



165 SANDTRAY THERAPY DIRECTIVES

Build a tray about...

School-age children:

- Your family
- Your friends at school
- Your typical day
- One side being the best part of your world/other side being the worst part of your world
- One side as when you feel happy/other side when you feel sad
- Your favorite things
- Life before foster care/after foster care
- The scariest thing in your world
- How you calm down when you are feeling upset
- What each of member of your family does most often
- What you want to do when you grow up
- Your siblings
- An activity you like to do with your family
- Your favorite day at school
- How you feel when you walk into school
- What you want to be when you are an adult
- What being an adult means to you

- Your biggest heartbreak
- What happy looks like
- What happy feels like
- A perfect family
- Your Grandparents
- You 5 Favorite things
- Your parents/stepparents
- Love
- Your best friend
- Anger
- Your best memory with your family

Adolescents:

- A timeline of your life
- Your happiest memory
- The hurdles you face now
- Three things you like about you
- Your ideal future
- What gives you the biggest rush
- Your funeral
- What love looks like to you
- The most important things in your life
- Marriage/commitment
- One thing you would change in your life if you could
- Your daily routine
- Your friends as animals
- Hurt vs Anger
- What you see when you look in the mirror
- Your worst nightmare (either imagined or an actual dream)

- What you think success looks like
- Three things you want to focus on in therapy
- The person you look up to the most
- What you need from your parents
- The perfect person to date
- Your school as a zoo
- What life will look like after high school
- What is other people's fault/What is your fault (one side of the tray for each)
- A circle of those who most influence you

Couples:

- Your marriage in the last 2 weeks/first 2 weeks
- What you need from your partner to heal
- Your favorite/least thing about your partner
- What your partner would say about you when asked his/her favorite and least thing about you
- 3 ways you show love to your partner
- Your view of money vs your partners view of money
- Your partner at the beginning of the marriage vs currently using only animals
- Each partner's shame reaction, such as lashing out or crying
- What happened when your partner began to change
- Your most vulnerable self
- The best way you both make up after a fight
- Each person in the couple builds what his or her marriage feels like for them
- Your first date
- What the other person would say they need to change (3 things), such as make a tray about what your partner would say you need to change
- A fun day in the past
- How your partner helps you the most
- Who you were before the relationship vs who you are now
- Your empty nest

- What abandonment feels like for you in the relationship
- Retirement
- If you could build a time capsule for your relationship, what would go in it?
- Your biggest hurt from the relationship
- Your children
- Your sex life within the marriage over time
- Hurdles you need to overcome for the relationship to be happier
- What you like best about your partner
- Your partner's family
- Your partner as a child
- The stages of your relationship
- The baggage you brought into the relationship
- Each partner makes a tray about what they each like to do and then the couple brings those things together and makes a tray together about what they would be willing to do with the other person or shared interests
- Your family- either nuclear or extended
- How each partner likes be shown care or love
- The motto of your relationship or marriage

Adults:

- Your hope for the outcome of therapy
- Your one biggest struggle
- Concerns about therapy
- Your earliest recollection
- What it looks like when you're angry
- Your worst day
- What it would look like if you won the lottery
- How the world sees you
- What money gets you in your life
- Unanswered questions
- Your dream world

- Your life journey
- Your family tree
- Your three biggest wishes
- Three things you want to focus on in therapy
- Your goals of therapy
- Your safe place
- Your happiest childhood memory
- Your saddest childhood memory (could combine this with the happiest childhood memory)
- What shame means for you
- Your fears
- The purpose of life
- All your hopes
- How you want the world to see you
- What change feels like to you
- About your home
- Your first day in therapy
- Your Faith journey
- What keeps you up at night
- What energizes you
- Your Favorite dream
- What your do for Self-care
- Your needs
- Your biggest vice and how it affects your life
- First time you used drugs
- Who's in your support group
- If you had chosen a different path what would it had looked like
- What it feels like to feel shame
- How others can show you love
- Your family as animals in the tray

- What you feel is impossible in your life
- What would take to stand up for yourself
- The best day possible
- Your view of time
- What happens when your buttons are pushed
- The three major parts of who you are
- Your family (kids, husband, parents, etc)
- What you would want to do if today was your last day alive
- Your thoughts as your feet hit the floor in the morning
- Your motto for your life
- Three things you can do tomorrow to feel better
- What your mom/dad would say about you if they were to make a tray about you
- Your best/worst attribute or characteristic
- 5 things you tell yourself every day
- How your life would be different if _____ was not in your life/heart (i.e. depression, divorce, hatred, etc)
- Your feelings as you lay in bed at night
- Your favorite part of life
- Your feelings in a typical day at work
- Your biggest wish
- Your grief journey
- Your romantic relationships (past or current)
- Your parents and grandparents. Choose a miniature to represent each and then a miniature to represent their relationship with each other (Similar to a genogram)
- Your funeral (encourage client to give voice to the miniatures)
- The time line of your life
- What goes through your mind when you are wanting X (cigarette, pills, food etc)
- What causes you to wake up sweating at night with panic
- Three coping skills you often use
- Three positive self-statements/three negative self-statements (on each side)

- What sadness feels like in your body
- Your inner community. Those voices you hear throughout your day from your past, either good or bad.
- Your biggest challenge at work
- What superhero you would likely be- what superpowers do they have?
- The feeling of longing
- Your worst fear
- Your biggest pet peeve
- Your best/worst quality (each side for one)
- When you feel the most loved
- Aloneness
- What it feels like when your parents fight
- How it feels when your friends leave you out
- One thing you can do differently in your life to make it better
- The role of food, alcohol, gaming, etc in your life
- Guilt
- Shame
- How you see you vs how others see you
- What makes you smile
- When you feel most connected to others
- Your proudest/least proud moment
- The phrase "Before I die, I want to..."
- Your earliest memory
- Fear
- Who/what you love most
- Your hobbies
- What your parents hoped for you vs who you are now
- Three self-statements that go through your head when you look in the mirror
- What goes through your head at night before you fall asleep