

Training Workshop: How to facilitate a bibliotherapy-based reading group.

Developed by

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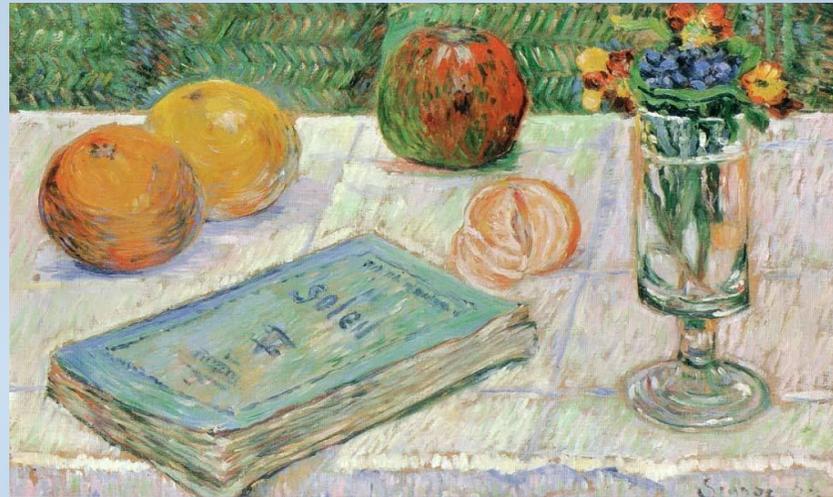


My bibliotherapy journey

- 2009 - research study on bibliotherapy at Western University, ON
- 2010 - bibliotherapy program on HIV/AIDS in South Africa
- 2011-2012 - *Read to Connect* program for the clients of St. John the Compassionate Mission, Toronto
- 2014 - published a scholarly manuscript "Healing through Books"
- 2015-2017 - *Bibliotherapy for Staff*, Rouge Valley Hospital, Toronto
- 2016 - *Book Break* program, St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto
- 2020-present – *Mindful Reading at CMCC* for college students and employees
- 7 publications and more than 20 presentations, workshops, and interviews

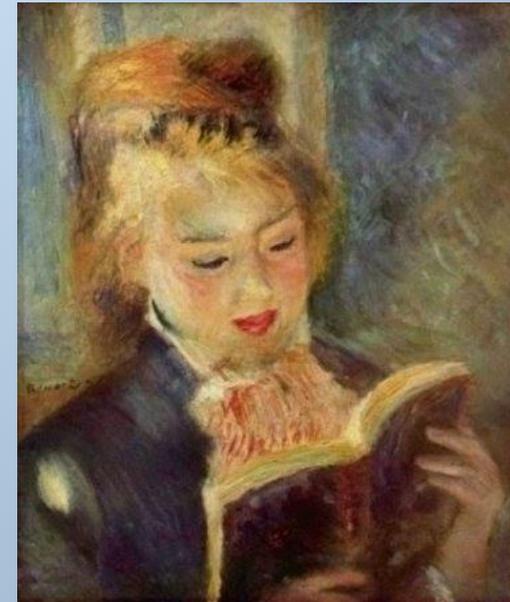
Power of Reading

“In reality, every reader is, while he is reading, the reader of his own self. The writer’s work is merely a kind of optical instrument which he offers to the reader to enable him to discern what, without this book, he would perhaps never have experienced in himself.”- *Marcel Proust*



Books as “silent therapists”

- The readers “find what they need in what they read.” – *Joseph Gold*
- Literature as an inexhaustible source of life experiences.
- Safe distance for a reader to explore life problems.



Bibliotherapy: Definition

- books, reading, and communication around texts
- the systematic use of books to assist individuals in dealing with mental, physical, emotional, developmental, or social problems.

Tukhareli, N. (2014). *Healing through books: The evolution and diversification of bibliotherapy*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press. 206 p.

Bibliotherapy: A Historical Overview

- Library of Alexandria (3rd century B.C.): “The place of the cure of the soul.”
- 18th -19th centuries – libraries in psychiatric asylums and hospitals in Europe and the United States.
- 1916 - the term “bibliotherapy” was introduced to describe “the use of books in treatment situations.”
- Since the mid-20th century – the expansion of bibliotherapy to non-medical settings (libraries, schools, community centers, nursing homes, shelters, prisons, etc.).
- 21st century – a rapid growth of evidence-based bibliotherapy research and creative bibliotherapy applications (shared reading groups)

Bibliotherapy Types: Terminology

Clinical Bibliotherapy

Medical
Therapeutic
Prescriptive

Self-help Bibliotherapy
Cognitive-behavioural
Bibliotherapy (CBB)

Non-clinical Bibliotherapy

Developmental
Creative
Informal
Social

Clinical Bibliotherapy

- an adjunct to psychotherapy or an alternative treatment
- facilitated by a counsellor, therapist, or psychologist
- a structured setting
- to assist adults and children with mental, psychological, emotional, and behavioural problems
- the use of fiction, poetry and self-help books

Self-Help Bibliotherapy

- The systematic use of self-help materials as part of clinical interventions.
- Types of materials:
 - commercially published self-help books;
 - customized self-help manuals developed for specific physical and mental health conditions;
 - patient handouts from online health-related resources.

“Books on Prescription” in Public Libraries



Therapists
select self-help
books on
mental health
issues

A public library
stocks a
prearranged
list of books

Therapists issue
“book
prescriptions”
to patients
and refer them
to the library

Non-clinical Bibliotherapy

- A social model of bibliotherapy used by non-medical professionals (in collaborations with psychologists) as a means of improving the quality of life of individuals facing various life challenges, promoting health and well-being, and combating social isolation.
- **Settings:** libraries, schools, nursing homes, community centres, community health centres, hospices, shelters, prisons, etc.
- **Facilitators:** librarians, educators, social workers, community service providers, etc.

“A Reading Revolution” in the UK

- Jane Davis and the *Shared Reading* movement in the UK
<https://www.thereader.org.uk/>
- Davis J. “*Literature isn’t a luxury but a life-changer: Sharing literature with those who wouldn’t otherwise come into contact with it is a joy*” - The Guardian, April 1, 2017



Bibliotherapy Project in Canada



- thematic compilations of readings to address “life problems” and promote health, well-being, and resilience
- reading materials of all genres and different cultural and spiritual traditions
- educational or informational components
- delivery methods: in-person (‘shared reading’ groups) or online

Tukhareli, N. (2018). Read to Connect: Reading to combat loneliness and promote resilience. In McNicol, S. & Brewster, L. (Eds.) *Bibliotherapy*. London, UK: Facet Publishing <http://www.facetpublishing.co.uk/title.php?id=303410#.XASWuuJOnIU>

Benefits

- flexibility (clients, settings, materials)
- accessibility (attracts people with low literacy)
- effective tool of health promotion and education
- promotes well-being and resilience
- promotes empathy and a sense of community

Program Delivery

- weekly sessions
- a 2-hour session with a 15-min break
- Small groups (5-10 people)
- Room arrangement: circle or semi-circle
- Print handouts with selected readings

Session Structure

- Warm-up activity
- Read-aloud activity: the facilitator reads the selection aloud clearly.
- Guided group discussion: the facilitator initiates and furthers a discussion allowing each member to contribute ideas and feelings about the literature.
- Writing activity (optional)
- Follow-up activity: participants' final reflections and comments; facilitator's summary.

Suggested themes

- Living through difficult times. Resilience.
- Loneliness and Isolation
- Power of Forgiveness. Compassion.
- Responsibility. Bringing meaning into your life.
- Positive attitude
- Power of Gratitude. Appreciation.
- Unconditional love. Giving.
- Connecting to Nature

Reading Materials: fiction & non-fiction

- parables
- short stories
- excerpts from novels
- poetry
- biographies, autobiographies, and memoirs
- self-help books
- excerpts from manuscripts in psychology, philosophy, etc.
- journal and magazine articles



Material Selection Criteria

- High literary quality of fiction and poetry
- evidence-based support for non-fiction materials
- relevance of materials to the topics addressed
- diversity of selected materials: materials reflecting different ethnic, cultural, and spiritual traditions
- sensitivity in approaching difficult subjects
- appropriateness of the information to the readers' developmental level illustrations and good visual images (for children books)

Resources

- Public libraries & book stores
- Award-winning book lists (Goodreads.com)
- Publishers' websites (Canadianauthors.com)
- Published book reviews: Library Journal, The Globe & Mail, The New Yorker, The Guardian
- Book Expo (OLA Super Conference)
- Professional associations websites (APA, MLA)
- Poetry websites (PoetryFoundation.org; PoemHunter.com)
- Online Self-help resources (Greater Good Magazine; Psychology Today; HealthGuide.org)

Copyright Compliance

- the purpose of the use: non-commercial use for the purpose of education
- the use of works that are part of the “public domain”
- for reading compilations: the amount to be used (up to 10-15% of the work)
- proper citations of materials used
- organizational websites: formal requests for permission to use specific materials

Program Evaluation

- ❖ program evaluation forms
- ❖ informal interviews
- ❖ case studies
- ❖ facilitator's journal

Group Dynamics

- voluntary participation in readings and discussions
- encourage participation (build self-confidence)
- make sure that all members are treated with dignity and respect
- make sure everyone is heard: balance between quiet and talkative people
- clarify ideas and participants' input when needed
- manage disagreements and reconcile different viewpoints
- be positive and create an atmosphere of trust
- avoid giving advice

Facilitator Skills

- belief in transformative power of books and reading
- literary knowledge and expertise
- expressive reading skills
- active listening
- social awareness
- communication skills
- knowledge of the group dynamics

Challenges

- preparation time
- diverse groups in terms of age, sex, education, skills, attitudes, values, and beliefs
- group dynamics
- professional boundaries (for librarians and educators)
 - collaboration with therapists and social workers when working with vulnerable populations

Read more...

- Tukhareli, N. (2018). Read to Connect: Reading to combat loneliness and promote resilience. In McNicol, S. & Brewster, L. (Eds.) *Bibliotherapy*. London, UK: Facet Publishing
<http://www.facetpublishing.co.uk/title.php?id=303410#.XASWuuJOnIU>
- Tukhareli, N. (2017). Bibliotherapy-based Wellness Program for Healthcare Providers: Using Books and Reading to Create a Healthy Workplace. *Journal of the Canadian Health Libraries Association*, 38 (2), 44-50.
<https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/jchla/index.php/jchla/article/view/29199>
- Tukhareli, N. (2011). Bibliotherapy in a library setting: Reaching out to vulnerable youth. *The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*, 6 (1). 1-18. Web:
<http://journal.lib.uoguelph.ca/index.php/perj/issue/view/110>

Thank You!

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