

School Library Connection

**How the Library Can
Help Students
Navigate Mental Health**

Road Map

1. Why Focus on Mental Health?
2. Awareness and Destigmatization
3. Trainings
4. Bibliotherapy
5. Therapeutic Approaches
6. Amplifying Student Voice
7. Reflection



Introduction: Why Focus on Mental Health?

1 in 5 children and adolescents has a diagnosable mental health condition

(Mental Health By The Numbers, www.nami.org 2017) (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015)

Introduction: Why Focus on Mental Health?

About 75% of mental illnesses
first emerge **during adolescence**

(Mental Health By The Numbers, www.nami.org 2017) (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015)

Introduction: Why Focus on Mental Health?

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-34

(Mental Health By The Numbers, www.nami.org 2017) (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015)

Introduction: Why Focus on Mental Health?

90% of those who die by suicide had an
underlying mental illness

(Mental Health By The Numbers, www.nami.org 2017) (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015)

Introduction: Why Focus on Mental Health?

50% of students with diagnosed mental illnesses **drop out of high school**

(Mental Health By The Numbers, www.nami.org 2017) (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015)

Introduction: Why Focus on Mental Health?

There is an **alarming increase in teens experiencing mental illnesses**. Since 2007, the suicide rate among children and teens has doubled.

(Mental Health By The Numbers, www.nami.org 2017) (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015)

Metrowest Area 2016 Adolescent Health Study: Education Development Center

MENTAL HEALTH			
Life "very" stressful (past 30 days)	49.4	21.6	35.8
Depressive symptoms (past 12 months)	24.1	11.5	18.1
Self-injury (past 12 months)	18.3	7.1	12.9
Considered suicide (past 12 months)	15.1	9.0	12.3
Attempted suicide (past 12 months)	4.7	3.1	4.0

MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey Regional Highlights Report. (2019). Retrieved from Education Development Center website.

Grants: Create Awareness & Destigmatize Mental Health

(2015-2016) Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant from MBLC

Collaborations with Public Library, Youth and Family Services, Yoga instructor (trauma informed)

NAMI Presentations - In Our Own Voice

People with lived experience discuss their illness through the lense of dark days, treatment, coping strategies, recovery and hopes and dreams

Psychology in Literature

People from NAMI with lived experience hold a class session and open dialog for students to ask questions; focus on Empathy, Social Emotional Learning and Destigmatizing

Focus on mental health through programming:

Yoga, Mindfulness, Poetry Residence, Art collaborations, Literacy Events

Training: Youth Mental Health First Aid

Collaborated to Bring Training to the Community

- Town employees, library employees, teachers, parents
- Common mental health challenges for youth
- Reviews typical adolescent development
- Teaches a **5-step action plan** for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations:
assess risk, respectfully listen to and support the individual in crisis, and identify appropriate professional help and other support
- Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including ADHD), and eating disorders

Training: Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Educators

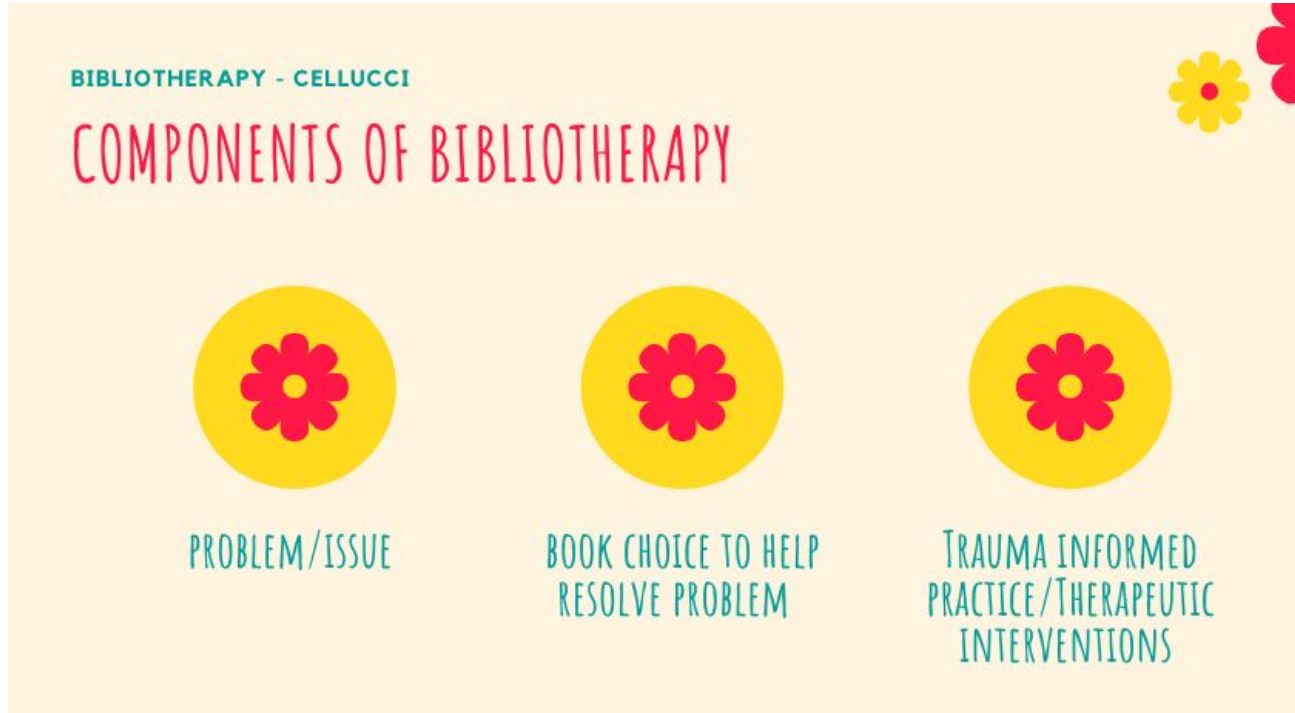
What is Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)?

- A comprehensive cognitive-behavioral method developed to treat problems caused by emotion dysregulation
- **DBT balances** teaching acceptance and strategies for change
- **DBT teaches students** emotion regulation, distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness/communication, and mindfulness
- **Outcomes:** Improved attendance, fewer hospitalizations, improved academic engagement & performance

Training: TIC - Becoming Trauma Sensitive in the Library

- Develop your **personal empathy and compassion** by learning more about trauma and the impact on a student's learning as well as their physical and emotional growth
 - Reflect on any trauma in your own life
- Ensure that **trauma sensitive practices** have been introduced in other ways in the school
 - aspects of implicit bias, inclusive space, class agreements and norms
- **Be flexible** with mindfulness practice with students
 - allow students to leave their eyes open, to choose their own seat, and to opt out in a non-disruptive manner

Bibliotherapy



Bibliotherapy: Defined

Bibliotherapy is a therapeutic approach to supporting mental health using literature. Librarians using bibliotherapy as a tool should be well versed in the aspects of mental health as well as acquire some training in relation to youth and mental health.

The American Library Association makes this clarification:

Through resources offered on their web page, they address the directed reading aspect of bibliotherapy, which may distinguished from the more general readers' advisory by the presence of the "problem" to be resolved through reading.

Bibliotherapy: Things to Consider

1. Course work and/or training with a focus on mental health is imperative to understanding how to approach this complex issue
2. Build relationships with mental health professionals in the school and/or community for support
3. Develop an awareness of self
4. Develop personal self care in order to help others process effectively and to react through a trauma informed lense

Therapeutic Approach: Groups

Collaborations with Clinicians:

- Students themed groups - i.e. Loss/Grief
- 6-week groups using short stories/books (fiction/non-fiction)
- Elements of DBT
 - Common language for teachers and students
 - Distress tolerance strategies
- Elements of Mindfulness and Yoga

Therapeutic Approach: Bibliotherapy Conferencing

Collaborations with English Classes:

- Growth Mindset and Identity as a Reader
- 1-1 Conferences with students - reading identity
 - Each student - 20-minute bibliotherapy meeting
 - Build trust
 - Reflect on the emotional aspect of reading
 - challenges/obstacles/effort/criticism
 - Discuss reading as a therapeutic intervention

Therapeutic Approach: Bibliotherapy Conferencing

Collaborations with Clinicians:

- Students are identified by clinical staff
- Students have the option to meet directly with the librarian or to submit a request through clinician
 - Librarian creates a suggested book list
 - Student has option to meet with librarian to discuss the book through use of guided questions
 - Student can use reflective writing in a journal with the librarian and/or content teacher and clinician

Mental Health: Amplify Student Voice

- **Collaborative Activities**

- Community Coloring, Mural Making, Poetry Open Mics, Poetry Installations
- Poetry club - a safe/brave space for students to “hold space” for each other around challenging topics

- **TAB - Joint Teen Advisory Board with WPL**

- Social Making - using maker philosophy to create authentic student voice opportunities:
 - Humans of Westborough
 - Kindness Projects

Grant - MindMatters: Student Wellness Advisory Team

“**Student Wellness Advisory Team** is a primarily student-led team dedicated to promoting mental health awareness and dismantling stigma within our community. We are passionate about normalizing conversations about mental health and strive to implement initiatives that both support the mental health of WHS students and instill a greater understanding of mental wellness.”

The team is sponsored by the SHINE Initiative, and we have received a grant from this organization which will help fund our endeavors.

Amplify Student Voice: Sound Bath



Amplify Student Voice: Stress Less Space



Anita Cellucci @anitacellucci

School Library Connection @SLC_Online

Individual Reflection

- **What are you noticing in your libraries or interactions with students and parents in relation to mental health?**
- **Where are the gaps for your students? How can your library fill them?**

Thank you!

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MENTAL ILLNESS IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

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INSPIRATION FOR MY RESEARCH

- Inspiration for my research on mental illness in young adult literature :
 - British scholars Rose, Thornicroft, Pinfold, and Kassam 's (2007) essay: **"250 Labels Used to Stigmatise People with Mental Illness."**
 - They asked 14-year-olds:
 - **What words might be used to describe someone who experiences mental health problems?**
- Depression
 - Disabled
 - Mad
 - Unpredictable
 - Insane
 - Loony
 - Disturbed
 - Nuts
 - Confused
 - Psycho
 - Spastic
 - Crazy
 - Mental
 - Schizophrenia
 - Thicko
 - Weird
 - Different
 - Freak

STIGMA ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS CONTINUES

PSYCH WARD DANCE TEAM ROUTINE

February 5, 2011 Waunakee High
School Varsity Dance Team
(Wisconsin)

“Waunakee High School's varsity dance team is headed to a state competition today, but advocates for the mentally ill are upset by what got them there — a “we get crazy” routine featuring all 18 dancers bouncing to hip-hop music, their hair wild, heavy black makeup on their snarling faces, and costumes made to resemble straitjackets and restraints with the words “Psych Ward” on them.”

“The pictures are quite disturbing,” says Hugh Davis, executive director of Wisconsin Family Ties. “We had parents and kids with mental health issues standing in the office with tears in their eyes. This brings up painful memories. It is incredibly insensitive.”

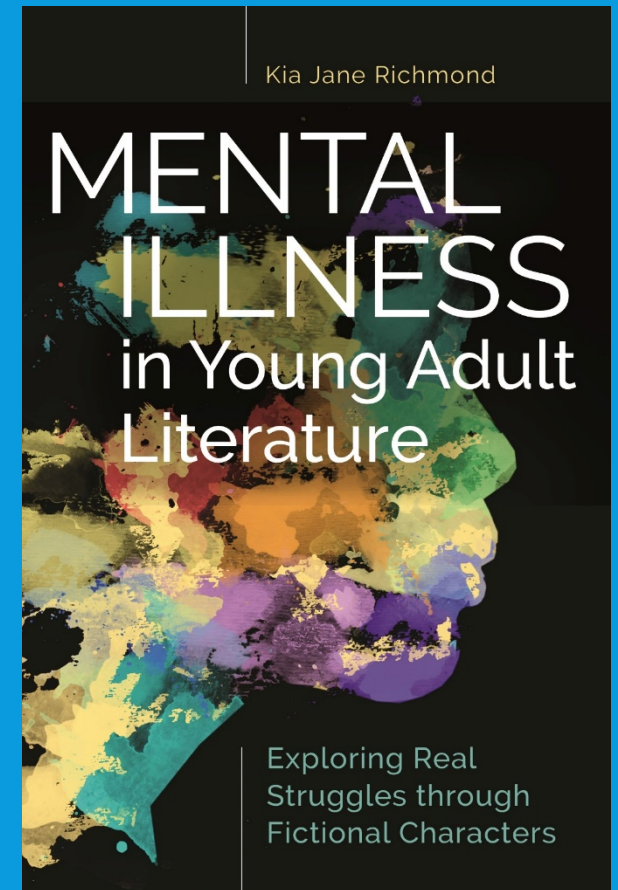
Doherty, Shawn. *The Capital Times*. “‘Psych Ward’ Dance Routine Upsets Advocates for Mentally Ill.” Feb. 5, 2011. https://madison.com/news/local/health_med_fit/vital_signs/psych-ward-dance-routine-upsets-advocates-for-mentally-ill/article_c8afffb0-3097-11e0-af24-001cc4c03286.html.

BUILDING EMPATHY THROUGH EXAMINATIONS OF YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

Using books featuring characters with mental illness can help educators “to empathize with those students who are living with mental illness or whose family members or friends are dealing with psychological disorders.”

“Reading books about mental illness can motivate students and teachers to be aware of the power of language choices and to become empowered to confront the stigma associated with mental illness and con-front bullying of those struggling with depression, anxiety, and others living with mental illness”

(Richmond, 2014, p. 24).



DEPRESSION IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

- ***Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock*** (2013) by Matthew Quick.
- The book focuses on a South Jersey high school senior, Leonard (Leo) Peacock, who is depressed and plans to kill himself and a classmate on his eighteenth birthday. Readers learn where Leo got the “P-38 WWII Navy handgun” he would use, why he is so angry at Asher Beal, and how he comes to terms with his past and his potential future.
- The novel is told through a first-person narrative and includes detailed footnotes, poetic lines, and letters to Leo from himself in the future.
- Some of Leo’s symptoms of depression (e.g., loss of interest in activities, feeling detached, difficulty sleeping, and irritability) overlap with symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Research from Zoellner et al. in 2013 reports a high comorbidity between major depression and PTSD.



FORGIVE ME, LEONARD PEACOCK – EXCERPT

In *Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock*, Leo says to himself as he reflects on his decision to kill Asher Beal:

It's cold and
dark in the
woods and I
wonder if this
is what it's
going to feel
like when I'm
finally dead –

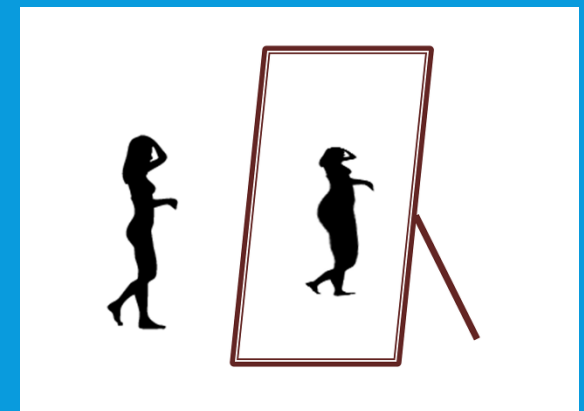
like a stupid
unfeeling
unthinking
unnoticed tree.
I'm hoping to feel nothing.
Ubernothing.

I'm hoping that I merely
cease to exist.
What dreams may come?
Hamlet and
Lauren would
ask.
None, I'm betting.
None.
Hellfire is not in the
plans.

Heaven is not
in the plans.
Cold and dark are not in
the plans.
Ubernothing.
That's what I want.
Nothing.

EATING AND FEEDING DISORDERS IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

- ***Wintergirls*** (2009) by Laurie Halse Anderson
- Lia Overbrook, a high school senior whose symptoms of anorexia nervosa – and problems with self-injury – are exacerbated when her best friend from childhood, Cassie Parrish, dies from complications of bulimia.
- Overwhelmed by guilt for not answering any of Cassie’s thirty-three phone calls the night before she died, and haunted by a hallucination of Cassie that becomes more and more insistent that Lia starve herself, Lia relapses despite having received prior treatment for her eating disorder.



WINTERGIRLS - EXCERPT

- Lia expresses an intense fear of gaining weight and displays behaviors that interfere with weight gain. In Chapter 3, Lia reflects on eating breakfast with her best friend, Cassie:

...When I was a real girl, with two parents and one house and no blades flashing, breakfast was granola topped with fresh strawberries, always eaten while reading a book propped up on the fruit bowl. At Cassie's house we'd eat waffles with thin syrup that came from maple trees, not the fake corn syrup stuff, and we'd read the funny pages...No. I can't go there. I won't think. I won't look. I won't pollute my insides with Bluberridazzle pops or muffins or scritchscratchy shards of toast, either. Yesterday's dirt and mistakes have moved through me. I am shiny and pink inside, clean. Empty is good. Empty is strong.

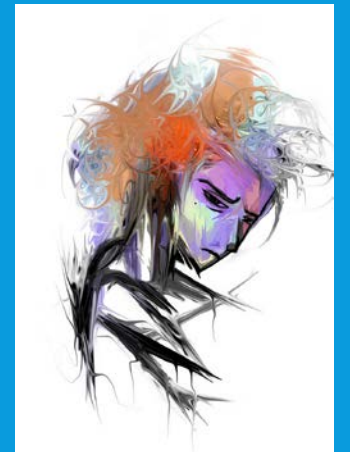
- By Chapter 48, Lia weighs 89 pounds, yet Lia tells readers, "The only number that would be enough is 0. Zero pounds, zero life, size zero, double-zero, zero point. Zero in tennis is love. I finally get it."

BIPOLAR DISORDERS IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

Crazy (2012) by Amy Reed

The story of eighteen-year-old Isabel's life is revealed through a series of emails and chats between Isabel (Izzy) and seventeen-year-old Connor, a guy she met at a summer camp in the Pacific Northwest.

The novel's epistolary format helps readers experience Isabel's mania and depression through her vivid descriptions. Additionally, Connor's reactions to and reflections on her symptoms help readers develop an understanding of how bipolar disorder can affect family and friends.



CRAZY – EXCERPT

“Dear Connor,

..., I’m feeling way better now. Like, I’ve never felt this good in my life. I don’t know what happened, but suddenly it sort of feels like sleep is something I’ve grown out of. Which is fine with me, because I have so much to do. I finished all my college applications in two days. TWO DAYS! I think it’s a new world record. And they’re good, too. Brilliant, in fact. That’s the good news.

The bad news is no one else seems quite as thrilled about my newfound energy. I got sent home from school early today, which was fine with me because of course, I didn’t actually go home. I just wandered around Broadway talking to people, but I guess my phone was ringing the whole time, but I had it turned off, and my dad was calling because the principal called him and told him I was being disruptive in class because I kept interrupting the teacher....”

SCHIZOPHRENIA IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

Challenger Deep (2015) by Neal Shusterman (National Book Award winner)

Shusterman's novel features a fifteen-year-old narrator named Caden Bosch, who after having episodes of hallucinations, paranoia, and delusions while attending high school, is diagnosed with schizophrenia and hospitalized.

Caden's experiences are told through flashbacks of his life with family mixed with his visions of being part of a pirate-ship that is headed toward the deepest part of the Marianas Trench.



CHALLENGER DEEP – EXCERPT

Caden tells readers,

- “You come to know the pattern of your particular chemical bombardment. The numbness, the lack of focus, the artificial sense of peace when the meds first hit your system. The growing paranoia and anxiety as they wane. The worse you feel, the more you can get into the treacherous waters of your own thoughts. The greater the threat from the inside, the more you long for those waters, as if you've grown accustomed to the terrible tentacles that seek to draw you into their crushing embrace.”
- “I had overheard [Dr.] Poirot talking to my parents. He was using words like "psychosis" and "schizophrenic". Words that people feel they have to whisper, or not repeat at all. The Mental-Illness-That-Must-Not-Be-Named.”

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

Dope Sick (2009) by Walter Dean Myers

Set in contemporary Harlem, the story focuses on Jeremy Dance (known as Lil J), an African-American seventeen-year-old on the run from police. Lil J ends up on the news after a police officer was shot during an undercover drug bust; his friend and fellow suspect, Rico Brown, was already caught by police in the Bronx.

Using elements of magic realism, the author shows readers how Lil J's life might have been improved if he made different choices about getting involved with drugs.



DOPE SICK – EXCERPT

- Lil J is never diagnosed officially with substance use disorder in *Dope Sick*; however, he exhibits multiple symptoms throughout the book that fit with the symptoms of opioid use disorder (heroin).
- Lil J denies having a drug problem but admits that he has “slipped from dibbing and dabbing into drugs, from weekend parties to really getting wired up.”

At one point, he says,

Sometimes it was like the heroin was calling to me. When I didn't have nothing, I could think about giving it up, about turning away and doing something else. Sometimes, when I really wanted to party and didn't have the money, I'd go play ball or just watch television and the feeling would go away. But when I had money, or when I had already scored a hit, I got nervous. I didn't have to have the dope, but when I had it, I had to use it.

EMPATHY AND REAL WORLD CHANGE

- P. Matthijs Bal and Martijn Veltkamp (2013) report that individuals who read fictional narratives and are emotionally transported into the story become more empathetic. They are among “the first who also show that fiction reading might have negative effects, when readers do not become transported, and hence, disengage from literature.”
- Bal and Veltkamp note, **“Increase of empathy is important for people because empathy is positively related to creativity, performance at work, and prosocial and cooperative behaviors.”** (emphasis mine)

WORKSHOP AT AN UPPER PENINSULA HIGH SCHOOL

April 18, 2019

- With an invitation from Heather Hollands, teacher at Gwinn High School in Michigan's rural Upper Peninsula, I visited her 10th grade English classes to lead a workshop on mental illness in young adult literature.
- Through a Donor's Choose project, Mrs. Hollands purchased 28 of the 30 novels that I analyzed in my book, *Mental Illness in Young Adult Literature*.
- During the workshop, students viewed an informational PowerPoint about mental illness and participated in a language analysis activity that I created for the Appendix of my book.



WORKSHOP AT GWINN HIGH SCHOOL

ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE IN YA LIT

ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE IN YOUNG ADULT LIT

CHARACTERS (Who speaks?)

- Physical characteristics
- Emotional characteristics
- Social characteristics

LANGUAGE (What is said?)

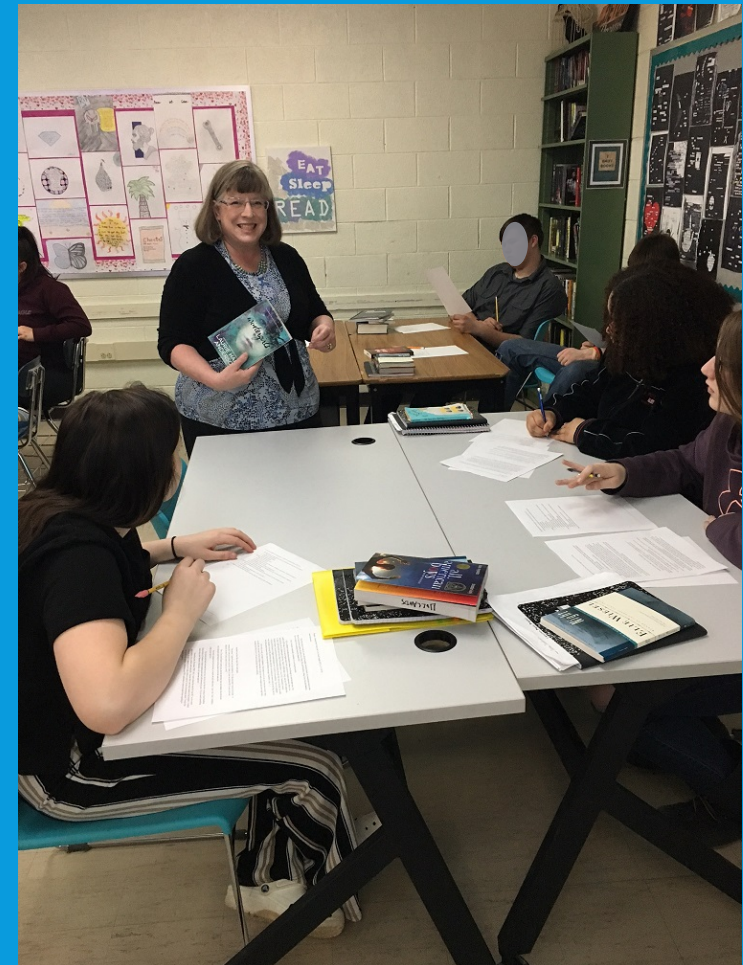
- What terms are used?
- What do those terms mean? (denotation – definition; connotation – positive and negative associations with the words)
- Is the language formal or informal? Is jargon used?
- Consider the following aspects of language: pace, tone, structure (full sentences, fragments, run-ons); punctuation, spacing.

POSITIONING/BELIEFS

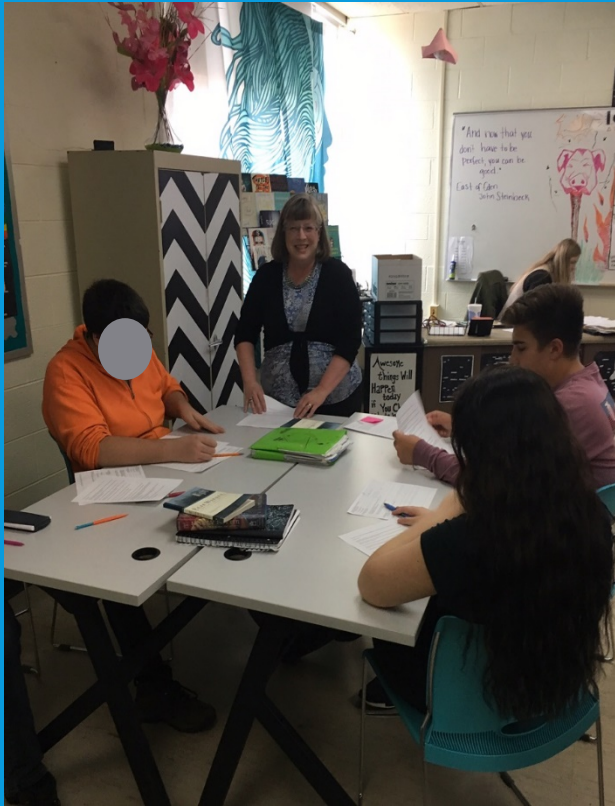
- What positionings can you identify based on the words used? (social; political; cultural; personal)
- What beliefs can you identify based on the words used?
- Is there evidence of stigma?

INSIGHTS

What do you know now about the characters, plot, and/or theme?



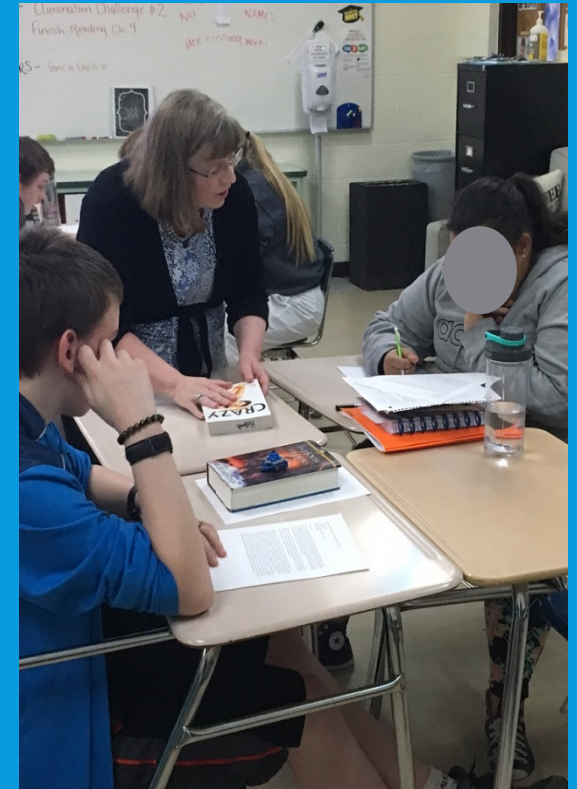
WORKSHOP AT GWINN HIGH SCHOOL ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE IN YA LIT



The 10th graders worked in teams to analyze language from several young adult novel excerpts provided.

They discussed stereotypes noticed in the excerpts as well as authentic language used by authors to portray mental illness symptoms and treatments.

At the end of the day, many students returned to the classroom to check out copies of the novels from the Mrs. Hollands' classroom.



EMPATHY AND REAL WORLD CHANGE

The Anti-Defamation League's Pyramid of Hate (2019) reminds us that discrimination and genocide are built on biased attitudes (e.g., stereotyping & fear of differences) and acts of bias (e.g., name-calling, ridicule, and bullying).

- By helping youth, educators, librarians, and others to develop empathy and understanding of individuals with mental illness through the reading and analysis of young adult literature featuring characters with mental illness, we can help to reduce stereotyping and acts of bias, perhaps subsequently preventing acts of discrimination and violence in our communities.

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THANK YOU!
KIA JANE RICHMOND, PH.D.



SERVING TEENS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE LIBRARY:

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Deborah Takahashi



**What is this book
about?**

PREPARING FOR A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

"If you see a teen in distress, pay attention to his or her behavior. If the teen appears to be in pain, or seems fearful, there is a chance he or she is experiencing a crisis."

SERVING TEENS WITH MENTAL
ILLNESS IN THE LIBRARY:
A PRACTICAL GUIDE



BUILDING A TEEN MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

DECLARATION THAT THE LIBRARY SUPPORTS TEENS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

To provide resources and services
to assist teens in need.



SHARE RESOURCES WITH SCHOOL STAFF & CREATE A SAFE SPACE

In order to provide mental health services in the library, superiors and fellow staff need to understand these new services including the need for a safe space.

Develop Powerful Partnerships Inside and Outside of the Library

- TAP INTO STUDENT GROUPS ON CAMPUS
- REACH OUT TO THE SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES OR PSYCHOLOGISTS
- CONNECT WITH AFTER SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS
- MEET WITH LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS



CREATE A RESOURCE
CENTER JUST FOR TEENS
WITH THE HELP OF YOUR
NEW PARTNERS!

BUILDING & PROMOTING BETTER SERVICES FOR TEENS

"Depending on the amount of information you receive from partners, all of this needs to be placed strategically and be easily accessible."

ADAPT YOUR PROGRAMS

Add a book about teens with mental illness to your book club rotation, offer therapeutic activities during lunch, or yoga in the library. Use what you've got to include mental health and wellness.

PROVIDE ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR TEENS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Work with your school counselors to provide students access to counseling services or ask colleagues to provide workshops on managing mental illness in the library.

Ad'-vo-cate

'With the teens mental health initiative, one major outcome you want to achieve is to teach teens how to advocate for themselves, in regards to their own mental health. However, in order to reach that goal, it is just as important to invite adults--parents, guardians, older family members--to join the conversation.'

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

DEVELOP AN EVALUATION THAT BEST SUITS YOUR NEEDS

Create, or adapt, an evaluation system that will keep your organized

DOCUMENT PROGRAM RESULTS

Think about developing a program evaluation form to pass out at programs

DEVELOP A MASTER PLAN WITH PARTNERS

Create a long term plan with partners to sustain services and programs

CREATE A SELF-CARE PLAN

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO NOW

TAKING CARE OF YOU

FINDING THE RIGHT PLAN THAT FITS YOU

Do a little research and adapt to your needs

RECOGNIZE WORKPLACE BURNOUT

Take note of your feelings and how it affects your work

CREATE BOUNDARIES

Openly and honestly communicate with coworkers about your boundaries

TAKE A MOMENT TO RELEASE

Take a walk or close the blinds to just breathe

WE
CARE

An annual report is usually read for around three minutes
by the largest organizations in Germany for people with disabilities
through the year and ensure that the activities
designing the thickest report in the
same thing when we carefully print
at some money for the agency

LET'S CONNECT

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