

## Books to build resilience during difficult times

These have been taken from published guides on literature to build resilience, many of them endorsed by mental health practitioners, as well as from personal reading and that of primary teachers nationwide.

### Books for all ages (grown ups too!)

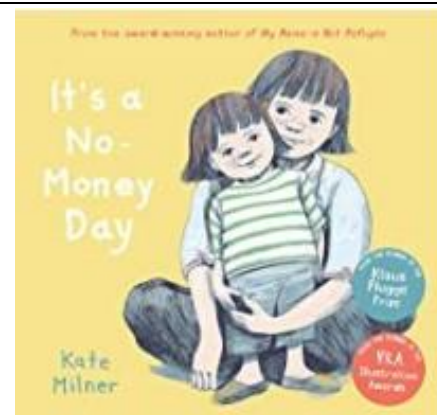
#### **The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and the Horse; Charlie Mackesy (Ebury Press)**

Enter the world of Charlie's four unlikely friends, discover their story, their fears and their most important life lessons. The conversations of the boy, the mole, the fox and the horse have been shared thousands of times online, recreated in school art classes and hung on hospital walls. Published in October 2019 and perfect consolation and inspiration for these strange times.



#### **It's A No Money Day; Kate Milner (Barrington Stoke)**

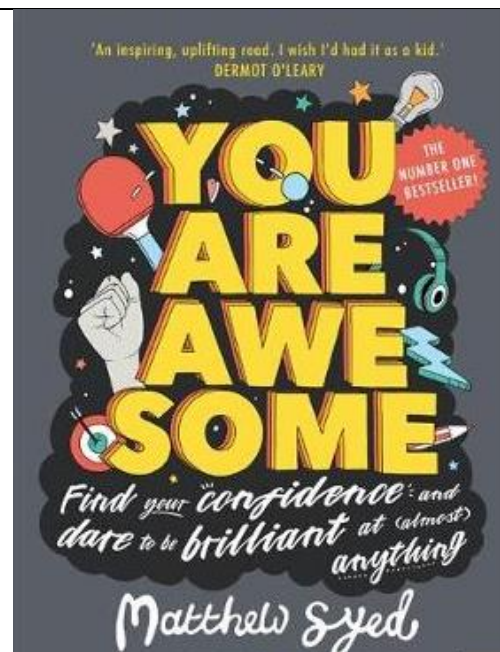
This beautifully understated picture book lays out in very simple terms a day in the life of a mother and child who use the local food bank. Sensitively portrayed and gently uplifting, the family find the joy in little things on a challenging day. This is an ideal text to promote empathy and resilience and particularly in the current situation nationally, to share and discuss with all ages.



#### **You Are Awesome; Mathew Syed (Hachette)**

If you believe you can't do something, the chances are you won't try. But what if you really could get better at maths, or sport or exams? In fact, what if you could excel at anything you put your mind to?

You Are Awesome can help you do just that, inspiring and empowering young readers to find the confidence to realise their potential. Mathew Syed uses examples of successful people from Mozart to Serena Williams to demonstrate that success really is earned rather than given, and that talent can be acquired. With hard work and determination, practice and self-belief, and, most importantly, a Growth Mindset, there's no reason why anyone can't achieve anything.

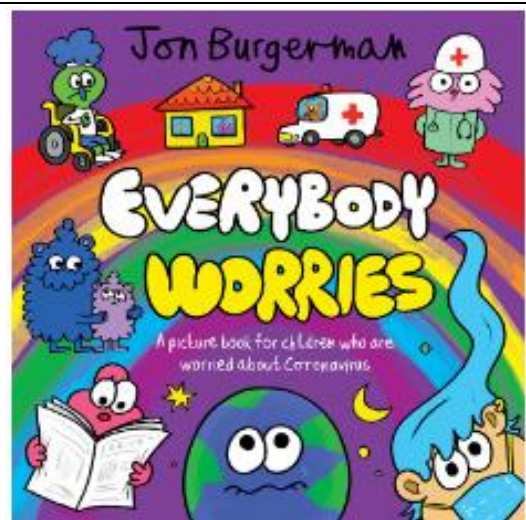


## Picture books (for ages 4-7)

**Everybody Worries; Jon Burgerman (Oxford Owl free ebook)** <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/books>

In this bright and friendly picture book, children learn that it's okay to worry about coronavirus. Fun rhyming couplets keep the tone gentle and supportive, and you will find plenty of ideas for dealing with coronavirus in a positive way.

*Everybody Worries* offers your child the reassuring message that this crisis will pass, we are there for them, and we will get through this together.



**Small Things; Mel Tregonning (Allen & Unwin)**

On the cusp of having everything slip from his grasp, a young boy has to find a way to rebuild his sense of self. An ordinary boy in an ordinary world. With no words, only illustrations, *Small Things* tells the story of a boy who feels alone with worries but who learns that help is always close by. An extraordinary story, told simply and with breath taking beauty, created in the last year of the author's life. Great for opening up dialogue about emotions and resilience.



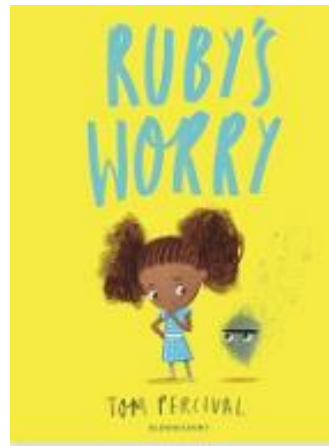
**Milo – A Moving Story; Tohby Riddle (Allen & Unwin)**

A sweet and funny story about a city-dwelling dog, a time when everything goes wrong, a curious rescue and a surprising gift. Milo's life is almost entirely unremarkable. He lives in a solid kennel in an okay part of town. Every other day he has a job delivering parcels. Then Milo's life is turned upside down by a bad dream, an argument with his friend, followed by a strange wild storm that leaves him and his kennel in a precarious place. So begins Milo's surprisingly remarkable journey back to his friends. A beautifully written book by an Australian author, perfect for these times, to help children understand that change doesn't have to be scary.



**Ruby's Worry: A Big Bright Feelings Book; Tom Percival (Bloomsbury Children's Books)**

An excellent children's book that deals with anxiety. Ruby is a young child who develops a very small worry that slowly gets larger over time. It becomes so huge that it begins to overcrowd her happiness. At a park one day, she finds another child with a problem and feels compelled to speak to him. After talking with each other about their problems, they both begin to feel better.



**Grobblechops; Elizabeth Laird & Jenny Lucander (Tiny Owl Publishing)**

Amir doesn't want to go to bed. He's afraid there might be a monster waiting in the dark. What if it has big teeth and growls like a lion? And even worse, what if the monster has a mum and dad too?

This hilarious take on the classic monster-under-the-bed tale is accompanied by gorgeous illustrations from Finnish illustrator Jenny Lucander. A great way of showing that naming and discussing our fears makes them less scary.

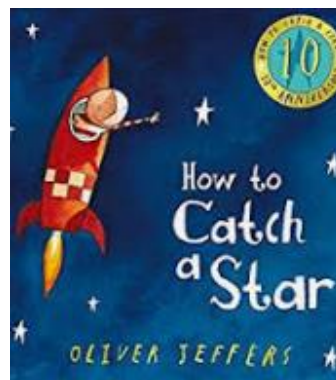




## Shorter Texts (ages 7-10)

### How To Catch A Star; Oliver Jeffers (Harper Collins)

A tale of perseverance, following a boy who loves stars so much he decides to catch one of his own. After waiting, jumping and stretching, again and again, his dream still feels far away. Then, just when he's about to give up, he finds a star in an unexpected place. Big, open, colourful pages, shimmering with hope, will inspire readers to keep reaching for the skies in difficult times.



### Worry Angels; Sita Brahmachari (Barrington Stoke)

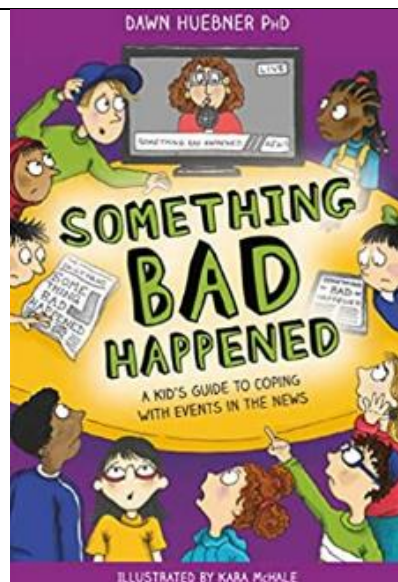
Amy May knows about webs of worries – so many people she meets are caught in them, from her own artist dad to newly arrived refugee Rima and her family. By being brave enough to open up her own worry box, can Amy May help those around her to find a way forward?

Illustrated by Jane Ray. An important, tender and vital story about dealing with and overcoming worry. Particularly suitable for struggling, reluctant and dyslexic readers aged 8+.



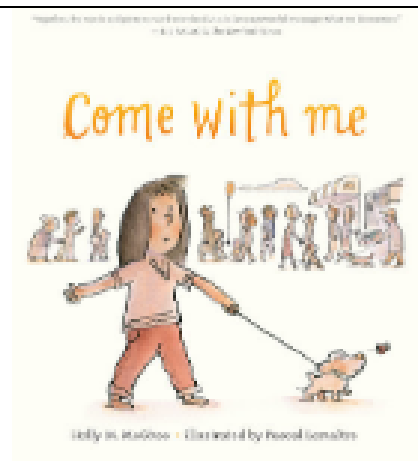
### Something Bad Happened: A Kid's Guide To Coping With Events in the News; Dawn Huebner PhD (Kingsley Publishers)

When children learn about something big and bad, their brains get busy trying to make sense of it. Where did it happen? Why did it happen? And especially, will it happen again? Something Bad Happened guides children and the adults who care about them through tough conversations about national and international tragedies. The non-specific term "bad thing" is used throughout, keeping this a flexible tool, and so children are never inadvertently exposed to events their parents have chosen not to share. Fear, sadness and uncertainty about the "bad thing" all are normalized, and immediately usable coping tools provided.



**Come With Me; Holly M McGhee (Penguin Random House)**

In this thoughtful, beautiful story, a little girl is concerned by the stories of anger and hatred she sees on the news. Her parents take her out, modelling friendship, bravery, and compassion, until she feels empowered to go out herself. A salient reminder to parents and children of the small but important role we each play in making our world a better place. The book contains images which do not involve social distancing, so this could form part of the discussion around the text, about how we show compassion and respect to others while distanced from them.

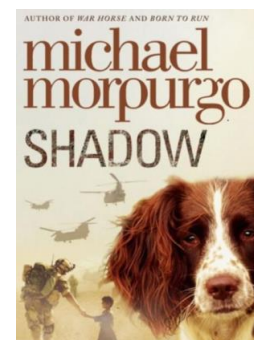


**Longer fiction texts (ages 10+)**

**Shadow; Michael Morpurgo (Harper Collins)**

A book about resilience in a time when the world as the characters knew it is falling apart; Aman and his mother flee from war-torn Afghanistan as refugees. Their fate is inextricably linked to a war dog called Shadow. A thought-provoking text for older readers. Teaching resources for this book are available at:

<https://www.michaelmorpurgo.com/products/shadow-2/>



**Pixie Pushes On; Tamara Bundy (Penguin)**

In this historical novel, set in the 1940s in America, Pixie deals with her problems – which include her beloved sister going into quarantine with polio – by lashing out at her classmates with rude nicknames. Then, when she starts to care for a runt lamb, the patience the job requires puts things in perspective. This is a sweet, funny book with a feisty heroine, and shows the value of not believing too strongly in your own bad luck.



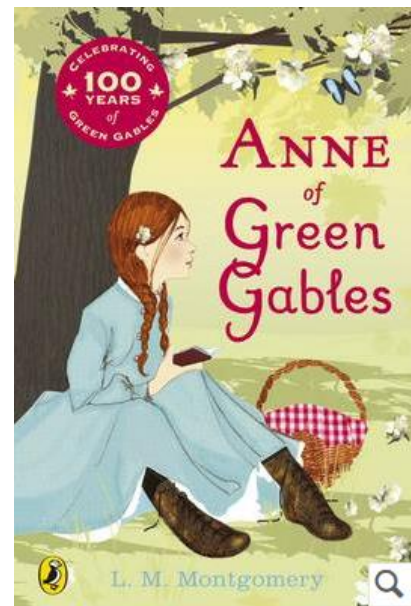
**Like Nothing Amazing Ever Happened; Emily Blejwas (Delacorte Press)**

Justin is a kid who feels like he'll never understand what's going on in his life. Since he lost his father, everyone he knows seems like a mystery to him, and he's frustrated at people acting like life is just fine when he knows it's not. In this American novel, set during the time of the Gulf War, Justin learns that time and space and memory are grander and weirder than he ever thought, and that small moments can hold big things, if you're paying attention. Just like his math teacher said, even when you think you have all the information, there will be more. There is always more. A book with a big heart and a hopeful spirit.



**Anne of Green Gables; L M Montgomery (Penguin Random House)**

A well-loved classic, written by Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery in 1908 but stands the test of time. Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert are waiting for an orphan boy to help with the work at Green Gables - but a skinny, red-haired girl turns up instead. Feisty and full of spirit, Anne Shirley charms her way into the Cuthberts' affection with her vivid imagination and constant chatter. It's not long before Anne finds herself in trouble, but soon it becomes impossible for the Cuthberts to imagine life without 'their' Anne - and for the people of Avonlea to recall what it was like before this wildly creative little girl whirled into town. A book with beautiful descriptions of the setting (Canada's Prince Edward Island) and brimming with hope in adversity and the importance of remaining true to yourself in difficult circumstances. The inspiration for the Netflix series 'Anne With An E' - but the books are much better!



**Hatchet; Gary Paulsen (Scholastic)**

An inspirational survival story, which is testament to the triumph of the human spirit and the power of nature in the wild. 13-year-old Brian is on his way to visit his father when the tiny plane he's flying in crashes. The sole survivor, Brian is left completely alone in the Canadian wilderness with nothing but a hatchet. The book chronicles his mistakes and tiny triumphs as he manages to survive in the wilderness for 54 days. Most of all, Brian leaves behind the self-pity he has felt about his predicament as he summons the courage to stay alive. A story of survival and of transformation, this riveting book has sparked many a reader's interest in venturing into the wild.

