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The Sun Will Shine Again 'My Mummy Has a Poorly Mind' - a review

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AIMS Journal, 2021, Vol 33, No 4

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The Sun Will Shine Again

'My Mummy Has a Poorly Mind'

Written by Jane Fisher

Illustrations by Amy Dignam 

Independent Publishing Network, 2021

ISBN: 978-1-78972-866-8

24 pages

Reviewed for AIMS by Rachel Boldero

This book is intended for families where the mother is going through mental health difficulties and is especially targeted at families with young children. It is a lovely book, with a positive message throughout, which reinforces the love within families despite difficult times. Having two children under seven, we read a lot of children's books and I've never seen anything quite like this. This book attempts to start the conversation about mental health with children; it is a conversation opener regarding what their parents may be experiencing. The book explores – in a way that should make sense to even young children – how one's mind can be poorly, much like a physical part of the body. This is definitely how we should be thinking of mental health challenges. The whole concept of the book is fantastic – this is such a fundamental topic.

The illustrations are beautiful. This helps to keep younger ones engaged, and as an adult I loved looking at them, too! These illustrations also provide some easy to understand analogies, such as gloomy days vs. sunny days, which helps little ones understand some of the feelings articulated. The concept of the medicine bag at the end of the book was lovely, both simple and containing the fundamentals (e.g. kind

words) without overcomplicating the issue for children. The illustrations are cleverly done: for example, the 'mummy' is looking away a lot and there are not many detailed pictures of a face: this means she can be imagined as lots of children's mummies and creates a more inclusive feel.

The overall message is summed up beautifully at the end; there is a focus on hope (i.e. things won't always be easy but positivity is key and things can get better with the right steps) and also (and most important for me) that mummy loves you. This is such a special book for children of parents who are struggling with their mental health, to reinforce the reality that they are loved.

The mental health specifics were perhaps a little one-dimensional, as they focused on depressive traits (i.e., there was no mention of some of other challenging mental health elements that can exist such as anxiety or psychosis). However, it is tricky to cover the whole spectrum and, indeed, this likely would be complex for the young reader. Obviously the book is also very much focused on maternal mental health; it would be lovely to see another version to use in cases of poor mental health on the part of a dad or partner.

I loved this book. My six-year-old daughter leapt up and gave me big hugs and kisses after reading it, and we had a discussion about the power of hugs, kind words and how they can make others feel. I hope that many other families will benefit from this lovely book in the years ahead.

Reviewer Bio: Rachel Boldero is an AIMS Volunteer who recently decided to pursue a career change to become a midwife. She is in her second year of study in South Yorkshire and loving the course.