

BIBLIOTHERAPY AND ANGER MANAGEMENT: AN EXAMINATION OF
CHILDREN'S BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY MISTER ROGERS'
NEIGHBORHOOD CHILDCARE PARTNERSHIP

by

Melissa A. Seehaver

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
in
Education

Approved: Two (2) Semester Credits


Dr. Marian Marion

The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin-Stout

August, 2004

The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751

ABSTRACT

Seehaver	Melissa	A.	
(Writer)	(Last Name)	(First Name)	(Middle Initial)
Bibliotherapy and Anger Management: An Examination of Children's Books Recommended by Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Childcare Partnership			
(Title)			
Education	Dr. Marian Marion	August, 2004	37
(Graduate Program)	(Research Advisor)	(Month/Year)	(# of Pages)
American Psychological Association, 5 th edition			
(Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)			

Violence is one of the most complex and difficult student problems faced in public education. It interferes with the students' academic performance, career options, and personal and social growth, and it threatens the very safety of students and faculty. Many of these violent acts are committed by children as a result of the inability to deal appropriately with anger. The cause of the anger may be different among children, but

the inability to understand and deal with the anger is what may lead to aggressive or violent behavior. Teachers, school personnel, as well as parents should realize the role that they can play to help children understand and manage their angry feelings.

There are many different methods of teaching anger management. One way is through bibliotherapy. This study examined the method of bibliotherapy in teaching children to understand and manage their anger. An important aspect to be examined in bibliotherapy is the book selection process. A tool has been developed to help teachers and parents choose children's books that help children appropriately manage their anger. This tool, a checklist, can be found in the book titled, *Guidance of Young Children* (Marion, 2003). The main objective of this research was to examine the books listed on *Mister Roger's Childcare Partnership* (1997) to determine if they met the criteria on Marion's (2004) checklist for choosing books to help children deal with anger. The books listed by *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Child Care Partnership* (1997) are recommended to help children deal with anger. The list contains forty-nine books in three age ranges. The age ranges include birth to three year olds; three to five year olds; and five years of age and older. Four books were randomly selected from each category. Each book was evaluated using the checklist and the results were recorded to determine how well they met the specific criteria as set forth on the checklist (Marion, 2003).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Marian Marion, for helping me formulate this idea for research. She has provided me with many resources, including her research on children and anger. In addition, she has given up some of her time this summer to read the drafts of this thesis.

I would like to take this time to acknowledge and thank Dr. Judy Herr for inspiring and encouraging me to work towards my Master's Degree. She has been a positive role model, and a true inspiration.

I also want to take this time to thank my family. To my husband, Josh, who has supported my education and has patiently understood my need to grow professionally. His kind encouragement and generosity have made it possible for me to finish my coursework and this thesis.

Also, to my parents, who have always supported me in whichever path I have chosen. They have truly shown me the value of education, and have taught me to strive for the best. The values and ethics they have instilled in me have made it possible for me to achieve this goal. I also want to thank my sister, Jennifer, who has spent many hours on the telephone giving me advice and letting me pick her brain.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
<i>Statement of the Problem</i>	5
<i>Research Objective</i>	5
<i>Assumptions and Limitations</i>	5
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	7
<i>Introduction</i>	7
<i>The Rise in Violence Affecting America's Children</i>	7
<i>Aggression and Anger in Young Children</i>	9
<i>Bibliotherapy: An Anger Management Method</i>	11
<i>Brief History of Bibliotherapy</i>	12
<i>Theories Behind Bibliotherapy</i>	13
<i>Procedures for Bibliotherapy</i>	13
<i>Bibliotherapy and Anger Management</i>	16
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	18
<i>Introduction</i>	18
<i>Subject Selection and Description</i>	18
<i>Instrumentation</i>	18
<i>Data Collection</i>	19
<i>Data Analysis</i>	19
<i>Limitations</i>	19
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	20
<i>Introduction</i>	20
<i>Item Analysis</i>	20
<i>Table 1: Results of Examination of Books as Recorded on Checklist</i>	24
<i>Table 2: Number of Statements Recorded on Checklist by Age Category</i>	25

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....	26
<i>Introduction</i>	26
<i>Limitations</i>	26
<i>Discussion</i>	27
<i>Conclusions</i>	28
<i>Recommendations</i>	28
REFERENCES	30
APPENDIX A: CHECKLIST FOR CHOOSING BOOKS ON ANGER	32

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Violence is one of the most complex and difficult student problems we face in public education. It interferes with students' academic performance, career options, and personal and social growth, and it threatens the very safety of students and faculty (Bemak and Keys, 2000). A survey administered nationally by randomly selected schools throughout the nation in 2000 found that more than one in three students said they don't feel safe at school (National School Safety Center School, 2001). The study went on to find that 43% of high school and 37% of middle school boys believed it is okay to hit or threaten a person who makes them angry. Nearly one in five of the girls agreed. Seventy-five percent of all boys and over 60% of all girls surveyed said they actually resorted to violence and have hit someone in the past twelve months because they were angry.

Perhaps the most violent act, school shootings seem to have become more common in recent years. However, data from the National School Safety Center School (as cited in Larson and Lochman, 2002) indicates that the actual number of single homicides in the school setting has declined 63% over the past decade. It is noted that although homicides in schools are on the decline, interpersonal physical aggression is not. In fact, more than two-thirds of 14-17 year olds report that there is a group of students at their school that sometimes or frequently intimidates others (National School Safety Center School, 2001).

It is difficult to pinpoint the reasons that individual children become violent because multiple independent factors are related to the development of violence (Surgeon General's Report, 2000). Many violent acts committed by children are a result of the

inability to cope appropriately with anger. The cause of the anger may be different among children, but the inability to understand and deal with the anger is what may lead to aggressive or violent behavior. In many cases, aggression or violence is a viscous cycle that is apparent in families. For example, many children only see negative ways to deal with anger from their parents. In turn, they may also deal with their anger in those same inappropriate ways. As adults, they may exhibit the same aggressive behavior in front of their own children and so the circle remains unbroken.

Violence has become a part of the everyday world and will never completely vanish. Violence often times is a culmination of feelings of anger and stress that children can not understand and deal with appropriately. However, teachers and other school personnel, as well as parents, should realize that the role they can play to help children is vital. They can teach them to “understand and manage angry feelings in a direct and non-aggressive way” (Marion, 2003 p. 249). When children are able to understand and manage their angry feelings appropriately, they will be less likely to resort to aggressive or violent acts as a way to vent their angry feelings. Perhaps the key to reducing aggressive and violent acts in children is not to increase punishments, but to increase the time spent on teaching children appropriate ways to deal with their anger.

The feeling of anger is often viewed negatively. However, the realization should be that the feeling of anger is not what is bad; it is the way in which individuals deal with the anger that can be bad. Anger is a healthy, basic emotion in which all typically developing human beings experience. When working with children and anger management, it is necessary to help them come to the conclusion that their feeling of anger is not bad or shameful. Anger should be explained in a way that is developmentally

appropriate to the child wherein the age and culture of the child should be considered as well as the developmental level of the child. To illustrate, when explaining anger to a two-year-old, it is important to label feelings of anger as “mad” instead of using the word “angry.” As the vocabulary of the child grows, introducing the word “angry” would be more appropriate. In addition, it is not normal for a two-year-old child to be able to take the point of view of another. When handling a situation when a two-year-old becomes aggressive with another child, it would not be appropriate to try to ask the aggressive child how it made the other child feel since it is hard for two-year-olds to take the perspective of another. When helping children deal with their anger, knowledge of child development needs to be consulted and implemented.

There are many different methods of teaching about anger management that parents, teachers, and therapists can utilize. Perhaps one of the most influential ways that anger management can be taught indirectly is by modeling appropriate behaviors. Modeling is a powerful method of teaching. The children will see their teachers or parents deal with anger in a positive and appropriate way. Over time, that child may use those same techniques in a situation that requires them to deal with their own anger. Some professional methods used by therapists include play therapy, individual therapy, small group therapy, games and bibliotherapy.

This study will examine the method of bibliotherapy in teaching children to understand and manage their anger, i.e., to use literature to help children relate to and work through their problems. Bibliotherapy consists of reading, viewing, or hearing the material (Borders and Paisley, 1992). The literature can be read to the children or the children can read the material by themselves. In most cases, the reading is followed by a

discussion led by the facilitator. The student is believed to receive the benefits of bibliotherapy by passing through three stages (Bibliotherapy, n.d.). The first stage is identification wherein the student identifies with the book character or events in the story. The second stage is catharsis. The child becomes emotionally involved in the story and is able to release pent-up emotions under safe conditions. The last stage is insight. The student becomes aware that his/her problems might also be addressed or solved. Possible solutions to the book character's and one's own personal problems are identified.

Bibliotherapy has been around since ancient times and has been used to help people deal with a wide variety of problems. Aiex (1993) wrote that, "in a review of the literature of the effects of bibliotherapy, a majority of the studies show mixed results for the efficacy of bibliotherapy as a separate treatment for the solving of problems" (p. 1). Although there are mixed results about bibliotherapy as a treatment, it can be said that in order for bibliotherapy to be successful, it is essential that careful planning go into the selection of the book. The book should not portray characters displaying inappropriate ways of dealing with the anger and at the same time should not minimize the solution. Furthermore, the development of the child should be taken into consideration so that the book chosen is of the language that the child can comprehend. The children must also be able to relate to the characters. Thus, the situation presented in the book must be one that the child can also relate.

Since the selection process is so delicate and yet so important, teachers must have knowledge of the criteria for choosing appropriate books to help children deal with anger. One tool has been designed to determine if a children's book is appropriate in helping them manage their anger. This tool, a checklist, can be found in Marion's book titled

Guidance of young children (2003). This checklist will be used to evaluate books that have been recommended to help children deal with anger to see if they are, in fact, appropriate. Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Child Care Partnership (1997) compiled the list of recommended books.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the books from Mister Rogers' Childcare Partnership (1997) meet the specific criteria for selecting books to help children deal with anger as set forth by the checklist designed by Marion (2003). The study will be conducted during June/July of 2004 and the books will be chosen by the stratified random method.

Research Objective

This research will focus mainly on one objective. It is:

1. Examine books listed on Mister Rogers' Childcare Partnership (1997) to determine which age category best meets the criteria on Marion's (2003) checklist for choosing books to help children deal with anger.

Assumptions and Limitations

Several assumptions and limitations are apparent in this research. These are:

1. The checklist developed by Marion (2003) is valid and reliable.
2. The examiner will use the same judgment on each of the selected books.
3. There is a difference in appropriateness of books developed for younger and older children.
4. The sample size may not be large enough to make generalizations to the specific age group or the entire book list.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the rise in violence in America's children, including national statistics and possible factors that could cause aggressive behavior in children. Aggression and anger in children will be addressed, followed by the definition of bibliotherapy. In addition, the history, theories, and procedures for bibliotherapy will be explained. This chapter will conclude with a discussion on choosing appropriate books to help children deal with their anger.

The Rise in Violence Affecting America's Children

The statistics on violence paints a confusing picture. The general numbers do not reveal an overall increase in violent incidents, but they do tell us that violence against children is rapidly increasing and youngsters are in serious peril (Curwin and Mendler, 1997). The number of violent acts committed by young people against young people in America is on the rise. The following list of statistics (Capozzoli and McVey, 2000) will support this idea.

- Homicide victims rates for 14-17-year-olds increased almost 150% from 1985 to 1993.
- Since 1993, homicide rates for teens and young adults have declined, but are still considerably higher than the levels of the 1980s.
- Homicides committed by younger offenders are more likely to involve multiple offenders.
- The number of homicides involving adult or juvenile gang violence has increased

sevenfold since 1976.

- Teenagers and young adults were more likely to become victims of violent crimes than older persons.
- In 1996, students age 12 to 18 were victims of about 225,000 incidents of nonfatal violent crimes at school.

To further support this idea, Curwin and Mendler (1997) have observed some recent trends: (1) There are more behaviorally disruptive students than ever before, and the rate is increasing, (2) Children are becoming more disruptive at younger ages. What were once exclusively high school misbehaviors have reached the primary grades, (3) Children are more violent, and teens are especially prone to violence. They are 2.5 times as likely to suffer an incident of violence than those over age 20, (4) Many children lack any sense of caring or remorse, and (5) Students are increasingly described by those who educate them as aggressive and hostile.

What causes violent behavior in children? No one cause can be pinpointed. Often times, violence stems from uncontrollable anger. Not all violent children fit into the same category, although as many as 80% of disruptive children come from dysfunctional homes (Curwin and Mendler, 1997). Many possible factors can be attributed to why children rage. Some include: personality conflicts, conduct disorder, abusive parents, inept parents, stress, lack of conflict resolution skills, media influence, substance abuse, and mental disorders (Capozzoli and McVey, 2000). Some data indicate a decrease over the last 10 years in both the number and percentage of murders, muggings, robberies, and rapes (Curwin and Mendler, 1997). However, in recent years, the nation has been more

terrified by aggression than ever before. Violence today feels different - more heartless, more senseless, and more random. Curwin and Mendler, (1997) described violence:

Violence is bred in an atmosphere of hostility and aggression where it feels and looks better to hurt than to resolve and tolerate.

The image of a hero as one who escalates aggression and conquers is pervasive, while the image of the hero as one who stays calm and finds real solutions is nearly nonexistent. (p. 5)

Before children become violent, they may often act aggressively for long periods of time. Reactions to anger can be illustrated on a spectrum from sweating and flushing of the skin all the way to aggression and violence. Is it possible to stop violence and aggression by first showing children how to understand and deal with their anger? No one factor will completely stop violence; however, by working with young children and showing them appropriate anger management coping strategies, it may be possible to reduce the amount of violent crimes committed by children.

Aggression and Anger in Young Children

It is important to realize that not all children who display aggression behaviors will in turn become violent. Not all children who are aggressive in the elementary schools go on to become adolescent fighters and victimizers, but early, chronic aggression is enough of a risk factor to warrant being taken very seriously (Larson and Lochman, 2002). Aggression can be defined as a part of human nature and some researchers believe it is chemically built into our genes (Curwin and Mendler, 1997). Aggression is a problem-solving behavior that is learned early in life, is learned well, and is resistant to change. It also is "any behavior that injures or diminishes a person or animal in some way

or damages or destroys property. Aggression can be direct or indirect, impulsive or well planned" (Marion, 2003, 268).

Seriously aggressive behaviors occur in approximately 5-10% of children, with boys outnumbering the girls by almost three to one (Larson and Lochman, 2002). When attempting to look at why children become aggressive, the most complete explanation is a systems or ecological approach (Marion, 2003). Professionals taking this approach acknowledge that a child is embedded in a variety of social systems and believe that these systems work together to shape a child's aggression. A child quite frequently first learns about aggression in his/her family system. Remember that "aggression is a learned behavior, and children learn aggression in their family" (Marion, 2003, p.276). Children who live in aggressive families observe their parents using aggression to resolve conflicts. In turn, these children obtain "aggressive scripts" that tell them to behave aggressively in certain interactions. Almost equal in importance to a family's influence is the media. Television, videos, and movies help children learn aggression. Research shows that television can and does increase subsequent aggression in children and televised violence increases a child's passive acceptance of aggression by others. The child's peer groups are another system that teaches and reinforces aggression. Peers model aggression, reinforce aggression, and regulate aggression by setting norms. Families and peer groups are themselves embedded in a larger setting, the community and culture, and it is the teachings from these settings that families learn and pass on to their children.

Often times, aggression may be the result of an inappropriate way of dealing with anger. Anger is a feeling of indignation and hostility that involves complex emotions and

depends on how we evaluate events and/or situations. Our own thought processes perpetuate anger and everyone has felt angry feelings at one time or another. There are negative functions of anger, which makes it difficult to think clearly and evaluate options and may also cause a person to discharge or release feelings in an irresponsible manner. There are also constructive functions of anger, including giving us vigor and stamina, giving us information about people and situations, and communicating our negative feelings to other people (Capozzoli and McVey, 2000).

Anger is believed to have three components. The first component of anger is the emotional state defining anger as “an emotion, an affective state, or feeling experienced when a goal is blocked or needs are frustrated” (Marion, 2003, p.238). The second component of anger is its expression, which occurs in infancy. Children who believe that an important goal has been blocked attempt to cope by expressing the anger that they feel. The third component of the anger experience is understanding. “The puzzling thing about anger in early childhood is that a child’s understanding of anger develops later than the other two components. Because the three components of the anger experience develop at different times, children in early childhood settings can feel and express anger but not understand it” (Marion, 2003 p.243). In addition, since young children cannot understand the feeling of anger, often times they act without evaluating their feelings.

Bibliotherapy: An Anger Management Method

Since aggressive and violent behavior can stem from the inability to deal with the feeling of anger, it is important to look at some practices that are used by professional therapists, teachers, and parents to help children appropriately deal with their anger. Possibly by helping children begin to understand and cope with their anger, fewer

children will become aggressive and violent. One of the ways to help children deal with their anger is through a process called bibliotherapy.

Bibliotherapy generally refers to the use of literature to help people cope with emotional problems, mental illness, changes in their lives, or to produce affective change and promote personality growth and development (Abdullah, 2002). It consists of reading, viewing or hearing the materials, followed by a discussion led by a facilitator. The therapy aspect takes place during this dynamic interaction between the reader and the literature. When people read, each person brings their own needs and problems to this reading experience; therefore, individuals interpret the author's words based on their own personal experiences (Syverson, 1999).

Brief History of Bibliotherapy

It is believed that bibliotherapy can be traced back to Aristotle (Syverson, 1999). Aristotle believed that literature had healing effects. The ancient library at Thebes had the inscription, "The Healing Place of the Soul" (Pardeck and Pardeck, 1993). In Alexandria, Egypt, the library displayed the words, "Medicine for the Mind." Aiex (1993) wrote that the idea of healing through books could be traced from the days of the first libraries in Greece. Myracle (1995) also contended that the powerful effects of reading have been known since ancient times, and it was only in the early 1900s that a specific term was coined for the use of books to effect a change in a person's thinking or behavior. Myracle (1995) went on to specify that in a 1916 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*, Samuel Crothers discussed a technique of prescribing books to patients who needed help understanding their problems, and he labeled this technique "bibliotherapy."

Theories Behind Bibliotherapy

The underlying premise of bibliotherapy is that clients identify with literary characters similar to themselves, and that helps the clients release emotions, gain new directions in life, and explore new ways of interacting. For example, teenagers may feel relief that they are not the only ones facing a specific problem. They learn vicariously how to solve their problems by reflecting on how the characters in the book solve theirs (Abdullah, 2002).

Bibliotherapy has varied greatly in approach and focus. Traditional bibliotherapy is more 'reactive' in its approach in that the process focused on getting individuals to react positively or negatively to the book. More recent approaches assume the therapeutic process is more interactive. Abdullah writes:

The reader becomes part of the unfolding intellectual and emotional process of the story, and in struggling to understand what is being communicated at the deepest levels, the reader responds by making a positive alteration or modification in behavior or attitude." Participants engage in activities that help them reflect on what they read, such as group discussion and dialogue journal writing. (2002, p.1)

Procedures for Bibliotherapy

Abdullah (2002) wrote that activities in bibliotherapy are designed to:

- provide information
- provide insight
- stimulate discussion about problems
- communicate new values and attitudes

- create awareness that other people have similar problems
- provide realistic solutions to problems

The bibliotherapy process progresses through four stages: identification, selections, presentation, and follow-up (Abdullah, 2002). Identification starts with the therapeutic relationship being established and the development of trust (Syverson, 1999). Also during this stage, the facilitator must show great sensitivity to the student's needs. The student and the facilitator need to agree upon the presenting problems and begin to explore the problem.

The second stage is the selection of literature. The selection process takes skill and insight, as the books must provide correct information about a problem while not imparting a false sense of hope (Abdullah, 2002). Aiex (1993, p. 2) wrote that, "...a practitioner must remember that it is more than just the casual recommendation of a certain book to an individual- it is a deliberate course of action that requires care planning." Aiex (1993) went on to explain that the books chosen by the practitioner must have literary merit – a poorly written novel with stereotyped characters and simplistic answers to complex questions is probably worse than not reading anything at all and can even leave children or young people with a negative view of literature. Tu (1999) has written a list of suggested criteria for selecting literature to help children cope with problems. He recommended that literature to help children cope with problems should have these features: (1) be well-written and appropriate to the child's developmental level, (2) provide stories using language familiar to children that is realistic in terms of their life experience, (3) honestly portray the condition and future possibilities for the characters. Illustrations should also portray problems in an honest and straightforward

manner, (4) present multidimensional characters experiencing legitimate and relatable emotions, (5) offer potential for controversy, (6) explore the process of working out problems, (7) demonstrate clear channels of communication and responses to children's questions, and (8) offer situations which generate genuine enthusiasm in the reader.

Pardeck and Pardeck (1993) explain that another aspect to consider in the second stage is the student's interests and reading levels. The material cannot be too childish or too difficult and should include an aspect that is interesting to the reader.

The next stage is the presentation stage. The selected books must then be presented carefully and strategically so that the children are able to see similarities between themselves and the book characters (Abdullah, 2002).

Once the children can identify with the main character, they enter the follow-up stage during which they share what they have gained. They may express catharsis verbally in discussion or writing, or nonverbal means such as art, role-playing, creative problem solving, or self-selected options for students to pursue individually (Abdullah, 2002). This process assists the student to gain an awareness of new ways of responding to troublesome situations and discover others share similar life problems (Syverson, 1999). Agreement is not always a necessary component of bibliotherapy as long as the child can support and clearly explain why they feel the way they do. Bibliotherapy promotes the development of student outside interests by exposing them to different patterns of living, encouraging students to model the appropriate actions of principal characters, and increasing the student's love of literature and reading.

The success of bibliotherapy programs depends largely on how well teachers or counselors play their vital role as facilitator throughout the whole process. In addition, if

in the selection stage inappropriate books are chosen, the presentation and follow-up stages will not benefit the intended audience.

Bibliotherapy and Anger Management

The topics that bibliotherapy could be used to address are seemingly endless. The most common topics include alcohol and drugs, anger and other emotions, attitudes and values, child abuse, family breakdown, peers and school, and sex education (Syverson, 1999).

Books dealing with the emotion of anger can help a child cope more effectively with such strong emotions. First, they receive information about anger, then are encouraged to make connections between the literature and their life, and finally, will be more likely to view their own feelings of anger as natural and normal (Marion, 2003).

Books selected to help children appropriately manage anger should meet specific criteria (Marion, 2003). Evaluation of the books should be conducted by answering the four following questions:

1. How does this book deal with words/vocabulary for angry feeling?
2. Does this book identify the specific event that seemed to elicit the anger?
3. How well does this book convey the idea that feeling angry is a natural and normal experience?
4. How does this story urge children to manage their anger?

After the selection processes is finished, a carefully planned lesson or discussion must be developed. The lesson planned needs to be sharply focused on anger by developing specific introductory remarks to motivate thinking and help children to concentrate on the topic of anger. In addition, specific comments and questions should be

prepared to use when reading the book, as well as a thoughtful follow-up. Avoid merely asking children to relate the chronological events of the story. Instead, clarify the information presented on how they manage anger responsibly. Concentrate on reviewing concepts or vocabulary relating to anger. Most important, communicate your acceptance of anger as a natural and normal emotion, and your approval of managing anger in a direct, nonaggressive way (Marion, 2003).

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will include information about the sample selection, a description of the sample and the instrumentation used. This chapter will further describe the data analysis procedures and conclude with limitations to the methodology.

Subject Selection and Description

All books are being selected from a list that has been recommended for use in bibliotherapy for helping children deal with anger. The list was compiled by Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Child Care Partnership (1997) and contains books in three age ranges. Nine books are identified in the birth to three year age range; nine books are identified in the three to five year age range; and 24 books are identified as appropriate for the five years of age and older range. Four books will be randomly selected from each category.

Instrumentation

The books will be evaluated to see if they meet the specific criteria as set forth on a checklist developed by Marion (2003). The checklist is designed to answer four questions:

1. How does this book deal with words/vocabulary for angry feelings?
2. Does this book identify the specific event that seemed to elicit the anger?
3. How well does this book convey the idea that feeling angry is a natural and normal experience? and
4. How does this story urge children to manage their anger?

Each question has four statements, lettered A-D, which represent various degrees of appropriateness. Questions that are answered most closely to statement "A" would be least appropriate ranging to most appropriate at statement "D". The examiner will choose the statement that best describes the book. A copy of the checklist is located in Appendix A. This checklist has not been measured for reliability or validity.

Data Collection

During the summer semester of 2004 the selected books will be evaluated. Each book will be evaluated individually and the most appropriate statement listed for each question will be recorded.

Data Analysis

The data is ordinal and all appropriate descriptive statistics will be calculated. The three age categories will be compared to determine in which age category the best books were most appropriate. The appropriateness of the book will be determined by how many appropriate statements are marked under each question. Statements C and D are considered most appropriate, while statements A and B are considered least appropriate.

Limitations

A limitation of the instrument is that the checklist has not been measured for validity or reliability and could be more appropriate for a specific age range. Furthermore, the data collected was based on the opinion of the examiner and therefore could be interpreted differently by another examiner. Moreover, intrajudge reliability has not been established or tested. In addition, the sample size used may not be large enough to make generalizations to the specific age category or to the entire book list.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the books recommended to help child understand and cope with anger by Mister Roger's Neighborhood Childcare Partnership (1997). The books were evaluated by completing a checklist, developed by Marion (2003). The books were evaluated on July 2, 2004 and July 6, 2004 and the most appropriate statement under each question of the checklist was determined. Four books were randomly selected for each of the age categories: birth to three year age range; three to five year age range; and five years of age and older.

Item Analysis

Checklist Item One: How does this book deal with words/vocabulary for angry feelings?

- A. Does not label the feeling.
- B. Uses one word, e.g. "mad" or "angry" exclusively.
- C. Uses two different words, e.g. "mad" and "angry" or some other combination.
- D. Uses several different words; nicely illustrates how to describe anger with different words.

Three out of the four books evaluated from the birth to three years old age group do not label the feeling of anger. One book in this age category uses one word exclusively to label the feeling. In the three to five age group, one book used one word to label the feeling, two books used two different words, and one book used several different words to describe the feeling. In the five years of age and older group, one book

does not label the feeling, one book used one word exclusively, one book used two different words, and one book used several different words. Overall, of the twelve books evaluated, four of them do not label the feeling of anger, three books use one word exclusively, three books label the feeling with two different words and two books use several words to describe the feeling.

Checklist Item Two: Does this book identify the specific event that seemed to elicit the anger?

- A. Not at all. Anger trigger never mentioned.
- B. Identified a trigger for the anger, but was inaccurate.
- C. Identified the anger trigger, but in a blaming, accusatory way.
- D. Correctly identified the specific thing that brought on the anger, and without blaming.

In the birth to three year age range, two books never mentioned the anger trigger, and two books correctly identified the specific thing that brought on the anger without blaming. In the three to five year age range, one book never identified the trigger of the anger, while three books correctly identified the onset without blaming the child. All four of the books in the five years and older age range correctly identified the specific thing that brought on the anger, and without blaming. Of the twelve books examined, three books never mention the trigger for the anger, while the other nine books correctly identify the specific thing that brought on the anger, and without blaming.

Checklist Item Three: How well does this book convey the idea that feeling angry is a natural and normal experience?

- A. Not at all. It actually blames the child in the story for feeling angry.

- B. Not very well. It acknowledges that the child is angry, but in a guilt-inducing way.
- C. Adequately. Acknowledges anger but says it nothing about being OK.
- D. Very well. Clearly conveys ideas that anger is a normal emotion.

One book in the birth to three year old age range does not convey the idea that feeling angry is natural and normal. Two books acknowledge the anger, but do not indicate that it is okay, and one book clearly conveys the idea that anger is a normal emotion. In the three to five age range, three books adequately address the idea that feeling angry is a natural and normal experience, although they do not say it is okay. One book clearly conveys the idea that anger is a normal emotion. In the five years and older age range, two of the books adequately address the idea that feeling angry is a natural and normal experience, although they do not say it is okay. The other two books clearly convey the idea that anger is a normal emotion. One out of the twelve books evaluated does not convey the idea that feeling angry is a natural and normal experience. Seven of the twelve adequately convey the idea that anger is natural, but say nothing about it being okay. The remaining four books clearly convey that anger is a normal emotion.

Checklist Item Four: How does this story urge children to manage their anger?

- A. This story does not urge children to manage their anger at all.
- B. With aggressive strategies exclusively.
- C. Sometimes with aggressive strategies.
- D. With positive strategies.

One book in the birth to three age range does not urge the children to manage their anger at all, two books urge the children to manage their anger with sometimes

aggressive strategies, and one book urges the children to manage their anger with positive strategies. In the three to five year age category, all four books urge children to manage their anger with positive strategies. In the five years and older range, one book does not urge children to manage their anger, two books urge them to manage it with sometimes aggressive strategies, and one book urges children to manager their anger with positive strategies. Overall, two books do not urge children to manage their anger at all, four books urge them to manage it with sometimes aggressive strategies, with the other six books urge them to manage their anger with positive strategies.

The results of all of the examination of books are displayed on Table 1.

Table 1: Results of Examination of Books as Recorded on Checklist

	Books evaluated for birth to three year age range	Books evaluated for three to five year age range	Books evaluated for five years of age and older range
1. How does this book deal with words/vocabulary for angry feelings?			
A. Does not label the feeling.	3	0	1
B. Uses one word, e.g. "mad" or "angry" exclusively.	1	1	1
C. Uses two different words, e.g. "mad" and "angry" or some other combination.	0	2	1
D. Uses several different words; nicely illustrates how to describe anger with different words.	0	1	1
2. Does this book identify the specific event that seemed to elicit the anger?			
A. Not at all. Anger trigger never mentioned.	2	1	0
B. Identified a trigger for the anger, but was inaccurate.	0	0	0
C. Identified the anger trigger, but in a blaming, accusatory way.	0	0	0
D. Correctly identified the specific thing that brought on the anger, and without blaming.	2	3	4
3. How well does this book convey the idea that feeling angry is a natural and normal experience?			
A. Not at all. It actually blames the child in the story for feeling angry.	1	0	0
B. Not very well. It acknowledges that the child is angry, but in a guilt-inducing way.	0	0	0
C. Adequately. Acknowledges anger but says nothing about it being OK.	2	3	2
D. Very well. Clearly conveys idea that anger is a normal emotion.	1	1	2
4. How does this story urge children to manage their anger?			
A. This story does not urge children to manage their anger at all.	1	0	1
B. With aggressive strategies exclusively	0	0	0
C. Sometimes with aggressive strategies.	2	0	2
D. With positive strategies.	1	3	1

In examining the appropriateness of the books by age category, the three to five year old category had the highest number of appropriate statements. It had a total of nine statements that were the most appropriate. The five year old and older category had eight most appropriate statements which made it the second highest. The books in the zero to three years old category received the lowest number of most appropriate statements with four, respectively. The number of appropriate statements that each age category received is evidenced in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of Statements Recorded on Checklist by Age Category

Statements ranging from least appropriate (A) to most appropriate (D)	Books evaluated for birth to three year old age range	Books evaluated for three to five year old age range	Books evaluated for five years of age and older age range
Statement A	7	1	2
Statement B	1	1	1
Statement C	4	5	5
Statement D	4	9	8

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Introduction

Violence is often triggered by the inability to cope with angry feelings. Children may act aggressively or violently as a way to vent or express angry feelings. They may have not been taught how to appropriately cope with their angry feelings, and may not understand that anger is a normal and healthy emotion. One way to help children begin to understand the feeling of anger, and how to appropriately cope with angry is through bibliotherapy. Books used for bibliotherapeutic reasons need to be carefully selected. The selection process for books that help children manage their anger, specifically, is extremely important as well. Books selected must appropriately label the feeling, identify the trigger, express that anger is a normal emotion, and urge the children to positively manage their anger. This study looked at books designated by Mister Roger's Neighborhood Childcare Partnership (1997) to help children manager their anger. A checklist developed by Marion (2003) was used to evaluate each of the twelve books to determine how appropriately they were to help children cope with their anger.

Limitations

There were several limitations apparent in this research study. The checklist that was used to evaluate the books (Marion, 2003) has not been tested for validity or reliability. Moreover, there is a difference in appropriateness of books developed for younger children and older children. Therefore, the checklist may be more appropriate to use when selecting books for a specific age range. Another limitation included that the examiner evaluated the books on two different days; therefore the possibility of

intrajudge reliability could be questionable. Lastly, the sample size is relatively small and therefore may not represent the whole and may not be large enough to make generalizations to the specific age group or the entire book list.

Discussion

In each age range, the statements were tallied to see how many of them received the most appropriate statement. The checklist contained four questions that each had a possibility of one out of four statements marked. Four books in each category were evaluated, making a total of sixteen statements marked for each age category. Each age category was compared to see which had the greatest amount of most appropriate statements. The statements on the checklist lettered "A" were the least appropriate and the statements increased in appropriateness as the letters continued. Statements lettered "D" were the most appropriate.

In examining the books for three age ranges, the books recommended by Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Childcare Partnership (1997) that met the most appropriate criteria on the checklist (Marion, 2003) to help children understand and deal with their anger were recommended for children three to five years old. Out of the total possible sixteen statements, nine of them were the most appropriate answer, five were the second most appropriate answers, one was the second least appropriate answer and one was the least appropriate answer. For this age range, over half of the statements that were marked for these books were the most appropriate answer.

The books recommended by Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Childcare Partnership (1997) as being appropriate for five year olds and older were the second most appropriate age range. There were a total of eight most appropriate answers for this age range.

The books that had the most inappropriate statements on the checklist were recommended by Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Childcare Partnership (1997) for children in the birth to three years old category.

Conclusions

The books recommended by Mister Rogers' Childcare Partnership (1997) that were determined most appropriate, according to the checklist (Marion, 2003) were for children from three to five years of age. The books recommended for children for five years of age and older were the second most appropriate, and the books recommended for children from birth to age three were the least appropriate.

Across the three age ranges, the books proposed by Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Childcare Partnership (1997) to help children manage their anger were appropriate. The books were most appropriate in identifying the cause of anger and urging children to manage their anger with positive strategies. Very few of the books, however, used several words to describe the feeling of anger.

The checklist designed by Marion (2003) may be more appropriate to use in selecting books for children three years old and older. Some of the components of the checklist would not be appropriate to use in selecting books for children under three since those books should be written more simplistically.

Recommendations

A larger sample size from the list of recommended books should be evaluated to see if the same results would occur and the generalizations of this study were accurate. In addition, the checklist (Marion, 2003) should be used to evaluate a larger population of

books across various age ranges to test its reliability and validity within specific age ranges.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, M. H. (2002). *Bibliotherapy* (Report NO. EDO-CS-02-08). Bloomington, ID: Indiana University, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 99 CO 0028)
- Aiex, N. K. (1993). *Bibliotherapy* (Report NO. EDO-CS-93-05). Bloomington, ID: Indiana University, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 357 333)
- Bemak, F., and Keys, S. (2000). *Violent and aggressive youth: Intervention and prevention strategies for changing times*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Bibliotherapy. (n.d.). Retrieved October 16, 2003 from http://maxweber.hunter.cuny.edu/pub/eres/EDSPC715_MCINTYRE/Biblio.html
- Borders, S. and Paisley, P. (1992). Children's literature as a resource for classroom guidance. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 27(2), 131-140
- Capozzoli, T., and McVey, R. (2000). *Kids killing kids: Managing violence and gangs in schools*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press LLC.
- Curwin, R. and Mendler, A. (1997). *As tough as necessary: Countering violence, aggression, and hostility in our schools*. Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD.
- Larson, J. and Lochman, J. (2002) *Helping schoolchildren cope with anger*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Marion, M. (2003). *Guidance of young children* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Mister Rogers' Neighborhood Childcare Partnership (1997). *Mad feelings workshop*

booklist. Retrieved November 1, 2003, from:

http://www.familycommunications.org/early_care/01-12-07_mf_booklist.pdf

Myracle, L. (1995). Molding the minds of the young: The history of bibliotherapy as applied to children and adolescents. *The Alan Review*, 22(2). Retrieved October

16, 2003, from: <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/winter95/Myracle.html>

National School Safety Center (2001). NSSC review of school safety research: school safety statistics June 2001, *National School Safety Center*: Westlake Village,

CA.

Pardeck J.T. and Pardeck, J.A. (Eds.). (1993). *Bibliotherapy: A clinical approach for helping children*. Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers.

Syverson, C. (1999). *Bibliotherapy: A review of the literature*. Unpublished masters thesis, University of Wisconsin Stout: Menomonie, Wisconsin.

Tu, W. (1999). Using literature to help children cope with problems (Report NO. EDO-CS-99-09). Bloomington, ID: Indiana University, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 436 0008).

U.S. Public Health Service (2001). *Youth violence: a report of the surgeon general*.

Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved on

July 2, 2004 from <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence>

APPENDIX A

Checklist: Guidelines for Choosing Books on Anger

Books on anger should meet specific criteria (Marion, 1997, 1999, 2003). Evaluate books on anger by completing this checklist:

Book title: _____ Author: _____

Evaluation date: _____ Age Range: _____

1. **How does this book deal with words/vocabulary for angry feelings?**
 - A. Does not label the feeling.
 - B. Uses one word, e.g. "mad" or "angry" exclusively.
 - C. Uses two different words, e.g. "mad" and "angry" or some other combination.
 - D. Uses several different words; nicely illustrates how to describe anger with different words.

2. **Does this book identify the specific event that seemed to elicit the anger?**
 - A. Not at all. Anger trigger never mentioned.
 - B. Identified a trigger for the anger, but was inaccurate.
 - C. Identified the anger trigger, but in a blaming, accusatory way.
 - D. Correctly identified the specific thing that brought on the anger, and without blaming.

3. **How well does this book convey the idea that feeling angry is a natural and normal experience?**
 - A. Not at all. It actually blames the child in the story for feeling angry.
 - B. Not very well. It acknowledges that the child is angry, but in a guilt-inducing way.
 - C. Adequately. Acknowledges anger but says nothing about it being OK.
 - D. Very well. Clearly conveys idea that anger is a normal emotion.

4. **How does this story urge children to manage their anger?**
 - A. This story does not urge children to manage their anger at all.
 - B. With aggressive strategies exclusively.
 - C. Sometimes with aggressive strategies.
 - D. With positive strategies.