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words

Reading for Well-Being Project

David Fearnley

Shared reading, aloud, is about getting more out of great writing. This innovative approach, developed by the Reader Organisation in Merseyside, has been very successful when tried in mental health settings. A group of patients and a trained facilitator will read afresh poems, short stories or novels (often a 'classic'). Expertise is sought from the literature, not the therapist. Increased confidence, concentration and self-development are commonly reported outcomes. Sharing the reading experience can empower many patients who may not have achieved their educational potential. Engagement can also be developed by promoting an interest in reading from within the healthcare team.

Some of the books we have read are: Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Alan Bennett's *The Uncommon Reader*, John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* – all went down well!

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