, it was more a father-child kind of a question. It's all about cars. So it's more like now I can feel that I am his father because now I had to explain these things to him ... that was interesting.... I really loved that because most of the time when I interact with him it's about soccer, soccer, soccer, school. (Tim)

... Triangle we had the conversation that I just shared with you. That was great for me. I'm happy that I wonder if he sees me as the father because that will be so great for me if he really sees me as the father, you know, ... (Tim)

In the extract below Tim describes a touching scene whereby Oval's father visited her at the home and they played soccer together:

... Oval ... something interesting ... her father visited her ... something beautiful that I've never seen again in my life, more especially from the black community. Oval and her father was playing soccer on the field, running around together, you know, and I was like, Wow! Sure. What is this? And, she was laughing. A very beautiful smile. (Tim)

Sam also reflects on the belongingness of the children as ascribed by the concept of brother and sisterhood, family:

You can feel that brother, sisterhood thing among themselves. Maybe there is a button that needed to be pressed and now maybe we've managed to press that button. They know now that, okay we belong together now. (Sam)

To become a part of something, to belong, requires adaptation, adjustment. On one level you can belong to a biological family or a school but not necessarily feel like you belong. Not being able to adapt, being rigid is static and suggests stuckness whereas adaptation requires flexibility and is transforming. Further to this, adaptation is illustrated by a shift or change, a difference that has occurred. Jane and Con refer to Circle and the shifts they have observed in her that suggest adaptation, settling in and the beginning of belonging:

... she's a little bit more fitting in. (Jane)

She was crying a lot before but now she's, not that much. (Con)

Tim's referred to Diamond settling into the environment of the children's home whereas before there were some problems with her adjusting. The first extract sums up how she was when she arrived and the second extract describes how she is after the completion of the SP activity:

... when she comes here she had some problems. Slowly I think she's adapting to our system. She's also adapting to some of the rules, terms and conditions that we have put in place. (Tim)

Diamond at first when she comes in, she was reserved. Now she talks and she was not comfortable with the language, isiZulu. Now she says whatever she thinks she needs to say. So she just says whatever that she wants to say ... even it's in her language. She's isiXhosa, she can still speak her accent, the accent is different from our accent ... it's more a Xhosa kind of an accent mixing with isiZulu. (Tim)

In addition, less acting out suggests the children are more content and more settled and that they no longer need to test the environment to the extent that they were. This suggests that they feel like they belong:

...when they come here, they want to see that if this place is the same as the place where they come from, or the environment, or even the people ... if at home I've been beaten by my parents ... these people beat me as well ... to see if you're going to insult me, are going to beat me. Then slowly but surely they'll then see ... this one is different. (Zane)

In the second interview, Zane reflects on how being able to express themselves has helped the children to come to terms with their reality, perhaps thereby not needing to test the environment as much. Acceptance is the start of feeling like this might be a place to belong:

... for me, it helps the children to express themselves as I've said before, it helps the children to come to terms with ... whatever has happened in their lives ... and with the facts of what is happening in life ... this sandplay sessions have helped them ... made a difference in their lives. (Zane)

The absence of misbehaviour or acting out suggests a realisation that this place is different from that place and this is where I belong right now:

I can say ... even in our meeting there is not too much of bad behaviour report now. It's like during the weekend they ask how was the weekend. Ja, the weekend was normal... not like that serious behaviour like that too much bullying or what. No, so far the behaviour is good. Seriously. (Sam)

Yes, before there used to be a lot of complaints about these children but since almost a month and a half or a month they didn't say anything. (Con)

So, with the kids that are coming here, we have never had any behaviour issues since we have, you have started. Nothing was brought to my attention because we meet every day to discuss each child. So for the kids that are coming in here, I've never had any case.... I've never received any report regarding each

of the kids that are attending the sand therapy... even myself, I've never picked up anything. (Tim)

5.7 RESEARCHER'S REFLECTION ON HEALING

The psyche's urge and capacity to self-regulate when provided with a free and protected space is reassuring (D. M. Kalf, 1996). Reading about it is one action. Seeing it work and being a witness and hearing feedback that supports what has been experienced and read is gratifying. In a sense, the circle is completed. At the outset a persistent concern existed that six weeks would not be sufficient time for an effect to be noticed, coupled with not knowing how the SP would be experienced by the group of children in their particular context. However, it is as the research indicates. When allowed to process and restore harmony the psyche makes full use of that chance. Seeing the SP processing taking place week by week is one thing. Hearing evidence of visible shifts and differences in behaviour and mood as witnessed by childcare workers is something else. Regulation and healing take place naturally and are quickened and more noticeable when the psyche is provided with an environment that facilitates and encourages the process (Weinrib, 2004). The role of a conducive environment is paramount. It is rewarding to hear stories, anecdotes and insights from the childcare staff of the children that participated in the study. Observing their insight and realisations unfolding during the interviews was heartening. Some immediately indicated that they had noticed positive differences in the children, whilst others gradually came to realise during the interview what had been happening with the children and what they had been seeing. The interviews encouraged them to think about and to describe what they had noticed in the children's behaviour and mood.

5.8 CONCLUSION

Chapter Five describes the findings of the study and the themes that emerged from the interview data. Two of the three main themes are highlighted in Chapter Five, namely wounding themes in before interviews and healing themes in after SP interviews with adult childcare staff. Before interviews confirmed the main theme of vulnerability, wounding and the overwhelming needs of the children. Woundedness and signs of healing are also reflected in the descriptions of sand scenes and this was

described in Chapter Four. All themes are reflected in interviews as well as in SP but each theme is pertinently linked with the three main sources of data; before and after interviews and to SP.

The final chapter is a discussion of the themes as reflected in the children's SP and as emerged in the before and after interviews with adult participants. Findings will be further detailed, considered, discussed and elucidated in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapters Four and Five provide descriptions of the research findings. Insights into the making of the SP images as well as detailed descriptions of each child's completed SP scene are covered in Chapter Four. Chapter Five describes the interviews with adult childcare staff as well as the themes featured in both SP and the interviews. The main focus of the final chapter is the discussion and synthesis of the findings, limitations and recommendations for the implementation of silent group SP as well as further research. This chapter summarises, elaborates and links the findings with the literature as the aims and objectives of the study.

6.2 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

Chapter One described the personal motivation and rationale of the study, the research problem and objectives, the theoretical approach, the design and methodology as well as a general overview of the content. The intention was to explore SP with early adolescents in a resource-poor environment. The researcher intended to investigate how the children responded to the activity as a group and as individuals. In addition, feedback and insight from adult childcare workers on the children's behaviour, demeanour and attitude to SP was gained. The literature on the subjects of early adolescence, SP and the resource-constrained context was presented in Chapter Two. The theoretical approach that informed this study was also discussed and is based on the theories of Carl Jung and SP as developed by Dora Kalff and subsequent SP authors. The concept of providing a free and protected temenos space is pertinent as well as the psyche's tendency to gravitate towards healing in a conducive environment (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Zoja, 2018). The research design and methodology were discussed in Chapter Three and a qualitative case study was selected as the best way to conduct the research.

Data were generated using photographs of completed sand scenes, observation notes, interviews (with adult childcare staff), audio recordings, verbatim transcriptions, and reflections. Furthermore, a model for providing SP in a children's home was established and applied. Generated data were analysed to identify patterns and themes from SP sessions and interviews. Photographs of completed sand scenes, observations notes, as well as reflections on the SP sessions, further contributed to the processing and analysis of data. The findings include photographs of completed sand scenes described in Chapter Four as well as accounts from interviews with adult childcare staff in Chapter Five. These findings are further illuminated and discussed in this chapter as they pertain to themes and research objectives including the answering of the research questions namely; how do early adolescents from a resource-poor environment respond to SP as an intervention, what does a comparison of each early adolescent participant's first and final SP show and what is observed in the behaviour and demeanour of early adolescent participants?

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE WOUNDING AND OVERWHELMING NEEDS

Interviews conducted with childcare staff before the SP sessions give insight into the children's vulnerability and wounding and their resource-poor context. Accounts of the children's background, behaviour and demeanour contextualise the study. Five sub-themes of wounding were identified and underline the overwhelming needs of the children and the effect on the organisation. The themes are vulnerability and wounding, constrained resources of both systems and support, the need for change, and culturally appropriate and accessible intervention as well as unknown knowledge of SP.

The first sub-theme of vulnerability and wounding highlights and dominates sand scenes from the initial SP session and corroborates reports by childcare staff. As such, the first sand image provides valuable insight into an individual's trauma and wounding (Ayres, 2016; Liu et al., 2021; Zoja, 2018). SP 1 highlighted threats, conflict and chaos, both in terms of the completed sand scenes and also by the countertransference feelings evoked in the researcher whilst observing the creation of the sand images. The frenzy with which miniatures were piled into baskets and the extent to which sand trays were loaded to capacity evoked feelings of overwhelmedness.

This countertransference experience of the other through oneself and oneself through the other is raw and is critical in understanding infant trauma and deprivation (Kowen, 2020; Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). The children's initial uncertainty about using all the miniatures, followed by their realisation that they were allowed to, resulted in frenetic overloading of baskets, taking as many miniatures as they could for their sand trays. This is an indication of the extent of their deprivation and their constrained resource environment and this behaviour is supported by South Africa's high rates of traumatic exposure, with domestic violence and abuse being one of the highest in the world (Van Westrhenen et al., 2019).

Prone figures indicate early wounding and profound harm when they are placed face-down in the sand (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). Neglect and isolation are depicted by unattended babies and unsupported lone figures evident in the children's early sand scenes. Threatening figures and buried miniatures suggest resistance or inability to deal with life issues (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). Split, divided scenes are a defence against overwhelming feelings and indicate a sorting out within oneself and from others (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). The above woundings are reflected not only in the children's sand scenes but also in their reported behaviour and demeanour. Accounts before SP of chaotic, overwhelmed, acting out behaviour include a propensity for violence (aggression, fighting and bullying), uncooperativeness, withdrawal and crying.

The children had never before been provided with so many toys. Toys are scarce in a resource-poor community. Conflicted and overwhelmed feelings of having all the miniatures available but not being sure that they may use them is felt by the researcher and observed in very full, chaotic sand scenes (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021; Zoja, 2018). As such, SP 1 highlighted and corroborated wounding themes, including the children's individual wounded backgrounds, the resource-poor setting and the fact that they had never experienced free and protected SP. This is further illuminated by the children checking to see if they were allowed to use all of the miniatures in the room, including the food miniatures.

The result of deprivation and neglect is reflected in early sand images and the constrained resources of the children's home are corroborated and reported. A lack of funding, cooperative support and development from governmental structures

reinforces the severity of a resource-poor environment. Limited capital and human resources make challenging work harder.

Vulnerability and overwhelmedness were further identified in the use of threatening and menacing figures in sand scenes. Dominating shadow figures represent aggression and danger. As such, snakes and dangerous wild animals depict threats or frightening events that endangered figures are unable to manage (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). Snakes and black animals are particularly feared by the children and by childcare staff. Initially, the children made a wide berth and jumped away from the toy snakes when they entered the sand room. The childcare workers also mentioned that snakes are feared and considered dangerous as well as black animals and that the colour red symbolises blood and injury. Thus, snakes are disliked and feared; they have two aspects: creative and destructive and represent vital and least psychologically accessible instincts (Park, 2018). As such, snakes produce a powerful effect, are an emblem of the visceral world and the appearance of the snake implies the potential of newly-created energy, reminding us of instinctive life (Kim et al., 2021; Park, 2018). Snakes often appear in puberty when the transformation into adulthood reaches deeper layers in the psyche (D. M. Kalff, 1996). Notably, large, dominant snakes are used extensively in the early sand scenes while later sand images feature smaller snakes indicating a reduction in the threat and movement towards healing.

The need to try something new, the need for change and culturally appropriate intervention and support are pertinent for traumatised children and reported by childcare staff. The initial restraint shown in the first SP (checking that carte blanche was genuine) shows that free, non-directed play provided by SP is unknown and unfamiliar. This was supported by childcare staff affirming the uniqueness and the universal applicability of SP that touches the psyche beyond culturally defined borders and highlights the common archetypal foundations of the human experience (M. Kalff, 2019).

Further, as a non-threatening, non-verbal, contained and safe activity, SP is known to be an appropriate intervention for the treatment of trauma and wounding and for the development of resilience (Jang et al., 2019).

6.4 DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY OF SANDPLAY THEMES

SP highlights and addresses the main theme of the need for containment and expression. As an expressive, containing and holding activity SP both accentuates the need for containment as expressed by the children and also provides it. An additional temenos is offered in the creation of a designated SP room as well as in the SP activity itself. The themes illuminated by this creative activity are threats, conflict and chaos, the need for protection and containment, revealed vulnerability, progression and regression, uniquely creative together, and containment and activation of movement. The use of representative figures in SP supports wounding and healing themes. Initial symbolic representations associated with wounding are dominant in early sand images whilst later sand pictures depict representations that reflect healing themes. Added to this, both wounding and healing occur in the same scene, the extent to which either presides is significant. In the absence of verbalisations, SP authors assist with insight into the potential universal applications of different symbolic representations.

The chaotic frenzy of the first sand session is indicative of the ego's insufficient strength and its stage of development is reflected in scenes that mainly consist of animal and plant life (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). Defencelessness in early sand scenes was noticeable by prone figures, babies unattended, an accident, bombs lobbed into a sand tray and death reflected in graves and zombies while differences were starkly split. Danger and turmoil were marked by snakes, wild animals, army men carrying weapons, empty alcohol bottles, isolation and conflict. Wild animals represent the instincts that come to the surface when social (ego) control of the self degenerates while extinct and imaginary figures are predominantly used by children separated from their parents (Kim, 2018; Peters, 2018; Weinrib, 2004).

Universally symbolic, archetypal representations are portrayed in early sand scenes synonymous with children that are separated from their parents. Prone figures and dominant threats of shadow material (army/military men, snakes, black animals, the colour red, etc.) suggest insufficient ego strength (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021).

The completed sand images of SP 1 reveal and demonstrate threats, conflict and chaos (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). Dangerous animals and chaotic scenes dominate. Rigidity and division are noticeable and isolation and the need for containment are evident. Division and differentiation are reflected vertically; and horizontally by

distinguishing between the foreground, the less deliberate actions of the collective unconscious and the background, the more deliberate actions of consciousness (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). The process of making the sand pictures is crucial in further understanding the issues portrayed in the first scenes. In this instance, the extent of the children's deprivation by the filling of their trays, returning several times to the display to collect more miniatures. Scenes display the need for nurture and are noticeable by the food items packed into the tray. Even death is marked by slices of bread. Children asking for permission to take the fruit and vegetable miniatures is another standout as well as the children arriving in the sand room for the first time unsure and momentarily immobilised. Not only does the first sand construction show the inner issues and outer reality, it suggests the way to reaching higher levels of development (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Mitchell & Friedman, 2021).

In the second SP session, a deeper exploration of the psyche began and the need for containment and protection was illuminated. This is a recurring theme that was expressed by childcare staff, observed by the researcher in the SP sessions and depicted in sand images. It is unsurprising as the children have been brought to the children's home for temporary shelter and care; however, what is elucidated is the need for additional care, restraint and containment. Protection not just from their home background but also from the constant monitoring within the children's home. There is no privacy at the home, the children and their childcare workers are together 24/7 and the children's conduct is constantly monitored.

The appeal for containment is both from within and without as conflict and danger is experienced inside and outside, individually, communally, and in the world. The interplay of inner and outer within and without is experienced in never-ending concentric layers.

In SP 2 fences and division are evident and retreat, preservation and containment are featured. Fences protect, contain and preserve. Protection and containment of and from the limits as well as from the danger within and without. Retreating is a feature of self-preservation and is reflected in response to an attack. Preservation of special aspects is illustrated by the containment of a fire (a powerful chemical), food and water, a playful place, home and the sea. Thus containment is provided by ordering and enclosing different aspects. Fear of the fire inside and what might happen if it is not

contained and the need for additional containment is evident in a messy uncontained warzone that includes empty toob containers.

In addition, guarding and reinforcement of the preservation of the SP room was an important action in the protection of the sacredness of the activity, further illuminating the essential requirement of providing a conducive environment. As such, multiple layers of qualities of the temenos are experienced in the SP activity; including working in silence, being a part of a group, the presence of a witness and privacy within the children's home environment.

Vulnerability is disclosed in SP 3 by porous and non-existent fences exposing what lies inside. Individual themes include minimised danger and vulnerable people, prey facing a predatorial attack, no people present in the chaos, finding containment and a beautiful angel. The use of vegetative and sea symbols and the absence of human figures indicate processing at a preverbal archetypal, deep level that is different from the interactions with the outer world and everyday life (Kim, 2018; Weinrib, 2004). A sand scene has a pathway/bridge in the centre but as yet the path from the foreground to the background is not being used by people.

Another scene that also does not involve people but depicts new growth, as well as the prey animals facing up to the predatorial attack, indicates tolerance and resilience. In another sand scene, the only realistic human figure is a lone girl presenting eggs to a shell in which smaller shells are contained. An offering of nourishment to a contained vulnerability suggestive of a yearning and longing. A scene indicating that vulnerability needs to be contained in an upside-down world. Smaller more fragile shells are held within larger shells in both the unconscious and the conscious. One sand image in this theme reflects human figures, however, the people and the babies are noticeably isolated.

A numinous scene of an angel depicts vulnerability and suggests an awakening and connection with the self and the spiritual dimension (Faulstich, 2021; Medgyesi, 2021). The entire sand image is of an angel formation. Within the angel, is a sacred area and an angel figure looking at a flower together with Mary⁹. Angels are religious beings that act between God and humans; foretelling, guiding and protecting while flowers,

⁹ Mary is a figure from the Nativity collection that was on display.

being seed-bearing, are representative of the feminine and signify wholeness and an optimum stage of development (Park, 2019). A flower nestled within an earth-formed angel acknowledges feminine capacity and vulnerability and is an allusion to puberty. When something is broken it cracks, providing a way in and out like a seed cracks for new buds to spring. Thus vulnerability holds the potential to facilitate the processes of letting go, opening up, readiness to receive. People's biggest fears, secrets and desires are revealed in the presence of expressed need and wounding. Thus the transcendental quality of the numinous scene of feminine vulnerability.

Regression and progression are reflected with some scenes depicting more progression and others more regression. A forward-facing dragonfly, the development of three areas, re-ordering from the left, searching and exploring the limits, and primal carnage progression and regression. Within sand scenes, evidence of deeper searching, as well as a gaining of consciousness.

A forward-facing dragonfly signifies progression and a readiness to take off, suggesting an improved capacity to deal with the world. Dragonflies are expert fliers, they can fly straight up and down, hover and mate in the air. This dragonfly, which has primitive regressive instincts, is facing the human figures who are restrained by a line in the sand. Inner resourcefulness including the capacity for manoeuvrability faces forwards in the reality of the past, present and future. Insects carrying psychic threats of a primitive nature are sometimes associated with conception or fertility going back to Roman times and are an allusion to puberty (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015).

The emergence of a third aspect signifies progression where previously only two distinct parts were considered. The conception of a third indicates growth whilst a bright red frog suggests transformative capacity. Archetypal, instinctual and intelligent wisdom is represented by horses that are ready to descend from the background forwards. Regressive rigid ordering and structuring are necessary to manage awareness and every aspect is contained including threats, capacity for transformation, an ideal preferred home environment, wild animals, the sea and religious beliefs. A procession of movement from the unconscious to consciousness is taking place.

Searching and exploration have resulted in the centring of fantastical figures on top and around a hill. Added to this is the burying of a new aspect (a baby in a yellow baby

grow) together with a proclaiming bell suggesting insufficient strength to manage the announcement of the new aspect. Recognition of nourishment in the background, far away from the isolated mother carrying a baby on her back. One baby is buried and another is carried.

Regression to primal carnage is necessary to find answers for the way forward. Unknown old issues are represented and constellated by dinosaurs and dragons, counterposed with emerging formations of known wild animals. The back and forth process of regression and progression reflects searching for understanding.

Simply accepting what is in front of a person is not sufficient. It is necessary to descend into the unknown, feared, spaces that are potentially laden with answers. As such, disintegration precedes new integration (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021).

Individual creations made simultaneously in the group are reflected in feminine undulations, the construction of farmlands, protection by the military, a beautiful backdrop and differentiation of spirit and domestic. Sand images created individually in the group sessions are distinguishable and unique. An undulated landscape portrays qualities of the feminine enhanced by how the undulations were formed with deft and graceful movements. This is further illustrated by human babies and feminine figures, of wild cats carrying instincts and of people, some real and some fantastical. This image projects different parts of the feminine. New aspects lie at the foot of the Buddha (an area of enlightenment) which is in the centre of the scene and wild cats are converging on that mound. The wild cats are moving from the family area and two elephants and a horse are converging from within the archetypal space (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015).

A scene of dynamic engagement is in the construction of farmlands and is a powerful display of energy suggesting an increased ability to deal with the outer world (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). The use of water in the ploughing of a field is direct engagement with the unconscious through repetitive mechanical actions of tilling the earth. The supply of water from deep within the unconscious (reflected in a windmill and a wishing well) replenishes the creative construction process. In addition, the numbers two and four are repeated in this sand image which succeeds the main theme of the number three in the previous SP. Three signifies not only energy but also something sacred reinforced by the archetype of the Trinity and refers to a dynamic process (D. M. Kalf, 1998).

1996), while the transition from three to four represents a reorientation of psychic energies (Zoja, 2018). Two symbolise the opposites as well as the tendency to unity while four denotes wholeness (D. M. Kalff, 1996; Weinrib, 2004). As such, reinforcing new growth, development and internal shifts are taking place.

Protection by the military provides safety for the developing self to showcase boats in a colourful sea area in a square-round construction. In the protection detail around the self are realistic people holding hands, united. Human figures symbolise people in their everyday reality in the present, past and future (Kim, 2018). Creative use of the military to protect that which is sacred. Boats connote the feminine holding and carrying capacity while against a landscaped backdrop, the creative use of objects for containing and enclosing purposes is noticeable. The Binocular's strap magnifies and contains a fire on the right. A snake holds the source of nourishment in the forefront. Jewellery contains wild animals and an assortment of figures and a mass of food is contained by being piled up against each other. Designated containers like treasure chests, an upside-down glass and a birdcage are empty whilst objects not normally used for containment are utilised for this purpose.

In this theme, another image differentiates between the spirit and the domestic. Wild horses represent spiritual wisdom and power from the depths while contained domestic animals allude to the ordering and structuring that comes with increased awareness and understanding. Horses also symbolise sexual energies of the masculine and these are differentiated from the domesticated feminine energies of the various categories of farm animals, unsurprising given that puberty is pertinent (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021).

Each SP scene uniquely depicts inner processing. Being a part of the group does not detract from the creative processes of each individual. On the contrary, it is proposed that the group provides a sense of security and confidence in which to explore and process individual aspects. Each psyche undergoes its process of change within the group activity.

In SP 6 individual themes include abundance in the foreground, less division, balance, a convoy to the community, centring in a beautiful place and a pilgrimage of integration and wholeness. Abundant, brightly coloured nourishment is on display and contained in the forefront immediate to the sandplayer.

There was no need to ask if fruit and vegetables can be taken. A yellow cheese arrow points deliberately to the background where home/ego interests reside and wild animal instincts are contained. This suggests that trauma has slipped into the background as improvement in the psyche is brought about by dealing with more immediate problems (Toshio & Robin, 2019). The division between forefront and background commences at a pathway from unconsciousness where a man dressed in a black uniform is lying down. The man has been downed and is no longer preventing access, thereby opening up movement from the left. This final scene is in contrast with the first scene which screamed threats and danger, and the need for protection. Ordering and a diminishing of danger followed by the creation of a powerful image of a dragonfly facing forward preceded the illumination of the feminine, and the final scene depicts immediately accessible abundant nurture that suggests internal support is available.

In another story, there is less division and distinction in the final SP. In addition, the intensity of conflict is reduced with the two sides being evenly matched and movement is now possible from either side. New growth, recognition of vulnerability and strengthening have occurred. A very different depiction from the initial starkly split intense battle image. It would be interesting to see what image will be made after this one, should SP continue.

A convoy to the people shows a procession that begins from the animus area (the capacity for connection and relatedness) and moves towards the family and the domestic feminine (Weinrib, 2004). This is a committed procession of motor cars supported on either side by tractors and aeroplanes. The family community area that is being approached appears happy, safe and relaxed. The first scene created in this narrative was rigid and static, a bomb site. This was followed by two softer scenes indicating a loosening of the tight hold and thereafter a regression back to chaos followed by a careful re-ordering. This final journey to the community and the people speaks of a desire and readiness to connect, relate and belong.

In another final image, centring is beginning to establish amidst the continued theme of the need for containment. Symbolised by the use of various types of containers from the first to the last sand scene. Most notably brass vases/jars, a symbol of the feminine receptive principle out of which sharp porcupine quills protrude (Kwak, 2019; Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). One vase has fallen over and the porcupine quill remains inside

it, next to Wonder Woman who has also fallen over which suggests that the fantasy is undefendable, not imagined, it is real. The psyche's movement is predominantly from the left, shaping into a circular formation in the central area of the sacred space. The first scene was overwhelming by the number of miniatures it contained and by the chaotic presentation; however, each figure and object is an important aspect in the process and the theme of the need for containment is strongly carried throughout this particular narrative. From overwhelmedness to messiness, a showing of the self, to the proclamations on the hill followed by a beautiful landscape, an encounter with the self and a circular area taking shape in the final centring image amidst the detritus in the surrounds. The containing/receiving feminine vessels remain, some upside down, empty and closed and others have fallen over, whilst some are upright and continue to hold sharp porcupine quills.

In the final image of the oldest group member, a numinous scene repeats a depiction of the self in the form of both head and heart. This is by the formation of a circular head and a square heart/torso of a person. The head representing the unconscious is encapsulated by spiders (threats of a primitive nature). The torso or heart region and the limbs that enable movement represented by motor cars are on the side of consciousness. A centring of head, heart and activation of mobility for integration. Horses comprise the processional movement around the head hill; an illustration of sexual energies from a pubertal 14-year-old girl. The square shape demarcated by seashells and butterflies contains a shiny heart area nestled within. As such, conscious grounding is occurring on the right where the land vehicles constitute the feet and move from the family area (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015). A figure of eight in the form of movement is underway. Clockwise from the left and anti-clockwise from the right, a crossing-over convergence of movement. This second numinous image repeats the connection of head and heart by movement and by a bridge of butterflies, representing the transformative capacity of the neck, between the head and the heart.

Previous sand images began with rigid isolated scenes, followed by a numinous angel and thereafter a regressive plunge into primal carnage and thereafter a re-ordering and distinguishing. The identification of aspects and capacities indicates an opening of pathways and resourcefulness and suggests the healing process is underway. The emergence of the self, evidently more than once during the six weeks of SP and the numinosity of the displays is significant and encouraging for positive development. In

two of the six scenes, the self constitutes the entire sand scene. The final image portrays movement towards integration and wholeness.

6.5 REFLECTION OF SANDPLAY THEMES

The first sand images were overwhelming both in their creation and in their completion. Chaotic scenes of loaded trays indicate wounding and deprivation, as well as split, rigid and static scenes. At the outset, SP was new and unknown and there was no indication as to how it would be received. As an unknown experience, the first session was potentially overwhelming both for the researcher and the children. That the children became absorbed in the creation of their sand images quickly is remarkable and points to the magnetism of SP. In addition, the privacy and containment of the SP room within the children's home added to the conducive environment. Sand sessions started with themes of brokenness and wounding followed by a process of absorption and engagement. By the third SP, a shift in energy was noticeable as well as a variation in the content (chosen miniatures), placement and the creation process. This suggests an unlocking of energy and pathways that facilitate exploration, access and testing out of different actions and depictions. As the threats were identified and acknowledged they were soon thereafter set aside for further exploration. Ever deepening searching led to patterns of disintegration and reintegration (Fordham, 1985). Declarations made were followed by a descent into the depths, displayed in chaotic, threatening and primal scenes. Thereafter a re-ordering and a preview of the next phase. Wounding themes displayed in earlier sand scenes are reflective of animal-vegetative and warlike stages of ego development (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021). Later sand images portray ordinary people in common settings suggesting ego strengthening and improved social ability (D. M. Kalff, 1996).

The difference in SP 1 and SP 6 images is noticeable and significant. Essentially, adaptation to the outer world and the collective is evidenced in sand images and accounts of healing reported by childcare staff.

The role of SP as the mother is thought-provoking. The unconditional reception and accommodation of a free and holding space for exploration is powerful and allows expression that steadily develops into growing confidence recognised in the quiet, ever-widening smiles of each child. Re-connection with the nurturing mother serves a refreshing and restorative function.

6.6 DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY OF HEALING THEMES

Psychological healing is an emotional, non-rational phenomenon and healing and integration themes are supported and enabled by deliberate regression and discouragement of rational thinking (Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004; Zoja, 2018). Themes include activated play, cooperation and sharing, open and responsive to others, increased understanding and awareness, centring, grounding and belonging.

One of the most noticeable aspects observed and reported by childcare staff is that SP activated in the children a desire to play despite a general decline in play in South Africa (Ogunyemi & Henning, 2020). The children started to play as they had never played before. Their play became more eager and earnest. They engaged in imaginative play with each other, visiting homes and preparing food for guests. The more they played the more they wanted to play and the more creative their play became. It was reported that the children fell in love with SP and after the six SP sessions had finished they arrived at the office requesting toys to play with, even the oldest participant. Another childcare worker indicated her surprise when she too was asked to join in and play. Enjoyment and no resistance to SP was reported by the adult childcare workers.

SP opened up a need to continue creating their story and this innate urge propelled their desire for play. Play is inhibited by hunger, anger, fear and loneliness, the children's response to play suggests an absence of the above and indicates activation of healing (Zoja, 2018).

Being drawn to play is the same principle as the magnetic attraction of the symbol/object that is chosen freely for the sand image. Absorption into creative play is evidenced by focussed concentration. Sometimes the sand images took 10 minutes to create and other times the full hour was used; however the absorption in the task was evident no matter the length of time spent. The desire to play and a noticeable shift in energy and activity levels were reported by the childcare staff. The children ran excitedly to the SP room and afterwards left in an energised, happy and thoughtful mood. This supports the view that SP impacts children holistically: somatically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually (Zoja, 2018).

The shift in the children's attitude from fighting for what is mine to being happy to share and a willingness to interact and cooperate with staff and each other was reported. The sharing of miniatures was also witnessed in SP sessions, especially in the final two sessions when collaborative sharing of miniatures was arranged by gesture and whispers. Once the children had the opportunity to express and explore their inner realms, the need to defend against threats was reduced and cooperation was feasible and reported by staff as the children being more willing to do their chores and by compliance with instructions and the daily routines. A childcare worker reported increased awareness and recognition that they could play after their chores had been completed. In addition, helping younger children and being more inclusive of each other was evidenced. Noticeably, there were reports of the children sharing food. Further to this, playing together and sharing toys outside of the SP sessions. They also discussed their sand creations and disclosed plans for future creations. Less aggression and increased tolerance of each other and between siblings were noticed. A reduction of fighting and bullying with no reports of bad behaviour for any of the SP children during the six weeks of the SP sessions were noted.

The children's increased receptive capacity is indicated by their improved communication with others. Being less reserved suggests a loosening of restrictive defences, thereby freeing up capacity for involvement and engagement. Increased tolerance of one another, receiving instruction and openness to interaction suggests that the need to protect and defend is reduced. Thus, growth of inner capacity accommodates new considerations and reduction in rigidity makes way for improved emotional flexibility, sensitivity and awareness of others. Resistance has been minimised and peace is a consideration, making way for more lighthearted interactions and a less tense atmosphere. The effect of free expression is mirrored in the shift of their demeanour and behaviour.

Openness and responsiveness bring increased capacity to engage and interact with others and, in so doing, facilitate further regulation. This improvement bodes well for positive social development, a crucial component of early adolescence. Aligning with the principle of *Ubuntu*¹⁰ in isiZulu, "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu", coupled with the greeting of "*Sawubona*"¹¹, is an acknowledgement of the other, a bedrock on which

¹⁰ An African belief directly translated meaning "A person is a person through other people."

¹¹ Literally translated as "I see you".

many rural KwaZulu-Natal communities operate. When wounded and floundering with overwhelmedness it is very hard to see oneself, let alone the other. Humans are social and need each other for the maintenance of equilibrium of bodies and souls that are not only hidden inside individuals but are also developed between people (Zoja, 2018).

As the transpersonal level of the personality is reached there is an increase in understanding and awareness and consequently a strengthening of the ego. This is seen in the children's interest and curiosity to learn and engage in conversations with adult childcare staff and with each other (Dominey, 2021). The new behaviour of reading with the younger children and helping with dressing and tying shoelaces are outward expressions of this growth in understanding and consciousness.

In playing, the children were able to construct, challenge and reconstruct their understanding of the world, connect new and old experiences and so, learn and grow (Ogunyemi & Henning, 2020). This is reflected in reports of a shift in attitude and energy and portrayed in positive behaviours. Increased understanding and awareness were also experienced by the adult childcare staff who learnt about the new activity and the benefits were not only for the children but also for their carers. Their observations are that if the children are helped their job is made easier. They were refreshed by the novelty of the culturally-suitable activity that was not burdensome and was enjoyable for the children. The new concept of the children engaging in group activity without their supervision was also reported, supporting the principle that learning is optimised in a playful context (Zoja, 2018). Access to the creative play world as well as entry into the deeper archetypal realm assists with the ever-increasing demands of adolescence and adulthood. Consequently, ever-deepening layers of understanding and consciousness support development and a stronger ego means a connection to natural abilities and increased ability to deal with the outer world, signifying the capacity to adapt and to join the greater collective.

In addition, scenes depicting numinous encounters with the self inspire meaning-making at a deeper more sustainable level. Such scenes are evidenced in a beautiful angel, a forward-facing dragonfly, protection by the military, the ploughing of farmlands, finding containment and a pilgrimage to integration and wholeness. SP images that portray encounters with the self are also noticed in centring/circular formations which lead to harmonious scenes and expressions of behaviour and mood

that suggest regulation. Aesthetically balanced sand images portray a central gathering in the middle of the scene suggesting unity and reflecting centring, evidenced in the children's improved reasoning ability and by their behaviour being more aligned and appropriate. In this vein, self-regulation is demonstrated by being calmer, more composed and less warring. In addition, reports describe the children as being happier, more confident and able to show up for themselves. As they discover and identify with themselves and each other their groundedness becomes evident in calmer less frenetic behaviour, and unity becomes conceivable by engagement with each other.

The capacity to practice humanity and compassion (*Ubuntu*) becomes feasible. Recognition of self and others makes the children more at ease with themselves and others. Contentment and groundedness are reflected in the children being more relaxed, friendly, and less reactionary towards each other. This indicates the healing of a psychic split and the readiness for a journey unhindered around a centre towards wholeness. Having experienced freedom to explore the inner self within the group, SP has role modelled the possibility for outer world contentment, individually. Grounding, centring and a sense of belonging in the outer world (the children's home) is a result of reduced inner turmoil.

Belonging is reflected in harmonious and balanced SP scenes that portray integration and encompass the whole tray. This is further depicted in displays of unity, connection, nurturance and congruence. In addition, reports of belonging are in the accounts of adjustment, the absence of misbehaviour, moving from aloneness to togetherness and the references to family. Suggesting a process of coming to terms with what has happened to them. As such, restoration of the connection with the mother (the origins of unitive consciousness) and a sense of coming home. To this end, nurturing has occurred and is reflected in the abundance of food and the gathering of supportive family groups in sand images. The ability to withstand the tension of the opposites is shown in images where opposite sides are evenly matched and respectfully aware of each other. Integration of the head and the heart is portrayed and is necessary for holding the different aspects of personality and for individuation. Added to this, signs of containment, of being held are shown and reflected in images where smaller shells are nestled within larger shells.

Other signs of coming to rest and belonging are shown in the sorting, organising and clustering of concepts and aspects that are provided protection and containment in safely stored treasure chests, vulnerability revealed and the availability of creative measures to do what needs to be done. Furthermore being in touch with the feminine allows for vulnerability and, consequently, intimacy and mutuality which deepens connection and restores a sense of belonging.

Being held by SP has role modelled the concept of containment for the individual within the group thereby enabling the self and the ego to relate. The opportunity and ability to connect to internal resources where needs can be acknowledged fosters an increased ability to trust, thereby releasing and making inner resources accessible. Behavioural reports of integration are to be found in the descriptions of a happy, joyful attitude to life and congruency towards self and others. The children feeling at home with each other is reflected in frequent references to the family by childcare workers after SP. Reports of brother, sister, mother and father denote intimacy and familiarity and suggest the experience of a sense of belonging and unity that will facilitate further healing. Having left their family of origin as a result of wounding, healing restores kinship.

6.7 REFLECTION OF HEALING AND WOUNDING THEMES

Wounding and healing cannot be separated. The children are vulnerable and were inflicted with wounding. For healing to be mentioned wounding occurred, they are therefore considered simultaneously. It is proposed that wounding and healing are on the same continuum and that the source of healing is found in the wound. As such, Table 6.1 summarises the relatedness of wounding and healing themes as they emerged. Recognising and acknowledging the wound in SP by sourcing creative ways to express the infliction and consequent vulnerability leads to further discovery, understanding and sense-making. The identification of individual wounds and needs fosters receptivity and connection. Recognition of others is shown by the ability to not react and the offering of increased generosity and tolerance for one another. In this way, healing is evidenced by new ways of seeing themselves and each other and this bodes well for the shaping of a positive sense of self and identity and improved interactions.

Early adolescence and menopause are both chaotic, transitional times in the life span. Both stages incur significant hormonal, physical, cognitive, social and spiritual changes. Jung referred to the two life stages as being full of meaning and that the difference lies in the purpose of each (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021).

The purpose of early adolescence is the development of a strong sense of self and identity in preparation for the first half of life. Menopause is the transition that provides the opportunity to consciously plan a fulfilling second half of life. An overarching principle, no matter the life stage or purpose, is that healing comes from within and cannot be bestowed or provided from without. Sustainability of healing is the ability of the self to connect to ultimate purpose and meaning. This is not magically achieved by creative pursuits. For anything to be sustainable it requires repeatability and practice, to become a way of life. For SP to continue impacting positively on the children they would need to continue playing to ensure the bridge between the ego and the self is maintained as this is what connects us to ourselves and each other. The same remedy can be said for negotiating menopause.

Table 6.1

Relatedness of Wounding and Healing

Wounding theme	Reflected as	Healing theme	Reflected as
Vulnerability and wounding	Prone figures face down and face up, conflict, chaos, aggression, danger and threats, death and isolation	Activated energy for play, openness, increased understanding, togetherness and calmer mood	Minimised danger and conflict, containment and activation of psychological movement
Constrained capacity and resources	Scarce food, money and toys, empty containers, rigid enclosures	Revealed vulnerability, differentiation and sorting of aspects and feminine capacity identified	Availability of abundance and nurturing, productive and constructive engagement and uniqueness reflected
The need for change	Incapacity, threats, imposed outer constraints and limitations, resistances, rigidity and unmet needs	Inner regulatory processes of regression and progression are underway	Ever deepening exploration, activation of interest and curiosity, receptivity and openness
Appropriate intervention required	Creative use of SP, non-verbal, non-threatening, symbols, autonomous response to silent containment	Uniquely creative together	The magnetism of play, shift in energy, increased confidence and expression
The unknown SP activity	Fear, absence of people, animal-vegetative, unconscious searching	Centring, grounding and belonging	Increased unity, togetherness, positive fraternal references, increased awareness and understanding and improved self-regulation

6.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A consideration of the limitations of the study resulted in the reflection that some limitations are also potential strengths of the study. The novice researcher can be considered a limiting factor, however it can also be argued that approaching the study carefully meant that the researcher's attitude was perhaps more aligned with the children and adult participants who were to experience unknown SP for the first time. Further to this, an uncertain mindful attitude is more receptive and open to whatever is presented. The duration of the study was a limitation in that it was just six weeks. Dora Kalff observed that it takes six to eight weeks until a situation made visible from the unconscious manifests in outer life (D. M. Kalff, 1996). Given this, it is remarkable that childcare staff reported improvements in the children's behaviour and mood immediately after the completion of six weeks of SP, suggesting that the natural pubertal and cognitive developments of early adolescence, together with SP, expedite healing and development. A lingering question remains about whether the positive improvements in outward behaviour are sustainable in the absence of SP after a six-week experience. The sand images of the children suggest their inner journeys are not completed or fulfilled. Repeated speculation ensued about what images would be created in a seventh SP and, whether the healing signs and themes would become more noticeable, consolidated and sustained with a longer duration of SP? The researcher anticipates that Dora Kalff's view of the creative process continuing in the psyche after the completion of a sand image is prolonged after a six-week SP experience (Zoja, 2018). It is proposed that a longer-term duration of SP would keep nurturing the bridge between the self and the ego, thus facilitating inner processing and outward interaction and exchanges. As, when the ego and the self are in a relationship, this is the closest state to individuation (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021; Weinrib, 2004).

It might be that the noticeable positive results of the study are indicative of the resource-constrained environment. It is uncertain whether the results would be reflected to the same extent with early adolescents from a less vulnerable more resourced context or if the context was more constrained and deprived would the results be the same. In addition, it is proposed that the positive results of the study, are partly because the children were contained by consecutive and uninterrupted weeks of SP, provided on the same day at the same time each week. The SP sessions

went ahead regardless of the circumstances and every child attended every session. Nobody dropped out. This additional containment contributed to the positive outcomes. However, it is not always possible for such containment to be upheld, in a sense there was some luck involved by the fact that the study was able to proceed uninterrupted. Whether this is replicable is questionable. Secondly, the focus on early adolescent SP is a strength in terms of the in-depth exploration of children aged nine to 14 years, however there is no comparison with other groups representing a different stage of development.

Another limitation is that the children were not interviewed about their experience of SP. However, this could also be considered a strength as an interview, potentially premature, could impose verbal and cognitive analytic procedures that inhibit healing and developmental processes (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021; Ryce-Menuhin, 2015; Weinrib, 2004; Zoja, 2018). Further to this, premature withdrawal of SP from the children's home is a limitation. The children wanted to continue, the staff expressed that they wished SP could become a permanent activity. The sand images beckoned and supported that there was more to come.

In addition, the replicability of the positive results is questionable without the added containing measures that include the organisation's receptivity, willingness and commitment to be a part of the study. Their support for the study, provision of a room in which to conduct the SP, facilitating the children's availability to attend six consecutive weeks of SP and their compliance with the SP model, of no external interference, may be considered a strength and a limitation and may have contributed to the positive findings. Other limitations include the availability, the provision and the security of five sand trays and a large collection of miniatures.

In resource-poor environments, the provision and availability of the above external resources, without funding, is a significant logistical limiting factor. The answer might be in neither definitive agreement nor categorical denial but the acknowledgement and tolerance of the various tensions between limitations and strengths.

6.9 RECOMMENDATIONS

As group SP activates, accelerates and facilitates the therapeutic process it is the ideal adjunct for children and childcare staff of children's homes that are under pressure to

discharge children to their communities as quickly as possible. Early adolescent group SP is strongly recommended for children's homes. The wounding experiences incurred in the outer world must be processed to break the perpetuation of inter-generational trauma. Inner processing is facilitated by an enabling environment. The efficiency of group SP in a resource-poor setting where several children can simultaneously conduct their inner processing is significant. The model of setting up a permanent facility for group SP within a protective organisation where it becomes a way of life, built into the therapeutic plan for each child, is strongly motivated. The ideal model for such provision includes a multi-layered temenos; the physical set-up of a purposeful SP room, suitably trained and supported SP facilitators, silence to facilitate inter and personal inner attunement, selected group members and an attendance schedule that allows consecutive weekly sessions. Such a multiple containing group activity provides security and confidence for individuals to participate in silence autonomously. Additionally, the reverence with which SP as a group activity is offered is essential, both in terms of a protected purposeful temenos space and by the presence of trained and supervised witnesses that are not staff at the children's home. To this end, the acknowledgement that sand images are photographs of the soul and that the process of creating such scenes must be treated sacredly (Zoja, 2018). It is agreed that nothing can replace the inner atmosphere in the SP room in which analysis runs its course (Chenghou, 2018). Added to this is the principle of creating sand images in silence as the effect of SP is stronger when less cognitive processing occurs (Zoja, 2018).

The timing of the provision of SP should be carefully considered. In the face of abuse, neglect and deprivation, any time is better than no time. However, practical consideration of how best to use the limited resources available is sagacious. As a supportive, non-threatening activity SP can be offered anytime, however, where the need is greatest is perhaps the best determining factor. Added to this, it is proposed that when SP is experienced in early adolescence the positive effect is profound, as early adolescence is when the developmental processes of puberty and increased awareness and understanding occur. This is a vulnerable time, especially in contexts of deprivation and wounding. Keep in mind that cognitive development through inner processing is heightened in early adolescence and the developmental processes of early adolescence are beyond control and can be experienced as a chaotic time in the

life span. Thus, awareness of the naturally occurring needs of individuals in transitional times is crucial, especially when outer circumstances reinforce vulnerability and woundedness and can lead to psychotic disorders (Mitchell & Friedman, 2021).

The value of group activities reminding individuals of their connection to each other by patterns and events (archetypes) that are inescapable is profound. Increased cognitive ability and the natural move to independence in early adolescence from family to friends and wider community involvement support receptivity to inner processing and social compliance. Given the aforementioned and the fact that SP accelerates development and healing it is agreed that provision during the early adolescent life stage is optimal for influencing positive behavioural and mood changes.

Longer-term provision is recommended to assist and support the development of a healthy ego-self relationship. It is further suggested that future studies seek to establish what duration of SP is optimum for sustainable, long-term effects. In addition, the widespread provision in groups is advocated for the development and healing of several individuals simultaneously. Furthermore, a comparison with younger and with older groups to glean differences and sameness of experience as compared with the early adolescent experience.

Finally, a study of SP with childcare staff along the same lines would be additionally supportive, enabling and healing and would reinforce the containment and support provided to the children if their carers are also being held in a process.

6.10 CONCLUSION

Silent group SP with early adolescents in a resource-poor environment activates a desire to play and encourages and supports healing. The research questions are answered firstly by the profoundly positive response of the early adolescent participants to SP as well as by the noticeable shifts in their behaviour and demeanour and, the first and final sand images portraying contrasting worlds with the final sand images indicating fewer threats and more centring. The provision of SP in a multi-layered temenos highlights the value of additional containment for vulnerable children. Such provision of SP promotes the processing and development of inner resources reflected in sand images and positive behavioural and demeanour shifts. Self-exploration and discovery mobilise healing, facilitate increased awareness and enable

more positive interactions with peers and adult childcare workers. Inner resilience in the face of wounding is remarkable and testimony to the self-regulatory function of the psyche in a conducive environment. Reconnection with the mother through SP supports the restoration of unity and the release of playfulness. The main function of play is relational and thus it facilitates the principles of *Ubuntu*¹² as well as adaptation to the collective. The purposeful accommodation and holding presence of the mother is vital. As such, childcare staff involved in everyday institutional caring routines are not suitable SP witnesses for the children that they directly look after. The provision of silent SP as a group activity during early adolescence is ideal. A multi-layered temenos, including silence, creates a beneficial containing womb in which individual inner processing is allowed and supported. The regulating effect of the group in silent SP cannot be underestimated. This lends impetus to the value of group SP as a supportive, identity-forming bridge between early adolescence and early adulthood when inner attunement assists with increased awareness and improves outer interactions.

The childrens' home's willingness to be a part of the study and their receptivity to SP is testimony both to the need for enriching and healing activities as well as an understanding of their role in providing as conducive an environment as possible with constrained resources.

Already in temporary protective care, the further support and accommodation of SP within a purposefully created and protected temenos space hastens and facilitates the healing process. In circumstances where the outer world imposes unprecedented deprivation and trauma on children, supportive, containing interventions facilitate inner processing and are imperative in the mediation of the effect of trauma. Thus, in situations of wounding and constrained resources, safe, sacred and appropriate opportunities that allow and foster inner development are essential to support and enable positive youth development. The inter-relatedness of inner and outer is noteworthy. The inner is reliant on the outer circumstances whilst the outer world is better placed for future sustainability in the hands of attuned and aware individuals. As such, silent group SP in early adolescence supports and facilitates inner processing

¹² *Ubuntu* literally means “a person is a person through other people”, in isiZulu “*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*”

and thereby the development of inner resources that enable positive relationships with the self and with others, and instils a sense of unity and belonging.

6.11 FINAL REFLECTION

Through this study parallel journeys have been revealed. The activation of healing for the children increased awareness for childcare staff and the enabling of a transformative journey for the researcher, confirming that self-regulation of the psyche is based on relationships that result in the transformation of both sides involved (Zoja, 2018). In this instance, all sides involved, the triad of researcher, children participants and the adult participants, have been affected by improved capacity for tolerance and the balancing of the paradoxes of life; suffering, uncertainty, restoration, healing and new ways of seeing. Sue Monk Kidd's reflection in "*When the Heart Waits*" resonate. Creativity flourishes not in certainty but in questions. Growth germinates not in the comfort of what we know but in the upheaval of uncertainty, the seedbed of creativity and growth that allows us to do the daring and to break through to newness (Kidd, 1990).

It is appropriate that the children's sand images and actions should have the last word in this document. Triangle articulates that he wants to go and play with the toys and that there is no talking in SP. Interestingly not talking is how his behaviour was reported by the on-site educational psychologist when she noticed a change in him after SP, whereby he was willing to talk about his problems, for the first time.

Square's portrayal of threatening impenetrable fences on the perimeter of her tray in initial sand scenes culminates in a display of accessible, abundant nurture in her final sand image and is supported by holding her own during the court proceedings of her abuse. Circle's uncontained, unconventional actions and powerful chemistry is converted by the seed sowing action of tearing open a silica¹³ sachet and sprinkling the contents onto her sand image, thereby leaving her mark of tiny silica beads that are discovered by subsequent sandplayers using the same tray. The delight and wonderment of the unsuspecting sandplayers of their discovery of these scarce

¹³ Silica sachets were in the boxes in which the miniatures were transported to protect them from moisture. Circle rummaged in the empty boxes and secured a sachet. The sachets were not a part of the display.

glistening pearls of reconstituted silica beads amongst the grains of sand. Oval's rigidity transformed and reflected in her relational game of soccer with her father described as a very unusual and rare occurrence for a daughter and father to play. And, finally, Diamond, as an AmaXhosa amongst the AmaZulu, at the endmost age of early adolescence, concludes with claiming her place as the oldest member of the group with two striking numinous sand images in just six sessions of SP. Indicated by her adaptation and belonging at the children's home.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interviewee: A / B / C

Interview 1: Before the first SP

Introductory questions

How many years have you been a caregiver/manager/director?

What is your experience working with vulnerable children?

In regards to the daily routine, could you give me an idea of your role/involvement with the children?

Questions regarding the children (early adolescent participants)

What interaction do you have with the children each day?

What is it like interacting with the children?

Could you tell me more about the children under your care?

How do you feel about the children you look after?

Behaviour

What is the behaviour of the children?

How would you describe the behaviour of the children?

How does it affect you if the children present with difficult behaviour?

Is there behaviour of any of the children that worries you?

Can you give examples of worrying behaviour?

How do you cope with concerning or difficult behaviour?

Demeanour

How would you describe the overall mood of the children?

What effect on the mood of the children are you hoping for from the SP activity?

Sandplay (SP)

What is your experience with SP?

How do you think the children will experience the SP activity?

What changes in the children are you hoping will take place from SP?

Are there any concerns you have about the SP study?

General

Do you have any questions or comments regarding this study?

Interview 2: After the final SP session had taken place

Introductory questions

The children have completed participating in SP for this study. How do you think the children experienced the SP activity?

After the children started with SP did you notice any differences in your interaction with the children?

Did you notice any differences in your interaction with the children before and after the SP sessions? If you did please indicate what you noticed?

What do the other caregivers say about their interactions with the children? Have they observed any differences in the children before and after the SP sessions? If they did please indicate what differences they observed?

Questions about the children (early adolescent participants)

Have you seen any changes from when the children started with the SP activities? If you did, could you please give an example?

What is your view of the effect of the SP activity on the children?

Have you seen any changes in the children before and after the SP sessions? If you did please indicate what you observed?

Behaviour

Did you see any changes in the behaviour of the children during and after the SP sessions? If you did please indicate the changes?

What do the other caregivers say about the behaviour of the children? Have they observed any changes in the children's behaviour during and after the SP sessions? If they did please indicate what behaviour changes they observed?

Anything specific you have noticed about the children's behaviour during the SP study?

How has the SP activity affected the children's behaviour, overall?

Demeanour

What is the mood or atmosphere of the children before they do the SP activity?

Please can you give an example.

What is the mood or atmosphere of the children after they have done the SP activity?

Please can you give an example.

How has participating in SP affected the children's mood?

What has been noticeable about the children's mood/atmosphere during the SP study process?

What is the mood of the children now that the SP activity is completed?

Have you noticed any particular child's mood?

How do you cope with the mood/atmosphere of the children?

Sandplay (SP)

What have you noticed about the SP activity?

What have the children said about SP since they began participating in it?

What are your thoughts on SP as an activity for early adolescent children?

How do you think the children experienced this activity?

What examples can you give that show how the children feel about SP?

Is there any story/comment that stands out for you about any of the children and the SP activity?

Concluding questions

What are your thoughts about the study now that it is completed?

Would you recommend SP for children?

Why would you/not recommend SP as an activity for the children?

What was it like for you to have participated in this study?

What comments or questions do you have for me about the SP study?

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT

For Sandplay (SP) Research Study

Study title:

Exploring Sandplay (SP) as an intervention with early adolescents in a resource-poor environment

Researcher: Lindi Redfern

Supervisor: Dr Michelle Finestone

Institution: University of Pretoria

Contact information:

Cell: 083 501 2506

Email address: lindiredfern@icloud.com

Date and time of first informed consent discussion:

Date	Month	Year

Time

Dear prospective participant

Dear Mr / Mrs

Date:

Introduction

My name is Lindi Redfern and I am a Master's degree student at the University of Pretoria. I would like to thank you and invite you to voluntarily participate in my research project. This document will provide you with the necessary information about the study to help you decide if you would like to participate in it. Please read the information carefully.

You must understand what the research involves before you agree to participate in it. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me or my supervisor. I will be happy to organise a meeting at your convenience to answer any questions you may

have. If you choose not to participate in the study at any time or for any reason, you may withdraw from the study without any consequences and without any prior explanation.

The nature and purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore Sandplay (SP) as an intervention with early adolescents. I hope to learn more about SP as an activity with early adolescent participants. This study is interested in the SP of early adolescent participants and in observations of participants' behaviour as reported by their caregivers and staff at xxx. Currently, within the South African context, there is limited research on SP as a personal development and enrichment activity in early adolescence. It is hoped that this study will add to the call for SP to be used more widely in positive youth development.

Explanation of the procedures and what will be expected of participants

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in two individual interviews at your convenience. They will last for about 60–90 minutes each. The total anticipated time for the interviews will be about three hours. The first interview will take place before the start of the SP sessions, and the second interview will take place after the final SP session of the study. The interviews will take the form of a one-on-one meeting between you and me. I will ensure that all ethical requirements are maintained before, during, and after the interview process, under the supervision of my supervisor. During the interview, I will ask several questions about the research topic. This study involves answering questions such as “What behaviour did you observe in the participants (children) during the SP project?” The interviews will be semi-structured with open-ended questions to achieve in-depth explanations of behaviour and the mood of the children.

With your permission, the interview will be recorded to maintain a high degree of accuracy and to ensure that no information is missed. You will be asked to verify the accuracy of transcripts from your interviews.

Risk and discomfort

As a creative activity, SP can sometimes evoke an emotional reaction or response in participants. Please be assured that appropriate support and intervention will be arranged for the children if this is necessary. However, this study does not aim to harm you or the children in any way. It does not present any physical, emotional or financial

risk, nor do we anticipate that taking part in the study will cause any physical or emotional harm. If you feel that any of the interview questions are too personal or make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them. Furthermore, you can choose to withdraw from the study at any point.

Possible benefits of the study

If you participate in the study, you may not benefit directly from this study. However, your participation is crucial for us to better understand SP with early adolescence. The information received through your participation will help researchers improve knowledge and research about the value of SP with early adolescence within the South African context. This, in turn, may lead to future studies being conducted and future academics learning from this study. In previous research on SP, both in South Africa and internationally, SP has had a personal benefit for both the participants and the facilitators.

Compensation

You will not be financially compensated for taking part in the study. However, if in-person interviews or meetings cannot take place as a result of COVID-19 or any other situation, virtual or Zoom meetings might be arranged. If this is the case, the researcher will cover the costs of data, after consulting with the director. You will not incur the cost of virtual meetings. There are no anticipated costs involved for you to be a part of the study, and you will not be paid to participate in the study.

Voluntary participation

Any member's decision to take part in this study is their choice alone. You do not have to take part in it if you do not want to. You can also stop at any time during the interview process without giving a reason. If you decline to take part in the study, this will not affect you in any way. Furthermore, voluntary participation will be required from all parties, including caregivers, staff and the director of xxx.

Prior approvals

Prior authorisation has been obtained from the director of xxx, and ethical permission has been obtained from the University of Pretoria.

Confidentiality

During the research process and within the final dissertation, your names will not be recorded to ensure total confidentiality and anonymity. I shall ensure that no individual will be able to connect any information provided to the answers you give. Your answers will be linked to a fictitious code or pseudonym (another name), and we shall refer to you in this way in the data, in any publication, or any other research output. All records from this study will be regarded as confidential. All records will be kept in a securely locked cupboard or on a password-protected device. Only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the above records. All hard copy information will be kept in a locked facility at the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria for a minimum of 15 years and only the research team will have access to this information. Any results that will be published will be done in a peer-reviewed journal or presented at conferences in such a way that it will not be possible for people to recognise the participants in the study. The records, data and final report may be reviewed by people responsible for ensuring that the research was done correctly, including members of the Research Ethics Committee. In every situation, your data, information or identity will be kept confidential by all these professionals. Records that identify you will only be available to people working on the study, unless you specifically permit other people to see these records.

We would like to request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria and, where relevant, the project funders. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

COVID-19 precautions taken

To prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the following protocols from the World Health Organization (2021) will be used:

For interviews:

- 1) Participants are welcome to have virtual meetings using password-protected software such as Zoom. Data costs will be covered by the researcher in discussion with the director. The participants will not incur these or any other costs.

- 2) Should participants decide to participate in and have an in-person interview:
- Social distancing will be maintained before, during and after the interview.
 - All surfaces (desks, chairs, tape recorder and any other objects present) will be sanitised before and after the interview.
 - The sanitising of hands will occur when meeting with the participant, during the interview, as well as at the end of the interview.
 - Participants and the researcher will wear facial masks at all times during the interview. If participants do not have access to a mask, the researcher will provide the participant with a clean/new mask. Masks will cover the nose and mouth of both the participant and the researcher at all times. To ensure the safety of all individuals, a bent elbow will be used to greet participants.
 - In addition, the availability of a bathroom will be ensured where a participant can wash their hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
 - A safe distance will be maintained from anyone who is coughing or sneezing. Should a participant feel unwell, have a fever or cough, or experience difficulty breathing, the interview will be rescheduled to suit the participant.

For SP:

- Social distancing will be maintained before, during and after the SP sessions.
- Sand trays will be placed at least two metres apart. A well-ventilated venue will be used (the sessions may also take place outside, weather permitting).
- The sanitising of hands will occur before and after each SP session.
- Participants and the researcher will wear facial masks at all times during the SP sessions. If participants do not have access to a mask, the researcher will provide the participant with a clean/new mask. Masks will cover the nose and mouth of all participants and the researcher at all times.
- In addition, the availability of a bathroom will be ensured where participants can wash their hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- A safe distance will be maintained from anyone who is coughing or sneezing. Should a participant feel unwell, have a fever or cough, or experience difficulty breathing, the group session will be rescheduled.
- Sand trays and miniatures will only be used by the research study every seven days and will be left untouched and locked when not in use.

Ethical approval

This study was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. If you have any enquiries about the research, please contact Dr Michelle Finestone via email at michelle.finestone@up.ac.za or on cell: 082 623 3575.

Consent form for caregiver/staff member

Research title: Exploring Sandplay (SP) as an intervention with early adolescents in a resource-poor environment

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____ **Signed at:** _____

By signing this document, I consent that I have been given information about this research study, titled “Exploring SP as an intervention with early adolescents in a resource-poor environment” and discussed the research project with *Lindi Redfern*. I agree to participate in Lindi Redfern’s study, conducting this research as part of a research master’s degree in Educational Psychology under the supervision of *Dr Michelle Finestone* in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research, which include identifying the most significant risks or burdens. I have had an opportunity to ask Lindi Redfern any questions I may have about the research and my participation in it. I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, that I am free to refuse to participate in it, and that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdraw consent will not affect my treatment in any way or my relationship with any member of the research project.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Lindi Redfern on 0835012506 or lindiredfern@icloud.com. If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact Dr Michelle Finestone at the University of Pretoria on 012 420 5510 and 082 623 3575 or email michelle.finstone@up.ac.za

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick the box as appropriate):

1.	I have read and understood the information about the research project in the information sheet dated _____	
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2.	I have been allowed to ask questions about the project and my participation in it.	
3.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.	
4.	I understand that I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing, nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	
5.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained to me (e.g., the use of names, pseudonyms, anonymisation of data, etc.). This has also included a discussion around the angles to ensure that no faces are recorded during photography, etc.	
6.	I have been informed of any risks, discomforts and potential benefits of the study.	
7.	I provide consent for the researcher to use <u>an audio recorder</u> during the interview. This form of data collection has been explained to me.	
8.	The use of data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	
9.	I understand that other researchers will only have access to this data if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.	
10.	I, along with the researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.	
11.	I have received a signed copy of this informed consent agreement.	

Participant:

Name of participant

Signature

Date

Researcher:

Lindi Redfern

Name of researcher

Signature

Date

Supervisor:

Dr M Finestone

Name of supervisor

Signature

Date

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND INFORMED ASSENT FOR SANDPLAY (SP)

Study title:

Exploring Sandplay (SP) as an intervention with early adolescents in a resource-poor environment

Researcher: Lindi Redfern

Supervisor: Dr Michelle Finestone

Institution: University of Pretoria

Contact information:

Cell phone number: 083 501 2506

Email address: lindiredfern@icloud.com

Date and time of first informed assent discussion:

Date	Month	Year

Time

Dear prospective participant

Dear

Date:

Introduction

My name is Lindi Redfern and I am a Master's degree student at the University of Pretoria. Thank you for being here and for listening to me. I am here to invite you to

take part in my research study. This meeting will give you all the information you need about the study to help you decide if you would like to take part. Please listen carefully. You must understand what it is about before you agree to take part. If you have any questions, please ask me or the staff at xxx. If you decide not to take part in the study at any time or for any reason, you may withdraw. Just let us know.

Participant's assent for participating in a Sandplay (SP) research study:

Project title: xxx Sandplay

To be read to children under the age of 18 years

Who am I and why am I here?

My name is Lindi Redfern and I am a researcher at the University of Pretoria. Sometimes, when we want to find out more about something, we ask people to join us in a study or project. Before we ask you to be part of this study, we want to tell you about it. This study will give us a chance to see how we, as the researcher and staff at xxx, can help you gain personal skills to equip and support yourself at xxx, at home, at school, and with your friends. We are asking you to be part of this study because xxx has agreed that you can be part of it.

What will happen to me if I am part of the study?

If you want to be part of the study, you will spend time doing Sandplay.

The Sandplay activity will take place for one hour, once a week for about two months and will be done silently, with no talking. Sandplay is like a creative, art activity. There is no right or wrong way of doing Sandplay. If you agree, we would like to take photographs of your sand trays after you have completed them at each session. The photographs are only of your sand trays, not of you or your face. We will write about your sandplay and record it with photographs and observation notes. We will not tell anyone your name.

Will the study harm me?

No, the study will not hurt. You will play with the sand trays and miniature toys without talking, and no one will ask you questions or tell you how to play or what to do. You are free to play as you choose. If you do not want to play, you may leave, after letting us know.

Will the study help me?

We hope that the study will help you learn more about yourself and to feel good about yourself, and that this will assist you at school and in your personal life.

What if I have any questions?

You may ask any questions you have about the study at any time. If you have questions after I have left, you can phone me on 083 501 2506 or you can ask me next time I come to visit you here at xxx.

Do my caregivers at xxx know about this study?

Yes, the study has been explained to all the staff of xxx and they said you can choose to be part of it. You can talk this over with them before you decide if you want to take part.

Do I have to be in the study?

No, you do not have to be part of the study. No one will be upset if you do not want to take part. You just have to tell us. You can say yes or no, and if you change your mind later, you do not have to be part of the project anymore. It is up to you.

Ethics?

We would like to ask your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria and, where relevant, the project funders. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

COVID-19 safety

During the study, we will take care to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by washing our hands, sanitising, not touching each other, wearing masks and placing the sand trays wide apart during the play sessions. Whenever possible, we will play outside.

Writing your name on this page means that you agree to be in the study and that you know what will happen to you during this study. If you decide to leave the study, all you have to do is tell the person in charge.

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

Signature of researcher _____ Date _____

Signature of supervisor _____ Date _____

If you have any questions about this study, you can phone the researcher, Lindi Redfern, on 803 501 2506, or her supervisor, Dr Michelle Finestone, on 082 623 3575.

APPENDIX C: PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SANDPLAY ROOM AND MINIATURE COLLECTION

Photographs of the Sandplay room



The Sandplay room from the outside



The Sandplay room from the inside

The available miniatures



Figurines (human, fairy, fantasy, nativity, religious and zombies)



A closer look at some of the miniatures



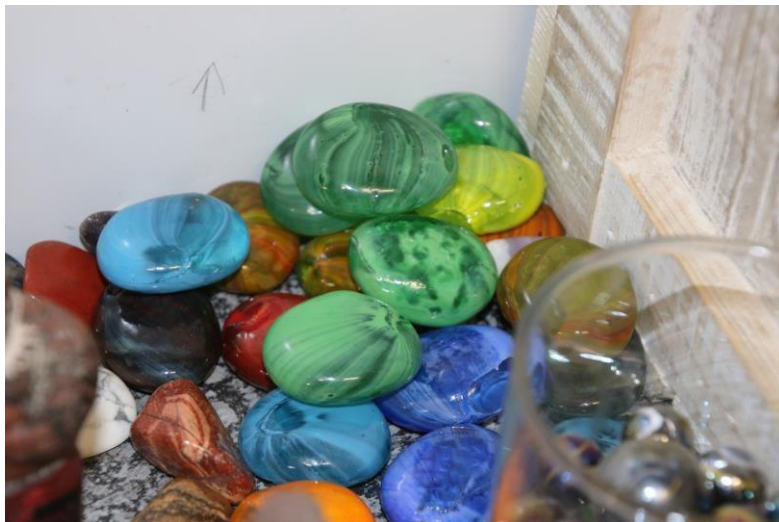
Army men (brown, pink, green and grey)



Construction items (blocks, houses, driftwood, trees, fences, flowers, porcupine quills etc,)



Trees and shrubs



Colourful stones and marbles

Animals and creatures



Dinosaurs



Snakes



Butterflies



Sea creatures



Spiders and insects



Wild animals and birds



Domestic animals



Horses

Transport (air, water and land vehicles)



Water craft



Land vehicles

APPENDIX D: INVENTORY OF MINIATURES

Miniature Collection Inventory

Categories	Objects	Description	Number
<u>Vegetation</u>			
Trees	assorted	Toobs	10
	assorted	Toobs	10
	palm type		4
	cactus		2
	green palm		6
	proper SA		4
	décor with stalks		2
Shrubs	bushes		2
<u>Food</u>			
Breads	slices	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	2
	bun	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	2 halves
	loaf	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	1
Meats	drumstick	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	1
Proteins	steak	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	1
	burger patty	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	1
	sausage	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	1
	fish	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	1
Dairy	butter	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	1
	cheeses	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	2
	milk	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	1
Fruit	watermelon	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	1
	orange	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	1
	tomatoe	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	1
	banana	Wooden (large) - 4 x crates	1
	Oranges	Toob	1
	Bananas	Toob	1
	Apples	Toob	1
	Pears	Toob	1
Vegetables	Carrots	Toob	1
	Artichokes		1
	Brocoli		1
	Mielie		1
<u>Nature (Soul)</u>	drift wood	natural items collected	
(Earth)	feathers		
	porcupine quills		
	stones		
	pebbles		
	acorns		

	Pods		
Flowers	unique types	toobs (assorted incl. strelitzia & rose)	8
Butterflies	Multi-coloured	toob	8
	ceramic	flat	3
Insects & reptiles	snakes	tiny & large	3 + 6
	spiders	web & spiders set (black)	
	various insects		6
Birds	cage	crazy store	1
	ceramic	flat	3
	owl	large & small	2
	eagle	large & small	2
Construction	Fences	farm animal (brown)	8 +
		homemade (green)	many
	ice cream sticks	wooden flat	2x packs
	wooden blocks	tower set	
	pieces of string		
	windmill	wire-made Steytlerville	1
Dwellings/homes	ceramic houses	flat	4
	hut	part of indigenous set toob	1
	houses	garden set - crazy store	2
	garden path	ceramic	1
	wishing well	ceramic	1
Vehicles / Transport			
Road	cars & other road vehicles	matchbox type	10
Air	assorted	toob	11
Water	boats	toob	
Motorbike			1

People	babies	assorted toob	9
family	family	toob	6
purpose & career	fishing boy	toob	2
	girl with lamb	toob	1
	girl with eggs	toob	1
	game ranger	toob	1
	law enforcement	traffice & police	2
	cook	toob	1
	vet	toob	1
	forrester	toob	1
	maintenance	toob	1
	postman	toob	1
	horse riders	toob	2
	indian bow & arrow	toob	1
	indian rifle	toob	1
	indigenous	toob	3
Army / Military	men		
	different colours	pink, grey, brown & green	
military vehicles	ratel etc.		
Hobbies/Interests			
Music	musical instruments	toob	8
Sport	sports (different)	racquet, baseball, ice hockey	3
	(toob)	assorted balls (soccer, tennis etc.)	7
Animals	cats	assorted toob	12
(Domestic)	dogs		16 +
	goats		5 +
	cows		6 +
	sheep		6 +
	rabbit		1
	mouse		1
	donkeys		4 +
	horses		3 +
	pigs		2
	turkeys		2
	geese		5 +
	chickens		3 +
Animals	lion (male)		

(Wild)	lioness		
	cub		
predators	leopard		
	cheetah		
	kudu		
prey animals	antelope		
	meerkat		
	buffalo		
	giraffe		
	elephant		
	elephant calf		
	rhino		
	rhino calf		
Horses	many	large and small	
Sea Creatures	fish	assorted	x
	ceramic fish		3
	dolphin		
	sharks		
	sea-horse		
	octopus		
	turtle		
	seal		
	crab		
	lobster		
Sea plants	sea plants/weed	green	4
	sea weed	orange	1
Sea shells	large shells	real	
	clam	real	1
	small shells	real	
Fantasy people	Wonder woman		1
	Superman		1
	Captain hook	Peter Pan	1
	Rapunzel	Tangled	1
	Prince	Fynn Rider	1
	Chameleon	Pascal	1
	Moana	Moana	1

	Chief / Father	Moana	1
	Mother	Sina	1
	Demi-god	Maui	1
	Dragon		1
Fairies	Fairy god-mother		1
	Fairies		5
Zombies	assorted humans	toob	12
(Dead alive)	graves		
Ancient Civilisation (Egyptian)	Egyptian figures	toob	12
Dinosaurs (Prehistoric)	large	tub assorted	
	small	tub assorted	
Treasures	chests	wood & silver	2
Money	coins	play	
	paper	play	
Brass vases			2
Copper pitchers			3
Religious	Buddha	wooden	1
	Nativity	wooden cut outs	
	Nativity	toob figurines	13
	Crosses	wooden cut outs	5
	Stars	wooden cut outs	5
Gemstones	multi-coloured		20-30

<u>Substances</u>	alcohol	mini bar bottles	4