

Bibliotherapy is a really innovative idea that I had never heard of before. I really like the idea that a child could relate to a book character and almost have a vicarious experience through the way the character might resolve their problem; it's an interesting way for the child to feel empowered in dealing with their challenges. I also think that the books don't have to match the child's situation exactly in order for it to be effective. The article mentions how there is a small selection of books for this to apply to wide range of kids, but any book that outlines a child who deals with some sort of challenge or trauma and shows how they overcome it is an effective teaching opportunity for any kid who is dealing with a trauma.

Bibliotherapy for Disasters Critique

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The Impact of Bibliotherapy on Positive Coping in Children Who Have Experienced

Disaster is an article about using books to help children cope with and learn to talk about disaster that has occurred in their lives (Pola and Nelson, 2014). The disasters included are “natural disaster, terrorist attack, [and] war” (Pola and Nelson, 2014). Books used in the coping mirror the lives of the children. The therapists try to find books that have the same type of disaster and present situations that the children might be facing. The use of books is meant to help the children voice their concerns and help them overcome the psychological obstacles that the disaster has created.

Strengths

Pola and Nelson (2014) explain the need for therapists in the bibliotherapy. They explain that librarians and teachers were able to ask questions to the children to help them analyze the books that they read. But, the therapists were able to delve into conversation and analysis that helped the children to apply the book to their lives. Pola and Nelson (2014) were able to effectively illustrate the need for therapists. This is a great strength due to the fact that they are researching a type of therapy and publishing it for the Therapeutic Recreation population.

Weaknesses

Something that the article was missing was evidence against bibliotherapy working. The article kept me wondering about negative experiences that kids might have had. Could some kids have had negative experiences with reading books that had similar tragic events as in their lives? I feel that it might be hard for some people to replay the memories that they have of the unfortunate events.

Pola and Nelson also stated that there was “limited literature” for the children to read due to the unexpected nature of the tragedies (2014). To create a larger access to literature, I wonder if they could have used a different set of events. There was no mention of how they decided on the disasters.

Application

The research and ideas in the article would be able to be applied in a few scenarios. The bibliotherapy could be used in schools. There are students in public schools who have gone through disaster. It may not be the same disasters as mentioned in the article, but the therapy would still apply. Students would be able to communicate their struggles. This therapy could also be used in youth group home programs. Bibliotherapy is just another form of therapy that can help troubled youth. It can be used as part of a program.

Interest

My biggest interest in the article stems from the criteria of people using bibliotherapy. The criteria matches my sister: a youth having experienced disaster. Our mother died when my sister was ten. My sister also has a “psychological disorder” (Pola and Nelson, 2014). My reaction was somewhat one of disbelief. I found it difficult to believe that reading and discussing disaster after experienced would be therapeutic for someone with psychological disorders. Most of my experience comes from watching my sister. She has a hard time with communicating her feelings and gets depressed when talking about the disasters in her life. Because of this, I am skeptical. This is why I would love to see the negative responses that children may have had to bibliotherapy.

References

- Pola, A., & Nelson, R. (2014). The Impact of Bibliotherapy on Positive Coping in Children Who Have Experienced Disaster. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*. Retrieved from <http://js.sagamorepub.com/trj/article/view/6046/4827>