
Helping students who hurt: Care based policies and practices for the school library

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School libraries provide unique opportunities to help those students who are experiencing difficult or hurtful situations in their lives. This literature synthesis focuses on strategies that school librarians can use to build a library program based on the ethic of care, including providing instruction, curating a collection, and creating a library environment as a healing space for those who hurt. The synthesis concludes with policy and practice recommendations.

Introduction

School librarians around the globe are dedicated to the enhancement of teaching and learning in schools. Much research has confirmed that school librarians do positively influence and impact academic achievement. A lesser-known role is that of how a school librarian positively affects students' feelings of being cared for and how thoughtfully designed instruction, collocation of a collection, and the school library facility all contribute to helping students who hurt. Yet, when asked, many school librarians offer multiple anecdotal accounts of touching a child one heart at a time and of creating a safe, enriching environment based on understanding the needs of the whole child and not just for the purpose of supporting the curriculum. However, the power of focusing on the whole child and the impact of one caring adult in a child's life has been well documented throughout the last five decades. A plethora of articles and research confirm the importance of a caring school environment for children in order to maximize academic achievement.

The ethic of care-based practices in the field of education is one that has been a topic of concern and documented research centered on quality teaching. In fact, some educators have equated caring with teaching. Nel Noddings, well known speaker and researcher, has devoted her career to presenting research on the ethic of care in schools. Noddings has suggested that care is a fundamental principle of education and students should experience being cared for in addition to learning how to care for others. Noddings (1992) has also posited that caring should be a primary goal of educators in order to provide an environment that is most conducive to teaching and learning and that children should experience caring for others and being cared for; later, Noddings (2005) noted that:

We will not find the solution to problems of violence, alienation, ignorance, and unhappiness in increasing our security, imposing more tests, punishing schools for their failure to produce 100 percent proficiency, or demanding that teachers be knowledgeable in the subjects they teach. Instead, we must allow teachers and students to interact as whole persons, and we must develop policies that treat the school as a whole community. (p.13)

Librarians can design the library as a space in which students can experience being cared for and access to resources, instruction, and opportunities that aid them in coping with stressful or painful situations. According to author Johnson (2012), "School libraries can be safe havens for

students: quiet places to decompress, without classroom pressures (grades, time limits, assignments) or social stresses (cliques, bullies, the negotiations of friendship). Reading and quiet offer respite for the weary souls of children” (p.76).

Why are children weary, in need of safe havens? Along with the normal developmental pressures mentioned above, societal issues trickle down to affect students, schools, and communities. The need for caring in schools and in school libraries across the globe is staggering. Many of the same issues prevalent in the United States affect schools worldwide. In the U.S., poverty remains a primary societal issue that can affect youth. Poverty is also more often experienced by those youth living in single parent headed households. Their quality of education is impacted by their parents availability to supervise, the lack of available income and is more likely to result in those youth receiving less education overall. The increase in poverty has also led to a documented increase of drug and alcohol use by youth in recent years that has been correlated to the significant increase in school violence. Statistics from the United States have suggested that children and youth face challenges stemming from normal developmental issues such as coping with peer pressure, academic achievement, self-esteem, and identity, as well as more pervasive societal issues such as poverty, drug addiction, and youth violence (CDC, 2016) Furthermore, statistical data gathered by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (2015) has suggested that youth health is most likely to be negatively impacted from the following factors:

- Prior history of violence
- Drug, alcohol, or tobacco use
- Association with delinquent peers
- Poor family functioning
- Poor grades in school
- Poverty in the community

Many of these same issues affect schools worldwide. Poverty is at the heart of many of the issues experienced by youth worldwide. In some countries, ongoing wars, political unrest and societal violence perpetuates poverty and loss of educational opportunities in addition to increased drug and alcohol use by youth. According to the World Health Organization (2016) youth living under these conditions are more likely to be affected by poverty and disparity in educational opportunities.. Likewise, Humanium (2016) reported,

Universal primary education is a major issue and a sizeable problem for many states. Many emerging countries do not appropriate the financial resources necessary to create schools, provide schooling materials, nor recruit and train teachers. Funds pledged by the international community are generally not sufficient enough to allow countries to establish an education system for all children.

Mental health issues are on the rise with children and teens. This increase in mental health issues is connected to societal issues affecting schools and communities. In the United States, depression and anxiety in young people has been increasing steadily over the last 50-70 years. Unfortunately, high school and college students are 5x-8x more likely to receive a diagnosis of major depression and/or anxiety disorder than youth of 50 years ago (Gray, 2010).

Worldwide, 10-20% of children and adolescents suffer from mental disorders, and over half of mental disorders begin by age of 14 (World Health Organization, 2013).

Chai (2016) reports that depression among teenagers has seen a 37% increase between the years of 2005 and 2014. Researchers note that the responsibility for outreach and intervention with youth falls to parents, teachers and pediatricians.

These factors emphasize the need for educators to be vigilant and intentional in helping youth navigate the challenges of growing up, as do the following statistics about the United States:

- 1 in 5 children ages 13-18 have, or will have a serious mental illness.
- 37% of students with a mental health condition age 14 and older drop out of school – the highest dropout rate of any disability group.
- 70% of youth in state and local juvenile justice systems have a mental illness.
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death ages 10-24.
- The average delay between onset of symptoms and intervention is 8-10 years.
- 90% of those who died by suicide had an underlying mental illness. (National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2016)

The World Health Organization (2013) states in their comprehensive health plan, presented at the Sixty-Sixth World Health Assembly, that care be given towards children to aid them in coping with issues that may be developmental in nature:

With respect to children, an emphasis is placed on the developmental aspects, for instance, having a positive sense of identity, the ability to manage thoughts, emotions, and to build social relationships, as well as the aptitude to learn and acquire an education, ultimately enabling their full active participation in society. (p. 3)

While the statistics are bleak in regard to the increase of potentially hurtful issues children and teens are experiencing globally, the statistics and research on the difference **one** educator can make in the school experience of a child is equally startling and exceptionally encouraging. School librarians, who are solely responsible for administrating all aspects of library services in schools, should feel heartened and empowered by the following statistics that illuminate an educator's power to demonstrate *caring* to students.

Blad (2014) summarized student reports that suggest, "students who strongly agree that they have at least one teacher who makes them 'feel excited about the future' and that their school is 'committed to building the strengths of each student' are 30 times more likely than students who strongly disagree with those statements to show other signs of engagement in the classroom - a key predictor of academic success" (p. 1). School librarians can be the adult who inspires students, in addition to supporting teachers to foster this environment. Having care from a school librarian is important because, "children and adolescents who have a formal or informal 'mentor-like' relationship with someone outside their home are less likely to have externalizing behavior problems (bullying) and internalizing problems (depression)" (Murphey, Bandy, Schmitz, & Moore, 2013, p. 1). School librarians are a natural source of support and assistance to students, providing help with academic assignments, becoming a mediator of information, and sharing resources with those students who may be experiencing challenging situations. The school librarian in many ways can be the non-threatening, safe adult with whom students converse and confide in when they are struggling with day-to-day challenges of growing up. The school library can provide the "space" outside the pressures of the classroom. For many practicing school librarians these concepts are commonplace and resonate with their current practices in the school library. Many school librarians see themselves fulfilling numerous roles as educators that include those of mentor, social worker, confidante, counselor and cheerleader for students. These roles expand the reach of the school librarian as teacher, information specialist, program administrator and curriculum partner to that of caregiver who is proactively providing pastoral care.

The idea of providing pastoral care often resonates with teachers and school librarians who view themselves as educators of the whole child rather than relegating their role to information imparter. On the Pastoral Care Association website, Bruce Rumbold (n.d.) of the La Trobe University School of Public Health described the focus of pastoral care as "the healing, guiding, supporting, reconciling, nurturing, liberating, and empowering of people in whatever situation they find themselves." In most situations, school librarians actively endeavor to empower and

nurture interests and encourage access to informational resources that will guide and support creativity, curiosity, and improved academics. In fact, upon reflection, many school librarians will be surprised to note how much time and daily energy is actually expended on these efforts. Indeed, researchers in the UK investigating the role of the school librarians found that without specifically being asked about caring, librarians reported that a significant portion of their day is spent in the role of providing pastoral care to students. In their research article “Invisible care? The Role of Librarians in Caring for the ‘Whole Pupil’ in Secondary Schools,” Shaper and Streatfield (2012) reported that “librarians identified three key aspects of their contribution: support for learning; maintaining a safe and secure environment; and providing individual support” (p. 65). Moreover, “When asked, ‘What do you think is the most important aspect of your role?’ Five percent of participants’ noted their pastoral contribution and another 55% included this dimension whilst highlighting various dimensions of their role” (p. 67). The researchers emphasized, “we did not ask specifically about pastoral care, but many of the respondents told us anyway, and it is clear that this aspect of their work is really important for a minority of librarians and is seen as a significant part of their job by many more” (p. 66).

The prevalence of these endeavors on behalf of students should not be *invisible*. The active engagement in demonstrating care for students is worth shouting about! Advocacy messages should include the important role of the school librarian in supporting academic achievement and their role in helping students who hurt. Troubled students require more resources from schools both in personnel, time, and resources. School librarians who document their care-based efforts may prove in both statistical and anecdotal terms the added value of having a school librarian in the school.

To infuse an ethic of care in their libraries, librarians can adopt three principles from Nodding’s work as a foundation for all decision-making:

Caring is intentional: Caring is more than a feeling of emotion. It is based on purposeful actions. School librarians actively engage in caring behaviors in addition to enacting best practices of demonstrating care through thoughtful deliberate and planned interactions with students.

Caring is foundational: For administration of library services in schools, caring about students and infusing an ethic-of care is an underlying goal for administering all areas and developing policies and procedures that guide the day-to-day management of the school library.

Caring is action-based: Caring is enacted by planned, purposeful deeds. Danford and Smith (2005) noted, “If caring matters as much as we think it does, it has to be something much more than a bundle of strong feelings. It has to be a way of being” (p. 95).

The perception of care is central to student learning and motivation. Multiple research studies illuminate the correlation between students’ perception of care and the connection to academic achievement (Stephens, 2015). Noddings (1995) declared,

My contention is, first, that we should want more from our educational efforts than adequate academic achievement and, second, that we will not achieve even that meager success unless our children believe that they themselves are cared for and learn to care for others. (p. 675)

School librarians may engage students in novel and creative ways and can add significantly to the sense of belonging and feeling of being cared for in the school.

The intent to implement care-based practices as an overall umbrella under which resources, services and instruction are prioritized and organized enables librarians to develop an infrastructure that will support the ethic of care in schools. School librarians can focus on three main areas of management in the school library:

1. **Instruction:** School librarians as an instructional partner have a major role in designing, collaborating and facilitating instruction that occurs in the library. As a collaborator, school librarians can provide instructional leadership in helping design learning experiences that are infused with an ethic of care.
2. **Collection:** The school librarian curates a print and online collection that supports and connects to the school curriculum. Librarians make acquisitions with the knowledge of their stakeholders' interests and informational needs as well as those that support the student "holistically."
3. **Facility:** School librarians endeavor to design a learning environment that will nurture and support students' development as well as stimulate their interests and engagement with others, including teachers, classmates, administration, and the school librarian.

1. Instruction

Instructional activities should reflect an ethic of care. Designing meaningful instruction is key to both meeting the learning needs of students as well as ensuring students feel *cared for* as individuals. Good instruction should result in a positive learning experience for students. Providing *choices* for students is one main consideration when developing instruction that reflects the *ethic of care* in the school library.

Choices for students include, but are not limited to, demonstrating their learning through the creation of a variety of end products and artifacts that enable students to tap both their interests and their skills to show their learning. School librarians should consider whether students are aural, kinesthetic or visual learners as these preferences may affect how students access and interpret information. The plethora of multimedia resources and options provided in online resources make accessing information with descriptive narration, visual text, or graphics much easier than in the past. Bluestein (2008) explained that

Like boundaries, choices are motivational tools that encourage young people's cooperation through empowerment. Choices build responsibility and commitment, communicate the teacher's respect for students' needs and preferences can encourage students to perform a particular behavior. Choices also can help prevent disruptive behaviors (p.1).

School librarians working with teachers on collaborative projects may find this a timely and relevant opportunity to discuss and present ideas for including *choices* for students, whether it be during instruction, as students access and consume information and create learning products to demonstrate their mastery of academic content, or during the evaluation and assessment phase. School librarians are often in the fortuitous situation to share the most current informational resource, or to promote the latest most innovative technology to maximize student creation of learning products.

2. Collection

The library's collection of physical and virtual resources is one of the school librarian's greatest marketing tools; it is a key to engaging school library stakeholders. School librarians need to know their existing collection, identify gaps in the collection, and consider their school library stakeholders' interests and informational needs in addition to supporting academic achievement. One of the best ways to gain knowledge about library stakeholders is to conduct a needs

assessment survey, identifying how stakeholders are using the library currently and their informational needs. In addition to surveying library users, investigate through the use of school experts such as guidance counselors, school psychologists, or administrators to discover common issues students are struggling with in school and in their lives. School librarians should be aware of child development characteristics. School librarians should ascertain issues typical for the developmental age served in the school library and their unique issues in the community by accessing local demographic data and statistics. Gathering this information will inform the selection and development of print and virtual resources. Online resources should include the collocation of age-appropriate vetted links to pertinent information that will assist students grappling with difficult emotional issues. In summary, there are a few areas to consider in having the best collection development practices and a strong collection to support student care. School librarians should focus on creating a collection that includes a broad range of resources, a variety of formats and a diverse range of topics to meet the varied interests, developmental levels, and learning styles of students.

School librarians should have a foundational knowledge of student developmental levels and common characteristics by age group. The following chart adapted from Harper (2011) provides a summary of developmental characteristics of children.

Table. Summary of developmental characteristics of children (adapted from Harper, 2011).

Social and Emotional Development	Intellectual Development
Ages 3-5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can cooperate • Experiences and copes with feelings, emotions appear to be all or nothing • Symbolic representation of self begins • Self-centered egocentric 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot sequence • Understands some abstract concepts • Cannot tell “how many times” • Understands family relations • Can tell a story with a length of 4 to 5 words • Cannot separate fantasy from reality
Ages 5-7	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being friends becomes increasingly important, although feelings of independence continue to develop • Begins seeing things from another child’s point of view, but still very self-centered • Finds criticism or failure difficult to handle and may seem very hard on themselves • Views things as black and white, right or wrong, with very little middle ground • Begin to understand consequences of their behavior • May become upset when behavior or school-work is ignored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands that print “tells” a story • Increased problem-solving ability • Begins to organize information to remember • Can begin to understand time and the days of the week • Develops a basic vocabulary • Asserts personal choice in decision-making
Ages 7-9	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop abilities to behave appropriately and gets along with others • Begins to understand consequences of own and others’ behavior • Eagerly will take on tasks and activities likely to be successful, but avoids risks • Judges success or failure based on adult responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed abilities of thinking and speaking • Master reading skills and use math in more abstract ways • Reading may become a major interest and start reading for a variety of purposes • Deepens understanding of cause and effect • Increased ownership in decision making
Ages 9-11	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoys being a member of a group • May belittle or defy adult authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested in reading fictional stories, magazines, and how-to-projects books • Develop special interest in collections or hobbies • May be very interested in discussing a future career • Fantasizes and daydreams about the future • Capable of understanding concepts without having direct hands-on experience • Ability to manipulate thoughts and ideas, but still need hands-on experiences
Ages 11-13	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the ability to work cooperatively, and can see the worth of other’s viewpoints • Becomes committed to their beliefs and personal views of the world • Start to question adult authority • Define self in terms of opinions, beliefs, values and expand sense of self by attempting to copy the culture • Sensitive to criticism and display feelings of success or failure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does some abstract reasoning • Continues to broaden knowledge • Uses language to clarify thinking and learning, often likes jokes and worlds with double meanings • Read for an increasing variety of purposes • Choose from a wide range of reading materials • Increasingly able to read critically and to detect inconsistencies in argument • Ability to persist with longer and more complex text • Starts plans for the future and career aspirations

School librarians may feel challenged to begin instituting changes in collection development when working with children in unfamiliar age ranges or when employed at a new school. Understanding children's developmental levels, recognizing issues stemming from local demographics, and soliciting student interests and needs are all strategies to thoughtfully make decisions that will help students. School librarians can also tap the wealth of professional resources that provide guidance about addressing children's developmental levels.

Bibliotherapy

Another method for using the collection to maximize the ethic of care in the library is to engage in bibliotherapy. Using literature to assist readers in dealing with psychological, emotional, or other issues is known as bibliotherapy (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007). Bibliotherapy is a strategy for librarians and teachers to help students identify, work through, and ultimately find resolution to stressful situations. School librarians can share specific literature with the intent to assist students experiencing emotional distress. Non-clinical bibliotherapy, used primarily by librarians or teachers, assists children in the coping and healing process. Miller (2009) states, "Adults can use reading to help children come to grips with issues that create emotional turmoil for them. Reading can also be very effective in preventing and resolving behavior problems" (p. 260).

Moreover, benefits to using bibliotherapy include a reduction in negative emotions and increased positive feelings, behaviors, compassion, empathetic understanding, and self-awareness (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007). School librarians and teachers can effectively use bibliotherapy to encourage discussion about difficult topics and issues. Bibliotherapy is more than just recommending a book or having story time in the library. Librarians and educators can intentionally guide children by asking questions and helping children to engage with the literature more effectively. Madsen (2012) notes, "children's picture books have always been used as a critical tool for engaging children in powerful conversations that are developmentally appropriate, addressing issues of equity and social justice" (p. 2). Bibliotherapy is not intended to replace clinical therapy or address psychological issues; rather, it is a means to raise awareness of concerns, reassure students they are not alone, and increase the perception that others experience challenges and are able to generate solutions, seek assistance, cope, and find resolution.

Readers' Advisory

Reader's advisory is another active strategy a school librarian may employ to get resources into the hands of students that need them. Reader's advisory typically occurs during what is commonly referred to as reference transactions. These interactions generally are one-on-one interaction between the student and librarian and usually begin with a student's request for "something good to read." The school librarian seeks through questioning to determine the characteristics of "good" the child has in mind and subsequently progresses to identifying preferred choice of resource type, format, and content. In the past, librarians may have focused mainly on print leisure reading materials. However, children may not distinguish between print and nonprint materials, as many children are accustomed to other types of "reading" such as ebooks, podcasts, other audio formats, audiobooks, or using mobile devices. It is important for the librarian to have comprehensive knowledge of the collection and availability of materials in other formats in order to match the child's request with recommended materials.

Librarians may provide indirect one-on-one reader's advisory services through the use of displays, annotated lists, or featured collections. For example, at an Ohio School Library conference, one Ohio high school librarian shared with the researcher that she created a section of nonfiction and fiction literature on common teen issues. Books were "checked out" on an honor system, in order to overcome student reluctance to seek and subsequently publicly "check out"

resources of this type. Circulation and use of these previously seldom used “reference informational” books substantially increased. The accessibility and availability of these items previously shelved in the reference collection and the pairing of fiction books served a critical need for students. The librarian improved the *findability* and *accessibility* of the resources that resulted in increased usage as students took advantage of the honor system of borrowing. A display of accompanying fiction on similar topics likewise was heavily “borrowed.” The school librarian surmised that students had a critical need for this information but may have been too shy or wanted to privately review the materials without adult oversight. In order to have resources be highly utilized and desired they must first be of top-notch quality and be relevant to student informational and emotional needs. Selection of quality materials is of utmost importance if students are to maximize their use.

Obstacles to Caring

Noddings (1992) suggested that obstacles to caring can be institutionally based. In fact, some institutions, namely those in education and healthcare, whose existence is based on the principle of *caring* engage in non-care-based practices. Obstacles to demonstrating care are often imposed from administrative practices that have been implemented seemingly to make schools run more smoothly or address a specific problem in schools; one example could be hindering access to the library or librarian by closing the library in the interest of maintaining schedules, centralizing services, or saving funds. Moreover, policies and procedures are implemented that result in education stakeholders, teachers, parents, students, community members feeling decidedly *uncared for*. Through interpersonal communication, school librarians can exemplify caring. School librarians can show care to students with these deliberate actions:

- Develop familiarity and trust with students by showing interest in students
- *Be there*: being physically present and emotionally engaged
- Engage in conversation: being companions in the moment through dialogue
- Showing sensitivity: not as a personal characteristic but as an action e.g. consoling a student or being firm
- Acting in the best interests of others
- Caring through feeling: an action and an activity e.g. feeling an intense emotion (empathy, hope, concern and love)
- Caring as doing: benevolent activity
- Exemplify reciprocity: sharing; mutual exchange of information or performing an act of helpfulness for one another (Kordi, Hasheminejad & Biria 2012, 1251)

The importance of building rapport and connecting with students routinely and regularly will result in a mutual caring relationship. Students will experience being cared for and learn how to show care to others. Librarians can demonstrate caring by actively listening, asking questions about the students’ daily school experience, their assignments, and interests. Additionally, librarians can show care by becoming actively involved in attending extra-curricular activities such as sporting events, academic or performing arts events (Bishop & Cahall, 2012).

School librarians can also make use of their online public access catalog to maximize how students access library resources. One example is the Old Trail School’s Meyo eLibrary catalog (<https://sites.google.com/a/oldtrail.org/library/books/bibliotherapy>). The school librarian worked to identify key resources for students in collaboration with school psychologists and guidance counselors by gathering input to collocate the best resources for the school that would meet the needs of students. In this example, students can view categories of topics and see related resources for a particular topic.

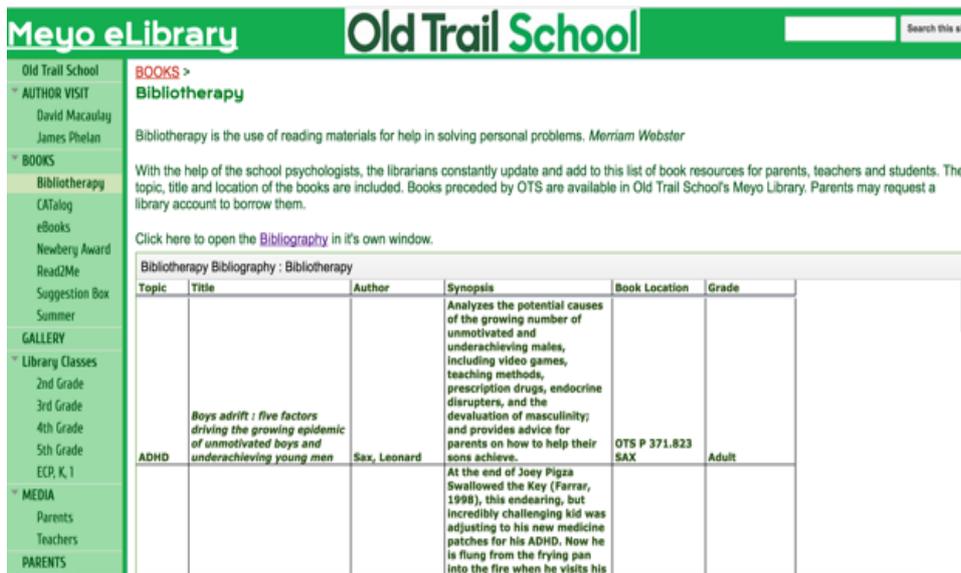


Figure 1. Screenshot of Old Trail School Meyo eLibrary Bibliotherapy page

As Figure 1 shows, the Old Trail School catalog is searchable for these topics: Anger, Anxiety, Asperger/Autism, Braces, Bravery, Bullying, Tolerance, Respect, Cancer, Conflict Resolution, Coping, Death of Person, Death of Pet, Divorce, Emotions, Fear, Friendship, Glasses, Hope, Learning to speak when appropriate, Love, Motivation, Moving, New Baby, Respect, Self- Esteem, Self-control, Self-identity, Separation, Starting School/Separations, Tattling

Many online resources include lists of books and resources on topics that are challenging for students in schools. Figure 2 illustrates one of Common Sense Media’s useful pages, “Books that Teach Empathy” (<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/lists/books-that-teach-empathy>) for school librarians who wish to provide an ethic of care to students.

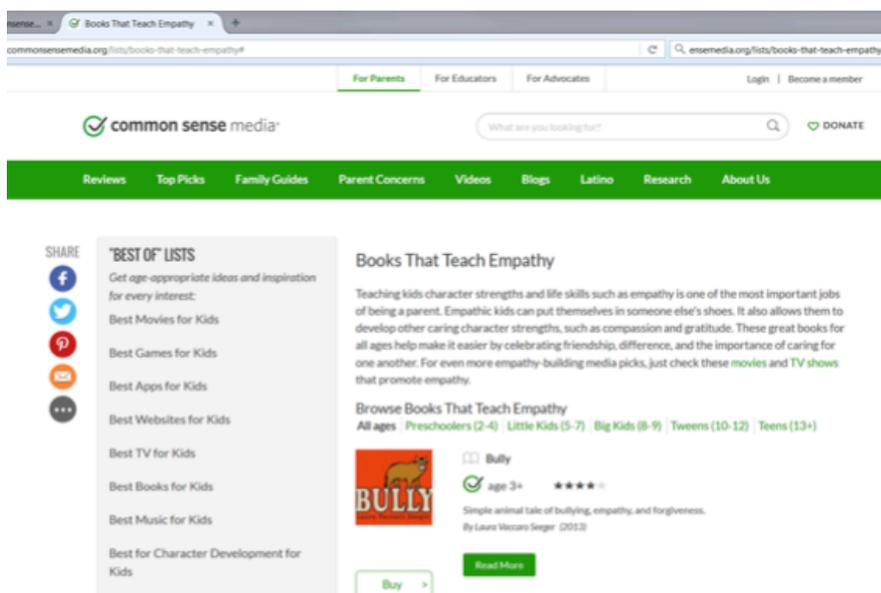


Figure 2. Screenshot of Common Sense Media’s “Books that Teach Empathy” page

As Figure 2 shows, Common Sense Media provides a wealth of information on many types of resources including lists of topically based resources in addition to reviews, best resource recommendation lists, and discussion questions to use with students about the resources’ content.

3. Facility

The school library is not a typical classroom: students experience it as a separate and different learning environment from a classroom; explore and create with technology; and engage in group learning and socializing. Although some students may not feel successful in their classrooms, opportunities to succeed abound in the library. The library offers a no-fail space for students, providing differing ways to engage positively with others, resources, and the school librarian. Librarians can enable students to engage in a variety of activities with others or, if preferred, solo. For many students, the library space and freedom of choice ensures they have a positive and affirming experience in school. The school librarian has physical and virtual resources for students' academic and personal interests as well as emotional needs. The library is a technology hub that meets many different learning needs and preferences, such as working alone, working with others, relaxing, and positive socializing with the school librarian, teachers and other students. Policies and procedures for using the school library facility and its resources should be thoughtfully developed in order to promote use of the library space and its resources. Policies should reflect a commitment to equal access and encourage use of the library rather than discourage. Policies should facilitate the equitable use of the library by all students

School librarians who want to design a library space that promotes the ethic of care should consider students' efficient, ethical use of resources and technology in addition to facility navigation. These principles are valuable to evaluate an existing or plan a new space:

- Enable multiple uses of the space by students with furniture placement and establish zones of activity that help youth feel comfortable and safe e.g. students should be able to find quiet areas in which to relax alone or collaborate with others.
- Organize the space and providing guidance in the form of signage, helpful hints and instruction that will encourage ethical use of resources and technology.
- Implement navigation cues to ensure library users move about the space, to interact with each other and access the resources. Establish traffic patterns that facilitate access to technology and resources rather than inhibit.
- Organizing the library space and providing learning experiences that invite creativity, interest and the "vesting in" of students in the school library.

The Harvard Graduate School of Education's Making Caring Common Project includes Strategies and Resources (<http://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/strategies-and-resources>) for educators and parents on creating an environment that supports caring, as featured in Figure 3.

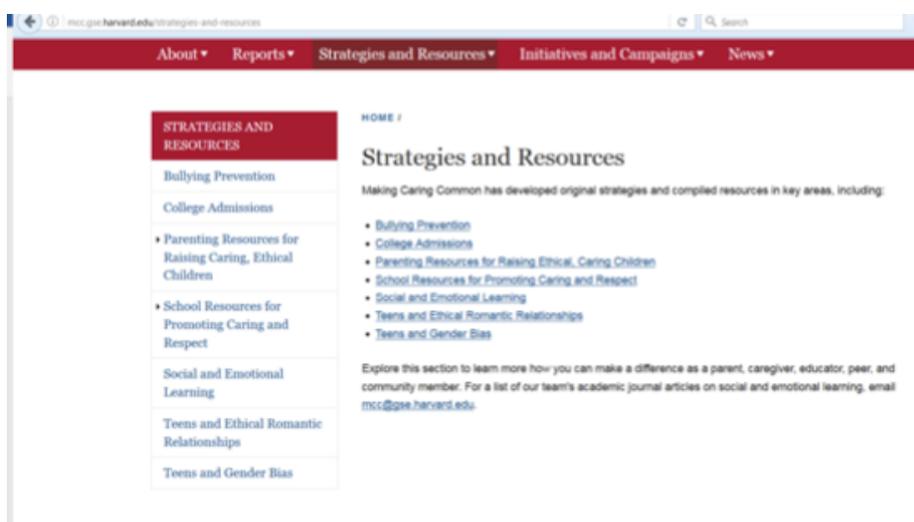


Figure 3. Harvard Graduate School of Education's Strategies and Resources

As Figure 3 shows, some of the main topics addressed on this website are ideas for creating a safe school environment, teaching empathy, and discouraging bullying.

Discussion and Conclusion

Decades of research and current statistics have suggested school librarians can positively influence students' quality-of life-experience as well as their academic performance through the provision of resources and instruction. As recipients of the ethic of care, students benefit academically and their sense of well being overall may be improved. In fact, research conducted across multiple states in the United States and reported in *Scholastics' School Libraries Work* (2016) has confirmed that the *presence* of a certified school librarian has an overall positive impact on teaching and learning in schools. Findings from these statewide research studies have not specifically addressed the role a school librarian plays in the holistic support of youth. However, the value-added *presence* of a school librarian who exhibits genuine care and concern for students extends beyond academics into the realm of holistic support. This added value is one that administrators may have overlooked practically and economically. Troubled students come with an inherent cost, both to schools and society. Troubled students require more personnel time, resources and may affect the learning of other youth in lost instructional time. Adams (2016) estimated that a student who drops out of school ends up costing upward of \$755,000 due to lost tax revenues, future healthcare, and criminal justice costs as many troubled students are unemployed, unhealthy, and engage in risky behaviour.

There is a lack of research that has evaluated the short-term or longitudinal results of having a caring school librarian who helped a troubled student academically or emotionally. Little research has gone into evaluating the importance of the school librarian as an empathetic and caring role model. School librarians who show students genuine care and concern illustrate for students how to be empathetic individuals and be caring toward others (Lahey, 2014).

School librarians worldwide strive to increase literacy, assist students to become academically successful in order to create lifelong learners and global citizens, they endeavor to do this as *caring* educators. To promote these to all school stakeholders, school librarians can proactively document how a professional ethic of care influences decision making about the library program and consequently influences students. Author Maya Van Wagenen (2015) had an inspirational message to school librarians and their important caring role in her keynote address at the Ohio Educational Library Media Association Conference,

You do not have to have a ton of books to create a library. You just need a librarian. It is an indispensable calling, something that can never be replaced by computers or automated systems. It is the human aspect you bring to this world made up of letters and paper that makes you as a group so meaningful. You wear many hats. You are the gatekeepers, guarding this realm of inspiration, of dreams, of education. You are the matchmakers, pairing the perfect book with the perfect individual. You are the teachers, rising to provide information on every subject to satisfy your hungry pupils. You are the doctors, pulling honest and sometimes unusual questions from hesitant patients, and filling prescriptions for loneliness and isolation with pages that promise of better days to come. You are the instigators of conscious evolution (n.p.).

The power of a school librarian to make a difference in the lived experience of a student is undeniable. School librarians who institute an ethic of care positively impact teaching and learning in schools worldwide.

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