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SANDTRAY SUITE

MODULE 3: FREE AND PROTECTED SPACE

Oftentimes, as therapists, you will hear this term, *Free and Protected Space*, and you may wonder what that even means. So, when we are thinking about free and protected space, this is often the magic that happens during your sandtray session.

When we are little kids, and even adults sometimes, we often don't have a lot of control and we don't have a space where anything is ok pretty much. So, when a child comes into your sandtray room and they can just put their hand in the sand, they cannot talk, maybe they can talk 90 miles an hour, whatever it is in the sandtray session, then that is freedom for them. And then, not only do they have freedom, but they also, most importantly, have protection; whereas, whatever comes up for them, whatever gets triggered during that session, you are there to hold that space and have that container for them so that they can borrow your nervous system to calm theirs down if things get triggered. So, again, this is really the best of both worlds. It's that free, but also protected space.

Now, in the neuroscience world, this is really called the Neuroception of Safety, oftentimes. Daniel Siegel will talk about it as the *Window of Tolerance*. But again, in terms of sandplay and play therapy, you will often hear the words, *Free and Protected Space*. And that's not some esoteric term, but that is something that is real and is absolutely needed to make progress in your sandtray therapy sessions.