FINDING RELEASE THROUGH READING: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF BIBLIOTHERAPEUTIC LITERATURE APPROPRIATE FOR VERBALLY ABUSED, EARLY READERS

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ABSTRACT

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Through literature, children can be taught healthy coping strategies and positive ways of interpreting the world around them. Properly discussing, interpreting, and matching books with a verbally abused early reader can motivate that student on more than one level. The purpose of this investigation was to address the following research question: *What children’s literature might an educator recommend for early readers living with verbal abuse?*

A content analysis was completed of children’s picture books written for a primary grade audience living with verbal abuse at home. Two checklists and an annotated chart to frame three tiers, or levels, of evaluation were used to analyze the books. Each level narrowed the books to the most specifically accurate for use as bibliotherapy with verbally abused early readers. Each tier of evaluation reveals selections of books that may be useful for varying audiences. However, after picture books had been annotated with the chart in the third tier, a quality list of literature that represents a good fit for the verbally abused was created.

Several evidence-based qualities typical among children’s books appropriate for bibliotherapy with this audience were identified. More specifically tailored to educators, counselors, and other adults selecting bibliotherapeutic literature for children dealing with emotional issues is the acronym CHARP. CHARP stands for the following list of necessary qualities in a book to make a best fit for a hurting child: (a) Coping Strategies, (b) Highlights an example of verbal abuse without other abuses attached, (c) Allows the child to see their own life in response to the book, (d) Relatable characters, and (e) Promotes discussion.
Although there was more literature on the topic of verbal abuse for adolescent readers, it is a topic that can be taught as a preventative measure to younger students as well. Because verbal abuse overlaps with several other forms of abuse and trauma, it is an important issue to address. Overall, the results from this investigation provide professionals with insight on an underrepresented audience of students. The results also provide resources for meeting the students’ educational and personal needs.
This thesis is dedicated to all the children acting as soldiers hiding the hurt and stress felt from living with abuse. A topic of personal significance, this investigation is something I have desired to do for myself. For verbal abuse as a whole, I intend to justify the importance of this issue on its own. I also dedicate this to my family. Because of their love and influence, I can happily be the person I am today.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

From a broader view, psychologists have long debated whether it is nature or nurture that determines how an individual develops his or her unique way of thinking and being. The argument behind “nature” claims that all of who someone is and becomes is a product of predetermined biological genetics. As for “nurture,” the debate says that the individual is a product of the changes and influences of their environment and what behaviors or tendencies it teaches that individual. Psychologists now understand that it is a combination of both nature and nurture that influences the individual. However, the environment in which a child is raised significantly impacts how a child learns to handle life’s challenges.

Any individual’s ability to understand, manage, and cope with the social and emotional challenges life brings may be determined, in part, by the frequency and intensity of the problems encountered. For some, the challenges may be a family member who has alcoholism or parents who aggressively fight for hours in front of their children. For others, it may be family members suffering mental health issues and taking out their frustrations on others, verbally or physically.

As a means of living with one’s thoughts and an ever-changing environment, ancient Greek philosophy draws connections to how art forms can be used to evoke emotional responses. Higginbotham (1998) explains that the Greek era and society have generally inspired the use of books for “instruction, entertainment, and healing” (p. 6). Caroline Shrodes (1949) supports this by explaining, “…Aristotle believed that the presence of evil in art is of the essence of tragedy, whose end is the catharsis of pity and fear. Aristotle’s belief in the healing power of art is grounded on the assumption of certain emotional experiences that take place in the witnessing of drama” (p. 6). Literature has been considered a form of artistic expression through writing long
before this time. Therefore, it is suggested by Shrodes that one can find emotional release through such art forms that evoke mental connections to personal experiences.

For example, imagine a group of people reading the classic Athenian play, *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles. Through the descriptive language of this play and the lessons learned from the overall message of the events that take place, Sophocles’ audience can be emotionally connected to the story. First, the reader wonders about the murder of the king, then it comes out that Oedipus had killed the king, an answer that is surprising to the audience. The king happened to be Oedipus’ father, adding a deeper test of morals and interpretations. As the reader connects with the scenes and emotions of characters, they begin to tie in personal bias, opinion, and understandings about life in general. *Oedipus the King* teaches people that humanity creates its own problems and we cannot avoid what the eyes have seen. Building drama leads the reader to oppose and analyze what the characters go through, learning from the overall message and applying it to current trends in society.

Classroom teachers are very aware of challenges as they encounter children daily. It is essential to get to know each student, knowing that one’s home influences strongly impact a child’s behaviors and temperament. Teachers will commonly detect children who suffer from emotional and verbal abuse. By understanding the emotional abuse and other unfortunate circumstances with which children are forced to live, teachers can find ways of easing their students’ burdens through reading. Bibliotherapy uses books that resemble the reader’s personal life, assisting the individual in seeking emotional relief in reading (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1998; Pehrsson & McMillen, 2009; Shectman, 2009; Shrodes, 1955).

Statement of the Problem
Emotional abuse impacts the mental state and attitude of an individual. Due to its common, but controversial and subjective nature among relationships, this abuse often goes unaddressed and escalates to extremes. Teachers can learn subtle ways to represent a child as an independent, acknowledging their struggles, and providing them with strategies for dealing with trouble. Teachers are responsible for motivating students to reach their academic potential, which is a difficult task when one’s personal life counteracts learning inside and outside of school.

Through bibliotherapy, the reader changes his/her thinking by applying himself/herself to what is interpreted within literature. Awareness and assistance needs to be given to the growing number of individuals living with emotional and verbal abuse at home. Educators and other adults who use bibliotherapy to offer such help to the abused must be wary of the literature they use. There are a great number of ineffective books used for therapy. Many teachers have difficult matching students to appropriate reading materials for any desired purpose. It is important to ensure emotionally and verbally children read literature that portrays situations in which they find themselves. Literature must draw out an experience an aesthetic response for therapy to be effective. The problem is that with such an underrepresented group of victims, it is likely that they are underrepresented in children’s literature as well.

Research Question

Because it is important to identify books that may help children who are verbally abused, the purpose of this investigation was to examine books that may be useful for students who experience verbal abuse. The specific research questions to be addressed by this thesis include:

*What children's literature might an educator recommend for early readers living with verbal abuse?*

Rationale
When people first hear the term abuse in the same context with children, the most natural assumption would be either physical abuse or sexual abuse. Perhaps, more common than these two forms of abuse is emotional abuse. While physical abuse and/or sexual abuse leave physical evidence that can be documented, emotional abuse leaves no physical marks or scars, but could negatively impact the affected children for life. As supported by Jantz (2005), “Emotional abuse is harder to spot and easier to deny. But just as physical and sexual abuse have signposts to mark their presence, emotional abuse, being a systematic attack on one’s sense of self, has common traits” (p. 12).

Emotional and verbal abuse is difficult to identify. Culture, personal opinions, legal boundaries, and other issues come into play when emotional or verbal abuse is suspected. However, such abuse is increasingly common. If it is a positive outlook that our nation intends to fulfill, then we must reverse the low self-esteem, lack of caring, and generally negative thoughts that consume many minds of young people. By considering the influences of each student’s unique learning environment, therapeutic methods can be used to provide healthy ways of handling pressure. The journey to learning begins at home. Before we can build upon a child’s inherent capacity to learn to read and write, a firm base for thinking and coping with emotion should be built. Through literature, children can be taught to use coping skills taught in school to counteract the negative thoughts and feelings connected with an emotionally abusive environment.

Because emotional abuse, more specifically verbal abuse and aggression, is so common, yet difficult to support with evidence, it is an important audience to address. Like most preventative measures, the sooner adults can assist children suffering from any abuse, the better their coping skills will be in the future.
As shared by Shectman (2009) in regards to education, “Our society is governed by adults, and children are expected to obey. When they do not succeed, they are either punished or removed from mainstream education” (p. 207). The current education system is in need of attention to the emotional needs of children. Shectman suggests “…we need to act against the basic instincts, to love rather than hate, to accept rather than reject, to nurture rather than punish, and to reach out rather than avoid” (p. 207). Educators must realize it is not the responsibility of the child to solve life’s problems alone, particularly when he/she is emotionally damaged.

Reading can be a means of relieving the pain and stress of living with emotional abuse. Reading can be done in a therapeutic way that allows the mind to find an escape from reality in order to use knowledge as a way of overcoming life’s troubles.

Teachers and counselors can choose appropriate literature to meet the needs of the emotionally abused, even in early years. Using bibliotherapy, children can be taught how to cope with their daily life in a healthy way. The earlier this is addressed, the better. Adults can motivate children to read for the purpose of feeling better with therapy. At the same time, however, the child will be motivated by their growing reading skills. Confidence will increase because the child is both a better reader and is finding pleasure in books.

Definition of Terms

Bibliotherapy has been defined in several ways by several people. They all seem to agree that it is an effective way of using books as a mental release for individuals. According to Gillespie Hendricks, Hendricks and Cochran (1999), bibliotherapy is the therapeutic use of books for healing. It is also defined more orderly as “the systematic use of books to help people cope with their mental and physical needs” (Gillespie Hendricks, Hendricks & Cochran, ¶3).
McMillen (2008) states that within bibliotherapy are two types: developmental and clinical. Developmental bibliotherapy tends to widely address developmental or situational issues, whereas clinical bibliotherapy pinpoints more serious mental health problems. Gladding and Gladding (1991) also define bibliotherapy differently. They claim that there is “reactive bibliotherapy,” which involves “the assignment of library materials to children and their hopefully positive reaction to their assignment” (p. 12). Gladding and Gladding also identify “interactive bibliotherapy,” in which “the processes of growth, change, and healing that occur in clients are centered not so much in the reading of material by individuals as in the guided material” (p. 78). Some researchers believe that it is necessary for bibliotherapy to include a specialized therapist to guide discussion, while some believe in the simpler definition of reading for healing.

Rubin (as cited in Gillespie Hendricks, Hendricks, & Cochran, 1999) divides bibliotherapy into three categories:

…institutional (the reading of didactic literature [usually] by individual institutionalized clients who discuss the readings with the doctor or medical team which may include a librarian), clinical (the reading of imaginative literature by clients with emotional or behavioral problems who discuss the readings with a librarian-bibliotherapist working in consultation with a doctor or a mental health worker), and developmental (the reading of both imaginative and didactic literature with individuals or groups of ‘normal’ individuals in a crisis situation who discuss the readings with librarians, teachers, or other helping professionals to promote normal development, self-actualization or to maintain mental health. (¶25)
Emotional Abuse is known to be maltreatment that results in impaired psychological growth and development (Garbino & Garbino, 1994). Emotional abuse involves words, actions, and indifference (Jantz, 2009). Aggressive behavior is known as “any intentional act to hurt others, physically or psychologically, directly or indirectly” (Shectman, 2009, p. 197). Specifically, verbal aggression addresses the negative energy expressed by yelling, screaming, arguing, cursing, name-calling, and any other hurtful words directed at or witnessed by the victim.

Limitations

Several limitations exist within the boundaries of this thesis. Due to this study being a content analysis, the books used for analysis are limited to the literature that has already been published, not considering any unpublished ideas or writings (Charles, 1998). Children’s literature with religious backing, those lacking pictures, and those focusing on any other abuse than verbal aggression were excluded. Therefore, the content analysis was limited to more widely acceptable children’s picture books sending a message about verbal aggression. By excluding books without illustrations and those written as chapter books or adolescent literature, the books used for analysis were limited to early readers’ picture books.

Rather than study the children suffering from all subdivisions of emotional abuse, the focus of this investigation is the effects of verbal aggression. The personal backgrounds of the students are unique to this case. Some students may have inherent emotional disabilities not brought on by the effects of their home environment, but by hereditary genetics. Because of this, the results may vary if someone else tried to conduct this study.
Children who live with verbal abuse and aggression at home experience violence that impacts their psyche in unique ways. Bibliotherapy, the use of books and literature for healing (Pardeck, 1994), may provide the verbally abused child with a personal connection to a properly chosen book to be both therapeutic and motivational. Research on finding “goodness of fit” between a reader and a book’s content and illustrations supports how important it is to match students with literature that is appropriate and relevant to their lives, particularly when the intent is to use the literature in a bibliotherapeutic manner. This chapter synthesizes a wealth of knowledge available to connect these questions: What children’s literature might an educator recommend for early readers living with verbal abuse?

This chapter includes an explanation of the historical research that supports the use of bibliotherapy and the positive impact bibliotherapy can have on readers. Next, the major researchers and their findings related to using bibliotherapy to motivate children will be highlighted. Contemporary studies and viewpoints on the topic will also be discussed. To close, research will be presented that supports conducting a content analysis using tiers of rubrics and criteria.

Historical Perspectives

Bibliotherapy, the reading of books for healing, can be traced to a long history. McCullis (2012) notes bibliotherapy includes two Greek roots combined to create the word: biblion, meaning book, and therapeia, meaning healing. McCulliss explains the term bibliotherapy dates back to 1916 with a Unitarian minister and essayist named Samuel McChord Crothers. According to Gillespie Hendricks, Hendricks, and Cochran (1999, ¶ 1), evidence of people using
books for therapeutic reasons date as far back as Ancient Egyptian inscriptions from 300 B.C.
and Shakespearean plays.

Shrodes (1949) wrote, “…Aristotle believed that the presence of evil in art is of the
essence of tragedy, whose end is the catharsis of pity and fear. Aristotle’s belief in the healing
power of art is grounded on the assumption of certain emotional experiences that take place in
the witnessing of drama” (p. 6). Literature has been considered a form of artistic expression
through writing long before this time. Therefore, it is suggested by Shrodes that one can find
emotional release through art forms that evoke mental connections to personal experiences.
Beginning in the eighteenth century, libraries became an integral part of therapy prescribed to
patients in mental hospitals. Books were used to calm the minds of the mentally ill. Salup and
Salup (1978) report, “Most of the better mental hospitals of Europe had established
libraries...Pinal in France and Chiaruru in Italy included reading as an important part of the
recreational program for the insane” (p. 2). According to Gillespie Hendricks, et al. (1999),
Benjamin Rush was one of the first people to speak on behalf of bibliotherapy as he
recommended reading the Bible and other religious materials to the sick and mentally ill. In
1853, John Minson Galt II wrote about the benefits of reading to people who are mentally ill
(Gillespie Hendricks, et al.).

Moving on to the early 1900s, librarians took a more involved role in helping the mental
institutions treat their patients, because they were the source for the books to be used as therapy
(Gillespie Hendricks, et al., 1999). In 1904, E. Kathleen Jones, a library administrator at
McLean Hospital (Waverly, MA), became the first qualified and trained librarian to use books in
the treatment of the mentally ill (Gillespie Hendricks, et al.). According to the Association of
Hospital and Institutional Libraries (1971), Alice S, Tyler, secretary of the Iowa Library
Commission, convinced the Iowa library committee to provide materials and a supervisor for state institutions; this appears to be the start of organized library service to state institutions.

In 1916, Samuel Crothers appeared to be the first to define bibliotherapy as the use of literature as a means of therapeutic medicine (Gillespie Hendricks, et al.). He did so when referring to the science involved when using books for therapy at a Bibliopathic Institute: “Bibliotherapy is such a new science that it is no wonder that there are many erroneous opinions as to the actual effect which any particular book may have” (Crothers, 1916, p. 295).

Bibliotherapy has also been studied for its benefits in practice. Because the reader connects his/her own meaning to the symbols read on a page, the reader could then create positive realizations that may properly re-route one’s troubled mind. Rosenblatt’s (2005) transactional theory of reading highlighted her thoughts, “But books do not simply happen to people. People also happen to books. A story or poem or play is merely inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols” (Roseblatt, p. 62). Rosenblatt’s connection to bibliotherapy was noted by Gillespie Hendricks, Hendricks, and Cochran (1999) who stated:

Louise Rosenblatt (1938) stated that prolonged contact with personalities in books may lead to increased social sensitivity… help one to assimilate the cultural pattern by acquainting him/her with the attitudes and expectancies of his/her group; and releasing the adolescent from provincialism by extending awareness beyond his/her own family, community, and national background. (¶ 11)

Rosenblatt (1938) also drew attention to bibliotherapy as preventative medicine: “Literature may prevent the growth of neurotic tendencies through vicarious participation in other lives...
Frequently, literature is the only means by which he can discover that his own inner life reflects a common experience of others in his society” (p. 243).

Shrodes (1949) broadened the theoretical content attached to bibliotherapy by defining two types of literature related to bibliotherapy (Gillespie Hendricks, et al., 1999):

Didactic literature (instructional and educational literature designed to facilitate a change within the individual through a more cognitive understanding of the self) and imaginative literature (dramatic presentation of human behavior through fiction, poetry, plays, and biographies). (¶ 15)

Later, Russell and Shrodes (1950) further explained three phases of bibliotherapy: identification, catharsis, and insight.

Zacharia and Moses (1968) stated that not a single study in a large body of research found bibliotherapy to be ineffective when used in a school situation. Bibliotherapy became increasingly more structured as researchers further developed this type of therapy. Rubin (1979) reported that Arleen Hynes was training individuals to be proficient in the specific skills involved with administering bibliotherapy. To further develop the program, materials were purposefully gathered according to criteria. Huck (1976) identified the book selection criteria as follows:

A book may be considered as suitable for bibliotherapy if it tells an interesting story and yet has the power to help a reader (1) acquire information and knowledge about psychology and physiology of human behavior, (2) learn what it means to “know thyself,” (3) find an interest outside himself, (4) relieve conscious problems in a controlled manner, (5) utilize an opportunity for identification and compensation and (6) illuminate difficulties and acquire insight into his own behavior. (p. 264)
Making bibliotherapy more professional, Rubin (1978b, 1979) categorized three types of bibliotherapy:

1. institutional (the reading of didactic literature [usually] by individual institutionalized clients who discuss the readings with the doctor or medical team which may include a librarian),

2. clinical (the reading of imaginative literature by clients with emotional or behavioral problems who discuss the readings with a librarian-bibliotherapist working in consultation with a doctor or a mental health worker), and

3. developmental (the reading of both imaginative and didactic literature with individuals or groups of “normal” individuals in a crisis situation who discuss the readings with librarians, teachers, or other helping professionals to promote normal development, self-actualization or to maintain mental health.).

Strengthening the appropriateness of using bibliotherapy in school, Cornett and Cornett (1980) spoke on behalf of its positive cognitive effects on the individual, as well as psychological problems. They also established qualification and procedures for holding a bibliotherapy session. Librarians, researchers, and educators spread awareness of bibliotherapy and establish firm training programs for those who would employ bibliotherapy (Cornett & Cornett).

Bibliotherapy began as an unlabeled, pleasurable feeling evoked from literature in medieval and primitive centuries. With the addition of science and medicine, the technique successfully served as treatment for the mentally ill. The lifestyles and temperaments of students either help or hinder one’s ability to acquire knowledge. Understanding that life’s struggles impact the psyche, educators soon saw the usefulness in blending bibliotherapy with classroom
teaching. As historical evidence suggests, bibliotherapy has been used to treat even the most severely mentally ill patients.

Theoretical Orientation

As it has been mentioned, the history that envelopes changes made to institutions, such as bibliotherapy, is long and still growing. Several researchers have conducted studies and analyses on the topic in relation to education and mental health over time. However, it is also important to note the role of general psychology theorists. Pehrsson and McMillen (2005) found that between 1961 and 2000, most of the literature published about bibliotherapy was written by authors of educational or psychology disciplines. The theories about how individuals grow and change frame the direction of this research.

Vygotsky

Vygotsky was a Russian psychologist of learning and development, first attempting to improve his own teaching. His socio-cultural theory supports the belief that social interactions with others create one’s cognitive structures and thinking processes (Palinscar, 1998). Vygotsky (1978) claimed that “every function in a child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level and later on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)” (p. 57). According to Vygotsky, children’s cognitive development is most highly affected by people, such as parents and teachers, who are more advanced in thinking (Moshman, 1997; Palinscar, 1998). Vygotsky places strong emphasis on the role of a mentor adult in a child’s education, guiding them in both positive and negative directions for learning. Scaffolding is a key process for gradually learning new skills with the guidance of a more educated peer. (Vygotsky, 1978).

Erikson
Another psychologist who prioritized social interactions was Erik Erikson. Erikson (1963) spoke on behalf of his psychosocial theory, which “emphasized the emergence of the self, the search for identity, the individual’s relationships with others, and the role of culture throughout life” (as cited in Woolfolk, 2007, p. 75). Erikson described stages of individual development that people go through during their lifetimes. It was believed these stages were marked by a conflict between a healthy and unhealthy option, known as a developmental crisis (Woolfolk).

Specific to elementary-aged students, children age five to seven are undergoing the industry versus inferiority stage (Erikson, 1963). Within this stage of development, children have a desire to produce great work and manage being a part of life in school, home, neighborhood, and among peers. If a balance is found and the child successfully contributes, then the child will grow a sense of competence. On the other hand, if the child has difficulty in any of these realms, then he/she may feel inferior (Woolfolk, 2007). It essential for children to develop effective coping strategies in the primary grades, for how they perform during these years is said to be a predictor of how the child will cope in the future (Entwisle & Alexander, 1998; Woolfolk).

Rosenblatt

Louise Rosenblatt’s (1938) transactional theory supports the notion that there is a mental connection between the reader and the text. It is within that process of the mind that meaning comes alive. Rosenblatt (1938) explains the mental connection to literature:

When we teach literature, we are…concerned with the particular and personal way in which students learn to infuse meaning into the pattern of the printed symbols. We are not dealing with books as separate and fixed and neatly outlined summed-up entities. We
are dealing with each student’s awareness, no matter how dim or confused, of a certain part of ongoing sequence in his life, as he seeks to marshall his resources and organize them under the stimulus of the printed page.  (p. 63)

By guiding children to read, regardless of the reasons, the individual is helping children discover new ways of thinking about the world and themselves. Bibliotherapy makes sense when placed alongside a rationale such as this. Both therapists and counselors are necessary to manage and track meaning that the child puts into the words and symbols on the page. When conducted properly, bibliotherapy can be helpful to explain the meanings children derive from text. Rosenblatt (1938) explains, “Above all, students need to be helped to have personally satisfying and personally meaningful transactions with literature. Then they will develop the habit of turning to literature for the pleasures and insights it offers” (p. 63). This quote explains how positive the influence of literature can be on the reader. A struggling reader can be motivated to continue the habit of reading once pleasure and some mastery has been achieved.

Bronfenbrenner

A theory that emphasizes the role of society as an outside pressure working its way closer to the individual person is Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1989) bioecological theory. In this theory, the broader powers of one’s nation or wider construct impacts the individual by also influencing every group before the individual. Woolfolk (2008) states, “The bio aspect of the model recognizes that people bring their biological selves to the developmental process. The ecological part recognizes that the social contexts in which we develop ecosystems because they are in constant interaction and influence each other” (p. 91). Ecology is considered to be the study of interactions between living organisms and environments. Bronfenbrenner’s theory was
constructed of the following basic structures: the Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem, and Chronosystem.

Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1989) does well to define these terms throughout his publications. For the child, the microsystem is the immediate setting a child is in at any given time. Microsystems surround the individual and can overlap within any of the other structures. The mesosystem includes any interactions between two or more of a person’s microsystems or environments (i.e. school, home, and community). One’s exosystem is defined as a setting in which the child does not participate in directly, but still feels the effects. The city council or parents’ jobs would be examples of settings in which the child does not participate but feels the repercussions. The macrosystem consists of overarching patterns of all the microsystems in one’s culture. Macrosystems represent belief systems and other societal patterns. At the same time, the chronosystem represents the time dimension in this equation (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

Family Systems Theory

As a combined effort, family systems theory was established to represent “family behaviors, rather than individual behaviors,” as it is seen with the family as a whole (Christian, 2006, p. 2). In every family, there are dynamic components and they include: needs, values and beliefs, the concept of time, and a concept of space. Parenting styles show patterns in their effects on children, as the behaviors of parents typically fall more heavily into one of four styles: authoritative, authoritarian, passive, and neglecting/rejecting (Woolfolk, 2008). The four parenting styles explained by Woolfolk include:

Authoritarian parents (low warmth, high control) seem cold and controlling in their interactions with children.... Authoritative parents (high warmth, high control) also set clear limits, enforce rules, and expect mature behavior. But they are warmer with
their children... Permissive parents (high warmth, low control) are warm and nurturing, but they have few rules or consequences for their children... and Rejecting/Neglecting parents (low warmth, low control) don’t seem to care at all and can’t be bothered with...caring for their children. (p. 93)

When dealing with individuals living with verbal, emotional, or any other type of abuse or crisis, it is important to seek out coping strategies to support the person. Resiliency is the ability to bounce back to normal or higher ground after being down and burdened. It takes a strong support system and a change in mindset, lifestyle, and environment to be resilient through troubling times. Resiliency is survival through harsh times. To teach a child to be confident and to utilize a set of applicable coping strategies through the act of reading is to become that support system that will help the child be resilient among the rubble.

Motivation

Motivation can be defined as “an internal state that arouses, directs, and maintains behavior” (Woolfolk, 2007, p. 404). Whether it is a child’s desire to read interesting books or their desire to seek mental release, bibliotherapy may be used to motivate children. Motivational theories suggest that when an individual reaps desirable benefit from completing a task or action, he/she will continue to do that task or action in hopes of gaining that benefit again.

Relating to this content analysis, despite the person’s living situation, if an individual believes he/she has gained desirable feelings from reading a book then he/she will continue to do so. Reading comes to life, not because of words and images on a page, but because of the thinking and meaning created in the reader’s mind. The verbally abused may be struggling with conflicting thoughts, making it important for literature to properly address their troubles to help them find mental release. Once mental release and coping strategies have been gained, it is
likely that the reader will be motivated to continue reading and apply coping strategies to continually attain this sense of relief in the future.

Researchers have suggested that motivation can either be intrinsic or extrinsic. Deci and Ryan (1985) write that intrinsic motivation “refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable” (p. 55). Researchers, Deci and Ryan (1992), share that intrinsic motivation is a person’s enjoyment of reading activities done for one’s own sake. It is referred to as a natural tendency to find and conquer challenges as we pursue personal interests and exercise our personal capabilities. Extrinsic motivation is when an individual is motivated solely to attain a given thing or service (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Here, the person does not perform a task for the internal satisfaction it brings, but instead as a mindless hurdle to winning a prize. For the purpose of this content analysis, it is important to focus on the intrinsic motivation to read books that can be instilled within a child. In this case, the child will face the challenge of reading to feel mental release, catharsis, and to learn coping strategies that also apply to daily life.

By helping children seek literature as a release from life’s stressors, children may be more naturally motivated to pick up books in search of that personal connection. At the same time, as a child reads for bibliotherapeutic reasons, his/her basic reading skills will be positively improved over time. Having increased strength in reading skills will motivate the child to do so even more. When an individual becomes good at a skill, it is more likely he/she will be intrinsically motivated to perform that skill. In this case, bibliotherapy is being used as a means for therapeutic coping and improving reading skills simultaneously.

*Motivation in Reading*

As stated by McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995), “three concepts are integral to modern understandings of attitude: the beliefs an individual harbors in relation to the object, the
behavioral intentions that concern the object, and the feelings the individual experiences because of the object” (p. 937). One’s attitude toward any activity, in this case reading, will determine the direction he/she chooses to take. Attitudes can change and tie in with the idea of motivation, or being moved to act based upon a desirable outcome.

Mathewson (1994) created a model of the influence of one’s attitude upon reading and learning to read. The following diagram (see Figure 1) is the graphic display of Mathewson’s model (as cited in McKenna, et al., 1995).

Figure 1. Mathewson model of attitude influence upon reading and learning to read

To comprehend this model, of reading attitudes, McKenna, et al. (1995) explain:

The major factors, represented by solid arrows, are “cornerstone concepts,” including personal values, goals, and self-concepts, and “persuasive communications,” which can affect the reader through a central route (as when a teacher touts readings) or peripherally (as when a book has an attractive cover). The minor factors include cognitive and
affective feedback from reading encounters. In Mathewson’s tripartite view, attitude comprises feelings, action readiness, and beliefs. (p. 938)

This reciprocal model of attitude should also be thought as linked with motivation to read and learn to read. In this model, the more one reads, the better his/her reading and learning skills will be. But, at the same time, the better one’s reading and learning skills are, the more that individual will feel confident and interested in reading.

Though Mathewson’s model is flawed in ways (McKenna et al., 1995), it does well to illustrate the idea of this reciprocal association between motivation, confidence, aesthetic responses, and reading. In addition to the Mathewson model of reading attitudes, the McKenna model of motivation considers more social norms and how the reader’s attitudes rise or fall over time. McKenna, et al., add, “The McKenna model predicts that as children mature and as more and more leisure options compete with reading, positive attitudes toward reading will on average worsen” (p. 941). This statement considered, it is crucial for educators to create a positive, attractive learning environment that can break this downward spiral. By being sensitive to personal issues, such as verbal aggression in the home, educators can help children realize at a young age the reading to attain knowledge and emotional release is of value. The flowchart found in Figure 2 illustrates the McKenna model of how one’s reading attitude is attained (as cited in McKenna, et al., 1995, p. 940).

McKenna et al. (1995) share from results of their data analysis about reading attitudes over time that “the point at which attitudes appear to be most positive is at the beginning of the elementary school experience” (p. 952). Similar to how preventative medicine is used in the medical field, educators must target the young, hopeful minds before life and negative attitudes hinder their ability to reach their highest ambitions. “Early intervention in an effort to preempt
reading difficulties may curb the attitudinal decline” (McKenna, et al., p. 952).

Figure 2. McKenna Model of Reading Motivation

Understanding that there is a relationship between a child’s attitude and his/her desire and/or ability to read, it is clear that educators must take care in selecting proper reading materials. It is important for educators to get to know their students on a level where they can appeal to the students’ interests and daily lives. If a child can be motivated by interest, personal connections, social norms, and positive aesthetic responses, then reading can become a helpful,
growing habit. That act alone has potential to stem into a future of healthy coping mechanisms, good habits, increased strength in reading, and boosted confidence.

**Significant Researchers**

*Shrodes*

Caroline Shrodes (1949) wrote a dissertation considered a seminal document in the world of bibliotherapeutic research. In that dissertation, Shrodes described the human response to literature as equal to having a personal connection with the same affective responses. Two types of literature were recommended for bibliotherapeutic use: didactic and imaginative. Didactic literature would include instructional and educational content intended to change the thinking about oneself. Imaginative literature includes fiction, poetry, plays, and biographies to portray human behavior (Shrodes). Shrodes believed imaginative literature would be more likely to evoke an emotional response from the reader and therefore be the most effective for therapy.

Russell and Shrodes (1950) identified three phases of bibliotherapy: identification, catharsis, and insight. Identification is when the client connects himself/herself to the elements of the literature being read. Catharsis is a phase of emotional release for the individual. Insight follows the previous two phases, being when the client gains understanding from the experience (as cited by Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007). Together, they agreed bibliotherapy “…conveys the idea that all teachers must be aware of the effects of reading upon children and must realize that, through literature, most children can be helped” (Russell & Shrodes, p. 335).

*Pardeck and Pardeck*

Though bibliotherapy began with a simple appreciation for books, it has grown into a field of research that enjoys a solid research base. According to McCulliss (2012), “Developments include (1) facilitated dialogue about printed materials with a trained therapist;
(2) patients being provided printed materials as part of their therapy; (3) bibliotherapy being recognized as an aspect of librarianship; and (4) creation of the genre of self-help books” (p. 24). These developments have been examined by previously mentioned researchers and theorists. However, John and Jean Pardeck have made a profound impact on bibliotherapy as a field of study.

John Pardeck (1990b) shared that bibliotherapy should not be used as a “single approach to treatment but rather as an adjunct to other therapies, one more tool to use in the process of therapy” (p. 1048). In his studies, he showed that the science of bibliotherapy contains “precautions and limitations” to be considered upon administering it (Pardeck, 1998, p. 18). This remark suggests that bibliotherapy is not an independent solution to anyone’s strife. Rather, it is a necessary part to be attached to a variety of approaches presented until the individual finds peace.

Pardeck (1990a) describes bibliotherapy as a helpful “…approach for helping abused children… treatment of child abuse encompasses an interagency and multidisciplinary approach that involves not only the child but also the various systems that influence the child’s social functioning” (p. 229). Pardeck provides justification for the use of bibliotherapy that addresses both the child’s specific experiences and the outside factors that also influence the situation. Through continued research and in reference to Russell’s and Shrodes’ (1950) phases, Pardeck (1990a) claims, “It is imperative that the therapist guide and support the child during the cathartic experience. Involvement of the therapist is the critical element that distinguishes bibliotherapy from the normal reading process” (p. 231). This statement suggests that bibliotherapy is most effective with a trained therapist to coerce the child into reaching a point of
emotional release in response to a text. The therapist is there to guide thinking in the right
direction to gather the message from the literature and then make a personal connection.

According to Pardeck (1990a), it is necessary for the child to identify with the character in the
literature. As Jalongo (1983) suggests in his list of criteria for proper bibliotherapeutic literature,
another required piece of the process is to understand a successful solution or coping strategy.
Because there are so many mental connections to make, the therapist is essential for helping the
child have the most benefit from the session. Jalongo (1983), as well as Pardeck (1990, 1990a,
1990b; 1998), inspired a list of elements essential for the functionality of administering
bibliotherapy to abused children in crises.

Bibliotherapeutic Research

Pehrrson and McMillen (2005) conducted a study of how many bibliotherapy articles
were published in education, psychology, medicine, healthcare, and library science from the
1960s through 2000. In the decade 1981-1990, there were about 174 education and 160
psychology articles on bibliotherapy published. Those numbers shrank in the next decade, 1991-
2000, having 128 education and 136 psychology articles published about bibliotherapy.

In their research study, Zacharia and Moses (1968) collected data about how effective
bibliotherapy was with school children. “Zacharia and Moses (1968) stated that not a single
study in a large body of research found bibliotherapy to be ineffective when used in a school
situation” (as cited in Gillespie Hendricks, Hendricks, and Cochran, 1999). Marrs (as cited in
Pehrrson & McMillan, 2007), using a meta-analysis approach of studies involving bibliotherapy,
found

…a limited number of empirical studies meeting his defined criteria… Vast differences in
methodology made comparisons across studies inappropriate and insufficient specificity
disallowed replication. Nevertheless, he found evidence for benefits when self-help books were used for clients with anxiety, depression, and alcohol abuse. (p. 2)

Jalongo (1983) highlights a research study conducted by Smith (1948) in which “children were asked to recall and list reading materials that had changed their lives. Although 502 students took part, only one publication was mentioned twice, illustrating how unique each interaction is between the printed word and the human personality” (p. 797). This conclusion illustrates the dependency of any literature analysis for bibliotherapy upon the individual reader. Many professionals have evaluated the research on the usefulness of bibliotherapy with children. However, this type of data cannot be generalized or uniform within an investigation because every child has a different life of experiences.

Emotional and Verbal Abuse

For bibliotherapy to be effective, the reader must engage with a book about a topic that is troubling the reader. One such topic is abuse, more specifically, emotional and verbal abuse. As stated by Jantz (1995), emotional abuse is defined as “the consistent pattern of being treated unfairly and unjustly, over a period of time, usually by the same person or people. It can also be a onetime traumatic event that is left unresolved” (p. 16). It is known that aggressive behavior is “any intentional act to hurt others, physically or psychologically, directly or indirectly” (Shechtman, 2009, p. 197). This description can apply to physical, emotional, and verbal aggression or abuse. Verbal abuse can then be considered the application of aggression, as defined previously, but without a physical component. Kreidler (1996) speaks about verbal bullying techniques, mentioning that verbal harassment can take the form of exclusion from activities, name-calling, spreading or starting rumors, as well as making belittling comments.
Jantz (1995) explains, “Ultimately, any abuse is about control, or the fear of losing control, and emotional abuse is no different” (p. 27). Several common symptoms or characteristics of emotional abuse may occur in isolation or as a combination: “low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, transfer of needs, perfectionism, inappropriate relationships, failure syndrome, unrealistic guilt, crisis oriented, and unresolved anger and resentments” (Jantz, p. 86). Also typical to victims of emotional abuse are the following physical effects: “addictions, allergies/asthma, depression, digestive disturbances, eating disorders, free-floating anxiety, hypochondria, migraine headaches, panic attacks, phobias, and unexplained skin rashes” (Jantz, p. 98).

In his book about understanding emotional abuse, Jantz (1995) describes the hurtful words spoken by abusers of this nature as “messages.” Jantz claims that these spoken or unspoken messages, “either positive or negative, have become incorporated into how you feel about yourself” (p. 17). How the person interprets what the abuser says has a lot to do with the effect words have on self-esteem and self-identity. In addition, the environmental, cultural, societal, and other outside influences that the victim has grown up to inherit will tweak the way words are considered (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

Emotional abuse is more difficult to identify; therefore, it appears to be a more pressing issue in need of defense. Shechtman (2009) brings attention to the important, but not easily defended existence of child abuse, not necessarily including physical harm:

Our society is governed by adults, and children are expected to obey. When they do not succeed, they are either punished or removed from mainstream education. How many adults are aware of the internal struggles of aggressive children… How many can see
their pain, sadness, fear, and anxiety? It is hard to recognize the plight of these high-risk children, because they appear forceful and strong, threatening, and dangerous. (p. 207) Jantz (1995) writes, “while emotional abuse always accompanies physical and sexual abuse, it can also be present on its own” (p. 15). Understanding that emotional abuse does not have to accompany physical or sexual abuse, this type of abuse then becomes easier to deny by the abuser. Without visible markings or evidence, one cannot prove abuse by anything more than word of mouth and trust in one’s honesty. This carries on as victims often find themselves struggling to manage life’s difficulties on their own. Despite mental implications of abuse, the victim may never have been physically or sexually abused and, therefore, not recognize the reasons for their damaged state (Jantz).

It is characteristic of an abused victim to be shy and embarrassed of his/her situation. Other more visible problems seem more important than the emotional abuse. Jantz (1995) states,

Often two negative, abusive messages are passed on to children that reinforce the emotional abuse: (1) Whoever is in authority over you (be it a parent, spouse, or boss) can speak to you however they see fit, no matter how negatively. Not only is it their right to address you as they desire, but it is probably for your own good. (2) ‘Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words can never hurt you. (p. 23)

A wealth of knowledge can be gathered from learning about the abuser and his/her personal history, as well. Jantz (1995) explains about abusers, “more often than not, even though you hated the way you’d been treated, you found yourself doing the same thing with your own kids, especially when you were stressed out or tired” (p. 20). This statement ties into the argument between psychologists over whether human behavior is a product of nature or nurture. This quote tends to suggest that how we were nurtured from childhood has modeled the behaviors and
general understanding of what each person considers normal and acceptable. To reiterate Vygotsky’s (1978) socio-cultural theory, it is known that what a child sees and observes from his/her social interactions with others becomes internalized. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1989) bioecological theory of human development also supports the notion that one’s societal and environmental influences become a part of the individual. Seeing that every individual comes from a unique background, the social influences on their behaviors and understanding of right versus wrong will vary. This helps to support Jantz (1995) in saying that “the people doing the abuse may not even be aware of the harm they are inflicting on the other person...They assume that the control they are trying to exert over the other person is really for their own good” (p. 29). This quote portrays the idea that the abuser may have been raised under “tough-love” mentalities and believe a harsh reality will awaken the child to what the abuser believes is right.

Verbal Aggression

According to Vissing, Strauss, Gelles, and Harrop (1991), verbal aggression is rather a combination of similar concepts than one standard definition. One commonly used term that seems synonymous to verbal and emotional abuse is psychological abuse or maltreatment (Hart, Germain, & Brassard, 1987; Hoffman, 1984; Hornung, McCullough, & Sugimoto, 1981; Murphy & O’Leary, 1989). According to McGraw-Hill’s Concise Dictionary of Modern Medicine (2002), psychological abuse is mistreatment with intent to cause mental or emotional pain or damage. Psychological abuse includes verbal aggression and results in stress, social withdrawal, depression, and anxiety (“Psychological abuse,” 2002). As one reads, emotional abuse is also intermixed amongst several other labels that share a similar meaning to that or psychological abuse. Therefore, it is common for any of these terms to be used to explain the same idea or circumstance (Vissing, et al.).
Children living with the negative influences of parental verbal aggression in the home suffer what is considered emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is to degrade a person's feelings and cause the individual to recognize himself or herself as inept, not cared for, and worthless, (Mosby’s Medical Dictionary, 2009). Guiding their own research, Vissing, Straus, Gelles, and Harrop (1991) defined verbal aggression as “communication intended to cause psychological pain to another person, or a communication perceived as having that intent. The communication may be active or passive, and verbal or nonverbal” (p. 224).

In the United States, there is a general assumption that male abuse of females is more serious than females abusing males: "the stereotypical association between physical aggression and males appears to extend to an association of psychological abuse and males" (Follingstad, DeHart & Green, 2004, p. 446). This is not necessarily the case, however, as women are portrayed in an abusive role as well. This can be seen at a glance in the illustrations of literature on the topic of abuse, as well as through information gathered by psychologists and counselors. Doll and Doll (1997) report that “…14 percent of school-aged children and youth have significant mental health needs and are not receiving community-based mental health services” (p. 26). Emotional and verbal abuse stems from a variety of influences, whether it is abuse, genetics, or other causes. Regardless of who is abusing the other, verbal abuse is real and leaves hurtful psychological imprints on the victim and witness.

Reflecting on the role of family dynamics on the individual, (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1989) one may note the influence of a vertical versus horizontal hierarchy within the structure of a family. When most responsibilities, emotions, and communications are shared equally, the hierarchy is considered horizontal. However, as soon as one partner has more power over the other and tends to lean heavily upon one highly pressured parent, the bond is vertical. It is
healthy for parents to share family baggage equally, growing together. Vertical relationships between parents are considered to be toxic for a family. Vertical hierarchies are typically found in abusive relationships. Though a vertical relationship of verbal abuse between parents may not be directed specifically at the child, this uneven power struggle becomes the psychological model that child grows to internalize. This suggests that as a child grows in an environment of vertical power imbalances, which may lead to any type of abuse, observing this influence alone will impact the child.

While it may seem like horizontal hierarchies are the better choice, this is not always true. Children are still learning about the world surrounding them and cannot be expected to make strong decisions. A horizontal relationship between parents and their children would allow the children to roam aimlessly, without teaching them discipline and management. Instead, a vertical relationship shows parents taking care of their child by modeling and taking the responsibility to teach their child right from wrong.

Booth-Butterfield and Sidelinger (2009) completed an experimental study on the effects of verbal abuse and affective orientation within a family’s structure and communication patterns. In this study, they identified two types of communication: destructive and constructive. Destructive communication is “an anti-social pattern which builds barriers between family members and leads to negative relational consequences” (Booth-Butterfield & Sidelinger, p. 408). Constructive communication is considered “pro social and has the potential to create an open family communication environment which can enhance the relationships within the family” (Booth-Butterfield & Sidelinger, p. 409).

Booth-Butterfield and Sidelinger (2009) portray verbal aggression as destructive messages that attack someone’s self-concept and intend to cause psychological pain. They claim
that verbal aggression is accompanied by affective orientation, the extent to which individuals use their emotions as guidance. Affective orientation can sway for better or worse depending on the abuse being made or how the victim reacts (Booth-Butterfield & Sidelinger). This study used surveys to collect data from 133 college students and 133 parents of the same college students about the positive or negative feelings about their family’s communication at home (Booth-Butterfield & Sidelinger). According to their data, Booth-Butterfield and Sidelinger (2009) concluded that when parents displayed verbal aggression either directly or indirectly toward a child, it produced negative effects on family communication and the child’s behaviors.

The Effect and Prevalence of Verbal Aggression

In a study by Vissing, Strauss, Gelles, and Harrop (1991), data about the existence of physical punishment were analyzed and compared to symptoms of psychological abuse. These data were collected from the “Second National Family Violence Survey” (Strauss & Gelles, 1986, 1990) and included adults who had a child 17 or younger living at home (N= 3,346). The interviews were conducted by telephone in the summer of 1985 (Vissing, et al.). The hypothesis these researchers tested assumed that verbal or symbolic aggression coming from parents will increase the probability that children would experience psychosocial issues. Vissing, et al. found an:

…analyses of data on a nationally representative sample of 3,346 American parents with a child under 18 living at home found that 63% reported one or more instances of verbal aggression, such as swearing and insulting the child. Children who experienced frequent verbal aggression from parents (as measured by the Conflict Tactic Scales) exhibited higher rates of physical aggression, delinquency, and interpersonal problems than other children. (p. 223)
The results from this study validate the argument that verbal aggression makes a negative impact on the child, whether the abuse is direct or indirect, as these children become more susceptible to trouble. While this is clearly a pressing issue, Vissing et al. (1991) report the “assumption that injuries can result from verbal assaults by parents has not been adequately documented by empirical research” (pp. 223-224).

Vissing, Strauss, Gelles, and Harrop (1991) emphasize that this negative relationship between verbal aggression and the abused child “…applies to preschool-, elementary school-, and high school-age children, to both boys and girls, and to children who were also physically punished as well as those who were not” (p. 223). Understanding the broad scope of ages and conditions of individuals that this relationship encompasses and consideration of the verbally abused should be a concern of all adults.

According to Garbarino (1986) and Runyon (1986), less than 10% of child abuse cases involve physical injuries that require medical attention. Vissing, et al. (1991), claim: “The more severe and permanent injury may be to their psychosocial development. Thus, contrary to the rhyme we quoted, names (i.e., verbal aggression) may hurt more than sticks and stones” (pp. 225-226). This report suggests that psychological abuse may haunt a person’s thoughts and alter one’s thinking, with or without physical injury. Doll and Doll (1997) explain,

…it is the occurrence of problems that sets one child apart from another… children with more limited success in solving their developmental problems may be at risk for high levels of personal distress and may be less successful in meeting their adult responsibilities. (p. 27)

This supports the increased likelihood of its occurrence and a need for coping strategies.

The Effectiveness of Bibliotherapeutic Literature
It is understood that verbal and emotional abuse occurs in one’s psyche just as reading does; both involve a complex set of processes in the mind. Recognizing this mental bond, the comprehension and intellectual skill that comes from reading applicable books for bibliotherapy may be beneficial for the damaged thoughts of the verbally abused. To select literature that is considered effective for bibliotherapy, however, one must match books against a set of criteria. As previously mentioned, it is essential for the literature to relate to the specific situation the reader is experiencing, have identifiable characters, send a message, and portray coping strategies, among other elements (Cohen, 1994; Pardeck, 1990; Pardeck & Pardeck, 1998; Rubin, 1978a, 1978b; Shrodes, 1949).

Pehrrson and McMillen (2005) explain that effective bibliotherapy teaches individuals “stories can serve as a stimulus or vehicle for expression of emotions and telling one’s own story” (p. 49). They created a measurement tool used to determine the effectiveness of specific literature for use with bibliotherapy. Their instrument was named the “Bibliotherapy Evaluation Tool (BET)” and is a survey taken either with pencil and paper or electronically about how strongly the individual felt aesthetic connections to a reading. This survey has been utilized in research to collect feedback from clients who have experienced bibliotherapy with a professional. Research on bibliotherapy and general reading comprehension suggests that the most effective literature will evoke a strong personal connection in the reader’s mind (Rosenblatt, 1938, 2005). When using the BET, survey results about a book in which there were strong connections suggest that the book was highly effective. On the other hand, if the survey feedback lacks applicability to the client, then the book in question will be less effective for bibliotherapy with this audience.

Selecting Children’s Books
When considering whether a child will benefit from reading a book, it is important to consider the daily experiences of the child. Jantz (1995) explains, “What can be boring to adults minds can be very comforting and affirming to children. The story always ends the same. Life has order...They learn to know what it feels like to be right, to know what lies ahead, and this produces a sense of control” (p. 32). This quote is applicable to children of all circumstances, not only with the emotionally and verbally abused. Children need regularity and routine in their lives to establish a more concrete awareness of their ever-changing surroundings.

It is imperative for educators to select and recommend books for children that are a good fit. Smith (1967) discusses the importance of choosing books that fit the reader. He explains that a good book will move the reader ahead on several levels; a mediocre maintains the current state, and a poor book will set that child back (Smith). By “good fit,” one intends to match literature to a child’s personal experiences, cultural background, and other aspects. In doing so, the educator increases the likelihood that the child will create meaning from the text by drawing connections between the story and the world as he/she knows it. There is not a single correct or “best” option for nearly anything in life, let alone a “best” book to recommend to a verbally abused child. Specifically with bibliotherapy, the child must be able to personally see themselves in connection with characters in a story (Pardeck, 1990, 1990a, 1990b; 1998, Shrodes, 1950, Jantz, 1995, Jalongo, 1983). Because every child experiences life in a unique way, it is nearly impossible to identify a “best” match for every single perspective. Therefore, adults should consider a broader scope of characteristics and the qualities of the individual child when finding a “good fit.” This “good fit” is a more accurate way of highlighting the most likely materials to meet the child’s needs, rather than negligently claim that the single “best” materials have been found and no others could compare.
An integral process connected to bibliotherapy includes properly selecting reading materials to share with students through reading and discussion. Huck (1976) was one of the very first people to identify criteria to define appropriate bibliotherapy materials:

A book may be considered as suitable for bibliotherapy if it tells an interesting story and yet has the power to help a reader (1) acquire information and knowledge about psychology and physiology of human behavior, (2) learn what it means to “know thyself,” (3) find an interest outside himself, (4) relieve conscious problems in a controlled manner, (5) utilize an opportunity for identification and compensation and (6) illuminate difficulties and acquire insight into his own behavior.  (p. 264)

Jalongo (1983) suggested the following list of criteria for selecting the best children’s literature for crisis-situations:

1. Can the children identify with the plot, setting, dialogue, and characters?
2. Does the book use correct terminology, psychologically sound explanations, and portray events accurately?
3. Does the book have professional endorsements?
4. Are the origins of emotional reactions revealed and inspected?
5. Does the book reflect an appreciation for individual differences?
6. Are good coping strategies modeled for the child?
7. Does the book present crises in an optimistic, surmountable way? (p. 32)

Jalongo identified questions that can be asked when searching for appropriate materials for use with bibliotherapy. Though there may be more or less that goes into the book selection process depending on the specific type of abuse the audience is enduring, this rubric provides an excellent framework. The characters, settings, fonts, and other details coordinate to send a
message to the reader that is often overlooked by adults. Jalongo also argued, “animals who serve as imaginary playmates or suffer peer rejection can be interesting to a child who is currently experiencing the situation because a successful resolution to the problem is offered” (p. 32). This quote highlights the selection of characters for a greater purpose than being attractive to children. Instead, it is made known that the part of that story holding the most positive significance to the child is a successful resolution. While the child may have related to the animal throughout the story, this book was a good choice because of its positive message upon the resolution.

Summary

To summarize the research presented, it is important to recall the guiding research question for this thesis: What children’s literature might an educator recommend for early readers living with verbal abuse? Because of its deep roots throughout history, bibliotherapy, the use of literature for healing, is a valuable avenue to consider for motivating readers. Specifically, a mental release may be achieved when a good fit has been made between the reader and appropriate literature. Verbal abuse is a highly common, but difficult to identify and underrepresented human condition brought on by one’s surrounding pressures. By selecting proper children’s literature with the characteristics to be used as bibliotherapeutic release, early readers can be taught coping strategies and satisfaction in the act of reading.
CHAPTER III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Whether it is seen as the power of influence over others by individuals or by civilizations, power is a matter of control and confidence. According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2012), power is defined as, “an ability to act or produce an effect; capacity for being acted upon or undergoing an effect.” In the model of power where one source takes precedence over another, “their illusion of power is maintained only as long as they have an “other” to have power over” (Evans, 1992, p. 31). Knowing this, adults who provide some outside guidance over a child should consider doing their part to empower the child. A child can find strength in reading, feel a part of something worldly, and understand strategies and reasons behind situations of abuse. As said by Evans (1992), “Personal Power is another way of experiencing power, one which doesn’t need winners and losers, dominant people and subordinates, and which doesn’t require Power Over an “other.” Personal Power works by mutuality and co-creation and may be considered a new way of being in and perceiving the world” (p. 31). This statement brings hope to the verbally abused, as they can gain personal power to persevere through trauma when equipped with coping strategies and self-confidence. Proper use of bibliotherapeutic literature can boost a child’s esteem above the role of submission, thus limiting an abuser’s power.

Reading builds knowledge, which ultimately builds power. Many children who are emotionally abused likely feel powerless. By using bibliotherapy in the classroom, teachers may be able to motivate children of abuse to use literacy as an escape from harsh realities they face daily. If students living in abusive homes are able to use reading to help them make a personal, aesthetic connection to the text, then it may also help them to read about others who have been where they are, and to learn to address the abusive situations in their lives.
The purpose of this research was to answer the research question: What children’s literature might an educator recommend for early readers living with verbal abuse? Verbal aggression is considered verbal abuse throughout this investigation. Evans (1992) defines verbal abuse as “words that attack or injure, that cause one to believe the false, or that speak falsely of one. Verbal abuse constitutes psychological violence” (p. 81). Chapter III explains the methods and procedures used to complete this investigation. Also included in this chapter is a discussion of how the data were collected and analyzed. A summary concludes the chapter.

Methods

Research Design

A content analysis research design was used to conduct this investigation, analyzing a wide variety of literature for common and/or contrasting elements. A content analysis is a method that enables researchers to study behavior indirectly, through an analysis of human communications (Charles, 1998). There are six basic questions to address with a content analysis:

1. Which data are analyzed?
2. How are they defined?
3. What is the population from which they are drawn?
4. What is the context relative to which the data are analyzed?
5. What are the boundaries of the analysis?
6. What is the target of the inferences? (Krippendorff, 1980).

These six questions were addressed throughout this investigation. When performing a content analysis, Charles (1998) reports two types of content: manifest and latent content. Manifest content is the obvious, surface content, such as words, pictures, etc. that are directly accessible (Charles). Latent content is understood to be the meaning underlying what is said or
shown (Charles). In this study, it was necessary to focus on both types of content to track similarities and differences across children’s literature.

**Materials**

Initially a broad review of books on the shelves of libraries was conducted following recommendations and suggestions by librarians, educators, and other professionals. To unveil the most confident representative sample of children’s literature available on the topic of verbal abuse, other means of finding children’s books were needed. Online search engines, library databases, and bookstores were browsed. A sample of the search terms or key words used to find books included the following: verbal abuse, emotional abuse, abuse, aggression, verbal aggression, fighting, parents fighting, argument, parents arguing, domestic abuse, domestic violence, and family issues. Online websites used for finding materials on the topic included the following: Google Books, Amazon, Chinaberry, Magination Press, Compassion Books, Barnes and Noble Bookstore, www.wegivebooks.com, and the general Google search site among others. On many of these sites, customer recommendations and related searches were explored as well. Within the Bowling Green State University online library services is the Children’s Literature Database, which also provided a more specific search for the materials needed. Digital library catalogues were searched through the Wood County and Lucas County public libraries, as well as digital books on the SEO Library Consortium Digital Catalog and Download System.

Between 250 and 300 books displaying the characteristics of verbal aggression were considered. Books with religious backing, those lacking pictures, chapter books written for an adolescent audience, and any out of print were eliminated. A representative sample of 46 children’s books was analyzed using three tiers of criteria. This was done to provide a selection
of eight children’s books in the end, all portraying the common and effective qualities of bibliotherapeutic literature.

Inspiration for the general type of books to study was gained from a study of picture books done by Martinez and Harmon (2012). Early readers rely heavily on pictures for understanding, supporting the major role illustrations play on developing story elements for the reader (Martinez & Harmon). Seeing this, the basic requirement of books to be evaluated in this study was to be a children’s picture book written for a primary grade audience. The initial choice of books to use used the cover illustrations, titles, and book summaries. Martinez and Harmon identify inferencing based on pictures and text separately as important processes in a content analysis. Books were passed through three phases of evaluation with increasingly specific requirements. Their work can be seen reflected in the structure of this content analysis of literature for verbally abused early readers.

**Instrumentation**

Similar to bullying, situations of verbal abuse include three key roles of individuals: the abuser(s), victim(s), and bystander(s) (Entenman, Murnen, & Hendricks, 2005). It was important to note the role of the bystander the effect of trauma, and how the bystander coped with his/her stress. Witnessing verbal abuse and bullying means experiencing violence. Entenman et al. explain, “Initially, the bullying may cause anxiety or fear in the bystanders. However, and perhaps more significant, children who observe violent behavior and see that it has no negative consequences for the bully will be more likely to use aggression in the future” (p. 355). Taking note of this, both objective and subjective data were collected in regards to the people and characteristics found within each of the three key roles.
In their content analysis of how bullying is portrayed in children’s literature, Entenman, Murnen, and Hendricks (2005) sorted literature into categories. Narrowing the research and books studied, the researchers created a chart to use as an evaluation tool when processing information. They modeled their research guidelines after Jalongo’s (1983) work, just as this thesis has done. The chart used addressed the following headings: “book title (author), types of bullying behavior, character portrayal, gender of bully and victim, setting, role of bystander(s), adult involvement, and victim’s strategy and problem resolution” (Entenman, Murnen, & Hendricks, pp. 357-358). The headings for this thesis were related to these in concept.

Tier checklists and charts were used in this thesis that began broad in scope, narrowing down to the most specific ties to children’s literature used for bibliotherapeutic motivation with verbally abused early readers. Tier I was a general rubric for books the research was intended to study (see Appendix B). Books passing Tier I moved onto Tier II. Tier II (see Appendix C) ensured that the books studied met all the needs of literature used for bibliotherapy. Books passing this point were analyzed for objective and subjective information in Tier III (see Appendices D and E). After comparing and contrasting characteristics found among the selections, a list of recommended books most clearly meeting all criteria was highlighted.

The checklists were aligned with the research found on bibliotherapy, content analysis research framework, emotional abuse, verbal aggression, the limitations set by the researcher, as well as inspiration from Jalongo’s (1983) rubric. As the books were analyzed, it was important to think from the viewpoint of an emotionally abused child. Keeping this study’s research questions in the background helped to increase the likelihood that emotionally and verbally abused children would be able to make connections to the text.

Procedure
Entenman, Murnen, and Hendricks (2005) published a study closely resembling this investigation. It was performed to discover how and where bullies are portrayed in children’s literature, while highlighting how teachers can use books to address bullying in the classroom. Connections were drawn between bullying and verbal abuse, the intentional harm inflicted on others through words being embedded in both. Therefore, this thesis became a stem off of the idea to look for a specific condition within children’s literature, tracking roles and qualities within the stories, and then assisting educators in using literature to address student needs.

This content analysis began by finding books geared toward meeting the needs of emotionally and verbally abused primary grade children. School guidance counselors, professors, and other educated professionals were enlisted for recommended literature. Various libraries and databases were searched for books that were determined to be a good fit for use with the emotionally and verbally abused. In this content analysis, three key rubrics were used that were modeled after previously published content analyses’ measures.

Research-based criteria, in the form of charts and checklists, were used to ensure the book selection had the common qualities needed for bibliotherapy. Each book was carefully reviewed through three-tier process that allowed the list of books to be narrowed to those that presented the best fit for children living with verbal abuse.

Tier I

The first tier of criteria was a more general list of requirements, ensuring that all books in the selection were appropriate for the study. Basic grounds determining a book ineligible included: emphasizing religious motives, lacking pictures, chapter books written for an adolescent audience, and any books out of print. Appendix B shows the exact chart used during the investigation of materials, along with annotations by the researcher. Books that passed from
Tier I had the following elements: picture book, fiction, written for a primary grade audience, and appearance of addressing verbal abuse. Titles, covers, and website book summaries were used to predict whether or not a book would be about verbal abuse.

Tier II

Tier II (see Appendix C) involved a more thorough examination of qualities and characteristics of the books meeting the qualifications form Tier I. This evaluation round focused upon the most frequently supported characteristics of bibliotherapeutic literature. Appendix C shows the chart used to study the books passing from Tier I for their use with bibliotherapy. Categories considered necessary for use with bibliotherapy in Tier II were: identifiable character roles, a victim dealing with verbal abuse, observable coping strategies, and showing cases of abuse reflective of the reader’s own. Though it was noted in Tier II, a clear resolution was not an eliminating factor from this evaluation.

Tier III

Finally, Tier III portrayed a deeper analysis of each book in the selection after passing the necessities of Tier II. The data from these children’s books were split into separate charts for objective and subjective information gathered. Appendix D is the chart used for objective data, showing the researcher’s findings. Appendix E shows the researcher’s subjective data about each book. Splitting the Tier III into two charts allowed the researcher to better represent the data visually, as well as to separate intentions of certain chart categories. It was this tier of investigation that provided the deepest insight into each book’s potential use for bibliotherapeutic purposes.

Once the data analysis had been completed for each book, similarities and differences were found across the collection in search for patterns. The initial research question was
addressed: *What children’s literature might an educator recommend for early readers living with verbal abuse?*

**Data Collection**

For this content analysis, the data collected were notes and markings that fell within the parameters of the rubric or checklist created for extracting information from books. These rubric or checklist determined whether the books addressed: (a) the challenges faced by the emotionally and verbally abused, (b) the qualities making a “good fit” for bibliotherapy for this audience, and (c) which of the books were of the best quality for bibliotherapy with emotionally and verbally abuse elementary-age students. See Appendices B through E for the specific charts or rubrics used for collecting data. The researcher examined not only the manifest (obvious), but also the latent (inferred) information embedded in the literature (Charles, 2008). Pictures were used as rich sources of data, as well as text.

**Data Analysis**

To analyze data, the researcher developed three tiers of charts or rubrics inspired by the published work of Charles (1998), Krippendorf (1980), Jalongo (1983), and Huck (1976). The literature was reviewed keeping the overall message sent to children in mind. During data analysis, the focus was on: (a) the challenges faced by the verbally abused, (b) what makes a book a “good fit” for bibliotherapy with this audience, and (c) which components of the books made them a “good fit” for bibliotherapy with verbally abused students. The basis for judgment during the analysis was based on evidence found in Chapter II about emotional and verbal abuse, bibliotherapeutic books, the process of bibliotherapy, and ways to evaluate literature in general. It was noted how the roles of various abusers were portrayed and how often the abuser was one particular gender. The characteristics of the victim(s), their appearance, actions, and
personalities were also recorded. It was important to evaluate the value of the coping strategies shown in the books, weighing which were positive and negative. Proper bibliotherapeutic literature should provide coping strategies to equip the reader to deal with his/her own life in a healthier way.

Summary

A content analysis was performed on 250 to 300 children’s books, which were narrowed to a representative sample of 46 books that contain stories, images, and messages addressing verbal abuse. Three tiers of criteria were used to analyze the books, ranging from broad to specific qualifications. The characteristics and features being published in books about emotional abuse and verbal aggression were outlined for use by adults to place properly selected books in the hands of students.
CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Through literature, children can be taught healthy coping strategies and positive ways of interpreting the world around them. Properly discussing, interpreting, and matching books with a verbally abused early reader can motivate that student on more than one level. The key to successfully implementing a bibliotherapeutic use of children’s literature to abuse lies with the selection of the books to be read by the child suffering the abuse. The purpose of this investigation was to address the following research question: *What children’s literature might an educator recommend for early readers living with verbal abuse?* Chapter IV presents the results of this investigation and a discussion of the results as they apply to the research question. Data are reported with several charts found in Appendices A through E, representing the tiers of children’s literature analysis.

Data Analysis

After searching multiple sources for children’s books that pertain to this investigation, approximately 250-300 books were identified as potentially useful books. After examining the title, pictures, cover, and story summary, the vast majority of these books were eliminated from further consideration for this investigation due to one of three main reasons: (a) the book was a chapter book meant to be adolescent literature and did not meet the picture book criteria; (b) the book was too heavily focused on a separate abuse or psychological condition rather than on verbal abuse, or (c) the book was out of press and inconvenient for the intended audience to obtain.

Using the criteria stated above, only 46 children’s books appeared potentially appropriate for addressing verbal abuse. These 46 books were then subjected to Tier I analysis. Tier I functioned to filter out any books that did not have general features of children’s books to be
used for this study. Using the criteria identified for Tier I analysis, only 27 of the 46 books met enough of the qualifications to pass from the first tier of content analysis to Tier II (see Appendix A for a list of the 19 books eliminated). All of the 27 books that would move on to Tier II analyses were fictional picture books. Each of the 27 books was written for a primary grade audience. This category was altered due to extreme difficulty finding books at an independent reading level for the primary grades (see Appendix B for the 27 books run through Tier I).

Additional analyses in Tier I included an examination of the title, date of publication, book summary, covers, and brief picture walks through each book, relativity to the topic of verbal abuse. The formal description of verbal abuse by Jantz (1995) was used to judge this as “the consistent pattern of being treated unfairly and unjustly, over a period of time, usually by the same person or people. It can also be a onetime traumatic event that is left unresolved, specifically seen as aggression by parents in the home” (p. 16). All 27 children’s books in Tier I appeared related to verbal abuse.

A total of 27 books were moved from Tier I to Tier II (see Appendix C for Tier II). In Tier II, the data were tailored more finely to bibliotherapy. The specific traits considered during this level of analysis included the following: identifiable character roles, victims dealing with verbal abuse, and observable coping strategies. Not every book met these three of the five criteria for bibliotherapeutic literature. Only 21 books displayed enough of the bibliotherapeutic qualities in literature to be thoroughly studies in Tier III (see Appendices D and E for Tier III data).

Tier III analysis involved a careful and close examination of the words and pictures in each book. For purposes of effectively displaying and studying data, two charts were made for Tier III. The first chart listed more objective data that included facts easily observed by glancing
at the pictures and book summary (see Appendix D). The second chart included (a) subjective
detail gathered as the text was read closely, (b) inferences inspired by the text and pictures, and
(c) meanings derived from illustrations (see Appendix E).

Of the books closely read and annotated in Tier III, eight books were selected as the
appropriate books for young readers struggling with verbal abuse. The top eight books, in order
of placement in the Tier I, II, and III evaluation charts, seen as a best fit for early readers with
verbal abuse include:

1. *The Animals Were Angry* by William Wondriska
2. *The Quarreling Book* by Charlotte Zolotow
3. *When They Fight* by Kathryn White
4. *Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry* by Bebe Moore Campbell
5. *The Words Hurt* by Chris Loftin
6. *A Family That Fights* by Sharon Chesler Bernstein
7. *Something is Wrong at My House* by Diane Davis
8. *Harriet, You’ll Drive Me Wild!* by Mem Fox

Two books eliminated from consideration based on Tier I, II, and III criteria could also
be considered for use. *A Terrible Thing Happened* by Margaret M. Holmes described a vague
scenario of abuse and focused more on the process of seeking counseling. Although the images
were not specifically verbal abuse, the vague descriptions of a “terrible thing” expand the
opportunity for conversation about abusive relationships to flourish. Because this book is vague,
it can be stretched for use with a variety of abuse types. Also, the focus on how the main
character copes and receives help makes this book a model of positive choices in handling one’s
own stress.
Also helpful for guiding discussion and catharsis in therapy may be the book, *When Something Terrible Happens: Children Can Learn to Cope with Grief* by Marge Heegaard. The story line frames the reader’s thinking and directly calls upon personal experiences of the reader. There are not illustrations in this book. Instead, there are prompts for the victim to illustrate his/her own mental image evoked from the text. It is necessary for a victim to connect with and see a mirror of his/her life within a text. This book acts as an exercise for forming mental images, sharing mixed emotions, and understanding what their life’s events mean.

**Discussion of Results**

The question addressed for this investigation was: *What children's literature might an educator recommend for early readers living with verbal abuse?* To answer this question, an in-depth analysis of evidence-based research was conducted. The review of the literature included the names of foundational researchers whose works were studied in an effort to decipher what was commonly supported as qualities of bibliotherapeutic literature. The qualities deemed necessary included the following: identifiable characters, victims that deal with verbal abuse, coping strategies, and a clear resolution.

Originally, it had seemed necessary for the reader to learn about a positive, clear resolution to the story for bibliotherapy to work. However, a book can be useful for bibliotherapy with or without a clear resolution. Literature that lacks a defined closure to a story allows room for interpretation and personal opinions to take place. A child living with verbal abuse may use any personal connections to brainstorm his/her own ending to the story. Therefore, this criterion was changed to reflect that books should not be eliminated from consideration just because a clear ending was not evident. At the same time, books that clearly
depict a positive resolution should be discussed as signs of hope and motivation for the reader’s own future.

Of the books that remained in Tier III, seven out of 21 (33%) books were written with verbal abuse in isolation. Of the remaining books in Tier III, two-thirds showed verbal abuse in tandem with another type of abuse. Eight of the 21 books in Tier III showed verbal abuse escalating to and mixing with physical abuse; two of the eight books also including alcohol or substance abuse. Three of the 21 books paired verbal abuse with parental neglect of their children.

Throughout the final eight books selected as good books about verbal abuse that would be appropriate for early readers, there was an equitable distribution of dynamics between abusers and victims represented. Two books showed the mother as the sole abuser and three books showed the father as the sole abuser. One book showed a mother and father both as abusers. Another single book showed a whole family as abusers of each other (father, mother, sister, and brother). In yet another book, a large group of gender and age neutral animal characters were shown in both the abuser and victim role. Three of the final eight books showed one adult abusing one child. Three books showed one adult abusing their spouse while children acted as bystanders. The other two books showed a family or group of animals that abused and was victimized by members of the same family or group.

Summary

To summarize this chapter, one should understand that the data analysis was performed in several phases and layers of evaluation. Initially, the researcher used multiple sources to browse hundreds of books to collect a sample that seemed appropriate for closer evaluation. After the initial screening, 46 books were collected as a representative sample of the children’s literature
available for early readers with verbal abuse. A total of 27 books were found to be suitable for evaluation in the first tier of the study. Three tiers of criteria were used to narrow these 27 books to those representing the clearest, most appropriate books for children dealing with verbal abuse. In the end, eight children’s books were identified as meeting the most criteria for quality books designed to be used for bibliotherapy with early readers who are verbally abused at home.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

After conducting a content analysis of 46 children’s books for use as bibliotherapy for verbally abused early readers, 8 children’s books were found to be appropriate for this audience. The following research question was addressed throughout the study and reported with the results: What children’s literature might an educator recommend for early readers living with verbal abuse? This chapter will summarize the investigation, discuss conclusions drawn from the results, and opportunities for future research based on the findings, and the relevance of the content analysis.

Summary

In general, this study highlighted a process for educators and other adults to use when matching an early reader living with abuse to an appropriate children’s book. Objective and subjective data were collected on 46 children’s books appearing to pertain to verbal abuse. Verbal abuse was selected as the audience in order to address an underrepresented issue. This abuse is often linked to more extreme abuses, suggesting that providing children with coping strategies and mental relief can act as a preventative measure against worse problems to come. Because teachers can be so influential, this study is helpful for identifying these issues and working to match texts with the student that may have a positive effect.

While this process may be used, it is important to remember one specific component of what makes a book appropriate for bibliotherapy: the child personally connecting their life to what is found in the story. To have such connections, there needs to be quality literature available that provides coping strategies, as well as relatable characters. Because each child’s experiences in life will be unique, it is impossible to provide books that will be a “good fit” for any individual based on books alone. Instead, the search for literature should most closely
resemble the characteristics of the reader based on face to face interactions. In addition, true bibliotherapeutic release happens not with the reader alone, but in combination with discussions between that reader and a specialist. For the interest of this content analysis, the research focused solely on the necessity of having quality literature containing bibliotherapeutic qualities. Therefore, the effectiveness of the books discussed is always limited to the nature of the reader.

Conclusions

The results of this investigation show a selection exists, but not a large selection, of children’s books appropriate for bibliotherapy with verbally abused early readers. Verbal abuse is an underrepresented topic, especially in children’s literature. Though many argue that abuse is too mature for a primary grade audience, awareness provides individuals with time to develop coping strategies, self-concept, and resiliency. Often times, this occurs at home with or without more extreme types of abuse included. Teachers who are aware of the implications of verbal abuse, as well how commonly it is embedded in various realms of daily life, can better meet the needs of students. Learning begins at home for an individual. According to Vygotsky (1978, 1986, 1987, 1993), children’s cognitive development is most highly affected by people, such as parents and teachers, who are more advanced in thinking (Moshman, 1997; Palinscar, 1998). Vygotsky places strong emphasis on the role of a mentor adult in a child’s education, guiding them in both positive and negative directions for learning. It is then the teacher’s job to use that prior knowledge and influence to properly adjust instruction to effectively prepare the student for learning. Through discussion and open-ended questioning, the teacher can provide a moment inspired by Vygotsky, scaffolding the child through a new way of thinking about and coping with verbal abuse. The positive model of this more experienced peer
will act as hope and a reminder that the abused child is not alone (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986, 1987, 1993).

The process used in this investigation and the data collected and analyzed guided the selection of eight books identified as appropriate for use with early readers who face verbal abuse in a bibliotherapeutic manner. Doll and Doll (1997) state that children “…struggle with their emotionality because they lack the words they need to label and talk about feelings and because they lack the experiences necessary for moderating the impact that feelings have on their behavior” (p. 27). Therefore, proper literature can guide discussions and help a victim avoid feeling alone while learning about ways to manage daily strife. Pardeck (1990a) claims, “It is imperative that the therapist guide and support the child during the cathartic experience. Involvement of the therapist is the critical element that distinguishes bibliotherapy from the normal reading process” (p. 231). Knowing what qualities and characteristics within books and conversation to use with verbally abused students will increase teacher effectiveness.

Another conclusion that can be drawn is that picture books about verbal abuse may be designed for early readers, but the subject matter may be more difficult to comprehend. The ability of the reader to read the book independently as is customary with bibliotherapy may impact the effectiveness of the bibliotherapeutic use of the book. During the investigation, it was noted that the readability was often above what an early reader might read independently. Because of this, the criteria were changed for eligible books from being independently read by the child to simply having to be written for a primary grade audience. This suggests that the use of these books for bibliotherapy is somewhat limited, requiring an adult to read with the child. This has a positive effect in that the adult is present to guide the child in questioning, making
personal connections, and generally understanding how to interpret the book for psychological relief.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this investigation is that the limited number of books portraying verbal abuse in isolation may reflect a societal disregard for this type of abuse as a serious concern. While many may argument about the existence of verbal abuse, professionals often argue that it overlaps, leads up to, or follows more extreme types of abuse. Knowing this interpretation, it was important to consider books that include multiple types of abuse; however, attention should continue to to be paid to verbal abuse as a separate issue. .

Bibliotherapy involves a student with a need, an appropriate book, and a discussion with the reader to ensure that he/she connects with the story and is able to see himself/herself in the story read. Russell and Shrodes (1950) identified three phases of bibliotherapy: identification, catharsis, and insight. Identification is when the client connects himself/herself to the elements of the literature being read. Catharsis is a phase of emotional release for the individual. Insight follows the previous two phases, being when the client gains understanding from the experience (as cited by Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007). Proper adult guidance or discussion about these books is necessary if these books identified as good books for addressing verbal abuse are to be effective with students who suffer from verbal abuse. In the hands of skilled bibliotherapists, these books can motivate verbally abused children to read, to seek help, or to provide coping strategies for victims. These books may also be used to prevent and/or protect students who may become victims.

Implications

Verbal abuse is just that, verbal mistreatment. It is an abuse done socially, through interactions and verbal communication meant to hurt the victim. As defined by Jantz (1995),
verbal abuse is “the consistent pattern of being treated unfairly and unjustly, over a period of time, usually by the same person or people. It can also be a onetime traumatic event that is left unresolved” (p. 16). Verbal abuse is extremely common, as there is a fine line between casual conversation, communicating orders, sarcasm, and other uses of interpersonal, verbal communication. Many people do not take it seriously, unfortunately. This is likely because verbal abuse is difficult to track and a controversial subject to bring up to adults. Shrodes (1950) explains the role of, “…the personality of the individual who does the perceiving, and how this personality came to be” on a victim of a significant event (p. 67). The harm from abuse varies upon each unique victim’s interpretation, emotions, temperament, and general social understanding. This makes for a scenario that is common, but difficult to prove, address, and consistently describe. Awareness of verbal abuse is useful to educators, psychologists, parents, and guardians alike. Bruises and physical damage may fade, but the haunting memories and psychological trauma attached to abusive encounters become a part of one’s perception and psyche.

Children should be taught how to perceive verbal abuse in a positive light along with coping strategies for overcoming the psychological damage that could ensue. Doing so will improve the quality of a child’s attitude, confidence, and motivation needed for achieving their highest potential in life. This is contrary to allowing confidence and emotional stability to be worn down as ambition and self-concept could diminish as verbally abusive words would cloud the victim’s thinking.

In schools, faculty and staff work together to equip students with strategies, skills, content, and positive attitudes needed to be successful in learning. Learning starts with the child’s personal life and continues to apply outside of school context. Therefore, to educate
well-rounded, motivated students, educators should be receptive to students’ psychological needs. Educators should be able to offer strategies and awareness for properly maneuvering life’s difficulties in order to preserve a child’s positive attitude for learning.

Jalongo (1983) provides a useful chart describing the teacher’s role in bibliotherapy. In this chart, three characteristics of the child must be known: social maturity, reading v. listening levels, and individual needs or problems. The teacher then has three tasks: choosing an appropriate theme, evaluating materials, and selecting a book for the student. Lastly, the educator’s knowledge base should be comprised of the following: child development, diagnostic skills, and

When choosing a book with the purpose of providing an early reader with therapeutic relief and reading motivation, a teacher should choose children’s literature that does or provides the following:

Coping Strategies

Highlights an example of verbal abuse without other abuses attached

Allows the child to see their own life in response to the book

Relatable characters

Promotes discussion

The acronym, CHARP, was arranged as a memorization device for educators selecting such literature for specific students. Identifying therapeutic literature using the CHARP list, teachers may also generalize this beyond verbal abuse. If a child is being bullied in a specific way, an adult in search of bullying books will be met with a multitude of books on the topics in all kinds of scenarios. However, a child being bullied may be more inclined to personally connect with
and taking away coping strategies from a book that meets the CHARP criteria. The same goes for students dealing with any type of strong emotion, abuse, depression, or other personal issue.

Future Research

A future investigation may be to conduct this study using adolescent literature. The criteria for the first tier of evaluation would need to be modified for this change from picture books to chapter books. Otherwise, the process of content analysis could remain the same. Due to the greater length and complexity of adolescent literature versus the children’s picture books analyzed, a future study of this nature would demand much more time to complete. The maturity, curiosity, and behaviors of adolescents suggest a greater need for literature that addresses the topic of verbal abuse may be strong enough to inspire such research. Just as it is important to offer bibliotherapy to early readers, it is important to do so for adolescents.

Summary

As mentioned in the abstract for this thesis, this research was tailored to educators selecting literature to meet the unique needs of students. Because verbal abuse overlaps with several other forms of abuse and trauma, it is an important issue to address. Through literature, children can be taught healthy coping strategies and positive ways of interpreting the world around them. Properly discussing, interpreting, and matching books with a verbally abused early reader can motivate that student on more than one level. Properly selecting books for bibliotherapy motivates the student in esteem via therapy at the same time as motivating them to read by enhancing skills and understanding. Overall, this thesis provides professionals with insight on an underrepresented audience of students and provides resources for meeting their educational and personal needs.
REFERENCES


CHILDREN’S BOOKS ANALYZED


Fox, Mem. (2000). *Harriet, you’ll drive me wild!* Harcourt, Inc.: San Diego, CA.


APPENDIX A
Eliminated Children’s Book Data
Appendix A.
Eliminated Children’s Book Data – 19 total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howard b. wigglebottom learns it’s ok to back away</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard b. wigglebottom learns to listen</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ugly duckling</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double dip feelings: Stories to help children understand emotions</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The grouchy ladybug</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the problems of everett anderson</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect square</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trouble with secrets</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something terrible happened and I’m scared to tell:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A book for young victims of abuse</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug’s big comeback</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbit &amp; squirrel: A tale of war &amp; peas</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurty feelings</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It wasn’t my fault</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something might happen</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ugly duckling</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinderella</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place for starr</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing ever happens on 90th street</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny is scared! When sad things happen in the world</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

Tier I: Checklist of Appropriate Children’s Books for Review
Appendix B.

Tier I: Checklist of Appropriate Children’s Books for Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Picture Book</th>
<th>Fiction</th>
<th>Year Published</th>
<th>Written for a Primary Grade Audience</th>
<th>Appears Related to Verbal Abuse</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>All the Animals Were Angry</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Name-calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Quarrel</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Anger and Fighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And My Mean Old Mother Will Be Sorry, Blackboard Bear</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Yelling and Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pillow War</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Children Fighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When They Fight</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Animals and Verbal Aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Fish and the Big Blue Whale</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Hurt Feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Terrible Thing Happened</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Child Coping Afterward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Safe Place</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Verbal Aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Our Neighborhood Lisa's Parents Fight</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Verbal Aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daddy, Daddy Be There</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Angry and Absent Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Mom yelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Title</td>
<td>Picture Book</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>Year Published</td>
<td>Written for a Primary Grade Audience</td>
<td>Appears Related to Verbal Abuse</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns About Mud and Rainbows</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Soothes an Abused Friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Words Hurt</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Father is Verbally Abusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Family That Fights</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something is Wrong at My House</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Domestic Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hear My Roar: A Story of Family Violence</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Domestic Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Penelope's Parrot</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Greed and Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Something Terrible Happens Children Can Learn to Cope with Grief</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Personal Workbook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Max, the Bad Talking Parrot</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Hurt Feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walt Disney's Cinderella</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Upstairs Cat</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Cat Fight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Hurt Me, Mama</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Abusive Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriet, You'll Drive Me Wild!</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Abusive Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Tale Worth Telling</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X Coach Abuse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

Tier II: Bibliotherapeutic Book Criteria
### Bibliotherapeutic Book Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Identifiable Character Roles</th>
<th>Victim Deals with Verbal Abuse</th>
<th>Shows Coping Strategies</th>
<th>Number of Abuse Types</th>
<th>Has a Clear Resolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All the Animals Were Angry</td>
<td>X Characteristics of People</td>
<td>X &quot;Hate&quot;</td>
<td>X Love for the good things</td>
<td>1_Verbal</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Quarreling Book</td>
<td>X_50's Style Family</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X_Aggression, Apology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And My Mean Old Mother Will Be Sorry, Blackboard Bear</td>
<td>X_Loney, Sad Boy</td>
<td>X_Mom Yells</td>
<td>X_Run Away &amp; Teddy</td>
<td>2_Verbal &amp; Neglect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>X_Girl &amp; Dad</td>
<td>X_Abusive Father</td>
<td>X_Tell, Therapy</td>
<td>3_Verbal, Physical, Alcohol</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pillow War</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>1_Physical</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When They Fight</td>
<td>X_Badger Family</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Fish and the Big Blue Whale</td>
<td>X_Fish and Whale</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X_Talk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Terrible Thing Happened</td>
<td>X_Raccoon Child</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X_Negative Behavior &amp; Counselor</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Title</td>
<td>Identifiable Character Roles</td>
<td>Victim Deals with Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>Shows Coping Strategies</td>
<td>Number of Abuse Types</td>
<td>Has a Clear Resolutio n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Safe Place</td>
<td>X_Girl, Mom, &amp; Dad</td>
<td>X_Witness</td>
<td>X_Be Good, Shelter</td>
<td>2_Verbal &amp; Physical</td>
<td>X_What happens to Dad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Our Neighborhood Lisa's Parents Fight</td>
<td>X_Family</td>
<td>X_Witness &amp; Directly</td>
<td>X_Tell</td>
<td>3_Verbal (x2) &amp; Physical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daddy, Daddy Be There</td>
<td>X_Children</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2_Verbal and Neglect</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry</td>
<td>X_Girl and Mom</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns About Mud and Rainbows</td>
<td>X_Rabbit and Alligator</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Words Hurt</td>
<td>X_Boy and Dad</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Family That Fights</td>
<td>X_Boy and Family</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X_Talk</td>
<td>2_Verbal and Physical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something is Wrong at My House</td>
<td>X_Son, Mom, and Dad</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X_Tell Teacher</td>
<td>2_Verbal and Physical</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hear My Roar: A Story of Family Violence</td>
<td>X_Only Child, Mom, Dad</td>
<td>X_Father Roars</td>
<td>X_Aggression, Tell, Therapy</td>
<td>3_Verbal, Physical, Alcohol</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Penelope's Parrot</td>
<td>X_Girl and Parrot</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X_Retaliation</td>
<td>2_Verbal and Bullying</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Title</td>
<td>Identifiable Character Roles</td>
<td>Victim Deals with Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>Shows Coping Strategies</td>
<td>Number of Abuse Types</td>
<td>Has a Clear Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max, the Bad Talking Parrot</td>
<td>X_Name-Calling</td>
<td>X_Name-Call &amp; Talk</td>
<td>2_Verbal &amp; Emotional</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walt Disney's Cinderella</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X_Evil Stepmother</td>
<td>X_Servant &amp; Dreams</td>
<td>1_Verbal</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Upstairs Cat</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Hurt Me, Mama</td>
<td>X_Girl and Mom</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X_Cry, Tell, and Church</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriet, You'll Drive Me Wild!</td>
<td>X_Toddler and Mom</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X_Cry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Tale Worth Telling</td>
<td>X_Child and Gym Teacher</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X.Hide It and Tell</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

Tier III: Objective Chart for Evaluating the Children’s Literature
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title &amp; Author</th>
<th>Who is the:</th>
<th>Main Issue in the Story</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Type of Abuse (s)</th>
<th>Year Published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All the Animals Were Angry</td>
<td>Abuser: Jungle Animals</td>
<td>Victim: Same Jungle Animals</td>
<td>Bystander: Dove</td>
<td>Taking out aggression on others</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Quarreling Book</td>
<td>Abuser: Father, Mother, Sister, Boy</td>
<td>Victim: Mother, Sister, Boy, Dog</td>
<td>Bystander: Dog and Cat</td>
<td>Hurt feelings being taken out on others</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And My Mean Old Mother Will Be Sorry, Blackboard Bear</td>
<td>Abuser: Mother</td>
<td>Victim: Little boy</td>
<td>Bystander: Blackboard Bear</td>
<td>Verbal belittlement; Shame; Running away</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When They Fight</td>
<td>Abuser: Mother and Father Badger</td>
<td>Victim: Mother and Father Badger</td>
<td>Bystander: Child Badger</td>
<td>Parents fight in front of their child who is fearful and alone</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Title &amp; Author</td>
<td>Who is the:</td>
<td>Main Issue in the Story</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Type of Abuse (s)</td>
<td>Year Published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Safe Place</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Living in fear; breaking free with the help of others</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
<td>Pos.</td>
<td>Verbal/Physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Our Neighborhood Lisa's Parents Fight</td>
<td>Stepfather, Mother</td>
<td>Stepfather's temper is out of hand and children suffer</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
<td>Pos.</td>
<td>Verbal/Physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Mother avoids help for her issues and abuses her daughter</td>
<td>Pos.</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
<td>Verbal/Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Words Hurt</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Overworked father takes anger out on his son and others</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
<td>Pos.</td>
<td>Verbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Family That Fights</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Father abuses mother as children bear witness</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
<td>Physical/Verbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Title &amp; Author</td>
<td>Who is the:</td>
<td>Main Issue in the Story</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Type of Abuse (s)</td>
<td>Year Published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something is Wrong at My House</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Young boy</td>
<td>Child suffers consequences of witnessing parents’ abuses</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hear My Roar: A Story of Family Violence</td>
<td>Papa Bear, Mama Bear and Orsa Bear</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Alcoholic father abuses family, losing temper</td>
<td>Pos.</td>
<td>Pos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Penelope's Parrot</td>
<td>Little Girl (Penelope), Pet Parrot</td>
<td>Little Prince Percival</td>
<td>A greedy girl verbally abuses others to get what she wants</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
<td>Pos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walt Disney's Cinderella</td>
<td>Stepmother, Step-sisters</td>
<td>Cinderella, Fairy Godmother</td>
<td>A girl is verbally forced into servitude</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
<td>Pos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Hurt Me, Mama</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Neighbor</td>
<td>Depressed mother abuses her daughter</td>
<td>Neg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriet, You'll Drive Me Wild!</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Harriet, baby girl</td>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>Accidentally doing things one doesn't mean to</td>
<td>Pos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E

Tier III: Subjective Chart for Evaluating the Children’s Literature
Appendix E.
Tier III: Subjective Chart for Evaluating the Children’s Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Characteristics of the:</th>
<th>Main Issue in the story</th>
<th>Problem Resolution</th>
<th>Coping Strategies Shown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abuser</td>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>Bystander</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>All the Animals Were Angry</em></td>
<td>Angry facial expression; “I hate you because...”</td>
<td>Frown; Making eye contact with the abuser</td>
<td>Is very close to or on the other animal; White; “I love you because...”</td>
<td>The animals spread feelings of hatred. The animals insult others in order to boost their own self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative: Making other people feel the same anger as yourself, Taking out aggression on others, Looking for the negative traits in people,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Quarreling Book</em></td>
<td>Busy, Slanted eyebrows, Angry, Quick to forgive, Frowns</td>
<td>Sad, Frowns</td>
<td>The dog still licks and loves the little boy, Loyal, Resilient</td>
<td>The dog does not pay attention to the negativity, staying loyal to the family he loves. The little boy’s laughter and kindness is inspired by the loving pet. Family members apologize and offer compliments to mend their previously harmful words. Just as negativity was contagious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative: Shoving, Insulting others, Releasing hurt feelings on loved ones,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And My Mean Old Mother Will Be Sorry, Blackboard Bear</td>
<td>Angry, Cleaning, Yelling, Scolding, Absent throughout most of the book</td>
<td>Quiet, Messy, Naïve, Lonely, Defiant</td>
<td>Listens, Speaks words of parental wisdom, Companion</td>
<td>A mother yells at her son. The little boy and his imaginary Blackboard Bear run away from home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>Physically aggressive, Smokes cigarettes, Drinks too much, Yells, Insults his daughter, Angry, Overworked, Mean</td>
<td>Scared, Nervous, Imaginative, Aims to please, Quiet, Protective of her father, Lonely</td>
<td>Keeps Daisy company, Talks about the abuse, Reports the father to help Daisy</td>
<td>A single father abuses his daughter with verbal insults and physical aggression. He was left by his wife and is tired from working, turning to alcohol for comfort. Grief over being left by his wife is taken out on Daisy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| When They Fight | Yelling, Fierce looking, Larger than the victim, Mean expressions | Keeps a distance, Retaliates, | Stays away, Watches, Avoids the situation, Fearful, Lonely, Sad | Two parents fight in front of their child. The child runs away, feeling alone and afraid until the parents resolve their conflict and are friends again. | They child bearing witness to the conflict thinks back on happier times with its parents. Focus is placed on the good feelings and emotions attached to better situations. The child remembers that they are still a loving family. | Positive: Removing oneself from trouble, Thinking positively, Love  
Negative: Helplessness, Retaliation, Revenge |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A Safe Place | Straining facial muscles, Yelling, Uses sharp hand gestures, Squinting eyes | Weak, Tired facial details, Frown, Escapes, Loving mother, Crying | Scared, Main character, Wide eyes, Worried expression, Sad, Quiet, Listens, | A little girl witnesses her father verbally and physically abusing her mother. The mother runs away with the little girl to live in a women’s safe house shelter. | The little girl quietly joins her mother in running away from an abusive father. The mother works within a safe house for abused women in order to live there with the little girl. In the end, the mother and little girl move to a new apartment with a new school. | Positive: Join a safe house shelter for abused women and their children, Hugging a stuffed animal, Talking through disputes, Painting traumatic events, Hugging  
Negative: Crying, Run away |
| In Our Neighborhood Lisa’s Parents Fight | Arms folded across chest, clenched fist, Frustrated, Hand on head, Hands on hips, Hits, Points finger, Casual clothing | Hang head low, Looking down, Crying, Sit in fetal position, Frown, Protective, Straight-faced | Dog offers sympathy, Concerned God acts as a listener to the victims’ troubles | Three children live as witnesses to their stepfather verbally and physically abusing their mother, as well as themselves. The stepfather turns to aggression out of stress and a short temper. | Lisa, the little girl, talks to a teacher about the problems happening at home. The teacher talks to her parents and accompanies the children in responding positively to the issues at hand. Lisa welcomes other adults to help her, accepting her parents for who they are. | Positive: Protecting loved ones, Sharing one’s feelings, Praying, Tell a teacher, Stay with a neighbor  
Negative: Pretending nothing is wrong, Crying, Expect nothing from the abuser |
<p>| <strong>Daddy, Daddy Be There</strong> | Emotional, Present in mind but not in reality or spirit, Kind and abusive in various ways | Cheerful, Hopeful, Crying, Lonely, Vulnerable, Sad, Loving, Considerate, Observant | N/A | A child is calling out to their father, begging for their love and attention despite life’s challenges and abuse or neglect. | The child grows older and takes loving care of their father. The child says, “I love you.” | Positive: Words of encouragement, Resiliency, Hope Negative: Crying, Pouting, |
| <strong>Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry</strong> | Very happy then mad, Yells, Defensive to others, Avoids help for her problems | Angry, Sad, Looks down, Hides, Confused, Independent | Try to distract the abuser, Comfort the victim, Offers a place to escape, gives advice | A mother switches from very happy to angry in a short amount of time. She takes out aggression through verbal abuse on her daughter. | The little girl’s grandmother offers advice, couching her on being independent and having positive thoughts. The mother continues to struggle without help, while the little girl finds happiness in her own mind and caring people around her. | Positive: Talking to extended family members, Taking care of oneself, Have a secret snack, Think happy thoughts, Hug a stuffed animal Negative: Wishing for revenge, Avoiding help |
| <strong>The Words Hurt</strong> | Red face, Yelling, Tense, Angry, Tired, Slanted eyebrows, Tall | Embarrassed, Cries, Seeks warmth and happiness, Shy, Looks down, Worried, Disappointed, Blushed cheeks | Mother avoids the situation and enables the abuse, Other parents are concerned and protect the victim | A father loses control of his anger and frustration from being overworked, tired, and stressed. Verbal abuse is directed at his son and concerned parents that witness the abuse. He doesn’t recognize his own aggression. | The son stands up for himself after a teammate’s parents address his father about the abuse taking place. The father and son talk about their feelings and reasons for their actions. The father seeks professional help and apologizes to his son. | Positive: Letting other adults help, Standing up for oneself, Apologizing, Talking about the situation, Compromising, Love, Seek professional help, Kind words Negative: Crying, Yelling back, Avoiding the situation, Quietly allowing abuse to happen, Assuming children won’t remember |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Family That Fights</th>
<th>Father; physically abusive, short temper, opinionated, threatens with belt and loud noises,</th>
<th>Mother, nervous, weak, self-conscious,</th>
<th>Children: Claire, Henry, and Joe; Scared, Worried, Ashamed,</th>
<th>A father is abusing his wife while the children witness and suffer the effects.</th>
<th>Joe, the middle child, imagines what life would be life with a healthy family relationship. He thinks about revenge and the fact that it is not the children’s’ fault.</th>
<th>Positive: Imagining moments of happiness with the abuser and family, Hoping for the best, Acting out scenes of violence with dolls, Drawing, Daydreaming. Negative: Worry, Pretending nothing is wrong, Hitting, Hiding, Crying, Think about future revenge.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Something is Wrong at My House</td>
<td>Clenched fists, Furrowed eyebrows, Yelling, Angry, Pointing,</td>
<td>Worried facial expression, Yelling, In pain, Pointing, Takes it out on the kids</td>
<td>Sad, Main Character, Frowning, Hides, Straight-faced</td>
<td>A young boy’s mom and dad have frequent, violent verbal fights. The boy must learn to identify his own feelings and cope with the situation positively.</td>
<td>The little boy (a) found positive ways to let out his negative feelings, (b) talked to his teacher and neighbor about the domestic violence, (c) focusing on what makes him happy, and (d) called an agency for domestic abuse. In the end, the boy felt healthy and able to pursue positive things in life, smiling and realizing his own self-worth.</td>
<td>Positive: Talking to the following: teacher, school counselor, religious figure, librarian, babysitter, neighbor, or other adults, Exercising, Playing, Do things that make you happy, Calling an agency or the police, Releasing negative feelings, Smiling, Finding friends. Negative: Crying, Hiding, Threatening with a clenched fist, Arguing back at an adult, Fighting other children, Lying, Stealing, Cheating.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hear My Roar: A Story of Family Violence</strong></td>
<td>Throws hands up in the air, Yells, Angled eyebrows, Angry, Controlling, Drinks too much, Falls asleep when he shouldn't</td>
<td>Frowns, Sad, Worried, Kind gestures to abuser, Cries, Compliant, Forgiving, Hard working</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Due to the stress of work and preparing for winter, Papa Bear turns to abuse and drinking to ease his pain. He takes his anger out on Mama Bear and Orsa Bear through verbal and physical abuse, damaging their belongings and esteem.</td>
<td>Mama Bear takes Orsa Bear to talk to a doctor about physical pain and poor appetite resulting from the abuse at home. They talk to the doctor about the abuse and problems they’ve had with Papa Bear. After Papa Bear burns the house down, Mama Bear and Orsa Bear stay in a safe shelter. Papa Bear seeks help from and talks to the doctor.</td>
<td>Positive: Talk to a doctor about physical and psychological pain, Understand it’s not the victim’s fault, Removing oneself from the situation, Stay in a safe shelter, Act out the abuse with dolls, Being kind</td>
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<td><strong>Princess Penelope’s Parrot</strong></td>
<td>Greedy, Selfish, Demanding, Mean, Glutton, Yells, Spoiled</td>
<td>Looks down, Sad, Trapped, Frightened, Shocked, Silent, Defiant</td>
<td>Avoids trouble, Friendly, Generous, Sensitive</td>
<td>A greedy little princess exerts verbal abuse to get what she wants. When her parrot does not submit to this, she uses verbal abuse and physical intimidation out of desperation.</td>
<td>The abused parrot gathers up the courage to repeat the same exact abuse that the princess exerted on it. When the prince witnesses this, he is sensitive to the issue and decides he would rather run away. He is generous to the victim in the end.</td>
<td>Positive: Standing up for oneself, Removing oneself from trouble, Preserving self-confidence</td>
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<td><strong>Walt Disney’s Cinderella</strong></td>
<td>Slanted eyebrows, Points finger, Yells, Belittles the victim, Self-centered, Tease the victim,</td>
<td>Looks down, Submissive, Quiet, Sad, Quick to give up, Hard working</td>
<td>Busy, Stand up for the victim, Support the victim and try to help, Smiling</td>
<td>Cinderella submits to the control and verbal abuse of her stepmother and two stepsisters. A self-centered family takes out insecurities on the victim.</td>
<td>The mice, birds, and fairy godmother that witness Cinderella’s abuse boost her confidence and console her hurt feelings. These bystanders help her feel confident and achieve her dreams. Cinderella’s resiliency throughout the</td>
<td>Positive: Maintaining confidence, Welcoming others’ help, Never letting go of personal dreams</td>
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<td>Selfish, Destructive</td>
<td>victim.</td>
<td>abuse makes her strong and desirable to others.</td>
<td>personally, Helplessness</td>
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<td><strong>Don’t Hurt Me, Mama</strong></td>
<td>Single parent, Low income, Worried facial expressions, Depressed, Drinks too much, Hands on hips, Messy hair</td>
<td>Scared, Lonely, Sad, Reminiscent, Loving</td>
<td>Offers help and an escape, Kind</td>
<td>A mother is depressed, turning to abuse and alcohol after being abandoned by her husband. The negative feelings are taken out on the daughter verbally, physically, and with neglect.</td>
<td>The mother recognizes her problem when her daughter begs not to be hurt. Apologies are made. She seeks professional help, works with a social worker, lets the neighbor help, and goes to church.</td>
<td>Positive: Talks to teacher and school nurse, Remains positive, Avoids the situation of abuse, Apologizing, Hugging, Seeking professional help, Working with a social worker, Negative: Quietly accepting abuse, Crying</td>
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<td><strong>Harriet, You’ll Drive Me Wild!</strong></td>
<td>Hands on hips; Yelling; Straight face</td>
<td>Messy; Wild;</td>
<td>Dog reflects the emotions and non-verbal cues of the child</td>
<td>Both characters do and say things they do not mean</td>
<td>The mother and child apologize for their actions and words, hugging</td>
<td>Positive: Apologizing, Hugging, Saying loving and positive things that they do mean, Explaining one’s good intent, Negative: Crying</td>
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<td><strong>A Tale Worth Telling</strong></td>
<td>Large, Mean, Physically and verbally abusive, Slanted eyebrows</td>
<td>Shy, Worried, Secretive, Lonely, Fearful,</td>
<td>Talkative, Positive, Tries to relate, Helpful, Resourceful</td>
<td>A boy is shy and fearful about physical and verbal abuse forced upon him by a soccer coach.</td>
<td>The victim tells a friend and janitor about the abusive soccer coach. The victim tells other adults and receives hugs and compassion from caring adults.</td>
<td>Positive: Telling close friends, Telling school staff members, Talk to adults, Don’t give up, Negative: Keeping abuse a secret</td>
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