



Bibliotherapy:

How Literature Can Help Heal

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Orange-Ulster BOCES

April 14, 2018

What is Bibliotherapy?



- Using books as a way to help heal psychological and emotional trauma
- Bibliotherapy can be used with almost any book, story, poem, or piece of text that connects to an issue you plan to address
- It can be used with an individual, large group, or a small group

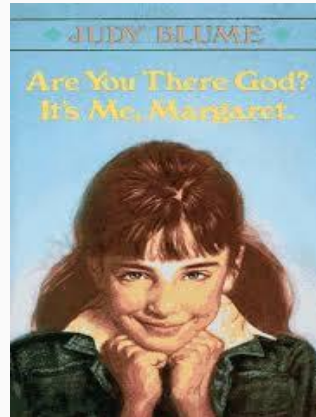
What students might benefit from bibliotherapy?

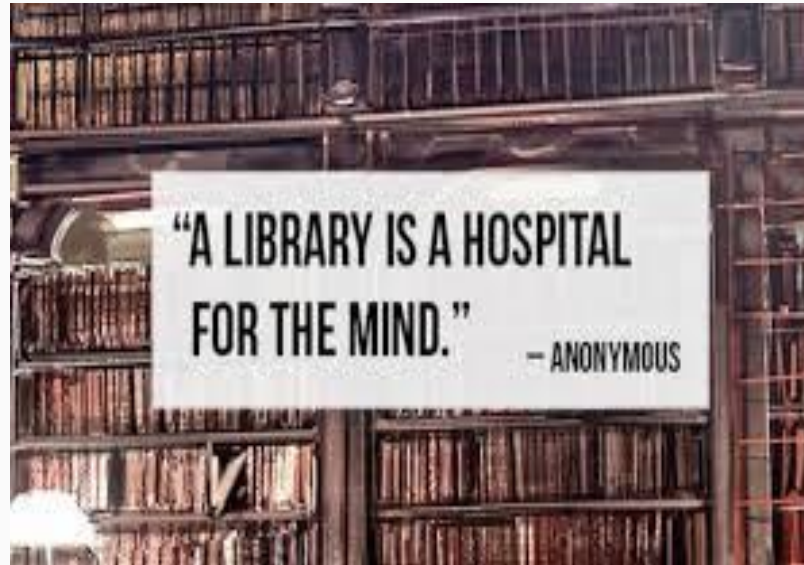
- Adolescents as they deal with body changes, emotional issues
- Students whose parents are separated/divorced
- Students experiencing homelessness
- Students exposed to domestic violence
- Students with an incarcerated parent
- Students exposed to alcoholism
- Students exposed to drug abuse
- Students with a sibling with special needs
- And more...



What is the point?

Bibliotherapy can help children connect with someone else, whether a real person in nonfiction or with a fictional character, and feel less isolated.





Goals of Bibliotherapy

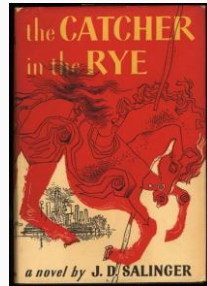
The goals of Bibliotherapy are to help children:

- Identify feelings
- Validate feelings
- Realize there are others who have similar problems
- Stimulate discussion
- Foster thought
- Foster self-awareness
- Discover coping skills
- Discover solutions



How can literature help?

Take a moment to think of one book that has stuck with you?

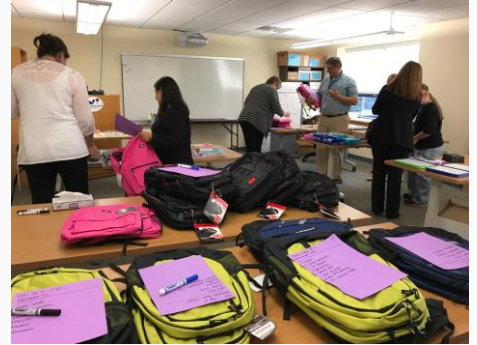


Why do you think it has?

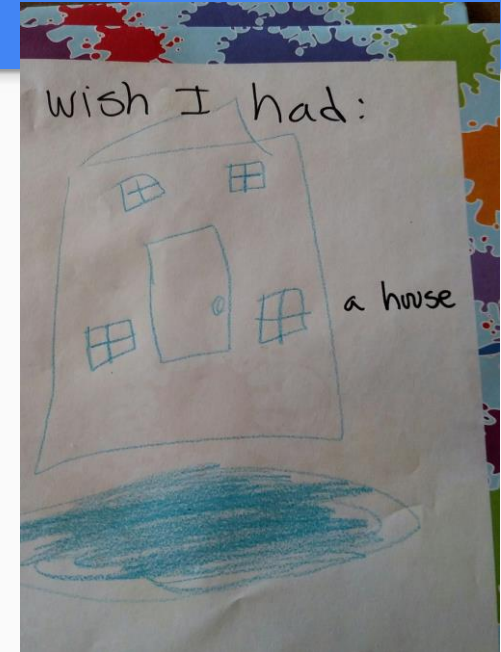
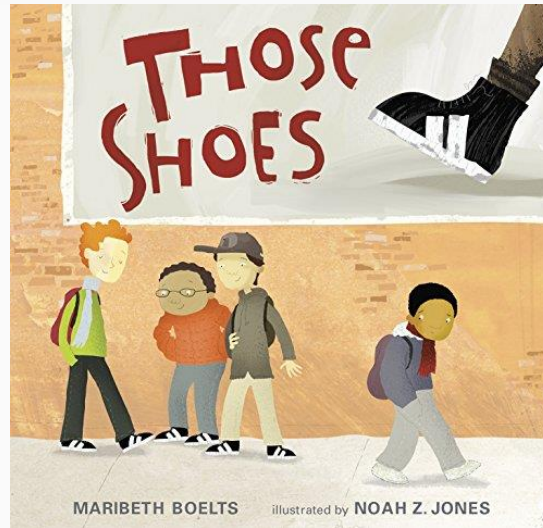
How do we use Bibliotherapy at OU BOCES within the McKinney-Vento Grant?

Lunch-Bunch Book Clubs

- STAR Assessment at start of 5-week session
- Books with characters confronted by challenge
- Resiliency
- Project
- STAR Assessment at end of 5-week session
- Backpack program for students at start of school year



An example from Lunch-Bunch Book Club

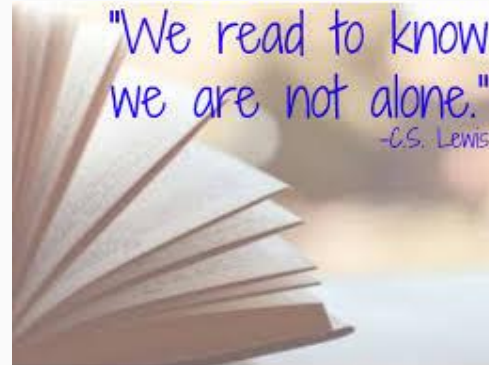
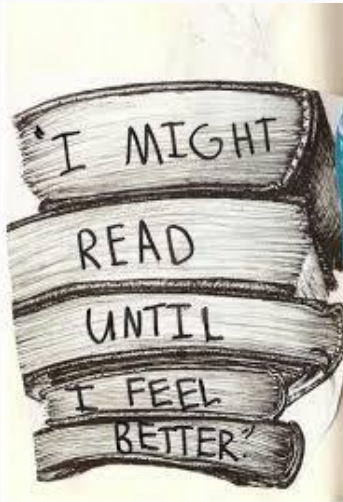


Several questions to ponder:



- With whom do you identify and why?
- What experience do you identify with and why?
- Do you agree with the decision the main character made?
- What message do you think the author is trying to send?
- Do you agree with the author's message? Why or why not?

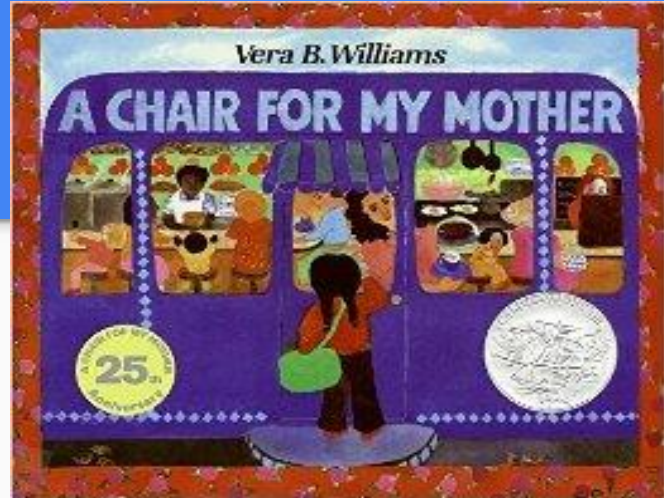
Examples for use...



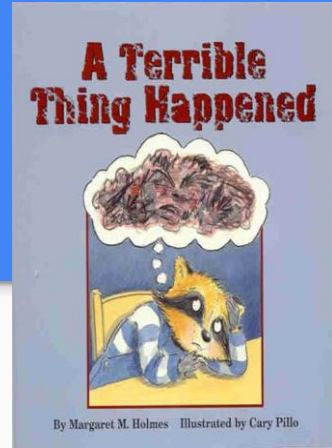
K-12

Little ones

- Can use picture books
- Talk about characters
- Talk about personal connections
- Draw pictures after reading

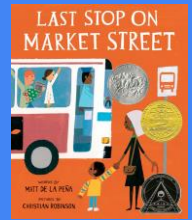


A Terrible Thing Happened by Margaret M. Holmes



- Sherman witnessed something terrible
- He doesn't recall exactly what it was, but he can't make it go away
- He has stomach aches and bad dreams
- Eventually he speaks to a therapist and realizes it is not his fault and though he can't make what he saw go away, he will feel better

*children who have witnessed violence or trauma

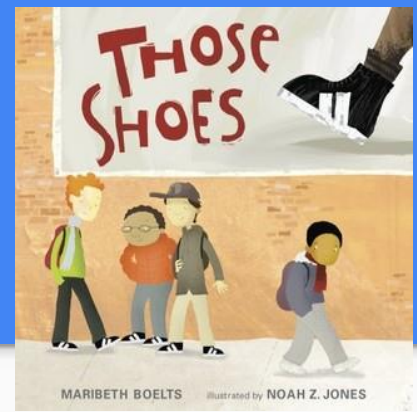


Last Stop on Market Street by Matt De La Pena

- CJ is riding the bus with his grandmother
- He notices many things that he feels he is missing--an Ipod and a car, for example
- However, the city around him is full of music and beauty, and his grandmother helps him see that

*helping those less fortunate, seeing beauty around us

Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts



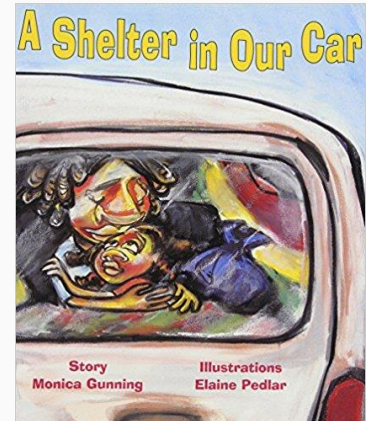
- A little boy wants the same sneakers most of the other boys have
- His grandmother cannot afford them
- When his sneakers fall apart, the school gives him a babyish pair of shoes with velcro
- Only one boy doesn't laugh at him
- He finds a pair of "those shoes" at a consignment shop and gets them even though they are way too small
- After struggling with them for a few days, he gives them to the little boy who had not teased him

*envy, helping a friend, kindness, want vs. need

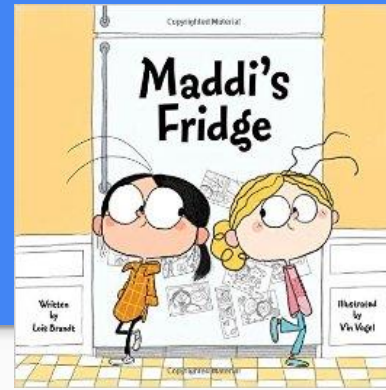
A Shelter in our Car by Monica Gunning

- Zettie and her mother left Jamaica and are living in NY
- Mom is a strong character, full of warmth and love and determination
- Can't afford a home so living in their car

*homelessness, perseverance



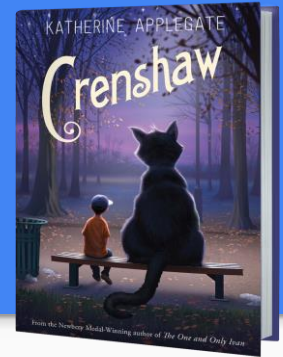
Maddi's Fridge by Lois Brandt



- Maddi and Sofia are great friends and love climbing together at the park
- When Sofia goes to Maddi's house she notices that they have very little food
- She has promised Maddi she will not tell anyone but the need to help overwhelms her, and she breaks her promise at the risk of losing their friendship in order to help

*friendship, secrets, poverty, hunger

Crenshaw by Katherine Applegate



- Jackson and his family are having serious financial issues and may lose their house
- Jackson knows, but his parents are not sharing any information with him
- He has an imaginary cat Crenshaw that helps him through this

*homelessness, fear, friendship, family relationships, honesty

Wonder by R.J. Palacio



- August was born with a very significant facial deformity
- Has made it very difficult for him to make friends
- Wants to go to school like other 10-year old children
- Told from various perspectives

*friendship, isolation, kindness, courage

Maniac McGee by Jerry Spinelli

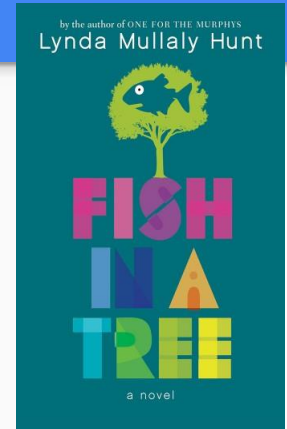
- Orphan boy
- Looking for a home
- Great athlete
- Known as fearless



*racism, homelessness

Fish in a Tree by Lynda Mullaly Hunt

- Ally is dyslexic but has hidden her inability to read
- Switches schools several times
- Uses distraction to avoid the truth
- Finds there is often more than meets the eye to many people

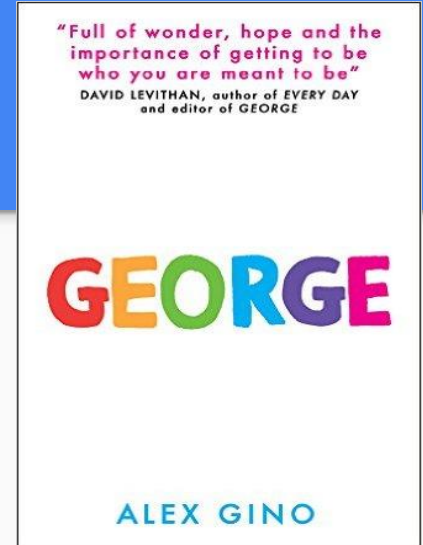


*overcoming obstacles, self-worth, accepting differences

George by Alex Gino

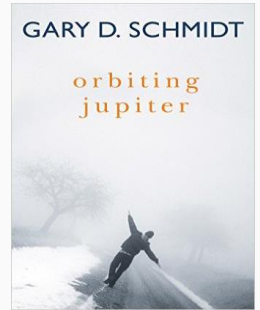
- Little boy feels like he is stuck in a female body
- Only wants to look at fashion magazines
- Wants to be referred to as “she”
- Wants to play “Charlotte” in class play of Charlotte’s Web

*transgender identity, isolation, friendship, frustration



Orbiting Jupiter by Gary D. Schmidt

- For teens
- 14 year old boy, Joseph, comes as a foster child to live with Jack's family
- Rumors that he has killed a teacher
- He has a baby
- Abusive father



*teen pregnancy from teen boy's perspective, abuse, violence, consequences of drugs

All the Bright Places by Jennifer Niven

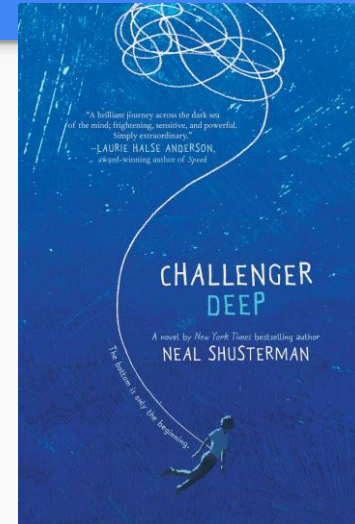
- Two teens meet on a ledge, on the verge of jumping
- Establish an unlikely friendship, eventually love
- She is “popular”; he is quirky



*mental illness, suicide

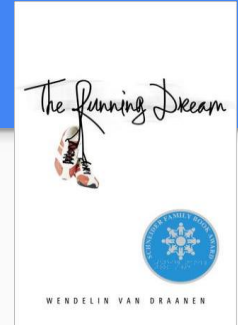
Challenger Deep by Neal Shusterman

- Serious mental illness for a teen
- Schizophrenia
- Hard for me to understand!
- Won a National Book Award



*mental illness/schizophrenia

The Running Dream by Wendelin Van Draanen



- Jessica loves running and feels her best when running
- She loses a leg in a terrible accident
- She is struggling when she meets a girl with cerebral palsy and her perspective changes

*resiliency, depression

Simon vs the Homosapiens Agenda by Becky Albertalli



- Simon is in high school
- Gay but not yet out-of-the-closet
- Starts an email communication with a boy in his school who is keeping it all anonymous
- Someone finds one of their email conversations and is blackmailing Simon with it

*In movie theatres now as *Love Simon*

Bibliotherapy



To read without
reflecting is like
eating without
digesting.

- EDMUND BURKE

<http://fkb.me>

Thank you for your time!

If you would like further information, please feel free to contact me at Orange-Ulster BOCES.

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