

**PICTURE BOOK BIBLIOTHERAPY:  
A HANDBOOK FOR INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP COUNSELLING**

by

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## **Picture Book Bibliotherapy: A Handbook For Individual And Group Counselling**

Picture storybooks offer situations that are at once universal and unique, and they do this through the skillful interweaving of art and text. Unfortunately, their potential as instruments of bibliotherapy is rarely realized. This project was undertaken to present the multidimensional nature of picture books and their efficacy as therapeutic tools. To that end, I researched bibliotherapy approaches and combined tenets of affective bibliotherapy with methodologies of reading theorists and practical applications from reader response theory to create a new therapy, which I christened picture book bibliotherapy. I crafted a handbook of read aloud strategies, processing activities, group workshops, and therapy termination procedures to use with 12 commercial picture books, in order to inspire therapists and clients to explore the worlds of talented writers and illustrators, with the ultimate goal of finding new ways of experiencing personal growth and change.

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## Introduction

I fell in love with picture books when I was a toddler and I have only become a more ardent enthusiast of children's literature with the passing of time. As a pre-reader, I was naturally drawn to the illustrations. I examined them minutely while being read to, absorbing them and pouring over them in an attempt to unlock the secrets of reading for myself. Sometimes I used the pictures as signposts to re-tell a story in my own words. Then, as a budding reader, I became devoted to decoding text, neglecting the pictures in my new-found enjoyment of words and language. Eventually, as a confident reader, I grasped the unique and essential magic of picture storybooks. Neither the pictures nor the words were self-sufficient. It was the seamless blending of illustrations and text that created a harmonious and inseparable story.

Picture books, with their beautiful illustrations, expressive language, and poignant and meaningful themes, have universal appeal (Gunning, 1998). Over the last twenty-five years, in my work as a teacher, college instructor, and librarian, it has been my pleasure and privilege to share picture books with children, teenagers, and adults. In my work as a counsellor, I have become increasingly aware of the profound effects that the therapeutic use of picture books can have on the lives of clients in a counselling setting. A book to be read aloud, like a gift waiting to be unwrapped, tantalizes and entices. The client and the counsellor connect with each other in novel and authentic ways as they engage with illustrations, with text, and with each other (Brownlie & Close, 1992). They are facilitated in their work as the reading aloud turns the picture book, page by page, into a therapeutic event. Both client and counsellor have opportunities to make personal discoveries, and they may find themselves identifying with the characters they meet, with the author and illustrator of

the work, and with other readers of the story whom they later encounter. The story allows them to respond spontaneously to the characters' problems, but provides the client and counsellor with objectivity and emotional distance, leading to a greater understanding of the issues to be explored in counselling, as well as to new insights into ways of thinking, feeling, and acting on the path to meaningful change (Mohr, Nixon & Vickers, 1991).

## **Chapter One: Picture Book Bibliotherapy**

Clients of all ages, and with a wide range of counselling concerns, benefit from picture book bibliotherapy (Rubin, 1978a). Unfortunately, there is a lack of general resources for counsellors. The materials that are available tend to address very specific and specialized populations. Resources for adult clients are primarily designed for use in psychiatric hospital settings. A further difficulty with literature-based resources is that they lose their value when the picture books recommended go out of print and become difficult to obtain. Therefore, bibliotherapy resources for counsellors are most effective when built around classic, quality picture books that stand the test of time. They should also include new and emerging authors and genres, with the clear intention of providing up-dated editions as social, marketing, and technology changes affect the publication and sale of children's literature.

Lack of resources may be the primary difficulty in providing clients with effective bibliotherapy experiences, but there is also the potential for a lack of understanding about the purposes and methods of bibliotherapy on the part of many counsellors, as well as on the part of clients. Some counsellors are uncomfortable with the idea of reading a picture book to a teenager or adult client and may dismiss such a practice as demeaning to themselves and/or to their clients. Counsellors may find the discussions generated by a picture book taking unexpected turns, and rather than facilitating understanding, clients may be left feeling vulnerable and bewildered. Clients themselves may be resistant to the idea of spending part of a therapy session exploring a picture book and they need to be informed and reassured that a counsellor has chosen bibliotherapy for specific reasons (Gladding & Alderson, 2012). Only when client and counsellor mutually consent to engage in bibliotherapy (even when agreement is accompanied by healthy scepticism) can it become an effective tool.

## **Purpose of the Affective Handbook**

This project, a handbook of bibliotherapy using picture books, was created with the fundamental goal of promoting client self-understanding, in the interest of empowering and helping clients of all ages. It has been my purpose to provide practitioners with stories and strategies as tools to enable them to assist their clients to process, interpret, and integrate the messages and themes of well-chosen picture books. In this way counsellors may sensitively and empathically guide clients toward coping with the challenges of living.

## **Rationale For The Counselling Design**

In planning the design for this project, I was compelled by the need for up-to-date bibliotherapy resources for counsellors, but I was also aware that a handbook purporting to promote multicultural, Aboriginal and international literature, and expanded views of the roles of men and women, while offering strategies and activities for clients of all ages, in individual and group therapy, in such diverse settings as schools, hospital wards, places of worship, community centers, and correctional facilities, required meticulous preparation. To produce a handbook that is widely applicable and easy to use, I presented the materials according to the picture storybook categories employed in library databases of children's literature. I have fully explained these categories and the design of the project handbook in Chapter Three.

I have found some bibliotherapy resources limiting because the literature prescribed has been so narrowly classified that the books are only intended to benefit very specific client populations. For example, the picture book called *Michael Rosen's Sad Book* (Rosen, 2004), which describes the author's sadness when he remembers his son, who died, is often shared

with child clients working through loss. Here is a brief excerpt from the story: “Who is sad? Sad is anyone. It comes along and finds you (Rosen, 2004, no pagination).” Michael Rosen’s very personal story of grief and loss has a message for anyone who has experienced moments of sadness. The author’s descriptions of his ways of coping with sadness are deeply moving, sometimes funny, and incredibly wise. The book is, indeed, a wonderful resource for grieving clients; however, it is also very effective for other clients, those struggling with depression, or with medical diagnoses, or with relationship issues. All may read and be touched by this book.

By using broad categories, this picture book bibliotherapy handbook achieves several aims. First, and fundamentally, the project allows counsellors to appreciate picture books as multidimensional therapeutic tools, able to reach many different clients, through the adaptive techniques that I have created and presented using a variety of response activities, for a specific collection of picture books. Secondly, this project provides resources with wide application and appeal. The intention of the handbook is to deliver flexible, well-organized plans and ideas in the hope that counsellors will find something truly practical and helpful that will further their work with their clients. To that end, my goal has been to select each picture book with care and to create each accompanying set of strategies with deliberation.

An important consideration in producing this project was whether bibliotherapy really requires elaborate strategies and resources. Certainly a purist could argue that the three needful elements in bibliotherapy are a book, a client, and a counsellor, in a similar manner that a Rogerian therapist maintains that the three core conditions for person-centered therapy are empathic understanding, congruence, and unconditional positive regard.

The plethora of counselling methods and theories demonstrates that human beings, in their uniqueness and diversity, are not served by a single therapeutic approach. While I have known the power and beauty of simply being in the moment, reading aloud, as a client experienced insight, healing, and peace; it has been a rare event. Typically, during bibliotherapy, the chosen picture book and the read-aloud experience have been a stepping-stone, a tool, whose potential was more fully realized by the use of additional strategies. As I explain in detail in Chapter Two, opportunities for responding to literature through dialogue and creative expression are extremely empowering and worthwhile (Mitchell, 2003). Clients are more comprehensively served when a bibliotherapy session is enriched with well-chosen activities that contribute to personal meaning-making (Fox, 2008). I would be reluctant to deprive my clients of these experiences.

## Chapter Two: Picture Book Bibliotherapy—A Review of the Literature

*The more you read,  
The more you know.  
The more you know,  
The smarter you grow.  
The smarter you grow,  
The smarter your voice,  
When speaking your mind  
Or making your choice.*

(National Library Week Poster, as cited in Tiedt, 2000, p. 33)

Bibliotherapy means different things to different people. This project was designed as the vehicle for a very specific form of bibliotherapy called picture book bibliotherapy, in which the pictures and the text of a story are completely intertwined, and the reader, consciously or unconsciously, responds to both the written word and the artistic images in the selected work. While the majority of the picture books used in bibliotherapy are works of fiction, non-fiction titles, especially autobiographical accounts and works from oral traditions, are also well-suited. While many resources exist for therapists of children and teenagers, I have never encountered any bibliotherapy manuals, aside from this project, that offer picture book bibliotherapy for adult clients.

### Defining Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy, as a form of counselling, began in psychiatric hospitals in the early twentieth century, as a natural outgrowth of the practice of reading to the sick and the mentally ill, which had been popularized in the nineteenth century in works like *On Reading, Recreation, and Amusements for the Insane* (Galt, 1850, as cited in Rubin, 1978b, p. 13). Because the therapy evolved from the integration of aspects of library science, psychology, education, literary studies, and counselling, a practitioner's definition of bibliotherapy is



shaped by his field of expertise, just as his method of conducting bibliotherapy is influenced by his theoretical orientation to counselling and his professional training (Rubin, 1978a). As a bibliotherapist, I exemplify this blending of professions; my inclusion of adult clients in my practice of picture book bibliotherapy is the serendipitous product of my experiences as an adult educator and my years of work in college and university libraries, in combination with my background in children's literature, my work as an elementary and secondary school teacher, and my training as a counsellor.

In summary, there is no unified definition of bibliotherapy and no single methodological approach. Instead, the discipline is divided into two major orientations: cognitive bibliotherapy and affective bibliotherapy. The one feature common to all bibliotherapy is the requirement of some form of reading (Schechtman, 2009).

### **Cognitive Bibliotherapy**

Cognitive bibliotherapy consists of providing clients with educational materials, frequently in the form of treatment manuals. In theory, it is a self-help intervention, characterized by the minimal participation of the counsellor (Tallman & Bohart, 1999). Non-fiction materials are used to assist clients in coming to a deeper understanding of their unique difficulties, and the learning becomes the catalyst for behavioural change (Glasgow & Rosen, 1978).

Cognitive bibliotherapy was discovered to be a successful form of treating traumatized soldiers and civilians in the years following World War 1, which started a trend in self-help literature that continues today (Rubin, 1978b). In modern practice, the therapeutic literature is often introduced by the counsellor to the client as homework and is either brought into the

therapeutic work in subsequent sessions, or remains an adjunct to therapy that is solely the responsibility of the client. Cognitive bibliotherapy groups frequently begin their sessions with members reading instructive literature aloud, using the literature as a spring-board for discussion and problem-solving. In cognitive bibliotherapy, there are two crucial elements: (1) non-fiction literature that guides individuals to improve their functioning and solve their problems; and (2) some contact with a therapist (Tallman & Bohart, 1999). I have include a selection of cognitive bibliotherapy resources in the appendix to this project, as a reference for counsellors, but these didactic materials are not the focus of my handbook, which is firmly rooted in affective bibliotherapy.

### **Affective Bibliotherapy**

Affective bibliotherapy, with its foundation in psychodynamic and humanistic counselling theory, is based on the shared experiences of the counsellor and client as they read and process literature together (Gersie, 1997; Gladding, 2005). Affective bibliotherapy occurs during the therapy session, as work that strengthens, unifies, and enhances the empathic relationship of the counsellor and the client (Gold, 1990). The purpose of the literary sharing is to enable the client to identify with characters and/or situations in fiction, in order to experience catharsis, and to gain insights that will enable him to challenge life events for personal growth and change (Shechtman, 2009).

Picture storybooks allow clients to distance themselves from the sensitive and painful topics of their lives (Mohr, Nixon, & Vickers, 1991). This safe exploration of emotions and human relationships existed before the field of psychology was ever established, and before the advent of picture storybooks, through the novels of Tolstoy, and the writers who followed his lead (Yalom, 1998). High-quality literature continues to offer situations, dilemmas, and

conflicts that are both universal and unique (Gold, 1990). In affective bibliotherapy, the therapist is present as both a fellow-traveller and a facilitator, drawing the client into the story, and leading him safely through whenever the story threatens to become emotionally overwhelming or anxiety-provoking (Teglasi & Rothman, 2001). A skilled therapist alleviates and/or legitimizes a client's feelings during the reading. Client and therapist may stop frequently during the read-aloud session to explore and discuss the pictures, as well as the story. Books with abstract or ambiguous pictures are especially fertile ground for the expression of client creativity and imagination (Schechtman, 2009). Together the counsellor and client are able to experience a wide range of human thoughts and emotions, as they journey through the words and pictures of the book (Hill, 2005; Kottler, 2010; Prochaska, 1999). Clients can find hope, even in very difficult circumstances, through the unexpected and alternative solutions provided by stories (Bettelheim, 1976).

### **Selecting Picture Books**

Choosing picture books that have the potential to assist clients in the process of self-understanding can seem a daunting task (Mohr, Nixon, & Vickers, 1991). Books that artfully blend and balance pictures and story are essential for successful picture book bibliotherapy (Benedict & Carlisle, 1992; McElmeel, 2000). Like a photograph, a therapeutic picture storybook evokes emotions, stirs up memories, challenges assumptions, creates connections, and holds a timeless appeal that makes the book valuable for helping clients of all ages (Mitchell, 2003). Many diverse picture books share these important features and become excellent tools in the hands of a skilled therapist. Here are specific criteria that I consider when selecting picture books for affective bibliotherapy. Appropriate literature must provide opportunities for clients to: (1) gain insight about themselves; (2) gain insight about

others; (3) see themselves in books and feel reassured that they are okay; (4) see that the world is not made up only of people like them; (5) experience models of coping; (6) share in an experience that they may not ever have had; and (7) kindle personal creativity in response to the book's language and illustrations (Mitchell, 2003). Books with therapeutic characteristics enable counsellors and clients to have meaningful conversations that link the world of the story to here-and-now reality, and vice versa (Cooper & Kiger, 2009). Such books have the potential to become catalysts for real change.

Another important aspect of the counsellor's selection of bibliotherapeutic picture books is his appreciation of the books themselves (Gold, 1990). A counsellor who does not enjoy picture books should not attempt to counsel using picture book bibliotherapy. Faith in the efficacy of the storybook, and a genuine appreciation of both the pictures and the text, are crucial to successful bibliotherapy. A book that does not resonate with a counsellor should not be used in his therapy work no matter how highly recommended the book may be (Trelease, 2006). By the same token, a client's responses to a picture storybook must be considered from the opening moments of the shared read-aloud experience. The client must actively engage in the process in order for the therapeutic outcomes to be meaningful. A skilled counsellor recognizes that a picture storybook is only effective when both counsellor and client find purpose and value in its therapeutic use (Gladding, 2005).

**Societal constructs in picture books.** Picture storybooks are never simply the pictures and the story. There is a wider context to consider, which includes the author's world view, the illustrator's world view, and the reader's world view (Holdaway, 1979). It is the counsellor's task to consciously probe the underlying assumptions that form the basis of his belief system, and to acknowledge that his responses to literature are filtered through this

personal lens (Kohl, 1995). Because his societal constructs may cause him to be blind to potential issues of racism, sexism, classism, and gender stereotyping the counsellor must proceed with caution in selecting and evaluating bibliotherapy resources (Mitchell, 2003).

Mitchell (2003) has created a list of five questions, as criteria for evaluating the beliefs and assumptions embedded in picture books.

- (1) Who or what was included and who or what was left out of the scope of the book?
- (2) What information does the author assume the reader knows?
- (3) What attitudes are shown toward people, animals, and even the land?
- (4) Who has the power? How is this power shown?
- (5) What is shown as being important or good? (p. 179)

These evaluative questions assist the counsellor in uncovering the biases and beliefs of the writer and illustrator. A counsellor will not necessarily dismiss a book because of the biases and beliefs revealed by these questions. Rather, the questions permit the counsellor to dig more deeply beneath the surface of the story and broaden his perspective, so that during the therapeutic read-aloud session the opportunities for client-counsellor discussion and personal sharing are enriched and extended (Bishop, 1997).

Bibliotherapy picture books can act as both a mirror and a window for clients (Cullinan, 1982). In addressing the basic therapeutic aim of client self-understanding, bibliotherapists who incorporate resources from culturally diverse literature stimulate and enhance client awareness of diversity within diversity in the experience of being human (Galda & Cullinan, 2006).

**Integrating multicultural and Aboriginal literature.** Canadian people have a rich and diverse heritage. Multicultural literature is defined as the work by and/or about ethnic groups that have not historically had a voice in mainstream culture (Temple, Martinez,

Yokota, & Naylor, 1998). These groups include the Aboriginal peoples, immigrants to Canada from around the world, and Canadians with multicultural backgrounds.

Multicultural literature focuses on the issues of multiple cultures in Canada (Mitchell, 2003).

Counsellors recognize the benefit to clients of seeing themselves in books through the sharing of multicultural and Aboriginal picture stories (MacDonald, 2008). Clients who have never experienced the opportunity of identifying with a book character may feel marginalized or insignificant. For these clients, the book is a window. Conversely, clients who only see characters similar to themselves in books may feel that those who are different are less worthy, or may completely fail to recognize that others exist. For them, the book is a mirror (Bishop, 1997). Through multicultural and Aboriginal literature, clients experience the mirror and the window. They gain insight into the existence of multiple viewpoints. The books provide concrete evidence that there is never only one objective or true way to look at the world, and through the stories, clients learn about themselves (Aronson, 1996).

Multicultural and Aboriginal literature can be classified in three ways, as: culturally neutral, culturally generic, and culturally specific. Culturally neutral books present stories that an illustrator has chosen to depict through culturally-specific art, or with characters with culturally diverse features, but which could equally be portrayed with another genre of artwork. Culturally generic books intentionally feature culturally-specific settings and characters, but the stories are otherwise generic, and the situations are ones shared across cultures. Culturally specific books illuminate nuances of a particular cultural group. The text and the artwork together reflect their language, attitudes, customs, values, beliefs, and ethics (Bishop, 1992). All three types of books are important because they provide a vehicle

for multicultural and Aboriginal experiences, but the culturally specific books, in particular, enhance the reader's understanding (Temple, Martinez, Yokota, & Naylor, 1998).

As previously discussed, for picture book therapy generally, counsellors must evaluate multicultural and Aboriginal books with care. The Council on Interracial Books for Children (CIBC) offers help in selecting books that avoid racial and sexual stereotyping. As well, Slapin and Searle (1998) have established specific criteria in selecting Aboriginal books, which involve evaluating author and illustrator bias toward dress, word use, lifestyle, relationships between people, humanness, and definitions of success. In using Aboriginal picture books with clients, it is important to first ascertain whether the client accepts the sharing of indigenous people's stories as acceptable practice. Some clients (and some counsellors) believe that Aboriginal stories have been stolen from various nations by mainstream society, regardless of whether the author and illustrator were from inside or outside the culture (Gray, 2011). They believe that Aboriginal stories should not be shared by anyone who is not a part of the specific ethnic group. Clients' beliefs must be acknowledged and respected. Honest, open discussion can pave the way to the selection of other books from the vast array of picture storybooks, and to a shared empathic understanding of culturally sensitive issues.

**Integrating international literature.** Counsellors and clients are all, by broad definition, world citizens, so it is appropriate to include picture storybooks from around the world for bibliotherapy. These books, like multicultural and Aboriginal books, present new ways of seeing and knowing the world. The difference is that international books, intended for local audiences, present cultures from around the world in the present day, each one with a unique voice and a unique perspective (Mitchell, 2003). With the help of a translator, the

culturally-bound text becomes available to the world, and, with the aid of the illustrations reveals the complexities of people and place (MacDonald, 2008). Some clients benefit from books that treat topics and themes that are often avoided by Canadian and American publishers, such as books that normalize discussions of bodily functions, and books that realistically and unflinchingly portray disturbing subjects of suffering, grief, and loss (Tomlinson, 1999).

One warning to counsellors looking for international books to add to their bibliotherapy collections is that the majority of mainstream international books are from other English-speaking countries, which eliminates the need for translation, but means that the stories typically portray lifestyles, traditions, and Euro-centric views similar to those depicted in the literature of many Canadian authors (Mitchell, 2003). Books in translation, picked up by large North American publishers, are generally selected from among the prize-winning books in their countries of origin, and are often edited and revised to further increase their marketability in North America (Stan, 1999). This means that they also tend to be Euro-centric and conform to the themes found in many Canadian picture books. There is nothing wrong with international books that lead the reader to instant identification and connection; however, counsellors who recognize that the best international stories surpass superficial comparisons, will strive to acquire picture books that expand their clients' experiences of diversity (Galda & Cullinan, 2006).

Kane/Miller, a California publishing company, is a notable exception to the general rule regarding international books. This company actively seeks out, translates, and publishes books that offer diverse points of view, describe life in the present in foreign countries, and incorporate sensitive topics. Their aim is to empower readers to act on the



insights they receive through the experiences of the characters in these books. Book characters that cope with difficulties in a culture, community, or situation while retaining a positive sense of identity and self-worth, may be facilitators of client growth and change (Miller, 2002).

Organizations like the Canadian Chapter of the International Board of Books for Young People actively work to promote the inclusion of international points of view in mainstream literature (Galda & Cullinan, 2006). Their efforts to bring international picture books to Canadian readers assist counsellors in acquiring beneficial bibliotherapy resources. International picture books enable clients to recognize that although cultures, and the individuals within cultures, are distinct and diverse, people everywhere share a universal need for love and acceptance. As well, all people are linked to others by bonds of kinship, and have basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing. These are messages that speak powerfully to bibliotherapy clients (MacDonald, 2008).

### **Responding to Picture Books**

In order for picture book bibliotherapy to fully assist the client, there must be time before, during, and/or after the read-aloud session for responding to the literature (Tiedt, 2000). Responding to picture books can include a wide range of activities, but its central goal is to value the literature and experience it fully, so that its meaning and its impact for a client become tangible (Mitchell, 2003). Readers make meaning through the transactional process that occurs between text and self (Rosenblatt, 1996). The work of the author and illustrator, in creating the picture storybook, lays the foundation for the many diverse interpretations, reactions, and responses of readers, as they interact with and make sense of

the book (Cooper & Kiger, 2009). No author or illustrator can ever fully conceive of the impact their work will have, because reading experiences are different for each person.

Bibliotherapists benefit from the work of reading theorist Judith Langer (1995) and her envisionment stances of reading. Counsellors who work from an envisionment model are attuned to the reading processes that occur during a read-aloud session. Envisionments are defined as the understanding that the reader has of the text in a given moment (Langer, 1995). There are four stances of envisionments that a reader may assume as he or she reads and discusses a story: Stance One, "Being Out and Stepping In;" Stance Two, "Being In and Moving Through an Envisionment;" Stance Three, "Stepping Out and Rethinking What One Knows;" and Stance Four, "Stepping Out and Objectifying the Experience." (Langer, as cited in Mitchell, 2003, p. 113). In the first stance readers enter the story. They begin to build an envisionment as they look for clues about the characters and events and try to predict what is to come. In the second stance readers become immersed in the story. They bring their personal knowledge to the text and fill in the gaps in the story with their understanding of the text, themselves, others, life and the world. In the third stance readers focus away from the story to determine what the messages and ideas from the text mean for their own lives. In the fourth stance readers distance themselves from the envisionment that they have created and relate the picture book to other works and experiences. In this stance counsellor and client discuss what the book means, how it works, and gain awareness of why particular authors, illustrators, and works hold personal significance for them (Langer, 1995).

The work of envisionment as described above appears to be a straightforward linear process, but that is misleading. Reading and meaning-making are complex processes rather than events. Envisionments are not static, and readers are constantly moving around in the

stances as they read. Counsellors who recognize their own movement through envisionment stances as they respond to a book are better equipped to provide their clients with rich and full bibliotherapy experiences (Mitchell, 2003). Clients are encouraged to take time to reflect on what they read to deepen their understanding by text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997). Between sessions they may want to re-read the picture book multiple times, adding to and reshaping their understanding of their unique perspectives (McCormick, 1994).

### **Processing Responses to Picture Books**

The purpose of bibliotherapy, as explained earlier in this chapter, is to help clients to gain insights into life challenges, in order to facilitate change. The bibliotherapy experience begins with a counsellor and a client, who have established a therapeutic alliance, meeting in session together to read aloud a picture book which has been specifically selected by the counsellor. Clearly, the reading is only one aspect of the comprehensive bibliotherapy process. Transmediation is the means of taking understandings created in one sign system, such as language, and moving them to another sign system, such as art, drama, music, or movement (Short & Harste, 1996). Responding to literature through transmediation allows client and counsellor to travel enormous distances from the created work of the picture storybook into the production of personal creative artistic expressions, and on to innovative approaches to daily challenges and struggles. Determining the types of response activities to use with each client stems from the counsellor's expertise, as well as his or her willingness to model response activities for the client (Morganett, 1994). The client's needs and the efficacy of the interventions inform the counsellor's practice and determine which response activities are selected.

**Talk.** Engaging in conversations about the therapeutic book is at the heart of every read-aloud session. A pre-reading discussion sets the stage, supplies useful background information, and ascertains the client's familiarity with the author, illustrator, and book (Brownlie & Close, 1992). Open discussion between counsellor and client, before the reading session, allows the client to voice concerns, ask questions, and raise issues (Buehl, 2001). It provides the counsellor with an opportunity to explain the reason for the book selection. The counsellor needs to be clear that the client is free to end the reading at any time if he or she should feel uncomfortable or distressed by either the story or the process (Morganett, 1994; Schechtman, 2009). This pre-reading discussion phase paves the way for honest communication throughout the therapy sessions.

Some clients enjoy stopping regularly during the story reading in order to make comments and observations. Certain stories lend themselves well to this technique. Stopping for discussion throughout the reading can even lead to abandonment of the book at some point, in preference of extended talk therapy. The book is always just a tool, so it is important that counsellors do not become focussed on finishing the story at the expense of a client and his needs (Mohr, Nixon, & Vickers, 1991). Occasionally clients prefer to hear a story in entirety before embarking on discussion. Again, much depends on the story structure and on the ability of the client to navigate between the text and the here-and-now. The most successful sessions of read-aloud are those that are "lightly" planned. Because each session is a product of the shared interactions of the counsellor and the client with the picture book, sessions should not be scripted or over-rehearsed, but rather flexible and open-ended (Hill, 1994). A skilled therapist is careful to follow a client's lead in the session, and to add to the discussion as a means to further the client's participation and engagement (Kohl, 1995).

One effective way to assist clients to share what they are thinking and feeling as they read is Chambers' (1996) discussion method which he calls the "three sharings." The first phase is called "sharing enthusiasms." Counsellor and client describe things they liked and that made them want to continue reading. They then describe things they disliked or that made them less eager to continue. The second phase is called "sharing puzzles or difficulties." Here the discussion centers on things in the story that the readers questioned or found unclear. As well, counsellor and client probe their own and each other's reactions and responses. The third phase is called "sharing connections," and is similar to the fourth stance of envisionment, where the readers move beyond the text to other works and other experiences of a personal nature.

Counsellors must be well-prepared with questions, observations, and reflections that will stimulate clients and extend their responses, but they must avoid assuming an expert stance on the story, or gratuitously offering unsolicited opinions and interpretations (Richardson, 2000). Just as the client is the expert in his or her own life, so too, he or she is the meaning-maker in bibliotherapy (Whitman & Boyd, 2003).

**Art.** Drawing, sketching, and painting which are vehicles of visual expression, are important methods of making meaning, representing the world, and understanding thoughts and feelings (Ernst, 1994). All readers create mental images as they read. These images are what make it possible for people to talk about literature and make the story experience come to life (Mitchell, 2003). Talking about these mental images helps clients to deepen their reading experience, but sketching or drawing these images does much more to take the client even further. The act of engaging in artistic expression challenges clients to experience things in a new way (Whitin, 1996). Even those who consider themselves to be non-artists

can become fully engrossed in the wonder of creativity in response to reading. As mentioned earlier, the counsellor, modelling the response behaviour, actively participates alongside the client in sketching or drawing.

As an example, when both counsellor and client sketch their interpretations of the same scene from a story, their drawings can fuel rich discussion. Likely they will have focussed on different aspects of the scene, and will have viewed the characters, setting, and events in very different ways. They may have included themselves in their representations and /or taken out characters entirely. They may have worked in a style similar to that of the book's illustrator, or in an entirely personal manner. The details in each person's sketch hold multiple meanings that can be explored through conversation. Each artist's unique characteristics (beliefs, values, age, gender, ethnicity, etc.) will be bound up in his or her representation, in the items he or she chooses to represent, in the way that he or she portrays the scene, and even in what he or she chooses to omit. Formal art analysis plays no part in picture book bibliotherapy. The counsellor has no authority or right to analyze the content of the client's sketches and drawings. The client, as artist, is the expert of his or her artistic work. The counsellor and client use their drawings in order to make observations, with the aim of the client coming to a personal understanding of his or her life, as revealed to him or her in his or her work. The client may find it useful to answer some or all of the following questions when responding to his or her own pictures (Hubbard & Ernst, 1996).

1. What do you see in your picture(s)?
2. What do you feel as you look at your picture(s)?
3. What is the story in or beyond your picture?
4. If you went inside your story, what would you find?
5. What inspired you?
6. What surprised you or what did you discover as you worked? (p. 18)

Satisfaction and pleasure in the process of creating, coupled with the opportunity to talk about and reflect on the artwork, enhances the entire bibliotherapy experience (Bowman & Bowman, 2005). For many clients, the inclusion of an art response activity imparts clarity about real-life problems in ways that discussion alone cannot.

**Writing.** Writing, like talk, is a language-based response intervention. It differs from talk by freeing the client to respond honestly and passionately on paper with words and expressions he may not ever speak. After the unburdening, the client may objectively and dispassionately review his or her words on the page, create distance from emotionally-laden themes and topics, and heighten his or her awareness of the connections between his or her thoughts, feelings, and actions. Counsellors and clients using a cognitive behaviour therapy framework may find this form of writing especially helpful (Gladding & Alderson, 2012). For other clients, the need is not for outpourings, but for slow, thoughtful reflection that, for them, comes more easily on paper than through talk (Katz & Chard, 1990).

There are many different kinds of writing activities that can augment the read-aloud experience. One of the most important reminders for counsellors is that every writing activity must be personally meaningful for the client and should flow naturally from the reading experience (Murray, 1982). As an example, during a bibliotherapy session the knowledge and wisdom of a character in a story may resonate with a client. In response to the client's thoughts and feelings, the counsellor could suggest that the client write himself a letter of encouragement, in the role of that character, as though the character were speaking directly to him or her (the client). It could also prove insightful for the counsellor and client to perform this task together. The important issue is that the activity not be contrived or forced. Writing activities proposed by the counsellor must be embraced by the client as a

creative expression that he or she is capable of achieving. It must be made clear that writing often passes through a number of drafts, re-writes, and changes once a writer begins a response activity, and that this is a normal and acceptable part of the writing process (Graves, 1983). At the same time, because the client is writing a bibliotherapeutic response, there are no imposed rules about what the final product should look like or be. The writing is for self-expression, for the client's self-understanding, and for the audience of his or her choice (Brownlie & Close, 1992).

Besides writing letters, clients often enjoy responding by writing poetry on the theme or topic of the picture book, or by jotting lists of words from the story that they find particularly descriptive of themselves or others (Mitchell, 2003). Creative writing response ideas are limitless. Some clients create memos and/or text messages from one character to another as a "dress-rehearsal" for real-world communications with the people in their lives (Mitchell, 2003). Some experiment with point of view by re-writing segments of a story from a particular character's perspective, or by creating newspaper articles about the characters and situations in the story (Johnson & Louis, 1987). Some writing activities combine elements of art with writing, like collage-making, where clients cut out words and pictures and rearrange them in personally meaningful ways in response to the reading, and story-mapping, where clients recreate the situations, elements, characters, and events from the story that were important to them (Hill, 1994). Many clients find that after reading a picture book, they feel compelled to write a story of their own, which may or may not include pictures.

Book projects with clients may appear formidable, but are very manageable when clients agree to work on some of the writing outside of session times, so that they may use



the therapeutic time to share their work in progress, and to discuss their experiences during the writing process. For young clients, a frame book, based on a familiar picture book, like *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie*, by Laura Numeroff (1985), where the phrases, “If I \_\_\_\_\_, then I’m going to have to \_\_\_\_\_.” can be filled in page by page to predict outcomes to personal actions. For other clients, an inexpensive hard-cover book with an inspiring or personally meaningful title can become a book craft project, where clients retain the book cover, but overlay or replace the book’s original, unwanted pages with personal images and writing (quotes, memories, journal, entries, etc.), resulting in a completely new book. There are many formats that a book project can take. Providing sample books, and helpful “how to” books, like *Literacy Through Literature* (Johnson & Louis, 1987), can inspire clients to begin the creation process. It is important for counsellors to offer encouragement and a non-judgemental stance during the sharing of written work (Katz & Chard, 1990). Writing is often a deeply personal medium, as epitomized by the many people who are closet diarists and journal-keepers, writing only for themselves. As with all response activities, writing is more meaningful to the client when the counsellor models and shares appropriately. As well, more than with any other response activity, it is important to check in regularly with clients to ensure that the writing not become a drudgery or chore. Helping the client to let go of a project that is no longer enriching the therapeutic experience is also a role of the counsellor during bibliotherapy (Wilhelm, 1997).

**Role-play.** The inclusion of drama activities in response to picture storybook bibliotherapy is another creative and dynamic method for deepening and enriching the client’s experience (Geldard & Geldard, 2010). A client who has been affected by the interplay between characters in a story may welcome the opportunity to role-play (Rubin,

1978b). There are many forms of role-playing a story. Reader's theatre, in which the client and counsellor simply take turns reading pre-determined characters' parts, is a non-threatening and playful way to introduce a client to the art of role-playing (Hill, 1994). In another form of role-play, the client and counsellor read the parts of characters, but modify and improvise the content to play the story out to a new conclusion, or to play and re-play a specific scene in a variety of ways. This allows the counsellor and client to explore the possibilities of different outcomes to an event. For some clients, especially for those with a flair for drama, the role-play may involve acting, as well as reading (Katz & Chard, 1990). The Gestalt "empty chair" technique can also be creatively applied to picture book bibliotherapy. Clients can remain in character as themselves, or they can assume the role of a character from the story. They can then address the empty chair, which can function as a significant person in their life or as another character in the story (Gladding & Alderson, 2012).

The essential elements for successful role-play are trust and rapport between counsellor and client, and the ability to communicate verbally and non-verbally to balance safety and risk. To ensure that the spontaneous and experimental nature of role-play results in catharsis, rather than in embarrassment or shame or unresolved feelings for either participant, time for debriefing the experience of role-play must be included in the therapy session (Guindon, 2011).

**Movement.** Related to role-play is movement. Clients who are physically able and willing to explore responding to reading through body movement find joy, healing, and release in the opportunity to engage in movement activities (Carmichael, 2006). Simple floor exercises, where a client listens to a descriptive passage and acts out the break-up of an icy

river during spring thaw, or the unfurling of a leaf, require the tensing and relaxing of muscle groups that culminate in relaxed, open-body postures. These activities engage the client at a deep level of awareness (Guindon, 2011). Stories in which characters experience transformation, as in the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly, lend themselves well to movement activities. Clients experience and work through the stages of the transformation process with exaggerated body gestures and actions. When clients experiment with repeating movements and creating patterns of movements, the activity becomes dance. Expressive, free dance allows clients to convey their feelings and to tell their stories without the need for spoken language (Geldard & Geldard, 2010).

**Music.** Closely related to movement and dance is the response to literature through music. Clients with a passion for listening to and/or making music enjoy the integration of music with story experiences (Mitchell, 2003). For some clients, the picture book leads to the memory of a song, which leads to the recall of a personal experience. Some clients simply enjoy matching story characters or elements with familiar songs, to deepen the story experience. For clients who experience difficulty expressing their thoughts through talk therapy, the words and/or melody of a song may act as a conduit for expression (Levitin, 2006).

Bibliotherapy offers multidimensional, life-enhancing opportunities for counselling. With a work of literature as a starting point, counsellor and client enter a relationship where they will share perspectives, make connections, and inhabit the worlds of talented writers and illustrators, with the ultimate goal of finding new ways of knowing themselves and experiencing personal growth and change (Gold, 1990). When counsellors use picture storybooks to deliver affective bibliotherapy, they best assist their clients when their work is

firmly grounded in an understanding of reading theory and reader response theory, and when they have the knowledge and expertise to skillfully blend literary experiences with creative response activities.

### **Chapter Three: Picture Book Bibliotherapy Applications**

The picture book bibliotherapy handbook for counsellors is a resource guide designed around 12 picture books. By reading the books aloud and working through the prepared response activities, counsellors are able to deliver effective bibliotherapy to clients of all ages, with a variety of counselling concerns, and in a variety of settings. Counsellors are busy people with many demands on their time. Finding and trying new techniques with clients can be daunting. The skill and effort involved in planning and implementing bibliotherapy can deter practitioners from getting started. The picture book bibliotherapy handbook delivers practical advice, strategies, activities, and follow-up assignments, to provide counsellors with a ready-made set of bibliotherapy lesson plans for immediate use, which can be adapted and modified as desired.

#### **An Overview of the Handbook Design**

The purposes of this project are: (1) to bridge the gap between the world of children's literature and the practice of individual and group counselling; (2) to recommend a rich and diverse selection of picture books for counsellors to read with clients; (3) to offer a comprehensive guide filled with creative strategies, activities, and therapeutic interventions to support counsellors in their work using the recommended books; (4) to include modifications for children, teens, and adults, as well as plans and suggestions for using the materials with individuals and with groups; and (5) to inspire and challenge counsellors to develop their own skills and approaches in the practice of bibliotherapy.

The layout of the handbook reflects these purposes, with four sections and an appendix. The first section of the handbook is an informative introduction to affective bibliotherapy,

which provides helpful how-to information about ways to read aloud to clients of all ages and ways to approach the topic of bibliotherapy with sensitivity and skill in a variety of counselling settings. The second section of the handbook introduces the 12 picture storybooks. There is a concise summary of each book, as well as online links to author and illustrator information. Each of the 12 books chosen for inclusion in the handbook had to meet the following criteria. Each one is: (1) an example of outstanding children's literature, (2) able to serve a variety of clients with a wide range of needs, (3) universal in its message, (4) ageless in its appeal, and (5) appropriate for use in multiple settings.

The third section of the handbook establishes the three stages of bibliotherapy: the read aloud stage; the response activity stage; and the wrap-up stage. There are strategies and reflexive questions to guide counsellors in appropriate book choice. There is an overview of the six response forms: talk, art, writing, role-play, movement, and music, and descriptions of their uses and integration. There are also suggested client assignments for the wrap-up session and important considerations for therapy termination.

The fourth section of the handbook is coded for ease of use. Presented in this section are the specific age-appropriate activities and interventions for six of the 12 books. Each book has an accompanying response activity plan, with ideas, activities, assignments, exercises, and interventions for children, teens, and adults. The planned activities are designed based on the developmental stage theories of Piaget (cognitive development) and Erickson (psychosocial development), but counsellors are encouraged to select activities from across the entire age range to meet the needs of individual clients. In this final section of the handbook, there are also plans for three supplemental workshops for small group bibliotherapy, arranged thematically so that counsellors can work with groups through

multiple sessions of bibliotherapy. The appendix contains lists of additional picture storybooks on related themes and a reference list of cognitive bibliotherapy books for psycho-educational use with clients.

### **A Guide to the Handbook Topics**

The collection of the 12 picture books is arranged in four broad categories based on library database categorization: (1) three books dealing with emotions; (2) three books for understanding experiences through the natural world; (3) three books about interpersonal relationships; and (4) three books to stimulate the imagination. There is considerable overlap among the topics, and the categories are intended as an aid to book selection, and not as a prescriptive guide. For example, a book dealing with emotions can also be a book about interpersonal relationships, and vice versa. My classifications signal the therapeutic function I assigned each book and the specific focus of the response activities that accompany them. Books that I have categorized as dealing with emotion are supplemented by predominantly reflective and contemplative activities, while books to stimulate the imagination are supplemented by predominantly spontaneous and unstructured artistic activities.

The bibliotherapy workshops for small groups complete section four of this handbook. Each workshop consists of four group sessions, with one picture book featured per session. The workshop books are chosen from among the 12 picture books. A further list of suggested books is included in the appendix. There are three small group themes: (1) exploring grief and loss (for children); (2) recognizing catalysts for change (for adults); and (3) mindfulness strategies (for teens).

I have intended to appeal to a wide audience. As I have already explained, a single picture storybook can appeal to a diverse audience. I have deliberately exploited such books, since they form the core of every good therapeutic picture book collection. I have endeavoured to create a practical handbook, filled with detailed response activities, age-appropriate instructions, and thematic small group workshops to provide a hands-on resource book for counsellors to use with clients of all ages, with a multitude of counselling concerns, in a variety of settings. It is my hope that this project will prove a welcome addition to the collection of bibliotherapy resources for counsellors.



## **Chapter Four: The Handbook of Picture Book Bibliotherapy**

I envisioned this handbook for counsellors as a bridge between the world of picture storybooks and the work of therapy. The guide is designed to support therapeutic work with children, teenagers, and adults. The underlying premise of this handbook is that children's books are powerful vehicles of therapy for all clients. A skilled bibliotherapist is able to take a well-chosen picture storybook and read it therapeutically with a child, a teen, or an adult. The same picture storybook is the counselling instrument for each one, but the therapeutic sessions look quite different as the therapist matches his or her approach to the specific client's cognitive and psychosocial abilities, and varies his or her techniques according to each individual's therapeutic needs. This chapter offers a blend of familiar and novel approaches to bibliotherapy, extending picture books' purposes and meanings in order to demonstrate that picture storybooks are tools of therapy, able to assist clients of all ages, with very different issues and needs, in individual and group settings, wherever counselling occurs.

### **Preparing to Read Aloud**

Whenever I hear the phrase "read aloud," I am instantly transported back to childhood. My memories include sitting with classmates at the story carpet, eagerly entering new realms of imagination, and cozy family groupings by the sitting room fire, sharing Dickensian adventures, of lying tucked up snugly in bed, asking for just one more story, and of basking in the glow of a campfire, mesmerized by the spell of a master storyteller. Those were magical experiences.

I began to experiment with bibliotherapy as a way to capture some of that magic with my clients, to foster that safe, comfortable intimacy, that abiding curiosity, that sense of possibility, of shared adventure, which reading aloud had given me. And along with the deepened bond that grew from the shared experiences, there were the beneficial effects of sharing, re-telling, questioning, and discussing that all stemmed from reading aloud.

Picture storybook bibliotherapy is a wonderful way to extend therapy for a client, because the book creates space out of time, away from everyday realities and problems, allowing probing and exploration of real issues at a safe distance. This handbook advocates working with clients by reading aloud a picture storybook and then processing the experience using counselling and psycho-educational techniques, for a combined approach of read aloud, talk therapy, and reader response – an affective bibliotherapy experience which the counsellor and client perform together. The shared read aloud is integral to the work.

Practicing picture book bibliotherapy with young clients is readily understood and accepted. Children are read to, even after they can read for themselves, and are unsurprised at the thought of a grown-up reading to them. As well, picture books are intended for children, so child clients, reading picture books, are hardly out of the ordinary. This is not the case with older clients, so there are, naturally, some special considerations in the approach to their use of picture storybooks. I offer the example of popular family movies. The layers of meaning in the film, conveyed visually and verbally to a wide audience, transform the event, so that what is enjoyed by a child may be quite different from what an older person understands and experiences, which may be quite different again from what the filmmakers intended. Picture book bibliotherapy for clients of all ages operates in just this way. Some books, like some films, are universally appealing, and these are the ones best

suited for use with clients of all ages. Picture book bibliotherapy is not a technique that works with every picture book and neither is it a technique to use with every client. Just as I would not arrange a movie-viewing for someone who dislikes movies, I would never read aloud with a client who actively dislikes books and/or being read to. As well, I find it most beneficial to initiate picture book bibliotherapy work after establishing a therapeutic alliance with the client, and when I have already learned something of the client's own story.

So what leads to using picture books to assist clients? A way in may be something as simple as a client expressing frustration that he or she cannot stop feeling sad, or that he or she cannot resolve a conflict with a spouse. Another starting point may be the client's sharing of a dream or a nightmare. Yet another avenue may be suggested by a "stuck" client, at a stage where therapy is not moving forward. All of these are examples of potential opportunities for beginning bibliotherapy with a client. Because I spend a great deal of time reading and examining children's books and because I have been working with and using children's books for over 25 years, I often find that a book title suggests itself to me while a client is sharing, and when I produce the book and suggest it as a therapeutic tool, that becomes the starting point. Familiarity with picture storybooks makes this a simple task for me. I feel fortunate that my life-long addiction to "pic lit" has proved more than just a strange, compulsive obsession, which was occasionally difficult to justify when I was no longer a child, or a parent of small children, or a primary grade teacher. To this day I frequent the picture book sections of libraries and bookstores and regularly add new finds to my growing collection of children's literature, so it is quite natural that my zeal extends to encouraging counsellors and clients to discover the enormous potential of picture books.

For counsellors new to picture storybook bibliotherapy, starting to use picture books is more problematic. The themes and topics that the client reveals may lead a counsellor to consult an index to children's books and search for possible titles, but the process is time-consuming and the books unfamiliar. And when a counsellor goes out on a limb and selects from a list of recommended titles, the books must then be found in the library or bookstore, or ordered online, before the work can begin. Here, in this handbook, I eliminate the complications of book selection, by tackling the procedure in reverse. Instead of starting with the client, I present 12 commercial picture books with wide audience appeal. I ask counsellors to read the summaries of the stories and look at the response activities that I have planned for integration with the read aloud. Do any of the books suggest a client and/or a client's needs in some way? Could reading this book together, and when I say reading, I mean sharing, with time to stop and discuss along the way, be a help, either alone, or in combination with other techniques? Could this book be the entrance to something positive and enriching in the client's life, to stimulate personal growth, inspire creativity, and lead to change?

Getting clients of all ages interested and eager to participate in bibliotherapy begins with a gentle suggestion that a new form of therapy be initiated, along with a general explanation about the ways that a picture book will be used to implement this therapy. When introducing bibliotherapy, I am clear that I have chosen a book specifically for the client, and that my act is deliberate and intentional. Clear explanations in the early stages go a long way to reducing clients' skepticism, anxiety, and reluctance to participate. Communicating directly about the bibliotherapy process is beneficial. It enables me to address the doubt and resentment of a client who questions paying to hear a book read aloud. It allows me to

reassure a client who worries that I am using the books because I am not genuinely interested in his or her problems. I am very clear that I do not regard “pic lit” as a way to “dumb down” real, deep personal issues. I find it worthwhile to point out that often, in fact, picture books are the by-products of their authors’ need to process and make sense of issues in their own lives. So at the very least, by embarking on a bibliotherapy journey, there is the potential to discover ways that others respond when faced with issues and challenges in life, and at best, the book becomes a path to self-discovery, restoration, and change. Each book is an introduction to new people - the characters in the story - as well as the book’s author and illustrator, and these new people have different ways of viewing the world. For some clients, the story opens vistas that they have never seen, either literally, through the artwork, or metaphorically, through the writer’s ways of knowing. Sometimes illustrations in a picture book, with silent eloquence, capture everything a client wishes to express but cannot put into words. Finding a book that speaks directly to a client’s heart can be a revelation.

If a client is resistant, then picture storybook therapy, at this point in therapy at least, is not the way to proceed. My rule is that I never read to an unwilling audience. And that brings me to the matter of preparing to read aloud with clients of all ages. There are many practical books for parents, teachers, and librarians on how to read to children, and I include a list of these in the appendix. But to assist counsellors to work with populations of older clients, I have created the following strategies for preparing to read aloud. The most important aspect is the rehearsal. I pre-read the book, and this means aloud, to myself. I often feel self-conscious at first. I like to do the initial read-through without focussing too critically on my performance and then I close the book and try to re-tell the story. I will jot down the re-telling very briefly in point form, and also make comments on the pictures,

where appropriate. Then I will compare what I have recalled with the book itself. It is often surprising and insightful to notice what I remembered and what I missed. That first reading is important. It uncovers my biases, my interpretations, and leads me to question, and to connect the reading to other experiences in my life. I end up with a good sense of what resonated with me, and what I avoided, or found difficult, what I liked and disliked, before I go into session with a client.

Still in the rehearsal phase, I now do a second re-reading of the story. This time through I'm more like an actor, rehearsing a part. I take time to work out the pronunciation of names and the phrasing of certain pieces of dialogue and narration. I may try out different voices for the different characters. I am wary about over-acting because I know that an overly melodramatic reading will defeat my aim of establishing a safe, comfortable shared space. Too many theatricals will detract from the story's message and may even embarrass or anger the client. On the other hand, subtle voice changes and changes in the pacing of the reading will add layers of impact and drama, like the artistry of that campfire storyteller I alluded to earlier. When I am satisfied with my reading, I may do a third run-through, to a supportive yet critical audience of a spouse, a child, or a friend, who will provide me with feedback on my performance. This last step is most important for counsellors new to reading aloud, or for those who tend to over-dramatize and need to be told to lose the hand gestures, etc., which they felt were quite acceptable. Reading aloud with a client should feel natural and enjoyable. If one is nervous about the performance, it will be difficult to be present with the client, or to be swept along and engaged in the story. Counsellors can hardly expect the client to enjoy the experience and benefit from it, while they remain disengaged. Rehearsing allows one to gain mastery of the material in order to create that inviting, intimate

atmosphere which enhances the shared experience. Those who read aloud regularly to small children will likely already have a good sense of their audience's receptivity and will probably forgo the third rehearsal altogether; nevertheless, these counsellors should keep in mind that their teen and adult clients may prove a more discerning audience than sleepy children with a vested interest in extending their bedtime.

### **The Collection of the 12 Picture Books**

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the therapeutic picture books are classified according to four categories, which are intentionally broad. I have selected three books that deal specifically with emotions, three books that examine experiences through the cycles and patterns in nature, three books that feature interpersonal relationships, and three books that stimulate and inspire the imagination. These four categories can assist a counsellor in narrowing the search for a particular book to read with a particular client. As I have already explained, I select books for clients based on my knowledge of children's literature. What a client tells me in therapy leads me to a book connection. Making the connection between the book and the client is not forced; it happens naturally as I think about the client and process the session. Other counsellors find the same thing happening for them with clients and a movie or TV program, a mental health website, a community program, a self-help manual, etc. Connecting clients with diverse, meaningful resources helps them to know that they are not alone, and enables them to continue the work of therapy outside of the counselling session. While not the purpose of this handbook, I believe that self-help books and other literature are wonderful adjuncts to sessions of affective bibliotherapy, and I include lists of thematic resources, both picture books and non-picture books, in the appendix.

In this handbook, rather than matching books to clients, I match clients to books. I am not too concerned that the “match” be an exact fit. For example, even though the picture book *That Summer* is a story about the illness and death of a child, it is helpful for many clients, and not only those who have lost a child or family member. The story offers universal messages about love and loyalty, about hope and resilience. I use this book with various clients, both children and adults, as a starting point for exploring a variety of counselling issues.

There are all kinds of stories. This collection contains stories about death, illness, conflict, despair, anxiety, loneliness, and betrayal, but those themes are balanced with courage, perseverance, beauty, healing, hope, and humour. Multicultural and Aboriginal books, as well as international books, are part of this collection of books. I selected the books based on the following five criteria. First, each book had to be an example of outstanding children’s literature, with a seamless blend of illustrations and text. Next, the book had to be adaptable for the discussion of a variety of counselling issues. Third, the book had to contain universal elements that would resonate with all clients. Fourth, the book had to engage clients of all ages through the artwork and layered message. Finally, the book had to be appropriate for use with individual clients, and also in group settings. I further limited the selection to books in print at the time of writing, readily available from major booksellers. Most of the authors and illustrators in this collection are world-famous award-winners, whose works have stood the test of time, but I have also ensured the addition of new voices in children’s literature. The 12 picture storybooks in this collection deftly expose our essential human needs and frailties and offer a variety of responses to the condition of being human.



## Picture Books Dealing With Emotions

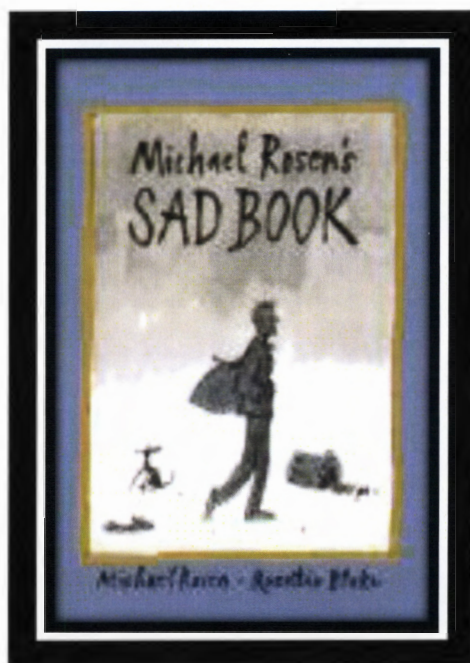


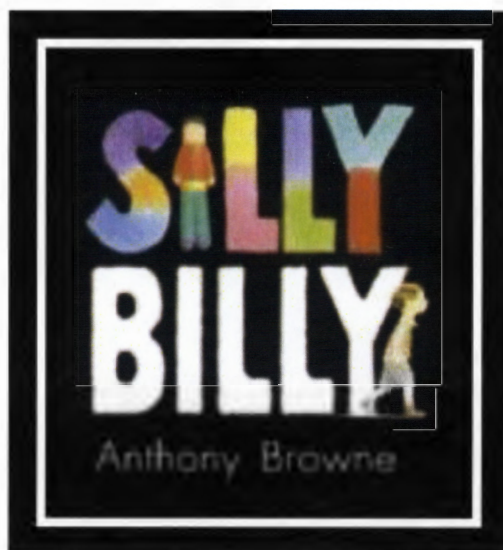
Figure 1. Book cover image for *Michael Rosen's Sad Book*.  
(Cover art for all 12 books is taken from the amazon.com website.)

Title: Michael Rosen's Sad Book  
 Author: Michael Rosen  
 Illustrator: Quentin Blake  
 Publisher: Candlewick Press, 2008  
 ISBN: 978-076361047

**Book Summary:** In this autobiographical account, author Michael Rosen describes his despair following the death of his son, Eddie. He explores the ways that sadness makes him feel and explains some of the things he does to cope with those feelings. Sometimes he talks to people, sometimes he needs to be alone, and every day he tries to do one thing that he can be proud of. His honest explorations of his feelings and actions draw the reader into his world. Less a story than the frank disclosure of a soul in pain, this book portrays a courageous and resilient man during a time of grief and loss.

Author Internet Link: <http://www.michaelrosen.co.uk/about.html>  
 Illustrator Internet Link: <http://www.quentinblake.com/en/>

## Picture Books Dealing With Emotions



*Figure 2. Book cover image for Silly Billy.*

Title: Silly Bill

Author and Illustrator: Anthony Browne

Publisher: Candlewick Press, 2006

ISBN: 0-7636-3124-8

**Book Summary:** Billy is a boy who worries about things. His parents offer reassurance but Billy continues to worry. Finally, with the help of his grandma, Billy learns about Guatemalan worry dolls, and allows the dolls to do the worrying for him. Sadly, in the manner of chronic worriers, his relief is short-lived, and he begins to worry that he has given the worry dolls too many worries. Billy finds a creative solution that brings the story to a satisfying conclusion. A brief explanation of traditional Guatemalan worry dolls is included at the end of the book.

**Author Internet Link:** <http://www.walker.co.uk/contributors/Anthony-Browne-1481.aspx>

## Picture Books Dealing With Emotions

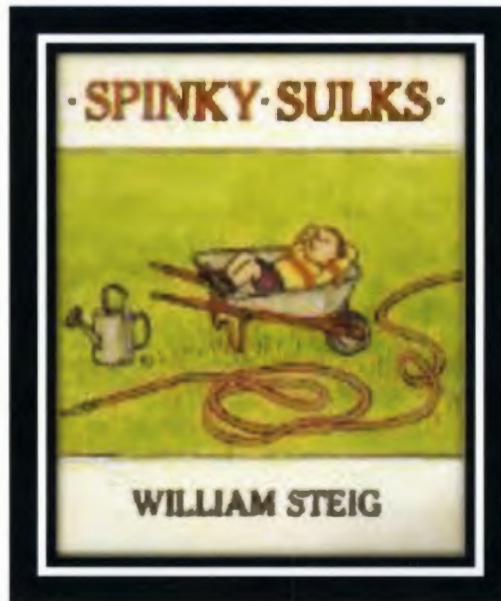


Figure 3. Book cover image for *Spinky Sulks*.

Title: *Spinky Sulks*

Author and Illustrator: William Steig

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988

ISBN: 0-374-46990-3

**Book Summary:** Spinky has thrown himself headlong into a terrible sulking fit and won't come out of it, no matter how his family tries to show him that they love and appreciate him. No one realizes just how long the self-imposed exile will last, not even Spinky, whose self-centered, self-indulgent, and self-pitying state keeps him outside in the backyard for several days and nights. Even a parade, a visit from grandma, and the antics of a hired clown fail to halt his general loathing of the human race. When he finally comes out of his sulk, Spinky finds a way to show his family that he really does care for them, without sacrificing his monumental pride.

**Author Internet Link:** <http://us.macmillan.com/author/williamsteig>

## Picture Books For Understanding Experiences Through Nature

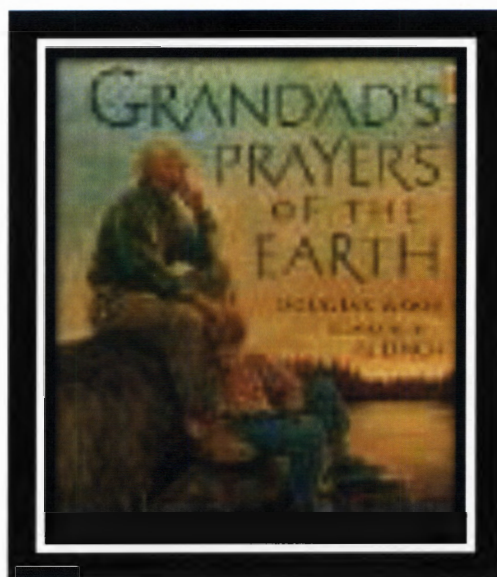


Figure 4. Book cover image for *Grandad's Prayers of the Earth*.

Title: Grandad's Prayers of the Earth

Author: Douglas Wood

Illustrator: P. J. Lynch

Publisher: Candlewick Press, 1999

ISBN: 0-7636-0660-X

**Book Summary:** The story unfolds as a boy and his grandfather walk through the woods over the course of the seasons, sharing their love of nature. The little boy asks his grandfather what prayer is, and Grandad explains that prayer is the gift of all the earthly things. Trees pray by reaching for the sky, birds pray by singing, and the water prays by flowing. Grandad reveals the act of prayer as a natural process and the act of thanksgiving as one of the greatest prayers of all. As the story progresses Grandad dies and the boy's prayers cannot bring him back. The growing boy turns his back on prayer, but later, as a teenager, finds that in walking through the woods he once again hears the prayers of the earth and gives thanks for his grandfather's life. In connecting with nature he is comforted and feels close to his grandfather again. This spiritual book contains no references to any deity or organized religion, only to prayer.

Author Internet Link: <http://www.douglaswood.com/>

Illustrator Internet Link: <http://www.pjlynchgallery.com/>



## Picture Books For Understanding Experiences Through Nature

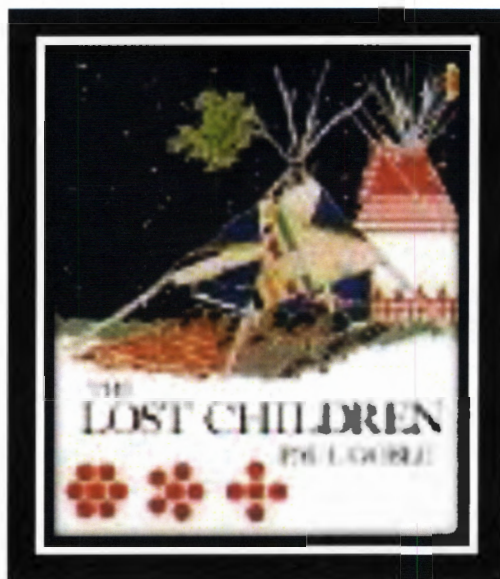


Figure 5. Book cover image for *The Lost Children: The Boys Who Were Neglected*.

Title: *The Lost Children: The Boys Who Were Neglected*

Author and Illustrator: Paul Goble

Publisher: Bradbury Press, 1993

ISBN: 0-02-736555-7

**Book Summary:** The author retells the sacred Blackfoot myth of the Pleiades, a cluster of stars in the sky. The story tells about six orphan boys neglected by the people, who are given only rags to wear and who never have enough food to eat. Only the camp dogs love the boys and so eventually the boys decide to leave the earth and go to the Above World to become stars. Sun Man and Moon Woman welcome the boys but send a drought on the earth because the people have not been kind to these lost children. The camp dogs' leader pleads with Sun Man to end the drought, and realizing that the animals are suffering, Sun Man sends the rains to revive the land. Ultimately, the camp dogs travel to the Above World, where they still sit in a ring around the Lost Children. The story features traditional artwork of the Blackfoot nation and depicts traditional ways of life.

**Author Information:**

Internet Link: <http://www.worldwisdom.com/public/authors/Paul-Goble.aspx>

## Picture Books For Understanding Experiences Through Nature

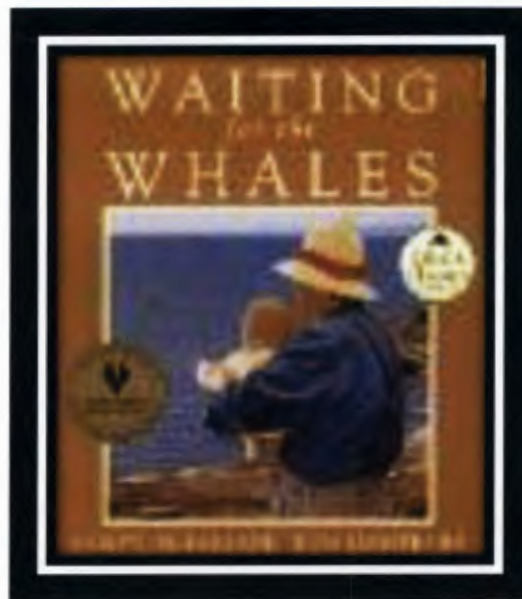


Figure 6. Book cover image for *Waiting For The Whales*.

Title: *Waiting For The Whales*

Author: Sheryl McFarlane

Illustrator: Ron Lightburn

Publisher: Orca Book Publishers, 1991

ISBN: 0-920501-66-4

**Book Summary:** The story opens with a lonely old man living along the Pacific coast. His life revolves around seasonal activities: planting, harvesting, collecting bounty from the tidal flats and woodlands, and waiting for the annual migration of the orcas. Then one year his daughter arrives with a baby daughter of her own. Together the old man, the daughter, and the granddaughter form a family. The old man passes on his lore of nature and his love of the orcas to his granddaughter. When he dies, his granddaughter mourns his passing, but finds new hope when the orca pod arrives in the strait with a new baby whale calf. This book beautifully portrays the natural progression of the cycles of life.

Author Internet Link: <http://www.sherylmcfarlane.ca/>

Illustrator Internet Link: <http://www.writers.ns.ca/writers/L/lightburnron.html>

## Picture Books For Exploring Interpersonal Relationships



Figure 7. Book cover image for *The Island*.

Title: *The Island*

Author and Illustrator: Armin Greder

Publisher: Sauerländer Verlag, 2007

ISBN: 978-1-74175-266-3

**Book Summary:** A naked man is washed up on the island. The islanders are afraid of him and want to send him back out to sea. Their fisherman persuades them to help the man, so they lock him in a goat pen. They neglect to give him clothes or food, so the starving man breaks out of the goat pen and comes looking for help. The islanders' fear increases and instead of offering the man an opportunity to work and maintain himself, they lock him back in the goat pen and feed him pig scraps. He becomes a nightmare figure in their minds and eventually they turn him out of the goat pen and force him back to his raft and send him out to sea. At the end of the story the islanders go to great lengths to ensure that no other strangers will reach their shore, including building an enormous wall of protection around their island.

**Author Internet Link:**

[http://www.walkerbooks.com.au/Authors\\_and\\_Illustrators/Armin-Greder](http://www.walkerbooks.com.au/Authors_and_Illustrators/Armin-Greder)

## Picture Books For Exploring Interpersonal Relationships

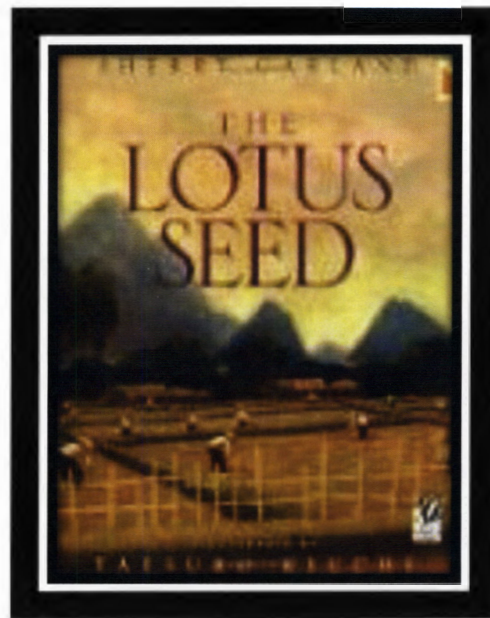


Figure 8. Book cover image for *The Lotus Seed*.

Title: *The Lotus Seed*

Author: Sherry Garland

Illustrator: Tatsuro Kiuchi

Publisher: Harcourt, Inc., 1993

ISBN: 0-15-249465-0

**Book Summary:** This story recounts the life journey of a young girl, born in Vietnam, who witnesses the emperor's grief when he abdicates his throne. The girl takes a lotus seed from the Imperial garden as a token of that day. The lotus seed remains her cherished possession as she grows up, gets married, loses her husband to war, and eventually emigrates to America with her children. She and her children work very hard. Much later in her life, her young grandson discovers her precious lotus seed and becomes captivated by its story. One night he steals the seed from the family home and plants it in the garden. The woman is distraught and the seed cannot be found, until finally, in the spring, a beautiful lotus flower blooms near the onion patch. At the end of the summer the flower fades and becomes a pod of seeds. The woman gives each grandchild a seed to remember her by and keeps one lotus seed for herself. The seeds are a special way for succeeding generations of the family to pass on and preserve their unique heritage.

Author Internet Link: <http://sherrygarland.swiftsite.com/>

Illustrator Internet Link: <http://tatsurokiuchi.com/>



## Picture Books For Exploring Interpersonal Relationships



Figure 9. Book cover image for *That Summer*.

Title: *That Summer*  
 Author: Tony Johnston  
 Illustrator: Barry Moser  
 Publisher: Harcourt Inc., 2002  
 ISBN: 0-15-201585-X

**Book Summary:** This story is told by an older brother about the summer that his younger brother, Joey, is diagnosed with a terminal illness. The family has only a few short months to be together and make memories. Grandma teaches Joey to quilt during the nights of pain when he can't sleep. The family find scenes to treasure every day. Joey's quilt pieces show the things he loved: his baseball glove, a fishing pole, and an owl. One square remains unfinished when Joey dies, and the family works together around the quilting frame to complete the quilt in loving memory of Joey.

**Author Internet Link:**

<http://us.penguinroup.com/nf/Author/AuthorPage/0,,1000016708,00.html>

**Illustrator Internet Link:** <http://www.moser-pennyroyal.com/moser-pennyroyal/Blank.html>

## Picture Books For Inspiring The Imagination

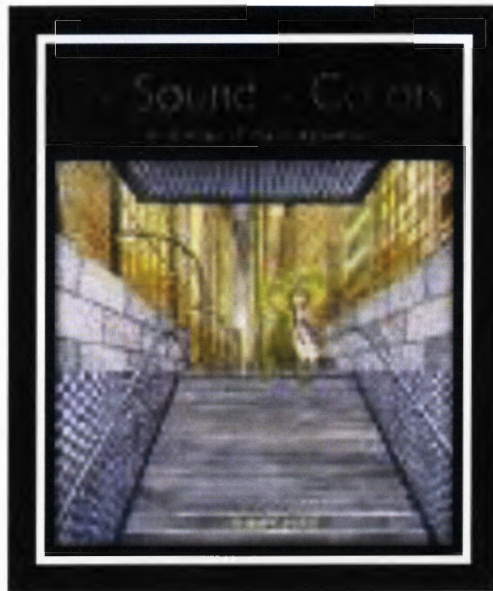


Figure 10. Book cover image for *The Sound of Colors*.

Title: The Sound Of Colors

Author and Illustrator: Jimmy Liao

Publisher: Little, Brown and Company, 2006

ISBN: 0-316-93992-7

**Book Summary:** This is a story about a girl who overcomes her disability of blindness and takes a journey on the underground, travelling from one station to another. Because the girl can no longer see the world, she imagines each subway stop in fantastical detail. At one stop she imagines herself floating above the clouds, and being gently wafted by the wind back into the train. At another stop she imagines she is in the ocean, swimming with a circle of dolphins. Throughout her journey the girl is searching for a friend, someone who will read to her, and sit with her, and who will be waiting for her at her journey's end. Finally a butterfly leads her up out of the darkness of the tunnel, and out of the darkness of her blindness, into the dazzling stained-glass light within her heart. This is a vividly imaginative picture book.

Author Internet Link: <http://www.jimmyspa.com/>

## Picture Books For Inspiring The Imagination



Figure 11. Book cover image for *The Three Questions*.

Title: The Three Questions  
 Author and Illustrator: Jon J. Muth  
 Publisher: Scholastic Press, 2002  
 ISBN: 0-439-19996-4

**Book Summary:** This is a story about a boy named Nikolai who wants to be a good person. He has three questions that he cannot answer, so he asks his three friends for their advice. His questions are: When is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do? His friends, a heron, a monkey, and a dog all have different answers to these questions but none of their answers are just right for Nikolai. Eventually he visits a wise old turtle. He helps the turtle in the garden and ends up rescuing a panda mother and her cub. Through his actions he learns that: The best time to do things is now. The most important one is the one you're with. The right thing is to do good for the one who is standing at your side. This is a Zen-based retelling of a story by Leo Tolstoy that speaks to living in the moment as a way to inner peace.

**Author Internet Link:** <http://www.allenspiegelfinearts.com/muth.html>

## Picture Books For Inspiring The Imagination



Figure 12. Book cover image for *Varmints*.

Title: *Varmints*

Author: Helen Ward

Illustrator: Marc Craste

Publisher: Candlewick Press, 2007

ISBN: 978-0-7636-3796-5

**Book Summary:** This is a story in three parts. It begins with a peaceful, pastoral world where the flowers bloom, and the bees buzz, and the little creatures live contentedly. Soon the world is invaded by “others” who bring towering buildings and deafening noise. One stalwart soul continues to nurture a little piece of wilderness high up in the oppressive city. He waits patiently for the growth of a strange pod-world that he has been longing for, which emerges from among the tall buildings. The pod-world is filled with radiance and light. The little creatures loads his precious bit of wilderness onto a wagon and drags it to safety. The city falls silent. Once again the flowers bloom, and the bees buzz, and the little creatures are content. This story, filled with ambiguous illustrations and minimal text, leads to all kinds of interpretations and discussions. It is a truly imaginative work.

**Author Internet Link:**

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/mar/29/featuresreviews.guardianreview32>

**Illustrator Internet Link:** <http://www.studioaka.co.uk/#/about-marccraste>

## **The Therapy Examined from Cover to Cover**

With a picture book selected for use with the client, the “match” has been made and the pre-reading, pre-session preparations for picture book bibliotherapy can proceed. Besides ensuring that I have practiced reading the book, I have examined my own responses to both the pictures and the text as part of my rehearsal process. I recognize that my reading experience has been filtered through the lens of my world view, and acknowledge that in the session there will be a wider context to consider, including the client’s world view, the author’s world view, the illustrator’s world view, and the characters’ world views. In planning for session reflection and discussion, I use Mitchell’s (2003) “Five Questions for Evaluating Beliefs and Assumptions Embedded in Picture Books” to appraise the book I have selected for my client. The questions help me to determine: (1) who or what is included (and, from that, who or what has been left out) of the story; (2) what the author assumes about my prior knowledge of the subject; (3) how people, animals, and the natural world are treated; (4) who has the power and how this is portrayed; and (5) what is important or good in the story. I have found these questions invaluable in uncovering biases and beliefs in picture books. I do not necessarily dismiss a book because of the answers I obtain, they simply help to broaden my perspective, and ensure that I have looked beneath the surface of the story to the societal constructs in the picture book. My final pre-session act is to remind myself of the purpose(s) of bibliotherapy for my client. Gold (1990) outlines the psychological benefits of shared literature, and I anticipate that my client may experience some of these: (1) identification with the characters and/or situations and/or settings; (2) modeling of behaviours; (3) a cognitive shift leading to a new perspective; (4) problem-solving to recreate story outcomes; (5) immunization by confrontation of feared situations;



and (6) normalizing of feelings and experiences. My faith in the efficacy of the picture book to help my client propels me into the bibliotherapy session.

In session there are three stages to the picture book bibliotherapy: the read aloud stage; the transmediation or response stage; and the wrap-up stage. The therapy usually requires two or three sessions to complete. At the beginning of the first session I set the stage for the read aloud story with some introductory information about the book, the author, and the illustrator, whenever these are relevant to the reading and/or interesting to the client. I find it important to share with my client my rationale for choosing a particular book specifically for him or her, because it immediately connects the client to the picture book, it fosters our therapeutic alliance, and it reassures the client that he or she matters to me as a person. I take the time to remind clients that they are free to end the reading at any time, especially if they are feeling uncomfortable or distressed by the picture book or by the therapeutic process. Stopping, in itself, can be a very fruitful avenue of exploration and growth. I allow time for the clients to ask questions and raise concerns. I generally spend more time in preliminary conversation with teen and adult clients, because they are understandably unused to hearing a children's story read aloud and unsure how to respond. Reframing the experience as "listening to a radio play, with accompanying illustrations, and the opportunity to interrupt the programme" is sometimes helpful.

Next I start reading aloud, either holding the book so that the pictures and text face the client, in the manner of a story time librarian, or sitting side by side with the client, with the book open between us. I read, because I have prepared to read. In the read aloud portion of the bibliotherapy I have the role of "reader," a role I have rehearsed, and which I am now enacting. The client, in the role of "listener," must be an active, engaged listener. In order to

foster this engagement, my other role is “facilitator.” I am ready to solicit participation in the form of gestures, comments, questions, and interjections, as I lead the client through the story. If the power differential in the counsellor-client relationship is an issue with a particular client, then the book may now increase the distance between us. In this instance I generally invite the client to share the reading aloud to address this perceived imbalance.

Engaging in conversation about the therapeutic book is at the heart of every read-aloud session, but client preferences, and the author’s style, dictate the manner in which this discussion takes place. Some clients prefer to hear the whole book read without interruption and save the talk for after, while others prefer to stop frequently to comment and discuss throughout the reading. Both methods are equally rewarding, so I follow the client’s lead. Occasionally the book itself does all the work of meeting the client’s needs. I once read the story *That Summer* to a grieving client. I read, while the client listened, and silent tears ran down her cheeks. During that reading, the client experienced empathic understanding and a sense of peace that she had never felt in session before. The author and illustrator reached out to her and offered her a way to begin to heal. After I finished reading, we both spent time silently reflecting on the story and I handed her the book so that she could go back and re-read several of the passages. That, in essence, was the session. With minimal sharing, the book met my client’s needs in ways that I had not been able to do with talk therapy. It was a deeply moving experience. That, however, is incredibly rare in my experience of the practice of bibliotherapy.

I believe that many counsellors, and many clients, expect that what I have just described is “real” bibliotherapy, and when clients don’t experience immediate catharsis, or don’t discover instant insights into their own behaviours, they become disillusioned, their

clients become disillusioned, and they abandon the book and the bibliotherapy. I also think some counsellors forgo the opportunity to practice bibliotherapy because they are waiting to find the “perfect” book. The counsellor, the client, and the book are not a magic triumvirate brought together in session for on-the-spot life transformation. Most of the time, the book is not the destination, but merely the starting point for further explorations of the real life problems and issues of the client.

The most successful sessions of read aloud are not scripted, but rather flexible and open-ended. During my pre-session rehearsal I have had the opportunity to examine my own responses to the picture book, so that during the session I am able to focus wholly on my client’s needs. My own understanding of the text and illustrations may be shared with my client, but only if and when appropriate. I am careful to follow my client’s direction in the session, and to add to the discussion as a means to further the client’s participation and engagement. Some discussions lead to an abandonment of the picture book entirely, in preference for extended talk therapy. It is important that I remember that the book is just a therapeutic tool. I must never become focussed on finishing the story at the expense of a client and his or her needs. Often in the first bibliotherapy session, when the picture book is introduced, there will be time to read the whole book, begin exploratory discussion, and wrap-up the session with an invitation to continue the bibliotherapy work in the following session.

The read aloud session was only the first stage in the comprehensive bibliotherapy process. Now, in our second session, the client and I move from the created work of the picture storybook into the transmediation stage. Together we take the understandings created in one sign system, such as language, and move them to another sign system, such as art or



drama. By providing the client with the opportunity for personal, creative, artistic expression I assist him or her to discover and explore innovative approaches to life's challenges and struggles. There are six therapeutic interventions that I use to facilitate processing responses to picture books: talk; art; writing; role-play; movement; and music. The talk, about the picture book, and about the clients' counselling issues, is purposeful. To empower clients to explore their thoughts and feelings I apply Chambers' (1996) "three sharings" method. I revisit the picture book with my client in our second bibliotherapy session to "share enthusiasms," "share puzzles or difficulties," and "share connections." I am prepared with questions, observations, and reflections to stimulate my client and extend his or her responses, but I am careful to avoid assuming an expert stance on the story or to gratuitously offer unsolicited opinions and interpretations. I am not an authority figure with all the answers, but a fellow-traveller with the client, sharing the journey into the world created by the author and illustrator. Clients who expect me to "tell" them what the reading is about are ultimately disappointed. Processing the story is therapeutic work. I can help to peel away the layers, but counselling is not literary criticism. I am not "teaching" the book. Just as the client is the expert in his or her own life, so too, he or she is the meaning-maker in bibliotherapy.

My experience as a bibliotherapist and my knowledge of my client will inform my practice and determine which other response activities, if any, will be pursued. Much depends on the client's personal interests, skills, and strengths, and the degree to which the interventions support and enhance the bibliotherapeutic experience. I believe that clients are more comprehensively served when a bibliotherapy session is enriched with well-chosen activities that contribute to catharsis, or to deeper insights into their behaviours.

Clients who feel more at ease conveying their thoughts visually than through talk therapy are encouraged to respond through art. I similarly invite clients to write, role-play, engage in movement activities, and to incorporate music into the session. Ideas for response activities are often suggested by the picture books themselves. For example, in the story *Silly Billy*, the main character creates worry dolls to help him cope with his anxiety. It is a natural response for clients to set about creating worry dolls of their own at the conclusion of the reading. Whatever forms the therapy takes, I actively participate alongside the client, modeling the response behaviour and/or sharing in the experience. The transmediation stage of therapy generally requires several sessions in order to revisit the picture book, respond in personal ways to ideas and events in the book, and connect those responses to personal issues, in order to promote growth and change. Chapter Two of this project provides detailed explanations of the six types of response activities, with examples of their use in picture book bibliotherapy. This handbook contains over 100 response activities, for clients of every age, to use with the collection of the 12 picture storybooks.

Wrap-up is the final stage of picture book therapy. In the penultimate session, I often assign my client a homework task to bring and share in the last session. It's the same task which I use in my preparation for bibliotherapy. I ask the client to recall the picture book story and to jot down a brief retelling, including doodles or descriptions of the illustrations, and any other details that come to mind. During the wrap-up we examine the picture book one final time, and the client has an opportunity to compare his jotted notes with the book itself. Often the discussion of the client's homework reveals cognitive shifts that have occurred over the course of the sessions. Just as I prepared the client for the experience of bibliotherapy, I am careful in preparing him for closure. For clients who are interested in

doing further work on their own, I provide a list of additional books by the author and/or other books on the same theme. Some clients wish to continue picture book therapy, and the wrap-up session becomes the launch for the selection of the next picture book. At the conclusion of this session I elicit client feedback about the bibliotherapeutic experience. I never lose sight of the very different interpretations, reactions, and responses of my clients to picture book bibliotherapy. The therapeutic work is always new, because reading and response experiences are different for each person, and no author or illustrator – or counsellor – can every fully predict the impact that the work may have.

The following pages contain the detailed response activities that accompany six titles in the collection of the 12 picture storybooks. I have laboured diligently to provide a comprehensive guide of hands-on resources for the six response forms: talk; art; writing; role-play; movement; and music. I have organized each picture book's response activities by age level: first is a set of therapeutic activities for use with children (marked with a star symbol), then a set of plans for use with teens (marked with a triangle symbol), and finally a set of plans for use with adults (marked with a square symbol), for a minimum of 18 response activities for each book. In my preparatory work, I created the therapeutic response materials for the youngest clients first. Since they were the intended audience of the picture books, it was relatively effortless to keep to the story's surface message and plan activities that would elicit personal responses. Next, I developed the adult materials for the same picture book. This was more challenging and I had to guard against tailoring the exercises to my own interests and abilities, or narrowing the perspectives of the stories' themes. When I came to write the curriculum for the teens, I was able to modify, adapt, and extend the lessons I had

created for children and adults. This explains the overlap among the 18 activities offered for each book.

The response activities are intended to be used by counsellors and clients after the read aloud session, during the transmediation stage of picture book bibliotherapy. I do not expect a client to complete all six of the response activities after reading the picture book. The reason for six response forms to choose from is that these are the six common ways in which human beings respond to literature. After the read-aloud session, I guide clients to select one response activity, based on their creative preferences and aptitudes, their responses to the story, and their stage in therapy. Whatever response activity is chosen, I actively participate in it alongside the client, processing this experience as we processed the picture book reading. If the work is helpful, then one response activity may lead to another, but I have found that less is often more, and a single response activity can often serve the therapeutic purposes. The most important principle to follow in the work is to value the literature, by reading aloud together and sharing conversation, and to experience it fully, by responding creatively, so that its significance and its impact for a client become the means of personal growth and change.

## Picture Books Dealing With Emotions

### *Michael Rosen's Sad Book*

#### Response Activities for Children



**Talk** Look at the picture on the first page of the story. Identify the things in the artwork that let you know that this “happy” face is really sad.

**Materials: the book.** List them. Expand the talk as desired. This is a warm-up for the role-play activity.

**Art** On a plain paper plate, create a happy/sad face mask. On one side of the plate, draw and decorate your happy face. Cut out holes for the

**Materials: paper plate, popsicle stick, clear tape, markers.** eyes. On the back, draw and decorate your sad face. Tape a popsicle stick to the bottom for easy flipping. What happens to your eyes when you change from happy to sad?

**“Cootie Catcher”** Look at the picture on the first page, of the “happy” sad face. Make

**Materials: the book, plain paper, scissors, markers.** a “cootie catcher” of hidden emotions by following the simple instructions for paper folding (online). Write the numbers 1-8 as instructed. Under each number write a “hidden” emotion. Write a “happy” or “neutral” expression on each of the 4 top squares, like “friendly,” “smiling,” “calm,” etc. Now take turns playing “cootie catcher” to reveal underlying emotions!

**Writing****“Letter of hope”**

**Materials: writing  
paper and envelope.**

Write a short note to Michael Rosen. What can you say to him that will encourage him and give him hope? Look through the story for ideas before you write. (You may wish to mail your letter. See the author’s homepage for contact information.)

**Role-play****“Emotion faces”**

**Materials: mirror,  
index cards labeled  
with emotion words  
(afraid, angry, etc.).**

Take turns making the “happy” sad face from the first page of the story in the mirror. How does this make you feel? Did your list from the talk activity help you to make the face?

Play a game using emotion word cards. Take turns picking a card, and then making a face to portray that emotion. Have the other player guess what you were emoting.

**Movement****“Happy hands”**

**Materials: index  
cards labeled with  
emotion words.**

What if we couldn’t show our emotions through our facial expressions, but only with our hands? Work out gestures to show different emotions just with your hands. (Extensions: try to show the emotions in a series: happy hands, angry hands, etc.; now do the exercise with just feet, etc.)

**Music****“Action song”**

Learn an action song about emotions. Sing aloud together, making up additional verses with emotion words and actions.

Song suggestion: “If you’re happy and you know it.”

## Picture Books Dealing With Emotions

### *Michael Rosen's Sad Book*

#### Response Activities for Teenagers



#### Talk

“Ways of being sad that don’t hurt so much”

#### “Brainstorming”

Brainstorm #1: Michael Rosen says he tries to do one thing every

#### Materials: the book.

day that he “can be proud of.” Look at the pictures and text. List all the ways to accomplish this daily goal.

Brainstorm #2: Michael Rosen says he tries to do one thing every day that means he has a “good time.” Repeat the exercise.

#### Art

Look at the text and illustrations on pages 10 and 11. Michael

#### “Cloud cover”

Rosen describes the sensation of having a cloud come along and

#### Materials: paper,

cover him up. The scene is shown four times, transitioning from

#### pen and ink, brushes

color, to monochrome. Divide the paper into four sections. Draw

#### and watercolors.

and paint your own changing scene of a “cloud cover” experience.

#### Writing

Write creative metaphors for sadness, following Michael Rosen’s

#### “Metaphors for sad”

lead. Or copy out your favourite metaphors for “sad” from the book

#### Materials: the book,

itself, like “It’s just a cloud that comes along and covers me up.” or

#### pen and paper.

“Sad is a place that is deep and dark...” (Adaptation: Turn your jottings into a poster, with different lettering styles, doodles, etc.)

**Role-play****“Eddie and me”**

**Materials: the book,  
an empty chair.**

Re-read pages 4 and 5 of the story. Michael Rosen expresses his anger at his son. Play the role of Michael and tell Eddie how you feel. Or play the role of Eddie, responding to Michael’s anger. (Adaptation: instead of book characters, talk to people in your life.)

**Movement****“Happy hands”**

Review the instructions for children. Make further adaptations to the movement activity as desired. (Adaptation: turn the series of hand movements into a “hand dance” that can be repeated. Rehearse and perform.)

**Music****“Theme songs”**

**Materials: the book.**

Think about music while looking through the book.

Try to name a theme song (or songs) to accompany each section.

Did your song themes change in any way as you read? Listen to a song selection now.



## Picture Books Dealing With Emotions

### *Michael Rosen's Sad Book*

#### Response Activities for Adults



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b><u>Talk</u></b>                          | Re-examine the illustrations for contrasts of uses of color. Quentin   |
| <b>“Contrasts”</b>                          | Blake subtly changes the scene with forays into gray. Reflect on   |
| <b>Material: the book.</b>                  | your responses to the color changes in the story. Are they significant to you? In what ways? Examine the last four pages. Contrast and compare the two scenes.                 |
| <br>  |  |
| <b><u>Art</u></b>                           | Review the instructions for teenagers. Adapt the art activity as   |
| <b>“Cloud cover”</b>                        | desired.   |
| <br>  |  |
| <b><u>Writing</u></b>                       | Michael Rosen is a novelist and poet with many published books of  |
| <b>“Rhyming verse”</b>                      | poetry. This book contains a short rhyming poem on page 17. Re-  |
| <b>Materials: the book, pen and paper.</b>  | read the poem and contribute new verses of your own. Start with “Sad is a place that is ....”  |
| <br>  |  |
| <b><u>Role-play</u></b>                     | This story is inhabited by a number of people, drawn in Quentin  |
| <b>“Talk to the author”</b>                 | Blake’s inimitable style. Imagine Michael in the empty chair, and  |
| <b>Materials: the book, an empty chair.</b> | take on the role of one of these people. What do you have to say to him? Suggested roles: Michael’s mom, Eddie, the listening woman, the angry man, the embarrassed girl, etc. |

**Movement****“Happy hands”**

Review the instructions for children. Review the adaptations for teenagers. Modify as desired.

**Music****“Theme songs”**

Review the instructions for teenagers. Adapt the music activity as desired.

**“Songs for sadness”**

Think about “songs for sadness.”

Are there songs you like to listen to when you feel sad? Are they songs to “lift” the mood or songs to “sustain” the mood?

Listen to a selection now.

## Picture Books Dealing With Emotions

### *Silly Billy*

#### Response Activities for Children



#### **Talk**

##### **“What worries me”**

**Materials:** the book,  
an erasable message  
board and marker.

Look at the story pages of the things that Billy worries about. Name them. Are any of them things that worry you? Make a list of some of things that worry you. Look over the list and circle one worry to work on today. This is a warm-up for the art activity.

#### **Art**

##### **“Worry doll”**

**Materials:** pipe  
cleaners,  
construction paper,  
stapler, markers.

Make a simple worry doll figure using a doubled-up pipe cleaner. Use additional pipe cleaners in other colours to make “clothes” for the doll. Make a sleeping bag for the worry doll out of construction paper. Staple two of the three edges closed, and draw pictures of your worry (from the talk activity) on the sleeping bag, as a reminder to let your worry doll do the worrying for you. This is a pre-writing activity.

#### **Writing**

##### **“Magic powers”**

**Materials:** worry  
doll.

Write all about your worry doll, in response to the talk and art activities. Give your worry doll a name. Describe the doll. How can your doll help you with your worries? Describe the doll’s special “magic powers.”

**Role-play****“Billy and his friend”**

At the end of the story, Billy helps his friends by making worry dolls for them. Act out the scene, with one person as Billy and the other as his friend. First pretend that you are the friend with worries. Tell Billy why you need him to make you a doll. Switch roles. This time, pretend you are Billy. Your friend isn't sure if the doll can help him. What will you say?

**Movement****“Worry release”**

This is a deep breathing and relaxation exercise. Lie on your back on the floor with your arms stretched out to the sides. You are a worry doll. Think of a worry and concentrate very hard, tensing your muscles in a progression from head to toe, feeling the tautness spread throughout your body. You are tense! But wait a minute; you can leave the worry in the doll! Release the worry, starting at your toes, through the relaxation process.

**Music****“Don't worry”**

**Materials: recording of the song by Bobbie McFerrin.**

Listen to the song “Don't Worry, Be Happy,” not to trivialise worrying, but rather to model singing as a coping strategy. Bobbie McFerrin's song features whistling and finger-snapping, so it's great for sing-along participation!

## Picture Books Dealing With Emotions

### *Silly Billy*

#### Response Activities for Teenagers



#### **Talk**

##### **“What’s normal?”**

##### **Materials: the book.**

Grandma normalizes Billy’s experience when she says, “You’re not silly. When I was your age, I used to worry like that.” How do her words affect Billy? When an older person says to you, “When I was your age ....” are their remarks helpful to you? Why or why not? Think of a time when you reached out to reassure someone that their experience was “normal.” Share your example. Why did you behave by “normalizing” in this instance? How did the other person respond? Discuss your reactions to having your own worries validated by others.

#### **Art**

##### **“Guatemalan worry doll”**

##### **Materials:**

**toothpicks, string, fabric scraps, needle, thread, permanent markers, craft glue.**

Make a traditional worry doll, like the ones in the story, or even a set, and a cloth pouch to keep them in. Follow simple instructions, available online, to make a worry doll. Start with a toothpick. Wrap the entire stick in thread. Glue it securely and then add the details to your doll. You can customize the clothing, size, and features of the doll to designate specific worries. For example, you can make a nurse or doctor doll for worries about health.

**Writing****“Healing words”****Materials: paper,  
pen.**

Writing about a worry is a wonderful therapeutic method of unburdening. Simply write about your worry, with complete honesty, without stopping to analyze or question, for a continuous length of time (15 minutes). Do not become preoccupied about grammar or spelling; just openly explore your thoughts and feelings.

**Role-play****“Dress rehearsal”****Materials: an empty  
chair.**

Have a trial run at talking about your worry to the empty chair.

Think about a specific worry. Think of someone you would like to tell about it. Practice talking about the worry.

(Modification: practice being the person hearing about the worry. Imagine possible reactions.)

**Movement****“Worry release”**

Review the instructions for children. Adapt the movement activity as desired.

**Music****“I’m so worried”****Materials: lyrics and  
recording of Monty  
Python’s song “I’m  
so worried,” and  
access to the  
internet.**

Listen to the song “I’m so worried” by Monty Python. Concentrate on the images that come to mind while you listen to the lyrics. Now watch a youtube video version of the song, a collage of art images, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0e10baH6cE>. Are the images similar to the ones you envisioned as you first listened? What happens to your thoughts when they are made concrete? Discuss this in the context of anxiety.

## Picture Books Dealing With Emotions

### *Silly Billy*

#### Response Activities for Adults



#### **Talk**

**“Tell me your worry”**

**Materials: the book.**

Re-examine Billy’s worries in the story book. As an adult, do you find it difficult to relate to his worries? Are you dismissive of his anxieties? Look at the responses of Billy’s father, mother, and grandmother. Which of their responses is the one you would like to hear about your own worries? If none of these speaks to your need, what is the response you’re looking for? Is such a response part of your regular self-talk? Discuss.

#### **Art**

**“Self-portrait with worry”**

**Materials: the book, paper, art pencils, art eraser.**

Look at Anthony Browne’s illustrations of Billy’s worries on pages 3-7 of the story. The pencil drawings, with Billy lying in bed while the worries invade his room, add a surreal, nightmarish quality to the scenes. Create your own pencil sketch in this style; a self-portrait of you lying in a bed with a worry of your own hovering about. Does the concretization of the worry change your feelings about it?

#### **Writing**

**“Healing words”**

**Materials: paper, pen.**

Review the instructions for teenagers. Adapt the writing activity as desired.



**Role-play** Review the instructions for teenagers. Adapt the role-play activity as desired.

**Materials: an empty chair.**

**Movement** Review the instructions for children. Adapt the movement activity as desired.

**“Worry release”**

**Music** Listen to the song “Free-floating Anxiety” by Nancy White. Does the premise of anxious thoughts assailing you as you lie awake in bed sound familiar? How do you deal with recurrent anxious

**“Free-floating anxiety”**

**Materials: lyrics and** thoughts? Do any of the singer’s worries resonate with you?

**recording of the** Discuss.

**song “Free-floating anxiety.”** Was the ending of the song a surprise, or had you predicted it? Do you agree with Little Richard’s solution to free-floating anxiety?



## Picture Books Dealing With Emotions

### *Spinky Sulks*

#### Response Activities for Children



#### **Talk**

##### **“Being ignored”**

##### **Materials: the book.**

In the story, Spinky refuses to talk to his family and friends. Have you ever tried to talk to someone who behaved like Spinky? How do you feel when someone ignores you? What do you do? Look at the ways Spinky’s family responds and compare their responses with your answer.

#### **Art**

##### **“A place for me”**

##### **Materials: the book, paper, coloured pencils, crayons, markers.**

Look carefully at all the different places that Spinky manages to find to sulk in – don’t forget the wheelbarrow on the front cover! Draw a self-portrait that shows you in your favourite place to go when you want to be alone. It can be a real place or it can be an imaginary place you would like to escape to. (Option: draw yourself in one of Spinky’s favourite places.)

#### **Writing**

##### **“Stay out!”**

##### **Materials: paper and pencil.**

Make a sign for Spinky to put out on the lawn to warn his friends and family to stay away. Write the message for him. How will you word the message to help everyone understand that Spinky does loves them (deep down), but he just wants to be left alone?

**Role-play****and****Movement****“Like a stone”****Materials: the book.**

This is an exercise that uses descriptions of Spinky’s behaviour as a basis for role-play and movement. Have your partner read these phrases to you while you act them out. Look at the pictures of Spinky if you need help! Then switch roles.

(1) Be too upset to see in front of you; (2) Shake to show you don’t want to be touched; (3) Lie down like a stone; (4) Let your arms hang like a noodle; (5) Cover your ears; (6) Go limp.

Now that you have practiced the 6 gestures, try a role play. Pretend that you and your partner are friends who unexpectedly meet on the street. Start a conversation. Pretend to become upset. Instead of letting your friend know, react with one of the 6 gestures.

What happens? Is your friend surprised? Switch roles. Talk about the difference between communicating with body language and with words.

**Music****“Circus time”**

**Materials: recording of circus music.**

When Spinky finally gets over his sulk, he dresses like a circus clown. Listen to a selection of circus music. Respond to the music with movement, if you like. How does the music make you feel? Does your mood change when the music stops?

## Picture Books Dealing With Emotions

### *Spinky Sulks*

#### Response Activities for Teenagers



#### Talk

##### “Nicknames”

Names are powerful. In the story, we learn two of Spinky’s nicknames: Stinky and Spinkalink. From the text and illustrations we learn that while one of the names is an insult, the other one is a pet name. Share your nicknames (if you have any), and the nicknames you give to others. Discuss how different names make you feel. Reflect on the statement: “When you take away my name, you take away my identity.” This is a warm-up for the writing activity.

#### Art

##### “A place for me”

Review the instructions for children. Adapt the art activity as desired.

**Materials: the book,  
paper, coloured  
pencils, crayons,  
markers.**

#### Writing

##### “Names”

Names are a label we carry throughout life. Our names are chosen for us, but each of us has a choice in how we shape our names for others. Choose one of the three writing exercise to write a short

**Material: paper,  
pen.**

descriptive story about your name. (1) Write about how you how you were named and what each part of you name means to you and/or to your family; (2) Write about the ways that your name has shaped aspects of your life, because of others' reactions to your name or to nicknames that they have given you; (3) Write about the ways that you shape your name to fit your life. Describe how this process is changing over time through the names that you give yourself.

### **Role-play**

**and**

Review the instructions for children. Adapt the role-play and movement activity as desired.

### **Movement**

**“Like a stone”**

**Materials: the book.**

### **Music**

**“Bad mood music”**

**Materials:**

**recordings of the  
songs.**

Listen to a selection of songs for sulking. Pretend that you are Spinky. Decide if each song improves your mood, makes it worse, or has no real impact either way.

**List of songs:**

**“Runaway” by Linkin Park**

**“A Place for my Head” by Linkin Park**

**“Saint Anger” by Metallica**

**“Otherside” by The Red Hot Chilli Peppers**

**“I Know Why You Want to Hate Me” by Limp Bizkit**

## Picture Books Dealing With Emotions

### *Spinky Sulks*

#### Response Activities for Adults



#### Talk

##### “Humouring

##### Spinky”

You may be surprised to know that this book is considered quite controversial and is even banned in some schools. Some parents and educators have publically denounced Spinky as a negative model for children. Others have hotly defended the book. What were your own first impressions of the story? Did you find yourself frustrated by the other characters’ treatment of Spinky? Did you identify more readily with any one of these characters? If you were visiting over the weekend, how would you interact with the sulky boy? Would you “interfere” in the situation or would you ignore the problem? Discuss, relating your thoughts to your own life experiences.

#### Art

##### “A place for me”

Review the instructions for children. Adapt the art activity as desired.

**Materials: the book,  
paper, coloured  
pencils, crayons,  
markers.**

**Writing****“Names”**

**Materials:** paper,  
pen.

Review the instructions for teenagers. Adapt the writing activity as desired.

**Role-play****and****Movement****“Like a stone”**

**Materials:** the book.

Review the instructions for children. Adapt the role-play and movement activity as desired.

**Music**

**“Sad is a universal  
language”**

**Materials:** access to  
the internet.

Music has the power to transcend language barriers and to evoke universal feelings, like feelings of sadness and self-pity, which are emotional components of sulking.

Listen to this multi-language mix of Disney’s saddest songs on youtube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xw4Q64bPCfc>.

There are tracks in Catalan, Korean, Norwegian, Thai, Danish, English, Finnish, Portuguese, Italian, German, Brazilian Portuguese, Swedish, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Japanese, and Arabic. Did your familiarity (or lack thereof) change your listening experience in any way?

## Picture Books For Understanding Experiences Through Nature

### *Grandad's Prayers Of The Earth*

#### Response Activities for Children



**Talk** In the story, Grandad listens to the prayers of the earth. Think about  
**“All beings pray”** your pet, or a pet you would like to have. How does a pet “pray,”

**Materials: the book.** according to Grandad? What do you think about Grandad’s ideas?

**Art** Draw a forest. Look at the story illustrations for ideas about things  
**“Nature scene”** to draw in your forest scene. Think about the things that Grandad  
**Materials: paper,** would say to you to help you understand how the things in your  
**coloured pencils,** forest are praying. (Extension: Add yourself to the scene. What  
**markers.** prayers are you expressing through your actions in the picture?)

**Writing** On the last page in the story there is a “thank you” prayer. Re-read  
**“Thank you”** the example and write your very own “thank you” prayer or a “thank  
**Materials: the book,** you” poem. Or, copy the prayer from the book. When you come to  
**paper and pencil.** the last line “and especially ... for my Grandad” change the words  
 “my Grandad” to the name of a special person in your life.

**Role-play** Slowly and majestically mime the people’s actions in the segment of  
**“Smell a flower”** the story on pages 15-16, while your partner reads. “Bending down  
**Materials: the book.** to smell a flower can be a prayer..., etc.” Feel the prayer through

your actions. Switch roles. Talk about the experience.

## **Movement**

### **“The tree”**

#### **Materials: the book.**

This is a guided movement exercise. Look again at the illustrations of trees in the book. Grandad begins his talk about prayers by describing how trees pray. Now pretend that you are a tree. Start out standing tall, being warmed by the sun, and move your trunk, branches, and leaves as the weather changes, as you experience the seasons of the year. You might want to add weather sound effects to heighten your experience. Do any of your movements feel like a prayer to you? (Extension: experience the life cycle of a tree, from sapling to mature tree to fallen log on the forest floor.)

## **Music**

### **“The wind sings”**

#### **Materials: five**

#### **empty plastic**

#### **bottles, a cup of**

#### **water.**

Have you ever heard the wind sing when it blows? You can create music by blowing, too. Blow across the top of an empty bottle to make sound. Practice this a little until you can consistently make the sound. Now put a little bit of water into the next bottle. Play the empty bottle and then the one with the water. The one with the water will sound higher. Add even more water to the next bottle, and the next, until you have a set of bottles with different pitches. Make up a pattern by blowing rhythmically, changing from bottle to bottle. Can you remember the pattern and play it over and over again? Enjoy composing a nature tune.



## Picture Books For Understanding Experiences Through Nature

### *Grandad's Prayers Of The Earth*

#### Response Activities for Teenagers



#### **Talk**

**“Are prayers answered?”**

**Materials: the book, access to the internet.**

In the story, the grandson wants to know whether prayers are answered. Do you remember Grandad's reply? Try and explain in your own words first. Then, turn in the book to page 18 to compare your response with Grandad's. Discuss your thoughts and opinions about Grandad's words. Do his ideas remind you of any philosophy, religious teaching, or spiritual practice? If yes, explain. If no, do a quick google search of the phrase “it is when we change ourselves ... that the world is changed.” What do you find?

#### **Art**

**“Mandala”**

**Materials: photocopies of mandala colouring pages, coloured pencils, markers.**

Mandalas are sacred art designs used as part of both Buddhist and Hindu religious practices. The word “mandala” is a Sanskrit word meaning “circle.” Colouring a mandala is considered a form of meditation/prayer. Select one of the designs and enjoy the therapeutic benefits of colouring. (Tip: choosing three to five colours before you begin and using them to colour the entire mandala allows for a more relaxed, meditative experience.)

#### **Writing**

**“A forest walk”**

Take a creative journey through the forest. Write freely, without conscious planning. Where is the writing path leading you? If you

**Materials: paper, pen.** wish, share your writing with your partner. Talk about the insights of the journey. Were you influenced by the story “Grandad’s Prayers of the Earth? If so, in what way(s)?

**Role-play** Review the instructions for children. Adapt the role-play activity as desired.  
**“Smell a flower”**

**Materials: the book.**

**Movement** Try a movement meditation exercise. Center yourself. Take some  
**and** deep, slow breaths. Then, get into a relaxed, squatting stance with  
**Music** your knees slightly bent and your hips and pelvis loose. Visualize  
 your feet connected to the ground. Gently move your body in an  
**“Movement** swaying motion. Imagine yourself as a flower opening up or as an  
**meditation:** animal moving through the brush. Be aware of tension in your  
**Materials: yoga mat** body, and use the movement to loosen the muscles. Lose yourself in  
**to stand on** the movement and try to achieve a deep state of relaxation. This  
**(optional); recording** exercise is a form of yoga, similar to tai chi, for people who  
**of music for** concentrate more easily when they are moving than when they  
**meditation.** assume a static pose. The goal is to sustain the movement. Play  
 music for meditation as an accompaniment to the exercise.

## Picture Books For Understanding Experiences Through Nature

### *Grandad's Prayers Of The Earth*

#### Response Activities for Adults



#### Talk

##### **“Turning to prayer”**

##### **Materials: the book.**

On page 16 of the story, Grandad mentions times that people turn to prayer: in sickness, in times of loss, in loneliness, or when faced with complex problems. He notes that often people pray set prayers that they have learned, during these times. Do you pray? Discuss your attitude(s) toward prayer. Grandad ends by saying that sometimes people need to pray their own words. Do Grandad's teachings accord with your personal beliefs? If so, how?

#### Art

##### **“Mandala”**

##### **Materials:**

photocopies of  
mandala colouring  
pages, plain paper,  
coloured pencils,  
markers.

Review the instructions for teenagers. Adapt the art activity as desired. (Suggested adaptation: start with a blank piece of paper and begin by creating your own mandala design to colour.)

#### Writing

##### **“Nature observed”**

In her Pulitzer Prize-winning book “Pilgrim at Tinker Creek,” author Annie Dillard writes magnificently about her experiences of nature.

**Materials: the book “Pilgrim at Tinker Creek” (optional), paper and pen, access to the internet.**

Follow her example. If possible, go outside (dressed for the weather) with your paper and pen, and creatively record the natural events that are occurring all around you. Even if your “nature” is limited to a view of the sky, simply try to find ways to tune your five senses to the things that you may normally take for granted. How often do you allow yourself to be present in the moment in a nature setting? For pre-writing inspiration, go online to “Nature Writing for Readers and Writers” and enjoy the poetic descriptions of nature at <http://www.naturewriting.com/>.

**Role-play**

**“Smell a flower”**

Review the instructions for children. Adapt the role-play activity as desired.

**Materials: the book.**

**Movement**

**and**

**Music**

**“Movement meditation:**

Review the instructions for teenagers. Adapt the movement and music activity as desired. (Suggested adaptation: rather than the single movement described, perform a series of tai chi movements, repeating them over and over in order to achieve a deeply relaxed state.)

**Materials: yoga mat to stand on (optional); recording of yoga music.**

## Picture Books For Understanding Experiences Through Nature

### *The Lost Children: The Boys Who Were Neglected*

#### Response Activities for Children



#### Talk

This story is a sacred legend about the stars called the Pleiades.

#### **“The Pleiades”**

Take the time to look at the map of the stars and find the Pleiades.

**Materials: a map of the night sky, access to the internet.**

Look for the dog stars, too. Re-tell the story while looking at the star map. Go online to an observatory site and practice finding the Pleiades so that you can look for them in the sky at night.

#### Art

#### **“Starry Sky”**

**Materials: paper, crayons, black tempera paint block and paint brush.**

Make a beautiful starry sky scene. Use crayons to draw stars all over the paper. Press very firmly with the crayons. Add moons and comets as desired for a detailed effect. Now lightly paint over the whole paper with the black paint. Leave your artwork to dry and prepare to watch the stars come out! (Look at the painting “Starry Night” by Vincent Van Gogh for added inspiration.)

#### Writing

#### **“Journey to the Above World”**

**Materials: the book, photocopied blank cartoon strip, pencil.**

Re-read the part of the story where the boys go to the Above World and are welcomed by Sun Man and Moon Woman. Now make a cartoon strip of the journey to the Above World. Decide what the boys are saying as they go into the sky and as they greet the Sun Man and the Moon Woman. Make speech bubbles for the words.

**Role-play****“Why?”****Materials: empty****chair.**

Use the empty chair technique. Pretend that you are one of the lost children. Pretend that the empty chair is one of the unkind people in the story. Tell the chair how you feel.

(Adaptation: instead of book characters, talk to people in your life.)

**Movement****“Sun Man, may I?”****Materials: rules to****the game “Mother,****may I?”**

Play an action game, an adaptation of “Mother, may I?” called “Sun Man, may I?” Sun Man stands facing the wall, with his back to the room. You are one of the lost children, standing at the other end of the room. Take a journey to the Above World. Ask if you may take one step, two steps, giant steps, baby steps, jump like a frog, walk like a crab, etc. to the Above World. Sun Man cannot look and can only say “Yes, you may.” or “No, you may not, but you may --- instead.” Reach Sun Man and touch the wall before he notices. Now you are Sun Man. Switch roles and play again.

**Music****“Stargazing”****Materials: recording****of classical music,****like Arthur B.****Rubenstein’s****“Observations.”**

There are many excellent CDs celebrating the cosmos. A number of them feature classical music selections. Listen to a piece like “Fanfare – Toccata” from Monteverdi’s “L’Orfeo.” As you listen, do you feel closer to the stars?



## Picture Books For Understanding Experiences Through Nature

### *The Lost Children: The Boys Who Were Neglected*

#### Response Activities for Teenagers



#### **Talk**

##### **“Subaru means**

##### **Pleiades”**

Stories about the Pleiades are told in many cultures. In Japanese, for example, the stars are called “Subaru,” which comes from a Buddhist term meaning “united.” The story “The Lost Children,” highlights the unity of the six orphaned boys. Their mutual support gives them the strength and courage to find a new way to live. Describe what “unity” means to you. Do you have a group or groups that you identify with? Explain. Name some advantages to being part of a group. Can you think of any disadvantages?

#### **Art**

##### **“Blackfoot tipi”**

##### **Materials: the book,**

##### **4 straight twigs 12”**

##### **long, a rubber band,**

##### **a large brown paper**

##### **bag, scissors, glue,**

##### **markers, access to**

##### **the internet**

Create a standing tipi model following the online instructions at <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/na/teepee/>. Look closely at the Blackfoot tipi designs scattered throughout the storybook and read the note about tipis on the last page. Draw a traditional design on your tipi with the Above World at the top, the Morning Star at the back, the Big Dipper on the north smoke flap, and the Lost Children on the south flap. Add an earth scene to the bottom and your chosen bird or animal to the middle section. Colour your tipi. Display the tipi on a flat surface.

**Writing****“Charter of Rights”**

**Materials:** paper,  
pen.

The lost children tell the Sun Man: “We want to live where people will be kind to us.” Create your own Charter of Rights. First make a list of all the things you need and/or want. Go over the list and decide which things are essential to you and which things you can live without. Include all the essential items in your charter.

**Role-play**

**and**

**Movement****“Let’s be stars”**

**Materials” the book.**

Act out the lost children’s argument from page 11 of the story with a partner. This is where the boys decide they don’t wish to be people any longer. One partner disagrees with every suggestion that the other partner makes. Start from the line: “Let’s be flowers.” “No, the buffaloes will eat us.” When you get to the decision to be stars, start making up your own lines. The disagreeing partner thinks of reasons not to become stars, while the other partner thinks of ways to change his brother’s mind. Ad-lib spontaneously.

After the performance, discuss the skit. Which partner gave the strongest argument in your version of the story? Think about how the boys’ lives would have been different if the disagreeing brother won the others over to his way of thinking.

**Music****“Stargazing”**

**Materials:** recording  
of classical music.

Review the instructions for children. Adapt the music activity as desired.



## Picture Books For Understanding Experiences Through Nature

### *The Lost Children: The Boys Who Were Neglected*

#### Response Activities for Adults



#### Talk

##### “Catalyst for

##### change”

The story includes explanations of two natural phenomena: (1) how the Pleiades came to exist; and (2) why dogs howl at night.

Explanations help us to accept situations that are difficult to understand. In the early part of the story, the boys accept the harsh treatment they receive. What is the catalyst for change for the boys? Describe a situation in your own life that you determined not to accept. How did you have the courage to change your circumstances?

#### Art

##### “Nobody”

**Materials:** paper,  
pencil, markers.

Look at the story illustrations on pages 7-8. Notice that only the lost children are drawn in detail. What impact do the faceless people have? Notice the language of the text: “Nobody was kind.... Nobody wanted them.” Draw a picture containing blank figures and detailed figures. Who do your blank and detailed figures represent?

#### Writing

##### “Charter of Rights”

**Materials:** paper,  
pen.

Review the instructions for teenagers. Adapt the writing activity as desired.

**Role-play****“Why?”**

**Materials: empty  
chair.**

Review the instructions for children. Adapt the role-play activity as desired. (Adaptation: Play the role of Sun Man or Moon Woman and plead for the rights of the child. Personalize the role and plead for your own rights from a parent or other person in your life.)

**Movement****“Rain”**

**Materials: an  
uncarpeted floor.**

In the story, Sun Man caused a terrible drought, to punish the people for their treatment of the lost children. When the camp dogs pleaded with him, he sent the rain. Here is an Aboriginal movement activity called “Rain,” which simulates the sounds of a rainstorm. Sit on the floor with your arms in front of you. With your palms make circular motions of the floor to sound like the wind. Next use just fingertips to strike the floor softly. Gradually build the sound a little louder. Now use all the fingers on each hand, hitting the floor harder and moving more quickly. Now use the palms of your hands to pound the floor very quickly. Reverse the order of the actions to end the rainstorm. This can be a very therapeutic stress reliever.

**Music****“Stargazing”**

**Materials: recording  
of classical music.**

Review the instructions for children. Adapt the music activity as desired.

## Picture Books For Understanding Experiences Through Nature

### *Waiting For The Whales*

#### Response Activities for Children



#### **Talk**

##### **“Like a plant”**

##### **Materials: the book.**

Start with a discussion about seeds. How do they grow? What do they need? What about you? How do you grow? How are you like a plant? How are you different? In the story, the old man plants an enormous garden. If you were a plant in the garden, what would you be? Why?

#### **Art**

##### **“Fingerprint whales”**

##### **Materials: paper, ink pad and markers.**

Make fingerprint whales. Put your finger on an ink pad and press it down on your paper. Draw a tail and a fin. Draw on an eye with a marker. Draw an oval for the top hole. Draw water shooting out of it. Draw curvy lines under the whale for the water. Now make more whales, until you have a pod. (Use your little fingerprint to make a baby whale.)

#### **Writing**

##### **“Waiting List”**

##### **Materials: the book, paper, pencil.**

In the story, the old man waits for the whales. What do you wait for? Write down a list of all the things you wait for, from daily things, like a ride to school, to big events, like your birthday. Look at your list. Put a star beside the thing(s) most difficult to wait for. Re-read the part of the story from the time when the orcas leave and the man is alone again to the time when the orcas return and he

shows them to his baby granddaughter.

What does the old man do to keep himself from becoming impatient? Make a list of reminders of things you can do when you have to wait. How many can you think of? More than the old man?

### **Role-play**

**“Welcome, orcas!”**

Act out the orcas’ return. First pretend to be the old man, watching the whales arrive. What do you say? How do you act? Now pretend to be the granddaughter. How are the two roles different?

### **Movement**

**“Growing plant”**

This is a guided movement activity. Start as a seed, deep in the ground. Slowly grow up out of the ground, reaching toward the sun. Unfurl your leaves and stretch. Feel the sun on your leaves. Feel the rain. Move in the wind. Grow strong and healthy. What kind of plant did you grow into?

### **Music**

**“Sing along”**

Have a sing-along.

**Materials: recording**

**of “The Garden**

**Song.”**

Learn “The Garden Song,” by Pete Seeger, which describes planting a garden. Do you know any other songs about nature?

## Picture Books For Understanding Experiences Through Nature

### *Waiting For The Whales*

#### Response Activities for Teenagers



#### Talk

##### **“Orcas and mothers”**

Orcas are at the heart of the book. Although the author doesn't tell us this, they are mammals which live in families, led by a matriarch. In the story, things begin to change when the old man's daughter, now a mother, arrives home. Do you think the daughter and the orcas play a similar role in the old man's life? Discuss. Now that you have had this discussion, do you think the daughter is an important character in the story? Do you see her in a new way? Notice specific ways the daughter interacts with the old man. First she is an intrusion, suddenly arriving home. Then she becomes a provider, working in the garden. Finally she is a comfort to the dying man. Think about your mother. What are some of the roles she plays in your life? What are some roles you play in her life?

#### Art

##### **“Sand art”**

**Materials: bottled white glue, sand, coloured construction paper.**

Make a sand art picture. Use your imagination to respond to the story. Use glue to draw a picture on a coloured piece of construction paper. Before the glue dries, cover the paper with a layer of sand, just pouring a handful over your design. Let it sit for a few minutes. Shake off the excess sand and allow the picture to dry completely.

**Writing**

Write a short message for the old man's tombstone (an epitaph).

**"Here lies..."**

(Extension: respond personally to the activity by composing your

**Materials: paper,  
pen.**

own epitaph.)

**Role-play**

Use the empty chair technique. Play the role of the old man.

**"Talk to the whales"**

Imagine the empty chair is an orca. What will you say to the whale?

**Materials: an empty  
chair.**

Do you ever talk to pets? Why or why not? What purpose(s) does this kind of communication serve?

**Movement**

Grandad watches the flowing movements of the orcas in the ocean.

**"Flow"**

Experience movement through this set of flowing yoga poses. Set

**Materials: yoga mat.**

up your yoga mat. Slowly perform each pose and gracefully transition into the next. Relax and focus your breathing. Start with mountain pose. Go into extended mountain, up on your toes. Move into tree pose. Bend to half-dog pose. Go into warrior pose. Straighten into triangle pose. Perform chest opener pose. End with mountain pose with neck stretch.

**Music**

The term "rolling in the deep" is a nautical phrase used to describe a

**"Rolling in the  
deep"**

sea-tossed boat, all alone on the ocean. Listen to the song "Rolling in the Deep," by Adele. Are there any images in the song that link

**Materials: recording  
of the song.**

with images and/or ideas from the story?

## Picture Books For Understanding Experiences Through Nature

### *Waiting For The Whales*

#### Response Activities for Adults



#### **Talk**

##### **“Part of the pod”**

##### **Materials: the book.**

As the story opens, we meet an old man whose favourite pastime is watching a pod of orcas, who swim together and interact with each other. In contrast to the whales, which live in a matriarchal family group, the old man is lonely and alone. Have you ever been on the outside looking in, like this old man? Describe your experience. Or, share an opposite experience of being on the inside, looking out. Near the end of the story, the author says that the old man’s spirit “has gone to leap and swim with the whales.” What are the changes in the old man’s life that prepare him to become an accepted insider? Explore this extended metaphor in relation to your own life.

#### **Art**

##### **“Nature mosaic”**

##### **Materials: piece of**

##### **burlap, hot glue gun,**

##### **seeds, leaves, etc.**

Make a seed picture on a burlap background. Use a variety of seeds, leaves, grasses, mosses, twigs, etc. to create a mosaic effect. A piece of doweling and some yarn will turn the picture into a wall hanging.

#### **Writing**

##### **“Paying tribute”**

Write an obituary for the old man, using details from the book as a guide in your tribute. Are there things about the man that the author

**Materials: the book, paper, pen.** and illustrator reveal to you which he would not want included in his memorial? Discuss. Now turn this writing exercise into a personal reflection and create your own obituary.

### **Role-play**

**“Wisdom of the ages”**

**Material: the book (optional).**

Perform this role-play with a partner. Assume the role of the old man. Tell your granddaughter something you want her to know, before you die. Your partner, in the role of the granddaughter, listens, and also shares something with you, the grandfather, that she wants you to know. Let the dialogue develop naturally, starting in the story, but moving wherever the work takes you. Switch roles. Was one of the roles more difficult than the other for you to play? Discuss your experience.

### **Movement**

**“Flow”**

**Materials: yoga mat.**

Review the instructions for teenagers. Adapt the movement activity as desired.

### **Music**

**“Ecclesiastes 3:1”**

**Materials: lyrics and recording of “Turn! Turn! Turn!”**

Listen to the song, “Turn! Turn! Turn! (to Everything there is a Season)” performed by The Byrds. This song holds a record as the number 1 hit with the oldest lyrics, since the words are actually a Bible verse. What other musical selection(s) would you suggest to celebrate and/or reflect on the seasons of life?



## **Creative Considerations for Groups**

Therapeutic support for clients with similar concerns can be provided through the implementation of small group picture book bibliotherapy. In this section I outline three workshop programs: one for children on grief and loss; one for teens on mindfulness practices, and one for adults on catalysts for change. The design of the workshops, modeled on the individual therapy, includes: a read aloud stage, a response activity stage, and a wrap-up stage. The workshops consist of four 90 minute sessions, delivered over the course of a month. One picture book is explored in each session. At registration, clients may purchase individual copies of the four picture books, if they so wish. Small groups are limited to eight participants.

**Children's workshop on grief and loss.** The children's workshop on grief and loss is presented in the form of an after-school club, led by a counsellor and a group of four teenage mentors. The participants, children aged six to ten, meet in the school library, where the sessions are carried out. The underlying purpose of the workshop is to support children during times of grief and loss, and to empower the children to navigate their own stories through the intermediary of literature.

Each session follows the same standard format. The workshop opens with a brief go-round, meaningfully planned to connect the clients to the work of the session, followed by a story, which is read aloud by one of the teenagers. Before he or she reads, the teen explains his or her personal interest in the story, and then reads the book. At the end of the story, the teen and the counsellor together facilitate discussion about the story. The children and the four teens talk about their favourite parts of the story, make observations, and ask questions.

The children are invited to make text-to-text connections, text-to-self connections, and text-to-world connections. The teen mentors are integral to the experience. The children identify with them, as they model personal ways of dealing with bereavement. On succeeding weeks, a different teen begins the session, until at the end of the month all four teens have shared a personal anecdote and a picture book with the group. The books come alive through the voices of the teenagers, who have personally chosen the stories that will be used in the workshops, and who have planned the response activities for the sessions, in collaboration with the counsellor, during their pre-workshop mentorship training program.

The second part of each weekly session is the group activity. Children are encouraged and assisted in an activity designed to reinforce and enhance the teen presenter's message, the read-aloud story, and the story-time discussion. These activities provide the children with opportunities to interact with each other and with the teens, fostering the establishment of empathic relationships. As the weeks unfold, the activities vary. Some of the presentations and stories lead to arts and crafts projects, while others lead to cooking activities, and still others to games, songs, dramatic recitations, and physical activities. The variety not only piques the children's interest ("I wonder what will happen next week?") but also ensures that all six response forms: talk, art, writing, role-play, movement, and music are represented, so that all participants have opportunities to showcase their special skills and talents.

Finally, for the last part of each weekly session, the children get into their author groups (two children, paired with one teen), where they work to write and illustrate a brief frame story. During the first session, the story-writing workshop is explained to the children. They are to choose a story idea, and then turn that story into their very own book, with text

and pictures. The counsellor shows examples of the stories of previous bibliotherapy participants and models the frame story writing process. Frame books, based on the patterns in beloved favourites like *The Gingerbread Man*, ensure client success in authoring a book. The counsellor provides a choice of frame templates and the children fill in the blanks to personalize their stories. The teens help the children with all aspects of the authoring and illustrating process. Where children are capable of working independently, teens model the project by writing their own books. The authors work through drafts of their books over the course of the several sessions, and then create the pictures to accompany the text. In the final workshop session, the clients gather together to celebrate their stories.

The four commercial picture storybooks for the children's grief and loss workshop are: *Michael Rosen's Sad Book*, *Grandad's Prayers Of The Earth*, *Waiting For The Whales*, and *That Summer*. Many other books are equally helpful, and an extensive list is included in the appendix. It is extremely important that the read aloud facilitator appreciate and identify with the book, in order to promote frank and authentic responses from the listeners.

**Workshop for teenagers on mindfulness.** The teenagers' workshop on mindfulness is presented in the form of an after-school mentorship training program. This is a psycho-educational workshop that combines learning the theories of mindfulness-based counselling with the work of applying those theories and techniques to personal processing. Again, the opening of each session begins with a read aloud story. The story is discussed and mindfulness teachings are explained and explored. At this point in the session the clients acquire the general principles of mindfulness. Their goal is to complete the training and become mentors and facilitators to provide group mindfulness workshops for children, under the supervision of the counsellor.

During the activity phase of every session, the teens learn read-aloud strategies and reader response strategies. They are introduced to picture books and learn criteria for selecting books for their mentorship work. They practice reading aloud to each other in pairs and small groups. They select read-aloud books from the library collection, or bring in stories from home. The teens experience the importance of genuineness in sharing literary works with others.

During the preparation phase of every session, the clients work in teams of four to plan and create the children's workshops. A great deal of creativity and thought goes into the work. The team selects the four books that they will read aloud to children, one book for each team member, and the members plan personal introductions to each book. Then the team determines the response activities that will help them to explore the books' messages with children. They find craft ideas, recipes, games, and songs. They collaborate to write a detailed workshop plan and decide on team members' individual responsibilities. Above all, they are reminded that the keys to success are empathy and flexibility.

Every week the teens are assigned homework. They are asked to choose one technique or concept from mindfulness that especially resonates with them and explore it more fully independently. Each teen processes the mindfulness-based learning in relation to his or her personal life challenges, in the form of a reflexive journal. In the wrap-up to the final session, the clients gather together to hear and share their anecdote about mindfulness in their own lives. Their stories are by turn heart-warming, funny, and sad as they share their victories and their frustrations. They do not have all the answers. They simply accept and describe their day-to-day realities. Their mindfulness training program ended, they are ready to lead the children by example.

The four commercial picture storybooks for the teenagers' mindfulness workshop are: *"The Three Questions, Grandad's Prayers Of The Earth, The Sound of Colors, and That Summer.* There are many additional books that skillfully blend mindfulness-based practices with children's literature.

**Adult workshop on change.** The adults' workshop on catalysts of change is presented as a special-interest processing group, facilitated by a counsellor. The group reads *The Lost Children, The Lotus Seed, Spinky Sulks, and The Island,* one picture book each week. The session begins with a go-round and the read aloud story, which becomes a springboard for discussion. The counsellor facilitates the work, as he or she does in the workshops for children and teens. Clients process as a group and then turn to the creation of individual response activities. For the adult group these response activities are unstructured. A variety of art materials are arranged for easy access and the clients select what they want to work with as the materials inspire and guide them. Over the four weeks, some of the clients work progressively on one response activity, such as a painting, while other clients choose different response activities each week. In the wrap-up to each weekly session the group members are paired, and with a partner they process the evening's work in whatever way they wish, by re-visiting the picture story book, by talking about the issues that brought them to group, and/or by showing and telling about their response activities. In the final wrap-up session, the clients come together as a community for a final celebration of their artistic and therapeutic experiences.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations**

A major facet of the in-session work between counsellor and client in picture book bibliotherapy is reading a story aloud. Reading aloud contributes to the client's progress in therapy, while simultaneously strengthening and supporting the therapeutic client-counsellor relationship. I found evidence, in my research of the literature, of the benefits of read aloud experiences for children and teens. In my project, I extended this affective bibliotherapy to use with adults, having addressed the special concerns of reading picture books to adult clients, and having created specific strategies and methods to employ when initiating read aloud sessions with these clients.

Of central importance to this project was the selection of therapeutic picture books. It was my goal to provide counsellors with broad guidelines for picture book selection, so that individual therapists could make informed book choices, and so that they could elect to adopt picture books that present universal truths, and that challenge and support world views, sometimes reflecting, and sometimes refracting clients' stances and ways of knowing. In my research, I looked to the work of children's librarians and educational consultants, guided by considerations including the examination of societal constructs, and the inclusion of multicultural, Aboriginal, and international works of children's literature.

My development of response activities for six of the 12 picture books, to augment and support the read aloud therapy, was based on my research into transmediation. I used common categories of talk, art, writing, role-play, movement, and music to generate exercises, assignments, and activities for clients of all ages. This work allowed me to give free rein to my creative faculties, in the production of psycho-educational resources. The



inclusion of detailed response activities in the handbook was a source of some personal, internal debate. On the one hand, I wanted to model response activities so that counsellors and clients could discover many novel ways to respond to a single picture book, but on the other hand, I was afraid that prescriptive plans could lead readers to believe that picture book bibliotherapy is a formulaic “therapy-by-numbers.” Nothing could be further from the truth. The activities offered in this manual are suggestions only, to be adapted and altered by the individual therapist to best suit his or her clients’ needs.

I have endeavoured to create a handbook of picture book bibliotherapy that provides a practical starting point for counsellors in individual and group settings, with clients of all ages, with a variety of life challenges. It is my sincere hope that counsellors and clients alike will discover, as I have done, the capacity of picture storybooks to enrich lives and to enhance the counselling experience.

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## **Appendix: Thematic Bibliotherapy Lists For Counsellors**

### **Books That Contain Read-Aloud Strategies**

*Book talk and beyond* by Nancy L. Roser and Miriam G. Martinez

*The Book Whisperer* by Donalyn Miller

*The Braid of Literature* by Shelby Wolf and Shirley Heath

*Dynamic Read-Aloud Strategies for English Learners* by Peggy Hickman

*Hey! Listen to This: Stories to Read Aloud* by Jim Trelease

*Honey For A Child's Heart* by Gladys Hunt

*Honey For A Teen's Heart* by Gladys Hunt

*How To Get Your Child To Love Reading* by Esme Raji Codell

*Improving Your Storytelling* by Doug Lipman

*Invitations* by Regie Routman

*Read All About It!* by Jim Trelease

*The Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease

*Read It Aloud!* by Judy S. Richardson

*Reading Magic* by Mem Fox

*Strategies That Work* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis

*What To Read When* by Pam Allyn

### **Books For Group Counselling That Contain Bibliotherapy Strategies**

*Books That Heal* by Carolyn Mohr, Dorothy Nixon, and Shirley Vickers

*Creative Interventions With Traumatized Children* by Cathy A. Malchiodi

*Skills For Living* by Rosemary Smead Morganett

## Books For Cognitive Bibliotherapy

### Topic: Anxiety

*The Anxiety Workbook For Teens* by Lisa Schab

*The Anti-Anxiety Workbook* by Martin M. Antony and Peter J. Norton

*The Mindfulness And Acceptance Workbook For Anxiety* by John Forsyth and Georg Eifert

*What To Do When You Worry Too Much* by Dawn Huebner

*When My Worries Get Too Big* by Kari Dunn Buron

### Topic: Dealing With Emotions

*Don't Let Your Emotions Run Your Life* by Scott E. Spradlin

*The Family Guide To Emotional Wellness* by Matthew McKay and Patrick Fanning

### Topic: Depression

*The Depression Workbook* by Mary Ellen Copeland

*Feeling Good* by David Burns

*Full Catastrophe Living* by Jon Kabat-Zinn

*Mind Over Mood* by Dennis Greenberger and Christine Padesky

### Topic: Grief

*Teen Grief Relief* by Heidi Horsley

*When a Friend Dies* by Marilyn E. Gootman

*Weird Is Normal When Teenagers Grieve* by Jenny Lee Wheeler

*Straight Talk About Death For Teenagers* by Earl A. Grollman

### Topic: Healing With Nature

*Healing With Nature* by Susan S. Scott

*Ecotherapy* by Linda Buzzell and Craig Chalquist

*The Wisdom Of Wilderness* by Gerald G. May

### Topic: Mindfulness

*Coloring Mandalas* by Susanne F. Fincher

*The Mindfulness And Acceptance Workbook For Anxiety* by John Forsyth and Georg Eifert

*Mindfulness For Beginners* by Jon Kabat-Zinn

*Mindfulness In Plain English* by Bhante Henepola Gunaratana

*The Miracle Of Mindfulness* by Thich Nhat Hanh

*A Pebble For Your Pocket* by Thich Nhat Hanh

*Wherever You Go, There You Are* by Jon Kabat-Zinn

### Topic: Relaxation

*Relaxation Techniques: 92 Affirmations* by Gary Vurnum

*Bedtime Stories: A Unique Guided Relaxation Program* by Clarissa Pinkola

*How To Calm Down Even If You're Absolutely, Totally Nuts* by Fred L. Miller

*A Boy And A Bear: A Children's Relaxation Book* by Lori Lite

## Picture Books About Exceptionalities

Topic: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

*Eager Eddy: The World's Most Active Dude* by Jill and Katherine Bobula

*I Can't Sit Still!* by Pam Pollack and Meg Belviso

Topic: Autism

*Looking after Louis* by Lesley Ely

*My Brother Sammy* by Becky Edward and David Armitage

*Dinosaur Diego: The World's Smartest Dude* by Jill and Katherine Bobula

Topic: Blindness

*The Hickory Chair* by Lisa Rowe Fraustino

*Melanie* by Carol Carrick

*Naomi Knows It's Springtime* by Virginia Kroll

*The Sound of Colors: A Journey of the Imagination* by Jimmy Liao

Topic: Cerebral Palsy

*Nathan's Wish* by Laurie Lears

Topic: Deafness

*Elana's Ears or How I became the Best Big Sister in the World* by Gloria Roth Lowell

*The Garden Wall* by Phyllis Limbacher

Topic: Down Syndrome

*Be Good To Eddie Lee* by Virginia Fleming

*Dustin's Big Day* by Alden R. Carter

Topic: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

*Forgetful Frankie: The World's Greatest Rock Skipper* by Jill and Katherine Bobula

Topic: Muscular Dystrophy

*My Buddy* by Audrey Osofsky

Topic: Speech Impediment

*Ben Has Something To Say* by Laurie Lears

*Hooway For Wodney Wat* by Helen Lester

*Wodney Wat's Wobot* by Helen Lester

Topic: Tourette Syndrome

*Ticcing Thomas: The World's Fastest Arm Flapper* by Jill and Katherine Bobula

Topic: Wheelchair

*Jungle School* by Elizabeth Laird, et al.

*Nice Wheels* by Gwendoly Hooks

## Picture Books About Family Relationships

### Topic: Abuse

*Mia's Secret* by Peter Ledwon

*Not in Room 204* by Shannon Riggs

*One of the Problems of Everett Anderson* by Lucille Clifton and Ann Grifalconi

*A Terrible Thing Happened* by Margaret M. Holmes

### Topic: Blended Families

*All Families Are Special* by Norma Simon

*Chelsea's Tree* by Marcy McCann

*Romina's Rangoli* by Malathi Michelle Iyengar

*Who's In A Family?* by Robert Skutch

### Topic: Divorce

*Dinosaurs Divorce* by Marc Brown

*I Don't Want to Talk about It* by Jeanie Franz Ransom

*It's Not Your Fault, Koko Bear* by Vicki Lansky

*Mama and Daddy Bear's Divorce* by Cornelia Maude Spelman

### Topic: Gay and Lesbian Characters

*And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson

*Daddy, Papa and Me* by Lesléa Newman

*In Our Mothers' House* by Patricia Polacco

*King and King* by Linda de Hann

*Mini Mia and her Darling Uncle* by Fija Lindenbaum

*Mom and Mum Are Getting Married* by Ken Setterinton

*Mommy, Mama and Me* by Lesléa Newman

*Uncle Bob's Wedding* by Sarah S. Brannen

### Topic: Moving

*Alexander, Who's Not (Do You Hear Me? I Mean It!) Going To Move* by Judith Viorst

*Melanie Mouse's Moving Day* by Cyndy Szekeres

*Moving Overseas* by Anne Civardi

*Sammy's Next Move* by Helen Maffini

### Topic: Sibling Rivalry

*Angelina's Baby Sister* by Katharine Holabird

*I'd Rather Have An Iguana* by Heidi Stetson Mario

*Julius, the Baby of the World* by Kevin Henkes

*My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother* by Patricia Polacco

*A Pocket Full Of Kisses* by Audrey Penn

*The Toy Brother* by William Steig

*What the No-Good Baby Is Good For* by Elise Broach



## Picture Books About Grief And Loss

Topic: Circle of Life

*The Fall of Freddie the Leaf* by Leo Buscaglia

*The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein

*Sophie* by Mem Fox

*Waiting for the Whales* by Sheryl McFarlane

Topic: Death of a Friend

*On Call Back Mountain* by Eve Bunting

*Rudi's Pond* by Eve Bunting

Topic: Death of a Grandparent

*The Language of the Doves* by Rosemary Wells

*The Lighthouse* by Robert Munsch

*Sophie* by Mem Fox

*Waiting for the Whales* by Sheryl McFarlane

Topic: Death of a Pet

*The Accident* by Carol Carrick

*The Old Dog* by Charlotte Zolotow

*The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* by Judith Viorst

Topic: Death of a Sibling

*That Summer* by Tony Johnston

Topic: Explaining Death

*I Miss You*, by Pat Thomas

Topic: Exploring Feelings of Loss

*After Charlotte's Mom Died*, by Cornelia Spelman

*Michael Rosen's Sad Book* by Michael Rosen

Topic: Spirituality

*Grandad's Prayers of the Earth* by Douglas Wood