

The Imagine Project: Empowering Kids to Rise Above Trauma, Drama, and Stress

Dianne Maroney

Yampa Valley Publishing (Oct 9, 2017)

Softcover \$16.99 (252pp)

978-0-9889951-1-6

The Imagine Project features quick, appealing, and practical tips for fostering children's emotional wellness.

The Imagine Project by Dianne Maroney offers hope to parents, counselors, and teachers who see children struggling emotionally but who aren't sure how to help them. It's a useful survey of common obstacles to children's emotional wellness, with practical tips for helping them cope and ultimately thrive.

The book begins with definitions of wellness, stress, and trauma. Maroney argues that children experience more stress than many people realize and covers research showing that teens tend to feel levels of stress similar to that of adults.

From there, the book moves into methods for helping children understand and process their experiences, including expressive writing and Maroney's own creation, the Imagine Journal. Later sections cover cultivating wellness in children through nurturing the mind, body, and spirit, as well as various forms of therapy that can help children deal with the more serious traumas they may face.

Maroney's intended audience is wide, including not only parents but teachers, counselors, and anyone who spends a significant amount of time with children and who needs advice on how to foster their emotional health. Her writing is clear and engaging, full of both heartbreaking and inspiring stories about the challenges that children face and the courage they so often display. Her frequent use of bulleted lists makes the material easy to absorb, and her use of sections such as "Tips for Teachers" makes it possible to find the most relevant sections quickly.

The Imagine Project covers a very large range of material and is best suited for readers new to the subject and without deep experience in or knowledge of psychology, therapy, and health. It's a broad overview of the topic rather than an in-depth study, and it will be most satisfying for those looking for encouragement, practical guidance, and a quick source of new ideas. A list of references at the book's end is a helpful starting place for those interested in further research.

One chapter is devoted to the Imagine Journal, with suggestions for using Imagine Journals and examples of "Imagine Stories" sprinkled throughout the book. The Imagine Journal is a space to explore personal challenges and envision new possibilities, wherein every sentence starts with "Imagine." Maroney's arguments for the efficacy of the medium, as well as her many powerful examples of its successes, make a strong case for giving the technique a try.

Dianne Maroney's *The Imagine Project* is a useful self-help book, designed to help adults nurture the children around them. Its quick, practical tips for fostering children's emotional wellness are appealing.

REBECCA HUSSEY (January 9, 2018)

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