

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

As part of our learning about literacy and mental health, we have been using a series titled *Well Aware* that combines engaging texts written by award-winning Canadian authors with lessons that connect to strategies students can use on a daily basis to manage stressful situations.

One of these texts, titled *The Only One*, is an autobiographical account of the author’s experiences growing up feeling like she was “the only one” in several ways—she was the only child she knew who had allergies, wore glasses, and had an adopted sibling. Most significantly, she was the only Black child in her neighbourhood and at school. The book explores the author’s journey from struggling with the challenges of being different to embracing all the qualities that make her a unique individual.

As students work with the text, they will explore various factors that contribute to a sense of identity and learn to value the qualities that make them unique individuals. They will also learn to develop self-confidence by relying on their strengths to help them cope with challenging situations they encounter.

Recognizing and valuing cultural heritage contributes to a person’s sense of identity and sense of well-being. To help your child understand and value his or her cultural heritage, you could

- talk about your family’s cultural background
- point out any ways in which your family life reflects your cultural heritage (for example, foods, traditions, celebrations, and customs)
- explain what your cultural heritage means to you

It would also be helpful if you could share with your child any situations you know of in which people demonstrated constructive ways of dealing with discrimination based on factors such as age, cultural background, or gender.

As part of our team, thank you for connecting with us concerning this important topic, and please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this work further.

Sincerely,