

# Books for Young Caregivers: Novels About Mental Health Issues

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Many of the main characters in these books are caregivers of a mentally ill parent or have, because of the illness, taken on responsibilities beyond what is typical for their age.

Brown, Susan Taylor, **Hugging the Rock**

Rachel and her father grow closer when Rachel's mother, who suffers from bipolar disorder, runs away from home. (Grades 5-8)

Fischer, Jackie, **An Egg on Three Sticks**

Abby's household gets more and more chaotic when her mother becomes mentally ill and is hospitalized. (Grade 7-up)

Haddix, Margaret Peterson, **Don't You Dare Read This, Mrs. Dunphrey**

Tish uses a journal to sort out her feelings, including her difficulties with a depressed mother. (Ages 12-up)

Johnson, Lindsay Lee, **Worlds Apart**

Winnie's mother becomes depressed after the family's move from Chicago to rural Minnesota. (Grades 8-11)

Marchetta, Melina, **Saving Francesca**

Sixteen-year-old Australian schoolgirl Francesca is in for a tough year when her usually optimistic mother, Mia, becomes depressed and fails to get out of bed one morning. (Ages 12-up)

Pearson, Mary E., **A Room on Lorelei Street**

Seventeen-year-old Zoe moves to a rented room when she can no longer cope with her alcoholic mother and the fallout from her father's possible suicide. (Grade 10-up)

Peters, Julie Anne, **Define "Normal"**

High school students Antonia and Jazz couldn't be more different, but their peer-counseling sessions help Antonia cope with her parents' divorce and her mother's depression. (Grade 7-10)

Powell, Randy, **Run If You Dare**

Gardner hopes to find some discipline in his own life while he watches his father's life succumb to despair. (Ages 12-up)

Quarles, Heather, **A Door Near Here**

Fifteen-year-old Katharine has her hands full: running the household, caring for three siblings, and concealing her mother's alcoholism. (Ages 12-up)

Rinaldi, Ann, **Or Give Me Death**

In this historical novel based on the life of Patrick Henry, his daughters, ages nine and sixteen, tell the story of their mother's mental illness and confinement to the cellar. (Grades 7-9)

Trueman, Terry, **No Right Turn**

Following his father's suicide, Jordan loses himself by joyriding in a vintage car. (Grades 8-11)

Warner, Sally, **How to Be a Real Person (In Just One Day)**

Eleven-year-old Kara wants no one, including her father, to find out about her mother's deteriorating mental health. (Ages 10-14)

Wilson, Jacqueline, **The Illustrated Mum**

Ten-year-old Dolphin and her teenage sister, Star, struggle to pick up the pieces while their mom, the charismatic, tattoo-covered Marigold, copes with bipolar disorder and a chaotic love life. (Grades 5-7)

Young, Janet Ruth, **The Opposite of Music**

Along with his mother and sister, fifteen-year-old Billy will do almost anything to save his father from a life-threatening depression. (Ages 12-up)

Zemser, Amy Brownwen, **Beyond the Mango Tree**

A white American girl living in Liberia confronts poverty and social injustice while dealing with her unstable mother, who is also severely diabetic. (Ages 10-up)

This reading list was compiled by Janet Ruth Young from the recommendations of librarians on the Young Adult Library Services Association book discussion list and can be found on the American Association for Caregiving Youth website ([www.aacy.org](http://www.aacy.org)).