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**Mental Health Advocate and Author Dr. Melissa S. Johnson Releases *Brighter than the Storm*,
a Compassionate Guide to Helping Children Navigate Mental Health Challenges**

August 17, 2026 (Orlando, FL) — As more families quietly experience the impact of parental mental illness, mental health advocate and author Dr. Melissa S. Johnson announces the release of her new book, *Brighter than the Storm*, a compassionate children's story that helps young readers and their families understand and cope with the emotional challenges that can arise when someone they love is experiencing a mental health challenge.

Through the story of Victoria, an eight-year-old girl whose mother is experiencing mental illness, *Brighter than the Storm* opens the door to difficult conversations. The book provides age-appropriate language to help children understand mental illness, express emotions, ask questions, and recognize that a parent's mental illness is never a child's fault.

Johnson combines storytelling with practical activities that encourage emotional awareness, communication, resilience, and healthy coping strategies. The book also provides parents, teachers and counselors with tools to help children explore their feelings, identify support and develop healthy coping skills. "My hope is that *Brighter than the Storm* helps children feel seen and helps families feel less alone," notes Dr. Melissa S. Johnson. "Sometimes children experience big emotions but don't have the words to explain what they are feeling. Through Victoria's story, I want children to understand that their feelings matter, they are not responsible for a parent's mental illness, and they do not have to walk through difficult seasons alone."

For parents, *Brighter than the Storm* offers a starting point for reassuring children that difficult changes at home are not their fault. For teachers and counselors, the book can support conversations about social-emotional learning, empathy, family challenges, and mental wellness. The book is intended as a compassionate starting point, not a replacement for professional mental health care. At its heart, *Brighter than the Storm* is a story of love, courage, resilience and hope. Victoria's journey demonstrates how communication, understanding, and support can help children and families face mental health challenges together.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Melissa S. Johnson is an author, community advocate, ordained minister, and passionate voice for mental health awareness. With a Ph.D. in Christian Counseling, she is committed to supporting the emotional, spiritual, and mental well-being of children, individuals, and families. Through her writing and advocacy, Johnson brings compassion, faith, and professional insight to subjects that can be difficult to discuss. Dr. Johnson is available for interviews, speaking engagements, workshops, panel discussions, and community conversations focused on children's mental health, family resilience, and mental health awareness. For media inquiries, contact info@melissasjohnson.com. *Brighter than the Storm* can be ordered at www.brighterthanthestorm.com. Learn more about Dr. Johnson's work at www.melissasjohnson.com.

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