Addiction/Substance Abuse

Hey, Kiddo: How I Lost My Mother, Found My Father, and Dealt with Family Addiction
By Jarrett Krosoczka

In this candid graphic novel memoir, the author shares the realities of his mother's heroin addiction, and the family love and support that guided him as he embarked on the path to becoming an artist.

Solo
By Kwame Alexander, with Mary Hess

Blade's story as the son of a washed-up rock star battling addiction brings to light the complex issues of families dealing with addiction.

Anxiety and Depression

Cicada
By Shaun Tan

Bullied, ignored, overworked, and underappreciated, Cicada works in a dreary, grey office building. Inspired by the 17-year life cycle of a cicada, as well as a haiku, this picture book for older readers uses brief lines of text and stark oil paintings to depict Cicada's humiliation, isolation, and persistence.

Don't Call Me Crazy
By Kelly Jensen

Thirty-three authors share their personal stories of mental illness in a variety of comics, short stories, and lists. This reminder that our brains are wired differently, including a section on depression, provide the reader with new opportunities to talk about mental health.

Adoption

Beyond the Bright Sea
By Lauren Wolk

Found as a baby on the shores of the tiny island of Cuttyhunk, Crow dreams of finding her biological family. Her quest involves a secret island community, pirates, and lost treasure, as well as finding out the real meaning of family in this ocean-drenched historical fiction title.

Half a World Away
By Cynthia Kadohata

Jaden, who was adopted at age 8, sees himself as an "epic fail" because of his troubled behavior and inability to love his adopted parents. As his parents prepare to adopt a second child, the experience stirs up complicated feelings and worries that he is being replaced.

Just Like Me
By Nancy Cavanaugh

Three very different girls who were adopted from the same orphanage in China meet at a summer camp, where they are to journal their bonding experience for the camp counselor.

Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus
By Dusti Bowling

Born without arms, 13-year-old Aven has never let that stop her from doing everything she sets her mind to. But a move to a new state challenges her innate sense of humor and indomitable spirit.

Like Vanessa
By Tami Charles

Inspired by Vanessa Williams’ 1983 win as the first African-American Miss America, 8th grader Vanessa Martin auditions for her middle school’s pageant, and learns how to develop her confidence, face her fears, and challenge mainstream beauty norms.

The Poet X
By Elizabeth Acevedo

This novel in verse tells the story of Xiomara Batista, a young teen living in Harlem who finds her voice through poetry, using it to come to terms with her changing body and her difficult relationship with her religiously conservative mother.

Tight
By Torrey Maldonado

Bryan’s new friend, Mike, pressures him into doing things that are pretty risky. Bryan needs to learn to stand up for and be true to himself, even when it means confronting his good friend.

Body Image/Self Esteem

Goodbye Stranger
By Rebecca Stead

Bridge’s friend Emily doesn’t seem to be concerned when her intimate photograph is exposed via social media...
## Tough Topics: Inspiring Conversations in Difficult Times

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Echo’s Sister</td>
<td>By Paul Mosier</td>
<td>Scholastic, 2017. 256p.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Blended
By Sharon M. Draper

Isabella’s identity is split: one week she lives with her white mother and the next with her black father. She wishes her divided life could come together like a magical, musical symphony through the black and white keys on her piano.

## See You in the Cosmos
By Jack Cheng

A space-obsessed boy and his dog travel from Colorado to New Mexico, Las Vegas to LA meeting remarkable people along the way. His father is dead. His mom is troubled. His brother isn’t around, and there are secrets to uncover.

## Speed of Life
By Carol Weston

Eighth grader Sofia’s mother died only nine months ago, so she’s shocked when her dad starts dating again. She’s even more appalled when she learns her father’s new girlfriend is none other than Dear Kate, a woman who writes an advice column for teens.

## Summerlost
By Ally Condie

Still reels from the death of her father and younger brother in a car accident, Cedar and her family move into a quiet summer house to grieve and heal. An unexpected friendship and an intriguing mystery help Cedar move forward through her sadness one day at a time.

## Dollar Kids
By Jennifer Richard Jacobson, Illus. by Ryan Andrews

Twelve year old Lowen Grover’s family seeks a new beginning in a new town through a “dollar program”, allowing them to purchase a new home for a dollar. This story explores one family’s struggle to process complex emotions such as guilt, grief, and finding themselves in a new community.

## Train I Ride
By Paul Mosier

After the death of her mother followed by her grandmother, Ryder is on a train to live with an unknown great uncle in Chicago. Her last chance before entering foster care. Anxious, hungry and lonely, Ryder finds strength from new friends on the train and ultimately within herself too.

## Two Roads
By Joseph Bruchac

After months of riding the rails during the Great Depression, Pop reveals to twelve-year-old Cal that they are part Creek and sends Cal to live at a government school. Although the school’s conditions are harsh, Cal finds a community of boys who help him connect to his heritage and understand his father.

## Auma’s Long Run
By Euabeth Odihambo

Set during the 1980’s, Auma’s dreams of earning a running scholarship and becoming a doctor, are crushed as the HIV/AIDS epidemic ravages Kenya. Auma struggles to decide what to sacrifice, the survival of her siblings or the fulfillment of her dreams.

## Echo’s Sister
By Paul Mosier

El’s excitement at starting seventh grade at a new school is derailed when her little sister Echo is diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. El struggles with the fear, stress, and difficult emotions that arise as the family fights to stay strong together for Echo.

## Family Game Night and Other Catastrophes
By Mary E. Lambert
Scholastic, 2017. 256p.

Annabelle’s mother suffers from hoarding, a compulsion which affects the whole family’s psychological well-being in different ways, until they realize they need to come together to help mom and each other.

## Halfway Normal
By Barbara Dee

After completing two years of treatment for leukemia, Norah is ready to tackle seventh grade, challenging classes, new friends and being honest about her experience.

## All the Stars Denied
By Guadalupe Garcia McCall

Estrella and her family struggle to contend with the consequences of U.S. government’s unjust and discriminatory repatriation policy during the Great Depression.
### TOUGH TOPICS: **Inspiring Conversations in Difficult Times**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Disaster</td>
<td>It Ain't So Awful, Falafel</td>
<td>By Firoozeh Dumas</td>
<td>Clarion Books</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>384p</td>
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<td>Undocumented: A Worker's Fight</td>
<td>By Duncan Tonatiuh</td>
<td>Abrams ComicArts</td>
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<td>Another Kind of Hurricane</td>
<td>By Tamara Ellis Smith</td>
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<td>Drowned City</td>
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<td>Hunger</td>
<td>By Donna Jo Napoli</td>
<td>Paula Wiseman Books</td>
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<td>Sexual Abuse</td>
<td>By Laurie Halse Anderson, Illus. by Emily Carroll</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>By Tom Avery</td>
<td>Schwartz &amp; Wade</td>
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<td>Be Prepared</td>
<td>By Vera Brosgo</td>
<td>Macmillan/ First Second</td>
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<td>Someone Else's Shoes</td>
<td>By Ellen Wittlinger</td>
<td>Charlesbridge</td>
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<td>Refugee</td>
<td>By Alan Gratz</td>
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**Summary:**

- **Natural Disaster:** Novels that explore the effects of natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina, and the resilience of communities in the face of adversity.
- **Resilience:** Stories that highlight the strength and determination of individuals and families in the face of challenges, including immigration, grief, and loss.
- **Suicide:** Novels that address the complex issue of suicide, including the impact on families and the importance of awareness and support.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Graphic novels that provide a platform for survivors to share their stories, offering hope and understanding.
- **Trauma/Violence/War:** Works that delve into the psychological and emotional toll of war and conflict, and the personal journeys of those affected.
- **Be Prepared:** Books that encourage young readers to be prepared for various situations, fostering a sense of readiness and empowerment.
- **Refugee:** Tales of displacement and the challenges faced by refugees, emphasizing the human dignity and respect.

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**Hunger:**
Lorraine and her family are tenant farmers in 1846 Ireland, entering the second year of the potato famine that is devastating their community. Lorraine and the other children of the community struggle to keep starvation, illness and death at bay as the wealthy British landowners continue to ignore the problem.

**You May Already Be a Winner:**
Olivia’s father has left her, her mother and her little sister to fend for themselves in their trailer park home. When money gets tight, Olivia has to stay home to take care of her sister since daycare is too expensive, but she finds solace in her daydreams.

**Speak: The Graphic Novel:**
Through her work on an art project, Melinda begins to face the terrifying fact that she was raped by an upperclassman at a party days before the start of her freshman year in high school.

**The Summer of Owen Todd:**
Owen and his best friend, Sean, are blissfully ready for summer vacation with nothing planned except trips to Cape Cod’s beaches. Then Sean is sexually molested by their babysitter which drastically changes the course of the boys’ lives.

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**Be Prepared:**
Vera is excited for a summer of new friendships and fun activities at Russian summer camp, but nearly goes home early when confronted with mean girls, too much nature, and loneliness. Vera rallies to save the summer and find a place for herself in this graphic novel memoir.

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**My Brother’s Shadow:**
Eleven-year-old Kaia isolates herself after her older brother’s suicide. The mute wild boy who mysteriously appears outside her boarding school helps draw Kaia out of her mental funk as she begins to work through her grief.

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**Nest:**
Set in the summer of 1972, Naomi “Chirp” Orenstein’s mother is diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis; rather than face the disease and in the throes of depression, Chirp’s mom chooses to end her own life. Chirp and her family must stick together to find a way through this tough time.

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**Someone Else’s Shoes:**
This emotion-heavy title paints a picture of how divorce, suicide, and depression can affect a family. There may be a way twelve-year-old Izzy’s can use her comedic skills to lighten and mend the situation, but it will be hard when she’s stuck with her mom’s boyfriend’s on top of taking care of her cousin.

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**A Game for Swallows:**
A graphic memoir of the author’s childhood in war-torn Beirut shows how amidst the horrors of conflict and fear one can always find solace in the strength of family and the comfort of neighbors.

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**Illegal:**
Ebo leaves his home in Ghana hoping to reunite with his brother and sister and start a new life in Europe.

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**Long Way Down:**
Will’s brother has been shot, and Will is in an elevator on the way down to find his brother’s killer, gun in hand. As the elevator descends, Will is visited by loved ones lost to gun violence from his past.

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**Refugee:**
Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are all fleeing war and/or violence in their homes as refugees in this novel that takes place in three different time periods.

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**The Stars Beneath Our Feet:**
Twelve year-old Lolly and his best friend Vega cope with the loss of Lolly’s older brother to gang violence as they resist being dragged into the same cycle of violence themselves through community and creativty.
## Resources for Adults

### Books

**Building Resilience in Students Impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences: A Whole-Staff Approach**  
By Victoria E. Romero, Ricky Robertson, and Amber Warner  
Covering topics including poverty, divorce, neglect, homelessness, substance abuse, domestic violence and parent incarceration, this workbook style resource for K12 educators shows how the school community can work together to assist children impacted by these issues.

### Websites

**How to Talk to Children about Difficult News and Tragedies**  
A brief overview of how to proceed after a tragedy, which includes the following downloads and weblinks:  
- "Disaster Distress Hotline"—SAMHSA.gov  
- “Listen, Protect, Connect—Psychological First Aid for Teacher & Students”—Ready.gov  
- “Tips for Talking with and Helping Children and Youth Cope after a Disaster or Traumatic Event—a Guide for Parents, Caregivers, and Teachers”—SAMHSA.gov  
- “Helpful Hints for School Emergency Management: Psychological First Aid for Students and Teachers: Listen, Protect, Connect—Model & Teach”—U.S. Department of Education  
- “Explaining the News to Our Kids”—CommonSenseMedia.org  
- “Children & Grief: Guidance and Support Resources”—Scholastic.com  
- “The Road to Resilience”—APA.org  

**I'm Your Neighbor website**  
[www.imyourneighborbooks.org](http://www.imyourneighborbooks.org)  
Resources for teachers and parents to promote using children's literature to connect “new arrivals” to “long term communities.”

**National Alliance on Mental Illness, Learning to Help Your Child and Your Family, Teens and Young Adults**  
Accessed April 15, 2019.  
[www.nami.org/Find-Support/Teens-and-Young-Adults](http://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Teens-and-Young-Adults)  
Warning signs, conversation starters, and resources for how to help teens with mental illness, including but not limited to depression, eating disorders and addiction.

**Talking about Difficult Topics with Children**  
Suggestions for parents about how to open and carry on a discussion about a sensitive topic.

**Teaching Tolerance website**  
[www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)  
A project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, Teaching Tolerance has classroom resources like films and lesson plans on topics such as bullying, immigration, equality, and more.

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**Talking to Cyberbullied Kids—and to Bullies**  
By Tori Coridiano, PhD  
Article includes links to eight websites on coping with cyberbullying.

**This Is How You Teach Kids About Consent**  
By the Good Men Project  
[www.huffpost.com/entry/this-is-how-you-teach-kids-about-consent_b_10360296](http://www.huffpost.com/entry/this-is-how-you-teach-kids-about-consent_b_10360296)  
A list of parenting action items (geared toward kids ages 1-21), created in the hope of raising a generation of children who have less rape and sexual assault in their lives.

**After #MeToo: Educators Seek Strategies To Teach Students About Consent**  
By Drew Himmelstein  
With systemic harassment and assault in the news, educators are teaching age appropriate lessons about boundaries, safety, and sexual assault.

**Parents Explain the Me Too Movement To Their Kids In Emotional Video**  
by Alanna Vagianos  
[www.huffpost.com/entry/parents-explain-the-me-too-movement-to-their-kids-in-emotional-video_n_5ac5d16e4b09ef3b24309b4](http://www.huffpost.com/entry/parents-explain-the-me-too-movement-to-their-kids-in-emotional-video_n_5ac5d16e4b09ef3b24309b4)  
In this video, three parents discuss the Me Too movement with their children, showing how difficult, but ultimately worthwhile, it can be to talk about sexual assault.