

Utilizing Group Sandplay Therapy for Mental Health Education in Primary Schools Through Experiential Activities

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Abstract:

Objective: Let primary school students experience group sandplay, explain the knowledge of mental health education through group sandplay, which is an entertaining way of teaching, and acquire knowledge about happiness, helping primary school students to establish and guide healthy psychology. **Method:** Using the case study on the group sandplay practical operation activities were carried out in the No. 1 Primary School of Dong Fang City, and the hot psychological problems of primary school students today were the theme activities. Students were allowed to express themselves through sandplay for mental health education. Qualitative methods to explain the students' feelings for the group sandplay activities. **Result:** The survey results showed high satisfaction, and the format was attractive to students and suited to their age. The sandplay can help them express themselves better, and the concrete nature of the sandplay can boost primary school students' understanding. **Conclusion:** Group sandplay therapy can positively support primary school students' mental health education and can be popularized.

Keywords: Group sandplay, Primary School Students, Practice Activities, Volunteers

1 INTRODUCTION

The research is about a sandplay therapy counsellor, who led 12 volunteers to the No. 1 elementary school in Dong Fang and participated in mental health education activities. Seven of the volunteers were members of the sandplay peer support team and performed practical activities for four days.

2 Practical Courses

To bring useful knowledge to the students of the first elementary school in Dong Fang, to improve the efficiency of our activities, and to maximize the meaning of the activities, we have arranged the content of the activities (Table 1). From pre-preparation and specific topic themes to the final report, we have divided labor. We also trained volunteers to pay attention to the lecture and the characteristics of the classroom of elementary school students, to "prepare" the target audience. Volunteers worked in teams of two to find information and prepare the lesson. They made a PowerPoint, wrote a script, gave a trial lecture, and revised it. After such repeated training, our volunteers ensured the quality of their teaching. They were still able to deliver the content smoothly in the face of the lively classroom of primary school students. Because of this, elementary school students admired, loved, and praised the volunteers.

Table 1: Course Schedule

| Sandplay Practical Classes | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Time | volunteers | |
| | | (2:30-4:30 pm) |
| 1 Day | Zhu Yiwen | My Dream |
| 2 Day | Gao Yang | My Strengths andSpecialties |
| 3 Day | Zhang Yucong | My Time Management |
| 4 Day | Hong Li | My Temper |

3 Participants

The students are all from Dong Fang No. 1 Primary School. A total of 50 students from grades 3-6 were randomly selected to participate in the group sandplay practice activity. None of them had participated in sandplay practice activities before.

4 Instruments

The practical activity questionnaire about the survey of satisfaction and advantages of sandplay practical activity. A total of 50 copies were distributed to all students who participated in the activity. An analysis of the outcome data was conducted using a simple statistical procedure. The questionnaire is in the Appendix.

5 Sandplay Practice Class

The students demonstrated the dynamism and infectious energy of new-age elementary school students through a group sandplay. We divided the class of 50 students into five groups randomly and followed the rules of a group sandplay. The students picked their sand tools in turn, put them into the sandbox, and shared their stories under the guidance of the volunteer teachers. The students discussed and talked more and more. Everyone had endless words and stories as if they had opened an entire world to them. The sharing session of sandbox works was even more enthusiastic. Some stories were laughable, some were whimsical, and some were disturbing, and their problems were exposed in the sandbox practice.

During the sandplay practice class, there are several steps to take: 1. Relax. All students are asked to close their eyes, adjust their sitting posture and breathing, let themselves relax and quiet down, and open their eyes after about 1 minute. 2. Put your hands on the sand. You can gently touch the sand, feel the sand, or grab a little to feel the sand slip from your fingertips. 3. Think about today's theme. How would you express it? 4. Choose a sand tool to represent your idea and place it on the sandplay. 5. Taking turns sharing their topics in the group is a great way to get everyone involved. 6 Thinking the host clarifies and guides students to think through the 5W1H question and answer method. The host can also suggest a variety of tools to represent topics and ideas. Finally, the group can come together to discuss and reflect on the ideas created.

5.1 My Dream



Figure 5.1: My Dreams

A question-and-answer discussion is: what is your dream? why is this your dream? what are the requirements to make this dream come true? what can you do now?

Student A said, "I took a helicopter to represent my dream because I like aeroplanes, and when I grow up, I want to be a pilot and fly freely in an areophane".

Student B said, "I took a fire truck and wanted to be a police officer and keep people safe".

Student C said, " I took a submarine because I am very interested in the ocean. I want to be a nautical researcher and develop a more powerful submarine in the future".

Students can clearly express their dreams and understand that dreams are not empty. We should have lofty ideals. Elementary school students need to have dreams, as this can inspire their motivation and goal awareness, foster perseverance, and resilience, help them discover interests and talents, cultivate self-confidence and self-fulfillment, and shape a positive mindset. Parents and educators can encourage elementary school students to pursue their dreams, provide support and guidance, and help them achieve their aspirations (Figure 5.1).

5.2 My Strengths and Specialties

A question-and-answer discussion is: what are your strengths and specialties? Why are these your strengths and specialties? What are the requirements to make these strengths and specialties come true? What can you do now about your strengths and specialties?



Figure 5.2: Sandplay My Strengths and Specialties

Student D said: "I took a rooster and put it in the straw shed. I think I am diligent like a rooster. I go to bed early and get up early, and I wake up my family."

Student E said: "I took a person who plays the piano, I can play the piano, and I have been insisting on learning the piano, although I don't like it very much, and sometimes I don't want to learn it, but I still insist on it now. I think I am very tenacious."

The students became more aware of their strengths and abilities through this activity. They increased their self-confidence and learned that if they use their strengths, they can maximize their strengths and avoid weaknesses. At the same time, I also learn about the strengths and talents of others, and I can also motivate myself more.

For elementary school students, it is significant to discover their strengths as it can promote self-awareness and self-confidence, develop their potential and talents, establish a positive self-image, provide a sense of achievement and fulfilment, and foster personal growth and adaptability. Parents and educators can assist elementary school students in identifying and nurturing their strengths, offering support and encouragement, enabling them to fully utilize their potential in their areas of strength, and achieving personal growth and success (Figure 5.2).

5.3 My Temper



Figure 5.3: Sandplay My Temper

A question-and-answer discussion is: Why do you get upset? Give an example. When do you usually get angry? What do you do when you are upset? How do you calm yourself emotionally?

Student F said: "The tiger is far away from home. When I am angry, I will be like a tiger, yelling. I think I am wrong. I am too fierce to my mother. I know she loves me. I should be gentle, or I will slowly lose my family too."

Student G said: "I took Tang Seng. Tang Seng is a very knowledgeable teacher. Even if Wukong is naughty, Tang Seng will not be very angry, but he will gradually reason with him. I think it's an excellent approach." It's not healthy for your health and other people."

Student H said: "I got a saw, and pliers, and I think when I'm angry I have a terrible temper, but I divert my attention by doing something I like, like fixing things".

Primary school students often get angry because they don't communicate their feelings well, so they sulk. Therefore, guide students to express themselves correctly and euphemistically instead of letting others guess. Be clear about what we can and cannot do when we are angry, and we cannot let negative emotions influence our thoughts and actions; otherwise, we will regret it afterwards. We need to learn to express our thoughts correctly and bravely (Figure 5.3).

5.4 My Time Management



Figure 5.4: Sandplay My Time Management

A question-and-answer discussion is why is time

management critical? When should time management be implemented? How do you personally implement time management, and what are the results?

Student I said: "I think time is like a river." Once it passes away, it will only flow in one direction and not return. Therefore, we should cherish time, and it will disappear when it passes away."

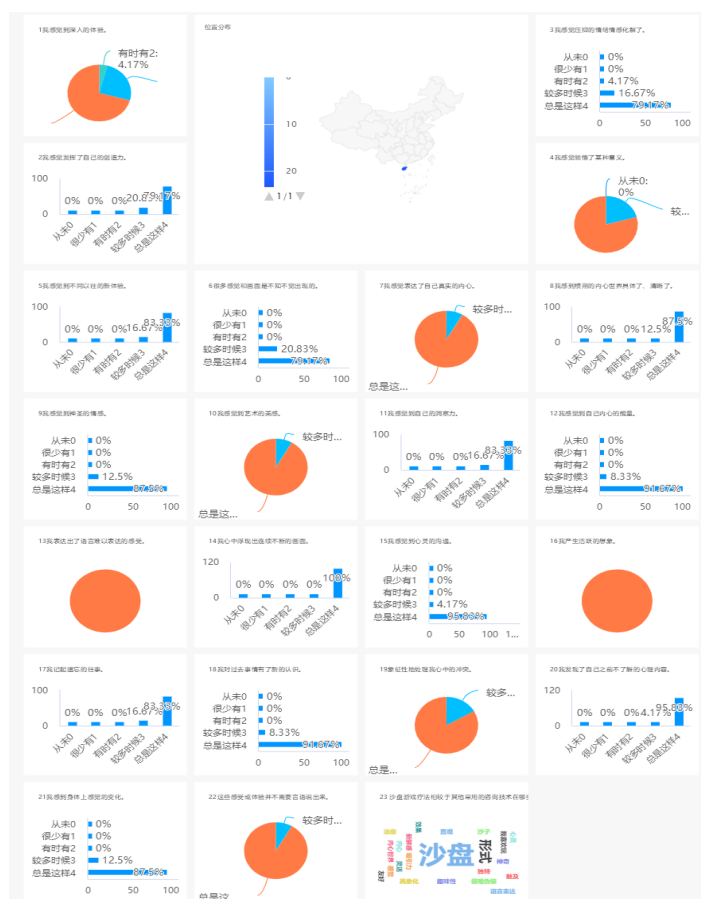
Student J said: "Most of my time is spent playing. I like playing with dinosaurs and watching TV shows about dinosaurs. Dinosaurs are powerful, tall, and powerful, and I like them very much.

Student K said: "I want to grow up quickly so that I can do what I like, such as travelling, and seeing new worlds. The world is colourful, just like this coloured stone".

Time management is a necessity for elementary school students as it cultivates a sense of responsibility, improves efficiency, builds organizational skills, reduces stress, and develops time awareness. Assisting them in developing good time management habits will have a positive and lasting impact on their learning, daily life, and future development (Figure 5.4).

6 Results

This is the result of the satisfaction survey of students who participated in sandplay therapy. From the results, everyone is very satisfied with the application of sandplay therapy.



7. Advertager Of Sandplay Therapy

Effective in Child Psychotherapy: Sandplay therapy is particularly advantageous for children and adolescents. It helps in understanding the psychology of non-verbal children, as they express themselves through sandplay symbols. This therapy aids in the development of their personalities and plays a significant role in education, personality development, and creativity, making it widely used in primary and secondary schools and kindergartens.

Bypassing Resistance: It serves as a tool to bypass resistance encountered in psychological counselling. When clients resist, sandplay therapy helps open the door to their hearts. The sandplay work and expressions during the session reveal unconscious content, facilitating a deeper understanding of the client's emotions and thoughts. Clients often become more cooperative after a sandplay therapy session.

Facilitating Psychological Insight: Sandplay therapy helps clients focus on the present moment. The tangible sand tools and the sensory experience of fine sand reduce anxiety and tension, helping clients become more

attuned to their bodies. This is essential in psychological counselling.

Engaging and Non-Boring: Sandplay therapy adds an element of dynamism to the counselling process, allowing clients to interact with the sand world. It helps clients personally experience and understand their inner psychological struggles. Clients can express their dreams, states of mind, and unconscious thoughts through three-dimensional sand tools and sand, making the counselling process more engaging.

Wider Applicability: While initially considered a psychotherapy technique, sandplay therapy has expanded beyond psychological counselling. It is now used in various settings, such as schools, kindergartens, institutions, enterprises, and communities. In these contexts, it is applied for purposes ranging from children's development and team integration to conflict resolution, demonstrating its versatility and applicability.

In summary, sandplay therapy offers unique advantages, particularly in child psychotherapy, bypassing Effective in Child Psychotherapy, bypassing resistance, facilitating psychological insight, making counselling engaging, and finding applications in a broad spectrum of settings beyond traditional psychotherapy.

Sandplay therapy is particularly advantageous for children and adolescents. It helps in understanding the psychology of non-verbal children, as they express themselves through sandplay symbols. This therapy aids in the development of their personalities and plays a significant role in education, personality development, and creativity, making it widely used in primary and secondary schools and kindergartens

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APPENDIX

The satisfaction and advantages of sandplay practical activity(English Version)

Dear students, please choose the corresponding options according to your actual feelings and complete the questionnaire. Thank you for your support and participation.

1. I feel the deep experience.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

2. I feel like I have used my creativity.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

3. I felt that the depressed emotion was resolved.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

4. I feel like I understand something.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

5. I feel a different new experience.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

6. A lot of feelings and images are imperceptible.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

7. I feel like I express my true heart.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

8. I feel the inner world of MoShuo is concrete and clear.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

9. I feel the sacred emotion.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

10. I feel the beauty of art.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

11. I felt my insight.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

12. I feel myself inside of the energy.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

13. I have expressed the feeling that the language is difficult to express. Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2
More times 3 Always this 4

14. Continuous images appeared in my mind.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

15. I feel the communication of the heart.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

16. I have an active imagination.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

17. I remember the forgotten past.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

18. I have gained a new understanding of the past.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

19. I have gained a new understanding of the past.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

20. I found something psychological that I didn't know before.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

21. I feel the change in my physical sensation.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

22. These feelings or experiences do not require words.

Never 0 Rarely 1 Sometimes 2 More times 3 Always this 4

23. What is sandplay therapy superior to other commonly used consulting techniques? (Can be selected more)

Attractive, fun, freshness, conducive to expression, concrete, richer and so on.