Welcome to the Virtual Sandtray App Newsletter!

This newsletter is intended to keep you up to date with what is happening with the App, updates, features, trainings, booths, uses, and sharing cases. We welcome your sanitized cases for inclusion here!

Announcing VSA-VR!!

I came home from work and Chris asked me to put on a Virtual Reality headset. I had never used one before. I wasn’t sure what to expect or how it would feel. He turned on the program and I was suddenly STANDING IN MY SANDTRAY. I can’t adequately describe how phenomenal the experience was. I stood under a breathing dragon, his enormous chest heaving above my head… I went into a castle and looked around and through the windows… I stood next to a fountain flowing with water…

We have created the beta version of this amazing experience and will be debuting it at the APT conference in Louisville, Kentucky. Be sure to stop by!

“The app is user friendly and engaging. It was very easy to learn and fun to use.”

Henry Kronengold, Ph.D.

United States
September Discussion Piece Featured Response:

1) What do you see happening in this tray?
   “My first reaction is "no way out" "extreme danger" but looking closer the flames resemble a key, and there is space between the flames and the sand......Since I never heard the narrative that goes with this tray.....I'm only giving how I felt by looking at it.”

2) How would you proceed once the client indicated it was completed?
   “I would ask if the house is empty or if someone is inside. If the answer was that someone is inside, I would reflect on how that (person, animal etc.) must feel......do they realize they are under impending danger? Is there anything that can be done to change this?”

3) Would you like to see how this tray progresses if the client wanted to return to the saved tray during a future session?
   “I would see if there are some ways to remove the danger, maybe water is put nearby, maybe the flames are partially extinguished, or maybe they are gone and replace by water......which is still dangerous but less aggressive than the flames. I would also would hope for a less dark building, or with some living creatures, magical, human, animals.”

4) How do you think it might progress? In the next session? After 4 more sessions?
   “This one is hard to answer, because I don't know anything about the client, I have questions as to why is she in PT, has she been in an accident? is it a divorce situation? abuse? Her original tray contains very little obvious information such as "no way out and incoming danger"......hopefully the progress is towards a world under control of danger, with a positive narrative.”

Thank you for all the great submissions
October Discussion Piece:

This is a tray completed by a 15 yo in a therapy session. Please send us your therapeutic reactions and interpretations and we can follow this up in the next newsletter!

1) What do you see happening in this tray?
2) How would you proceed once the client indicated it was completed?
3) Would you like to see how this tray progresses if the client wanted to return to the saved tray during a future session?
4) How do you think it might progress? In the next session? After 4 more sessions?

Please send submissions to support@sandtrayplay.com by October 20, 2016:

14 yo client
My First Experience with VSA

I should start off with some background information as I reflect on my first experience learning about the Virtual Sandtray App, or VSA. Technology has always fascinated me from a very young age. Many hours of free time with the family were spent playing games to have fun and strengthen the relationships between one another.

Quickly, I realized the importance of technology from a different perspective which is therapy. The use of technology taught me a lot of important values and benefits. These values and benefits include responsibility, accountability, social interaction, problem solving, and how to have fun!

Fast forward to today and the use of technology has been incorporated into my theoretical framework when working with children. Being a genuine person has always helped me build the relationships with clients but now I gain the cool points of having technology! This past summer, I had a unique opportunity that would change the course of my career. My director at my internship told me about a presentation on Virtual Sandtray at the play therapy conference. I was so excited and I was not let down! The presentation was presented beautifully and the Virtual Sandtray was absolutely mind-blowing.

Virtual Sandtray is unique because of its simplicity which holds a great value in therapy. However, do not let the simplicity fool you because the simplicity sparks creativity. The creativity is at the client's fingertips! The use of the Virtual Sandtray has parallels to the therapeutic process. It serves as a platform that starts clear with a therapist and a client. As the relationship between the therapist and client grows, the sandtray grows as well. Each sandtray is unique like each therapeutic process is unique to each client. Inside, it consists of a lot of different models, creatures, and scenarios which is exactly like a client's life story! In essence, the sandtray acts as a
My First Experience with VSA continued:

platform for the client to express, change, think, and create new things just like therapy!

Virtual Sandtray definitely sparked my interest and creativity on how it can be used therapeutically. After showing fellow colleagues, friends, and other mental health professionals, the reactions that they had were incredible! Many of them started talking about different ways they could use it for their clients or in different settings such as educational purposes. It is comforting knowing how an idea, brought to life by the creators of VSA, has sparked communication and collaboration among many platforms of professions. I am excited to start another year of internship with this intervention and see what clients' creativity can come up with! I look forward to sharing my experiences through many articles to come and new ways I've conjured up on therapeutic or fun uses of the app!

Bio:

Mr. Ehrig is currently a student who is working on his MA in Marriage and Family Therapy. He is gaining experience as a school based counseling intern for clients in the 6th to 8th grade with play therapy. Client population include, but are not limited to, trauma, grief, anxiety, social skills, and self-harm. Areas of expertise include attachment work and social skills acquisition. Mr. Ehrig is currently integrating technology into sessions through the use of video games and psychotherapy.
Monthly Tip for VSA Use:

VSA Painting Feature

Painting the sand with a variety of textures is a unique feature in the Virtual Sandtray App. Traditionally we are bound by the color of the sand in our physical box. Here we have an option to have a variety of colors and textures to customize the tray.

Here are some quick tips on how to pain the sand in the VSA after signing in and choosing “play”:

We will be using the paint can and paint brush.

Painting:

One quick tap on the paint can and paint brush icon will cause the icon to blink. It will show an array of paint textures available for use.
Monthly Tip Continued:

Once you choose the desired paint texture you will be able to drag your finger along the sand and paint. If you’d like to further customize your brush strokes you can long press the paint can. (This works best when you’ve already chosen your paint texture.) Once you long press the can a menu will pop up which includes 3 paint brush sizes and a spilling paint can.

Here the grass, water, and cobblestone paint textures are in use.
Monthly Tip Continued:

The spilling paint can is used to fill the entire tray with the chosen texture at once. If a second, third, or more additional paints are desired then you may choose the desired one and repeat the process.

Please note that if you long press the paint can before choosing a paint texture the variety of brush sizes will appear but not the spilling paint can icon. This will only appear after a paint texture is chosen.

You are also welcome to view instructional videos in any of these locations:

1) www.sandtrayplay.com
2) Virtual Sandtray App Facebook page
3) YouTube channel for Virtual Sandtray App
**Product Highlight**

It is an honor to support each other in this field and in this work. Please enjoy this introduction to an amazing tool: My Blanco

What is Blanco?

Blanco is a monkey doll you color on with markers! It’s so fun to draw on Blanco because you draw ANYTHING you’d like. Once you’re happy with the drawings, guess what? You can WASH Blanco and start over. Blanco has been both a fun toy and a great therapeutic assessment tool. Therapists from diverse disciplines use Blanco with their clients because Blanco is huggable and not threatening to their clients! Clients love to draw and tell stories to Blanco, and Blanco listens or takes on the character they are drawn as for that time. Many children have overcome traumatic experiences with Blanco, letting go of their pain, anger, hurt, loss, resentment, hatred and are able to grow and move past the bad times. Blanco is not the only toy available, there is also a human doll named Boo, a multicolored Panda bear, a smaller cat/dog/fox named Tails, an entire set of 6 Puppets in sizes Small, Medium, and Large, and a Heart pillow. They can be custom ordered in any color, check the website for color options such as butter yellow, lavender, spring green, pink, sand, robin blue, and more! Dark colors are fun with chalk. Website is [www.myblancoandfamily.com](http://www.myblancoandfamily.com)

Made to order in Arizona.
**Blanco & Family can Help You:**

Calm and reassure the child with a soft, huggable and non-threatening stuffed animal toy they could keep

Provide your client a large and body-shaped 3-D canvas to draw or act out how they feel

Informally assess your client without re-traumatizing them

Explain Medical procedures or surgeries easily to patients and ease tension. Simplify by giving Blanco the same procedures with their markers or needles!

Role Play with Blanco, Boo, Panda, Tails or the Puppet Family

The Heart can be used with techniques to symbolize how the client is feeling in their heart (sad, lonely, angry, scared)

Clients are more likely to show “hurt”, true feelings or anger toward Blanco & Family because they are not their own cherished possessions

Provide opportunities for client emotional development

Provide opportunities for client emotional release for otherwise forbidden thoughts and impulses

Use Blanco as the photographable chronology of the client’s progress and evidence of disclosures your client made while using Blanco (via photographic or real-life testimony) for forensic investigation(s) can be documented in photographs

Blanco, Boo, Tails, Puppets or the Heart make excellent Transitional Objects to provide when a client leaves therapy—to be used like a personal journal.
Come see us!

Please join us for a 3 hour, 3 CE presentation in Phoenix, Arizona on October 15, 2016!! 9a-12p

“Expanding Play Therapy:  How to therapeutically speak the client’s language in a digital era”

http://www.azapt.org/workshop.htm#detail2

Location:

Child Help, 2120 North Central Avenue, Suite #130, Phoenix, Arizona, 85004

Comments from recent presentations:

*Awesome presentation! Thank you for sharing your passion and knowledge! This is an amazing addition to how, when and where the sandtray can be utilized.
* Loved it!
*Like how she tried to “stay true” to Sandtray work.
*Great App Concept.
APT BOOTH!!

We will be hosting a booth at the Association for Play Therapy conference in Louisville, Kentucky October 4-8!

Please come by and try out the VSA and VSA-VR for yourself. We will have one VSA-VR setup and many iPads will be available!

We can’t wait to see you there!

http://www.a4pt.org/?page=2016AnnualConference