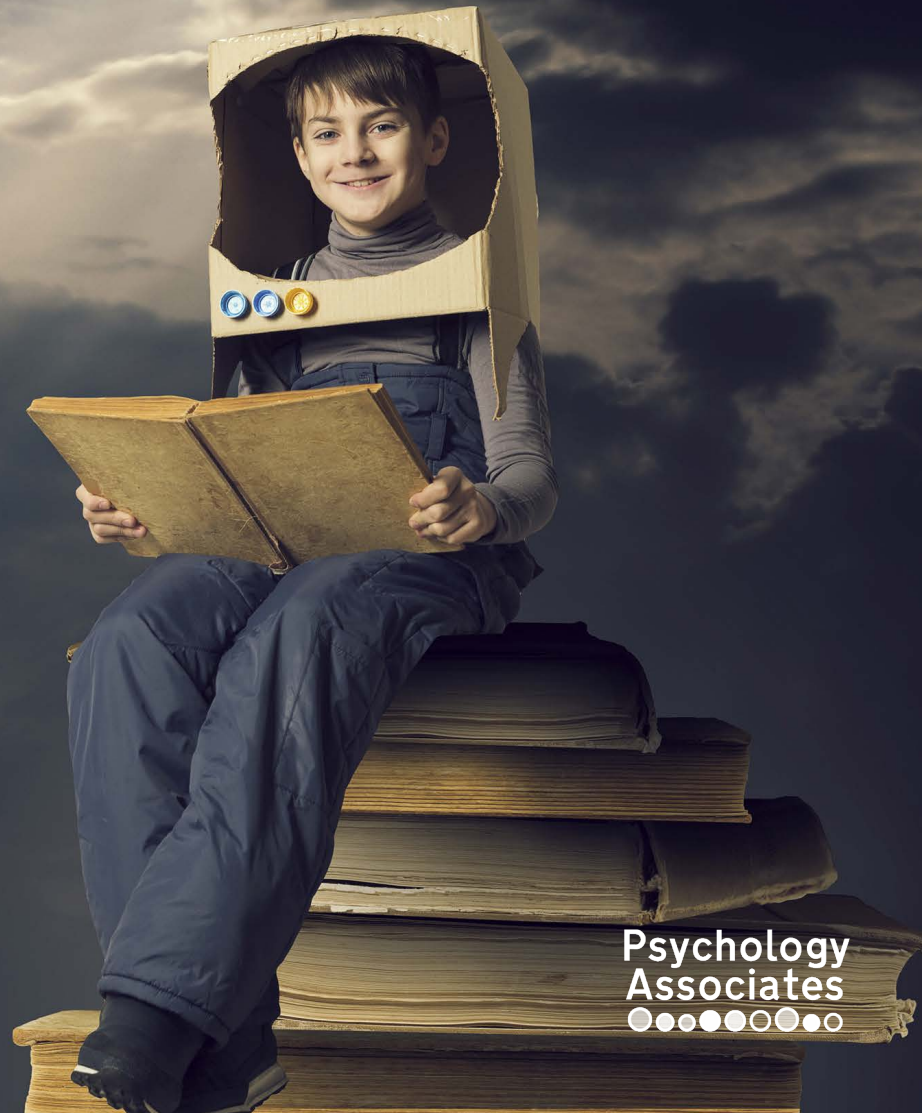


OPERATION ENCOMPASS

Book Reviews

PART ONE

The Relationships (and Sex) Education and Health Education Curriculum



Psychology
Associates
●●●●●●●●

This guide contains a range of book reviews which schools can use alongside the Operation Encompass Handbook which supports the domestic abuse strand of the Relationships (and Sex) Education and Health Education statutory curriculum: Operation Encompass: Working to break the cycle of Domestic Abuse.¹

Books are an effective way in which to engage children and in particular to engage children in concepts that may, whilst recognised as important, be challenging and difficult to discuss. Domestic Abuse can be viewed as one such subject.

We have included a wide range of books within this first guide and a second guide will soon be available with further book reviews. Whilst each review includes an appropriate age group, each teacher will use their professional judgement as to whether any particular book is or is not suitable for particular children in their care and whether the book fits within the culture and ethos of the school and its Relationships (and Sex) Education and Health Education curriculum.

These books can be used in a therapeutic way to support an individual child who is experiencing domestic abuse in the home or in their own relationship, or they may be used as a resource for work with a group of children or to support a whole class activity as part of the Relationships (and Sex) Education and Health Education.

¹ www.operationencompass.org Operation Encompass: working to break the cycle of Domestic Abuse

The book reviews may also form part of a staff professional discussion when considering how best to teach about domestic abuse and other trauma the most appropriate resources to purchase, in order to support the spiral curriculum which will thread throughout the whole school. Our handbook could also form an important support for such a whole school discussion.

Each review has been written for Operation Encompass by Clinical and Educational Psychologists who are all members of the Psychology Associates team and the books have been kindly shared by their publishers and authors.

We would welcome feedback as to how these resources have been used. Please use the Good Practice Reports tab on our website:

www.operationencompass.org

Operation Encompass, the surrogate voice for children, will continue to provide free resources and support for teachers and education staff who each day care for children experiencing domestic abuse; Our children deserve no less.

Elisabeth Carney-Haworth DBE

David Carney-Haworth DBE



The relevance of the book to Domestic Abuse

This book is intended to educate a young audience about body safety, consent, safe and unsafe touch, private parts, body boundaries and respect. It could be used as a helpful text in a broader domestic abuse educational context as many of the key learning points around safety and respect are also relevant here.

How best to use the book with the target audience (child or young person)

This book conveys some critically important messages in an accessible, easy to use format. The well-illustrated alphabetical sections need not be read in a sequential order but rather can be dipped in and out of. As the introduction suggests, this book is designed to be read at a conversational pace and over a number of sittings.

The suitability of the book for its target audience/could the book's target age be extended?

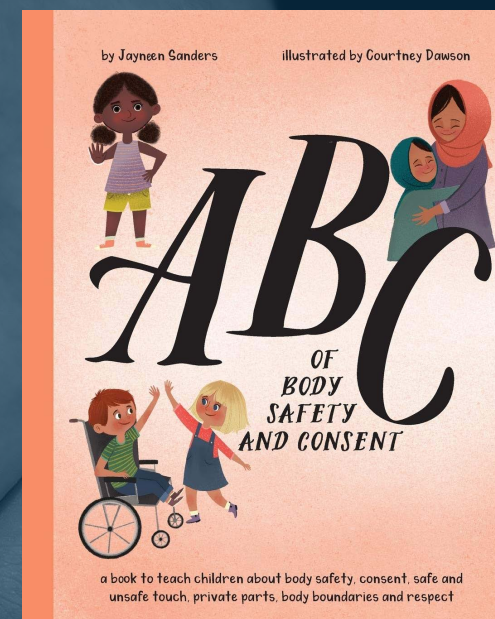
I would suggest that this book is aimed at a broad range of primary age children. The clear alphabetically memorable sections and the colourful and appealing illustrations make it visually accessible to early years and KS2 children alike. The simple, easy-to-use format, a child-centred discussion question on each page – provides good opportunity for exploring a child's understanding whilst also encouraging learning.

At the back of the book there are further discussion questions for teachers/ carers to aid a more in-depth exploration of a child's skills.

The best things about the book

This beautifully illustrated, well-structured and accessible read would serve as a good memory aid and an excellent resource to support and empower primary school age children on all matters to do with body safety and consent.

I would recommend this book as an important resource for all primary school teaching/support staff to have access to.



ABC of Body Safety and Consent

By Jayneen Sanders

Illustrated by Courtney Dawson

Published by Educate2Empower

The relevance of the book to Domestic Abuse

This book aims to help children who have experienced trauma. It specifically looks at coping with emotions and big feelings following the trauma. The story follows an alligator and his stuffed toy, and the adventures they go on. During these, the alligator identifies different parts of himself which help him to feel safe in different situations (e.g.: becoming 'puddles' when he feels sad about what has happened, and doesn't feel like doing anything). It also suggests different coping strategies which will help the child to feel safe (e.g.: grounding and breathing exercises) when thinking about or re-living the trauma.

This book gives children and their caregivers a shared language which helps to externalise behaviours which may be identified as problematic. It helps children and their caregivers to understand that the child is not the problem, and has different 'parts' of themselves which adapt and serve to protect them when coping with a traumatic experience. For example, the alligator describes dissociation as feeling 'spacey' and recommends a grounding technique. Throughout, the alligator asks questions to the reader (e.g.: do you have parts like Alex?) which can serve as prompts for discussions between children and their caregivers.

How best to use the book with the target audience (child or young person)

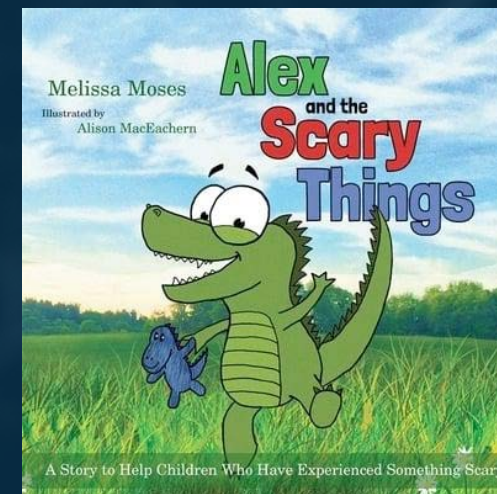
The book is probably best for a child and caregiver, or someone that the child trusts, to read together in order to develop a shared understanding and language of what is going on for the child. Reading together will also be beneficial so that caregiver and child can practice the techniques and exercises together.

The suitability of the book for its target audience/could the book's target age be extended?

The illustrations and language used are simple and accessible and would be ideal for young children within primary phases of education. However, the authors emphasise that the ideas and techniques in the book are helpful for everyone.

The best things about the book

This book is playful and curious and very accessible for both children and adults. It provides helpful techniques which are easy to understand and use, and can be implemented across a variety of settings.



Alex and the Scary Things

(A Story to Help Children Who Have Experienced Something Scary)

By Melissa Moses

Illustrated by Alison MacEachern

Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers

The relevance of the book to Domestic Abuse

The book is relevant to Domestic Abuse because it playfully and engagingly communicates to children that although it is normal to feel angry, it is never acceptable to express anger using violence. Cartoon inspired pictures of fish are used to illustrate the book, and a range of possible strategies which children can use instead of violence are suggested.

The book was written by Julie K Federico, a former middle school counsellor, who holds a bachelor's degree in social work and a master's degree in counselling from Indiana University. There is a real sense that the author's experience and knowledge of working with children who have experienced domestic abuse underpins her approach to writing an effective book for this age group. The story includes signposting to organisations which are based in the United States of America.

How best to use the book with the target audience (child or young person)

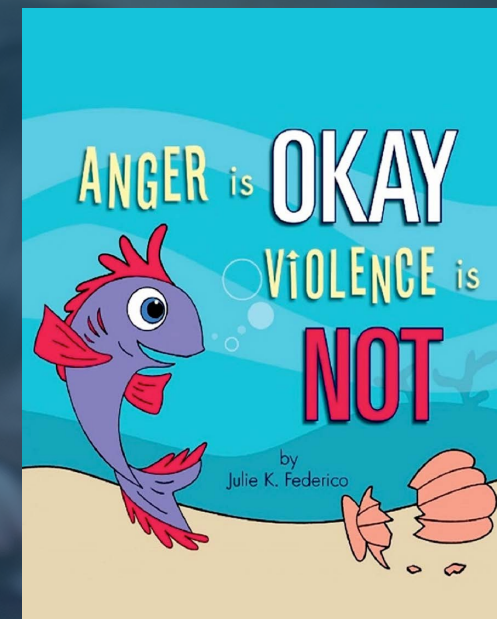
The book could be part of a setting's library and available for all children to enjoy, because the message of the book is relevant to all children. The book really lends itself to being read aloud. It would be suitable to read to a small group, whole class, or on a one to one basis. Given the nature of the book, it may make it more likely that some children disclose information about their experiences at home or with their peers, and staff should respond to these in line with their safeguarding procedures.

The suitability of the book for its target audience/could the book's target age be extended?

The book would be suitable for all children in pre-school to Key Stage 1 phases of education, because it has helpful messages and which are communicated in an engaging way. As with any book, it may appeal to older children depending on their developmental and emotional stage.

The best things about the book

The 'call and response' repetition used in the structure of the book is particularly engaging. This book is a great way for children to learn about really important aspects of social interaction and coping with difficult emotions - what is acceptable behavior from others, appropriate strategies to cope with anger, and what they should do if they are experiencing violence. This is a particularly useful book in the context of domestic abuse, because children's experiences in their home lives will be 'normal' to them, and sharing this book clearly communicates what an acceptable version of 'normal' is, and how children should respond (e.g. tell a trusted adult) if someone they know is hurting others.



Anger is okay, Violence is NOT

By Julie K Federico

Illustrated by Glori Alexander

Published by Tate Publishing
& Enterprises USA

The relevance of the book to Domestic Abuse

The book is a simple and comprehensive text for carers/teachers involved in promoting body safety and empowering children and teenagers with the skills and knowledge to protect themselves from sexual abuse. NB. Domestic abuse is not a subject raised in this book.

How best to use the book with the target audience (child or young person)

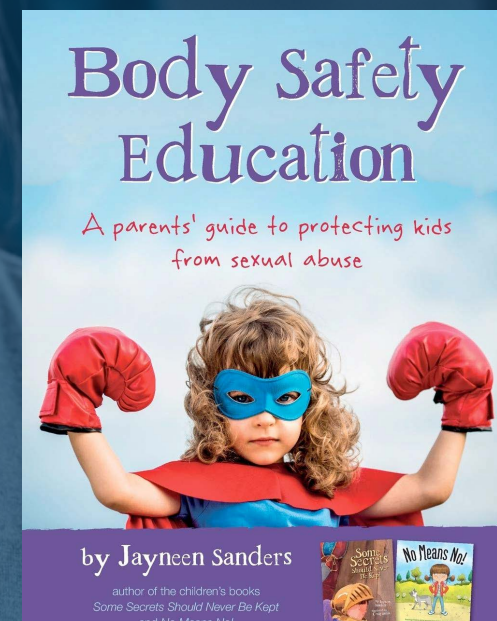
The book includes simple, practical and age appropriate guidance as well as important warning signs and information regarding how abusers groom. It can be read by carers/educators as a complete text, or divided into teaching blocks which could form the basis of an educational programme for primary- secondary school-aged children. There is also a teaching resource kit with the book to support such a programme. Further reading recommendations are also included for children, carers and teachers.

The suitability of the book for its target audience/could the book's target age be extended?

This is good safety education reading material for all parents and teachers. The resource materials would need to be tailored to children's developmental and emotional stage of development.

The best things about the book

This is a recommended comprehensive sexual abuse prevention text for adults (parents, carers, teachers etc.) who support children. It provides good practical awareness-raising material and focuses on empowering children with the skills and knowledge that will reduce the likelihood of them becoming victims of sexual abuse.



Body Safety Education

A Parents' Guide to Protecting Kids From Sexual Abuse

By Jayneen Sanders

Designed by Ben Galpin

Published by Educate2Empower

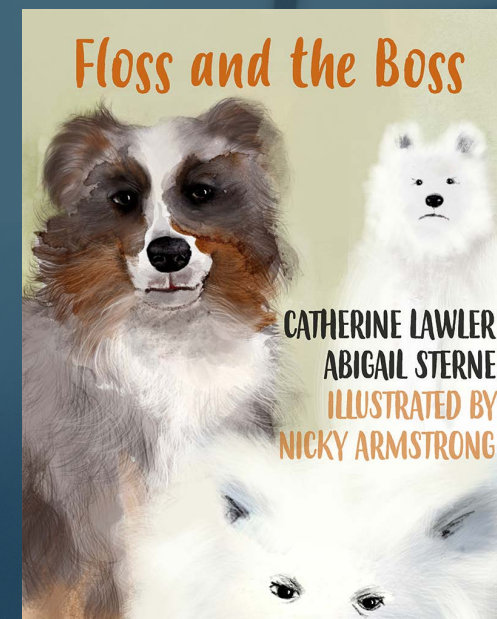
The relevance of the book to Domestic Abuse

This book is aimed at supporting children's understanding and awareness of Domestic Abuse (DA) and coercive control in the context of a mother dog, her young child and an abusive male partner (step-parent role). The story is suitable for young children and uses clear, simple and accessible language. This is designed for use by professionals working with individual children or within groups and is suitable for teachers, mentors, therapists, counsellors and other supportive key adults. It provides a powerful yet simple narrative with an excellent accompanying professionals' guide that makes clear links to therapeutic practice with helpful prompts, key questions, discussion points and key principles to embed within practice.

Using a family of dogs (or any domestic animals that children are familiar with) is an effective medium to explore sensitive and emotive content (allowing some externalizing and distance) whilst also facilitating engagement and interest. This is accessible for young children (primary aged) with high quality illustrations and a clear narrative that supports further exploration of important issues related to DA and coercive control. This also supports broader aspects of social-emotional learning, healthy relationships and emotional literacy that is relevant for all children.

The Professional Guide provides an excellent resource in terms of psycho-education, contextual data, links to practice and research and the wider impact that DA has on a child's overall learning, development, health and wellbeing. This can provide a useful and empowering framework for adults to embed therapeutic principles in their everyday interactions with children, making clear 'how' this applies to practice and systemic approaches to support children and their families. The resource also includes sign-posting to other sources of support and wider reading.

continued on next page...



Floss and the Boss

Helping Children Learn About
Domestic Abuse & Coercive Control
- A Professional Guide

By Catherine Lawler and Abigail Sterne

Illustrated by Nicky Armstrong

Published by Routledge

A Speechmarch Book

How best to use the book with the target audience (child or young person)

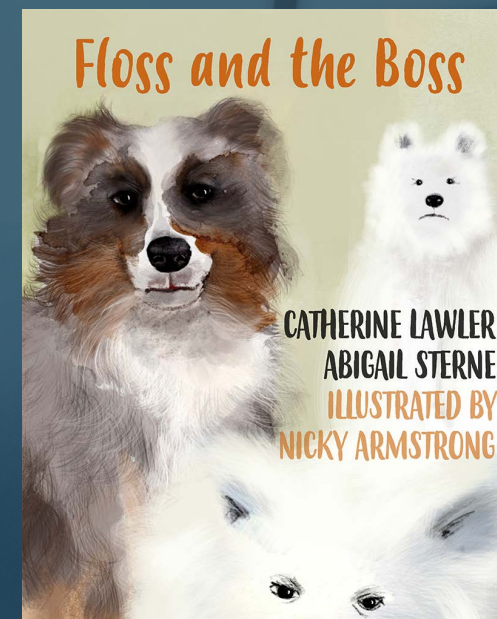
It is important that this story is read with a key adult that has sufficient knowledge and understanding of DA and coercive control and works with children as part of their role in schools, education and or care/community settings. The Professional Guide is an excellent resource to ensure safe and effective practice with key prompts and questions to facilitate discussion and child-led exploration of issues. This can also be a useful training resource for staff to embed these themes into their wider PSHE curriculum.

The suitability of the book for its target audience/could the book's target age be extended?

This appears suitable for young children in pre-school - primary phases of education however it may also be used as appropriate with older children when tailoring to their developmental and emotional stage of development.

The best things about the book

This is a highly recommended story book and professional guide; it is empowering, engaging and accessible. It provides excellent psycho-education and focuses on the meaningful impact of therapeutic interactions, via key adult relationships, with clear links to systemic practice across home, education and community contexts.



Floss and the Boss

Helping Children Learn About
Domestic Abuse & Coercive Control
- A Professional Guide

By Catherine Lawler and Abigail Sterne

Illustrated by Nicky Armstrong

Published by Routledge

A Speechmarch Book

The relevance of the book to Domestic Abuse

The story of Kit Kitten is about a child (Kit) and their caregiver (Kizz Cat). The story follows Kit in their daily life and the struggles they face with the unpredictability of living with their caregiver, who has complex needs and experiences difficulties of their own. Throughout, we learn that Kit's caregiver struggles to name their own feelings and emotions and isn't able to tune into how Kit is feeling. This in turn means that Kit also doesn't know how to talk about feelings, and sometimes finds that others assume they are feeling a particular way (for example, Kit's teacher tells Kit that they look worried one day, but Kit doesn't agree this is how they feel on the inside). The author explains that how Kit is feeling can depend on what has happened during the day and the behaviours of others, such as her caregiver (e.g.: not turning up to collect Kit from school). When difficulties arise within the caregiving relationship, Kit and their caregiver have support from Kit's teacher and another trusted cat. Following this, the story explains how Kit and their caregiver learn ways of understanding and talking about their feelings together.

This story clearly highlights the importance of children spending time with adults who are able to explore, process and name their feelings, in order for the child to also learn these processes. It gently reminds us how important this is for a child's early development.

How best to use the book with the target audience (child or young person)

This book is very accessible and appropriate for a child and caregiver/adult with whom the child feels safe, to read together. Throughout, the book has little boxes with questions in, for example: How do you think this made Kit feel? The author provides some suggestions of feelings, which can serve as prompts for discussion and thought. The authors importantly note that it might take time and repetition for the child to feel comfortable and start exploring and sharing their feelings and emotions.

This book also has a number of suggestions at the end for activities that caregivers or anyone working with children can use. These are intended to support learning about feelings with children. Both individual and group activities are suggested making it appropriate for use in educational settings as well as other places where a child feels safe and comfortable.

continued on next page...

KIT KITTEN AND THE TOPSY TURVY FEELINGS

A Story About
Parents Who
Aren't Always
Able to Care



Jane Evans Illustrated by Izzy Bean

Kit Kitten and the Topsy-Turvy Feelings

A Story About Parents Who Aren't
Always Able to Care

By Jane Evans

Illustrated by Izzy Bean

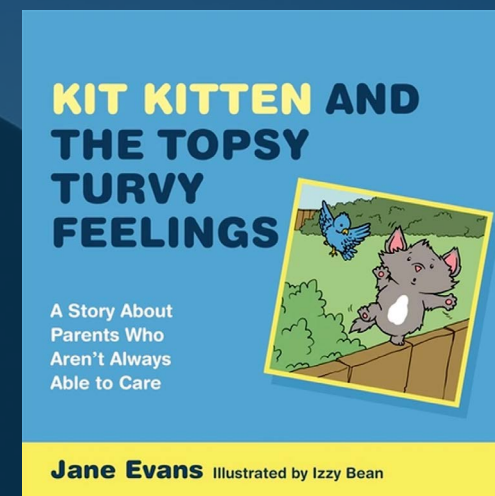
Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers

The suitability of the book for its target audience/could the book's target age be extended?

This book is accessible and written in such a way that children will be able to relate to it and hopefully explore their own emotions in relation to such experiences. It appears to be aimed at children in primary education settings, although some of the activities at the end of the book could be used with children in older settings.

The best things about the book

This book is easy to follow and prompts important thoughts about feelings and emotions. The activities are a great starting point for any caregivers looking to explore, wonder, recognise and name feelings with children they are supporting.



Kit Kitten and the Topsy-Turvy Feelings

A Story About Parents Who Aren't
Always Able to Care

By Jane Evans

Illustrated by Izzy Bean

Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers

The relevance of the book to Domestic Abuse

This book is intended to educate a young audience about inappropriate physical touch and sharing. It could be used as a starter text in a broader domestic abuse educational context. An introduction / foreword by Marilyn Carson gives some brief context about sexual abuse for the reader.

How best to use the book with the target audience (child or young person)

This book conveys a simple keep safe message to young children. It could be used on its own or as an introduction by carers or educators preceding a more in depth programme around sexual abuse prevention. There is an audio download also available with the book.

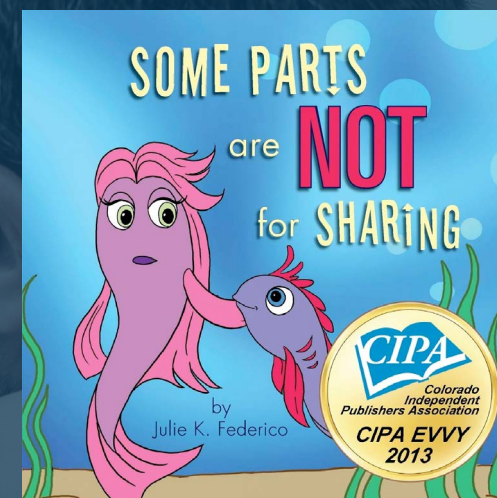
The suitability of the book for its target audience/could the book's target age be extended?

This book is aimed at introducing the concept of "safe sharing" to nursery age children. However, it may also appeal to older primary school age children who might enjoy the simplicity of its brightly coloured format and the humour of pictures of turtles wearing swimming costumes and fish high fiving each other.

The text does not contain any details about body part names or about safe and unsafe touch. The simple message of this book concerns acknowledging the privacy and importance of owning and protecting the intimate areas of our body: The area under your swimming costume is the part of your body that is not for sharing, and if someone touches you there you should tell a trusted adult.

The best things about the book

This easy to read picture book could serve as a starting point for further discussion with a young child around the topic of empowerment and abuse prevention.



Some Parts Are Not For Sharing

By Julie K Federico

Illustrated by Kurt Jones

Foreword by Marilyn Carson

Published by Tate Publishing
& Enterprises, USA

The relevance of the book to Domestic Abuse

The workbooks support the therapeutic activities and conversations which enable a mother and her child to make sense of and safely explore their experiences of domestic abuse. The books provide clear guidance for mothers and workers/professionals to navigate these helpful, creative resources and activities. The context of the book and the history to the development of the resource is clearly explained within the foreword and this offers a clear reasoning of the focus of the book where a mother is a victim of domestic abuse (as opposed to a father).

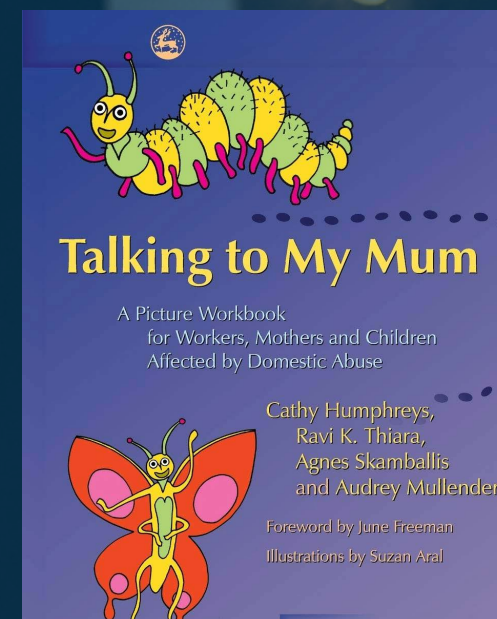
How best to use the books with the target audience (child or young person)

The activities and resources are clearly explained in terms of how a parent may use them with their child/young person; they are also useful for wider professionals to consider in their work and considerations for key workers supporting the mother are provided throughout. The authors present thoughtful and important considerations to guide the reader in how to make best use of the resources and activities; clearly identifying factors such as age/stage; readiness and support networks, for example. The authors discuss how the activities and resources have been designed and explored for a mother to use with her child, but also raise the very important considerations of support for the mother (e.g. from an appropriate worker) and self-care, which are very pertinent given the nature of the activities and the need for the adult to provide safety and emotional containment. Helpful ground rules for the activities are outlined which support the adult to consider practical preparations and emotional regulation. Activities are also helpfully organized according to the stage that families find themselves in on their journey e.g. 'early days' or 'moving on' (as two examples) and the authors identify that the different activities can be used flexibly to tailor to individual need. The creative and accessible activities/resources would be beneficial to many families to develop relational connection, self-esteem and reflection skills in parents and children in many different contexts.

The suitability of the book for its target audience/could the book's target age be extended?

The activities, resources and presentation are carefully considered within each book to tailor to a specific age range. 'Talking to My Mum' is aimed at 5 to 8 year-olds, whilst 'Talking about Domestic Abuse' is aimed at young people from age 9 to adolescence.

continued on next page...



Talking to My Mum

A Picture Workbook for Workers, Mothers and Children Affected by Domestic Abuse and Talking about Domestic Abuse: A Photo Activity Workbook to Develop Communication between Mothers and Young People.

Talking to my Mum

The animal characters used in the activities are accessible to this age range and help by reducing the need to reflect purely and directly upon their own experiences. This is further supported by the accessible language and clear structure added to activities/resources.

Talking about Domestic Abuse : 'A Photo Activity Workbook'

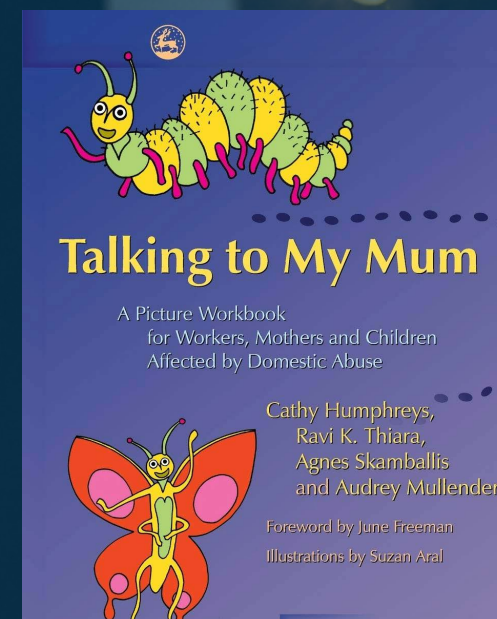
Within this workbook, the language and concepts used allow for the greater reflection skills that young people of the target age-range can demonstrate. There is also, appropriately more opportunity for focusing on exploring and understanding feelings salient to young people who have lived with domestic abuse and the wider social world (e.g. Considering safety and risks). The photos within the book are helpful in adding context and will be supportive for young people where the increased language and literacy demands in activities present a barrier.

The authors reflect on their experiences of using the resources with children of different ages and draw on this practice to guide the appropriate age ranges. It is acknowledged however that these age ranges are guides and that some children may find accessing the resource that does not align with their chronological age appropriate. Certainly, adopting a developmental stage approach to considering which resource would be most accessible will be beneficial and children/young people's additional needs may mean that one of the resources is more accessible or less emotionally challenging.

The best things about the books

These highly recommended books provide accessible activities and resources which seek to empower the parent in supporting their child; building, trust, communication and reflection. The activities can help the child to explore worries; manage changes and make sense of their experiences through a key relationship (whilst further developing the relationship itself). It is very helpful to hear the voices of parents who have been involved in these activities and the impact these have had within the book.

Very pertinent guidance is offered for the activities and this provides a clear narrative of self-compassion and care for the parent, whilst supporting them to engage with their child in an accepting and empathetic way.



Talking to My Mum (Photo Activity Workbook)

Authors: Cathy Humphreys, Ravi K. Thiara,
Agnes Skamballis and Audrey Mullender.

Foreword by June Freeman

Illustrations by Suzan Aral

Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers

The relevance of the book to Domestic Abuse

The focus of the story is about 'worrying' in general. Rather than a specific focus on domestic abuse, this book aims to help children cope with any worries that they may have. The story is about a child called Jenny, who gradually starts to worry about all sorts of different things, including that she was getting too fat, friends whispering about her and her parents arguing. One day the worries take on a physical form, in a 'bag of worries' that follows Jenny around. Jenny tries different ways to get rid of the bag, but it always comes back, gradually causing more difficulties in her life. Eventually, an elderly neighbour sees the bag of worries, opens up the bag and sorts the worries into groups so that Jenny is supported to cope with her worries.

The book was written by Virginia Ironside, a British journalist, agony aunt for the Independent newspaper, and author. The book is beautifully illustrated by Frank Rodgers whose pictures bring the metaphor of the bag of worries to life emphasising how worries can be all different shapes and sizes.

How best to use the book with the target audience (child or young person)

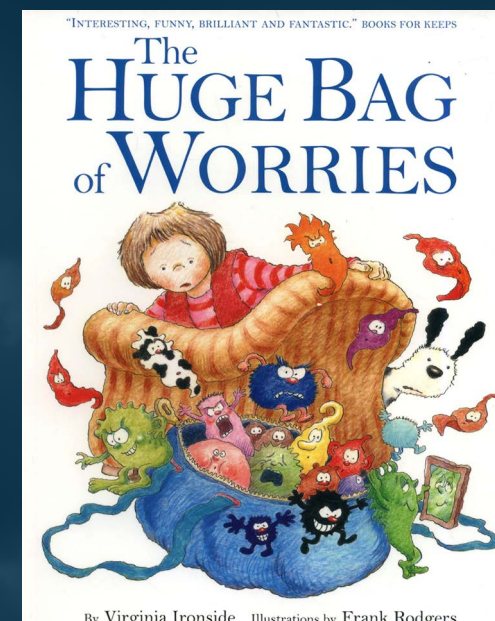
This book could be an addition to a setting's library and available for all children to enjoy, because the message about worrying is relevant to all children. The book could be enjoyed one to one with a child, or with larger groups of children.

The suitability of the book for its target audience/could the book's target age be extended?

This appears suitable for young children in reception and key stage 1 phases of education, but it may be interesting to older children depending on their developmental stage and how the book was used. It could form the basis of a piece of class work, where children could reflect on their own strategies for coping with worries, and the strategies used by Jenny and the elderly neighbour could be discussed.

The best things about the book

The metaphor of worries becoming real and taking on the form of a huge bag of worries is imaginative and powerful. The way that Lucy is supported to cope with her worries is a great starting point to help children reflect on their own strategies to cope with any worries that they may have.



The Huge Bag of Worries

By Virginia Ironside
Illustrations Frank Rodgers

First published in Great Britain in 1996 by Macdonald Young Books. The edition used in this review was published in 2016 by Hodder and Stoughton.

The relevance of the book to Domestic Abuse

This book involves the story of 10-year-old Aniyah and sensitively yet powerfully explores the impact of Domestic Abuse, loss and friendship. This combines the innocence of a child's perspective when experiencing the disappearance of their mother; exploring their hurt, confusion and hope with sensitivity, insight and understanding. This story embraces themes of empowerment, strength and resilience whilst highlighting the devastating impact of Domestic Abuse.

How best to use the book with the target audience (child or young person)

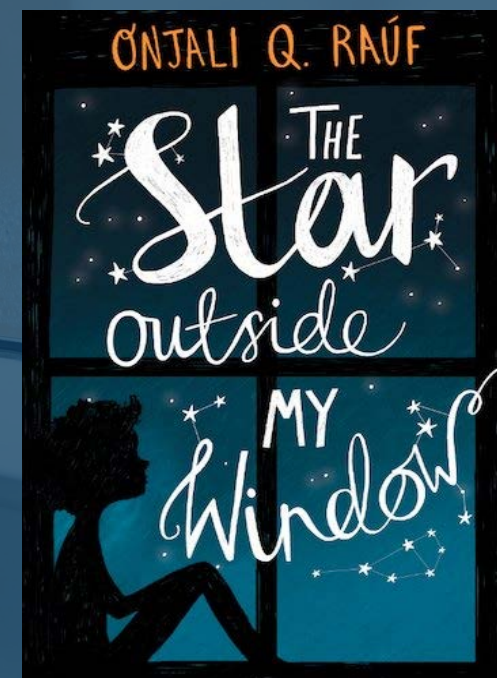
This book is told through the voice and perspective of a child and as such is suited to children, young people (and adults) at an appropriate stage in their emotional development and understanding. It focuses on Domestic Abuse within a family context involving the disappearance and death of the child's mother at the hands of an abusive father. As such, thought and consideration is required to ensure this is appropriate at any given stage to a child or young person's emotional wellbeing, understanding and development.

The suitability of the book for its target audience/could the book's target age be extended?

Taking into account the considerations noted above, this can be suitable for a wide range of ages and readers.

The best things about the book

This is a sensitive, emotive and powerful story that captures the thoughts, feelings and hopes from a child's perspective. Very skillfully written, it shines a light on the importance of recognising and giving a voice to children as victims of Domestic Abuse.



The Star Outside My Window

By Onjali Q. Rauf

Illustrations Frank Rodgers

Published by Hachette Children's Group

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