

Bibliotherapy: Children Coping with a Chronic Illness

by

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Fall 2011

Bergman, T. (1989). *One day at a time: Children living with leukemia*. Milwaukee, WI: Stevens, Inc.

*One Day at a Time: Children Living with Leukemia* is a book written for children ages 12 and under who may be dealing with leukemia. This book details the path of children with leukemia and follows them as they are treated for the illness. This book is told from the author's point of view since he got to be with the children in the hospital. The author shares how Hannah and Fredrick cope with the treatment from beginning to end. Hannah gets her blood tested and is not scared of the hospital anymore. Fredrick has had leukemia for about six months. He is on a medication that sometimes makes him angry. The doctor explains that sometimes this happens and talks Fredrick through the procedure.

Thomas Bergman, the author, is a photographer that would go around and take pictures of the children showing their strength when coping with the illness. He became close with Hannah and Fredrick and found himself interested in the treatment of leukemia. He then decided to take his pictures of the children's strength and make a book to help other children understand the hospital is not a scary place to be. A hospital is the place for the children to feel safe and get treatment to get better. He has written several books about children coping with different chronic illnesses.

Bjorklund, R. (2005). *Asthma*. New York, NY: Benchmark Books.

*Asthma* is an informational book for young children or adults who have children who may be coping with asthma. This book details very to the point information and developed a sense of understanding and a way every person could understand of the

condition of asthma. The book is easy to read and to understand. There is a list of books and websites at the end of the book that the author found helpful in understanding this concept. The author also listed a reference of different words and their meanings in case the reader did not understand what something, such as a nebulizer. The author took a perspective of a child, Miles, who developed asthma. Miles felt like he could not go outside and enjoy other activities that other children did. He had to take medication and controlled his breathing and activities more than other kids. The author also talked about the different systems in a human body and how asthma affects all these systems and how these systems help fight off unhealthy bacteria that came into the body.

Ruth Bjorklund, the author, writes children's book that include topics such as chronic illnesses. Ruth's goal when writing is to take a complicated topic and make it understandable for young children. She liked to use pictures to help explain the topic in matter better to children. The pictures are always colorful and easy to understand. She studied at the University of Washington. She currently lives on Bainbridge Island, Washington.

Blake, C., Blanchard, E., & Parkinson, J. (1998). *The paper chain*. Albuquerque, NM: Health Press.

*The Paper Chain* is a picture book that is written for children 12 years of age and under and who may find themselves in a situation where information about cancer can be helpful. The book details the idea of being truly honest with children. The children made a paper chain and counted down the days until their mom could come home. The book is told from the perspective of the children. The book shows how sometimes the children

became frustrated because the mother could not do some of the activities they use to be able to. The book explains what cancer, chemotherapy and radiation are in a way that is easy for young children to understand.

Claire Blake, the author, was diagnosed with cancer. She had to find a way to tell her young sons about the illness and help them understand what is going to happen. The author studied childhood education. Therefore, she knew the impact that stories had on children. She then decided to write a book to help families, like her own, in the time of help. Two other authors also worked with Claire on this book. Their names are Eliza Blanchard and Kathy Parkinson. They are all from Belmont, Massachusetts.

Haney, J. (2005). *Juvenile diabetes*. New York, NY: Benchmark Books.

*Juvenile Diabetes* is a non-fictional informational book that is written for children 12 and under and parents who may have children coping with juvenile diabetes. This book details what juvenile diabetes is and what it is like to have juvenile diabetes. The context of the book focuses on educating children, families, friends, schools, and even communities. The book focuses on children so they could understand the complex disease of diabetes but also helped adults find ways to understand more about diabetes so they could be more prepared and able to help their children when they needed. At the back of the book, there was a list of different websites and organizations to help adults understand and educated on diabetes. The book starts from the perspective of a girl named Kathleen who has been diagnosed with juvenile diabetes. She explains her symptoms and she had to check her blood glucose daily. She talks through the doctor appointments and what goes on in a day with juvenile diabetes so children who are

reading this book would have a better understanding of the illness. At the end of the book, the author listed different books and websites that he found helpful for learning about juvenile diabetes.

Johannah Haney, the author, has written many books in this series concerning chronic illnesses such as, asthma, depression, and lung cancer. These books are set up the exact way that this one is so the readers can grasp a better understanding of the illness.

Heiney, S.P., Hermann, J.F., Bruss, K.V., & Fincannon, J.L. (2001). *Cancer in the family: Helping children cope with a parent's illness*. Atlanta, GA: American Cancer Society.

*Cancer in the Family: Helping Children Cope with a Parent's Illness* is a nonfictional book for parents and young children who may be dealing with a chronic illness in the family. This book details the journey of cancer. Cancer is often known as the "family disease". The "family disease" affects everyone, especially young children. This book details steps can be taken to help children understand the diagnosis of cancer. This book also includes hands on activities. These activities are very helpful with children. The activities, journals or ways to eat healthy, can teach the children how to channel their questions and concerns so they can understand. This book is informational; therefore the author breaks down the book into chapters and even age groups for children to understand. The author also makes questions that are most frequently asked very to the point that children can understand. Some parents may not know how to talk to their children about cancer. This book allows adults to find answers to the hard questions and concerns of their children. The kids' corner of this book is where the activities are. The author addresses the children in this part to make them feel more comfortable.

Sue Heiney, Joan Hermann, Katherine Bruss, and Joy Fincannon, the authors, put much thought into this book. They based the information in the book from scientific information and clinical experience. They decided to do a survey and get together with group leaders that deal with children, parents, and cancer. They worked together to decide what would help children understand this complex disease and help them cope. This is what brought the idea of the Kids' Corner and material in this book.

Kroll, V. (2005). *Brianna breathes easy: A story about asthma*. Morton Grove, IL: Alberta Whitman and Company.

*Brianna Breathes Easy* is a fictional story that is written for children up to age 8 and who may be coping with asthma. This book details the triggers from asthma and the protocols to be followed when coping with asthma. The book is told from the perspective of a little girl, Brianna, who developed asthma. Brianna visits her grandfather, who is playing cards with some friends. Some of his friends are smoking and the room is full of smoke. On the way home, Brianna starts coughing. Brianna is very excited about an upcoming play that she is in. The day before the show, she starts coughing and cannot catch her breath. She then goes to the emergency room and finds out she has asthma. Brianna learns about the triggers such as: smoke, cold air, or dust, and then learns how to control her asthma. Her grandfather put a sign on the front door that said "No Smoking" since it was harming Brianna. The book helps children understand that other children who have asthma have some of the same symptoms. The medication Brianna used was an inhaler and even some of her friends had inhalers too.

Virginia Kroll, the author, her two children, and her granddaughter all have asthma. She decided to write a book talking children through the illness. Virginia and her family go to a doctor to keep the asthma under control. They also have medications they take so they can breathe easier when breathing gets hard.

Mallinos-Moore, J. (2007). *I have asthma*. Barcelona, Spain: Gemser Publications.

*I Have Asthma* is a nonfictional story that is written for children 12 and under and who may be coping with asthma. This book is very easy to read and understand. The book details the prevalence of asthma and talks about some of the symptoms or fear of being rejected from friends many children may have. The book is told from the perspective of a little boy who enjoys playing soccer. He started coughing and his parents took him to the doctor and they found out he had asthma. He was afraid he would not get to play soccer anymore and his friends would not talk to him since he had asthma. At the end of the book there is a section on guidelines on asthma for parents to better understand and follow the precautions to prevent asthma. Something very interesting about this book is it teaches children how to make an inhaler pouch so children won't lose their inhaler.

Murray, L., Foxworthy, J., & Howard, B. (2002). *Angels and demons: A child's eye view of cancer*. Atlanta, GA: American Cancer Society.

*Angels and Demons: A Child's Eye View of Cancer* is a nonfictional picture book written for children 12 and under and who may be coping with cancer. This book details the emotions and thoughts of young children while coping with a chronic illness. The book is told from the children's point of view about cancer. They share how this illness

has made them stronger or weaker. They share these feeling they have towards cancer through art. The book is emotional but grabs the reader's attention in the differences in the art work.

Jeff Foxworthy, one of the authors, worked with children coping with cancer. He knows how they feel towards to illness. He feels that all the children want is to be "normal." They want to be able to run and play without having to be hooked up to machines.

Lisa Murray, one of the authors, is an art therapist. She worked with these children and had them focus their anger, confusion, sadness, or even happiness through drawings. She found that this helped the children show others how they felt and even helped them cope with the illness.

Billy Howard, one of the authors, is a photographer. He went around the hospital taking pictures of the children to brighten their day. He got thinking and wanted to put more use into these pictures. He joined the other two authors of this book and put the pictures in the book with the art pictures so the readers could see the art and then the person who drew it.

Powell, J. (2007). *Feeling sick? Asthma*. North Mankato, MN: Cherrytree Books.

*Feeling Sick? Asthma* is a nonfictional informational book for children between 5 and 12 years of age and who may be coping with asthma. This book details the symptoms of asthma; with some "Did you know" ideas of asthma. Also, this book details stories from different children with asthma. This book is a very easy read and very informative about asthma and coping with asthma. The book is told from the perspective of the author



and different children. The author talks what is going on in a child's body, and then talks about medications. The children have inserts throughout the book describing their diabetes and how they cope with it. The book starts by addressing what asthma is and how asthma can affect breathing. Then the author had pictures to help children understand the system in the body and how it is affected by asthma. Then there are preventions in the book that children find helpful so they know what to watch out for to prevent an asthma attack. The book contains a glossary so children can look up key terms they may not be familiar with or confused about.

Jillian Powell, the author, writes books on different illnesses. She has written a series of *Feeling Sick?* Books that include topics like asthma, allergies, and chickenpox. Jillian Powell is also known for have "Dear Doc" citations in her books. The "Dear Doc" inserts talks about common questions children have dealing with asthma. Some of her citations can be found in Keystone Books.

Powell, J. (2007). *Feeling sick? Diabetes*. North Mankato, MN: Cherry tree Books.

*Feeling Sick? Diabetes* is a nonfictional informational book for children between 5 and 12 years of age and who may be coping with diabetes. This book details the symptoms of diabetes such as: tiredness and being very thirsty. This book is a very easy read and very informative about type I and type II diabetes and coping with diabetes. The book is told from the perspective of the author and different children. The author talks about how a person feels with asthma, what is going on in your body when an asthma attack occurs, and then talks about medications. The children have inserts throughout the book describing their asthma and how they cope with it. The books in the *Feeling Sick?*

series has a “Did you know” box that includes facts about diabetes or other chronic illnesses.

Jillian Powell, the author, writes books on different illnesses. She has written a series of *Feeling Sick?* Books that include topics like diabetes, allergies, and chickenpox. Jillian Powell is also known for have “Dear Doc” citations in her books. The “Dear Doc” inserts talks about common questions children have dealing with diabetes. The book includes a glossary in case children are not sure what a term means.

The perspective of a little boy named Han is at the beginning of the book. Han told his story of finding out he had diabetes. A little boy named William told his story about his dad giving him the insulin shots but now he can do the shots himself. The stories from children help children reading this book that there are other children in the same situation and show how they cope with diabetes.

Preller, J. (2008). *Six innings: This time it is for the championship*. New York, NY: A Feiwel and Friends Book.

*Six Innings: This Time it is for the Championship* is a fictional book that is written for children 9 to 12 years old and who may be coping with cancer. The book details how a young boy copes with an illness known as cancer. The perspective of this story is told by the author. Sam, the boy who has cancer, is on a baseball team. Baseball is his way of thinking about here and now. He does not want to think about his cancer, his hair, or his doctors. He wants the championship.

James Preller, the author, also wrote the *Jigsaw Mystery Series*. This book is his first novel. The idea came from the passion he had for baseball and his experiences in

Little League as a coach and a father. He now lives in Delmar, New York. He still coaches Little League and plays men's hardball league.

Russell, N. (2001). *Can I still kiss you? Answering your children's questions about cancer*.

Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc.

*Can I Still Kiss You? Answering Your Children's Questions about Cancer* is a nonfictional informative book written for young children and adults coping with cancer. This book details the strength and weaknesses cancer has on a family. The book is told from the author's perspective of cancer. Some parts of the book the author imitates a child when asking questions and then tells the parents what they should say to the child so they would understand. The book is an easy read and sometimes can be emotional. The author listed different questions that came up in conversations with children. He then gave simplistic answers so the children would understand exactly what cancer is and how chemotherapy can change a person's look but how the person is still the same person they were before chemotherapy. Parents struggle when talking to children about chronic illnesses. This book talks about finding the strength and the right words to use to explain this illness to children. The book is broke down into chapters that walk through the steps of coping with cancer. In each chapter, there are spaces for the adults and the children to write emotions and questions while reading.

Neil Russell, the author, is president and CEO of Neil Russell Productions and Site 85 Productions and a member of the Writer's Guild of America and The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Neil Russell is a father to two sons and a husband who found himself diagnosed with cancer. This book portrays his way of coping with cancer

and how his children dealt with the news. He found the strength and the hope to fight the cancer and build stronger relationship with his sons.

Stewart, G. (2003). *Diabetes*. San Diego, CA: Kidhaven Press.

*Diabetes* is an information nonfiction book that is written for children 12 and under who may be dealing with diabetes. This book details what diabetes is to living with diabetes. The book is told from the author's perspective of diabetes given scientific evidence from diabetes. The book includes an index and photographs. At the end of the book, the author listed several websites and books she found helpful on the subject of Diabetes. The book details that diabetes is a serious disease and if not treated, it can lead to serious problems. The book started by talking about what diabetes is and then goes into detail what parts of the body are linked with diabetes. This gives children an understanding of how their body works with the illness. The author made a list of symptoms of diabetes that include: excessive thirst, dry skin, blurred vision, weight loss and many others. The book is an easy read and very easy for children to understand. There are parts in the book that children explain their diagnosis and many have found talking to other children with diabetes comforting.

Gail Stewart, the author, has written over 90 books for young people. She received her undergraduate degree from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota. She did her graduate work in English, linguistics, and curriculum study at University of St. Thomas and University of Minnesota. She use to teach English and reading for over 10 years. She now resides in Minneapolis with her husband and three sons.

Walker, R. (2007). *Ouch! How your body makes it through a very bad day*. New York, NY: DK publishing.

*Ouch! How Your Body Makes it through a Very Bad Day* is a nonfiction book that is written for children 10 to 12 years old and who may be concerned with asthma. This book details many different situations your body goes through. One situation that was concentrated in this book was asthma. The book is told from the perspective of the author with scientific relevance. The book has a very invasive picture of what the lungs should look like and what they look like with asthma. On the side, it breaks down the different parts of the respiratory system and how they function. There is a CD-ROM that comes with this book. The CD-ROM takes the reader on a voyage inside the body by just a click of a button. The reader clicks on the lungs and it takes you inside the lungs. Then an asthma attack occurs and it shows the airways constricting.

Warner, S. (1998). *Sort of forever*. New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

*Sort of Forever* is a fictional story that is written for children 10 to 12 years old and who are coping or know somebody coping with cancer. This book details the coping of cancer by two 12 year old girls. The girls come together to help each other find ways to cope with this illness. The book is told from the perspective of a young girl named Cady who is Nana's best friend. Cady just found out that her best friend Nana has cancer. Nana has always been there for her. Cady decides she is going to be there for Nana in her time of need. Nana is a happy, strong person. When she finds out she has cancer, all joy

fades away. Cady does not know how to react to this change in her friend. Cady decides to try to help Nana and bring a smile to her face.

Sally Warner, the author, was born in New York City. She moved when she was 8 years old and grew up in California and Connecticut. She got her B.A from Scripps College in Claremont, California and her B.F.A. and M.F.A in fine arts from Otis Institute in Los Angeles. She worked as an artist and starting writing a few years later.

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