

## SOME MINDFUL READS...

### *NERVOUS CONDITIONS* TSITSI DANGAREMBGA

Whilst this bildungsroman is primarily focused on colonialism and family domesticity, there is a particular focus on eating disorders throughout the second half of the novel, in which one of the key protagonists, Nyasha, suffers with anorexia. Although her refusal to eat is interpreted by many as a metaphorical result of colonialism, the struggles she has to endure from this disorder are a very real representation of the ways in which many others struggle. Eating disorders of many kinds are not specific to any one gender, age, or ethnic group. That is why getting this fictional representation of this struggle perfect may not be an easy task; or an easy read for many who have suffered with this, or currently are. However, I think Dangarembga's illustration of anorexia perfectly captures the very realistic physical and mental consequences that eating disorders can cause, as well as the distress this can cause to those around the individual who's struggling. *Nervous Conditions* is an enticing read for many and may be especially eye-opening to those who may not understand eating disorders and the struggles of it.

### *SAPIENS*

YUVAL NOAH HARARI

Although not a book overtly concerned with addressing mental health, *Sapiens* is a book I found to be of personal use to me. It allowed me, through the scope of the history of our species, from the basins in Africa through to the modern world, to better understand myself, my ancestors and why the world we live in is as it is. I felt it grounded me in history, whilst making sense of the world around me. Perhaps not an obvious choice for a book on mental health, *Sapiens* really settled the anxiety I felt towards the world we live in.

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## *NOTES ON A NERVOUS PLANET* MATT HAIG

If you're looking for a book that enables you to think about your own mental wellbeing, as well as pondering how to stay in touch with your own humanity, then Matt Haig's Number One Sunday Times Bestseller *Notes on a Nervous Planet* could be the book for you. Haig addresses how we might cope with anxiety and tolerate the toxic traits of social media in a fresh way. At no point in the book do you feel that he is preaching to you from the lofty heights of his soapbox, instead Haig allows you to address your own anxious thoughts through contemplating the world around you and its impact on your mental health.

## *ALL THE BRIGHT PLACES* JENNIFER NIVEN

Jennifer Niven's, 'All the Bright Places' perfectly discusses the troubles of mental health that many teenagers face. The beautiful story of Violet Markey and Theodore Finch, who are both battling their own demons, show the possibility of bringing brightness out of dark situations. Even with the dark themes throughout the novel, the story relates to everyone who has ever struggled with life's realities. An extremely sad, heartfelt but enjoyable read.

## *JOG ON: HOW RUNNING SAVED MY LIFE* BELLA MACKIE

Bella Mackie documents her journey of choosing to simply 'run' away from her problems. With her previous issues with divorce, anxiety and dropping out of university, she writes about how running and exercise was the only method of help that actually worked. The story is both witty but deeply sad and grasps the brutality of mental illness. Despite there not being much about running and fitness, the message of getting out and physically doing something is quite inspirational. A truly moving read!