



## Games to promote mental wellness

In one of the group's I was leading last week, there was an audible gasp when I told the students that I have been working in the area of counseling and human services for over 28 years. It was one more reminder of how old I am and that I am even older than I want to admit. With this many years behind me I've got some experience; however, what also tends to happen is one becomes out of touch with more current methods or the latest technology. With more and more frequency, people of all ages are going on-line or using technology to help them through a variety of problems. Many of the students I counsel report that playing video games is one of their favorite past times. So, I've gone on a hunt to try and find some video based games or resources that kids may enjoy that also serve the purpose of either teaching them coping skills or other skills to address mental wellness or just provide a platform where the character may be dealing with a mental health dilemma similar to their own. Below are some of the games and resources I have found so far. This could be a wonderful addition to your parenting tools. Perhaps you could play one of these games with your kid? Or perhaps you could incorporate one of these games into a behavioral reward chart? As always, if you are struggling with how to incorporate such interventions into your home, please do not hesitate to contact me, Micah Hoffman ([micah.hoffman@matsuk12.us](mailto:micah.hoffman@matsuk12.us)) or your child's case manager.

**DISCLAIMER:** While I have previewed these games, I cannot absolutely say they are 100% without issue or appropriate for your child. You should do your own research and due diligence to determine if you believe these games could be helpful for your child.

**Gris:** A serene game with no violence, that shows how the main character, a young girl, slowly learns to cope with grief and loss through puzzles and skill-based

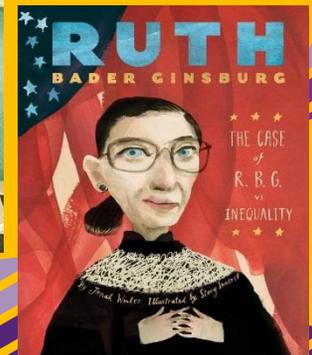
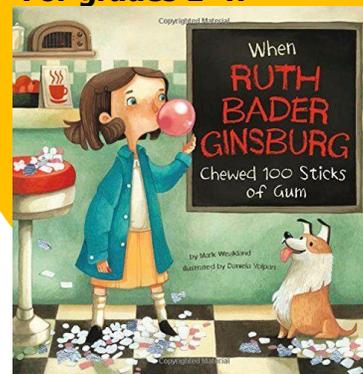
## The Passing of an Icon

Last week we witnessed the passing of someone who has had a profound effect on the world – Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She is very often thought of as a warrior for women's rights – and she was! – but she championed rights for everyone, including men. In fact, the first case she argued in front of the Supreme Court was to address gender discrimination against a man. The passing of an individual of her importance provides a wonderful opportunity for you to discuss the impact of individuals on our society. You don't have to agree with all of her rulings to appreciate that RBG was someone who tried to make the world a fairer place, and that is something that will resonate with your children. She was also someone who worked very hard to build relationships with those who had differing philosophical, political, and legal viewpoints, and this is something I'm sure us adults can appreciate and keep striving to have more of.

There are two great movies you could watch (probably suitable for middle school and up): *On the Basis of Sex* and *RBG*. I've watched both and highly recommend them.

Here are a few books you could read with/to your child, as well as a couple that you could read yourself. These are just a few...there are lots more to choose from.

### For grades 1-4:



challenges. "Gris is a...young lost in her own world, dealing with a painful experience in her life. Her journey through sorrow is manifested in her dress which grants her new abilities to navigate her...reality."

<https://store.steampowered.com/app/683320/GRIS/>

**Sea of Solitude:** You play as Kay, a young woman who inhabits a world where lonely people are transformed into monsters. Kay, becomes monster as her loneliness, anger, and feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness take over. The game helps her develop insights and skills for recovering from these feelings.

<https://www.ea.com/en-gb/games/sea-of-solitude>

**Squish 'Em!:** Interactive game around stress. You attempt squish the annoying "stress trogs". Suitable for older youth and early teens.

<https://mindyourmind.ca/tools/squish-em>

**Celeste:** "Celeste is a game framed around a challenging platformer but containing a powerful tale of recognizing, dealing with, and attempting to overcome mental illness.

<https://www.gamespot.com/games/celeste/>

**Relationships:** This is an interactive E-Learning "game"/information. Probably better suited for middle school students (6-8<sup>th</sup>).

<https://en.e-learningforkids.org/life-skills/lesson/relationships/>

**You & Others:** This is another interactive E-Learning game. Well suited for middle school kids, but may also be appropriate for 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 9<sup>th</sup> grade depending on developmental ability/maturity.

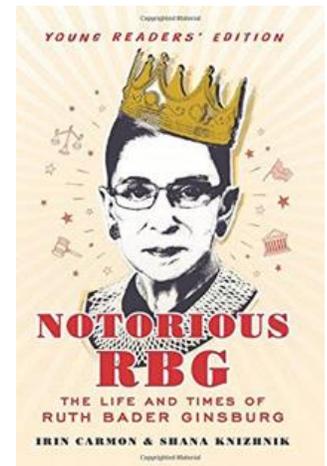
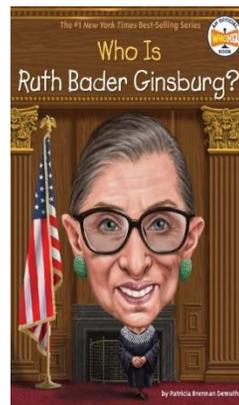
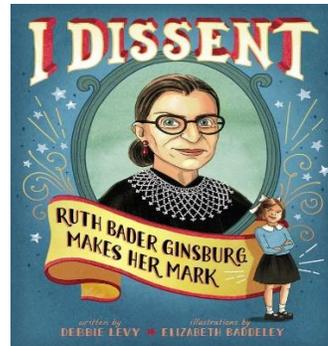
<https://en.e-learningforkids.org/life-skills/lesson/you-and-others/>

**Deep:** I HAVE NOT PREVIEWED THIS ONE AT ALL as I don't have access to VR equipment. The following is a description from a website reviewing the game:

"DEEP is a meditative and psychoactive VR game that is controlled by breathing. Players don the Oculus Rift and the custom DEEP controller to explore a beautiful and mysterious undersea world."

<http://owenllharris.com/deep/>

**For grades 3-8:**



**High School and Adults:**

