



SELINUS UNIVERSITY
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**DYNAMICS OF INDIVIDUATION IN SANDPLAY THERAPY IN
WOMEN WITH PATERNAL DEPRIVATION**

By YELENA SHEVELEVA

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INTRODUCTION

Degree of elaboration of the problem and relevance of the study.

The problem of personality individuation occupies a central place in analytical psychology, where it is traditionally viewed as the process of becoming an integrated personality through the integration of conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche [130]. In the classic works of C. G. Jung, individuation is described as a universal, individually conditioned path of psychic development; however, the gender specificity of this process long remained outside the focus of systematic analysis. Historically, models of individuation were predominantly formed based on male experience, while female subjectivity was considered indirectly, through projections of the Anima and relational functions in relation to male consciousness [158; 161; 68; 63; 71; 67; 53].

In the second half of the 20th century, a significant shift occurred within the analytical-psychological tradition regarding the understanding of female individuation. The works of E. Neumann [109; 110; 108], E. Harding [46], J. Singer [156; 155], M. Woodman [190; 191; 192], S. Matsliah-Hanokh [99], M. Murdock [106; 107], and other researchers expanded the classical understanding of individuation, emphasizing the specifics of female experience, the bodily-symbolic dimension, relational orientation, and cyclical development. Female individuation in these works is described as a non-linear, processual path involving crisis transitions, regressions, and symbolic transformations, thus providing an important theoretical framework for further research.

One of the key factors influencing the dynamics of female individuation, as considered in analytical psychology, is the function of the paternal principle.

Research by Chodorow (1978), Bowlby (1988), and Miller (1997) confirms that the absence of an emotionally available father affects not only the formation of basic attachment but also deeper aspects of development such as self-identification, the formation of ego boundaries, the capacity for self-regulation, and the structuring of inner space. In women, this is particularly manifested in disturbances of the symbolic separation process, dependencies, difficulties in affective differentiation, and instability of self-image and self-attitude.

In the Jungian tradition, the paternal function is understood not only as the real figure of the father but primarily as a symbolic structure ensuring the formation of boundaries, inner authority, direction, and the capacity for discernment [61]. When this function is deficient or distorted, the individuation process takes on a mediated, fragmented, or crisis-like character.

In psychological science, the phenomenon of paternal deprivation is primarily studied within empirical-psychological and socio-psychological frameworks [3; 4; 176; 43; 20; 22; 28; 51; 89; 94; 112; 115; 168; 100]. Russian-language and international research shows that the absence or insufficiency of paternal involvement is associated with disturbances in self-image, reduced psychological autonomy, the formation of dependent relational patterns, and difficulties integrating positive and negative aspects of the internal father image. However, most of these studies rely on quantitative methods that capture structural characteristics of experience but poorly reflect its procedural and symbolic dynamics.

The relevance of studying paternal deprivation is heightened by contemporary socio-demographic trends. According to statistics (Figure 1; Appendix 1) from the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan on family policy (dated 25.08.2025), there is a persistent trend of divorce [13], which objectively increases the number of families with a disrupted or fragmented paternal function.

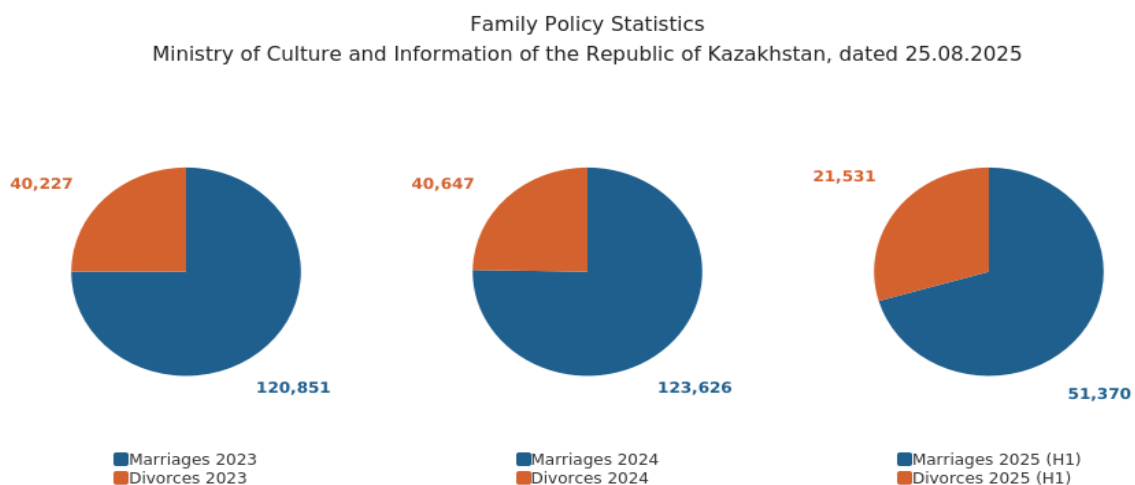


Figure 1. Statistics of marriages and divorces in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023–2025.

In conditions of rising divorce rates and transforming family structures, it can be assumed that a significant number of children, including girls, are developing in the context of partial or complete absence of a father, or disturbed father-daughter relationships. This creates long-term psychological consequences manifesting already in adulthood and affecting the processes of female individuation.

Despite the accumulated body of empirical data on the consequences of paternal deprivation, a methodological gap persists in modern science between the socio-psychological description of this phenomenon and its in-depth analytical-psychological understanding. The question of how the deficit of the paternal function manifests and transforms in the dynamics of a woman's individuation, and which symbolic and psychodynamic processes accompany this path, remains insufficiently developed.

Sandplay therapy, as a method of analytical psychology allowing the study of non-verbal, symbolic, and processual dynamics of the psyche, holds particular potential for investigating these processes [77; 81; 2; 41; 35; 95; 164; 153]. Unlike questionnaire and survey methods, Sandplay therapy provides an opportunity to observe transformations of internal structures during the therapeutic process, making it methodologically adequate for studying the individuation of women with paternal deprivation.

Thus, **the relevance of this study** is determined by the intersection of social transformations, theoretical deficits, and methodological limitations in the study of paternal deprivation. The work aims to understand the influence of the paternal function deficit on the dynamics of personal development and the integration of archetypal structures of the psyche in the process of a woman's individuation. Analyzing the dynamics of individuation in Sandplay therapy allows for the integration of empirical data with analytical-psychological interpretation, combining qualitative processual and quantitative approaches, thereby expanding understanding of the variability of paths of female individuation in contemporary socio-cultural conditions. The obtained results contribute to deepening the understanding of the mechanisms of female subjectivity formation and contribute to the development of analytically oriented approaches to the psychotherapy of attachment trauma.

The aim of the study – is to identify the features of the dynamics of individuation in women with experience of paternal deprivation based on Sandplay therapy material, avoiding pathologization and considering the subjective experience of the participants.

Object of the study – the individuation of a woman with paternal deprivation.

Subject of the study – the phenomenology and dynamics of Sandplay symbols in the individuation of a woman with paternal deprivation.

Hypotheses of the study:

1. Paternal deprivation does not preclude the possibility of undergoing the individuation process in women.

2. In the conditions of psychotherapeutic work using Jungian sand therapy (Sandplay therapy), activation of compensatory and symbolic mechanisms is possible, allowing the initiation, support, and completion of individuation phases.

3. Signs of individuation can be captured at an imaginal level and traced in the dynamics of therapeutic scenes expressed in the Jungian sandbox field.

Tasks of the study:

In the theoretical part of the study:

1. Analyze scientific approaches to the concept of paternal deprivation and individuation in female development.

2. Describe the methodology of Sandplay therapy as a tool for visualizing and symbolizing the individuation processes of a woman with paternal deprivation.

3. Formulate possible types and trajectories of individuation of a woman with paternal deprivation based on the obtained data.

4. Draw conclusions about the role of the therapeutic Sandplay environment in initiating and maintaining the individuation process of a woman with paternal deprivation.

In the methodological part of the study:

5. Develop criteria for identifying signs and observing the individuation of a woman with paternal deprivation in sand scenes.

6. Develop a model of research psychotherapy encompassing social, personal, symbolic, analytical-psychological, and psychotherapeutic levels.

In the empirical part of the study:

7. Conduct a qualitative analysis of Sandplay therapy materials from women with experience of paternal deprivation.

8. Develop and test a checklist for registering symbols of individuation in Sandplay therapy as a tool for qualitative analysis.

9. Develop a Sandplay therapy program for working with women with paternal deprivation.

The methodological basis of the study is formed by the tenets of analytical psychology concerning the individuation process as the natural dynamic of achieving personality wholeness, as developed by C. G. Jung.

In studying the specifics of female individuation, the works of E. Neumann, M. Woodman, and M. Murdock were used.

The works of S. Schwartz [133; 136; 135] served as the theoretical starting point for studying the phenomenon of the absent father and its impact on women's development. To understand the father complex in contemporary women, the works of modern Jungian analyst V. Kast [82] were selected.

The concept of L. R. Freedle's «Seven Phases of Sandplay Therapy» [33; 34; 37; 36], offering a structured approach to understanding the transformation process during individuation development, was used as a theoretical and empirical model for observing the dynamics of individuation.

For the organizational methodology to study the phenomenology of symbols and meaning structures of individuation in women with paternal deprivation, we chose a case study model and qualitative analysis [1; 86; 162; 36; 87; 95; 195; 196]. To study the direction of structures and signs of individuation dynamics, the application of the sign test as a quantitative analysis method was determined. This complex of methods involves combining the operationalization of observable signs and their empirical recording [121; 120; 122].

The interpretation of the dynamics of individuation in women with paternal deprivation considers the ideas and concepts of analytical psychology by C. G. Jung, M. Stein, M. Woodman, M. Murdock, J. Singer, S. Schwartz; the theories of ego-consciousness development and the Ego-Self axis by E. Neumann and D. Kalf; the tenets of object relations theory by D. W. Winnicott on the formation of internal objects, the development of symbolization capacity, and the

establishment of ego boundaries; the concept of individuation phases in Sandplay by L. R. Freedle.

The presented methodological strategy allows viewing the individuation of a woman with paternal deprivation as a multi-level process encompassing archetypal, structural, and socio-personal dynamics.

Research methods.

Theoretical: comparative theoretical analysis of literature.

Organizational: qualitative research, case study design.

Empirical: unstructured interview; research psychotherapy; observation (sandplay sessions); analysis of symbolic material of sandboxes; analysis of photo and verbal protocols; analysis of the work protocols of the reference group; Self-Attitude Inventory (MIS, S. R. Pantileev).

Data processing methods: content analysis; intent analysis; interpretative analysis; clustering of cases according to L. R. Freedle's «Seven Phases of Sandplay Therapy» model; sign test.

Empirical basis of the study.

The empirical study was organized in the private psychological practice office of E. V. Sheveleva in Almaty (Republic of Kazakhstan) in the form of a case study of 9 cases of individual sandplay sessions of women aged 33 to 56 with experience of an absent father (paternal deprivation).

The reliability and validity of the obtained results are ensured by the totality of the theoretical-methodological and empirical foundations of the study.

First, the study rests on a conceptually grounded methodological base of analytical psychology, within which data interpretation is carried out considering the principles of symbolic analysis, processuality, and contextual conditionality of psychic phenomena.

Second, the reliability of the results is ensured by using a qualitative research design (case study), involving in-depth analysis of individual cases followed by cross-case comparison and identification of recurring patterns.

Third, validity is enhanced by applying methodological triangulation, including a combination of various data collection and analysis methods: observation of sandplay sessions,

analysis of symbolic material, interpretation of verbal protocols, as well as elements of quantitative processing (sign test), allowing comparison of results obtained at different levels of analysis.

Fourth, reproducibility and transparency of analysis are ensured by developing and applying a checklist for registering symbols of individuation, allowing standardization of the procedure for recording and interpreting observed phenomena.

Fifth, the reliability of the conclusions is confirmed by the stability of the identified dynamic changes and their recurrence across different cases, indicating the presence of typological patterns in the individuation process.

An additional factor of validity is the professional training of the researcher in analytical psychology and Sandplay therapy, ensuring the correctness of phenomenological observation and interpretation of symbolic material.

Propositions for defense:

1. Paternal deprivation in the analytical-psychological sense represents not so much a consequence of the actual absence of the father, but a deficit of the symbolic function of the paternal principle, reflected in the structure of the Self and in the individuation process.

2. In paternal deprivation, the disruption primarily affects the functions of boundaries, autonomy, and inner authority, manifesting not as isolated symptoms but in stable patterns of psychic organization and relational strategies.

3. In the process of female individuation, paternal deprivation often leads to the formation of compensatory developmental paths, where the integration of the paternal principle occurs indirectly through symbolic images, crisis transitions, and recurring relational scenarios.

4. Sandplay therapy creates unique conditions for empirical observation of the dynamics of paternal deprivation, allowing not only the deficit of the paternal function but also the spontaneous attempts of the psyche to restore it at a symbolic level to be recorded.

5. The symbolic material of sand compositions in paternal deprivation is characterized by processuality and variability, making the qualitative, interpretative approach methodologically more adequate compared to quantitative analysis models.

6. Qualitative analysis of empirical data from Sandplay therapy allows viewing paternal deprivation not as a static traumatic category, but as a dynamic structure transforming during the therapeutic process.

7. The use of inductive and processual qualitative analysis strategies facilitates the identification of individual trajectories for integrating the paternal principle, expanding understanding of the variability of individuation paths in paternal deprivation.

Scientific novelty of the study:

1. An integrative model for analyzing the dynamics of individuation in Sandplay therapy in women with paternal deprivation has been developed.

2. For the first time, the visual phase concept of individuation movement proposed by L. R. Freedle [33; 34] has been adapted to the tasks of empirical research on female individuation. The model is used not in a descriptive but in an operationalized format as an analytical matrix for interpreting symbolic dynamics.

3. An author's modification of the visual tool for analyzing individuation phases has been carried out.

4. A structured form for recording the symbolic dynamics of individuation processes in Sandplay therapy [149] has been developed, including additional interpretation parameters and a block for comparison with the results of psychometric diagnostics of self-attitude [113]. This allowed a transition from a qualitative description of the therapeutic process to a reproducible model of qualitative-quantitative analysis.

5. For the first time, the specifics of phase dynamics of female individuation in conditions of paternal deprivation have been empirically investigated. The process of symbolic transformation is examined through the lens of the deficit of the paternal function as a structure-forming factor of psychic organization. Features of the early and transitional phases related to images of boundaries, power, law, and inner authority have been identified.

6. It has been shown that paternal deprivation influences not only the content of symbolic images but also the trajectory of the individuation movement as a whole, expanding the theoretical tenets of analytical psychology regarding the mechanisms of formation of the internal paternal function.

Theoretical significance of the work:

1. A systematic literature review of views and concepts on women's individuation, considering gender specifics of female development, is presented.

2. Understanding of the process of female individuation in analytical psychology has been expanded by considering paternal deprivation as a factor structurally influencing the configuration of phases of symbolic development.

3. The role of the father archetype in the formation of inner authority, boundaries, and the experience of law in the female psyche has been clarified, complementing classical tenets of analytical psychology regarding the dynamics of the Animus and the Self.

4. The possibility of an interdisciplinary connection between analytical psychology and empirical personality psychology through the operationalization of symbolic dynamics and its comparison with psychometric indicators has been substantiated.

5. The developed model of phase analysis of individuation creates a theoretical basis for further research on the transformation of the paternal function in the context of contemporary changes in family structure.

Practical significance of the study:

1. A reproducible tool for analyzing the dynamics of individuation in Sandplay therapy has been proposed, which can be used in clinical and counseling practice.

2. The developed form for recording phase dynamics allows structuring therapeutic observation and enhances the analytical accuracy of interpreting symbolic material.

3. The obtained results can be used in work with women experiencing the consequences of paternal deprivation, attachment trauma, trauma of loss of a significant object, in developing therapeutic strategies aimed at reconstructing the internal paternal function.

4. The research materials can be included in training and professional development programs for specialists in analytical psychology and Sandplay therapy.

5. The developed model of the Sandplay therapy program for women with paternal deprivation can be used in the toolbox of a practicing psychologist.

Approbation of research results.

The results of the study were presented at international conferences: VI Conference on Jungian Sandplay Therapy «Sand Stories – Images of Individuation» (December 6-7, 2025, Moscow, Russia), XII International Scientific and Practical Conference «Society, Science,

Practice» (December 15, 2025, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan). The main stages of the research, conclusions based on preliminary results, and propositions for defense were discussed at the methodological meeting of the «Kazakh Society for the Development of Analytical Psychology» www.jungian.kz (March 4, 2026, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan).

Materials and issues of the research have been published in articles:

Sheveleva E. V. Female Individuation in Paternal Deprivation: Issues and Possibilities of Qualitative Research in Sandplay Therapy // Proceedings of the scientific-practical conf. «Society, science, practice». – Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 2025, – pp. 255–262. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26118/p5718-8497-9220-k> (RSCI)

Sheveleva E. V. Features of Female Individuation: A Jungian View // Smart Science, 2026. – (8). – pp. 50–54. DOI; <https://smart-inc.ru/smart-science>

Sheveleva E. V. Paternal Deprivation in the Context of Female Individuation: Empirical Studies, Jungian Interpretation, and Methodological Perspectives of Sandplay Therapy // Pedagogical Anthropology, 2026. – (1). – pp. 116–121. URL: <https://pedagog-antropolog.ru/wp-content/uploads/26-1.pdf#page=116> (RSCI)

Sheveleva E. V. From Measurement to Understanding: Development and Testing of a Checklist for Registering Symbols of Individuation in Sandplay Therapy // Psychology. Historical-critical reviews and contemporary research, 2026. – Vol. 15. No. 3A. – pp. 87–103. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34670/AR.2026.36.90.008> (VAK)

Structure of the dissertation.

The work consists of an introduction, 3 chapters, conclusions, final remarks, a bibliography (201 sources), and 17 appendices. The main body of the dissertation comprises 231 pages. The dissertation text includes 17 tables and 20 figures.

CHAPTER 1. THE THEORY OF INDIVIDUATION IN C. G. JUNG'S ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY: DEFINITION AND STRUCTURE OF THE PROCESS

1.1. The concept of individuation: historical and theoretical context and key definitions

1.1.1. Structure of the psyche as the basis of the individuation process

Definition of Individuation

The concept of individuation occupies a central place in the theoretical legacy of Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), the Swiss psychologist, psychiatrist, and thinker, founder of analytical psychology. Jung himself repeatedly called this concept key to his system. Although this term acquired specific content in the Jungian tradition, its origins lie deep in European philosophy: in scholasticism, the term *individuationis* was used to denote the process of separating the individual from the general *principium individuationis*.

Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus debated the nature of the principle of individuation, seeing it sometimes in matter, sometimes in form. Schopenhauer introduced this term into broad philosophical discourse, viewing space and time as forms generating the illusion of the separateness of individual beings. For Jung, these philosophical connotations became a starting point: he reinterpreted the concept in a psychological key, imbuing it with content related to personality development, its transformation, and the attainment of wholeness.

The conceptually central source is «Psychological Types» [67], one of Jung's most important theoretical works, where he gave the first detailed definition of individuation. In «Essays on the Psychology of the Unconscious» [59], the Russian edition combining «Psychology of the Unconscious» and «Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious», Jung formulates the key definition of this process: «Individuation means becoming a single, homogeneous being, and insofar as individuality encompasses our innermost, ultimate, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own Self. Therefore, individuation could also be translated as 'becoming a personality' or 'self-realization'» [59, p. 199]. This

definition, concise in form, contains several fundamentally important layers of meaning. First, individuation is interpreted as a process, that is, something dynamic unfolding over time, not a static state. Second, the Self is proclaimed the key goal-concept as an archetypal structure embodying the potential wholeness of the psyche.

It is fundamentally important to distinguish between individuation and individualism, a distinction Jung himself insisted upon. In «Essays on the Psychology of the Unconscious,» he directly states: «Individualism means a conscious emphasizing, highlighting, and exalting of supposed peculiarity as opposed to collective considerations and obligations. Individuation, however, means a more perfect and more complete fulfillment of collective properties and qualities by a human being, since adequate consideration of the individual's peculiarity leads to better social achievement than when peculiarity is neglected or suppressed» [59, p. 200]. In other words, a truly individuated person does not oppose society but enters into more mature and conscious relationships with it, since their actions are determined not by unconscious collective automatisms but by an integrated psychic structure.

The concept of individuation is concretized in the context of Jung's model of the psyche. Developing the theory of the collective unconscious, Jung stated in his work «Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious»: «The more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal. I call it the personal unconscious. However, the personal unconscious rests upon another, deeper layer, which is not formed from personal experience. This innate deep layer I call the collective unconscious... the collective unconscious is the same for all people, thus forming a universal psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature that is present in each of us» [68, p. 8]. It is the existence of the collective unconscious that gives individuation its paradoxical character: in becoming oneself, a person simultaneously touches the universal foundations of the psyche. A vertical deepening into one's own individuality turns out to be simultaneously a horizontal expansion, a connection with the universal.

Another aspect of Jung's understanding is important: individuation is not only a psychological but also a deeply ethical process. In «Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious,» Jung writes that individuation «entails the determination of the individual, i.e., precisely that which is not collective. This separation from the collective is a violation of the collective norm. Consequently, individuation implies guilt» [59, p. 342]. Taking responsibility

for one's own uniqueness means breaking with collective patterns and bearing the burden of this uniqueness – this is the moral responsibility Jung considered an integral part of the process.

M. Stein, in «Jung's Map of the Soul,» gives the following characterization: Jung «used the term individuation for psychological development, which he defined as the becoming of a unified, yet simultaneously unique, personality, an individuality, an indivisible and whole person»[158, p. 188]. Stein emphasizes particularly that individuation is associated not only with the first half of life (development of the Ego and Persona) but primarily with the second half – with the movement towards deeper wholeness including unconscious contents.

Finally, O. A. Boyko, in the dissertation «Model of Personality in C. G. Jung's Philosophical-Anthropological Concept,» formulates a systemic philosophical definition: «the process of individuation is the guarantee of internal freedom of the individual» and acts as «spiritual self-improvement, consisting in the integration of various components of the human psyche, the acquisition of life meaning and spiritual harmony»[8, p. 19]. E. V. Korchaznikova, in the article «The Role of Individuation in Personality Self-Realization,» emphasizes the relationship of this process with self-realization: «one needs to be aware of one's inner needs, understand who you are, what you want... To go through the path of self-awareness, the path of individuation, to realize oneself» [90, p. 88].

Post-Jungian interpretations of the concept of individuation.

The concept of individuation did not remain unchanged after Jung's death in 1961; it was actively developed, critically re-evaluated, and enriched within the post-Jungian movement. E. Samuels, in his work «Jung and the Post-Jungians,» identified three main directions in contemporary analytical psychology. The classical direction develops Jung's ideas in their original form. The archetypal direction emphasizes the imaginal dimension of the psyche and is primarily represented by J. Hillman. The developmental direction brings the Jungian approach closer to object relations theory and research on infant development (M. Fordham) [128, pp. 3–25].

M. Fordham showed that the individuation process begins not in maturity, as Jung assumed, but from birth itself. He introduced the concept of the «primary Self,» from which the ego differentiates during development [32]. This brings analytical psychology closer to the theory of D. Winnicott, who introduced the concepts of the «good enough mother» and

«transitional object,» related to the separation-individuation process in children [188]. This view allows considering early mother-child relationships as the matrix in which the capacity for individuation is either born or inhibited.

The position of J. Hillman deserves special attention; he criticized the teleological dimension of Jung's individuation, seeing in it a hidden moralizing. For archetypal psychology, there is no single path to a single Self: the psyche is a «polyphony» of archetypal images, each deserving respect [48]. Heinz Kohut, the founder of Self psychology, studied self-development and processes related to individuation and narcissism, offering a different perspective on the problem of wholeness [88].

Stein, in «Jung's Map of the Soul,» offers a balanced assessment: «One should not confuse Jung's concept of individuation with the meanings attributed to this word by other theories... For Jung, individuation is completion; it is the whole process» [158, p. 189]. At the same time, he acknowledges that Jung himself «did not pay special attention to the topics of the first half of life» and worked primarily with middle-aged adults who needed «wisdom and guidance in their further inner development» [ibid., p. 191].

Boyko, in his philosophical analysis, emphasizes the dialectical nature of individuation: «the dialectic of the individuation process, according to Jung, lies in the fact that, representing an inner spiritual self-realization, it allows, at a new turn of personal development, to form relationships with society. At the same time, the person enters society not as a representative of the 'silent majority,' but as a Personality who understands themselves and others better, is aware of their responsibility for events happening in the world» [8, p. 20]. This conclusion echoes Jung's original thesis on the relationship between individuation and collectivity: true individuation does not lead to isolation but to a more mature and responsible participation in common life.

Moreira, summarizing clinical observations, offers a metaphor that succinctly captures the essence of the process: like trees of different biomes, taking various forms in response to environmental conditions, each person realizes their unique form of individuation depending on life circumstances. «No woman should feel forced into motherhood, since the path to individuation is unique and cannot be transferred to another»

[170, pp. 11]. This is a striking example of how the clinical Jungian approach affirms the uniqueness of individuation concerning specific life choices.

Structure of the psyche as the basis of the individuation process.

To understand Jung's theory of individuation, it is necessary to turn to his model of the psyche, since individuation is primarily a process of psychic transformation, implying a certain relationship between different instances of mental life. Jung identified three main layers of the psyche: consciousness with its center – the ego; the personal unconscious, containing individually repressed or unnoticed material; and the collective unconscious as a layer common to all humanity and structured by archetypes. This three-level model sets the coordinates within which the individuation process unfolds.

The Ego is the center of the field of consciousness. It is responsible for identity, continuity of experience, and goal-directed behavior. Stein, drawing on Jung's texts, describes the ego as the first of all structures one can find on Jung's map, a structure providing the sense of I exist, I feel, I think, I want [158].

The Self, the archetype of wholeness, encompasses the full extent of the psyche and acts as a regulating center striving for the integration of opposites. This tension between the ego and the Self constitutes, according to Jung, the dynamic axis of the individuation process. In «The Phenomenon of the Self,» he describes the Self as a «postulated symbol that expresses an unknowable essence» and embodies «the totality of a person: the sum total of their conscious and unconscious processes» [72, p. 44]. The Self is simultaneously the goal and the driving force of individuation – that which psychic development strives for, and that which inwardly guides this striving.

Four archetypal figures play a central role in the individuation process, encountered sequentially during psychic development: Persona, Shadow, Anima/Animus, and Self. In «Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious,» Jung provides a detailed characterization of each. He defines the Persona as a «compromise between the individual and society concerning what a person should appear to be,» it is a «segment of the collective psyche»– a necessary adaptive mechanism, identification with which leads to loss of contact with the authentic personality [62, p. 181]. The Shadow, according to Jung, represents the «dark side» of the personality: «There is something frightening about the fact

that a person also has a certain shadow side, which consists not just of little weaknesses and flaws, but of a downright demonic dynamic» [ibid., p. 35].

S. Vaneyan, in the review work «Jung: Symbolism, Mythology, Individuation,» examines the Shadow archetype in detail: «The Ego also has a counterpart, a dark figure, which Jung calls the Shadow. Its hidden positive function is connected with the discovery and activation of everything that a person denies in themselves. Everything they wish to hide from themselves is contained in the Shadow archetype. This is everything we do not want to know about ourselves – the dark, the bad, the evil, the impermissible, the unpleasant, the uncomfortable» [174, p. 57]. The author emphasizes that working with the Shadow is not an additional element but a necessary foundation of the entire individuation process, without which movement toward the Self is impossible.

Anima (for a man) and Animus (for a woman) embody the opposite-sex psychic side. Vaneyan describes the Anima as the «living and life-giving feminine principle» in the male psyche, and the Animus as the masculine principle in the female, the bearer of logos and rationality [ibid., p. 56]. In «The Phenomenon of the Self,» Jung designates them as archetypes of the «syzygy» as paired principles forming a numinous opposition: «The encounter with oneself is primarily an encounter with one's own Shadow. The Shadow is a narrow passage, a narrow door, whose painful constriction spares no one who descends into the deep well» [72, p. 22].

E. Neumann, in the fundamental work «The Origins and History of Consciousness,» supplemented Jung's scheme with an evolutionary dimension, showing that the individuation process reproduces, in individual biography, the archetypal stages of human consciousness development in general. Consciousness, according to Neumann, is born from the matrix of the unconscious just as the sun rises from darkness: the hero archetype symbolizes the ego fighting for autonomy against the devouring maternal principle [108]. O. A. Boyko, summarizing this concept, indicates that for Jung, personality «acts as a functional system combining the somatic (bodily), psychic, and symbolic spheres» [8, p.15], and it is precisely the individuation process that ensures the integration of these spheres into a single whole.

1.1.2. Phases and stages of the individuation process

Process dynamics and general principles.

The question of the stage structure of the individuation process is one of the most debated in analytical psychology. Jung himself did not propose a rigid stage scheme; however, his texts and clinical practice allow the reconstruction of a certain dynamic logic. The key principle is the principle of compensation. M. Stein reveals it as follows: «The fundamental relationship between consciousness and the unconscious is one of compensation... Over time, the multitude of these small daily compensations form patterns, and these patterns form the basis of a spiral development towards wholeness, which Jung called individuation» [158, p. 189].

Jung himself, according to Stein, described this process as: «I have called this unconscious process, spontaneously expressing itself in the symbolism of large dream series, the individuation process» [158, p. 190]. Thus, individuation has both a conscious and an unconscious dimension: it can be initiated by a conscious intention, but its driving force is a deeper psychic process directed by the Self.

Jung's thesis on the two halves of life is fundamentally important for understanding the dynamics of individuation. M. Stein writes that in the first half of life, the most important task is the development of the Ego and Persona to a point of individual viability, cultural adaptation, and adult responsibility, whereas in the second phase of individuation, the dominant pattern is not the emergence of the Ego from its background but, rather, the unification of the whole personality into a whole [158; 161; 160]. In other words, the first half of a person's life is primarily occupied with social adaptation, while the second half opens the path to genuine individuation in Jung's sense.

The question of what initiates the individuation process is also important. I. Jacobi indicated that in most cases, the beginning of the process is associated not with a voluntary decision but with a crisis, loss, illness, disappointment, or the collapse of a habitual way of life. Such a catalyst knocks the ego out of its accustomed balance and opens the path to deeper self-knowledge [53]. Thus, Moreira showed, based on clinical cases, that life's difficulties and adverse circumstances can paradoxically act as catalysts for individuation, provoking growth rather than deformation. This idea echoes her metaphor of natural bonsai: like a tree growing in

the harsh conditions of rocky soil, the human personality can realize its potential even in unfavorable circumstances, developing not despite but in harmony with the environment [105].

First phase: Encounter with the Persona and awareness of the Shadow.

The first major stage of the individuation process is associated with disidentification from the Persona and awareness of the Shadow. In «Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious,» Jung describes the Persona as a «segment of the collective psyche»[62, p. 181], necessary for adaptation but dangerous when fully identified with, as the Persona is an external shell intended, on the one hand, to make a certain impression on others, and on the other, to conceal the true nature of the individual [ibid., 182–183]. In the first half of life, the Ego builds its identity primarily through social roles. This process is necessary, but it involves an inevitable narrowing: everything that does not fit the image of the «right» person is repressed into the Shadow.

Stein indicates that initially, the Ego of a healthy person «develops a Persona»: «The Ego of a healthy child and young person learns at an accelerated pace to furnish its own world, becoming self-sufficient... Adaptation based on such archetypal images as the mother-child dyad, and later on heroic patterns of separation and conquest, occurs in any circumstances» [70, p. 187–188]. As a life crisis calls into question habitual self-definitions, a person faces the demand to reconsider their identity and encounter the Shadow.

Vaneyan examines this encounter from the perspective of the dynamics of psychic energy: the most important aspect of the Shadow is that it «is not a negative Ego. Man is by nature binary, conflicted. The archetypal, essential is inherent in him on this dialectical level as well, and this is the archetype of the Shadow»[174, p. 57]. This means the Shadow contains not only undesirable but also unrealized positive potential. Working with the Shadow is, according to the unanimous opinion of Jungian analysts, the foundation of the entire subsequent process.

Boyko, analyzing the significance of this stage from a philosophical point of view, emphasizes: «awareness of the negative qualities of one's own psyche, repressed from consciousness, and the desire to control one's unconscious processes» is one of the «main features that distinguish a genuine personality» [8, p. 19]. Accepting the shadow aspects for a person is not a moral defeat but, on the contrary, a condition of genuine morality based on self-knowledge rather than self-deception.

Second phase: Encounter with the Anima/Animus.

After work with the Shadow has reached a certain maturity, the archetype of the contra-sexual opposite – Anima for a man or Animus for a woman – comes to the fore. Jung described a man's Anima as the embodiment of his capacity for feeling, imaginative thinking, connection with nature and the unconscious. In «Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious,» he formulates the essence of the anima as compensating the male Ego and therefore analytically that which is the collective unconscious for a man. According to Jung, the Anima expresses that which is not masculine in a man [62].

In his work, Vaneyan dwells in detail on these paired archetypes: «the pair Animus and Anima is the masculine principle in woman and the feminine principle in man. Anima-soul, something a little (or a lot) biological... Anima is the living and life-giving feminine principle.» At the same time, an «overly passive, sensitive man» is an expression of the dominance of the Anima, while a «businesswoman» is a woman in the grip of the Animus archetype [174, p. 56]. In unprocessed forms, these archetypes are expressed in projections onto external partners; integration, however, means establishing a conscious dialogue with the internal image.

Thus, Boyko, in his dissertation research, applies archetypal analysis to study the work of Pablo Picasso, showing how different aspects of the artist's Anima can be traced in female portraits: «peculiar female portraits appear in Picasso's work from around 1917... This painting presents the elegant, aristocratic and haughty side of the artist's anima» [8, p. 37]. This example is instructive because it traces the connection between an inner psychological process and external creative expression.

Third phase: Encounter with the Self and attainment of wholeness.

The deepest and, in a certain sense, never fully completed stage of individuation is associated with the ego's movement towards the Self. In his work «Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self,» Jung described the Self as the archetype of totality, wholeness, completeness as the sum total of a person's conscious and unconscious processes [115, p. 12-14]. The Self is experienced as numinous [67, p. 454], i.e., possessing the quality of the sacred, awesome, incomprehensibly great.

Jung formulates a most important thesis on the relationship between the Self and the Ego: «The Self is not only the center but also the full circle encompassing both consciousness and the unconscious; it is the center of this total totality just as the ego is the center of consciousness»

[69]. This means that the encounter with the Self does not imply the dissolution of the ego, as that would be a regression into the unconscious; on the contrary, it is about establishing a living relationship between the ego and the Self, in which the ego retains its function but no longer claims supremacy in psychic life.

M. Stein describes this final stage of individuation in detail as a movement towards wholeness in the second half of life: «Now the actual task becomes the connection of the Ego with the unconscious, where the unlived, unrealized potential of the person is hidden. Such development in the second half of life turns out to be the classical individuation in Jung's understanding, becoming what you potentially already are, only deeper and more consciously» [158, p. 191]. This process requires, according to Stein, «the connection of the energy of symbols that uncover and open access to previously unmastered contents of the unconscious»[ibid.].

The mechanism ensuring the encounter between Ego and Self was called by Jung the transcendent function. He describes it as the psyche's ability to hold the tension of opposites, describing the birth of life from the flashes of opposites [62]. The transcendent function allows one not to prefer either the conscious or the unconscious position, holding them in dialogue, and it is from this tension that integrating symbols are born, heralding genuine psychic development.

S. S. Vaneyan characterized the final orientation of individuation in the following words: «Gaining the Self, gaining the core of one's own personality, destiny, purpose in life – that which, in religious terms, is the divine plan for man, what man should be, for what reason man came into the world, for what reason he lives and realizes in his life» [174, p. 57]. This description reveals the religious and existential dimension of the concept, which Jung never separated from the psychological.

Conditions, driving forces, and obstacles to individuation.

Jung was convinced that individuation is not a privilege or exception: it is inherent in every person as a potentiality embedded in the very nature of the psyche. M.-L. von Franz, Jung's closest associate, insisted that the individuation process is unique to each individual as the process of individuation is something that can happen only to one person, and its form is always unique [180]. This means its intensity, symbolic form, and life circumstances in which it unfolds will be fundamentally different for each person.

The central condition for individuation is the capacity for dialogue with the unconscious, primarily through dream work and the method of active imagination. These tools, developed by Jung in clinical practice, ensure the necessary contact between the conscious and unconscious.

M. Stein describes in detail the mechanism that ensures psychological movement: compensation. The unconscious compensates for the one-sidedness of ego-consciousness «in slips of the tongue, forgetting or mystical revelations; by arranging accidents, catastrophes, love affairs, and unexpected successes; by providing inspired thoughts and harebrained ideas.» In the lifelong self-revelation, «the leading force is the Self, and the mechanism by which it manifests in conscious life is compensation»[158, p. 190]. This mechanism operates both in the first and second halves of life, although the nature of the compensating contents changes fundamentally.

The main obstacle on the path of individuation, Jung called inflation – a state where the ego identifies with an archetype, appropriates its numinous power, and loses its measure. O. A. Boyko indicates that danger arises when collective archetypes «act in the psyche like an avalanche that cannot be stopped,» and a person «loses control, yielding to a general unconscious emotional wave»[8, p. 18]. At the social level, this is expressed in collective breakthroughs of archetypal contents, such as phenomena of extremism, fanaticism, totalitarianism.

F. Moreira shows, through clinical material, that obstacle and opportunity often coincide. Analyzing three cases of women seeking analytical help regarding the decision of motherhood, she demonstrates that it was the unfavorable childhood experiences, privations, and difficulties that wounded the psyche, forming emotional and feminine wounds, and at the same time became the source of special vitality and creative strength of these women. According to the analyst's observation, «from the first day all three patients radiated tremendous vitality... more than survivors, they are like bubbling» [170, pp. 8]. This prompts reflection on the universality of the thesis: one should not romanticize difficulties, but neither can one ignore their potential transformative effect within the individuation process.

Jung considered the most important external condition for individuation to be the analytical relationship. The analyst acts not so much as an expert interpreting the patient's psyche, but as a companion on a journey, a person who is themselves undergoing or has undergone their own individuation path. S. S. Vaneyan describes Jung's therapeutic position as follows: «it is necessary and possible to create conditions for the patient to unleash the power of

his imagination, which is a direct function of consciousness» [174, p. 57]. Jung used the method of active imagination so that images of the unconscious could express themselves without dissolving the ego in a stream of fantasies, but allowing it to enter into a conscious dialogue.

E. V. Korchaznikova, examining the role of individuation in personality self-realization, identifies two fundamentally different paths by which this process can begin. The first depends on the person themselves: «the desire for knowledge of the new, associated with their curiosity, which is a powerful driving factor, and the ability to take risks.» The second is determined by external circumstances: «when a person is forced, not of their own will, to change their life, due to the prevailing situation»— crisis, catastrophe, loss [41, p. 88–89]. In both cases, there is a rupture with the habitual way of life and an opening of access to new levels of the unconscious.

1.2. Women's individuation in analytical psychology

1.2.1 Women's individuation through the lens of analytical psychology

Even though the concept of individuation was initially formulated by C. G. Jung as a universal psychological regularity, a historical examination of this concept reveals a significant gender imbalance: classical descriptions of the individuation process relied primarily on male experience and male archetypal symbolism.

In early analytical psychology, the woman was often viewed through the prism of male unconscious projections as the image of the Anima, which limited the understanding of the specifics of female subjectivity and the female path of becoming. The study of the phenomenon of female individuation as an independent psychological and symbolic process required a revision of the classical Jungian model and a reorientation of theoretical attention from the universal scheme to concrete female experience.

Classical formulations and male heroic models historically reflected individuation primarily as a male experience, vividly represented in Joseph Campbell's work «The Hero with a Thousand Faces,» and woman was long viewed through the projections of the male unconscious as the image of the Anima. Overcoming this limitation became one of the key directions of post-Jungian thought in the second half of the 20th – early 21st centuries: the works of M. Woodman,

E. Harding, S. Matsliah-Hanokh, E. Pattis-Zoya, J. Singer, G. Adler, M. Murdock, M. Roy, and other authors shift the focus from universalized models of development to the analysis of concrete female experience, including corporeality, traumatic experiences, crisis transitions, and symbolic rebirth. Female individuation in these works is described as a non-linear and processual path, closely linked to the relational context and internal images of significant figures (Figure 2).

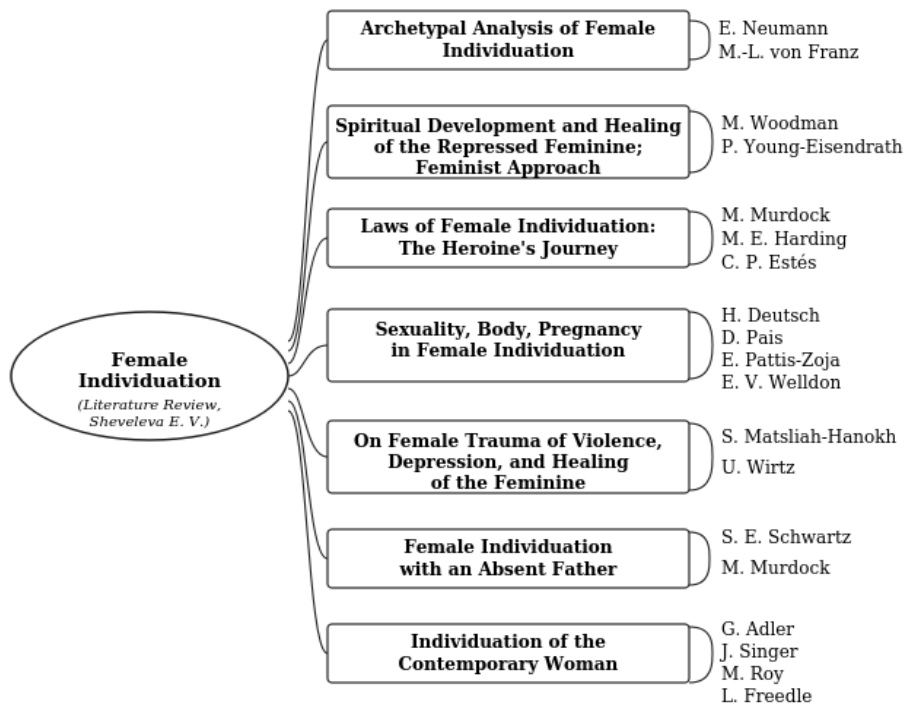


Figure 2. Map of literature review on the concept of female individuation in the analytical (Jungian) paradigm.

This paragraph is devoted to a systematic examination of the concept of female individuation within the analytical-psychological paradigm. It sequentially covers: the historical foundations and theoretical prerequisites for distinguishing female individuation as a separate subject area; the key archetypal dimensions of the female path of becoming; the role of the body, trauma, and mythological symbolism in the dynamics of female individuation; as well as the contributions of individual authors to the development of this concept (Appendix 2).

From universal scheme to female subjectivity.

In analyzing the concept of female individuation within the Jungian paradigm, we identify two vectors in understanding female individuation presented in the literature: the first vector is the archetypal analysis of female individuation (E. Neumann, M.-L. von Franz), which emphasizes universal patterns of archetypal psychic transformations; the second vector is the spiritual development and healing of suppressed femininity with a feminist accent (M. Woodman, P. Young-Eisendrath), placing concrete cultural and bodily experience of women at the forefront. Concurrently, there exist models of the Heroine's Journey (M. Murdock, E. Harding, C. P. Estes), concepts of sexuality, body, and pregnancy in female individuation (H. Deutsch, D. Pais, E. Patis-Zoya), as well as studies of female trauma, depression, and healing of the feminine (S. Matsliah-Hanokh, U. Wirtz) (Figure 2; Appendix 2).

The revision of the classical Jungian model and the search for the specifics of the female path of individuation began already in the 1930s–1940s in the works of Esther Harding, one of Jung's closest students. Harding proposed the idea that a woman undergoes her own path of individuation, different in structure and dynamics from the male one. If male individuation moves along the vector of Ego autonomy, then female, according to Harding, presupposes integration through relationship and corporeality: «a woman becomes whole not when she separates, but when she connects, realizing the cyclical nature of life, birth, destruction, and rebirth in herself» [46, p. 2]. The key for female individuation, in Harding's understanding, becomes not so much separation from the collective unconscious but the acquisition of connection with the deep feminine principle: the Mother Goddess, earthly and spiritual simultaneously.

June Singer, in her book «Boundaries of the Soul» (1972), analyzed individuation as a process of inner dialogue between opposites. For Singer, female individuation is a movement towards inner freedom, during which the ego ceases to be a hostage to collective images of femininity (mother, lover, victim) and enters into contact with the Self as a living center. Singer paid special attention to how socially prescribed roles keep a woman in psychological infantilism, preventing her from establishing a genuine connection with her own inner world [156; 155].

S. Wright's position, outlined in the article «Confronting Bluebeard: Totalitarian Regimes in Childhood and in the Collective Psyche,» presents a practice-oriented analytical view of this

problem. Using the fairy-tale image of Bluebeard as a metaphor for the patriarchal order, Wright shows that the story of Bluebeard symbolizes the shadow side of the everyday social reality of marriage in patriarchal culture, suggesting that it can be potentially deadly when power and control are on one pole and naive dependence on the other. The curiosity of the nameless heroine, opening the forbidden room, becomes in this interpretation a symbol of the beginning of the individuation movement as a going beyond adaptive security towards an encounter with genuine, albeit frightening, reality. This curiosity, according to Wright, initiates change, and the analytical situation provides a safe space where the woman found a stable state necessary for her in a situation of emotional flooding, a place for the union of opposites, finding the inner Other that did not correspond to her socially constructed identity [194].

Jungian analyst Marion Woodman made a significant contribution to the theoretical understanding of female individuation, developing an original approach to understanding the female psyche through the lens of the body and its symbolism. In «The Ravaged Bridegroom,» Woodman formulates a key thesis about the nature of masculinity and femininity as two types of inner energy: «masculinity and femininity are two types of inner energy coexisting in every person; both of these energies strive for inner harmony. As long as they are projected onto other people, we rob ourselves in terms of achieving maturity and inner freedom» [191, p. 12]. This thesis sets the fundamental stance of her entire approach: female individuation is not adaptation to the external world or the achievement of social success, but a movement towards inner harmony of the masculine and feminine.

In the same work, Woodman describes the specifics of the contemporary cultural situation in which female individuation unfolds: «survival on a psychic or spiritual level takes us beyond biology into the realm that Jung called individuation. The single human community... has turned into a unity that has become the result of deep-seated identity, urgently demanding mutual understanding» [ibid., p. 24]. For Woodman, the body is «the meeting place of soul and matter,» and a woman's path to wholeness is impossible without healing the split between spirit and flesh. Female Self, according to her, manifests through the capacity to endure the contradiction between the spiritual and the instinctual, the rational and the poetic.

We have identified several key themes developed by Woodman over long-term clinical work with women (Table 1). First of all, the body as a temple of the soul: the path to oneself goes

through the body, corporeality, feeling oneself in the body – insists Woodman. Next, the shadow of femininity and its recognition: the «Dark Goddess,» «female masculinity,» suppressed female archetypes – all that demands awareness. A significant place is occupied by the motif of the «inner marriage»: for Woodman, the path of the soul is not a choice between poles, but their union, and it is the inner marriage of Anima and Animus, the feminine and masculine, that is the key to individuation. Finally, Woodman paid close attention to the psychological cost of heightened masculinity and lost femininity: in women deprived of contact with their true femininity, Woodman noted a tendency towards over-identification with masculine archetypes: perfectionism, emotional numbness [190; 191; 192].

Table 1

Key Themes of Female Individuation according to M. Woodman

Theme / Motif	Essence / Meaning
The Body as Temple of the Soul	Woodman emphasizes that the path to the Self runs through the body – through embodiment and the felt sense of inhabiting one's body. She worked with eating disorders, viewing them as a symptom of suppressed femininity.
The Shadow of the Feminine and Its Acknowledgment	The Dark Goddess, female masculinity, suppressed feminine archetypes – all of these require acknowledgment. Woodman regarded a recognized and reflected-upon Shadow as a resource for growth, transformation, and integration.
The Inner Marriage of the Feminine and the Masculine (Anima–Animus / Feminine–Masculine)	For Woodman, the path of the soul is not a choice between poles but their union. The inner marriage of mature, conscious feminine and masculine principles is the key to individuation.
The Psychological Cost of Heightened Masculinity and	In women cut off from contact with their true femininity, Woodman observed a tendency toward over-identification with

Theme / Motif	Essence / Meaning
Lost Femininity	masculine archetypes: perfectionism, emotional numbness, and domination by the Shadow. This is a path of estrangement from one's own Self and from psychic wholeness.
The Role of Myth, Dream, and Symbol in Individuation	Drawing on mythological images (e.g., the motif of the Dark Goddess, the heroine's return from the underworld), Woodman shows that the unconscious is not an enemy but a source of spiritual growth; transformation of consciousness is possible through work with symbol and embodiment.

A crucial theoretical contribution to the conceptualization of female individuation is the «Heroine's Journey» model developed by Maureen Murdock. Unlike the Jungian model of individuation as a universal path, Murdock offers a description of a specific female dynamic as a cycle (Figure 3), beginning with the trauma of a woman's loss of her femininity: **separation from femininity**, as an internal or external rejection of the traditionally feminine: corporeality, dependence, emotionality, motherhood. At the next stage, **identification with masculinity and the search for allies** occurs: the woman internalizes the values of achievement, autonomy, rationality, often focusing on male models of success. This is followed by **the road of trials** as a series of external and internal challenges, where the heroine encounters «ogres and dragons,» i.e., competition, aggression, devaluation, and her own shadow aspects. **Achieving success** brings social recognition but simultaneously intensifies inner emptiness, which leads to **awakening in the spiritual desert**: a crisis of meaning experienced as the symbolic death of the former identity. From this crisis, a downward movement begins: **initiation and descent to the Goddess** means a turn to the deep layers of the psyche, to the body, images, the unconscious, the lost connection with the feminine. **A thirst for reunion with femininity arises**, a desire to restore the lost part of oneself. This is followed by healing **the mother/daughter split** as a working through of the mother complex [83] and transgenerational scenarios, and then **healing the wounded masculinity**, where the inner animus and the experience of power, control, and action are

rethought. The path ends with the **integration of masculinity and femininity** – not a return to the former role, but the attainment of wholeness, where both principles relate to the Self aspect of the Psyche and can coexist without mutual suppression [106].

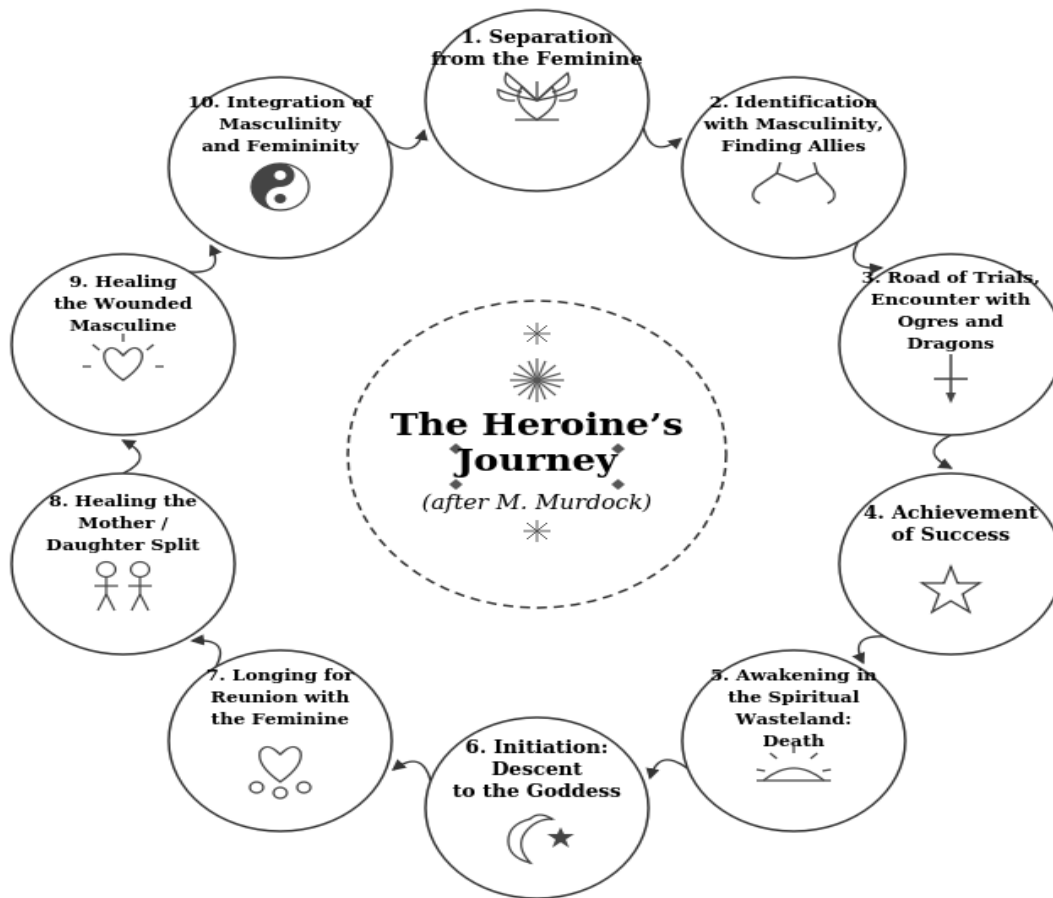


Figure 3. The Heroine's Journey according to M. Murdock (2023): dynamics of individuation, healing of femininity.

Israeli analyst and writer Simona Matsliah-Hanokh made a significant contribution to understanding the symbolic dimensions of traumatized female individuation. In her book «Tales of Reversible Death: Depression as a Healing Power,» she views depression not as a disease to be eliminated, but as a psychic state carrying transformative potential. Appealing to archetypal images from fairy tales and myths (Snow White, Little Red Riding Hood, Persephone), Matsliah-

Hanokh formulates the concept of tales of reversible death: «Tales of reversible death are repeatedly occurring stories of the depressive process, told through various plots, where there is necessarily a descent into the underworld of the soul's hell, a seemingly endless stay in this hell, and then an equally difficult ascent, a kind of rebirth, which entails sacrifices, concessions, and losses»[100, p. 22].

It is fundamentally important that in this concept, the described process corresponds to the symbolic dynamics of the myth of Persephone: descent into the underworld, sojourn in darkness, and return, qualitatively changed by the experience. It is precisely this movement that Matsliah-Hanokh interprets as the archetypal basis of female individuation – a spiral, not linear, movement inseparable from the experience of loss, suffering, and reunion with lost aspects of oneself.

Examining the image of Persephone in a mythological context, Matsliah-Hanokh discovers pre-Jungian layers in it: in the most ancient versions of the myth, the goddess of spring descended into the Underworld voluntarily «to quench her thirst for knowledge... and finally to meet the mysterious husband waiting for her there; to discover for herself the inner image of the mother, the image of the so-called Black Demeter, and to examine up close the Shadow of her own soul hidden in the depths»[99, p. 29]. This image of voluntary descent is fundamentally important for understanding female individuation: it indicates that turning to the dark, «subterranean» aspects of the psyche is not a pathology but a necessary condition for growth and the attainment of wholeness.

In parallel, Matsliah-Hanokh develops the thesis that the female psyche retains in its deep layers archetypal «threads» of memory connecting it to these images: «Our great myths, legends, and fairy tales tell us about the difficult, suffering, and painful but inevitable journey of women – young girls – into the world of depression and their return from it. Snow White, Little Red Riding Hood, and Inanna have traveled this path and returned, died and been reborn. Their stories are deeply rooted in our collective subconscious to serve as support in particularly difficult circumstances» [ibid., p. 31]. Thus, fairy-tale images act not merely as cultural metaphors but as psychic guides, helping a woman recognize in her crisis a natural stage of the individuation path.

In an analytical-psychological perspective in the article by M. L. Ramírez, we can also see how female individuation is viewed as a process of self-realization with a non-linear, cyclical character. Based on the literary texts of Margaret Atwood, the author analyzes the female path of

becoming through the lens of Jungian concepts of the Self, shadow, archetypal figures, and symbolic return to original psychological conflicts. Individuation is described not as a movement towards autonomy in the traditional sense, but as a process of integrating fragmented aspects of subjective experience, including traumatic and repressed elements. Ramírez emphasizes that female individuation is characterized by the «completion of a circle,» where personal development involves repeatedly turning to early relationships and internal objects, rather than definitively overcoming them. The article contributes to the understanding of female individuation as a symbolic and narrative process, expanding Jungian theory through the interpretation of cultural and literary texts [118].

Drawing on the work of researchers in the Jungian tradition, we concluded that female individuation in the analytical paradigm is: the disclosure of inner form, the Self aspect (according to I. Jacobi), descent and return to the feminine (according to M. Murdock), bodily-soul embodiment (according to M. Woodman), working through traumatic losses (according to S. Schwartz, C. P. Estes) (Figure 4).

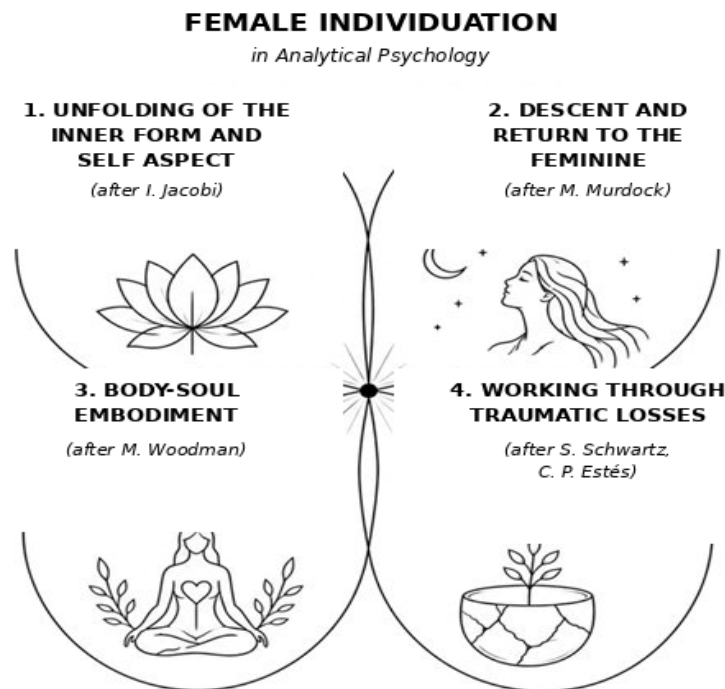


Figure 4. Components of female individuation in the Jungian paradigm.

Based on the analysis of the presented concepts, we propose a working definition of female individuation as a process of a woman's becoming through the restoration and integration of the feminine principle, transformation of the masculine, encounter with the unconscious, symbolization of traumatic experience, and return to one's own bodily, emotional, and spiritual depth. This allows viewing female individuation not as a linear path, but as a spiral movement: multi-layered, culturally mediated, archetypally rich, and deeply embodied.

1.2.2. The role of the father in the development of a woman's individuation

In analytical psychology, the father is traditionally viewed as one of the key figures determining the daughter's psychic development. If the mother symbolizes the primary matrix and the space from which psychic life is born, then the father embodies the principle of differentiation, demarcation, and outward direction.

In the symbolic dimension, the paternal function ensures the formation of boundaries, inner authority, and the capacity for independent judgment and action. It is through the relationship with the paternal figure that a woman receives her first experience of interaction with the masculine principle – an experience that lays the foundations for both the image of the Animus and self-attitude in general.

The theoretical development of this topic in analytical psychology has a relatively short history. As S. E. Schwartz, a researcher who has dedicated several monographs to this theme of the daughter of the absent father, notes, «over the last 25–30 years, very little has been written about the role of the father in psychoanalytic, Jungian, therapeutic, and psychological literature; all attention has been focused on the mother. At the same time, harm is done by the very presence of his absence, affecting the daughter in body, mind, and soul. The relevance of this topic is particularly increasing in the context of transforming family structures characteristic of modern society» [136; 147; 137].

This paragraph is devoted to a systematic examination of the role of the father in the development of female individuation from an analytical-psychological perspective. It sequentially examines: the paternal function as an archetypal and psychological structure; the connection of the father complex with the formation of the Animus; the influence of the quality

of father-daughter relationships on self-attitude, self-image, and individuation trajectories; as well as the specifics of the female path of becoming with a deficit or distortion of the paternal function.

Paternal function in analytical psychology: archetypal and personal dimensions.

In analytical psychology, the concept of the paternal function encompasses two interrelated yet distinct levels: archetypal and personal. At the archetypal level, the father embodies the principle of Logos as a structuring, separating, and directing masculine principle, opposed to the maternal Eros as a principle of connection and fusion. Jung described these two principles not as biological facts but as psychological polarities present in every human psyche: the masculine and feminine as archetypal qualities are not identical to the biological sex of their bearers. The archetype of the Father as the bearer of Logos ensures differentiation: going beyond the primary undifferentiatedness of the mother and the world, forming the individual center of consciousness.

At the personal level, the paternal function is realized through the concrete relationship of the daughter with the real father or paternal figure. At the archetypal level, in analytical psychology, the paternal function is understood not only as the actual participation of the father in the child's life but primarily as a symbolic structure ensuring the formation of boundaries, inner authority, direction, and the capacity for differentiation. This distinction is fundamental: the paternal function exists in the daughter's psyche largely independently of the actual presence or absence of the father, although the quality of real relationships has a decisive influence on how this function will be internalized and structured.

S. E. Schwartz, in her monograph «The Absent Father Effect on Daughters,» shows that «an emotionally connected and present father contributes to the daughter's healthy energy and builds her self-esteem. He is, alongside the mother, the figure through whose relationship she forms her individuality. His consistency and support set a reliable rhythm of life. He is a door to the world and an integral part of identity development. Thus, the father acts as the first mediator between the daughter and the external world, and the one who symbolically 'opens' access to culture, sociality, and her own subjectivity for her. Schwartz examines father-daughter relationships in a Jungian perspective as the dynamics of the formation of the internal father image, which determines the development of female subjectivity and the structure of the Self,

regardless of the actual presence of the father. This internal father image is not just a mnemonic trace of biographical experience, but a living psychic structure carrying both personal content and archetypal layers of the collective unconscious» [136; 137].

For the daughter, the father image performs several key psychological functions. Firstly, it is the primary model of the Other as the first encounter with a fundamentally different, non-maternal, non-symbiotic presence. It is through the father that the daughter first gains experience of a relationship with a person who is simultaneously close and different, loving and maintaining their own separateness.

L. Zoja, in the cultural-historical monograph «The Father,» examines the paternal function in a broad anthropological context, showing that it is fundamentally different from biological fatherhood, stating that the father is a cultural construct and each society invents him anew, giving him form and meaning. According to Zoja, it is the loss of the paternal function in modern Western society, its symbolic disintegration, that creates a collective psychological deficit reflected in both men and women [201]. In a Jungian perspective, this deficit manifests itself in the weakening of inner authority, loss of capacity for independent orientation, and excessive dependence on external structures.

According to G. Figdor, the father offers the child a model of a relationship between autonomous subjects; through identification with the father, the child discovers the possibility of a new, non-symbiotic relationship with the mother. Secondly, the father image forms the basis of the future image of a man – the matrix through which a woman perceives the male world and builds relationships with men. Thirdly, the father image carries the prototype of what, in Jungian terminology, is designated as the Animus, the inner masculine principle in the woman's psyche [112].

Animus as the inner man: formation through the image of the father.

One of the key archetypes determining the dynamics of female individuation is the Animus as the masculine archetypal component of the female psyche. According to Jung's definition, the Animus embodies the masculine principle in a woman and, just as the Anima gives a man a particular feminine color, the Animus gives a woman a masculine one. The Animus acts as the inner image of a man, as the bearer of Logos and the principle of rationality, spirit,

semantic direction, and simultaneously as a mediator between the woman's consciousness and her deep unconscious [62].

Critically important for understanding the formation of the Animus is its connection with the image of the real father. V. V. Zelensky, drawing on Jungian sources, emphasizes that the Animus is initially constellated precisely through the relationship with the father: «the first incarnation of the Animus is the father, endowing the daughter on the one hand with positive convictions, like the father's irrefutable judgments, and on the other with extremely rigid views that are never discussed, but only postulated» [199, p. 133]. Thus, the quality of the real father, namely his presence, availability, and capacity for emotional contact with his daughter, directly forms the content and nature of the Animus as an internal psychic structure.

S. E. Schwartz examines in detail how the negative Animus – suppressing, condemning, destructive – is connected with the real experience of a woman who has a destructive or absent father. She quotes Jungian analyst J. Knox, who describes the dilemma arising in the daughter in the absence of paternal affirmation: to be loved and to be able to love, she needs to erase herself, and therefore she tirelessly struggles with herself [136]. This description captures a deep psychic dilemma: the daughter who does not receive paternal recognition risks constructing her inner masculinity as self-criticism and self-abasement, rather than as a supportive, guiding force.

In analytical psychology, it is customary to distinguish several levels, or stages, of the Animus, describing the degree of its integration into the woman's consciousness. In «The Phenomenon of the Self,» Jung described the Animus in its archetypal dimension as the father or wise man – i.e., as the embodiment of meaning, spiritual authority, and creative initiative [69]. In its unprocessed form, the Animus manifests as the voice of an inner critic, the bearer of rigid judgments and obsessive opinions not belonging to the woman herself but perceived by her as absolute truth. It is precisely such a possessed-by-Animus pattern that is often associated with unresolved relationships with the father.

M. Woodman, in «The Ravaged Bridegroom,» describes the specifics of what she calls heightened masculinity in women: «In women deprived of contact with their true femininity, there is a noted tendency towards over-identification with masculine archetypes: perfectionism, emotional numbness, domination over the Shadow. This is a path of alienation from one's own Self, from psychic wholeness» [191, p. 24]. From a Jungian perspective, such

hypermasculinization of the female psyche is often a compensatory reaction to a deficit of positive experience with the paternal figure: the daughter deprived of live contact with the real father may unconsciously appropriate his function, constructing a rigid inner masculinity as a defense against vulnerability.

The process of integrating the Animus is a central stage of female individuation, presupposing a transition from unconscious obsession with it to conscious and harmonious relationships with the masculine principle within oneself. The path to the integration of the Animus involves rethinking the inner experience of power, control, and action, and then the integration of masculinity and femininity – not a return to the former role, but the attainment of wholeness, where both principles relate to the Self aspect of the Psyche and can coexist without mutual suppression.

The influence of father-daughter relationships on self-attitude and self-image.

Self-attitude – the stable emotional relationship of a person towards themselves, including self-esteem, self-acceptance, and the sense of one's own value – is formed in early childhood under the direct influence of relationships with significant others, and primarily with parents. In an analytical-psychological perspective, self-attitude is directly related to the state of the ego-complex and the quality of internalized images of significant figures.

Schwartz describes in detail the mechanism by which an absent or emotionally unavailable father forms stable patterns of disturbed self-attitude in daughters: the absent or emotionally unavailable father leaves a lasting trace in the daughter; not receiving paternal recognition, she withdraws into herself, but does not find support there. Her own Self remains foreign to her, and she does not feel like the author of her inner life [134]. In other words, the daughter deprived of the paternal mirror loses the ability to rely on herself as an authority – she becomes dependent on external evaluations, because the inner witness has never been formed.

The clinical data summarized by Schwartz reveal a stable connection between paternal deprivation and manifestations of disturbed self-attitude such as fragile self-contact, discord with the body, self-devaluation, and inability to build fulfilling relationships [136]. The emotional and/or physical absence of the father is internalized by the daughter as an inner void, which is then reproduced in relationships: dissatisfaction becomes chronic, and the need for confirmation and recognition endless.

Drawing on domestic and foreign research data, we observe data demonstrating the connection between deficit of the paternal function and features of self-image, reduced psychological autonomy, formation of dependent relational patterns, and difficulties integrating opposite aspects of the internal father image. At the same time, it is fundamentally important that «divorce itself is not identical to paternal deprivation; however, it significantly increases the likelihood of disruption of the paternal function in the psyche» [147, p. 226]. Long-term consequences of this experience often manifest already in adulthood.

V. Kast, in the book «Fathers-Daughters, Mothers-Sons,» shows that the father complex in its positive form provides the daughter with «trust in structure and authority,» a sense of security, and the ability to orient herself in the external world: «women with a positive father complex idealize the father and men in general,» and subsequently, with successful working through of this pattern, gain the ability to rely on their own authority [82, p. 46]. The negative father complex, on the contrary, gives rise to either excessive dependence on male figures or a defensive opposition to them, with an invariably disturbed capacity for autonomous subjectivity.

Susanne Wright, in the article «Confronting Bluebeard,» describes the psychodynamics where the daughter's identification with the father's fear of femininity leads to a renunciation of authentic masculine initiative: sensing the father's fear of her burgeoning femininity, the girl instinctively adapts and remains nice, playful, safe. She seems to make an unspoken deal: she gives up her strength, assertiveness, right to herself in exchange for continued love [194]. This description illustrates one of the most common patterns of disruption of female individuation related to father relationships: sacrificing one's own voice and initiative to maintain the connection with the paternal figure.

1.3. Paternal deprivation in the context of female individuation

The phenomenon of paternal deprivation is interpreted as the psychic and emotional state of a child caused by prolonged lack of communication with the father. By its nature, paternal deprivation represents the absence or lack of emotional intimacy and warmth, as well as opportunities for the child to learn social roles in the father-child dyad; its danger lies in the fact that the role of the absent father cannot always be replaced [89].

In the scientific literature, it is customary to distinguish types of deprivation by duration: episodic (temporary separation from one parent) and chronic (continuous separation). Contemporary researchers also introduce, as a type of deprivation, the phenomenon of the «cold father» in a complete family – relationships with whom are emotionally unavailable – emphasizing that in this case, deprivation occurs not through physical absence, but through the absence of emotional connection [ibid.].

At the level of Jungian conceptualization, we propose a fundamental clarification: paternal deprivation in the analytical-psychological sense is interpreted not so much as the biographical absence of the father, but as a deficit or distortion of the paternal function in the psychic organization of the subject [150]. This distinction opens up the possibility of considering paternal deprivation regardless of specific family circumstances.

1.3.1. Empirical-psychological studies of the father's influence on women's development

The empirical study of the father's role in the psychological development of a woman is a relatively young but dynamically developing area of psychological science. For most of the 20th century, psychological research on child-parent relationships was primarily focused on the mother figure: it was maternal deprivation, maternal sensitivity, the quality of early attachment to the mother that formed the theoretical and empirical center of developmental psychology. The father figure was considered derivative, auxiliary, or studied through the prism of his absence within the context of single-parent families. As Ralnik and Trunova (2022) rightly point out, the phenomenon of fatherhood is examined less frequently in scientific works than the phenomenon of motherhood, and the father's influence on the development of daughters is studied significantly less fully than his role in the development of sons [115]. Nevertheless, the accumulated body of research allows us to assert that paternal participation has an independent, specific, and irreplaceable impact on the formation of a woman's personality in the cognitive, emotional-personal, relational, and identificational spheres.

Paternal participation and the general psychological development of the daughter.

Contemporary research convincingly demonstrates that an involved father plays a crucial role in the cognitive, behavioral, and general psychological development of the child, including

the development of daughters. The presence of a positive male role model helps an adolescent girl observe positive gender-role characteristics and form an internal representation of the male world [ibid.]. A loving and caring father is as important for a child's happiness, well-being, social and academic success as the presence of a loving and caring mother.

Data presented by Korol and Mironova (2022) in their study of the relationship between features of the father image and emotional well-being in women during the transition to early adulthood, referencing a number of foreign studies, show that more active father involvement, especially its positive, qualitative dimension including warmth, care, and support, is associated with higher cognitive, social, and behavioral outcomes in children, as well as with lower levels of behavioral problems. Specifically, the authors indicate that Flouri and Buchanan (2003) established that greater father involvement at age seven predicted a reduction in emotional and behavioral problems in adolescents at age sixteen. Harris and colleagues (1998) distinguished between the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of paternal involvement: while the amount of time spent with the father predicted children's economic and educational achievements, the quality – closeness, warmth, attachment – was associated with delinquent behavior and psychological well-being [91].

Examining empirical research, we found that in domestic psychology, father-daughter relationships are considered a factor determining a wide range of personality characteristics. It is customary to highlight the following key areas of paternal influence on daughter development: gender-role identification (N. Levald, Z. Freud, Sh. Bern); intellectual development (B. Ftenakis, R. Burns); assimilation of moral norms (O. B. Chirkova); the emotional-personal sphere (V. S. Sobakin, E. O. Smirnova); certain characterological features (Z. Matejčík, A. Biller) [89]. The father directly influences the development of empathy, independence, high self-esteem, and conflict resolution skills [115]. Of particular importance is the cross-influence of parents on children of the opposite sex, confirming the idea of the specific role of the father specifically in relation to the daughter [89]. According to Kalina's data, the nature of the father's image is reliably associated with emotional well-being and the formation of gender-role identity: perceiving the father as a reliable, warm, and responsive person reduces the level of interpersonal problems and increases the daughter's level of well-being, whereas perceived alienation and hostility from the father intensify emotional distress [91]. Warm and satisfying relationships with

the father develop femininity and self-confidence in the daughter, facilitating easier heterosexual adaptation. Doroshchuk (2025) particularly emphasizes that the relationship with the father forms the self-esteem and future romantic relationships of daughters, setting the basic patterns of intersexual interaction that are reproduced in adult partnership relationships [22].

Ralnikova and Trunova (2022) conducted a comparative study of 62 women aged 20 to 40 raised in intact and single-parent families. The results, obtained using T. Leary's «Diagnosis of Interpersonal Relations» method and one-way analysis of variance, showed that in women with paternal deprivation, personality characteristics such as submissiveness ($F = 43.88$; $p = 0.001$), dependence ($F = 27.79$; $p = 0.001$), and altruism ($F = 26.40$; $p = 0.001$) statistically significantly dominate in their self-representations. Substantively, 70% of women with paternal deprivation classify themselves as submissive people: they consider themselves passive, submissive, shy, prone to self-condemnation and concessions, weak-willed, often feeling guilty. 60% characterize themselves as dependent, fearful, insecure, anxious, helpless, dependent on others' opinions. At the same time, 62% describe themselves as altruistic, responsible, caring, selfless, delicate, and responsive. For comparison: 90% of women raised in intact families primarily describe themselves as authoritarian, attributing to themselves qualities such as confidence, leadership, dominance, persistence, and competence. The authors interpret the pole of submissiveness and dependence formed in the personality structure of paternally deprived women as the basis for the risk of forming codependent relationships in later life [115].

Kolkova and Stakhovtsova (2024), having studied 68 women with various forms of paternal deprivation, established a differentiated picture of self-attitude disturbances. Women with chronic deprivation exhibit significantly higher levels of internal conflict and significantly lower levels of self-acceptance and self-confidence compared to women from intact families. Women raised by a «cold» father demonstrate the most pronounced self-blame, maximal closeness, and the lowest level of self-acceptance – simultaneously with an emphasis on independence and self-sufficiency as compensatory traits. Notably, women with episodic deprivation, in the presence of a significant adult male in their environment, practically did not differ in self-attitude indicators from women in intact families, indicating the possibility of partial functional compensation for the paternal deficit [89].

A significant portion of empirical research is devoted not so much to the analysis of the father's actual behavior but to the study of his subjective image in the woman's psyche, the so-called «internal father.» The father's image is understood as an important structure for psychic development, formed from birth under the influence of both real interactions with the father and internal (projections, fantasies) and external (cultural stereotypes, influence of significant adults) factors; it reflects the physical, intellectual, and emotional components of the paternal figure [91]. A number of clinical observations and theoretical assumptions allow us to assert that not only real interactions between father and child are significant, but also the «internal father,» represented in the psyche and formed under the influence of various conditions [89].

Osinskaya and Kravtsova (2013) conducted a qualitative analysis of the father's image in 108 codependent individuals, using an associative experiment, the Sack's and Levy's «Unfinished Sentences» method, the «Personal Differential,» and T. Leary's method. Six content categories were identified in the structure of the father's image in codependents, three of which reflect positive aspects («caring, emotionally close father,» «socially mature, successful father,» «ideal father»), and three negative aspects («emotionally rejecting,» «emotionally rejected,» «emotionally inadequate, internally problematic father»). The real image of the father in codependents is characterized by the dominance of negative emotional components, whereas the positive image reflects rather the ideal image – what the father should be in the respondents' perception. The authors state that the image of the father in codependents is characterized by pronounced heterogeneity and disharmony: there is no integration between the real and ideal images, between positive and negative aspects [112]. The emotional component of the father's image turned out to be system-forming and least amenable to change, and its features correlate with the level of psychological autonomy: a more realistic and differentiated image of the father corresponded to a lower degree of codependency.

Korol and Mironova (2022) established a direct link between a positive attitude towards the father's image and the level of subjective well-being in women during the transition to early adulthood ($r = 0.524, p \leq 0.05$), as well as between the emotional module «warmth/rejection» in the father's image and the level of subjective well-being ($r = 0.518, p \leq 0.05$) [91]. The negative father image correlates negatively with well-being ($r = - 0.791, p \leq 0.05$), with the greatest

contribution to the growth of emotional distress being made by problems with interpersonal relationships and self-esteem [91].

One of the most developed empirical sections is the study of the connection between the quality of the relationship with the father and the woman's relational patterns in adulthood. Tsvetkova and Rybakova (2018), in a study of 103 girls aged 16–19, found that girls with love addiction are significantly less likely to be raised in traditional intact families (47.2% vs. 68%), significantly lower assess father's involvement in upbringing (5.3 vs. 6.9 points on a 10-point scale) and the quality of the relationship with him (5.5 vs. 7.2 points). The image of the father in the eyes of addicted daughters is less positive in terms of directiveness, hostility, and inconsistency ($U = 885.5$; $p = 0.003$). Correlation analysis revealed a fundamental pattern: in girls with love addiction, interpersonal dependence increases with age ($r = 0.730$; $p = 0.000$), whereas in girls without addiction, it decreases ($r = -0.284$; $p = 0.046$). The more pronounced the interpersonal dependence in an addicted girl, the weaker the perceived positive interest of the father in the daughter and the weaker her self-confidence. The authors conclude that the father plays a significant role as «physically absent,» «indifferent,» or «inadequate in his participation» in the formation of love addiction in the daughter [168].

Ilyinykh (2018), in a study of 90 married women using regression analysis, established that almost all considered parameters of father-daughter relationships make a significant contribution, from 10 to 50% of the explained variance, to the characteristics of marital relations. The most significant predictors were: the father's consistency and constancy in upbringing (25.5% variance in mutual understanding between spouses), the father's cooperation with the daughter and his goodwill towards his wife (40.8% variance in trust in marital communication), as well as agreement between father and child (about 50% variance in ease of communication between spouses) [51].

An important step in systematizing empirical data was the development of standardized diagnostic tools. Merlino-Perkins (2008) developed and validated the Merlino-Perkins Father-Daughter Relationship Inventory (MP-FDI), a self-report tool assessing women's childhood interactions with fathers who exhibited various behavioral patterns. The normative sample consisted of 1039 women. The final version of the instrument includes six general scales: «Supportive-Controlling Father,» «Protective-Controlling Father,» «Distant-Passive Father,»

«Tyrannical-Physically Abusive Father,» «Absent-Tyrannical Father,» «Seducing-Tyrannical Father.» Internal consistency indices for the scales range from $\alpha = 0.74$ to 0.90 , test-retest correlations over a two-week period range from $r = 0.83$ to $r = 0.99$ [98].

At the same time, we are compelled to note the limitations of such instruments: they primarily capture structural characteristics of experience and do not allow analysis of the processual and symbolic dynamics of the transformation of the paternal function. This underscores the limitation of exclusively quantitative approaches in studying deep psychic processes and justifies the need for qualitative analytical-psychological analysis, discussed in the next paragraph.

1.3.2. Jungian interpretation of the influence of a father's absence on a woman's life

Analytical psychology offers a fundamentally different language for understanding the problem of the deficit of the paternal function, a language that goes beyond behavioral, socio-psychological, and systemic dimensions. In a Jungian perspective, the absence of a father is viewed primarily as a disruption at the level of the symbolic organization of a woman's psyche, affecting deep structures directly related to the individuation process. This approach does not contradict the empirical data presented in the previous paragraph but reveals a different archetypal and processual level of the phenomenon under consideration.

In a Jungian perspective, a full-fledged individuation process in a woman presupposes, among other things, the integration of the paternal principle as an internal psychic function. This means not absorption by the masculine, but the establishment of a living, dialogical relationship with one's own Logos as the capacity for discernment, judgment, direction, and self-determination, which are not borrowed from external authority but born from one's own center.

When this principle is deficient or distorted, individuation does not cease, but takes on a fundamentally different character. Efthimiadis-Keith (2010) and Ramírez (2022) describe female individuation not as a direct movement towards autonomy, but as a process involving repeated returns to crisis points, compensatory forms of development, and painful reinterpretations. In the case of paternal deprivation, this non-linear character is particularly pronounced: the woman is forced to construct on her own what is normally laid down in early relationships with her father,

often at the cost of recurring crises, in which the former identity is destroyed without having sufficient inner support for integration [26; 118].

«In analytical psychology, paternal deprivation is viewed not as a static traumatic state, but as a dynamic context in which the individuation process can unfold indirectly, through symbolic images, crisis transitions, and compensatory forms of development» [97, p. 227]. This approach is fundamentally important: it shifts focus from pathologization to understanding the transformative potential of even unfavorable experience.

Neumann and Woodman described specific patterns characteristic of women with a deficit of the paternal function. In relationships, they tend to reproduce the situation of searching for the father image in a partner – someone who will provide the orientation, meaning, and authority not received in childhood. This search often takes the form of addictive attachment: the paradox of maintaining a positive interest in the father despite a pronounced deficit of his participation forms a matrix in which the daughter reproduces the original configuration in adult relationships – she reaches out to one from whom she constantly did not receive what she needed. In the professional sphere, the deficit of the paternal principle often manifests in a disturbed relationship with the public, with Logos, with self-expression in the cultural space [190; 109; 108].

Schwartz emphasizes that what matters is not whether the father was physically present, but what he became in her inner world and whether he took root there as a living psychic force [134]. This means that a daughter who grew up with an absent father can, nevertheless, in the course of analytical work or her own psychic development, form a mature internal paternal function and thus advance along the path of individuation.

Wright, using a long-term clinical case example, shows how analytical relationships can compensate for the deficit of the paternal function: the analyst acts as a good enough containing presence [188], providing the client with «a safe place where she found the stable state necessary for her in a situation of emotional flooding, a place for the union of opposites, finding the inner Other» [194, p. 11]. It is in this space, controlled and reliable, that the daughter can for the first time experience the paternal support in its positive archetypal dimension.

A crucial aspect of the theme is the transgenerational dimension of paternal deprivation. M. Murdock, within the framework of the «Heroine's Journey,» describes the stage of healing the

mother/daughter split as a working through of the mother complex and transgenerational scenarios [107]. A similar process exists concerning paternal patterns: often a woman reproduces in her life scenarios inherited from her mother and grandmother – relationships with inaccessible, emotionally distant, or destructive male figures. The awareness of this transgenerational transmission and its processing during therapy or personal analytical work is a crucial stage of female individuation.

Carvalho (R. R. N. Carvalho, 1982) emphasizes that «paternal deprivation affects not the external object, but the internal structure of the Self, weakening the capacity for self-support and stable identity»[16, p. 344]. Thus, paternal deprivation can be viewed as a structural vulnerability that has a systemic impact on the individuation process.

According to S. Schwartz, daughters of absent fathers [136; 135; 134; 137] often face:

An unstable sense of self, insecurity, low self-esteem;

Difficulties with intimacy, closeness, establishing healthy relationships: mistrust, fear of rejection, repetition of patterns of «absence» in partnership;

The need to «fill the void» through perfectionism, achievements, external roles, to prove their worth to themselves/the world;

Loss of bodily, emotional, soul connection with oneself: the body, feelings, inner life may be «numbed»;

A sense of loss, deprivation, sadness, inner emptiness as an early trauma that forms an unconscious background.

Schwartz introduces a traumatological component into the concept of female individuation: the absence of a father creates a vacuum in the structure of the Self, appearing as a lack of support, disturbed self-esteem, a gap between the inner desire to be seen and the experience of non-recognition. The deficit of the inner paternal principle makes it difficult to form an autonomous position for a woman and complicates the transition to the phase of mature individuation, especially in midlife, when integration of inner authority and a reassessment of life meaning are required.

Transformative potential: from father wound to mature Animus.

Based on the literature and research in analytical psychology, it is important to note that the Jungian approach to the theme of father and daughter is fundamentally anti-pathologizing: the

deficit of the paternal function is viewed not as an insurmountable obstacle, but as a specific task of individuation (*italics ours* – E. Sh.), possessing its own transformative potential. On this basis, we particularly emphasize our hypothesis in this study that the resource potential of individuation is possible even in conditions of a deficit of experience of quality relationships with the father. Paternal deprivation in the context of female individuation can be considered as a structural condition for a specific trajectory of development.

The image of the wounded father and the daughter's paternal wound plays a role in analytical psychology similar to that of other archetypal wounds – not only destructive but also initiating. Schwartz indicates that daughters deprived of paternal attention describe the unreliability of the Self, splitting and disintegration of personality, and the silencing of the voice, but at the same time, therapeutic work opens a path out of idealization, betrayal, abandonment, and loss towards restoration and renewal [136]. This path of restoration is precisely the trajectory of individuation specific to women with experience of paternal deprivation.

Matsliah-Hanokh, in her concept of tales of reversible death, describes an archetypal pattern that can be applied to this context: the symbolic descent into the experience of loss and pain, whether it be the loss of the father, his recognition, or the very possibility of a healthy relationship with him, is not a dead end but a turning point. «The descent into the underworld of the soul's hell, a seemingly endless stay in this hell, and then an equally difficult ascent, a kind of rebirth»[99, p. 22] – such is the archetypal rhythm of transformation, traceable in the myths of Persephone, Inanna, and other goddesses who pass through death and return to life.

Schwartz, formulating the key thesis of her work with women, indicates that it is precisely the focus of analytical psychology that strives for the attainment of wholeness and achieves it through the gradual mastering of what previously remained in the shadows: the unconscious becomes conscious, and the personality finds balance [136]. This process is none other than individuation in its specific refraction for women with experience of paternal deprivation: a movement from fragmentation and a voice silenced by trauma towards wholeness, in which the masculine principle takes its place as a supporting rather than a suppressing force.

We concluded that the process of transformation in a woman with experience of an absent father, the so-called father wound, paternal trauma, into a mature Animus involves several interrelated steps:

firstly, awareness and experiencing the pain of loss, mourning for the father who was not there or could not provide what was needed;

secondly, gradual differentiation of the internal father image: separation of the archetypal Father (as a principle) from the personal, real father with his limitations and wounds;

thirdly, work with the shadow aspects of the Animus as awareness of negative internal objects as projections of the wounded father complex;

fourthly, finding the inner Ally, a mature, supportive Animus, which becomes a support for self-expression, creativity, and independent judgment.

Thus, the role of the father in the development of female individuation is multi-layered and fundamentally important. At the archetypal level, the paternal function ensures the differentiation of the psyche, the formation of the Animus, and access to the logos principle. At the personal level, the quality of real father-daughter relationships directly determines the nature of self-attitude, self-image, and the woman's relational strategies.

When the paternal function is deficient or distorted, the individuation process does not cease but takes on a specific character: it unfolds through crisis, symbolic descent, and gradual reconstruction of inner authority. The Jungian perspective allows viewing this path not as a pathology, but as a particular form of individuation with its own archetypal logic and its own transformative potential.

The father complex in the woman's psyche.

In the clinical practice of analytical psychology, the specific form of disruption of the paternal function is conceptualized through the concept of the father complex – an affectively-charged cognitive pattern constellated in the unconscious, organized around the image of the father. The complex carries both the personal content of biographical experience and archetypal layers, giving it an energetic autonomy and stability surpassing the power of conscious will.

The concept of the father complex, developed in analytical psychology based on Jung's ideas and described in detail by V. Kast, allows us to understand how early experience of relationships with the father forms stable psychic patterns. Kast defines a complex as an «emotionally charged knot of psychic contents organized around a certain affective core: the father complex, which is formed in us in childhood as a positive or negative reaction to our parents, can hinder full development in adulthood» [36, p. 5–6]. Importantly, the father complex

carries not only personal but also collective-archetypal material – what the Father should be like in a given cultural tradition.

According to V. Kast (1997/2016), the negative father complex in a woman can manifest in two opposite, outwardly dissimilar, but deeply interconnected forms. The first form is the dominance of a rigid, destructive masculine principle: perfectionism, harsh self-criticism, inability to accept one's own worth, devaluation of one's own experience. This position often looks like success and competence, but at the cost of alienation from one's own femininity and living affectivity. The second form is the weakness of Logos: difficulties in asserting one's own position, inability to make autonomous judgments and actions, chronic dependence on external authority and approval [ibid.]. It is precisely this form that is often described in empirical studies through the categories of dependence, submissiveness, and anxiety identified in women with paternal deprivation [89; 115].

The Jungian perspective on female individuation in conditions of paternal deprivation allows shifting focus from pathologizing female experience to investigating its transformative potential: the deficit of the paternal function is considered as a condition for the formation of specific trajectories of individuation, not as a sentence.

Conclusions to Chapter 1

1. Individuation in C. G. Jung's analytical psychology is considered the central process of personality formation, aimed at integrating conscious and unconscious components of the psyche and achieving a more holistic relationship between the Ego and the Self.

2. Individuation is not identical to individualism: it presupposes not isolation from society but a more mature inclusion of the individual in social life through the awareness of one's own uniqueness and responsibility.

3. The structure of the individuation process is associated with the sequential encounter with key archetypal formations: Persona, Shadow, Anima/Animus, and Self. Their integration is a condition for psychic wholeness.

4. Female individuation has specific dynamics because classical Jungian models largely relied on male experience and heroic symbolism. The post-Jungian tradition expands this understanding through the themes of body, trauma, relationships, femininity, descent, and symbolic rebirth.

5. In female individuation, the integration of feminine and masculine principles acquires particular importance, where the task is not the dominance of one principle over the other but their inner correlation and symbolic inner marriage.

6. The paternal function in a woman's psyche performs a structuring role: it is associated with the formation of boundaries, inner authority, the capacity for differentiation, autonomous judgment, and outward direction.

7. The father image participates in the formation of the Animus as a woman's inner masculine principle. Under favorable development, it becomes a source of support, meaning, and independence; under deficit or distortion, it can manifest as an inner critic, dependence on external authority, or compensatory hypermasculinization.

8. Paternal deprivation in the analytical-psychological context is understood more broadly than the actual absence of the father: it is considered a deficit or distortion of the paternal function in the woman's internal psychic organization.

9. Empirical research confirms the link between paternal deprivation and disturbances in self-attitude, dependence, anxiety, submissiveness, reduced self-acceptance, and difficulties in building mature partnership relationships.

10. The Jungian perspective allows viewing paternal deprivation not only as a traumatic factor but also as a specific task of individuation, in which, through crisis, symbolic descent, and therapeutic processing, the formation of a mature internal paternal function is possible.

11. The transformative potential of paternal deprivation lies in the transition from the «father wound» to a mature Animus, i.e., from inner emptiness, dependence, and deficit of recognition to the formation of an inner ally, the capacity for self-support, independent judgment, and creative self-expression.

12. Thus, the first chapter substantiates the theoretical framework of the study: the dynamics of individuation of women with paternal deprivation should be considered as a multi-level process, including archetypal, personal, relational, bodily, and symbolic levels of analysis.

CHAPTER 2. SANDPLAY THERAPY IN THE STUDY OF INDIVIDUATION

2.1. History and methodology of Sandplay

Sandplay therapy (Jungian sand therapy, Sandplay) as a modality is an in-depth method of psychotherapy within C. G. Jung's analytical psychology, in which, through creating an image in the sandbox, the symbolic representation of the unconscious is activated, the process of psychic self-regulation unfolds, and conditions for structural personality changes are created. Sandplay is the result of many years of practice and observation by the creator of the method, Swiss analyst Dora Maria Kalff (1904–1990).

2.1.1. Prehistory and origins of the method

The history of Sandplay dates back to the early 20th century when the British writer Herbert George Wells described observations of his sons playing with miniature figures on the floor. In 1911/2004/2018, he published the book «Floor Games,» in which he noted that children, through playful interaction with a miniature world, are capable of working through real conflicts and relationships. This work became the first evidence of the therapeutic potential of play with miniatures, although the famous science fiction novelist himself did not formulate its psychotherapeutic significance [185].

The work and research in the clinical practice of British pediatrician and child psychiatrist Margaret Lowenfeld (1890–1973) as a concept became the direct predecessor of Sandplay therapy. Lowenfeld, in the late 1920s, working at the London Clinic of Child Psychology (founded in 1928), sought a non-verbal way of communicating with children, allowing them to express what cannot be formulated in words. Inspired by H.G. Wells' book, she placed sand trays and a set of miniature objects, a so-called «wonder box,» in the playroom. The first child, seeing these materials, transferred the figures to the sand tray, and thus the child «invented» what Lowenfeld later called the «World Technique» [103]. Lowenfeld approached the World

Technique primarily as a diagnostic tool, allowing the study of the child's inner world. Each «world picture» created in the sand was considered material for subsequent verbal therapy. Lowenfeld's most important contribution was the recognition of pre-verbal experience. She insisted that children cannot describe their experiences in words but are capable of embodying them in three-dimensional images. Lowenfeld introduced the concept of the primary mental system (later as a proto-system), which does not lend itself to complete verbalization but can be expressed through art, poetic language, and playful creations in the sand [97].

Concurrently with Lowenfeld, a number of other researchers developed similar approaches. Charlotte Bühler created the «World Method»(1930), Goesta Harding – «Erika's Method»(1940s), Hedda Bolgar and Lisolotte Fischer worked with the «Little World» technique (1960s). Historically, the Sandplay method also technologically accumulated E. Erikson's «Dramatic Productions Method»(1930s) and G. von Staabs' «Scene Test» (1950) [103].

Dora Maria Kalff and the formation of Sandplay.

The key figure in transforming the World Technique into an independent psychotherapeutic method was the Swiss analyst Dora Maria Kalff (1904–1990). Her very biography represents a unique path to the creation of the method. Born in 1904 in Richterswil (Switzerland), Kalff received a broad education in philosophy, music, and oriental languages. Thanks to her friendship with Gret Baumann, daughter of Carl Gustav Jung, she met C. G. Jung himself, who recognized in her a natural gift for working with children and recommended she continue her studies at the C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich [146].

From 1949 to 1955, Kalff underwent six years of training at the Jung Institute in Zurich, conducting her personal analysis under the guidance of Emma Jung, C. G. Jung's wife. In 1954, while still a student at the Institute, she attended a lecture by Margaret Lowenfeld and was deeply impressed by the «World Technique.» On Jung's advice, in 1956 Kalff went to London, where she interned at Lowenfeld's clinic under the guidance of Jungian child psychotherapist Michael Fordham. There she also studied with D. W. Winnicott [188].

Returning to Switzerland, Kalff began synthesizing the World Technique with Jungian analytical psychology. In the late 1950s, she agreed with Lowenfeld to use the term «Sandplay» to designate her approach, distinguishing it from the original World Technique. In 1966, Kalff's seminal book «Sandplay: Mirror of a Child's Psyche» was published (in German), and in

1980/2003 in revised form in English under the title «Sandplay: A Psychotherapeutic Approach to the Psyche.» The Russian translation of D. Kalff's book «Sandplay and its Healing Effect on the Psyche» was published in 2021 [78].

The fundamental theoretical difference between Jungian Sandplay and Lowenfeld's Technique was the rethinking of the therapeutic function of the method: if for Lowenfeld the images created in the sand served as diagnostic material for subsequent verbal work, then Kalff viewed the very process of creating a sand picture as a therapeutic act and a direct transformation of the psyche. Drawing on C. G. Jung's concept of individuation and the Self's striving for wholeness, she argued that the psyche possesses an innate capacity for self-regulation and healing, and it is this capacity that is activated in the process of free play in the sand [78].

Three theoretical sources significantly influenced the formation of the method. The first is C. G. Jung's analytical psychology with its concepts of the unconscious, archetypes, individuation, Self, and the Ego-Self axis. The second is Margaret Lowenfeld's «World Technique» as a methodological and instrumental basis. The third is Eastern contemplative traditions: Tibetan Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, and Taoism, with which Kalff was deeply acquainted through direct communication with spiritual leaders [146]. According to several researchers, it is this third source that provided the method with the unique quality of the therapist's presence and special attention to numinous experience [198; 103; 172; 2; 184].

Dora Kalff's active pedagogical activity contributed to the wide dissemination of Sandplay therapy. Starting in 1966, she regularly traveled for seminars to the USA, Japan, and European countries. The reception of the method in Japan was particularly significant: the Zen Buddhist tradition, the artistic practice of «hakoniwa» (creating miniature landscapes in a box), and the orientation of Japanese culture towards non-verbal communication created an exceptionally favorable ground for Sandplay therapy. Currently, Japan is one of the countries with the most developed Sandplay therapy community.

On August 13, 1985, at Kalff's home in Zollikon, the International Society for Sandplay Therapy (ISST) was founded, uniting fourteen founding members from Switzerland, Italy, Great Britain, the USA, and Japan. The organization was created for training, certification, and preserving practice standards in the spirit of the method's founder and now represents more than 18 countries where certified sandplay therapists practice [52].

Dora Kalff died on January 15, 1990. However, the method she created continues to be developed by the efforts of her students and followers worldwide, who continue to publish books, organize conferences and congresses, conduct and publish research results on the effectiveness of Sandplay therapy in leading scientific journals [121]. Among the most significant contributions to the development of the method after Kalff's death, the following works and their authors should be highlighted.

Estelle L. Weinrib, one of the founders of ISST, made a fundamental theoretical contribution to the understanding of the sandplay process. Her book «Images of the Self: The Sandplay Therapy Process» (1983/2004) became a classic text of the method, in which the concept of the manifestation of the Self in sand pictures is deeply developed and the stages of ego development during Sandplay are analyzed. Weinrib was the first theorist to systematically describe patterns of individuation in series of sand pictures, drawing on Erich Neumann's psychology of development [184].

Ruth Ammann, a Swiss Jungian analyst and sandplay therapist, developed her own analytical system for understanding sandplay images. In her book «Healing and Transformation in Sandplay: Creative Processes Made Visible» (1991), she explores transformation processes manifested in sand pictures, paying special attention to spatial symbolism and archetypal themes of alchemical transformation [2]. Ammann examines in detail the interpretation of symbolic images through the lens of mythology, fairy tales, and the history of religions.

Kay Bradway, an American Jungian analyst and one of the founders of ISST, made an important contribution to understanding therapeutic relationships in Sandplay therapy. Her study «Sandplay Bridges and the Transcendent Function»(1985) is devoted to the transcendent function as a mechanism of transition between opposites in symbolic work with sand. Bradway proposed the term «co-transference,» indicating the fundamentally mutual, bidirectional nature of therapeutic relationships in Sandplay: not a unidirectional transference from client to therapist, but a simultaneous process affecting both participants at conscious and unconscious levels [12]. Later, together with Lorraine Chambers and Marie Helene Chiaia, she published «Sandplay in Three Voices» (2006), a collective study where the Sandplay process is viewed through the voices of client, therapist, and supervisor simultaneously.

Martin Kalff, son and student of Dora Kalff, one of the founders of ISST, made a crucial contribution to the development of the analytical and interpretive apparatus of the method. His article «Twenty-one Points for Consideration in the Interpretation of a Sandplay» (originally «Twenty Points...», first published in 1993; expanded to 21 points in 2006) represents the most complete and systematic methodology for analyzing an individual sand picture. In this work, he particularly distinguishes between «lunar,» pre-verbal (matriarchal) consciousness, which is activated in the sandplay process, and «solar,» verbal-rational consciousness of everyday thinking, drawing on the concept of E. Neumann. M. Kalff especially insists on the symbolic nature of interpretation: a successful interpretation itself must be symbolic and point beyond itself to the same inexpressible dimension of experience to which the images of the sand picture appeal. Additionally, Kalff developed the concept of «deep transference» as a relationship between the client's Self and the therapist's Self, distinguishing it from «strong transference» involving surface emotional reactions [78; 79].

Hayao Kawai (1928–2007), a distinguished Japanese analytical psychologist and one of the founders of ISST, played a key role in rooting Sandplay therapy in Japanese cultural tradition. His works on the intersection of Jungian psychology with Japanese culture and Buddhist concepts significantly influenced the understanding of the non-verbal and holistic dimension of the method. Kawai also developed the concept of «hakoniwa therapy,» a Japanese version of Sandplay therapy based on the ancient tradition of creating miniature gardens in a box (hakoniwa). His book «Hakonwa-ryoho nyumon» («Introduction to Hakoniwa Therapy,»1969) is the first Japanese systematic guide to Sandplay therapy and laid the foundation for the formation of a powerful Japanese school of the method [84]. The Japanese Association of Sandplay Therapy under his leadership became one of the largest in the world.

Among other significant contributions to the development of the method, mention should also be made of the works of Rie Rogers Mitchell and Harriet S. Friedman «Sandplay: Past, Present, Future»(1994), the first systematic historical and theoretical study of the method [103]; the fundamental «The Handbook of Sandplay Therapy»by Barbara Turner (2005), translated into six languages and becoming the most widely read book on the method in the world [172]; as well as the «International Handbook of Sandplay Therapy» published by Routledge (2022) edited by B. Turner [123].

2.1.2. Psychological mechanisms of personal change in sand therapy

At the basis of Sandplay therapy lies the idea that the unconscious possesses not only repressed or conflicting material (according to Freud) but also a constructive, self-regulating potential (according to C. G. Jung).

In a review by researcher of the effectiveness of Jungian analysis S. Roesler, devoted to the theory, application, and evidence base of Sandplay therapy, it is emphasized that the process originates from the idea of the unconscious as a space containing archetypal structures and supporting ego-consciousness in the integration of split-off parts of the psyche. Symbols arising in the sandbox are viewed as condensed carriers of information, through which the unconscious becomes accessible for experience and subsequent integration [121; 120]. Personality development in Sandplay is carried out through symbols that transcend the ego and connect the person to a broader level of psychic reality; that is why the power of the symbol can be seen in clients' sandboxes just as in dreams, fantasies, and mythological plots. The psychological mechanisms of Sandplay therapy that influence the dynamics of personal change can be described in several interrelated planes.

First, this is a free and protected space. The central theoretical construct explaining the environment conducive to personality change in Sandplay therapy is the concept of «free and protected space,» introduced by Dora Kalff [37 p. 12]. This space has two dimensions. The first is physical: the sand tray represents a limited but observable container, within which the client's unbounded fantasy takes concrete form. The boundedness of the tray space creates a productive polarity between freedom of expression and the need to embody the inner world within given limits. The second dimension is psychological: the therapist provides a safe relational field in which the client feels accepted without judgment, allowing unconscious contents to manifest unhindered [172]. Kalff viewed positive transference to the therapist as possible only thanks to the therapist's ability to create a «free and protected space» for the client: «The prerequisite for any true freedom, including freedom of development, is security» [78, p. 99]. The psychological security created by the therapist is a prerequisite for the activation of the inner healing forces of the psyche.

Second, the development of the Ego-Self axis and the manifestation of the Self. The key theoretical mechanism of transformation in Sandplay therapy from a Jungian perspective is the restoration and strengthening of the Ego-Self axis. In C. G. Jung's concept, the Self is the center and totality of the entire personality (conscious and unconscious), while the Ego is the center of consciousness. Normally, there is a living connection between the ego and the Self, ensuring psychological health. According to Kalff, psychological disturbances are often due to the weakening or rupture of this axis. During Sandplay therapy, the client, immersed in play, reaches a particular psychic state in which deep unconscious wholeness, the Self, can manifest in symbolic form. Kalff described the moment of «manifestation of the Self» as a numinous experience, often expressed in the creation of mandala-like images in the sand [ibid., p. 8–11]. Weinrib emphasizes that the moment of manifestation of the Self is a turning point in the therapeutic process: it is here that the restored Ego-Self axis triggers the organic movement of the psyche towards integration and wholeness [184].

Third, it is the mechanism of symbolization. In creating a sand composition, the client translates affectively charged, often pre-verbal or repressed experiences into a visual-spatial form, making them accessible for experience, retention, and subsequent integration. Symbols act as carriers of both personal and archetypal content, providing a connection between individual experience and broader structures of the psyche. Working with sand evokes primary, direct expressions of the psyche and touches pre-verbal and implicit memory systems, which by their very nature cannot be fully communicated by words. In his works, Jung described the formation of a symbol as an incubation phase in the creative process, when a person tries to solve a problem using previous methods; if that fails, more information is gathered to solve the problem. During this process, the mentioned incubation phase begins, when instead of concentration and tension, the work of the unconscious begins. Consciously, the person feels frustration, but at the same moment, ideas begin to come, and the incubation phase is followed by an insight and illumination phase, which can become available in the form of a symbol [68; 63; 61].

Images carrying symbolic load allow the deep layers of unconscious information to rise to the level of consciousness as needed and demanded; during this process, the conscious and unconscious are in free interaction and conduct a free dialogue: these are images not only as a reflection of current activity but are primary, archaic, as they are characteristic of all

representatives of the species. The work of symbol-making in Sandplay as a dialogue between unconscious and conscious material in the Psyche can be visually represented as described by G. Furth [42] after studying D. Kalf's sand therapy. For example, when situation «D» in the sandbox correlates with content «D» in the unconscious, then through analytical work the content «D»-material is directly brought into consciousness (Figure 5).

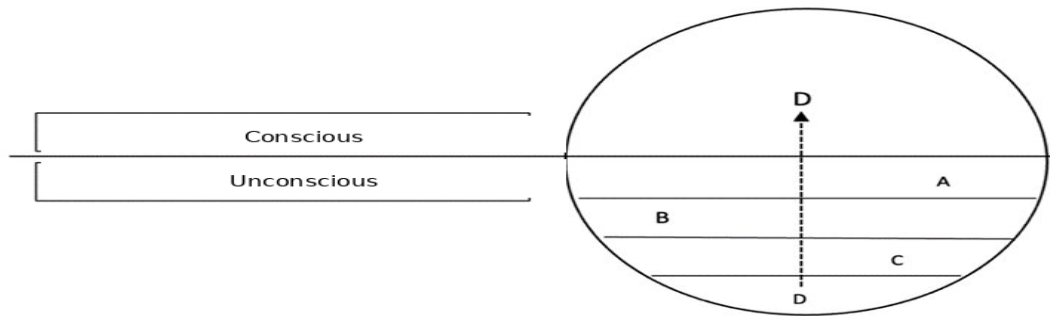


Figure 5. First variant of the symbol-making model (Furth, 2003).

Furth's second variant describing the process of symbol-making (Figure 6) looks as if content «D» is at a far distance from the possibility of awareness and is not as urgent as content «A,» which has the possibility of coming to the surface of consciousness but is still not accessible (due, for example, to psychological defenses). Meanwhile, content «D» unconsciously manifests itself in the images and narrative of the sandbox, and this reproduction can cause a «domino effect,» which will move content «C» up, moving «B» higher, and allow «A» to reach consciousness and analytical processing.

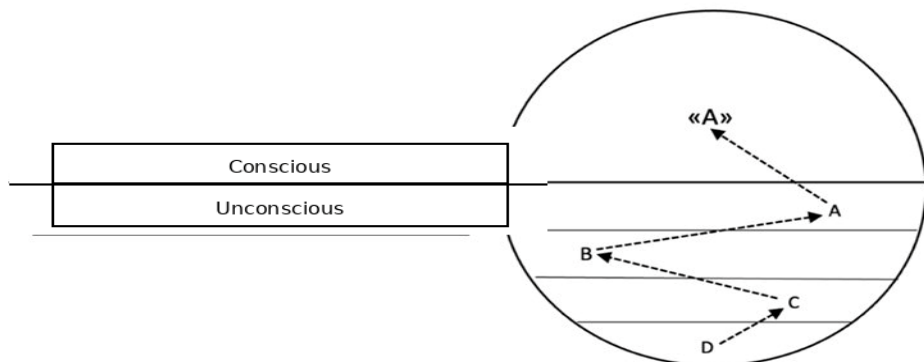


Figure 6. Second variant of the symbol-making model (Furth, 2003).

Fourth, it is the mechanism of the transcendent function. Jung formulated a significant proposition about the transcendent function, which plays an important role in understanding the formation of symbols and symbol-making, considering this function the most significant factor in the psychological process in which transformation and integration of experience occur, initiating the dynamics of human individuation. The symbol has a dual nature, and it is precisely opposites that create the tension in which the energy of libido brings out the symbol from the archetype (the level of collective experience in the psyche) and the negative complex (the level of personal experience), creating a new field of symbol-making and triggering the transcendent function. The transcendent function expresses itself through the formed symbol, facilitating the transition from one psychological attitude to another, from one pattern of behavior, thinking to another.

Fifth, it is the mechanism of activating inner dialogue. At the processual level, the criterion for the effectiveness of Sandplay is the quality of the inner dialogue, reflected in the transformation of symbols and the appearance of transitional objects that become a metaphorical support for accumulating resources during the deep work of the symbol as a mediator between different parts of the psyche [124].

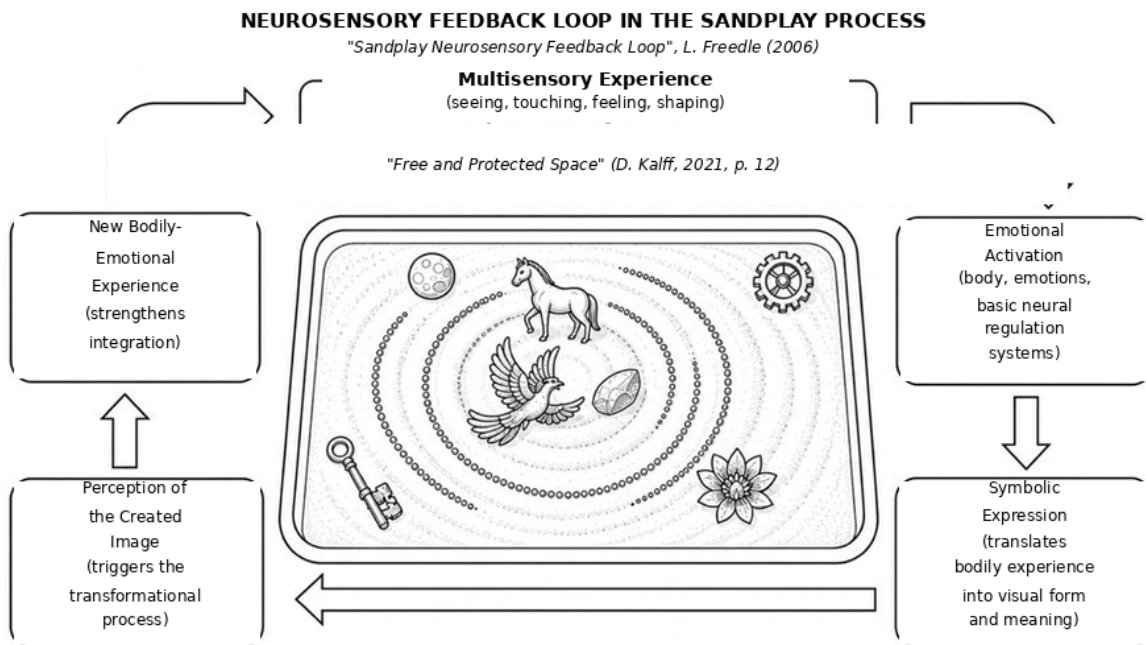


Figure 7. Multisensory feedback loop (Freedle, 2006).

Sixth, it is the mechanism of neural sensory-affective activation and regulation. Sand acts as a multisensory stimulus, triggering a neurosensory feedback loop [36]: contact with the material, then a bodily-affective response, then insight and symbolic expression (Figure 7). The symbolic nature of Sandplay affects the irrational limbic system of the right hemisphere, when more rational conscious material is integrated by processes in the left hemisphere. This facilitates the processing of conflictual, emotionally charged material or trauma experience, also influencing neural, sensory, and motor regulation [81].

Seventh, it is the mechanism of therapeutic containing. The most important principle of working with the Sandplay method is minimal intervention, including minimal instructions, as well as the need to constantly consider the relationships that arise from three sides: between the client, the therapist, and the symbol emerging in the process in the sandbox, the so-called three-way transference [102, p. 47] – all this ensures the operation of the mechanism of therapeutic containing. Constructive resonant interaction is the key interpersonal mechanism between therapist and client, arising with emotionally charged and safe support [124].

Boik and Goodwin (Boik B. L., Goodwin A., 2000) listed specific models of therapeutic communication in the process of sand play [6]:

- the role of the therapist as a «psychological container» through holding for the client everything that happens in the sand tray and in the room;
- the role of a model of attentive listening, unbiased behavior, and full presence of the therapist;
- the role of the therapist as a «connector» between the client and their sand play, the unconscious content of the material with consciousness, the sand play and the external world;
- the role of «helper and support» by helping the client experience emerging feelings;
- the role of «co-investigator» in studying together with the client their creation and what it means for the client;
- the role of «witness and mirror» through witnessing, reflecting, and strengthening the client's experience.

It is precisely this interaction that creates a transitional space of shared play. Changes occur not only due to the depiction but also because it appears in a reliably held space of

relational relationships [18]. Of particular importance is the interpersonal mechanism of therapeutic interaction in the Jungian sand therapy office. In conditions of empathic and non-directive presence of the therapist, a transitional space and reverie are formed, in which an interaction arises that facilitates the processing of experience and the development of psychic stability [78].

Eighth, the mechanism of countertransference and resonance. Countertransference in Sandplay is a subtle tool of cognition. While the client creates the composition, the therapist's psyche resonates with the symbolic material: bodily sensations, images, and emotional responses reflect the client's unconscious penetrating the space between them. The Jungian tradition describes this through the concept of psychic induction [132]: the client's psyche transmits to the therapist contents that the client themselves is not yet able to realize. Conscious work with these reactions – the ability to notice, hold, and reflect on them without projecting them back – all this turns countertransference into a living channel of transformation through which genuine change in the client's personality is born.

Ninth, it is the mechanism of mastering new roles and new forms of connection with the collective, society. In Sandplay, the mechanism of mastering new roles and ways of interacting with the social environment is realized [95]. The choice of figures and the construction of sand pictures, communication with the sandplay therapist allow exploring new roles and new ways of reacting: the client first tries out a new position in the symbolic field, and then gets the opportunity to transfer this experience into real life. A similar phenomenon is observed in both the Kalfjian approach and the multimodal approach. The symbolic representation of oneself and others through figures allows safely exploring new forms of behavior and transferring them into real life.

Tenth, it is the mechanism of protecting the autonomy of the client's psychic process. In Sandplay therapy, changes occur not because the therapist deciphered the meanings, but because the client encountered their image, projections, internal objects, experience, and endured this contact. The process unfolds in a special sacred, deeply meaningful 'free and safe space' – a temenos [78, p. 12; 130, p. 234] where the therapist must maintain respect for the symbol and image and not substitute the client's process with their own interpretations [18; 172].

To protect the autonomy of the client's psychic processes in Sandplay, serious attention is paid to ethical requirements [96], such as: Competence: one cannot call oneself a Sandplay specialist without sufficient training and supervision; Therapist's personal experience: working with a client in a method one has not personally experienced is ethically unacceptable; Supervision: a mandatory condition of practice; Transference and countertransference: inability to work with them can cause real harm to the client; Dual roles: combining roles requires clear boundaries and conscious management of conflict of interest; Informed consent: the client must know about the boundaries of the method's work, the use of sand pictures (e.g., photographing, viewing, demonstration at conferences and supervisions) before starting work; Research ethics: research in Sandplay requires adherence to standards of working with participants; Data protection: photographs of sand scenes and clinical records require strict protection.

Thus, personal changes in Sandplay therapy are ensured by the complex interaction of symbolization, sensory-affective regulation, inner dialogue, and mastering role models, reflection, and therapeutic relationships in a protected and safe therapeutic space.

2.1.3. Organization of work in the Sandplay method: conditions and tools

Sandplay therapy in D. Kálff's methodology is conducted within the framework of the analytical psychology setting 1–2 times a week [166; 58], depending on the client's current state and request, in a specially equipped office (Figure 8). The physical organization of the space occupies a special place in Sandplay [172], since the environment itself is considered part of the therapeutic container, the «free and protected space» according to Dora Kálff [78, p. 12].

The sandbox is filled approximately halfway with dry or wet sand; ideally, in the Kálffian approach, the therapist has both options. Next to the tray is an extensive collection of miniature figures, systematically grouped into categories: people (men, women, children, representatives of various cultures and eras), animals (domestic and wild), vehicles, buildings, natural objects (trees, stones, shells), archetypal symbols (gods, goddesses, mythological creatures), everyday objects, and objects of religious significance.



Figure 8. Example of equipping a classic Jungian sand therapy office: a collection of figures and two sandboxes, with dry and wet sand (Sheveleva E. V.)

The diversity of the collection is fundamentally important, as it provides the client with maximum freedom of expression. The collection of figures is a «living» extension of the therapist, an aspect of the container, carrying the unique traits of the therapist's personality and the result of their deep symbolic connection with the figures. The figures on the shelves can be arranged according to a developmental principle or an archetypal principle [76, pp. 363–367].

According to the recommendations of Dora Kalff and her followers, before starting a session, the sand is recommended to be sifted and leveled – this symbolically renews the space and prepares it for the next client's work. Some therapists light a candle or perform other ritual actions marking the transition into the therapeutic space. This reflects the understanding of the Sandplay space as a *temenos* – a sacred, protected circle. The office creates a maternal psychological womb as an emotional metaphor for the uroboric mother-child unity, where healing of inner psychological trauma can occur [151].

Techniques used in Sandplay therapy, brief description.

Creating a sand composition. In the limited space of the sandbox made of dry or wet sand, water, and miniatures, the client creates an image born from inner movement; the therapist observes with empathic attunement.

Serial work with images. It is the sequence of scenes, not a single picture, that allows seeing the dynamics of the process, the repetition of symbols, and the transformation of resources.

Working with the relief and sand material. Manipulations with sand as an independent part of the process: provide a meditative, regulatory effect, reduce anxiety and tension.

Working with the symbol. The symbol is not reduced to a univocal meaning but is held as a multi-layered formation linked to personal history, cultural context, and archetypal dimension [83].

Analysis and interpretation. Formal level of interpretation: how the sand composition was created [45; 172]. Content level of interpretation: what the theme is, is there a focus, narrative; movement of libido energy, are there stagnations, progressive or regressive tendencies; classification of psychological development according to D. Kalf and E. Neumann. Structural level: object level, subject level, symbol level, transference aspects, understanding the scene, causal approach, biographical approach, complexes, conflict level, resources, final aspect, and possible resolution [139; 140].

Deferred interpretation. One of the most important principles. Premature interpretation disrupts the client's process. The therapist maintains a silent presence or follows the client's description, and silent acceptance of the images creates a sense of security.

Working with associations. The use of associations, according to Jung, allows detecting the presence of an unconscious problem or conflict. Three types of application: free (unrestricted), directed (with restrictions, e.g., naming only verbs or adjectives), chain (to each previous word).

Amplification. Expanding the associative process to include historical, cultural, and mythological context, applicable for identifying the archetypal image and personal complex.

Photographing and record keeping. Records are kept throughout the session; photographing only after the client leaves, adhering to informed consent. Historically, this is part of the method's procedural organization since the early sand techniques, and in contemporary research, it becomes the basis for qualitative analysis.

Structuring the process of intervention in sand therapy, brief description of stages.

We note five significant components of the therapeutic process in Sandplay: the client, the sand therapist, the office, the sandbox, and the collection of miniature figures. The «client–sandbox–sand therapist» structure includes establishing the therapeutic frame, forming the image, holding symbolic material (including protocol and photo documentation), serial dynamics, content transformation, integration of experience, and transfer of changes into life. Each of these components has communicative and analytical symbolic significance influencing the context and effectiveness of the therapeutic process.

Work in Sandplay begins with the client entering the free and protected space of the office, where they are invited to create a plot and landscape in the sandbox using figures. This space is non-directive but structured by the conditions of the setting, the physical frame of the office and sandbox, the presence of the therapist, and the set of miniatures. Then the client creates a sand composition, an image is formed which may be accompanied by a story or remain in silence, while the therapist maintains an empathic, non-intrusive, observing position. A series of sand scenes gradually forms a process in which the conscious and unconscious interact, moving towards resolution and greater wholeness.

Stages of work in Sandplay therapy [126; 172; 6]:

1. Pre-Sandplay Stage. Creative work for clients not ready to work directly in the sandbox (high anxiety, disturbed attachment, unestablished contact). This stage includes art therapy techniques with various materials (pre-sandplay according to B. Jackson, ISST seminar, 2023);
2. Orientation and Expansion Stage. Getting acquainted with the office and collection (initial reception), collecting anamnesis and request; during repeat sessions, orientation in the dynamics of states;
3. Creating the Sand Composition Stage. Direct construction of the sand composition as a projection of the inner world. In the Kalfian approach, minimal instruction («create any world»); in the multimodal approach, there may be a specific theme («my family,» «my fear,» «my future,» etc.);
4. Experience and Restructuring Stage. The client can restructure the created world on their own initiative (in the Jungian approach without therapist instruction);

5. Reflection and Experience Processing Stage. Verbal analytical stage: the client shares a story about the created sand composition, clarifies meanings, and integrates new insights. In analyzing the sandplay process, the therapist uses perception, intuition, feeling, and thinking, tracing symbols throughout the series of pictures, avoiding fixed meanings, applying both intrapsychic and intersubjective modes of observation.

6. Completion Stage. Summarizing meanings, client reflection, analytical position of the sandplay therapist. The multimodal approach may suggest forms of feedback: «What from this world could you take into real life? What thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations? An idea or maybe a word, something that could be meaningful for you in life»;

7. Documentation Stage. During the sandplay session, the protocol records: type and number of miniatures, process of creating the composition, client behavior, working time, eye contact, sequence of placing figures, traces in the sand. Protocoling is done on special forms [45; 172];

8. Dismantling Stage. Neither the client nor the therapist dismantles the sandbox during the session! The client «takes away» its holistic image. After the client leaves, the therapist performs photo documentation from different angles, including buried/hidden elements, the landscape without figures. Photographs and records help the therapist maintain a continuous relationship with the client's process. Before a session, viewing previous photographs prepares the therapist's psyche for the encounter, performing an additional container function. The protocol is intended only for the therapist: its task is to see what is happening and protect the process, not to interpret pictures to the client.

Protocoling the sandplay process is significant material for analytical study and reflection on the client's material. It also performs an additional container function. The psychotherapist's task is to notice and realize the symbolic meaning of individual figures, patterns, and the sand scene as a whole, thereby compensating for the dissociation operating within the client that is not subject to their awareness.

Photographs or sketches of each sandbox can, at the final stage of psychotherapy, be viewed together by the client and therapist. This process of joint analysis brings a new level of awareness when the experience of playing with sand is combined with cognitive awareness. Records and photographs help the therapist remain in a continuous relationship with the client's

sand process, providing the symbolic process with time and place. At a deep psychic level, viewing images attunes the therapist's Psyche to the client's inner process. Before an upcoming session, a quick glance at photos in a folder can be a resource for containing, making the sandplay therapist's psyche energetically more prepared for the encounter with the client in the session. The therapist, being the most important component of the psychological container of the sandplay process, simultaneously «cleanses» and reorganizes themselves through photo documentation, returning to a centered state, and thus the therapist and setting are prepared for work with the next client.

Principles for understanding sand pictures in Sandplay.

For understanding the sand process, it is important to apply intrapsychic and intersubjective modes of observation and analysis. The sandplay therapist uses their perception and intuition, feeling and thinking in their work. The methodology of analytical psychology is dialectical, requiring great openness of breadth and depth simultaneously from the therapist. Speaking of symbols as discrete elements, it is necessary to remember that the entire process functions as a symbol. While exploring thematic patterns, the sand therapist remains attentive to their possible symbolic dimension, avoiding assigning fixed meanings in each specific case; they trace symbols gradually unfolding throughout the series of sand pictures.

Kalff writes that the therapist's understanding of the issues embodied in the sand picture itself creates an atmosphere of trust as a kind of unity, akin to the mother-child bond, which has a healing effect. At the same time, the therapist does not necessarily have to voice their insights aloud: it is about living the symbol in a safe space. In some cases, the emerging images are nonetheless explained to the client, but in a form accessible and understandable to them [78].

The details of the sand pictures and the logic of their appearance provide the therapist with guidelines for further work. Kalff particularly emphasizes that the first picture illuminates the client's initial situation and already contains indications of key themes requiring attention: the client's attitude towards therapy, their attitude towards their own unconscious, the nature of the personal problem, and possible ways to solve it [172]. The analysis of subsequent pictures can be guided by various approaches developed by M. Kalff, E. Weinrib, R. Ammann, and J. Grubbs.

Sandplay therapist Martin Kalff defined twenty aspects of observation and analysis of dynamics in Sandplay [78; 79]:

1. Client's history and external situation. Similar sand pictures can have very different meanings depending on the client's clinical history. Depending on the client's clinical history, the sand process must be considered considering external circumstances and the client's internal state. Kalff emphasizes that it is important to remember that sand pictures often anticipate actual life circumstances but can only be matched with external circumstances over time.

2. Session content. The interaction between client and therapist during the session, as well as the client's verbal and non-verbal expression, should be examined for their correspondence to the sand picture. The client's comments and emotional reactions to the sand picture or even dreams can become important indications of the meaning of the sand composition.

3. Therapist's feelings. It is important to consider the therapist's emotional reaction to the sand composition as a whole and to its individual elements and compare what feelings they experienced before the start of the sand process to determine projections. It is also important to compare the therapist's sensory response to the client's emotional reaction to the sand picture.

4. Sandbox space. The use of space in sand work can provide important information when analyzing the sand scene. «Overcrowded» images may indicate flooding unconscious activity, while «empty» scenes may be indicators of depression and lack of energy. In other circumstances, a relatively empty sandbox may indicate inner clarity and calm. Repeatedly empty half or part of the sand picture may indicate the client's inability to express threatening inner experiences or their deep imbalance.

5. Choice and use of sand. The client's choice of dry or wet sand and the comments they make about it can provide important information about the meaning of the sand process. Also important is how contact with the sand occurs or does not occur. Doubts or reluctance to touch the sand may indicate unconscious fear or difficulties related to the physical aspects of life. Packing down the sand may indicate a desire to control one's emotions or psychological defenses.

6. Placement of figures and landscape. It is important to observe the properties and dominance of forms when molding figures and landscapes from sand and in the placement of figures. Rounded forms may indicate a predominance of feminine energy or sensory qualities,

while clear geometric forms may indicate a predominance of masculine energy and intellectual value. The manner in which the sand is shaped and the figures placed can be an important indication of some aspects of the client's process. More careful shaping and placement may indicate greater motivation, while random scattered placement of figures and forms may indicate a lack of will or intention. An indication of the physical level influenced by the sand process may be the configuration of sand or objects resembling parts or organs of the body.

7. Color. The choice of a bright, dominant color in the sand composition may indicate something important in the process. For example, intense red may indicate a striving for life; in the sandbox of a depressed person, this color may act compensatorily. The dominance of green may indicate a calmer, «vegetative» inner position.

8. Use of the blue bottom of the sandbox. The blue base of the sandbox can be used to indicate a clean surface in the landscape pattern, but generally, it indicates water. It is important to observe how the client descends to the symbolic water level. If the client avoids exposing the «water» under the sand, this may indicate a fear of going too deep into unconscious structures. If the client reaches the water level almost immediately, this may indicate they have access to deep resources. It is important to pay attention to whether the blue areas are used only as water, or if some other meaning is mixed in. Placing terrestrial objects on water or aquatic animals and water transport on land may indicate an insufficiently developed capacity for differentiation.

9. Figures. It is important to observe which figures are used and how this is done. A clear preference for or avoidance of a certain category of figures can provide important information about the client's condition. Avoidance of specific figures may indicate defensiveness (a person's tendency, when faced with difficulties, to take an avoidant or passive-defensive position). The presence or absence of vegetation can also provide important information about the client's experiences regarding growth, prohibitions, hope, or despair.

10. Placement of figures in space. Placing figures in opposite corners of the diagonal, i.e., at the maximum distance within the sandbox, may indicate opposite qualities of the specific symbolic content presented in the picture in this position.

11. Level of differentiation. The level of ego development is closely linked to the processes of differentiation in the sand scene. The sand picture provides a whole spectrum of

possibilities: from undifferentiated placement of figures in the sandbox at one end, random placement of figures in the sandbox, battle scenes with unclear distinctions between opponents to well-organized scenes with clear boundaries at a differentiated level on the other end of the spectrum.

12. Relationship between figures and scene elements. It is important to pay attention to whether the figures are connected to each other and how they interact. This may indicate how the client feels in relationships with other people or how aspects of their psyche are connected to each other. Qualitative changes in the relationships between figures and elements in a series of sand pictures are important indicators of the direction of healing. Unconnected and «parallel» scenes may indicate significant «disturbances.» In this case, it is important to observe changes from a state of disconnection to greater connection during the process. The presence of bridges may indicate a connection between different aspects of the personality and access to higher levels of energy. Bridges connecting identical elements or placed chaotically may indicate low energy or indecision.

13. Self-expression. The need for unique self-expression can be observed when the client molds faces or bodies of people from sand. Additionally, the client may make or bring their own figures from home to express something very special or unique in the sand picture.

14. Dynamism or static. The presence or blocking of movement can provide important information about the movement of the client's psychic energy. It is important to observe whether movement is contained, directed, free, or chaotic. If movement is blocked, it is necessary to look for indications of any exit points for the blocked energy. It is also important to investigate the properties of the closed system and try to understand whether this state indicates a need for security, concentration, or demarcation, whether it prevents activity, indicates frustration.

15. Two-dimensional use of sand. The sandbox and figures can also be used to create two-dimensional images similar to drawings. The meaning of such use of sand needs to be considered in the context of the entire sand process. This may indicate that the content of the image cannot be realized in the fullness of the three-dimensional context, the reasons for which need to be analyzed.

16. Proximity to consciousness. The level of consciousness or unconsciousness of the sand picture is indicated by the degree of ordinariness and realism of the scene. Sand pictures

with very distant places and times, or even imaginary places, are much farther from consciousness than scenes of normal, everyday life. Also, intersections of different levels of consciousness can be observed in the pictures.

17. Symbolic content. Interpreting symbolic content requires deep knowledge of mythology, symbols, religion, fairy tales, and dreams, and all this must be considered in the context of the specific work of each client on an individual basis. The client may unconsciously use collective meanings of symbols. Any associations or feelings the client has towards a particular symbol must be taken into account. By their nature, all symbols have a wide range of meanings, stretching from negative polarity to positive. It is important to demonstrate how the specific symbolic content relates to the specifics of the case under consideration, so deriving meanings from symbol dictionaries is clearly insufficient.

18. Interpretation in the context of the whole process. It is very important that the analysis of an individual scene be linked to the sand pictures that precede and follow it.

19. Interpretation based on internal patterns of development. A careful analysis of the relationships between figures and scene elements may indicate processes dependent on established patterns of development, within the individuation process according to Jung. The manifestation of the Self and subsequent stages of Ego development are particularly significant in the analysis of the Sandplay process, as is the appearance of the Shadow, Animus, and Anima. In the Sandplay process, one can recognize stages of consciousness development according to Neumann (Neumann, 1973), as well as signs of development according to patterns described by other famous theorists: Freud (Freud, 1966), Erikson (Erikson, 1963).

20. Client-therapist relationship. The sand process and its elements can be indicators of the therapeutic relationship and the properties of transference, countertransference, or co-transference as a complex interconnectedness of conscious and unconscious actions and reactions of the client and therapist, which often arise in PT. The manifestation of the Self is a natural result of the relationship formed by the free and protected space arising from the containment of the process by the therapist. The relationships between figures can indicate how easy or difficult the client finds it in the relationship with the therapist. The client's choice of specific figures can consciously or unconsciously reflect the therapist's traits.

Possibilities of applying Sandplay with various client groups.

In contemporary realities, it is important to distinguish between sand therapy as a basic Jungian method (Sandplay therapy) and the multimodal approach, where work with the sandbox is used as an additional tool in various modalities and directions of psychological and psychocorrectional assistance (counseling, psychodiagnostics, psychocorrection, EMDR, Gestalt therapy, symbol drama, crisis psychotherapy, systemic constellations, psychodrama, fairy-tale therapy, art therapy, sand-art, developmental pedagogy, speech therapy, defectology, etc.).

This distinction is fundamental, as Sandplay relies not only on sand material and miniature figures but also on a special theoretical-methodological framework of analytical psychology: symbolization of the unconscious, archetypal dynamics, levels of development of the Ego-Self axis, the individuation process, and the client's work in the Kallfian free and protected space accompanied by a containing, observing, and analyzing sand therapist. In the multimodal approach, the sandbox is used in synthesis with techniques from other modalities, where the psychologist-specialist takes on the role of an active director of the process, using the method as an additional stimulation environment.

As a cross-cultural, non-verbal, and symbolic method, Sandplay occupies a stable place in the contemporary practice of psychotherapy, psychocorrection, and psychological assistance. The method is used with people of all ages: both with the psychically and somatically healthy and with those with disorders of various etiologies [123].

Sandplay therapy is effectively used in individual and group formats with children, adolescents, and adults. The range of applications is quite wide: speech disorders, ADHD, autism spectrum disorders, work with orphaned children with immunodeficiency, with pre-verbal traumas. In a school context, the method helps correct maladjustment and form communication skills; moreover, it is used in the psychotherapy of social phobias and in work with the elderly [131; 151, p. 84]. Significant experience has been accumulated in using Sandplay in crisis intervention and the treatment of PTSD in both children and adults who have experienced natural disasters, armed conflicts, and terrorist attacks [81; 47 p. 248]. In the field of psychosomatic medicine and psychiatry, the method is used in oncology facilities, in work with psychosomatic and somatoform disorders, depression, conversion syndrome. It is also used in the rehabilitation of drug addicts, for addictions, suicidal behavior, borderline personality disorder, behavioral

pathologies, in particular, pyromania. A separate place is occupied by accompanying patients with dementia and people in terminal condition [123, p. 63].

The neurobiological direction of research is actively developing: the influence of sand work on the regulation of psychic processes and on individual brain structures is being studied. In particular, studies involving adults after traumatic brain injury have shown that the multisensory nature of Sandplay stimulates psychological development, and the kinesthetic properties of sand, tactile contact with figures, and the creation of compositions activate the lower parts of the brain, contributing to the restoration or maintenance of self-regulation [123, p. 267, 434].

Sandplay therapy is also actively used as a tool for professional and personal growth of specialists, both those working directly in this method and representatives of related fields; it is also used with students [44] for the development of professional self-awareness and adaptation.

Area of contraindications for the use of Sandplay therapy.

Archetypal images and symbols of the unconscious possess numinosity and autonomy: they can get out of the control of consciousness and completely separate, opening the path to the captivating but dangerous influence of archetypes. Jung pointed out the risk for people with a predisposition to psychosis: if archetypal contents are not integrated by consciousness, a threat of dissociation arises – a state in which consciousness loses its ability to control the unconscious. Miller (R. R. Miller, 1982) recommends refraining from using the method with adult patients with schizophrenia and borderline psychosis during acute episodes [102]. The method may also be premature for clients with severe deprivation in their history: the abundance of material in the Sandplay office and the possibility of embodying internal images in sand can cause them confusion and overload. Finally, Sandplay is not suitable for those who are categorically not ready or unwilling to work in this format, whether client or specialist.

The ultimate goals of Sandplay therapy intervention are not only the reduction of symptoms but movement towards psychic wholeness: facilitating individuation, constellating the Self, strengthening the observing ego, integrating split-off parts of the psyche, and developing a stable, meaningful mode of existence. At the symptomatic level: reduction of anxiety, depression, traumatic distress, improvement of emotional regulation and self-regulation. At the level of personal change: development of symbolic function, strengthening of inner dialogue, formation of a stable «I» image, transition from chaotic/rigid compositions to peaceful and structured ones,

appearance of transitional objects as resource accumulators. At the structural level: integration of previously split aspects of the psyche, reduction of dissociation, increased capacity to hold opposites, strengthening of the reflective ego and connection with the Self. At the interpersonal level: adaptive interaction with others, mastering new roles, inclusion in social space. The outcome of the sandplay process is the client's experience of greater wholeness, meaningfulness, and stability of psychic functioning, readiness to interact more actively with reality, and the ability to transfer the achieved changes into everyday life.

2.2. Experience of applying Sandplay therapy in the study of individuation

2.2.1. Sandplay therapy and individuation: conceptual connections and contemporary research

The conceptual bridge between the theory of individuation and the practice of Sandplay is the Jungian concept of the transcendent function of the symbol. Jung saw in the symbol something living precisely because it is pregnant with meaning and capable of holding opposites within itself without being destroyed, releasing the energy of their development. It is this mechanism that underlies individuation: the transcendent function unfolds the psyche towards a new attitude where the greater is possible [60]. Monte describes individuation and the transcendent function as two sides of the same coin: «individuation is the achievement of the full development of all sides of the personality into a unique configuration, whereas the transcendent function is the guiding force in achieving this idiosyncratic wholeness» [34, p. 27].

Sandplay provides the symbol with a special dimension of existence: not inside a dream or fantasy, but in an external, tangibly experienced space. The client does not describe the symbol as in a dream but creates it with their hands, places it in a real container, sees it among other images. It is this, according to Kalff, that provides the possibility for «a natural and spontaneous experience of the transcendent function of symbols» [ibid., p. 41]. The symbolic imagery of Sandplay functions like the imagery of a dream: it «transforms consciousness, builds bridges between opposites, helps to move from one stage to another, from one perception to

another»[ibid., p. 41]. In this sense, Sandplay is a medium for the development of individuation, in which the transcendent function unfolds directly.

Dora Kalff: «free and protected space» as a condition for individuation.

The theoretical foundation of Sandplay as a method that activates individuation is Dora Kalff's concept of the free and protected space (freies und geschütztes Raum). Kalff understood this space not as a technical technique but as an ontological condition: the therapist surrenders to the law of the psyche and takes on the role of a witness-container, which creates that special form of relationship in which the client's psyche feels sufficient safety to encounter the unconscious. «The role of the therapist in Jungian psychotherapy is to facilitate psychological wholeness by allowing the client to be guided by their unconscious totality in the presence of the therapist»[34; p. 28].

Kalff defined individuation in Sandplay through the encounter with the Self as the central archetype and totality of the personality: «it is through this process that the person surrenders to the law of the psyche and enters into the process of individuation, as Jung defined it» [ibid., p. 37–38]. Encounters with the Self in the Sandplay space are accessible to direct observation by both client and therapist, manifesting in symbols such as the mandala, circle, quaternity, child figure. Kalff also insisted that the therapist «does nothing» at the moment of creating the picture: does not interpret, does not direct, does not intervene. This non-intervention is a form of maximal presence that allows individuation to unfold according to its own logic. According to Weinrib's observation, such an approach «apparently accelerates the individuation process and moves more directly towards the constellation of the Self and the relativization of the ego» [ibid., p. 38].

Ruth Ammann: individuation as observable dynamics in a series of sand pictures.

Ruth Ammann developed a clinical vision of how the individuation process unfolds and becomes visible in a sequence of Sandplay sessions. In her book «Healing and Transformation in Sandplay: Creative Processes Become Visible,» she presented in detail two cases of adult women, demonstrating how a series of sand pictures reveals «fundamental confrontations»: with the shadow, with the transformation of the feminine, with the Self as the image of God, which both reflect and advance the individuation process [2, p. 47; 34, p. 47].

A conceptually important contribution by Ammann is her view of Sandplay as a space for the psyche's self-regulation towards the equilibrium and wholeness of the personality [2]. The

psyche in the Sandplay space does not need therapeutic management – it itself, given a sufficient container, organizes the movement towards individuation. Ammann's first case showed a classical individuation sequence: descent into darkness (dismembered, scattered symbols), then constellation of the union of opposites, and then ascent towards healing and rebirth (transformation of energies in pictures, mandala symbolism). The second case traced how the encounter with «completely unknown» shadow aspects of the feminine led to awareness of unrealized potential and the expansion of identity beyond the dominant role of the «good mother.» In both cases, the process unfolded primarily at the unconscious level, gradually penetrating consciousness and manifesting in external life. Ammann especially emphasized the individual nature of each process, which corresponds to the Jungian understanding of individuation as a unique path.

Estelle Weinrib: ego strengthening as a prologue to individuation.

Estelle Weinrib introduced an important clarification to the conceptual system of Sandplay and individuation, concerning the relationship between ego-development and the encounter with the Self. In her work «Images of the Self,» she showed that individuation in Sandplay unfolds in two fundamentally different registers: first, Sandplay strengthens the wounded ego, and only then, when the ego-structure becomes sufficiently stable, are the transformative aspects of individuation possible [184]. This finding has fundamental methodological significance: it means that the Sandplay process has an inbuilt sensitivity to the client's current psychic structure and itself regulates the depth of immersion into the unconscious.

Weinrib also showed that the very act of creating in Sandplay as «expression through doing» is itself individual: «in Sandplay, the person expresses themselves through the act of doing, which itself cultivates a growing sense of creativity, which, in turn, strengthens the ego and improves self-image and self-confidence» [34, p. 46]. Weinrib notes that doing precedes understanding, not follows it [184]. It is precisely this ontological primacy of action over interpretation that distinguishes Sandplay from verbal analytical methods and makes it especially valuable for working with those aspects of the psyche that have not yet found linguistic expression.

Katherine Bradway: Sandplay as the «silent workshop of the psyche.»

Katherine Bradway (Bradway, 1991; Bradway & McCoard, 1997), whose book «Sandplay: Silent Workshop of the Psyche» became one of the classic texts of Sandplay methodology, emphasizes silence as a special dimension of the connection between Sandplay and individuation. In the traditional analytical setting, language is both a medium of expression and a field of interpretation; Sandplay creates a space in which the psyche works in silence, without needing to translate the image into words. Silence in Sandplay is the process where the symbol speaks directly, bypassing the defenses and rationalizations of the conscious mind [12].

Bradway also developed the concept of «co-transference» in Sandplay therapy as a special form of interaction between the psychic spaces of therapist and client, in which both become participants in the unfolding symbolic process. This concept indicates that individuation in Sandplay is always a dyadic process: it occurs not «in the client» nor «in the therapist,» but in the space between them, in the living field of co-transference, which itself is a form of analytical holding, containing. It is precisely the therapeutic relationship, according to Bradway, that creates the container within which the psyche receives the opportunity to risk an encounter with the unconscious. In this view, Sandplay methodology directly echoes the Neumannian understanding of primary relationships as a condition without which archetypal processes cannot be activated [ibid.].

Lenore Steinhardt: Sandplay as a space for self-expression and transformation.

Lenore Steinhardt (2001), a certified ISST Sandplay teacher, examining Sandplay through the lens of art therapy and Jungian psychology, emphasizes the fundamental importance of non-verbal symbolic expression for activating individuation. In her concept, Sandplay provides simultaneously a diagnostic and transforming space: the scenes created by the client are not an illustration to a verbal narrative but an independent psychic act – an act of embodying unconscious content into visible form. It is precisely this embodiment that initiates change. Steinhardt notes that in a series of sessions where the client creates sand worlds, deep confrontations with oneself unfold, and these confrontations not only accompany individuation but themselves become its living fabric [163].

Steinhardt also draws attention to the fact that Sandplay works at the intersection of the personal and the collective – precisely where, according to Jung, authentic individuation unfolds. The miniatures that the client chooses from the therapist's collection belong simultaneously to

personal history and the mythological space of humanity: by choosing a figure, the client establishes a connection between their personal complex and its archetypal dimension. It is in this dual belonging, personal and collective, that the individuation potential of choosing miniatures lies: the psyche, through them, establishes a connection with those layers of the collective unconscious that are necessary for movement toward wholeness.

Lorraine R. Freedle: empirical confirmation of the link between Sandplay and individuation.

If Kalff, Ammann, Weinrib, and Bradway built the conceptual link between Sandplay and individuation based on clinical experience, then Freedle (L. R. Freedle) made the first systematic attempt at its empirical verification. In her dissertation research (Freedle, 2006), applying the qualitative method of collective case study, she posed the question: does something unfold in the Sandplay process of adult clients that can be described as individuation in the Jungian sense? The results gave an affirmative answer. All four participants exhibited a stable pattern of psychological development – the «Seven Phases of Sandplay Therapy» [140, p. 169–177; 142], structurally corresponding to the dynamics of individuation: from the presentation of everyday difficulties through descent into the dark phase to the constellation of the Self, integration of opposites, and return to life with a renewed attitude.

The concept of the seven phases of the Sandplay process by L. Freedle, examining the symbolic dynamics of sand compositions as a reflection of successive stages of psychic transformation and the movement of individuation. The phase approach allowed analyzing not only individual symbols and their meanings but also the overall trajectory of changes in the participants' psychic field: the nature of image development, ways of organizing space, degree of integration of opposites, features of experiencing crises, transitions, and the formation of an inner center.

Freedle defines the following phases of the Sandplay process reflecting the individuation movement of the Psyche, expressed in the symbolic space of the Jungian sandbox [37]:

PHASE I. Expression of experience and everyday struggle with difficulties. In the initial phase, people often express themselves and their current actual situation in the sand. Personal stories, problems, obstacles, and possible solutions may appear. Sometimes people may feel the need to explain each element in detail, as well as justify its use;

PHASE II. Access to resources and their placement. During the second phase, the client's internal resources are expressed more openly in the sand; more symbols of positive energy can be observed; the psyche comes alive; the client develops ego strength for the journey; trust in the therapeutic relationship is established;

PHASE III. Descent into death, darkness, despair. In the third stage, as the client descends into internal conflicts, shadow themes, complexes, war, barriers hindering access to resources, and/or inertia may predominate;

PHASE IV. Reflection, mirroring, meditation, transformation, finding hope. After Phase III of struggle and decline, the fourth phase includes a period of self-reflection when hopeful and calming scenes consciously arise;

PHASE V. Touching wholeness, divinity, fullness. A deep moment or moments of union occur; both the client and the therapist experience contact with the depth of the Self and its transformative energies; with a feeling of wholeness, transcendence, unity, and/or the presence of the divine;

PHASE VI. Union of opposites, emerging integration. In Phase VI, the return path of the heroic journey begins, associated with the integration of opposites and the relativization of the ego. The encounter with the Self may be accompanied by destabilization and transformation of the ego, after which the client again encounters previous difficulties, but with greater inner strength and determination;

PHASE VII. Return to everyday life with a new perspective. By the end of the process or in the final sand scene, the client demonstrates a new perspective or a renewed attitude toward everyday life; themes and symbols of returning home, to oneself, with a reborn ego.

Freedle also empirically confirmed the specific role of Sandplay as a non-verbal channel for contents inaccessible to verbalization, stating that: «participants could express themselves through Sandplay in ways previously unavailable to them verbally»— and further, that this property as access to «pre-verbal and implicit memory systems, which by their very nature cannot be fully conveyed by words»[37, p. 84] makes Sandplay methodologically indispensable for studying those dimensions of individuation that have not yet found linguistic expression. In 2025, Freedle published an expanded conceptual version of the model, confirming its universal character and applicability to diverse clinical groups, defining the seven phases.

The totality of the considered conceptual contributions allows us to formulate the answer to the question posed by this study: why, in our opinion, is Sandplay an adequate method for studying the individuation of women with paternal deprivation?

2.3. Methodological justifications for psychodiagnostic research and psychocorrection of women's individuation with paternal deprivation using the Sandplay therapy method

The choice of research method in psychology is determined by the nature of the phenomenon under study, its ontological status, and the theoretical framework in which it is conceptualized. The individuation of a woman with paternal deprivation is a processual, non-linear, symbolically mediated phenomenon unfolding over time and not amenable to exhaustive description through static quantitative indicators. It is precisely this ontological uniqueness of the research subject that dictates the choice of appropriate methodological tools – qualitative, phenomenological, and oriented towards symbolic dynamics. This section justifies why Sandplay therapy is a methodologically optimal context in research and psychocorrectional terms for studying this phenomenon.

2.3.1. Qualitative research methodology as a framework for psychodiagnostic research of women's individuation with paternal deprivation

Most empirical studies of paternal deprivation rely on standardized psychometric instruments: self-attitude questionnaires, attachment scales, anxiety and depression inventories [115; 100]. These methods capture structural characteristics of experience at a specific point in time, allow for intergroup comparisons and statistical verification of hypotheses. However, they are fundamentally incapable of capturing what lies at the heart of individuation: processuality, symbolic transformation, the dynamics of the relationship between the conscious and unconscious. A psychometric scale captures a snapshot, whereas individuation is movement, the dynamics of personality. An instrument that measures anxiety before and after therapy can capture symptomatic improvement but cannot describe how the internal image of the absent

father transformed into a resourceful inner authority, through which symbols this movement was achieved, and at what moment a qualitative shift occurred.

Furthermore, paternal deprivation is a fundamentally subjective phenomenon: what is decisive is not so much the objective fact of the father's absence but the psychic quality of the paternal function and the nature of its integration into the daughter's inner world [136; 134; 137]. This means that the research method must be capable of working with subjective experience, internal images, and their dynamics, not only with behavioral indicators or self-assessment scales.

This limitation of quantitative methods concerning the study of deep psychic processes was already noted in the works of A. Maslow, who warned of the danger of reductionism in psychology: the desire for measurement precision should not substitute the precision of understanding [100]. In the context of Jungian psychology, this problem becomes even more acute: the archetypal and symbolic by its very nature does not lend itself to operationalization in numerical scales, not because it is «unscientific,» but because it belongs to a different level of psychic reality requiring a qualitatively different epistemological approach.

The qualitative research paradigm is oriented towards understanding meaning, dynamics, and subjective experience. It is methodologically adequate when the research subject is processual, contextually rich, and fundamentally individualized – and such is the phenomenon of individuation [120]. Qualitative research recognizes the value of understanding how a specific path unfolds in a specific psyche.

A fundamental methodological justification for choosing a qualitative approach to study individuation is contained in the works of C. G. Jung himself, who insisted that the psychology of the unconscious requires a hermeneutic, rather than an experimental-statistical, method. In his fundamental work «Psychological Types,» Jung draws attention to the fact that the research method is determined by the nature of the object under study: measurement is applicable where the subject lends itself to quantitative expression; where the subject is constituted by meaning and symbol [132]. Regarding the study of individuation, this means that the qualitative method is not a methodological choice among several possible ones but a necessary condition for adequate knowledge of the phenomenon.

A systematic review of the effectiveness of Sandplay therapy [121] shows that it is precisely qualitative and mixed designs that allow capturing processual changes: the transformation of symbolism from session to session, the appearance of new images, structural shifts in the construction of sand pictures, which remain inaccessible to purely quantitative measurements. This confirms the position of Merriam (Merriam, 1998) that qualitative research is indispensable where the subject requires deep, holistic immersion rather than broad coverage [101], and the individual psychotherapeutic process is precisely such a subject.

An additional argument for the qualitative approach is the very nature of the data produced in the sandplay process. The client's verbalization, the sequence of figure choices, the spatial organization of the scene, the change of the scene from session to session – all this is rich material amenable to systematic qualitative analysis. Ramos and da Matta (Ramos D. G., da Matta R. M., 2008) developed a specialized method for categorizing Sandplay data for scientific research, allowing the combination of qualitative interpretation of symbolism with elements of quantitative tracking of category dynamics [117]. This confirms that the sandplay process produces data suitable for rigorous scientific analysis without loss of semantic depth.

A significant argument in favor of qualitative methodology concerning female psychology and individuation is the work of C. P. Estés (Estés, 1992), who in her large-scale study of female archetypal patterns used a narrative and interpretive approach [27], convincingly demonstrating that deep female psychic processes are revealed precisely through images, fairy tales, symbols – that is, through qualitative, not quantitative material. Similarly, in clinical studies of female psychology, drawing on the works of C. P. Estés, L. Sh. Leonard, and other Jungian analysts, qualitative analysis of narratives and symbolic material serves as the primary method for understanding phenomena related to paternal trauma and its transformation.

Phenomenological analysis and Erich Neumann's model as a theoretical basis for interpretation.

The phenomenological approach in the study of the psyche is aimed at describing phenomena as they appear in immediate experience, without reduction to external causal explanations. Applied to the sandplay process, this means attentive, unconstrained observation of what unfolds in the sand space: which images appear, how they transform, what precedes qualitative shifts. Phenomenological analysis applied to sandplay material was conceptualized, in

particular, in the dissertation research of O. Lipadatova (2014), dedicated to the study of psychological adaptation of immigrants through the prism of their sandplay expressions [95].

The theoretical framework for interpreting symbolic dynamics in this study is E. Neumann's model of psychic development, primarily his concept of the stages of consciousness development and the structure of the female psyche. In his fundamental work «The Great Mother,» the author developed a concept of the development of female consciousness as a non-linear, mythologically structured process in which the transformation of the image of the Great Mother and associated archetypal figures plays a central role. Neumann describes individuation as a movement from a state of fusion with the collective unconscious to a differentiated identity centered in the Self through successive encounters with archetypal images [109].

Concerning the female psyche, this path is inextricably linked with the transformation of the image of the Animus, that inner masculine figure whose primary reference is the father image. In paternal deprivation, the Animus often appears destructive, archaic, non-dynamic, and it is precisely Sandplay that creates the space in which this figure can be safely embodied, seen, and gradually transformed. Phenomenological analysis of symbolic series in Sandplay scenes allows tracking how the Neumannian stages unfold in a specific individual process.

A significant supplement to Neumann's model is the work of Linda Leonard «The Wounded Woman» (Leonard, 1982), which examines in detail the phenomenology of the paternal wound in the female psyche and identifies specific patterns of compensation and defense arising from various forms of paternal deprivation. Leonard relies on clinical narrative and imaginal material, demonstrating that it is precisely the qualitative phenomenological approach that allows capturing the subtle differences between different types of paternal deprivation and their psychic consequences – differences completely lost when translated into psychometric scales.

Case study methodology as a strategy for studying individuation.

Case study research strategy is a methodologically sound choice when studying complex, contextually rich phenomena where variables cannot be isolated and the researcher seeks to understand how and why a particular process occurs [196]. It is precisely these criteria that the study of individuation meets: each case represents a unique configuration of internal images, defense structures, relational patterns, and resources.

Within the comparative analysis by Yazan (2015) of three key approaches to case study methodology: Yin (2009), Merriam (1998), and Stake (1995), the most adequate for the purposes of this study appears to be an integrated approach, combining the constructivist epistemological orientation of Merriam and Stake with the analytical rigor of procedures proposed by Yin. Merriam's constructivist position, according to which «reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social world» [101, p. 6], is methodologically consonant with the Jungian understanding of psychic reality as constructed and symbolically mediated. At the same time, Yin's emphasis on the need for analytical procedures that ensure research quality (construct, internal, and external validity, reliability) allows giving the analysis of Sandplay material the necessary research rigor [195].

Serial analysis of Sandplay sessions of one participant allows tracing the entire arc of the transformation process from the initial state to the appearance of integrating symbols. Freedle (2006) in her dissertation research applied case study precisely to study the individuation of adults with traumatic brain injuries through Sandplay, convincingly showing that the depth of understanding achieved with this approach is unattainable by any quantitative tool [34; 36].

Comparative analysis of several cases allows, without striving for statistical generalization, to identify recurring patterns of symbolic dynamics characteristic of women with different forms of paternal deprivation, and to formulate justified typological hypotheses [1; 162]. This corresponds to the logic of analytical generalization accepted in qualitative research methodologically described by Yin: not the entire population of clients, but theoretical assumptions verified in subsequent research [196].

An important methodological argument in favor of case study concerning the study of individuation through Sandplay is also Merriam's position on the nature of qualitative case study: such research is «holistic» in the sense that it examines the subject in all the complexity of its contextual embeddedness [101]. Individuation as a psychic process is fundamentally not amenable to being cut out from the participant's life context – their history of attachments, cultural and family patterns, current life circumstances – which allows maintaining this contextual wholeness without sacrificing it to the demands of standardization.

2.3.2. Sandplay therapy as an optimal environment for research and psychocorrection of women's individuation with paternal deprivation

The totality of the methodological considerations for qualitative analysis presented above indicates that Sandplay therapy is an environment in which all the necessary conditions for the research and correction of the individuation of women with paternal deprivation are simultaneously fulfilled. Let us examine these conditions systematically.

Firstly, the non-verbal nature of the method. Paternal deprivation is typically experienced at pre-verbal or early levels of the psyche, before the child has developed the ability to verbally understand the relationship with the father. It is neurobiologically confirmed that early traumatic experiences, stored in the limbic system and right hemisphere, are difficult to access verbally, whereas non-verbal and symbolic techniques allow working with these layers directly [5; 31]. Sandplay provides precisely a symbolic, tactile, three-dimensional channel of access to material inaccessible through words. This aligns with Allan Schore's theoretical propositions about the role of right-hemispheric affective processes in attachment psychotherapy: it is precisely non-verbal, imaginal, affectively charged working methods that create conditions for the regulation of right-hemispheric affective states associated with early attachment disturbances [123].

Secondly, the «free and protected space.» Dora Kalff's concept of the «free and protected space» is fundamental for working with clients whose early experience was associated with a deficit of precisely such a space: safe, accepting, and non-demanding. For a woman with paternal deprivation, the experience of acceptance without interpretation and evaluation in the presence of a witness-therapist creates a corrective relational experience, which is itself part of the therapeutic process and creates conditions for accessing the material of individuation. This dimension is particularly significant considering the research of Judith Herman, which showed that recovery from traumatic experience requires first and foremost the creation of a safe containing space [78].

Thirdly, visibility and objectification of the internal. One of the key mechanisms of Sandplay's action is the objectification of psychic contents: internal images, conflicts, and resources receive a visible embodiment in a three-dimensional scene, becoming visible and accessible for reflection. This is especially important for the study of individuation: it is precisely

the internal image of the father, as a symbolic structure, that is the subject of study and transformation, and Sandplay allows this image to manifest in a diagnostically significant and therapeutically workable form [121]. The active imaginative objectification of the internal, underlying this process, is directly related to the Jungian technique of active imagination: Sandplay can be viewed as a three-dimensional active imagination expressed in material form [172].

Fourthly, seriality and tracking of dynamics. The Sandplay process is built as a series of sessions, each producing an independent artifact – a sand picture – allowing for fixation, description, and comparison. This allows not only to ascertain the presence of certain symbols but to trace their transformation: from destructive and deficit images to integrating and centering ones. It is precisely such serial dynamics that constitute the content of individuation and precisely this that makes Sandplay an indispensable research tool for its study. The categorization method developed by Ramos and de Matta (2008) provides a tool for systematically tracking such dynamics with the possibility of cross-case comparison [117].

Fifthly, empirically confirmed effectiveness. A systematic review by Roesler (2019), covering 16 randomized controlled trials and 17 effectiveness studies, showed significant improvements using Sandplay therapy for a wide range of mental problems in children and adults [121]. A study by Foo, Ancok, and Milfayetty (2017) on a sample of women with generalized anxiety disorder demonstrated an exceptionally high effect size (Cohen's $d = 2.58$) compared to the control group [31]. This confirms that Sandplay is not a purely clinical-descriptive method: it produces measurable therapeutic results accompanied by observable symbolic dynamics.

Sixthly, integration of research and therapeutic functions. One of the key methodological advantages of Sandplay therapy in the context of this study is that it is simultaneously a method of research and a method of psychocorrection, psychotherapy. This allows avoiding the artificial split between «pure»research and therapeutic practice, characteristic of experimental designs. This integration is methodologically consonant with Stake's position, viewing the qualitative researcher as an interpreter inseparable from the studied phenomenon, and Merriam's position, emphasizing the importance of researcher reflexivity in qualitative case study [101]. The therapist-researcher in Sandplay work occupies precisely such a reflexive position of witness and

interpreter, constituting the possibility of simultaneously therapeutic intervention and scientific knowledge.

Thus, the methodological justification of this study is built on the following logical chain. The individuation of a woman with paternal deprivation is a processual, symbolically mediated, subjectively experienced phenomenon not reducible to measurable static variables. Its adequate study requires qualitative methodology, phenomenological sensitivity, attention to symbolic dynamics, and the ability to track the transformation process over time.

Case study methodology, in the integrated reading of Yin (2009), Merriam (1998), and Stake (1995), provides a strategic framework for the idiographic study of the complete process while maintaining analytical rigor. Phenomenological analysis, based on the theoretical models of Neumann (Neumann, 1953; 1955), Leonard (Leonard, 1982), Bolen (Bolen, 1984), and Woodman (Woodman, 1982; 1985), sets the conceptual coordinates for interpreting symbolic series specific to the female psyche and the experience of paternal deprivation. The method of categorizing Sandplay data according to Ramos and de Matta (2008) ensures analytical rigor and the possibility of cross-case comparison.

Sandplay therapy in this configuration is not just one possible method; it is a methodologically necessary choice: only it simultaneously provides access to pre-verbal layers of experience [123], creates conditions for the safe embodiment of the internal father image in a free and protected space [78], produces serial, describable, and comparable artifacts of symbolic dynamics, integrates research and therapeutic functions within a single methodological framework, and remains a recognized therapeutic method with proven effectiveness [121].

Sandplay provides the symbol with a three-dimensional, tactile, visible existence – thereby transferring the transcendent function of the symbol from the realm of internal fantasy into the space of observable experience. Finally, Sandplay works at the intersection of the personal and the archetypal: the choice of a miniature is always simultaneously a personal act and an archetypal event, making the method sensitive precisely to those levels of the psyche on which, according to Jung, authentic individuation unfolds. In the context of studying female individuation in paternal deprivation, this correspondence acquires particular importance: the deficit of the paternal function affects precisely those pre-verbal, body-embedded, relational

layers of the psyche that are most fully accessible precisely in the non-verbal, symbolic, dyadically held space of Sandplay therapy.

This is precisely why Sandplay therapy serves in this study as a unified environment for diagnosis, correction, and scientific knowledge of the individuation of a woman with paternal deprivation – as a methodological solution in which research rigor and clinical depth do not contradict but mutually enrich each other.

Conclusions to Chapter 2

1. Sandplay therapy as an independent method was formed at the intersection of C. G. Jung's analytical psychology, M. Lowenfeld's «World Technique,» and Eastern contemplative traditions. Its creator, D. M. Kalff, reinterpreted Lowenfeld's diagnostic tools: the creation of a sand picture itself became a therapeutic act, not merely material for subsequent verbal work.

2. Sandplay therapy has proven effectiveness for a wide range of requests, from symptomatic disorders to structural personality changes, and is used with children, adolescents, and adults in individual and group formats, confirming its universal therapeutic potential.

3. The key condition for personal change in Sandplay is the «free and protected space» according to D. Kalff – a physical container in the form of a sandbox and a psychological container in the form of a non-judgmental empathic presence of the therapist. It is this space that activates the innate capacity of the psyche for self-regulation and healing.

4. The psychological mechanisms of personal change in Sandplay form a multi-level system: symbolization and the transcendent function, restoration of the Ego-Self axis, sensory-affective regulation (multisensory feedback loop), therapeutic containing, countertransference and resonance, activation of inner dialogue, mastery of new roles. All mechanisms act interconnectedly.

5. The manifestation of the Self – the central event of the sandplay process. Its appearance in the form of mandala-like and integrating images marks the restoration of the ego-Self axis and triggers the organic movement of the psyche towards wholeness and individuation.

6. The conceptual contributions of D. Kalff's followers (E. Weinrib, R. Ammann, K. Bradway, M. Kalff, O. Lipadatova, L. Freedle, etc.) have systematically developed and described the theory of individuation in Sandplay: based on the phenomenological approach, stages of development, patterns of serial symbolic dynamics, the concept of «co-transference» as a dyadic process, as well as the empirically verified «Seven Phases of Sandplay Therapy» were described.

7. Sandplay is a methodologically necessary environment for studying the individuation of women with paternal deprivation because it: (a) provides access to pre-verbal layers of experience where early paternal trauma is stored; (b) produces serial, describable, and

comparable artifacts of symbolic dynamics; (c) integrates research and psychocorrectional functions within a single methodological framework.

8. Qualitative case study methodology, integrating the approaches of Yin, Merriam, and Stake, is an adequate strategy for studying individuation as a processual, symbolically mediated, and fundamentally idiographic phenomenon. Phenomenological qualitative analysis and the case study framework set the conceptual coordinates for interpreting symbolic series specific to the female psyche in paternal deprivation.

CHAPTER 3. EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE DYNAMICS OF INDIVIDUATION IN WOMEN WITH PATERNAL DEPRIVATION

Aim: to identify and study the features of the dynamics of individuation in women with experience of paternal deprivation based on Sandplay therapy material, avoiding pathologization and considering the subjective experience of the participants.

Hypotheses of the study:

1. Paternal deprivation does not preclude the possibility of undergoing the individuation process in women.
2. In the conditions of psychotherapeutic work using Jungian sand therapy (Sandplay therapy), activation of compensatory and symbolic mechanisms is possible, allowing the initiation, support, and completion of individuation phases.
3. Signs of individuation can be captured at an imaginal level and traced in the dynamics of therapeutic scenes expressed in the Jungian sandbox field.

Tasks of the study:

1. Select a group of subjects sufficient in number to observe the phenomena of the dynamics of individuation.
2. Organize the Sandplay therapy environment for conducting the experiment: the office, define the setting and schedule for each participant, sign informed consents.
3. Organize a working reference group of specialist psychologists-sandplay therapists for independent analysis of the subjects' materials.
4. Develop a model of research psychotherapy encompassing social, personal, symbolic, analytical-psychological, and psychotherapeutic levels.
5. Develop criteria for identifying signs and observing the individuation of a woman with paternal deprivation in sand scenes.
6. Develop and test a checklist for registering symbols of individuation in Sandplay therapy as a tool for qualitative analysis.
7. Conduct a qualitative analysis of Sandplay therapy materials from women with experience of paternal deprivation and trace the dynamics of individuation based on the obtained results.

8. Analyze the obtained results and compare the data on the dynamics of women's individuation with the results of the study of their self-attitude.

9. Formulate possible types and trajectories of individuation of a woman with paternal deprivation based on the obtained data.

10. Draw conclusions about the role of the therapeutic Sandplay environment in initiating and maintaining the individuation process of a woman with paternal deprivation.

11. Develop a Sandplay therapy program for working with women with paternal deprivation.

3.1. Planning and organization of the study

This study is a qualitative ascertaining study with elements of processual analysis. The aim of an ascertaining study is to identify and describe the features of the phenomenon under study at a certain stage, as well as to compare the dynamics of changes in the studied parameters during the psychotherapeutic work process.

Within this work, the study is aimed at investigating the dynamics of individuation in women with experience of paternal deprivation in the context of Sandplay therapy.

Controlled variables:

- gender: women;
- age: 33–56 years;
- presence of experience of paternal deprivation;
- participation in Sandplay therapy;
- comparable conditions of the therapeutic space.

Independent variable:

conditions of analytical work in Sandplay therapy (the psychotherapeutic process as an unfolding environment of symbolization and transformation).

Levels of the independent variable:

- initial stage of therapy (diagnostic and projective phase);
- intermediate stages (development of symbolic material, crisis and transitional states);

- final stage (integration and stabilization of psychic changes).

Means of recording the independent variable:

- observation of sandplay sessions;
- analysis of sand compositions;
- protocolling of the therapeutic process.

Dependent variable:

dynamics of individuation, manifested in changes in the symbolic, personal, and relational functioning of the study participants.

Levels (indicators) of the dependent variable:

- degree of differentiation of the Self and boundaries;
- presence and nature of internal objects;
- features of symbolic activity;
- level of autonomy and inner authority;
- integration of opposites;
- changes in self-attitude and relational patterns.

Means of measuring the dependent variable:

- a checklist for registering symbols of individuation developed within this study [149], based on L. R. Freedle's concept of the «Seven Phases of Sandplay Therapy» [37];
- qualitative analysis of symbolic material (sand compositions);
- content and intent analysis of verbal data (analysis of interviews and narratives);
- psychodiagnostic study of participants' self-attitude.

The dynamics of individuation, recorded using L. R. Freedle's phase model, were compared with the results of the psychodiagnostic study of self-attitude (MIS) [113]. Such a correlation allowed identifying the relationship between changes in the symbolic material of sandplay compositions and the transformation of the subjective experience of the self.

Data processing methods:

- content analysis and intent analysis of symbolic and verbal material;
- cross-case comparison of dynamics;
- quantitative data processing.

To assess the direction and statistical significance of the identified changes, the non-parametric sign test was used, allowing comparison of indicators «before» and «after» the psychotherapeutic process. The application of this criterion provided additional verification of the observed dynamics, recorded both at the level of symbolic analysis (according to individuation phases) and at the level of psychodiagnostic indicators of self-attitude.

Stages of the study:

Stage 1. Organizational.

The aim of this stage is to develop the research design, determine the methodological strategy, and select methods adequate to the aim and tasks of the study.

Given the specificity of the research subject and the nature of the phenomenon under study, an integrative model [165; 167; 170] was chosen as the methodological strategy, including a qualitative approach and an element of quantitative analysis using the non-parametric sign test. The qualitative approach is implemented in the form of a collective case study with multiple sources of data, which involves a comparative analysis of several cases while simultaneously utilizing heterogeneous sources of information: observations, interviews, photographs of sand pictures, and session recordings, this provides both the analytical breadth necessary for identifying overarching patterns and sufficient depth for studying each individual case. The quantitative approach using the non-parametric sign test will allow assessing the direction and statistical significance of changes in «before and after» indicators.

Methods and tools of the study:

1. Unstructured interview. Used at the initial stage of the study as a method of primary immersion into the participants' subjective world. This method allows capturing the individual request of the participants, the features of their subjective experience, as well as the context of experiencing paternal deprivation before the start of Sandplay therapy. The unstructured nature of the interview ensures the possibility of free self-expression by the participants and the identification of significant thematic meanings without rigid restriction by standardized questions, which corresponds to the analytical-psychological paradigm of the study.

2. Sandplay therapy as a method of obtaining empirical material. Sandplay therapy is used as a projective-symbolic method, allowing the study of unconscious processes through the creation of sand compositions in the conditions of the Kalfian free and protected space. This

method provides access to deep levels of the psyche and allows recording the dynamics of individuation in symbolic form.

3. Checklist for registering symbols of individuation. The checklist was developed based on L. R. Freedle's concept of the «Seven Phases of Sandplay Therapy» [37] and represents a tool for systematic recording of observed symbols, images, and phenomena in sand compositions. The use of the checklist allows: structuring symbolic material; correlating observed phenomena with phases of the individuation process; tracking the dynamics of changes during therapy (Appendix 11).

4. Qualitative analysis methods: analysis of interviews, analysis of artifacts (photo protocols of sand compositions), analysis of narratives from written protocols of sand compositions (sandbox titles, comments on sandboxes).

5. Self-Attitude Inventory (MIS by S. R. Pantileev). This psychodiagnostic tool is used to assess the participants' subjective attitude towards themselves, including parameters such as inner honesty, self-confidence, self-guidance, reflected self-attitude, self-worth, self-acceptance, self-attachment, inner conflict, self-blame (Appendix 10). The inclusion of this method is due to the need to compare the symbolic dynamics of individuation in Sandplay with changes in the subjectively experienced structure of the Self as criteria-codes for dynamic personality changes.

6. The non-parametric sign test will allow assessing the direction and statistical significance of changes in the «before and after» indicators of the MIS data.

Stage 2. Research.

The aim of the stage is to identify and analyze the dynamics of individuation in women with experience of paternal deprivation during Sandplay therapy, as well as to test the research hypothesis about the relationship between symbolic and personal transformation.

Tasks of the stage:

1. Conduct a psychodiagnostic study of the participants' self-attitude (at the initial and final stages of therapy);

2. Conduct a series of 10 sandplay sessions with the study participants, recording symbolic material (sand compositions, written and photo-observation protocols, filling out the checklist for registering symbols);

3. Carry out an analysis of the dynamics of individuation based on the analysis of the checklist for registering symbols, relying on the phase model of L. R. Freedle [34; 37].

4. In collaboration with a reference group of specialists, conduct a cross-case analysis of recurring patterns (key «essences» of sand pictures) and typological features of the dynamics of individuation.

5. Conduct a psychodiagnostic study of the participants' self-attitude (at the initial and final stages of therapy);

6. Correlate the symbolic analysis data (dynamics of individuation phases) with the results of self-attitude psychodiagnostics to identify consistency of changes at different levels of psychic functioning;

7. Carry out quantitative data processing using the non-parametric sign test to assess the direction and statistical significance of changes in the «before and after» indicators.

Stage 3. Final.

The aim of the stage is the generalization, interpretation, and theoretical understanding of the obtained results.

Tasks of the stage:

1. Integrate the data from qualitative (symbolic) and quantitative analysis;
2. Formulate the main conclusions of the study;
3. Identify patterns in the dynamics of individuation in women with experience of paternal deprivation;
4. Determine the scientific novelty and practical significance of the work.
5. Generalize the materials of research psychotherapy into a psychotherapy program for women with paternal deprivation based on the Sandplay approach.

3.2. Progress of the study

Women with life experience of an absent father were invited to participate in the study through an announcement (Appendix 3) on E. V. Sheveleva's social networks. After a preliminary interview, 9 women with experience of an absent father (paternal deprivation) were selected ($n = 9$), aged 33 to 56 (Appendix 14). In the Jungian perspective, this age period of the

study participants corresponds to the phase of approaching and entering midlife, considered a critical stage of deeper individuation. The choice of this group is due to the fact that the deficit or distortion of the paternal figure in the intrapsychic space influences the formation of personality boundaries, the dynamics of self-attitude, and self-regulation processes, making the individuation process more complex.

When selecting, not only the biographical factor of the father's absence was considered but also signs of a deficit of the internal paternal function identified in interviews and anamnestic analysis. Since the study was qualitative and process-oriented, the task was not to quantitatively measure the degree of expression of the paternal function, but to phenomenologically identify its manifestations and influence on individuation processes in the participants' subjective experience and their symbolic material. This allowed moving from recording biographical factors to studying the internal psychic dynamics of the participants.

The study participants, according to ethical procedures in Sandplay therapy [96], were informed about the methodological nuances of the experiment and signed informed consent to participate in the study (Appendix 5), analysis of sand pictures, audio and photo documentation of the material (Appendix 6), and the use of sandbox photographs in publications and reports on the study (Appendix 7). All anamnestic data were anonymized, and each woman chose a pseudonym for herself.

To study the dynamics of individuation of women with experience of paternal deprivation, we developed a «Five-Level Model of Research Psychotherapy» (Figure 9), covering social, personal, symbolic, analytical-psychological, and psychotherapeutic levels. The starting point for its construction was the observation of the methodological limitations of existing empirical approaches: in most studies, paternal deprivation is considered primarily within the coordinates of the social (Level I of the proposed model) and personal (Level II): through family structure, fathering styles, features of self-image and relational patterns. The proposed model retains these levels as necessary but significantly expands the analytical field by including the symbolic (Level III) and analytical-psychological levels (Level IV), opening access to archetypal dynamics, unconscious structures, and the symbolic representation of the deficit of the paternal function in the psyche. The psychotherapeutic level (Level V) occupies a special place in the model: it is not parallel to the others but permeates each of them as an integrative and processual

dimension, providing the possibility of symbolic reconstruction of the paternal function and maintaining individuation movement based on the theoretical tenets of analytical psychology and the clinical tools of Sandplay therapy [150, p. 119].

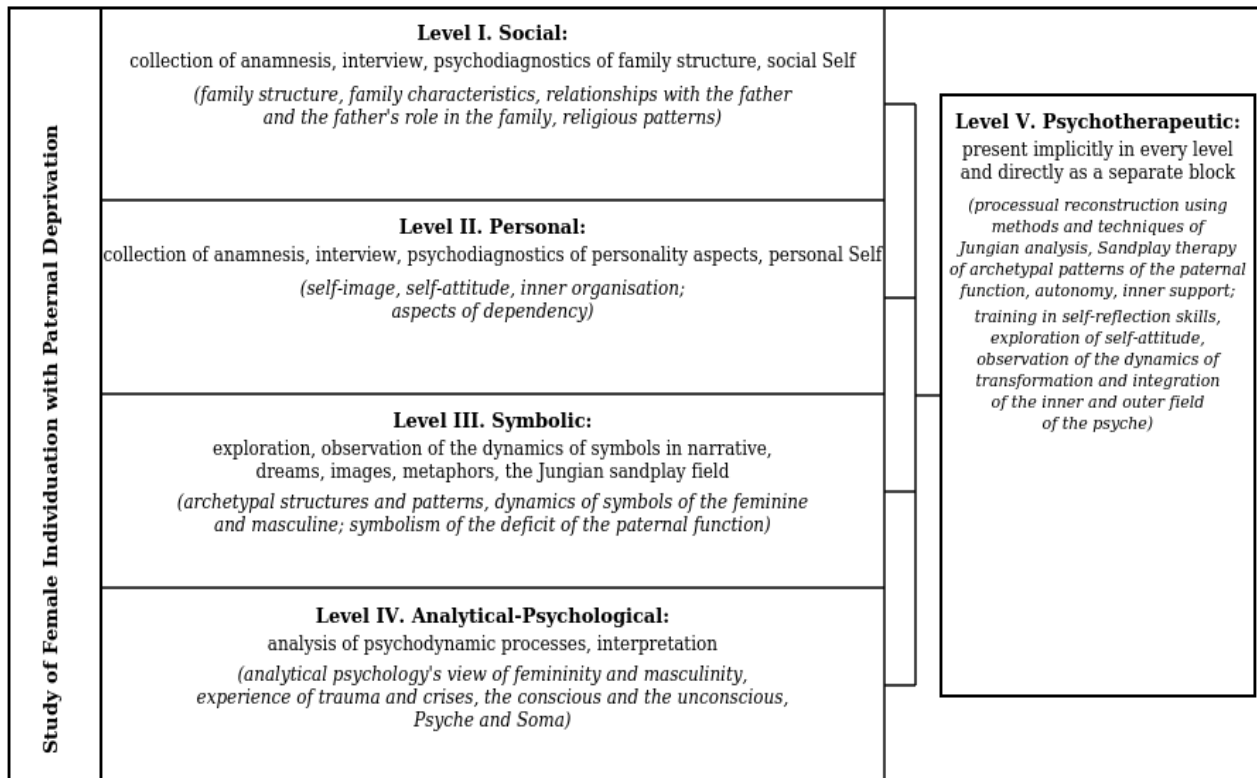


Figure 9. Five-level model for studying the individuation of a woman with paternal deprivation.

The research psychotherapy process included 15 individual sessions of 50 minutes each, including: an interview, initial testing, 10 sandplay sessions, repeated testing, an analytical concluding session, and a deferred reflective session.

Each participant created 10 sandboxes; one woman, due to health reasons, created 7 sandboxes. The experiment took place in a specialized office of E. V. Sheveleva (Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan), equipped with tools for Sandplay therapy (Appendix 4). The research psychotherapy with all stages was implemented from April to December 2025.

Verbal sessions of the research process were recorded in written and audio formats; sandplay sessions were recorded in written and photo formats.

Data sources included the researcher's session notes, photographs of sand compositions and participants' comments, and analytical comments from three independent specialists from the reference group for each case. A total of 97 written session protocols and 174 units of sandbox photographs were obtained: compositions with and without figures, with imprints and landscape forms.

The confidentiality of participants' materials was ensured through pseudonyms chosen by them and the consistent exclusion of personal identifying information from all research materials and reports.

Procedure of the experiment (research psychotherapy using the Sandplay method).

The participants worked in individual sessions in sandboxes with the researcher, who has a specialization in Sandplay therapy according to ISST standards and followed the general recommendations for conducting Sandplay therapy, using the methodology proposed by D. Kalff [77; 172].

During each individual session, participants were invited to create a picture in the sand tray. The instruction intentionally remained open: «You can create any sand composition,» without any substantive instructions or expectations. The participant independently chose whether to work with dry or wet sand, whether to use miniatures or limit themselves to sand only, and whether to share a story about the created scene with the therapist. The researcher maintained a silent and complete presence throughout the process of creating the picture, providing the free and protected space in which the participant could experience unconditional acceptance. If the participant decided to talk about her picture, the researcher listened attentively, consistently refraining from interpreting both the scene itself and the accompanying narrative, so that the images could be experienced and worked through at an unconscious level without external interference.

Additionally, in the research psychotherapy, themes for expression in the sandbox were proposed. The themes originated from the experience and self-perception of a woman with paternal deprivation for projecting images of such experiential motifs into the sandbox, such as: «my father,» «me and my world,» «I am a woman,» «me and the world of men,» «my Shadow,

what I dare not speak about.» The alternation between work in the sandbox with the classical Kalfian instruction, where the participant could freely express herself in her fantasies and projections (or, conversely, symbolically express her difficulties in symbol-making), and work in the sandbox with directed themes created an environment focusing on the experience of the father's absence, self-attitude, and one's own worldview.

The study protocol provided for the creation of 10 sand pictures by each participant; they were informed of this at the beginning of the research psychotherapy course. One participant, due to health reasons, created 7 sandboxes; after recovery, she participated in the final testing and analytical sessions. If they wished, participants could continue working beyond the set number of sessions; two participants expressed interest in possibly continuing the work.

According to the standard practice of Sandplay therapy, the researcher recorded the participants' statements, the process of creating the sand composition, and her own observations at each session, and the completed sand pictures were documented photographically. The photographs and session records constituted the main body of data. The participants' verbal activity varied depending on personal characteristics, but all created sand scenes were photographed.

In addition to the researcher's analysis of the materials, the materials were submitted for independent analysis to the reference group of this research project: three sandplay therapists specializing in the method according to ISST standards.

The reference group specialists voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and signed informed consent, including compliance with confidentiality and ethical rules for handling research materials (Appendix 8). Before deciding to participate in the study, all experts were thoroughly informed about the nature of the tasks assigned to them and the requirements placed upon them.

The experts were sent three cases each, avoiding overlaps (it was important that the expert and the participant did not know each other, as the social environment where the announcement was posted was frequented by some experts and participants). All data of the women-participants were strictly anonymized before sending the materials.

Each expert analyzed 3 cases, studying the sandboxes sequentially, after which they compiled a general commentary on the case. The experts worked independently of each other; the central object of analysis was the symbolic content of the photographs.

During the analysis process, the experts answered open-ended questions concerning each individual sandbox, as well as the overall therapeutic process for each case.

For each sandbox, the reference group specialist gave answers to three questions (each answer expected to be 1-2 paragraphs in length):

1. What do you see in this sandbox?
2. What does this sandbox convey about this woman's experiences?
3. What does this sandbox say about the process of this woman's psychological development?

The open-ended format of the questions was deliberately chosen to obtain free responses, not limited by pre-set categories, covering the content and processual dimensions of the analyzed material.

Upon completing the analysis of the full series of sand compositions, the reference group specialists prepared a final analytical summary of the process according to the instruction: «Please provide a detailed analytical summary of the Sandplay therapy process, about 2 pages in length, for each study participant you analyzed.»

The reference group of specialists in the research design was not used as an independent quantitative coding system. Its task was analytical validation of interpretations.

Each case was analyzed at least twice (by the researcher and an expert; upon additional request from the researcher, supervisor consultations were also obtained); phenomena raising additional questions were discussed jointly. At the beginning, the experimenter conducted a primary analysis of the material obtained during the research psychotherapy sessions with the women-participants, and then the cases were discussed by the experts independently of each other; alternative interpretations were considered, and final conclusions were formed through expert consensus.

In our study, the analysis was phenomenological and processual in nature, therefore methods of analytical triangulation and expert validation, more characteristic of qualitative methodology, were used.

3.3. Description of participants' cases

In this chapter, we present an overview of the study participants' cases. The summary table (Appendix 14) contains a systematic overview of anamnestic data and initial information on the quality of paternal deprivation experience, the number of sessions, and the participants' reflection at the conclusion of the research psychotherapy studying the experience of the absent father using the Sandplay method.

Anamnestic data on the experience of the father's absence, descriptions of the dynamics of the sand process are accompanied by photographs of sand compositions reflecting experiences of current life processes, self-attitude, understanding the image of the father in life and contact with him, the image of a man and the image of a woman, and the discovery of repressed shadow experiences.

At the end of each case, tables of key meanings of experiences – the essences of the pictures – extracted from the symbolic field of the sandboxes and the narratives of each participant are provided.

3.3.1. Case of «Lolita», 34 years old

«Lolita» experienced an early divorce of her parents at the age of three. Her father suffers from chronic alcohol addiction and is a veteran of the Afghan war. Despite the difficult experience of the relationship, «Lolita» continues to maintain contact with him, cares for him, visits him, and helps him financially. At the same time, expressed ambivalent feelings persist towards the father: simultaneously present are attachment, pity, responsibility, anger, and the impossibility of internally renouncing the connection with him.

The participant's main request was related to an attempt to understand her own attachment to her father and explore the phenomenon of love for him, despite the experienced deficit and traumatic experience: «I couldn't abandon my father, I want to know what love for a father is. I'm interested in this Sandplay experience for myself. I want to explore the reason for the difficulty in building long-term relationships».

«Lolita's» sand process (Figure 10; Table 2) unfolded as a gradual movement from experiencing inner fragmentation, anxiety, and emotional ambivalence towards finding a stable inner center and a deeper contact with her own feminine nature. In the early sandboxes, themes of survival, dangerous space, and the need to hold on in life despite pain and inner emptiness dominated.

Already in the first composition, «Pearl Diver»(sandbox 1), the motif of searching for value in a lifeless environment appears, as well as a theme important for the entire subsequent dynamic: the rejection of existence «without pain, but also without love.» In subsequent compositions, the motif of inner conflict and instability intensifies. Sandboxes «Hope» (sandbox 2), «Wind» (sandbox 3), and «Pomegranate Battle»(sandbox 4) reflect the experience of inner splitting, the difficulty of holding contradictory feelings, and the gradual awareness of her own ambivalence towards the father figure. The symbolic field of the process is saturated with themes of loss, departure, the impossibility of return, as well as the revision of rigid moral attitudes and black-and-white perception of the world.

The middle part of the process is associated with the intensification of themes of separation, female identity, and the search for one's own support. In the sandboxes «I am a Woman»(sandbox 5) and «Runway»(sandbox 6), images of growing up, separation, choosing one's own path, professional self-determination, and gradually allowing oneself to feel one's own desires without shame and guilt appear. In the second half of the process, contact with archetypal images of the feminine intensifies. Sandboxes «Natural Woman» (sandbox 8) and «Visiting Baba Yaga» (sandbox 9) reflect the movement towards deep female layers of the psyche, contact with the theme of motherhood, initiation, female sacredness, and inner transformation. The motif of the «enchanted girl» turned to stone as a way of emotional survival and avoidance of vulnerability becomes particularly significant. Simultaneously, a readiness to engage in the process of inner journey and go through it independently arises.

The final sandbox, «Underwater Dragon» (sandbox 10), symbolically concludes the process with a touch on a deep inner resource. If at the beginning of the process the space was experienced as dangerous and lifeless, at the end an image of inner strength hidden in the «deep waters» of the psyche emerges. The inner world begins to be perceived not only as a place of pain and anxiety but also as a source of stability, life, and calm.

During the Sandplay therapy process, «Lolita» noted an increase in contact with her own feelings, growth in inner stability, and the ability to endure complex emotional states. The changes manifested not only in inner experience but also in external professional realization: greater courage in self-expression appeared, a sense of the right to occupy her place in the profession, opportunities for professional autonomy expanded, and income increased.



Figure 10. Sandplay process of «Lolita», 34 y/o

Regarding the father figure, there was a gradual complication of the internal image: the participant began to perceive him not only through traumatic experience but also through a more voluminous understanding, allowing her to build a new internal dialogue with the theme of the father.

«Lolita» reflects on her experience: *«Lately, I have become more attentive to my inner states. I have become more honest regarding those feelings that were previously difficult to hold or acknowledge. My attitude towards myself has become softer and more accepting, and permissive; a feeling of inner stability and support has appeared. Gradually, my reflections on the father figure also began to change: I began to look at this image more voluminously, not only through habitual experiences but also through understanding, distance, and the possibility of*

building a new internal dialogue with this theme externally, the changes have become noticeable in how I manifest myself in society and in the professional sphere. I have developed more courage to show myself, my ideas, and my work. I was able to start working for myself, take on more clients, confidently declare my professional position, and, as a result, achieve a higher level of income. The inner permission to occupy ‘my place’ in the profession gave me a sense of expanded opportunities and the right to choose those forms of work and interaction that truly suit me.»

Table 2.

Case of «Lolita». Key Meanings of Experiences (Essences of Sandplay Pictures)

«Lolita», age 34

Sandbox No.	Author’s Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandbox and Narrative
1	«Pearl Diver»	The path of seeking and effort for a valuable result; a dangerous, lifeless environment and the risk of stagnation; a life without pain but also without love, and a clear unwillingness to choose such a state; the theme of pain and contact with the alien; faith as an inner value that cannot be abandoned under any circumstances.
2	«Hope»	Serenity tinged with sadness and emptiness; the theme of needs and the difficulty of expressing them; inner conflict between impulse and self-criticism («right – wrong», «allowed – not allowed») and gradual permission to act; the theme of centring rhythm, repetition, and gathering.
3	«Wind»	The theme of movement and instability; a state in which life is perceived as swirling, dynamic, requiring caution – yet not catastrophic; transition, departure, and the leaving behind of the former; thoughts of death – one’s own, of loved ones, of those who have passed and those still living, of farewell, the impossibility of return, and the irreversibility of certain losses; deep inner conflict linked to judging others and oneself, the revision of black-and-white moral positions, and the recognition of the complexity of human relationships.

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandbox and Narrative
4	«Pomegranate Battle»	The theme of conflict and confrontation; the image of the father and the experience of contradictory, difficult-to-integrate feelings towards him; the theme of the fragmentation of experiences, the impossibility of holding them in a single category, partial unconsciousness, and inner rupture; reflections on dependency (coffee, smoking) as a means of reducing anxiety and tension; the idea of an inner container, deceleration, and the search for a space between impulse and action.
5	«I Am a Woman»	The theme of womanhood, femininity, and sexuality; reflections on sensuality and sensitivity; body and emotions; relationships with oneself and others.
6	«Runway»	The past (childhood, adolescence) and the present (adulthood); the theme of separation and independence; a transitional process; the experience of choosing a profession; movement with a «following wind», sensing and understanding oneself and one's needs without social shame or guilt; the search for and maintenance of inner support.
7	«Encounter»	The theme of distance, ambiguity, and the difficulty of direct contact with the world of men; the experience of early abandonment and being left behind; reflection on the distinction between infantilism and trauma; difficulties in personal relationships are connected not with immaturity but with an early psychic wound; the theme of female sensitivity, protection, and readiness to move towards relationship.
8	«Natural Woman»	A deep encounter with the theme of motherhood; a dilemma of choice; abandoned children and adoptive parents; woman's natural inner resourcefulness; the meanings of life and the future.
9	«A Visit to	Feminine space as sacred, shadowy, and resourceful; a man capable of

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandbox and Narrative
	Baba Yaga»	observing and protecting; the motif of an enchanted girl turned to stone – a cold, avoidant state, yet a less vulnerable form of existence; the need to add a figure symbolising the Self, to travel «all paths»(the stove, the treasury, the well), and to enter the initiation process.
10	«Underwater Dragon»	The experience of contact with something inexplicable, ambivalent, beautiful, and troubling; the strong and the ancient within can provide a stable state of calm; the theme of «inner waters» where a force dwells that gives the resource of life.

3.3.2. Case of «Ainura», 49 years old

«Ainura's» parents divorced due to conflicts over drinking but lived together. The participant's father suffered from alcohol addiction and died when «Ainura» was three years old. His death occurred as a result of an accident at a construction site. One of the participant's early emotionally charged memories remains the image of her mother grieving deeply for the loss.

The main request was related to exploring difficulties in building long-term relationships with partners: «I am interested in Sandplay. I would like to explore the topic of difficulty trusting a partner.»

«Ainura's» sand process (Figure 11; Table 3) was associated with the gradual integration of the experience of early loss of the father, restoration of inner self-worth, and the search for a more stable inner support. Already in the first sandbox, «This is what happened» (sandbox 1), the theme of carefully gathering oneself from fragments of experience and the need to preserve inner resources without losing oneself in contact with others appears.

In the sandbox «Daddy» (sandbox 2), the central conflict of the process manifests itself particularly clearly: the simultaneous experience of a lack of paternal contact and an attempt to independently «grow» within oneself a feeling of value, beauty, and the right to be loved. The

father's image remains contradictory and partially inaccessible but gradually begins to be perceived not only as a source of deficit but also as a carrier of certain family resources.

The middle part of the process, compositions «My Life» (sandbox 3), «Before the Exam» (sandbox 4), «This is Me» (sandbox 5), is associated with the exploration of her own multi-layered female identity. In the symbolic field, themes of boundaries, maturity, age, professional dignity, and the right to occupy one's place in life intensify. Simultaneously, the motif of crossing through a dangerous space to a more protected territory appears, as well as the theme of accompaniment, protection, and the need to let go of growing children.



Figure 11. Sandplay process of «Ainura», 49 y/o

Of particular importance in the process is the composition «Fracture/Break» (sandbox 6), which coincided with the participant's actual physical injury. This stage becomes a symbolic re-experiencing of the theme of loss, the fragility of life, and simultaneously the psyche's ability to recover from trauma. The experience of the father's death begins to be integrated not only as a source of pain but also as part of life's history. The final composition «This is Me» (sandbox 7) reflects movement towards greater inner wholeness and contact with one's own resources. A more complex experience of one's own feminine strength, connection with the lineage, and the ability to hold different aspects of one's personality without the need for rigid splitting emerges.

During the research process, «Ainura» experienced a physical crisis – a severe leg injury and long recovery, which she herself associated with deep inner work. In parallel, significant professional changes occurred: obtaining professional accreditation, a successful public dance performance (tango with a partner). The participant linked these events to the activation of her inner resourceful masculine and paternal functions.

In her reflection, «Ainura» noted that Sandplay helped her touch deep layers of the psyche and initiated a further process of inner unfolding related to professional and personal maturity: *«These external events are connected, as it seems to me, with my masculine and/or paternal inner functions. During my participation in the study, I broke my leg and had difficulty recovering. For me, it was a trial that made me think about many things. Now I have plans for further professional development. Sand therapy helped me touch the deep processes of my psyche; I think this work is just beginning to unfold,»* reflected «Ainura».

Table 3.

Case of «Ainura». Key Meanings of Experiences (Essences of Sand Pictures)

«Ainura», 49 y/o

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
1	«This Is What Came Out»	Spontaneity and following the inner impulse; living through a son's growing up; restoring wholeness through the careful gathering of fragments of experience; a space for self-regulation; the need to sustain contact without losing oneself; care for preserving and maintaining the inner resource.
2	«Dad»	The theme of the father as a complex, contradictory, and partially inaccessible figure; the theme of tears, losses, and unexpressed grief; reflection on «good genetics», inherited resources and, simultaneously, vulnerabilities passed down through the family line; female self-worth; the theme of the deficit of contact with the father – through whom a girl acquires a sense of her own «beauty»; the need to «grow» within oneself a sense of value and support rather than waiting for them from the outside.
3	«My Life»	The theme of dual identity: strength and vulnerability, adulthood and

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
		childhood; the theme of boundaries, closedness, and selective access; bodily-instinctive nature and self-sameness; the separation and differentiation of life spheres; the necessity of their autonomy; motherhood, letting go, and separation anxiety.
4	«Before the Exam»	The theme of two contrasting spaces: a world of heightened danger and a more protected territory, between which there exists a boundary and a passage; a girl in need of protection; a male protector; the need for accompaniment and a sense of safety; the laborious process of forming one's life space; the motif of one's own «exam» as a significant event, as well as the theme of a child's entry into adult life and the necessity of letting go.
5	«This Is Who I Am»	Mature femininity and one's relationship to age; a juxtaposition of the aspects of the witch and the queen, the maiden and the ageing woman; the discovery of still-hidden «values and treasures»; professional identity and choice; a sense of the «regal» dignity of the profession and the necessity of giving birth to something new in each encounter; motifs of rhythm, dance, cycles, the moon, pauses, and also of bodily experience (pregnancy, motherhood, care, blossoming).
6	«Fracture»	Living through the experience of an actual physical trauma that occurred during the research period; the theme of a dangerous and unpredictable world; an existential re-experiencing of «life is difficult – neither bad nor good»; the recollection of a childhood experience of the father's death; the integration of the experience of trauma and the power of the life resource.
7	«This Is Me»	Reflection on oneself as different across different roles and resources; the theme of connection with ancestors; the discovery of open treasures; a «Mercurial» father who is difficult to catch hold of; inner resources; the governance of one's own feminine power.

3.3.3. Case of «Athena», 43 years old

«Athena» had no experience of contact with her biological father and knew about him only from her mother's words. Her life history includes several marriages of her mother and changes of paternal figures: the mother's second husband adopted her, but the relationship with him was subsequently lost.

Despite an outwardly declared absence of feelings towards her father and stepfather, the participant showed interest in exploring this theme through the symbolic space of the sandbox: «I want to participate in science. I'm interested. I have no feelings towards my father or stepfather. I would like to look at this in the sandbox.»

«Athena's» sand process (Figure 12; Table 4) unfolded as a gradual reassembly of identity after experiencing multiple losses, instability in the family system, and the absence of a stable paternal figure. Already in the first composition, «Being/Existence» (sandbox 1), the central theme of the entire process appears: experiencing oneself after the destruction of previous life roles and the need to answer anew the question «who am I now?». The symbolic space from the very beginning is associated not so much with acute trauma as with a state of inner burnout and the need for a new life stage. In the early compositions «Hearth» (sandbox 2), «Attraction» (sandbox 3), the theme of the deficit of stable male presence and the need to adapt to changing attachment figures actively manifests. The father's image is experienced as fragmented and unattainable. Simultaneously, the movement towards finding one's own value, inner light, and the ability to become the center of one's own life, not merely a reflection of external expectations, intensifies.

The middle part of the process is associated with experiencing loneliness, female maturation, and inner separation from previous roles. In the sandboxes «Unity» (sandbox 4) and «Women's World» (sandbox 5), the theme of emptiness after the dissolution of the usual family structure emerges, but simultaneously a gradual opening to one's own mature femininity. Becoming aware of oneself not only through the maternal function but also through one's own autonomous female value becomes significant. The motif of late recognition of one's beauty, strength, and the right to choose oneself appears.

In the second half of the process, the theme of action, inner responsibility, and integration of opposites intensifies. Sandboxes «Garden» (sandbox 6), «Strength/Power» (sandbox 7), and «Self-Realization» (sandbox 8) reflect the transition from passively waiting for changes to experiencing oneself as an active subject of one's own life. Simultaneously, a rethinking of the masculine occurs: from the image of a suppressive and traumatic force to a more complex understanding of masculine energy as potentially creative but requiring discernment and awareness.

The final compositions «Symbiosis» (sandbox 9), «Rebirth» (sandbox 10) demonstrate movement towards inner autonomy and a more stable inner center. The symbolic space is less and less built around the deficit of relationships and more and more around the cyclical nature of life, inner rhythm, one's own universe, and trust in what is happening. The completion of the process is associated with the experience of one's own rebirth as a woman and a person, as well as readiness to pass on one's experience and knowledge to other people.



Figure 12. Sandplay process of «Athena», 43 y/o

During the therapy process, «Athena» initially did not note pronounced changes related to the theme of the father. However, later, in her reflection, a deeper awareness of the deficit of paternal presence in childhood appeared. Simultaneously, there emerged an experience of an

inner possibility of turning to the father figure as a symbolic source of support and encouragement, even in the absence of real relationship experience: *«I don't feel any significant changes in terms of working through the father. Maybe somewhere at a subconscious level. But overall, I am very glad for the work that was done»*– thus «Athena» reflected on her therapeutic experience.

Table 4.

Case of «Athena». Key Meanings of Experiences (Essences of Sand Pictures)

«Athena», 43 y/o

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
1	«Being»	Rebirth through loss; burnout; reassembling the Self; «who am I now, if I am no longer only a mother and no longer a wife?»; a rethinking of one's purpose.
2	«The Hearth»	The figure of the father as a distant, unreachable, and fragmentary presence; the experience of adapting to a succession of father figures (biological father, stepfathers) and the need to switch quickly between states of loss and acceptance; childhood vulnerability; the theme of transformation and the processing of experience; the theme of lightness, flight, and feminine rebirth.
3	«Attraction»	The need to keep focus on attracting the «best»: abundance, prosperity, goodness, a bright future, and the conscious choice of what one wishes to draw into life; self-identification as a source of light and value, energy, radiance and attractiveness; shadow and inner power that evoke fear; the discovery of the theme of uniting opposites and entering a new life stage.
4	«Union»	The experience of loneliness after divorce, the departure of grown children, and the dissolution of habitual family bonds; returning home as an experience of emptiness; the need for home, safety, and

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
		belonging; the complex dynamics of relationships with children: the pain of distance and, simultaneously, a preserved connection; the search for inner support and the dilemma of femininity versus provider role.
5	«The Women's World»	The feminine world as a state of lightness and abundance; the experience of feeling like «the ugly duckling» in childhood; the absence of mirroring by adults of one's beauty and worth; the late discovery of one's own beauty and feminine power; mature age as a time of spiritual reassembly, choosing oneself, gratitude for what has been lived, and acceptance of a new stage of feminine realisation.
6	«The Garden»	Freedom as a state of uplift and awareness; transformation through tension and opposites; the aspiration not only to live through experience but to comprehend, hold, and integrate it; the theme of action and personal responsibility – to «do», not to make excuses, not to assign one's fate to destiny or God, but to enter into partnership with a higher power through one's own effort.
7	«Strength»	The image of a man as hunter, warrior, provider; the theme of the separateness of the masculine and feminine worlds; the struggle between strength, belligerence, power, and the need for love, tenderness, and togetherness; strong masculine energy as a filter and barrier to real relationships; the traumatic experience of a marriage in which the man's strength became domination, grandiosity, and emotional abuse; an open desire to move away from this traumatic experience and pattern.
8	«Self-Realisation»	Reliance on the universe as a guiding force; reflection on a difficult inner state arising from poor sleep and constant thoughts (since early

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
		childhood) that make even reading difficult – yet information always finds its way in; a present sense of lightness and blossoming; life as a filter.
9	«Symbiosis»	Attunement, tonalities, and the inner centre; symbiosis instead of co-dependency; the autonomy of a woman's life and her own universe; transition and the cyclical nature of life processes; recurring structures and rhythms; the experience of moving from one life stage to another.
10	«Rebirth»	The meanings of one's own rebirth as a woman and as a person; the symbolism of an anniversary and the experience of this milestone (five years since leaving her husband); a discussion of the image of Thumbelina flying away on a swallow from the mole (rescuing one's own femininity); the desire to carry one's experience, knowledge, and transformation to others; trust in God, who will arrange everything.

3.3.4. Case of «Agatha», 51 years old

«Agatha's» parents divorced due to the father's alcohol addiction when she was three years old. She has practically no personal memories of him, except for an episode where the child asked her father not to leave. The father's image was formed mainly through the mother's stories as the image of a handsome, intelligent, and talented man. Many years later, two years before participating in the study, «Agatha» learned of his death and that she was his only relative.

The participant's request was related to exploring her own femininity, the influence of the father theme on her life, and the desire for inner development: «I am interested in the project. I would like to explore myself as a woman and work through the theme with my father, how it affects me. I want to develop.»

«Agatha's» sand process (Figure 13; Table 5) unfolded as a gradual movement from experiencing orphanhood, inner stagnation, and suppression of one's own feelings towards a

deeper integration of the feminine and masculine principles, as well as towards experiencing one's own rootedness and inner wholeness.

The initial sandboxes «Fairy Tale» (sandbox 1) and «Sea Idyll» (sandbox 2) were saturated with themes of loss, deficit of the paternal figure, and the need to «gather» the father's image from fragments of memories and fantasies. Already at an early stage, the symbolism of growing up through trial and passing through an inner «hell» appears, but simultaneously there is a fear of transformation and change. Reflections on the paternal function as the ability to go out into the world, trust oneself, and move forward occupy a significant place. The sandbox «The World Inside and Me in the World» (sandbox 3) reflects the resource potential of «Agatha's» psyche and the desire to move and develop in her life, despite fears.

In the middle part of the process, the theme of inner control and chronic self-restraint intensifies. Sandboxes «Waiting for a Miracle» (sandbox 4), «Silence» (sandbox 5), and «On the Edge of I Don't Know What» (sandbox 9) reflect a state of prolonged inner waiting, emotional inhibition, and the impossibility of freely expressing anger, irritation, and one's own needs. The symbolic space is filled with images of a labyrinth, a prolonged transition, and the need to «sit out» the inner process until it matures.



Figure 13. Sandplay process of «Agatha», 51 y/o

Simultaneously, interest in the deep layers of the psyche, spirituality, and symbolic knowledge gradually grows in the process. Sandboxes «View from Within» (sandbox 6), «I am the beginning, I am the end» (sandbox 7), and «Story from Deep Centuries»(sandbox 10) demonstrate a transition from an external search for salvation to an internal search for the source of strength. The image of a man gradually transforms: from an absent or frightening figure to a more complex and integrated image, combining strength, wisdom, creativity, and the capacity for creation.

The composition «Encounter» (sandbox 8) and the final composition «Story from Deep Centuries» (sandbox 10) reflect the movement towards experiencing the continuity of life, connection with the lineage, and a sense of one's own rootedness. The psychic dynamics of the process shift from themes of loss and deficit to themes of inner union of opposites, maturation, and restoration of wholeness.

Following the Sandplay process, «Agatha» described experiencing deep inner discoveries and an increase in inner courage. The gradual movement from the position of a frightened child to greater self-expression and the ability to occupy a place in society became important. In her reflection, an image of her own uniqueness, strength, and contact with the inner masculine aspect appears. Simultaneously, the perception of men and the male world changes: it begins to be experienced as more understandable and safer.

Thus, «Agatha» reflects on her experience of participating in the study: *«These meetings turned out to be very vivid and intense for me: after each one, there were many reflections and inner responses. Important personal discoveries occurred during the process that could not be planned in advance. A deeper awareness came that the presence of the father in childhood was indeed lacking. At the same time, an important feeling appeared: now I can internally turn to him, feel support and encouragement, even if it wasn't there in reality. After completing the meetings, I noticed more inner courage and confidence in myself. I began to take real steps forward: in development, in actions, in self-expression. Earlier, I was more often in the position of a child who is afraid to speak up about themselves, but now I am gradually going out into society and allowing myself to be seen.»*

Table 5.

Case of «Agatha». Key Meanings of Experiences (Essences of Sand Pictures)

«Agatha», 51 y/o

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
1	«A Fairy Tale»	Rebirth through loss and pain; the theme of orphanhood and the deficit of the paternal figure (personal experience of fragmentary, near-absent memories of the father); the «gathering» of the father's image from fragments; growth and strength are earned through «hell», trials, death, and losses; at the same time, a strong fear of the need to «burn in order to rise like the Phoenix»; the search for inner support and maturation through a symbolic path.
2	«Sea Idyll»	The paternal line of origin; the theme of the loss of roots, deportation, and the assimilation of the clan; the difference between the maternal and paternal functions; the paternal function as support for venturing into the world, courage, and self-trust; Eastern philosophy as a source of support and protection; the motif of the «mid-journey pass», maturation, the shedding of former roles, and the need to find a new content of life.
3	«The World Within and I in the World»	The search for «where to go», orientation and direction in life; an intention to «stop straining, to enjoy»– the theme of lightness, carefreeness, and pleasure in the process; selection and filtering rather than trying to encompass everything; the theme of cultural belonging and ancestral code, reflections on heritage, the memory of the clan, dreams of ancestors, and the right to exist within one's own cultural context; a vertical of light and depth, the connection of dream and symbol, observation without interpretation.
4	«In Anticipation»	Constant self-monitoring and the difficulty of «giving oneself permission» for spontaneity and freedom; childhood memories (early

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
	of a Miracle»	autonomy, the need to «defend oneself», the absence of an adult who would intervene and offer support); the theme of double messages from significant adults; the theme of an un-lived childhood and suppressed emotions; the anticipation of the birth of something new – not yet manifested, not yet born, but potentially significant.
5	«Silence»	Silence as a desired state of peace and a place of meeting with oneself; inner control and limiting beliefs («don't complain», «don't boast», «everything must be fine», constant self-monitoring and restraint); the split between the bodily and the mental in self-observation; the theme of female vulnerability and tenderness; the anticipation of a new beginning.
6	«A View from Within»	The theme of rebirth and restoration; the search for deep knowledge as a source, not a miracle; introspection of inner contents in search of a resource.
7	«I Am the Beginning, I Am the End»	The image of a man as the union of sage, warrior, and creator; the man in the field of spiritual practices and philosophy; the masculine is described through the joining of polarities – «destruction–restoration», «strength–fertility», «war–creation»; the encounter of the masculine and the feminine as the central motif, healing the trauma of generations.
8	«An Encounter»	Movement in life – life is movement; the theme of the important «gathering» feminine and the «forward-driving, heroic» masculine; the anticipation of «a significant encounter that is about to take place».
9	«At the Edge of I Know Not	The theme of the labyrinth as a prolonged inner state, a metaphor for a drawn-out inner process; the theme of being stuck and of unmet expectations; the difficulty of expressing anger, irritation, and

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
	What»	indignation – emotions are suppressed, «kept on a tight rein»; the need for help as reliance on inner sub-personalities; the hero is «not yet ready»– one must wait, sit through it, arrive at a deeper awareness.
10	«A Story from the Deep Ages»	Profound antiquity and the «prehistoric» layers of experience; the theme of shamanism and mediation between worlds as a metaphor for the connection of the conscious and the unconscious; the image of the «returning» father is ambivalent – frightening, incomprehensible, and yet significant; the theme of family, clan, and the continuity of life; the myth of the creation of the world and the assembling of a complete picture – of origin, continuation, and rootedness.

3.3.5. Case of «Ekaterina», 37 years old

«Ekaterina» grew up in an intact family but described the emotional unavailability of her father. Her history includes experience of her father's alcohol addiction and his being in prison. In childhood, the participant often took a defensive position towards her mother. Despite the formal presence of the father in the family, the experience of emotional contact with him remained deficient. «Ekaterina» noted that for some reason she doesn't have the habit of calling her dad like she does her mom. «Ekaterina's» impression of her relationship with her father is that her dad is somewhere nearby, but not in her life. She often visits her mom and dad.

The main request concerned working through the theme of the father and understanding its influence on relationships: «I want to work through the theme of my father, which is most likely affecting my relationships.»

«Ekaterina's» sand process (Figure 14; Table 6) unfolded around themes of inner isolation, control, shame, and the gradual search for a safe form of closeness with the male world. In the early sandboxes, images of a closed, protected space dominate, where control becomes a way of survival and maintaining a sense of security (sandbox 1).

In the sandbox «House in Captivity» (sandbox 2), the connection between the participant's personal experience and the fate of her father, who has experience of imprisonment, is particularly vivid. The symbolic space is organized around themes of restriction of freedom, inner self-imprisonment, and unconscious self-stigmatization. Control and isolation are experienced simultaneously as a defense and as an obstacle to a full life.

The middle part of the process is associated with exploring her own anxiety, need for refuge, and fear of losing vitality (sandbox 6 «Life and Death»). In sandboxes «Solitude» (sandbox 3), «Witch's Island» (sandbox 4), and «Female Diversity» (sandbox 5), images of an inner refuge, feminine strength, sensitivity, and the multiplicity of female roles appear. Simultaneously, the desire to go beyond excessive functionality and constant self-control intensifies.

In the second half of the process, the theme of the inner axis and subjectivity becomes more noticeable. In the sandboxes «A Boring World» (sandbox 7) and «Being in One's Own Womb»(sandbox 8), reflection on her own inner masculinity as a capacity for goal-setting, self-observation, and building her own life trajectory emerges. The insight about the need to be «in one's own womb» rather than living inside parental expectations and instructions becomes particularly significant.

The final compositions «Wedding, Marriage» (sandbox 9), «Unity» (sandbox 10) reflect movement towards a more mature perception of relationships and the male world. The masculine ceases to be perceived exclusively as a source of threat or control and gradually becomes part of the participant's inner wholeness. The completion of the process is associated with the experience of the possibility of relying on oneself and simultaneously entering into contact with the world without prior isolation.

During therapy, the figure of the father began to be perceived as more accessible and psychologically closer. The participant noted that she could more easily and freely enter into contact with him in real life. In parallel, there was a deepening of contact with her own female identity and inner world. The male world began to be experienced as less frightening and more understandable.

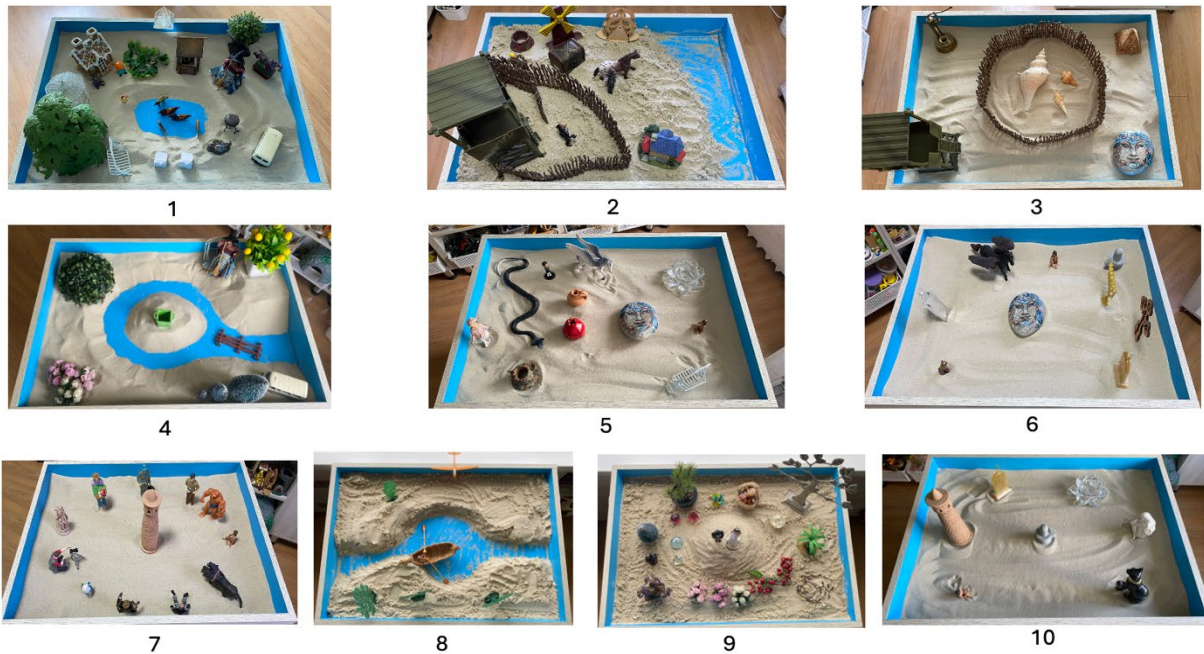


Figure 14. Sandplay process of «Ekaterina», 37 y/o

«Ekaterina» gave feedback: «My dad has become a more accessible figure within my thoughts about him. He is not as distant as before. And in reality, I also started communicating with him directly and easily. Now I can talk to him about almost everything. I discovered, as if for the first time, my world of me as a woman. It is uniquely fantastic, and I saw the strength and power of my inner man as well. Communicating with my dad has become much easier, and it's as if the male world and real men on the street have become more understandable and closer to me, safer somehow. Communicating with the world has become even easier.»

Table 6.

Case of «Ekaterina». Key Meanings of Experiences (Essences of Sand Pictures)

«Ekaterina», 37 y/o

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
1	Untitled	The image of a stable life space, home, territory, and rootedness; the theme of energetic sensitivity and the atmosphere of space; the image of the father as fragmentary and never fully known; a surviving masculinity taking the place of a wounded femininity; independently leaving a destructive

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
		relationship and taking on masculine functions oneself.
2	«A Home in Confinement»	The image of a father with experience of institutional restriction of freedom, yet for the family a protector, a hard worker, reliable; the theme of isolation, imprisonment, and self-enclosure; the metaphorical inner isolation of the woman herself – living «in a shell», behind a fence, under control; control as a form of safety, experienced as a means of survival and as the creation of a sense of comfort and security; a heroic, warring masculinity, yet isolated from relationships; shame about the father's past and a hypothesis of unconscious self-stigmatisation that prevents one from «stepping into freedom» and living a full life.
3	«Solitude»	The theme of solitude, refuge, and the need for a «womb»– «a house within a house», a place for restoration; control as a means of coping with anxiety; the fear of «mummification»: becoming stuck in functionality, beauty, and order while losing movement, spontaneity, and the vital juices of life; «king of one's own land» as a quality of a man and of a woman's inner masculinity; reflection on one's own anxiety and control in connection with ancestral histories of survival, displacement, and the need to «check and recheck a million times».
4	«The Witch's Island»	The need to process the «superfluous», to «dump everything in the bin and cart it away»– the burdening, traumatic experience of childhood; archetypal feminine power when one has one's own place, one's own island; reflection on one's own sensitivity; resource as the availability of many possible solutions to life's challenges – «many routes»; roots and the ancestral code of the family.
5	«Feminine	The different states and facets of a woman; the possibility of being a different woman with different possibilities; confusion and inner conflicts

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
	Diversity »	when seeking to understand oneself; the need to feel wholeness and interaction within oneself across feminine roles.
6	«Life and Death»	Life and death as beginning and end; the transition to a new life stage as the experience of loss and death; one's own defencelessness and vulnerability; the possibility of looking both at one's instincts and at one's spirituality.
7	«A Bored World»	The diversity of masculine roles in the world; the opposites of the masculine world as «flat» and «bored», and simultaneously the masculine world as a multiplicity of goal-orientations; a bored woman in a masculine world preoccupied with goal-setting; the inner masculine as the capacity to build goal-orientations and to perceive one's own inner axis.
8	«Being in One's Own Womb»	The theme of refuge and the need to be in one's «womb»; reflection on the need to seek approval; the sense of a world that is still confined within former frameworks; a new road in life as movement towards the future; the theme of a perceived capacity for self-observation of one's own processes («I am like a drone performing a check-up of my various affairs»); the insight of the importance of «being in one's own womb – not in mother's and not in father's, but in one's own.»
9	«Wedding, Marriage»	The feminine theme of being happily and safely married; the need for a safe, reliable man; the opposites of «funeral and wedding» as symbols of the birth of a feminine self-perception in relationships with a man; the theme of anger at oneself in one's own vulnerabilities and feminine desires to feel safe.
10	«Union»	The masculine world – still largely unfamiliar; the need to gather one's varied experience into a single, unified whole; the feminine and the masculine are both within me; union with the world and with oneself as a resource; to rely on oneself and to keep exploring.

3.3.6. Case of «Vasilisa», 50 years old

«Vasilisa's» parents divorced in her infancy due to the father's infidelity. Information about her biological father remained hidden for a long time. The mother did not talk about her biological father. At age 7, «Vasilisa» found her parents' wedding photograph. From her grandfather, she learned that her stepfather was not her biological father. The mother had a second marriage. When «Vasilisa» was 8, the mother divorced the stepfather. The first meeting with her father occurred only at the age of eighteen and was accompanied by mixed feelings: a desire to be liked and simultaneously an experience of shame and alienation.

The request in research therapy was related to the difficulty of self-expression, fear of betraying oneself, and the desire to work through the history of the relationship with her father: «It is very difficult for me to express myself, I don't want to betray myself. I want to change something in my life. I want to work through the story with my father.»

«Vasilisa's» sand process (Figure 15; Table 7) was associated with a gradual transition from experiencing inner splitting, rescuing, and chronic self-control to greater inner integration, corporeality, and subjectivity.

In the initial sandboxes «Three Roads» (sandbox 1), «The Life of My Beloved Daddy»(sandbox 2), themes of choice, duality, and an attempt to reassemble the inner image of the father separately from the mother's influence dominate. A significant motif of the early stage is the awareness of her own involvement in a pattern of rescuing and living through compensation for inner emptiness. Simultaneously, the first formulas of a new self-attitude appear: the need for greater self-acceptance and a desire for self-knowledge.

The middle part of the process is associated with exploring her own female identity, corporeality, and relationship with control. In sandboxes «My Real and Different Self» (sandbox 3), «Freedom Instead of Control» (sandbox 4), and «Happy Woman»(sandbox 5), a movement towards a more vivid, autonomous experience of oneself emerges. Symbols of verticality, structure, the connection between psyche and body appear, as well as the motif of the right to choose one's own life. The composition «The World of Different Men» (sandbox 7) unfolds a picture of the experience of relationships with a man and a new perspective; understanding the external male world and her own resources of the masculine part of the psyche.

A particularly important stage is the one associated with distinguishing between one's own and the ancestral. In the sandbox «Healthy Spine – Happy Me» (sandbox 6), the participant begins to understand what part of life's burden she carries as an inherited family scenario, and what part as her own choice. A more pronounced subject position and the ability to set boundaries emerge, along with an understanding of her spiritual faith (supportive) and faith in her own strengths and resources (sandbox 8 «Last Help»).

The final compositions «Two Different Worlds» (sandbox 9), «Before and After» (sandbox 10) reflect the gradual integration of the masculine and feminine principles, as well as a deeper contact with oneself. The symbolic space is less and less built around the need to survive and more and more around the possibility of living a full, stable, and emotionally rich life.



Figure 15. Sandplay process of «Vasilisa», 50 y/o

During the Sandplay therapy process, «Vasilisa» noted the formation of inner support, reduced anxiety, and increased confidence. A significant result was the awareness of her own violated boundaries and experience of being in abusive relationships. An understanding of the unsafety of previous relationships emerged, along with an inner decision not to return to such patterns of interaction anymore. *«Support for myself appeared, confidence, the inner state became calmer, understandings and goals of where to move next were formed. Towards the*

figure of my father, even more tender feelings appeared and the understanding that even though he has been gone for a long time, it's as if he is watching over me and protecting me, as if some invisible care and support is nearby. In communications, I became more open and began to calmly admire the actions and deeds of men. I began to distinguish and understand men even better, observe them, and not project my illusions onto them. And most importantly, I realized in what abusive relationships I lived, and that I didn't set boundaries at all, and how unsafe my body was. It is painful to realize, but now I can get out of this, and most importantly, understand that I don't want this anymore and won't return to it. It's already impossible to 'unsee' this. Once again, I want to thank you for this wonderful project, where I was able to dive even deeper into my thoughts, feelings, and sensations»– reflection of «Vasilisa» at the end of the therapeutic process.

Table 7.

Case of «Vasilisa». Key Meanings of Experiences (Essences of Sand Pictures)

«Vasilisa», 50 y/o

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
1	«Three Roads»	Experiencing oneself as situated between several levels of life: spirituality, childhood experience, and real social life: « <i>I am between worlds – the spiritual, the childlike, and the real.</i> » The image of a woman as one who has been taken and abandoned. Message: <i>there is power within me, but it is dangerous.</i> The motif of choosing a life path, as if standing before a choice but unable to choose. Intentions: « <i>I want to put it all in order,</i> » « <i>everything can be combined.</i> »
2	«The Life of My Beloved Father»	The motif of « <i>I am reconstructing the image of my father, separately from my mother.</i> » An emerging personal vision of the father: repeatedly creates relationships, strives for family, yet remains inwardly unfulfilled. One's own pattern of rescuing as compensation for emptiness; the impossibility of «giving» when there is nothing inside (analysis not only about the father, but also about the husband). Awareness of one's own involvement in this

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
		pattern. An inner vector of self-relationship emerges: <i>«more love and self-acceptance,» «getting to know oneself.»</i>
3	«The Real and Multifaceted Me»	Self-reflection as an autonomous, independent, authentic person: <i>«I am real and I am multifaceted.»</i> Reflections on trust, betrayal, and self-betrayal. A search for a state of inner resource. The emergence of symbols of verticality and depth: symbolism of the mind–body connection. Images of qualities associated with feminine personal identity.
4	«Freedom in Place of Control»	Reflection on embodiment as a symbol of the experience of freedom and control. Themes of the relationship with one’s husband; exploration of conflicts and sources of tension in relationships and in one’s sense of self. The value of loving and accepting oneself in all one’s complexity.
5	«A Happy Woman»	The motif of being able to «try on» life and having the right to choose emerges: <i>«I am becoming someone who observes and chooses her own life.»</i> The image of a happy woman appears. The experience of belonging to a generational continuum: <i>«Women stand behind me, and I am not alone.»</i> The beginning of integrating polarities: <i>«I am learning to unite opposites.»</i> Images of establishing a mind–body connection: <i>«she has gained a body,» «I am completing myself by reclaiming my body.»</i> Symbols of vertical development appear (upward movement, structure, form).
6	«A Healthy Spine – A Happy Me»	The theme of carrying the weight of others; being overburdened by familial and generational patterns and scripts: the experience of <i>«I am not living only my own life.»</i> The need to separate what is one’s own from what has been inherited – not through rejection of lineage, but through discernment: <i>«my stones or someone else’s,» «to carry or not to carry.»</i> Reflection on the possibility of changing one’s life through action rather than through suffering. The image of the body as a point of support and restoration.

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
		Relating to others through the theme of boundaries and attentiveness to oneself, listening to oneself. Emphasis on subjectivity.
7	«A World of Different Men»	Themes of the past; recollections of family scripts regarding relationships with men: « <i>we had children – what do we do next?</i> » Different images of men: some are negative, while others are self-aware, interesting, and reliable.
8	«The Last Help»	Themes of spirituality and one's sense of place in the world. Vulnerability and strength. The spiritual world as a central source of resource. Nature as the Great All-Accepting Mother. The inner world as a «protective charm»; self-relationship and self-belief: « <i>you will cope, you are strong.</i> » The Black Madonna at the centre as a symbol of deep femininity.
9	«Two Different Worlds»	The theme of « <i>complete trust in the world.</i> » The unification of what is fragmented: masculine and feminine, father and daughter. Reflections on the importance of self-knowledge: « <i>if I do not know myself, how will I choose a man and how will I build a relationship?</i> » Reflection on the experience of hitting boys at school: « <i>was it because of my strength or my fear?</i> » A need to learn more about oneself; to become acquainted with a new self not yet known.
10	«Before and After»	Symbols of the integration of experience from all previous sessions. A feeling of sadness that one cannot go everywhere one wishes. Symbols of free feminine self-expression. Symbols of hobbies as a life richly filled with what one loves to do. Integration as a transition toward oneself and as the possibility of movement into the future.

3.3.7. Case of «Larisa», 56 years old

«Larisa» was born after her parents' divorce. The first contact with her father occurred only in adolescence, when her father returned to the family when she was twelve, and was accompanied by the experience of him as a stranger, frightening, and destructive person. Memories of her father are associated with alcoholism, conflict, and emotional distance. At sixteen, there was a walk with her father, but «Larisa» does not remember what she felt.

The main request concerned the desire to change her life and explore the influence of the father theme on relationships: «I am interested in the research, I would like to explore the theme of my father and how it affects my relationships.»

«Larisa's» sand process (Figure 16; Table 8) unfolded as a movement from a deep experience of loneliness, deficit of support, and dependence on relationships to the gradual formation of an inner center and the ability to rely on oneself.



Figure 16. Sandplay process of «Larisa», 56 y/o

In the early sandboxes «A Magical Fairy-Tale Land» (sandbox 1), «My Men» (sandbox 2), themes of inner emptiness, deficit of reciprocity, and the desire to earn love through care, effort, and rescuing dominate.

The image of the father at the beginning of the process is presented as a split and unstable internal object, around which a pattern of choosing men forms. The masculine is experienced simultaneously as desirable and unsafe. The symbolic space is saturated with fantasies about a «reliable man» who could provide the external support lacking inside.

Themes of loneliness and an attempt to reassemble one's life as a single whole are traced in the sandbox «Past, Present, Future» (sandbox 3). The middle part of the process is associated with gradual movement towards an inner center and contact with the feminine part of the psyche.

In the sandboxes «Forest Tale» (sandbox 4) and «Tenderness» (sandbox 5), images of inner warmth, sacred space, and one's own sensitivity as a value, not a weakness, appear for the first time. Simultaneously, reflection on inner compensatory masculinity emerges (sandbox 7 «Advice and Love») and a desire to find balance between protection and openness (sandbox 8 «Magical Vacation»).

In the second half of the process, the existential and spiritual level of experience intensifies. Sandboxes «Value of Being» (sandbox 6), «My Fears» (sandbox 9), and «Depth of My Unconscious» (sandbox 10) reflect the movement from the literal search for love and protection to the search for inner meaning, a symbolic center, and contact with deep layers of the psyche. Dreams begin to appear, and inner symbolic processing of experience intensifies.

The finale of the process is associated with the gradual recognition of her own depth and the ability to continue the path to herself without the need to completely rely on an external object. The symbolic space becomes more centered, and the inner world more alive and stable.

Following Sandplay therapy, «Larisa» described strengthening of inner support, increased self-esteem, and reduced risk of depressive states.

Working with sand was accompanied by a gradual strengthening of the ability to rely on her own inner strength and endure life's difficulties: «*Our work helps me now find support within myself, not fall into depression, be confident in myself, that I will succeed. I thank you for helping me feel my inner strength and raise my self-esteem*»— «Larisa» analyzed her experience and noted that in the autumn, a month after the end of therapy, some difficult changes occurred in life: troubles and a layoff at work, caring for a sick pet, and a man with whom she had broken up three years ago reappeared.

Table 8.

Case of «Larisa». Key Meanings of Experiences (Essences of Sand Pictures)

«Larisa», 56 y/o

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
1	«A Magical Fairy-Tale Land»	Core theme: relationships, solitude, and the loss of a sense of support. Symbols of a whole «home space» as an image of a family «that no longer exists.» Reflection on inner loneliness. Asymmetry in relationships: giving care and effort without receiving reciprocity or a responding engagement. Themes of finding meaning in life through the other. Analysis of childhood experiences, early autonomy, and growing up with a working mother and an absent father. Themes of attachment through care and rescuing. Irritation at one's own sensitivity and tears, as though there were no inner container for grieving.
2	«My Men»	A deepening of previous reflections on loneliness; a structure of choice emerges, connected to the image of the father and to self-worth. A split image of the father as broken and suppressed on the one hand, and deep and romantic on the other (inner object: ambivalent, unstable). Observation and reflection on the pattern of choosing men according to a fractured image of the father (an attachment pattern through a split object). Key relational formulas: « <i>I must prove that I am good,</i> » « <i>I am unworthy of love.</i> » The theme of the basis for choosing a partner: a deficit of self-worth. The theme of love through effort and suffering. The need to find an external protector, with the reflection that there is no sense of an internal one.
3	«Past, Present, Future»	An attempt to gather one's life into a coherent story. Life is experienced as a linear process made up of stages, without an inner centre. The unbearability of solitude. Happiness: as a goal rather than an experience. Choosing a man not out of connection but out of a need for support. The image of a fantasy man: « <i>sturdy,</i> » « <i>reliable,</i> » « <i>with a profession</i> »– yet no

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
		integrated inner image of a man as a person with diverse qualities. Analysis and «assembly» of oneself as a subject through roles, relationships, and the narrative of one's life.
4	«A Forest Fairy Tale»	The theme of searching for an inner centre through images of nature. The feminine image – a little red-haired witch – as symbolism of an approach toward the resources of the feminine.
5	«Tenderness»	For the first time, not only the theme of relationships appears, but the inner world as a space and the beginnings of a centre. Self-analysis of oneself as fragile, sensitive, and alive. Symbols of contact with inner femininity, and reflections on inner compensatory masculinity. A dilemma: to protect oneself or to isolate oneself. Images of resource: fire at the centre, «the sacred,» «warmth,» «light.» Meaningful shifts toward positive self-relationship: « <i>I am beginning to rely not only on others but on myself,</i> » « <i>I am seeking a balance between the masculine and the feminine within myself.</i> »
6	«The Value of Being»	Emptiness from which meaning is born. Deficit is transformed into a field for the emergence of new understanding. An expansion of the symbolic from the personal to the universal and archetypal. Reflection on the experience of regulation through spiritual unity and meaning, and on reliance on inner meaning. The experience of a maternal, containing, all-encompassing force. Dreams have begun to appear – symbolic inner processing of experience. Movement toward inner wholeness through integration.
7	«Happiness and Love»	A prolonged selection of suitable figurines representing the image of men – reflecting a need for cognitive construction and control. The theme of the ideal image of a man: protector, provider, romantic, noble. Sadness that

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
		there was no father (an idealised, borrowed, unintegrated image). Reflection on the idea that <i>«love must be found within.»</i> A need to move toward the inner source.
8	«A Magical Holiday»	Themes of current life circumstances; anticipation of an upcoming holiday. Fatigue and the expectation of rest and renewal on the shores of a warm sea. The feminine image in the sandplay – a mermaid gazing at the water. Images of men: sailor-pilgrims or solitary fishermen. A need to savour life.
9	«My Fears»	Existential themes of life, the infirmity brought by illness, and death. A spiral at the centre – a reflection on the centre of meanings, anxieties, and fears. Discussion and reflection on age as a mountain pass at the midpoint of the journey. Feminine images: Baba Yaga and Guanyin (the wisdom of feminine experience and the healer of the feminine). Memories of losses and a car accident. A life-affirming conclusion: <i>«darkness will always be conquered by light.»</i>
10	«The Depths of My Unconscious»	Images of nature as a reflection of resources and the need to find strength. A desire to mark a centre. A long and attentive construction of the composition, with reflections on the experience of previous sessions. Reflection on the need to continue moving inward, toward the depths of oneself.

3.3.8. Case of «Ayana», 33 years old

«Ayana's» father lived separately, but near our house where she lived with her mother. When «Ayana» was 1.5 years old, a stepfather appeared. «Ayana» often saw her father but does not remember vivid episodes of communication with him, but there is a feeling of love and pity. «Ayana's» father used psychoactive substances and had experience of being in prison. Despite

the deficit of stable contact, the participant maintained feelings of love and pity towards him. Impressions of her dad as a person with a big soul who would give away his last. After the father's death in adolescence, the theme of male figures remained emotionally difficult, including in relationships with her stepfather.

The participant's request was related to exploring the theme of femininity, the paternal figure, and fears concerning starting a family and motherhood: «I am interested in participating in the research. I wanted to explore the theme of femininity, work through the theme of my father and the fears of pregnancy not occurring, because there was no normal family.»

«Ayana's» sand process (Figure 17; Table 9) was largely associated with the gradual weakening of hypercontrol and movement from chronic autonomy to greater inner subjectivity, corporeality, and contact with her own feelings.

The initial compositions reflected a high level of inner tension, anxiety, and the need to keep everything under control. In the sandboxes «Rest» (sandbox 1) and «Grandfather's Empire» (sandbox 2), the experience of emotional «freezing,» deficit of living contact with the father figure, and the compensatory formation of her own security system through hyper-independence and control manifest. The space of the sandboxes at the early stage looks organized but emotionally restrained and immobile.

In the central part of the process, themes of female identity, corporeality, and the internal conflict between rigid functional masculinity and the need for a softer, more alive mode of existence begin to manifest more actively.

In the sandboxes «Cinderella» (sandbox 3), «My Green House» (sandbox 4), and «My Female Roles» (sandbox 5), the participant explores her own victimhood, anxiety about self-expression, the theme of motherhood, and difficulties contacting different aspects of her femininity.

The final composition «Little Village» (sandbox 10) reflects movement towards a more stable, fulfilling, and humane way of life. In the symbolic space, images of female housekeeping, coziness, wealth, and the ability to live not only through tension and deserving, but also through inner fullness and balance appear.



Figure 17. Sandplay process of «Ayana», 33 y/o

A significant shift appears in the sandbox «Wild Nature» (sandbox 6), where contact with the natural, instinctive, and bodily part of the psyche intensifies for the first time. Simultaneously, the absence of an integrated paternal function becomes more noticeable: the composition contains female animals with cubs, but no males. This image symbolically reflects the experience of life in a system where care and survival exist without stable male support. At the same time, the compositions «Our Men» (sandbox 7) and «My Anxiety» (sandbox 9) unfold an overview of various roles of men in the world and in a woman's life, with parallel anxieties about motherhood in her own life and experiences about the need to be protected by a man.

In the second half of the process, the theme of authorship of one's own life intensifies. In the sandbox «Paradise Place» (sandbox 8), reflection on the inner critic and introjected controlling figure appears, and an important subjective motif is formulated: «I want to choose my own path». Parallely, the level of compulsive control and inner tension decreases.

During therapy, the participant noted an increased ability to protect her own boundaries and defend her «I.» The awareness of her own closedness and the difficulty of opening up in close emotional contact became significant. Simultaneously, the need for greater subjectivity and personal autonomy intensified: «I have become very emotional, I don't know if it's related to our

work in some way, but for some reason I have begun to fiercely defend myself, if before it was somehow easier for me to remain silent, now it's no longer possible. Regarding my father, I don't think so, I always treated him well. I started communicating more with everyone with the sand; I noticed that, of course, the work was hard for me, especially on a given topic, it was very hard for me to work with him, I think it's because for the most part I am a very closed person, of course it doesn't seem that way to people from the outside, but on more personal and deep topics, it's hard for me to open up to people. But I also want to add that all the time when I worked in the sand, I told you I wanted to go on vacation so much, and I eventually dreamed myself into a vacation».

Table 9.

Case of «Ayana». Key Meanings of Experiences (Essences of Sand Pictures)

«Ayana», 33 y/o

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
1	«Rest»	Themes of everyday tension, control, and solitary autonomy. Themes of constant busyness and multiple tasks even in a state of fatigue. Reflection on the presence of anxiety masked by activity. Permission to rest only outside one's own reality. Control through order and cleanliness. Intolerance of losing control over time and process. A deep experience of chronic inadequacy and of perpetually falling behind an endless stream of tasks. Adaptation and a mode of defence through self-sufficiency and extreme autonomy, developed since childhood.
2	«Grandfather's Empire»	Themes with a traumatic layer. A flat composition as emotions kept under psychic control. The image of the father as « <i>as if he wasn't there</i> » – presence without being present: « <i>I have no bad memories, but I also have no living experience of connection.</i> » A sense of emotional freezing in unacknowledged trauma, with the preservation of «normality.» The theme of life as a future home of one's own

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
		construction, as an ark. One's own container of safety, created rather than received. Difficulty naming feelings.
3	«Cinderella»	The theme of busyness as a defence against inner emptiness; self-sacrifice for the sake of stability. The theme of boundaries that must be maintained; external control as a means of regulating one's inner state. Images of sacrificial femininity, reflected in the sandplay and in self-reflection. The transference of the paternal function onto the partnership: the husband is older, « <i>like a father – he will protect, he will create the conditions.</i> » Reflections on two inner self-experiences: one's own fragility and one's own rigidity. Continued reflection on the image of the father: the father was absent, the stepfather did not become a significant figure, the husband occupies this role. The theme of a self-experience of being « <i>too convenient.</i> »
4	«My Green House»	The theme of balance and burden. A search for the feminine beyond the inner rigid masculine, which drives one through intensive work without rest to the point of back pain. A conflict between allowing oneself to live lightly and living under a heavy load.
5	«My Feminine Roles»	Difficulty in analysing and reflecting on one's own feminine roles. A prolonged construction of the composition. Reflection on each figurine and anxiety about placing something incorrectly. The theme of self-expression within feminine roles. The theme of potential motherhood in the future and anxiety about this. The image of the husband as « <i>father.</i> » A desire to discover different qualities of womanhood within oneself.
6	«Wild Nature»	Themes moving from control toward the movement of the psyche. Discussion of a life formula in which everything is arranged yet does

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
		<p>not quite fit – a divergence between outer order and inner experience. Images in the sandplay composition with female animals and their young, but no males – the theme of reflection on life without an integrated paternal function. Patterns of enduring things for a long time, followed by an explosion. Contact with natural images in the symbolism of the sandplay as a movement toward the instinctive, bodily, and feminine part of oneself. Themes of care toward oneself, attentiveness to the body and to boundaries.</p>
7	«Our Men»	<p>A need for safety through the masculine. Orientation toward the outer (masculine) world is stronger than toward the inner (feminine) world. Images of the masculine are fragmented: the man-child, the hero, the provider, the grandfather, the worker – while the image of the father is idealised, the father as a saint. The theme of anxiety about future motherhood as a limitation. An unresolved inner story with parents: early maturation, a dependent father who died of illness, a preoccupied mother.</p>
8	«A Paradise»	<p>The theme of choosing one's direction and self-directing one's life, yet with a background anxiety in the absence of signals that everything is going to plan. Shared that compulsive cleaning has diminished – as though tension has decreased. The theme of observing the body, where activity replaces emotional experience. Reflection on observing the Inner Parent, who scolds, demands, and criticises – becoming acquainted with an introjected controlling figure. <i>«I want to choose my own path myself, rather than going where I have been 'placed'»</i> – the theme of the emergence of subjectivity and authorship over one's own life. Discussion of symbols of «inner lighthouses»: a time to learn to notice one's own</p>

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
		lighthouses. Symbolism of integration and unification.
9	«My Anxiety»	Avoidance of the proposed theme, on the grounds that constructing compositions is difficult because it feels as though one must analyse. Themes evoking complex feelings: home, a close friend, and motherhood. A self-directed manifesto: to believe that everything will resolve itself.
10	«A Little Village»	Satisfaction with the image of one's own sandplay. Images of women who are feminine and bring abundance: full buckets, pies, active and managing their own homes. The theme of cosiness and balance. A movement toward the integration of a full life – but without exhausting fatigue, without waiting for inner and outer praise that must be earned.

3.3.9. Case of «Yukki», 48 years old

«Yukki's» parents lived together for ten years and divorced when she was three. Her father moved to the Far East. There are memories of the father tossing her in the air, but also experiences related to the mother's emotional pain and the father's negative qualities towards her. In adolescence, there was no contact with the father. In the family, the theme of the father and divorce was taboo for a long time. The father is now elderly, and «Yukki» corresponds with him and has hosted him as a guest.

The participant's request was to internally explore the influence of the father theme on her own life and relationships: «I am interested in participating in the research. To gain an internal experience of studying the theme of my father in my life and the complex feelings towards him».

«Yukki's» sand process (Figure 18; Table 10) was distinctly archetypal and philosophical in nature and unfolded as a gradual integration of identity, ancestral experience, and inner center. Already in the first sandbox, «Cradle» (sandbox 1), themes of a lost safe world, the search for a

guiding figure, and the experience of her own cultural and ancestral multiplicity appear. In the early compositions «Shards» (sandbox 2), «Magic Garden» (sandbox 3), motifs of fragmentation of inner experience and the search for a structure capable of uniting the scattered parts of the personality dominate. The father's image is experienced as important but not integrated into a holistic inner system. Simultaneously, contact with female figures of the lineage and the need for one's own inner guiding center intensifies.

The middle part of the process gradually shifts from the personal level to a more archetypal experience of life as a cycle of transformations. In sandboxes «Cycle of Life» (sandbox 4), «Wheel of Samsara» (sandbox 5), and «Birth of Something» (sandbox 6), «This is Something Big, Hard to Name» (sandbox 8), themes of inner center, movement of opposites, transformation, and the birth of a new order from chaos intensify. The ability to experience life not as a linear story of losses, but as a continuous process of changes and inner maturation emerges.

In the second half of the process, the integration of the masculine becomes increasingly important. In the sandbox «Me and the World of Men» (sandbox 7), the masculine is experienced for the first time not only as an external figure but as a multi-layered inner function of order, law, wisdom, and creativity. Simultaneously, a desire for more holistic relationships with a man, based not on deficit but on inner maturity, arises.



Figure 18. Sandplay process of «Yukki», 48 y/o

The final compositions «In the Shadow» (sandbox 9), «Waters of Life» (sandbox 10) reflect the integration of shadow aspects of the psyche and the restoration of contact with inner resources. The feminine begins to be experienced as fluid, alive, and stable simultaneously. The completion of the process is associated with a feeling of an inner flow of life, the ability to endure changes, and rely on deep inner sources.

«Yukki» shared that during the research process, actual contact with her father occurred, which was an emotionally significant event for the participant: *«During the research, I had contact with my father. He wrote that he bought me a gift (a fur coat and a watch) and sent it by parcel. I used neither, but the fact itself was significant for me. After researching the father figure, I took a course on working with the mother figure. And this complemented my perception of the relationship with parental figures very well. My intention to work with a male therapist strengthened. I started searching for ‘my’ therapist, and the process itself became an interesting experience»*– reflects «Yukki». After completing the work with the father theme, the participant continued exploring parental relationships through work with the mother figure, and also expressed an intention to continue personal therapy with a male therapist.

Table 10.

Case of «Yukki». Key Meanings of Experiences (Essences of Sand Pictures)

«Yukki», 48 y/o

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
1	«The Cradle»	The theme of a lost paradise of childhood – a safe, «right» world for a child. The theme of development through multiple sources rather than through a single parent. A search for a mentor who sets a direction; a need for an external guiding figure. Acceptance of the duality of reality. The theme of national identity; a search for oneself through cultural layers: Slavic fairy tales, Eastern mythology, Korean identity. A layer of identity trauma is uncovered, rooted in the preceding century's family experience. The value of authenticity as a foundation of one's world.
2	«Shards»	The image of the father as <i>«important, but not integrated into the system.»</i>

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
		The father as an external function without a whole image – and this as a double loss of both personal and family structure. The potential of connection with one's lineage for integrating fragments of personal experience and heritage. A readiness to undergo experience, to let it pass through oneself. A search for a structuring inner central function.
3	«The Enchanted Garden»	An attempt to gather the inner world – not through control, but through symbolic space. A search for a self-image: <i>«it is not difficult to find an image of myself – I feel as though I am not yet formed.»</i> Resource images of the women of one's lineage: mother, grandmother, wise women. The theme of a need for connection with one's inner directing centre. Reflection on the ambivalence of one's own nature. Making sense of one's own strength and aggression. Reflection on the potential for development. A need to integrate the current challenges of life.
4	«The Cycle of Life»	An existential, archetypal, and almost mythological level of experiencing life as a process of transformation. Life as a process of transformation rather than a point of arrival. The theme of the ripening of something new; observation of access to the transformation of narratives, life patterns, and emotional experience. A need for nourishment for change. Observation of inner supportive objects and figures – grandmothers and grandfathers who <i>«observe but do not interfere.»</i> The perception of life as a repeating cycle of transformations. The existential multiplicity of choice.
5	«The Wheel of Samsara»	The motif of the Self rotating around a centre. Symbols of the feminine: maternal, warrior-like, transforming. Reflection on one's own inner centre. A movement toward the integration of opposites. The masculine seems to have no place here: <i>«I wanted to add masculine figures, but it did not yet feel appropriate.»</i> A transition from rationalisation to experience. A need for a

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
		balance of stability and change.
6	«The Birth of Something»	Images of a living, self-organising process. The motif of order being born from chaos. Reflection on the value of process rather than outcome. Self-observation of the sense of a stable inner centre. The theme of transformation connected with a reassembling of the relationship with the mother and the restoration of the connection with the father. Reflection on the experience of strengthening ancestral bonds in life through family, support, and the reinforcement and creation of family and cultural connections. Integration of experience.
7	«Myself and the World of Men»	The theme of the relationship with the masculine within one's own feminine world. Reflections on one's different feminine roles. The image of a man diverges between inner and outer choice – a multilayered, composite animus with the function of order and law: the figure of the earthly and labouring grandfather, the sage, the warrior, the creator. In life, a living engagement with masculine energy. A need for an encounter with a man at the level of wholeness. The masculine is experienced as simultaneously strong and fragile. Self-reflection on the simultaneous role of woman and of a maternal figure for men.
8	«This Is Something Large, Which Is Difficult to Name»	The motif of the sandplay images is cosmogonic, ancestral, and transpersonal. An archetypal level of making sense of one's life and one's femininity. The processing of experience as philosophical work. The theme of experiencing the feminine as connected with the creation and sustaining of life. The experience of inner maturity. Reflection on personal development as a need and an inner impulse, rather than an imposed task. Integration of experience. Continuation of the journey.

Sandbox No.	Author's Title	Key Meanings of Experiences, Essences of the Pictures Extracted from the Symbolic Field of the Sandboxes and Narrative
9	«In the Shadow»	The theme of the shadow aspect as the experience of one's own strength – yet a strength that is under control and in service: the motif of containing and self-regulating aggression as a resource for protection. The motif of inner processing of tension. Reflection on the shadow as a source of nourishment and of the preservation of the core of life. A need to form and to sense one's own inner symbolic sacred space.
10	«The Waters of Life»	The motif of the flow and change of life. Reflection on the sense of inner strength and the recognition of this resource within oneself. The feminine as a flexible, flowing river. The existential quality of life and its currents. The self-experience of the capacity to connect with inner resources. Integration of processes. The motif of transformation.

We examined the anamnestic data of the participants regarding the experience of the father's absence. In this section, the presented narrative descriptions of the dynamics of the participants' sandplay process, as well as the summary tables of the essences of the sand compositions, allow us to move from the level of individual clinical stories to the level of cross-case qualitative analysis.

The identified symbolic motifs, recurring themes, the nature of image transformation, and the dynamics of experiences created the basis for subsequent systematization of the material, identification of typological patterns, and analysis of the regularities of the individuation process in women with experience of paternal deprivation.

The next section presents the results of qualitative data processing, including the analysis of semantic codes, dynamic types of the symbolic process, as well as a comparison of the identified phenomena with L. Freedle's phase model of Sandplay therapy and our developed checklist for registering symbols of individuation.

3.4. Qualitative analysis of the dynamics of symbols in Sandplay compositions in the study of the development of individuation

Qualitative data analysis in this study is aimed at identifying the dynamics of symbolic processes reflecting the movement of individuation in sandplay compositions of women with experience of paternal deprivation.

The analysis of the subjects' material in research Sandplay therapy (97 written and audio session protocols and 174 units of photographs of sand compositions with and without figures as post-graphics of sand compositions (Appendix 12) with imprints and landscape forms) was carried out at three levels in the qualitative research methodology:

1. Descriptive (content analysis): analysis of protocols, identification of main themes of paternal deprivation and female individuation;
2. Intentional analysis: determining the direction of content of symbolic material and themes;
3. Interpretative (symbolic analysis): analytical interpretation.

3.4.1. Data sorting and coding procedure

Coding procedure.

In the traditions of qualitative research, each sand composition was considered by us as a unit of analysis, as a crucial factor of fundamental importance for understanding the phenomenon or system under study [167].

The identification of semantic codes and main themes, «essences of symbolic material» [34, p. 86] was concurrently carried out by a specially created reference group consisting of three invited independent specialist psychologists with professional training, experience, and supervision in Sandplay therapy according to the standards of the International Society for Sandplay Therapy (ISST).

As an analytical basis, not only individual symbols and storylines of sand pictures were considered, but also their sequential transformation during the therapeutic process: changes in the

nature of images, spatial organization of compositions, features of interaction of figures, emotional-semantic accents, and ways of symbolically experiencing inner experience.

Relying on C. G. Jung's analytical psychology, concepts of the individuation process in the works of M. Stein, M.-L. von Franz, E. Neumann, as well as the concept of symbolic dynamics of Sandplay by D. Kalff and L. Freedle, qualitative criteria-codes for analyzing individuation were identified in the study. These codes were considered as recurring symbolic, spatial, emotional-semantic, and structural-phenomenological signs reflecting changes in the organization of the participants' psychic experience. Together, this created the possibility of viewing the sandplay process as a dynamic system of symbolic development, accessible for sequential qualitative analysis and typologization.

We identified the following main **codes for analyzing the individuation process**, which we tracked in the therapeutic process and participants' materials:

Presence of «good internal objects» in the symbolic field of the psyche;

- Differentiation of internal and external;
- Symbolic activity;
- Ability to hold the tension of opposites;
- Autonomy and subjectivity;
- Formation of inner support;
- Integration of the masculine and feminine;
- Stability of boundaries;
- Capacity for self-observation and reflection;
- Emergence of an inner center;
- Reduction of fragmentation of the psychic field;
- Movement from survival to living life.

Additionally, the author's term *post-graphics of sand compositions* (italics ours – E.Sh.) was introduced into the study, describing the visual-symbolic traces and graphic pro-forms preserved in the sand field after the removal of figures (Appendix 12).

Analysis of post-graphics allowed us to take into account not only the subject composition of the composition but also the structural-phenomenological features of the sand space [125], geometric forms of the landscape reflecting processes of integration, fragmentation,

centering, and transformation of the psychic field. We identified the following observable **post-graphic codes**-criteria of individuation dynamics in sandbox protocols for analyzing individuation processes:

- Centering;
- Degree of fragmentation;
- Field density;
- Voids;
- Trajectories of movement;
- Depth;
- Boundaries;
- Containing;
- Symmetry/asymmetry;
- Traces of integration;
- Traces of «decay»;
- Tense zones of the field.

When identifying individuation criteria-codes, the study relied not only on the analytical-psychological understanding of symbolic dynamics but also on the data from the psychodiagnostic study of the participants' self-attitude. In particular, individual criteria of qualitative analysis were correlated with indicators of the Self-Attitude Inventory (MIS) by S. R. Pantileev [113], since individuation processes in analytical psychology are directly related to the transformation of the personality's relationship to itself, its own value, boundaries, autonomy, capacity for self-acceptance, and inner support (Appendix 10).

In this regard, such phenomena as strengthening subjectivity, reducing inner fragmentation, forming a more stable self-attitude, developing self-support, capacity for self-observation, and a more integrated experience of one's own identity were considered simultaneously as psychodiagnostically recorded changes and as symbolically manifested criteria for the dynamics of individuation in sandplay compositions.

Structuring codes into a four-level model system:

Having designated the analysis codes: the dynamics of individuation through the lens of analytical psychology; the dynamics of symbolic [56; 73; 61] and phase process in Sandplay

[37]; codes extracted from the indicators of the Self-Attitude Inventory (MIS) for final observation of individuation processes in women with paternal deprivation – we identified the following criteria for the dynamics of individuation, divided into four levels, into a system of a four-level model:

Level I. SYMBOLIC-ARCHETYPAL LEVEL (change in figurative structure and internal objects, symbolization function)

XVO - Appearance of «good»internal objects, reduction of projections, strengthening of the Ego

GVV - Internal and external boundaries;

ASF - Active symbolic function, appearance of grand images, dreams

BM - More material in analysis, less various forms of resistance;

OKhM - Appearance of more images of the «good mother»;

SKhO - Appearance of properties of «good objects»increases;

GM - Flexibility of thinking, structuring and differentiation occur;

GVR - Flexibility of inner ordered regulation affecting external regulation and reality testing;

KSO - Qualitative self-attitude shows developmental dynamics;

NSO - New connections and relationships, strengthening of previous ones;

VOO - Perception of the father's image (reflective, emotions accessible);

UKA - Improvement in quality of adaptation;

ChUZh - Feeling of life satisfaction;

RPSI - Reflection on the usefulness of participation in the sandplay process and research.

Level II. STRUCTURAL-PSYCHIC LEVEL (reorganization of the internal structure of the Self, formation of internal law and self-authority)

GVV - Formation of internal and external boundaries

GM - Flexibility of thinking, differentiation

GVR - Flexibility and development of internal regulation

BM - More material and reduction of primitive forms of resistance

Level III. PERSONAL-REFLEXIVE LEVEL (attitude towards oneself and processing of identity, conscious integration of experience)

KSO - Qualitative dynamics of self-attitude

RPSI - Reflection on the usefulness of participation in the sandplay process and research

Level IV. SOCIAL-ADAPTATION LEVEL (manifestation of changes in external life)

NSO - New connections and strengthening of relationships

UKA - Improvement in quality of adaptation

ChUZh - Feeling of life satisfaction

This comparison allowed for a cross-level analysis of data, combining symbolic, phenomenological, and psychodiagnostic levels of research.

Analysis of the codes allowed tracking the dynamics of formation of inner support, the degree of integration of opposites, features of experiencing the feminine and masculine, processes of centering of psychic space, transformation of defense patterns, as well as movement from fragmentation to greater inner coherence and subjectivity.

Tool for observing individuation processes: L. R. Freedle's phase model.

The methodological basis for the qualitative analysis in this study was L. Freedle's concept of the seven phases of the Sandplay process, which examines the symbolic dynamics of sand compositions as a reflection of successive stages of psychic transformation and the movement of individuation. The phase approach allowed analyzing not only individual symbols and their meanings but also the overall trajectory of changes in the participants' psychic field: the nature of image development, ways of organizing space, degree of integration of opposites, features of experiencing crises, transitions, and the formation of an inner center.

In accordance with L. Freedle's concept, the following phases of the sandplay process were observed and analyzed in the study [37], which became the methodological basis for developing the checklist for registering symbols of individuation and identifying criteria-codes for qualitative analysis:

PHASE I. Expression of experience and everyday struggle with difficulties.

PHASE II. Access to resources and their placement.

PHASE III. Descent into death, darkness, despair.

PHASE IV. Reflection, mirroring, meditation, transformation, finding hope.

PHASE V. Touching wholeness, divinity, fullness.

PHASE VI. Union of opposites, emerging integration.

PHASE VII. Return to everyday life with a new perspective.

Development of a checklist for registering symbols of individuation.

To systematize the observed phenomena, the procedure for developing and testing the checklist included:

1. Recording symbolic material using analytical interview protocols and sand composition observation protocols (Appendix 9);
2. Correlating the recorded symbols with the main themes related to paternal deprivation and the dynamics of individuation;
3. Analyzing the correlation of the dynamics of symbols with the phases of individuation described by L. Freedle [37].

The developed checklist (Appendix 11) is a structured qualitative analysis tool, including a system of phenomenological categories reflecting: symbolic images and objects; thematic and plot structures; archetypal and processual markers correlatable with individuation phases. A checklist for registering sandplay symbols of individuation processes through the seven phases of the sand process was developed, allowing the identification of recurring criteria-codes of individuation dynamics and their comparison with the content of sand compositions, narrative descriptions, and anamnestic data of the participants.

Algorithm for working with the checklist:

1. Stage 1. Phenomenological registration of material: observation of the sand composition (sequential series of compositions) as a holistic phenomenon with recording of present symbols, images, and thematic elements. Registration is carried out without prior interpretation, consistent with the principles of the phenomenological approach in qualitative research. Identified elements of symbols of the sand picture are marked in the corresponding categories of the checklist.
2. Stage 2. Classification according to phases of the individuation process: the identified symbolic elements are correlated with the themes of the sandplay process phases. The representation of different phases in each sand composition is analyzed, and the dominant phase reflecting the current state of the psychodynamic process is determined. This approach allows operationalizing the dynamics of individuation through observable symbolic markers.

3. Stage 3. Comparison with narrative material: checklist data are compared with verbal materials (title of the sand composition; comments of the sandbox author; story about the created sand scene). This allows clarifying the subjective meanings of symbols and avoiding reducing the analysis exclusively to external description.

4. Stage 4. Integration with anamnestic data: the obtained observations are correlated with the anamnestic information of the sandbox author, with their biographical life dynamics, experience, adaptation, request for psychotherapy. This ensures contextualization of the identified symbolic structures and increases the validity of interpretation in the traditions of analytical psychology, where «validity is assessed by whether the interpretation connects with and enlivens the person with the archetypes that have been identified and amplified based on the data»[177, p. 131] and further, where «the various motifs are different facets of the same basic theme. The amplifications are then placed in sequence in a narrative which itself provides a certain selection of amplifying images. When the collection of images is thus enriched, the interpretation follows, that is, the translation into modern psychological language, which means the connection or association of the images with psychic experience that can be lived in the present»[ibid.].

5. Stage 5. Coding and identification of semantic units: based on the totality of visual and narrative data, semantic codes are identified and subsequently aggregated into more generalized categories of «essences of themes»[34, p. 86]. This procedure corresponds to the practice of qualitative analysis focused on identifying the subject's meanings and strategies of experience [175; 86; 162; 154; 167; 187; 196].

6. Stage 6. Analysis of process dynamics: when a series of sand compositions is available, a temporal analysis of changes is conducted, including tracking transitions between phases; identification of stable and transforming symbolic structures; the direction of the individuation process is determined.

The checklist provided structured observation and coding of the material of sand compositions, allowing not only the recording of the presence of certain phase indicators but also their distribution over time in the research process. Thus, the function of operationalizing the phase model was performed, creating a basis for subsequent visual and comparative analysis of the dynamics of individuation.

3.4.2. Analysis process

The visual method of representing phase dynamics proposed by L. Freedle [37] was used in this study as a prototype for analytical visualization. At the same time, the original model is not reproduced unchanged but adapted to the tasks of our empirical study. For the purposes of this study, as we presented above, a structured form, a checklist for recording phase dynamics, was developed.

We retained the principle of phase sequence but expanded the structure of indicators and introduced a block for comparison with psychometric data. Thus, Freedle's visual scheme acts as a methodological foundation on the basis of which an integrative tool for qualitative-quantitative data interpretation was created. This modification allowed a transition from descriptive visualization to an analytical model of cross-level correlation of symbolic dynamics and changes in self-attitude.

Observation of the symbolic material of the sand compositions of the study participants using the checklist (Appendix 13, p. 253–261) made it possible to identify phases of the dynamics of individuation of women with paternal deprivation, trace the psyche's tendencies towards qualitative changes in the internal image and function of the father, and observe the dynamics of symbols of healing of femininity.

Recording the phenomena and symbols of individuation as stable units in the developed checklist allowed correlating the symbolic material of sandboxes with the analysis of the participants' verbal material, interview materials, and the results of the self-attitude study using the MIS method to translate symbolic, non-verbal, and verbal material into a categorical form suitable for further analysis.

In the next chapter, we present the possibilities of qualitative analysis based on criteria of symbolic space, sandplay process phases, and coding of signs of individuation processes. It allowed us to discover that the dynamics of individuation in women with paternal deprivation is non-linear and includes returns, fluctuations, and varying expression of phases. This confirms C. G. Jung's conception of the non-linearity of individuation and its orientation towards the integration of psychic contents, and D. Kalff's protected safe space of Sandplay provides a three-dimensional environment for transformation. L. R. Freedle's model proved to be an effective analytical framework for the study, and the obtained data indicate variability in its implementation.

3.5. Results and interpretation

3.5.1. Dynamics of phases of the individuation process in women with paternal deprivation

Using the checklist and applying the model for observing the seven phases of transformation in Sandplay, we were able to identify individual trajectories of individuation in women with paternal deprivation (Figure 19) and draw conclusions about the typological characteristics of female individuation in paternal deprivation (Tables 11, 12).

Using the checklist, all photo protocols of each participant’s sand compositions (with figures and with post-graphics, without figures) were studied, noting the presence of symbols and plots correlating with each individual phase (Appendix 13). This was then correlated with the narratives of the participants’ stories and comments and marked with a color corresponding to the phase of individuation dynamics.

Thus, we obtained a color map of the dynamics of changes and can visually observe the movement of the woman’s individuation process expressed in the sandbox from the phase «Expression of experience and everyday struggle with difficulties» to resource phases of development expressing integration and wholeness: «Reflection, mirroring, meditation, transformation, finding hope», «Touching wholeness, divinity, fullness», «Emerging integration, union of opposites», «Return to everyday life with a new perspective»(Table 11).

Table 11.

Movement of Individuation Processes of Research Participants

Movement of Individuation Processes Through the Seven Phases of the Sandplay Process (after L.R. Freedle, 2025)										
	Sandbox									
Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
«Lolita», age 34	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Brown	Yellow	Blue	Red	Yellow	Orange	Yellow
«Ainura», age 49	Yellow	Green	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	White	White	White
«Athena», age 43	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Blue	Green	Orange	Green
«Agata», age 51	Blue	Green	Green	Blue	Blue	Green	Red	Orange	Blue	Red
«Ekaterina», age 37	Orange	Blue	Blue	Orange	Blue	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange

«Vasilisa», age 50	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Purple
«Larisa», age 56	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Blue	Brown	Green
«Ayana», age 33	Blue	Brown	Blue	Green	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Red	Blue	Green
«Yukki», age 48	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Brown	Green

Table 12.

Colour Key of Sandplay Process Phase Indicators (after L.R. Freedle)

Phase	Colour Indicator	Name of Sandplay Process Phase of Individuation Dynamics (after L.R. Freedle, 2025)
I	Blue	«Expressing Experience and Everyday Struggle»
II	Yellow	«Accessing and Placing Resources»
III	Brown	«Immersion in Death, Darkness, Despair»
IV	Green	«Reflection, Transformation, Finding Hope»
V	Yellow	«Touching Wholeness, the Divine, Fullness»
VI	Red	«Emerging Integration, Uniting Opposites»
VII	Purple	«Return to Everyday Life with a New Perspective»

We also presented the obtained phase dynamics according to the Freedle model using Microsoft Excel in the form of a wave model (Figure 19) where the X-axis is the sequence of sandboxes, and the Y-axis is the phases of the individuation process in Sandplay.

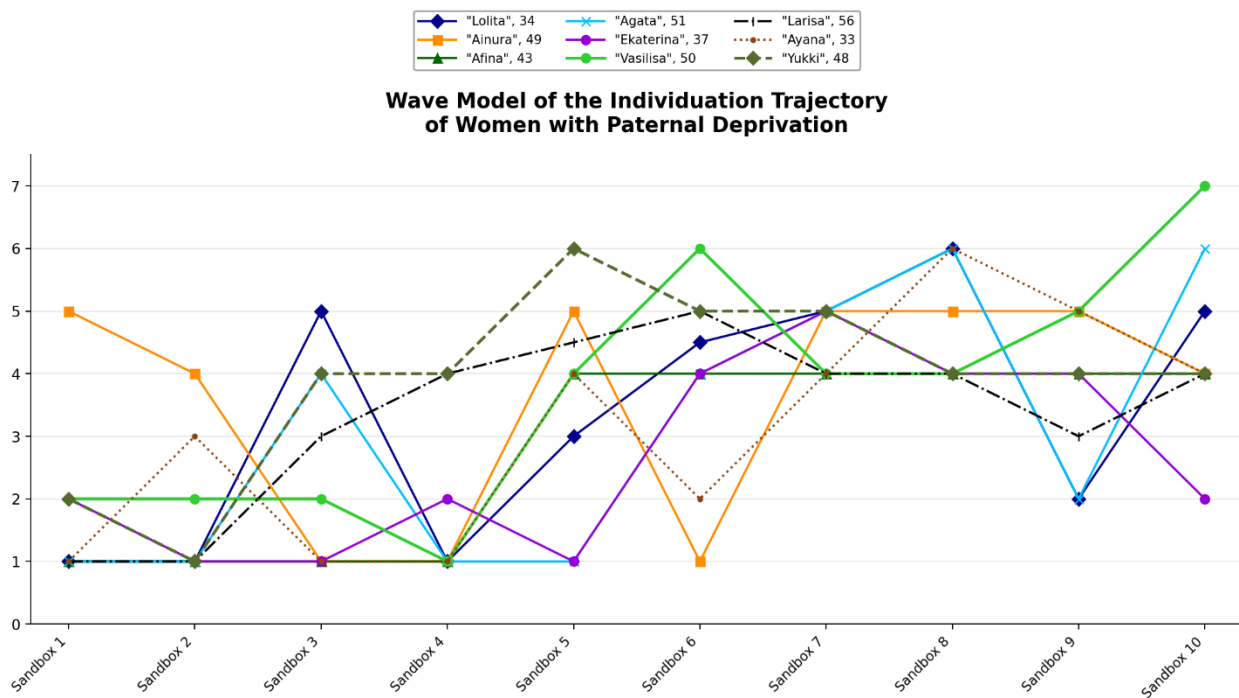
If the previous stage of analysis demonstrated the distribution of symbolic manifestations across phases, the next stage was aimed at reconstructing the overall trajectory of individuation movement. For this, the phase indicators (Table 11) were translated into a dynamic wave model, allowing observation not of a static state but of the change in the process over time (Figure 19). The presented wave model reflects the nature of each participant's movement through successive stages of psychic transformation.

The graph shows that towards the final stages of the process, most participants demonstrate a tendency to shift towards higher phases associated with integration, restructuring of the internal structure, and the formation of a more stable psychic organization.

Analysis of the dynamics of individuation processes, presented in the form of Freedle’s phase dynamics and the Microsoft Excel wave model (Figure 19), demonstrates a pronounced non-linearity and variability in the passage of sandplay process phases among the study participants.

In all cases, oscillatory trajectories are observed, characterized by alternating ascents and descents. This indicates the absence of a progressive, linear movement and confirms the understanding of individuation as a cyclical and regressive-progressive process.

By regressive-progressive process, we understand not only movement forward but a natural alternation of returns to earlier psychic material and its subsequent integration. In the study sample, this manifests as transitions from phases of chaos and crisis to phases of centering and integration, as reflected in the wave model.



Note: Y-axis – phases of the individuation process.

Figure 19. Wave model of the dynamics of individual trajectories of individuation

This understanding is based on Jung’s analytical psychology, where regression is considered a potentially constructive mechanism, as well as on Freedle’s phase model, which assumes non-linearity of movement within the Sandplay therapy process. Turning to broader theories of development, L. S. Vygotsky described a similar logic: development includes not only

evolution but also involutory processes, when the destruction of a previous structure becomes a condition for the emergence of a new one. Development is not a straightforward accumulation of changes but involves crises, temporary disorganization of previous structures, and the formation of new ways of organizing psychic experience.

In most individual trajectories, repeated returns to earlier phases (I and II) are recorded, including after reaching phases associated with integration (V and VI). These oscillations can be interpreted as manifestations of necessary regression, ensuring the processing of unconscious material and deepening the transformation process. Thus, regressive episodes do not indicate stagnation but, on the contrary, act as a functional element of the dynamics of individuation.

Alongside this, differences in the nature of the trajectories are revealed, allowing for the preliminary identification of several typological variants of dynamics. Some study participants demonstrate a jump-like pattern with sharp transitions between phases, which may reflect intense crisis experiences and breakthrough transformations.

In other cases, a smoother dynamic is observed with retention within certain phase ranges, indicating a gradual nature of integration processes. Some trajectories are characterized by high variability and the absence of a stable direction, which may indicate instability of the internal structure or an ongoing search for symbolic organization of experience.

Of particular note is the fact that phases associated with symbolic integration (V and VI) do not consolidate linearly but emerge as temporary peaks, after which a return to earlier levels is again possible. This confirms the proposition that the attainment of wholeness in the individuation process is not final but dynamic in nature and requires repeated re-experiencing of key psychic contents. Analysis of dynamics showed that the transition to deeper phases is accompanied by increased tension, reflecting the active processing of unconscious material.

For «Lolita» (34 y/o), the trajectory is characterized by pronounced amplitude and frequent returns to Phase I after episodes of reaching Phases V-VI. The dynamics reflect an intense regressive-progressive process in which periods of symbolic integration prove unstable and require repeated return to earlier levels of processing unconscious material. At the same time, a persistent tendency towards repeated movement towards integration is maintained.

For «Ainura» (49 y/o), the visualization dynamics demonstrate an alternation of integration ascent phases and sharp returns to early phases. Repeated return to Phase I after

reaching Phase V may indicate the need for repeated re-experiencing of basic themes of security, stability, and support. Nevertheless, the trajectory maintains a direction towards restoring inner wholeness.

For «Athena» (43 y/o), the phase dynamics and graph show a trajectory characterized by prolonged retention in Phase I with subsequent short-term transitions to Phase IV. Such dynamics may indicate the gradual formation of the capacity for symbolization and cautious progression towards integration while maintaining high internal fixation on early levels of psychic organization.

For «Agatha» (51 y/o), the dynamics combine periods of steady progress with pronounced regressive setbacks. Particularly significant is the exit to Phase VI, occurring after repeated returns to Phase I, which may reflect the deep nature of the transformation process. The trajectory demonstrates intense but productive movement towards integration.

The dynamics of «Ekaterina's» (37 y/o) individuation processes show a trajectory characterized by relatively smooth and sequential development. After initial fluctuations between Phases I and II, a relatively stable retention in Phase IV is observed, which may indicate the gradual strengthening of processes of internal organization and stabilization of the symbolic structure of the psyche.

For «Vasilisa» (50 y/o), the trajectory demonstrates the most consistently ascending dynamics among the study participants. A gradual transition from early phases to Phases VI-VII is observed without pronounced regressive setbacks. Such a configuration may indicate a high degree of readiness of the psyche for integration and a stable experience of wholeness processes.

The visualization of «Larisa's» (56 y/o) dynamics reflects movement towards integration phases with a subsequent return to Phase I after prolonged retention in Phase V. Such a configuration may be interpreted as the need for repeated recourse to early material after achieving a certain level of integration. At the same time, the trajectory maintains a tendency towards repeated restoration of symbolic organization.

For «Ayana» (33 y/o), the trajectory is characterized by high variability and an alternation of sharp transitions between early and deeper phases. Frequent returns to Phase I are combined with episodic exit to Phase VI, which may reflect instability of the internal structure and simultaneously the presence of powerful transformative potential.

«Yukki's» (48 y/o) dynamics demonstrate a relatively rapid attainment of Phase VI with subsequent fluctuation in the range of Phases III-V. Such a configuration may indicate active processing of unconscious material after an intense transformational breakthrough. The trajectory maintains an integrative direction despite subsequent fluctuations.

The presented visual models demonstrate not only the pronounced variability and non-linearity of the movement of the individuation process but also the visible purposefulness and orientation of the woman's psyche towards phases of wholeness, despite the experience of emotional trauma of the absent father.

In all cases, oscillatory process trajectories are observed, characterized by alternating ascents and descents. This indicates the absence of progressive, linear movement and confirms the analytical psychology understanding of individuation as a cyclical and regressive-progressive process in search of integration, stability, centering, and wholeness of the psyche.

For almost all women, integration does not look like a «staircase upward», but rather resembles the image of a sea tide: the psyche touches the shore of wholeness and again retreats into the depth of the material. The Self is not conquered in a forced march but rather periodically emerges through chaos, like the outline of an island in the fog – and it is precisely this that we, as Jungians, would describe such a process.

3.5.2. Correlation of MIS questionnaire data with phases of the individuation process in Sandplay. Statistical processing of obtained data

The correlation of the results of the Self-Attitude Inventory (MIS) with the Sandplay therapy data was carried out not as a direct comparison of individual indicators, but according to the principle of analytical triangulation [162, p. 260]. Changes in self-attitude parameters were considered as a quantitative indicator of possible changes in the internal organization of the personality, and the dynamics of symbolic material as a qualitative reflection of these processes.

For cross-analysis of data on the dynamics of individuation phases obtained using the checklist for registering symbols (Appendix 11) and visualization models (Table 11; Figure 19), we posed the question of whether a correlation would be observed between the dynamics of

observed individuation processes in Sandplay and changes in the categories of women's self-attitude.

For this purpose, we applied the sign test (calculations were performed using Microsoft Excel with built-in binomial distribution functions). The sign test as a non-parametric method allows assessing not the frequency but the directionality of changes and involves not counting the number but aggregating paired measurements before and after the experiment of research psychotherapy using the Sandplay method (Appendix 16) to observe the direction of changes in women's self-attitude, as one of the designated codes-criteria for the dynamics of individuation.

The multidimensional primary data on the quality of self-attitude (Appendix 15) were reduced, using sign test calculations, to generalized indicators of the number of positive, negative, and zero shifts, which allowed assessing the general vector of trajectories of individuation transformation dynamics for each subject (Tables 13; 14). We consider it important to note that the sign test was used primarily as a non-parametric tool for assessing the directionality of individual changes, and not as the sole criterion for statistical proof of effectiveness.

Table 13.

Indicators of self-attitude qualities «before and after» the experiment, generalized by the sign test

Participant	IH	SC	SS	RS	SV	SA	SAtt	IC	SB
«Lolita»	–	+	+	+	+	–	+	–	–
«Ainura»	+	0	–	+	–	0	–	0	+
«Athena»	+	+	0	+	–	–	0	–	–
«Agata»	+	0	0	–	+	0	+	–	–
«Ekaterina»	–	–	+	–	–	–	–	+	+
«Vasilisa»	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	–	+
«Larisa»	0	+	0	–	–	+	0	+	+
«Ayana»	–	+	–	+	+	–	–	0	0
«Yukki»	+	0	0	–	0	–	+	+	–

Note: IH — Internal Honesty; SC — Self-Confidence; SS — Self-Guidance; RS — Reflected Self-Attitude; SV — Self-Value; SA — Self-Acceptance; SAtt — Self-Attachment; IC — Internal Conflict; SB — Self-Blame.

Table 14.

Individual Results by the Sign Test

Participant	+	-	0	n (excl. 0)	Direction of Change	Comment
«Lolita»	5	4	0	9	Mixed	Active dynamics with no dominant vector
«Ainura»	3	1	5	4	↑	Mild positive dynamics with high stability
«Athena»	6	2	1	8	↑	Pronounced positive dynamics
«Agata»	4	3	2	7	Mixed	Oscillatory, process-oriented dynamics
«Ekaterina»	2	7	0	9	↓	Increased tension / acute phase
«Vasilisa»	3	0	6	3	↑	Stabilization with targeted improvements
«Larisa»	2	4	3	6	↓	Compensatory decline on several scales
«Ayana»	3	3	3	6	Neutral	Balanced changes, no directional vector
«Yukki»	3	3	3	6	Neutral	Symmetric, well-balanced dynamics

For statistical completeness, we supplemented the trend indicators of the directionality of individual changes with p-value calculations for each participant (Table 15). For p-value, zero shifts are excluded, and significance is determined by the binomial distribution for the number of positive and negative shifts.

Table 15.

Significance level (p-value) for each participant

Participant	+	-	0	m	p-value
«Lolita»	7	2	0	9	0.180
«Ainura»	2	4	3	6	0.688
«Athena»	5	2	2	7	0.453
«Agata»	5	1	3	6	0.219
«Ekaterina»	1	8	0	9	0.039
«Vasilisa»	4	1	4	5	0.375

Participant	+	-	0	m	p-value
«Larisa»	2	4	3	6	0.688
«Ayana»	3	4	2	7	1.000
«Yukki»	3	3	3	6	1.000

Note: + — positive shift; - — negative shift; 0 — no change; m — number of non-zero changes; p-value — two-tailed sign test.

An additional calculation of the significance level (p-value) showed that a statistically significant change at the individual level was observed for participant «Ekaterina» (p=0.039), while for the remaining participants the changes were predominantly tendential in nature. This is expected given the small sample size and the case study research design. In this study, statistical analysis performed a specifically auxiliary function in relation to the qualitative analysis of the dynamics of symbols and the individuation process.

Next, based on the calculation results, we identified clusters of typology of the dynamics of individuation in women with experience of an absent father (Table 16):

- Integrative-positive individuation (stable positive development);
- Processual-crisis (increased tension and conflict);
- Stabilization-neutral (minimal changes);
- Mixed, oscillatory (alternation of positive and negative shifts).

Table 16.

Clusters of typology of individuation dynamics of study participants

	CLUSTER I. Integrative- Positive Dynamics	CLUSTER II. Process-Crisis Dynamics	CLUSTER III. Stabilization- Neutral Dynamics	CLUSTER IV. Mixed (Oscillatory) Dynamics
Participants	«Athena», «Ainura», «Vasilisa»	«Ekaterina», «Larisa»	«Ayana», «Yukki»	«Lolita», «Agata»
Formal Profile of the	Predominance of +, reduction in	Predominance of - with active	Balance of + / - / 0	No stable vector; + ≈ -

	CLUSTER I. Integrative- Positive Dynamics	CLUSTER II. Process-Crisis Dynamics	CLUSTER III. Stabilization- Neutral Dynamics	CLUSTER IV. Mixed (Oscillatory) Dynamics
Sign Test	conflict; + > - many «0» → structural stability presence of - on internal conflict scale	movement; - ≥ + high rate of change (few «0») increase or fluctuation on vulnerable scales	+ ≈ - many «0» no dominant vector	high variability across scales few «0» → active process
Psychological Meaning	Growth of self- regulation, formation of inner grounding, change without disorganization.	Surfacing of conflicts, weakening of defenses, temporary intensification of tension.	Maintenance of structure, adaptation without abrupt shifts, possible latent phase.	Intense inner dialogue, opposing tendencies, search for a new self-configuration.
Analytical Interpretation	Classical integration dynamics: the psyche sustains change.	Typical phase of depth therapy.	Early stage of the integration process or an inter-phase period between stages of change.	Transitional state.

The obtained results of the cross-analysis demonstrate that the dynamics of participants' self-attitude are not linear or uniform. The changes identified using the sign test reflect the high

variability of individual trajectories and confirm the understanding of the individuation process as a heterogeneous, phased, and regressive-progressive movement of the psyche.

Comparison of self-attitude data with the phase dynamics of the Sandplay process (Table 11) allows us to assume that positive dynamics do not always manifest in the form of a direct improvement in all indicators. In some cases, increased internal conflict, a decrease in habitual compensatory mechanisms, and increased tension can act as signs of activation of deep transformation processes.

The identified clusters demonstrate the existence of different strategies of psychic adaptation and integration in women with experience of paternal deprivation. At the same time, even in crisis and oscillatory variants of dynamics, the directionality of the psyche towards a more stable and holistic internal organization is maintained.

«Lolita's» profile is characterized by high activity of changes in the absence of a dominant direction of dynamics. The combination of positive and negative shifts may indicate an intense internal processing of material, accompanied by fluctuations between strengthening inner support and the actualization of vulnerable aspects of self-attitude. This configuration corresponds to a mixed, transitional type of dynamics (Cluster IV).

«Ainura» exhibits moderately expressed positive dynamics while maintaining a significant number of stable indicators. This may indicate a gradual strengthening of the internal structure of the personality without sharp destabilization of the psychic organization. The positive changes are mild and integrative in nature (Cluster I: integrative-positive dynamics).

«Athena's» profile demonstrates the most pronounced positive directionality of changes. The predominance of positive shifts with a relatively low number of negative indicators may indicate the activation of self-support processes, strengthening of self-worth, and expansion of the capacity for inner integration (Cluster I: integrative-positive dynamics).

«Agatha's» dynamics are oscillatory in nature and reflect a process of active internal restructuring. The combination of multidirectional changes can be interpreted as a sign of deep transformation work, in which integration processes are accompanied by temporary destabilization of certain aspects of self-attitude (Cluster IV: mixed, oscillatory dynamics).

«Ekaterina» demonstrates a predominance of negative shifts on several self-attitude scales. Such dynamics may reflect not a deterioration of the psychic state as such, but a phase of

increased awareness of internal conflict, reduction of compensatory defenses, and the emergence of previously repressed material into the field of consciousness. In the context of deep therapy, such a configuration can be considered a crisis but potentially productive stage of the individuation process (Cluster II: processual-crisis dynamics).

«Vasilisa's» profile is characterized by a high number of stable indicators with the presence of individual positive changes. Such dynamics may indicate a gradual stabilization of the internal structure and the formation of a more stable self-attitude without pronounced fluctuations or crisis manifestations (Cluster I: integrative-positive dynamics).

«Larisa» shows a predominance of negative changes while maintaining some stable parameters. This configuration may reflect a temporary decrease in habitual mechanisms of psychological compensation and increased sensitivity to internal contradictions. The dynamics correspond to the processual-crisis type of transformation (Cluster II).

«Ayana's» indicators demonstrate an even distribution of positive, negative, and stable changes. The absence of a dominant vector may indicate that the psyche is in a transitional state, where restructuring processes have not yet acquired a stable direction (Cluster III: stabilization-neutral dynamics).

«Yukki's» profile is characterized by symmetrical and balanced dynamics. The balance of multidirectional changes and stable indicators may reflect a process of internal adaptation and gradual processing of material without pronounced polarization of self-attitude (Cluster III: stabilization-neutral dynamics).

In interpreting crisis tendencies in the dynamics of observed individuation processes in participants, crisis dynamics are considered by us as a productive tendency, based not on the single fact of the predominance of negative shifts according to the sign test, but on the totality of several objective indicators.

Negative changes on self-attitude scales themselves were not considered by us as a sign of regression. The decisive factor was the analysis of the dynamics of the process as a whole. The criteria for a productive crisis noted by us are:

- The presence of sequential transformation of symbolic material, not its stereotypical repetition;

- Progress through the phases of the sand process according to the Freedle model, including passing through Phases III-IV («darkness», «death», «reflection», «transformation»);
- The appearance of new symbols of integration and differentiation (boundaries, bridges, transitions, movement, relational figures, etc.);
- An increase in the participant's capacity for reflection and symbolization of their own experience;
- The presence of changes in the structure of the request and in the verbal material;
- Maintenance of the overall coherence of the process.

Whereas the criteria for destructive regression would be:

- Repeated reproduction of an identical conflict without transformation;
- Narrowing of the symbolic space;
- Loss of coherence of plots;
- Increased chaoticness without subsequent integration;
- Decreased capacity for symbolization and reflection;
- Absence of further movement along the phase dynamics.

Thus, negative shifts on individual MIS scales were not interpreted as an automatic indicator of deterioration, and the conclusion about a productive crisis was built on the principle of analytical data triangulation. In analytical psychology, a temporary increase in internal conflict may reflect not destruction but the activation of previously repressed material.

The obtained results actually confirm that the individuation process in Sandplay therapy manifests not as a linear «improvement of state», but as a complex movement between stabilization, destabilization, regression, and integration of psychic experience. In the context of paternal deprivation, such non-linearity acquires particular importance, since the experience of the absent father is often associated with a violation of the basic sense of inner support and stability of self-attitude and a reduced ability to form a coherent identity.

The obtained data allow us to assume that Sandplay therapy creates a space in which the processes of symbolic processing of deficient and traumatic experience can gradually transform into more integrated forms of psychic organization, leading the psyche towards development and individuation.

The identified clusters of individuation dynamics allowed tracing general typological patterns of the transformation process in the study participants. However, for a deeper understanding of the specifics of the occurring changes, it seems important to turn not only to the formal indicators of the directionality of dynamics but also to the content analysis of requests, themes of sand compositions, and recurring symbolic codes manifested during the therapy process (Table 17).

Table 17.

Participants' requests in Sandplay and essences, content themes of sandboxes

Participant	Therapeutic Request	Essences and Themes of Sandplay Sessions
«Lolita», 34	<p>Explicit request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – build long-term relationships; – overcome dependence on dramatic relationships. <p>Latent request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – exit co-dependency with father; – stop repeating traumatic relational patterns. 	<p>Movement from pain, inner conflict, and fragmentation toward self-gathering through femininity, separation, and contact with deep inner strength. The central theme is the search for inner grounding in the context of an early holding-contact deficit (especially with the father) and the gradual permission to feel, choose, and live. Initiation into one's own feminine wholeness.</p>
«Ainura», 49	<p>Explicit request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – work through difficulties in relationships with men; – overcome difficulty trusting and following a partner. <p>Latent request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – work through fear of not being chosen; – overcome the need to control rather than trust. 	<p>A gentle gathering of wholeness through integration of loss, ancestral themes, and maternal identity. The key axis: strength and vulnerability, control and release, closeness and boundaries. A grounded, mature feminine position capable of holding life's complexity without self-destruction.</p>

Participant	Therapeutic Request	Essences and Themes of Sandplay Sessions
«Athena», 43	<p>Explicit request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – support through a difficult life period and stress; – inability to fulfill oneself. <p>Latent request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – exit from solitary survival mode; – formation of boundaries and the right to one’s own life. 	<p>Rebirth following the loss of roles (wife, mother) and the reconstruction of a new identity. The central conflict: tension between strength and vulnerability, autonomy and the need for closeness — especially around the masculine theme. Emergence into mature subjecthood: a woman who chooses herself and consciously builds her life by uniting opposites.</p>
«Agata», 51	<p>Explicit request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – understand the causes of difficulty in building relationships; – understand oneself. <p>Latent request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – restoring contact with emotions; – transition from avoidance to experiencing. 	<p>Deep work through the trauma of the paternal line, loss of roots, and inner control toward the search for meaning and direction. The central theme: fear of transformation alongside a simultaneous pull toward it. Movement toward integration through myth, lineage, and the union of masculine and feminine as a healing principle.</p>
«Ekaterina», 37	<p>Explicit request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – explore the influence of the relationship with the father; – overcome difficulties in self-expression. <p>Latent request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – restoring contact with feelings and desires; 	<p>Tension between control as a survival strategy and the need for aliveness, spontaneity, and connection. The central theme: isolation (internal and external) and a gradual movement toward wholeness through the union of the inner masculine and feminine. Formation of inner grounding and the transition from surviving to living.</p>

Participant	Therapeutic Request	Essences and Themes of Sandplay Sessions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – exiting the position of silence and self-absence. 	
«Vasilisa», 50	<p>Explicit request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – working through a relational crisis; – working through the father story; – working through difficulties of self-expression. <p>Latent request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – exiting the script of being unwanted; – restoring contact with the body. 	<p>Movement from fragmentation and living «between worlds» toward integration, subjecthood, and choosing oneself. The key theme: separating the personal from the ancestral, exiting the rescuer pattern, and forming one’s own axis. Assembling a whole identity through the union of opposites and grounding in oneself.</p>
«Larisa», 56	<p>Explicit request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – explore causes of difficulty in relationships with men; – work through repetition of destructive relationship choices. <p>Latent request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – restoring self-worth; – exploring and working through the causes of the intergenerational script rupture. 	<p>Movement from existential loneliness and a deficit of self-worth toward the gradual formation of an inner center. The central theme: dependence on relationships and the search for external support, transitioning toward an inner source of meaning and love. The beginning of individuation through the discovery of an inner center and symbolic life.</p>
«Ayana», 33	<p>Explicit request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – exploring oneself as a woman; – fears associated with this; 	<p>Tension between total control, autonomy, and repressed vulnerability. The central theme: deficit of the paternal function, frozen</p>

Participant	Therapeutic Request	Essences and Themes of Sandplay Sessions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – exploring the father’s influence on one’s life. <p>Latent request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – restoring contact with feelings; – forming a sense of safety. 	<p>feelings, and their substitution with activity and order. Movement toward embodiment, feelings, and subjecthood as an exit from survival mode.</p>
«Yukki», 48	<p>Explicit request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – explore the residual influence of the father theme; – understand what remains unresolved. <p>Latent request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – completion of the inner process; – understanding the limits of healing. 	<p>The search for identity and center reaching the archetypal, cosmogonic level and toward the integration of the Shadow. The central theme: integration of the Self through the union of opposites (feminine–masculine, light–darkness, personal–ancestral). Individuation as a lived process: maintaining the balance of forces and engagement with the flow of life.</p>

The obtained material of the empirical study was built into a three-layer structure of analysis:

1. Individual dynamics of the process: phase analysis, wave models, sign test (Figure 19; Table 11; Table 14);
2. Semantic content of the process: requests, latent themes, essences of sand compositions (Table 17);
3. Generalized indicators of individuation (Appendix 16).

Comparison of individual participants’ requests, analytical essences of sand stories, and frequency indicators of individuation allowed a transition from describing external dynamics to examining the internal logic of psychic reconstruction. This made it possible to analyze changes in self-attitude, phase dynamics, and symbolic material regarding how the process of

transformation of female individuation gradually developed in conditions of experiencing paternal deprivation.

3.5.3. Analysis and interpretation of final data on the dynamics of individuation

The conducted analysis of participants' requests and themes of sand composition content (Table 17), phase dynamics (Table 11; Figure 19), and final indicators of individuation (Appendix 16; Figure 20) allowed the identification of several recurring patterns reflecting the specifics of psychic processing of the experience of paternal deprivation in women.

Content analysis of the essences of sand compositions showed that the individuation process in women with experience of an absent father unfolded not only as a personal change but also as a deep symbolic reconstruction of internal objects and images of the psyche. In the dynamics of the participants, themes of restoring the internal father image, forming inner support, uniting opposites, integrating vulnerability and strength, as well as transitioning from an external search for confirmation to the development of an inner center repeatedly emerged.

Despite differences in individual histories, ages, and life situations of the participants, persistent overarching themes are traced in the study: deficit of inner support, difficulties with self-worth, tension in relationships with the masculine, fear of intimacy, hypercontrol, emotional isolation, as well as a pronounced conflict between autonomy and the need for support. At the same time, in almost all cases, the sand compositions demonstrated a gradual transition from experiencing fragmentation, internal splitting, and survival to the search for a center, stability, subjectivity, and the ability to endure one's own feelings and relationships.

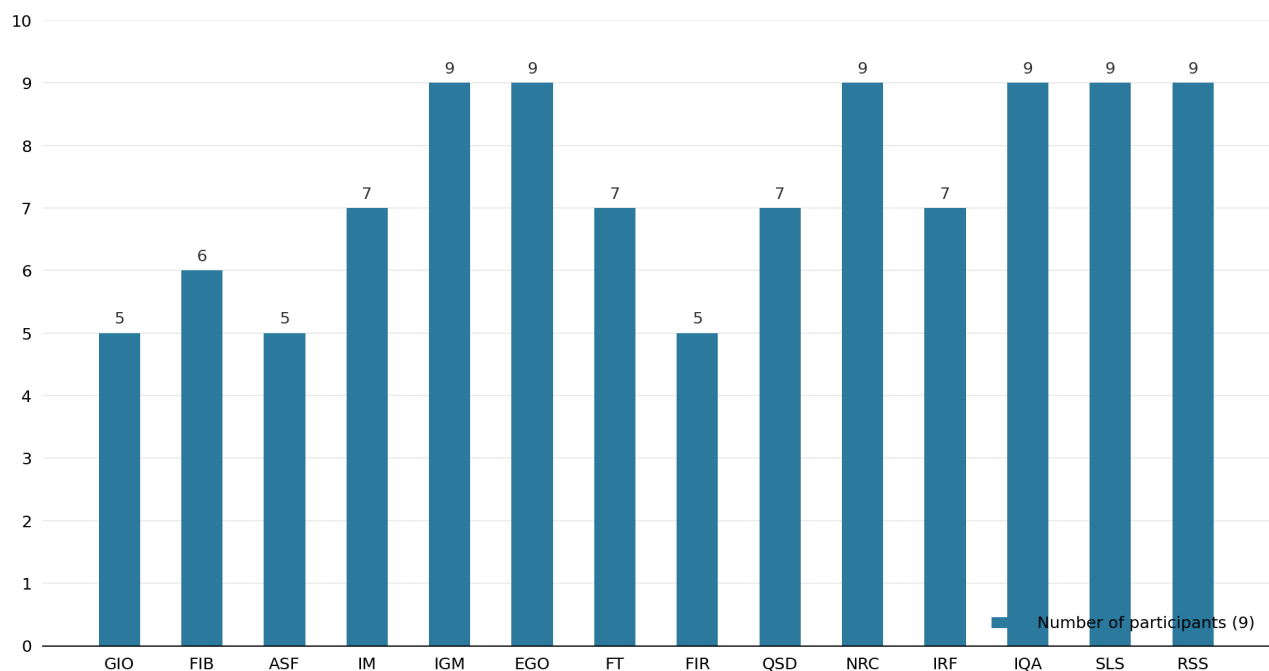
Of particular importance, in our opinion, are the data on the final frequency of individuation codes (Appendix 16; Figure 20), which we tracked precisely upon the completion of the sandplay process in research psychotherapy.

Most of the criteria, based on the hypotheses set, we expected to manifest in the series of signs of individuation (subjecting the symbolic material of the sandboxes to analysis, highlighting the main themes and essences of sandbox meanings, narratives of sandbox stories, reflection of life processes, and final deferred feedback from participants 2-3 months after the therapeutic process).

The data on the final frequency of individuation codes are particularly significant. The most frequently occurring indicators were:

- strengthening of the image of the «good mother»(OKhM),
- expansion of the properties of «good objects»(SKhO),
- new social connections and strengthening of relationships (NSO),
- improvement in quality of adaptation (UKA),
- subjective feeling of life satisfaction (ChUZh),
- reflection on the usefulness of participation in the sandplay process and research

(RPSI).



Note: the four-level model of observation codes for the individuation dynamics of women with paternal deprivation. I. SYMBOLIC-ARCHETYPAL LEVEL (changes in imagistic structure and internal objects; symbolization function): GIO — emergence of "good" internal objects; IGM — strengthening of the "good mother" image; EGO — expansion of "good object" properties; IRF — internal reconstruction of the father image; ASF — activation of the symbolic function. II. STRUCTURAL-PSYCHIC LEVEL (reorganization of the inner Self structure; formation of inner law and self-authority): FIB — formation of internal and external boundaries; FT — flexibility of thinking, differentiation; FIR — flexibility and development of inner regulation; IM — increased material and reduction of primitive forms of resistance. III. PERSONAL-REFLEXIVE LEVEL (self-relationship and identity reworking; conscious integration of experience): QSD — qualitative dynamics of self-attitude; RSS — reflection on the usefulness of participation in the sandplay process and research. IV. SOCIAL-ADAPTIVE LEVEL (manifestation of changes in external life): NRC — new connections and strengthening of relationships; IQA — improvement of adaptation quality; SLS — subjective sense of life satisfaction.

Figure 20. Frequency of individuation indicators at the study completion stage (April-December, 2025)

It is noteworthy that not only intrapersonal but also social-adaptation indicators received the maximum frequency. This may indicate that the changes arising in the symbolic space of Sandplay gradually begin to manifest in the participants' external lives: in the quality of relationships, capacity for self-support, level of adaptation, and subjective feeling of life's fullness.

At the same time, indicators related to the flexibility of internal regulation (GVR) and activation of the symbolic function (ASF) were less frequent. This result seems natural, as these levels are associated with the most profound structural rearrangements of the psyche and likely require a longer therapeutic process.

The indicator of reconstruction of the father's image (VOO), which manifested in 7 out of 9 study participants, deserves special attention. This result seems conceptually significant, since it was precisely the deficit, distortion, or ambivalence of the internal paternal object that was one of the central themes in both the women's explicit requests and the latent content of the sand compositions.

It is important to note that the reconstruction of the father's image in this study was not reduced to a «positive reinterpretation» of the real father or to a reduction of the traumatic experience. On the contrary, in the analytical process, a gradual formation of a more complex and differentiated internal representation of the masculine principle as a psychic function was observed. In the sand compositions, this manifested through the emergence of images of protectors, guides, boundaries, structures, stable centers, symbols of law, order, and support. In fact, we are talking about a gradual restoration of the internal function of the paternal – as the psyche's capacity to maintain structure, autonomy, inner authority, and symbolic separation from primary dependencies. It is particularly important that such changes were accompanied not only by a reduction in external dependence on relationships but also by an increased ability to endure uncertainty, loneliness, ambivalence, and one's own subjectivity without destroying the sense of Self.

At the same time, the fact that the reconstruction of the father's image did not manifest in all participants is also analytically significant. This may indicate different depths and tempos of the individuation process, and also confirm that the restoration of the internal paternal object is one of the most complex and lengthy tasks when working with the consequences of paternal

deprivation. We assume that during therapy, women often began to search not for an «ideal father» but for an internal ability to rely on themselves. That is, the figure of the father gradually ceased to be only a figure of loss and trauma, and returned to the function of internal stability of the psyche.

We also note that the core of the most stable individuation codes included not signs of «ideal functioning» but indicators related to the restoration of the capacity for relationships, the experience of one's own worth, the holding of internal objects, and the subjective experience of life as having meaning. This is particularly important in the context of paternal deprivation, where one of the central deficits is the violation of the experience of inner support and stable self-worth.

The dynamics of «**Lolita's**» process reflect an intense and oscillatory process of reconstruction of internal identity. Through the alternation of regression and integration, the ability for separation, the experience of one's own worth, and the rejection of repeating destructive relationships gradually form. **Individuation manifests as a movement from emotional dependence towards the search for an inner center and stable female subjectivity.**

«**Ainura's**» process is mild and gradually integrative in nature. Against a background of relative structural stability, a strengthening of inner support, a reduced need for total control, and the development of the ability to endure closeness without losing oneself are observed. **Individuation dynamics manifest through the mature union of strength and vulnerability.**

«**Athena's**» process dynamics demonstrate a pronounced positive dynamic with a gradual transition from a state of internal survival to the formation of a new identity. **Individuation is accompanied by strengthening of self-worth, expansion of the boundaries of the Self, and strengthening of the ability to consciously assume a subject position in one's own life.**

«**Agatha's**» dynamics are characterized by deep transformative work with pronounced phase fluctuations. The reconstruction of the psychic structure occurs through an appeal to traumatic material, themes of lineage, loss, and internal control. **The individuation process manifests as a gradual union of emotional experience, symbolic thinking, and the search for inner meaning.**

Despite the predominance of crisis dynamics, «Ekaterina's» process reflects an important stage of destruction of previous ineffective defensive structures of the psyche. The increase in internal tension is accompanied by a gradual emergence from emotional isolation and movement towards a more vivid contact with feelings, desires, and one's own voice. **Individuation here manifests through the transition from a survival strategy to the restoration of inner subjectivity.**

«Vasilisa's» trajectory of processes demonstrates the most consistent movement towards integration and wholeness. Gradually, the processes of internal regulation, separation of one's own experience from ancestral scenarios, and the formation of a stable internal axis strengthen. **Individuation dynamics manifest as strengthening of autonomy, corporeality, and the ability to choose oneself without destroying relationships.**

«Larisa's» process dynamics are accompanied by a pronounced crisis stage and a reduction in habitual compensatory mechanisms. At the same time, the theme of an inner center and the search for a source of value inside oneself, not in external confirmation, gradually forms in the content of the sand compositions. **Individuation manifests as a slow movement from dependence to inner support.**

«Ayana's» dynamics reflect high internal ambivalence and instability of integration processes. Fluctuations between control and vulnerability are accompanied by a gradual restoration of contact with the emotional sphere, corporeality, and the experience of safety. **The individuation process manifests as a transition from hypercontrol and emotional freezing to greater psychic vitality.**

«Yukki's» process is characterized by relatively integrated and reflexive dynamics. The central task becomes holding opposites and understanding the already traveled transformational path. **Individuation manifests as the ability to endure the complexity of the inner world, integrate the Shadow, and perceive one's own life as a continuing process of psychic becoming.**

The obtained results allow us to confidently state that Sandplay therapy in the analytical approach contributes not so much to the direct «elimination of symptoms» but to the gradual reorganization of the internal psychic structure through the symbolic processing of traumatic experience. The individuation process in this case manifests as the restoration of the psyche's

capacity for coherence, symbolization, holding ambivalence, and the formation of a more stable inner center.

Thus, the totality of qualitative, visual, and statistical data confirms the productivity of the comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of individuation in Sandplay therapy and demonstrates the possibility of observing deep transformation processes not only at the level of subjective experiences but also through a system of recurring symbolic, structural, and personal indicators.

Conclusions to Chapter 3

Based on the results of the empirical study of the dynamics of individuation in women with paternal deprivation, conducted using the Sandplay therapy method, the following conclusions were formulated:

1. The research hypotheses are confirmed. Paternal deprivation does not preclude the possibility of undergoing the individuation process. In all 9 participants of the study, signs of individuation dynamics at the symbolic, personal, and relational levels were recorded under the conditions of Jungian Sandplay therapy, confirming the first hypothesis of the study.

2. Sandplay therapy as an environment for activating individuation. The protected and free symbolic space of Sandplay therapy according to D. Kalf's methodology ensured the activation of compensatory and symbolic mechanisms of the psyche, allowing the initiation, support, and advancement of phases of the individuation process in women with a deficit of the paternal figure. This confirms the second hypothesis of the study.

3. Symbolic signs of individuation are recordable and traceable. The developed author's checklist for registering symbols of individuation based on L. R. Freedle's phase model successfully operationalized the observation of individuation processes: signs of individuation were recorded at the imaginal level and traced in the dynamics of sand compositions. This confirms the third hypothesis of the study.

4. Non-linearity and variability as basic characteristics of the individuation process. Analysis of wave models of phase dynamics (L. R. Freedle) showed that in all study participants, the individuation process is non-linear, oscillatory in nature, with alternating progressive and regressive episodes. Regressive returns to early phases do not indicate stagnation but act as a functional element of deep psychic processing of material, consistent with C. G. Jung's ideas on the nature of individuation.

5. Four clusters of typology of individuation dynamics in women with paternal deprivation were identified: integrative-positive dynamics («Athena», «Ainura», «Vasilisa») as stable positive movement with strengthening of inner support; processual-crisis dynamics («Ekaterina», «Larisa») as increased internal tension and destruction of previous defensive structures as a stage of deep transformation; stabilization-neutral dynamics («Ayana», «Yukki»)

as a transitional period without a pronounced dominant vector; mixed, oscillatory dynamics («Lolita», «Agatha») as intense internal processing of material with multidirectional changes.

6. Reconstruction of the father's image as a central indicator of individuation. In 7 out of 9 participants, a partial or pronounced reconstruction of the internal father's image (code VOO) was recorded during the sandplay process. This process was not reduced to a positive reinterpretation of the real father but reflected the gradual formation of a more differentiated internal representation of the masculine principle as a psychic function – as a source of structure, autonomy, inner authority, and the ability for symbolic separation from primary dependencies.

7. The most frequent final indicators of individuation were: strengthening of the image of the «good mother»(OKhM), expansion of the properties of «good objects»(SKhO), strengthening of new social connections (NSO), improvement in quality of adaptation (UKA), increased subjective feeling of life satisfaction (ChUZh), and reflection on the usefulness of participation in the sandplay process and research (RPSI). Less frequent were indicators of flexibility of internal regulation (GVR) and activation of symbolic function (ASF), which is natural, as these levels require a longer therapeutic process.

8. The dynamics of self-attitude (MIS by S. R. Pantileev) is not linear or uniform. The application of the non-parametric sign test to compare «before and after»data showed high variability of changes: in some cases, an increase in internal conflict and a decrease in habitual compensatory mechanisms acted not as regression but as a sign of activation of deep transformation processes. Thus, a «crisis»profile of self-attitude data may indicate a productive stage of individuation.

9. Recurring themes characteristic of women with paternal deprivation, regardless of age and individual history, were identified: deficit of inner support and self-worth; tension in relationships with the masculine; fear of intimacy and trust; hypercontrol and emotional isolation; conflict between autonomy and the need for support; transition from survival to subjective living of life. In all cases, a directionality of the psyche towards the search for an inner center, stability, and integration was traced.

10. The five-level model of research psychotherapy confirmed its operational viability. The developed model, covering social, personal, symbolic, analytical-psychological, and psychotherapeutic levels of analysis, provided a systemic coverage of the phenomenon of

paternal deprivation and allowed tracing the dynamics of individuation in its multi-level expression.

11. Sandplay therapy contributes not so much to the direct «elimination of symptoms»but to the gradual reorganization of the internal psychic structure through the symbolic processing of traumatic and deficient experience. The individuation process manifests as the restoration of the psyche's capacity for coherence, symbolization, holding ambivalence, and the formation of a more stable inner center. The achievement of wholeness is not final but dynamic in nature and requires repeated re-experiencing of key psychic contents.

12. The research data confirm the validity of the metaphor of the «sea tide»concerning the individuation of a woman with paternal deprivation, when the psyche periodically «touches the shore of wholeness»and again returns to the depths to process the next layer of traumatic material. The Self is not achieved once, but emerges through the dynamics of the process as an increasingly stable inner guide.

Thus, the totality of qualitative, visual, and statistical data confirms the productivity of the integrative approach to analyzing the dynamics of individuation in Sandplay therapy and demonstrates the possibility of observing deep transformation processes through a system of recurring symbolic, structural, and personal indicators in women with experience of paternal deprivation.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the conducted theoretical and empirical study of the dynamics of individuation in women with paternal deprivation during Sandplay therapy, the following conclusions are formulated.

I. Conclusions on the theoretical part of the study

1. Paternal deprivation in the analytical-psychological perspective represents not merely the fact of the physical absence of the father but primarily a deficit of the symbolic function of the paternal principle as an internal psychic instance ensuring the formation of boundaries, autonomy, inner authority, and the capacity for symbolic separation from primary dependencies. This deficit leads not to isolated symptoms but to stable patterns of psychic organization: difficulty in differentiating affects, instability of self-image, a tendency towards dependent relational strategies, and compensatory hypercontrol.

2. Theoretical analysis of approaches to female individuation in analytical psychology (C. G. Jung, E. Neumann, M. Woodman, M. Murdock, M.-L. von Franz, J. Singer, et al.) established that the female path of individuation possesses a specific non-linear, cyclical, and bodily-symbolic nature. It includes repeated regressive returns, crisis transitions, and continuous processing of archetypal contents, which fundamentally distinguishes it from the classical progressive model of Jungian individuation, formed primarily on male clinical material.

3. The paternal principle in analytical psychology is understood as an archetypal structure, not just as the real image of a specific person. The deficit of this structure in women with paternal deprivation leads to disruption of separation processes, autonomization, and the formation of internal law. This is confirmed both by the conceptual works of Jungian researchers (V. Kast, S. Schwartz) and by data from empirical studies of attachment and personality development (J. Bowlby, N. Chodorow, J. Miller).

4. Sandplay therapy is substantiated as a methodologically adequate tool for research and psychocorrection of individuation in women with paternal deprivation: the non-verbal nature of the method, work with the symbolic dimension of the psyche, and the specific «free and protected space»therapeutic environment create conditions for the manifestation and transformation of deep psychic contents inaccessible through exclusively verbal approaches. L.

R. Freedle's phase model of the Sandplay process (2006; 2007; 2025) provides a structured, operationalized matrix for observing the dynamics of individuation.

II. Conclusions on the methodological part of the study

1. The checklist for registering symbols of individuation in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle's phase model, modified by E. V. Sheveleva) developed during the study proved its practical applicability as a tool for observing the phase dynamics of the sandplay process. The checklist allows recording changes in symbolic material, correlating them with phases of individuation movement, and applying the obtained data in subsequent cross-case comparative analysis.

2. The author's term «post-graphics of the sand composition» was introduced, denoting the structural-graphic trace of the sand field recorded after removing the figures from the composition. The inclusion of the post-graphic level of analysis expanded the possibilities of qualitative interpretation of the material by recording not only the symbolic content but also the features of the organization of the psychic space. Analysis of post-graphic characteristics showed their significance for identifying processes of integration, disintegration, and structural transformation in the dynamics of individuation, which increased the sensitivity of the developed checklist to hidden aspects of the psychic process.

3. The developed four-level system of codes for observing the dynamics of individuation (symbolic-archetypal, structural-psychic, personal-reflexive, and social-adaptation levels) allowed operationalizing the observed processes and making the transition from qualitative description of individual sandplay scenes to systematic analysis of transformation dynamics in its entirety.

4. Methodological triangulation as a combination of qualitative analysis of symbolic materials, phase clustering according to L. R. Freedle's model, narrative analysis of protocols, and quantitative processing using the sign test of self-attitude data (MIS, S. R. Pantileev), ensured the validity and reproducibility of the obtained results, confirming the correctness of the chosen methodological approach.

5. The developed Sandplay therapy program for women with paternal deprivation was tested within the empirical study and can be recommended for use in the practice of

analytically oriented specialists when working with the consequences of paternal attachment disorders, trauma of loss, dependent relational patterns, and disturbances of self-worth.

III. Conclusions on the empirical part of the study

1. The results of the qualitative analysis of nine cases of individual Sandplay therapy confirmed all three research hypotheses. First, paternal deprivation does not preclude the possibility of undergoing the individuation process: in all cases, movement through the phases of the sandplay process and symbolic signs of transformation were recorded. Second, in the conditions of psychotherapeutic work, compensatory and symbolic mechanisms are activated, allowing the initiation, support, and completion of individual phases of individuation. Third, signs of individuation can be recorded at the imaginal level and traced in the dynamics of therapeutic scenes.

2. Analysis of phase dynamics revealed pronounced non-linearity and variability of individuation trajectories in all study participants. The movement of the psyche is not progressive: almost all participants experienced regressive returns to early phases (I-II) after reaching integrative phases (V-VI). These oscillations are interpreted not as a sign of stagnation but as a functional element of the transformation process, necessary for the processing of unconscious material.

3. Based on cluster analysis of sign test data (MIS dynamics «before and after»), four typological variants of individuation dynamics were identified: integrative-positive («Athena», «Ainura», «Vasilisa»); processual-crisis («Ekaterina», «Larisa»); stabilization-neutral («Ayana», «Yukki»); mixed, oscillatory («Lolita», «Agatha»). Each type has independent analytical significance and is not simplified to the notion of «success» or «failure» of therapy.

4. Content analysis of the essences of sand compositions revealed overarching themes characteristic of women with paternal deprivation: deficit of inner support, disturbance of self-worth, tension in relationships with the masculine, fear of intimacy, hypercontrol, emotional isolation, conflict between autonomy and the need for support. In all cases, the sandplay process revealed a movement from experiencing fragmentation and survival towards the search for an inner center, subjectivity, and the ability to endure one's own feelings and relationships.

5. The most significant result is the recording of the reconstruction of the internal father's image in 7 out of 9 study participants. This process was not reduced to a «positive

reinterpretation»of the real father but meant the gradual formation of a more differentiated and stable internal paternal object as a psychic function of boundaries, structure, inner authority, and autonomy. This confirms the central theoretical proposition of the study that working with paternal deprivation in Sandplay therapy is primarily directed towards the symbolic reconstruction of the paternal function, not the restoration of the concrete image of a real person.

6. Analysis of final frequency indicators of individuation showed that the most stable signs of transformation were indicators of the social-adaptation level (new connections, improved adaptation, subjective feeling of life satisfaction) and the personal-reflexive level (qualitative dynamics of self-attitude, reflection on the significance of the therapeutic process). This indicates that changes arising in the symbolic space of Sandplay gradually exteriorize into the real lives of the participants.

7. The totality of the obtained results allows us to assert that Sandplay therapy creates unique conditions for observing the symbolic realization of compensatory mechanisms of the psyche in response to the deficit of the paternal function, which makes this method methodologically valuable both in research and psychotherapeutic contexts when working with the consequences of paternal deprivation.

FINAL REMARKS

This dissertation research is devoted to studying the dynamics of individuation in women with experience of paternal deprivation based on Sandplay therapy material. The relevance of the chosen problem is determined by the steady increase in the number of families with a disrupted or absent paternal function against the backdrop of persistent limitations in the theoretical and empirical understanding of the psychological consequences of this phenomenon, particularly concerning the dynamics of deep personal development processes.

The research is built at the intersection of three conceptual planes: C. G. Jung's analytical psychology and his followers, the phenomenology of female individuation in the post-Jungian tradition, and the methodology of Sandplay therapy as a unique tool for observing the symbolic dynamics of the psyche. The interaction of these three components allowed the creation of an integrative research model, combining the depth of analytical interpretation with the reproducibility of a qualitative research design.

Theoretical analysis established that paternal deprivation exerts a systemic influence not only on the socio-psychological level of personality functioning but also on the deep processes of psychic organization, namely the formation of internal structure, the capacity for symbolization, autonomy, and the experience of inner authority. At the same time, the theoretical analysis showed that this influence is not fatal: the psyche exhibits a pronounced tendency to compensate for deficient experience through the activation of symbolic and archetypal mechanisms accessible for observation in analytical work.

The empirical study, which included a qualitative analysis of nine individual Sandplay therapy cases with women aged 33 to 56, confirmed all three initial hypotheses. It was shown that:

- paternal deprivation does not preclude the possibility of undergoing the individuation process;
- under conditions of psychotherapeutic work, compensatory and symbolic mechanisms capable of initiating and supporting phases of individuation are activated;
- signs of individuation can be recorded at the imaginal level and traced in the dynamics of Sandplay therapeutic scenes.

The application of L. R. Freedle's phase model as an analytical matrix tool allowed the visualization of each participant's individuation trajectories, the identification of their pronounced non-linearity and variability, and the description of typological clusters of dynamics: integrative-positive, processual-crisis, stabilization-neutral, and mixed (oscillatory). The obtained data confirmed the analytical-psychological conception of individuation as a cyclical, regressive-progressive process, in which regressive episodes perform not a disorganizing but a structuring function.

One of the central results of the study was the recording of the reconstruction process of the internal father's image in 7 out of 9 participants. During Sandplay therapy, the psyche gradually formed a more differentiated and stable internal paternal object, embodied in symbolic images of protectors, guides, structures of order, and internal boundaries. This process indicates that Sandplay therapy creates a space in which the compensation for the deficit of the paternal function is achieved not through rationalization or reinterpretation of past experience, but through the organic symbolic movement of the psyche towards the restoration of the lost structure.

Comparison of qualitative sandplay analysis data with the results of self-attitude psychodiagnostics (MIS, S. R. Pantileev) using the non-parametric sign test confirmed that changes in symbolic material correlate with changes in the structure of the participants' self-attitude. At the same time, it was established that positive dynamics in the context of deep psychotherapy do not always manifest as a direct improvement in all diagnostic indicators: in some cases, an increase in internal conflict and a temporary reduction in compensatory defenses are signs of active transformative work of the psyche.

The scientific significance of the conducted research is determined by several essential contributions. Theoretically, the study expands the understanding of female individuation in analytical psychology by considering paternal deprivation as a structural factor influencing the configuration of phases of symbolic development. The role of the father archetype in the formation of inner authority and the experience of law in the female psyche has been clarified, complementing the classical tenets of analytical psychology on the dynamics of the Animus and the Self. Methodologically, this work presents the first attempt to operationalize Freedle's phase model for the tasks of empirical research on female individuation, developing a reproducible

analysis tool such as a checklist for registering symbols and a system of four-level codes for observing the dynamics of the transformation process.

In practical terms, the research results open up possibilities for developing and applying structured Sandplay therapy programs focused on working with the consequences of paternal deprivation in women. The proposed analysis tools are available for use in clinical and counseling practice and can also be included in professional training programs for specialists in analytical psychology and Sandplay therapy.

Addressing the limitations of the study, it should be noted that the sample is purposive and small in size (9 cases), which is due to the nature of the qualitative case study design and does not imply statistical representativeness. Further studies with an expanded and more heterogeneous sample, as well as the application of longitudinal observation schemes, will allow verification and refinement of the identified patterns. Promising directions also include a comparative analysis of the dynamics of individuation in different forms of paternal deprivation (loss, alcoholism, emotional unavailability, violence), the study of the specifics of male individuation under analogous conditions, as well as the development and testing of training programs for specialists based on the developed model.

The conducted research contributes to the dialogue between depth psychology and empirical personality science, offering a model of their methodological interaction, in which qualitative, processual, and quantitative approaches do not oppose but complement and mutually verify each other. This integration seems fundamentally important in the context of contemporary analytical psychology, striving for the validity and reproducibility of its clinical observations.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that this study was conducted with unwavering respect for the subjective experience of each participant, without pathologizing the experience of paternal deprivation and with a deliberate maintenance of a research position open to the diversity and uniqueness of individuation paths. The psyche of each of the women who participated in the study revealed its own, unique strategy of movement towards wholeness, thereby confirming the fundamental thesis of analytical psychology: the path of individuation is always unique and belongs only to the one who traverses it.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1

Statistics on Family Policy of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan, dated 25.08.2025

Statistical Data

According to official data, the number of registered marriages in 2025 (preliminary, January–June) was 51,370, in 2024 it was 123,626, and in 2023 it was 120,851.

The largest number of marriages was registered in Almaty city – 13,732 (in 2023 – 13,074), Turkestan region – 12,143 (in 2023 – 11,818), Astana – 10,856 (in 2023 – 10,392), Almaty region – 10,787 (in 2023 – 10,087), and the smallest number was in North Kazakhstan region – 3,021 (in 2023 – 3,121) and West Kazakhstan region – 3,874 (3,886).

Table. Number of Registered Marriages by Region of the Republic of Kazakhstan

No.	Region	2023	2024	2025 (1st half-year)
1	Abai	3,452	3,619	1,541
2	Akmola	4,450	4,529	2,028
3	Aktobe	5,489	5,316	2,378
4	Almaty Region	10,087	10,787	4,421
5	Atyrau	4,267	4,061	1,711
6	West Kazakhstan	3,886	3,874	1,513
7	Zhambyl	6,997	7,142	2,784
8	Zhetysu	4,320	4,191	1,687
9	Karaganda	7,511	7,544	3,089
10	Kostanay	4,964	5,080	2,151
11	Kyzylorda	4,661	4,798	1,908
12	Mangystau	5,008	4,912	1,989
13	Pavlodar	4,435	4,524	1,973
14	North Kazakhstan	3,121	3,021	1,309
15	Turkestan	11,818	12,143	4,915
16	Ulytau	1,498	1,484	566
17	East Kazakhstan	4,571	4,724	1,973
18	Astana city	10,392	10,856	4,794
19	Almaty city	13,074	13,732	5,610
20	Shymkent city	6,850	7,289	3,030

No.	Region	2023	2024	2025 (1st half-year)
	Republic of Kazakhstan	120,851	123,626	51,370

The average age of marriage is 26–29 years for men and 23–28 years for women. In 2024, 870 early marriages were registered in Kazakhstan.

Divorce Statistics

In 2025 (preliminary, January–June), 21,531 divorces were registered. In 2024, the number of registered divorces was 40,647; in 2023 – 40,227; in 2022 – 44,517. The largest number of divorces in 2024 was in Almaty city – 6,900, Almaty region – 6,050, Karaganda region – 4,910. The fewest were in Atyrau region – 1,350 and Mangystau region – 1,520.

Table. Number of Registered Divorces by Region of the Republic of Kazakhstan

No.	Region	2023	2024	2025 (1st half-year)
1	Abai	1,514	1,598	737
2	Akmola	1,422	1,682	932
3	Aktobe	1,860	2,092	989
4	Almaty Region	2,931	2,106	1,120
5	Atyrau	1,095	1,138	648
6	West Kazakhstan	1,475	1,573	814
7	Zhambyl	1,963	2,011	1,084
8	Zhetysu	1,322	1,272	844
9	Karaganda	3,475	3,532	1,822
10	Kostanay	2,324	2,318	1,220
11	Kyzylorda	1,469	1,723	784
12	Mangystau	1,340	1,323	710
13	Pavlodar	2,131	2,326	1,263
14	North Kazakhstan	1,472	1,494	738
15	Turkestan	1,887	1,938	1,004
16	Ulytau	502	536	308
17	East Kazakhstan	2,286	2,261	1,066
18	Astana city	3,389	3,616	2,067
19	Almaty city	4,761	3,959	2,274

No.	Region	2023	2024	2025 (1st half-year)
20	Shymkent city	1,609	2,071	1,107
	Republic of Kazakhstan	40,227	40,647	21,531

According to the National Report, the main causes of divorce are: interference by relatives, marital infidelity, immoral behavior, domestic violence, and the influence of social media.

APPENDIX 2

Summary Table of Literature by Analytical Psychology Authors Examining the Concept of Individuation

Author, Year	Theoretical Basis	Definition of Individuation	Focus on Female Individuation	Methods / Material	Key Findings	Key Archetypes / Images	Critique / Limitations	Significance for the Study
C. G. Jung	Analytical psychology	Individuation as a process of becoming whole	Universal; female specificity not distinguished	Clinical observations, mythology	Archetypal path toward the Self	Anima, Great Mother, Self	Male perspective; insufficient attention to female experience	Foundational framework
E. Neumann	Jungian psychology, cultural anthropology	Evolution of consciousness through archetypal stages	The feminine through the image of the Great Mother	Mythology, art	Development of consciousness from maternal totality	Great Mother, Persephone	Essentialism; reduction of the feminine to the maternal	Archetypal roots
M.-L. von Franz	Jungian school, fairy tale analysis	Female individuation as integration of the animus	Central emphasis on the female path	Folklore, fairy tales	The heroine's path through transformation of the animus	Animus, heroine	Limited by cultural material	Analysis of female dynamics
M. Woodman	Post-Jungian, feminism	Path to wholeness through body and soul	Central emphasis	Clinical cases, women's groups	Liberation from patriarchal attitudes	Body, inner shadow, father	May be perceived as ideologically driven	Relevant to contemporary women's experience
J. Hillman	Archetypal psychology	Individuation as 'ensoulment'	Female specificity not emphasized, but feminine images explored	Mythological analysis	Poetic multiplicity of the soul	Aphrodite, Persephone, feminine figures	Moves away from development toward aesthetics	Symbolic expansion of analysis
M. Fordham	Child analytical psychology	Individuation as a process beginning in infancy	Female specificity absent	Child case studies	Primary self and integration	Child, primary self	Does not emphasize female experience	Relevant to early development
M. Stein	Contemporary post-Jungian	Individuation as a 'map of the soul'	Female path not central, but acknowledged	Systematization of Jungian theory	Dynamic developmental process	Self, Anima/Animus	Theoretical; less clinical application	Structures the research field
D. Kalf	Jungian,	Individuation	Female path	Clinical	Sandplay as a	Sand, water,	Female	Practical

Author, Year	Theoretical Basis	Definition of Individuation	Focus on Female Individuation	Methods / Material	Key Findings	Key Archetypes / Images	Critique / Limitations	Significance for the Study
	sandplay	through symbolic play	reflected in case studies	examples	'theatre of the soul'	archetypes	specificity described minimally	methodology
C. P. Estés	Jungian + cultural psychology	Individuation as return to the 'Wild Woman'	Central focus on the female path	Fairy tales, myths, oral tradition	Woman restores connection with instincts	Wild Woman, she-wolf, fairy-tale heroines	Criticized for mythopoetic style and 'non-academic' approach	Significant for the symbolic language of the female soul
M. Murdock, M. Roy, G. Adler, M. E. Harding, J. Singer, S. Matzliach-Hanoch, D. S. Bolen	Cross-cultural psychology, gender studies	Individuation as integration of identity, body, and culture	Focus on female trajectories (e.g., post-Soviet, Asian, or Western contexts)	Empirical studies, qualitative interviews, therapeutic practices	Female individuation examined in relation to culture, embodiment, and trauma	Mother–daughter, body, gender archetypes	Fragmented; diverse methodologies; difficult to synthesize into a unified theory	Current social and cultural context

APPENDIX 3

Template Social Media Announcement for Recruitment of Women with Paternal Deprivation (Experience of an Absent Father) for Research Psychotherapy in Almaty and the Almaty Region (Republic of Kazakhstan)

SANDPLAY
KAZAKHSTAN

INVITING WOMEN
WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF AN
"ABSENT FATHER"

**TO AN IN-PERSON THERAPEUTIC
RESEARCH PROJECT**

**Start: spring,
10 sessions**
Registration by interview

ALMATY, "SANDPLAY KAZAKHSTAN" OFFICE
BOGENBAI BATYR 86/47

Participation in the project is free of charge
as part of a PhD dissertation research

PROJECT GOAL:
**PSYCHOTHERAPY AND RESEARCH
ON THE INDIVIDUATION
DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN**
*with childhood experience in a family
with an absent father*
*within the Jungian psychotherapy approach
using the Sandplay method (sand therapy)*

Project lead: Sheveleva Elena Vitalevna,
Master of Psychology, PhD candidate,
Jungian analytical psychologist,
clinical psychologist with 29 years of experience
www.b17.ru/psysheveleva

**TO APPLY FOR AN INITIAL CONSULTATION
WRITE ON WA: +7 777 239 01 11**

TO APPLY WRITE ON WA: +7 777 239 01 11

Equipment of the Sandplay Therapy Office



Example of equipping a classic Jungian sand therapy office: a collection of figurines and two sandboxes with dry and wet sand (Sheveleva E. V.)

Informed Consent to Participate in the Study and Research Psychotherapy

IE "Workshop of Psychological Practice of Elena Sheveleva", "Sandplay Kazakhstan"
IE Certificate: series 0101 No. 0027338 TIN: 760215400805
Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty, Bogenbai Batyr St. 86/47, office 504A
+7 727 252 66 58, +7 777 239 01 11, www.b17.ru/psysheveleva , www.sandplaykz.com

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE Ph.D RESEARCH OF SHEVELEVA E. V. (MSc)

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Sheveleva Elena Vitalyevna (MSc), PhD candidate of the International Online Institute "SMART" (LLC "ONLINE INSTITUTE SMART", TIN 9701198958, PSRN 1227700116654, License No. L035-01298-77/00621355).

This research involves the study of sandplay therapy with women who have the experience of an "absent father". Sheveleva E. V. works under the supervision of Candidate of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor Legostayeva E. S. and with the dissertation committee of the Ph.D programme of the International Online Institute "SMART". This research is part of the doctoral dissertation of Sheveleva E. V.: *"Individuation Dynamics in Sandplay Therapy among Women with Paternal Deprivation. A Qualitative Study"*.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to study the development of individuation in women with the experience of an "absent father" (paternal deprivation) within the framework of Jungian sandplay therapy (in the approach of Dora Kalfff). It is hoped that this research will contribute to further studies and psychotherapeutic practice in the field of psychotherapy for women using Jungian sandplay therapy (Sandplay).

SELECTION

You have been selected to participate in this research because you are between 30 and 55 years of age, you have the childhood experience of an "absent father", and you have completed an initial screening interview with Sheveleva E. V. following your response to the invitation to participate in the study.

PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to allow independent reviewers (supervision and mathematical analysis of phenomenological research data) to analyze the information obtained during consultations and Sandplay therapy sessions (**with strict confidentiality**), photographs of your Sandplay scenes, and notes made by the consultant during the sessions. **Any information that could identify you, such as your name, age, and other potentially identifying information, will be removed or masked by the researcher to ensure complete anonymity.**

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information about you will be strictly confidential. The informed consent forms and other materials will be stored in a secure filing cabinet and on a password-protected personal external hard drive belonging to Sheveleva E. V. You will be asked to use a pseudonym for any references to you and your materials obtained during the research that may be included in the dissertation. You will also have the opportunity to review the transcripts of your session recordings and photographs of your Sandplay scenes, and to remove any materials you do not wish to be used. All research materials will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study. The results of this research will be published in the researcher's dissertation and possibly in subsequent journals or books. No personal information about you will be included in the published reports.

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ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

You will not receive direct personal benefits from participating in this study; however, the information obtained may be valuable to researchers and practitioners working with women on the development of their personality, individuation, self-attitude, and psychotherapy of emotional trauma related to the experience of an "absent father" when using Jungian sandplay therapy.

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROCEDURES

There are no foreseeable risks arising from your participation in this study. Consenting to participate means that you authorize the researcher to use information from your personal history for the purposes of this study — **this information will be masked to protect your identity.**

PARTICIPATION

The decision to participate in this study is entirely yours, and your decision will have no negative consequences. You may withdraw from participation in the study at any time, both during and after the screening interview, without any adverse effects. If you withdraw, your data will be excluded from the study and destroyed.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

You will not receive any payment for participation in this study.

RESULTS

In addition to discussing preliminary results with the researcher, you may also receive a copy of the final results by indicating your interest in the attached form below.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about any aspect of this research or your participation, please address them to the researcher before signing this form.

CONSENT

You have been provided with two copies of this informed consent form. Please sign both copies, indicating that you have read, understood, and agreed to participate in this study. Return one copy to the researcher and keep the other for your records.

PARTICIPANT'S FULL NAME _____

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

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+7 727 252 66 58, +7 777 239 01 11, www.b17.ru/psysheveleva , www.sandplaykz.com

NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER OF THE RESEARCHER

Sheveleva Elena Vitalyevna (MSc),
IE "Workshop of Psychological Practice of Elena Sheveleva", "Sandplay Kazakhstan"
Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty, Bogenbai Batyr St. 86/47, office 504A
+7 727 252 66 58, +7 777 239 01 11
sandtherapist@gmail.com

Yes, please send me a brief summary of the research results by email (please print clearly)

—

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Research Participant’s Authorization for the Use of Sandplay Process Materials

IE "Workshop of Psychological Practice of Elena Sheveleva", "Sandplay Kazakhstan"
IE Certificate: series 0101 No. 0027338 TIN: 760215400805
Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty, Bogenbai Batyr St. 86/47, office 504A
+7 727 252 66 58, +7 777 239 01 11, www.b17.ru/psysheveleva , www.sandplaykz.com

**RESEARCH PARTICIPANT'S PERMISSION
FOR USE OF THE SANDPLAY PROCESS MATERIALS**

I hereby grant Sheveleva Elena Vitalyevna permission to provide the International Online Institute “SMART” with all data from the work conducted with me, pertaining to Sheveleva E. V.’s Ph.D research, with the removal or masking of all information that identifies me.

I understand that these data, with full anonymity maintained, may be used by Sheveleva E. V. for: 1) professional exchange; 2) research; 3) publications.

The pseudonym assigned to you by the therapist (or chosen by you) will be:

Signature (under pseudonym, by legal name in documents): _____

Date: _____

.....

Research Participant (full legal name)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Current address: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Note:

The upper half of this permission form, containing only the pseudonym and signature, will be attached to all data presented to the International Online Institute “SMART”. Therefore, your legal name and address will be omitted from the information submitted to the Institute and the collegial professional community.

A full copy of this permission, including your legal name and address, will be retained by Sheveleva E. V.

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Informed Consent for the Use of Sand Pictures

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RESEARCH PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT FOR Ph.D RESEARCH
FOR USE OF SANDPLAY PHOTOGRAPHS

The researcher, analytical psychologist Sheveleva Elena Vitalyevna (MSc), photographs your sand compositions during the research analytical psychological sessions conducted for the Ph.D dissertation.

These photographs will be used for scientific research, data analysis, dissertation writing, publications in academic literature, presentations at scientific conferences based on the research results (with confidentiality maintained), as well as for your consultations.

I, the undersigned research participant (full name)

hereby permit the use of photographs of my sand compositions (with full confidentiality), made with me, for the purpose of:

- participation in clinical research;
• presentations at professional meetings and conferences;
• sharing of research experience;
• publications in academic journals;
• electronic publication of articles (online portals of academic libraries and journal editions);
• supervision (professional collegium).

I understand that my sand composition photographs and the clinical notes of psychologist Sheveleva E. V. are part of the analytical research process, and that any information associated with the sand composition photographs that may identify me will be processed in the dissertation documentation with the strictest confidentiality.

I understand that my name or any identifying information is confidentially protected for any purpose. I also understand that I may limit my approval.

I understand that I may delete any or all of these photographs and/or further restrict their use by notifying Sheveleva E. V. in writing by email at sandtherapist@gmail.com.

I understand that I may view any or all of my sand composition photographs, provided I contact Sheveleva Elena Vitalyevna in advance.

I understand that Sheveleva Elena Vitalyevna may delete these records and sand composition photographs after 5 years at her discretion and without prior notice.

Date _____

Participant's signature _____ Full name _____

Researcher's signature _____ Full name _____

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Informed Consent for Reference Group Specialists

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Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty, Bogenbai Batyr St. 86/47, office 504A
+7 727 252 66 58, +7 777 239 01 11, www.b17.ru/psysheveleva , www.sandplaykz.com

**INFORMED CONSENT OF THE REFERENCE GROUP SPECIALIST PARTICIPANT
OF SHEVELEVA E. V.'s RESEARCH PROJECT: FOR WORKING WITH SANDPLAY
COMPOSITION PHOTOGRAPHS AND PROVIDING EXPERT ASSESSMENT MATERIALS**

The researcher, analytical psychologist Sheveleva Elena Vitalyevna (MSc), provides the reference group of specialist psychologists specializing in Jungian sandplay therapy (Sandplay) with photographs of sand compositions made by participants of Sheveleva E. V.'s PhD dissertation project for the purpose of independent qualitative expert assessment. The composition of the reference group participants was confirmed following an interview with researcher Sheveleva E. V.

The photographs of the sand compositions of the participants of this research project will be used for data analysis, dissertation writing, publications in academic literature, and presentations at scientific conferences based on the research results (with confidentiality maintained).

I, the undersigned participant of the reference research group of Sheveleva E. V. (full name)

_____ hereby permit the use of my expert assessment materials following my work with the sand composition photographs for the purpose of: clinical dissertation research of Sheveleva E. V.; presentations at professional meetings and conferences; sharing of research experience; publications in academic journals and books; electronic publication of articles (online portals of academic libraries and journal editions).

I understand that the sand composition photographs provided as part of Sheveleva E. V.'s research are part of the analytical research process, and that any information associated with the sand composition photographs of the research participants *will be processed in the dissertation documentation with the strictest confidentiality.*

I understand that the names of the research participants or any identifying information are *confidentially protected* for any purpose.

I understand that I may view any or all of the sand composition photographs provided to me for expert assessment in strict confidence, providing my expert assessment and other research data exclusively to researcher Sheveleva E. V.

I understand and accept responsibility for maintaining the confidentiality of the research materials provided to me for my expert assessment and work in the independent reference group: **prohibition on distribution of sand composition photographs and dissertation research materials to third parties, via messaging applications, or on the Internet.**

I have been informed that I will not receive direct financial benefit from participating in this research; however, the information from my expert assessment may be valuable to researchers and consultants working with women on the development of their personality, individuation, self-attitude, and psychotherapy of emotional trauma related to the experience of an "absent father" when using Jungian sandplay therapy.

I have been informed that my expert assessment materials will be used in the Ph.D dissertation of Sheveleva Elena Vitalyevna (MSc) "*Individuation Dynamics in Sandplay Therapy among Women with Paternal Deprivation. A Qualitative Study*" and will also be published under our joint authorship in academic articles relating to the activities of the reference group of researcher Sheveleva E. V.

I understand that Sheveleva Elena Vitalyevna may delete my expert assessment materials after 5 years at her discretion and without prior notice.

If you have any questions about any aspect of the research or your participation, please address them to the researcher before signing this form.

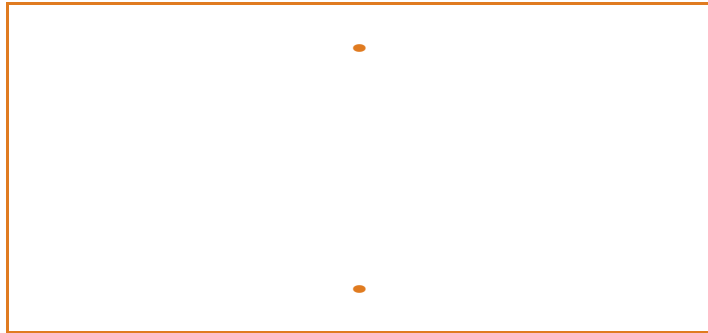
Date **16 August 2025**

Reference group participant's signature _____ Full name _____

APPENDIX 9

Documentation Protocol for the Sandplay Process Sandbox

Client _____
Age _____
Date _____
Composition No. _____
Dry sand _____
Wet sand _____
Comments: _____



Initial observations or statements (psychologist or client): _____

- | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 _____ | 11 _____ | 21 _____ |
| 2 _____ | 12 _____ | 22 _____ |
| 3 _____ | 13 _____ | 23 _____ |
| 4 _____ | 14 _____ | 24 _____ |
| 5 _____ | 15 _____ | 25 _____ |
| 6 _____ | 16 _____ | 26 _____ |
| 7 _____ | 17 _____ | 27 _____ |
| 8 _____ | 18 _____ | 28 _____ |
| 9 _____ | 19 _____ | 29 _____ |
| 10 _____ | 20 _____ | 30 _____ |

Brief client statements about the composition: _____

Psychologist _____

Content Interpretation of the Scales of the Self-Attitude Inventory (SAI, S. R. Pantileev)

<https://psytests.org/emvol/mis.html>

Internal Honesty (or Closedness–Openness).

The statements included in this factor were designed to contain certain qualities (primarily negative from the standpoint of everyday morality) that are present to some degree in every person but require sufficient reflective skills and a certain degree of inner honesty to acknowledge. Responses to these items are therefore determined by the predominance of one of two tendencies: either criticality, deep self-awareness, inner honesty and openness – or conformity and a pronounced motivation for social approval. The scale essentially measures the depth of self-penetration: open or closed (defensive) self-attitude. «Closedness» corresponds to the high pole of the scale.

Low scores indicate deep self-awareness, heightened reflexivity and criticality, and the ability to not conceal significant unpleasant information from oneself or others.

Extremely low scores may indicate self-exposure bordering on cynicism.

High scores indicate closedness, an inability or unwillingness to be aware of and disclose significant self-information – in the extreme, outright lying and falsifying results in the direction of social desirability.

Self-Confidence.

This factor reflects an attitude towards oneself as a confident, independent, strong-willed, and reliable person who has reason to respect oneself.

High scores correspond to high self-opinion, self-confidence, a sense of the strength of one's «I,» and the absence of inner tension.

Low scores indicate dissatisfaction with oneself and one's capabilities, and doubt in one's ability to inspire respect.

Self-Guidance.

This factor can be interpreted as reflecting the perception that the primary source of one's activity and results – both in terms of actions and one's personality itself – is the self. A high score characterizes a person who clearly perceives that their fate lies in their own hands, that they themselves integrate and organize their activities, communication, and behavior. Several items

also reflect the individual's sense of ability to effectively manage their emotions and self-related experiences and control them. The opposing pole is associated with belief in the subordination of one's «I» to external circumstances, poor self-regulation, a diffuse locus of self, and an absence of a tendency to seek causes of actions and results within oneself. This factor is clearly related to locus of control; however, while the latter expresses a generalized perception of the controllability and predictability of the world, including the results of the subject's own actions, the self-attitude factor under consideration primarily reflects the subject's sense of the controllability and predictability of their own «I.» This is a specific dimension, close in content to one aspect of locus of control identified by several authors and called «personal control.»

A person with a high score clearly perceives their own «I» as the inner axis that integrates their personality and life activity, believes that their fate is in their own hands, and experiences a sense of the reasonableness and consistency of their inner impulses and goals.

Low scores indicate belief in the subordination of one's «I» to temporary circumstances, inability to resist fate, poor self-regulation, a diffuse locus of «I,» and an absence of a tendency to seek causes of actions and results within oneself.

Reflected Self-Attitude.

The content of this factor reflects the subject's perception of whether their personality, character, and activities are capable of evoking respect, sympathy, approval, understanding, or their opposites in others. It is important to emphasize that this does not concern the actual attitude of others but rather an anticipated, reflected attitude – that is, the subject's own self-attitude. At the same time, anticipated reactions from others are one of the most important aspects of self-attitude.

High scores correspond to the subject's belief that their personality, character, and activities are capable of evoking respect, sympathy, approval, and understanding in others.

Low scores are associated with an expectation of opposite feelings from the generalized other.

Self-Worth («I» as Value).

The positive pole reflects a sense of the value of one's own personality and simultaneously a presumed value of one's «I» for others. The scale reflects an emotional

assessment of oneself and one's «I» according to internal, intimate criteria of spirituality, the richness of inner life, and the ability to evoke deep feelings in others.

High scores reflect interest in one's own «I», self-love, a sense of the value of one's own personality and simultaneously a presumed value of one's «I» for others.

Low scores indicate a deficiency of one's spiritual «I», doubt in the value of one's own personality, detachment bordering on indifference to one's «I», and a loss of interest in one's inner world.

Self-Acceptance.

The basis of this factor is a feeling of sympathy towards oneself, agreement with one's inner impulses, and acceptance of oneself as one is, even with certain shortcomings. The factor is associated with approval of one's plans and desires, a lenient and friendly attitude towards oneself. Like the previous factor, this one has no opposing pole – no statements associated with a negative attitude towards oneself. The feelings and experiences underlying this factor are not associated by subjects with their personal manifestations.

A high pole corresponds to a friendly attitude towards oneself, agreement with oneself, approval of one's plans and desires, and emotional, unconditional acceptance of oneself as one is, even with certain shortcomings.

A low pole indicates an absence of these qualities – insufficient self-acceptance, which is an important symptom of inner maladjustment.

Self-Attachment (ease or difficulty of changing one's self-representations).

The negative pole of this factor is associated with a strong desire for change, dissatisfaction with oneself, and a desire to conform to an ideal self-representation. A high score, accordingly, characterizes a person who does not wish to change their self-attitude and is fully satisfied with themselves; the factor reflects a certain rigidity of the self-concept, conservative self-sufficiency, and denial of the possibility and desirability of developing one's own «I» (even for the better).

High scores indicate rigidity of the self-concept, attachment, an unwillingness to change against a background of generally positive self-attitude. These experiences are often accompanied by attachment to an inadequate self-image. In the latter case, the tendency to preserve such an image is one of the protective mechanisms of self-awareness.

Low scores indicate opposite tendencies: a desire to change something in oneself, a striving to conform to an ideal self-representation, and dissatisfaction with oneself.

Inner Conflict.

The content of the items on this scale is associated with the presence of inner conflicts, doubts, and disagreement with oneself. They reveal a tendency towards excessive self-scrutiny and reflection, occurring against a background of generally negative emotional self-attitude. Denial of these qualities may indicate closedness, superficial self-satisfaction, and denial of problems. The general psychological content of this aspect of self-attitude can be designated as a sense of conflict within one's own «I.»

High scores indicate the presence of inner conflicts, doubts, disagreement with oneself, and anxious-depressive states accompanied by feelings of guilt.

A moderate elevation on the scale indicates heightened reflexivity, deep self-penetration, awareness of one's difficulties, an adequate self-image, and an absence of repression.

Extremely low scores indicate denial of problems, closedness, and superficial self-satisfaction.

Self-Blame.

This factor includes items associated with intrapunitiveness, self-blame, and negative emotions directed at the «I.» It is a unipolar factor with independent significance in the self-attitude system.

High scores indicate self-blame, a readiness to hold oneself responsible for one's mistakes and failures, and one's own shortcomings. The scale is an indicator of the absence of sympathy towards oneself, accompanied by negative emotions towards oneself, even despite a high self-assessment of qualities and achievements.

APPENDIX 11

Checklist for Registering Sandplay Symbols of Individuation Processes Through the Seven

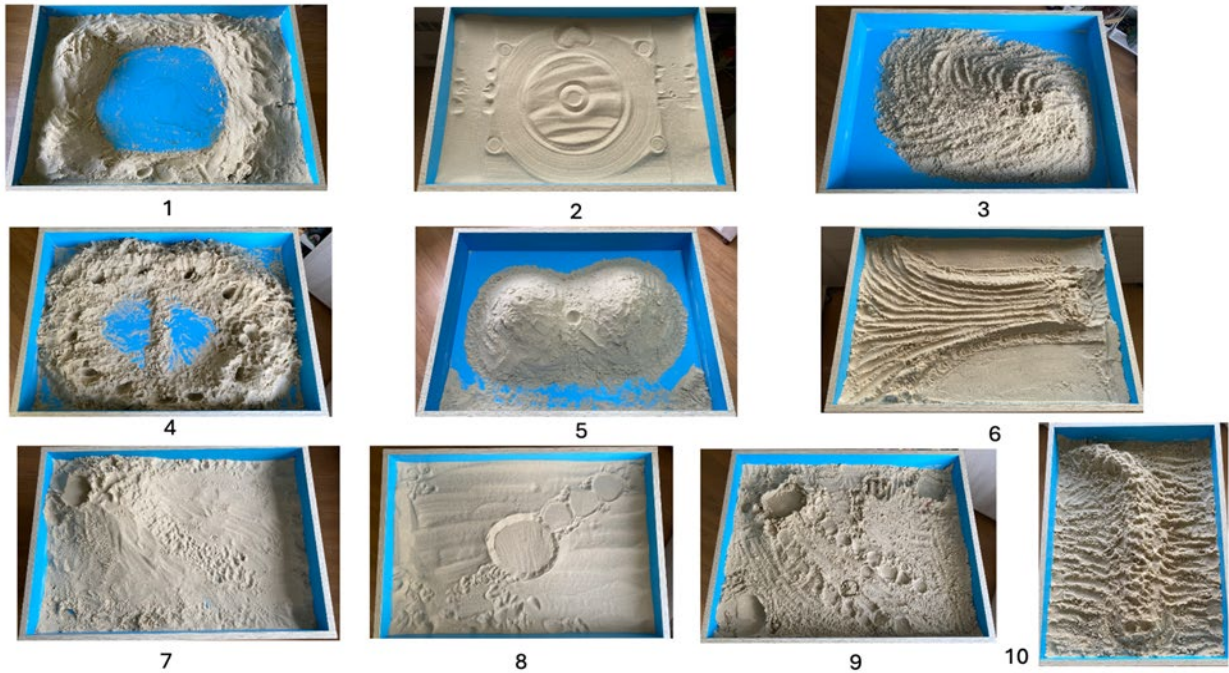
Phases of the Sandplay Process

(Compiled by E. V. Sheveleva based on L. R. Freedle)

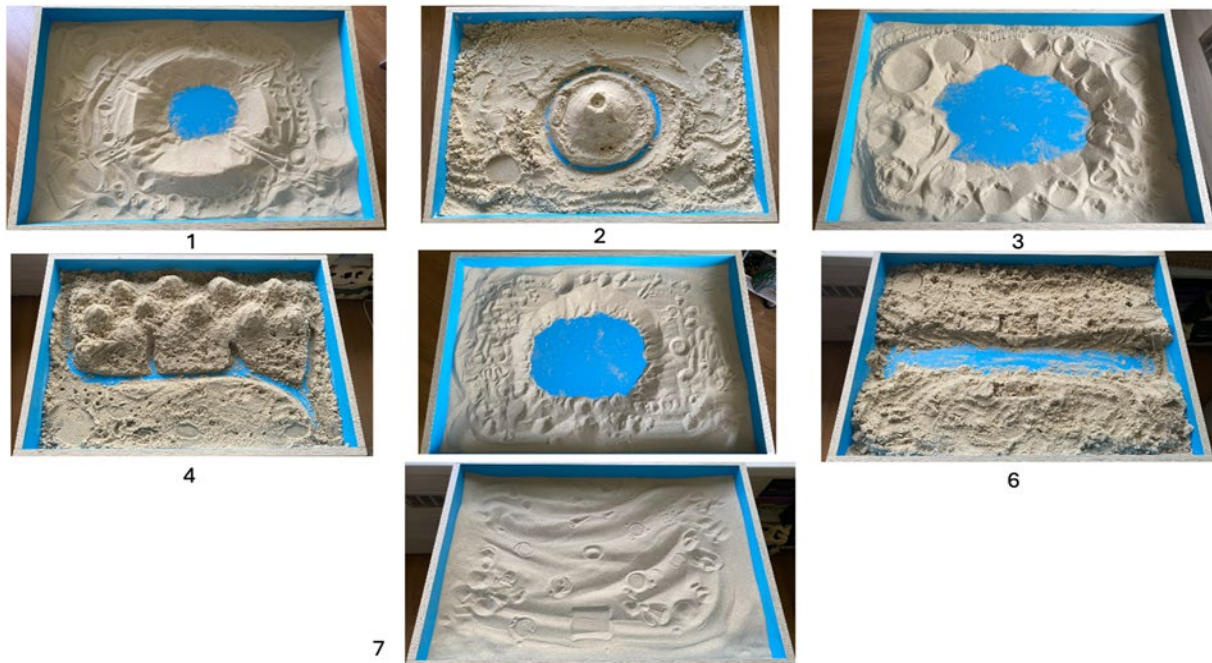
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Sand Composition										
Themes	Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
PHASE I Expression of the experience of suffering and daily struggle In the initial phase, people often express themselves and their current situation in the sand. They may share personal stories, problems, challenges, and possible solutions. Sometimes people may feel the need to justify each element in detail.	Themes	Journey: paths, temporary frames, 'now and later', goal in the distance.										
		Obstacles: barriers, fences, blocked vehicles, demons, hiding predators or monsters.										
		Dependency symbols (e.g., bottles, sweets, phone, computer, musical instruments).										
		"I am": representation of one's situation or dilemma, an outpouring of emotional pain, handprints, figures representing sympathy and antipathy, figures representing family and/or friends.										
		Anxiety: something frightening (e.g., spider, snake).										
		Depression: an abandoned or lonely figure, empty trays.										
		Catharsis/Release: emotional release — may suddenly start to cry when hands are placed in the sand; may need to visit the restroom during sand play.										
		Hidden resources: an animal guide may be present, a spirit symbol, a wise male or female figure, something magical or mystical, a treasure (buried or visible), but none of this is yet revealed.										
PHASE II Access to resources and their deployment During the second phase, inner resources become more openly expressed in the sand; a positive energy may emerge that the client can sense, enabling travel and building trust	Symbols	Resources at the center of attention: supplies, an animal guide, a spirit symbol or moment.										
		A wise male or female figure.										
		Something magical or mystical may become more central elements of the scene.										
		Energy: food, elements, moving vehicles, construction, tools in the tray.										
		Relationship with the therapist: symbols placed near the therapist or identified by the client as the therapist.										
		Unity of mother and child, represented as animals or humans.										
PHASE III Immersion in death, fear, avoidance immerses in the inner world, shadow themes, conflicts, fears, complexes, and barriers may emerge, blocking access to resources and/or causing	Symbols	Death/Unknown: skeleton, bones, tombstones, a gloomy reaper, coffin, darkness, cave.										
		Conflict: war, battle, shooting, surrounded by enemies.										
		Devouring/Danger: predatory animals, a femme fatale, cannibals, monsters.										
		Losses, illnesses in animals or people.										
PHASE IV of self-reflection.	Symbols	Stuck/Stagnation: empty tray, absence of energy, lying figures, wounded figures, trapped in a snare.										
		Resources used: resources from previous phases are employed, such as food, supplies, animal guides, something magical.										

Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)			Sand Composition											
Themes		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		Symbols	Spiritual resources and symbols, treasures may play a more prominent role.											
			Wise/sacred male or female figures. Handprints may return.											
			Helpers: animals or human assistants.											
			The journey continues to a new and more encompassing place, moving vehicles, a sense of productive movement and energy, construction.											
			Hope/Transformation: rainbow, butterfly, egg, sand sculptures.											
			Centering: balanced and centered scenes, figures at the center, peaceful scenes, Zen garden.											
PHASE V Approach to wholeness, divinity, fullness	umination arrives, and the client and therapist experience deep contact with the Self and its transforming energy, with a sense of	Symbols	Uniqueness: each person creates a unique self-expression.											
			Sacred: shimmer, candles, hands, lace, contact with the divine.											
			Boundlessness, spontaneity, freedom, play based on feelings, timelessness, boundlessness.											
			Wholeness arises naturally (from the depths): opposites coexist, creating a single unified image.											
			Deep simplicity, transcendence experienced in a scene that is deeply simple.											
PHASE VI Integration of opposites, emergent relational integration	begins, associated with the integration of opposites and relational integration. Meeting with the Self may be accompanied by destabilization and transformation of the Self, after which the client	Symbols	Conflict/struggle re-emerges: may be accompanied by extreme trials; old battles become more intense and conscious.											
			"In a new land": on Earth, an alien may arrive, or a mermaid may come ashore.											
			Wholeness/Unity: bridges, connections, unification, accord.											
			Masculine and feminine energies may work together productively and harmoniously.											
			Emergence: hatching, birth, awakening, new discoveries.											
			Opposites come into balance or are reconciled in current life circumstances.											
			Connections are established between past, present, and future.											
PHASE VII Return to everyday life and homecoming with a renewed Self	By the end of the process, or in the final scene with the sand, the client demonstrates a new perspective on everyday life or returns home as a	Symbols	Return home: home now seems different, (repeated) rejoining with the community.											
			New perspective: view of the city, self-awareness, new attitude, respect.											
			Wholeness/Unity: a mandala arises naturally, agreement, consensus.											
			Something "departs".											
			A kind of "the work is done", a completed deed, a satisfying conclusion to something.											

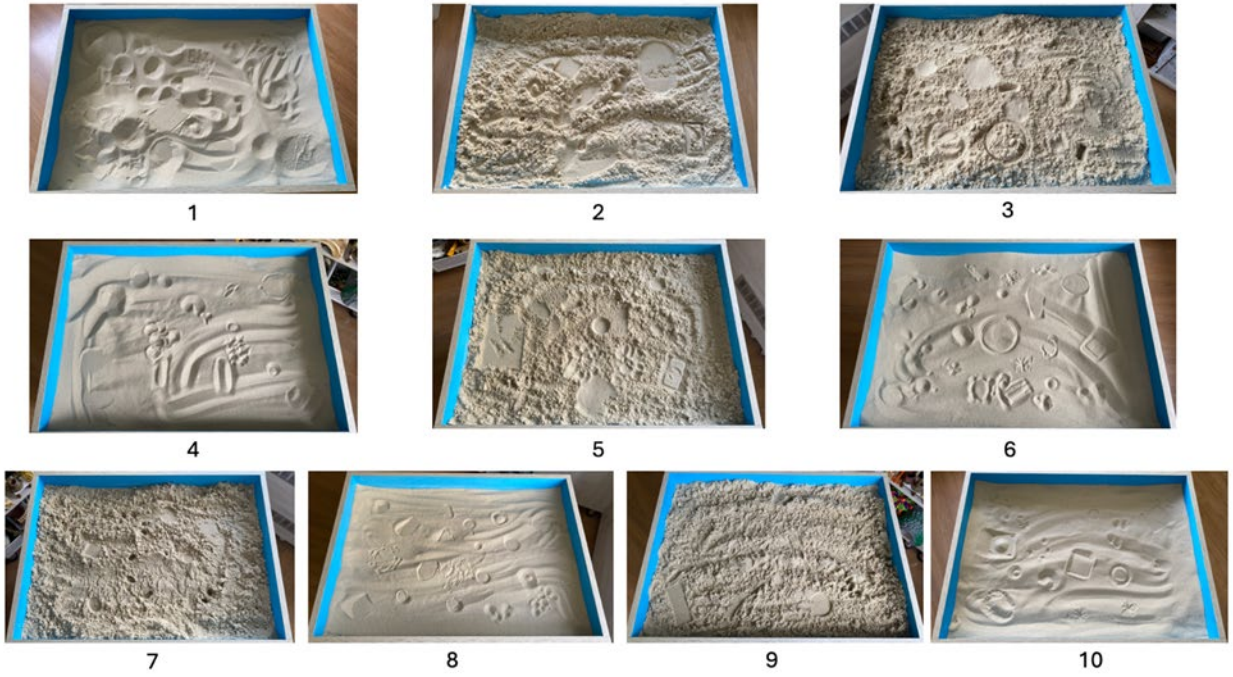
Photo Protocols of Post-Graphics of Participants' Sand Compositions



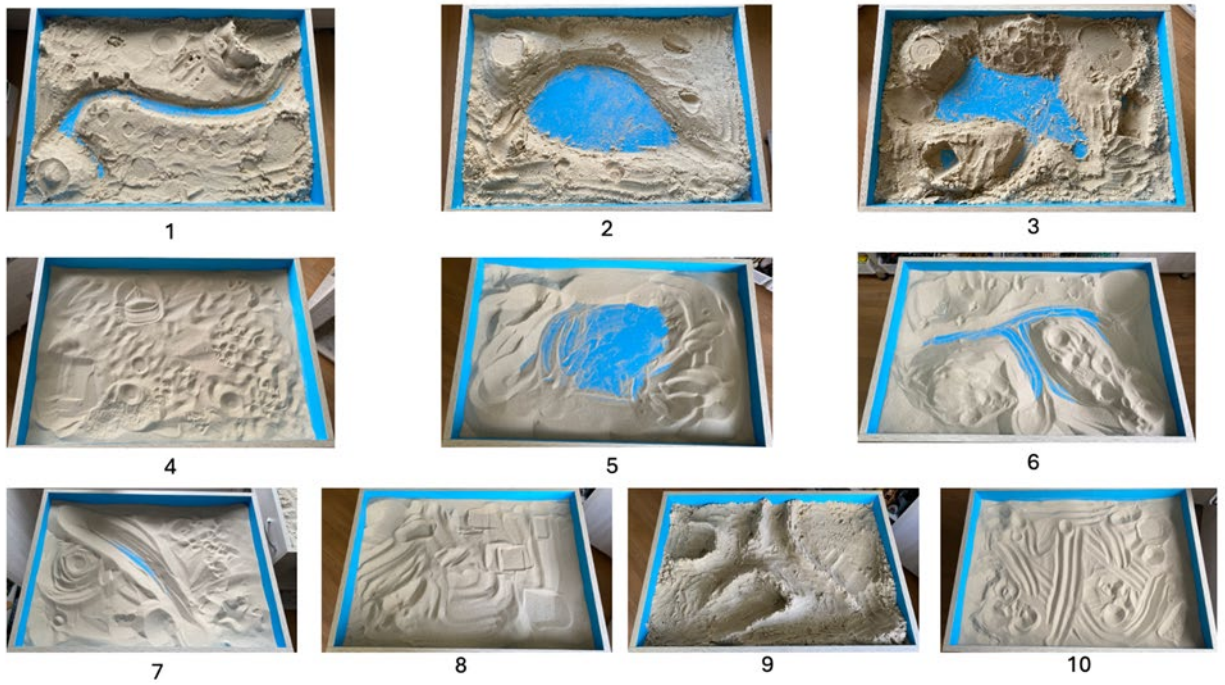
Sandplay process of «Lolita», 34 y/o



Sandplay process of «Ainura», 49 y/o



Sandplay process of «Athena», 43 y/o



Sandplay process of «Agatha», 51 y/o



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

Sandplay process of «Ekaterina», 37 y/o



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

Sandplay process of «Vasilisa», 50 y/o



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

Sandplay process of «Larisa», 56 y/o



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

Sandplay process of «Ayana», 33 y/o



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

Sandplay process of «Yukki», 48 y/o

**Protocols (Checklists) for Registering Sandplay Symbols of Individuation Processes
Through the Seven Phases of the Sandplay Process of Women with Paternal Deprivation
(Study Participants)**

**Checklist for Registration of Sandplay Individuation Process Symbols Across the Seven Phases of the Sand
Process**

(compiled by Sheveleva E. V.)

"Lolita", 34			Sand Composition									
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Themes		Symbols										
PHASE I Expression of experience of suffering and daily struggle	In the initial phase, people often express themselves and their current situation in the sand. They may share personal stories, problems, challenges, and possible solutions.	Expression of suffering	Journey: paths, temporary frames, 'now and later', goal in the distance.	+		+		+				
			Obstacles: barriers, fences, blocked vehicles, demons, hiding predators or monsters.	+								
			Dependency symbols (e.g., bottles, sweets, phone, computer, musical instruments).									
			"I am": representation of one's situation, emotional pain outpouring, handprints, figures of sympathy/antipathy, family and/or friends.	+	+			+				
			Anxiety: something frightening (e.g., spider, snake).	+								
			Depression: an abandoned or lonely figure, empty trays.	+	+							
			Catharsis/Emotional release — may suddenly cry when hands placed in sand; may need restroom.									
			Hidden resources: animal guide, spirit symbol, wise figure, something magical/mystical, treasure (buried or visible).				+					+
PHASE II Access to resources and their deployment	Inner resources become more openly expressed; a positive energy may emerge, enabling travel and trust in the therapeutic relationship.	Access to resources	"Teleobjective": main dilemma may be amplified in 2nd, 3rd, or later sand scenes for closer examination.			+		+				
			Resources at the center: supplies, animal guide, spirit symbol or moment.				+					
			A wise male or female figure.									
			Something magical or mystical may become more central elements of the scene.									
			Energy: food, elements, moving vehicles, construction, tools in the tray.									
			Relationship with therapist: symbols placed near or identified as therapist.						+			
PHASE III Immersion in death, fear, avoidance	The client immerses in the inner world; shadow themes, conflicts, fears, complexes, and barriers may emerge.	Immersion in death, fear	Unity of mother and child, represented as animals or humans.									
			Death/Unknown: skeleton, bones, tombstones, gloomy reaper, coffin, darkness, cave.									
			Conflict: war, battle, shooting, surrounded by enemies.									
			Devouring/Danger: predatory animals, femme fatale, cannibals, monsters.									
			Losses, illnesses in animals or people.									
PHASE IV Courage, transformation	Reflection, transformation	Resources used: from previous phases — food, supplies, animal guides, something magical.	Stuck/Stagnation: empty tray, absence of energy, lying figures, wounded figures, trapped in snare.									
			Resources used: from previous phases — food, supplies, animal guides, something magical.			+					+	

"Lolita", 34			Sand Composition											
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		Spiritual resources and symbols, treasures may play a more prominent role.												
		Wise/sacred male or female figures. Handprints may return.												
		Helpers: animals or human assistants.			+									
		Journey continues to a new place: moving vehicles, productive movement, energy, construction.												
		Hope/Transformation: rainbow, butterfly, egg, sand sculptures.												
		Centering: balanced/centered scenes, figures at center, peaceful scenes, Zen garden.	+	+				+		+				
PHASE V Approach to wholeness, divinity, fullness	Deep moment(s) of unification; both client and therapist experience deep contact with the Self, wholeness, transcendence, unity and/or divine presence.	Approach to wholeness	Uniqueness: each person creates a unique self-expression.		+			+		+				
			Sacred: shimmer, candles, hands, lace, contact with the divine.		+									
			Boundlessness, spontaneity, freedom, play based on feelings, timelessness.				+					+		
			Wholeness arises naturally: opposites coexist, creating a single unified image.		+			+						
			Deep simplicity, transcendence experienced in a scene that is deeply simple.							+				+
PHASE VI Integration of opposites, emergent relational integration	The reverse path of the heroic journey begins. Meeting the Self may be destabilizing; client again faces former difficulties but with greater inner strength.	Integration of opposites	Conflict/struggle re-emerges: extreme trials, old battles more intense and conscious.											
			"In a new land": on Earth an alien may arrive, or a mermaid may come ashore.											
			Wholeness/Unity: bridges, connections, unification, accord.					+	+			+		
			Masculine and feminine energies may work together productively and harmoniously.					+			+			
			Emergence: hatching, birth, awakening, new discoveries.											+
			Opposites come into balance or are reconciled in current life circumstances.									+		
			Connections established between past, present, and future.								+			
PHASE VII Return to everyday life and homecoming with a renewed Self	By the end of the process, or in the final sand scene, the client demonstrates a new perspective or returns home as a renewed Self.	Return home with renewed Self	Return home: home now seems different, (repeated) rejoining with community.										+	
			New perspective: view of city, self-awareness, new attitude, respect.											+
			Wholeness/Unity: a mandala arises naturally, agreement, consensus.											
			Something "departs".											
			"The work is done": completed deed, satisfying conclusion to something.											

Checklist for Registration of Sandplay Individuation Process Symbols Across the Seven Phases of the Sand Process

(compiled by Sheveleva E. V.)

"Ainura", 49			Sand Composition										
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Themes		Symbols											
PHASE I Expression of experience of suffering and daily struggle	In the initial phase, people often express themselves and their current situation in the sand. They may share personal stories, problems, challenges, and possible solutions.	Expression of suffering	Journey: paths, temporary frames, 'now and later', goal in the distance.				+		+				
			Obstacles: barriers, fences, blocked vehicles, demons, hiding predators or monsters.		+	+							
			Dependency symbols (e.g., bottles, sweets, phone, computer, musical instruments).				+						
			"I am": representation of one's situation, emotional pain outpouring, handprints, figures of sympathy/antipathy, family and/or friends.		+	+			+				
			Anxiety: something frightening (e.g., spider, snake).		+	+							
			Depression: an abandoned or lonely figure, empty trays.						+				
			Catharsis/Emotional release — may suddenly cry when hands placed in sand; may need restroom.							+			
			Hidden resources: animal guide, spirit symbol, wise figure, something magical/mystical, treasure (buried or visible).		+	+				+			
PHASE II Access to resources and their deployment	Inner resources become more openly expressed; a positive energy may emerge, enabling travel and trust in the therapeutic relationship.	Access to resources	Resources at the center: supplies, animal guide, spirit symbol or moment.										
			A wise male or female figure.	+		+							
			Something magical or mystical may become more central elements of the scene.										
			Energy: food, elements, moving vehicles, construction, tools in the tray.		+		+		+				
			Relationship with therapist: symbols placed near or identified as therapist.										
			Unity of mother and child, represented as animals or humans.						+				
PHASE III Immersion in death, fear, avoidance	The client immerses in the inner world; shadow themes, conflicts, fears, complexes, and barriers may emerge.	Immersion in death, fear	Death/Unknown: skeleton, bones, tombstones, gloomy reaper, coffin, darkness, cave.										
			Conflict: war, battle, shooting, surrounded by enemies.										
			Devouring/Danger: predatory animals, femme fatale, cannibals, monsters.										
			Losses, illnesses in animals or people.					+					
			Stuck/Stagnation: empty tray, absence of energy, lying figures, wounded figures, trapped in snare.							+			
PHASE IV Reflection, courage, transformation, emergence of hope	After the struggle of Phase III, self-reflection begins: new calming and reassuring scenes may gradually emerge.	Reflection, transformation	Resources used: from previous phases — food, supplies, animal guides, something magical.				+						
			Spiritual resources and symbols, treasures may play a more prominent role.		+								
			Wise/sacred male or female figures. Handprints may return.			+							
			Helpers: animals or human assistants.					+					
			Journey continues to a new place: moving vehicles, productive movement, energy, construction.		+			+					

"Ainura", 49			Sand Composition									
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		Hope/Transformation: rainbow, butterfly, egg, sand sculptures.		+			+					
		Centering: balanced/centered scenes, figures at center, peaceful scenes, Zen garden.	+	+	+							
PHASE V Approach to wholeness, divinity, fullness	Deep moment(s) of unification; both client and therapist experience deep contact with the Self; wholeness, transcendence, unity and/or divine presence.	Approach to wholeness	Uniqueness: each person creates a unique self-expression.	+			+					
			Sacred: shimmer, candles, hands, lace, contact with the divine.						+			
			Boundlessness, spontaneity, freedom, play based on feelings, timelessness.							+		
			Wholeness arises naturally: opposites coexist, creating a single unified image.	+					+			
			Deep simplicity, transcendence experienced in a scene that is deeply simple.	+						+		
PHASE VI Integration of opposites, emergent relational integration	The reverse path of the heroic journey begins. Meeting the Self may be destabilizing; client again faces former difficulties but with greater inner strength.	Integration of opposites	Conflict/struggle re-emerges: extreme trials, old battles more intense and conscious.									
			"In a new land": on Earth an alien may arrive, or a mermaid may come ashore.									
			Wholeness/Unity: bridges, connections, unification, accord.	+	+							
			Masculine and feminine energies may work together productively and harmoniously.	+								
			Emergence: hatching, birth, awakening, new discoveries.							+		
			Opposites come into balance or are reconciled in current life circumstances.									
			Connections established between past, present, and future.	+								
PHASE VII Return to everyday life and homecoming with a renewed Self	By the end of the process, or in the final sand scene, the client demonstrates a new perspective or returns home as a renewed Self.	Return home with renewed Self	Return home: home now seems different, (repeated) rejoining with community.									
			New perspective: view of city, self-awareness, new attitude, respect.									
			Wholeness/Unity: a mandala arises naturally, agreement, consensus.									
			Something "departs".									
			"The work is done": completed deed, satisfying conclusion to something.	+								

Checklist for Registration of Sandplay Individuation Process Symbols Across the Seven Phases of the Sand Process

(compiled by Sheveleva E. V.)

"Athena ", 43			Sand Composition										
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Themes		Symbols											
PHASE I Expression of experience of suffering and daily struggle	In the initial phase, people often express themselves and their current situation in the sand. They may share personal stories, problems, challenges, and possible solutions.	Expression of suffering	Journey: paths, temporary frames, 'now and later', goal in the distance.	+	+	+							
		Obstacles: barriers, fences, blocked vehicles, demons, hiding predators or monsters.	+	+									
		Dependency symbols (e.g., bottles, sweets, phone, computer, musical instruments).											
		"I am": representation of one's situation, emotional pain outpouring, handprints, figures of sympathy/antipathy, family and/or friends.	+	+									
		Anxiety: something frightening (e.g., spider, snake).			+								
		Depression: an abandoned or lonely figure, empty trays.			+								
		Catharsis/Emotional release — may suddenly cry when hands placed in sand; may need restroom.			+								
		Hidden resources: animal guide, spirit symbol, wise figure, something magical/mystical, treasure (buried or visible).	+	+	+								
PHASE II Access to resources and their deployment	Inner resources become more openly expressed; a positive energy may emerge, enabling travel and trust in the therapeutic relationship.	Access to resources	Resources at the center: supplies, animal guide, spirit symbol or moment.	+		+							
		A wise male or female figure.	+		+								
		Something magical or mystical may become more central elements of the scene.											
		Energy: food, elements, moving vehicles, construction, tools in the tray.				+							
		Relationship with therapist: symbols placed near or identified as therapist.											
		Unity of mother and child, represented as animals or humans.											
PHASE III Immersion in death, fear, avoidance	The client immerses in the inner world; shadow themes, conflicts, fears, complexes, and barriers may emerge.	Immersion in death, fear	Death/Unknown: skeleton, bones, tombstones, gloomy reaper, coffin, darkness, cave.					+					
		Conflict: war, battle, shooting, surrounded by enemies.											
		Devouring/Danger: predatory animals, femme fatale, cannibals, monsters.				+							
		Losses, illnesses in animals or people.											
		Stuck/Stagnation: empty tray, absence of energy, lying figures, wounded figures, trapped in snare.											
PHASE IV Reflection, courage, transformation, emergence of hope	After the struggle of Phase III, self-reflection begins: new calming and reassuring scenes may gradually emerge.	Reflection, transformation	Resources used: from previous phases — food, supplies, animal guides, something magical.					+	+	+	+		
		Spiritual resources and symbols, treasures may play a more prominent role.					+	+	+	+			
		Wise/sacred male or female figures. Handprints may return.					+	+	+	+			
		Helpers: animals or human assistants.					+	+	+	+			
		Journey continues to a new place: moving vehicles, productive movement, energy, construction.									+		

"Athena ", 43			Sand Composition									
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
							+	+	+		+	
							+	+	+	+		
PHASE V Approach to wholeness, divinity, fullness	Deep moment(s) of unification; both client and therapist experience deep contact with the Self; wholeness, transcendence, unity and/or divine presence.	Approach to wholeness	Uniqueness: each person creates a unique self-expression.									
			Sacred: shimmer, candles, hands, lace, contact with the divine.									
			Boundlessness, spontaneity, freedom, play based on feelings, timelessness.									
			Wholeness arises naturally: opposites coexist, creating a single unified image.									
			Deep simplicity, transcendence experienced in a scene that is deeply simple.									
PHASE VI Integration of opposites, emergent relational integration	The reverse path of the heroic journey begins. Meeting the Self may be destabilizing; client again faces former difficulties but with greater inner strength.	Integration of opposites	Conflict/struggle re-emerges: extreme trials, old battles more intense and conscious.									
			"In a new land": on Earth an alien may arrive, or a mermaid may come ashore.					+				
			Wholeness/Unity: bridges, connections, unification, accord.					+				
			Masculine and feminine energies may work together productively and harmoniously.									
			Emergence: hatching, birth, awakening, new discoveries.									
			Opposites come into balance or are reconciled in current life circumstances.							+		
			Connections established between past, present, and future.							+		
PHASE VII Return to everyday life and homecoming with a renewed Self	By the end of the process, or in the final sand scene, the client demonstrates a new perspective or returns home as a renewed Self.	Return home with renewed Self	Return home: home now seems different, (repeated) rejoining with community.									
			New perspective: view of city, self-awareness, new attitude, respect.									
			Wholeness/Unity: a mandala arises naturally, agreement, consensus.									
			Something "departs".									
			"The work is done": completed deed, satisfying conclusion to something.									

Checklist for Registration of Sandplay Individuation Process Symbols Across the Seven Phases of the Sand Process

(compiled by Sheveleva E. V.)

"Agata", 51			Sand Composition												
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
Themes		Symbols													
PHASE I Expression of experience of suffering and daily struggle	In the initial phase, people often express themselves and their current situation in the sand. They may share personal stories, problems, challenges, and possible solutions.	Expression of suffering	Journey: paths, temporary frames, 'now and later', goal in the distance.									+			
			Obstacles: barriers, fences, blocked vehicles, demons, hiding predators or monsters.										+		
			Dependency symbols (e.g., bottles, sweets, phone, computer, musical instruments).												
			"I am": representation of one's situation, emotional pain outpouring, handprints, figures of sympathy/antipathy, family and/or friends.					+					+		
			Anxiety: something frightening (e.g., spider, snake).										+		
			Depression: an abandoned or lonely figure, empty trays.						+				+		
			Catharsis/Emotional release — may suddenly cry when hands placed in sand; may need restroom.												
			Hidden resources: animal guide, spirit symbol, wise figure, something magical/mystical, treasure (buried or visible).						+					+	
PHASE II Access to resources and their deployment	Inner resources become more openly expressed; a positive energy may emerge, enabling travel and trust in the therapeutic relationship.	Access to resources	Resources at the center: supplies, animal guide, spirit symbol or moment.	+	+					+					
			A wise male or female figure.	+											
			Something magical or mystical may become more central elements of the scene.	+							+				
			Energy: food, elements, moving vehicles, construction, tools in the tray.	+											
			Relationship with therapist: symbols placed near or identified as therapist.												
			Unity of mother and child, represented as animals or humans.												
PHASE III Immersion in death, fear, avoidance	The client immerses in the inner world; shadow themes, conflicts, fears, complexes, and barriers may emerge.	Immersion in death, fear	Death/Unknown: skeleton, bones, tombstones, gloomy reaper, coffin, darkness, cave.												
			Conflict: war, battle, shooting, surrounded by enemies.												
			Devouring/Danger: predatory animals, femme fatale, cannibals, monsters.												
			Losses, illnesses in animals or people.												
			Stuck/Stagnation: empty tray, absence of energy, lying figures, wounded figures, trapped in snare.												
PHASE IV Reflection, courage, transformation, emergence of hope	After the struggle of Phase III, self-reflection begins: new calming and reassuring scenes may gradually emerge.	Reflection, transformation	Resources used: from previous phases — food, supplies, animal guides, something magical.	+	+			+	+						
			Spiritual resources and symbols, treasures may play a more prominent role.			+			+						
			Wise/sacred male or female figures. Handprints may return.			+		+							
			Helpers: animals or human assistants.	+	+	+		+	+						
			Journey continues to a new place: moving vehicles, productive movement, energy, construction.	+	+	+		+	+						

"Agata", 51			Sand Composition										
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
		Hope/Transformation: rainbow, butterfly, egg, sand sculptures.			+	+							
		Centering: balanced/centered scenes, figures at center, peaceful scenes, Zen garden.				+		+					
PHASE V Approach to wholeness, divinity, fullness	Deep moment(s) of unification; both client and therapist experience deep contact with the Self; wholeness, transcendence, unity and/or divine presence.	Approach to wholeness	Uniqueness: each person creates a unique self-expression.										
			Sacred: shimmer, candles, hands, lace, contact with the divine.										
			Boundlessness, spontaneity, freedom, play based on feelings, timelessness.										
			Wholeness arises naturally: opposites coexist, creating a single unified image.										
			Deep simplicity, transcendence experienced in a scene that is deeply simple.										
PHASE VI Integration of opposites, emergent relational integration	The reverse path of the heroic journey begins. Meeting the Self may be destabilizing; client again faces former difficulties but with greater inner strength.	Integration of opposites	Conflict/struggle re-emerges: extreme trials, old battles more intense and conscious.										
			"In a new land": on Earth an alien may arrive, or a mermaid may come ashore.								+		
			Wholeness/Unity: bridges, connections, unification, accord.									+	
			Masculine and feminine energies may work together productively and harmoniously.								+	+	
			Emergence: hatching, birth, awakening, new discoveries.										
			Opposites come into balance or are reconciled in current life circumstances.										
			Connections established between past, present, and future.										
PHASE VII Return to everyday life and homecoming with a renewed Self	By the end of the process, or in the final sand scene, the client demonstrates a new perspective or returns home as a renewed Self.	Return home with renewed Self	Return home: home now seems different, (repeated) rejoining with community.									+	
			New perspective: view of city, self-awareness, new attitude, respect.										
			Wholeness/Unity: a mandala arises naturally, agreement, consensus.										
			Something "departs".										
			"The work is done": completed deed, satisfying conclusion to something.										

**Checklist for Registration of Sandplay Individuation Process Symbols
Across the Seven Phases of the Sand Process**

(compiled by Sheveleva E. V.)

"Ekaterina", 37			Sand Composition										
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)	Symbols		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Themes	Symbols												
PHASE I Expression of experience of suffering and daily struggle	Expression of suffering	Journey: paths, temporary frames, 'now and later', goal in the distance.		+					+				
		Obstacles: barriers, fences, blocked vehicles, demons, hiding predators or monsters.		+	+								
		Dependency symbols (e.g., bottles, sweets, phone, computer, musical instruments).											
		"I am": representation of one's situation, emotional pain outpouring, handprints, figures of sympathy/antipathy, family and/or friends.	+			+		+					
		Anxiety: something frightening (e.g., spider, snake).						+					
		Depression: an abandoned or lonely figure, empty trays.		+				+		+			
		Catharsis/Emotional release — may suddenly cry when hands placed in sand; may need restroom.											
		Hidden resources: animal guide, spirit symbol, wise figure, something magical/mystical, treasure (buried or visible).	+			+							
PHASE II Access to resources and their deployment	Access to resources	Resources at the center: supplies, animal guide, spirit symbol or moment.	+										
		A wise male or female figure.	+		+								
		Something magical or mystical may become more central elements of the scene.			+	+							
		Energy: food, elements, moving vehicles, construction, tools in the tray.		+				+		+			
		Relationship with therapist: symbols placed near or identified as therapist.	+										
		Unity of mother and child, represented as animals or humans.	+										
PHASE III Immersion in death, fear, avoidance	Immersion in death, fear	Death/Unknown: skeleton, bones, tombstones, gloomy reaper, coffin, darkness, cave.											
		Conflict: war, battle, shooting, surrounded by enemies.											
		Devouring/Danger: predatory animals, femme fatale, cannibals, monsters.											
		Losses, illnesses in animals or people.											
		Stuck/Stagnation: empty tray, absence of energy, lying figures, wounded figures, trapped in snare.											
PHASE IV Reflection, courage, transformation, emergence of hope	Reflection, transformation	Resources used: from previous phases — food, supplies, animal guides, something magical.						+					
		Spiritual resources and symbols, treasures may play a more prominent role.		+			+						
		Wise/sacred male or female figures. Handprints may return.			+				+				
		Helpers: animals or human assistants.							+				
		Journey continues to a new place: moving vehicles, productive movement, energy, construction.							+	+			

"Ekaterina", 37			Sand Composition										
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
		Hope/Transformation: rainbow, butterfly, egg, sand sculptures.							+	+			
		Centering: balanced/centered scenes, figures at center, peaceful scenes, Zen garden.	+		+			+	+	+			
PHASE V Approach to wholeness, divinity, fullness	Deep moment(s) of unification; both client and therapist experience deep contact with the Self; wholeness, transcendence, unity and/or divine presence.	Approach to wholeness	Uniqueness: each person creates a unique self-expression.								+		
			Sacred: shimmer, candles, hands, lace, contact with the divine.										
			Boundlessness, spontaneity, freedom, play based on feelings, timelessness.										
			Wholeness arises naturally: opposites coexist, creating a single unified image.										+
			Deep simplicity, transcendence experienced in a scene that is deeply simple.										+
PHASE VI Integration of opposites, emergent relational integration	The reverse path of the heroic journey begins. Meeting the Self may be destabilizing; client again faces former difficulties but with greater inner strength.	Integration of opposites	Conflict/struggle re-emerges: extreme trials, old battles more intense and conscious.										
			"In a new land": on Earth an alien may arrive, or a mermaid may come ashore.										
			Wholeness/Unity: bridges, connections, unification, accord.										
			Masculine and feminine energies may work together productively and harmoniously.										
			Emergence: hatching, birth, awakening, new discoveries.										
			Opposites come into balance or are reconciled in current life circumstances.										+
			Connections established between past, present, and future.										
PHASE VII Return to everyday life and homecoming with a renewed Self	By the end of the process, or in the final sand scene, the client demonstrates a new perspective or returns home as a renewed Self.	Return home with renewed Self	Return home: home now seems different, (repeated) rejoining with community.										
			New perspective: view of city, self-awareness, new attitude, respect.										
			Wholeness/Unity: a mandala arises naturally, agreement, consensus.										
			Something "departs".										
			"The work is done": completed deed, satisfying conclusion to something.										

**Checklist for Registration of Sandplay Individuation Process Symbols
Across the Seven Phases of the Sand Process**

(compiled by Sheveleva E. V.)

"Vasilisa", 50			Sand Composition											
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Themes		Symbols												
PHASE I Expression of experience of suffering and daily struggle	In the initial phase, people often express themselves and their current situation in the sand. They may share personal stories, problems, challenges, and possible solutions.	Expression of suffering	Journey: paths, temporary frames, 'now and later', goal in the distance.	+										
			Obstacles: barriers, fences, blocked vehicles, demons, hiding predators or monsters.	+										
			Dependency symbols (e.g., bottles, sweets, phone, computer, musical instruments).											
			"I am": representation of one's situation, emotional pain outpouring, handprints, figures of sympathy/antipathy, family and/or friends.	+	+									
			Anxiety: something frightening (e.g., spider, snake).		+									
			Depression: an abandoned or lonely figure, empty trays.	+	+									
			Catharsis/Emotional release — may suddenly cry when hands placed in sand; may need restroom.											
			Hidden resources: animal guide, spirit symbol, wise figure, something magical/mystical, treasure (buried or visible).	+	+									
PHASE II Access to resources and their deployment	Inner resources become more openly expressed; a positive energy may emerge, enabling travel and trust in the therapeutic relationship.	Access to resources	Resources at the center: supplies, animal guide, spirit symbol or moment.			+								
			A wise male or female figure.	+		+								
			Something magical or mystical may become more central elements of the scene.		+									
			Energy: food, elements, moving vehicles, construction, tools in the tray.				+							
			Relationship with therapist: symbols placed near or identified as therapist.		+									
			Unity of mother and child, represented as animals or humans.											
PHASE III Immersion in death, fear, avoidance	The client immerses in the inner world; shadow themes, conflicts, fears, complexes, and barriers may emerge.	Immersion in death, fear	Death/Unknown: skeleton, bones, tombstones, gloomy reaper, coffin, darkness, cave.				+							
			Conflict: war, battle, shooting, surrounded by enemies.											
			Devouring/Danger: predatory animals, femme fatale, cannibals, monsters.											
			Losses, illnesses in animals or people.											
			Stuck/Stagnation: empty tray, absence of energy, lying figures, wounded figures, trapped in snare.											
PHASE IV Reflection, courage, transformation, emergence of hope	After the struggle of Phase III, self-reflection begins: new calming and reassuring scenes may gradually emerge.	Reflection, transformation	Resources used: from previous phases — food, supplies, animal guides, something magical.				+	+						
			Spiritual resources and symbols, treasures may play a more prominent role.			+	+			+				
			Wise/sacred male or female figures. Handprints may return.			+	+							
			Helpers: animals or human assistants.			+	+							
			Journey continues to a new place: moving vehicles, productive movement, energy, construction.					+				+		

"Vasilisa", 50			Sand Composition												
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
		Hope/Transformation: rainbow, butterfly, egg, sand sculptures.			+	+		+							
		Centering: balanced/centered scenes, figures at center, peaceful scenes, Zen garden.					+	+		+					
PHASE V Approach to wholeness, divinity, fullness	Deep moment(s) of unification; both client and therapist experience deep contact with the Self; wholeness, transcendence, unity and/or divine presence.	Approach to wholeness	Uniqueness: each person creates a unique self-expression.								+				
			Sacred: shimmer, candles, hands, lace, contact with the divine.									+			
			Boundlessness, spontaneity, freedom, play based on feelings, timelessness.										+		
			Wholeness arises naturally: opposites coexist, creating a single unified image.								+				
			Deep simplicity, transcendence experienced in a scene that is deeply simple.										+		
PHASE VI Integration of opposites, emergent relational integration	The reverse path of the heroic journey begins. Meeting the Self may be destabilizing; client again faces former difficulties but with greater inner strength.	Integration of opposites	Conflict/struggle re-emerges: extreme trials, old battles more intense and conscious.												
			"In a new land": on Earth an alien may arrive, or a mermaid may come ashore.							+		+			
			Wholeness/Unity: bridges, connections, unification, accord.				+			+		+			
			Masculine and feminine energies may work together productively and harmoniously.				+			+					
			Emergence: hatching, birth, awakening, new discoveries.								+		+		
			Opposites come into balance or are reconciled in current life circumstances.									+			
			Connections established between past, present, and future.										+		
PHASE VII Return to everyday life and homecoming with a renewed Self	By the end of the process, or in the final sand scene, the client demonstrates a new perspective or returns home as a renewed Self.	Return home with renewed Self	Return home: home now seems different, (repeated) rejoining with community.										+		
			New perspective: view of city, self-awareness, new attitude, respect.											+	
			Wholeness/Unity: a mandala arises naturally, agreement, consensus.												
			Something "departs".												
			"The work is done": completed deed, satisfying conclusion to something.												+

**Checklist for Registration of Sandplay Individuation Process Symbols
Across the Seven Phases of the Sand Process**

(compiled by Sheveleva E. V.)

"Larisa", 56			Sand Composition											
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Themes		Symbols												
PHASE I Expression of experience of suffering and daily struggle	In the initial phase, people often express themselves and their current situation in the sand. They may share personal stories, problems, challenges, and possible solutions.	Expression of suffering	Journey: paths, temporary frames, 'now and later', goal in the distance.								+			
			Obstacles: barriers, fences, blocked vehicles, demons, hiding predators or monsters.	+										
			Dependency symbols (e.g., bottles, sweets, phone, computer, musical instruments).											
			"I am": representation of one's situation, emotional pain outpouring, handprints, figures of sympathy/antipathy, family and/or friends.	+	+									
			Anxiety: something frightening (e.g., spider, snake).											
			Depression: an abandoned or lonely figure, empty trays.		+				+		+			
			Catharsis/Emotional release — may suddenly cry when hands placed in sand; may need restroom.											
			Hidden resources: animal guide, spirit symbol, wise figure, something magical/mystical, treasure (buried or visible).	+	+						+	+		
PHASE II Access to resources and their deployment	Inner resources become more openly expressed; a positive energy may emerge, enabling travel and trust in the therapeutic relationship.	Access to resources	Resources at the center: supplies, animal guide, spirit symbol or moment.	+										
			A wise male or female figure.											
			Something magical or mystical may become more central elements of the scene.											
			Energy: food, elements, moving vehicles, construction, tools in the tray.											
			Relationship with therapist: symbols placed near or identified as therapist.											
			Unity of mother and child, represented as animals or humans.						+					
PHASE III Immersion in death, fear, avoidance	The client immerses in the inner world; shadow themes, conflicts, fears, complexes, and barriers may emerge.	Immersion in death, fear	Death/Unknown: skeleton, bones, tombstones, gloomy reaper, coffin, darkness, cave.								+			
			Conflict: war, battle, shooting, surrounded by enemies.											
			Devouring/Danger: predatory animals, femme fatale, cannibals, monsters.											
			Losses, illnesses in animals or people.					+				+		
			Stuck/Stagnation: empty tray, absence of energy, lying figures, wounded figures, trapped in snare.					+						
PHASE IV Reflection, courage, transformation, emergence of hope	After the struggle of Phase III, self-reflection begins: new calming and reassuring scenes may gradually emerge.	Reflection, transformation	Resources used: from previous phases — food, supplies, animal guides, something magical.			+	+							
			Spiritual resources and symbols, treasures may play a more prominent role.			+								
			Wise/sacred male or female figures. Handprints may return.			+	+							
			Helpers: animals or human assistants.				+							
			Journey continues to a new place: moving vehicles, productive movement, energy, construction.					+				+		

"Larisa", 56			Sand Composition									
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		Hope/Transformation: rainbow, butterfly, egg, sand sculptures.					+					
		Centering: balanced/centered scenes, figures at center, peaceful scenes, Zen garden.						+		+		
PHASE V Approach to wholeness, divinity, fullness	Deep moment(s) of unification; both client and therapist experience deep contact with the Self; wholeness, transcendence, unity and/or divine presence.	Approach to wholeness					+	+	+			
		Uniqueness: each person creates a unique self-expression.					+	+	+			
		Sacred: shimmer, candles, hands, lace, contact with the divine.						+	+			
		Boundlessness, spontaneity, freedom, play based on feelings, timelessness.										
		Wholeness arises naturally: opposites coexist, creating a single unified image.						+	+			
		Deep simplicity, transcendence experienced in a scene that is deeply simple.					+	+	+			
PHASE VI Integration of opposites, emergent relational integration	The reverse path of the heroic journey begins. Meeting the Self may be destabilizing; client again faces former difficulties but with greater inner strength.	Integration of opposites										
		Conflict/struggle re-emerges: extreme trials, old battles more intense and conscious.										
		"In a new land": on Earth an alien may arrive, or a mermaid may come ashore.										
		Wholeness/Unity: bridges, connections, unification, accord.										
		Masculine and feminine energies may work together productively and harmoniously.										
		Emergence: hatching, birth, awakening, new discoveries.										
		Opposites come into balance or are reconciled in current life circumstances.										
		Connections established between past, present, and future.										
PHASE VII Return to everyday life and homecoming with a renewed Self	By the end of the process, or in the final sand scene, the client demonstrates a new perspective or returns home as a renewed Self.	Return home with renewed Self										
		Return home: home now seems different, (repeated) rejoining with community.										
		New perspective: view of city, self-awareness, new attitude, respect.										
		Wholeness/Unity: a mandala arises naturally, agreement, consensus.										
		Something "departs".										
		"The work is done": completed deed, satisfying conclusion to something.										

Checklist for Registration of Sandplay Individuation Process Symbols Across the Seven Phases of the Sand Process

(compiled by Sheveleva E. V.)

"Ayana", 33			Sand Composition											
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Themes		Symbols												
PHASE I Expression of experience of suffering and daily struggle	In the initial phase, people often express themselves and their current situation in the sand. They may share personal stories, problems, challenges, and possible solutions.	Expression of suffering	Journey: paths, temporary frames, 'now and later', goal in the distance.	+		+		+		+				
		Obstacles: barriers, fences, blocked vehicles, demons, hiding predators or monsters.												
		Dependency symbols (e.g., bottles, sweets, phone, computer, musical instruments).												
		"I am": representation of one's situation, emotional pain outpouring, handprints, figures of sympathy/antipathy, family and/or friends.	+	+		+		+						
		Anxiety: something frightening (e.g., spider, snake).												
		Depression: an abandoned or lonely figure, empty trays.	+	+	+		+		+					
		Catharsis/Emotional release — may suddenly cry when hands placed in sand; may need restroom.												
		Hidden resources: animal guide, spirit symbol, wise figure, something magical/mystical, treasure (buried or visible).					+							
PHASE II Access to resources and their deployment	Inner resources become more openly expressed; a positive energy may emerge, enabling travel and trust in the therapeutic relationship.	Access to resources	Resources at the center: supplies, animal guide, spirit symbol or moment.											
		A wise male or female figure.												
		Something magical or mystical may become more central elements of the scene.												
		Energy: food, elements, moving vehicles, construction, tools in the tray.					+		+					
		Relationship with therapist: symbols placed near or identified as therapist.												
		Unity of mother and child, represented as animals or humans.							+					
PHASE III Immersion in death, fear, avoidance	The client immerses in the inner world; shadow themes, conflicts, fears, complexes, and barriers may emerge.	Immersion in death, fear	Death/Unknown: skeleton, bones, tombstones, gloomy reaper, coffin, darkness, cave.			+								
		Conflict: war, battle, shooting, surrounded by enemies.												
		Devouring/Danger: predatory animals, femme fatale, cannibals, monsters.												
		Losses, illnesses in animals or people.												
		Stuck/Stagnation: empty tray, absence of energy, lying figures, wounded figures, trapped in snare.					+							
PHASE IV Reflection, courage, transformation, emergence of hope	After the struggle of Phase III, self-reflection begins: new calming and reassuring scenes may gradually emerge.	Reflection, transformation	Resources used: from previous phases — food, supplies, animal guides, something magical.				+							
		Spiritual resources and symbols, treasures may play a more prominent role.												
		Wise/sacred male or female figures. Handprints may return.												
		Helpers: animals or human assistants.												
		Journey continues to a new place: moving vehicles, productive movement, energy, construction.					+			+				

"Ayana", 33			Sand Composition									
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		Hope/Transformation: rainbow, butterfly, egg, sand sculptures.					+		+			
		Centering: balanced/centered scenes, figures at center, peaceful scenes, Zen garden.					+			+		
PHASE V Approach to wholeness, divinity, fullness	Deep moment(s) of unification; both client and therapist experience deep contact with the Self; wholeness, transcendence, unity and/or divine presence.	Approach to wholeness										
		Uniqueness: each person creates a unique self-expression.										
		Sacred: shimmer, candles, hands, lace, contact with the divine.										
		Boundlessness, spontaneity, freedom, play based on feelings, timelessness.										
		Wholeness arises naturally: opposites coexist, creating a single unified image.										
		Deep simplicity, transcendence experienced in a scene that is deeply simple.										
PHASE VI Integration of opposites, emergent relational integration	The reverse path of the heroic journey begins. Meeting the Self may be destabilizing; client again faces former difficulties but with greater inner strength.	Integration of opposites										
		Conflict/struggle re-emerges: extreme trials, old battles more intense and conscious.										
		"In a new land": on Earth an alien may arrive, or a mermaid may come ashore.								+		
		Wholeness/Unity: bridges, connections, unification, accord.							+	+		
		Masculine and feminine energies may work together productively and harmoniously.										
		Emergence: hatching, birth, awakening, new discoveries.										
		Opposites come into balance or are reconciled in current life circumstances.										
		Connections established between past, present, and future.								+		
PHASE VII Return to everyday life and homecoming with a renewed Self	By the end of the process, or in the final sand scene, the client demonstrates a new perspective or returns home as a renewed Self.	Return home with renewed Self										
		Return home: home now seems different, (repeated) rejoining with community.										
		New perspective: view of city, self-awareness, new attitude, respect.										
		Wholeness/Unity: a mandala arises naturally, agreement, consensus.										
		Something "departs".										
		"The work is done": completed deed, satisfying conclusion to something.										

Checklist for Registration of Sandplay Individuation Process Symbols Across the Seven Phases of the Sand Process

(compiled by Sheveleva E. V.)

"Yukki", 48			Sand Composition										
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Themes		Symbols											
PHASE I Expression of experience of suffering and daily struggle	In the initial phase, people often express themselves and their current situation in the sand. They may share personal stories, problems, challenges, and possible solutions.	Expression of suffering	Journey: paths, temporary frames, 'now and later', goal in the distance.										
			Obstacles: barriers, fences, blocked vehicles, demons, hiding predators or monsters.		+	+							
			Dependency symbols (e.g., bottles, sweets, phone, computer, musical instruments).				+						
			"I am": representation of one's situation, emotional pain outpouring, handprints, figures of sympathy/antipathy, family and/or friends.			+							
			Anxiety: something frightening (e.g., spider, snake).			+	+						
			Depression: an abandoned or lonely figure, empty trays.			+							
			Catharsis/Emotional release — may suddenly cry when hands placed in sand; may need restroom.										
			Hidden resources: animal guide, spirit symbol, wise figure, something magical/mystical, treasure (buried or visible).					+					
PHASE II Access to resources and their deployment	Inner resources become more openly expressed; a positive energy may emerge, enabling travel and trust in the therapeutic relationship.	Access to resources	Resources at the center: supplies, animal guide, spirit symbol or moment.	+									
			A wise male or female figure.	+									
			Something magical or mystical may become more central elements of the scene.										
			Energy: food, elements, moving vehicles, construction, tools in the tray.										
			Relationship with therapist: symbols placed near or identified as therapist.										
			Unity of mother and child, represented as animals or humans.						+				
PHASE III Immersion in death, fear, avoidance	The client immerses in the inner world; shadow themes, conflicts, fears, complexes, and barriers may emerge.	Immersion in death, fear	Death/Unknown: skeleton, bones, tombstones, gloomy reaper, coffin, darkness, cave.							+			
			Conflict: war, battle, shooting, surrounded by enemies.										
			Devouring/Danger: predatory animals, femme fatale, cannibals, monsters.						+				
			Losses, illnesses in animals or people.										
			Stuck/Stagnation: empty tray, absence of energy, lying figures, wounded figures, trapped in snare.									+	
PHASE IV Reflection, courage, transformation, emergence of hope	After the struggle of Phase III, self-reflection begins: new calming and reassuring scenes may gradually emerge.	Reflection, transformation	Resources used: from previous phases — food, supplies, animal guides, something magical.				+					+	
			Spiritual resources and symbols, treasures may play a more prominent role.			+	+				+		
			Wise/sacred male or female figures. Handprints may return.			+	+	+				+	
			Helpers: animals or human assistants.				+						
			Journey continues to a new place: moving vehicles, productive movement, energy, construction.					+				+	

"Yukki", 48			Sand Composition										
Phase of the Individuation Process in Sandplay (based on L. R. Freedle)		Symbols	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
			Hope/Transformation: rainbow, butterfly, egg, sand sculptures.						+	+	+		
			Centering: balanced/centered scenes, figures at center, peaceful scenes, Zen garden.			+	+		+	+			
PHASE V Approach to wholeness, divinity, fullness	Deep moment(s) of unification; both client and therapist experience deep contact with the Self; wholeness, transcendence, unity and/or divine presence.	Approach to wholeness	Uniqueness: each person creates a unique self-expression.							+			
			Sacred: shimmer, candles, hands, lace, contact with the divine.										
			Boundlessness, spontaneity, freedom, play based on feelings, timelessness.										
			Wholeness arises naturally: opposites coexist, creating a single unified image.				+		+				
			Deep simplicity, transcendence experienced in a scene that is deeply simple.										
PHASE VI Integration of opposites, emergent relational integration	The reverse path of the heroic journey begins. Meeting the Self may be destabilizing; client again faces former difficulties but with greater inner strength.	Integration of opposites	Conflict/struggle re-emerges: extreme trials, old battles more intense and conscious.										
			"In a new land": on Earth an alien may arrive, or a mermaid may come ashore.										
			Wholeness/Unity: bridges, connections, unification, accord.			+		+					
			Masculine and feminine energies may work together productively and harmoniously.			+		+					
			Emergence: hatching, birth, awakening, new discoveries.						+				
			Opposites come into balance or are reconciled in current life circumstances.							+			
			Connections established between past, present, and future.								+		
PHASE VII Return to everyday life and homecoming with a renewed Self	By the end of the process, or in the final sand scene, the client demonstrates a new perspective or returns home as a renewed Self.	Return home with renewed Self	Return home: home now seems different, (repeated) rejoining with community.										
			New perspective: view of city, self-awareness, new attitude, respect.										
			Wholeness/Unity: a mandala arises naturally, agreement, consensus.										
			Something "departs".										
			"The work is done": completed deed, satisfying conclusion to something.										

Overview of Study Participants

Anonymized name (pseudonym chosen by participant)	Case 1 "Lolita"	Case 2 "Ainura"	Case 3 "Athena "	Case 4 "Agata"	Case 5 "Ekaterina"	Case 6 "Vasilisa"	Case 7 "Larisa"	Case 8 "Ayana"	Case 9 "Yukki"
Age	34	49	43	51	37	50	56	33	48
Circumstances of the father's absence	Parents divorced when "Lolita" was 3. Father has suffered from alcoholism for over 30 years; he is an Afghan War veteran. "Lolita" currently has contact with her father, visits him at his apartment and brings him groceries; she experiences intense ambivalent feelings.	Father played in a professional wind orchestra. He began drinking before he married. Parents divorced due to conflicts over his drinking but continued to live together. Father underwent treatment for alcoholism. When "Ainura" was 3, her father died at a construction site, having failed to wear safety equipment. She remembers how her mother wept bitterly.	She knows her biological father only through what her mother has told her. Her mother has been married three times. Her surname was given by the second stepfather, who adopted "Athena". The relationship with the stepfather was severed when they moved away from the North.	Parents separated due to the father's alcoholism when "Agata" was 3. She has no memory of him except a moment when he visited and she asked him not to leave. According to her mother, the father was well-read, tall, and handsome, and could do anything. Two years ago she was contacted by the regional centre with news that her father had died and that "Agata" was his only relative.	The family remained intact. The father had served time in prison. He drank; during conflicts "Ekaterina" remembers her mother. According to "Ekaterina", her father is the kind of person who does not like to impose himself. There is no habit of calling him as she does with her mother. Her impression is that her father exists somewhere nearby, yet is absent from her life. Now, studying the theme of the father, she looks at her relationship with	Parents divorced early, when "Vasilisa" was 8 months old, due to the father's infidelity. The mother remarried. The mother never spoke about the biological father. At age 7, "Vasilisa" found a wedding photo of her parents. From her grandfather she learned that her stepfather was not her biological father. When she was 8, her mother and stepfather divorced. The mother harboured	Parents separated before "Larisa" was born. At 12, she met her father when he came to live with them. He drank and caused disturbances. She remembers him as an unpleasant stranger, and "Larisa" asked her mother to make him leave. She was jealous of her mother's men. At 16, she went for a walk with her father; she cannot recall what she felt.	The father lived near her and her mother's home. When "Ayana" was 1.5 years old, a stepfather appeared. She has no vivid memories of communicating with her father, but feels love and pity toward him. Her father used psychoactive substances and had served time in prison. When "Ayana" was 14, her father died. Her relationship with her stepfather is very difficult. She thinks of her father as a	Parents lived together for 10 years and divorced when "Yukki" was 3. The father moved to the Far East. She has memories of him tossing her in the air, but also of her mother crying and of a terrible father. In adolescence there was no contact with him. The topic of the father and the divorce was long taboo in the family. Now the father is elderly and "Yukki" corresponds with him and has welcomed him as a guest.

Anonymized name (pseudonym chosen by participant)	Case 1 "Lolita"	Case 2 "Ainura"	Case 3 "Athena "	Case 4 "Agata"	Case 5 "Ekaterina"	Case 6 "Vasilisa"	Case 7 "Larisa"	Case 8 "Ayana"	Case 9 "Yukki"
					him differently when she visits her parents.	many grievances. At 18, "Vasilisa" had her first and only meeting with her father; he helped her find work. She felt mixed emotions: wanting to please her father and feeling ashamed — he was both hers and a stranger.		person with a big soul who would give away his last possession.	
Number of sandboxes	10	7	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Number of verbal sessions / psychodiagnostic assessments	3 / 2	3 / 2	3 / 2	3 / 2	3 / 2	3 / 2	3 / 2	3 / 2	3 / 2
Total session duration	20 weeks	17 weeks	20 weeks	20 weeks	20 weeks	20 weeks	20 weeks	20 weeks	20 weeks
Participant's main goal in the research Sandplay process	Could not leave my father; I want to understand what love for a father is. Interested in Sandplay for myself. Want to explore the	Interested in Sandplay. Would like to explore the theme of difficulty trusting a partner.	Want to take part in science. I am interested. I have no feelings toward my father or stepfather. Would like to look at this in the sandbox.	Interested in the project. Would like to explore myself as a woman and work through the theme of the father — how it affects me. I	Work through the father theme, which most likely affects my relationships.	It is very hard for me to show myself; I don't want to betray myself. I want to change something in my life. I want to work through the	Interested in the research; would like to explore the father theme and how it affects my relationships.	Interested in participating in the research. Wanted to explore the theme of femininity, work through the father theme and	Interested in participating in the research. To gain an experience of exploring the father theme in my life from within. I have complex

Anonymized name (pseudonym chosen by participant)	Case 1 "Lolita"	Case 2 "Ainura"	Case 3 "Athena "	Case 4 "Agata"	Case 5 "Ekaterina"	Case 6 "Vasilisa"	Case 7 "Larisa"	Case 8 "Ayana"	Case 9 "Yukki"
	cause of difficulty building lasting relationships.			want to develop.		story with my father.		fears around not becoming pregnant, since I never had a normal family.	feelings toward my father.
Changes that occurred during sandplay (participants' reflection)	<p>Recently I have become more attentive to my inner states. I have become more honest about feelings that were previously difficult to hold or acknowledge. My attitude toward myself has become gentler and more accepting — more permissive — and a sense of inner stability and groundedness has appeared. Gradually my thinking about the figure of my father has also begun to shift: I now look at this image more fully, not only</p>	<p>Passed my final exam, received professional accreditation, performed at a tango evening — 'these external events feel connected, it seems to me, to my inner masculine and/or paternal functions'.</p> <p>'During the study I broke my leg and had a difficult recovery. It was a trial that made me think about many things.'</p> <p>I now have plans for further professional development. Sandplay therapy helped me make contact with deep processes of my psyche; I think this work is</p>	<p>I do not feel any significant changes in terms of working through the father. Perhaps somewhere at a subconscious level. But overall I am very glad about the work that was done.</p>	<p>These sessions turned out to be very alive and rich for me: after each one there was much reflection and inner resonance. Important personal discoveries took place during the process that could not have been planned in advance.</p> <p>A deeper awareness came that my father's presence during childhood was truly lacking. At the same time an important feeling appeared: I can now turn to</p>	<p>My father has become a more accessible figure in my thoughts about him. He is no longer as distant as he once was. And in reality I have also begun to communicate with him directly and easily. I can now talk with him about almost anything. I discovered, as if for the first time, my world as a woman — unique and extraordinary.</p> <p>And I saw the strength and power of my inner masculine.</p> <p>Communicating with my father became much easier, and it feels as though the male world</p>	<p>A sense of inner grounding appeared, along with confidence; my inner state has become calmer; I have formed an understanding of my goals and directions. Toward the figure of my father, even more tender feelings have emerged, along with the understanding that, although he has been gone for a long time, it is as though he is watching over me and protecting me — as though some invisible care and support is near.</p>	<p>Our work is helping me now to find grounding within myself, not to fall into depression, to be confident that I will manage. I thank you for helping me feel my inner strength and raise my self-esteem.</p> <p>In the autumn, a month after the end of therapy, significant changes occurred in her life: difficulties and redundancy at work, caring for a sick pet, and the reappearance of a man she had parted</p>	<p>I have become very emotional — I don't know whether this is connected to our work, but for some reason I now fiercely defend myself: whereas before it was somehow easier to stay silent, now I simply cannot.</p> <p>With regard to my father, I don't really think about it well toward him. I have simply become more communicative with everyone. Working with sand I noticed that things were moving slowly for me, especially on a</p>	<p>During the research I was in contact with my father. He wrote to say he had bought me a gift (a fur coat and a watch) and sent it by post. I did not make use of either, but the fact itself was significant to me.</p> <p>After exploring the figure of the father, I undertook a course on working with the figure of the mother. This beautifully complemented my perception of relationships with parental</p>

Anonymized name (pseudonym chosen by participant)	Case 1 "Lolita"	Case 2 "Ainura"	Case 3 "Athena "	Case 4 "Agata"	Case 5 "Ekaterina"	Case 6 "Vasilisa"	Case 7 "Larisa"	Case 8 "Ayana"	Case 9 "Yukki"
	<p>through familiar experiences but also through reflection, distance, and the possibility of building a new inner dialogue with this theme.</p> <p>In the external realm, changes became visible in how I present myself socially and professionally. I have grown bolder in showing myself, my ideas, and my work. I was able to start working for myself, take on clients more actively, assert my professional position more confidently, and as a result reach a higher income level. The inner permission to</p>	<p>only beginning.</p>		<p>him inwardly and sense his support and groundedness, even though it was absent in reality.</p> <p>After the sessions ended I noticed greater inner courage and confidence in myself. I began taking real steps forward: in development, in action, in visibility.</p> <p>Whereas before I more often found myself in the position of a child afraid to declare myself, I am now gradually stepping into society and allowing myself to be seen.</p>	<p>and real men around me have become more comprehensible, more familiar — safer, in a way. Engaging with the world became even easier.</p>	<p>In communication I have become more open and can calmly admire the actions and deeds of men. I have become better at distinguishing and understanding men, observing them without projecting my illusions onto them.</p> <p>Most importantly, I realized what abusive relationships I had been living in and how completely I had not set boundaries, and how unsafe my body felt. It is painful to recognize, but now I can move out of it — and more importantly, I understand that I do not want</p>	<p>from three years earlier.</p>	<p>given theme; it was genuinely very hard. I think it is because at heart I am a very closed person — people around me don't seem to realize that, but opening up to others on more personal and deeper topics is still difficult for me.</p> <p>And I also want to add that the entire time I was working in the sand I kept telling you how much I wanted a holiday — and I ended up making that wish come true.</p>	<p>figures.</p> <p>I have strengthened my intention to work with a male therapist. I began searching for 'my' therapist, and the process itself has also become an interesting experience.</p>

Anonymized name (pseudonym chosen by participant)	Case 1 "Lolita"	Case 2 "Ainura"	Case 3 "Athena "	Case 4 "Agata"	Case 5 "Ekaterina"	Case 6 "Vasilisa"	Case 7 "Larisa"	Case 8 "Ayana"	Case 9 "Yukki"
	<p>occupy 'my place' in the profession gave me a sense of expanded possibilities and the right to choose forms of work and interaction that truly suit me.</p>					<p>this anymore and will not return. This cannot be 'unseen'.</p> <p>I want to thank you once again for this wonderful project, where I was able to immerse even more deeply in my thoughts, feelings, and sensations.</p>			

APPENDIX 15

Overview of Raw Scores on the Self-Attitude Inventory (SAI) of Study Participants at the Beginning and Completion of Research Psychotherapy Using the Sandplay Method

No.	Participant	Internal Honesty		Self-Confidence		Self-Guidance		Reflected Self-Attitude		Self-Value		Self-Acceptance		Self-Attachment		Internal Conflict		Self-Blame	
		Raw Score		Raw Score		Raw Score		Raw Score		Raw Score		Raw Score		Raw Score		Raw Score		Raw Score	
		In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out
1	"Lolita"	7	6	10	11	6	8	9	11	12	13	11	10	7	8	7	4	3	2
2	"Ainura"	7	8	13	13	10	6	9	10	13	11	10	10	8	7	0	0	0	2
3	"Athena "	8	10	12	13	10	10	6	8	14	12	12	11	9	9	9	4	3	1
4	"Agata"	7	8	10	10	10	10	11	8	11	14	11	11	6	9	8	4	3	2
5	"Ekaterina"	7	6	13	12	9	10	9	8	14	12	11	10	9	8	1	5	2	5
6	"Vasilisa"	9	9	12	13	9	11	11	11	14	14	10	10	9	10	2	0	0	2
7	"Larisa"	9	9	8	9	7	7	9	7	12	11	8	11	6	6	3	5	2	3
8	"Ayana"	9	8	9	10	7	6	4	7	10	11	11	8	7	6	4	4	1	1
9	"Yukki"	9	10	12	12	10	10	10	9	13	13	11	10	7	8	2	3	3	2

Note: In — score at the beginning of research psychotherapy; Out — score at the end of research psychotherapy.

Overview of the Frequency of Individuation Process Dynamics Indicators Among Research Participants

	Emergence of 'good' internal objects, reduction of projections, strengthening of the Self	Internal and external boundaries	Emergence of larger images, active symbolic function, dreams	More material in analysis, fewer forms of resistance	Emergence of more 'good mother' images	Properties of 'good objects' increasing	Flexibility of thinking, structuring and differentiation occurring	Flexibility of inner ordered regulation, influencing external regulation and reality testing	Quality of self-attitude shows developmental dynamics	New connections and relationships, strengthening of existing ones	Perception of the father image (reflective, emotions accessible)	Improvement of adaptation quality	Sense of life satisfaction	Reflection on the usefulness of participation in the Sandplay process and research
	GIO	FIB	ASF	IM	IGM	EGO	FT	FIR	QSD	NRC	IRF	IQA	SLS	RSS
"Lolita"	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
"Ainura"	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
"Athena "		+	+	+	+	+			+	+		+	+	+
"Agata"	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
"Ekaterina"				+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+	+
"Vasilisa"				+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+
"Larisa"	+	+			+	+	+	+		+		+	+	+
"Ayana"		+			+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+
"Yukki"	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Total (n)	5	6	5	7	9	9	7	5	7	9	7	9	9	9
Share (%)	56%	67%	56%	78%	100%	100%	78%	56%	78%	100%	78%	100%	100%	100%

**OUTLINE OF A PSYCHOTHERAPY PROGRAM FOR WOMEN WITH PATERNAL
DEPRIVATION BASED ON THE SANDPLAY APPROACH**

Compiled by: Master of Psychology
Sheveleva Yelena Vitalievna
Scientific Consultant: Candidate of
Psychological Sciences, Associate
Professor Legostaeva Ekaterina
Sergeevna

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Explanatory Note

In the context of contemporary socio-cultural transformations, there is a persistent trend toward an increase in the number of women with experience of paternal deprivation – the absence or deficiency of the paternal figure at physical, emotional, or symbolic levels. This phenomenon has a significant influence on the formation of personality structure, the processes of separation, self-identification, and the construction of interpersonal relationships.

In the context of analytical psychology, paternal deprivation is associated with a disruption in the formation of the internal image of the Father as the bearer of the principles of order, boundaries, law, and directing will. A deficit of this archetypal component may manifest in: diffuse ego boundaries, difficulties with autonomy, disturbances in relationships with the masculine, and a tendency toward dependent or destructive relational scenarios.

Thus, a need arises to develop psychotherapeutic programs aimed not only at processing traumatic experience but also at forming an inner symbolic resource that compensates for the deficit of the paternal function.

Methodological Basis

The program is grounded in the tenets of analytical psychology, primarily in the following concepts: C. G. Jung's theory of archetypes, the individuation process, and the structure of the psyche; E. Neumann's theory of the development of consciousness and female psychology; M. Woodman's bodily-symbolic aspects of female identity; S. Schwartz's aspects of the trauma of the absent father in the daughter's life; M. Murdock's female individuation, the heroine's journey, healing, and development; D. Kalf's protected and free space of the Sandplay therapy method as a space for the symbolic self-regulation of the psyche.

The methodological foundations include: the principle of psychic self-regulation, the concept of symbol-formation as a mechanism of psychic integration, and the idea of individuation as the process of becoming a whole personality. In this program, Sandplay therapy is viewed as a special therapeutic space in which the unconscious gains the opportunity for expression through the symbol, bypassing protective cognitive structures.

Aim of the Program

To facilitate the process of individuation and the working-through of the emotional trauma of rejection in women with experience of paternal deprivation through the symbolic representation and integration of internal psychic contents in the conditions of Sandplay therapy.

Objectives of the Program

1. Actualization and symbolization of unconscious experiences connected with the image of the father.
2. Diagnostics of the ego structure and the character of ego–world relationships.
3. Identification of deficits connected with a disruption in the formation of the paternal function.
4. Formation and strengthening of the inner center of personality.
5. Research and integration of female identity.
6. Work with the image of the masculine (Animus) and relational scenarios.
7. Integration of shadow aspects of personality.
8. Tracking the dynamics of the symbolic field as an indicator of psychic changes.
9. Development of the capacity for symbolization and reflection.

Target Group

Women with life experience of an absent father (paternal deprivation).

Principles of the Program's Design

For the organization of psychotherapeutic work with women who have experience of an absent father (paternal deprivation), the «Five-Level Model of Research Psychotherapy» is recommended, encompassing social, personal, symbolic, analytical-psychological, and psychotherapeutic levels [99].

This program is structured according to the logic of a gradual unfolding of the psychic process:

1. The Principle of Spontaneity. Free compositions allow the psyche to independently manifest its current contents without directive intervention.

2. The Principle of Alternating Structure and Freedom. Alternating between thematic and free sessions ensures a balance between: directed exploration (the father, the shadow, identity) and the autonomous unfolding of the unconscious.

3. The Principle of Symbolic Dynamics. Changes are assessed not only at the verbal level but also through: the transformation of images, the spatial organization of the sandplay field, and the emergence of symbols of wholeness.

4. The Principle of the Individuation Vector. Each session is embedded in the process of movement from fragmentation to differentiation, then toward integration and wholeness.

Organizational Conditions

A Sandplay therapy office equipped to the standards of D. Kalff and the analytical psychology setting: an extensive collection of miniature figurines and two sandboxes (with wet or dry sand). For group work, rectangular sandboxes painted blue on the inside are required, one per participant (no more than 6 participants recommended, to ensure the psychological containment of each participant's process).

Methods and Forms of Work

Methods: Sandplay therapy, clinical interview, symbolic analysis, comparative analysis of compositional dynamics, SAI psychodiagnostics, written and photo documentation of sandboxes and post-graphics of sand compositions, deferred interpretation, study of narrative stories from sand compositions, the method of associations and amplifications. Forms: individual work (primary), group work.

Program Structure

The program includes a minimum of 15 sessions at a frequency of once per week (meeting the requirements of short-term programs), organized into three functional blocks:

I. Diagnostic-Initiating Block (Sessions 1–3): interview, initial analytical session, Self-Attitude Inventory (SAI), interview, anamnestic data collection, initial free sand composition. Goals of the block: identification of the initial psychic configuration (observation of the manifestation of the father theme, the structure of the self and the world).

II. Transformational Block (Sessions 4–12): dynamic free compositions and thematic compositions (see Table). Goals of the block: initiation and accompaniment of the process of

psychic transformation (work with identity, work with the image of the father and the Animus, integration of the shadow).

III. Integrative-Reflective Block (Sessions 13–15): final composition, analytical verbal session, review of photographs of sand compositions, repeat self-attitude assessment (SAI), deferred analytical session for reflection on the dynamics of the Sandplay therapy process. Goals of the block: observation and recording of changes achieved, and their meaning-making.

Table 1
Thematic Session Plan

Session	Session Title	Session Goals	Content	Sample Reflection Questions
0	Initial screening interview with the therapy candidate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishing therapeutic contact. ● Collecting anamnestic data. ● Identifying the participant's request. ● Initial assessment of emotional state and features of the relationship with the paternal figure. 	<p>Unstructured interview.</p> <p>Discussion of life history and current request.</p> <p>Exploration of family context and experience of the relationship with the father.</p> <p>Introduction to the programme format and working principles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>What brought you to this programme?</i> – <i>How would you describe your relationship with your father?</i> – <i>What did you feel was missing in that relationship?</i> – <i>What in your life would you like to rely on now?</i> – <i>What changes would be important to you?</i>
1	Initial analytical verbal session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deepening therapeutic contact. ● Activating emotionally significant experiences. ● Exploring the inner self-image and relationships with others. ● Preparation for symbolic work in the sandplay process. 	<p>Analytical conversation.</p> <p>Exploration of current life difficulties.</p> <p>Discussion of recurring emotional patterns and relational scenarios.</p> <p>Initial reflection on experiences related to the absent father.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Which topics in your life are most painful right now? – Which relationships most frequently bring you tension or disappointment? – How do you usually experience the feeling of support — or its absence? – What does 'inner grounding' mean to you? – How do you feel when you are around other people?
2	Exploration of self-attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exploring the structure of the participant's self-attitude. ● Identifying features of self-acceptance and self-worth. ● Diagnosing inner conflicts and the level of inner coherence. ● Obtaining baseline diagnostic data for tracking the dynamics of change. 	<p>Administration of the Self-Attitude Research Inventory (SARI).</p> <p>Instructions and support during completion.</p> <p>Initial discussion of the participant's subjective impressions.</p> <p>Recording emotional reactions during the diagnostic process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Which questions resonated most strongly with you? – What was unexpected during the process of completing the inventory? – How easy was it for you to answer honestly? – What feelings arose in relation to yourself while completing the task? – What do you notice now about your attitude toward yourself?
3	Sand Composition 1: Free theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creating conditions for spontaneous symbolic self-expression. ● Initial assessment of the structure of the psychic field. ● Identifying current emotional and unconscious contents. 	<p>Creation of a free sand composition.</p> <p>Instruction: Build any sand world / composition prompted by your imagination.</p> <p>Non-verbal work with sand and miniatures.</p> <p>Observation of the process of selecting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What do you feel now, looking at your composition? – Is there a place in it that particularly draws your attention? – Which part of the composition seems most important to you? – What is happening in this space?

Session	Session Title	Session Goals	Content	Sample Reflection Questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observing features of organization, boundaries, and the center of the composition. 	<p>and placing figures.</p> <p>Brief analytical reflection after completing the composition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If this composition had a title, what would it be?
4	<p>Sand Composition 2: «My Father»</p> <p>Instruction: Build any sand world / composition that could be called «My Father».</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activating the inner image of the father. ● Exploring the emotional experience associated with the paternal figure. ● Identifying deficits, conflicts, and defensive experiences. ● Creating conditions for the symbolization of experiences related to paternal deprivation. 	<p>Creation of the thematic sand composition «My Father».</p> <p>Instruction: Build any sand world / composition that could be called «My Father».</p> <p>Work with symbolic images of the masculine and paternal.</p> <p>Observation of spatial organization and interaction of figures.</p> <p>Analytical reflection on the composition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How is the father represented in this composition? – What place does he occupy in this space? – What do you feel alongside this image? – Is there distance, tension, or connection in the composition? – What seems most important to you in this picture?
5	<p>Sand Composition 3: «Myself and My World»</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exploring the perception of oneself within the system of relationships with the world. ● Identifying features of psychological boundaries and the sense of safety. ● Diagnosing the level of autonomy and inner stability. ● Analyzing the position of the Self in the symbolic space of the composition. 	<p>Creation of the thematic sand composition «Myself and My World».</p> <p>Further instructions follow the pattern of compositions 1 and 2.</p> <p>Work with images of space, boundaries, and interaction.</p> <p>Observation of the placement of central and peripheral elements.</p> <p>Analytical reflection on the created composition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Where are you in this composition? – How do you feel in this world? – Is there a place of safety or grounding here? – What relationships arise between you and the surrounding space? – What seems most significant to you in this composition?
6	<p>Sand Composition 4: Free theme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting the spontaneous unfolding of the psychic process. ● Tracking the dynamics of the symbolic field. ● Identifying current unconscious themes and experiences. ● Observing changes in the organization of the composition and the level of integration. 	<p>Creation of a free sand composition.</p> <p>Non-verbal work with sand and miniatures.</p> <p>Observation of the process of symbol formation and image selection.</p> <p>Analytical reflection on the composition and the participant's emotional state.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What is happening in this composition right now? – What feelings does this picture evoke in you? – Is there a place that seems especially important? – What has changed compared to the previous compositions? – What title would you give to this work?
7	Sand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exploring the image of 	Creation of the thematic sand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How do you see yourself as a woman in this

Session	Session Title	Session Goals	Content	Sample Reflection Questions
	Composition 5: «I Am a Woman»	<p>feminine identity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activating perceptions of oneself as a woman. ● Identifying inner conflicts related to the feminine role and self-worth. ● Supporting the processes of acceptance and integration of the feminine aspect of personality. 	<p>composition «I Am a Woman».</p> <p>Work with symbolic images of the feminine, embodiment, and self-attitude.</p> <p>Observation of emotional and spatial features of the composition.</p> <p>Analytical reflection on experiences and meanings related to the image of woman.</p>	<p>composition?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What feelings does this image evoke in you? – Is there a sense of strength, vulnerability, or wholeness in the composition? – What in this space is connected to your feminine aspect? – What would you especially like to notice or carry forward from this work?
8	Sand Composition 6: Free theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting the autonomous symbolic process. ● Identifying current inner changes and experiences. ● Observing the dynamics of integration of psychic contents. ● Tracking changes in the structure, boundaries, and center of the composition. 	<p>Creation of a free sand composition.</p> <p>Spontaneous work with sand and miniatures.</p> <p>Observation of features of the symbolic field and the interaction of images.</p> <p>Analytical reflection on the composition and the participant's emotional state.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What is most vividly felt in this composition right now? – Which images seem central to you? – Is there anything new or unexpected in this work? – How do you perceive the space of this composition? – What might this picture be saying about your inner state?
9	Sand Composition 7: «Myself and the World of Men»	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exploring the perception of the male world and relationships with men. ● Identifying inner attitudes, expectations, and conflicts related to male images. ● Analyzing features of interaction with the masculine principle (Animus). ● Supporting the formation of a more differentiated perception of the masculine. 	<p>Creation of the thematic sand composition «Myself and the World of Men».</p> <p>Work with symbolic images of the masculine and interpersonal relationships.</p> <p>Observation of spatial organization and interaction of figures.</p> <p>Analytical reflection on the composition and emerging experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How is the world of men represented in this composition? – What place do you occupy within it? – Is there a sense of contact, distance, or tension here? – What feelings arise alongside the masculine images? – What does this composition tell you about your relationship with the male world?
10	Sand Composition 8: Free theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting the spontaneous symbolization process. ● Tracking the current dynamics of the psychic state. ● Identifying signs of integration and inner stability. 	<p>Creation of a free sand composition.</p> <p>Independent selection of images and narratives.</p> <p>Observation of features of spatial organization and symbol interaction.</p> <p>Analytical reflection on the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What is most important to you in this composition right now? – Which images or figures particularly draw your attention? – Is there a sense of change in the composition compared to previous works?

Session	Session Title	Session Goals	Content	Sample Reflection Questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observing changes in the symbolic field and structure of the composition. 	composition and the participant's emotional response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How do you feel within this space? – What might this composition be saying about your inner process right now?
11	Sand Composition 9: «My Shadow: what I have not yet dared to create in the sandbox / to tell»	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activating repressed and shadow aspects of personality. ● Creating a safe space for the symbolic expression of difficult experiences. ● Exploring suppressed feelings, fears, and inner conflicts. ● Supporting the processes of acceptance and integration of shadow contents. 	<p>Creation of the thematic sand composition «My Shadow».</p> <p>Work with symbols of hidden, rejected, and unconscious experience.</p> <p>Observation of emotional reactions and features of the symbolic field.</p> <p>Analytical reflection on the composition and emerging meanings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What in this composition seems most difficult or unfamiliar to you? – Is there something here that you previously wanted to conceal or not notice? – What feelings arise alongside these images? – What does this part of your story want to show or tell? – What changes when you allow it to be seen?
12	Sand Composition 10: Free theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final reflection of the inner state and dynamics of change. ● Identifying signs of integration and wholeness of the psychic field. ● Comparing initial and final symbolic images. ● Supporting awareness of the inner journey undertaken. 	<p>Creation of the final free sand composition.</p> <p>Spontaneous work with sand and miniatures.</p> <p>Comparative analysis of the dynamics of symbolic images and composition structure.</p> <p>Analytical reflection on the overall experience of participation in the programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What do you notice in this composition compared to your very first work? – How does your inner space feel right now? – Is there a place of grounding, center, or stability in the composition? – What changes do you notice in yourself over the course of the programme? – What would you like to take with you from this experience going forward?
13	Repeated assessment of self-attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repeated assessment of the structure of the participant's self-attitude. ● Identifying the dynamics of changes in self-perception and self-worth. ● Comparing initial and final diagnostic data. ● Reflecting on the personal changes that occurred during the programme. 	<p>Re-administration of the Self-Attitude Research Inventory (SARI).</p> <p>Comparative analysis of baseline and follow-up results.</p> <p>Discussion of subjective perception of changes.</p> <p>Analytical reflection on the experience of participation in the programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What has changed in your perception of yourself over the course of the programme? – What inner changes do you notice now? – What has become more stable or clear for you? – How has your attitude toward yourself changed? – What do you feel when you look back on the journey you have taken?
14	Analytical reflective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integrating the experience 	Viewing and sequential analysis of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What do you notice now as you look through the

Session	Session Title	Session Goals	Content	Sample Reflection Questions
	closing session	<p>gained during the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflecting on the dynamics of inner changes and individuation processes. ● Comparing symbolic and diagnostic data. ● Completing the therapeutic process and recording personal changes. 	<p>photographs of all sand compositions. Comparison of baseline and follow-up Self-Attitude Inventory (SARI) results. Discussion of the dynamics of the symbolic field, key images, and themes. Final analytical reflection on the overall experience of participation in the programme.</p>	<p>entire journey of your compositions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Which changes seem most significant to you? – Which images or themes accompanied you throughout the entire work? – What has changed in your relationship to yourself and to your story? – What do you conclude this process with, and what do you wish to carry forward?
15	Secondary delayed reflective final session (2–3 months after completion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assessing the sustainability of the changes achieved. ● Analyzing the integration of the therapeutic experience into daily life. ● Identifying the participant's current emotional and personal state. ● Reflecting on the further direction of inner development. 	<p>Analytical conversation about the post-therapeutic experience. Reflection on changes in self-attitude, relationships, and inner state. Discussion of symbolic themes that have been retained or transformed. Final reflection on the significance of the programme for the participant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What proved most significant from the programme experience, looking back? – Which changes have persisted in your life and self-perception? – What do you notice now in your relationships with yourself and others? – Is there a sense of inner grounding or stability? – How do you see your path forward after completing the programme?

Expected Results

As a result of completing the program, the following individuation changes are anticipated:

- At the level of personality structure: strengthening of ego boundaries; formation of an inner center; increased autonomy; dynamics in the quality of self-attitude.
- At the level of the symbolic field: transition from chaotic to organized compositions; emergence of archetypal symbols of wholeness; greater complexity of symbolic representation.
- At the level of relationships: transformation of the inner image of the father/paternal principle; formation of a more mature image of the masculine; change in relational scenarios.

Criteria of Program Effectiveness

Assessment of the program's effectiveness is carried out based on qualitative analysis of the dynamics of psychic changes manifested in the symbolic field of sandplay compositions, participants' verbal reflection, and changes in the structure of self-attitude.

Effectiveness criteria are considered as a set of interrelated indicators reflecting the process of individuation, the degree of integration of inner psychic contents, and the transformation of the father image in women with experience of paternal deprivation.

1. **Criteria of Symbolic Field Dynamics.** The effectiveness of the program is determined through changes in the structure and content of sand compositions:

- transition from chaotic, fragmented compositions to more organized and structured ones;
- emergence of a center of the composition;
- strengthening of connectivity between elements;
- formation of spatial boundaries;
- reduction of voids, isolation, and destroyed zones;
- emergence of symbols of integration, path, home, circle, mandala, bridge, tree, water as signs of unfolding individuation processes.

2. **Criteria of the Transformation of the Father Image.** The program is considered effective when changes in the internal father image are present, manifested in:

- reduced intensity of images of absence, threat, or destruction;
- decreased idealization or total devaluation;
- emergence of a more differentiated and realistic perception of the masculine image;

- formation of symbols of support, structure, protection, and stability.

3. **Criteria of Ego Development and Individuation Processes.** Significant criteria include:

- strengthening of autonomy and subject position;
- increased capacity for symbolization and reflection;
- formation of more stable psychological boundaries;
- reduced identity diffuseness;
- emergence of signs of ego-orientation, inner center, ego-Self axis;
- integration of previously repressed or shadow aspects of personality.

4. **Emotional-Reflective Criteria.** Positive dynamics is determined through:

- reduction of the level of inner anxiety;
- decreased experience of inner emptiness;
- expansion of the emotional range;
- increased capacity for meaning-making of one's own experience;
- greater coherence and consistency of personal narrative.

5. **Behavioral and Interpersonal Criteria.** Effectiveness criteria also include:

- change in the character of relationships with men;
- reduction of dependent or destructive relational scenarios;
- increased capacity for establishing boundaries;
- strengthening of a sense of inner support and stability in interpersonal interaction.

6. **Criteria of Dynamic Process Analysis.** The effectiveness of the program is assessed not only by the final result but also by the character of the dynamics during the therapeutic process. For assessing dynamics, a comparative analysis of a series of sand compositions is used, including the first diagnostic and the final free composition:

- emergence of new symbolic themes;
- greater complexity of compositional structure;

- increased variability of images;
- the psyche's capacity for spontaneous symbol-formation.

7. **Integral Criterion of Effectiveness.** The integral criterion of the program's effectiveness is the formation of a more holistic inner organization of personality, manifested in:

- the presence of an inner symbolic center;
- strengthened capacity for self-regulation;
- greater coherence of the self-image;
- reduced influence of patterns connected with the experience of the absent father.

Of particular significance is the dynamic of transition: from fragmentation to differentiation, then to integration and wholeness.

The main criterion is the woman's development of an inner capacity to hold herself, her feelings, her boundaries, and her own life path without a constant search for external support.

Table 2
Indicators of Individuation Processes in Sandplay Compositions

Sandplay Session	Psychological Indicators	Codes — Signs of Paternal Trauma / Integration	Symbolic Markers in the Sand Composition of Paternal Deprivation / Integration
Free composition	Initial state of the psyche	Fragmentation; absence of center; anxious background / greater structure	Chaos, empty spaces; scattered figures; absence of an axis
«My Father»	Activation of the father complex	Idealization, devaluation; anger; emptiness; distance	Distant figures; broken/destroyed images; absence of the father figure
«Myself and My World»	Position of the Self in the system of relationships	Boundary diffusion; dependence; isolation	Self at the periphery or in a corner; overloaded or empty space
Free composition	Beginning of inner dynamics	Emergence of a center; first connections; reduction of chaos	Grouping of figures; hints of structure; lines / roads
«I Am a Woman»	Formation of feminine identity	Splitting / embodiment; self-worth	Female figures; water; mirrors; dual images
Free composition	Autonomy of the psychic process	Spontaneous themes; new symbols	Unexpected scenes; increasing complexity of composition
«Myself and the World of Men»	Work with the Animus	Destructive / idealized Animus; dependence	Conflict scenes; dominant male figures
Free composition	Deepening integration	Coherence; stability; reduction of anxiety	Center; symmetry; stable structures
«My Shadow»	Integration of the repressed	Aggression; fear; shame / reflection	Dark zones; monsters; subterranean elements
Final composition (free theme)	Wholeness / Self	Integration; centeredness; balance	Mandala; center; harmonious structure
Final analytical meeting — review of photographs	Reflective integration	Sense-making; new identity; subjecthood	Verbalization, reflection, comparison of compositions

Methods of Diagnostics and Interpretation

Self-Attitude Inventory (SAI) at the beginning and completion of the program.

Analysis of the first sandbox as material for the discovery and observation of symbols of absent-father trauma, the presence and intensity of inner conflict, and the presence of symbols of obstacles to development and prospective tasks of individuation processes.

Systematic analysis of a series of sand compositions using observation of the dynamics of individuation processes with the Checklist for Registering Sandplay Symbols of Individuation Processes.

Interpretation of the material is based on the analytical Jungian principles of working with the symbol according to C. G. Jung, M.-L. von Franz, and V. Kast, and on the criteria for analyzing sand compositions according to E. Weinrib, M. Kalff, J. Grubbs, and B. Turner.

Limitations of the Program

The proposed program has a number of methodological and practical limitations that must be considered when applying it and interpreting its results.

First, the effectiveness of the program depends to a considerable degree on the level of professional training of the specialist in analytical psychology and Sandplay therapy. Working with symbolic material requires not only technical mastery of the method but also the capacity for phenomenological observation, maintenance of the analytical position, and understanding of the archetypal dynamics of the psyche. With insufficient preparation, there is a risk of reducing the symbolic process to superficial interpretation or directive intervention.

Second, the program is oriented primarily toward qualitative analysis of psychic dynamics, which limits the possibilities for rigorous quantitative verification of results. Changes are recorded through the transformation of symbolic images, the spatial organization of sand compositions, emotional-semantic themes, and the level of reflection, which implies the presence of a subjective research component.

Third, the process of psychic transformation in Sandplay therapy is non-linear in character. Participants may demonstrate varying speeds of passing through the stages of differentiation, integration, and meaning-making of experience. In certain cases, regressive states, heightened anxiety, or temporary disorganization of inner material are possible, requiring caution in accompanying the process.

Furthermore, the program is not universal and cannot be considered a sufficient form of assistance in the presence of pronounced mental disorders, acute crisis states, or severe traumatization without additional clinical support.

The cultural-symbolic specificity of the material should also be taken into account: interpretation of sand compositions is grounded in the analytical-psychological approach and may vary depending on the socio-cultural context, the personal experience of the participant, and the system of symbolic meanings.

Finally, a limitation of the program is its relatively short duration of the structured cycle. Despite the possibility of recording significant changes in the dynamics of the symbolic field and individuation processes, the deep transformation of the father image, female identity, and the inner structure of the Self may require longer analytical work.