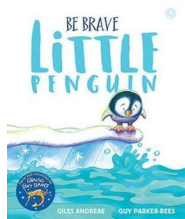


Books to support emotional wellbeing

A reading guide for parents, carers and primary school children

Sharing a story can make space for feelings, questions and connection. This selection explores themes such as worries, belonging, confidence, friendship and loss. All titles are recommended by BookTrust or Books for Topics.

Picture books to share



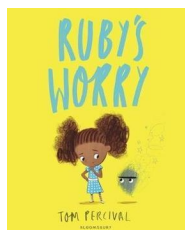
Be Brave, Little Penguin

Giles Andreae; illustrated by Guy Parker-Rees

Ages 2-5 • Worries and trying something new

Pip-Pip is frightened of swimming in the sea. His mother listens to his fears and helps him find the confidence to try. A reassuring story about being heard and asking for support.

Talk together: What could help Pip-Pip feel ready to try?



Ruby's Worry

Tom Percival

Ages 3-6 • Sharing worries

Ruby's worry grows until it starts to take over her day. Talking with someone who has a worry too helps her feel less alone. A gentle starting point for conversations about worries.

Talk together: Who could you talk to when a worry feels big?



Meesha Makes Friends

Tom Percival

Ages 4-5 • Friendship and belonging

Meesha loves making things but finds making friends much harder. Her creativity helps her connect with another child. A thoughtful story about finding your own way to belong.

Talk together: What might help someone feel welcome?



When Sadness Comes to Call

Eva Eland

Ages 4-8 • Recognising sadness

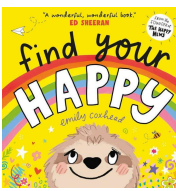
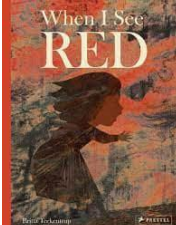
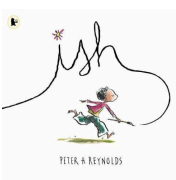
Sadness arrives as an unexpected visitor. Rather than hiding it away, a child learns to acknowledge it and find moments of comfort. This quiet picture book makes room for difficult feelings.

Talk together: What comforting things could the child do with Sadness?

Reading together: Follow your child's pace. They can talk about the characters, point to pictures or simply enjoy the story without answering questions.

Understanding feelings and big emotions

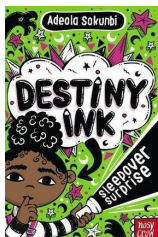
Picture books from the emotional literacy and mental health lists

	The Colour Monster Anna Llenas Ages 2-7 • Naming emotions Colour Monster feels mixed up. With help from a friend, he explores different feelings through colour. A colourful starting point for naming emotions and noticing that feelings can change. Talk together: Which colours would you choose for your feelings?
	Find Your Happy Emily Coxhead Ages 2-11 • Understanding a range of feelings A friendly sloth introduces emotions including worry, anger, sadness and shyness, with practical ideas for responding to them. The book makes space for days when feeling happy is difficult. Talk together: What helps you when you are having a difficult day?
	When I See Red Britta Teckentrup Ages 2-7 • Understanding anger A child experiences anger as a powerful storm. Vivid pictures and expressive language offer a way to talk about how anger feels and the changes it can inspire. Talk together: What might help someone express anger safely?
	Ish Peter H. Reynolds Ages 2-11 • Perfectionism and creativity Ramon loves drawing until a critical comment makes him doubt himself. His sister helps him rediscover the pleasure of creating without getting everything exactly right. Talk together: What could you enjoy making without it needing to be perfect?

Use colours and pictures as invitations to talk, rather than rules about how an emotion should look or feel. Children may experience and describe the same feeling differently.

Friendship and everyday feelings

Illustrated chapter books for sharing or growing independence



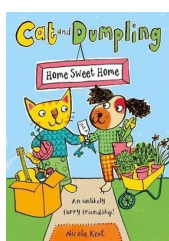
Destiny Ink: Sleepover Surprise

Adeola Sokunbi

Ages 6-7 • New experiences and anxiety

Destiny is excited about her first sleepover but nervous about monsters in the dark. An unexpected visitor has worries of his own. A funny early chapter book about facing unfamiliar experiences.

Talk together: Can someone feel excited and worried at the same time?



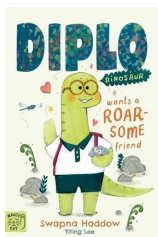
Cat and Dumpling: Home Sweet Home

Nicola Kent

Ages 6-8 • Kindness and compromise

Cat and Dumpling both want the same new flat, but their personalities and interests are very different. This illustrated story explores how listening and compromise can help friends find a way forward.

Talk together: How could they make a plan that works for both of them?



Diplo Dinosaur Wants a Roar-some Friend

Swapna Haddow; illustrated by Yiting Lee

Ages 6-9 • Jealousy and friendship changes

When a new dinosaur arrives at school, Diplo worries about losing his best friend. Talking with his mum helps him understand his jealousy and think about repairing the friendship.

Talk together: What might Diplo say to explain how he feels?



The Council of Good Friends

Nikesh Shukla; illustrated by Rochelle Falconer

Ages 6-9 • Empathy and making amends

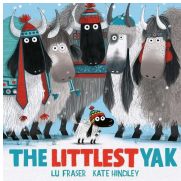
Vinay feels pushed out when his cousin joins his friendship group. After a prank goes wrong, the friends begin to understand the situation differently. A humorous story about jealousy and seeing another person's perspective.

Talk together: What might change if the friends listen to each other?

Choose one gentle question rather than turning the story into a lesson. Ask how a character might feel, what helped them, or what a friend could do. It is fine to pause and return another day.

Confidence and coping with change

Picture books, stories and non-fiction about self-belief and resilience



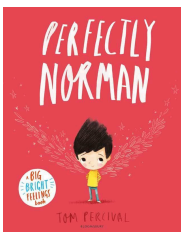
The Littlest Yak

Lu Fraser; illustrated by Kate Hindley

Ages 5-7 • Recognising your strengths

Gertie wishes she were bigger, until her small size turns out to be just what is needed. A rhyming story about recognising your own qualities and valuing what makes you different.

Talk together: What is something you can do in your own way?



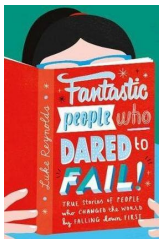
Perfectly Norman

Tom Percival

Ages 2-7 • Self-acceptance

Norman grows wings but hides them under a coat because he worries what others will think. This picture book explores the freedom of accepting yourself and celebrating differences.

Talk together: How could you help someone feel comfortable being themselves?



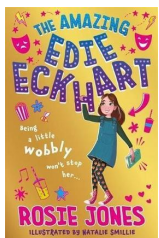
Fantastic People who Dared to Fail!

Luke Reynolds; illustrated by M S Corley

Ages 6-11 • Setbacks and self-belief

Real-life accounts explore how people faced obstacles on the way to achieving their goals. A non-fiction choice for discussing mistakes, perseverance and the support that can help us keep going.

Talk together: What could you learn from a mistake or setback?



The Amazing Edie Eckhart

Rosie Jones; illustrated by Natalie Smillie

Ages 9-11 • Confidence and school transitions

Edie, who has cerebral palsy, starts secondary school in a different class from her best friend. Through the school play and new relationships, she begins to find her own place. A funny diary-style novel.

Talk together: What could help someone feel they belong in a new school?



How to Roller-Skate with One Leg

Ella Dove; illustrated by Jennifer Jamieson

Ages 9-11 • Adapting to change

Maya returns to school after an accident and a leg amputation. With friendship, humour and a list of goals, she navigates changes and setbacks. An uplifting story that also recognises frustration and inaccessible environments.

Talk together: How do Maya's friends support her while respecting her choices?

Grief loss and remembering

Books to choose thoughtfully and share with a trusted adult

These books discuss death and bereavement. Preview them first and consider your child's experience and readiness. Let them choose whether to talk, listen or come back another time.



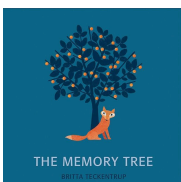
Badger's Parting Gifts

Susan Varley

Ages 2-11 • Remembering someone who has died

After Badger dies, his friends remember the skills, kindness and special moments he shared with them. A gentle animal story about grief and the memories that remain.

Talk together: Would you like to talk about a memory, or just listen today?



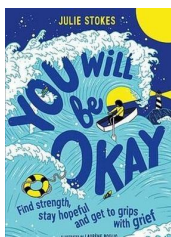
The Memory Tree

Britta Teckentrup

Ages 2-11 • Sharing memories after loss

Fox's friends gather after his death and share memories of their time together. As they remember, a tree begins to grow. A quiet picture book about remembering someone who mattered.

Talk together: Is there a story or memory you would like to keep?



You Will Be Okay

Julie Stokes; illustrated by Laurène Boglio

Ages 9-11 • Grief and bereavement

A non-fiction guide for children experiencing the death of someone close. Stories and practical activities explore memories, feelings and sources of support. Choose this book thoughtfully and share it with a trusted adult.

Talk together: Would you like to share a memory, draw, or simply sit together?

Explore the source booklists

- BookTrust mental health and wellbeing
- BookTrust emotional resilience and expression
- BookTrust feelings and emotions
- BookTrust resilience for ages 8 and above
- Books for Topics Emotional literacy and ELSA
- Books for Topics Mental health
- Books for Topics Bereavement and loss
- Books for Topics Confidence-boosting picturebooks

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