

SANDTRAY SUITE

MODULE 5: TIPS FOR WORKING WITH FAMILIES IN THE SANDTRAY

When you are working with families in the sandtray, just beware that it's all going to come out, and it's a wonderful, but also kind of scary thing. So, it's really important that you set up boundaries before you start working with families in the sandtray.

So, what I mean by boundaries would be something like, 'You're not to touch other people's miniatures unless they have permission to.' That we can't talk over people. And, so when you're doing a group tray, like with a family, of course, they have all years and years of stuff that they're bringing to the tray and all of a sudden, things get triggered with their right-brain and then it may have like a fire-storm effect. And that's ok. You just need to be aware of that. And again, it's super important to set up those rules, whatever they are, on the front end. It could be, again, "We don't touch other people's stuff. We don't talk over other people." And then you could also say, "I decide when we stop." Because what may happen is a family has become just too enraged and it's just way too contentious to put them in the sandtray. And you go, "OK. Time out. We need to come out and we need to talk about this," rather than just kind of let it go. But it's also a wonderful, wonderful way for you to see the different family dynamics in the tray. Now, one easy thing to do, if you're going to start out using the sandtray with families, is to have each person in the family to choose a miniature that represents themselves, as well as a miniature that represents each other family member. And then you allow them to discuss it. And oftentimes, that by itself will bring up enough to where you're like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa." Where you won't actually build anything in the sandtray together. So, that's usually when I start doing sandtray with families. That's where I start. And then, of course, then we can go to more complicated trays from there. But that's, again, one of the techniques that I would do to start sandtrays with families. And then also, be aware that you're going to need to set the rules and the boundaries before the session starts.