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THEME

**CHANGING ROLES OF LIBRARIES
IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

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SCHEDULE OF PROGRAMME/BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Roles of Libraries in Biblio-therapy

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ABSTRACT

A thorough investigation into the notion of bibliotherapy has revealed that it has existed for a significant duration and is deeply rooted in ancient librarianship. Nevertheless, this concept has transcended beyond the confines of libraries and has found its way into other corporate and organizational settings. This article examines the expanded role that libraries and librarians play in the field of bibliotherapy. Primarily, it delves into the essence of bibliotherapy, which involves the amalgamation of literature and healing. This approach is specifically designed to bring about healing for library users through their engagement with relevant literature and their unique personalities. Additionally, the etymology of the concept is explored. Furthermore, this article expedites the various forms of bibliotherapy, the relationship between bibliotherapy and library science, as well as the types of bibliotherapy that can be integrated into library services. It also highlights the principles of use that would facilitate the effective utilization of library resources. The outcome of this study is the development of a roadmap that underscores the necessity of integrating bibliotherapy into library services. Moreover, it suggests



the extension of this subject matter into clinics, hospitals, prisons, and rehabilitation centers, while also emphasizing the importance of systematic exploration within their respective domains. This article recommends that reading and developmental bibliotherapy be regarded as highly essential in library settings. To ensure its effective implementation, library staff must receive proper training, orientation, and users' education. Furthermore, libraries should provide consultancy and referral services for users who may require them. Lastly, creating a conducive environment through aesthetically pleasing designs and a welcoming staff attitude is of utmost importance.

Keywords: Bibliotherapy, librarian; Types; Principles; Libraries

The Role of School Libraries in Enhancing Students Academic Achievement

Roles of Libraries in Bibliotherapy

BY

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A thorough investigation into the notion of bibliotherapy has revealed that it has existed for a significant duration and is deeply rooted in ancient librarianship. Nevertheless, this concept has transcended beyond the confines of libraries and has found its way into other disciplines. This article examines the expanded role that libraries and librarians play in the field of bibliotherapy. Primarily, it delves into the essence of bibliotherapy, which involves the combination of literature and healing. This approach is specifically designed to bring about healing for library users through their engagement with relevant literature and their unique personalities. Additionally, the origin of the concept is explored. Furthermore, this article advances the various forms of bibliotherapy, the relationship between bibliotherapy and library science, as well as the types of bibliotherapy that can be integrated into library services. It also highlights the principles of use that would facilitate the effective utilization of library resources. The outcome of this study is the development of a roadmap that underscores the necessity of integrating bibliotherapy into library services. Moreover, it suggests the extension of this topic into clinics, hospitals, prisons, and rehabilitation centers, while also emphasizing the importance of systematic exploration within their respective domains. This article recommends that reading and developmental bibliotherapy be regarded as highly essential in library settings. To ensure its effective implementation, library staff must receive proper training, orientation, and users' education. Furthermore, libraries should provide consultancy and referral services for users who may require them. Lastly, creating a conducive environment through aesthetically pleasing designs and a welcoming staff attitude is of utmost importance.

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Introduction

There are many of books available on bibliotherapy. Many academic fields such as psychology, literature, healthcare, education, and library and information science, have impacted the theory and practice of this field of research (Mclaine, 2021). The literature on this truly interdisciplinary field is riddled with ambiguity and controversy, with differing opinions on basic issues like how bibliotherapy should be defined, how it should be applied, and what kind of literature would best serve its purposes. This is because the field has been discussed from a variety of perspectives,

frequently with little to no effort to reconcile differing views. The misunderstanding is further exacerbated by the uneven and varied use of language (Girčienė and Damijonaitė, 2023). The literature (Wideman, 2019) is similarly ambiguous on the role that libraries and librarians should play in facilitating bibliotherapy. Bibliotherapy is a useful tool for guiding today's problematic individuals along the correct path. Many of these people need to be saved immediately before their problems get worse. That hasn't been the case, though, is heartbreaking. This raises various questions. Do librarians find it intimidating to act as therapists? Do librarians realize everything that books and libraries can offer? Do librarians realize that they are social change agents? Do librarians lack the emotional intelligence to connect with their patrons? However, this section serves as a wake-up call for librarians, library authorities, bodies, and associations regarding the pressing need to establish bibliotherapy as a key idea in the field of libraries, particularly those in educational institutions.

Brief History of Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy is a creative arts therapy that uses reading particular texts aloud or storytelling as a therapeutic intervention. The term is derived from the Greek terms "iblio," which means book, and "therapeio," which means healing. Bibliotherapy employs a person's relationship to books, poetry, and other written words to promote healing and personal development.

Bibliotherapy is thought to be a relatively modern idea, although it has a long history that dates back to antiquity. It has been discovered that the ancient Greeks employed literary works to evoke strong feelings in their audience members when performing theatrical productions. During World War II, bibliotherapy did have a breakthrough and rise in popularity. It eventually evolved into a therapeutic intervention bit by bit. The term "bibliotherapy" was first used in the 20th century by Samuel McChord Crothers, although books have been utilized as a therapeutic technique since the Middle Ages (Miller, 2017).

The earliest known mention of bibliotherapy is from 300 BC. The inscriptions over library doorways from ancient civilizations claimed that "soul-healing might be found within". The idea dates back to Aristotle, the philosopher, who believed that reading fiction could relieve illness and that literature had therapeutic properties. Bibliotherapy was first applied to treat mentally ill patients in psychiatric hospitals. Psychiatric hospitals across Europe and America had created libraries by the twentieth century. Before mental health care was deinstitutionalized in the 1970s, bibliotherapy—a therapeutic approach that uses literature to help people resolve emotional, interpersonal, or behavioral issues—was primarily used with hospitalized adults to support mental health. By the end of World War I, libraries had established themselves in many veteran hospitals, and bibliotherapy was implemented to meet the growing demand for treatment. Due to this change in the treatment of mental illness, bibliotherapy has become more prevalent outside of hospital settings and in a variety of community contexts, such as medical practices, psychology, criminal justice, nursing, social work, education, and occupational therapy. The fundamental goal of bibliotherapy has not changed, even though later definitions and uses have been wide and include both fiction and non-fiction. - the application of literature to help people deal with social, psychological, and emotional issues (Senevirathna and Lansakara, 2022).

The Significance of Bibliotherapy

In bibliotherapy, a therapist may suggest to a patient who is experiencing anxiety a workbook with relaxing exercises or another self-help book. As an alternative, they can recommend a story about a made-up person going through pain and grief after a recent loss to a client who is grieving the loss of a family member.

Therapists can help people comprehend the problems that brought them to counseling in the first place by using narratives from fiction and nonfiction books, plays, poems, short tales, and self-help materials.

Gain Personal Understanding

Bibliotherapy helps people develop methods to address their pressing difficulties and get insight into the personal obstacles they are facing. It also fosters understanding, self-awareness, and problem-solving abilities.

Get Advantages Not Just in Therapy

The therapist gets a framework for giving homework outside of therapy sessions by having the patient and therapist work together on a book to read in the interim. This approach contributes to deeper therapy sessions and better learning. Gladding points out that a preventive model that uses bibliotherapy to give people coping skills for life's challenges is another tactic therapists might use.

Acquire a Fresh View

The attraction of bibliotherapy is that it provides a window into how other people—like fictional characters—deal with comparable issues. It is clear that others are going through personal challenges when one can relate to a character, fictitious or real, especially on an emotional level. Therapists can choose a book with a character who is struggling with intrapersonal or interpersonal issues similar to the patient's to reinforce this link to a tale and normalize the treatment process.

The importance of bibliotherapy in the treatment of mental illness has drawn a lot of attention. It helps treat psychiatric illnesses in addition to being vital in reducing stress and mental tiredness.

Benefits of Bibliotherapy

A variety of benefits identified by Canty, (2017) linked to bibliotherapy include:

Bibliotherapy can be used in a variety of ways, from reading circles led by librarians to private sessions with mental health specialists. Particular texts are chosen with consideration in various contexts to address the particular difficulties that people or groups seeking treatment must overcome.

Bibliotherapy has demonstrated efficacy in the management of several ailments such as depression, anxiety, trauma, and grief. It is especially helpful for kids and teenagers who have trouble verbally expressing their feelings since it offers a secure and accepting space for them to explore and deal with their emotions.

The goals of bibliotherapy are complex and change as new theoretical and practical perspectives are developed. The promotion of health and well-being is always the primary aim, but the precise goals may change based on the target audience. Certain strategies target only those with mental health issues, while others aim to help a wider variety of people. Whichever method is used, the goals of bibliotherapy are to increase the patient's comprehension of their particular problem, enlighten them about the disorder, and encourage acceptance of suggested interventions.

Furthermore, bibliotherapy fosters a sense of personal accountability for rehabilitation and active involvement in the healing process. Finding out that others have experienced similar difficulties and have effectively dealt with or overcome them can be comforting for some people.

Bibliotherapy is becoming more and more accepted in educational settings in recent years. Education institutions have realized how important it is to take care of their student's mental health and well-being, and one tactic they have used is bibliotherapy. These institutions' libraries are perfect places to start bibliotherapy programs because they already have a large selection of books available.

The benefits highlighted by Onifade (2023) include the reduction of negative emotions and symptoms, leading to the adoption of more positive behaviors and emotions.

Bibliotherapy plays a significant role in facilitating problem-solving, fostering compassion, cultivating empathetic understanding, and enhancing self-awareness. It also fosters cultural identification and ethnic pride, explains principles, and encourages positive social behavior. This method works effectively for both people and groups since it provides opportunities for modeling and improving communication skills, as well as feedback from others on interpretations and behaviors.

Studies have indicated that while reading helpful literature can have advantages of its own (Onifade, 2023), the benefits can be amplified when counselors or librarians help choose the items. Self-help books usually provide clear recommendations and techniques geared toward particular subjects or ailments including anxiety, despair, and anger control. These books usually offer helpful knowledge and beneficial exercises that individuals can perform outside of the library.

Types of Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy can be approached in a multitude of ways. It is customized for each person by their mental health issues and requirements. Among the main categories of bibliotherapy are:

- **Prescriptive bibliotherapy:** In this method, counselors recommend specific books or genres by each client's needs and difficulties. This will deal with certain problems that the person is facing. The majority of the books in question are non-fiction, and they can be used with professional assistance or as a self-help tool at home.
- **Creative Bibliotherapy:** Group settings are the most common setting for this method. Readings of poetry, fiction, and stories that the group has discussed are included in this. Together, these techniques entail using both literature and expressive writing to examine and convey the feelings the person has been experiencing.

- **Developmental Bibliotherapy:** This method is most suited for a younger audience, particularly kids and teenagers. Using this approach, recommendations for books or other works of literature that are age-appropriate will be given to address children's developmental, social, emotional, and other challenges. This primarily refers to fiction books that youngsters can read to assist them in overcoming obstacles or problems. Included in the process of building resilience.
- **Therapeutic bibliotherapy:** Applied in conjunction with other therapeutic approaches to address and manage a range of mental health and psychological conditions.
- **Biblio-poetry:** focuses on literary poetry for introspection and healing. The therapist may also suggest that the patients produce poetry as a way to express their feelings.
- **Digital bibliotherapy:** This refers to the investigation and application of digital media, audiobooks, and other online resources as a therapeutic tool. Among these, developmental bibliotherapy is frequently used by educators and literary professionals to support students' appropriate developmental transitions, while clinical bibliotherapy is frequently used by mental health professionals to address emotional and behavioral issues.

Principles of bibliotherapy

The principles are essential to consider for bibliotherapy sessions to go smoothly because they support the process. The following ideas were proposed by Eftimova et al. (2021), Pardeck and Pardeck (2021), and Hynes (2019) and form the basis for the use of bibliotherapy.

Principle #1 highlights how important it is to understand the dynamics and essence of bibliotherapy as well as how to incorporate the theory behind the practice into a workable framework. This principle emphasizes that for therapists to administer bibliotherapy effectively, they must have a thorough understanding of research and theory.

Principle #2 suggests that practitioners familiarize themselves at least somewhat with the literary works that their clients would be reading. This includes being aware of the client's background, reading level, problems, demographics, and preferred genres. It's also important to take into account factors like characters, book-length, appropriateness, and reading difficulty.

Principle #3 emphasizes how prompting strategies might help to encourage and facilitate bibliotherapeutic reading. Using book lists that are suggested or visually appealing book displays, for example, might pique students' interest in therapeutic reading materials in school contexts.

Principle #4 emphasizes how important it is to be prepared while using bibliotherapy techniques. The underlying problem needs to be addressed by the client and the therapist and build a solid rapport before using bibliotherapy strategies.

Principle #5 promotes book recommendations above book mandates. Therapists ought to suggest a range of potentially helpful books, letting the client choose which ones to read in the end.

Principle #6, reading materials that are succinct and targeted are typically better than lengthy literary works. Shorter readings allow the therapist to more effectively communicate the key points

while also increasing the client's likelihood of finishing. It might be appropriate in some situations to read a few chosen chapters rather than the full book.

Principle #7 emphasizes how crucial it is for practitioners to be aware of any physical limitations that can call for the use of specific reading materials. For people with visual impairments, factors like print darkness and font size are critical.

According to Principle #8, bibliotherapy works best for people who have ordinary to above-average reading abilities. This is said to be because advanced readers can interact more fully with the text because they are more at ease and proficient with it. However, it is interesting that studies on low-level readers have also shown that bibliotherapy is effective.

Principle #9 highlights how important it is to consider an individual's diverse personality features when choosing reading materials. When choosing reading material, factors including age, reading ability, and personal reading preferences should be carefully taken into account.

According to Principle #10, having talks or counseling sessions after the person has finished reading might improve the effectiveness of bibliotherapy. These conversations are essential for reorganizing the reader's mental processes since they include a wide range of topics, including the reader's responses to the text, whether they agree or disagree with the choices made by the characters, new perspectives, and the reading's importance.

Principle #11 highlights that bibliotherapy ought to be used in conjunction with other forms of support, not as a substitute for them. While bibliotherapy might be a useful adjunct to therapeutic or educational contexts, it could not have long-lasting effects when used exclusively.

Principle #12 warns that although bibliotherapy is an effective tool, it is not a panacea. Although educators and therapists acknowledge its advantages, the fact that some people might still find methods to avoid or minimize their problems underscores the limitations of bibliotherapy. These guidelines discuss the advantages and disadvantages of bibliotherapy and help practitioners apply it effectively. They offer suggestions for improving the procedure, highlighting its wide applicability to a variety of demographics as covered in the section that follows.

The Process of Bibliotherapy

When adopting bibliotherapy as a kind of treatment, people go through three main stages, whether they are reading nonfiction or fiction.

Identification or Involvement: In the first phase, readers try to relate to a fictional character in a book or to someone who is going through a comparable situation. Readers may enquire about significant events in the subject's life, the effects on the subject, and shared experiences with the subject in non-fiction works like memoirs. Pupils might be able to relate to individuals who are similar in age and experiencing comparable things (Allen Heath et al 2005).

Catharsis: The purging of emotions or the letting go of tension are key components of this stage. During the identification stage, readers re-establish a connection with their emotions and

experiences, which facilitates the process of catharsis (Shechtman, 1999). Readers realize this at this point and shout, "I understand!" (Stanley 1999). When reading non-fiction, the reader should be conscious of the lessons the subject's life has to offer, even though the emotion may be more subdued.

Insight: At this point, everything is prepared for action. It could be a good idea to have readers compile a list of ways that the main character or a character they related to solved challenges. This list can function as the foundation for a workable plan to address their issues. For instance, cutting back on spending is a solution for someone worried about money and can relate to a character who is going through similar problems. The next step in the plan would be to cut costs by eating out less frequently. The idea is that strategies will be easier to implement if they are more precise and tangible.

The relationship between bibliotherapy and library and information science

The way that librarians might assist bibliotherapy programs at educational institutions is how bibliotherapy and library and information science are related.

First, by classifying the library's collection according to topics or genres, librarians can aid in the growth of collections. This makes it simple for students to obtain resources that meet their needs. Librarians can also make book lists or displays that emphasize novels that are appropriate for students and concentrate on particular themes, including anxiety, loss, or self-esteem. They can also compile a series of graphic novels that tackle mental health issues, giving students another way to interact with challenging material.

Second, by fostering a friendly atmosphere in the library, librarians may encourage students to talk about delicate subjects and explore their feelings. Soothing hues, comfortable furniture, and other components that encourage awareness and relaxation can improve the atmosphere. In addition, librarians can give children a place to journal or write about their emotions, along with writing tools and suggestions to help with self-expression.

Thirdly, to integrate bibliotherapy into the classroom, librarians can work in conjunction with lecturers, instructors, or teachers. They can recommend books that go well with the curriculum or offer activities that push pupils to learn more about the books' subjects. Through this collaboration, the bibliotherapy program will be made a crucial component of the student's overall educational experience.

Fourthly, in addition to books, librarians can offer other resources that enhance health and well-being. This could contain details on self-care techniques, local medical facilities, and other helpful resources that students can take advantage of.

Lastly, librarians can facilitate meaningful discussions about the books used in therapy sessions by leading book clubs or reading groups that concentrate on works with therapeutic themes.

Conclusion

One effective strategy for enhancing library patrons' mental health and well-being is bibliotherapy. It offers kids and teens a secure, non-threatening environment in which to explore their emotions

and pick up coping mechanisms. To develop bibliotherapy programs and promote mental health, libraries and librarians can play a critical role.

It can be applied in a variety of settings, such as book displays or reading clubs, and it can offer kids and teens a secure and efficient means of resolving behavioral and emotional problems. To successfully implement bibliotherapy programs, libraries and librarians are crucial, and they may offer staff and students invaluable support. Together, the library and librarians can foster a welcoming atmosphere that supports each student's mental health and well-being.

Notably, bibliotherapy does not serve as a replacement for expert mental health care. A mental health professional should be consulted when a student exhibits severe emotional or behavioral problems. However, bibliotherapy can be a useful complement to a student's network of support, giving them a non-threatening and secure space to talk about their emotions.

Recommendation

It is advised that understanding of the concept and mental health be increased, as bibliotherapy provision in libraries is significantly impacted by misconceptions about the practice and the stigma attached to it.

Librarians will be able to provide more comprehensive, responsive, and sensitive library services if they increase public understanding of bibliotherapy. Providers of bibliotherapy must be cognizant of the broader interpretations of the practice that certain clients may have.

Given that different readers may benefit from different approaches and book types for a bibliotherapeutic effect and that readers' needs and preferences change over time, it is advised that the library use a flexible, inclusive approach to bibliotherapy that is customized to meet the needs of each reader. Facilitators of bibliotherapy shouldn't be forced to stick to a certain genre of books or therapeutic philosophies.

Service users frequently seek bibliotherapy when they are in vulnerable mental states and are unable to interact with difficult materials or handle having their problems addressed directly. For this reason, it is advised that libraries take a sympathetic and understanding approach to serving service users, striking a balance between demonstrating empathy, and yet it's as important to avoid making service consumers feel like outcasts.

The libraries may be unable to provide all forms of bibliotherapy on their own, so it is advised that multidisciplinary partnerships be looked for and that everyone involved understand their duties in the provision of bibliotherapy.

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