

BOOKS: THE POWER OF HEALING

What is Bibliotherapy?

Known as a mute therapy, bibliotherapy is a therapy technique that has one of the longest history in the world of therapies. Samuel McChord Crothers (1916), wrote the first article on bibliotherapy called A Literary Clinic about the Bibliopathic Institute managed by Dr. Bangster. The institute had been using books as an expressive therapy medium that involves certain items as one of the methods to treat the soul and heart. It is even used during World War II to treat patients. By reading, the patients felt tranquility and stability not to mention could even overcome their excruciating pain at that moment. To be more precise, "sharing books or stories can help to heal and stabilize emotions and soul", (Forgan, 2002).

Is Bibliotherapy an Effective Treatment?

Based on the feedbacks from medical practitioners, bibliotherapy is widely used in the world of mental health medicine. Studies even shows that bibliotherapy could actually help when facing divorce problems or the loss of a family member. Bibliotherapy also helps foster children to adapt to their new family or to their new environment (Nelson, 1993). Not to mention, bibliotherapy assists when dealing with issues relating to parent's mental health problems (Kuivila,1991). In general, bibliotherapy is a therapy to express the truth and self-empathy, can also to build up social skills and communicating skills.

Why Bibliotherapy?

Emotional problems are identified to be the main issue of the society's mental health at this point, especially since the country had enforced the Movement Control Order (MCO). The Head Director of Health, Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, said that based on the 8,380 calls received on his behalf as of yesterday, 46.8 percent deal with this problem (Berita Harian, 19 May 2020).

Through bibliotherapy, a person can express their feelings and solve problems with innovative ways to overcome the fear that they have in themselves. Nonetheless, this type of therapy could only be used to treat individuals that experience common or minor depression.

The Roles of Librarians and Libraries.

Aligned with the paradigm shift of knowledge for society, the library plays an important role as the tower of knowledge while librarians as bibliotherapist helping society through the preparation of reading materials that is appropriate and guiding them on how to use it. Librarians are responsible to promote the benefits and importance of bibliotherapy to create a knowledgeable and informed society and also have a healthy and positive mind. Appropriate with the Vice Chancellor of UPM aspirations through the Vice Chancellor's Narrative Ceremony of UPM 2021, he mentioned on work and life balance, bibliotherapy can be a great medium to accomplish this goals.

Spreading of the Covid-19 pandemic and the implementation of the Movement Control Order (MCO) as of March last year will never stopped libraries from providing their services to users even with the new norms. The online approach has become the transformation agent since physical approach could not be done as a whole. Multiple digital library initiatives have been conducted such as Database portal, eTheses portal, information portal and Agricultural Information Resource portal. However, the Social Media platform for example Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have also been used as a communication tools with each users sharing knowledge, deliver information and latest news of the Library in line with one of the five main strategy of UPM directions towards realizing smart campuses, a digital concept campus involving the use of technology for everyday business of the university, educational or administrative affairs.

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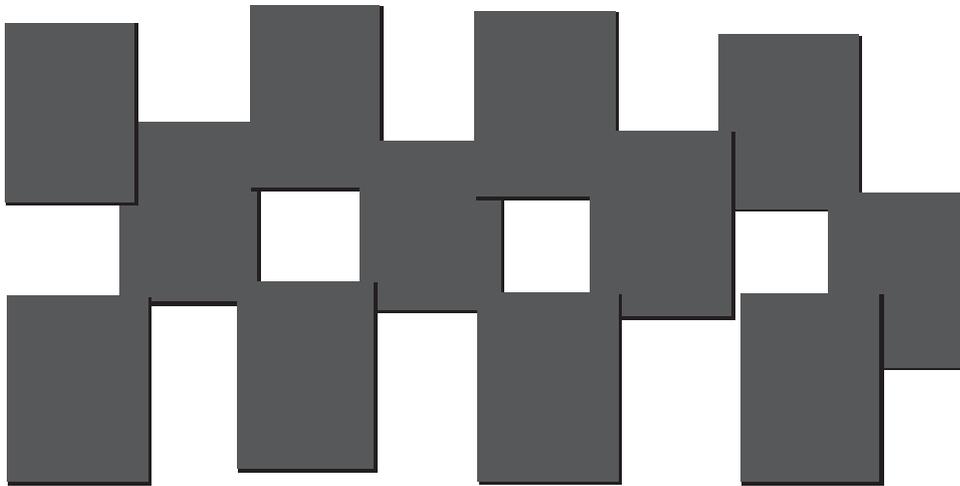
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Balances Life, Cures the Heart and Soul by Reading.

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