

# Middle School Mental Health Booklist



## **Focused**

by Alison Gerber (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) Clea knows she has to do her homework, but she gets distracted. It's starting to be a problem—not just in school, but when Clea's playing chess or just hanging out with her best friend. She's just not sure how you can fix a problem that's all in your head. But that's what she's going to have to do, to find a way to focus.



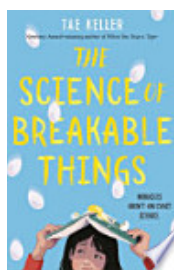
## **Anything But Typical**

by Nora Raleigh Baskin (Autism) Readers get inside the head of tween Jason Blake and experience his struggles to get through each day with Autism. Jason spends his free time writing fiction on the Storyboard website and develops a friendship there, but when he has to meet one of his online friends in person, things get complicated.



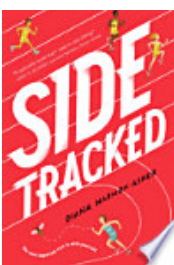
## **Some Kind of Happiness**

by Claire Legrand (Depression) Finley Hart is sent to her grandparents' house for the summer while her parents try to work out their marital differences. Her depression, which has been an ongoing struggle, is intensified while living away from home with her grandparents and cousins. Her only way to escape is to go to Everwood, a fantasy kingdom that exists only in her notebook.



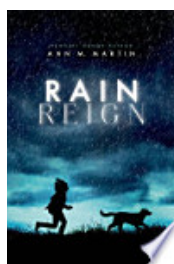
## **The Science of Breakable Things**

by Tae Keller (mother diagnosed with Depression) Using the scientific method as a framework, Natalie tries to find a solution to her biggest question – how to help her mother who is suffering from depression. Natalie latches on to winning a local egg drop competition as a way to earn prize money and bring hope to her botanist mom. This story explores what it is like for a 7th grader to deal with a parent with mental health struggles.



## **Sidetracked**

by Diana Harmon Asher (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) If middle school were a race, Joseph Friedman wouldn't even be in last place—he'd be on the sidelines. With an overactive mind, he struggles to understand his classes, and fellow classmates. But then, two important things happen. With a new friend and a new team, Joseph finds himself off the sidelines and in the race (quite literally) for the first time.



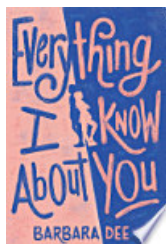
## **Rain Reign**

by Ann M. Martin (Autism) A story about homonym-loving Rose Howard and her dog, Rain. Kids will connect with tween Rose and her Asperger's ways as well as her troubles connecting to other kids. Things are not always easy for Rose, and when her dog goes missing she must struggle with her emotions and learn to see things from someone else's viewpoint.



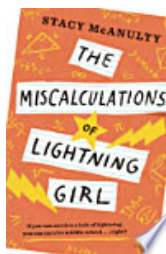
## **Stanley Will Probably Be Fine**

by Sally J. Play (Anxiety) Nobody knows comics trivia like Stanley knows comics trivia. It's what he takes comfort in when the world around him gets to be too much. And after he faints during a safety assembly, Stanley takes his love of comics up a level by inventing his own imaginary superhero, named John Lockdown, to help him through.



## **Everything I Know About You**

by Barbara Dee (Friend with Eating Disorder) Thirteen-year-old Tally discovers several surprising things about her roommate—including the possibility of an eating disorder—during a seventh-grade class trip to DC.



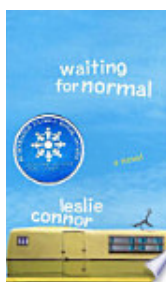
## **The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl**

by Stacy McAnulty (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) Lucy Callahan was struck by lightning. The zap gave her genius-level math skills, and ever since, Lucy has been homeschooled. Now, at 12 years old, she's technically ready for college. Lucy's grandma insists: Go to middle school for 1 year. Lucy's not sure what a girl who does calculus homework for fun can possibly learn in 7th grade.



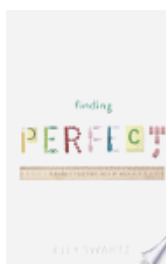
## **Rules**

by Cynthia Lord (sibling diagnosed with Autism) Rules promotes acceptance and caring as it follows 12-year-old Catherine and her younger brother David, who's autistic and often acts in ways that are embarrassing to her. What she discovers about friendship is heartwarming, and the story may help kids diagnosed with Autism understand a bit how the world perceives kids similar to them.



## **Waiting for Normal**

by Leslie Conner (Parent with Bipolar Disorder) Addie just wants to be normal. But with a divorced mom who suffers from bipolar disorder, which leaves Addie alone for long periods of time, her life is anything but normal. She finds two new friends who help her face the challenges at home, but present more drama and challenges for Addie, too



## **Finding Perfect**

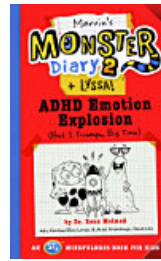
by Elly Swartz (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) To others, 12-year-old Molly seems perfect. In order to keep this outward appearance of perfection, she must always have her pencils sharpened just right, and have her glass figurines lined up just so. When her mother temporarily moves, Molly's OCD-like habits become more extreme and she feels like her life is falling apart. But, she's afraid to get help from anyone — even her family and closest friends.

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## Chasing the Milky Way

by Erin E. Moulton (Parent with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) Lucy Peevy has a dream—to get out of the trailer park she lives in and become a famous scientist. And she’s already figured out how to do that: Build a robot that will win a cash prize at the BotBlock competition and save it for college. But when you’ve got a mama who doesn’t always take her meds, it’s not easy to achieve those goals.



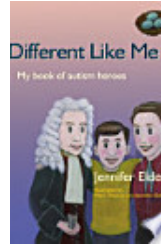
## Marvin's Monster Diary- ADHD Attacks!

by Raun Melmed and Annette Sexton (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) Meet Marvin, a lovable monster with a twelve-stringed baby fang guitar, a rambunctious case of ADHD, and a diary to record it all. His teachers scold him, and his parents don't know what to do with him. In short, Marvin's life is feeling out of control—until a secret formula changes everything.



## What Happens Next

by Claire Sninarski (Sister with Eating Disorder) In this heartfelt and accessible middle grade novel, a young girl throws herself into solving a local mystery to keep from missing her older sister, who has been sent to an eating disorder treatment facility.



## Different Like Me: My Book of Autism Heroes

by- Jennifer Elder (Autism) Introduces kids to famous, inspirational figures from the world of science, art, math, literature, philosophy and comedy. Eight-year-old Quinn, a young boy with Asperger's Syndrome, tells young readers about the achievements and characteristics of his autism heroes, from Albert Einstein to Lewis Carroll, and more.



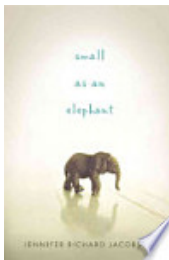
## Guts

by Raina Telgemeier (Anxiety) Raina wakes up one night with a terrible upset stomach - it's probably just a bug. Raina eventually returns to school, where she's dealing with the usual highs and lows: friends, and not-friends. It soon becomes clear that Raina's tummy trouble isn't going away... and it coincides with her worries about food, school, and changing friendships. What's going on?



## The Goldfish Boy

by Lisa Thompson (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) Matthew suffers from severe OCD that was brought on from the death of his baby brother. He is obsessed with hand-washing and germs, and he can't go to school or even leave his bedroom due to his extreme worries. Then, the toddler next door goes missing and he was the last one to see the child alive. He is faced with the choice of staying in his safety zone or tackling his fears to solve the crime and help the child.



## Small As An Elephant

by Jennifer Richard Jacobson (Parent with Bipolar) Jack is an 11-year-old whose mom's moods can swing dramatically from happy & loving to depressed & neglectful. He wakes up after camping in a national park with his mom and finds himself totally alone with only a backpack, a sleeping bag, and \$14. He doesn't want to tell the police so he begins the journey back to his home -- alone.



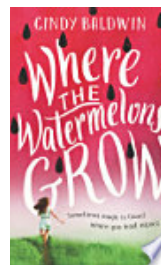
## Give and Take

by Elly Swartz (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) Family has always been important to twelve-year-old Maggie. But her grandmother's recent death leaves a giant hole in Maggie's life, one which she begins to fill with an assortment of things: candy wrappers, pieces of tassel from Nana's favorite scarf, milk cartons, sticks . . . all stuffed in cardboard boxes under her bed.



## Each Tiny Spark

by Pablo Cartaya (Parent with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) It's hard for Emilia Torres to follow along at school, and sometimes she forgets to do what her mom or abuela (grandmother) asks. But she remembers what matters: a time when her family was whole and home made sense. When Dad returns from deployment, Emilia expects that her life will get back to normal. Instead, it unravels.



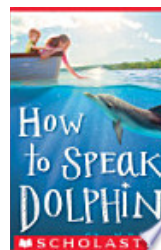
## Where the Watermelons Grow

by Cindy Baldwin (Parent with Schizophrenia) Della knows what to do when the sickness that landed her mama in the hospital four years ago spirals out of control again, and Mama starts hearing people who aren't there, and waking up at night to cut the black seeds from all the watermelons in the house. Della decides it's up to her to heal Mama for good.



## OCDaniel

by Wesley King (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) Daniel has spent his life trying to hide his obsessive compulsive disorder from his friends and other kids at school. When Daniel gets a mysterious note asking for help, he finds himself part of a huge mystery that takes him on a whirlwind of adventures and emotions that change how he sees the world.



## How to Speak Dolphin

by Ginny Rorby (sibling with Autism) Lily is a middle schooler who has become the closest thing to a mother that her half-brother with Autism, Adam, has since their own mother died. When Lily learns of a dolphin therapy program, she brings Adam to meet Nori, a young captive dolphin. Adam and Nori form an immediate and deep bond but Lily believes strongly this dolphin should be free.



We would like to extend a special thank you to the Coalition volunteers that reviewed and compiled this list. This project was made possible with a grant from The Friendship Fund.