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Empowering Children's Literature for Stressful Times

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Empowering Children's Literature for Stressful Times

Author Biography

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Abstract

Abstract

Reading and books are synonymous with children and education. Caregivers and educators alike understand the many benefits of reading books to help children learn about their world but also to help manage emotions. As the pandemic rages across the country and the world, books are one way to help children deal with the emotions that are present in their lives. Bibliotherapy is explored as the practice of clinically and educationally using literature to help children deal with anxiety and stress. Research is explored that supports the emotional needs of children and the use of books to help children empathize with others and deal with their own emotional stress. In addition, the authors have read and reviewed books published since 2017 specific to coronavirus and to helping children deal with stressful situations. Specific children's literature titles are listed for the pandemic and to empower children to deal with other stressful situations. Ideas for instructional activities are presented for titles.

Keywords

anxiety, bibliotherapy, children's literature, English language arts, stress

Empowering Children's Literature for Stressful Times

*On March 15, Ms. Rivera began her school day much as any other day, but in the back of her mind was the anxiety and unforeseen future for her students over the next few days and weeks. The pandemic forced the closing of her school which meant a move to distance learning. Ms. Rivera's students were confused and didn't understand why they were closing school. Knowing the power of her read-alouds to help her students feel calm and safe, she chose to read *The Color Monster* by Anna Llenas during their morning gathering time. Through this book, Ms. Rivera was able to open a class discussion about uncertainty and confusion and help students deal with the emotions they were feeling. After reading and discussing the book, students journaled by writing and drawing about *Color Monster* and their own feelings.*

*Ms. Rivera returned to the classroom in August with a blended classroom model, seeing some students twice a week on an alternating schedule, some in a totally virtual classroom, while the remaining students were in the classroom with her wearing masks and physically distanced at desks. The "normal" for their classroom changed and was adapted, adding extra stressors and concerns for both the students and the teacher. Ms Rivera chose to start the new year by sharing the same book about *Color Monster* since her students were not only new to her, but also to the new school model, and expressed anxiety with the school year. Through reading the book, discussions, and journaling, she was able to help them understand the feelings they were having at this time and begin to learn ways to cope with these feelings.*

The COVID-19 pandemic is a devastating event that could only be compared to the events of 9-11 within the U.S. But a difference is that the coronavirus does not affect just one country, but is a world tragedy and a shared event across cultures. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), a health outbreak, such as the coronavirus pandemic, can cause fear and anxiety which results in stress for adults and children (2020). When children are stressed, it may not be as easy to observe and identify as it might be for adults. Younger children might exhibit behaviors such as irritability, crying, have unexplained headaches or body aches, or revert to behaviors they have outgrown. Older children might worry excessively, have difficulty paying attention, exhibit unhealthy eating and sleeping habits, avoid activities previously enjoyed, or demonstrate a change in

academic performance (CDC, 2020). This stress will be apparent in all facets of a child's life, at home, at school, and at other activities.

The above scenario has been a common occurrence in many classrooms this year. Classrooms exist in various formats; virtually, blended, and in person. Teachers are managing these different modalities of a classroom and types of instruction, and students are adapting to the new formats, delivery, and learning environments. It is different for all. This new normal has affected students in various ways, and anxiety is one of many ways that is visible to educators and parents.

Anxiety and Children

Children in school often struggle with anxiety, even without a pandemic or other shared events. In a recent study (Ghandour et al., 2019), 7.1% of children aged 3 - 17 years have been diagnosed with anxiety, that is 4.4 million children. Additionally, 3.2% of children aged 3 - 17 years have been diagnosed with depression. An anxiety disorder may be diagnosed when a child does not outgrow the fears and worries that are typical in childhood or when these fears and worries become so great, they interfere with school, home, or play activities. Anxiety in children can sometimes manifest as fear or worry, but can also make children irritable and angry. Other symptoms can include trouble sleeping, fatigue, headaches, or stomach aches.

Ghandour and colleagues (2019) found that children were more often diagnosed with anxiety and behavioral or conduct disorders than depression. Anxiety and behavior or conduct disorders are sometimes addressed within the primary or educational settings through focus on behavioral management strategies rather than direct provisions for treatment of the child.

Anxiety sometimes stems from a childhood trauma. Some students may have experienced at least one Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and some have experienced multiple ACES (Plumb, Bush, Kersevich, 2016). These traumas can range from acute to chronic or complex and can stem from physical abuse, mental abuse, deaths, and other life-altering traumas. For example, the abuse by a caregiver over time would be a complex trauma from multiple ACES. Experiencing ACES can then lead to anxiety for the child, which will affect all activities and interactions in their daily life.

Naturally, this trauma caused from an ACE can affect children in the school setting. Some students in classrooms could be experiencing separation anxiety, generalized anxiety, social anxiety, or specific phobias (CDC) resulting from ACES. Children spend many hours of their day in

school so it is logical that the classroom atmosphere can be impacted by the anxiety children face. Addressing social and emotional learning with students can help all students understand not only their own emotions, but the emotions of others.

Social and Emotional Learning

One factor to consider for students during a pandemic or other experience which might produce anxiety is to focus on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). SEL, in the simplest definition, is “learning that focuses on social, emotional, behavioral, and character skills that support success in school, workplace, relationships, and the community” (Frey, Fisher, & Smith, 2019, p. 2). This broad definition encapsulates the essence of SEL, but digging deeper into SEL and how it relates to the school and classroom community is important. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) developed five competencies of SEL to further define the multiple facets of SEL (CASEL, 2020) (see Figure 1).

The five competencies are self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Self-awareness includes the ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions and thoughts and how that influences one’s behavior. Social awareness involves the recognition and understanding of social and ethical norms for behavior. Self-management is the ability to regulate emotions and behavior in different situations including stress management, impulse control, motivation, and setting goals. Relationship skills focus on establishing and maintaining healthy relationships with diverse individuals and groups through effective communication, cooperation, and negotiation during conflict. Responsible decision-making includes making constructive and responsible choices about personal and social interactions while considering ethics, safety, social norms, and consequences of actions (CASEL, 2020).

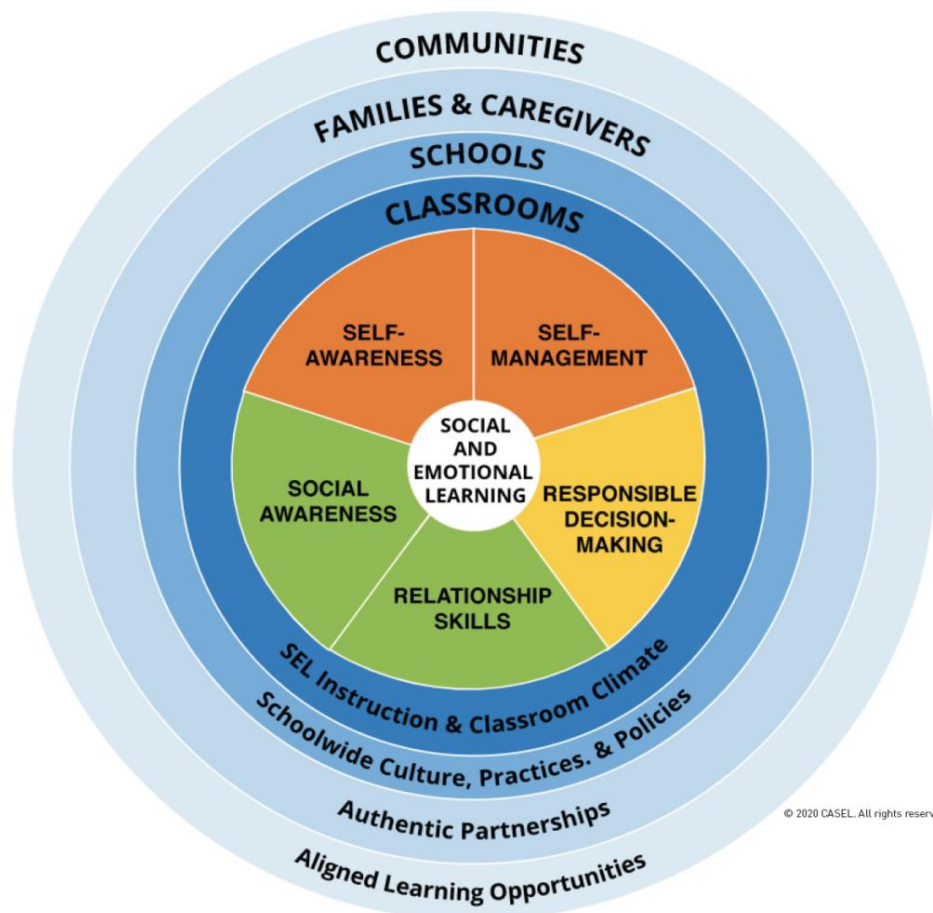


Fig. 1 CASEL diagram¹

The outer rings of Figure 1 explain the key settings that enhance students' social, emotional and academic learning. These key settings include classrooms, schools, families and caregivers and communities. Social and emotional learning can be enhanced through a variety of classroom practices, including explicit instruction and teaching practices that encourage cooperative learning and project-based learning. Schoolwide culture, practice, and policies impact SEL efforts, which contribute and depend on a school climate where both students and adults feel respected, supported, and engaged. Families and caregivers must form authentic partnerships with schools to help build connections that further develop students' SEL. Partners within the community provide safe and rich

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settings for learning and developing and have the opportunity to align with classroom curriculum and school policies to continue students' SEL development. (CASEL, 2020).

Most teachers would agree that the outlined competencies are necessary to function and be successful in school, personal relationships, and the local and global communities. Explicit teaching of skills targeted in SEL programs can build social and emotional competencies and attitudes about self, others, and school and increase prosocial behaviors (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). In addition to the obvious social benefits of SEL, there are academic benefits to teaching SEL in the classroom (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones & Kahn, 2017; Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017). Including SEL programs can lead to improved academic performance on achievement tests and overall grades (Durlak et al., 2011). Furthermore, students' improved academic performance continues after SEL programs are completed and there are positive preventive impacts such as a decrease in conduct problems, emotional stress, and reported drug use (Taylor et al., 2017). In other words, once we manage our emotional self, we are then able to learn and grow.

SEL and its benefits have a decades long history (Greenberg, et al., 2003; Weissberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003; Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2007). What is more important, teachers can effectively integrate SEL lessons and programs since these programs do not require the intervention of specialized staff or faculty. Interventions have been successfully incorporated into daily routines and educational practices within a classroom by teachers (Taylor et al., 2017).

SEL in the Classroom

By the end of 2018, there were 14 states that had articulated K-12 standards for students' SEL and in 2019 there were an additional 11 states in the process of developing resources and making strategic alignments to SEL, but had not fully developed standards (Dusenbury, Yoder, Dermody, & Weissberg, 2019). Of the states that had created SEL standards, more than half included components relating to not only mental health and trauma but also diversity and equity. About half of the states also included implementation guidance and instructional practices for SEL to ensure classroom teachers were able to implement strategies easily and with fidelity (Dusenbury et al., 2019).

Teachers play an active role in developing students' SEL. The quality of the classroom atmosphere matters; emotionally supportive classrooms can impact the development of SEL (Jones, Barnes, Bailey, & Doolittle, 2019). Teachers can effectively plan and implement lessons (Durlak et al.,

2011) that promote SEL competencies. SEL, however, cannot be a one size fits all approach because of the wide range of developmental and environmental transitions that happen in school through elementary and into middle school. SEL should focus on skills appropriate to a specific age and grade range (Jones et al., 2019).

The interest in smaller scale approaches to SEL has led to the idea of kernels. Jones and colleagues define *kernels* as “low-cost, targeted strategies which, in our view, would represent the essential ‘active ingredients’ in the more comprehensive programs we know to be effective” (Jones, Bailey, Brush, & Kahn, 2017, p. 2). Furthermore, since kernels are designed to target specific behaviors, this can mean quick teaching and therefore more powerful and feasible implementation than a comprehensive program (Jones et al., 2017). Ideally, kernels could help teachers conceptualize and include components of SEL in the classroom in a more organic form than having a separate time and space for an SEL lesson.

Kernels are designed to be easy to use and can be applied across the school context. The kernels can be adapted based on individual, cultural, and other contextual needs (Jones et al., 2017). The kernels are researched based strategies that can help students increase social competence and academic achievement and reduce aggression and stress. One way for teachers to integrate the idea of kernels in the classroom is through the use of literature and read alouds.

Bibliotherapy and Students

Parents, caregivers, and teachers alike understand the power of reading and interacting with literature for children. Parents and caregivers snuggle with children as they read a nightly bedtime story, preparing the child for sleep. Teachers often hold daily read-aloud with students, to cover content, for enjoyment, or to help students cope with social issues, such as acceptance. Research has shown that a child’s literacy achievement is highly related to their emotional functioning (Tracey, 2019). If a child is struggling with stress or anxiety, their ability to focus and succeed in cognitive activities such as complex reading and writing is diminished. On the other hand, recreational reading can calm and reduce stress (Lewis, 2009) which then allows adults and children the ability to deal with issues and concerns.

Counselors, psychologists, social workers, and others are familiar with and use bibliotherapy with children who might suffer from anxiety and other distressing emotions. In addition, bibliotherapy is an effective way to integrate SEL kernels for children. *Bibliotherapy* is the clinical practice of using texts and books to address mental health issues, but is often used as

an umbrella term to cover clinical and non-clinical interventions using reading and communicating about the books (Tukhareli, 2018).

Bibliotherapy can be divided into three main categories, clinical, developmental, or client-developed bibliotherapy (DeVries et al. 2017). Counselors, psychotherapists, and others who use books and readings as a prescriptive therapy engage in *clinical bibliotherapy*. *Developmental bibliotherapy* is the use of literature by lay people, such as parents and teachers, to help readers develop feelings of self-worth and wellness. *Client-developed bibliotherapy* is when a reader writes reactions to characters or texts that lead to personal self-growth and wellness.

Bibliotherapy begins by reading specific literature with events, characters, and themes that help a child relate to specific circumstances. Books can be useful either through read-alouds, individual reads, or in small group readings in addition to becoming springboards for journaling and other instructional activities. Adults can engage children in discussions or provide time to write and draw so children can express how the story affects their thoughts and feelings. There are specific procedures for implementing bibliotherapy in clinical settings, but for teachers in a classroom setting, simply reading the books, allowing children think time, and discussing and writing about the content may lead to overcoming stress or anxiety for children.

This interactive nature between the text and children, creates a setting where children can empathize with others or see themselves within a book. Not only does this interactivity create a supportive environment, but it also encourages comprehension of the text. In 2002, the RAND Reading Study Group (RRSG) developed a model to explain that the reader, text, and the reader's activities are all vital to comprehending a text (see fig. 2). The RRSG defined reading comprehension as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (Snow, 2002).

The reader brings cognitive abilities, motivation, knowledge, and experiences to every reading experience. The text includes not only the words on the page, but the content of the text and how this content is expressed and extracted by the reader. The activity involves at the lowest level, the ability of the reader to decode the words in the text, but also self-monitoring for comprehension. Additionally, it includes the purpose for reading the text, the type of reading (i.e., skimming, deep reading), and the outcome of the reading experience (i.e., put together a table you just purchased).

Reading is also considered a cultural activity, and the RRSG (Snow, 2002) included this idea in their model. The reader also uses their own

sociocultural context to comprehend texts, which could include income, race, ethnicity, native language, or neighborhood environment. By including books that help cover kernels of SEL, teachers can aid children in dealing with difficult emotions while increasing comprehension of text. In addition, exposing students to characters who are similar is important, but allowing students to also encounter characters who are different is essential.

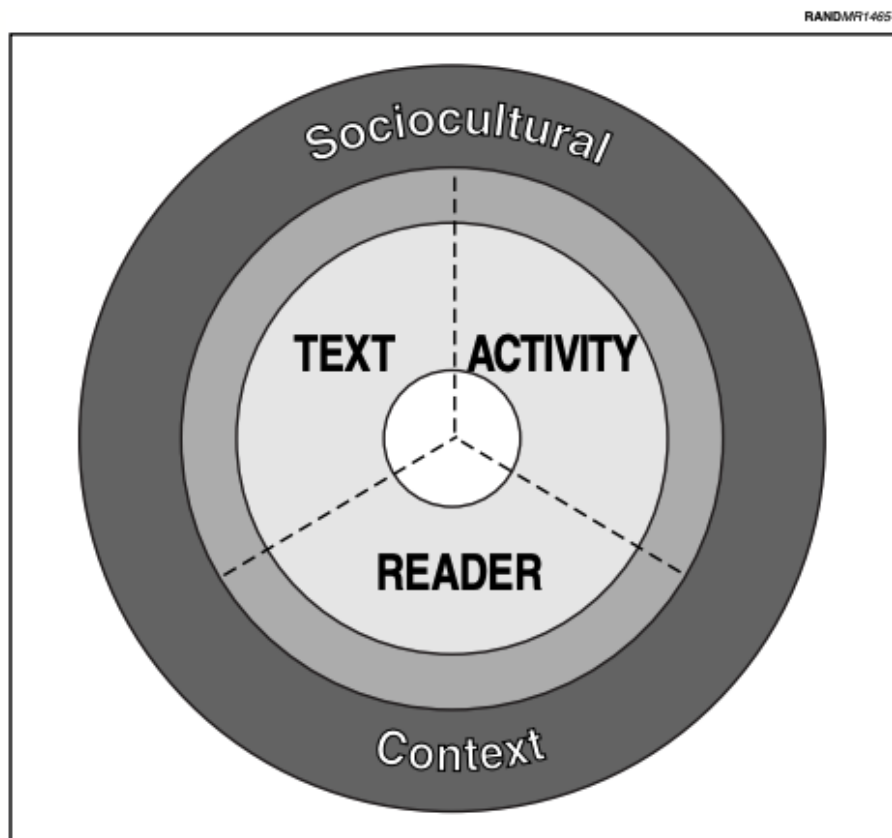


Figure S.1— A Heuristic for Thinking About Reading Comprehension

Fig. 2 RAND diagram²

Bibliotherapy and Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors

As Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) eloquently stated, books can be mirrors that reflect the reader and their place in the world, windows that provide a view of real and imagined worlds, or a sliding glass door that transports the reader to the author's world. Bishop's essay (1990) was

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https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1465.html.

written to encourage the inclusion of multicultural literature that reflected all cultures and ethnicities so children could see themselves in literature and see those who were different in order to develop understanding of others.

This power of books also provides readers with opportunities to see characters who might be experiencing the same anxiety, fear, or event, and help the reader begin to cope. Children who may not experience these events, can begin to develop empathy towards others as they peer through the story window. Through reading and read-alouds, children can engage in books and begin to cope with their emotions and difficult experiences, while increasing their capacity to empathize with others.

While most teachers may not be trained to use bibliotherapy with students, they know books are an essential tool for all types of issues and in varying situations. And since specialized support personnel are not always available, teachers can use books to help students begin to cope with difficult experiences. This in turn will help students become more empathetic and have the cognitive ability to deal with learning.

COVID-19 Literature

During the early stages of the coronavirus, authors and publishers alike banded together to create and provide works that parents and teachers could use to help children deal with this novel event. One of our favorite COVID-19 works of children's literature was created by Freeman Ng, titled *The House We Sheltered In*, an adaptation of the English rhyme, *The House That Jack Built*. (www.authorfreeman.com/blog/sheltered).

This Creative Commons rhyme is available in various formats, to read online, print, or in video format and focuses on the reasons for sheltering in place. Illustrations that travel across the world help readers see themselves in the book, and helps them to relate to the new stress and unknowns of this virus. Many other creative books are also available to address the coronavirus, staying healthy, or dealing with the emotions children might experience due to the pandemic.

As the pandemic continues to affect lives globally, coronavirus specific books are more readily available, with choices available to all levels and ages of readers. The New York City Library system created a page dedicated to free books and resources to help children read about the coronavirus or deal with the effects of the pandemic. It can be accessed here <https://nycdoe.libguides.com/COVID-19ebooks/free> In addition, Table 1 lists a selection of COVID-19 specific titles that can be used in classrooms.

Table 1

Children's Literature for COVID-19				
Grade	Title and author	Description	Format?	Teaching Ideas
K-2	<i>Lucy's Mask</i> by Lisa Sirkus Thompson	Lucy learns why she needs to wear a mask during the pandemic.	print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integrate with Community unit (SS)
2-4	<i>The Princess in Black and the Case of the Coronavirus</i> by Shannon Hale	Princess Magnolia learns the three things to do to help during the pandemic.	Ebook, pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion of school community and coronavirus safety
3-5	<i>A Little Spot Stays Home</i> by Diane Alber	Spot learns what to do during a pandemic.	Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a rule book about safety
K-5	<i>A Kids Book About COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 19</i> by Malia Jones	A visually artistic book that outlines the virus and how it affects our lives.	Online pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Science connections--viruses and diseases
K-5	<i>Captain Corona and the 19 Covid Warriors</i> by Melissa Gratias	A book exploring the many people on the frontlines during the pandemic.	Online pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community helpers (SS) ● Literacy--write thank you letters to helpers
K-5	<i>Coronavirus: A Book for Children</i> by Elizabeth Jenner, Kate Wilson, and Nia Roberts	An in-depth look at the coronavirus and the pandemic.	Online pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create infographic on coronavirus ● Create school safety posters ● Connect virus to science content
K-5	<i>And the People</i>	A book in prose about	print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write own poetry

	<i>Stayed Home</i> by Kitty O'Meara	how the pandemic affects all people.		about staying home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create class book of home activities
K-5	<i>The House We Sheltered In</i> by Freeman Ng	A poem about sheltering during the pandemic based on the House that Jack Built.	Online, video, pdf to print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● World cultures ● Poetry--explore how to rewrite a poem

Children's Literature for Anxiety and Classroom Ideas

There is a plethora of children's literature available to teachers on a range of topics. We searched for books published since 2017 to include, and it is also only a sampling of what is available. The authors read each title presented to ensure this was appropriate for the age and purpose. Our hope is to alleviate some of the teacher's workload and stress and provide books that can be used with children in a comprehensive list (see Table 1). For all ages, classroom activities can include journaling or writing, and small- or whole-group discussions. Specific ideas for each book are listed in the table that extend beyond these general suggestions.

The table is labeled with suggested grade levels, but as a teacher, you know your audience best. We recommend reading each book you choose ahead of time prior to using it with children. The grade levels designations are listed below with a short explanation.

K-5: Books in this category are appropriate for children in each of these grades. The purpose and way the book is engaged with students may vary based on the age, but the content is appropriate for each grade level.

K-2 or K-3: Books for our youngest learners include pictures to support the story and concepts and can be effective as class read-alouds. Often children can also use these texts as independent reading materials. The concepts are expressed in child-friendly words with age-appropriate exploration of difficult topics.

3-5: Children in these grades are reading short chapter books and still enjoy and benefit from read-alouds. These chapter books are longer but also are age-appropriate in the concepts presented. Literature circles are beneficial for these children as well as reading independently. Picture books for these children include more sophisticated language and content.

5-7 or 6-8: Readers in grades five and above are considered young adults and the books include more complex themes and content in addition

to longer lengths of texts. Teachers in these grade levels often conduct literature circles or students will read these books independently.

Through care, kindness, and empathy, teachers can help their students deal with anxiety and stressors. Reading and sharing empowering literature might be the key that enables the nation and world to heal. We salute all teachers who are serving our children. Thank you.

Table 2

Children's Literature for Stressful Times				
Grade	Title and author	Description	Theme	Literacy ideas
K-2	<i>Brave</i> by Stacy McAnulty	Being brave in different circumstances presented in simple text.	Overcoming fears--bravery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write list of moments of bravery • List of when it is hard to be brave with solutions
K-2	<i>Worrysaurus</i> by Rachel Bright	Rhyming text introduces Worrysaurus and how he conquers his worries.	Overcoming worry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of worries • Write "Sad-saurus" or "Happy-saurus" class books
K-3	<i>A Friend for Henry</i> by Jenn Bailey	Henry navigates trying to find a friend that isn't too noisy, or too close, but who will enjoy being quiet and orderly like him.	Friendship Autism Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write about what makes a good friend • Story map Henry's journey • List ways to be a friend
K-3	<i>Listening with My Heart: A Story of Kindness and Self-Compassion</i> by Gabi Garcia	Esperanza's daily struggles lead to learning to be kind to herself and others.	Self-compassion Kindness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Heart Charts to list things that make your heart happy • Create Kindness Rocks with positive messages

K-3	<i>There Might Be Lobsters</i> by Carolyn Crimi	Sukie, a small dog, is scared of most everything at the beach, especially lobsters.	Overcoming fear Friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rewrite story for a park, city, etc. There might be... ● List ideas to help friends with fears
K-5	<i>Brave Molly</i> by Brooke Boyton-Hughes	Molly conquers the fears only she can see in this wordless picture book.	Overcoming fear Bravery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write dialogue for the story ● Create class version of story text
K-5	<i>The Color Monster: A Story about Emotions</i> by Anna Lienas	Color Monster tackles his emotions through colors with the help of a girl.	Understanding emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write how colors "feel" ● List of things for each color ● Create an "Color Monster" jar to hold emotions
K-5	<i>My Magic Breath</i> by Nick Ortner and Alison Taylor	An interactive book that encourages readers to breathe out happiness and other emotions.	Self-wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create pages for breathing out emotions--what is it like? ● Practice breathing
K-5	<i>When Sadness is at Your Door</i> by Eva Eland	Sadness visits a child and through experiences the child slowly is able to deal with the emotion.	Overcoming sadness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write and draw own sadness and name it ● Rewrite with "When Happiness is at Your Door" or other emotions
3-5	<i>After the Fall (How Humpty Dumpty Got Up Again)</i> by Dan Santat	After Humpty falls off the wall, he is overcome with fear--how does he do the things he loves?	Perseverance Overcoming fear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write an ending for another nursery rhyme ● Compare a difficulty of your own to Humpty's

3-5	<i>What Should Danny Do?</i> By Adir Levy (book in series)	A “power to choose” book about Danny and his daily choices about events & emotions.	Making good choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept map choices in text • Create own choice mini-book
3-5	<i>A Little Spot of Anxiety: A Story About Calming Your Fears</i>	Gray SPOT of anxiety becomes a Green Peaceful SPOT to help children overcome anxious feelings.	Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write how the strategy made you feel • List other strategies for anxiety • Write about another SPOT character
3-5	<i>Nothing Stopped Sophie: The Story of the Unshakable Sophie Germain</i> by Cheryl Bardoe	The story of mathematician Sophie Germain and her perseverance to solve unsolvable problems.	Perseverance Overcoming odds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a timeline of Sophie’s life within history • Write a poem about math as poetry • Research Greek equations in book
3-5	<i>Sam Wu Is NOT Afraid of the Dark</i> by Katie and Kevi Tsang (series)	Sam Wu is going camping with friends and has to overcome his fear of almost everything.	Overcoming fears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write lists of things not afraid of • Rewrite chapter titles • Choose chapter title and write a new story
5-7	<i>Front Desk</i> by Kelly Yang	Mia has moved to America from China and through kindness and courage, helps her family as they navigate their new home.	Anxiety Loneliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write character biographies • Create a map of the setting
5-7	<i>Posted</i> by John David Anderson	In a middle school where cell phones are banned, students learn	Anxiety Acceptance Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a classroom wall of sticky notes that include all the

		to communicate through sticky notes, proving words can be beautiful and hurtful.		beautiful and empowering words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions about the power of words
6-8	<i>Pie in the Sky</i> by Remy Lai	This graphic novel contains elements of prose and tells the story of a middle schooler who immigrated to the U.S., but has a hard time adjusting to a new school and country with a language he doesn't know.	Acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great for independent or choice read • Discussions about fitting in and feeling different • Examine the art of graphic novels beginning with this text
6-8	<i>Guts</i> by Raina Telgemeier	This autobiographical account in graphic novel format tells a child's story about discovering and dealing with her anxiety.	Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List what anxiety can feel like • List other strategies for anxiety • List connections to characters in text to self
6-8	<i>The Science of Breakable Things</i> by Tae Keller	The main character in this novel tries to win a science contest so she can use the prize money to take her mother on a trip to see flowers. Her mother is a botanist who suffers from depression.	Acceptance Mental Illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great independent or choice read • Discussion about mental illness • Science tie-in with plants and/or flowers
6-8	<i>Chasing the Milky Way</i> by Erin Moulton	In this story, a young girl and her sister learn to stick together and remain a family through their mother's highs and lows of her mental illness.	Acceptance Mental illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great for independent or choice read • Discussion about mental illness • Discussion about what makes a family • List strategies for

				coping
6-8	<i>New Kid</i> by Jerry Craft	This graphic novel shows how one child must navigate between his two very different worlds: private school where he is one of few students of color and his own neighborhood.	Anxiety Overcoming struggles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great for independent or choice read • Discussion about fitting in and feeling different • Compare own two worlds with the character's worlds
Additional Recommended Books				
Grade	Title		Author	
K-3	<i>I'm Sad</i>		Michael Ian Black	
K-3	<i>The Buddy Bench</i>		Patty Brozo	
K-3	<i>Jabari Jumps</i>		Gaia Cornwall	
K-3	<i>The Rabbit Listened</i>		Cori Doerrfeld	
K-5	Sing, Don't Cry		Angela Dominguez	
6-8	<i>Each Tiny Spark</i>		Pablo Cartaya	

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