

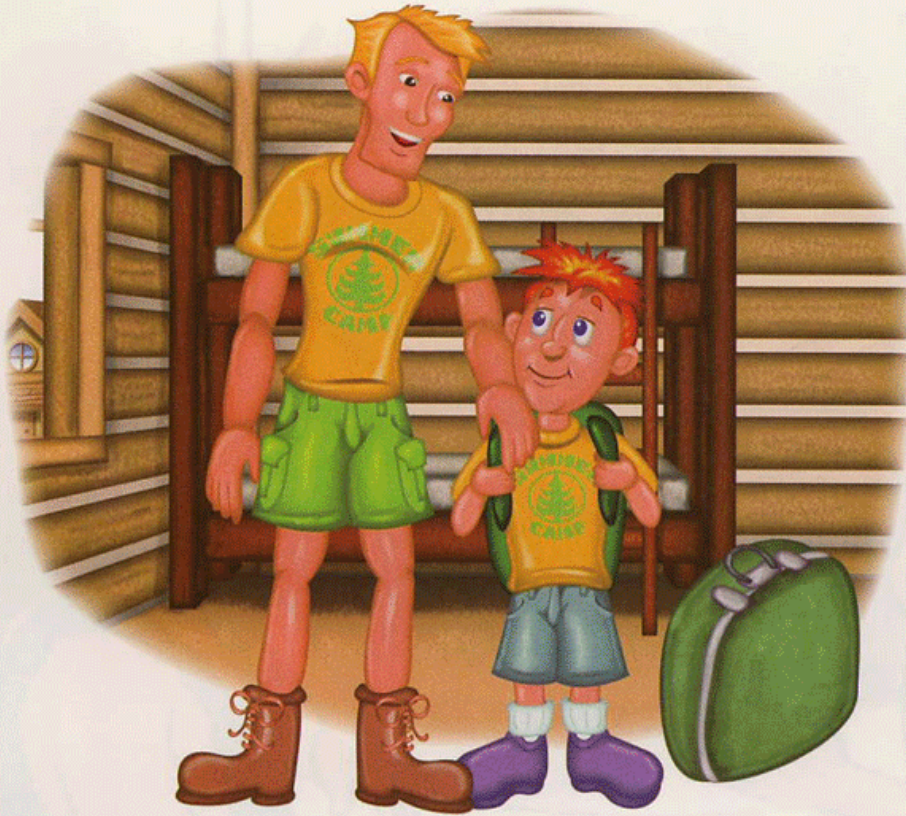
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TOLERANCE
Hold the Cheese! follows Danny, a baseball player who gets picked on for not eating the same foods as other kids at school. After getting sick from eating dairy during a classroom party, Danny decides to inform his classmates about lactose intolerance with the help of the school nurse.

Turning the PAGE

Helping children stay positive with the aid of illustrations



BY LAURA ADAMS

English essayist, poet and politician Joseph Addison said, "Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." One Ridgewood-based psychologist seems to agree with this message. Frank J. Sileo, Ph.D., executive director of The Center for Psychological Enhancement and author of three children's books: *Toilet Paper Flowers*, *Hold the Cheese!* and *Bug Bites and Campfires*, helps parents and children come to terms with personal issues and illnesses through illustrated stories.

"Bibliotherapy is an effective child-therapy technique where a therapist reads a story to a child about a particular topic. The book educates the child about the problems; it validates the thoughts

and feelings; and it teaches healthy solutions on how to cope with the problem," says Sileo.

"It reinforces the message, 'You are not alone.'"

Sileo wrote these books to fill a void in the bibliotherapy market and to meet the needs of various patients. *Toilet Paper Flowers* and *Hold the Cheese!* are the first and only books written for children on Crohn's disease and lactose intolerance. Sileo's most recently published book, *Bug Bites and Camp Fires*, was written because he could not find an age-appropriate book for children to help them with the issue of homesickness and separation anxiety. "Children are used to being read to, and books are a great tool for therapists to help their patients," he says.

Bibliotherapy isn't the only tool Sileo uses to help children and parents through difficult issues, >

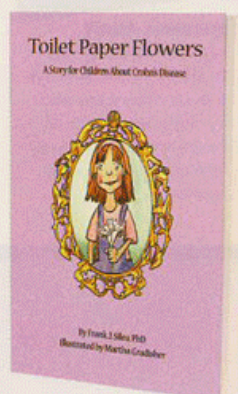


SURVIVAL GUIDE

Bug Bites and Camp Fires, Dr. Sileo's most-recent book, is about a young boy who learns the coping skills of dealing with homesickness with the help of his camp counselor.

DR. SILEO'S TIPS FOR HELPING CHILDREN ACCEPT ISSUES AND ILLNESSES

- Allow them to express feelings including negative ones
- Support friendships and activities with peers
- Keep a door open to communication
- Give them hope and listen
- If your child is exhibiting behavior and/or emotional problems that were not evident before, seek help
- Work with your child's school
- Stay involved and give information to your children (at their age level)
- Take care of yourself and stick to a routine
- Plan for procedures to reduce anticipatory anxiety and stress
- Remember the needs of your other children and partner
- Do things as a family
- Don't let your children hear more than you intend



“Children are used to being read to, and books are a great tool for therapists to help their patients.”

FLOWER POWER

Toilet Paper Flowers tells the story of Julia, a young girl who suffers from Crohn's disease and makes toilet paper flowers while in the bathroom. Julia explains her condition to a new friend and finds acceptance.

but it is a successful one. “No one likes to talk about bathroom diseases or things that make us feel uncomfortable. When I speak to audiences about Crohn's disease, children approach me at the end of my talk and present me with a toilet paper flower to thank me for my book. Those are the rewards I am touched by.”

According to the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, children can develop adjustment disorders as an individual



DR. FRANK J. SILEO

response to a stressful event or situation, such as the diagnosis of an illness, which then can cause signs and symptoms of depression.

“Children often feel that they are the only ones experiencing a particular problem or feeling a particular feeling. This could lead a child into feeling depressed or anxious,” says Sileo. “I want to reduce those feelings in children. Hope, despite adversity, is a message that not only children need to learn, but all of us as well.” ❖

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