

BIBLIOTHERAPY FOR GRIEVING STUDENTS

**Penny Mills, Ed.S., NCSP
&
Bethanie Brogli Opell, Ed.S.**

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. Overview of grief reactions
2. Define bibliotherapy
3. Increase awareness of children's books used for grief
4. Delivery of lesson plan

GROUNDING ACTIVITY

“Hey, let’s...”

Peacock Feathers

DEATH ISN'T AN EASY TOPIC

- Adults are not always comfortable with their own feelings related to death
 - ◆ It's often very difficult to start the conversation
 - ◆ We frequently want to protect children from harsh reality
 - ◆ It's hard to answer their questions

BIBLIOTHERAPY, WHAT IS IT?

Bibliotherapy is an expressive therapy that involves the reading of specific texts with the purpose of healing. It uses an individual's relationship to the content of books and poetry and other written words as therapy. Bibliotherapy is often combined with writing therapy. It has been shown to be effective in the treatment of depression.^[1] These results have been shown to be long-lasting.[‡]

4 GOALS OF BIBLIOTHERAPY WITH GRIEVING STUDENTS

Acknowledge

Understand

Adjust

Remember

COMMON FEELINGS

insecurity,
anger, frustration, guilt,
sadness, avoidance,
confusion,
denial, blame



CHILDREN REQUIRE COMPASSIONATE GUIDANCE



HOW CAN WE BE THERE FOR YOUNG STUDENTS?

“The right story at the right moment is an arrow to the heart. It can find and catch what is hiding inside the reader (or listener), the secret hurt or anger or need that lies waiting, aching to be brought to the surface.”

- Bruce Colville

STEPS IN BIBLIOTHERAPY

Pick the story

Read the story

Share the story

Evaluate the story

HOW TO SELECT A GOOD STORY

- Amazon Evaluations
- Horn book guide
- Recommendations
 - Librarians
 - Colleagues

A GOOD STORY...

- Is engaging
- Is honest
- Shows sensitivity
- Builds coping skills
- Offers hope

Phases of Bibliotherapy

Phase	Description
Involvement	Students become interested as they look at the book's pictures and listen to the story
Identification	Students identify with story characters and situations
Catharsis	Students become emotionally engaged and vicariously experience the characters' feelings
Insight	Students relate the story to their own personal situation
Universalism	Students gain a broader perspective, helping them feel that they are not alone and that others struggle with similar challenges

Basic Outline of Bibliotherapy Lesson Plan

	Description of activities
Pre-reading questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask questions to stimulate student interest. This helps focus attention, builds curiosity, creates a context for the story, and assess students' initial knowledge.• Teach key vocabulary words.
Read the book	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read aloud with enthusiasm; display pictures.
Post-reading activity and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include activities and discussion to extend story's core message into real-world application.• Align activities with core message. Include role plays, games, and creative activities.• Include discussion to further clarify story's core message.• Check for students' understanding.
Closure	Clarify "take-away message." Clearly identify what is expected of students and describe how to apply story's lesson in day-to-day activities. Post a visual reminder, such as a poster.

DOES THE BOOK HAVE TO BE ABOUT DEATH?

BIBLIOTHERAPY LESSON PLAN

TASK OF GRIEF:

Created by:

BOOK INFORMATION

Book title:

Author:

Publisher and date of publication:

ISBN:

Number of pages:

Reading level or interest level:

BOOK SYNOPSIS

In a few sentences, describe the book's plot. Explain how you will use this book in group or individual counseling to address the specific social skill.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

In one or two sentences identify the basic goal for your bibliotherapy lesson.

LESSON MATERIALS AND ADVANCED PREPARATION

List materials needed for pre-reading (attention getting questions) and post-reading activity.

KEY VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS

Review vocabulary and concepts that might be unfamiliar to your students.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Describe how you will introduce the book.

READ THE BOOK

POST READING DISCUSSION

List a few engaging questions that will elicit discussion. You might refer to a specific picture or statement and ask students for their insights.

POST READING ACTIVITY

Describe a post-reading activity. Involve children in an engaging activity that extends learning into practical application.

CLOSURE

Wrap up the lesson with a few statements fortifying the lesson's objectives. Challenge students to set a goal related to the lesson's objectives. During the week, check in with students to monitor progress towards meeting their goal. Post a visible reminder of the lesson's main objective (poster).

BIBLIOTHERAPY LESSON PLAN

Task of Grief: Remembering & Memorializing

Book Information

Book Title: I miss You: A First Look at Death by Pat Thomas

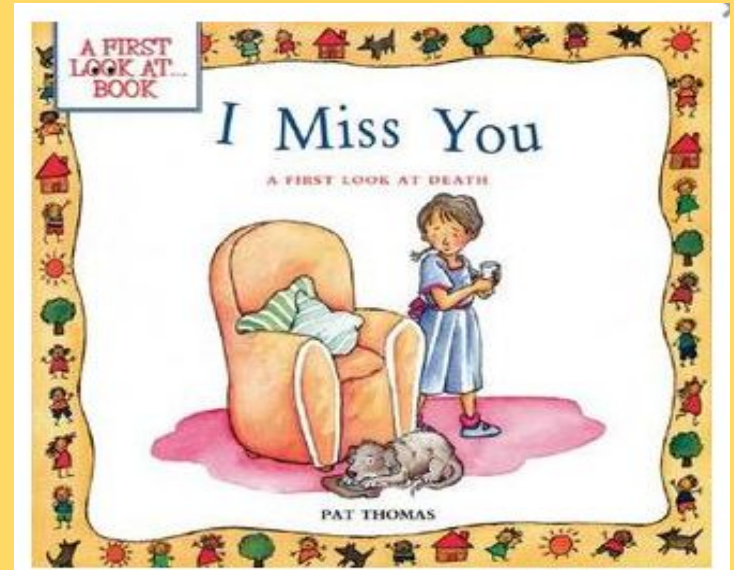
Publisher: Barron's

Year: 2001

ISBN Number: 978-0-7641-1764-0

Number of Pages: 27

Reading Level: elementary



BOOK SYNOPSIS

The story begins with a discussion of life and death, leads to funeral exploration, normalizes reactions to the death of a loved one, briefly talks about what happens after a person dies (is culturally sensitive) and ends by stressing the value of memories.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Children will identify reminders of a person who is no longer alive.

LESSON MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION

Materials for post-reading activity: (select type of activity - drawing or writing)

Drawing activity - plain white typing paper or art paper and colored markers or crayons for each child.

Writing activity - lined paper and pencil for each child.

KEY VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS

Review the following terms or concepts that might be unfamiliar to your students:

Funeral – A memorial ceremony for a person who has died.

Soul – The soul is part of you that makes you special. You can't see the soul or touch it but everyone has one.

Grief – Many people go through a period of grief after someone dies. Different people express grief in different ways. Some may feel very sad and tearful. Others feel tired, or lose their appetite and interest in doing things with friends. Some feel very angry. Many people feel a mixture of these things.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Show the front cover of the book: a girl and dog near an empty chair.

Ask: What do you think is going on in this picture? How do the girl and dog feel?

READ THE BOOK

POST-READING DISCUSSION

The girl in the story experienced a lot of emotions after someone special to her died. **What were some of the feelings she had? How did she show those feelings? Is it o.k. If we don't all have the same feelings or express grief the same way?** We may be sad when we cannot be with the ones we love. However, even though we feel sadness, if we have memories of the person they will always be a part of our life.

POST-READING ACTIVITY

Adjust the following activity to children's developmental level and specific needs. Ask the children to think about something that helps them remember the person who has died. Either draw a picture or write a short description of what helps them remember the person. Then ask the children to volunteer to share their drawings or writings to the group. Make sure each child has an opportunity to explain their remembrance but do not force participation. Share examples such as pictures, favorite books, etc.

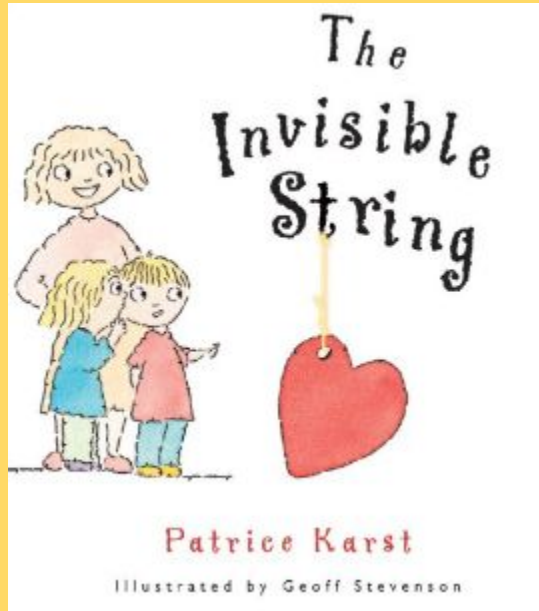
CLOSURE

We will always remember (insert person who died). Years from now, when we are older, we will still think about him/her from time to time. For now you have your drawings and writings to help you remember when you need it.

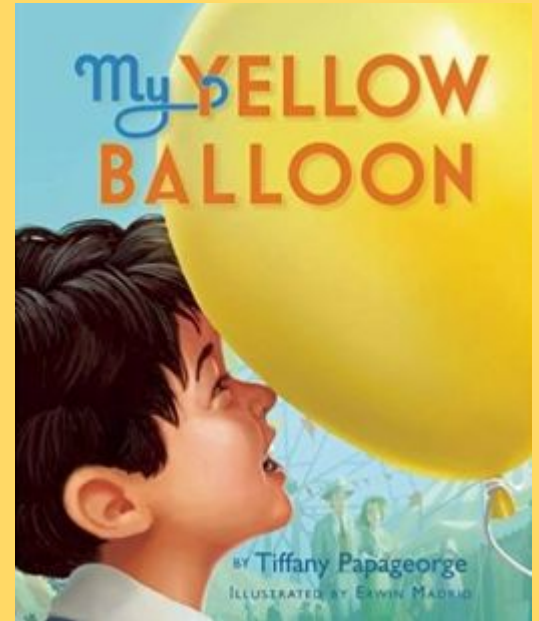
“When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure.”

– Anonymous

WRITE YOUR OWN LESSON PLAN USING:



THE INVISIBLE STRING
OR
MY YELLOW BALLOON



BIBLIOTHERAPY LESSON PLAN

TASK OF GRIEF:

Created by:

BOOK INFORMATION

Book title:

Author:

Publisher and date of publication:

ISBN:

Number of pages:

Reading level or interest level:

BOOK SYNOPSIS

In a few sentences, describe the book's plot. Explain how you will use this book in group or individual counseling to address the specific social skill.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

In one or two sentences identify the basic goal for your bibliotherapy lesson.

LESSON MATERIALS AND ADVANCED PREPARATION

List materials needed for pre-reading (attention getting questions) and post-reading activity.

KEY VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS

Review vocabulary and concepts that might be unfamiliar to your students.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Describe how you will introduce the book.

READ THE BOOK

POST READING DISCUSSION

List a few engaging questions that will elicit discussion. You might refer to a specific picture or statement and ask students for their insights.

POST READING ACTIVITY

Describe a post-reading activity. Involve children in an engaging activity that extends learning into practical application.

CLOSURE

Wrap up the lesson with a few statements fortifying the lesson's objectives. Challenge students to set a goal related to the lesson's objectives. During the week, check in with students to monitor progress towards meeting their goal. Post a visible reminder of the lesson's main objective (poster).


HANDOUTS

Grief Activities by Afton Philbrick & Karli Miller

Quotes on Grief

Bibliotherapy Lesson Plan by Melissa Heath

Books to Support Grieving Children

A blue circle is centered on a white background. Inside the circle is a light blue rectangle. The text "We are all connected in the great circle of life." is written in a black, sans-serif font within the rectangle. The words "of life." are on the same line as "circle".

We are all
connected in
the great circle
of life.

Lion King