

Storybook reading is a great way to connect with children after stressful events

You might also be interested in these books:

Once I Was Very Very Scared
by Chandra Ghosh Ippen

Bubble Trouble: Using Mindfulness to Help Kids with Grief
by Heather Krantz

Becoming a Superhero: a Book for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma
by Miri Bar-Halpern

The Way I Feel
by Janan Cain

Wemberly Worried
by Keven Henkes

Owl Babies
by Martin Waddell

"I Have a Little Problem," said the bear
by Heinz Janish

A Terrible Thing Happened
by Margaret M. Holmes



Online Resources:

<https://flood.unl.edu/families>

<https://flood.unl.edu/help-children-cope-disaster>

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/index.asp>

<https://child.unl.edu/read4resilience>

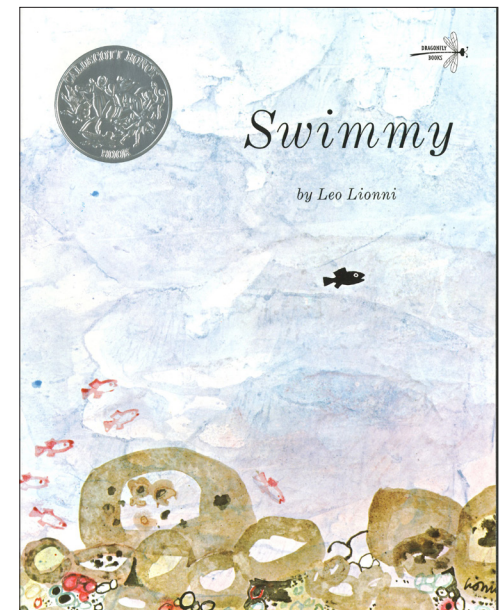
UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Lincoln

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Nebraska Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

N | EXTENSION Read for Resilience

University of Nebraska has identified books to support childrens' coping and understanding of their feelings after experiencing a disaster, loss and/or grief.



A storybook guide for *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni

In this beloved, award-winning tale of a brave little fish, Swimmy and his friends learn that they can overcome any problem with teamwork.

Recommended Questions

Before Reading

- What is a community? *People that work together towards a common goal.*
- What different types of communities can we belong to? *Suggestions: family, faith organizations, athletic teams.*
- Look at the front cover of the book at the black fish. A “community” of fish is called a school. Does the black fish have a school?
- Today we are going to read a story about how the little black fish on the cover of this story finds his school.

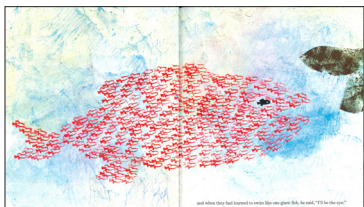
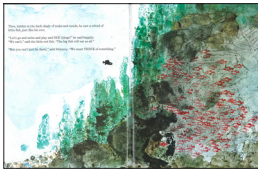
During Reading

- How did Swimmy feel when he escaped from the tuna and swam alone in the deep sea?



- What wonderful creatures did Swimmy discover throughout his journey in the beautiful sea?

- Are the fish eager to let Swimmy join them at first? Why? How do you feel when you meet someone new with new ideas?



- What did Swimmy do to help the fish solve their problem?

- Why do you think Swimmy offered to be the eye of the fish?

After Reading

- Can the school of fish in this story be called a community? Why or why not?
- Notice how Swimmy volunteered his talent, which was knowledge about the world, to gain the trust of others. Why do people volunteer their time, talent or treasure to help others?

Suggested Activities

- Swimmy encourages the other fish to take a risk so they can see the beautiful sea. Encourage children to think of something that is new for them. Talk about the risks involved. What can children do with the support of family and/or friends that will help them take that new risk safely?

Play Pin-The-Tail-On-The Donkey

- Either draw a picture or tape a poster of a donkey to a whiteboard or wall. Have each child attach a tail using a magnet or tape. Blindfold one child, spin them, and invite them to attempt to pin the tail on the donkey. Instruct the rest of the class to help them by giving them advice using the words “hot” or “cold.” Children will discover pinning the tail on the donkey is a lot easier with the support of a community of friends rather than by doing it alone.

Common Reactions

Most children involved in a traumatic event experience an emotional reaction. While each child’s experience is different, there are some common and typical ways they respond. These include:

- * Sleep issues, nightmares, not wanting to go to bed or get up.

- * Difficulty with transitions, such as going to preschool or leaving.
- * Exaggerated reactions to small crisis.
- * Increased difficulties with peers or siblings such as conflict, aggression or withdrawal.
- * Unable to cope with change.
- * Clinging to familiar things or family.
- * Changes in eating, dressing or toilet habits.
- * Overactive behavior.
- * Irritability, uncooperative, bored.
- * Preoccupation with the trauma.

Ways to Support Children

- Use real, accurate words. “Sugar coating” things may confuse children.
- Help create a safe space for your child to express their feelings when they are ready.
- Give children multiple outlets for telling their story, including: art supplies, dolls, puppets and stuffed animals.
- Watch for signs of many feelings: fear, guilt, denial, anger, confusion or loneliness. Children can experience a range of emotions after experiencing a traumatic event.
- Try to maintain a daily routine as much as possible. Also maintain rules and expectations.

Contact Us

Visit <https://epd.unl.edu/> to find an Extension Educator in your area.

Visit us on the Web:

<https://flood.unl.edu/>

<https://child.unl.edu/>