

Using Literature to Help Troubled Teenagers Cope with Identity Issues (The Greenwood Press Using Literature to Help Troubled Teenagers Series)



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The search for one's identity is an ancient quest reflected throughout history in stories where human glory and conquest are often layered with great pain and self doubt, meant to help people discover themselves and who they are. Today, this quest is found prevalently in young adult novels, where characters wrestle with modern dilemmas in order to find themselves. This reference resource provides a link for teachers, media specialists, parents, and other adults to those novels and how to use them effectively. Educators and therapists explore the literature where common identity issues are addressed in ways intriguing to teens. Using fictional characters, these experts provide guidance on how to encourage adolescents to cope while improving their reading and writing skills.

Twelve novels are examined from both a literary and psychological perspective, allowing the readers to meet the central figures as if they were living human beings. Each chapter is written by a literature specialist who has teamed up with a therapist and confronts a different identity issue, examining such dilemmas as body image, the father/son relationship, bigotry, and peer relations. This pair of experts tries to define the central character's struggle in each novel to discover who they are and to become self-actualized individuals. Each chapter also provides an annotated bibliography of other works, both fiction and nonfiction, that explore these same issues to give readers not only the insight into helping teenagers with similar problems, but also the tools with which to get teenagers reading and addressing these problems. This innovative approach is meant to provide the opportunity for adults and adolescents to better understand each other.

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