

### **“Some of Our Favorites” Children’s Books - Recommended by Gil Institute Clinicians**

As professionals we are equipped with many tools to help children, adolescents and caregivers address and cope with many different issues. Creative stories, vibrant pictures, innovative characters and child friendly language have proven to be an extremely effective way to help our clients understand the issues that they are faced with on a daily basis. The team at the Gil Institute would like to share with you some of their favorite books for children that address issues of adoption, anxiety, attachment, bullying, sexual abuse, identification / regulation of emotions, anger management and loss and grief. When ordering books please remember The Self-Esteem shop, a book store interested in books for children and a favorite resource of Dr. Gil and the Gil Institute staff. They can be found at [selfesteemshop.com](http://selfesteemshop.com).

#### ***Anh’s Anger by Gail Silver***

Five-year-old Anh becomes angry when his grandfather when he interrupts playtime with a call for dinner. When he is sent for some quiet time to calm down, Anh discovers a mindful method to work through his feelings. This book uses beautiful illustrations and the text engages both young and school-age children.

#### ***Enemy Pie by Derek Munson.***

In this funny and endearing book, one little boy learns an effective recipe for turning his enemy into a friend by spending time with him. The story and picture will keep young children involved and engaged in this delightful story.

#### ***If I Tell by Susan Marcy-Webster & Emily Phillips***

A story about a 12 year old girl who experiences sexual abuse and doesn't know how to stop it, until one day she finds the courage to tell. This book captures many of the thoughts and feelings that children have regarding disclosure. Many young female clients have identified themselves with the girl in this story and have found their stories reflected on this book.

#### ***I Love You, Stinky Face by Lisa Mccourt (Author), Cyd Moore (Illustrator)***

This story is about a mother's unconditional love for her child. It uses creative, colorful and zany illustrations that symbolize a child's “stinky” side and a mother's ability to accept anything her child shows her. It demonstrates healthy and secure attachments between a mother and a child.

#### ***Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda by Lauren Alderfer***

A wonderful picture book for both children and adults that introduces the power of mindfulness practice for all ages in a creative and engaging way. With the charming Monkey and his peaceful friend Happy Panda guides readers to a calmer and more conscientious mind, this whimsical yet warm presentation will delight all readers. I find this book perfect for introducing the practice of mindfulness at the beginning (or end) of parent-child joint sessions, beginning of individual sessions, and parents have found it useful at home to help create a calmer routine at bedtime.

#### ***Oliver Button Is a Sissy by Tomie dePaola (Author and Illustrator)***

A story about a boy who is teased for liking things that are different from other boys his age. The book deals beautifully with gender stereotyping and responding to bullying

***Please Explain Anxiety to Me! Simple Biology and Solutions for Children and Parents (Growing With Love): Laurie Zelinger, Jordan Zelinger, Elisa Sabella:***

This book describes anxiety in a concrete and creative way that children can relate to. Children, their parents and professional will understand the biological and emotional components of anxiety. *Please Explain Anxiety to Me* uses child friendly language to explain physiological information about anxiety. A vibrant dinosaur story explains the connection between brain and body functioning, followed by practical therapeutic coping techniques that children can use and relate to. Children will learn that they can handle their anxiety when it is explained to them in a creative and child friendly way. In addition, they will walk away with useful tools to help cope with their symptoms.

***Porcupette Finds a Family by Vanita Oelschlager:***

This book addresses adoption by telling a creative story about a baby porcupine whose mother disappears, and the baby is taken in and cared for by bears. She has a difficult time trusting her relationship with them and wonders when they may leave her and she has a hard time letting them love her, but eventually she feels secure and loved with her new family. This book does a wonderful job helping children and adults understand trust, adoption and attachment.

***Steps and Stones: An Anh's Anger Story by Gail Silver***

The feeling of anger is personified in this story (impulsive creature who feeds on negativity). Illustrations are bold and colorful, and the story centers around slowing things down until the personification of anger grows "small" and loses energy when Anh takes control and practices walking away, counting slowly, and controlled breathing before acting on his angry feelings.

***Tear Soup by Pat Schweibert and Chuck DeKlyen, Illustrated by Taylor Bills***

This heartfelt book is useful in helping adults feel validated during or after their grief process and assisting children and teens who have experienced all forms of loss from divorce to the loss of a significant others. I like to combine this book with an art activity where the family members create their own personal "tear soup".

***The Kissing Hand by Ruth E. Harper, illustrator, Nancey M. Leak***

Weather starting school, daycare, camp or faced with another form of separation from your primary caretaker, this heartwarming children's book has become a classic and favorite of teachers, parents and therapist to help children with difficult transitions.

***The Invisible String by Patrice Karst***

When Liza and Jeremy run to their mother during a scary storm, she comforts them by telling them about an invisible string, that connects them to the people they love so that they are never alone. The Invisible String is a very simple approach to dealing with the fear of separation with a creative elegance that young children can identify with and remember. This book is great for individual session and group sessions. Specifically, I recommend using the book during the termination phase of treatment. You can pair this book with hands on activity by taking a ball of yarn and passing it around the group. Once the circle is complete, cut the string so that each individual can take a piece with them. This can also be done in school settings when a student is leaving the class.

***The Way I Feel By Janan Cain.***

This delightful book can be used in homes, school, groups and individual session. It uses wacky characters who sniffle; soar and shriek teach such emotions such as anger, disappointment and boredom.

***You Are Special by Max Lucado***

This heartwarming tale helps address issues of bullying and low self worth. It sends a vital message that, regardless of how others and the world view them, God cherishes them just as they are.

I like it for responding to bullying and low self worth.

***You've Got Dragons, by Kathryn Cave/Nick Maland***

A book that details what anxiety feels like and how a child feels about caregivers' responses to their worries. This book helps to normalize the experience of anxiety for children in a fun and creative manner. It uses the symbolism of a dragon to help children identify and relate to a concrete image of an abstract thought or feeling. I might use this book during family sessions, and then invite the family to draw a "dragon" they are currently facing.

*Compiled and submitted by Heather M. Bryan, LPC, Associate Partner*