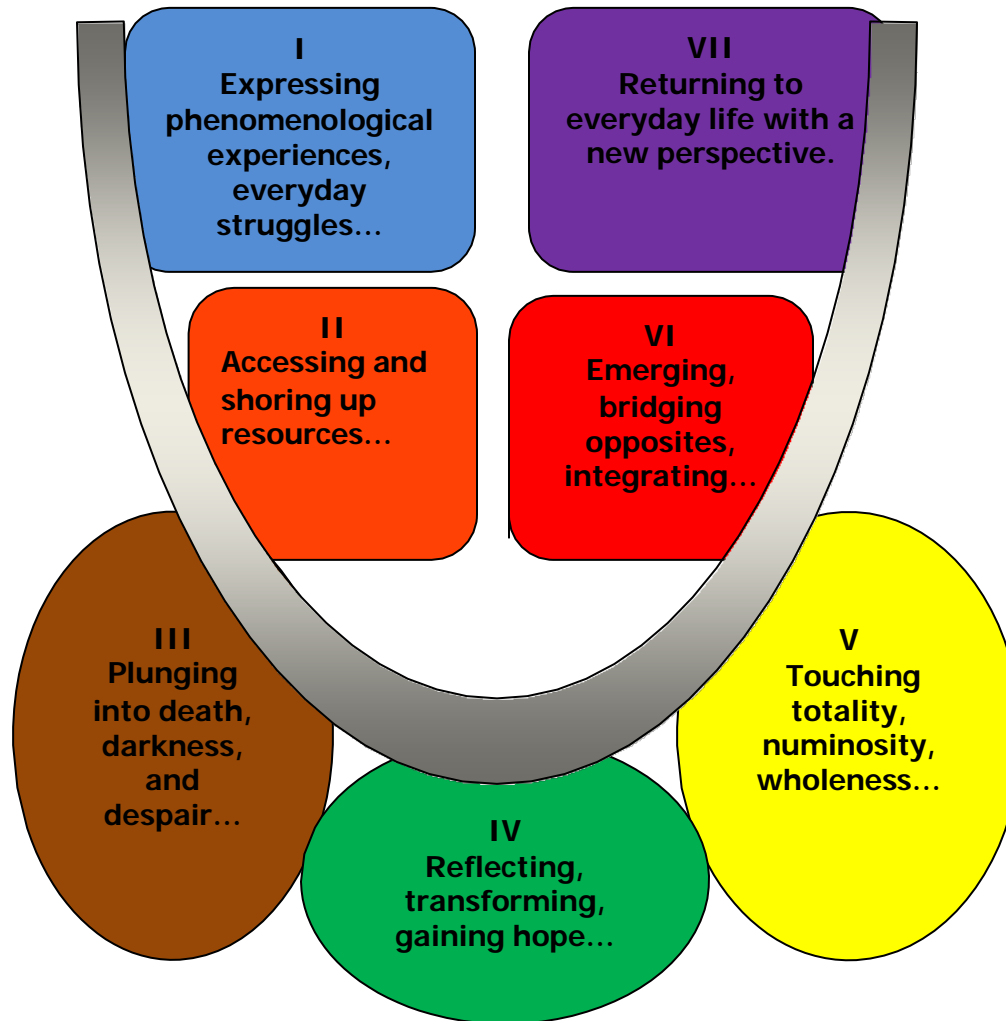


# The Seven Phases of Sandplay Therapy

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## The Seven Phases of Sandplay Therapy

Freedle (2006) discovered seven phases of psychological development that emerged from the sandplay processes of adults with traumatic brain injury. Findings suggested that psychological development is stimulated by the multisensory aspects of sandplay in the presence of the attuned sandplay therapist and progresses through seven phases:

- I. Expressing phenomenological experiences and everyday struggles
- II. Accessing and shoring up resources
- III. Plunging into death, darkness, and despair
- IV. Reflecting, transforming, gaining hope
- V. Touching totality, numinosity, wholeness
- VI. Emerging, bridging opposites, integrating
- VII. Returning to everyday life with a new perspective

The seven phases of sandplay therapy:

- were generally sequential, but not linear
- involved some overlap and revisiting of phases before movement to the next phase.

## Campbell's Hero's Journey

The seven phases of sandplay therapy resembled the archetypal hero's journey as described by Joseph Campbell wherein a hero answers the call of adventure, departs from everyday life, experiences protective power, goes through the trials of initiation, touches the energy source of life, and eventually returns with the freedom to experience life as it *is*.

## Jung's Theory of Individuation

The seven phase of sandplay therapy were consistent with Jung's theory of individuation wherein individuals experience successive encounters with unconscious material, confront the shadow, expand consciousness, encounter the Self, reconcile opposites, and assimilate experiences to bring forth wholeness of personality. Jung emphasized the *process* of development inherent in this universal journey of the spirit over an endpoint.

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