

Books that get to you: Bibliotherapy in addictions

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Guided reading, often referred to as bibliotherapy, has been shown to be an effective complementary method in recovery. In an attempt to define bibliotherapy for addictions as a theoretical model, the authors discovered significant differences in the interpretations and applications across the disciplines and countries. Subsections of bibliotherapeutic practice include prescription-based self-help bibliotherapy (mostly in the US); creative bibliotherapy, which uses reading and writing in a creative way (Europe), and informal bibliotherapy with a strong social element such as reading groups and library recommendations (both US and Europe).

Librarians offer services and recommend resources without passing judgment. Through this process, they often become “accidental bibliotherapists” (Brewster, 2009). Bibliotherapy environments range from mental health facilities to public libraries. Potential titles include manuals, guidebooks and workbooks written by addiction professionals; self-help books; and

literary classics, memoirs, and pop culture titles. Diverse audiences include addicts, those in recovery, family members, and/or other affected parties who wish to remain anonymous while seeking authoritative sources on the topic.

In a collaborative effort, the authors compare current practical uses of bibliotherapy in addictions in North America and Europe. Starting in 1976 in Hungary, bibliotherapy was first used in a psychiatric rehab center with 10-15 recovering alcoholic inpatients by a physician, staff, and a librarian. Short stories were used to focus on three main subthemes: managing everyday life, human relations, and complex moral issues (Bartos, 1980).

In 2015, the Center of Alcohol Studies Library was awarded a two-year ALA Carnegie-Whitney grant to develop a comprehensive tool to assist those in recovery by offering appropriate reading material. The project, called Reading for Recovery (R4R), aims to bridge the gap in access and discoverability between the


readers in need and the books that can enhance active coping. With its online annotated bibliographic records arranged in a searchable database, this tool will address a critical information gap.

This poster also aims to generate interest among the international members of SALIS, seeking further collaboration and exposure to those with similar endeavors across cultures. The authors are committed to involving SALIS librarians in the project.

References


Brewster, L. (2009). Reader development and mental wellbeing: The accidental bibliotherapist. *Australasian Public Libraries and Information Services*, 22(1), 13-16.


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<h4 style="background-color: #8B4513; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Definition</h4> <p>IN GENERAL "using books from a list created under the guidance of a subject expert in order to address a therapeutic need" (R4R)</p> <p>SUBSECTIONS OF BIBLIOTHERAPEUTIC PRACTICE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. prescription-based self-help bibliotherapy (mostly US) 2. creative bibliotherapy: uses reading and writing in a creative way (EU) 3. informal bibliotherapy: includes a social element such as reading groups and library recommendations (US, EU) 	<h4 style="background-color: #8B4513; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Audiences</h4> <p>Bibliotherapy in the addiction field targets addicts, those in recovery, family members, and/or other affected parties who wish to remain anonymous while seeking authoritative sources on the topic.</p> <p><i>"applicable to persons in all stages of life, from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and with a wide variety of problems" (Myers, 1998)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, young adults • Patients with mental health conditions • Prisoners • Problem drinkers • Other substance abusers 	<h4 style="background-color: #8B4513; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">BT in Addictions - EU</h4> <p>HIGHLIGHTS FROM HUNGARY</p> <p>1976/77 - First attempt to use BT in the rehabilitation of alcoholics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital setting (Psychiatry Rehab Center), but wearing street clothes • 10-15 inpatients (voluntarily, all ages) + physician + full staff + librarian • Program cycles using short stories focusing on <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) managing everyday life (2) human relations (3) complex moral issues • 45-60 minutes, once a week, with 10-minute reading intro • Success: based on therapeutic motives hidden in the personality <p>2004 - Post-Graduate Certificate in BT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pázmány University, 4 semesters • Receptive BT (reading therapy) <p>2010 - Hungarian Bibliotherapy Society http://www.irodalomterapia.hu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering services for hospitals 	<h4 style="background-color: #8B4513; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Accidental BT</h4> <p>Librarians offer services and recommend resources without passing judgment. Through this process, they often become "accidental bibliotherapists".</p>  <p><small>What is "accidental" about? Reading about substance abuse. Many of people around the world struggle with substance abuse. Librarians offer services and recommend resources without passing judgment. Through this process, they often become "accidental bibliotherapists".</small></p>
<h4 style="background-color: #8B4513; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Reading for Recovery</h4> <p>Assuming that guided reading can be effective in the continuous process of recovery, BT aims to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide information and insight • find facts for solutions • contemplate and offer dialogue/communicate new values and attitudes • learn about how others have faced the same problems <p>Public libraries have all these resources on their shelves, but librarians may not feel comfortable recommending titles concerning sensitive topics.</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; text-align: right;">Funded by an ALA Carnegie-Whitney Grant (2015-2016)</p>	<h4 style="background-color: #8B4513; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">R4R: The Need</h4> <p>The gap between the right books and their readers cannot be bridged by librarians without the requisite knowledge.</p> <p>There is a need to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitate library resources for creative and informal bibliotherapy • establish an easily discoverable, non-commercial, open-access website for anonymous users • add to the readers' advisory toolkit on sensitive topics • provide addiction counselors with a sustainable database 	<h4 style="background-color: #8B4513; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">R4R Purpose</h4> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bridge the gap in access and discoverability between the readers in need and the appropriate books that can enhance active coping. 2. Empower librarians and addiction counselors with a tool that has been vetted by experts. 3. Create a comprehensive collection that would add to the support system for addicts and those in recovery. 4. Address an information gap with its online annotated bibliographic records arranged in a searchable database. 	<h4 style="background-color: #8B4513; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">R4R Timeline</h4> <p>Phase 1 - PLANNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate our selection criteria • expand the scope • brainstorm for content <p>Phase 2 - SEARCHING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comprehensive search for titles • reach out to the CAS faculty • include both fiction and nonfiction <p>Phase 3 - SELECTING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create collection development policies <p>Phase 4 - PILOT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create annotated bibliographies • develop pilot website <p>Phase 5 - TESTING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • test content and format for accessibility and usability <p>Phase 6 - DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solicit information from SALIS • develop the collection proper further • write annotations where applicable <p>Phase 7 - FINALIZING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present at CAS Library Day and RUL • solicit feedback <p>Phase 8 - GRAND OPENING</p>