Creative Counseling 101
Activities & Techniques

Written & Illustrated by:
Dedication:

For my family: Thank you for all the love and support given to me while I worked on my career in counseling. I would never be where I am without you! A special thanks to my husband, Barry. You have opened up an entire new world for me by way of writing and illustrating my books. I love you!

Acknowledgments:

This book was written for my past and future students that I teach in on the Master’s level in counseling at Mercer University and Argosy University in Atlanta. This book was created for all the counseling students and working mental health professionals who do not know what to do with children, adolescents, teens, and adults in counseling. It was also created for the seasoned counselor who wants new ideas and new ways to help clients on a deeper level. The activities in this book can be used with children, adolescents, teens, and adults. By using these activities and techniques you will allow your clients to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the way they relate to the world around them. The clients and students that have used these techniques have benefited tremendously in their own counseling process.

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*Disclaimer: The activities in this book are meant to be used by a licensed mental health professional or a certified school counselor. If you are a mental health professional who does not have training in the creative play and arts arena it is strongly recommended to seek supervision with someone who is trained in the creative arts and play therapy. Do not attempt to use these activities in this book without proper training, or ongoing supervision with a trained professional. If you, or your client(s) becomes suicidal, or homicidal when using any of the activities listed in this book contact your nearest mental health hospital or call 911.*
Introduction:

My name is Dr. Michelle Stangline and I am a Creative Psychotherapist. I have worked as a psychotherapist in many settings. These include school counseling, clinical counseling and private practice, and as mental hospital counselor. I am also an adjunct professor at two major universities. At Mercer University Atlanta, I teach Play Therapy, Sand Tray therapy, Ethics and Lifespan Development. At Argosy University in Atlanta I teach supervision to students during their Master’s Counseling Internship. I also offer workshops to mental health professionals in the area of Play Therapy and Sand Tray Therapy. I love to work with adults in order to help them get in touch with their inner child or adults who have lost their creative edge. I also have a strong background in art and use my skills in creativity every day. I am certified in Art Education and School Counseling and my doctorate degree is in Counseling Psychology. I have been a teacher and counselor for the past fifteen years.

The great masters of psychotherapy that have greatly influenced my life and work include Albert Ellis, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Anna Freud, and Erwin Yalom, Gary Landreth, and Eliana Gil. Anna Freud was one of the first therapists to work with children. Carl Jung was the first to process the archetype personalities. You will see a lot of his beliefs in the miniature work and sand tray activities.

The creative counselor is an eclectic counselor. I cannot put myself into one school of psychotherapeutic thought. I take bits and pieces of many schools of therapy. When I work with a client I allow the client to take me where they need to go. If I do not have the understanding or training for the necessary tools I go and seek the proper training and supervision in order to help my client reach their full potential. I find that being creative is the most helpful aspect in my growth as a psychotherapist. This book is a conglomeration of my journey as a creative seeker of knowledge in the field of psychotherapy, art, travel and life. My journey and training has given me many tools in order to better serve my clients and students.
While working as a college professor helping to prepare Master’s Level Counseling interns, I found that these students did not understand how to work with children. Many universities do not offer any training to counseling students in the area of Creative Arts and Play Therapy.

My belief is that every counseling student needs to have some formal training in the area of creative play and arts. I also know that when we learn how to work with children on their level it also teaches us how to work more creatively with adults. Most of my work with adults is based on a modified creative play and art therapy curriculum.

I also believe that any psychotherapist can do what we call “talk therapy”. But talk can be cheap and talk therapy does not always take a lot of training. Years ago, in my own analysis as a counseling student in graduate school, I remember needing more than “talk therapy” from my counselor. I went to several counselors seeking a deeper level of awareness. While searching for this deeper awareness in therapy I found myself thinking, “Is that all you’ve got? Give me more than that! I need to process on a deeper level!”

Sadly enough, my personal counselor(s) could not take me where I needed to go to a deeper level. It takes a creative counselor, one with training and a natural instinct, to really help clients reach a deeper level of self-awareness. All of the activities in this book have been successfully completed with children, adolescents, teens, and adults. The activities are very visual in nature. Using these activities allow the client to go to the deepest part of the brain (See Reptile Brain Dysfunction for more information). They help client’s visualize their issues, confront themselves, and find working solutions to these issues.

This book is a basic tool to help the beginning counselor understand and utilize the creative arts and play therapies. It is also useful for the seasoned counselor who might have a client that is stuck, or needs to process on a deeper level.

The activities are easy to use and materials can be purchased cheaply. My students know that I am always calling myself “cheap” as a joke. What I mean
by this is that I do not spend a lot of money on tools for clients. I believe the best tools are homemade or very inexpensive. You will see many items you can make for your clients in this book. These items are often made from recycled materials and barely cost any money.

Creativity is the key to making creative tools in psychotherapy for your clients. I also offer free clip art on my website for therapist to use as tools for clients. By using clip art and your computer / printer, you do not have to clutter up your office or play room. The therapist can also find the perfect miniature for the client using this method. One no longer has to collect thousands of miniatures in hope that one of these miniatures will benefit a client for an activity. The client can also gain more visual understanding about themselves by completing the activities. The book activities can be used for individual or group work.

I wish I had found a tool similar to this book when I was a new counselor. My first job as a counselor was working in a mental institution. As I reflect back on my work with this population I find that I am saddened by the fact that they never got a chance to do any of these activities to help them on their difficult journey. I believe that the activities in this book would have promoted healing and hope to so many of my clients who were suffering from mental illness in the mental institution.

For those people not suffering from a mental illness this book can be used for the “healthier” client, or for individuals who want to learn how to be more creative and find solutions to problems in everyday life. The therapist will also have fun doing these activities by themselves before using them on their clients (This is highly recommended, as I believe a therapist should always use a tool on themselves before using it on a client.)

The activities are tried and true and have been used for many years in the school and private counseling setting. They work in the “counseling arena” for the private practice psychotherapist and the school counselor. These activities can
also be modified for use in the school setting for shorter groups and individual sessions.

This book can also be used in to the therapeutic and clinical side of counseling. Many extensions have been added to the activities for those on the clinical side of counseling for that therapist wishing to give their clients a richer experience in psychotherapy.

Is this book based on directive therapy? In a sense yes it is based on directive therapy. I was a teacher for many years before I became a therapist. My training as a teacher always taught me to be prepared in advance with a lesson plan. My training as a psychotherapist taught me that if the activity I had planned was not applicable to the client’s need in the therapy session then it must be disregarded. The client must always lead the way in counseling. The job of the psychotherapist is to have excellent training and be eclectic in their approach to psychotherapy.

Often students who are involved in an internship are asked to do things that a well seasoned therapist would do. These students would often go into groups “cold” without any type of plan or activity. The only knowledge these students possessed was “talk therapy.” Remember, talk is cheap and anyone can go into a session (individual or group) and just “talk”. It is hard to do psychotherapy without some type of plan. Creative Psychotherapy is directive and non-directive at the same time. I would not want to go to my medical doctor and have him show me around his examination room to entice me to “find” tools for my diagnosis. I want my medical doctor to know what he is doing and to be directive with me in a plan to help me with my illness.

A psychotherapist must be the one who has the training and the tools to help clients. It is not up to the client to find the tools that they need to help themselves. However, I do try to sense what my clients like to do before suggesting an activity. A few of my clients do not like to touch the sand; therefore we do not do any sand tray activities. I follow my clients lead and go where the client needs to go, not where I want to go. This is how I use non-
directive therapy with clients. Yet, I am the one who has the expertise, training, and tools to help clients. This is part of what I get paid for. I do not sit back and let the client choose what tools will be used unless they want to. Directive and non-directive therapy is a fine line and which one is used must be used based on the needs of the client, not the therapist. Also, with managed care, therapists are often confronted with the client only being able to have brief therapy sessions. One must plan and be directive with a shortened client treatment plan.

I often plan ahead for the next session at the end of the current session. After the client leaves I take notes as to what I think would be an effective activity for the client at the next session. As I am thinking of the activity in the "current session" I will make the suggestion to the client about the activity. If the client is open I plan the activity for the next session. This allows the client to think about the suggested activity and I find that clients are excited to come for the next session due to the activity we have planned.

This book gives activities and ideas for those just starting out in psychotherapy, or for those wanting fresh ideas that will expand their knowledge base in therapy. It can be used for all ages. Adolescents, teens, and adults enjoy these activities as much as children do. Use these activities for all ages, individual sessions, or group sessions.

I hope you enjoy this book and remember that play and creativity is a universal right for all human beings (child, adolescent, adult).

Regards,

Michelle Stangline
Chapter One

Creating the Creative Counseling Room
The Creative Counseling Room

The creative counseling room is slightly different from a play therapy room or an art therapy room. This room combines play and art elements, however, it is not cluttered with toys or massive amounts of art supplies. I do not consider myself just a “play therapist”, or just an “art counselor”. I combine many types of psychotherapy in the creative arts arena. These include the sand tray, art, play, bibliotherapy, music, miniatures, and drama therapy. I use the five senses in creative counseling with my clients. Clients are able to use the sense of smell by the lingering scents of gingerbread, lavender, lemon, peppermint, cinnamon and chocolate chip cookies.

Clients see a well organized room that is visually pleasing to the eye. The room is attractive to the child as well as the teen and adult. They can listen to beautiful sounds such as the rainforest, whales, or a visual imagery c.d.. My clients can touch all the objects in the room. Nothing is off limits to them and I encourage the client to explore. They can taste cookies (see the feeling cookie) and sugar (see Sugar Therapy).

Below are some of the things you will see in my creative counseling room:

- Puppets
- Blocks
- Celebration Box
- Books
- Games
- Affirmation Jar
- Homemade Sand Tray
- Plastic Sand Tray for making a Wet Sand Tray
- Treasure Box
- Homemade Made Wands
- Homemade Puppet Theater
- Homemade Doll Houses (Several)
- Books
- Cookies & Lollipops
- C.D.’s for Music and Visual Imagery
- Clip art Cutouts

Artwork (My personal artwork that is child centered, never show the clients work to others as it violates confidentiality.)

Several Miniatures of different genres (See Miniature Section for descriptions)

Art Supplies (Glue, glitter, confetti, paper, scissors, crayons, colored sand, tape, Play Dough, wooden dowels, paper dolls, markers, pipe cleaners, fake gems, etc.)

My Traveling Creative Counseling Tools:

1 often travel to serve the needs of clients.

1 large traveling crate

Bags of miniatures: I love the tubes of animals such as jungle, reptiles, farm, ocean, and circus miniatures.

Art supplies (glue, glitter, popsicle sticks, markers, crayons, paper, confetti, sequins, fake gems, ribbons)

Puppet Supplies (Paper towel holders, construction paper, small moveable eyes, pipe cleaners)

Paper Plates & Card Stook

Play Dough

Affirmation Jar

Slinkys

Bubble Bottle

Kaleidoscope

Copies of activities in this book (have an idea of what you will use but bring extra activities in case the client needs something else.)

Small Empty Boxes

Selected books

Magazine’s that relate to a client’s personality (for making paper dolls)

Traveling Sand Tray

Clip art Cutouts (Computer with access to clip art)
Chapter Two

The Beginning of the Therapy Process:
Warm Ups & Techniques
with Creative Counseling
Creative Treasure Box

Rationale: Sometimes clients need visual tools to help them see their world in a different way, or deal with stress or anger. I buy many of the items below from Oriental Trader on-line and keep them in a Treasure Box. I also allow children and teens to take an item out of the Creative Treasure Box at the end of each session.

Materials:

1 Treasure box

Assorted items such as a slinky, bubble bottles, kaleidoscopes, warm fuzzies, mood rings, etc.

Directions:

1. Have the client state the problem and begin to process the situation at hand.

2. Assess the situation to see if it is stress or anger issue. Show the client the Creative Treasure Box. Allow them to pick one item in the box to take home.

3. Refer to the activity worksheets in this chapter for the slinky, bubble bottle, mood ring, kaleidoscope, warm fuzzy, stress ball, or golf ball.

4. Give the client the inexpensive item to take home as a visual reminder and coping skill.
The Kaleidoscope (A Different Perspective)

Rationale: Sometimes clients need a tool to help them see their personal world in a different way. The kaleidoscope can help clients imagine a different ways of looking at things, especially when they see a kaleidoscope distort reality. This can also be a calming technique for clients when they look into the magnificence of the kaleidoscope. I buy kaleidoscopes in bulk from Oriental Traders or the Dollar Store. I keep these in my creative toy box to offer clients a tool for looking differently at the world.

Materials:

- One small party favor kaleidoscope or a dollar store kaleidoscope

Directions:

1. Have the client state the problem and begin to process the situation. Ask the client if they have looked at this situation from every angle.

2. Give the client a kaleidoscope to look through. Ask the client what they see. Discuss how the kaleidoscope can give a distorted view of reality. Ask the client how they might be distorting the situation?

3. Continue to process the “crooked thinking” that the client might be experiencing. Transfer that thinking into ways to create a new perspective that the client can master.

4. Give the client the inexpensive kaleidoscope to take home as a reminder to keep seeking new ways to look at the problem.
5. An extension of this is to have an expensive kaleidoscope in your office. These are truly an experience to look through.
Blowing Bubbles (Anger, Anxiety, Stress)

Rationale: I keep several inexpensive bubble bottles in my creative toy box. I use this as part of a stress or anger management technique for children, adolescents, teens, and adults. I buy my bubble bottles from Oriental Trader.

Materials: 1 Bubble Bottle with wand

Directions:

1. Show the client how to dip the wand in the bubble liquid and blow the bubbles out.

2. Ask the client to try visual imagery and imagine blowing out negative feelings and thoughts. When the client breathes in, ask them to think of happy, calming thoughts.

3. Give the client the bubble bottle to take home and practice each day for ten minutes for stress, or to use when they feel angry feelings.
Fiddle Basket (Warm Up / Anxiety)

Rationale: This is a great way to begin conversations with clients of all ages. I keep this basket on a table close to where the client sits. In this basket there is an assortment of items for the client to pick up and “fiddle” with. These items can include the slinky, bubble bottle, balloon, golf ball, kaleidoscope, rocks, shells, and some miniatures. I often change out the miniatures and add other interesting items.

This “fiddle basket” can get the client talking, usually by the client asking me questions about the items in the “Fiddle Basket”. If they ask about a certain item, it shows me a path that they are interested in taking. For instance, if they start to play with the slinky, I ask if they would like to have a slinky to use for stress management. I have learned that what the client picks up in the basket is usually something that represents a visual for what is going on in their lives or something they need.

There is always a reason why clients are interested in a certain item in the Fiddle Basket. However, this “reason” or “need” is usually on a deeper subconscious level. One time I had a fake plastic “poop” in the basket. I had a teen tell me that their life was “crap” and they felt like the “poop”. Needless to say, this was a great conversation starter.

Materials: Basket with an assortment of items that are small such as a stress ball, kaleidoscope, slinky, balloon, bubble bottle, golf ball, rocks, shells, and assorted miniatures.
Directions:

1. Put the “Fiddle Basket” within the client’s reach before the session.

2. If the client shows an interest, invite them to “play and fiddle” with the items in the basket.

3. Let the client lead you. If they happen to take interest in an item found in your Creative Treasure Box let them know you have one they can take home.

4. See activities for the slinky, golf ball, balloon, kaleidoscope, Warm Fuzzy, and stress ball.

5. For each session change the items in the Fiddle Basket to keep it fresh.
Golf Balls (Anxiety, Stress, Anger, A.D.H.D.)

Rationale: I discovered the significance of the golf ball when I was taking my final statistic class in graduate school. After struggling to understand what the teacher was talking about I tried rolling a golf ball in my hands (under the desk of course.) I found this a very soothing technique and very helpful to my pre-frontal cortex. I felt as if I could listen more effectively and better understand the difficult material. I keep a golf ball in my “Fiddle Basket” for clients to try as a relaxation technique.

Materials: 1 Golf Ball

Directions:

1. Using both hands, show the client how to roll the golf ball up and down the inside of the hands.

2. Notice the calming effect the indentation on the ball has for stress reduction and relaxation.

3. Try this with your A.D.H.D. patients. Students can use this at school or while completing homework. However, if it becomes a toy it needs to be put away for a while until the student can learn to handle it correctly.
The Slinky  (Anger, Stress, Anxiety)

Rationale: In my creative box I keep several inexpensive slinkies from the dollar store, or from Oriental Trader. I give this out to children, adolescents, teens, and adults for stress and anger management, or to use as a distraction.

Materials: One inexpensive slinky toy

Directions:

1. Give the client a slinky. Tell them they can take it home and keep it.

2. Show the client how to pull the slinky back and forth for stress release.

3. Explain that while you pull the slinky back and forth you are watching it intensely. This can help with stress and anger as your attention is “distracted” towards the slinky.

4. Count to ten as you work the slinky back and forth.

5. I give this to students who are anxious at school. They can take the slinky to school, but it cannot become a toy while being used at school. It is important to explain this concept to the parent, child, and teacher. If it becomes a toy then the teacher needs to take it away and give it back to the child at the end of the day.
Stress Ball (Anger, Stress, Anxiety)

Rationale: I keep an assortment of stress balls in my creative treasure box. I also have an activity that I use to let clients make their own stress balls below.

Materials: One stress ball, or make your own stress ball: 1 balloon w/ sand

Directions:

1. Using both hands show the client how to squeeze the stress ball when angry or frustrated.

2. Notice the calming effect the ball has for stress reduction and relaxation.

3. To make a stress ball simply add sand to a balloon and create a ball shape. Tie the balloon to keep the sand in.
Chapter Three
Homemade Tools
In
Creative Psychotherapy
Homemade Puppet Theater

Rationale: Children often prefer homemade creations in the play room. An old picture frame makes a great puppet theater. Make sure it is safe to use, is self-standing and will not fall on children. Use your imagination and make sure the stage looks appealing to children. You may wish to include child friendly fabric for the curtains.

The Puppets:

Create puppets out of socks, paper, or materials for your puppets. Puppets can be made or store bought. Finger puppets may also be used. Again, make the puppet kid friendly! Marionettes may also be used. See the puppet making activity for additional puppet making ideas.

Materials: Large Picture Frame Paint Wooden Dowel Fabric Stitch Witchery found in craft stores

Directions:

1. Paint the picture frame with the color of your choice.

2. Cutout fabric curtains. Make room for the wooden dowel to attach on top of the curtains. You can sew the ends by using Stitch Witchery and an iron. Attach the fabric to the wooden dowel with Stitch Witchery or by sewing.

3. Attach the long dowel to the puppet theater with nails.
Homemade Puppets

Rationale: Children like to make puppets, especially if it looks just like them! Have your client make a self-portrait puppet and allow them to take it home. Keep several paper towel and toilet paper holders on hand for children to make and take home. This is a great activity for your young client to project his or her feelings onto a puppet and confront other puppets. Mix your own play therapy puppets with the child’s homemade puppet to create the ultimate puppet show!

Materials: Paper towel or toilet paper cardboard holders or socks

Wiggly eyes Yarn Colorful paper Scissors Glue Pipe Cleaners

large popsicle sticks

Directions:
1. Cover the toilet or paper towel cardboard holder with paper of choice.
2. Color in the face with nose, eyes, and ears.
3. For the eyes clip a small portion of the pipe cleaners. Glue to the eye area. Take the wiggly eyes and glue to the end of the pipe cleaners. This will give the eyes definition and a 3 D appearance.
4. Add yarn of choice for hair.
5. Add clothing with paper or markers. Large Popsicle sticks can be added for the base of the puppet.

Paper Towel Puppet idea created by two of my best students:

Lyndsey Morda and Angelie Greene. Permission granted to use idea by Angelie and Lyndsey.
Create Your Own Dollhouse

Rationale: A therapist does not have to go out and purchase an expensive dollhouse. Many times children prefer the homemade dollhouse verses the store bought dollhouse. I have several doll houses that I have made by myself. They are often simple, and some are made from old bookshelves.

Materials:
- Wood, cardboard, shoe boxes, boxes, or heavy card stock, plastic, or a bookshelf to convert.
- Building materials such as: glue, nails, scissors, or a saw
- Furniture & decor (Make or buy)
- Dollhouse family or miniatures

Directions:
1. Using the material you have chosen create the dollhouse you desire.
2. Make it as child friendly as possible. Children like color and sparkle.
3. Create doors, windows, and any other embellishments you desire.
4. Make your own or purchase furniture for your dollhouse.
5. Include miniatures or dolls meant for a dollhouse.

Your final grade for this project is based on your creativity, time, and effort put into the dollhouse. Make sure you create it with your own hands. Do not pay for...
someone to build you a dollhouse. You will also want to include miniatures that represent your family of origin and your inner child.
Build Your Own Sand Tray

Rationale: The sand tray is a great way to use miniatures and to get clients to open up and let the therapist into their phenomenological world. I encourage my graduate students to build their own sand tray to save money. I do not like using my dry sand tray with water. I offer a plastic tray for the use of water when a client needs to use a wet tray.

Official Size of the Sand Tray: 20 x 30 with a 4 inch depth.

Materials:  
- Base: 1 Particle Board sheet: 20"x 30" (1/2 inch thickness)  
- 2 Particle boards: 20 inches (short sides)  
- 2 Particle boards: 30 inches (long sides)  
- Nails  
- Sand paper  
- Blue paint  
- Wood stain  
- Polyurethane

Directions:  
1. Put the sand tray together as a rectangle with the wood sheet at the base and the particle boards as the sides. Sand the wood down to make the tray smooth.  
2. Paint the tray entire tray (except for the inside part) with the wood stain. Allow to dry.  
3. Use craft glue and nail to secure the sand tray.  
4. Paint the bottom and insides of the sand with the blue paint. Allow to dry.
5. Cover the entire tray with the polyurethane paint (This will protect the tray’s paint). You may wish to use several coats of paint. Allow to dry for a couple of days until the paint has hardened.

6. Add sand once the paint has dried completely.
Chapter Four

Use of Miniatures and Symbolism in Creative Counseling

Use of Miniatures & Symbolism in Creative Psychotherapy:

My use of miniatures and symbols began with my training in the sand tray. By using these tools in the sand tray I was able to see a piece of the client’s psyche or phenomenological world. After several years of using the sand tray with clients I started to seek new ways to work with symbols and miniatures by bringing these tools outside of the sand tray.

Carl Jung’s Archetypes inspired my use of miniatures and symbolism. Jung identified several archetypes from the shadow to the self. Jung believed that these archetypes are part of the deep psyche of every human being. Most of the time people will deny the dark archetype’s of their personalities. When we do this the darker side of our selves can have a life of its own. We often project this darker part onto others. When we project our dark parts onto others we tend to dislike the person whom we projected our parts onto.

If we ignore the different parts of ourselves we have them show in ways that are often harmful such as tantrums, nightmares, hallucinations, or when we are tired, sick, or confused. By asking client’s to identify with a representation of the different parts of self they can begin to acknowledge the cast of characters that live in the psyche.

Margaret Lowenfield’s use of miniatures in the sand play world also influenced my use of miniatures for clients. Dr. Lowenfield discussed “pre-verbal thinking” in children. In childhood development, children will attach a picture to something before they learn a word. The use of miniatures takes us back to childhood and helps us translate how we related to the world.

I have simplified the use of miniatures and symbols by asking client’s to identify feeling words and attaching a miniature or symbol to that word. After we begin to identify symbols and miniatures for the parts of the personality I ask clients to go deeper by creating phenomenological worlds. These worlds are simply another way to process the sand tray. In this book you will find the following activities to build worlds with your client:
I also keep an assortment of miniatures and symbols on a shelf in my office for the client to use. This assortment has been collected over several years of work as a psychotherapist. I only allow myself one shelf of miniatures in my office. Yes, I do use the sand tray; however, I am not only a sand tray therapist. I believe the Creative Psychotherapist has several tools to offer and should not clutter up their creative psychotherapy room with miniatures. This is why I only allow myself one shelf of miniatures and symbols.

The Creative Psychotherapist encourages the client to seek miniatures and symbols to use as well. The client can seek miniatures outside of the therapeutic session to represent the feeling words (see Personality Parts Activity). In doing so the client takes a more active stance in therapy and often picks representations that are tailor made to their personal psyche.

Clients can also look in magazines, or online to find representations of the “feeling words.” See the “Making Miniatures” activity below in the “Creative Psychotherapy Room” section for more ideas on building a miniature collection.
Below are some suggestions for the therapist who is a beginning miniature collector:

Plastic Animals: Jungle, farm (horses), ocean creatures, bugs, reptiles, dinosaurs, etc. These can be purchased cheaply in bags.

Fantasy Figures: Wizard, magic, dragons, horror, spooky, knights, pirates.

Realistic Figures: Plastic soldiers, Native-Americans, police, cave men

Storybook: King, queen, princess, prince, Disney characters,

Nature: Sea shells, rocks, fake flowers, small plastic trees, etc.

Nightmares: Ugly and scary figures such as demons, witches, devils, etc.

Small bridges and fences are also important to have for clients to represent growth or boundaries.

Transportation: Small cars, trucks, helicopter, planes, trains, etc.

Small plastic people of all colors: Mom, dad, grandmother, grandfather, siblings.

Small Buildings: Home, school, office, etc.

Plastic furniture: Chairs, sofa, beds, toilets, tables, etc.


Other Symbols: Death, birth, alcoholism (mini liquor bottle), etc.

I usually buy most of my miniatures from Wall-Mart, Target, or the Dollar Store. Each season brings new miniatures to the Dollar store so look for the scary miniatures at Halloween, the holiday miniatures at Christmas, etc. The beginning miniature collector can start with a few plastic animal miniature and over time grow their collection.

Making Miniatures (All Feelings)
Rationale: I encourage my clients to seek their own miniatures. By doing this the client has the “right” visual for miniature work. When the client seeks their own miniatures they are taking an active role in the therapeutic process. Also, the client can take the miniature home as a visual reminder of solutions that have been created in therapy. The paper miniature is similar to paper dolls. Microsoft offers free clip art that can be used to make miniatures. Also, on my website I offer free cutouts for the activities in this book.

Materials: Magazines (Make sure it is a genre the client can relate to.)

Free Clip Art (This is an excellent way to make miniatures.)

Card stock paper Scissors Glue Modeling Clay

Directions:

1. After working with the client for several sessions ask them to cut out pictures in magazines (or on-line) and bring them to the next session. These pictures can be of anything that catches the client’s eye. Remember, everything has a meaning if it is chosen by the client. The client may wish to cut out people, places, or things to use as miniatures in the sand tray, or outside of the sand tray. If you have a laminating machine you can laminate the pictures.

2. Glue the cut out pictures to card stock paper and cut out. This can be done during the session. Ask your client to explain why they felt like cutting out the pictures and what it means to them as they are cutting the pictures.

3. After you have cut out the pictures on card stock paper created a base out of the modeling clay. Roll a small ball and attach the picture on the modeling clay base. When this dries the picture will stay on the clay base.
Chapter Five
Expressing Emotions with Creative Counseling
(Self-Esteem, Self-Awareness, Sadness, Anger, Fear, Grief)
Stars in My Crown (Self-Esteem)

Rationale: This is a great activity to get client’s to identify things they like about themselves.

Materials:

Paper crowns (Clip Art or Cut Out)   fake jewels       glitter       tape       scissors

Star list below

Directions:

1. Have the client write down what they are good at on the Star List.

2. Pick a fake jewel to represent each item the client is good at on the list.

3. Color the picture on the gem for each item on the list.

4. Have the client make a personal crown and add the gems that relate to what the client does well.

5. Discuss what each jewel means to the client.
Star List: Beside each number write something you like about
yourself, or something you do well. Place a gemstone on the line next
to the statement.

Gemstone:                        Positive Statement about Self:

____ 1.

____ 2.

____ 3.

____ 4.

____ 5.

____ 6.

____ 7.

____ 8.
The Gift (Self-Esteem)

Rationale: The client will identify unique qualities about themselves and create a gift box to put written thoughts in.

Materials:

Empty box of choice with lid that opens.

Wrapping paper and bow of choice (Gift tag optional).

Paper and pen for writing.

Directions:

1. Ask the client to pick out the materials they would like to use to wrap a gift to themselves.

2. While the client is wrapping the box (Make sure you can lift the lid to put the paper in it later) discuss with them what would be the greatest gift they could give to themselves. It cannot be a material gift. Ideas can range from empathy, love, kindness, forgiveness, sobriety, anger management, self-esteem, healthy lifestyle, etc.

3. The client will write down the name of the chosen gift that they wish to give to themselves. Brainstorm ways the client can reach these goals on other sheets of paper.
4. Place the paper in the gift box. Instruct the client that they are to take the gift box out when they need some support from their own being. The client can open the box and read the entries. Once they feel strong enough to continue with their goal, they can then put the paper back in the box to be used at another time.
Snowflake Self-Esteem

Rationale: The client will identify differences that unique and valuable parts of the client’s self.

Materials Needed:
- Wax paper
- Elmer’s glue
- Glitter (Silver, white, or other)
- String

Directions:
1. Encourage the client(s) to talk about what makes snowflakes different (size & shape, different patterns). Talk about how people are all different and compare this to the differences in snowflakes. Then ask the client what kind of snowflake they would like to make to represent themselves as a different and unique individual.

2. On wax paper take the glue and create your own personal snowflake. Add glitter of choice. Attach a string to the wet glue. Allow 1 full day to dry.

3. Clients can share with the group or counselor how their snowflake is different and unique. Allow client to take the snowflake home to reflect on how wonderful their own personality is.
Sweetheart Candy Expressions (Self-Esteem)

Rationale: Clients will build their self-esteem by making positive statements about themselves.

Materials Needed:

One small box or handful of Necco Valentine Hearts each.

Directions:

1. After giving the client a handful or box of the valentine hearts have them pick out their favorite expressions on the hearts. The client(s) will be instructed to make up a positive statement about themselves and turn the valentine expression into a complete sentence.

2. Have the client(s) make a positive statement about themselves using the valentine hearts as a prompt. For instance, if the valentine heart says, “I love you” the client can complete the statement with a reason why they love themselves. An example of this might be, “I love you because you try so hard each and every day to be the best you can be.”

3. If this is being used for a group have the clients share one heart at a time. Continue until the clients have finished with all their valentine hearts.
Emotional Waves Feeling Bottle (All Feelings)

Rationale: To show a client that feelings do not last forever by building a bottle to hold feelings in.

Materials:

Empty Plastic Bottle w/ lid (rinsed and clean) Water
2 drops of dish soap  1 or 2 drops of blue food coloring
Glitter: Red (Anger), Blue (Sad), Purple (Embarrassed), Green (Envy), Yellow or Gold (Happy), Multi color (Mixed Feelings)
Water proof tokens of choice Emotional Wave Sheet Below

Directions:

1. Process with the client and discuss the wave of emotions being felt within the body (grief, stress, worry). Identify the color felt. Pick the appropriate colored glitter above to express the feelings.

2. Ask the client to draw what the waves would look like if the waves were in the ocean. Use the sheet below.

3. Explain to the client that emotional waves come and go and it is similar to the ocean. Talk about how the ocean can be stormy and have strong waves. But most of the time the ocean settles down and the waves are calm again. Have the client draw a time line of the waves in their life below.
4. Make a bottle to demonstrate this. Fill the bottle up half way with water. Add dish soap, food coloring of choice, and glitter or waterproof objects (client’s choice). Glue the top on to the bottle to keep it from spilling.

5. Shake the bottle up and show how the waves are turbulent. Then come back to the bottle after a few minutes and see how calm the water is.

6. The client can take the bottle home as a reminder that emotional waves come and go similar, to the water in the bottle.
Draw Your Emotional Waves Below:
Masquerade Carnival (All Feelings)

Rationale: Every year in Venice, Italy they celebrate with a “Carnival” and wear masks. The purpose of this activity is to identify the different masks we wear in different situations. When we wear masks we are putting on a facade. Help your client identify what masks they are wearing in different situations.

Materials:
- Cutout of mask below on card stock paper
- Art supplies for decoration of the mask: paint, markers, glue, glitter, scissors, feathers, fake gems, yarn, etc. (See mask cutout below or have your client create their own)
- Large popsicle stick for holding the mask to the face.

Directions:
1. Ask the client to identify one feeling that they “mask” and try to hide. What is the feeling they use to cover up the “hidden” feeling? Process with the client how masks build walls in relationships.
2. The client or student will decorate the mask with the identified feeling. Add the popsicle stick to the bottom of the mask.
3. After decorating the mask ask the client or student the following questions:
- What does this mask mean to you? When do you need to put the mask on? Why do you feel you need to wear the mask? How does it protect you? How does it hurt you?

- Put the mask up to your face. How do you feel when you wear the mask? Now take it off. How do you feel when you take the mask off?

- Ask the client or student if they truly feel they are being true to their real self when they wear the mask. How can they learn to take the mask off and let their real self show?

A feeling I try to hide behind a mask is:
Create a mask that shows this feeling on the circle below:
The Feeling Cookie (All Feelings)

Rationale: The client will identify feelings with frosting and a cookie.

Materials:

- 1 Round Cookie (Sugar cookies work the best). You can also use a paper cookie cut in place of the real cookie (See Below). Any type of cookie will work.
- Frosting with food coloring if you are using an edible cookie
- Markers if you are using the paper cut cookie below.
- Food Coloring (blue for sadness, red for anger, black for numbness, grey for grief, green for jealousy, pink for feeling ecstatic, yellow for happy, purple for embarrassed, or orange for playful.)
- Plastic Knives to mix frosting and spread frosting
- Sprinkles for real cookies of the above colors or mixed sprinkles to denote “Mixed Feelings” / or glitter in the above colors for paper cookies

Directions:

1. Have the client pick at least five colors and attach a feeling word to each color. Write each color with what feeling it relates to on a separate piece of paper. Discuss the feelings identified and how the client identifies with the feelings.
2. Mix up the frosting with the feeling colors that the client has identified if you are using frosting.

3. Talk about where the feelings that were identified are located in the body.

4. Ask the client to put to frost the cookie or color the paper cookie in a way that shows where each feeling color lives in the body.

5. Discuss ways to acknowledge the feelings in the body and release them when they become overwhelming such as exercise, drawing, or talking to someone about them.

6. Eat and enjoy the cookie!
Feeling Cookie

Color your cookie with your feelings:
Now translate your colors from the cookie into feelings:

Color: ___________________ Feeling: ___________________

Color: ___________________ Feeling: ___________________

Color: ___________________ Feeling: ___________________

Color: ___________________ Feeling: ___________________
Wishing Upon A Star Wand (All Feelings)

Rationale: The client will make a wish and write the wish on a magic wishing wand, along with strategies to make the wish come true...


Directions:

1. Ask the client to state a wish that would change something about the problem they are encountering.

2. On one side of the “Wish Sheet Star” have the client write down what the wish is that would solve their problem if it came true.

3. On the other side of the “Wish Sheet Star” ask the client to write a way to make the wish come true. The therapist will then process with the client about ideas that could make this wish come true. Ask the client how they can use their powers (strengths) to help them turn the problem into a solution?

4. Cut out the “Wish Star” and have the client decorate it into a “Wish Wand”. Use ribbons, glitter, and faux gems to create the wand.

5. The Client can take the wand home with them to keep in a safe place. The client may want to look at the “Wish Wand” when they need strength or motivation for the presenting issue or future issues.
Wish Wand

Make a wish

Write it on the star.
Make a wand.
Clouds (All Feelings)

Rationale: This was one of my favorite activities to do as a child. I used to lay in the grass and watch the clouds pass by. I would identify what I thought the clouds looked like. The activity below can be used with clients by having them identify what they see in the cloud pictures below.

Materials:  Clip Art Cloud cutouts, or real clouds outside, Paper Markers

Directions:

1. A fun way to warm up with this activity is to take the client outside and have them look at the clouds in the sky (By the way this is very relaxing). Ask the client what shapes, animals, or things they see in the cloud shapes.

2. Using the clouds below ask the client to identify what they see in the shapes.

3. The client can draw a picture of the cloud and turn it into the symbol they identified.

4. Process with the client why they chose the symbol and what the symbol means to them.

5. Translate the symbol in the Symbols Dictionary and ask the client if they can relate this symbol to their real life.
Sugar Therapy (Extreme Stress / Anxiety / Fear)

Rationale: Use “Sugar Therapy” when a client (especially a child) is in crisis mode (hysteria, hyperventilation, etc.). It is important that the therapist address the “crisis feelings” before conducting therapy. I have a jar filled with small colorful suckers that I will bring out when a client is in crisis and needs to calm down so that therapy can begin. I use “Sugar Therapy” sparingly, as giving sugar to children may sometimes be controversial. I also check with the parent at the beginning of therapy to make sure I can offer their child sugar from time to time. This “check-in” with parents is included in my informed consent paperwork given the prior to the first session.

Materials:

- Suckers or Hard Candy           - Jar for candy items

Directions:

1. If a client comes into the therapy session and is hysterical, hyperventilating, or beyond rationalization offer them a sucker or piece of hard candy. I prefer a sucker as the client can remove the sucker to talk as soon as they begin to calm down.

2. Begin the session by telling the client that you will just sit with them while they calm down and focus on eating the sucker. Ask the client to only think about the sucker and how it tastes at this moment.
3. While the client is focusing on the sucker ask them to begin to focus on their breathing by breathing from the diaphragm and taking long, deep breaths.

4. "Sugar Therapy" can take anywhere from ten to thirty minutes. Once the client has calmed down and can begin to talk then the therapy can begin and the client can focus on the situation at hand.
Warm Fuzzies (Love /Anxiety)

Rationale: I keep a basket of pom pom balls for clients to take. I usually read the “Warm Fuzzy” story first. Warm Fuzzies are little balls of “pure love” that help children, adolescents, teens, and even adults get through tough times. Some students sleep with them under their pillows, or carry some in their pocket when they need a little extra love. People go crazy over these little puff balls. I used to be known as the “Warm Fuzzy Counselor” at one of my schools. This is also useful for students with separation anxiety. I tell the child with separation anxiety that I will give them a Warm Fuzzy if they come to school each morning. This has worked for every child with separation anxiety. Kids and teens would come in just to ask me for a Warm Fuzzy. Many conversations and check ins have happened due to someone asking for a Warm Fuzzy. It became a cultural phenomenon where I worked as a counselor. I will always have a basket of Warm Fuzzies for my students to use.

Materials: 1 basket of pom pom balls (Assorted sizes and colors)

Directions:

1. Read the “Warm Fuzzy” story below with the client.

2. After reading the story give a few “warm fuzzies” to the client to keep.

The Story of Warm Fuzzies

Once upon a time there was a lovely place called “Warm Fuzzy Land” In this land people felt free to give warm fuzziest to one another. Warm Fuzzies were little balls of pure love that made everyone feel good all over. Back in the day,
all you had to do was ask for a Warm Fuzzy. People would reach into their pocket and grab a handful of Warm Fuzzies and give them to you. Everyone was generous and there was never a shortage of Warm Fuzzy feelings to go around. Everyone felt safe and loved and made everyone else feel safe and loved.

But one day a wicked elf showed up in the Land of Warm Fuzzies. When people began to give him Warm Fuzzies he did not like it. They were the opposite of what he kept in his pocket, the mean cold prickles. He began telling people that there was a huge shortage of Warm Fuzzies and they needed to hoard them. Well, people stopped giving away their Warm Fuzzies and hid them away or locked them up. They stopped carrying them around in their pocket too.

Soon, the entire land was angry and sad. People started to be mean to each other and say hateful things. They began to bully, yell, and become angry with one another. They hid in their houses and did not come out. The Land of Warm Fuzzies was renamed the Land of Cold Prickly.

One day a sad little boy was bored and began looking around the attic for something to play with. He stumbled upon a box of Warm Fuzzies that had been hidden for many years. When he opened up the box he felt feelings of love, kindness, and warmth. He took the box to school with him the next day. He gave a Warm Fuzzy to all the children in the school. They in turn took the Warm Fuzzy home and gave it to their parents. The parents remembered the boxes of Warm Fuzzies they had put away in their attics. They all brought the boxes downstairs and opened them. The love, warmth, and kindness was so immense that the Land of Cold Prickles became the Land of Warm Fuzzies once again.

Everyone lived happily ever after and never gave up their Warm Fuzzies again!

Story Modified / Source Unknown
Magic Power Wand (Self-Esteem / Anger / Anxiety / Fear)

Rationale: To help a client find inner strength and use that strength when they need it and create a magic power wand representing the power.

Materials:
Sparkle pipe cleaners  glue  glitter  sequence
Card stock  Star Cutout below  Wooden Dowel  Fake Gems

Directions:
1. Have the client talk about one or more inner strengths they possess. This is the client’s “Magic Wand.” Write them down on a note card or card stock.

2. Discuss ways that the client can use this inner strength (resiliency) when they get into tough situations. For instance if they have a great sense of humor they may be able to deal with bullies in a humorous way. Or, they can think of creative solutions to a problem if creativity is their strength.

3. Have the client pick out the materials they want and create a magic wand.

4. Ask the client to write the strength they possess in the center of the magic wand star. Add pipe cleaners around the outside of the star. Use several pipe twisted pipe cleaners as the wand handle or use a wooden dowel. Attach to the star.

5. Decorate with baubles, gems, glitter, ribbons, or sequence of choice.
6. The wand can be taken home and displayed in a special place as a reminder of the “magic power” the client possesses. The wand with “magic powers” can be referred to when a difficult situation presents itself to the client.
Write your Power in the Starburst:

- Cut Out
- Add a stick
- Make a Power Wand
Protective Sea Shell (Anxiety / Fear)

Rationale: I keep a basket of sea shells in my office for clients to touch and hold. One of the sea shells is a large conch shell. If you listen to the inside of the shell you can hear the ocean sounds. Sometimes, clients need to create a visual of a safe place. I use the shell as an example and relate how animals in the ocean chose a shell for protection.

Materials: Basket of sea shells, or Clip Art Conch Sea Shell Cutout Below

Art Materials: markers, glue, sequins, confetti, stickers, gems, etc.

Directions:

1. Show the client a collection of sea shells. Ask them to imagine what it would be like to be an ocean animal and crawl up into the shell when they do not feel safe. Process these feelings with the client.

2. After the client processes the safe feelings ask them to write what safe feelings they have on the back of the sea shell cutout.

3. The client can decorate the sea shell cutout and take it home as a reminder of a safe place to climb into when the world becomes a scary place.
Protective Seashell

Cut out and decorate
Mood Swings and Rings (Identify Feelings)

Rational: Sometimes clients need to be taught to acknowledge their feelings. By utilizing this exercise, clients can begin to track and understand their many moods (Positive or Negative). The counselor can also use this activity as a way to help the client build coping skills when dealing with their negative moods (Anger, Depression, Grief, Embarrassment, Sadness, and Anxiety). I always keep several mood rings (male & female styles) and Bio dots in my office. Children and adults love these trinkets and it is a good way to identify and process feelings. I order several mood rings and dots from a company called Bio dots. The client can take a ring or dot and measure their mood throughout the day. I keep my rings and dots in my creative toy box and generously give these out to clients. Children, adolescents, and adults love to take a ring or dot home.

Mood Ring or Bio Dot w/feeling chart of colors and moods

Directions:

1. Give the client a mood ring or Bio dot. The bio dot comes with a feeling chart that can help the client understand and identify the mood. Allow 30 minutes to activate the ring or the dot.

2. Talk to the client about each mood on the Bio dot chart or mood ring chart. Discuss with the client about their mood history.
3. Ask questions such as, “Do they remember a time when they got to the darkest level on the chart? What did they do to change their mood? How often do they go to the darkest part of the feeling chart? What can they do in the future when they go to the darkest part of the chart?”

4. Process coping skills with the client. Allow the client to take the ring or dot home with the feeling chart to use in the future.

5. Have the client create a record of how many times a day they experience negative feelings and what level they reached on the feeling chart.
Theater Masks (All Feelings)

Rationale: Sometimes we hide our true feelings behind an imaginary mask. Masks keep our authentic selves from shining through and cause us to build walls between others. People can see masks we put on and this can lead to mistrust from others. There are some feelings we let everybody see and other feelings we try to hide. The feelings we try to hide can become a “mask” if we continue to ignore or stuff them within.

Materials: Paper for creating masks  Mask Cut outs  Glitter  Glue  Gems  Feathers  Markers  Other Craft Materials

Directions:

1. Identify one or more feelings that are hidden and blocked. Do you think these feelings have become a mask that you wear?

2. Create a mask that represents one of the feelings using the art materials listed above.

2. Cut out a mask of choice. Decorate the mask and give the mask a name and write it on the inside of the mask. Examples of mask cutouts are below.

3. After the client has decorated and named the mask ask them to sit and look at the mask for a few minutes.

4. Ask the client to discuss the below questions:

- How does this mask protect you?

- How does the mask keep you from being your authentic self?
- What does holding onto this mask offer you. What do you get from this mask?

- Who do you lift the mask off for? Why do you take the mask off for this person?

- When do you put the mask on? When do you take the mask off?

- How does this mask help you? How does it hurt you?

- What needs to happen to change the mask?

- How do you feel when you wear the mask?

- Do you get tired when you wear the mask?

- How can you take the mask off and still feel safe?
Drawbridges (Anxiety / Fear)

Rationale: Sometimes we need to build walls to protect ourselves. Other times we need to let the walls down to allow people in and to take chances. This exercise gives the visual of a castle (the self) with a moat and a drawbridge. The client chooses when to let the drawbridge down and when to pull it up. This gives a sense of empowerment and control over one's life.

Materials: Markers Free Clip Art Copy of Castle with drawbridge

1. Process with the client about walls that they put up. Some walls are healthy and protect us. Other walls are harmful and keep us from experiencing life or taking healthy risks.

2. Discuss the healthy walls and the harmful walls in the client's personal world.

3. Show the client the copy of the castle and the drawbridge. Ask the client what would it be like to have a drawbridge and a moat? You can let the drawbridge down when you feel safe and invite others into your castle. You can pull the drawbridge up when you don't feel safe.

4. Talk about times in the client's life that it is necessary to let the drawbridge down, as well as bring it up.

5. The client can decorate the castle and take it home as a visual reminder to take healthy risks in life, yet protect themselves at the same time.
Cut the drawbridge out.
Dream Boat (Goals / Dreams)

Rationale: The client will identify past, present, and future dreams and goals that have not come true and write solutions to make the dream come true.

Materials: Dream Boat Clip Art Cutout Markers Glitter Glue

Directions:

1. The therapist will process with the client about dreams or goals they had in the past, present, and future that have not come true.

2. Talk about things that have blocked these dreams or goals. What got in the way of these dreams?

3. Ask the client to pick one of the dreams. Have the client write the dream on the “Dream Boat” worksheet below. Then ask the client to write three steps to take to make the dream or goal turn into a reality.

4. The client can decorate the boat and take it home.
Write Your Dreams Below:

1.
2.
3.
Building Castles (Hopes / Dreams / Goals)

“If you have build castles in the air, your work need not be lost: that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.” – Henry David Thoreau

Rationale: To put a dream down on paper and come up with unique and different “foundations” for the castle in the air.

Materials: Castle Clip Art Cutout below Markers Crayons Glitter Cotton Balls

Directions:

1. Ask the client to chose one important dream that would make them happy if the dream came true.

2. Have the client state some blocks that are keeping them from their dream.

3. Give the client a cutout of a castle from below. Add cotton balls to the base of the castle to represent clouds. The client can then brainstorm ideas that can make the dream become a reality and bring the castle” down to earth (Or ground the castle).

4. The client can decorate the castle and take it home as a reminder of the work that needs to be completed to bring the castle down to earth.
Make my castle come down to earth.

1.
2.
3.
Grief Bottle (Grief / Loss / Trauma)

Rationale: To show clients that grief feelings come and go.

Materials: Empty Plastic Bottle w/lid (rinsed and clean) water paper/markers 2 drops of dish soap food coloring (Red or Blue) Glitter: Red (Anger), Blue (Sad), Purple (Embarrassed), Green (Envy), Yellow or Gold (Happy), Multi color (Mixed Feelings)

Small waterproof tokens of choice

Directions:

1. Process with the client and discuss the wave of emotions being felt within the body (grief, stress, anger, etc.). Identify the color felt. For example if grief is experienced it may be a blue color, anger might be red in color.

2. Ask the client to draw what the waves would look like if the waves were in the ocean. Use the sheet below.

3. Explain to the client that emotional waves come and go and it is similar to the ocean. Talk about how the ocean can be stormy and have strong waves. But most of the time the ocean settles down and the waves are calm again. Have the client draw a time line of the waves in their life below.

4. Make a bottle to demonstrate this. Fill the bottle up half way with water. Add dish soap, food coloring of choice, and glitter or waterproof objects (client’s choice). Glue the top on to the bottle to keep it from spilling.
5. Shake the bottle up and show how the waves are turbulent. Then come back to the bottle after a few minutes and see how calm the water is.

6. The client can take the bottle home as a reminder that emotional waves come and go similar, to the water in the bottle.

Wave Sheet: Using the ocean sheet below draw a time line of waves that are stormy to represent grief in your life.

Questions To Ponder:

1. How long did these waves last in your life?

2. Did you ever experience calming waters? How long did they last?
The Tower (Anger Management)

Rationale: Use this activity with a client that is “blocked” and is having difficulty finding solutions to a problem. The client will create a “Visual” of their problems being locked away in a tower and come up with solutions to solving these problems. If the client is not ready to create a solution to the problem the client can still benefit by visualizing the problem locked away in the tower. The client can become empowered by separating themselves from the problem that is locked away in the tower.

Materials: Tower Worksheet     Markers

Directions:

1. Ask the client to identify the number one problem they are facing and write it in the tower worksheet below. Process the problem with the client to make sure you and your client fully understand the problem at hand. 2. Once the problem is identified ask the client to come up with creative and unique ways for solving the problem. These can be written at the bottom of the worksheet. 3. Process each solution with the client. Which solution could be brought into reality? What would it take for the client to make the solution a reality? Is the client ready to take the risk to make the solution happen? Or, does the problem need to stay in the tower for now?
Angry Balloon (Stress / Anger)

Rationale: This activity works well for anger management groups or individual sessions. It can also be used for stress management. I use this technique for kids and adults.

Materials:

1 Balloon 1 Balloon Cutout (Below)  Markers  Glitter  Glue  Faux Gems

Directions:

1. Ask the client to discuss the situation that is causing them to feel anger or stress.

2. The client can use the balloon to visualize blowing the anger or stress into the balloon. Once the balloon is blown up ask the client not to tie it but to release the air from the balloon in short bursts. To do this you must use your fingers and only allow a certain amount of air out of the balloon at a time. It will make a squeaky sound. This usually makes the client laugh which in turn releases more angry and stressful feelings.

3. The client can use the balloon template below to write their feelings (stress, anger, etc.) on the balloon. Decorate the balloon with markers, glitter and gems.

4. Have the client visualize their negative feelings being lifted by the balloon and floating away. Discuss what it would look like to the client if this really did happen.
5. Give the client a balloon to take home to use when they experience anger or stress.
Write your angry feelings inside the balloon.
Measure Your Thoughts (Re frame Thoughts)

Rationale: This activity will help you show client’s the true reality of the situation. It will allow the client to give a number to the situation and gain the true perspective of the issue.

Materials: One to ten scales below

Directions:

1. After the client has talked to you about the issue at hand, show the client the scale below. Tell the client that a “1” is the lowest amount of feeling on the scale and the “10” is the highest amount of feeling on the scale. Ask the client to rate the problem or situation on the scale below. Many clients will give the situation or problem a very high rating on the scale.

2. Ask the client what the worst situation that could ever happen to them might be. Younger children might state the death of a parent, older children and adults might say a nuclear war. Once the client states what the worst situation would be for them, ask the client to rate it on the scale below.

3. Then ask the client to rate the problem or situation (the one they first rated on direction #1) again on the scale below. Does the problem or situation get the same number on the scale after comparing it to a true catastrophe?
Measure Your Thoughts

use the measurement chart below to rate your feelings:

10 (Highest Amount of Horrible Feelings)

9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2

1 (Least amount of Horrible Feelings)
Potty Mouth (Anger / Curse Words)

This is a good activity for children who are using curse words, or “nasty” words.

Rationale: This

Materials:

Markers / Potty Worksheet Below

Directions:

1. Ask children to identify some curse words they are using and make sure they understand that these words are offensive and inappropriate to use. The therapist may want to find out where these “potty” words are coming from (Home, School, And Other).

2. Tell the child or adolescent that they are too smart to use these words. Often the statement, “I know you are better than that” has a tremendous effect on the child or adolescent. Teach parents to say this statement instead of using negative discipline.

3. Ask the child or adolescent to write the “potty words” on the toilet sheet worksheet below. You can feel free to omit letters. For instance, you may wish to use “sh_t” instead of writing out the entire word.

4. On the right hand side next to the “potty” ask the client to write alternative words that can replace the “potty” words.

Example to replace the word “sh_t”: Sunshine, Sugar, Sweet, Super.
List the words that need to be “flushed” down the toilet below:

Write some alternative words below that will not get you into trouble here:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4.
Put the potty word below.

Write the potty word.
Stressed Out Balloon (Anger, Stress)

Rationale: I keep a bag of balloons in my creative toy box. I use this as part of a stress or anger management technique for children, adolescents, teens, and adults.

Materials: 1 Bag of colored balloons

Directions:

1. Model for the client by blowing into the balloon hold the balloon at the nape of the balloon with the fingers. Suggest using visual imagery when blowing air into the balloon. This can include blowing angry or stressful thoughts into the balloon.

2. Let a small amount of air out at a time. The balloon makes a funny noise as the air comes out. This may take some practice as you need to hold the balloon just right and let a small amount of air out to make the noise.

3. Let the client try to blow up the balloon and let the air out. Allow the balloon to fly around the room. The client usually begins to loosen up and starts laughing.

   3. Give the client the balloon to take home and practice each day for ten minutes for stress, or to use when they feel angry feelings.

   4.
Part II of Stressed Out Balloon

Rationale: To release negative feelings into a balloon by identifying the feeling and then bursting (getting rid of) the feeling.

Materials Needed: Regular size balloons, sharpie marker

Directions:

1. Have the client pick out a balloon. Make sure you have an assortment of colors to choose from.

2. Ask the client to blow up the balloon half way. Let them tie the balloon if possible. Talk about placing the “negative feeling(s)” in the balloon when they blow the balloon up half way.

3. The client will draw a face on the balloon that relates to the “negative feeling” he or she is experiencing. The client may wish to give the balloon a name. Allow the client to write the name on the balloon.

4. The client is now instructed to burst the negative feelings located inside of the balloon. Because the balloon is only blown up half way, this will take some time to do.

5. By the end of this activity the client is usually laughing and smiling!
Tame Your Dragons (Anger)

Rationale: This is an exercise of guided imagery and the dragon represents the negative feeling of anger. The therapist helps the client identify the problem, identify the feeling(s), and then redirect the thinking process to a more positive one.

Materials Needed for Paper Dragon:
- Paper
- Markers or Paint
- Glitter
- Faux Gems

Materials Needed for 3-D Dragon:
- Clay or Play Dough
- Paint

Directions:
1. After the client has identified the problem ask them to talk about the feelings they are experiencing (Anger, Rage, Hate, Fear, Sadness).
2. Ask the client to draw the dragon (the dragon wills represents the feeling).
3. After the client has finished drawing the dragon ask them to give a name for the dragon.
4. Ask the client to talk about what the dragon in the picture or the 3-D dragon is feeling.
5. Process what it would feel like if this dragon was there for some type of purpose. Could it be for a good reason? Could it be possible the dragon is there to protect the client or help the client in anyway?

6. Ask the client what it feels like to not have the dragon around, or if the client lost the dragon. What would the opposite feeling be from the one the dragon has?

7. After processing the above, ask the client what they want to do with the dragon. Do they want to recreate the dragon in some way? How can they turn the dragon into a friendlier version of a dragon? Or would the client just like to make the dragon go away? Or smash it up? Tear it up?
Angry Tornado (Anger)

Rationale: This can show a client how anger can build up inside. It can also show the client that when they feel an angry tornado inside of them they can use coping skills to help defuse the anger.

Materials:

Empty Plastic Bottle w/lid (rinsed and clean)  water  paper/markers
2 drops of dish soap  food coloring (Red)

Glitter: Red (Anger), Blue (Sad), Purple (Embarrassed), Green (Envy), Yellow or Gold (Happy), Multi color (Mixed Feelings), Black (Anxious)

Water proof tokens of choice to represent some type of meaning to the client.

Directions:

1. Process with the client and discuss the wave of emotions being felt within the body (grief, stress, anger, etc.). Identify the color felt. For example if grief is experienced it may be a blue color, anger might be red in color.

2. Explain to the client that emotional anger can look like a tornado inside us sometimes. The tornado does not stay forever, but comes and goes at different times due to events that happen to us. Process what events might trigger an angry tornado to happen inside the client.

3. Ask the client to create a tornado in the bottle by adding water, food coloring, glitter, and tokens of choice. Make a bottle to demonstrate this. Fill the bottle
three quarters of the way with water. Add dish soap, food coloring of choice, and glitter or waterproof objects (client’s choice). Glue the top on to the bottle to keep it from spilling.

4. Shake the bottle up and down. Swirl it around. Make it resemble a tornado. Now ask the client to do the same thing. Then come back to the bottle after a few minutes and see how calm the water in the bottle is.

5. Process with the client about how anger can “tornado” up inside of each of us. Get the client to name some things they can do to calm the “tornado” inside of them. Make a list for the client to reference later on when they get angry or upset.

6. The client can take the bottle home as a reminder that anger comes and goes. It is a natural occurrence with human beings. However, as with the tornado in the bottle things eventually settle down and go back to a normal baseline. By using this visual, the client can understand their own anger and have a list of coping skills handy to go to when the anger strikes.
Chapter Six

Creating

Personal Worlds

With

Miniatures

And

Clip art Cutouts
Personality Parts (Beginning Use with Miniatures or Clip Art)

Rationale: The client will choose miniatures that represent emotions they are experiencing.

Materials: “Personality Parts Worksheet” below

Assorted Miniatures of Choice

Directions:

1. Ask the client to pick one or more words from the Suggested Emotion list below.

2. The client will need to find miniatures that represent these chosen emotions. This may take one or more sessions. The therapist should have an assortment of miniatures available when doing this activity with a client. If the client does not find a miniature that represents the word they can draw one or take extra time outside of the session to look for the perfect miniature to represent the word.

3. After the client has chosen the “emotional words” and the miniatures to represent each word fill out the “Personality Parts Worksheet” below.

4. The therapist can translate each miniature from the Symbols Dictionary to share with the client when they meet again.
Extension: Use the “Inner World” activity located in the Creative Psychotherapy book.

Suggested Emotions:

alienated, angry, aggressive, annoyed, apathetic, angry, bashful, bored, cautious, confident, confused, curious, depressed, determined, disappointed, discouraged, disgusted, embarrassed, enthusiastic, envious, excited, ecstatic, exhausted, fear, frightened, frustrated, guilty, happy, helpless, hopeful, hostile, hurt, humiliated, hysterical, innocent, interested, jealous, loved, lonely, mischievous, misery, negative, positive, optimistic, passive, paranoid, peace, proud, puzzled, power, relieved, regret, sadness, shock, satisfied, shy, stubborn, sure, suspicious, withdrawn, shutdown, unhappy, undecided, kindness, blocked, shame, ugly, beauty, frozen, terror, horror, sickness, etc..

(Feel free to make up your own emotional words.)
Pick an emotional word and find a miniature to represent the word. Explain why the miniature was chosen to represent the word:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Word</th>
<th>Miniature Chosen</th>
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Rationale: The lowest part of the human brain derives from a mammal-like reptile. This part of the brain is often referred to as the “Reptilian Brain.” It’s the most ancient part of the brain and a fundamental core of the nervous system. The “Reptilian Brain” controls bodily functions such as breathing, temperature, heartbeat, etc. It also houses the “fight, flight, or flee” syndrome. Other reptile brain behaviors such as post traumatic stress, sexual drive, addiction, over eating, paranoia, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, rituals, and anxiety are located here. This part of the brain is visual and responds well to miniature work.

Materials: 1 bag of reptile or dinosaur miniatures or markers for drawing

Directions:

1. Explain to the client about the “Reptilian Brain” and how stress can cause us to use this part of the brain. When we regress and use this part of the brain we are no longer using logic, only instinctual fear.

2. The goal is to catch yourself before you regress to the “Reptilian Brain”. Ask the client to relate to what they are feeling and then translate the negative feeling into a fear. Remember, all negative feelings come from a fear base. The client will then chose a miniature or draw a picture of a reptile to represent this part of the brain.
3. Process with the client ways to avoid “Reptile Brain Dysfunction”. They may wish to try yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong, exercise, self-talk, massage, meditation, or hypnotherapy from a licensed mental health professional.

3. When we are self-aware we are less likely to use our “Reptilian Brain.” It is also helpful to understand our belief system and why we believe what we do. Our belief system is set by the age of six years old. We rarely change our belief system unless we question and challenge it. Humans are a combination of thoughts and patterns passed down through generations from well meaning family members. Yet sometimes humans get stuck in their beliefs and become rigid.

4. When the client becomes anxious, fearful, obsessive, addicted, etc. ask them to get their reptile miniature or picture out. Then they can be reminded not to go into “Reptile Brain Dysfunction” and use coping skills to bring them back to rational thinking.

*Inspired by Candace Ford: World’s Greatest School Psychologist*
Draw a picture of your “Reptile” to represent your “Reptile Brain” below:

Name three things you can do to prevent “Reptile Brain Dysfunction”:

1.
2.
3.
Rationale: The client will briefly describe a problem or situation they are experiencing and then pick an animal to represent the feelings within. After processing the problem and coming up with solutions the client will choose another animal to represent the problem or issue. Hopefully, this animal will be less threatening. For instance, one of my students picked a lion to represent him yelling at his mother. After processing and problem solving he chose a cat to represent himself.

Materials: Miniatures or Markers for drawing a chosen animal.

Directions:

1. The client will briefly describe their situation or problem to the therapist.

2. The therapist will ask the client to pick an animal to represent the problem or situation. The client can either chose an animal miniature or draw the animal on the sheet below.

3. The client will explain why they chose the animal and how it represents the problem in their mind. They will then use the animal to act out the situation or problem.

4. The therapist will ask the client would they act the same way if the problem or situation happened again. Usually, the client will say they wish they had responded differently to the problem. This is an ideal moment to use re
framing. Ask the client to process different ways to respond to the situation or
problem that are healthier.

5. The therapist will then ask them to pick an animal to represent the new way
of being or the new way of thinking.

6. The client will again re-enact the situation or problem with the new animal
and the new learned behaviors.
Big | Little
Personal Landscape (Miniature World)

Rationale: The client will create a personal landscape with miniatures to represent their personality parts living in their own special world (phenomenological world) within the psyche.

Materials Needed:

- White Poster Board (9 x 9) to draw the parts of the landscape and to hold the miniatures. See instructions for Triarama at the end of this book.

- Small props you can move around (seasons, places, past, present, future). Magazine clip outs work well. Ask the client to preview some magazines before your session and to bring cut outs with them. Think of how stage production uses props in a play. Create a setting or theme for your world.

- Miniatures, paper dolls, paper props, back drops

*See “Personality Parts” activity in this book for a list of emotions to represent miniatures.

Markers     Glue      Glitter      Sequins      Faux Jewels      Other Art Materials

Miniatures: This is the cast of characters that live in this magical land of the psyche. These can include: Ego, persona, inner child, shadow, hero, mother earth, wise old man, power, blocked self, controlling self, death, fear, demons, trickster, animals, spirituality, risk taker, ancestor, etc.. You will also want to include some real life family, friends, etc. from the past, present, or future. Ask the client to pick these out before the session. You may want to devote one session to choosing the archetypes.

Objective: You will want to set up your world on the large construction paper using the above cast of characters (archetypes).
Directions:

1. The client will set up a world using chosen personal miniature characters. Add the characters that exist in the client’s present landscape (phenomenological world).

2. Create props in your landscape through drawings and cut outs on the construction paper. You may want to add swamps, forests, rivers, oceans, mountains, volcanoes, bridges, gardens, roads, buildings, etc., to make the landscape appear more lifelike.

3. The client will explore each miniature and ask each one why they are in the world and what job they do in the world. See more questions below.

Extension:

Have the client create a past, present, future landscape world. This can take up to three sessions to complete this activity.

Questions for the Landscape World:

1. Who, what, why and where are your characters in this world? Why are they in the archetype inner world?

2. Ask the client what their miniatures love, hate, or fear in this world? Who are the heroes and who are the villains? How can the negative miniatures be more accepted?

3. What patterns happen in the world? Which characters are responsible for the patterns of the world?

4. Who needs to change certain behaviors or attitudes in your world? Who do you need to dismiss from your village, or give another job to? Who needs a lot of attention and why do they need so much attention? Who wants to change, and who is not ready to change? Who is getting in the way of needed change? Who sets up road blocks and who tears road blocks down? Who is in denial? Who is distorting the reality of the world?

5. What characters need to be added to your world? Who can help you with your own growth in self-awareness?

6. What props do you need in your world to help you move closer to self-awareness?

7. Who has the all-or nothing thinking (black/white, good/bad, and winner/loser)? Who is happy, sad, angry, active, sedated?
8. What do you want your world of the future to look like? What characters need to leave? What characters need to stay? Who needs to change in order to be allowed to continue with the future world? How do they need to change?

9. Personal awareness: Do you need to add or take away bridges, rivers, or mountains for protection? Do you need to explore the swamps, dark forests, deserts, or bottom of the oceans in your world?
Clouds = Anxiety
Sun = Fun
Mountains = Peace
Volcano = Fear
Forest = Sad
Anger
River = Happy
Ocean = Serenity
Waterfall Bridge
Swamp Seaed
Circus Life (Miniature World)

Rationale: The client will build a world based on the circus characters below. The client will identify with the circus animals that have been chosen to create the world. This is another way to use miniatures or paper doll cut outs and create the inner world of the psyche.

Materials:

Paper doll cutouts of the circus (below) or plastic circus animals

White Poster Board (9 x 9) Triarama (See directions for making this at end of book.)

Markers  Scissors  Glue  Glitter  Faux Gems

(Other items found at the circus: peanuts, popcorn, feathers)

Directions:

1. Using a large sheet of paper or an upside down paper plate have the client create a world that represents circus life.

2. The client can cut out the paper dolls below or use plastic circus miniatures or animals to help create their circus world.

3. The client can also decorate the world using additional art materials such as glitter, faux gems, feathers, etc.
4. After the client has completed their world ask them to identify with each of the circus animals, people, or things in the world.

5. Ask these questions based on what characters the client put into their circus world. Who is the ring leader? Who is the tiger, lion, elephant, seal, clown, strong lady or man, contortionist, jester, tight rope walker, acrobat, etc.? Who is happy? Unhappy? What makes this world work? What brings problems to this world? Who needs to stay in this world? Who needs to leave this world? Does anything need to be added to this world?

6. Relate the circus world to the real world of the client.

The client can take this world home as a reminder of all of the thoughts and ideas that were processed in the session.
Circus Life
Under The Sea (Miniature World)

Rationale: The client will create an underwater ocean world using cutouts of sea creatures and sea life.

Materials:

1 Triarama White Poster Board (9x9)
Different colors of card stock or construction paper for cutting fish, etc.
Scissors    glue    markers    glitter    under the sea cutouts or miniatures

Directions:

1. Ask the client to think about the people in his/her family and where they live. You will want the client to transfer this information into a family portrait using fish, sea creatures, plants, shells, shipwrecks, etc. as symbols of family members.

2. Direct the client into creating a family portrait by drawing and cutting out fish, sea creatures, and environmental structures found on the ocean floor using colored card stock or construction paper.

3. When the client has finished ask the client to translate the collage to you. Be cognizant of what type of sea animal represents each family member. Also, what type of structure does the ocean floor have? Is it a safe environment or a frightening environment? You may wish to translate the animals and structures in the Symbols dictionary.
The Healing Garden (Miniature World)

Rationale: The client will build a healing garden world that is a safe and protective place. In which they can put vulnerable emotions.

Materials: Triarama poster board, miniatures, and an assortment of arts and craft supplies, Garden cutouts below, and glue. Allow the client to take the Healing Garden home to give a visual representation of a safe and protective place.

Directions:

1. Build a garden on the triarama poster board using the cut outs below and adding other art medium as needed. Let the client know that this is a healing garden and a safe place to put vulnerable thoughts and feelings.

3. Ask client to talk about their healing garden they created. The therapist asks questions such as:

What was it like to create this garden? What plants or miniatures did you add to your healing garden?

Why did you add the (plants, miniatures, etc.)? What feelings do these plants or animals represent to you?

Do you want to add more items to your garden? Do you want to take anything away from your garden?
Do you want to change your garden in any way?

What is it like to live here in this garden? What feelings are present in this garden?

How are the plants and animals in this garden safe? What plants and animals make it unsafe?

What plant or animal would make this animal feel unsafe in this environment (Add the animal to the world)?

If this plant or animal could talk what would it say? Project your feelings and words into the plant or animal and make it talk.

What do you need to do to get rid of the unsafe parts of this garden?

Is there a plant or animal that can help your garden? How can you make sure the plant or animal stays in this garden to help you when you need help?

What if we moved the plants or animal(s) around in the world? What would happen if we placed the plants or animal(s) here, there?

What do you want / need to say to the garden?

What is it like for you experiencing this garden?

What words would describe your experience today?

What did you learn from this garden world?

What needs to change / stay the same in this garden?

What protection does this garden need in order to feel and stay safe? How can you translate this perspective to real life?

Therapist: It is now time to translate your client’s plants and animal using the SYMBOLS DICTIONARY. Discuss this translation with your client in the next session.
Life Theater (Miniature World)

Rationale: The client will create a personal theater that holds an inner world play of their life using the materials below.

Materials needed: Triarama white poster board paper to use as a theater. Build a back to the theater by taking one piece of paper and folding it three times (Center fold will be larger)

- Small props you can move around (seasons, places, past, present, future). Magazine clip outs work well. Ask the client to preview some magazines before your session and to bring cut outs with them. Think of how stage production uses props in a play. Create a setting or theme for your world.

Miniatures, Paper Dolls, Paper Props, Theater Back Drops

Markers     Glue     Glitter     Sequins     Faux Jewels     Other Art Materials

The Cast of Characters: Miniatures that represent your shadow, hero, mother earth, wise old man, power, blocked self, controlling self, death, fear, demons, trickster, animals, spirituality, risk taker, ancestor, etc.. You will also want to include some real life family, friends, etc. from the past, present, or future. Ask the client to pick these out before the session. You may want to devote one session to choosing the miniatures that will represent each part of the self, family members, etc... You can also use miniatures that represent feeling words or emotions.
Objective: You will want to set up your theater play on the large construction paper using the above cast of characters and other chosen miniatures.

Directions:

1. Set up a theater play using your miniature characters above. Add the characters that existed in your past to the world.

2. Create props in your world through drawings and cut outs on the construction paper. Think of how you would set a stage if you were writing a play on your own life. What would your personal set look like?

3. Explore the play’s characters and ask each one why they are in the theater world? What job they do in the world? See more questions below.

Extension:

Have the client create a past, present, future inner world. This can take up to three sessions to complete this activity.

Questions for the Theater World Play:

1. Who, what, why and where are your characters in this world? Why are they in the archetype inner world?

2. What do the character miniatures in this play love, hate, or fear? Who are the heroes and who are the villains? How can the negative miniatures be more accepted?

3. What patterns happen in the world? Which characters are responsible for the patterns of the play?

4. Who needs to change certain behaviors or attitudes in your world? Who do you need to dismiss from your play, or give another job to? Who needs a lot of attention and why do they need so much attention? Who wants to change, and who is not ready to change? Who is getting in the way of needed change? Who
sets up road blocks and who tears road blocks down? Who is in denial? Who is distorting the reality of the play?

5. What characters need to be added to your play? Who can help you with your own growth in self-awareness?

6. What props do you need in your play to help you move closer to self-awareness? Do you need to add or take away furniture, houses, cities, bridges, rivers, or mountains for protection? Do you need to explore the swamps, dark forests, deserts, or bottom of the oceans in your play?

7. Who has the all-or nothing thinking (black/white, good/bad, and winner/loser)? Who is happy, sad, angry, active, sedated?

8. What do you want your future play to look like? What characters need to leave? What characters need to stay? Who needs to change in order to be allowed to continue the play in the future? How do they need to change?
Jungle Animal World (Miniature World)

Rationale: The goal of this activity is to ask the client to name a jungle animal (You can use other animals as well). The client will be asked to draw the jungle animal and to name some personal traits that belong to the jungle animal and relate them to the client's self. Some of the traits listed can be positive, neutral, or negative. However, it is always best to end the session with a focus on the positive traits of the client.

Materials: Markers Jungle Background worksheet below Pens

Extension Materials: Plastic Jungle Animals or Clip art Cutouts

Directions:

1. Ask the client to think of a jungle animal they can relate to in some way. Either use a miniature of that animal or find a paper cutout picture. The client can draw the animal if they prefer.

2. Once the client has identified an animal ask them to create a jungle world for their jungle animal on the worksheet below.

3. After the client has identified the animal and drawn a world for it the therapist will ask the following questions:

- Can you name some personal traits that the jungle animal you picked has that might relate to some of your personal qualities?
- What are some personal traits you share with the jungle animal that you would like to change?

- What are some strength traits you share with the jungle animal that can help you in real life?

- How can you bring out these positive strength traits in the future?

- What is this world like for the jungle animal? Does anything need to change?

4. Once this project is finished the client can take the drawing home and use it as a reminder of the traits that give them strength.

Extensions: This activity can be completed with the use of plastic miniatures. Buy a bag of plastic jungle animals and allow the client to pick out an animal that they relate to. The client can also take this plastic animal home as a representation of the animal’s strengths and their own personal strengths. A collage or stage can also be created that represents the animal's environment.

Use the below background to create a jungle environment for your jungle animal:
Personal Island (Miniature World)

Objective: To allow the client to identify a private island world they live in and transfer this to a paper plate island setting. This island world is set as a fantasy, but the therapist needs to help the client process this world and bring it into reality. This is another way to utilize the sand tray; however, you will use a Triarama poster board instead of the sand tray.

Materials: Paper plate, blue construction paper, small plastic animal assortment, and an assortment of arts and craft supplies, nature items, and glue, sand, shells, rocks, palm trees, water symbol. Allow the client to take the island home.

Directions:

1. The client creates a personal island world on the plate. The plate rests on top of the blue construction paper. (ocean) The client can add clip art and plastic animals to create the island world.

- Ask client to talk about their personal island world. The therapist asks questions such as:

- How did it feel for you to create this island world?
- Tell me about the animals and images in your world?
- What is it like to live here for this animal or miniature on this island? Discuss what the feelings are within the animal / miniature.
- What makes it safe for this animal? What makes it unsafe?

- What animal or thing would make this animal feel unsafe in this world (Add the animal to the world)?

- If this animal or miniature could talk what would it say? Project your feelings and words into the animal and make it talk.

- Are there unsafe animals in this island world? What do you need to do to get rid of the unsafe animal? Is there an animal/miniature that can help your animal (Add the animal)? How can you make sure the animal stays in this world with your animal or how can you access this animal when you need help?

- Do you need to add anything to make this animal feel safe? Do you need to take anything away to make this animal feel safe?

- What if we moved the animal(s) around in the island world? What would happen if we placed the animal(s) here, there?

- Who needs to go off the island, come to the island?

- What do you want or need to say to the animals in the island world?

- What is it like for you experiencing this island world?

- What do you want to change?

- What words would describe your experience today?

- What did you learn from this island world?

- How can you take a part of this island with you into real life?

- What does your real life need that this island has?

- How can you get what you need from the island?
Therapist: It is now time to translate your client’s animal and other symbols by using the SYMBOLS DICTIONARY. Discuss this translation with your client in the next session.
House, Tree, Water, Sun or Moon, & Animal (Drawing)

Rationale: This activity is similar to House/Tree/Person but goes to a deeper level of self awareness due to adding the sun, water, and animal. You can also add a snake if you like.

Materials: Markers  Crayons  Paper or Sand Tray with Miniatures

Directions:

1. Ask the client to make a drawing that will include each of the following: A house, tree, sun or moon, water, and animal. The client can add anything else as long as these five items are included in the drawing.

Translation:

The House- The house is often translated as the client’s perspective of themselves. It can also mean how a client feels about him or herself. Look for a door, window(s), sidewalk or entry, chimney, etc. Smoke from a chimney may mean health or anxiety (only the client can tell you). How big is the house? Are the lines of the house thick or thin? What is the roof shape? What is the color of the house? Are there curtains or bars on the window(s)? How many windows are there? Are the windows big or little? Is there a door? A door knob? Would you like to visit this house or stay away from it? Is it centered and grounded, or floating? I once had a student who drew a hole in the earth to represent his home.

The Tree- This could represent the interpersonal relationships that a person may or may not have. Notice the leaves and branches? Are there a lot of leaves? Does
the tree look healthy and full with leaves? What type of tree is it? Evergreen? Palm Tree? Is it a tree in winter, spring, fall, or summer? Is there fruit on it or flowers? Are there roots? Is it hollow? Do animals live in or on the tree? How big is the tree? Where is the tree located in the picture? Is it close to the house or far away from the house?

The Water - Water may symbolize the “mother figure” relationship. What kind of water is it? A lake, pond, snow, ice, a river, or ocean. Is the water moving? Fast or slowly? Is it all over the drawing? How close is it to the house? What color is the water? Is it fresh or salt water? Are there animals in the water?

The Sun - This may symbolize the “father figure” and the relationship with the father. How far or close to the house is the sun? Are there rays? Sunglasses? Is it smiling?

The Moon - This is generally thought of as a person’s instinct. Is it a full moon? A crescent moon? The full moon means the person is more aware of the instinctual self.

The Animal - This animal represents the “ego”. What type of animal is it? Is it aggressive? Passive? Offensive? Defensive? Does it seem at home in the picture or sand tray? Does it have a food source? Look up the animal in the Symbols Dictionary to fully translate what type of “ego” the client has.

Disclaimer: Symbols often have different meanings to different clients. Use this drawing tool as a piece to the puzzle in a client’s life. Never project your translations onto a client’s artwork or sand tray. Talk to your client and get the client to translate what is going on in the drawing. Look for themes that reoccur. This is only a tool. Used with other tools or more drawings, this can help the therapist understand the client’s phenomenological world.

Allow the client to be the ultimate translator!
**Safety Snow Globe (Miniature World)**

**Rationale:** To allow the client to identify the environment they live in and to establish what is safe in their personal world.

**Materials:** Waterproof small plastic animal assortment, and an assortment of arts and craft supplies, nature items, and waterproof glue or epoxy.

- Dash of glycerin
- Plastic snow and/or glitter
- Snow globe dome with base (snowdomes.com)
- Or a clean see through jar with a wide lid

**Directions:**

1. **Client:** Pick a plastic waterproof animal that represents you from this assortment.

2. Build an environment for the animal in the bottom of the snow globe or jar top using waterproof items and waterproof glue or epoxy.

3. Depending on the glue or epoxy used it may take up to 24 hours to dry. Check directions on tube. You can still discuss the following questions below with the jar lid or globe base completed.

4. **Once the glue or epoxy has dried,** attach the base and fill with distilled water (or room temperature water) and include a drop of glycerin, snow, and/or plastic snow and/or glitter.
glitter. Fill the jar or globe almost to the top. Lace a ribbon around the base or cover with paint or paper.

5. Ask client to talk about their created environment. The therapist asks questions such as:

What was it like to pick up this animal? How did it feel for you to create this space for this animal?

Do you want to change your animal?

What is it like to live here for this animal? Discuss what the feelings are within the animal.

What makes it safe for this animal? What makes it unsafe for this animal?

What animal would make this animal feel unsafe in this environment? Add the animal to the world.

If this animal could talk what would it say? Project your feelings and words into the animal and make it talk.

What do you need to do to get rid of the unsafe animal?

Is there an animal that can help your animal? Ask the client to add the animal. How can you make sure the animal stays in this world with your animal or how can you access this animal when you need help?

Do you need to add anything to make this animal feel safe? Do you need to take anything away to make this animal feel safe?

What if we moved the animal(s) around in the world? What would happen if we placed the animal(s) here, there?

What do you want / need to say to the animals in the world?

What is it like for you experiencing this world?

What words would describe your experience today?
What did you learn from this world?

What needs to change/stay the same?

What protection does this animal need in order to feel safe? How can you translate this perspective to real life?

Therapist: It is now time to translate your client’s animal using the SYMBOLS DICTIONARY. Discuss this translation with your client in the next session.

Allow the client to take the snow globe home. When they feel a negative emotion such as fear, anxiety, sadness they can look at the snow globe and visualize feeling safe.
Chapter Seven

The Sand Tray & Mandala In Creative Counseling
Beginning Sand Tray (All Feelings)

Rationale: The client will build a world in the sand tray using miniatures.

Materials: Sand Tray w/ sand and a blue painted bottom

Miniatures of all types and genres / Clip art

Directions:

1. After describing what the sand tray is allow your client to pick assorted miniatures of choice to add to the sand tray. Explain that you will be making note of the miniatures they are adding and drawing a replica of the sand tray world. As the therapist you will need to take on the role of the silent witness. The client will be putting a piece of their inner world (psyche) into the tray. There is no right or wrong way to do a tray.

2. Ask your client to build their world in the sand tray. Tell them that you will remain quiet on the other side of the sand tray until they are finished and ready to talk about the world they have created. They will need to let you know when they are completed. Take notes of the miniatures that are added to the world, especially the first five miniatures.

3. Once the client has told you they are ready to talk about their completed world ask if you can move your chair over to the side they are sitting on in order to “join them in their world.” You will need to see their world from the point of creation and they eyes of the creator. Ask the client if there is anything they
would like to add, take away, or change in the world. Make a note of these changes.

4. Once they have invited you to join their world you can ask some of the below questions. However, it is nice to request that you both sit quietly for a few moments in order to soak in the world that has been created.

5. Look for patterns and hot spots in the created world. Make a note of these in your drawing of the world.

Below are some suggestions for prompts from the therapist after the world has been created and the therapist has been invited into the world. (These are only suggestions. Go with your gut!):

Tell me about this world that you have created? What was it like for you to create this world?

What was it like to pick up this miniature? How did it feel for you to create this space for this miniature?

How would it feel to change your miniature into something else?

What is it like to live here for this miniature? Discuss what the feelings are within for this miniature?

What makes it safe for this miniature? What makes it unsafe for this miniature?

What other miniature would make this miniature feel unsafe in this environment? Add a new miniature to the world.

If this miniature could talk, what would it say? Project your feelings and words into the miniature and make it talk.

What do you need to do to get rid of things that are unsafe in this world?

Is there something in this miniature collection that can make you feel safe in this world? How can you make sure the safety stays in this world with your
miniature, or how can you access this animal when you need help? Do you need to add anything to make this being feel safe?

Do you need to take anything away to make this being feel safe?

What if we moved the (miniature)______ around in the world? What would happen if we placed the miniature(s) here, or over there?

What do you want / need to say to the miniatures in this world?

What is it like for you experiencing this world?

What words would describe your experience today?

What did you learn from this world? What would you like to take with you from this inside world into the outside world?

What needs to change / stay the same?

What protection does this miniature need in order to feel safe? How can you translate this perspective to real life?

What did you learn from this world? What would you like to take with you from this inside world into the outside world?

Ask if you can take a photo of the world for future references.

Therapist: It is now time to translate your client’s miniatures using the SYMBOLS DICTIONARY. Discuss this translation with your client in the next session.
Wet Sandcastles (Wet Sand Tray / All Feelings)

Rationale: This activity works well for grief and loss. It is a powerful way to show that nothing lasts forever in life. It also can be used with clients who are obsessing over a current problem in their life. Creating the sandcastle in the sand tray and then letting the water wash it away (similar to the beach) can help show that problems don’t last forever. Another way to use this activity is to print out a copy of the sandcastle below and decorate it with colored sand. The client may wish to destroy the sandcastle in some way to show that nothing, even problems, last forever.

Materials: Sand tray with sand (I use a plastic tray for this.)

Pitcher of Water

For paper sandcastle: Sandcastle worksheet below Glue
Assorted Colored Sand

Directions for Sand Tray Sandcastle:

1. Process a problem or grief issue with the client. Discuss feelings of grief and loss.

2. Ask the client to build a sandcastle in the sand tray. The therapist will want to take the stance of the silent witness as the client is building the sand castles in the tray.

3. The client will let the therapist know when they are ready to talk about the sand tray.
4. The therapist will then ask the client to pour water on the sandcastle in the sand tray.

5. Process the feelings associated with the destruction of the sand tray. Does the client feel a sense of loss? Freedom?

6. Relate the feelings that come about to real life. How is life like a sandcastle? What does the ocean tide do to the sandcastles on the beach? How is the sand tray sandcastle similar or different?

Directions for paper sandcastle:

1. Follow the directions for the sand tray sandcastle except use the worksheet below and the colored sand.

2. The therapist can also process the client’s choice of colors used on the sandcastle cut out.

3. Explore what the client wishes to do with the finished sandcastle. Do they want to keep it for a while? Do they want to return the sandcastle to nature? How will they destroy the sandcastle?

Again, this is a reminder to clients that nothing lasts forever. It is also a tool to show that life is short and we must live in the here and now to fully appreciate life.
Creating Mandala (All Feelings)

Rationale: The mandala has been around for thousands of years in many cultures, religions, and even science! It is even found in nature, as even the atom is a mandala! In the Sanskrit it language it means “sacred circle” or “competition”. Carl Jung said the mandala “a representation of the unconscious self” and is responsible for introducing this Eastern concept to the West. Mandalas are everywhere including our cells, world, and universe. The mandala can also be used as a meditation for your client. The mandala is an creative counseling tool to clients of all ages and cultures.

Materials:

11 x 17 piece of white paper  
Markers  
Paper plate

Directions:

1. Take a white piece of paper. Draw a circle with a paper plate on the circle (about 10 inches in diameter). You don’t always have to use circles, but it should have a semblance of a circular design within it.

2. Use markers, colored pencils, or oil pastels (Tibet Monks use painted sand to represent their mandalas). Take 15-20 minutes to draw your mandala.

3. Let your thoughts and feelings inspire your mandala. There is no right or wrong way to create your mandala. Be creative!
4. Give it a title and date of creation. You may wish to write some words around the mandala itself. You may wish to write about some feelings or memories that the shapes, colors, designs, or images your mandala has brought forth. Write down your interpretation of the mandala. Explain the decision making and creative process you took to create your mandala.

Mandala Interpretation: Take note of the colors you used in the creation of your mandala. What were the predominant colors, the least used colors? What animals or symbols were used in your mandala? What soft or hard lines are present? Are there any textures? Rough or smooth edges? Are there any hot spots within the mandala? Look for patterns within your mandala.

You may wish to add boxes at the bottom to color in with the colors used in the mandala. You can then write feeling words that represent each color next to the box.

The center of the mandala may represent the core of your “self”. From this center you may want to add symbols of places, animals, people, ideas, things or events from your personal life.

It is important to note that the mandala is very personal to you. It is a representation of who you were when you created it. It is a form of self-exploration and self-healing.

Sometimes the Monks would destroy their mandalas after creating to show that nothing lasts forever and it is hurtful to become attached to a thing (The sand is easily returned to nature). You may wish to give away your mandala as a gift to someone. Your mandala has already served its purpose to you by being created.

You may even wish to do an extended mandala over time. You may want to create a mandala journal over time as well.

Extension: You may wish to use other materials other than markers to create your mandala.
Outdoor Sand Tray (All Feelings)

Rationale: It can be a very unique experience to create a sand tray in nature. One gets a different perspective from the Sand Tray by using dirt or the earth.

Materials:

Items found in nature work the best for this outdoor project. Ask the client to collect these items while finding the perfect spot for the outdoor Sand Tray. Items such as rocks, leaves, flowers, acorns, etc. can be used.

Directions:

1. Ask your client if they would be open to exploring the Sand Tray in a different way. This Sand Tray will be created in nature.

2. Arrange a nature walk to take with your client that is close to your office. Note: For your protection as the therapist it is preferable to be out in the open where people can see you, especially with children.

3. Ask your client to collect items found in nature on the walk. While walking and collecting items ask the client to begin looking for an ideal spot to create the Sand Tray. (The client may need to clear a spot with twigs or brush in order to create the Sand Tray.).

4. Once the perfect spot is found ask the client to create the Sand Tray in the dirt or sand using the items they have chosen on the nature walk.
5. Act as the silent witness as the client creates the Sand Tray. Once the client lets you know they are finished begin to process the tray.

6. Ask the client what each item means to them and why it is in the Sand Tray. Does anything need to be added? Taken away? What is the meaning behind this tray?

*You can also use this for an outdoor Mandala.
Chapter Eight

Therapy Games, Groups & Bibliotherapy
Play Therapy Games

Rationale: Play therapy games are a great way for play therapist or school counselor to teach social, emotional, problem solving, empathy, conflict resolution, and other life skills. Children love games and learn well from playing skill building games. The most important aspect of a therapeutic game verses a regular game is that there should be no losers. Everyone wins in a therapeutic game because every player learns a valuable tool. The therapist wants to make sure they also win in the game. Even a young child can pick up “mellow manipulation” from fixing a game to allow someone to win. Therapist and counselors want to avoid this due to the high costs of destroying trust in the relationship.

Children also love to create new games. If you allow a child to contribute to the game making process you will help that child build a stronger self-esteem. Making games for your clients is actually fun and it saves you a lot of money. So, don’t spend big bucks on games, go and make one yourself!

Materials: Poster Markers or Paint Colored Card Stock Your Great Ideas

Dye & Tokens

Directions:

1. Based on the needs of your clients create a game that has a clear goal with a purpose.

2. Make sure the game is a win win game. Do not allow anyone, including the therapist, to lose.
3. Give a title to your game. Sometimes, if you start with the “big picture” it is easier to break the game down.

4. Pick a theme for your game. It is often helpful to pick a theme the client can respond to, or that is age appropriate.

5. Add tokens that relate to the game if you need to have tokens to move around for your game idea.

6. Add activity cards that explain what to do in the game.

7. Make clear and precise rules so the child is not confused (boundaries).

8. Make it colorful and above all fun!
Gumdrops Feeling Game

Rationale: I use this game to open up my groups or individual sessions. Gumdrops are not an expensive candy and make the game more fun to play!

Materials: Game Directions  Game Board Below  1 Bag of Gumdrops

Directions:

1. Give each child a handful of assorted colored gumdrops.

2. Ask each child to count and sort all of their gumdrops. Place the sorted gumdrops on the appropriate gumdrop color of the game board.

3. Follow the below directions for each color:

   - Talk about something that makes you happy for each yellow gumdrop.
   - Talk about something that makes you angry for each red gumdrop.
   - Talk about something that makes you jealous for each green gumdrop.
   - Talk about something that makes you afraid for each white gumdrop.
   - Talk about something that makes you sad for each purple gumdrop.
   - Talk about something that is difficult for you for each orange gumdrop.

4. Have fun and eat your gumdrops!
Angry Gumdrop Game

Rationale: I use this game to open up my groups or individual sessions. Gumdrops are not an expensive candy and make the game more fun to play!

Materials: Game Directions  Game Board Below  1 Bag of Gumdrops

Directions:

1. Give each child a handful of assorted colored gumdrops.

2. Ask each child to count and sort all of their gumdrops. Place the sorted gumdrops on the appropriate gumdrop color of the game board.

3. Follow the below directions for each color:
   - Talk about an anger management goal you would like to make for yourself. for each green gumdrop
   - Talk about a reason why we need to control our anger in class or somewhere else for every yellow gumdrop.
   - Name someone you admire and who shows good anger management skills to others for each red gumdrop.
   - Talk about a positive coping skill that helps you control your anger for each white gumdrop.
   - Name a reason why it is important to show anger management skills in school or other places for each purple gumdrop

4. Eat and enjoy your gumdrops!
Bibliotherapy for Play Therapy

Rationale: I cannot imagine not using books in my sessions with children. Bibliotherapy has been used in therapy in many different settings. There are some wonderful books out there that address every feeling including depression, divorce, anxiety, death, bullies, self-esteem, friendship issues, etc. I find that bibliotherapy helps children work through many different issues and can be a beneficial way to help children problem solve and overcome emotional issues. Sometimes, it is helpful to have another “voice” or “perspective” in therapy other than yours.

Materials: Library Books E-Books Books

Directions:

1. Find and utilize bibliotherapy books by choosing titles that relate to the issue the child is dealing with.

2. It is best to have the parent or therapist read the book first without the child present. Then, the parent or therapist can make adjustments with what pages in the book would be most beneficial to the child.

3. Books can be a great starting point for a session or the ending of a session, especially if you are a new therapist or the topic is uncomfortable. Let the “book” break the ice.

4. Therapist can also gather books to recommend and/or check out to parents to take home and read to their children. Play therapist especially need to be aware

of what type of bibliotherapy books are out there for children. They also need to be able to utilize them in session, or offer either the title or actual book to the child's caretakers. Parents expect the therapist to know and recommend books and books on a certain topics.

5. Bibliotherapy books need to be part of any play room or therapists office. Therapist need to keep lists of what books to recommend to parents and have quick access to this list when suggesting books to parents. Parents may need additional support by reading bibliotherapy books that help them understand their child's mental health issue.
Teddy Bear Tea Party

Rationale: I use the Teddy Bear Tea Party theme at the beginning of my sessions with children. New clients or students are allowed to bring in a stuffed animal of choice (Not necessarily a teddy bear) for a “Getting To Know You Teddy Bear Tea”. This allows the child to “bring a friend” to therapy and not feel so afraid.

Materials: One stuffed animal of choice from home. I also serve snacks such as crackers, PBJ finger sandwiches, cookies, and candies. I use water for tea in my children's tea set.

Directions:

1. For the first or second session with a child allow them to bring a favorite stuffed animal from home to the session for a “Teddy Bear Tea Party.” I give out invitations to the clients to make it seem more “official.”

2. Before the session set out cookies, finger sandwiches, candy, and crackers. Children are not very fussy and the smallest effort can seem like a lot to them.

3. Serve water in a tea set and sit down for the tea party with the child. The most important thing is to attend to the child and follow their lead in the tea party.

4. Make sure you enjoy yourself in order for the child to feel at ease and enjoy themselves as well!
Magic Box of Crayons (Small Groups)

Rationale: This activity works well for groups of any kind. Magic Box of Crayons builds cohesion within the group and teaches team building skills to clients. The therapist can also use this activity for mediation with clients who are not getting along in a group setting.

Materials: 1 Large white sheet of paper per group / 1 Box of crayons per group

Directions:

1. Explain to the group that you are passing out a blank sheet of white paper and a box of crayons to each group (This can be done with several groups at one time).

2. The objective of Magic Box of Crayons is to get the group to come up with a picture with the entire group agreeing on what to draw and creating it together.

3. The entire paper has to be colored. Make sure to tell the group that no white is to be showing.

4. Give the group fifteen minutes to complete the picture. The group will also give the picture a title they all agree on.

5. After the fifteen minutes are up, the therapist will question the group about the experience of creating a picture together.

Questions to ask:
- Who took charge of the group?
- Who contributed the most?
- Who contributed the least?
- Was everyone included?
- What were some positive things that happened while creating the picture?
- Negatives?
- What would you do differently next time?
- Did the crayons bring a certain “magic” to the group process?

Extension: If this is a family group give them the magic box of crayons to take home as a reminder of the experience they had creating a picture.
Chapter Nine

Ending the Therapeutic Process With Creative Counseling
Everybody’s Birthday (Group or Individual)

Rationale: I end the therapeutic process with a celebration. If it is an individual client we plan a party and invite family members. If it is a group we plan a party and everyone brings a small token to each group member. It is a “positive” way to end therapy with clients. I tell clients that it is their “second birthday” for the year to celebrate their hard work in therapy.

Materials: Party Favors Hats Balloons Card Cake or Cookies Banner

Small gift such as: kaleidoscope or a memory token

Directions:

1. The therapist will offer the idea to the client or group of clients well in advance of the closure date.

2. Decorate the therapy room with party favors, balloons, banners, cake, etc.

3. The therapist will create or buy a card to give to the client or a small token such as a kaleidoscope (See chapter one: Kaleidoscope) or memory item.

4. Read the book, “On the Day you were born” by Debra Frasier. This book addresses how unique and special the client has been since the day they were born.

5. If “Everybody’s Birthday” is for a group: Ask the client’s to go around the room and pass out small tokens to each group member and state why they gave
the token to that person. I tell my clients that each token can cost no more than $1.00. The best tokens are free ones!

Certificate of Closure: I give certificates at the end of therapy for kids, teens, and adults if appropriate.
How to make a Triarama

Materials: 9 x 9 white construction paper or poster board    scissors     glue

Directions:

1. Fold the top right corners of the square down to the lower left corners and repeat with the opposite corners.

2. Open and cut one folded line until you reach the center of the square.

3. Go ahead and draw your preferred background on the top half of the square.

4. Overlap
About the Author

Dr. Michelle Stangline is a licensed professional counselor who works with children, adolescents, teens, and adults in a variety of settings. These settings include school counseling, college adjunct professor, counselor supervisor, private practice, and counseling in a private mental hospital. Her doctorate degree is in Counseling Psychology.

She is also certified in Counseling Supervision, Art Education and School Counseling. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia with her husband, son, German Shepherd, and cat. Her hobbies include oil and watercolor painting, jewelry making, yoga, and kayaking.

She loves to travel around the world in search of new creative counseling ideas and life adventures. Dr. Stangline also teaches Play Therapy, Sand Tray Therapy, Ethics, and Lifespan Development at Mercer University and offers supervision to counselors seeking licensure.

For more information on workshops and lectures on Play and Sand Therapy, Difficult People, Finding Your Inner Creativity, Helping Your Inner Child, and Real Colors Personality Traits see the below website link.

For more information and free creative psychotherapy activities and clip art that go along with the activities in this book visit Dr. Stangline’s website @ www.creativecounseling101.com .

If you liked this book check out: The Creative Sand Tray, by Dr. Michelle Stangline.