

# The Colour Thief

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*The boy in the story's Dad has lost the colour in his life, this sensitive story explores themes of mental health in a gentle age appropriate way.*



## 5 Objectives

### Lesson 1:

I can tell you what mental illness means and how this can vary in severity.

I can tell you some ways people can look after their mental health

### Lesson 2:

I can tell you how someone experiencing mental illness can get support and why it is better to get support early.

### Lesson 3:

I can tell you some of the ways people with mental health problems are supported.

### Lesson 4:

I can describe some of the feelings involved with living with and supporting someone with a mental illness and I can describe the support that is available.

### Lesson 5:

I can tell you why it is important to show respect to all people including people experiencing mental illness.

### Lesson 6:

Reflection and Evaluation

## Tags:

mental health, depression, mental illness, medication, therapy

## Sensitive Content in This Story

This story focuses on an episode of depression a dad has through the point of view of his child. The story uses a range of personification techniques and colour symbolism to explain the dad's depression and that all the colour in his life had been stolen and replaced with grey. The story shows some examples of how the depression impacts the dad such as a decline in physical activity and isolation behaviours. Throughout the book the dad does reassure the child that it is not their fault which echoes self-blame feelings that some experience around those with depression. The dad goes to the hospital to have care and takes medicine. The book poetically explains that the change is a process but by the end of the book the child has their dad back and the colour has returned.

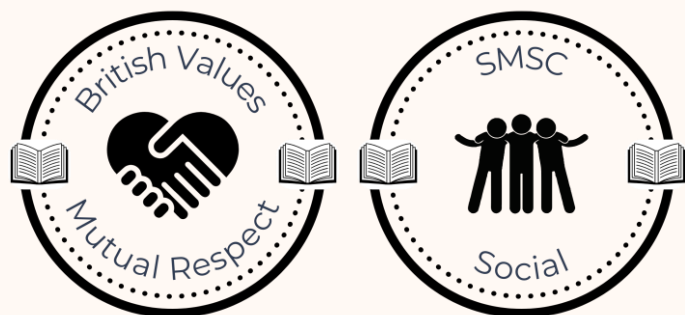
Teachers should be aware about the sensitive nature of mental health, especially depression and if any children in the class struggle with their emotional regulation or have family members/friends that have experienced depression or any other mental health problem. Additionally if any children have any mental illnesses and have experienced stigmas/discrimination due to them. Another trigger might be the dad's act of going to the hospital and taking medication as some children may find the hospital a negative/scary place or have known someone who has abused medication. Many of the lessons in this unit will help support that hospitals, although sad moments happen there, are important places and the importance of seeking help and support.

## Wellbeing skill links

Through the following 5 lesson plans children will explore the following RSHE statutory (s) and PSHE non- statutory (n) wellbeing objectives.

Being Safe (s)	Mental Wellbeing (s)
<p>How to recognize and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult. <b>(Lesson 4, 5)</b></p> <p>How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. <b>(Lesson 4, 5)</b></p> <p>Where to get advice e.g. family, school and or other sources. <b>(Lesson 1, 3, 4, 5)</b></p>	<p>That mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health <b>(Lesson 1, 4, 5)</b></p> <p>Where and how to seek support (including recognizing the triggers for seeking support), including whom in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online) <b>(Lesson 2, 3, 4, 5)</b></p> <p>It is common for people to experience mental ill health. For many people who do, the problems can be resolved if the right support is made available, especially if accessed early enough. <b>(Lesson 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)</b></p>
Respectful Relationships (s)	
<p>That in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority. <b>(Lesson 5)</b></p>	
<p><b>Further Skill Coverage:</b></p> <p>All <b>Settle</b> activities cover: Simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family and the benefits of hobbies and interests.</p> <p>All <b>Training</b> activities cover: That there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations.</p> <p>How to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings.</p>	

## British Values and SMSC



# Literacy Links

Through the following 5 lesson plans children will explore the following literacy objectives.

Retrieval	Vocabulary	Inference:
<p><i>Check the book makes sense by discussing and re-reading the text</i></p> <p><i>Ask questions to improve understanding of a text</i></p> <p><i>Answer retrieval questions using evidence in the text</i></p> <p><i>Explain and discuss what has been read</i></p> <p><i>Distinguish between fact and opinion</i></p> <p><i>Discuss understanding of a text</i></p> <p><i>Know and discuss setting, character and event changes across a text</i></p> <p><i>Identify how text structure/presentation contributes to meaning and understanding</i></p> <p><i>Discuss how narrative content is related and contributes to meaning and understanding</i></p> <p><i>Discuss and explain how narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole (explain setting, character and event changes across a text)</i></p>	<p><i>Check the meanings of words using teacher prepared definitions.</i></p> <p><i>Explain the meanings of words and know how to use in the correct context.</i></p> <p><i>Ask questions to improve understanding of vocabulary.</i></p> <p><i>Explore the meaning of words in context (asking questions, checking word meanings)</i></p> <p><i>Write own definitions for words.</i></p> <p><i>Use dictionaries to check the meaning of words read.</i></p> <p><i>Discuss how words and phrases have been used to build a picture for the reader.</i></p>	<p><i>Draw inferences such as inferring character's feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions and justifying inferences with evidence from the text and general knowledge</i></p> <p><i>Summarise the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph</i></p> <p><i>Make plausible predictions about what might happen from details stated or implied and support with reference to the whole text</i></p>

## Lesson Content

All five of the lesson plans related to this book follow our STORY structure



**S**

**Settle:** Start your session with a settling activity to encourage children to be in the right frame of mind for listening and learning about their wellbeing.



**T**

**Training:** Keep children's emotional literacy updated by spending a couple of minutes looking at a picture from the book and discussing the different emotions the characters are feeling.



**O**

**Objective:** Introduce a wellbeing objective for children to focus on when they are listening to the story



**R**

**Read:** Read the story and discuss the following guided reading questions as a class.



**Y**

**You:** To finish the session children have the opportunity to reflect on the book and to relate the book to themselves.

## Further Resources

Some other stories we would recommend that are related to this story are:

The Sad Book by Michael Rosen  
Small Things by Mel Tregonning  
All The Things That Could Go Wrong by Stewart Foster  
Aubrey and The Terrible Yoot by Horatio Clare

This guide for parents could be helpful if you have any children in your class who need more support with mental health and mental illnesses:

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/mental-health-support/supporting-a-child-or-young-person/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/introduction-to-mental-health/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/children-and-families-at-risk/parental-mental-health-problems/#:~:text=If%20a%20parent%20has%20severe,to%20take%20their%20own%20life>

**Childline** offer a free helpline, email service and online and phone counselling service for children and young people in the UK, currently from 9am until midnight. They can also provide Welsh-speaking Counsellors.

**The Mix** offer a helpline, email, live chat, telephone counselling service and crisis text line for anyone under 25 years old needing support

