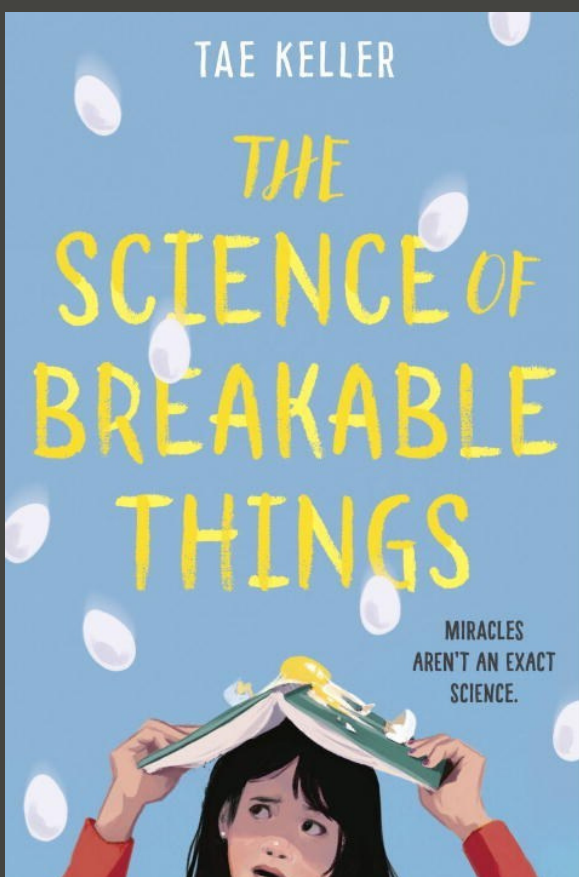


Community Matters Family Book Club

Discussion Guide

Monthly Book Pick:

The Science of Breakable Things
by Tae Keller

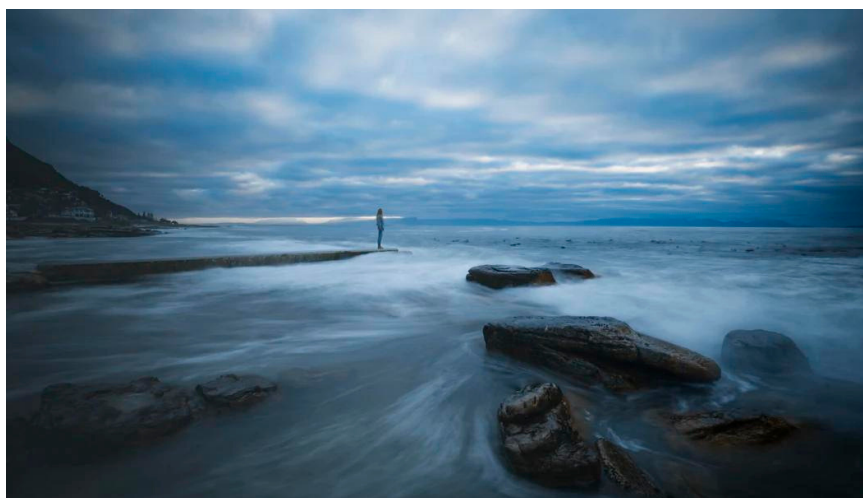


Season Dates and Times

Thursday, September 9th @ 6 pm CST

Thursday, October 14th @ 6 pm CST

Thursday, November 18th @ 6 pm CST



This Month's Theme: Mental Health

This September we will discuss mental health. Use this guide, along with Tae Keller's novel [The Science of Breakable Things](#) to explore the ways mental health disorders affect children, families and the community. Like any book club, please navigate these conversations with patience and kindness. Our intent is to better understand ourselves and the world around us.

Sincerely,

Sam, Jenny, Mary, Tiffany, Christina
The Community Matters Planning Team

JOHNSON COUNTY
KANSAS

Library



Photo of Author Tae Keller

Conversation Starters

What surprised you about this book?

What was your favorite part?

What is mental illness?

When Natalie is frustrated with her Mom she thinks "it's not like she's really sick." What do you think? Are people with mental illnesses really sick?

If mental illness is in your mind and your mind is part of your body is mental illness really different than other types of illnesses?

Themes

- Mental Illness
- Depression
- Therapy
- Cultural Pride
- Losing Someone Who is Still There
- Saving/Taking Responsibility for Others
- Blaming
- Friendship

Discussion Questions

1. Part of the scientific process that Mr. Neely teaches is to investigate things that intrigue you. If you could research any question and get an answer, what would be your question?
 - Do you ever observe things in your life?
 - Do you think observation is a good way to figure out how you feel/how to react to things that are worrying you?
2. How does Natalie feel about her mother's depression?
 - Follow-up: Do you think she should feel angry?
 - Follow-up: How do you think you'd feel?
3. Do you know some of the ways that depression is treated?

Discussion Questions: Continued...

4. Do you think Natalie's father handled the mother's depression well?
 - What could he have done better?
 - Why do you think he didn't insist she get treatment earlier?
 - Often people who are suffering from depression resist getting treatment, why do you think that is?
 - What stigmas surround mental illness?
5. The title of the novel is *The Science of Breakable Things*. What do you think the "unbreakable" thing is?
6. What does Natalie learn about life from Operation Egg?
 - Book quote: "Because science is asking questions. And living is not being afraid of the answer."
7. Natalie's father called her mother "a situation". Why do you think he does that?
8. The author doesn't mention forms of treatment beyond talk therapy, which her mother begins at the end of the book. Why do you think that is?
9. Let's talk about Natalie and her dad – they are not the ones who are depressed, but they need – and get help from a counselor. What do you think about that?
10. Did this book help you increase your understanding of depression and its effects on families? If the answer is yes, what did you learn? Is there anything important you'll take away from reading this novel?

Additional Resources

Crisis Text Line: Text "HELLO" to 741741

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

MentalHealth.gov

