



Children's books on child protection issues

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Through the use of books in a therapeutic sense, it is hoped that children will be able to develop a personal sense of strength and the understanding that they are not the only person who has experienced a particular problem.

Ideas inherent in selected reading materials can have a therapeutic effect. Bibliotherapy, the use of books in a therapeutic sense, is the process of dynamic interaction between the personality of the reader and the literature.

Bibliotherapy aims to teach children to think positively and constructively, to encourage them to talk freely about their problems, to help them to analyse their attitudes and behaviours, to point out that there are multiple solutions to a problem, to stimulate them to find solutions, and to enable them to compare their problems with those of others.

The books described below can be a valuable resource for adults in assisting children to come to terms with a range of social problems.

There are common features in the books outlined in this list. Each one of these books focuses on a combination of issues dealing with secrecy, children's rights, personal safety, touching, personal responsibility or assertive behaviour. In relationship to child sexual abuse, one of the central dynamics is secrecy. It is important to respect secrets, but children need to learn that secrets about sexual abuse need to be told. Another issue relevant to abuse is children's rights, which in turn is paramount to the issue of child safety. All children have rights and choices, and children

have a right to feel safe all of the time. Also described in many of these books is the need for children to be aware of the difference between good touching and unwanted touching, and to know how to assert themselves if they find themselves in an uncomfortable situation.

In these books, by identifying with a character who deals with a similar situation in a positive manner, it is hoped that children will be able to develop a personal sense of strength and counteract feelings of isolation and of being the only person who has experienced a particular problem.

Books on child abuse

Blaxland, W. (2000) *Personal Safety*, MacMillan Library, Melbourne.

Everyone has the right to feel safe wherever they are. This is the underlying concept of this book. Safety is about keeping safe and knowing what to do in an emergency. This book is part of a Safety Series that encourages the reader to think about safety in different situations.

The author provides basic safety strategies for children, from simple messages of being aware of what is around them and what to do when they are home alone, to how to protect themselves from, and how to deal with, bullies and how to travel safely on the street.

A section on sexual abuse discusses the rights children have over their bodies, how no one has the right to do anything to them that makes them feel uncomfortable, and that it is important for children to be able to talk to people if they feel unsafe.



Elliott, M. (1987) *The Willow Street Kids: It's Your Right to be Safe*, Piccolo Books, London.

The aim of *The Willow Street Kids* is to make children less vulnerable to dangerous conditions. Its purpose is

to help them to think about what to do in a variety of situations which they may confront – for example, when bullies, strangers or even people they know try to harm them. The book is written so that children may read it on their own or so that parents, teachers or other adults can read it to or with them.

The episodes in *The Willow Street Kids* are true stories told by children themselves. The adults in the book are supportive – they listen to and help the children, though it is made clear that sometimes it is hard to find an adult who will listen. However, the stories show that it is important for troubled children to keep trying

to find someone to whom they can tell their problem.



Moe, B. (1999) *Coping as a Survivor of a Violent Crime*, Rosen Publishing Group, NY.

This book, which is aimed at young people, has three purposes: to help people who have experienced violent crime learn to cope with past experiences and get on with their lives; to help all young people avoid becoming victims; and to encourage non violent ways of solving conflicts. Through explanations, stories and suggestions, the author looks at crime from many different perspectives.

The book begins with an examination of the transition from victim to survivor. The challenge facing every victim of a violent crime is to become a survivor. There is no one right way to become a survivor, but in this book the author outlines some principles – the basic principle being that it is important to tell what has happened, to take action and to work at overcoming the past. She then goes on to provide an overview of the different stages people may experience when they have been the victim of a violent crime such as anger, grief, and revenge, and discusses ways to be safe in an unsafe world. The book concludes with a section on how people can nurture themselves with activities such as regular exercise and stress management techniques.

Rue, N. N. (1998) *Everything You Need to Know about Abusive Relationships*, Rosen Publishing Group, NY.

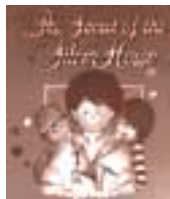
Recognising abusive behaviour and not accepting it is essential for adolescents who are dating or planning to date. No matter what the situation, abusive behaviour is never appropriate. Whatever the reason, it is not right for people in a relationship to hurt each other with words, actions, physical force or sex. The message in this book is that abuse should not be tolerated, ignored or brushed aside.

As well as providing an overview of different types of abusive relationships, the author describes some of the myths surrounding abuse, why people stay in abusive relationships, how to avoid an abusive relationship, what to do if you are in an abusive relationship and what to do for a friend in an abusive relationship.

The book concludes with a section on programs being run in secondary schools with the purpose of teaching students strategies to prevent violence and encouraging them to take active roles in ending

violence. The program aims to make adolescence aware of the role of power in relationships, to teach them ways of setting boundaries and to learn how to solve problems without resorting to violence.

Books on child sexual abuse



Canada, Department of Justice (1989) *The Secret of the Silver Horse*, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Secrets are part of life, and while it is important to teach children to respect these confidences, they also need to know that secrets about sexual abuse ought to be revealed. In this book, children are shown the difference between a good secret and a bad secret, such as one about sexual abuse, and between good touching and sexually abusive touching.



The Secret of the Silver Horse instructs children that secrets about sexual abuse should not be kept. The story also teaches that if a child tells an adolescent or an adult about sexual abuse and that person does nothing, the child should be persistent and keep telling someone else until eventually someone does listen to them.



Girard, L. W. (1984) *My Body is Private*, Albert Whitman & Co., Morton Grove, Illinois.

For parents, talking with their children to find out if they have been sexually abused is an important way to prevent sexual abuse. It is necessary for parents to feel comfortable talking about this subject or children may become aware of their parents' discomfort and may be reluctant to talk about it with them. Children need to be reassured that they will not get into trouble for telling someone that they have been abused, and they need to be believed if they report any abuse.

This book talks about the importance of privacy – ranging from a letter that a child may receive to the privacy of their body. The author provides sound judgment concerning distinguishing between good touching and unwanted touching, and how children need to learn to assert themselves and say when they feel uncomfortable about being touched by someone.

Gordon, S. & Litt, S. (1988) *Nolly and Groogle, the Gillows of Crimpley Creek*, Essence Publications, Burnside, SA.

Children have a right to feel safe all the time. Unfortunately there are many children who do not experience this right as a reality in their lives. The authors have written this story to help children learn about their right to feel safe. It will also help them to 'listen' to the early warning signs which everyone gets when things are not as they should be, to deal with those situations themselves whenever they can, and to have a network of adults to whom they can turn for help if the situation is beyond their control.

This story is based on the Protective Behaviours Program, devised by Peg Flandreau West of Wisconsin, USA. It is intended for very young children, up to the ages of 5 to 6 years old. It's companion, *Zing and Zipp: The Troggs of Wongo-Wongo Wood*, is intended for slightly older children, in the 4 to 9 year old age range.



Gordon, S. & Litt, S. (1988) *Zing and Zipp: The Troggs of Wongo-Wongo Wood*, Essence Publications, Burnside, SA.

All children have the right to feel safe all of the time. Unfortunately there are many children who do not experience this right as a reality in their lives. These stories were written to help children learn about their right to feel safe. They were also written to teach them about and to help them to 'listen' to the early warning signs which everyone gets when things are not as they should be, to deal with those situations themselves whenever they can, and to have a network of adults to whom they can turn for help if the situation is beyond their control.

The stories are based on the Protective Behaviours Program, devised by Peg Flandreau West of Wisconsin, USA. The underlying philosophy is that there is nothing so awful that it cannot be talked about. The book is intended for children in the 4-9 year old age range. *Nolly and Groogle: The Gillows of Crimpley Creek*, written by the same authors, is intended

for a younger audience, children 5 years and under.



Gordon, S & Litt, S. (eds.) (1989) *Try Again Red Riding Hood: A New Look at an Old Story*, Essence Publications, Burnside, SA.

This story was written by a class of children who have been involved in the Protective Behaviours Program, devised by Peg Flandreau West of Wisconsin (USA). The editors believe that the approach taken by the teacher and her class is an excellent way of reinforcing and applying the principles that the program teaches - that children have the right to feel safe. Children are able to practise problem solving skills, in a one-step removed, non-threatening manner.

The story is published as an example of an approach that can be adapted to other well known stories and nursery rhymes. Activity pages have been included so that the reader can join in the learning and problem solving process, with the underlying message of the program being that, 'we all have the right to feel safe all the time'.

Gray, J. (1994) *After I Told My Secret*, Jennie Gray Publications, Wandong, Vic.

Child sexual abuse is a very private crime, one that can and does take place repeatedly, substantially affecting the quality of life of a young person. The issue of children's rights is paramount to the issue of child safety. If children are encouraged to 'speak out' and if they are taught that they do have rights and choices, then the community is one step closer to dealing with sexual abuse. The story *After I Told My Secret* looks at the issue of child sexual abuse through the child's eyes. The author, herself a survivor of child sexual abuse, has written the story in a sensitive and understanding manner, explaining to children that they have the right to feel safe and to speak out if they don't.

After I Told My Secret shows how a little boy feels after he has told someone that he has been sexually abused. It illustrates a range of thoughts and fears, and also provides examples of activities that aim to assist children to feel safe. It encourages children to realise that despite what has happened, they can be happy again.

Also in this series by the same author are the books *I Had A Secret* and *My Body Belongs to Me*.

Gray, J. (1994) *My Body Belongs To Me*, Jennie Gray Publications, Wandong, Vic.

My Body Belongs To Me looks at the issue of child sexual abuse through the child's eyes. It is designed to promote awareness of the possibility of sexual abuse,

and provides a framework in which adults and children can discuss this sensitive issue together. It encourages children to identify the 'special' parts of their bodies and to learn how to say 'no' to unwanted physical contact. By encouraging children to speak out and teaching them that they do have rights and choices, the community comes one step closer to understanding and dealing with child sexual abuse.

The book describes places where children can go to be safe and places that they should avoid.

Also in this series by the same author are the books *I Had A Secret* and *After I Told My Secret*.

Gray, J. (1994) *I Had A Secret*, Jennie Gray Publications, Wandong, Vic.

The issue of children's rights is paramount to the issue of child safety. Children are defenceless against most adults, but are especially vulnerable to those authority figures closest to them, and upon whom they depend the most. Adults who sexually abuse children become adept at recognising the issues important to the child, and these issues become the focus of their manipulation. A child can be led to believe that sexual abuse is a normal expression of love, or they can be intimidated into not revealing abuse through threats or fear of losing the love of other family members.

The story, *I Had A Secret*, looks at the issue of child sexual abuse through the child's eyes. It tells how a little girl was able to trust her friend, mother and teacher with her secret which she had thought was too terrible to tell anyone. It deals with sexual abuse from the child's perspective and encourages children to understand that there are sympathetic and caring adults who will believe them.

Also in this series by the same author are the books, *After I Told My Secret* and *My Body Belongs To Me*.

Hessell, J. (1987) *What's Wrong with Bottoms?* Century Hutchinson, Glenfield, Auckland, NZ.

What's Wrong with Bottoms focuses on the subject of sexual abuse and is written specifically for children. Although it deals with a difficult topic, the overall tone is warm and supportive.

The book tells the story of a young boy whose Uncle Henry lives with him and his family. The boy and his uncle always had a close relationship, and the boy considered his uncle his special friend. However, one day Henry showed his nephew his genitals. Another day he wanted to fondle his nephew's genitals, and he told his nephew that he shouldn't tell anyone. Eventually the young boy told his mother who explained how wrong his uncle's behaviour was.

The information provided on the problem of sexual abuse is accurate and helpful, giving appropriate role models for both children and adults.



Jessie (1991) *Please Tell! A Child's Story About Sexual Abuse*, Hazelden Foundation, Center City, MN, USA.

Please Tell! is a simple book with a profoundly important message for children who have been sexually abused: namely that the abuse was not their fault. Written and illustrated by Jessie, herself a young survivor of sexual abuse, it tells young people what to do to get the help they need. Nine year old Jessie's words and illustrations help other sexually abused children know that they are not alone, that it is OK to talk about their feelings, and that the abuse was not their fault.

One of the central dynamics of child sexual abuse is secrecy: children are told by their abusers not to tell. When secrecy exists, pain is borne alone. This isolation compounds the pain and confusion caused by abuse. Therapists, protection workers, teachers and parents will find that this book can be used to speak directly to children on several levels. First, for children who have been abused, this book offers affirmation for their disclosure, as well as the knowledge that they are not alone. On a second level, this book can be used by professionals who evaluate sexual abuse by giving permission for children to talk about the abuse. And on a third level, sexual abuse prevention trainers may find this book helpful to share as they teach children about sexual abuse and providing them with the courage to deal with it.



Kleven, S. (1998) *The Right Touch: A Read Aloud Story to Help Prevent Child Sexual Abuse*, Illumination Publishing Company, Bellevue, WA, USA.

The Right Touch reaches far beyond the usual scope of a children's picture book. It is a parenting book that introduces a very difficult topic - the sexual abuse of young children. This gentle, thoughtful story is meant to be read aloud by a parent or trusted carer to children aged between three and seven years old. It was developed as a tool for teaching skills to help prevent child sexual abuse. Children generally sense when things are not 'right' so it is important to encourage them to trust their feelings and seek help. This book validates a child's innate warning system.

In the story, young Jimmy's mother explains the difference between touches that are positive and touches that are secret, deceptive or forced. She tells him

how to resist inappropriate touching, affirming that abuse is not the child's fault.

The introduction provides valuable information about sexual abuse and guidance on what to do if a child experiences an abusive situation.

Lenett, R. & Crane, B. (1986) *It's OK To Say No: A Parent/Child Manual for the Protection of Children*, Ashton Scholastic Pty Ltd, Gosford, NSW.

Sexual assault on children has been called 'the hidden crime' - hidden because many children, out of fear or shame, are reluctant to tell of their experiences; hidden because many parents, for their own reasons, fail to report instances of sexual abuse to the proper authorities; hidden because the damage often is not evident, although the psychological scars may remain for a lifetime.

Children are taught about the dangers of crossing the street, the risks of poisonous substances, the hazards of playing with matches. No one assumes that these lessons undermine the innocence of childhood. Children can similarly be taught some basic lessons that will help them deal with attempted sexual abuse. The sexual abuse of children cannot be totally prevented, but at least children can be armed with a rudimentary awareness of how to deal with an instance of potential assault.

This is a book for parents and children to read together. In simple language it aims to alert parents to the messages a child gives when being molested, and provides a collection of stories the child and parent can read together. These stories will help to develop both an awareness of potential dangers and an understanding that it is sometimes okay to say 'no' to an adult.



Otto, M. (1987) *Tom Doesn't Visit Us Anymore*, Women's Educational Press, Toronto, Ontario.

This book introduces the concerns surrounding child sexual abuse for young children under the age of six. It tells the story of Charlotte who is sexually abused by Tom, a family friend, and how he tells Charlotte, that this is their secret. He tells her that if she tells anyone about their 'secret', she will be in trouble. For a while Charlotte doesn't tell anyone, but eventually, the secret is too big for her, and she becomes more and more upset. One day she tells her mother, and her mother reassures her that she did nothing wrong, but rather what Tom did was wrong.

Her mother explains to her the difference between good secrets and bad secrets, and how she does not need to be afraid to tell her parents anything.

Peake, A. (1989) *My Book, My Body, The Children's Society, London.*

My Book, My Body is a colouring book intended for use with children aged 4-12 years old. Its primary use will be by professionals, in direct one-to-one work with children who are thought or known to be abused. It could, however, also be used as part of a prevention program. There is considerable scope for children to colour in, draw or write in the book, and detailed guidelines and suggestions for use of the colouring book are provided with the book. The drawings deliberately feature children from different ethnic groups and children with a disability in the hope that there will be a child with whom the reader can identify.



It is important that the book be given to the child and seen as belonging to that child. If all or part of the book is needed for evidence in a court case then the relevant parts should be photocopied or photographed.

Rouf, K. (1991) *Black Girls Speak Out*, The Children's Society, London.

This booklet was written by two young women. Charmaine, a Caribbean, described what being black and sexually abused meant for her. She wrote that she was abused by her father but felt she could not tell anyone because she loved him. She was also abused by her uncle, and was afraid that if she told anyone he would be physically violent towards her. The other author, Khadij, an Anglo-Asian, with a Bangladeshi father and an English mother, was raised in a culture completely different to Charmaine's. She too was sexually abused by both her father and her uncle, felt herself to blame for the abuse, and was ashamed of the abuse. Although these women are of differing backgrounds, they share common experiences in racism.

This book is told in the language of these young women. They felt that their spelling mistakes should not be corrected, nor any

commentary added, as they thought it would change the quality of their message. Their message is a powerful one, especially the need to understand different cultures and how helpful it is to talk about feelings with someone who can be trusted.

Rouf, K. (1989) *Mousie*, The Children's Society, London.

Mousie is a teddy who is called Mousie because he is so quiet. This book tells the story of something that happened to Mousie that frightened him. At first he kept quiet about his fear, and when he finally did tell someone, he was not believed. One day, however, he was able to tell someone who believed and protected him.

Mousie is intended to be read to children who may also have a secret they have been afraid to tell. It is the author's own story, and as the author says, it is not only her story, 'but the story of countless children who are seen but never heard. Mousies who become empty and frail as they are taught that their voices cannot be heard.... To those children who read this book - if you know how Mousie feels, please tell someone.'

Rouf, K. (1989) *Secrets*, The Children's Society, London.

The message of *Secrets* is in the words and pictures of the story, a story that tells of the sexual abuse of a child by a trusted adult.

The author herself was sexually abused as a child. She was a victim, and the story that she tells is one that she lived through for many years of her childhood. However, in this story, the victim becomes the survivor. The author hopes that her words and pictures will help others to find the courage to tell their stories and to survive. She has written this story for children and adolescents who may be going through the same thing that she experienced. She wrote it because she knew that although books have been written to warn children against strangers, it is often someone well known to them and in whom they trust who commits the abuse.

The author hopes that her words and pictures will help every victim to find the courage that he or she has inside - the courage to tell and to survive.

Rowley, T. M. (1986) *Did I Ever Tell You How Special You Are?* Queensland Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Brisbane.

Did I Ever Tell You How Special You Are? was produced by the Queensland Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse for children aged 4-10 years old. The underlying theme of the book is that a child's body is special and that children have rights, the right to

be happy, the right to feel good about themselves, and the right to say 'no' to anyone who they feel touches them in a way that feels wrong. The book also stresses the importance for children to tell someone they trust if they feel that anyone is treating them in a way which they don't like.

Other books written by the author in the same series are *Touches and Feelings*, an introduction to understanding the difference between good, bad and confusing touches, and *Knock Knock, Who's There*, a book which traces the feelings of a child who has been sexually abused.

Rowley, T.M. (1986) *Knock Knock! Who's There?* Queensland Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Brisbane.

Sometimes children may be embarrassed, scared or may not have the language to tell someone that they have been sexually abused. A child may subtly hint that something has happened or there may be a sudden change in the child's behaviour. A number of books, games and personal safety programs are available that give children accurate prevention information and teach them self protective skills to reduce their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation.

This book traces the feelings of a child who has been sexually abused. It explores the possibility of sharing the experience with a sympathetic adult, and gives children permission to discuss the subject with someone they trust.

It is recommended reading for children aged four to ten years old.

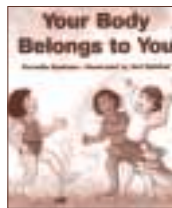
Other books by the author in the same series are *Touches and Feelings*, an introduction to understanding the difference between good, bad and confusing touches and *Did I Ever Tell You How Special You Are*, a book to encourage children's self esteem and confidence, and to help children listen to their feelings.

Rowley, T.M. (1986) *Touches and Feelings*, Queensland Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse, Brisbane.

Child sexual abuse or assault is the exploitation of a child by an older person or adult for the sexual gratification or stimulation of that person. Most child sexual abuse occurs with someone the child knows and trusts. This book is designed to help parents teach their children to become aware of good and bad touches, and to talk to a trusted adult about bad or confusing touches. It also aims to encourage children to listen to their feelings.

Touches and Feelings was produced by the Queensland Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse for children aged 4-10 years

old. Other books by the author in the same series are *Did I Ever Tell You How Special You Are?*, a book to encourage children's self esteem and confidence, and *Knock Knock, Who's There*, a book which traces the feelings of a child who has been sexually abused.



Spelman, C. (1997) *Your Body Belongs to You*, Albert Whitman & Co., Morton Grove, ILL, USA.

Children need an abundance of warm physical attention to thrive. However, when children indicate that they do not want to be hugged or kissed, it is important to respect their reactions. In this way, they learn that being touched is their choice, not another's, and that their bodies 'belong to them'. Children who are taught very early that their bodies belong to them, and that they have the right to decline touch, are being taught that they are not powerless.



This book is meant to convey a few simple ideas in simple language: a child's body is his or her own; a child has the right to decline touch – no matter how innocent; and there are certain parts of the body that ought to be touched only in certain circumstances. Keeping the message simple is important for very young children.

Helping children to talk about what feels good and what feels bad (such as being tickled against their will) leads to confidence in their own perceptions. Children also need to know that any touching which has to be kept secret is not good touching.

Wachter, O. (1986) *Close to Home: Saying No Is Not Enough*, Viking Kestrel, London.

Child abduction by strangers or friends is constantly in the press. Warning children against these very real dangers is often a difficult task. *Close to Home* goes beyond teaching children to stay safe and not to talk to strangers. These short stories contain advice on those unsure situations where friends act strangely and strangers act friendly. They aim to teach children how to feel and stay safe. They ask the questions: What if a person tells you to do something that doesn't feel safe? What do

you do? What if someone wants you to get into a car and go somewhere where you're not sure it's okay to go? What do you say? Most likely, children know better than to go anywhere in a car with a stranger. But what if a stranger acts friendly, and makes you feel confused? What if someone you know and trust wants you to go somewhere you don't want to go?

This book contains four short stories, about children who are not always sure what the right thing – the safe thing – is to do. This book aims to help children practice taking care of themselves by showing them all sorts of different situations with different kinds of people. It is about children learning to feel and be safe, at school, at home, or wherever they may be.

Wachter, O. (1985) *No More Secrets for Me*, Viking Kestrel, Ringwood, Victoria.

Sexual abuse of children is not a highly uncommon event. There are a vast number of children who are made uneasy at best, and deeply distressed at worst, by approaches from adults that they do not understand and with which they do not know how to cope. In recent years, there has been public discussion of this all too common childhood experience and provision to help those children to whom it happens. However, there is still not much literature aimed at the children themselves, and it is no protection to wrap them in ignorance. Children need to be warned, to be given permission to talk about disagreeable things if they happen to them. They need to be made to feel that they are not to blame if such things do happen to them.

No More Secrets for Me takes children by means of simple, direct and honest stories, through the sort of problems that may arise. The first story discusses child modesty and the need for adults to respect it. Other stories deal with experiences such as the adult who tries to get a child into a car, the young man who tries to share his nakedness with a young boy, and incest within a stepfamily.

Winston-Hillier, R. (1993) *Some Secrets are for Sharing*, MAC Publishing, Denver, CO USA.

The author has written this book to combine her expertise as a child therapist focusing on early childhood and child abuse issues and her interest in writing books for children. In the introduction to this book she notes that every year over a million children are abused in one way or another. Most of these children are alone with their feelings. Even if they receive professional help, there is a strong likelihood that their experience will not be shared with their peers. And even if the child is fortunate enough to have a friend to talk to, it is uncomfortable

and frightening for another child to understand the abused child's experience.

In *Some Secrets are for Sharing*, the reader is not only faced with the experience of a boy named Timmy who has been abused, but reads about the feelings, behaviours and struggles with which Timmy has to deal as an abused child. The reader will be able to identify with Timmy and gain sensitivity and understanding into a serious problem.

Sometimes when topics such as child abuse receive constant attention, the meaning and severity of the problem is actually diminished through desensitisation. Consequently, it is sometimes easy to forget that behind every incident of abuse there is a victim – a helpless child who may not know how to fight back, a child who does not know his rights, a child who may be violated and damaged. This book aims to show that for a child to share this sort of secret is the most important thing that he or she can do.

Books on domestic violence

Butterworth, D. & Fulmer, A. (1990) *Sometimes Mummy and Daddy Fight*, Child and Family Consultants, Dalkeith, WA.

Sometimes Mummy and Daddy Fight tells a story of domestic violence in a family from the point of view of a young school aged boy and the effect it has on him. In this family, the boy's father works in the city, while his mother works one day a week at the local library and spends most of her time looking after Gemma, their three year old daughter. For the most part, the family seems like a happy one, except that one day after his parents had an argument, his father pushed his wife, which resulted in her falling over and hurting herself. The children became very frightened, ran out of the room and hid in a toy cupboard until the arguing stopped.

The young boy tried to reassure his sister that everything would be all right, and the next morning his parents acted as though nothing had happened. Although everything seemed okay, the young boy was sure that eventually, his parents would have another argument. What he could not understand was how come '...grownups who were supposed to know everything, didn't even know that it was wrong to fight?'



Hochban, T. (1994) *Hear My Roar: A Story of Family Violence*, Annick Press Ltd, Toronto.

Many women and children experience violence in the home on a regular basis. This book is intended to help children who have been exposed

to family violence. It is meant to act as a framework for discussing feelings and challenging the idea of violence as a way of controlling other people.

Hear My Roar is the story of a family in which the father is abusive towards his wife and their child. The mother becomes concerned when she realises what effect the violence is having on the family. She asks for help from her family doctor and takes action towards ending the abuse. The story ends with the mother and her son leaving to visit a shelter as their first step in developing their new life together. The father begins to acknowledge his responsibility for the violence and is offered help for his problem.

Children learn by watching the behaviour of family members and friends. If they see people using violence 'successfully' as a way of solving problems, they might adopt that behaviour as well. Children need to learn that family violence is never appropriate behaviour and never a suitable way to resolve family conflicts. They need to learn that violence does not have to be tolerated and that action can be taken to stop it. It is important for children to know that the person committing the violence is responsible for their behaviour, and that the violence is not the child's fault. They need to learn how to protect themselves when faced with violence and how to find help when they need it. Above all, children need to know that they are safe and loved by their caregivers.

The author has worked with families in both urban and rural areas. He has conducted research in child developmental psychology on the effects of family violence. This work confirmed his experience that children who witness violence suffer many of the same problems as direct victims of abuse. He developed this book to provide a form of 'preventative medicine' aimed at breaking the cycle of violence.

Kinstlinger-Bruhn, C. (1997) *Everything You Need to Know About Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Violence*, Rosen Publishing Group, NY.

Domestic abuse is a pattern of controlling behaviour. It can be physical, sexual, or emotional. Many people believe violence is a learned behaviour. If children see it in their family, they are more likely to continue it in their future relationships. Sixty percent of boys who witness violence in the home grow up to abuse their adult partners. Victims of domestic violence are also more likely to be victimised again than are victims of other types of crime. This behaviour is known as the 'cycle of violence', and the aim of this book is to help the reader recognise it and to learn how to break the cycle.



Otto, M. (1988) *Never, No Matter What*, Women's Press, Toronto.

Never, No Matter What is a story for young children that focuses on a child whose

mother chooses to leave an abusive family situation and goes with her child to a women's shelter. The author focuses on the importance of understanding that in a situation where domestic violence occurs, it is not the fault of the person who is being abused; rather it is the responsibility of the abuser. Being violent is never an appropriate way to solve problems.

Also included with this book is a question and answer page for adults and children in which the author defines what a shelter is, why mothers and their children are there, what a counsellor is, and what happens to the father when he has behaved violently.



Trottier, M. (1997) *A Safe Place*, Albert Whitman and Co., Morton Grove, IL USA.

A Safe Place is a story about family violence, and the damaging effect that it has on children. In this story Emily's parents often argue, and her father frequently hits her mother. Eventually Emily and her mother leave the family home and go to a place where they can feel safe. Emily has felt that the arguing at home was her fault, and that though 'she had tried to be good ... no matter how good she was the fighting didn't stop.' The most important thing is for Emily to feel safe and loved, and so Emily's mother feels that the only choice she has is for her to leave the family home and take Emily with her.

Even though Emily loves both her father and her mother, there is still violence in their home. However, the violence is not her fault. Rather it is the person who commits the acts of violence who is responsible.

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