READ WELL, FEEL WELL!

CHILDREN’S BOOKS FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

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| **Title & Author(s)** | **Issues addressed** | **Synopsis** |
| **The Huge Bag of Worries** by Virginia Ironside and Frank Rodgers. | Coping with general worry/anxiety | Jenny carries a huge bag of worries with her wherever she goes and is desperate for someone to help her. Shows children that a problem shared is a problem halved. |
| Happy, Sad, Feeling Glad by Yasmeen Ismail | Coping with general worry/anxiety | This is part picture book and part activity book. Children are asked to help draw illustrations of things that might make the animal characters feel happy, thereby reinforcing their own stores of good memories. |
| Silly Billy by Anthony Browne | Coping with general worry/anxiety/tension | Billy worries obsessively about everything until Grandma suggests that worry dolls might help him to cope better. |
| Frog’s Breath-taking Speech by Michael Chissick | Fear of public speaking; anxiety; anger; tension | Frog is very worried as he has an important speech to make at his school assembly. The speech is about breathing and he doesn't know a thing about it! He asks his friends for help and they teach him all about the lion breath, the crocodile breath, the humming bee breath and the woodchopper breath. Can any of these breathing techniques calm his nerves before the big speech? |
| The Calm Buddha at Bedtime by Dharmachari Nagaraja | Accessible mindfulness practices for children | Designed either to be read to KS1 or to be read by KS2 readers on their own, these compelling narratives help to focus and calm the mind. The selection of gentle meditations at the end provides an extra practical dimension that can be used at any time to help enhance a sense of peace and contentment. |
| I Am Peace: a book of mindfulness by Susan Verde | Accessible mindfulness practices for children | A carefully illustrated manual that gently brings tenets of mindfulness to a child-friendly level. |
| You’re a Rude Pig, Bertie! by Claudia Boldt | Friendship and conflict resolution | Bertie, the rude pig, is a good example of how unkind behaviour can drive away friends – and what you need to do to put things right |
| Today I’m a Monster by Agnes Green | Recognising and coping with feelings of anger | Appropriate for EY till KS2 – straightforward and engaging book that explains that angry feeling come and go, and that doing bad things doesn’t make you bad. |
| Ella on the Outside by Cath Howe | Joining a new school; friendship and conflict resolution | KS2 appropriate, this award-winning story by primary school teacher Howe will appeals to fans of Jacqueline Wilson |
| Bob's Blue Period by Marion Deuchars | Low mood | Bob's best friend Bat has to go away for a while and Bob feels so sad that he paints everything in blue. However, his other friends get together to show that there are many other beautiful colours in the world and Bob starts to feel better. A perfect book about expressing emotions and how to feel better when you're "blue". |
| The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig | Loneliness; kindness and friendship | Brian is the invisible boy. Nobody ever seems to notice him or think to include him in their group, game, or birthday party, till one day a new child comes to class.  When Justin arrives, Brian is the first to make him feel welcome. And when Brian and Justin team up to work on a class project together, Brian finds a way to shine. |
| Black Dog by Levi Pinfold | For children who live with parents with mental health problems. | The youngest and bravest member of the Hope family is the only person who tames the Black Dog, a metaphor for depression, which grows bigger and bigger each time you try to ignore it. |
| The Colour Thief: a family’s story of depression by Andrew Fusack Peters and Polly Peters | Lived experiences of depression | The story recounts a child's experience of losing his father to depression. As the illness takes hold his father disappears into a world of pain and confusion taking with it the once colourful life they both shared. The boy fears that he is somehow to blame for his father's condition despite reassurances to the contrary. As the father seeks help a mere glint of colour reappears and with it hope that they can be full of colour once again. |
| Jim’s Lion by Russell Hoban | Graphic novel dealing with adversity/sickness | Asleep in his hospital bed, Jim dreams of a great lion with white teeth and amber eyes. This lion is Jim's finder. According to Nurse Bami, everyone has a finder, a creature who comes looking for us when we are lost. But when the time comes for Jim's operation, will his lion be able to find him and bring him safely home? |
| ***Monday*** by Anne Herbauts | Low mood; loneliness | Very subtle and surreal picturebook that explores the sometimes intangible sadness’s children feel related to the passing of time. Follows a penguin called Monday. Will appeal to EY, KS1&2 |
| ***The Red Tree*** by Shaun Tan | Childhood depression | A surreal, fragmented journey through a child’s experience of depression. |
| Augustus and His Smile by Catherine Rayner | Low mood; loneliness | Augustus the tiger has lost his smile and is feeling sad. However, as he starts looking for it, he gradually discovers that joy can be found in all sorts of everyday situations. |
| ***Because Amelia*** Smiled by David Ezra Stein | Encourages everyday acts of kindness and friendship | The good feelings that started with Amelia’s smile make their way around the world, from a goodwill recital in Israel, to an impromptu rumba concert in Paris, to a long-awaited marriage proposal in Italy, to a knitted scarf for a niece back in New York. |
| ***A Monster Calls*** by Siobhan Dowd and Patrick Ness | Anger; stress; family illness and grieving | YR 5/6 appropriate. A sublime story with haunting illustrations that will captivate all readers. |
| Sad Book by Michael Rosen and Quentin Blake | Death and grieving | This book discusses the author’s real grief at his son Eddie’s death from meningitis. It is reassuring in its message that, while sadness is often unavoidable and difficult, there are better days too. |
| ***Duck, Death and the Tulip*** by Wolf Erlbruch | Death; passage of time | A picturebook version of the Book Thief! A duck strikes up a friendship with death. The book deals very elegantly and straightforwardly with the passage of time. |
| ***La Visite de Petite Mort*** by Kitty Crowther | (French!) picture book on death and friendship | Very similar storyline to *Duck, Death and the Tulip* (above), this picture book is entirely in French, and exposes children to a new language while also seeking meaning from the interplay of pictures and words. |
| ***Goodbye Mog*** by Judith Kerr | Loss and loneliness | Much loved family cat Mog dies at an old age, but her ghost sticks around for a while to make sure the family are getting on okay with the nervous new kitten. |
| ***The Heart and the Bottle*** by Oliver Jeffers | Loss and loneliness | Girl places her heart in a bottle after the death of her grandparent. The picturebook advocates opening oneself up to grief and focusing on the memories of love shared. |
| ***Granpa*** by John Burningham | Friendship and loss (grandparent) | EY & KS1 appropriate: simple but affecting picturebook about a little girl’s relationship with her Granpa and how she copes when he is not around anymore. |
| ***Still my Grandma*** by Véronique Van den Abeele | Coping with a grandparent with Alzheimer’s disease. | Picturebook: Camille and her grandma have a special friendship. They have sleepovers, bake chocolate cupcakes together, go out shopping, and giggle at old photographs. But one day Grandma forgets Camille's name. Then she can't remember where to put her shoes.  Camille learns that her grandma is sick, but "not the kind where you cough and blow your nose." Grandma has Alzheimer's disease, which is what makes her do strange things. And even though Grandma has to move out of her house and rely on nurses to care for her, Camille finds a way to continue their special traditions. |
| On Sudden Hill by Linda Sarah and Benji Davies | Friendships and playground politics | Sometimes strong friendships can break down when a new person joins the group. Try using this book for children struggling with playground politics or those who don’t know how to share friendships. |
| Beautiful Oops! by Barney Saltzberg | For children with anxiety- related perfectionist tendencies | This fun book helps perfectionists to see that mistakes and accidents can actually turn into things that are quite amazing. |
| ***The 5 Misfits*** by Beatrice Alemagna | Positive message about friendships and being yourself; dealing with perfectionist friends! | Brilliantly artful, award-winning picturebook. When Mr Perfect comes to stay, the five misfits find themselves questioning what their purpose in life is. Can they teach him that not fitting in is more fun than trying to be perfect? |
| Beyond the Fence by Maria Gulemetova | Friendships and conflict | Thomas thinks he knows what's best for his friend Piggy and orders him around. Piggy becomes sad until he meets a wild pig, who helps to show him what true friendship really means. |
| ***Up in the Tree*** by Margaret Atwood | Confusions around growing up and life choices | Two children make their home up in the branches of a tree, where they are free to do whatever they choose. But when the ladder they rely on to get back down again is destroyed, some of their freedom disappears, too, and the children begin to wonder what they might be missing, down amongst the ground dwellers. |
| ***Here We Are: notes for living on planet Earth*** by Oliver Jeffers | Growing up; future-thinking; big world worries | Jeffers’ picturebook recognises that our world can be a bewildering place. The book explores children’s many questions about what makes our planet and how we live on it. “Some things about our planet are pretty complicated, but things can be simple, too: you've just got to be kind.” |
| ***The World Belongs to You*** by Riccardo Bozzi | Rights respecting; future thinking; coping with change | Uplifting graphic picturebook for children of any age experiencing a time of change in their lives. |
| ***The Giving Tree*** by Shel Silverstein | The gift of giving; teaches about the capacity to accept another’s giving in return | *Once there was a little tree ... and she loved a little boy.*  Every day the boy would come to the tree to eat her apples, swing from her branches, or slide down her trunk ... and the tree was happy. But as the boy grew older he began to want more from the tree, and the tree gave and gave and gave. |
| ***Emmy’s Eczema*** by Jack Hughes | Picturebook dealing with what it is like to have eczema and how you can be a better friend to someone who does | Emmy has eczema. She knows she shouldn't scratch. But sometimes she's so itchy, she just can't help it. One day, she scratches so much she makes her skin really sore. Find out how her friends make her feel better. |
| ***Sasha and the Wiggly Tooth*** *by Rhea Tregebov* | Children’s bodies and rites of passage | Sasha is the last of all of his friends to still have his baby teeth. So when one tooth becomes wiggly, he is excited, curious and also a little bit worried. After politely dismissing all efforts to help the tooth fall out, Sasha is astounded when he swallows the tooth accidently |
| ***Have you stared yet? You and your period: getting the facts straight by Ruth Thomson and Chloe Thomson*** | Promoting body confidence, coping strategies and dispelling myths around periods | This book explains exactly what periods are, why they happen and how they will affect you. It asks the questions and gives the answers simply and openly, with plenty of practical advice. |
| ***Your Body is Brilliant by Sigrun Danielsdottir*** | Promoting self-esteem | This picture book encourages children to love their bodies from an early age. By learning about all the wonderful things bodies can do, and how each body is different and unique, children will be inspired to take good care of their bodies throughout their lives. Promoting respect for body diversity among children will also encourage kindness and help prevent bullying. |
| ***Stick Up for Yourself! Every Kid’s Guide to Personal Power and Self Esteem*** by Gershen Kaufman, Lev Raphael and Pamela Espeland | Tips for building self-esteem and confidence skills | A book for KS2, full of practical, encouraging and realistic advice. |
| ***What About Me? When Brothers and Sisters Get Sick*** by Allan Peterkin | How to cope when a sibling is poorly; discovering a renewed sense of family | This story deals with the many complicated feelings the well child experiences in such a situation: guilt about having somehow caused the illness, fear that the sibling will die, anger over being left out, anxiety about catching the sickness, and longing for life to return to the way it was. |
| ***The Unforgotten Coat*** by Frank Cottrell Boyce | Refugee crisis; fitting in; combatting prejudice and discrimination | KS2: this tale focuses on two brothers, Chingis and Nergui. It is narrated by Julie, an outspoken Year 6 pupil, and explores how the boys are integrated into their school community, and how both cultures have a lot to learn and to offer, as boundaries are broken down and friendships are forged. A short but compelling tale told through an accessible, notebook form. Great for reluctant readers. |
| ***Refugee Boy*** by Benjamin Zephaniah | Fitting in; friendship; combatting prejudice and discrimination |  |
| ***The boy at the Back of the Class*** by Onjali Q. Raúf | A child’s perspective on the refugee crisis | When a new boy is introduced at school, no one is exactly sure where he has come from; what is a "refugee kid", anyway, and how can Ahmet be helped to feel that he belongs? |
| ***Girls Who Rocked the World by*** Michelle Roehm McCann | Self-esteem and future-thinking | Powerful, motivational real-life examples of young women and girls from the global North and South who made/are making a difference. Upper KS2 appropriate. |