**Reach Out and Connect:**

**Using Children’s Books to**

**Talk about Mental Health**

Parents and caregiver’s can use children’s books to talk with their kids about some tough topics that effect our kid’s mental health. This is such a strange, stressful time for all of us, especially for our kids. Kids’ daily routine of school, visiting friends, visiting family, sports, and other activities has been interrupted and this change is not easy to deal with emotionally.

**Why is it important to talk with our kids about their mental health?**

* When challenging events happen that affect both kids and their families, parent’s first instinct can be to shield their children from everything, reassuring them that everything is fine.
* But sometimes everything is not fine, especially when there is so much change happening like this COVID crisis. Our children have rational fears and sadness. These feelings don’t go away by simply ignoring them.
* Children need to talk about and recognize their emotions in order to develop coping strategies for building mental resilience.
* Instead, we can tell kids that the world might not be okay– but as individuals they will be okay, because they will find a way to adapt.

**How children’s’ books can help discuss emotions with our kids**

Fiction offers another route to talk about difficult subjects and help make powerful feelings manageable.

* Reading stories about people just like them going through and dealing with tough emotions can help put some order into chaos they are feeling. There’s a comfort in hearing and being able to relate to those stories.
* When you read aloud, whatever else may be going on in the world, you are concentrating all your attention on your child, on the book and the story—and your child will understand this and feel reassured.
* This security will help your child feel confident in opening up to tell you how they feel.

“Imagination is the flipside of anxiety. Obviously if you’re anxious, you’re imagining stuff all the time. You need to fill that imaginative space with positive, fun, nourishing stuff and books can give you that. Through fiction, you can escape into a world that isn’t your life, but can help you to deal with it.”

* Children’s Author Matt Haig

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**Books About Fear**

[*When Lions Roar*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8btmBL6sVM)

By Robie Harris

Illustrated by Chris Raschka

[*I’m Worried*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=du_pp_-isVk)

By Michael Ian Black

Illustrated by Debbie Ridpath Ohi

[*The Don’t Worry Book*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqmNyLcWvS0)

By Todd Parr

[*Ruby Finds a Worry*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCyiiHI2SJU)

By Tom Percival

[*I Am Peace: A Book of Mindfulness*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnR5HDfR3JI)

*­*By Susan Verde

Illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds

[*Me and My Fear*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THAIfa8EXgA)

By Francesca Sanna

[*Emily’s Blue Period*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0rYqQNhFIQ)

By Cathleen Daly

Illustrated by Lisa Brown

[*I Used to Be Afraid*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhWXRSSPYJg)

By Laura Vaccaro Seeger

[*Blue*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGqF2Ai6IxY)

By Laura Vaccaro Seeger

[*Silly Billy*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDE5pqAFPwU)
by Anthony Browne

[*The Heart and the Bottle*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FSuy-J_Pzk&t=108s)
by Oliver Jeffers

[*Wemberly Worried*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkuXc0htNGk&t=22s)
by Kevin Henkes

[*Jabari Jumps*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1O-CE6czyE&t=2s)
By Gaia Cornwall

[*After the Fall*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUKt1a6I3yw)

By Dan Santat

[*The Invisible Boy*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNHc2XCultQ)

By Trudy Ludwig

Illustrated by Patrice Barton

**Books About Death**

*Goodbye Mousie*

By Robie Harris

Illustrated by Jan Ormerod

**Books About Illness**

[*The Remember Balloons*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvvFJgu3tFs)

By Jessie Oliveros

Illustrated by Dana Wulfekotte

**Books About Sadness**

[*When Sadness is at Your Door*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5CgTj4Izfw)

By Eva Eland

[*Tomorrow Most Likely*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVP3kTtqJB4)

****By Dave Eggers

Illustrated by Lane Smith

**Books About Feelings**

[The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, and the Horse](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81b4i9jQhck)

Written and Illustrated by Charlie Mackesy

[The Feelings Book](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9a9pgV9P8ek)

[El Libro de los Sentimientos](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3al6AvvZ-Oc)

Written and Illustrated by Todd Parr

[The Color Monster: A Story About Emotions](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWujGPb6mgo)

[El Monstruo de Colores](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__NmMOkND8g)

By Anne Llenas

 [Pout Pout Fish by Deborah Diesen](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqupxANpqIE) o [El Pez Pucheros](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNnJxaL0g24)

By Deborah Diesen

Illustrated by Dan Hanna

[Unlovable](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9IAGRh0wAk)

By Dan Yaccarino