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Huebner's "Something bad happened: A kid's guide to coping with events in the news" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Huebner, D. (2019). *Something bad happened: A kid's guide to coping with events in the news*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 78 pp. \$10.00. ISBN 9781787750746

Intended for children ages 6 to 12 and the adults who care for them, *Something Bad Happened* is a guide to help children and adults have tough conversations about serious world events, many of which involve large-scale tragedies. Author of bestsellers *What to Do When You Worry Too Much* and *Outsmarting Worry*, Dawn Huebner is a clinical psychologist who specializes in the treatment of anxious children and their parents. Dr. Huebner's award-winning books have been translated into 23 languages and her TEDx talk on Rethinking Anxiety has been viewed over 650,000 times.

Beautifully illustrated and clearly presented, Huebner's newest book is a practical resource for learning about bad things as they happen, putting them in perspective, and making a plan to do something helpful. She begins by giving a framework for understanding "bad things" as they happen in the world and are reported by the media. Rather than identify particular tragedies in history, thereby bringing attention to them, her use of the term "bad thing" gives parents control over which event to talk about with their children and how much information to provide. Huebner strongly believes that children can be taught to help themselves, and therefore, provides self-help strategies for coping with the fear, sadness, and worry often associated with worldwide catastrophes. She presents five steps to take when something bad happens: (1) calm your brain, (2) gather accurate information, (3) identify helpers, (4) deal with feelings, and (5) do something positive. With the use of simple logic, Huebner explains concepts in a way that is easily understood by her intended audience. In the chapter called "Understanding Likelihood," she demonstrates that "just because something *can* happen, that doesn't mean it *will* happen" (p. 51). This insightful understanding of the difference between possibility and likelihood is wisely used to calm the fears of children who wonder whether the bad thing will happen to them.

Each chapter addresses frequently asked questions and includes tools for processing feelings and calming anxiety. Accompanied by drawing exercises and writing prompts, many of the pages can be downloaded from a website for children to reuse. *Something Bad Happened* is an excellent resource for children and parents seeking to develop critical coping skills to face adversity in a healthy way. As media outlets continue to sensationalize the news, this expert advice is sorely needed today. It is highly recommended for public libraries and libraries with parenting and family collections.

Reviewer

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