Recommended Reading for Young People and Their Caregivers

SELF-ESTEEM

Beaumont, K. I Like Myself. USA: Harcourt Children’s Books, 2004.  *In rhyming text, a little girl expresses confidence and joy in her uniqueness, no matter her outward appearance. Ages 4-6*


Nyokabi, S. The Chameleon Who Couldn’t Stop Changing His Mind. Nairobi: Trans-Africa Publishers, 1974.  *Provides the message that you are special just the way you are!* *Ages 4-8*

Spelman, C. When I Feel Good About Myself. Morton Grove, IL: Albert, Whitman & Company, 2003.  *A young guinea pig explains that self-confidence comes from learning new things without being afraid of making mistakes and remembering that everyone has different qualities that make them loveable. Ages 4-6*


Zobel, A. What I Like About Me. USA: Reader’s Digest, 2005.  *In a world where fitting in is the norm, being different is what makes us special. Ages 6--10.*

FEELINGS

Congancherry, H. I Am Not a Crybaby. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Co., 1989.  *Sends the message that it’s okay to cry. Great to use with boys that have been given the message, “men don’t cry.” Ages 4-8*

Curtis, J.L. Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods That Make My Day. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1998.  *A young girl explores different feelings she experiences, recognizing that while some days she feels silly, there are times that she also feels, grumpy, mean, excited and confused. Ages 5-10*

Fox, B. Tough Boris. Orlando, FL: Voyager Books, 1998. *Boris the pirate is mean, tough and greedy. But when his parrot dies, he is sad and mourns like anyone else. Ages 4-8*

Hamilton, D. Sad Days, Bad Days: A Story About Depression. USA: Albert, Whitman and Co., 1995. *Amanda Martha tries to understand her mother’s depression, which sometimes makes her sleep all day, feel sad, or cry. Ages 5-8*

Heide, F. Some Things are Scary. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2000. *Many thoughts and considerations are scary and scary feelings are normal. This book helps to acknowledge the real feeling of being scared through humor and laughter. Ages 6-10*

Henkes, K. Wemberly Worried. Hong Kong: Greenwillow Books, 2000. *A mouse named Wemberly finds that she has a whole list of things to worry about when she faces the first day of nursery school. Ages 4-8*

Lachner, D. Andrew’s Angry Words. New York, NY: North-South Books, Inc., 1995. *Helps children to see that their words can affect the feelings of others. Ages 4-8*

Pigmeumal, M. When Life Stinks: How to Deal with Your Bad Moods, Blues, and Depression. USA: Abrams Harry Inc. 2004. *A book to help teenagers distinguish between age-appropriate feelings and more serious mood disturbances, such as depression. Ages 12-16*

**ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE**


Kilgore, M. Me May Mary. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America, 2005. *A memoir about a teen emerging from a tumultuous past. Beginning with a childhood spent stealing money from her violent, alcoholic parents to survive, through her teen years in foster care and an orphanage, Mary struggled to overcome her history and embrace her potential. Ages 14-18.*

Krementz, J. How it Feels to be Adopted. New York, NY: Random House, 1982. *Nineteen boys and girls, ages 8-16, from varying social backgrounds, tell us their feelings about being adopted with remarkable honesty, wisdom, and compassion. Ages 9-16*


**INCARCERATION**

Bender, J. My Daddy’s in Jail. USA: Youlight Inc., 2003. A little girl tells about her fears and feelings when her father is in jail. **Ages 9-12**

Hickman, M. When Andy’s Father Went to Prison. Morton Grove, IL: Albert, Whitman & Company, 1990. When Andy’s father is sent to prison for robbery and the family moves to be near him, Andy is afraid of what the kids at his new school will think. **Ages 9-12**

Hodgkins, K. & Bergen, S. My Mom Went to Jail. USA: The Rainbow Project, Inc., 1997. Often times children may feel blame for their parent’s incarceration. This book tries to counter this common child’s perception, while helping children cope with a parent’s incarceration. **Ages 4-8**

Stauffacher, S. Harry Sue. New York, NY: Random House Books, 2005. Although tough-talking Harry Sue would like to start a life of crime in order to be “sent up” and find her incarcerated mother, she must first protect the children at her neglectful and mother’s home day care center and befriend a paralyzed boy. **Ages 9-14**

Testa, M. Nine Candles. USA: Lerner Publishing Group, 1996. After visiting his mother in prison on his seventh birthday, Raymond wishes it were his ninth birthday when Mama has promised to be home with his dad and him. **Ages 9-12**

Whitbold, M. Let’s Talk About When Your Parent is in Jail. USA: Rosen Publishing Group, 2003. This book offers well organized, truthful (not sugar coated), and easy to understand explanations about the various aspects of having a parent in jail. **Ages 9-14**

Woodson, J. Visiting Day. New York, NY: Scholastic Press, 2002. A young girl and her grandmother visit the girl’s father in prison. **Ages 4-8**

**ILLNESS AND HOSPITALIZATION**

Beatty, M. My Sister Rose Has Diabetes. Santa Fe, NM: Health Press, 1997. Discusses management of diabetes and issues of those without diabetes that sometimes feel forgotten in a family preoccupied with this disease. **Ages 9-12**


**ILLNESS AND HOSPITALIZATION: HIV/AIDS**

Girard, L. Alex, the kid with AIDS. Morton Grove, IL: Albert, Whitman and Company, 1991. Alex may have AIDS, but he is a normal kid too! Ages 6-10


Nelson, T. Earthshine. New York, NY: Orchard Books, 1994. Slim’s father is dying of AIDS. When she reluctantly joins a therapy group of peers who have relatives dying of AIDS, she meets Isaiah, whose optimism makes her sad and hopeful at the same time. Ages 9-14

Verniero, J. You Can Call Me Willy: A Story for Children about AIDS. New York, NY: Magination Press, 2005. Like most third graders, Wilhelmina Jones loves school, her Grandma, and baseball. But having AIDS means she also has struggles that most children don’t. Ages 4-8

**ILLNESS AND HOSPITALIZATION: CANCER**

Ackermann, A. Our Mom Has Cancer. USA: American Cancer Society, 2001. Two sisters, ages 11 and 13, describe what it was like for them when their mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent treatment. Ages 9-12

Carney, K. What is Cancer Anyway?: Explaining Cancer to Children of All Ages. Wethersfield, CT: Dragonfly Publishing Co, 1998. In a calm, clear and reassuring manner, this book provides basic information that is essential when someone in the family has cancer. Ages 4-8


Hurwin, D. A Time for Dancing. New York, NY: Puffin, 1997. Two close friends, since the age of nine, deal with changes as they face a serious illness and potential loss, when, at the age of seventeen, one of the girls is diagnosed with cancer. Ages 10-14


GRIEF


Baumgart, K. Laura’s Star. Waukesha, WI: Little Tiger Press, 1997. Laura finds a special friend in the sky, but when she wakes up in the morning the star is gone. Ages 4-6


Gaines, A. G. & Polsky, M. E. I Have a Question about Death: A Book for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Other Special Needs. London, England: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2017. Death is a difficult topic for any parent or educator to explain to a child, perhaps even more so when the child has Autism Spectrum Disorder or other Special Needs. This book is designed specifically to help children with these additional needs to understand what happens when someone dies. Ages 5-12.


Hanson, W. The Next Place. Minneapolis, MN: Walden House Press, 1997. An inspirational journey of hope to a place where earthly hurt is left behind. Provides comfort and hope for children experiencing a loss. All Ages


Kaldhol, M & Oyen, W. Goodbye Rune. Brooklyn, NY: Kane/Miller Book Publishers, 1987. Rune and Sara are best friends. They do everything together, until the day that Rune accidentally drown. Ages 6-10


Schwiebert, P. & Deklyen, C. Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss. Portland, OR: Grief Watch, 1999. While Granny makes her soup she blends different ingredients into her own grief process. Ages 6-10
Simon, N. The Saddest Time. Morton Grove, IL: Albert, Whitman & Company, 1992. Three different scenarios representing, illness, accidents and old age are described showing how children experience powerful emotions when someone close has died. Ages 6-10

Thomas, P. I Miss You: A First Look at Death. Hauppauge, NY: Barron’s, 2000. This book helps children understand that death is a natural part of life and that grief and a sense of loss are normal feelings to have following a loved one’s death. Ages 4-8


DEATH OF A PARENT


Clifton, L. Everett Anderson’s Goodbye. New York, NY: Henry Holt & Company, 1983. Everett Anderson has a difficult time coming to terms with his grief after his father dies. Ages 4-8

Kornblatt, M. Understanding Buddy. New York, NY: Margaret K. McElderry, 2001. When Buddy joins Sam’s fifth grade class he is withdrawn and will barely speak to his classmates. Only Sam knows what’s troubling Buddy; over the summer Buddy’s mom was killed in a car accident. Ages 9-12


Ryan, D. Rules For Life. USA: Orca Book Publishers, 2005. Ever since her mother died two years ago, Izzy has had a very close relationship with her father. But things change when her father becomes seriously interested in someone and decides to get married. Ages 14-18

Vigna, J. Saying Goodbye to Daddy. Morton Grove, IL: Albert, Whitman & Company, 1991. Frightened, lonely and angry after her father is killed in a car accident, Clare’s mother and grandmother help her through the grieving process. Ages 6-10


Zolotow, C. If You Listen. Philadelphia, PA: Running Press, 2002. A young girl asks her mother how she can know if her father still loves her even though he’s been dead for a long time. Ages 4-8

DEATH OF A SIBLING

Corman, C. Many Stones. New York, NY: Penguin Putnam Books, 2002. 16 year old, Berry, and her estranged father travel to South Africa from the U.S. to come to terms with the murder of her sister that took place a year earlier. Ages 12-16
Grimes, N. Grimes, N. What is Goodbye? USA: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004. *Alternating poems, a brother and sister convey their thoughts and feelings about the death of their brother and how it has impacted their family.* **Ages 9-14**

Park, B. **Mick Harte Was Here.** New York, NY: Scholastic Inc., 1995. *13 year old Pheobe recalls her younger brother, Mick, and his death in a bicycle accident.* **Ages 8-12**

Rodowsky, C. **Remembering Mog.** USA: Avon Books, 1998. *After graduating from a private High school in Baltimore, Annie comes to term with the loss of her sister who had been murdered two years earlier.* **Ages 13-16**

Russell, B. **Last Left Standing.** New York, NY: Puffin Books, 1998. *A thirteen-year-old boy must come to terms with his older brother's death as he progresses from denial to grief.* **Ages 9-12**

Schwiebert, P. **We Were Gonna Have a Baby, but We Had an Angel Instead.** USA: Perinatal Loss, 2004. *Told from a young child’s perspective about the excitement and plans for the coming baby, and the disappointment and sadness following the death of the baby.* **Ages 4-8**

Temes, R. **The Empty Place: A Child’s Guide Through Grief.** USA: New Horizons, 1992. *When a 9-year old boy’s beloved big sister dies, he is confused, angry and fearful. For the first time, he must face the finality of death and the pain of loss.* **Ages 4-8**

Yeomans, E. **Lost and Found: Remembering a Sister.** USA: Centering Corp., 2000. *After her sister dies, a young girl realizes the ways her life has changed. She discovers how her new life will be different and finds hope and comfort in unique ways.* **Ages 4-6**

**DEATH OF A GRANDPARENT**


Barron, T.A. **Where Is Grandpa?** New York, NY: Philomel Books, 2000. *As his family reminisces after his beloved grandfather's death, a boy realizes that his grandfather is still with him in all the special places they shared.* **Ages 4-8**

Bostrom, K. **Papa’s Gift.** Grand Rapids, MI: Zonder Kidz, 1995. *Clara’s grandfather dies and she explores why God took her papa away.* **Ages 6-10**

Boyden, L. **The Blue Roses.** New York, NY: Lee & Low Books, 2002. *A Native-American girl learns to understand the cycle of life after her grandfather’s death.* **Ages 4-8**

Burrowes, A. **Grandma’s Purple Flowers.** New York, NY: Lee & Low Books, 2000. *A young girl recalls her visits with her grandmother during each season of the year, until the winter when she dies.* **Ages 4-8**

Henkes, K. *Sun and Spoon*. New York, NY: Greenwillow Books, 1997. *Spoon* Gilmore’s grandmother dies and he is worried that he will forget her. He searches for a personal way to remember his life with his grandmother. **Ages 9-12**

**DEATH OF A PET**


Rylant, C. *Cat Heaven*. New York, NY: Blue Sky Press, 1997. *Dealing with the death of a cat. God created Cat Heaven with fields of sweet grass where cats can play, kitty-toys for them to enjoy, and angels to rub their noses and ears*. **Ages 4-8**


Viorst, J. *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*. Hong Kong: Aladdin Library, 1987. *A boy’s cat dies and he plans a funeral for him. In an attempt to overcome his grief, the young boy tries to think of the ten best things about his dead cat*. **Ages 4-9**


**TRAUMA**

Bohlmeijer, A. *Something Very Sorry*. USA: Houghton Mifflin, 1996. *This book relates the thoughts and feelings of a young girl as she recovers from a tragic car accident in which her whole family was involved*. **Ages 9-14**

Hamilton, V. *Cousins*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc., 1992. *Cammy wishes her cousin, Patty Ann, would disappear from the face of this earth, and her wish comes true. Facing this tragedy forces Cammy to confront ambivalent feelings about her cousin*. **Ages 9-12**


Schor, H. *A Place for Starr: A Story of Hope for Children Experiencing Family Violence*. USA: Kidsrights, 2002. *This story follows a brave girl and her family as they break the cycle of violence and leave an abusive home for safety in a domestic violent shelter.* Ages 4-8


**TRAUMA: VIOLENT DEATHS**

Banks, K. *Walking Softly, Rachel*. USA: Douglas & McIntyre, 2003. *14 year old Rachel reads the journal of her brother who had completed the act of suicide when she was seven. Through his journal, Rachel learns secrets that help her understand her parents and herself.* Ages 14-18


Flake, S. *Bang!* USA: Hyperion Books for Children, 2005. *Mann is only thirteen, yet he has already had to deal with more than most go through in a lifetime. His family is still struggling with the tragic shooting of his little brother, Jason.* Ages 12-18

Goldman, L. *Bart Speaks Out: Breaking the Silence on Suicide*. CA: Manson Western Corp., 1998. *A book that speaks of suicide to children and allows them to share their feelings in the process.* Ages 8-12


**FUNERALS AND CREMATION**
Arnold, C. What We Do When Someone Dies. USA: Watts Franklins, 1987. Explains different customs of dealing with death and remembering the dead, such as funerals, burials, cremation, mourning, wills, and memorials. Ages 4-8


Johnston, M. Let’s Talk About Going to a Funeral. USA: Powerkids Press, 2003. Gives an overview of what a funeral is, why cultures have them, and what might happen at one. Ages 6-8

O’Keefe, S. My Life and Death by Alexandra Canarsie. USA: Peachtree Publishers, 2002. Escaping school and family problems in a cemetery, fifteen-year-old Allie begins attending strangers’ funerals, which leads to her first real friendship and a mystery that she believes only she can solve. Ages 12-16

Wiles, D. Each Little Bird That Sings. USA: Harcourt Children’s Books, 2005. Comfort Snowberger is well acquainted with death since her family runs the funeral parlor in their small southern town, but even so the ten-year-old is unprepared for the series of events that begins with the sudden death of her beloved great-uncle. Ages 9-12


**CAREGIVERS OF GRIEVING YOUNG PEOPLE**


