

REVIEW

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A Trauma Resource Bibliography by Deanne Ginns-Gruenberg, MA, BSN, LPC, RPT-S

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In the days following the horrific events of September 11th, trauma specialists scrambled to find resources to help young clients. There were numerous requests for resources to manage the nightmares, decrease stress levels, gather ideas for altruistic activities, address bigotry and hatred as well as develop group activities to enable people to come together. The need to know what to say, how to reach out to others, and how to assist families and clients were also common concerns.

It is widely known that children need information to counterbalance the misinformation that is readily accessible. The task at hand becomes providing that information in a developmentally age-appropriate manner. We have also learned that in times of crisis and grief, attention spans are limited and so the amount of time one can focus on the words of the books must be considered. A tip might be “less is more.” The following is a list of trauma-related resources that may be of help to trauma specialists, parents, teens, and children:

* The National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children (TLC) has created an extensive library of practical hands-on tools. These trauma resources are jewels that offer detailed guidance for helping professionals to use in these challenging times. *What Parents Need to Know: Help for Parents of Grieving & Traumatized Children* by William Steele is an excellent place to start for caregivers and parents. It has an easy to read format explaining trauma, expected behaviors, and some beginning steps toward healing those who hurt. Two other booklets, *You are Not Alone* (for children ages 6 to 12) and *A Trauma is Like No Other Experience* (for teens) are directed to these traumatized children.

* Parents often are concerned that if they say too much too soon they will frighten their children. My experience has been that you will soon know, by the signs children provide, when it is over their heads. Some helpful books that assist parents with helpful dialogues include *How to Talk to Your Kids About Really Important Things* and *How to Talk to Teens About Really Important Things* both by Charles E. Schaefer, PhD and Theresa DeGeronimo, M.Ed., *Children and Trauma* by Cynthia Monohon, and *Parenting through Crisis* by Barbara Coloroso. Books by respected grief authors Alan Wolfelt and Earl Grollman provide some concrete answers which parents may be seeking as well as *Keys to Parenting Your Anxious Child* by Katharina Manassis, M.D., F.R.C.P. will be helpful.

* Parents and children can benefit from good books that help children learn to identify and express their feelings. There are so many outstanding books on this subject. A few of my favorites are *Just Because I Am* and the Leader’s Guide that accompanies this title.

Double Dip Feelings gives children permission to have more than one feeling at the same time. More pertinent than ever, my favorite book for traumatized children is *Brave Bart* (see review in V1 N1, *Trauma and Loss: Research and Interventions*). While some children relate well to people-characters, I frequently note that animal characters are especially appealing and engaging to children, especially in these difficult situations. Children identify with the animal characters in this story and are encouraged to believe that they too can surmount the issues which confront them.

* For classroom use after the terrorist attacks on September 11th, I suggest *Sailing Through the Storm* by Edie Julik. A sailboat on the water of life is “happily sailing along in calm, blue water. Suddenly there is a big boom. Someone has been hurt, and everything changes.” “Violence has happened to you, or to someone you know, or even someone you have never met.” So begins this interactive book that serves as a springboard to initiate discussion and expressive activities. The metaphor of sailboats on the water of life is an empowering tool that offers a sense of hope. Speaking directly to the children, it captures a wide range of emotions which include feeling like your “little sailboat is going to sink;” and moves in a positive direction encouraging children to express those scary feelings. *Sailing Through the Storm* affirms that within each of us lies the power to make a difference and sail towards the ocean of peace.

* *When Something Terrible Happens* by Marge Heegard, is a venue for children to express their fears and hopes. Simple explanations are on each page, and the children are invited to draw and discuss their work. To help children cope with nightmares, two of my personal favorites are *Jessica & the Wolf* and *Annie Stories*. *Jessica* models different coping techniques including reworking her nightmare - giving it a healthier ending. *Annie Stories* is a collection of stories on numerous topics in which the author actually provides footnotes for the caregiver. These explain the rationale for specific strategies which characters model.

* Additionally, soothing audiotapes or cassettes played at bedtime can help decrease anxiety and stress levels. Books like *Starbright*, *Earthlight*, and *Moonlight* provide calming guided imagery and affirmations for elementary age children. Roxanne Daleo has created some beautiful stories on audio to help children unwind. *Ready Set Relax* by Jeffrey Allen and Roger Klein, a favorite of many play therapists and caregivers, is an outstanding tool with calming scripts for the active imagination. These are followed by specific activities and questions for discussion. The scripts, put to music, are available both in a CD and cassette format called *Ready Set Release*, and are valuable for all ages.

* The importance of expressive therapies cannot be understated in its contribution towards the healing process. *Understanding Children's Drawings* by Cathy Malchiodi is an essential tool; providing practical guidelines for art therapy including helpful questions to explore with children. Clinicians will find the suggestions in another book on art intervention, also by Malchiodi, applicable to all children affected by our recent tragedy. *Children in Distress: A Guide for Screening Children's Art* by Linda Peterson and M. Hardin provides assistance to therapists in identifying signs of childhood trauma. Those working with adolescents will find *Contemporary Art Therapy with Adolescents*

by Shirley Riley a welcome companion to assist this population in communicating their concerns.

* Equally important is play therapy and there are numerous books that can help trauma specialists get started. In a new book, *School-Based Play Therapy*, edited by Athena Drewes, Lois Carey, and Charles Schaefer, Athena has written an excellent, relevant chapter, "Developmental Considerations in Play & Play Therapy with Traumatized Children." In *Treating Traumatized Children* Beverly James shares clinical situations and specific interventions. Any of Eliana Gil's books or chapters on the subject of abused and/or neglected children and adolescents can be adapted when working with traumatized youth and families.

* Trauma specialists often need resources to help children make sense of what happened. Sandtrays offers a soothing medium for children of all ages to begin the healing process. A great place to start is with *Sandtray: A Practical Manual* by Linda Homeyer and Daniel Sweeney; this medium facilitates children as they move towards feelings of safety and empowerment. *Sandplay Therapy with Children and Families* by Lois Carey will be of value to those working with families. In *Sandplay Therapy* by Barbara Boik and E. Anna Goodwin, the attention given to multicultural aspects takes on added value and importance, at this time.

* Why do people hate other people? This question has been asked with increasing frequency and begs to be answered. *Why is Everybody Always Picking on Us*, assists us to look at the roots of prejudice, and will be a useful tool for educators and clinicians. *Children of Color* by Jewelle Gibbs suggests important considerations when working with clients of different nationalities or races.

* What will be most valuable to those of us working with traumatized children? There are so many available outstanding materials; this list is far from exclusive. Two outstanding resources that will provide a helpful overview for us are *Too Scared to Cry* by Lenore Terr, MD and *Trauma and Recovery* by Judith Herman. Both clearly articulate the impact of trauma.

* Practical resources to help the helper are also needed. *What Color is Your Hurt?* for preschool children, *I Feel Better Now!* Curriculum, for ages 6-12, and *Trauma Intervention Program* are available from The National Institute for Trauma and Loss to guide the helper in working with children in groups. Children begin the healing process as they express their thoughts, concerns, hopes, and dreams in clearly defined age-appropriate activities. A new manual, *Adults and Parents in Trauma*, recognizes the need for parental involvement and offers specific therapeutic interventions to facilitate healing. *Trauma Debriefing for Schools and Agencies* is an essential tool for every debriefer. I also suggest *Three Dimensional Grief: Model for Facilitating Grief Groups for Inner City Children* by Dottie Ward Wimmer, Carol Napoli, and Sarah Outman Brophy. Kathryn Brohl offers helpful ideas in *Working with Traumatized Children: Handbook for Healing*. The detailed case studies in *Helping Bereaved Children: A Handbook for*

Practitioners, edited by Nancy Boyd Webb, also offers valuable guidelines and considerations for treatment.

Of course, the most important resource that I did not mention are the children themselves. Books are important, but more important is that we truly listen to and partner the children with whom we are working , allowing them guide us in their journey. In so doing, we may create the best healing tool yet.

