

## Book Review — Books for Children

Three very beautifully produced books for children have recently arrived in our office. Each is different in its own way.

### *CATCH A FALLING STAR*—a tale from the Iris the Dragon Series.

This delightful fairy tale, about a young boy named Fish and his imaginary friend, Iris the Dragon, attempts to explain the difficult concept of mental illness to children, in a way that they can relate to and feel comfortable with. You can only imagine how frightening it must be for a child, when he starts to experience feelings he doesn't understand, and begins to feel different from other children. Iris reassures Fish that it is OK to tell his parents how he is feeling and as a result, Fish gets the treatment he needs.

Children with mental illness are not immune to stigma and this story addresses that issue. As well, the importance of early intervention and treatment are emphasized, thereby reassuring children that they can and will feel better. Written and beautifully illustrated by two mothers, both of whom have children with brain disorders, this book is highly recommended for children, families, as well as caregivers and teachers in addressing the issue of mental illness in children and helping them cope.

Written by Gayle Glass, illustrated by Coral Nault. \$10.95 US, \$15.95 Cdn. For more information or to order copies visit their website at [www.iristhedragon.com](http://www.iristhedragon.com)



### *JOE'S DIARY - A SANE Guide for young people*

This charmingly designed booklet is exactly that, the diary of a boy of maybe 12 years. It reflects on various incidents in his life which have arisen because his mother has schizophrenia. Scattered throughout the book and always on the right hand page are "Joe's Tips" which reinforce ideas expressed in the text and which will help readers with their own problems.

The information is excellent and simply delivered. The designs throughout the text are most attractive, done with wide water colour brush strokes and depicting objects from everyday life. Thank heaven there are no bizarre drawings as we have often seen before on dust covers and in texts related to mental illness. The whole feeling is upbeat and "normal". The booklet is highly recommended for young people who have a sick parent.

To order go to [www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org), the website of SANE, Australia. The ISBN number is 1 875182 65 9

### *SOMEONE IN MY FAMILY HAS A MENTAL ILLNESS* by Lyne Brindamour, MSW

This is a workbook for children developed for Family Services of the North Shore in North Vancouver, Canada. The service had been unable to find specific information and educational materials for children who had a family member with a mental illness.

The workbook is liberally scattered with stick drawings of children with captions which help explain concepts, words, emotions, etc. There are three sections: 1 explains the concept of mental illness; 2 invites children to write or draw about their experiences and feelings, explains symptoms and helps relieve the guilt they sometimes feel that they may have caused the mental illness. Section 3 shows children how they can help themselves cope with their emotions, using breathing exercises and visualizing a calm atmosphere. It also introduces children to the help they may find in their community.

The authors explain that the workbook should be used by mental health practitioners in conjunction with the children and their family members. It is recommended that the workbook be completed over several sessions. It is unfortunate that the book itself does not contain the address from which to obtain another copy.

To obtain this book (\$10 Canadian) write to Family Services of the North Shore, 101-255 West 1<sup>st</sup> Street, North Vancouver, BC V7M3G8 Canada or Fax to +604-988-3961.