

**1. What's your name and where do you live?**

My name is Mary Jean Nave and I live in southern middle Tennessee in a little town called Minor Hill. My former principal used to quip that we were 3 beer joints from the Alabama state line!

I started my career as a first grade teacher in 1984-85 school year. My Master's degree is in Elementary Guidance- later changed to School Counseling. I taught first and then third grade for 15 years and then I started the position of School Counselor at my school. That was during the 1999-2000 school year. I decided to go back to school and pursue my Education Specialist degree in 2011. My degree is in Culture, Cognition, and the Learning Process. It was through this degree that I became fascinated with Neuroscience and how the brain learns/ processes information. It completely changed my approach to School Counseling!

**2. How did you learn about/start doing sandtray?**

I became interested in SandTray Therapy after hearing about it at SCALI (School Counselor and Administrator Institute) one year, but it was foreign to me and I tucked it away in my mind. During the Christmas break of 2016, my granddaughter came over with some kinetic sand she had gotten at Walmart. I had never felt kinetic sand before. It was so satisfying to touch! I started thinking about the SandTray information from the SCALI a few years back and started researching online. I stumbled across the Southern SandTray Institute and joined the SandTray Suite. I contacted my county's Coordinated School Health Coordinator about possibly getting me a starter set for SandTray and she said "Yes!" While I waited for her to do that, I ordered the books Amy recommended and started studying them. I bought some playground sand and a few miniatures and started trying it out. Later I expanded my sandtray materials until I got where I am today!

**3. What makes sandtray a good fit for your school setting?**

I started using Sandtray with a few students who had trauma in their past especially students in DCS custody. I had my kinetic sand in a tub at the front of my room and I noticed that my 7 & 8 grade students couldn't keep their hands out of it. I decided that I needed to expand so that more students could benefit from sand. After I attended RIST in May 2018, I started devising a way to have whole class sandtrays. Students are under so much pressure these days. They do not know how to de-stress and self-regulate. I have taught them 4,7,8 Breathing for several years, but they needed more. I started using the sand to help with this.

**4. Tell us about the most effective way you've found to use sandtray in the school setting?**

At the end of lessons when we have extra time, I pass out the specialty sand trays for students to relax before going back to class. I have kinetic sand, kinetic beach sand, and Sands Alive sands in these small trays. I also use some round crawfish trays I got for about \$2.00 each for partner trays. These have various Jurassic sands in them- Traditional, Stardust, Pink Amethyst, Riverbed, and Mojave Desert. We use these with tools (such as funnels, sifters, measuring cups, and combs), Mandala trays with stones etc., and Greatness Sticks and miniatures. I also have a sand tray area this year with my large tray and 2 round tray tables as well as my miniatures. I use this area with individuals still.

**5. How have you had to adapt sandtray for schools?**

I do not do “therapy” per se. I teach the students to use the sand to learn to regulate their emotions and to devise calming techniques. I look for themes and areas of concern in their trays. As they do trays with me, I notice improvements in their feelings, coping skills etc. If there are themes that are cause for concern, I refer the student for counseling with Health Connect Counselors (who can meet with them at school or in the office in town either one.) The counselor who comes to school and I work together well. We collaborate with several students.

**6. Do you feel that sandtray is a good fit for schools?**

I do think it is a good fit. I’m not going to lie, it is a lot of trouble. I have to clean up a lot of sand because the students do spill some even though they are being careful. But the good far outweighs the bad. The students love using the sand. They ask whether we get to use it every time they come for Guidance class. I have so many self-referrals for SandTray that I can’t get to them all. I have had to be very creative in scheduling students to come see me. I see 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders from 7:45-8:15 most mornings because their teachers see the value in what I’m doing and allow them to miss a little of their academic time to do it. I see students during their Specialty times with the permission of the other Specialty teachers of course. And I see students during their recess time if they have self-referred.

I have found that sandtray is a great way to do conflict resolution between students. I have them pick minis to show how they feel, how they see the problem, what they wish the other person knew, how they think we could “fix” the problem, and what they will commit to try. We discuss as they pick the minis one at a time. This allows students to process the problem without the blaming that comes from just talking. They can see the other person’s point of view.

**7. Bonus!**

See the video!