

Therapeutic Stories

Therapeutic Stories are used to help children process difficult experiences, feelings and emotions through words and pictures. The characters and events in therapeutic stories delicately reflect real life themes and allow time and space for the child to draw out comparisons in emotions/experiences between themselves and the characters featured.



One of the aims of a therapeutic story is that the child can relate to and empathise with the character and their experience. This then provides the child with:

- A sense of feeling less alone with the issue they are facing
- Validation of their own feelings and experiences.
- The vocabulary and language they need to explain their own thoughts and feelings (that they may not have had access to before)

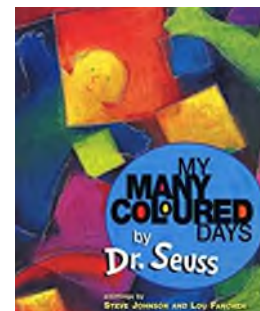
Therapeutic stories can enable children to engage in conversations that may otherwise overwhelm them. The identification of emotions with a trusted adult can help a child to make sense of what has happened; provide ideas, guidance and support that can help a child to learn new coping strategies; or to develop a new way to think about the problem they are facing.

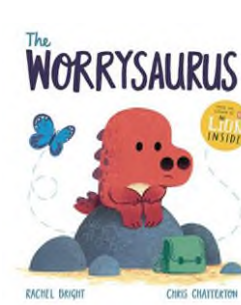
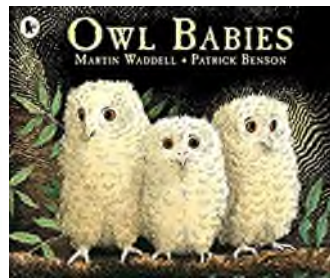
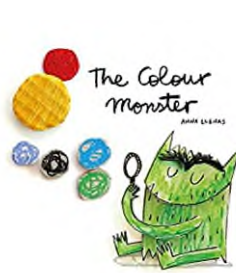
Therapeutic stories always end on a positive, hopeful and happy note. This allows a child to imagine, visualise and internalise the 'felt sense' of an alternative future for themselves.

What makes therapeutic stories so effective?

- A child's natural language is that of image and metaphor. They will often connect more quickly and easily to story than to a conversation about the same topic
- Stories provide a safe distance from the issue; this can allow them to stay with any difficult feelings and thoughts long enough to begin to process them
- The metaphors in therapeutic stories can help to create new neural pathways in the brain; helping children to reframe their experiences
- Stories provide a way to talk about the problem indirectly and even to open more direct conversation if needed (and only once the child is ready).
- Stories create a wonderful 'jumping off point' to allow for further creative processing through art and play
- - Stories create a 'road map' that can guide children towards healing and resolution

Recommended Book List:





Useful Links:

[ELSA – Recommended books](#)

[Social emotional books](#)

[SEMH therapeutic stories](#)

[Little Parachutes](#)



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