

BIBLIOTHERAPY LESSON PLAN

TASK OF GRIEF: How exposure to trauma/violence can impact a child

Created by: Margaret M. Holmes

BOOK INFORMATION

Book title: A Terrible Thing Happened

Author: Margaret M. Holmes

Publisher and date of publication: American Psychological Association, 2000

ISBN: 1-55798-701-7

Number of pages: 29

Reading level or interest level: Story is read by adult to children ages 4 to 8 years of age.

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Sherman Smith (main character) has a terrible thing happen to him. The author doesn't specify the terrible thing but does describe some of the symptoms Sherman is experiencing from the event. He receives help from an adult (Ms. Maple) to deal with the impact of the event.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Child will be able to describe a traumatic event he/she experienced and how it is impacting them.

LESSON MATERIALS AND ADVANCED PREPARATION

Have art material (e.g., crayons, markers, paper) available when the child may want to draw pictures to help process their feelings.

KEY VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS

Since the book doesn't describe the actual terrible event the main character experiences it is up to the child to suggest what the event is. It is at this point the child may project a traumatic event they were a victim of or witnessed.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

If possible, get some background information on the child from an adult familiar with him/her before you read the story. Read author's notes at back of book to help decide which children you should read the book to.

READ THE BOOK

POST READING DISCUSSION

1. What do you think happened to Sherman?
2. Have you ever felt like Sherman after something happened to you?
3. Do you have a Ms. Maples to talk with if you need to talk?

POST READING ACTIVITY

Observe the child's behavior during the session. If the child appears to be in significant emotional distress during or after the reading of the book work with the parent to connect with an appropriate professional to support the child.

CLOSURE

Emphasis with the child if they ever have a "terrible thing" happen to them there are adults they can go to for help. Help the child problem solve who in their life they can go to for help.