

Australian Family Therapists' Award for Children's Literature

Announcement of the Seventeenth Annual Awards (for books published in 2003)

The annual prize of \$1,000 in the Australian Family Therapists' Award for Children's Literature is awarded to **Krista Bell** for *Who Cares*, published by **Lothian Books**, which centres on the evolving friendship between two teenage boys, thrust together through a series of family circumstances. During a beachside holiday, Toby and Rhys learn to respect and accept each other's differences. Their growing friendship allows the unfolding of secrets, including the alcoholism of Rhys' mother. These problems are resolved through family support and lead to greater closeness not only between the boys but between their families.

The \$1000 **Young Readers/Picture Book Award** was not awarded this year. Of the small number of picture books and books for younger readers submitted, few met the criteria. Of those that did, none were of a sufficiently high standard to merit the award.

Books Useful for Therapists

The following books tell stories which may enhance therapists' insight into specific problem areas. The Committee strongly recommends that therapists read these selections critically before deciding whether they are appropriate to share with their particular clients. Because of the sensitive nature of some of these books it is important, if they are used, that they be only one tool within an ongoing therapeutic relationship — inclusion in this list does not mean a book is recommended as a self-help book.

Picture Books

Cuthbert's Babies by Pamela Allen, published by Penguin/Viking. When Cuthbert's mother brings home not one baby brother but four baby sisters, no one seems to have time for Cuthbert. His mother's way of reassuring him that there is enough love to go round makes the book a useful tool for discussing feelings of displacement.

Reggie Queen of the Street by Margaret Barbalet, illustrated by Andrew McLean, published by Penguin/Viking. Reggie the dog encounters change and relocation. Things are not the same when you go back, but there's a future. A positive and engaging story.

Books for Older Readers


Saving Francesca by Melina Marchetta, published by Penguin. Reflecting some strong family relationships and positive values, the story depicts Francesca's attempts to deal with the complexities of her world, such as her mother's depression and the family's inability to name it, peer relationships, and the adolescent struggle with differentiation and individuation, in the context of strong family and cultural norms. The book provides a useful platform for discussion; however, it is ineligible for the award because the issues are brought to a head by Francesca running away — not a positive way of working through difficulties.

Keep Your Hair On by Elizabeth Vercoe, published by Black Dog Books. A great book for adolescents and anyone working with young people managing cancer treatment.

Two Weeks in Grade Six by Mary K. Pershall and Anna Pershall, published by Puffin. A realistic story about a girl in Grade Six, her anxieties around peer relationships, her experience of bullying, and the positive impact of her grandmother's support.

Recovered not Cured by Richard McLean, published by Allen & Unwin. A good book to enhance therapists' and trainees' understanding of schizophrenia. We strongly suggest that therapists read this powerful first-hand account of a young man's journey before recommending to clients.

The Naming of Tishkin Silk by Glenda Millard, illustrated by Caroline Magerl and published by ABC Books. A sensitive story dealing with grief, rituals of inclusion and the acknowledgement of death in the family, which may be most helpful for adults attempting to understand a child's experience of grief.

Bad Boy by Michael Gliksman and published by Penguin. This is a book for therapists rather than clients, being a narrative exposé of a young boy's systemic and sexual abuse by a therapist, most useful in training contexts. 

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