

Minds in Conflict – Teen Fiction about Mental Illness

Adapted from the June 2015 VOYA article

[Stop Pretending: What Happened When My Big Sister Went Crazy](#), by Sonya Sones

YA Fiction Sones, S

A younger sister has a difficult time adjusting to life after her older sister has a mental breakdown. Grades 6-9

[Will Grayson, Will Grayson](#), by John Green and David Levithan

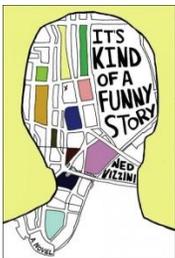
YA Fiction Green, J

When two teens, one gay and one straight, meet accidentally and discover that they share the same name, their lives become intertwined as one begins dating the other's best friend, who produces a play revealing his relationship with them both. Grades 10-12

[Define "Normal: A Novel](#), by Julie Anne Peters

YA Fiction Peters, J

When she agrees to meet with Jasmine as a peer counselor at their middle school, Antonia never dreams that this girl with the black lipstick and pierced eyebrow will end up helping her deal with the serious problems she faces at home and become a good friend. Grades 7-10



[It's Kind of a Funny Story](#), by Ned Vizzini

YA Fiction Vizzini

A humorous account of a New York City teenager's battle with depression and his time spent in a psychiatric hospital. Grades 9-12

[Dirty Little Secrets](#), by C. J. Omololu

YA Fiction Omololu

When her unstable mother dies unexpectedly, sixteen-year-old Lucy must take control and find a way to keep the long-held secret of her mother's compulsive hoarding from being revealed to friends, neighbors, and especially the media. Grades 8-12

[A Scary Scene in a Scary Movie](#), by Matt Blackstone

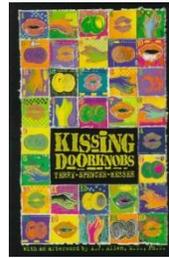
YA Fiction Blackstone

Rene, a high school freshman with obsessive-compulsive disorder, finds life to be like a scary movie, and even after he makes friends with the ultra-cool Giovanni he still feels responsible for saving his favorite teacher, dealing with his missing father, courting the beautiful Ariel, and trying to pretend to be normal for the school psychologist. Grades 6-10

[Not as Crazy as I Seem](#), by George Harrar

YA Fiction Harrar, G

As fifteen-year-old Devon begins mid-year at a new prestigious prep school, he is plagued by compulsions such as the need to sort things into groups of four.



[Kissing Doorknobs](#), by Terry Spencer Hesser

YA Fiction Hesser, T

Fourteen-year-old Tara describes how her increasingly strange compulsions begin to take over her life and affect her relationships with her family and friends. Grades 10-12

[Crazy](#), by Han Nolan

YA Fiction Nolan, H

Fifteen-year-old loner Jason lives a precarious life with his mentally ill father, who thinks he is an Argonaut and wears tinfoil ear guards as he prepares for imminent attack from the Furies. When Jason was 6, his father tried to bury him alive, and his nightmares of suffocation continue to haunt him. Now that his mother has died from a stroke, Jason struggles to care for his needy father alone and with few resources. To help him cope, he creates a narrative with imaginary characters that include Crazy Glue, Sexy Lady, and sympathetic, nurturing Aunt Bee, of Mayberry fame. There's a laugh track, too, and Jason directly addresses the reader. As Jason finds support in group therapy, social services intervention, and a foster family, the voices in his head recede, and he becomes less fearful that he, too, is going crazy.

[A Blue So Dark](#), by Holly Schindler

YA Fiction Schindler, H

As Missouri fifteen-year-old Aura struggles alone to cope with the increasingly severe symptoms of her mother's schizophrenia, she wishes only for a normal life, but fears that her artistic ability and genes will one day result in her own insanity. Grades 9-12

[Inside Out](#), by Terry Trueman

YA Fiction Trueman, T

A sixteen-year-old with schizophrenia is caught up in the events surrounding an attempted robbery by two other teens who eventually hold him hostage. Grades 9-12

