USING SANDPLAY TO EXPLORE INNER STATES

Research by Sandi Peters, MA
What is self?

The self is not only the centre, but also the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious; it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is the centre of consciousness.

C. G. Jung
What is Dementia?

- progressive decrease in cognition or behavior from a prior level of functioning
- interference with customary activities of daily living and social relationships causing dependence, alienation
- caused by brain disease
What is Sandplay?

• Sandplay is a symbolic process that is both playful and sacred.
• It has been used as a method of working with the psyche since the 1920s.
• It uses a box of sand and numerous miniature figures representing all aspects of life.
• It allows the sandplayer to access internal unconscious states through the creation of sand pictures.
How does Self, Dementia and Sandplay unite?

- **Jung**: an inborn urge toward truth or wholeness propelled by the self

- **Joan Erikson**: stage nine added to the traditional eight stages of development

- **Naomi Fiel**: Validation, a psychodynamic model of providing care

- **Thomas Kitwood**: Personhood movement
A Care Perspective

Our views on ageing affect how we address and treat older people, as well as which needs in the caring situation we think must be satisfied. What one considers as important in the care of older people actually depends largely on one’s theoretical perspective.

Barbro Wadensten
What we call a symbol is a term, a name, or an image which in itself may be familiar to us, but its connotation, use and application are specific or peculiar and hint at a hidden, vague or unknown meaning.

C.G. Jung
Case presentation:

- Little or no cognitive impairment
- Early stage dementia
- Middle stage dementia
- Late stage dementia
- Self constellation
Dorothy
Mary M Tray 1 of 8 (6/09)
Harry
Mary
Considerations when doing Sandplay with elders

- Visual ability
- Motor limitations
- Cognitive ability
- Personality
- Level of dementia
“So when it comes to aging, I am led to assume that there is intelligence in life that intends aging just as it intends growth in youth. As we unfold into speaking, standing, walking, discriminating, and mastering, so we may infold, once called the involution of aging. As we must unfold or develop to gain entry into the world, so infolding or aging is essential to our leaving. Not the leaving of life; we never leave life until life leaves us—suicide the exception We are alive until declared dead. If dying is a possibility from the very first breath, so living endures until the very last. It is an enormous mistake to read the phenomena of later life as indications of death rather than as initiations into another way of life.”

J. Hillman: *The Force of Character*