Bibliotherapy: Using Children’s Books to Heal, Cope and Grow

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What is Bibliotherapy?

- Practice of using literature to help children learn, develop, heal, cope and grow

- Opportunity to work through difficult situations

- Involves reading, discussing and follow-up activities
An important distinction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinical Bibliotherapy:</th>
<th>Developmental Bibliotherapy:</th>
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<td>used by trained professionals</td>
<td>used by teachers, librarians, families</td>
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\[ \text{self-help} \quad \text{creative} \]

http://bibliotherapy.ehs.cmich.edu/

Why could Bibliotherapy be helpful?

- Canada is ranked 25th in the world in terms of child health and wellness \((Children \ First\ Study, \ 2018)\)

- Classrooms - wide range of social, emotional and learning difficulties... + inclusion

- Strained budgets = fewer professional supports
Why Children’s Literature?

- Inexpensive and widely accessible
- Provides a focal point
- Quality text and illustrations attract, draw, hook
- Co-construct knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978)
- Transformative power of stories (Rosenblatt, 1982)
- Multimodal literacies
- Lifelong love and appreciation of books and reading

Criteria for Young Children’s Book Selection

- High literary quality
- High quality illustrations
- Reflects diversity
- Human experience
- Authentic (culturally conscious)
- Accurate
- Range of styles, literary structures, genres
- Award winners or honors
Anxiety

Fears, phobias
Worries
Obsessive compulsive tendencies,
Nervousness,
Restlessness

Book titles and sample questions:
Resilience

*Perseverance, overcoming*

*Courage,*

*Growth mindset,*

*Positive thinking,*

*Problem solving*

Book titles and sample questions:
Diversity

Cultural diversity,

Individual diversity,

Different perspectives

Book titles and sample questions:
Lots of other topics...

- emotional regulation
- prosocial skills
- grief, divorce, illness
- risk taking
- disabilities
- body changes, babies
- family differences
- LGBTQ perspectives
- communication
- collaboration/cooperation
- Indigenous histories
- critical thinking

Some ideas for facilitating discussions...

- Trust and mutual appreciation
- Fair opportunity to contribute
- Model active respectful listening
- Sufficient wait times
- Steer away from one-sided, digressive or subjective conversations
- Allow difficult issues/questions to be raised
- Keep conversation focused on goals, solutions and results - not necessarily ‘on-topic’

www.edglossary.org/protocols
Helpful Hints for Successful Story Sharing...

**Well before the story** (without kids)

**Just before the story** (with kids)

Helpful Hints for Successful Story Sharing...

**During the story**

**After the story**
Other ideas...

- Model and use Wonder Talk
- Don’t ask if there are any questions...assume there are!
- Think about how you word the questions
- Meet in smaller groups whenever possible
- Set the stage for flexible thought, persistence and transformative potential
- Consider follow-up activities that extend learning and ideas
- Prepare to take on many roles...simultaneously

References


References


References


THANKS!

Questions? Comments?

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