

Bibliotherapy Revisited Issues In Classroom Management



**Developing Teachers' Awareness and Techniques to Help Children
Cope Effectively With Stressful Situations**

Marilyn N. Malloy Jackson

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Children Cope Effectively With Stressful Situations

by
Marilyn N. Malloy Jackson



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Dedication To

**TONI
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and
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Professor Goniwiecha reflected on his early childhood years as he read the text and made the following comments: “I appreciate your bibliotherapy examples: *My Grandpa Died Today*, *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*, *I Am Adopted*, *On Mother’s Lap*, and so on. I believe my earliest memory is of me sitting on my mother’s lap, with my older siblings (as the sixth of 16 children) sitting around on the floor, listening to Mom read from a book of Bible stories retold for children. I must have been from two-to-four years old. Thus, reading played an important role for me from the very beginning. I guess I was very lucky to have had a relatively carefree childhood.” These are very passionate and endearing comments that show such great interest in the area of bibliotherapy.

Mr. Goniwiecha is professor of library science, coordinator of reference and instruction services at the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Library, Learning Resources at the University of Guam, since 1988 to the present. Previously, he was employed at the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks (1983-88). He has taught various library science courses, including young adult literature classes. Thus, his suggestions, additions, examples and ideas were extremely very significant.

I also wish to express my appreciation to Professor Brian L. Millhoff, of Instructional Media at Learning Resources – University of Guam, for being accessible for his technical and production assistance in executing the final production of this book. And, to Toni Jackson, my creative daughter, who drew several really cool pencil illustrations with a Guam flavor. It is my hope that *Bibliotherapy Revisited: Issues in Classroom Management*, will be of benefit to students, parents, teachers, professors, and individuals who work with young children and adolescence.

**Dr. Marilyn Malloy Jackson, Professor
Early Childhood/Elementary Education**



The Author

MARILYN N. MALLOY JACKSON began her teaching career in 1970, on the island of Guam, where she has taught for 17 years with the Guam Public School System (GPSS). Her experiences at the GPSS covered a wide range of areas such as Special Needs, Gifted and Talented, Math and Reading Specialist, Primary Students “at risk,” and working with several elementary grades in the regular classroom.

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She has trained and prepared Guam and the Pacific Region with hundreds of teachers who are especially able to teach preschool and primary grade children K-3rd along with many child care directors and care providers in a variety of multicultural, multilingual environments. She understands the needs of young children and provides ongoing technical

assistance and professional development for educators and teachers who work in early education programs.

Dr. Jackson earned both a B.A. and M.A. degree from the University of Guam and her Doctorate from the University of Oregon at Eugene. Her passion has always been emergent reading and literacy development, Children's Literature, and writing local Culturally Responsive Books for young children. Also, she is the School of Education founder and major advisor since 1995, for the University of Guam Association for Childhood Education International student organization. She has a great interest in parental concerns about meeting the needs for quality and sound programs for young children and their families.

Also by Marilyn N. Malloy Jackson

- *Mother Goose on the Loose in Guam: A Chamorro Adaptation of Traditional Nursery Rhymes*
- *Mother Goose on the Loose in Guam: A Chamorro Adaptation of Tradition Fairy Tales*
- *Pathway to Collaboration: Mentoring Plans for New Teachers in the Guam Public School System*
- *Improving Transition to the Classroom: An Overview and Reflections from the First New Teachers Mini Conference*
- *A Guide for Chuukese Parents on Child Development*
- *LANGUAGEarts: An Original Collection of Teaching Activities Developed by Teachers in Truk*
- *A Historical Critique: A Turning Point in the History of Guam Between 1671-1698*
- *Montessori on Guam: A Historical Development of a Controversy*
- *Literature to Help Children Cope: An Intervention in Children's Stress*
- *Perceived Problems and Support of New Teachers in the Guam Public School System*

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Bibliotherapy Revisited

Issues In Classroom Management

Developing Teachers' Awareness and Techniques to Help Children Cope Effectively With Stressful Situations

PREFACE

Are teachers aware of the stress in their classrooms? Do teachers plan for stress control? Educators need to understand why stress is a part of classroom life and how it affects the teacher-student relationship. Stress in childhood is an issue in classroom management.

Bibliotherapy can be an intervention in stress management through books. The use of appropriate reading material to help solve emotional problems and to promote mental health is known as bibliotherapy. Children's books can provide a special medium for therapeutic purposes.

All teachers have one thing in common; at one time or another they have experienced a child with a difficult or life threatening situation – death of a loved person or pet, divorce, financial stress, imprisonment of a family member, natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, typhoons, natural tragedies such as school shootings, terrorists bombings and the recent war with Iraq.

Every year, about four million American children are exposed to traumatic events (Schwartz & Perry, 1994). Young children do not have the life experiences or cognitive development to understand these events or grieve them as adults do (Christian, 1997).

It is not the goal of school to eliminate stress in the lives of children, but rather to manage and help children to handle childhood traumas and stressful problems and situations that may arise. Learning about the nature of stress by acquiring a better understanding of what stress is and how it affects the body, we, as teachers, can learn to manage stress effectively in our lives and in our classrooms.

Bibliotherapy Revisited

Issues in Classroom Management

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Introduction

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated the American gulf coast, leaving hundreds of thousands of people homeless and without food, water, shelter, and clothing. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of men, women, and children perished. The human and material consequences of this disaster are still being assessed, but it is believed that this disaster will be considered the most monumental natural disaster in American history (Frost, 2005).

In many respects, the damage and human suffering from Hurricane Katrina are similar to the 2004, South Asian tsunami. This massive disaster resulted in the loss of parents, homes, schools, and personal belongs for tens of thousands of children in South Asia who struggle to cope with its devastating effects. The Holocaust and the ongoing African uprisings and concurrent AIDS epidemic have subjected children to as much pain, misery, and loss on such an epic scale (Grossfeld, 1996).

Each year, young children are victims of maltreatment; physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, as well as neglect. In many cases, children are the victims of more than one type of maltreatment (Tucker, Brady, Harris, & Fraser, 1993). There are no words to adequately describe some disasters and their effects on children, whether they are natural, as with disease, tsunamis, earthquakes, typhoons, or hurricanes; or national tragedies like school shootings, the Oklahoma City bombing, the 9-11 terrorist attacks, or the recent war with Iraq.

Every year, about four million American children are exposed

to traumatic events (Schwartz & Perry, 1994). Incidents of children experiencing stress are not necessarily more limited than those of adults. Young children do not have the life experiences or cognitive development to understand these events or grieve them as adults do (Christian, 1997).

Children may develop posttraumatic stress disorder, as a result, leaving them vulnerable to phobias, behavioral difficulties, anxiety disorders, depression, and other neuropsychiatric disorders (Lowenthal, 1999). Today we are all “at risk.” The term “at risk” may encompass a vast majority of children who have been exposed, directly or indirectly, to violent trauma.

Too many young children are growing up and going to school with a wide range of problems associated with situations that not only fail to promote healthy development, but may leave them with long-term severe problems.

The purpose of this book is to help the classroom teacher of young children come to an understanding of stress and childhood traumas. Not to investigate stress, but to provide a guide and design hands on hands activities or lessons, and materials for discussion so that the teacher can plan for stress management in classroom situations. Being aware of stress is the first step in preventing or controlling it.



A conceptual understanding of the ideas is valuable. As concerned professionals, we need to understand why childhood traumas, stressful events and situations are a part of classroom life and how it affects the teacher-student relationship. Many school-age children are subject to school-related stressors such as failing grades, overly demanding classroom environments, athletic requirements, peer relationships, tests, and conflicts with teachers (Jewett, 1997; Romano, 1997; Scherer, 1996; Sears & Milburn, 1990).

What Is Bibliotherapy?

After lunch, Mr. Cruz was reading aloud to his third-graders, *“The Meanest Thing to Say,”* by Bill Cosby (1997), when all of a sudden, John raised his hand. He enthusiastically exclaimed, “I’m going to try that the next time my brother calls me a name. I think by saying that I will get him to stop.” John *identified* with the literary character in the story and discovered a new solution to his challenging problem. Identification and insight (see more on page 34) that John received from the literary character result from the use of appropriate reading material. This process to help children solve emotional, complex problems and to promote mental health is known as bibliotherapy.

Identification may go beyond personal characterization to include others in the story and the child’s own life. Second, a child who *identifies* with a fictional character may imitate that character. When the real persons in the child’s life do not provide appropriate models, fictional characters may. The third, important advantage of reading as a form of intervention is that the child is in control. He can choose not to continue, or to continue at a pace appropriate to his feelings. Bibliotherapy involves a child reading about a character who successfully resolves a problem similar to the one the child is experiencing. Using reading material to help solve emotional problems and to promote mental health is bibliotherapy.

Bibliotherapy is:

“The employment of books and the reading of them in the treatment of nervous disease.” Dorland’s Medical Dictionary 1941

“The use of selected reading material as therapeutic in medicine and psychiatry;” also, “Guidance in the solution of personal problems through directed reading.”
3rd edition of Webster’s New International Dictionary
1961 accepted 1966

...getting the right book to the right child at the right time about the right problem. Lundsteen, 1972

Help(ing) a pupil find a book that might help the pupil solve a personal problem, develop skills needed for living, and a bolster self-image. Shepherd and Illes, 1976

Have you ever read a book for self-help or to find answers to your difficulties, such as how others dealt with a loss, learn to become self-assured, or overcome a hardship? Then you have used bibliotherapy. Bibliotherapy is simply defined as the use of books to help people solve problems (Aiex, 1993, p. 1). Most people have read books to determine how others have approached a delicate situation. Teachers can use Children’s Literature to help their students solve problems and generate alternative responses to their issues. Bibliotherapy can be used with a single child, with a small group of children, or with an entire class, with minor variations in procedures.



If children who are experiencing social-emotional problems can have a story read to them about children who have similar problems, they can see hope for themselves. Stories centering around the death of a loved one, can offer a child an opportunity to initially express her own feelings about the story. Children should also be given ample opportunity to talk openly, if they care to do so about their own experiences with death. In addition, some leading questions should be presented as a means of encouraging further discussion.

Bibliotherapy Used for Psychological Purposes

Bibliotherapy was first documented as an intervention technique in 1840 (Afolayan, 1992). In 1916, the term “bibliotherapy” was used in a published article to describe the process of presenting books to medical patients who needed help understanding their problems (Crothers, 1916). Bibliotherapy was primarily used for the remediation of emotional difficulties in adults.

It was not until the second half of the 19th century that the practical applications of bibliotherapy expanded considerably. During the early 1900s, French psychiatrist, Pierre Janet, believed that patients could be helped toward a better life through assigned readings. Today, bibliotherapy is viewed as “an emerging strategy that can be used not only for clinical problems but also as a technique for helping children handle developmental needs” (Pardeck, 1986, p. i).

Bibliotherapy was used with military personnel during both world wars and with civilians in rehabilitation hospitals. Schools have used books and stories as “social helpers” for over a century. Bibliotherapy was also endorsed by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, a British health agency. The agency warned of “overuse” of antidepressants in patients with mild depression, and recommended that doctors try guided self-help or other kinds of counseling before medication (British Association for Counseling & Psychology, 2005).

Bibliotherapy or guided-help started with Neil Frude, a Cardiff University psychologist who used a self-help-book program to free up busy counselors to deal with more seriously depressed or mentally ill patients (Frude, 2005). Bibliotherapy has been used to treat thousands

of patients in the United Kingdom where The National Health Service covers everyone's medicines and doctor visits, free of charge.

In more than a dozen communities across the British Commonwealth, patients take the book prescription to their local library where they check out reserved titles such as Overcoming Depression and The Feeling Good Handbook, (Frude, 2004). Most cases of depression and anxiety are diagnosed at the general physician's office, where the average visit in Britain lasts just seven minutes.

In nearly 100 physicians' offices in Devon, a county in southwest England, doctors send mildly to moderately depressed patients down the hall to a mental-health worker, who tries to determine the core problem. Then the mental-health worker will prescribe a self-help book and meet four more times with the patient to discuss the book and its exercises to ensure that the treatment is working. They also view this self-help book program as a cost-saving strategy (Frude, 2004).

What Exactly Is Human Stress?

Hans Selye is thought to be the pioneer who is credited as the first to note the existence of human stress. He described its qualities, defined the concept, and gave the phenomenon an appropriate name. Selye (1976), he defined stress as:

In its medical sense, stress is essentially the rate of wear and tear on the body.

Selye gave another definition that helps to clarify the nature of stress. He began to view stress as a physiological response that was associated with the process of adaptation. He defined stress as:

The efforts or work of the body to adapt to change internal or external conditions produce the characteristic pattern of somatic responses that we call stress.

A more recent and widely accepted definition is:

Stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it to adapt whether that demand produces pleasure or pain, stress is a "response of the body."

This means that stress is a physical condition, a *physiological* response; physical, not cognitive.

The potential for stress develops when a seriously threatening situation occurs in one's social environment. The brain's perceptual and problem-solving processes examine the situation to discover what can be done to remove the threat (Sylwester, 1983). Sylwester further states, that if the mind can solve the problem without too much difficulty, the debilitating physical manifestations of stress do not occur.

Stress is an inappropriate, over-response to the kinds of problems that occur in school. For the school-age child, stressors may include anxiety about school conflicts with teachers, competition with peers or siblings, lack of parental interest, personal injury or loss, poor grades, fear of success or failure, and fear of medical visits (Dickey & Henderson, 1989; Sears & Milburn, 1990). Other stressors could include fear of negative evaluation, parental conflict or loss, unfair punishment, school work, and boredom (Atkins, 1991; Dickey & Henderson, 1989; Kanner, Felman, Weinberger, & Ford, 1987; Lewis, Siegel, & Lewis 1984; Spirito, Stark, Grace & Stamoulis, 1991).

Children who have been exposed to a traumatic event may become emotionally upset or disturbed. They may display nighttime fears, anger, irritability, lower tolerance for stress, nervousness, compulsiveness, helplessness, and/or powerlessness (Armsworth & Holaday, 1993; Richards & Bates, 1997). Also, children with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder may display developmentally regressive behaviors such as thumb sucking, or loss of previously learned academic and social skills. Older children and adolescents may try drugs, drink alcohol, or even attempt suicide.

Stress can lead to a decrease in productivity and bad feelings, and the long term effects are detrimental to the health of students and school personnel. Too much stress is also a signal that something in the school environment is wrong (Sylwester, 1983). Since social stress occurs when the mind is unable to solve threatening problems that confront it, nothing else but appropriate information properly used can

generate appropriate stress responses.

Stressors and Behavioral Reactions
Identified in Elementary School Children

Child	Stressor	Behavioral Reaction
6 yr old girl	Loses scissors in class	Wrings hands, cries easily
7 yr old girl	Anticipates doctor visits and shots	Outbursts of crying without provocation
7 yr old girl	Father looks for another job in another city, might move	Clings to teacher
7 yr old boy	Jehovah's Witness, can't celebrate Halloween	Tears, asks to leave the room
7 yr old boy	Grandfather seriously ill	Headaches, hyperactivity, flushed face
8 yr old girl	Child abuse	Headache, not wanting to go home after school
8 yr old girl	Dropped baton during school performance	Crying, stomping feet
9 yr old girl	Mother in hospital for a week	Cries easily, less attentive to work
10 yr old boy	Very small stature, failed high jump in gym	Cries, runs from gym to class, slams books on desk

Child	Stressor	Behavioral Reactions
10 yr old boy	Leukemia, treatment causes loss of hair, wears a cap	Reluctant to attend school
10 yr old boy	Parents separated, compete with each other for child	Fights on playground, complains about unfair situations
10 yr old boy	Frequent family moves	Wrote a very gory Halloween story
10 yr old boy	Superior intelligence, parent pressure	Uses knowledge to put others down
10 yr old girl	Father abusive to children, problem with drinking	Aggressive behavior toward peers
11yr old girl	Father in hospital for surgery, chronically ill	Throws down spelling test, didn't know word
11yr old girl	Father loses job, financial crisis at home	Withdraws, puts head on desk, does not relate to peers
12 yr old boy	Birth of sister	Tattles on other children in class

Source: Bloom, Cheney and Snoddy, 1986.

**Using Books To Help Children Cope With Anxiety, Fears
Hospitalization, Illness, Moving, Separation From A Parent,
Divorce, A New Baby, Or Changes In Family Lifestyle.**

Bedtime Stories

Soothing, Reassuring Stories

Stories Portraying Some Inner Concerns

Surrounding Bedtime

The New Baby

Books About Dreams and Dreaming
*Books Emphasizing Reassurance and Love for
the Older Child*

*Books About Older Sibling Who Attempt to
Run Away but Return When They Feel Love &
Needed*

*Books Showing an Older Sibling's Role in
Caring for a New Baby*

*Story Revealing a Young Child's Fantasy Life
When a New Baby Arrives*

Moving

*Books Showing Children Coping With a Recent
Family Move*

Books Describing Moving-Day Activities

*Moving from One Country or Setting to Another
When a Friend Moves, When a Newcomer*

Arrives

Home as a Symbol of Security, Belonging



**Books Portraying Experiences and Emotions That
May Have Special Meaning for the Hospitalized
Child.**

Separation Feelings and the Hospitalized Child
Self-Esteem and the Hospitalized Child
Stories About Illness or Pain in General
Nighttime in the Hospital
*Books Describing a Visit to a Doctor's or
Dentist's Office*

Divorce Stories Highlighting Visits with Father

*Nontraditional Divorce Stories Acknowledging
the Possibility of Custody*
*Stories Showing Child and Single Parent Living
Alone and Managing Well Together*
*Imaginative Stories Showing Children Coping
with Divorce*
*Stories About Feelings and Families That May Have
Special Meaning for Children of Divorce and/or Their
Friends and Peers*

Using Books To Help Children Cope With A Parent Going To Prison Or Concerns Related To Family Composition.

Books for Older Children in Which a Parent (Father) Goes to Prison

*Encouraging an Open, Honest Expression of Feelings
Stories Portraying Parental Absence That May Have
Special Meaning for Children of Prisoners*

*Picture books Showing, Among Other Experiences, a
Relative (Parent) in Prison*

*Accidental Separation from a Parent or Parent-Figure
Books Intended To Help Adults Explain Adoption to
Young Children*

*Imaginative Stories in Which the Leading Character
Happens To Be an Adopted or Foster Child*

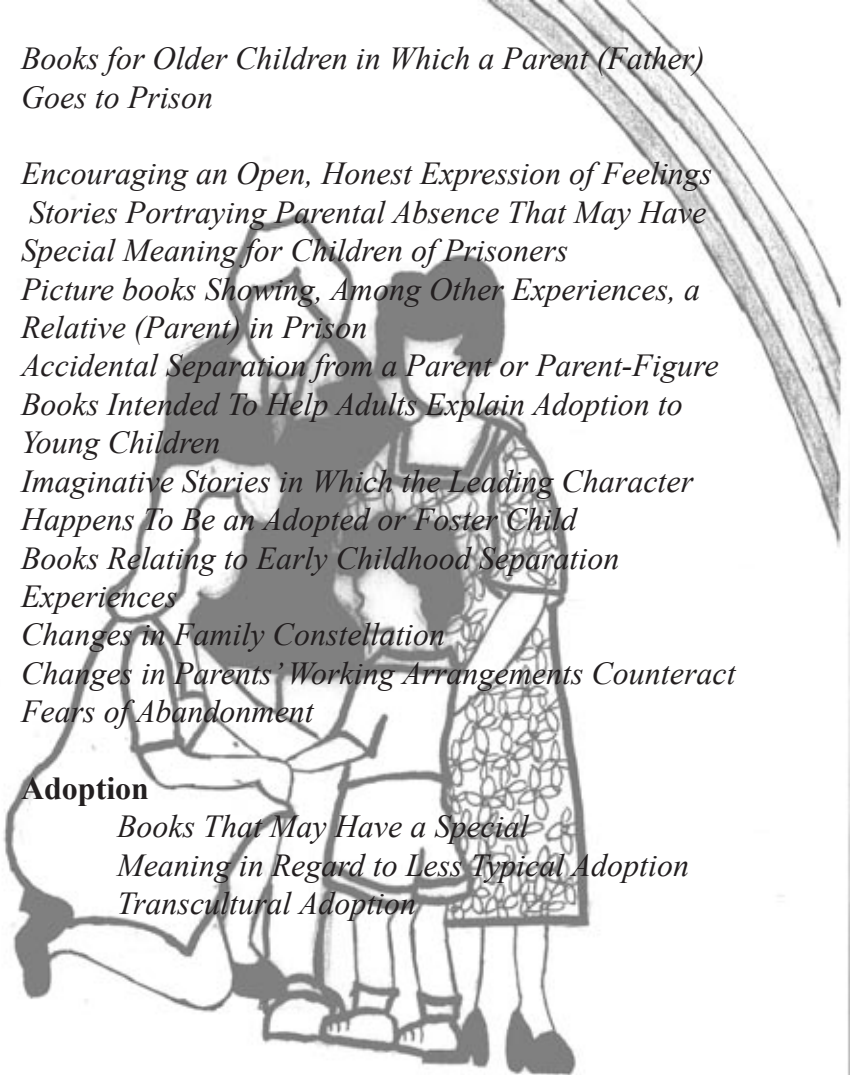
*Books Relating to Early Childhood Separation
Experiences*

Changes in Family Constellation

*Changes in Parents' Working Arrangements Counteract
Fears of Abandonment*

Adoption

*Books That May Have a Special
Meaning in Regard to Less Typical Adoption
Transcultural Adoption*



**Using Books To Help Young Children Talk Or Share Their Feelings
Concerning Death Or The Actual Death Of A Love One.**



Stories About Nature and Change

*Stories That Might Relate Well to Issues Surrounding
Human Death*

*Stories That Raise the Issue of Possible Death in the
Near Future*

When a Child Dies

Books About the Death (or Threatened Death) of a Child

*Stories About Children Who Have Experienced the
Death or Loss of an Important Individual in Their Lives*

Sometime in the Past

When a Grandparent Moves In

*Books That Might Help Young Children Talk About or
Share Some Feelings Concerning Death*

Other Changes in Family Composition

Information-Type Books About Death

Stories About the Death of Pets and Animals

**Using Books Related To Coping With Poverty, School Experiences,
Floods, Fires, Typhoons, Hurricanes, And Other Emergency
Situations.**

Coping with Poverty (in Varying Degrees)

*Separation from a Well-Liked and Trusted Individual
(Friend, Teacher, Therapist, etc)*

Books Portraying Experiences with Fire

*Floods, Typhoons, Storms, and Other Emergency
Situations*

Hurricanes, Lightning, Thunder, and Rain

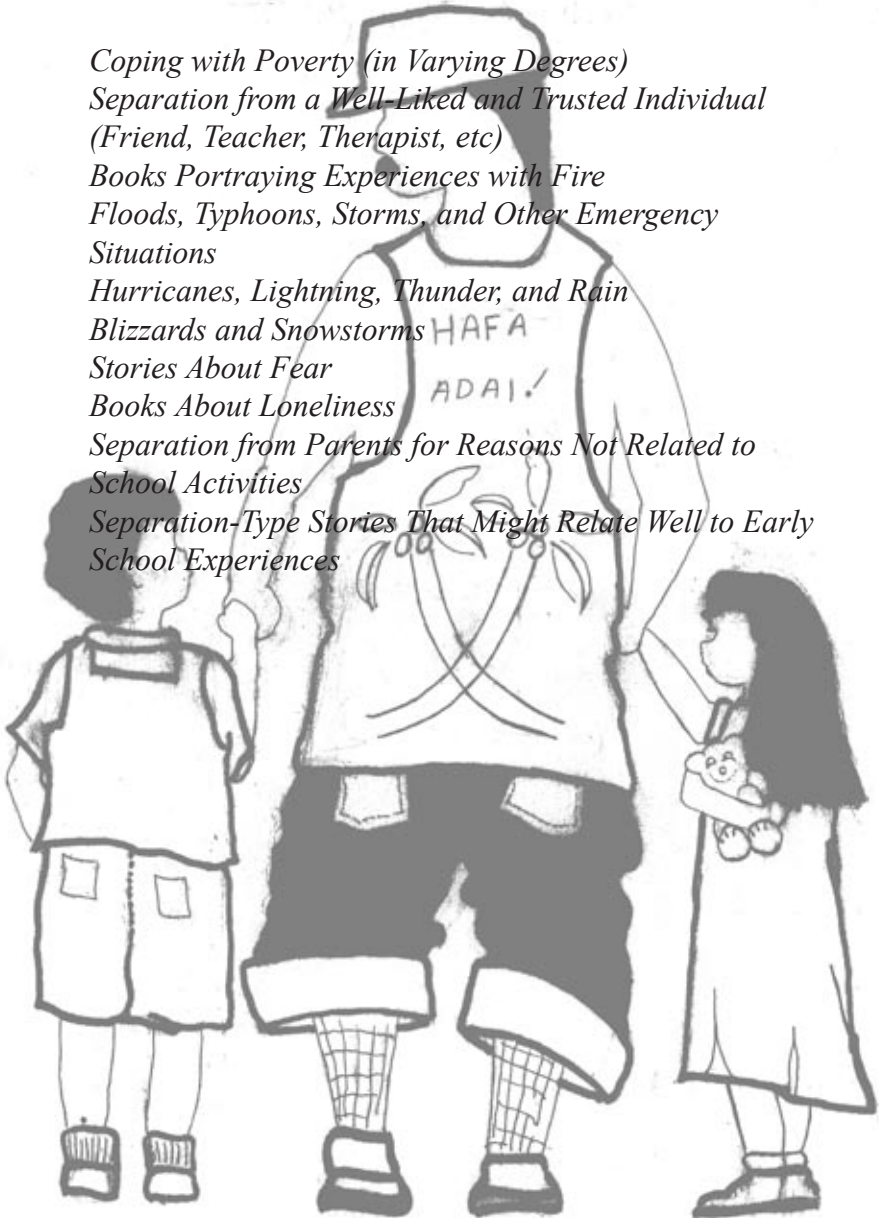
Blizzards and Snowstorms

Stories About Fear

Books About Loneliness

*Separation from Parents for Reasons Not Related to
School Activities*

*Separation-Type Stories That Might Relate Well to Early
School Experiences*



There Is Good Stress and Bad Stress?

What's bad about stress in school is that it is almost always an inappropriate response to a threatening situation (Sylwester, 1983). It is not the goal of school to eliminate stress in one's life, but rather to manage and help children to handle the problems that might arise.

Not all stress is damaging. Some stress is essential to life and growth, for example, the stress that performers are under to do their best. This stress does not work against them, but rather stimulates them to perform at an optimal level (Roger, 1983). The short term effects of occasional stress are not serious. There are "good" and "bad" stress situations. Getting married, getting a job, preparation for a test, are all potentially threatening stressful times, but people are able to handle these types of problems. The concern is with the "bad" stress and its detrimental effects.

Distress or "bad" stress presents a pattern of continuously activating the stress mechanism in response to social problems that can lead to illness (Sylwester, 1983). Hans Selye, in his most recent definition of stress, indicates both pleasure and pain as being capable of evoking a stress response. Pleasure and pain both change the circumstances under which the body must operate. Both pleasure and pain stimulate an undifferentiated stress response in the body.

Review of the Literature

Teachers and counselors have similar goals (Myrick, 1987). Lee (1993) cited many studies in which positive links between classroom guidance counselors and academic achievement were found. The National Standards for School Counseling Programs published by the American School Counseling Association states that, "The school counseling program has characteristics similar to other educational programs, including a scope and sequence; student outcomes or competencies; activities and processes to assist students in achieving these outcomes." (Campbell & Dahir, 1997, p. 9).

Schools provide many services to students in addition to learning the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Support personnel such as counselors also need time to work with students.

Collaboration between teachers and counselors is an effective method to use during large group guidance in the classroom. Therefore, self-esteem issues such as; behavior, peer relationships, self-control, physical development, stress, dealing with feelings and emotions, and school success are most effectively discussed in classroom groupings. We know that these concepts are taught in lessons that are presented in units and themes during reading time.



Cooperative learning enhances self-esteem as well as promotes student achievement (Lampe & Rooze, 1996). Cooperative learning involves interaction with peers. Chandler, Lee, & Pengilly, (1997) found that expectations for success may have a causal relationship to self-esteem.

In the Literature Circle environment, students have an opportunity for success while learning about interesting topics. Literature Circles consist of small groups of readers reading the same topic. Students usually select their own reading from sets of books previously selected by the teacher. They decide how many pages

to read for each session, and each student takes responsibility for preparing for the discussion (Daniels, 1994 p. 13). Literature Circles permit students to interact with each other and allows them to select books on topics of interest to them.

On an average, abused, maltreated, or neglected children score lower on cognitive measures and demonstrate poorer school achievement compared to their non-abused peers of similar socioeconomic backgrounds (Barnett, 1997; Vondra, Barnett, & Chicchetti, 1990). These are the children who learn to view themselves as unworthy, unlovable, and incompetent in school-related and cognitive tasks. Abuse often leads to a loss of self-esteem and a lack of motivation to achieve in school. Neglected children, compared to children suffering from other forms of abuse, appeared to have the most severe problems. (Eckenrode, Laird, & Doris, 1993; Mash & Wolfe, 1991).

It is not the goal of school to eliminate stress in the lives of children, but rather to manage and help children to handle stress from the problems that might arise. Children's responses to stress vary widely just as adults, a few become seriously incapacitated, the majority adapt with defensive and coping behaviors, and a small group does very well in the face of adversity. Learning about the nature of stress by acquiring a better understanding of what stress is and how it affects the body, teachers can learn to manage stress effectively in their own lives and in their classrooms.

Effectiveness

Books have an important role in everyday life. Through well-chosen books, readers may increase their self-knowledge and self-esteem, gain relief from unconscious conflicts, clarify their values, and better understand other people. By *identifying* with characters in books, children may come to realize that they are part of humanity; that they are not alone in their struggles with reality. Reading increases personal knowledge and invites the readers to consider themselves objectively (Blom, Cheney, & Snoddy, 1986).

If children who are experiencing difficulties can read about others who have solved similar problems, they may see alternatives for themselves. By presenting possible solutions, books can help prevent some difficult situations from becoming full-blown problems. Through encountering frustrations and anxieties, hopes and disappointments, successes and failures in fictional situations, children may gain insights applicable to situations they meet in real life.



Bibliotherapy is currently being used to help children who are experiencing a variety of emotional and developmental difficulties. These difficulties include controlling aggression, managing stress, and initiating and maintaining social relationships. Children having difficulties with these socio-emotional issues often are viewed as having more generalized difficulties in emotional intelligence (Sullivan & Strang, 2002).

In addition, all children can benefit from being taught a literature bibliotherapy lesson because students are likely to encounter similar issues during their school years. For example, a student may not be confronted by a bully or teased today but may experience similar problems later.

Why Is It Important to Learn About the Nature and Control of Stress?

Learning about the nature of stress by acquiring a better understanding of what stress is and how it affects the body, teachers can learn to manage stress effectively in their lives and in their classrooms.

There are three widespread, glaring manifestations of stress in our culture that indicate a need to understand and deal with stress as a problem of vast significance and scope:

(1) the incidence of psychosomatic disease, (2) the economic loss to business due to stress, and (3) the alarming prevalence of serious maladaptive coping measures. (Roger, 1983).

Eighty percent or more of all physical diseases are psychosomatic or stress related in origin. This is probably a very conservative figure in medical texts today. Cardiovascular disorders are the cause of more deaths in this country each year than all other causes combined. Stress attacks every physiological facet of cardiovascular functioning, so it may be a principle cause in most forms of cardiovascular diseases.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States. Stress can weaken the natural defense mechanisms of the body, thereby giving cancer an open door to develop and spread. Stress does not cause cancer, but it plays a major role in setting up the internal conditions conducive to its appearance.

The experience of human stress can either cause or exacerbate a host of other diseases, including diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, arthritis, infectious diseases, muscular dysfunctions, gastrointestinal ulcers and related problems, skin disorders, allergic responses, sexual dysfunctions, and metabolic alterations. One may argue that all of these conditions (and most somatic diseases overall) are merely the LONG-TERM, SEVERE SYMPTOMS OF STRESS.

Selye's definition uses the term nonspecific, meaning, stress is nonspecific both in cause and in effect. Anything can trigger a stress reaction – "*any demand to adapt.*" Anything that changes conditions for the body to which it must then adapt produces stress.

Stress also produces nonspecific effects that alter the activity of all the organ systems in the body; not just one. Stress does not simply attack the heart, or liver, or kidney. It has the potential to affect

everything. Stress is a physiological pattern of changes that can be triggered by nearly anything and can affect any or all aspects of human biological functioning (Selye, 1976).

It is inevitable that children will bring to school stress that affects their learning and social behaviors. Schools need to deal with these issues from the perspective that their primary function is education. At the same time, schools and teachers can be therapeutic without having to be treatment agencies or therapists.

Maladaptive Coping Schemes

Aside from the serious incidence of life-threatening, stress-related diseases and the high economic costs from the effects of stress, one of the most striking indications of our stress problem is the ubiquitous use of maladaptive coping schemes. Over 150 million prescriptions a year are written for psychoactive drugs. More than half of these are for Valium and Librium, (Allen, 1983).

Psychopharmacologists believe that Americans are spending billions of dollars a year on drugs to relieve their anxiety. One's mind and body is strung out from stress, and then one turns to Valium to relieve the pain.

Therefore, a massive stress problem exists, but the treatment does not appear to be the best approach or it is the wrong approach. The anti-anxiety agents may in fact decrease anxiety, but they also reduce all kinds of emotional responsiveness.

Rats drugged with anti-anxiety agents fail to increase tolerance for frustration as shown by the undrugged animals trained in the same way. This implies that any drug which reduces the experience of anxiety is also likely to reduce one's capacity to develop behavioral methods of coping with stress. We take a drug to help us reduce anxiety and pain, but in fact, it only serves to make us more susceptible to them.

Evidence now shows that many people take more direct and complete actions to rid themselves of stress. Thousands of Americans commit suicide each year. A suicide attempt is a cry for help. A person

may try to end his or her life when pain or problems seem too hard to manage.

Each year in the United States, approximately 500,000 people require emergency room treatment as a result of attempted suicide. In 2000, the National Institute of Health reported that 29,350 persons died by suicide in the United States. Suicide deaths outnumbered homicide deaths by 5 to 3. Suicide was the third leading cause of death for 10-24 year olds, and the eighth leading cause of death for males. Suicide is an enormous trauma for millions of Americans who experience the loss of someone close to them.

The death of an adolescent is always tragic, but a self-inflicted one is especially so. This tragedy is intensified by the realization that the young suicide victim chose death over life. A suicide death is most often preventable. If only we had been able to provide intervention in time (Hazel, McMakin, Bell, Naval, Rubinstein & Workman, 2001).

Nationally, more teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease combined. The excessively high suicide rate is another factor pointing to the importance of learning to handle the stress of life. STRESS IS A PROBLEM IN NEED OF SOLUTIONS.

Permanent Separation and Grief

There are two closely related sources of stress that reoccur throughout a normal person's life; temporary and permanent separation from loved ones. Profound grief is by no means found only in bereavement; grief reactions regularly occur whenever there is prolonged separation from loved ones. More intense reactions of mourning and depression occur if physical separation is accompanied by signs of rejection. When an intimate friendship or love affair is terminated by the cold withdrawal of one of the partners, the other is likely to experience intense grief.

In these circumstances of separation, just as in bereavement, the person suffers a profound sense of loss, which is the central feature of grief. During the time when the feeling of loss is most acute, the world

appears weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable.

It is in young children that we can very clearly see the profound emotional impact of separation. Among the best known case studies by Robertson (1958) and Bowlby (1960), who observed more than 50 preschool children confined in a hospital to receive medical or surgical treatment or sent to a residential nursery so that the mother might take a full-time job. According to Robertson and Bowlby, there are three main phases that characterize the emotional reactions of a young child during the period of separation from his mother:

Phase I- Protest: *During the first day or two of separation, screams, repeatedly calls out “I want my mommy,” refuses to allow a maternal substitute to take over, and appears to be constantly vigilant for the return of his mother. After the most acute forms of protest die down, the child continues to complain about the mother’s absence, is reluctant to comply with demands from the substitute, has temper tantrums, and continues to complain loudly and tearfully.*

Phase 2- Despair: *After several days of protest, the child usually begins to show characteristic reactions of grief - moaning, quiet weeping, and sad facial expressions. He or she no longer responds eagerly to any sight or sound that might signal the return of the mother. Observers are left with the impression that the child is in a depressed state.*

Phase 3-Detachment: *From several days to about one week following the onset of the separation, the young child gradually begins to change in the direction of seemingly unemotional, bland responses to his environment. No longer is there any apparent seeking of the mother or clinging to her if she comes to visit. The child also appears indifferent to mother substitutes, such*

as the nurses who take care of the child in the hospital. The child becomes increasingly more apathetic, as if he no longer cared about his mother or anything else in his environment. Sometimes the child directly verbalizes his feeling; "I don't care if mommy isn't here; I don't need her."

According to Bowlby, the child's withdrawal from his mother and from maternal substitutes during the third phase is regarded as highly dangerous to his personality development, since it seems to lead to a permanent blocking of affection and a tendency toward superficial or exploitative relationships with other people. It may even dispose the child to become psychotically withdrawn or depressed later in life.

Bowlby, further stated that, the longer the period of separation, the greater the changes of entering the third, pathogenic phase. Furthermore, the longer the pathogenic phase continues before the toddler is reunited with his mother, the greater are the changes of permanent personality damage.

Young Children and Death

Ragouzeos (1987), states that grief does not have a timetable. Although children and adults may go through the stages of grief, children do grieve differently from adults. At times, they may appear unaffected by the loss or may appear to be handling their grief. Young children are unable to articulate or express their feelings and may, instead, act out their grief.

Children generally do not grieve regularly or constantly. They may want to go out and play when adults express their sympathy. A young child may discuss the dead person as if he or she were still alive. The child is merely struggling to understand how the death fits in his life. It may take a long time for death to become real to a child.

Children under six usually see death as temporary, reversible. Young children are not capable of grasping the meaning of the word "death," but they can sense that something dreadful is happening in the

home, something too dreadful for words. At times, they may appear unaffected by the loss or may seem to be handling their grief.



The National Association of School Psychologists indicate that children's reactions to a stressful event should be diminishing within 30 days (Hogan & Graham, 2001). This however, does not apply to certain groups of children. Educators must understand that grief is a process and children, as well as adults, usually take approximately

two years to adjust to death (Arent, 1990; Lagorio, 1993; Mills et al., 1976; Schaefer & Lyons, 1988; Ward, 1993).

As educators, we can best help children cope with death and grief, whether expected or unexpected, by being prepared (Schonfeld & Kappelman, 1992). Although children who experience trauma require help from a professional counselor, psychologist, or therapist, educators also have a responsibility to intervene. Parents expect their child's teacher to provide a sense of security and regularity in their classrooms, and that means helping children to cope with stressful and traumatic events. Schools are expected or should have intervention plans to help students cope with stress and childhood traumas.

When the Work of Mourning Is Completed

Inadequate or incomplete mourning, which usually involves persistent denial of the death, is likely to lead to prolonged depression and some form of pathological identification with the dead person. When the child's symptoms of grief subside after he has completed the work of mourning, he manifests a more constructive type of identification, enriching his personality by taking over certain of the

interests and values of the dead person that are compatible with his own.

Another constructive outcome that can follow from the work of mourning, arises from daydreams in which the child will converse with the dead person. Particularly in children who have lost a parent, these imaginary conversations can be an impetus to creative imagination. It has been noted that a number of outstanding writers, such as A.E. Housman, Dante, Rousseau, Emily Bronte, and Baudelaire, all lost their mothers or fathers when they were very young. Their writings are pervaded with feelings of melancholy and contain many symbolic images of reunion with the dead.

Educators and parents should help children learn to cope with other losses. But the death of a pet is a very significant loss for a child. Frequently, this is a child's first experience with death. How it's handled can determine, to some extent, how all future grief will be handled. The patterns for coping with loss and grief begin in early childhood and often continue through adulthood. The Tenth Good Things About Barney, is a story about a little boy who mourns the death of his cat. When Barney, the cat, dies, the little boy plans a funeral for his pet. This story is an open expression of feelings; a boy who cries deeply, acknowledges his sadness, and sincerely misses his cat. There are also understanding and sympathetic parents. And there is, additionally, a healthy affirmation of the ongoing nature of life, as the cat's death is portrayed in juxtaposition to the planting of seeds and the patient waits for new flowers.

A Child's grief may not be recognized because children express feelings of grief more in behavior than in words. Feelings of abandonment, helplessness, despair, anxiety, apathy, anger, guilt and fear are common and often acted out aggressively because children may be unable to express feelings verbally. In Miska Miles's book, Annie and the Old One, she tells the story about a little Navajo girl named Annie who is very close to her grandmother and loves to sit at her feet and listen to stories of long ago. Annie's mother is weaving a beautiful rug, and Grandmother encourages Annie to observe how

the weaving is done. One day Grandmother calls the family together and tells them she is going to “return to Mother Earth” when the rug has been completed and taken from the loom. Annie learns that her Grandmother is going to die. She decides she must unravel the rug so that Grandmother will not die. Grandmother has discovered that Annie is unraveling the rug, and she explains to Annie that all things come from the earth and later return to the earth. Annie understands and is awed by the wonder of life and death. The author, sensitively and effectively portrays the feelings of closeness between a child and her grandmother. This story is able to explain life and death in a simple and moving manner that appeals to the young reader.

The Role of School

The school should function as a stress-reduction agency that, (1) should teach students the information and skills they need to solve the threatening problems they will confront in life, and (2) creates an environment that allows the staff personnel to feel they are helping students. The goal of school is to create a wholesome learning environment.

Schools and other educational settings serve many roles in a child's life beyond academic preparation. Grief scholars describe these settings as akin to "a central caregiver" (Silverman, 2000, p. 194) and as being "the hub of a child's life" (Johns, 2000, p. 77). Teachers and parents are in a unique position to make a difference in a child's life by providing support. Educators can show children how to give support to others and how to ask for help when they need it. These are vital life skills that, if learned in childhood, may be used for a lifetime.

No matter what type of stress, neglect, or childhood traumas have occurred – school personnel must intervene to help prevent further significant school and social-emotional problems. Teachers must foster for children a sense of trust, and remain open to positive learning and emotional experiences. We must learn to observe, be aware, understand, pay greater attention, and acknowledge children's pain and recognize that some anti-social behaviors are reflections of painful experiences. All children need warmth, nurturing, empathy, stability, and a sense of belonging in order to reach their full potential (Frost, 2005).

Recovery: The Role of Adults

When calamity does strike and children are affected, adults can help with the healing process. Adults should heed the following recommendations by Frost (2005) to help young children deal with a disaster, whether the disaster is experienced firsthand or through media coverage:

- *Listen to children. Be alert to their body language, which may signal distress. Assure children that they are safe. Be calm, confident, positive, and in control.*

- *Talk to children and establish and maintain normal routines. Provide close emotional support through hugs and extra attention.*
- *Accept the reality that children are confused, fearful, and upset. Help them to understand that their emotions are natural and okay.*
- *Talk with children about the tragedy in simple, factual language without speculating or embellishing. Involve them in projects to help others, and in writing and sending messages of hope.*
- *Study and show respect for local customs of the affected areas, including religious beliefs and belief systems.*
- *Explain how charitable groups and emergency personnel are helping those affected. Seek out appropriate ways to involve children with adults in recovery activities. Be alert to potential hazards to children helping in such activities.*
- *Monitor television viewing to limit children's access to horror stories and news reports not suitable for traumatized children.*
- *Obtain information about support groups. Observe children carefully to identify those who appear to be at greater physical or emotional risk, and*
- *Secure expert assistance for them, including medical personnel for physical injuries and illness, and play therapists and counselors for slow-to-heal and severely traumatized, abused, neglected, or damaged children.*

Reading Books for Stress Intervention

Children's books provide a special medium or teaching technique many teachers can feel comfortable using in the classroom since it involves reading, listening to, and analyzing a story. When used in stress intervention, the story selected has as its theme a particular *stressor*, and the procedure consists of encouraging children to react,

through discussion to the story elements and the characters' behavioral reactions.

Therefore, the cognitive and language skills of reading, listening, speaking, and analysis are employed, just as in other familiar language learning activities. The use of children's books as a reactive intervention can be used with a single child, with a small group of children, or with an entire class.

The content of stories in basal reading textbooks and trade books have focused on motivational, socializing, and behavioral influences on children in the educational setting (Blom, Cheney, & Snoddy, 1986). Another idea of the content or theme of a story is that it is not only a source of information, but it also has a positive emotional impact on the reader.



It can be conceptualized that reading can serve multiple psychological purposes. These include: fantasy expression and gratification; channeling impulsive expression; providing information that aids reality testing; offering ideas and values that can guide behaviors dealing with universal conflicts and feelings; nurturing cognitive development and functioning.

Reading can also serve to liberate oneself from one's own environment, offer comic relief, find pleasure in words and ideas, and prepare for any integration of life experiences. Children can experience these feelings and thoughts if they are given enough favorable opportunities with appropriate books and with adequate processing opportunities.



The selection of books aimed at achieving these ends offers both challenges and opportunities for teachers. There are many books that deal with such childhood issues of family life, children's emotions, biological events, and stressful happenings. They vary in quality from

the very poorly conceived and written, to stories with an engaging and convincing plot, including books that are considered downright literary.

How to Teach Using Bibliotherapy?

The teacher who wants to use books to help children understand the challenges, stressful events and situations, childhood traumas, and problems of growing up need not be a clinical psychologist. The main qualifications are an interest in and a concern for children and a willingness to become familiar with Children's Literature. Reading guidance or bibliotherapy can be a simple procedure. However, professional therapeutic skills are necessary if the child's problem is severe.

Three Key Elements in the Bibliotherapy Process

A number of positive consequences may occur when a child reads a story with a pertinent psychological theme. Studies of therapeutic emphasis suggest the content and theme of a story not only is a source of information, but also have a positive emotional impact on the reader. There are three main steps usually present in the process of bibliotherapy:

1. **Identification** – From the reading, children come to realize that they are not the only person with particular fears, frustrations, worries, or stressful living conditions. Recognizing similarities between themselves in the story book characters, thus they may work out their problems vicariously. Identification is not limited to a reader's identification of self with a story character. As a result, the child may develop a better understanding and appreciation of the real person. Children may also identify with characters in animal stories as well as with fictional human beings; when the animals have believable human characteristics. Identification entails recognizing the thoughts and behaviors of others.

2. **Catharsis** - Catharsis builds upon *identification*. When a child who identifies with a fictional character lives through situations and shares feelings with that character, that child experience catharsis. This vicarious experience may produce a release of tension or an imitation of the character's behavior. When this happens, it is important that the child have someone with whom to discuss the reading, on a one-to-one basis or in a group. After releasing emotional tensions, individuals become better able to apply what they have learned to their own similar situations, resulting in *insight*. An advantage of reading as a therapeutic experience is that it does not *force* a child to participate. If the fictional situation becomes too intense, too stimulating, too painful, the reader can back off (or the child being read to can assume the role of observer).

3. **Insight** - Through reading, children may become more aware of human motivations and of rationalizations for their own behavior. They may develop a more realistic view of their abilities and self-worth; the written word tends to carry authority. Colville (1990) describes insight as "an arrow to the heart" (p. 35). Insight targets an individual's specific problem and brings issues to the surface so they can be addressed. Children who feel doubt and suspicion toward adults and peers tend to be less doubtful and suspicious of books. Authors of fiction generally become trusted because they rarely impose judgment explicitly.

A Teaching Framework for Bibliotherapy and Problem Solving

Most teachers when exploring bibliotherapy with students will use everyday types of life problems such as anger, teasing, bullying, and issues of self-concept. These types of problem-solving issues are best accomplished through small-group or whole class readings and

discussions of the topic. Doll and Doll (1997) describes this approach as *developmental bibliotherapy* because it focuses on helping children cope with developmental needs rather than relying on clinical or individualized bibliotherapy.

There are four books that I have always used for developmental bibliotherapy concerns with my early childhood K- Grade 1 students: *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak (disobeying, vivid imagination, loneliness, and guilt); *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* by Judith Viorst (death of a pet, stages of mourning, sadness, sympathetic parents, and memories); *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* by William Steig (relationships, loving parents, a sense of loss, fear, making poor choices and family); and *Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine* by Evaline Ness (reality, honesty/dishonesty, loss of a parent, vivid imagination, lying, fear, and friendship).

There are four steps for the teacher when using bibliotherapy:

1. Pre-reading Plan,
2. Guided Reading,
3. Post-reading discussion, and
4. Follow-up Problem-solving/reinforcement activity.

Pre-reading Plan is the first step in the selection of an appropriate book. Emphasis is placed on this step when reading any book to children, but it is most important when literature is to focus on feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and values. Careful selection of reading material is significant so that students can identify, connect and relate to the real or fictional character. There are various subject access guides which are available to help teachers determine which books can be used with children's problems, such as *A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books*; *The Best in Children's Books: the University of Chicago Guide to Children's Literature*; *The Bookfinder: A Guide to Children's Literature About the Needs and Problems of Youth Aged 2- Up*; and *Middle and Junior High School Library Catalog*. Pre-reading plans should include a brief discussion of students' background knowledge to help them link their past experience with the book's content. Display

the cover of the book and ask students to predict what the story is about. The teacher should provide students with a brief statement about the story and ask open-ended questions. Allow children to predict similarities and differences between their lives and the character(s) in the book. Pre-reading activities should include appropriate questions that will enable students to identify what they know about the topic, and what they want to know. These types of activities will help students activate their prior knowledge and identify with the book's content.



Guided Reading is actually reading the story aloud to students, preferable in one sitting. Read the story at an appropriate pace and appropriate volume so students are listening and paying attention. Interject prepared questions and respond to children's comments and concerns. A crucial aspect of bibliotherapy is the advance preparation of specific questions that can be interspersed throughout the story to focus attention on major points.

Post-reading Discussion is the third step of the bibliotherapy process. Once the story is completed the teacher and students will engage in a sequence of discussions. Have students retell the plot and then evaluate character feelings and any situations that occurred. It is important to ensure that students comprehend the story before moving

forward. Next, students are asked probing questions to help them think about their feelings and better **identify** with the characters and events in the story. The questions should vary in that some are knowledge and comprehension questions, and others require analysis and evaluation. When students pass through *identification* and *catharsis* they learn to problem solve. By *identifying* with the literary character(s), students recognize that they are not alone in experiencing a problem. This is the key, as young children often feel alone when experiencing a specific problem. This type of dialoguing will help students as they develop *insight* into the character's difficulty and discuss the merits and shortcomings of any solutions. In addition, the class can generate possible solutions to their own problem by using their newly acquired *insight*.



Follow-up Problem-Solving/Reinforcement Activity is the fourth bibliotherapy step to help students learn how to become independent problem solvers. As students *identify* with characters in the story and discuss solutions to the problems, they are applying an interpersonal problem-solving strategy and developing additional alternatives. The first step is to identify the problem presented in the

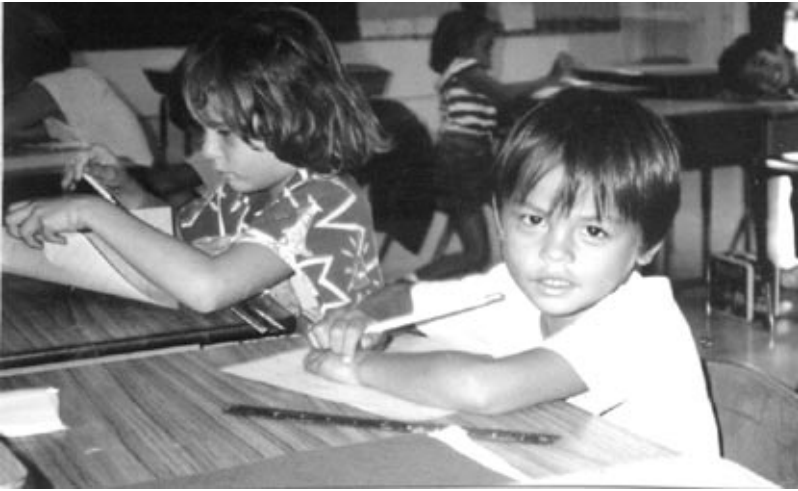
book. It may be necessary to guide students in discussion to address any secondary problems. Students should try to list all solutions the book's characters considered to solve the problem as well as generate their own original solution to the problem. Students and teacher will then examine each solution and determine if there are any obstacles to those solutions. Identifying each obstacle, reassure students that it is typical for many of the solutions to have obstacles but that they must find a solution with few or no obstacles. Have students look over the solutions again and choose one. The purpose for this step is to emphasize to the class that they need to select good solutions that solve their problem in the long-run, not just a solution for the moment. When students realize that they have chosen a good solution; they now need to try it out. When students learn to become good problem solvers, they begin to develop feelings of self-control, a process that becomes helpful in creating a positive classroom environment (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1997).



The next responsibility of the teacher should include reinforcement activities to give students practice and application of the solutions they found. Activities should use social skills within a natural setting or real-life situation or incidental learning such as role-playing. Not all children can verbalize their thoughts and feelings, for these children, art work, poetry, writing stories, play activities and many opportunities to draw can provide valuable

alternative modes of expression. In children's play activities the teacher can also become incorporated into the child's role playing; this will allow the teacher to give constructive feedback of students' performance. The next time students are presented with the problem or situation, they will try their solution.

In addition, teachers should also use reinforcement activities for home assignments. These activities (or application) will reinforce the student's ability to use the strategy for generating an appropriate solution when confronted with a problem. By learning a problem-solving strategy and applying it to children's literature, students can learn to become independent and effective problem solvers.



When preparing for bibliotherapy follow-up or reinforcement activities, information from a number of writing activities can be used with different open-ended questions like, "What do you think about...?" or "How would you feel if...?" An effective technique is for the teacher to give questions to stimulate writing and then to give suggestions back to students. Some of these open-ended writing activities could be:

Title Starters: *"The Thing I Would Change About Me"*
"My Three Worst Fears"
"My Home"

If... Starters: *If I were my mother I would ...
If it weren't for...
If I had enough money I would...*

Unfinished Sentences: *School is...
At the bus stop...
I don't do my homework because...*

Wish test: *You have been given three wishes. What would they be and why did you choose these three?*

Dear Abby: *Have a mailbox where students can put letters about their problems.*

Throw-Away Box: *Students write their worries on a piece of paper and throw them away into this box.*

Art activities is an excellent way to gather information about children's concerns such as:

Coat of Arms: Each student makes a shield that is divided into six parts: favorite past times; things that make me sad; things that make me happy; my family; me; and things I hate. The student will draw something to express his feelings in each part of the shield or coat of arms.



Pizza: This is the same idea as the shield, but children draw responses on each slice of a pizza.

Me Collages: Children find pictures and words that tell about themselves and paste the words and pictures on paper cut in the shape of their bodies.

About Me Book: Children draw or paste words and pictures on pages in a book made of construction paper. Each page is labeled with topics: *Things that make me happy, My favorite hobbies, Wishes I Have, About my family.*



Conclusion

Reading is usually a private activity; a transaction between reader and writer in which the experiences and sensitivities of the reader fuse with the printed text. However, sharing a book in a classroom, with a partner, in small groups, or as a class; can have its value. These activities may lead to better reading and a deeper relishing of a book, and a refinement of the individual's own responses.

Bibliotherapy is the use of books to help children who are experiencing a variety of emotional and developmental difficulties, as well as solving personal problems (Riordan & Wilson, 1989). Bibliotherapy is very useful and deserves to be acknowledged and developed as a valuable part of classroom management for young children. Stress and childhood traumas are serious, life-threatening issues facing children today. Educators should not try to avoid stress in their classrooms, but learn to control and manage it. Books have an important role in everyday life in the classroom, and can also be used to help children become better equipped for tomorrow's challenges by meeting similar challenges today in the stories that they read.

Using stories with a specific stressor can help to teach coping skills and strategies that restore or increase a child's level of functioning after a trauma. Teachers should encourage children to share experiences and feelings privately or in a group discussion. Such discussions are good, in that, they validate feelings, reduce fears and anxieties and help children learn from each other.

Bibliotherapy gives children permission to talk and express their feelings through words. Young children need their teachers and parents around to support, listen to them carefully, believe in their thoughts and feelings as they heal. Bibliotherapy merits a much higher profile than it has had up to the present time. Teachers, especially early childhood educators at the pre, primary, special needs and elementary levels, need to be more aware of the potential benefits of Bibliotherapy or self-

help strategy. It deserves greater recognition, wider implementation, and increased systematic research. Bibliotherapy is a child-friendly, noninvasive method that employs reading - a very natural technique used in the classroom.

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A Sample of Dr. Jackson's Personal Library List of Books

Resources and Beginning Card File of Children's Books to Help Educators Deal With Stressful Situations

Internet Resources

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. (1998). *Children and grief*. Retrieved September 17, 2001, from www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/grief.htm

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. (2000). *Helping children after a disaster*. Retrieved September 17, 2001, from: www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/disaster.htm

American Psychology Association. (2001). *Psychology in daily life: Managing traumatic stress*: Tips for recovering from disasters and other traumatic events. Retrieved September 18, 2001, from: <http://helping.apa.org/daily/traumaticstress.html>

American Red Cross. (2001). *Helping young children cope with trauma*. Retrieved September 17, 2001, from: www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsafe/childtrauma.html

American School Counselor Association. (2001). *Coping strategies for children and young adults*. Retrieved September 20, 2001 from: <http://1206.61.101.87/contentcfm?L1=1000&L2=49>

Compassion Books with related topics: www.compassionbooks.com

Kids Health, (2001). For teachers: *Talking about terrorist attacks*. Available online: www.kidshealth.org/kid/m/sc/attacks_help.html

National Center for Grieving Children, A Service of the Dougy Center. (2001). *In the wake of the terrorist attacks on America: How do we respond to our children?* Retrieved September 17, 2001, from www.grievingchild.org/about_terroristhtm

The U.S. Department of Education's Web site is designed to provide school leaders with more information about emergency preparedness and to be a one-stop-shop to help school officials plan for any emergency, including natural disasters, violent incidents, and terrorist acts. www.ed.gov/emer2.encyplan

This is an online resource from Families and Work Institute that contains tips for talking to kids of all ages, from infants to teenagers, about times of violence and conflict. It also provides information about symptoms of trauma that parents and educators should be on the lookout for. This guide describes various ways to help children cope. www.familiesandwork.org.

Children's Books

Bunting, E. (1994). *Smokey night*. San Diego, CA: Hartcour Brace.

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- Lalli, J. (1997). *I like being me: Poems for children about feeling special, appreciating others, and getting along*. Free Spirit Publishing.
- Lamb, N., & Cooper, F. (1996). *One April morning: Children remember the Oklahoma bombing*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.
- Livingston, M. C. (Ed.) (1987). *I like you, if you like me: Poems of friendship*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books.
- Pellegrino, M. (1999). *I don't have Uncle Phil anymore*. Washington, DC: Magination Press.
- Romain, T., & Verdick, E. (1999). *What on earth do you do when someone dies?* Minneapolis, MN: Flee Spirit Publications.
- Rowland, A. (1995). *How I learned to make friends*. Childswork/ Childsplay.
- Rylant, C. (1997). *Cat heaven*. New York: The Blue Sky Press.
- Shriver, M. (1999). *What's heaven?* New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Simms, A. (1986). *Are you still my sister?* Slidell, LA: Big A and Co.
- Varley, S. (1984). *Badger's parting gifts*. New York: Hyperion Books.

Zimmerman, T., & Shapiro, L. (1996). *Sometimes I feel like I don't have any friends (but not so much anymore)*. Childswork/Childsplay.

Wolfet, A. (2000). *Healing your grieving heart: 100 practical ideas for kids*. Fort Collins, CO: Center for Loss and Transition.

BOOKS ABOUT DIVORCE

The following is a list of appropriate books given in the September/October 1980 Edition of Childhood Education, P. 7

THE BOYS AND GIRLS BOOK ABOUT DIVORCE,

by Richard A. Gardner

Dr. Gardner, a child psychiatrist, candidly discusses the problems which young children encounter when their parents divorce. Among the topics discussed are: whom to blame for the divorce, love between parents and child, anger, and its uses and the fear of being left alone.

EMILY AND THE KLUNKY BABY AND THE NEXT-DOOR DOG

by Joan M. Lexus

The feeling of rejection depicted in this story is often experienced by a child whose parents are divorced.

MORRIS AND HIS BRAVE LION

by Relen Spelman Rogers

The author's tender and straightforward handling of the divorce issue, without condescension, shows depth and understanding of children's needs as well as a basic respect for human feelings.

The following books are recommended in the March 1981 edition of Teacher V98 n7, pp. 24-26.

DIVORCED KIDS

by Warner Troyer

The author comments on the estrangement between divorced kids and their parents stems from feelings of guilt and embarrassment in the children. This leads youngsters to feeling major constraints in spending time with parents whom they feel may blame them for the marital crash.

PICTURE BOOKS:

TWO PLACES TO SLEEP

by Joan Schuchman

The text, and warm illustrations by Jim LaMarche, relate how the child comes to accept his parent's separation, realizing that although they don't love one another, they both will always love him.

DADDY

by Jeanette Cains

Portrays the closeness between a father and his little girl who share Saturdays together. This subtly written book illustrated with back-and-while drawings by Ronal Rimpler, is a gentle depiction of love and anxiety.

SHE'S NOT MY REAL MOTHER

by Judith Vigna Whitman

This book focuses on the mixed feelings of a young boy toward his stepmother, whom he visits on weekends. When he gets lost during a visit to an ice show, she comes to his rescue, causing him to re-evaluate their relationship.

BREAKFAST WITH MY FATHER

by Ron Roy

David looks forward to having breakfast with his father. Once the father returned to spend two days. The illustrations by Troy Howell add to the realistic view of a family attempting to solve problems together.

A FATHER LIKE THAT

by Charlotte Zolotow, illustrated by Ben Shecter

This story relates a young boys thoughts of what his father, who went away before he was born, might be like.

IF YOU LISTEN

by Charlotte Zolotow

This story tells about the thoughts of a little girl who misses her father who has been away a long time. The warm imagery of the text, and full-color illustrations make this a very compassionate love tale.

I WON'T GO WITHOUT A FATHER

by Muriel Stanek, illustrated by Eleanor Mills

Young Steve's disappointment when his father doesn't show up for open house is lessened by the presence of his uncle, grandfather and neighbor.

A DIVORCE DICTIONARY: A BOOK FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN

by Stuart M. Glass, illustrated by Bari Weisman

This is an easy-to-read volume with alphabetically arranged definitions and discussions of a number of terms - from abandonment to visitation rights.

SURVIVING YOUR PARENTS DIVORCE

by Charles Boeckman

Boeckman offers advice on dealing with feelings of guilt, loneliness and anger; adjusting to a new life with a single parent, and getting along with stepfamilies.

Novels for Middle-Grade ReadersMY DAD LIVES IN A DOWNTOWN HOTEL

by Peggy Mann, illustrated by Richard Cuffari

IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD

by Judy Blume

MATT GARGAN'S BOY

by Alfred Slote

MAMA

by Lee Bennett Hopkins

The following is a sampling of books recommended by Parents Without Partners, taken from September 1980 edition of 'Teacher' , p. 54.

A GUIDEBOOK FOR TEACHING FAMILY LIVING

by Lynn Ann DeSpelder and Nathalie Prettyman

DIVORCE IS A GROWN UP PROBLEM

by Janet Sinberg (beginning readers)

ELIZA'S DADDY

by Ianthe Thomas (beginning readers)

MARINKA KATINKA AND ME (SUSIE)

by Winifred Madison (Grades 2-4)

A BOOK FOR JORDAN

by Marcia Newfield (Grades 3-5)

HOW DOES IT FEEL WHEN YOUR PARENTS GET DIVORCED?

by Terry Berger (Grades 4 and up, including adults)

A SMART KID LIKE YOU

by Stell Pevsner (Grades 5 and up)

LEAP BEFORE YOU LOOK

by Mary Stolz (Grades 7 and up)

"ZACHARY'S DIVORCE" IN FREE TO BE ME

by Linda Sitea (all ages)

**PWP publishes a “Children’s Reading List”
available by writing to:
Parent Without Partners
7910 Woodmont Avenue
Washington, D.C. 2000**

WHEN SOMEONE VERY SPECIAL DIES:CHILDREN CAN LEARN
TO COPE WITH GRIEF

by Marge Heegaard to be illustrated by children.

This book was designed to teach basic concepts of death and help children understand and express the many feelings they have when someone special dies. Communication is increased and coping skills are developed as they illustrate their books with their personal story.

LEARNING TO SAY GOOD -BY: WHEN A PARENT DIES

by Eda LeShan

In this book LeShan discusses the questions children have when a parent dies.

GOOD GRIEF: HELPING GROUPS OF CHILDREN WHEN A
FRIEND DIES

by Sandra Sutherland fox.

**A List Of Books From A Centering Corporation Resource
1531 N. Saddlecreek Road
Omaha, NE 68104
402-553-1200**

MY DADDY IS A STRANGER

by Vicki Cochran

I HAVE TWO DADS

by Linnea Schulz

HERMAN AND FRIEND

by Sandy Priebe

A story of TLC - Treatments, Losses and Coping.

REMEMBER RAFFERTY

by Joy Johnson

A book about the death of a pet... for children of all ages.

THIS TIME IT'S ME

by Joy and Dr. S.M. Johnson, Lisa Molek, Mary Vondra and Martha Jo Church. A book for the young person who has just found out she's pregnant.

SUICIDE OF A CHILD

by Joy and Marvin Johnson

For parents whose child has committed suicide.

HURTING YOURSELF

by Dr. Eugene Oliveto and Jeanne Harper

For young people who have attempted suicide or intentionally injured themselves.

GRIEF COMES TO CLASS: A TEACHER'S GUIDE

by Majel Gliko-Braden

THIN ICE

by David Buthman

Parents who have lost two young children.

GOD IS A BIRDWATCHER

by Linda Musser

A journal story of a mother who lost her son and must write to help in the grieving process.