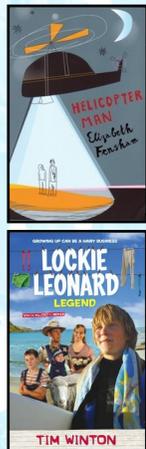


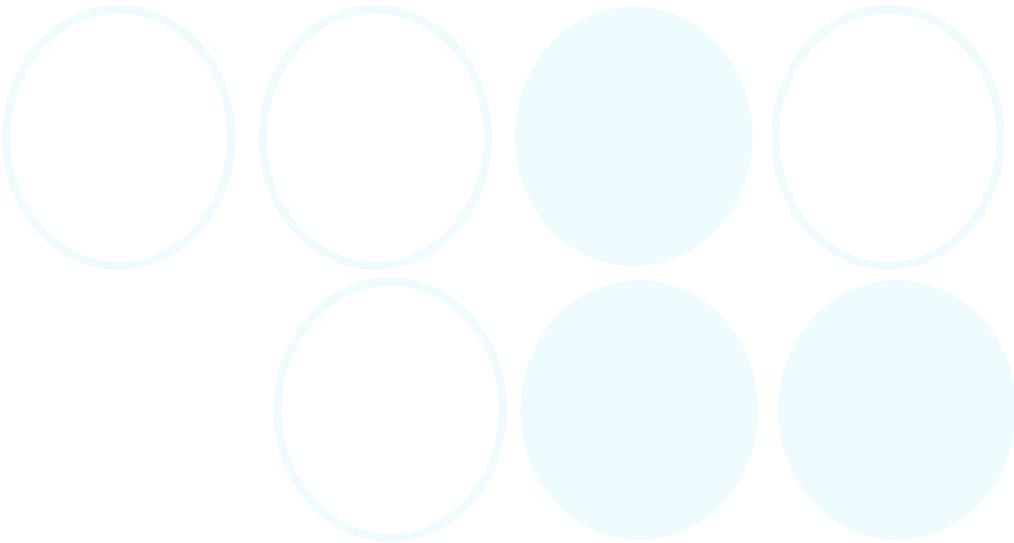
*mind* matters  
Leading mental health and wellbeing

# Just Being Me



A package of ideas for middle schools teachers using *Helicopter Man* and/or *Lockie Leonard, Legend* as class texts and who are interested in the following potential outcomes for students: increasing students' understanding of mental illness and its potential affect on families; reducing the stigma associated with mental illness; increasing students' help seeking behaviours.

(Ideas provided are mainly for use in English classes with associated links for Health and Physical Education, Society and Environment, Maths, Arts, Science, Drama, Music, Design and Technology).



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**Teacher preparation and support**  
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**Where to start?**  
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**Resources referred to within this package**  
Page 6-7

## LINKS TO OTHER LEARNING AREAS

	Art	Food	Maths	Music	Drama	Health	Design	Society	Science	Info Tech	Technology	Environment
<b>1. Coping</b> Page 8-11	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
<b>2. Mental illness - language and stigma</b> Page 12-15		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
<b>3. Loss and grief responses to mental illness within the family</b> Page 16-17				✓	✓							
<b>4. Young people caring for parents with a mental illness</b> Page 18-21	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	

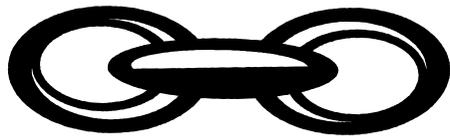
**Acknowledgments**  
Page 22

# TEACHER PREPARATION AND SUPPORT

## Preparatory training and information for staff

The ideas included in this package require an understanding of the concepts of mental health and mental illness. Prior to commencing work in this area with students it is highly recommended that the teacher has:

1. undertaken some MindMatters professional development (check the website for professional development opportunities in your State [www.mindmatters.edu.au](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au))
2. read *School Matters* pages 22-27 regarding teacher considerations when dealing with sensitive topics (see [http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/resources\\_and\\_downloads/mindmatters/school\\_matters.html](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/resources_and_downloads/mindmatters/school_matters.html))
3. visited the *Workers Resource, Education* section of the Children Of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI) website [www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au).



**Unless otherwise stated, the activity suggestions provided are for use in English classes.**

**This symbol indicates links to other learning areas.**

As one in five Australians will experience a mental disorder in any 12 month period, it is highly likely that teachers may have personal experience of their own, or of a close relative or friend's mental illness.

Ensure you know how to seek support for yourself or your colleagues as you may want to debrief about some of the subject matter.

Consider linking with a person working in the 'copmi' field before presenting this unit (see the *Programs & Services* listing on the COPMI website [www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au) for local service providers).

They may be able to:

- provide further information or resources
- co-present some of the unit
- be a guest speaker

# Where to Start?

This package of ideas is not a 'recipe book': activities can be undertaken in any order and can be modified according to the teacher's skills, experience and student interests. However, it is important that the safety issues outlined below are addressed prior to commencing any of the activities contained in this resource.

## Creating a safe and supportive classroom environment for students

1. Take time to establish a safe and supportive environment during the first session. Negotiate class agreements about how individuals will demonstrate respect for the group and contribute to feelings of safety.
2. The nature of this work might touch on personal or sensitive issues for some students. Ensure that all students know where and how to get help for themselves or their friends in case any concerns arise about their own, or someone else's, well-being. For some students it will be appropriate to link with school psychologists/ counsellors and/or community health workers to provide emotional support. Many schools require teachers to notify the school psychologist or counsellor BEFORE these topics are discussed as part of the curriculum. It may be helpful to invite the school counsellor or psychologist to join you in the classroom for some, or all, of the activities.
3. Some students may wish to talk about a personal experience or issue that arises from the work. Recounting personal situations in a group setting is not recommended in the general classroom and it is important that a student's or staff member's personal experience does not become the focus or content of the curriculum. It is therefore important that teachers provide students with clear guidelines about disclosure of personal information before the unit of work commences (e.g. seeing the teacher after class, not using the names of real people, seeing the school counsellor). Teachers should be prepared to protectively interrupt students whom the teacher feels may be about to disclose personal or sensitive information that would be better disclosed in a private setting.

## Student Posters:

One possible starting activity to introduce students to the topic of 'Just Being Me'.

Set up a light source (such as an overhead projector or data projector) so that it projects a strong white light against a wall or whiteboard. Place a large piece of white paper (e.g. butcher's paper) on the wall where the light is shining. Each student will need their own piece of paper. Then students take turns standing side on to the wall to cast a silhouette shadow on the paper. Another student carefully draws around the shadow to create an outline of the student projecting the shadow.

Students then cut pictures from magazines or newspapers that illustrate their life at the moment. It may be pictures of clothing, food, houses, pets – whatever. These pictures are pasted inside their silhouette to form a visual representation of them as a person.

The class may like to discuss which pictures they think Lockie (from Lockie Lenard Legend) or Pete (from Helicopter Man) would paste into their own silhouettes if they were in the class.

# RESOURCES REFERRED TO WITHIN THIS PACKAGE

Listed alphabetically by resource code

## Publications

B&H

**Bullying and Harassment**, MindMatters Australia (2002) downloadable from [www.mindmatters.edu.au](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au)

Family Talk

**Family Talk: tips and information for families where a parent has a mental health problem or disorder**, Australian Infant Child Adolescent and Family Mental Health Association (2004). Order free copies or download from [www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au)

LLL

**Lockie Leonard, Legend**, by Tim Winton (1997), Sydney, Pan MacMillan Australia. [Also available as an audio book.] (Page number references are to the 2007 paperback edition.)

Big and Me

**Big and Me**, by David Miller (2008), Melbourne, Ford St Publishing.

Heli Man

**Helicopter Man**, by Elizabeth Fensham (2005), London, Bloomsbury Publishing. [Also available as an audio book.] (Page number references are to the 2005 paperback edition.)

Not Alone

**You're Not Alone: A SANE guide to mental illness for children**, SANE Australia (2003) [www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)

ERI

**Enhancing Resilience 1**, MindMatters Australia (2002) downloadable from [www.mindmatters.edu.au](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au)

Joe's Diary

**Joe's Diary: A SANE guide for young people**, SANE Australia (2001) [www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)

St L Cards

**St Luke's Strengths Cards**, St Luke's Innovative Resources, 137 McCrae Street Bendigo Vic 3550, [www.innovativeresources.org](http://www.innovativeresources.org)

ER2

**Enhancing Resilience 2**, MindMatters Australia (2002) downloadable from [www.mindmatters.edu.au](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au)

L&G

**Loss and Grief**, MindMatters Australia (2002) downloadable from [www.mindmatters.edu.au](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au)

UMI

**Understanding Mental Illness**, MindMatters Australia (2002) downloadable from [www.mindmatters.edu.au](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au)

## RESOURCES REFERRED TO WITHIN THIS PACKAGE CONT'D

Listed alphabetically by resource code

### Electronic Resources - websites, DVDs, CDs

COPMI

**Children Of Parents with a Mental Illness**

[www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au)

Champs

**Families where a Parent has a Mental Illness (FaPMI)**. The CHAMPS project in Victoria, Australia, has developed this website for children in the 5-12 year age group who have an adult family member with mental illness.

[www.easternhealth.org.au/champs/](http://www.easternhealth.org.au/champs/)

DOHA

**Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing** pamphlets

[www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Mental+Health+and+Wellbeing-1](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Mental+Health+and+Wellbeing-1)

Search publications for the following in the "What is.....?" series (2007)

NB: most of these fact sheets are also available in twenty-one languages from Multicultural Mental Health Australia:

[www.mmha.org.au/](http://www.mmha.org.au/)

- Mental illness
- Anxiety disorder
- Bipolar mood disorder
- Depressive disorder
- Eating disorder
- Schizophrenia.

Headspace

**Headspace** pamphlets and website

[www.headspace.org.au/](http://www.headspace.org.au/)

Itsallright

**Itsallright** (developed by SANE Australia for young people) [www.itsallright.org](http://www.itsallright.org)

MindMatters

**MindMatters** is a mental health promotion resource for secondary schools. The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing distributed one free resource kit to every secondary school in Australia in 2002. PDF versions can be downloaded from [www.mindmatters.edu.au](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au).

Raising Children

**Raising Children** [raisingchildren.net.au](http://raisingchildren.net.au)

KOPING

**KOPING DVD (2008)**

The KOPING DVD (*Koping 'their stories'*) and accompanying CD ROM resource has been developed in Queensland to support children, young people and their families whose parent/s are living with a mental illness or dual diagnosis, by providing information about other young people's experiences, ways of coping and how to get help. The DVD and CD ROM set retail at \$50 (inc. GST and p&h within Australia). Email: [koping@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:koping@health.qld.gov.au).

Time To Change

**The Movie** and **Kids' Party**, two brief video clips developed as part of the UK *Time-To Change: Lets end mental health discrimination* program [www.time-to-change.org.uk/home/](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/home/)

Young Carers

**Young Carers** [www.youngcarers.net.au/](http://www.youngcarers.net.au/)

# COPING

**Introduction: remember to negotiate class agreements with students in the first lesson of this unit to make your classroom a safe place to talk about sensitive issues (e.g. the right to 'pass', it's OK to seek help, speak in the third person).**

## 1. Introductory Activity – Stresses and Coping

As a whole-of-class activity, brainstorm possible stresses in a young person's life. Keep discussions one step removed and allow no judgement on individual contributions (what one person finds stressful, another may not). In small groups, choose three of the stresses and brainstorm ways young people use to cope with them.

List some of the strategies that Pete uses to help him cope, e.g.:

- writing a letter to his mum (page 28)
- hugging a tree to give himself courage (page 17)
- writing down the good and the bad stuff in his diary (page 30)
- using positive self-talk (page 82)
- thinking of his mum as a guardian angel (page 106).

Label each of them according to whether students believe they are healthy or unhealthy (i.e. will they hurt or harm yourself or anyone else? Will they make the situation worse?)

Resource required: Heli Man



## 2. Imagery – Helicopter Man

Brainstorm how different emotions (e.g. happy, sad, scared) can be evoked by certain sights and sounds (e.g. the theme music for *Star Wars* movies in creating suspense).

Talk about a theme song or movie that has used music to create emotion that has impacted on you.

Pete feels safe with Daph just by feeling her soft cardigan against his head and smelling her perfume - ask students if they can identify any smells or textures that make them feel certain emotions and highlight that these may be different for different people (e.g. a burning wood smell may evoke a positive feeling for some young people if it reminds them of happy camping trips but may evoke fear in those who have been through a bushfire).

Resource required: Heli Man



## Health

Pete misses many things that were stolen with his backpack (page 54) because he associated them with his mother and good times. Those memories helped him to cope.

Ask students to draw or imagine a backpack and think about which of their possessions they would put in it to help them cope emotionally if they were on their own or in a tough situation. As an alternate possible assessment for students who struggle to draw/write, ask them to create a collage using pictures to make up their backpack or bring in their backpack and make an oral presentation.

### 3. Imagery – *Lockie Leonard, Legend*

On pages 103 and 104 of *Lockie Leonard, Legend*, Lockie goes to his mother's room, smells and feels her clothes and looks through some of his mother's belongings to think about her, as he tries to make sense of why she has become ill. These paragraphs help the reader learn a little more about his mother.

Ask students to think about a family member or good friend. Write a paragraph or two that would help a reader gain an image of what the person is like, without physically describing the person.

Resource required: LLL



### 4. Personal Qualities

Pete finds it good to talk to Uncle Jack who always has time to listen, laughs a lot and makes you feel like you belong (pages 49-50).

In *Joe's Diary*, Joe feels comfortable talking to his grandad (page 22). Grandad is also able to talk with Joe's mum and encourage her to go to see the doctor when she's unwell.

- a. Ask students to identify some of the qualities of people they feel they can talk to.
- b. Ask students what qualities they have that make people feel comfortable talking to them.

Resources required:  
Heli Man, ER2, Joe's Diary



### Drama

Divide the students into pairs or small groups and ask them to find a section that provides some 'light relief' in the story – something that makes the reader smile. Have the students read or act out the section and say why they enjoyed it.

Alternatively, perform the section as a radio play.

### Health

Pete demonstrates that sometimes he uses negative talk about himself, e.g. he says he 'fluked it' when he got some goals at basketball whereas Godfrey says he's 'got aptitude' (page 120).

Use activity 2 on page 29 (and the activity sheet on page 32) of the MindMatters booklet *Enhancing Resilience 2* to assist students to discuss positive and negative self-talk.

Discuss how Pete could re-frame his negative self-talk into positive self-talk. Rewrite two negative thoughts into positives.

### 5. Descriptive Writing

On page 167 of *Lockie Leonard, Legend*, Lockie describes how the sight of a dolphin leaping from the water 'stirred your soul and gave your heart a boot'. At the end of the book he's delighted that his mum can also enjoy this sight.

Follow up: Ask the students to keep a pictorial or written diary about things they see that they find uplifting – for one week.

Ask the students to select three things from their diary and describe exactly how those things made them feel.

Resource required: LLL



### Arts

Research well known artists or works of art to find two images of resilience.

- Discuss why you chose them.
- Describe the feelings or thoughts that you believe the images might invoke in the viewer.

Or find two album covers/songs/movies that present images of resilience to you.

## COPING CONT'D

### 6. Comparative Activity

Watch the KOPING DVD as a class. Ask students to identify any ways in which the young people interviewed, coped with their situation and compare these strategies with the ones shown by Pete (in *Helicopter Man*) or Lockie (in *Lockie Leonard, Legend*).

Example answers

KOPING DVD:

The girl in the park takes her dog for a walk or takes deep breaths in difficult situations; the girl pictured by the water writes poetry and songs; the boy in the park talks to friends or listens to music.

Pete wrote in his diary.

Lockie talked to his dad.

Resources required: Heli Man,  
ER2, LLL, KOPING



### Society and Environment or Health

Pete wonders if men find it harder to handle things than women do and if he will be like that when he gets older (page 118). He is also glad that Godfrey lends him a pair of sunglasses so that no-one will see that he's been crying (page 97).

Use the small group 'Coping Styles' activity in the MindMatters booklet *Enhancing Resilience 2* (pages 57-59) to assist students to reflect on the cultural pressures and expectation placed on males and females in terms of how they express their needs.

Resources required: Heli Man, ER2



### Health

List a number of situations when Pete is stressed or challenged, e.g.:

- when he starts at the new school (page 106)
- when he froze climbing down from the sea eagle's nest (page 81)
- when he realises that his father is not ready to leave the hospital (page 105)
- when his backpack is stolen (page 55).

Use the 'Coping Collections' activity on page 34 (and the mope, hope or cope cards on pages 37-45) of the MindMatters booklet *Enhancing Resilience 2* to help students reflect on coping strategies they would find useful. Give each student one random coping card. Name one of the stressful situations listed above and ask students to move to one end of the room if they would find the coping strategy written on their card to be helpful in that situation. Move to the other end of the room if it wouldn't be helpful. Move to the middle if unsure. Repeat the activity for each of the stressful situations above. Discuss different ways people cope and the value of having a number of coping strategies so that you don't depend on one or two that may not suit a particular situation.

Explain that it is OK to disagree with someone else's choice but not to judge them.

### Design and Technology

Pete and his dad find some environments more stressful to be in, than others.

- a. Draw a picture of a place (other than your bedroom) where you feel most relaxed – indoors or outdoors.
- b. Design an indoor or outdoor space where you think Pete and his dad would find the setting very relaxing and stress free.

Resource required: Heli Man



# COPING: Assessment Suggestions

Pete thinks that the way he and Vic were home-schooled worked well (pages 36 and 37). Construct a real-life curriculum that covers all the subjects you currently study at school in a way that would suit your interests and learning style.

Resource required: Heli Man



## Possible Assessment Criteria

- Creativity
- Able to self assess own interests and learning style
- Appropriate setting out.

List Pete's strengths and needs, then write a print, online, TV or radio advertisement for a foster father for him. In the advertisement sell Pete's strengths and also clearly state what he requires of a foster parent to support him at this time.

Resource required: Heli Man



## Possible Assessment Criteria

- Uses features of media
- Understanding of different types of media
- Able to articulate strengths
- Appropriate target audience.

Describe a scene in which two students walking home from school become scared simply by hearing something or smelling something. Describe exactly the same scene, smell or sounds again but rewrite the ending to indicate that instead of these things causing them to be scared, they bring great delight to the students.

## Possible Assessment Criteria

- Creative solutions to problems
- Use of descriptive language to elicit emotion
- Appropriate endings.

Design a community service announcement, a radio advertising jingle or a *YouTube* clip about a program or camp where young people who have a parent with a mental illness can meet together, learn about mental illness and identify, develop and share their personal coping strategies. List your sources of information. Explain why you designed the announcement the way you did.

## Possible Assessment Criteria

- Appropriate features
- Original
- Engaging
- Provides correct information
- Targets audience
- Able to self assess.

If you had to make the book into a film, how would you portray some of Pete's supporting adults (e.g. Uncle Jack, Daph, Neil and Alison, Prue and Godfrey)?

How would you set the scene?

Who you would select as the cast?

What role would you like to play and why?

Resource required: Heli Man



## Possible Assessment Criteria

- Able to articulate physical descriptions
- Translates written to visual
- Able to explain choices and decisions.

# MENTAL ILLNESS – LANGUAGE AND STIGMA

**Introduction: remember to negotiate class agreements with students in the first lesson of this unit to make your classroom a safe place to talk about sensitive issues (e.g. the right to ‘pass’, it’s OK to seek help, speak in the third person).**

## I. Words Can Be Stigmatising

- As a whole class activity, ask students to call out words used to describe someone with a mental illness (one student scribes them on the board).
- Ask another student to scribe while students call out words used to describe someone with diabetes.
- Ask another student to scribe while students call out words to describe someone with breast cancer.
- Ask the students to reflect on the difference between words on each list. Which list includes the most ‘put downs’? Lead into a discussion of how language can make people feel bad, worthless, judged, etc.

Discuss stigma and stigmatising language with students in terms of the names that Pete (from *Helicopter man*) is called at his new school, e.g. Why does Pete feel that being called ‘Spag’ is OK (page 121) but being called ‘Worm’ (page 107 and 109) is not?

Agree as a class to reconsider using words that could be heard as put downs and from now on only use correct terminology.

As an extension activity, play the ‘Discrimination Game’ of the MindMatters booklet *Bullying and Harassment* (pages 30 and 31).

Resources required: Heli Man, B&H,  
UMI, St L Cards, Time to Change



## Health

Ask students to brainstorm their strengths and what they believe their close family or best friends would say are their strengths.

Students may like to use the St Luke’s Resources Strengths cards with examples of what strengths they may have.

Although Pete and others can observe some of his dad’s weaknesses, they also speak about his strengths, e.g. ‘good manners’ (page 12); ‘he’s so intelligent’, ‘so generous...he reminds me more of Jesus than most people I meet at church’ (page 124); teaching skills (page 37); writing poetry (pages 39-41); ‘quiet and polite’ (page 19); kind to strangers (page 79).

Ask students to complete the ‘Fact, Fear, Furphy or Fiction’ activity on page 71 of the booklet *Understanding Mental Illness*.

Watch one of the *Time to Change* video clips about mental health discrimination. Ask students to brainstorm the key message/s in the clip.

Resources required: Time To Change, UMI,  
St L Cards, Heli Man



## 2. Introducing Metaphors

On page 49 of *Helicopter Man*, Pete mentions that he doesn't know what a metaphor is. Discuss use of simile, metaphor and onomatopoeic words in *Helicopter Man* using examples from the book – e.g. 'Like a hawk after a sparrow' (page 130); 'Like coming up for air after you've been drowning for years and years' (page 125), and the list of fart words (page 39).

Use activities (poems, feelings and word pictures) from Session 3 of the MindMatters booklet *Enhancing Resilience 1* (pages 75-80) to highlight that metaphor and simile can be used to help us express how we feel, and to assist us to cope with challenge.

Resources required: Heli Man, ERI



## Health

- Show students the comic strip description of mental illness on pages 5 and 6 from the book *You're Not Alone*.
- In small groups or pairs, have students write out a script that a doctor could have said to Pete to help him understand his dad's mental illness.
- Students read the scripts aloud to the class or practice them in groups of three, where one person is the observer and provides feedback.

## Drama

Read the young children's book *Big and Me* to a child or children in the 6-9 year age range at a local Primary School. Ask them to write down or make an audio recording of what they think the book is about. Alternatively, the High School students could act out the book's story (e.g. this could be done using narration and configuration mime).

Resource required: Big and Me

## Assessment Suggestion

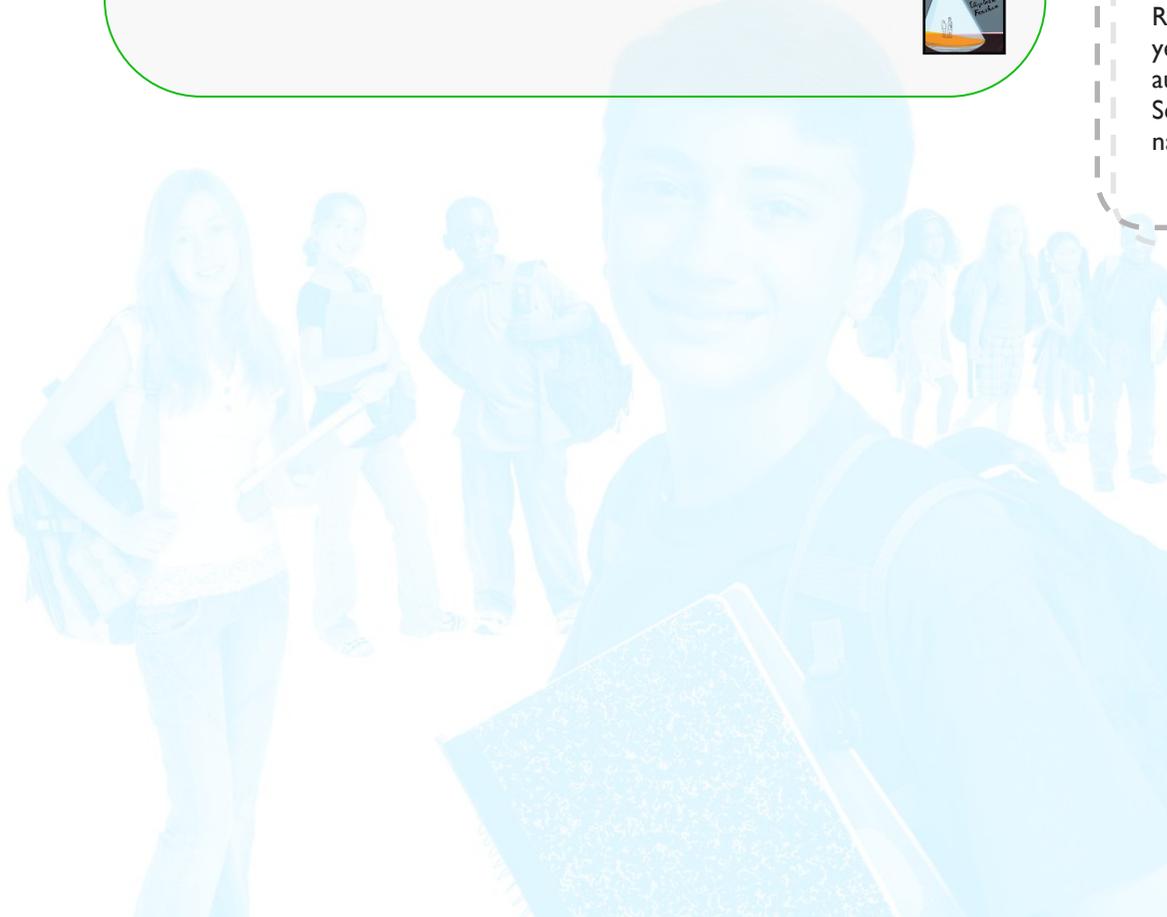
(Link with the metaphor activity)

Discuss the visual representation of mental illness in the book *Big and Me* and describe another way in which mental illness could be depicted visually for young children.

Resources required: Big and Me

### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Seeks creative solutions to problems.
- Understands metaphor.
- Able to create an alternative metaphor.
- Appropriate for intended audience.
- Uses imagination



## MENTAL ILLNESS – LANGUAGE AND STIGMA CONT'D

### 3. Metaphors for Mental Illness

Read with the class relevant sections of *Helicopter Man* and note the ways various people described mental illness

- 'a sandwich short of a picnic' (page 75)
- 'like when I knock on the door and there's no-one home' (page 154)
- 'like an empty room' (page 154).

In *Lockie Leonard, Legend*, examples include

- 'some sort of a melt down' (page 47)
- section starting at 'What's it like? How you feel...' (pages 115-116)
- 'as though she'd gone somewhere else behind her eyes' (page 50)
- 'I feel...like the cloud has passed' and 'the fog of the pills' (page 122)
- 'like a bomb dropping' (page 53)
- 'drop your bundle' (page 73)
- 'a pair of stunned mullet' (page 65).

Students could read the poem *Thesaurus of Madness* on page 73 of the MindMatters curriculum booklet *Understanding Mental Illness* and complete the creative writing task on page 68 of the same booklet.

Resources required: Heli Man, LLL



### Health

Pete often talks about loyalty to his father (in his own way), e.g.:

- not providing information to people who could help (page 48)
- not wanting to betray his dad ('I won't be a traitor to dad') (page 83)
- deciding to run away again with his dad if necessary (page 158).

Discuss how misplaced loyalty, fear and lack of knowledge can prevent people from accessing treatment and/or disclosing that they or a family member has a mental illness.

To assist students to understand that communicating about needing help or seeking help can be challenging, use the 'Getting it Said' exercise in the MindMatters booklet *Enhancing Resilience 2* (pages 51-56), that includes persuading a friend to seek help, telling someone you need help and seeking help for a friend.

Resource required: ER2

### Health

As a class activity, write a list of all of Pete's dad's symptoms of mental illness (see pages 9, 13, 26, 30, 34, 43, 68, 71-72, 75, 125, 132) and compare them to the descriptions of schizophrenia on page 42 of the MindMatters booklet *Understanding Mental Illness*.

Ask students to discuss the similarities and differences and display them in a Venn diagram.

Resources required: UMI, Heli Man



# MENTAL ILLNESS – LANGUAGE AND STIGMA: Assessment Suggestions

## Science/Studies of Society and Environment

How can the environment have an effect on anyone's mental health? Research the major environmental or social issues that humans are facing in today's world and suggest how you think they could impact on a person's mental health and well-being, both positively and negatively (e.g. bushfires, climate change, violence, increasing volunteerism, resurgence of spirituality, global networking sites, world sporting events).

### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Evidence of research – uses minimum 3 sources
- Offers positive and negative ideas
- Applies own thinking and perspective to factual information
- Presentation.

## Music

Produce a piece of music that depicts Sunday 9 July (pages 102-106) at the hospital when Pete takes his father outside OR a piece that depicts how Pete feels after the experience. The student discusses their music composition.

Resource required: Heli Man



### Possible Assessment Criteria

- The student can recognise and depict the emotional aspect of the situation
- Shows understanding of time, tone colour, dynamics.

## Maths

Research (Australian Bureau of Statistics) shows that one in five Australians aged 16 - 85 years are likely to develop some form of mental illness. How many people would this represent in each state of Australia, and the nation as a whole? Graph the results. What would be the impact if this frequency rose to one in four? Re-draw your graph.

### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Understands ratio
- Graphing skills
- Shows working out.

## IT

Design a page for the *Champs* website (including at least one picture/image/graphic) that could help explain a mental illness to a child in the 5-12 year age range.

Resources required: CHAMPS

### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Uses appropriate information and graphic for audience
- Information is accurate
- Demonstrates level of visual design.

Produce a simple crossword puzzle or quiz using the names of characters from *Helicopter Man* or *Lockie Leonard, Legend* and at least eight words relating to mental illness or mental health. Use definitions of mental illnesses within the clues.

### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Information is correct

## English

Write a picture book that includes an explanation of mental illness for children aged 6-9. Begin by developing a storyboard with stick figures and dialogue.

### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Demonstrates an understanding of audience through use of text and pictures
- Submits a draft
- Includes correct information
- Spelling and correct grammar
- Evaluates own work
- Appropriate for intended audience.

## Health or English

Write to the producer of a popular Australian television series or soap opera providing suggestions about how a parent with a mental illness might be included in the story line. Include suggestions about what safeguards the scriptwriter would need to take to ensure that the mental illness was accurately portrayed and that the person's strengths were highlighted.

Script a help-seeking message and include a relevant website to play before the credits at the end of the episode.

### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Displays appropriate ideas and language (e.g. non-stigmatising)
- Demonstrates understanding of mental illness
- Follows letter writing protocols
- Spelling and grammar
- Website reference is evidence-based.

# LOSS AND GRIEF RESPONSES TO MENTAL ILLNESS WITHIN THE FAMILY

**Introduction: remember to negotiate class agreements with students in the first lesson of this unit to make your classroom a safe place to talk about sensitive issues (e.g. the right to 'pass', it's OK to seek help, speak in the third person).**

## 1. Exploring the Term 'resilience'

- Have each student write down what they think resilience means
- Provide some definitions
- Neil says to Pete 'Don't you be downhearted now' as he's leaving (page 98). 'Easy for them to say' is what Pete thinks about that. Highlight that human beings are very resilient and, with support, can often overcome great crises
- Ask students to write a paragraph about someone they know who they think is resilient
- Ask students to refine their original definition.

## 3. Making Connections

Communicating with a stranger can be difficult. Pete found it useful to meet Troy at the hospital because his parent also had a mental illness. Troy had found the holiday camps useful because 'being with other kids who have parents with problems you feel less of a freak and you handle things better' (pages 154-155).

Use the 'Mixed Pair Card' activity on page 27 of the MindMatters booklet *Enhancing resilience 1*. Use the pairing strategy. Ask students to find four things in common with their partner. Practice using questions to help students make connections when meeting new people.

Resources required: Heli Man, ER1



## 2. Introductory Activity – Loss and Grief

As a whole of class activity, brainstorm possible losses in a young person's life. Use activity 1 on change in the MindMatters booklet *Loss and Grief* (page 22 and 23).

Keep the brainstorm one step removed.

Resource required: L&G

### Health

Brainstorm unhelpful strategies to support people who are grieving (on page 60 of the MindMatters booklet *Loss and Grief*) and brainstorm with the students possible guidelines for being a supportive person. Compare the students' responses to the list on page 61 of *Loss and Grief*

Resource required: L&G

### Health

When Pete finds Merrie has eaten one of the mice babies (page 112) he realises that 'even happy families can have weird secrets'.

Read the book *You're Not Alone* with the class and highlight pages 14 and 15 showing that all families are different and that 'every family has stuff'. In pairs or small groups ask the students to draw a comic strip to add to the *You're Not Alone* book that would depict the feelings of the children in the family when their dad is not able to do fun things with them because he is ill.

Resources required: Heli Man, Not Alone





#### 4. Descriptions of Loss

We often think loss refers to when a person has died (and Pete certainly feels the loss of his mum) but we can also feel the loss of a relationship even when the person we had the relationship with is still alive.

Ask students to list the ways in which Pete reacts to the loss of the relationship he had with his father e.g. like a death (page 79), angry (page 73 and 94), sad (page 73), afraid (page 132), lonely (page 95).

Resources required: Heli Man, L&G, ERG



#### Health

Use activities 2-5 on pages 25 and 26 of the MindMatters booklet *Loss and Grief* to explore different reactions to loss (physical responses, behaviour, feelings and thoughts). At the end of the activity, before the end of the class session, work with students to develop a bag of helpful ideas/coping strategies. Attach it to the figure in the physical responses activity and/or have the students take the 'bag of ideas' with them as they leave the class. As an alternative activity ask student to complete the 'Bunch of 5's' activity on page 46 of the MindMatters booklet *Enhancing Resilience 2*.

Resources required: L&G, ER2

## LOSS AND GRIEF RESPONSES TO MENTAL ILLNESS WITHIN THE FAMILY: Assessment Suggestions

#### English/Drama

Write and produce a short play involving friends responding to a teenager experiencing loss of a parent's involvement in their everyday life (e.g. through mental illness, death, divorce, transfer overseas with work, working interstate or longer hours or shift work). Ensure the play has a positive resolution.

#### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Shows sensitivity
- Demonstrates concept of resilience
- Positive and realistic resolution
- Demonstrates some understanding of the complex response to loss
- Maintains character throughout performance.

Write a personal account of the way in which you have coped with a personal loss and include ways in which your friends, teachers and/or other adults were helpful or could have been more helpful.

Identify which coping strategies were the healthiest.

NB: advise the students that the audience for this task will be the teacher only – not peers. NB: discuss this task with the school counsellor prior to setting it. Be prepared (in partnership with the counsellor) to follow up on any concerns about negative coping strategies.

Inform parents that students will be doing the task?

Revisit help seeking avenues that students have.

#### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Retains writing in first person
- Articulates coping strategies.

#### English

Write a 'foster father instruction manual' for Godfrey. Include the rules that you think he should enforce with a 12 year old foster son.

Resource required: Heli Man

#### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Realistic rules
- Formatted as manual – cover, title, diagrams, pictures, index
- Shows depth of thinking
- Worded as rules.



Write a poem or song as if you are Pete that expresses your feelings about the loss of your relationship with your father.

Resource required: Heli Man

#### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Is able to articulate emotions
- Follows protocols of poetry genre chosen.



# YOUNG PEOPLE CARING FOR PARENTS WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS

**Introduction: remember to negotiate class agreements with students in the first lesson of this unit to make your classroom a safe place to talk about sensitive issues (e.g. the right to 'pass', it's OK to seek help, speak in the third person).**

## 1. Introduction – Young Carers/Responsibility

Ask students to reflect upon the household duties/jobs that they do. What is their most favourite and least favourite activity? E.g. make bed, cook, feed pets, wash car, babysit, household shopping.



The above activity could be integrated within

- **Home Economics** in discussions on household management processes.
- **Studies of Society and Environment** in discussions regarding occupations.

## Food and Technology

Lockie and his dad need to plan ahead so that they don't end up eating toast every night (page 27) and they can't rely on help from his nan and pop (page 94). Ask students to develop a week's meal plan and shopping list for Lockie's family that includes meals that don't take too long to prepare, are nutritious and are economical to produce. (The maximum number of take-aways they can include is one.)

As an additional task, ask students to cost the week's meals.

Resource required: LLL



## 2. Descriptive Language

When Lockie starts taking on some of the roles around the house that his mother usually does, he finds that there are a number of new skills he needs to learn, e.g.:

- changing nappies (page 26)
- caring for his baby sister (pages 48 and 49).

Ask the students to reflect on, and list, the skills they would require if they suddenly had to take on the role of one of their parents. Ask students to think about where in their social network they could find someone to help them learn these skills.

Visit [www.raisingchildren.com](http://www.raisingchildren.com) to see how skills such as changing a nappy are visually depicted and described. Ask students to work in pairs to develop a procedure/simple half page description of a domestic job that a young person may need to learn to do if their parent was unwell.

Resources required: LLL, Raising children



## Design and Technology

Create a class book of recipes. Design, illustrate, desktop publish, produce, advertise and sell the recipe book with proceeds going to your local young carers program (see COPMI website [www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au) Programs & Services listing for contact details).

Resource required: COPMI website

### 3. Stigma and the Carer Role

Lockie not only has to care for his younger sister and brother when his mother is ill but he also feels he has to care for Sarge emotionally (e.g. page 125).

Ask students to visit the Australian Young Carers website at [www.youngcarers.net.au/](http://www.youngcarers.net.au/). Ask students to discuss if they feel Lockie would, or would not, classify himself as a 'young carer'.

Use the 'Getting it Said' activity on page 56 of the MindMatters booklet *Enhancing Resilience 2*. This provides a role play activity or sentence starters to help students write down what they would say if they were Lockie's friend and:

- Lockie asked if the student thought he would be able to get support for his 'carer' role
- the student was trying to convince Lockie that he could get help for his caring role and could ask for it
- the student was asking someone else on Lockie's behalf about the type of support he could possibly get for his caring role.

In groups of three, ask the students to act out these three situations (one person is an observer and provides feedback).

Resources required: LLL, Young Carers Website, ER2



### Drama

See 'Getting it Said' role play activity on page 56 of the MindMatters booklet *Enhancing Resilience 2*.

### 4. Comparative Activity

In the chapter 'Brothers' (pages 145 to 154), Lockie realises that he's not the only one experiencing problems in his family. Compare his response to that of the character in *You're Not Alone* when she realises that other families have 'stuff' (pages 14 and 15).

In *Joe's Diary*, Joe talks about life not being fair and is sad that his family is not 'ordinary' like the families in ads on the TV (page 8).

In *Lockie Leonard, Legend*, Vicki speaks of her feelings of jealousy of Lockie's family (page 151).

Ask students to note down what families in three advertisements look like (either in magazines as a class activity or on TV as a homework activity). Compare the three advertisements and discuss the way that the media portrays families.

In *Joe's Diary*, Joe provides a tip for others on page 9 about feeling different. Ask students to write a similar tip for Lockie.

Resources required: LLL, Not Alone,



### Health

When Vicki is trying to be helpful, Lockie finds it 'dead embarrassing...too stupid to look after his own problems' (page 130).

Ask students to brainstorm what they might be able to do to help a friend in Lockie's position. For each suggestion ask students to brainstorm ways in which they could approach Lockie with their 'helpful' idea (see page 154 for how Vicki explains it). Then they can discuss how they could respond in a positive way if Lockie told them that their idea wouldn't be helpful.

### Society and Environment

Explore the concept of 'diversity' in families using a concept map which depicts elements of diversity (e.g. attitudes, health, people, traditions, lifestyles, culture).

Use the concept map to 'map' different families encountered in the book the class is reading (e.g. Lockie and Vicki's families in *Lockie Leonard* or Pete's and the Collins families in *Helicopter Man*).

Student activity: think about the elements of diversity in your family and complete a concept map for yourself.

## YOUNG PEOPLE CARING FOR PARENTS WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS CONT'D

### 5. The Concept of Pride

Ask groups of three students to take the roles of Lockie, his mother and a narrator and read aloud the chapter entitled 'Pride' (pages 141 – 144).

As a class activity, brainstorm the attributes of 'pride' using a grid to list what pride looks like (positive and negative) and what pride feels like (positive and negative).

Discuss how pride can be positive in someone's life but can also get in the way of people accepting or seeking help.

Resource required: LLL



### Drama

On page 101 of *Lockie Leonard, Legend*, Lockie at first feels uncomfortable that people know about his mother's illness but then, 'he realised with relief that they weren't alone' and it felt good.

The title of the SANE guide to mental illness for children is *You're Not Alone*. Ask students to act out the scene on pages 22 and 23 of *You're Not Alone* and then develop a short video clip or advertisement for a young carers program which depicts a young carer finding out that they are not alone in their experience of caring for a parent and that help is available.

Resource required: Not Alone

### Maths

- Ask students to make a list of the people they see in the media who would be considered carers. Beside each person's name, ask the students to list their gender, approximate age, if they work full-time, part-time or are not in the paid labour force, and their relationship to the person they care for (e.g. they provide care for their mother, daughter, brother, friend). As a class or individual activity, graph the findings.
- Check the class statistics against those collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Are the carers depicted in the media, representative of carers in Australian community?
- Discuss possible misconceptions about who provides care in the community.
- Make a list of things that people of the student's age might do to assist carers in the community.
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# YOUNG PEOPLE CARING FOR PARENTS WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS:

## Assessment Suggestions

Write a short article for publication in your favourite magazine about the role that young carers play in looking after a parent with a mental illness who is required to spend long periods of time in hospital. Include supports that are available, phone numbers and internet sites that young people could use to find out about local services they might be able to access.

### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Engaging headline
- Includes facts
- Evokes empathy
- Includes facts and sources
- Style fits with favourite magazine.

Watch the '1 in 5' videos from the MindMatters resource kit. Create the next video clip in the series about children whose parents experience mental illness. See activity page from the *Understanding Mental Illness* book for an outline of the task.

Resources required: UMI

### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Demonstrates understanding of stigma reduction
- Follows 'formula' of the original ads
- Originality
- Performance skills
- Editing skills.

Write an article or 'tip sheet' for a School Counsellors' Newsletter about ways in which you believe school counsellors can support students who care for a family member with mental illness.

### Possible Assessment Criteria

- Suits audience
- Evidence of deep thinking
- Includes sources of information.

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## Feedback Welcome

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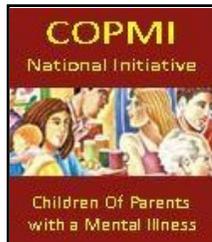
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