



Focus on Miniatures: Gems

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Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This early third-century Greek phrase means that we can all appreciate and view beauty from different perspectives. Gems in the sandtray can be an example of this. They can be a variety of sizes and colours and be translucent. Gems are also categorized as precious or non-precious. Precious gems are understood to be hard to the touch and permit light to pass through them.

Gemstones are natural crystalline materials formed under extreme heat and pressure in the Earth's crust (Matulis, 2021). Diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires are included in this category and, in ancient times, were considered rare. Non-precious gems are pretty, but not one of these four stones. They were nonetheless appreciated for use in objects such as jewellery as well as sandtrays. They can be big or small or vary in colour and shape.

In this writer's office, gems are plentiful, from the very little in various colours to one housed in a grand engagement ring (Figure 1). Another popular gem used in many worlds is a giant orb that is often viewed as a very large gem (Figure 2). In this sand therapy space, gems have been utilised as protective boundaries (Figure 3), or they can mark a magical or safe path or designate the spot for a being who has not yet been met. They are utilized by littles and adults in different ways. (The figure photographs of reproductions of sandtrays, 1-3, are provided for illustrative purposes.)

Practitioners (psychologists, social workers, and play practitioners) who use sandtray integratively with other modalities such as EMDR or as a non-directive approach contributed to



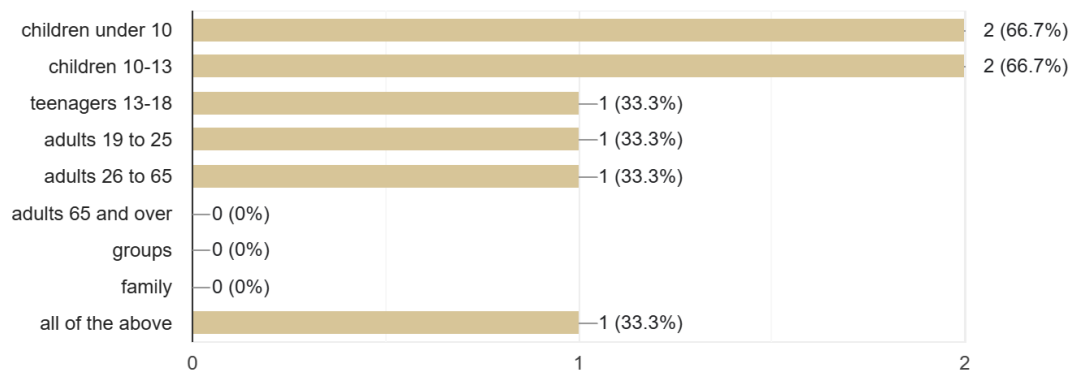
this article. As noted in Table 1, these therapists work with individuals in the following chronological age ranges.

Table 1 Chronological Age Range of the Builder

What age of clients usually use your sandtray? Click all that apply

 Copy

3 responses



The contributors came from three geographical areas (Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and shared their experiences of how gems showed up in the sandtray. These included communicating boundaries. For example, gems were used to divide the tray or to communicate the need for protection and safety. Gems can communicate the need for secrecy or even beauty in a world that may need the representation of beauty. "Gems are guarded or protected, buried or placed in chests. Sometimes they are found, and sometimes they remain hidden. Sometimes, they are meant for me - the therapist to find". Another contributor connected the use of gems with the bereavement journey. This, like other life journeys, can be marked in the sandtray with a brightly coloured stone to show the way.

The sandtray, of course, is perfect for containing all of these journeys. For the new sandtray therapist attempting to discern what miniatures are needed in their healing tools, gems are important to select. First, begin with a few gems purchased at a local dollar or aquarium store, and then be intentional about finding the marking tool you suspect your builder needs or perhaps the gem that will mark your own journey as a sand therapy professional.



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Figure 1 Gem in an Engagement Ring





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Figure 2 Giant Orb Gem





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Figure 3 A Variety of Gems Used as Boundaries





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References

Matulis, E. (2021). How are gemstones formed? Retrieved from: [How Are Gemstones Formed? – EULIS](#)