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Bibliotherapy: School Psychologists' Report of Use and Efficacy

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BIBLIOTHERAPY: SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' REPORT

OF USE AND EFFICACY

by

Marci A. Olsen

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

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This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by

majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Marci A. Olsen in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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ABSTRACT

BIBLIOTHERAPY: SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' REPORT

OF USE AND EFFICACY

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This study focused on the use of bibliotherapy by school psychologists. A survey was created and distributed to 119 registered and licensed school psychologists in Utah to obtain information on this topic. Forty-one percent returned a completed survey. Results indicated that bibliotherapy is used by 82% of the participants in the study, and 31 of 34 (91%) use bibliotherapy with children grades K-6. Topics most used with bibliotherapy included self-esteem, bullying, divorce, anxiety, and grief. Efficacy varied depending on the topic of bibliotherapy. However, school psychologists regarded bibliotherapy across all topics to be very effective to effective.

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INTRODUCTION

Bibliotherapy is a unique type of therapy that has gained more attention and recognition over the past years. Depending on the context in which one uses bibliotherapy, definitions can range from general to specific, or simple to complex. Pardeck (1990) defines bibliotherapy as literally meaning "to treat through books" (p. 83). McCarty and Chalmers (1997) state that bibliotherapy refers to using books in a way that is "therapeutic in the sense that they can help children work through a crisis" (p. 12). For the purposes of this research, Hebert and Furner's (1997) definition of bibliotherapy will be used, as it is more applicable to children and to needs within a school setting:

> Bibliotherapy is the use of reading to produce affective change and to promote personality growth and development. It is an attempt to help young people understand themselves and cope with problems by providing literature relevant to their personal situations and developmental needs at appropriate times. (p. 169)

History of Bibliotherapy

The idea of an individual healing through books is not revolutionary. It has been around for centuries, although it may have been referred to by different terms, depending on the time period (Aiex, 1993). Bibliotherapy can be traced as far back as the ancient days of Greece, when libraries were first formed (Aiex). Although the concept and knowledge of bibliotherapy has been known since ancient times, it wasn't until the early 1900's that bibliotherapy was given the specific term to imply the use of books as a therapeutic means to help people (Myracle, 1995). In addition to this, bibliotherapy was not applied to children until almost half a century later in 1946 (Myracle).

Bibliotherapy and Children

Bibliotherapy is a beneficial approach to use when working with children for a variety of reasons. Pardeck (1990) highlighted three reasons why bibliotherapy is particularly beneficial when working with children: Children can (a) obtain problem solving strategies through the experiences of characters in the book; (b) identify how characters in the book dealt with similar anxieties, frustrations, and disappointments that they too may be facing; and (c) gain insight into alternative solutions or courses of action they may take. Through bibliotherapy, children can better learn to solve problems as they see characters in a book solve problems (Kramer, 1999).

Stages of Bibliotherapy

The literature focuses on four distinct stages children go through when they are involved with bibliotherapy: (a) identification, (b) catharsis, (c) insight, and (d) universalization. During the identification stage children up the book and realize "This character is very much like me. I can relate to this person." The more children have in common with the main character of the book, the more they are able to reach identification (Hebert & Furner, 1997). Catharsis is the next stage which involves an emotion. Children realize they are not alone in facing their problems. They may learn vicariously through those they identify within the book (Hebert & Furner). The third stage, insight, comes from children looking at their life's circumstances from a distance. This allows them to examine their situation with understanding (Kramer & Smith, 1998). Lastly, universalization is the recognition that "our problems are not ours alone" (Hebert & Furner, p. 172). Children realize that they are not isolated in either circumstance or feelings.

Efficacy of Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy can help with a gamut of problems that children face on a daily basis while in elementary school (e.g., anger, teasing, bullying, issues of self-concept) (Forgan, 2002). In addition to this, many studies validate bibliotherapy's efficacy in a variety of other areas that relate to children, such as with giftedness (Hebert & Furner, 1997), anxiety (Register, Beckham, May, & Gustafsch, 1991), aggression (Shechtman, 1999), disabilities (Forgan), assertiveness and attitude change (Schrank & Engels, 1981), bullying (Oliver & Young, 1994), and abuse (Pardeck, 1990).

As can be seen by the studies cited above, much research is being done in regard to the history and efficacy of bibliotherapy in terms of its use by therapists, parents, and teachers. However, little if any research is being done in regard to bibliotherapy and its pervasiveness and perceived efficacy by school psychologists. This is surprising, considering the fact that school psychologists have the educational and psychological knowledge and background to effectively implement this therapeutic approach. Hebert and Furner (1997) further legitimize the efficacy of bibliotherapy as used by school psychologists when they stated, "If discussions at greater depth appear to be beneficial, teachers should ask the school psychologist to serve as a co-leader in the discussions. Without a mental health professional present, teachers without training in psychology should not try to encourage self-disclosure that would make students feel exposed" (p. 173). Trained school psychologists have the added knowledge and skills to be prime candidates for implementing bibliotherapy.

Statement of the Problem

There are many studies published in both educational and psychological journals that highlight the efficacy of bibliotherapy when used with children (Aiex, 1993; Forgan, 2002;

Hebert & Furner, 1997; Kramer, 1999; Kramer & Smith, 1998; Myracle, 1995; Pardeck, 1990; Register et al., 1991; Salend & Moe, 1983; Schlichter & Burke, 1994; Schrank & Engels, 1981; Shechtman, 1999). There are also many studies which have reported the implementation of bibliotherapy by therapists, parents, and teachers (Adams & Pitre, 2000; Burns & Kondrick, 1998; Nickerson, 1975; Pardeck, 1990; Pardeck, 1994; Shechtman, 1999). However, no research was found regarding the pervasiveness of bibliotherapy being used by school psychologists specifically, or how school psychologists perceive its efficacy in relation to working with children.

Statement of Purpose

The general purpose of this study is to obtain more information on the topic of bibliotherapy as implemented by school psychologists. This study will also investigate how pervasive bibliotherapy is among school psychologists. More specifically, the purpose of this study is to determine bibliotherapy's perceived efficacy in relation to a number of topics that school age children (grades K-6) encounter in their everyday lives, (e.g., anxiety, aggression, high incidence disabilities, self-esteem, and abuse).

Research Questions

In accordance with the statement of purpose, the following research questions will be investigated:

1. What percentage of school psychology professionals in Utah use bibliotherapy in their practice? If used, how often is bibliotherapy implemented?

2. What percentage of school psychology professionals in Utah use bibliotherapy when working with children K-6? If used, how often is bibliotherapy implemented for this population?

3.   For which topics do school psychologists most often use bibliotherapy?

4.   What is bibliotherapy's perceived efficacy in relation to different topics as judged

by school psychologists?

Importance of Study

There are two main reasons why this study is important. First, a number of

researchers (Hebert & Furner, 1997; Kramer & Smith, 1998; Pardeck, 1990; Shechtman,

1999) caution untrained professionals against using bibliotherapy, especially in relation to

topics that have deeper emotional impact on children. This warning is due to the requisite

psychological and developmental knowledge base needed in order to work with children who

have deep emotional issues. Thus, parents and teachers are particularly cautioned to use

bibliotherapy carefully (Shechtman, 1999). School psychologists, however, have the

psychological and developmental knowledge necessary to deal with children's emotional

issues.

Second, bibliotherapy is inexpensive to implement. Public schools provide 75% of

mental health services for children and adolescents (Burns & Hoagwood, 2002). The use of

bibliotherapy would offer a low-cost intervention that could be utilized with individuals or

groups. These are primary reasons why school psychologists are prime candidates for the

implementation of bibliotherapy among children; and therefore, why this study is of value

and importance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bibliotherapy Defined

Many people have defined *bibliotherapy*, highlighting different points in relation to their field of study and emphasis. Depending on the setting in which the professional is working, and how the professional chooses to use bibliotherapy, the definition varies. Definitions range from general to specific, and simple to complex. Some definitions focus on emotional well-being as seen in the definition provided by Davis and Wilson (1992). They define bibliotherapy as "the process of growing toward emotional good health through the medium of literature" (p. 2). A developmental component is added by Schlichter and Burke (1994). They believe the main goal of bibliotherapy is to "assist young people with the challenges of developmental tasks through a responsive interaction with literature" (p. 280).

Other definitions add a therapeutic aspect in the definition of bibliotherapy. McCarty and Chalmers (1997) believe that bibliotherapy refers to the use of books as a means of helping children work through a difficult time or situation by way of a therapeutic intervention. Adams and Pitre (2000) add that bibliotherapy is the "guided use of reading, always with therapeutic outcome in mind" (p. 645). Pardeck (1990) includes the simplified definition, stating that bibliotherapy "literally means to treat through books" (p. 83).

The Dictionary of Education (Good, 1966) combines the developmental and therapeutic aspects mentioned above in its definition:

The use of books to influence total development, a process of interaction between the reader and literature which is used for personality assessment, adjustment, growth, clinical and mental hygiene purposes, a concept that ideas inherent in selecting

reading material can have a therapeutic effect upon the mental or physical ills of the reader. (p. 212)

Finally, some definitions add an element of problem solving. Aiex (1993) simply believes that bibliotherapy is the use of books to aid individuals in solving their problems. Pardeck and Pardeck (1989) give a more precise definition of bibliotherapy: "Bibliotherapy is a family of techniques for structuring interaction between a facilitator and a participant based on mutual sharing of literature" (p. 107).

For the purposes of this paper, Hebert and Furner's (1997) definition of bibliotherapy will be used, as it is more applicable to children and school settings. Their definition combines the developmental, problem solving, therapeutic, and mental/physical aspects of bibliotherapy as described above:

> The use of reading to produce affective change and to promote personality growth and development. It is an attempt to help young people understand themselves and cope with problems by providing literature relevant to their personal situations and developmental needs at appropriate times. (p. 169)

History of Bibliotherapy

The idea of bibliotherapy is not new, although the name by which it has been referred has changed over the years. Bibliotherapy can be traced as far back as the ancient days of Greece, when libraries were first formed (Aiex, 1993). Not only has the name of bibliotherapy changed, but the interpretation of bibliotherapy has also varied over the years. A majority of the bibliotherapy literature reflects the perspective and field of study of its authors (Aiex). No matter what perspective or field of study one may favor, it is important to

remember that bibliotherapy is more than just reading a book. It is using a book as a way to teach, learn, and heal.

Although the concept and knowledge of bibliotherapy has been known since ancient times, it wasn't until the early 1900's that bibliotherapy was given the specific term to imply the use of books as a therapeutic means to help people (Myracle, 1995). In a 1916 issue of *Atlantic Monthly,* Samuel Crothers described bibliotherapy as the method of using books to help individuals understand their problems (Myracle).

In 1946, thirty years after Crothers coined the term bibliotherapy, bibliotherapy was first applied to working with children (Myracle, 1995). Now bibliotherapy is used by a wide gamut of professionals (e.g., classical scholars, physicians, psychologists, social workers, nurses, parents, teachers, librarians, and counselors) for a variety of individuals (e.g., clients, patients, children, adolescents) and problems (e.g., abuse, divorce, grief, aggression). This study will look specifically at how school psychologists use bibliotherapy and perceive its efficacy.

Clinical and Developmental Bibliotherapy

There are two main types of bibliotherapy- clinical and developmental. Clinical bibliotherapy involves the use of guided reading to help those who are having trauma in relation to their emotions, behaviors, or situation (Hebert & Furner, 1997). It takes place in a clinical setting in the presence of a professionally trained counselor or therapist (Kramer & Smith, 1998).

Developmental bibliotherapy involves the use of guided reading in more natural settings, such as in school. Through reading a book, students form a relationship with their current life and the literature they are reading (Bohning, 1981). The focus of developmental

bibliotherapy is mostly used with students in elementary and secondary school within a classroom setting. This developmental form of bibliotherapy can actually be used as a preventative technique, because bibliotherapy anticipates students' needs and specific areas of crisis (Kramer & Smith, 1998). This type of bibliotherapy gives children hope and insight into their current problems or circumstances. It provides them with the skills necessary to know what to do if a crisis or troublesome situation arises.

This study will focus mostly on developmental bibliotherapy, because it is related to school psychologists who work with children in the school setting.

Bibliotherapy and Children

Pardeck (1990) cites three reasons why the bibliotherapeutic approach can be helpful when working with children. First, a child can obtain problem solving strategies through the experiences of characters in a book. Second, a child can see how the characters in the book dealt with similar anxieties, frustrations, and disappointments. Finally, in addition to helping a child obtain problem solving strategies, a child may also gain insight into alternative solutions or courses of action they may take.

Bibliotherapy allows children to see their problems from a new perspective. It helps them realize that others have faced similar problems and have overcome them. Bibliotherapy offers strategies and alternative routes for children when they are confronted with a similar problem or issue as a character in a book.

Through bibliotherapy, children can better learn to solve problems as they see characters in a book solve problems (Kramer, 1999). Further, valuable insights into problem solving can be gained as children discuss the books they are reading with a teacher, parent, school psychologist, or other school personnel (Kramer).

Cianciolo (1965) identified six areas in which books could provide positive help for children:

1. Books can help children acquire information about human behavior, including areas that are a current concern to them.

2. Books can also help children come to an understanding of the phrase "heal thyself." That is, children can learn that the answer to some problems must come from within.

3. Through books, children can find interests outside themselves.

4. Stories can help children relieve stress in a controlled manner.

5. Books provide children with an opportunity to identify and compensate for personal problems. That is, it is often easier for children to talk about a problem if it is someone else's problem.

6. Stories can highlight personal difficulties and help children gain insight into their behavior. That is, a problem can be clarified by seeing it described by another person in a story.

Bibliotherapy gives children knowledge. It provides children with information which they can take and apply to themselves and their own personal life situations. This applied knowledge leads to self mastery and self discovery. It leads to solutions to current problems which children may be facing. These solutions and added knowledge allow the children to gain more insight into themselves and their own way of thinking and behaving.

A practiced author can assist children in forming a relationship and drawing connections between themselves and characters found in a book (Hebert & Furner, 1997). Further, information acquired through reading a book is sometimes an easier form for

children to get information than a lecture from a concerned parent or teacher (Hebert &

Furner). This may be due to the fact that the author is outside the child's current

environment. The author is someone who does not know the child personally, yet is able to

describe emotions and feelings the child is currently experiencing or may have felt in the

past.

Issues for which bibliotherapy can be used. Bibliotherapy can help with an array of

problems children face in school and life, including anger, teasing, bullying, self-concept,

abuse, aggression, anxiety, and death. Kramer and Smith (1998) state that bibliotherapy can

also help improve "self-awareness and self-understanding and increase understanding and

empathy for others. Bibliotherapy can also help relieve stress, provide successful coping

strategies, and help an individual to be able to express both feelings and ideas about a

problem or difficulty" (p. 90). Bibliotherapy has the power and capacity to help children with

many of the main issues they face during their developmental years.

Bibliotherapy and prevention. Bibliotherapy is not only used as a type of treatment

for issues children are facing, but it can also be used as a preventative measure. Bibliotherapy

can allow children to see how others have solved problems similar to those they are going

through. In combination with assistance from a helping professional, a child can gain further

insight into a variety of alternative solutions they can take in order to help solve current or

future problems (Pardeck, 1990). In light of this, children can use bibliotherapy not only as a

way to help in the treatment of an issue, but also as a way of prevention. The benefits of

bibliotherapy, in terms of a preventative measure, come from alleviated emotional pressures

that children face (Kramer, 1999). Children are able to cope with these pressures before they

escalate and accumulate.

Benefits associated with bibliotherapy. There exists a number of benefits associated with the implementation of bibliotherapy with children. One of the main benefits is the acquisition of knowledge and information. "Using books that address a particular problem often enables the child to gather accurate and reliable information in a subtle, nonthreatening manner" (Sawyer, 2000, p. 209). Bibliotherapy gives children a base of knowledge which they can rely on when they have to confront an issue they have not dealt with previously.

Bibliotherapy does not force or pressure children to talk about problems or current hardships they are facing (Yauman, 1991). The non-threatening aspect is another main benefit of bibliotherapy. Bibliotherapy is an informative, non-confrontational, innocuous way in which children can confront and deal with their problems.

Efficacy of Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy may not be as effective when used in isolation, as it is when combined with other therapies (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1984). A majority of studies show mixed results in the efficacy of bibliotherapy as a single form of treatment, but as a successful treatment when paired with other treatments (Aiex, 1993).

Research supports that bibliotherapy is most effective when used with other therapies. Salend and Moe (1983) implemented bibliotherapy to determine if it would change children's attitudes toward children with disabilities. They found no significant difference in attitudes toward children with disabilities when only bibliotherapy was used. Beardsley (1981-1982) conducted a similar study, and also failed to find a significant difference in children's attitudes toward children with disabilities. However, in both of these situations, there were no follow-up activities or discussion. The participants merely read the books. Both research

reports indicated that if follow-up activities were used, bibliotherapy would have been effective and would have made a significant difference.

Bibliotherapy has shown to be effective for a variety of topics. For example, Register, Beckham, May, & Gustafsch (1991) studied self-reported anxiety in test-anxious college students. Their anxiety reduced following the implementation of bibliotherapy. A variety of emotional difficulties, such as worry, emotionality, task-generated interference, and state and trait anxiety were reduced through the use of books as a form of therapy. These results were shown to be stable according to self-reports one month later.

Bibliotherapy seems to be especially effective in helping with children's aggression. Through the process of reading and pondering about a book on the topic of aggression, children reflect on their behavior, understand it more fully, recognize the triggers for their aggressive behavior and the negative aspects that come from feeling aggressive (Shechtman, 1999). "Literature seemed to have played an important part in facilitating these mechanisms of change; it presented the richness and complexity of life to the children, while stimulating curiosity yet minimizing defensiveness" (p. 50). Bibliotherapy allows a child to reflect on his/her behavior, while acting as a catalyst for change within the individual. This change leads to thought taking place before action.

Bibliotherapy helps with a number of topics children confront in their everyday lives. Studies have shown that the use of bibliotherapy can help improve the problem solving abilities of students with disabilities (Forgan, 2002). Bibliotherapy has been shown to be extremely effective for helping children with assertiveness, with attitude change, and with therapeutic gains (Schrank & Engels, 1981). Bibliotherapy has also been found to positively influence children in relation to the topics of self-concept, adolescence with learning

disabilities and emotional problems, separation and divorce of parents, and self-esteem (Myracle, 1995).

Further, bibliotherapy helps children deal with concepts such as divorce, illness, child abuse, and death (Kramer, 1999). In fact, a study conducted by Seadler (1999) highlighted school psychologists' use of bibliotherapy in helping children cope with death. Seadler's questionnaire was sent to 950 school psychologists across the nation. From those who responded, 33% reported using bibliotherapy for death-related crisis intervention, 50.3% reported using bibliotherapy for grief counseling, and 36.4% of school psychologists reported using bibliotherapy for death education.

Studies also show that bibliotherapy has been effective in helping children deal with their parents being incarcerated (Hames & Pedreira, 2003) or parents having a mental illness (Tussing & Valentine, 2001). Studies also show that bibliotherapy helped children with the development of emotional intelligence (Sullivan & Strang, 2002-2003), improved self-esteem (Rubisch, 1995), and helped children who both instigate and are victims of bullying (Oliver & Young, 1994). The studies show mixed results, however, when bibliotherapy is used to help with self-concept, academic achievement, behavior change, fear reduction, helper effectiveness, and self-development (Schrank & Engels, 1981).

No research was found on the topic of bibliotherapy and its efficacy in relation to disasters (both natural and other); however, there are many children's books that highlight a variety of disasters (e.g. hurricanes, fires, school shootings) that might promote worry or anxiety in children.

Bibliotherapy has been found extremely effective when used with children who have been abused (Kramer, 1999), possibly because children who come from abused backgrounds

are usually hard to treat by conventional methods (Pardeck, 1990). Children who have been victims of abuse often have difficulty forming relationships, including relationships with therapists or counselors. In light of the difficulty abused children have in forming relationships, bibliotherapy offers a different, innovative approach through which children can seek treatment (Pardeck). Bibliotherapy is a non-threatening way for abused children to open up and release their pent-up emotions through identification with a character in a book.

As can be implied from the list above, bibliotherapy has been shown to be an effective technique for helping children with a wide variety of topics. One must not make the mistake, however, of jumping to the conclusion that bibliotherapy is a fool-proof cure-all that can help anybody, with any situation or circumstance. Yet one must also keep in mind, "the advantages of bibliotherapy are many, and the disadvantages relatively few" (Calhoun, 1987, p. 941).

Using Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy can be an effective tool in helping children with a variety of topics and concerns. However, as with any therapy, bibliotherapy must be planned and used appropriately in order to be effective. Sawyer (2000) presents three factors that one using bibliotherapy must follow in order for it to be most effective: developmental appropriateness, accuracy of content and effectiveness of style, and strategies for presentation. Each of these components will be discussed in further detail.

The first factor is developmental appropriateness. It is important to keep the age and developmental level of the child in mind. This is one of the main keys to effective bibliotherapy. Different concerns are often associated with the age and developmental level of the child. A younger child may be confronted with issues such as bullies, difficulty in

school, and making friends, while an older adolescent may be confronted with the issues of self-worth, drugs, and body image. There are, of course, those issues that are not bound by age, such as parental separation, divorce, death, illness, and self-esteem.

The second category is accuracy of content and effectiveness of style. This simply emphasizes the importance of choosing a book that is realistic, and does not take a "fairy tale" view of the problem. Many children's books have this unrealistic view, but for the purposes of bibliotherapy, realistic content is best. This does not mean that the book cannot be fictional, but the book must mirror reality. In other words, using animals (e.g., bears) is fine, as long as the situation and outcomes are realistic. To be effective, a book must communicate with children at their level. This will be discussed further when book selection is discussed.

The final aspect that one must take into consideration for effective bibliotherapy is proper strategies for presentation. Having a plan ahead of time is one of the most important precautions an individual can take. This could include informing the child's parents of how you plan to use bibliotherapy, knowing when to use bibliotherapy, and knowing beforehand how to share the bibliotherapeutic experience with children.

When using bibliotherapy, it is also important to be aware of its limitations. As stated earlier, bibliotherapy is not a cure-all. It won't help every child in every situation or circumstance. It is important to realize this before implementing bibliotherapy so that one may set reasonable expectations.

Stages of Bibliotherapy

The literature seems to agree on four stages children experience when they are involved in bibliotherapy: identification, catharsis, insight, and universalization. Each of these four stages will be discussed in greater detail.

The first stage is identification. During this stage, children identify with a character in a book and realize the similarities between the character and themselves. This helps the children feel a connection with the character (Hebert & Furner, 1997). Children realize that they have common ground with the character in the book. The more the children discover they have in common with the character, the better the identification process (Hebert & Furner). As children identify with the characters presented in the book, they are able to bridge their internal emotions with their actions (Shechtman, 1999). Through seeing a similar situation to one's own life played out in a book, children can better understand their own thoughts and behaviors.

The second stage is catharsis. Catharsis is a heightened experience of emotion. Through this elevation of emotion, children are able to realize that they are not alone in their problems; others are experiencing similar feelings and situations (Hebert & Furner, 1997). The reconnection of feelings and experiences that occur during the identification stage is what allows catharsis to occur (Shechtman, 1999). Through the experience of catharsis, children are able to escape their roles and live vicariously though another's experiences (Coleman & Ganong, 1990). In the catharsis stage, readers are able to identify with characters and also experience a release of emotion through the realization that they are not alone.

The third stage is insight. Bibliotherapy allows a child to use displacement. This added distance allows the child to let down walls of defensiveness and be more open to insight and growth that would probably not occur otherwise (Shechtman, 1999). With this newly acquired insight, real-life situations that are parallel with situations in a book are confronted (Hebert & Furner, 1997). Further, activities provided during this stage better help insight to occur. "The use of activities enables children to more effectively construct their knowledge about these issues rather than just hear about them and is more developmentally appropriate and aligned with what we know about how children learn" (Kramer & Smith, 1998, p. 91).

Universalization is the fourth and final stage. During the universalization stage children recognize that they are not alone in their trials and that others are experiencing similar situations (Hebert & Furner, 1997). Through bibliotherapy children realize that others experience emotions that they feel (Kramer & Smith, 1998). Through this realization that others experience similar struggles, children are able to have a sense of normality (Coleman & Ganong, 1990). Universalization allows the reader to understand that they are not alone; there are others working through the same trials and hardships. This gives the reader a sense of hope, unity, and normality.

Book Selection

There are several guidelines to keep in mind when selecting books to be used for bibliotherapy. Bibliotherapy is not simply picking up a book and reading it; bibliotherapy requires a well thought out and designed lesson plan (Aiex, 1993). There are many guidelines to keep in mind when selecting books for bibliotherapy. First, books should be enticing or interesting to the child. They should also be current enough so that the child can relate

(Kramer & Smith, 1998). Literary merit is important when choosing a book for bibliotherapy because a well written book will leave an impression on the child. This will better enable the child to make connections with characters in the book, and as a bonus, have a positive view of literature (Aiex; Kramer & Smith).

Books that are chosen should have believable characters and situations that provide the reader with realistic hope and information (Kramer & Smith, 1998; Pardeck, 1994). It is also important to choose books that are in accordance with the child's chronological and emotional age. "As a general rule, children will most likely be interested in reading or hearing about characters close to their own age" (Pardeck, 1990, p. 84). Younger children should be provided books that have illustrations and simple story lines. Older children need more complex story lines and greater character development (Pardeck, 1990).

Finally, it is a good general rule to let children choose their own book. This can be done by the practitioner through first carefully selecting books that are related to the topic, and have all the characteristics listed above, then allowing the child to choose a book that interests them most. Again, if a child likes the book, the child will be better able to draw connections between their own lives and the lives of the characters (Kramer & Smith, 1998).

Implementation of Bibliotherapy

Need for follow-up techniques. Successful bibliotherapy does not just simply involve reading a book. Meaningful follow-up techniques are imperative. Such techniques may include discussion of the book (both feelings and insights), and a variety of activities. Hebert and Furner (1997) stated the importance of follow-up techniques:

To simply read a good book with an entire class is not bibliotherapy. It is very

important that young people not only read books, but also become involved in

discussions, counseling, and follow-up techniques, such as role-playing, creative

problem solving, relaxation with music, art activities and journal writing (Hebert,

1991, 1995). When presented in this way, bibliotherapy can be an enjoyable time for

solid introspection for young people. (p. 172)

These follow-up techniques are extremely valuable when working with children.

Children learn best by hands-on activities, therefore follow-up activities give them a chance

to actively incorporate what they have just learned (Kramer, 1999). Hands-on activities also

help children retain information over time. This is one reason follow-up techniques are

suggested when using bibliotherapy.

Implementing bibliotherapy: Groups or individuals? Bibliotherapy can be used either

with groups, or with single clients and students. The use of individual, small, or whole group

therapy is largely dependent on the needs of the child or children (Kramer & Smith, 1998).

Bibliotherapy can be implemented in the school setting with an entire class, subgroups of a

class, or with individual students depending on the need.

Steps in implementation. Researchers suggest different steps in regard to the

implementation of bibliotherapy. Three authors' perspectives will be highlighted below: Aiex

(1993), Forgan (2002), and Crosby (1963).

Aiex (1993) focuses on five basic procedures in the transference of bibliotherapy.

These procedures can be used, whether implementing bibliotherapy with a single individual

or group:

1. Motivate: Introductory activities, such as games and role plays can help motivate

   children to participate.

2. Reading Time: Children need sufficient time to read through the material.

3. Incubation: Children comprehend most when they have time to ponder over what they have just read.

4. Follow-up: The main aspect of the follow-up procedure is participating in a discussion. This will allow the children to share perspectives and insights, and obtain ideas from other children as well. Follow-up discussion can also help children to realize how they can apply this knowledge in their own lives.

5. Evaluate: Individual self-evaluation, as well as group and practitioner evaluation may be conducted. This allows the members who participated in bibliotherapy to have a solid conclusion on what the experience meant to them.

Forgan (2002) believes those implementing bibliotherapy in the classroom setting should focus on four elements. First is prereading, which involves the selection of materials. Forgan advises consulting with a school or public library media specialist when selecting the books to use for bibliotherapy. Prereading also involves helping student link their current analysis of the book to their past and current experiences (Forgan). Second, is guided reading. Guided reading stage simply involves reading the story, out loud and uninterrupted, to a classroom or individual. The reading should be followed by some quiet time used for reflection, either mentally or writing down feelings in a journal. The third element is postreading discussion. Postreading discussion involves the students retelling the plot of the story and perhaps answering questions generated by the individual implementing bibliotherapy. The final stage is a problem-solving/reinforcement activity. This is simply where the students identify the problem presented in the book; students generate solutions to the problem, determine the best solution, and finally evaluate the outcome of that chosen solution (Forgan). Activities allow students to have a hands-on experience with the book.

Finally, Crosby (1963) has yet another procedure to use in regard to the implementation of bibliotherapy with children. His model involves five steps:

1. The child retells the story.

2. The child identifies changes in feelings, relationships, and behaviors of the character.

3. The child is asked to compare his/her experiences of life with the experiences characters are facing in the book.

4. The child explores the consequences of behaviors or feelings the character exhibits/demonstrates in the book.

5. The child develops conclusions or generalizations about the book through discussing various solutions to the character's challenges.

These perspectives on how to implement bibliotherapy have common characteristics or steps: first, read the book; second, to use the book to make a connection with their current life; third, discuss the book and draw conclusions from the book; and fourth apply what they have learned from the book to their current life situation.

Using Fiction or Non-Fiction

Little research was found regarding bibliotherapy and the use of fiction and non-fiction books. However, Coon (2004) stated that both fiction and nonfiction books can be used when implementing bibliotherapy. Although this may be the case, a majority of articles used for this research focused on the use of fictional books. There are many reasons this may be the case. First, children may be able to relate to fictional stories easier than non-fiction stories. Children can form connections with characters who have qualities that are similar their own. Second, circumstances and situations that children commonly encounter may be

fabricated in a way to create more universal application for all children. Finally, fictional books are more common, and it maybe easier to locate a fiction book, than a nonfiction book of interest.

Limitations and Cautions

As stated earlier, bibliotherapy is not a cure-all, and one should consider the limitations of such a therapy before its implementation. Bibliotherapy will not "automatically influence all attitudes or behaviors; however when bibliotherapy is used by a knowledgeable and empathic [practitioner], it has great potential to help intelligent young people deal with their problems and discover clues for self-directed personal growth" (Hebert & Furner, 1997, p. 173). Although bibliotherapy does not help every child with every situation, it does have great capacity for benefiting a child's life.

One of the main limitations of bibliotherapy is that the personality of participants may vary. One individual may understand the book in one way, and another individual can take a completely different perspective. Information from the literature can be "misunderstood, misinterpreted, and even distorted, colored by the reader's private experiences" (Shechtman, 1999, p. 40). Although this may be true, some researchers believe that follow-up activities can help curb the negative effects that are a result of bias created through individual uniqueness (Kramer & Smith, 1998).

Those implementing bibliotherapy should be prepared for reactions from children that may be unexpected (Kramer & Smith, 1998). No one knows specifically how each child may react to a certain book or storyline. Further, bibliotherapy must be used with caution when working with children who have deep psychological problems. It is recommended that when deeper psychological problems are the issue with a child, that they be redirected to

professionals that are trained to work with children facing issues of increasing difficulty (Sawyer, 2000). This is why school psychologists would be ideal professionals to implement bibliotherapy. School psychologists have the psychological and educational background needed to help children from this population.

Who Uses Bibliothearpy?

Bibliotherapy is used by a wide variety of professionals. In fact, bibliotherapy has increased in popularity among a variety of professionals in a variety of settings (Myracle, 1995). One study reported that parents administered a reading therapy program for a lengthy period of time with their children, and upon completion reported satisfaction with their children's progress (Burns & Kondrick, 1998). Another study reported how bibliotherapy was implemented by teachers to help students with their individual needs (Pardeck, 1994). Many studies have been conducted on the use of bibliotherapy by therapists, and even growing in popularity among mental health professionals (Adams & Pitre, 2000; Nickerson, 1975; Pardeck, 1990; Shechtman, 1999). Adams and Pitre surveyed a variety of clinicians and found that 60% of the psychologists who participated in their survey reported prescribing books as an adjunct to therapy. Of those, 69% of clinicians indicated that some of their patients reported being helped through the prescribed books. These studies show the growing use and popularity of bibliotherapy among an array of professionals.

Regardless of who chooses to use bibliotherapy, those who are interested in implementing bibliotherapy should have the personal qualities of personal strength, genuine interest in others, empathy, compassion, and knowledge (Aiex, 1993). Those who choose to use bibliotherapy must have, or acquire these characteristics in order for bibliotherapy to be effective.

Bibliotherapy and School Psychologists

A wide array of literature exists on the topic of bibliotherapy and how therapists, parents, and teachers use this technique to aid in helping young children through their problems. However, minimal research exists concerning school psychologists' use of bibliotherapy with children (Seadler, 1999).

Aiex (1993) outlined nine reasons a teacher may choose to use bibliotherapy with students. School psychologists may be better suited to implement bibliotherapy with children for some of these issues.

1. To show children they are not the only ones in a situation similar to their own.

2. To show children another solution to the problem they may be facing.

3. To help children open up and talk about their problem without inhibition.

4. To help children strategize an effective plan or course to follow to solve their problem.

5. To build up a child's self-concept.

6. To alleviate built up mental or emotional pressure a child may be facing.

7. To promote honest self-appraisal in a child.

8. To present the child with a way to discover different interests he/she may not have encountered otherwise.

9. To amplify a child's understanding of human behaviors, motives, and actions.

School psychologists may be prime candidates for using bibliotherapy with children. Hebert and Furner (1997) further legitimize the importance of having a trained professional implement bibliotherapy:

If discussions at greater depth appear to be beneficial, teachers should ask the school guidance counselor or psychologists to serve as a co-leader in the discussions. Without a mental health professional present, teachers without training in psychology should not try to encourage self-disclosure that would make students feel exposed. (p. 173)

Having school psychologists implement bibliotherapy may be extremely effective because they have the psychological training, developmental knowledge, and educational (school based) background that can be advantageous for children in the school setting. Further, they have more opportunities to work in small group or one-on-one settings with students than do teachers.

Given this review of literature, there are many topics that still need to be researched in relation to bibliotherapy and school psychology. Specifically, no research was found concerning bibliotherapy and its use and its perceived efficacy by school psychologists. Therefore, this study was designed to address this topic. The following question guided the current study: What percentage and how often do school psychologists in Utah use bibliotherapy? What percentage and how often do school psychologists in Utah use bibliotherapy with children K-6? For which topics do school psychologists most often use bibliotherapy? What is the efficacy in relation to the different topics as judged by school psychologists?

METHOD

Participants

Participants in this study were comprised of licensed, registered, and practicing school psychologists in the state of Utah, as recorded by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) for the 2005-2006 academic school year. The potential participants (119) were selected via a random sampling format (using a table of random numbers) within this population of 233 school psychologists. The list of licensed, registered, and practicing school psychologists in the state of Utah was obtained through the Utah State Office of Education. Upon verification of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, an Excel file was sent to the primary investigator via e-mail (by Geri Bernardo, the USOE programmer) which contained the list of school psychologists, the school district in which they were employed, and the address of their particular school. Forty-nine of these school psychologists participated in the study (41% return rate).

Procedures

Prior to beginning any research, IRB approval was granted by Brigham Young University. Upon approval, each participant received a letter containing a notification letter asking for consent, along with a questionnaire. In order to acquire high return rates of the questionnaire, two weeks following the initial sent material (i.e., consent form and questionnaire) to all participants (i.e., licensed/registered/practicing school psychologists in Utah); another questionnaire and consent form were sent to those professionals who did not respond (via e-mail). In addition, following the initial material sent, personal and phone

contacts were made to six school psychologist coordinators in various school districts to encourage those they oversee to fill out the questionnaire.

A PowerPoint presentation on the use and implementation of bibliotherapy was created and sent to those who returned the questionnaire within two weeks. This presentation was used as an incentive to increase the return rate, and therefore the response rate for this study.

Measures

No existing measures were found that researched the topic of bibliotherapy and its perceived efficacy and pervasiveness among school psychologists. As a result, a questionnaire was created to align with this focus.

The questionnaire is comprised of a demographic section and a survey section. The demographic section includes ten items, topics ranging from gender of participant, to grade levels they work with, to the district in which they are employed (see Appendix A).

The survey consisted of eight questions (see Appendix A) which focused on if bibliotherapy was used (yes or no), how often (a Likert-type scale with five options ranging from once a week, to less than annually), for what topics was it used (checklist), and bibliotherapy's perceived efficacy for each topic (a Likert-type scale with four options; ranging from very effective, not at all effective). The topics that were included in the checklist were chosen because they were the most pervasive topics in the review of literature. In addition, questions three and four, focusing on bibliotherapy's use with children in grades K-6 was specified because most of the literature that was reviewed focused on students within this population.

The last three of the eight survey questions were qualitative questions addressing the issue of if the participant hadn't used bibliotherapy, why not? If they had used bibliotherapy, what barriers have they come across? And what their favorite book children's book for bibliotherapy is and why?

Due to the fact that a new questionnaire was created in order to focus on this topic of research, no reliability or validity can be stated. However, a pilot study was created by giving the questionnaire to eight school psychologists in order for the items to be critiqued and to receive feedback. From the feedback received, changes were made accordingly to make the questionnaire more clear and accurate.

Research Design

This study follows a within-stage mixed model research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The questionnaire included both quantitative (questions 1-5) and qualitative items (questions 6-8). Quantitative responses were categorical.

Data Analysis

Data were entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences-Windows Version) where descriptive statistics were the primary analysis techniques used to describe the data. Percentages, frequency counts of themes that emerged from the data, and central tendency measures (i.e., median) were used to describe the data. There are also some qualitative data due to the responses given to the three short-essay questions. These qualitative data were gathered by noting reoccurring themes in the participants' responses and putting tally marks next to the themes to account for those that were most commonly cited.

RESULTS

Return Rate of Survey

Out of the 233 licensed, registered, and practicing school psychologists in the state of Utah, as recorded by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) for the 2005-2006 academic school year, 119 were selected, via random sampling through use of a table of random numbers. Of those 119 selected as a target sample, 49 responded.

After receiving a listing of all the licensed, registered, and practicing school psychologists in the state, a letter containing a notification letter asking for consent, along with a questionnaire was sent to all 119 participants that were randomly selected from the sample. Two weeks following this initial letter, 35 participants completed and sent back the questionnaire -- a 29% return rate. A follow up letter was then sent (via e-mail) to those participants who had not completed and sent back the questionnaire, and within two more weeks seven more school psychologists responded. Two more weeks were then allowed for participants to respond, and 6 more school psychologists responded for a total of 49 out of the 119 school psychologists in Utah. This equates to a 41% response rate.

Although Suskie (1996) states that 50% is a minimally adequate response rate, she also states that quality is more important than quantity. "It is more important to have respondents who are representative of the group from which you are sampling than to have a large return rate" (Suskie, p. 69). The participants for this study seem to be an adequate representation of the sample, and therefore, I believe the response rate to be sufficient.

Demographics of Participants

Data were reviewed and categorized according to the grade level of children the school psychologists worked with (early intervention/preschool, K-6, 7-9, 10-12). Out of the

school psychologists who responded to the study, 9 (18%) worked with children in early intervention/preschool, 34 (69%) worked with children K-6, 11 (22%) worked with adolescents in grades 7-9, and 16 (33%) worked with adolescents in grades 10-12. These results indicate a greater number of responses than those who participated in the study because 24 of the 49 school psychologists who responded to the study worked in more than one setting (or school) within their school district.

A summary of the demographic information of the 49 school psychologists who participated in the study can be found in Figures 1, 2, and 3. There were 20 males and 29 females. In regards to race/ethnicity, 2% of those who participated were Asian, 2% were Hispanic, and 96 % were Caucasian/White. Most school psychologists who participated were between the ages of 26 and 30, had one to five years of experience, and a majority reported having a master's degree.
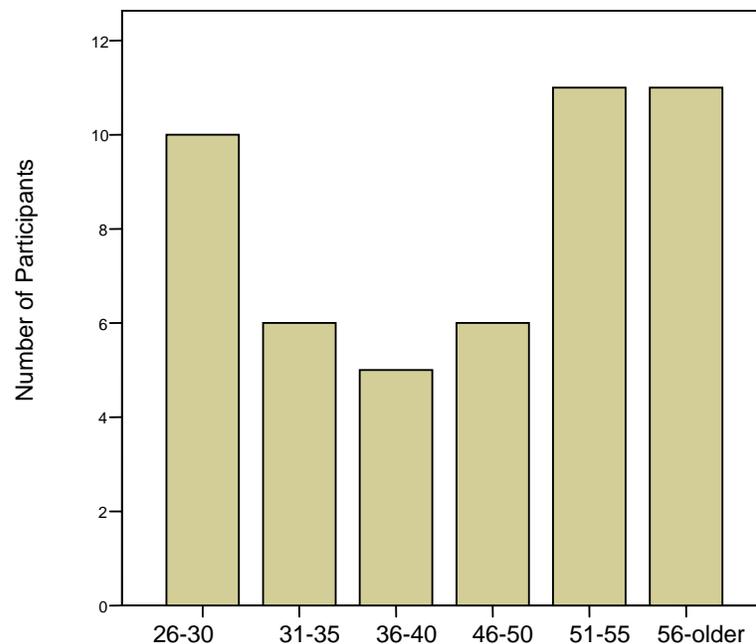
Figure 1. Age of participants.
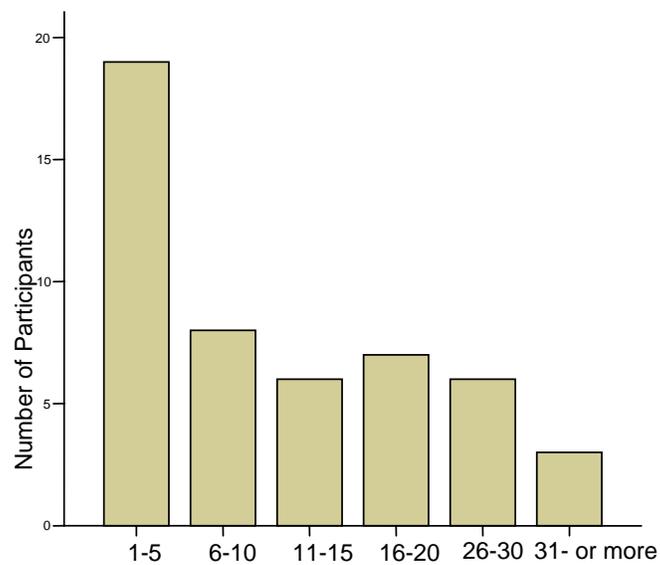
Figure 2. Years of experience.

Masters (MS)
Education Specialist (EdS)
Doctorate (PhD)
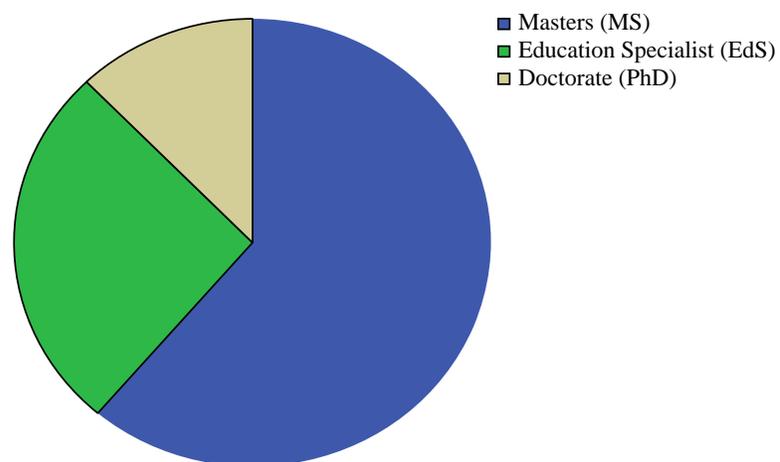
Figure 3. Type of degree earned.

In regard to the school districts where the participants were employed, a majority of

the participants 24 (49%) worked in Jordan School District. More information regarding the

district participants worked in can be found in Figure 4. Most school psychologists (25, 51%) worked in a single setting (within one school), while 24 (49%) worked in multiple schools within the district.
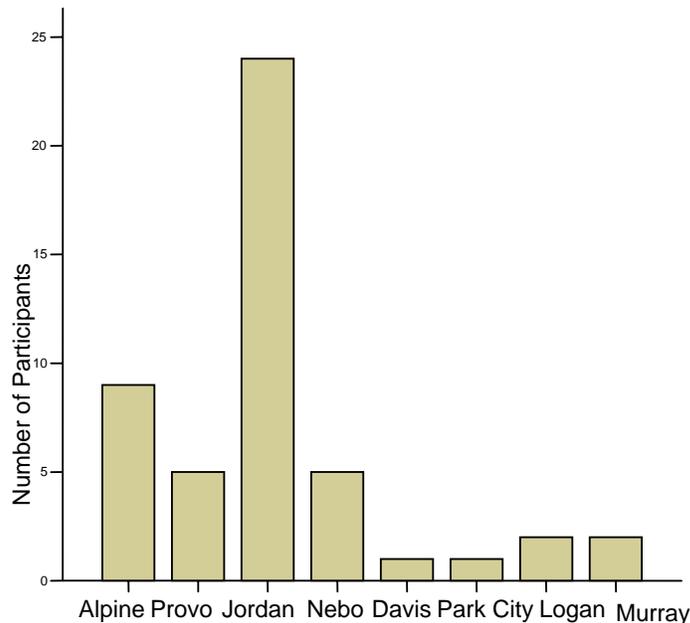
Figure 4. School districts in which participants are employed.

Over half (53.1%) of school psychologists surveyed reported receiving training in their graduate program which included interventions using bibliotherapy (26 received training, 23 did not receive training). Of the school psychologists surveyed, 11 (22.4%) had received professional training since graduate school about bibliotherapy and 38 had not (77.6%).

Data Analysis of Research Questions

Research question 1: What percentage of School Psychology professionals in Utah use bibliotherapy in their practice? If used, how often is bibliotherapy implemented?

According to the data collected, 40 out of the 49 (82%) school psychologists who participated in the study use bibliotherapy in their practice. In regard to how often bibliotherapy is used in their practice 17 (43%) of those who use bibliotherapy reported using

it once a week, 13 (33%) reported once a month, 7 (18%) reported once a quarter, 1 (2.5%) reported once a year, and 1 (2.5%) reported less than annually.

Research question 2: What percentage of School Psychology professionals in Utah use bibliotherapy when working with children K-6? If used, how often is bibliotherapy implemented for this population? According to the data collected, 31 out of the 34 (91%) school psychologists who worked with children K-6 used bibliotherapy for this population. In regard to how often bibliotherapy is used for this population, 14 (45%) of those who use bibliotherapy for this population reported using it once a week, 10 (32%) reported once a month, 3 (10%) reported once a quarter, 2 (6.5%) reported once a year, and 2 (6.5%) reported less than annually.

Research question 3: For which topics do school psychologists most often use bibliotherapy? The school psychologists who participated in this study were able to select as many topics as they deemed appropriate regarding for which topics they use bibliotherapy. A summary of topics and their pervasiveness of use by school psychologists can be found in Table 1.

Research question 4: What is bibliotherapy's perceived efficacy in relation to different topics as judged by school psychologists? In relation to all the topic areas and bibliotherapy's efficacy, the average efficacy rating was 1.84 (1= very effective, 2= effective, 3= not very effective, 4= not at all effective, and 5= N/A). The efficacy ratings for those individual topics that were most often used by school psychologist can be found in Table 1. Participants rated all topics within the range of very effective to effective.

Table 1

Topic and Efficacy Ratings

Topic	Number of participants that reported using topic	Efficacy Rating *
Self-Esteem	26	1.88
Bullying	25	2.08
Anxiety	24	2.08
Divorce	24	1.87
Grief	23	1.74
Aggression	23	2.26
Development of Emotional Intelligence	20	2.11
Attitude towards people with disabilities	17	1.82
Personal Limitations	14	1.64
Abuse	9	2.29
Disasters	6	2
Incarcerated Parents	6	2
Friendship Skills	5	1.80
Mental Illness of Parent	4	1
ADHD	4	2
Anger Management	2	2
Acting out Behavior	1	2
School Phobia	1	2
Chronic Illness	1	2
Race	1	1
Depressive Disorders	1	1

* (1= very effective, 2= effective, 3= not very effective, 4= not at all effective)

Qualitative research questions. Seven (14%) of the 49 participants responded to question six on the questionnaire. Forty-one (83%) responded to question seven, and forty (81%) responded to question eight. In regard to question 6 ("If you haven't used bibliotherapy, why?") on the questionnaire, there were a few key themes found in the responses. One was a lack of training. Many of the school psychologists felt that they did not have much training on the use and implementation of bibliotherapy, and thus felt wary in using it with their students. Another common response was a lack of resources; not having a good reference list of books to refer to for each specific problem type, and also the availability of books. The last common theme of why school psychologists did not use bibliotherapy in their practice was they utilized other techniques in which they saw as more effective to help children through different problems and issues.

In regard to question 7 ("What are some barriers you have come across in using bibliotherapy?"), some of the same key themes as related above were mentioned, and a few more were added. Many stated of the frustration and difficulty of finding the right book for the right problem which is presented. This goes in hand with limited resources and a lack of information on good books. Lack of time and need for follow-up for optimal outcome were mentioned. Again, a lack of training was stated as a barrier, as well as the low reading level and motivation of the students in which these school psychologists work with. Some stated the difficulty to generalize information to applied settings, and others related the difficulty of determining efficacy of bibliotherapy when multiple treatments are implemented. Finally, some school psychologists mentioned that the students they work with tend to like activities better than reading and discussing a book.

In regard to question 8 ("What is your favorite children's book to use when working with children, and why?"), a majority of the participants chose different books as their favorite books to use with children. Some of the most common topics that these books covered include the following list: feelings, self-worth/self-esteem, differences, teasing/bullying, values, attitude, death/grief, anxiety, friendship, self-talk, and ADHD. A list of these books recommended by school psychologists can be found in Appendix B. An additional list of books referred by or most cited in the literary review can be found in Appendix C.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the pervasiveness and efficacy of bibliotherapy among school psychologists in Utah. Limitations and cautions of this study will be discussed followed by a discussion of results, suggestions for best practice, and suggestions for future research.

Limitations and Cautions

While the random selection of participants improves the validity of this study, the generalizability of the study is limited. Since the sample was limited to the state of Utah, the external validity of the study is limited because the results cannot be generalized with any degree of confidence beyond practicing school psychologists in the state of Utah.

Second, the information provided by the questionnaire is subjective. The answers are based solely on the perception of the school psychologist who completed the questionnaire. Therefore, the stated efficacy of bibliotherapy in relation to each of the topics is exclusively subjective. No empirical data regarding actual effects on school children can back up these assumptions.

Third, there was a relatively low response rate. This could be due to the fact that there was no stamped, self-addressed envelope included in with the survey. This may have deterred some from participating in the study. In addition, the low response rate could be due to sample bias. Perhaps some did not respond to the questionnaire because they do not use bibliotherapy, and thus only those who used bibliotherapy were willing the return the questionnaire. This would bias the results in favor of bibliotherapy because those who use bibliotherapy in their practice were more willing to fill out and return the questionnaire.

Forth, the male/female ratio of participants did not match that of the male/female ratio of school psychologists in Utah (proportionately there were more male participants who participated in the study.) The reason is unknown, but the male subjects sampled appeared to have been more willing to complete and return the questionnaire as indicated by the inflated response rate of male participants.

Finally, the questionnaire was created to align with the focus of bibliotherapy and its use by school psychologists. No reliability and validity data regarding the measure are available. It is an assumption that this instrument is measuring what it is intended to measure.

Discussion of Results

A vast majority of participants (82%) reported using bibliotherapy in their school psychology practice. In addition, many of those in the sample use bibliotherapy with students in grades K-6 (91%). There was little research found in the literature that focused on the topic of bibliotherapy and how pervasive its use by school psychologists, and therefore, this information is new to the field.

In regard to efficacy of bibliotherapy in relation to individual topics, this study supports much of what was represented in the literature. According to the literature, (Beardsley, 1981-1982; Salend & Moe, 1983) bibliotherapy made no difference in changing students' attitudes towards those with disabilities. However, in these studies, they considered simply reading a book bibliotherapy. The results of this current research indicated bibliotherapy (including discussion) to be effective in changing students' attitudes towards those with disabilities. Seventeen (35%) of the school psychologists use bibliotherapy in this area and gave it a mean rating of 1.82 (1= very effective, 2= effective, 3= not very effective, 4= not at all effective, and 5= N/A).

The literature also shows that bibliotherapy is effective in helping children with anxiety and feelings associated with anxiety (Register et al., 1991). The results of this research indicated that school psychologists in Utah also see bibliotherapy as effective in relation to the topic of anxiety. Twenty-four (49%) of the school psychologists use bibliotherapy in this area and gave it a mean rating of 2.08.

Research indicates that bibliotherapy is effective in helping address children's aggression (Shechtman, 1999), helping children who are victims of abuse (Kramer, 1999; Pardeck, 1990), helping with children's self-esteem, and coping with divorce (Myracle, 1995). The results of this research indicate much the same. The school psychologists who participated in this study indicated that bibliotherapy was effective for the following topics: acting out behavior, anger management, helping abused children, helping increase self-esteem, and helping children with divorced parents.

Bibliotherapy was found to be effective in helping children deal with concepts of death (Kramer, 1999). A national survey given to school psychologists in the United States (Seadler, 1999) even stated that 33% of school psychologists reported using bibliotherapy for death-related crisis intervention, 50.3% for grief counseling, and 36.4% for death education. The results of this study indicated that twenty-three (47%) of the school psychologists in Utah, use bibliotherapy in relation to death and grief, rating its efficacy 1.74. This is in accordance with the review of literature.

Suggestions for Best Practice

Many school psychologists who participated in this study who did not use bibliotherapy mentioned lack of training as a barrier to using bibliotherapy. In light of the lack of training barrier, it could be suggested for all universities training school psychologists

to include into their curriculum the proper use and implementation of bibliotherapy. This would help future school psychologists feel more proficient in using bibliotherapy in their practice (and using it properly), and further help children cope with difficult issues they face.

In addition, 53.1% of the school psychologists who participated in this study reported having received some training in bibliotherapy at a graduate level. An additional 22.4% reported having some post-graduate school professional training in bibliotherapy. This means that 75.5% of those school psychologists who participated in this study have received some type of training in relation to bibliotherapy. However, 82% of those school psychologists who participated in the study reported using bibliotherapy. That means that roughly 7% are using bibliotherapy without any type of graduate or post-graduate training. Perhaps conference or workshop sessions could be put in place to better help these school psychologists implement and use bibliotherapy properly.

In addition, there are many good, modern, and realistic books addressing a number of topics for school psychologists to use. One of the main problems school psychologists face is they do not have the time or know of the resources to find those books. A resource could be created (e.g., web page, pamphlet) listing a variety of topics and quality books addressing those topics. This resource could help a great deal in helping school psychologists use bibliotherapy more in their practice.

Future Research

This study focused on the use of bibliotherapy by school psychologists in Utah. Future research could be conducted to determine how bibliotherapy is used by school psychologists around the nation. A comparative analysis could be made among each of the states. Further, this study highlighted how often bibliotherapy is used by school psychologists

for those students K-6 (see research question 2 and survey questions 3 and 4). Future research could be done to compare the use of bibliotherapy among K-6, 7-9, and 10-12, and see how bibliotherapy is used among the different age groups.

Future research could also be conducted concerning the topic of bibliotherapy training. If school psychologists were given more training on the topic of bibliotherapy during their graduate studies, would they be more apt to use it as an intervention? In addition, if graduate training is used, how do those who participate in such training rate its efficacy?

A number of participants reported lack of reading ability of students as a barrier to using bibliotherapy. Future research could focus on the use of bibliotherapy through audio tape (listening to a recording of a book) and distinguish its efficacy in relation to traditional bibliotherapy (reading a book.)

Lastly, there was little information found on the use of bibliotherapy and the preference or efficacy of fiction verses non-fiction books. Future research could focus on this topic to determine if fiction or non-fiction books should be preferred when using bibliotherapy.

Summary/Conclusions

Bibliotherapy is the use of books to "produce affective change and promote personality growth and development" (Hebert & Furner, 1997, p. 169). Bibliotherapy has been used since the first libraries were formed in ancient Greece; however, it wasn't until 1946 that the term bibliotherapy was first used in reference to children. Bibliotherapy can help children with problem-solving strategies, help children cope with different problems they are facing, and help children gain insight into their problems (Pardeck, 1990).

Bibliotherapy has been found to be effective for a variety of topics that school age children face on a daily basis; ranging from anxieties, to divorce, to friendship skills (Forgan, 2002). Bibliotherapy can not only be used to help solve current problems, but also to help prevent future problems (Pardeck, 1990).

In order for bibliotherapy to be effective it must be implemented correctly, in addition, the use of follow-up techniques is vital. There are different steps in the implementation process that one must follow namely, read the book, make a connection to current life, discuss the book, and apply what you have learned (Crosby, 1963). Bibliotherapy is used by a wide variety of professionals. If the data collected in this study are generalizable to all of the school psychologists in Utah, then it appears that bibliotherapy is used by many school psychologists in Utah. Of the 49 school psychologists who participated in this research 40 (82%) used bibliotherapy in their practice. Many of these school psychologists used bibliotherapy on a weekly or monthly basis. Of the 34 school psychologists who worked with children K-6, 31 (91%) reported using bibliotherapy. Again a majority of those school psychologists used bibliotherapy on a weekly or monthly basis.

School psychologists of Utah use bibliotherapy for a variety of topics. The efficacy of bibliotherapy, as perceived by school psychologists in Utah, varied depending on the topic for which it was used. Those topics that appeared to be the most frequently used and most effective by school psychologists were divorce, grief, personal limitations, self-esteem, and friendship skills.

Based on the data collected, those who don't use bibliotherapy do not use it because of their lack of training, lack of resources, and relative uncertainty of bibliotherapy's efficacy. Of those school psychologists who do use bibliotherapy in their practice, the

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barriers that they have come across include the following: lack of time, lack of ability to generalize information, and low motivation and reading ability of the students they work with.

In considering those barriers and limitations, it has been suggested that university faculty who train school psychologists should add the proper use and implementation of bibliotherapy to their curriculum. In addition, a resource could be made available to all school psychologists (perhaps via the internet) that include quality books focusing on a variety of topics that could be used to help students cope with trouble situations.

There are a variety of areas in which future research could be conducted. Future research could look at the pervasiveness of bibliotherapy as used by school psychologists around the nation, or investigate the difference of how school psychology is used among the different grade levels of students (K-6, 7-9, 10-12). Research could be conducted on bibliotherapy training, and whether that would increase its use by school psychologists, and finally research could be conducted to verify the pros and cons of using fiction and non-fiction books.

Bibliotherapy is not simply reading a book. Bibliotherapy is using books to "produce affective change and promote personality growth and development" (Hebert & Furner, 1997, p. 169). When understood and implemented correctly, bibliotherapy can be an effective tool in helping students with a variety of topics they face in their everyday lives. Bibliotherapy can be utilized more effectively when university programs, professional training, conferences, and workshops teach school psychologists in the proper use and implementation of this type of intervention. This added training may, in return, better serve the children in our public schools.

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APPENDIX A

Letter to Special Educator

Dear special educator:

You have been asked to complete this survey because your information and experience are important to us. We will use the information you provide as a baseline about bibliotherapy and its use by school psychologists in Utah. You will answer questions about:

      (1) Your use bibliotherapy

      (2) How often you use bibliotherapy

      (3) What topics you think bibliotherapy has the most efficacy.

As an incentive for you to complete and return the survey, we will send you a power-point presentation via e-mail on how bibliotherapy works and how to implement bibliotherapy **if the survey is returned and completed within two weeks**. It will take you approximately 5-10 minutes to answer the questions on the following pages. The information you provide will remain anonymous. The information that we collect will be stored and safeguarded in a locked filing cabinet in our office.

The experiences and information that you provide to us will help us to establish a baseline of bibliotherapy and its pervasiveness and perceived efficacy in Utah schools. This may raise awareness of bibliotherapy, and perhaps increase the use of bibliotherapy within Utah school districts. The risk is considered minimal and your participation is voluntary.

This research is being completed by Marci Olsen, Tina Dyches, Melissa Allen, and Mary Anne Prater. The latter three persons are associate professors and chair of the CPSE department at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. If you have concerns, you may contact us at (435) 590-6166 or by e-mail at mao29@byu.edu.

Thank you for your help with this important research.

Sincerely,

Marci Olsen

Consent to be a Research Subject

Introduction: This research study is being conducted by Marci Olsen, a master's student in School Psychology at Brigham Young University, to determine how pervasive bibliotherapy is among school psychologists in Utah, and how effective it is perceived to be by school psychologists. You were selected to participate because you were chosen randomly from a list of currently licensed school psychologists as recorded by the Utah State Office of Education.

Procedures: You are asked to complete the questionnaire enclosed. You will be asked to provide demographic information and answer eight survey questions, with the latter three requiring a short written response. The survey questions pertain to the topics for which you use bibliotherapy, and your perception of how effective bibliotherapy is for those topics.

Risks/Discomforts: There are minimum risks for participants in this study. Participation in this research will require some of your time and input.

Benefits: The benefits of this study may not have direct relation to you as a participant. However, results of this study, though your participation, will lead to more information on the topic of bibliotherapy in relation to school psychology. This could lead to more research and advancement on this topic.

Confidentiality: All information will remain confidential. The information will not identify certain individuals, but instead, will be categorized as group data. All questionnaires will only be accessible to those directly involved with the research.

Compensation: A power point presentation on how to use and implement bibliotherapy will be sent via e-mail, to those participants who return the survey within two weeks.

Participation: Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy or penalty.

Questions about the Research: If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Marci Olsen at mao29@byu.edu, or Dr. Tina T. Dyches at (801) 422-5045.

Questions about your Rights as a Research Participant: If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact Dr. Renea Beckstrand, Institutional Review Board Chair, 422-3873, 422 SWKT, renea_beckstrand@byu.edu.

The return of the attached survey is your consent to participate in the research.

Bibliotherapy Questionnaire

Demographic Questions:

What is your gender? M or F (circle one)

What is your primary ethnicity or race? (circle one)

Asian Pacific Islander Hispanic African-American Caucasian/White Native American
Other: _____

How old are you? _____

What type of degree did you earn?

      Masters (MS)   Education Specialist (EdS)   Doctorate (PhD)

Did your training include interventions using bibliotherapy?

      Yes   or   No   (circle one)

Have you received professional training since graduate school about bibliotherapy?

      Yes   or   No   (circle one)

Which age group, children and/or adolescents, do you work with? (circle all that apply)

      Early Intervention/Preschool   K-6   7-9   10-12

Do you work at a single setting (one school) or at multiple schools within the district?
(circle one)

          Single   Multiple

What school district do you work for? _____

How many years have you been working as a School Psychologist? _____

Survey: Id. # _____

Definition of Bibliotherapy: Bibliotherapy is the use of reading to produce affective change and to promote personality growth and development. It is an attempt to help young people understand themselves and cope with problems by providing literature relevant to their personal situations and developmental needs at appropriate times.

1) Do you use bibliotherapy in your school practice? Yes or No (circle one)

                                        If you circle "No" please go to question 6
2) How often? (circle one)

Once a week   Once a month   Once a Quarter   Once a Year   Less than Annually

3) Do you use bibliotherapy in your practice working with children in grades K-6? (if applies, circle one)

                    Yes or No

4) How often? (if applies, circle one)

Once a week   Once a month   Once a Quarter   Once a Year   Less than Annually

5) With which topics have you used bibliotherapy; and if so, how effective do you perceive the bibliotherapy to be? (Please check those that apply)

Topic	Please mark if you use for topic	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Not at all effective	N/A
Aggression						
Abuse						
Anxiety						
Attitude Toward People with Disabilities						
Bullying						
Development of Emotional Intelligence						
Divorce						
Disasters (natural and other)						
Grief						
Incarcerated Parents						
Mental Illness of						

Parents						
Personal Limitations						
Self-Esteem						
Other. Please List_____						

6) If you haven't used bibliotherapy in your practice, is there a reason why you have not? If so, please state:

7) Have you come across any barriers in using bibliotherapy? If so, please state:

8) What is your favorite children's book to use when working with children, and why?

Return to:

    Marci Olsen
    631 W. 1925 N.
    Provo, UT 84604

Return by: __October 17, 2005___

Email address to send power point presentation to: _____

APPENDIX B

School Psychologists' Referred Book List

Feelings/Emotions

Title: Today I Feel Silly
Author: Jamie Lee Curtis
Year: 1998

Title: Mean Soup
Author: Betsy Everitt
Year: 1995

Title: SOS for Emotions
Author: Lynn Clark
Year: 2001

Title: My Many Colored Days
Author: Dr. Seuss
Year: 1997

Anxiety

Title: Wemberly Worried
Author: Kevin Henkes
Year: 2000

Title: The Kissing Hand
Author: Audrey Penn
Year: 1993

Hope/Motivation

Title: Charlie, the Caterpillar
Author: Dom Deluise
Year: 1993

Title: The Hiding Place
Author: Corrie Ten Boom
Year: 1984

Title: Three Questions
Author: Jon J. Muth
Year: 2002

Self-Worth/ Self-Esteem

Title: The Touch of the Master's Hand
Author: Myra Brooks
Year: 1997

Title: If Only I had a Green Nose
Author: Max Lucado
Year: 2002

Title: You are Special
Author: Max Lucado
Year: 1997

Title: The Carrot Seed
Author: Ruth Krauss
Year: 1993

Title: Stellaluna
Author: Janell Cannon
Year: 1993

Title: The Lost Princess
Author: George MacDonald
Year: 1992

Title: Stand Tall, Molly Lou Mellon
Author: Patty Lovell
Year: 2001

Values/ Morals

Title: The Rag Coat
Author: Lauren A. Mills
Year: 1991

Title: Fables
Author: Arnold Lobel
Year: 1983

Differences/ Tolerance

Title: The Ugly Duckling
Author: Hans Christian Anderson
Year: 1999

Title: Tacky the Penguin
Author: Helen Lester
Year: 1990

Title: The Sneetches
Author: Dr. Seuss
Year: 1961

Title: Green Eggs and Ham
Author: Dr. Seuss
Year: 1960

Trouble/ Mischief

Title: No, David
Author: David Shannon
Year: 1998

Title: David Gets into Trouble
Author: David Shannon
Year: 2002

Friendship

Title: English Roses
Author: Madonna
Year: 2003

Title: Best Friends for Francis
Author: Russell Hoban
Year: 1976

Title: How to be a Friend
Author: Laurie Krasny Brown
Year: 2001

Death/Grief

Title: When Dinosaurs Die
Author: Laurie Krasny Brown
Year: 1998

Title: Badgers Parting Gifts
Author: Susan Varley
Year: 1984

Title: Final Gifts
Author: Maggie Callanan
Year: 1997

Title: After a Suicide: A Workbook for Grieving Kids
Author: Dougy Center for Grieving Children
Year: 2001

Teasing/ Bullying

Title: Simon's Hook
Author: Karen Gedig Burnett
Year: 1999

Title: Bullies are a Pain in the Brain
Author: Trevor Romain
Year: 1997

Title: Stop Picking on Me!
Author: Pat Thomas
Year: 2000

Title: Blackboard Bear
Author: Martha Alexander
Year: 1999

Divorce

Title: When Dinosaurs Divorce
Author: Laurie Krasny Brown
Year: 1988

Title: How it feels when Parents Divorce
Author: Jill Krumentz
Year: 1988

Anger/ Aggression

Title: Angry Arthur
Author: Hiawyn Ora
Year: 1982

Title: Mean Jean the Recess Queen
Author: Alexis O'neill
Year: 2002

Title: Bartholomew and the Oobleck
Author: Dr. Seuss
Year: 1949

Miscellaneous

Title: Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Bad Day
Author: Judith Viorst
Year: 1972

Title: Three Wishes
Author: Liane Moriarty
Year: 2004

Title: The Little Engine that Could
Author: Watty Piper
Year: 1978
Title: Thinking, Changing, Rearranging
Author: Jill Anderson
Year: 1988

Title: The Giving Tree
Author: Shel Silverstein
Year: 1964

APPENDIX C

Literature Review Book List

Abuse

Title: Margaret's Story
Author: Anderson, D. and Finne, M.
Publisher: Dillon Press, Inc.
Year: 1986

Title: Michael's Story
Author: Anderson, D. and Finne, M.
Publisher: Dillon Press, Inc.
Year: 1986

Title: My Body is Private
Author: Girard, L.
Publisher: Albert Whitman and Company
Year: 1984

Title: Gunner's Run
Author: Orr, R.
Publisher: Harper and Row
Year: 1980

Aggression/ Anger

Title: Angry Authur
Author: Oram, H.
Publisher: Random House of Canada
Year: 1993

Title: Danny, the Angry Lion
Author: L. Dorothy
Publisher: North South Books
Year: 2000

Title: I'm Mad at You!
Author: Gikow, L.
Publisher: Checkerboard Press
Year: 1989

Title: When Sophie Gets Angry- Really, Really Angry
Author: Bang, M.
Publisher: Scholastic Press
Year: 1999

Title: Angry Arthur
Author: Hiawyn Oram
Publisher: Farr Straus Giroux
Year: 1977 (Reprint Edition)

Title: Mean Jean the Recess Queen
Author: Alexis O'Neill
Publisher: Scholastic Press
Year: 2002

Anxiety

Title: Math Curse
Author: Scieszka, J. & Smith, L.
Publisher: Viking Press
Year: 1995

Title: Don't Worry, Grandpa
Author: Ward, N.
Publisher: Barron's Juveniles
Year: 1995

Title: Sam's Worries
Author: MacDonald, M.
Publisher: Hyperion Books
Year: 1994

Title: The Secret Life of Bethany Barrett
Author: Mills, C.
Publisher: Simon & Schuster
Year: 1995

Title: Wemberly Worried
Author: Kevin Henkes
Publisher: Greenwillow
Year: 2000

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Title: What do you mean I have Attention Deficit Disorder?
Author: Dwyer, K. M.
Publisher: Walker & Company
Year: 1996

Title: Sometimes I Drive my Mom Crazy, but I Know She's Crazy About Me
Author: Shapiro, L. E.
Publisher: Center for Applied Psychology
Year: 1993

Title: Why Can't Jimmy Sit Still?
Author: Sandra L. Tunis
Publisher: New Horizon Press
Year: 2005

Attitude Toward People With Disabilities

Title: My Buddy
Author: Osofsky, A.
Publisher: Henry Hold & Company
Year: 1994

Title: Princess Pooh
Author: Muldoon, K. M.
Publisher: Albert Whitman & Company
Year: 1989

Title: The Sneeches
Author: Dr. Seuss
Publisher: Random House Books
Year: 1961

Bullying

Title: What a Wimp!
Author: Carrick, C.
Publisher: Clarion Books
Year: 1982

Title: The Revenge of the Incredible Dr. Rancid and His Youthful Assistant
Author: Conford, E.
Publisher: Little, Brown
Year: 1980

Title: Turkeylegs Thompson
Author: McCord, J.
Publisher: Atheneum
Year: 1979

Title: Courage at Indian Deep
Author: Thomas, J. R.
Publisher: Clarion Books
Year: 1984

Title: Bullies are a Pain in the Brain
Author: Trevor Romain
Publisher: Free Spirit Publishing
Year: 1997

Title: Stop Picking on Me!
Author: Pat Thomas
Publisher: Barron's Educational Series
Year: 2000

Cerebral Palsy

Title: Going Places: Children Living with Cerebral Palsy
Author: Bergman, T.
Publisher: Gareth Stevens
Year: 1991

Title: Imagine me on a sit-ski
Author: Moran, G.
Publisher: Albert Whitman & Company
Year: 1995

Death/Grief

Title: Anna's Scrapbook: Journal of a Sister's Love
Author: Aiken, S.
Publisher: Centering Corp.
Year: 2001
Title: The Happy Funeral
Author: Bunting, E.
Publisher: Harper & Row
Year: 1982

Title: I Had a Friend Named Peter: Talking to Children about the Death of a Friend
Author: Cohn, J.
Publisher: Morrow
Year: 1987

Title: The Healing Tree
Author: Hemery, K. M.
Publisher: Centering Corp.
Year: 2001

Title: I Heard Your Mommy Died
Author: Scrivani, M.
Publisher: Centering Corp.
Year: 1994

Title: I Heard Your Daddy Died
Author: Scrivani, M.
Publisher: Centering Corp.
Year: 1996

Title: Not Just a Fish
Author: Hemery, K. M.
Publisher: Centering Corp.
Year: 2000

Title: Badgers Parting Gifts
Author: Susan Varley
Publisher: Harper Trophy
Year: 1992 (Reprint Edition)

Title: Final Gifts
Author: Maggie Callanan & Patricia Kelley
Publisher: Bantam
Year: 1997 (Reprint Edition)

Divorce

Title: Please Come Home
Author: Sanford, D
Publisher: Multnomah Press
Year: 1985

Title: Mom and Dad Break Up
Author: Prestine, J. S.
Publisher: Fearon
Year: 1996

Title: Your Family, My Family
Author: Drescher, J.
Publisher: Walker
Year: 1986

Title: Surviving your Parent's Divorce
Author: Boeckman, C.
Publisher: Franklin Watts
Year: 1980

Title: Dinosaurs Divorce
Author: Brown, L. K., & Brown, M.
Publisher: Atlantic Monthly Press
Year: 1986

Title: Father's Day Blues
Author: Smalls, I.
Publisher: Longmeadow Press
Year: 1995

Down Syndrome

Title: Be Good to Eddie Lee
Author: Fleming, V.
Publisher: Philomel
Year: 1993

Title: Thumbs Up
Author: Testa, M. P.
Publisher: Albert Whitman
Year: 1994

Emotions

Title: Today I Feel Silly
Author: Jamie Lee Curtis
Publisher: Joanna Cotler
Year: 1998

Title: SOS for Emotions
Author: Lynn Clark
Publisher: Parents Press
Year: 2001

Friendship Skills

Title: How to be a Friend
Author: Laurie Krasny Brown
Publisher: Little Brown
Year: 2001 (Reprint Edition)

Incarcerated Parents

Title: When Andy's Father went to Prison
Author: Hickman, M. W.
Publisher: Albert Whitman
Year: 1990

Title: My Mom Went to Jail
Author: Hodgkins, K. & Bergen, S.
Publisher: The Rainbow Project
Year: 1997

Title: Prison, Not Me
Author: Richardson, D.
Publisher: WeWrite
Year: 1998

Title: My Life as a Girl
Author: Mosier, E.
Publisher: Random House
Year: 1999

Mental Illness of a Parent

Title: Amazing Gracie
Author: Cannon, A. E.
Publisher: Delacourte Press
Year: 1991

Title: My Father, the Nutcase
Author: Caseley, J.
Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf
Year: 1992

Title: Searching for Atticus
Author: Marino, J.
Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers
Year: 1997

Title: You Bet Your Life
Author: Deavor, J. R.
Publisher: Harper Collins Publishers
Year: 1993

Title: New Jersey
Author: Monninger, J.
Publisher: Atheneum
Year: 1986

Miscellaneous Disabilities

Title: Nick Joins In
Author: Lasker, J.
Publisher: Albert Whitman & Company
Year: 1980

Title: My buddy
Author: Osofsky, A.
Publisher: Henry Holt & company
Year: 1992

Title: My Sister is Different
Author: Wright, B. R.
Publisher: Raintree Children's Books
Year: 1993

Title: Tacky the Penguin
Author: Helen Lester
Publisher: Houghton Mifflin/Walter Lorraine
Year: 1990 (Reprint Edition)

Motivation

Title: The Hiding Place
Author: Corrie Ten Boom
Publisher: Bantam
Year: 1984

Title: The Little Engine that Could
Author: Watty Piper
Publisher: Grosset & Dunlap
Year: 1978

Self-Esteem

Title: The Carrot Seed
Author: Ruth Krauss
Publisher: Harper Trophy
Year: 1989 (Reprint Edition)

Title: Stellaluna
Author: Janell Cannon
Publisher: Harcourt Children's Books
Year: 1993

Self Worth

Title: Touch of the Master's Hand
Author: Myra Brooks Welch
Publisher: Buckaroo Books
Year: 1997

Title: You are Special
Author: Max Lucado
Publisher: Crossway Books
Year: 1997

Teasing

Title: Ada Potato
Author: Caseley, J.
Publisher: Greenwillow Books
Year: 1989

Title: The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Teasing
Author: Berenstain, S. and Berenstain, J.
Publisher: Random House
Year: 1995

Title: Fat, Fat Rose Marie
Author: Passen, L.
Publisher: Henry Hold and Company
Year: 1991

Title: Simon's Hook
Author: Karen Gedig Burnett
Publisher: GR Publishing
Year: 1999

Values

Title: The Rag Coat
Author: Lauren A. Mills
Publisher: Little, Brown
Year: 1991

Visual Impairments

Title: Glasses, who needs 'em?
Author: Smith, L.
Publisher: Viking
Year: 1991

Title: Blindness
Author: Landau, E.
Publisher: Henry Holt & Company
Year: 1994