



Program Title (Topic, In-Person)

Sandtray Play Therapy: Sand Therapy & Expressive Arts (In-Person)

Presenters: Isabella Cassina, MA, Claudio Mochi, MA, RPT-S™ & Theresa Kestly, PhD, RPT-S™

Description

Integrating a variety of creative and expressive techniques, this training will show participants how to support both child and adult play therapy clients in developing **affect competence** through experiential, hands-on activities. *Affect competence* refers to the ability to recognize, express, and regulate emotions effectively—an essential foundation for personal growth, resilience, and neural integration.

Participants will engage in expressive activities such as sandtray play, collage, drawing, movement, writing, poetry, simple costume play, and the use of modeling materials. These multisensory experiences activate multiple neural pathways and offer opportunities to deepen emotional awareness. By engaging in these creative processes, clinicians will learn practical ways to enhance attunement, support polyvagal safety, and expand clients' capacity to meet life's challenges with authenticity, clarity, and confidence.

Training Dates: September 4-5, 2026

Prerequisites: Levels 1-2; Graduate degree in mental health or enrolled in a graduate degree program in mental health.

Continuing Education (CE): 12 contact hours/2 full days.

Fees for 2026

Professional Early	\$350 (Postmarked 30 days in advance.)
Professional Regular	\$370
Student Early	\$330 (Postmarked 30 days in advance.)
Student Regular	\$350

Note: Although tuition fees include a certificate of training, there is a fee for replacement certificates.

Educational Goals

This training will help participants to:



1. Identify benefits and limitations of integrating sandtray play therapy and expressive arts to strengthen affect competence.
2. Explain and create a plan for the inclusion of expressive arts in sandtray play therapy sessions.
3. Analyze how specific expressive arts interventions can enhance the therapeutic powers of play inherent in sandtray therapy.
4. Discuss the role of the play therapy professional during creative and expressive activities, including distinctions between directive and non-directive approaches.
5. Explain how polyvagal theory informs the therapeutic use of expressive arts in conjunction with sandtray play therapy.
6. Utilize a variety of creative and expressive materials to strengthen affect competence.
7. Practice at least six expressive arts techniques applicable in both individual and group sandtray therapy settings.

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Isabella Cassina, MA, TPS, CAGS, PhD Candidate (Switzerland)

Isabella is a Social Worker with over 15 years of experience in humanitarian interventions and psychosocial projects for children and families in crisis contexts across South America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia. A former Head of Social Services at the Swiss Red Cross, she transformed psychosocial support in reception centers by leading innovative projects grounded in play therapy. With a Master of Arts in International Cooperation from the University of Geneva and advanced certifications in play therapy and expressive arts therapy, she is now completing her PhD in this field in Switzerland. A university lecturer, speaker, and Director of Project Management at the International Academy for Play Therapy, she serves as a board member of APTI and a founding member of IC-PTA. She is also an author of books and articles, editor of the Italian Play Therapy magazine, and creator of educational board games for families and schools.

Claudio Mochi, MA, RP, RPT-S™ (Italy)

Claudio is Director of the Master in Play Therapy at the International Academy for Play Therapy in Switzerland. He has delivered lectures and specialized training across six continents, earning recognition as a global leader in innovation, education, and the advancement of quality play therapy. Claudio is a psychologist and psychotherapist with over 25 years of international experience supporting victims of humanitarian emergencies and trauma. He is an expert in play therapy, holds a Master of Arts in Creative Psychotherapy, and is a Registered Play Therapist Supervisor™ (APT, USA). In addition, Claudio will be finishing the Certificate of Program Completion at the Sand Tray Play Therapy Program In Corrales, New Mexico with Theresa Kestly in August 2026. An author and pioneer in the field in Italy, he



founded the Association for Play Therapy Italy in 2009 (currently a board member of the IC-PTA) to promote high standards in the practice and teaching of Play Therapy.

Theresa Kestly, PhD, RPT-S™

Theresa is a psychologist, educator, consultant, and a registered play therapist/supervisor with the Association for Play Therapy. She is an international presenter, and she maintains a private practice with specialties in play therapy and sandtray therapy in Corrales, New Mexico for children, adults, families, couples, and small groups. Theresa served as a senior staff psychologist at the Albuquerque Family and Child Guidance Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico where she specialized in child, adolescent and family therapy, consultations with the Indian Health Service, and consultations with the Albuquerque Public Schools. She supervised psychology, counseling, and psychiatry trainees as an adjunct faculty member at the University of New Mexico. Theresa served as the first president of the New Mexico Association for Play Therapy. She is the founder and director of the Sand Tray Training Institute of New Mexico in Corrales, New Mexico where she provides large-group seminars and small-group intensive training for psychotherapists in child and adult sandtray therapy. Theresa is author of *The Interpersonal Neurobiology of Play: Brain-Building Interventions for Emotional Well-Being* (Norton Interpersonal Neurobiology series).

[APT Provider Approved Provider #99-052](#)

Location

Sand Tray Training Institute
294 Mission Valley Road
Corrales, NM 87048

Daily Schedule*

Days 1 - 2 (6 contact hours each day)

9:00 - 9:30 am	Gathering Time with Continental Breakfast in Corrales (Optional)
9:30 - 11:00 am	Topic Presentation & Discussion
11:00 - 11:15 am	BREAK
11:15 - 12:45 pm	Training demonstration
12:45 - 2:15 pm	LUNCH BREAK (on your own)
2:15 - 3:45 pm	Topic Presentation & Discussion, Training Demonstration, Questions
3:45 - 4:00 pm	BREAK
4:00 - 5:30 pm	Training Demonstration, Discussion & Clinical Applications, Review and Questions

*Schedule may vary at the discretion of the presenters due to curriculum updates and participant processing.



Continuing Education Credits

In this 2-day training participants will earn 12 CE contact hours verified with a Certificate of Training. Following is a list of organizations that have approved our training for continuing education requirements. To receive CEs, participants must be present the entire time of training. There are no exceptions to this policy.

The Sand Tray Training Institute of New Mexico is approved by the **National Board for Certified Counselors, NBCC** as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 5972. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. The Sand Tray Training Institute is solely responsible for all aspects of the program. The **New Mexico Board of Social Work** Examiners accepts all continuing education credits that are approved by NBCC. In addition, the Institute is approved by the Association for Play Therapy, APT Approved Provider #99-052, to offer continuing education specific to play therapy. The Sand Tray Training Institute of New Mexico follows all CE guidelines and maintains responsibility for the program. This course meets the qualifications for 6 contact hours of continuing education credit per 1 full day of training.

Checking Your Personal CE Requirements

It is always a good idea to check with your own credentialing agencies (state boards, affiliated agencies, etc.) to ensure that the CE credits you receive from us are applicable to your specific situation. You need to attend the entire training sessions to receive credit. Partial credits cannot be given. In cases of family or other unavoidable emergencies that interrupt your attendance for a short time, makeup possibilities for time missed may incur a fee based on our hourly consultation rate.

Cancellation and Refund Policy

Registration fees are refundable (less \$50.00 administrative fee & any credit card fees) if written notice is post-marked no later than 30 days before the training begins. As of September 2023, PayPal added processing fees for credit card refunds. Refunds require a minimum 6-week processing time. Registrants may transfer/sell their enrollment to another qualified person at any time. Transfer fee is \$50.00.

The Sand Tray Training Institute reserves the right to cancel a workshop due to insufficient enrollment, inclement weather, instructor illness, instructor family emergency, or some other unforeseen event. Notice will be provided at the earliest possible date via email with the option to reschedule for a future training date or to receive a full refund of paid workshop fees.

Makeup Policy: Certificates can be awarded only when the training is attended in full. In case of medical or family issues, makeup work may be arranged on an individual basis at an hourly consultation rate. The requirement for full attendance is a policy issued by the CE organizations that approve our trainings for continuing education credits.