

# “Has the Whole World Gone Crazy?” – Psych Cinema

## Using film as a teaching tool in psychiatry

### Introduction

Movies generate all sorts of reactions and emotions in us. The dynamics between cinema and real life can be used to teach students about the complexities of human emotions and relationships to broaden their appreciation of psychiatry. Psychiatry has insights to offer the society it serves and the culture in which it is situated; film highlights many of the salient issues.

### Purpose

- Use film to discuss psychiatric themes in movies.
- Situate psychiatry within the world and culture around medicine.
- Demonstrate how a more complex appreciation of the human animal can enrich medical practice.

### Methods

- Learners interested in Psychiatry are invited to a quarterly Psych Cinema event.
- Faculty select movies with mental health themes or rich sociocultural elements.
- The activity is not a required didactic -- **open to psychiatry interested learners and to the general public.**
- Advertise via email, social media, word of mouth and flyers.
- Present only cinematic pieces rather than documentaries in order to keep the material raw for interpretation.
- Intentionally **do not frame discussions in terms of diagnoses or how characters display pathology with particular labels.**

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### Activities Thus Far

6 Screenings – Variety of Periods and Genres  
3 in Hospital Auditorium & 3 in Department Conference Room  
Faculty prepared for certain themes to be discussed  
**Growing emphasis on facilitating interactive experience for attendees driven by perspectives they share**



### Results

- Majority of attendees were **medical students**, followed by **some residents**, and then other faculty
  - Occasional attendance outside department
- **Smaller informal setting** (e.g. conference room) better suited to generate discussion than an auditorium.
  - Observed each other reacting to the movie and interacted more directly about it.
- Locating the venue within the Department of Psychiatry increased attendance due to proximity
  - Free food (and smells) played a key role in attracting people to the activity.
  - **Struggling** to draw from broader community.
- Average of 15 – 20 attendees thus far
  - Psych Cinema activity generated discussion outside of the activity, itself.
  - Colleagues who cannot attend often give us feedback on our movie selection.
  - More recent **requests from faculty** who wish to come and discuss particular films.



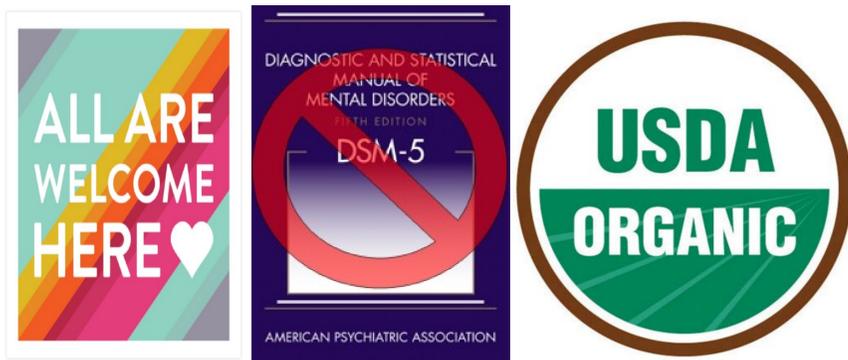
### Conclusions

Psych Cinema is a creative way to discuss complexities of the human mind and the world we live in. It permits learning through personal connections outside of a traditional didactic format. We hope to make Psychiatry more relevant to the university and the broader community and attract more attendees with their diverse perspectives.

### References

The Big Lebowski, 1998  
Klemenc-Ketis and Kersnik: Using movies to teach professionalism to medical students. BMC Med Educ 2011.  
Lumgertul et al: Cinemeducation: A pilot student project using movies to help students learn medical professionalism. Med Teach. 2009.  
Lawson and Fouts: Mental Illness in Disney Animated Films. Can J Psychiatry 2004.

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- Provide food and beverages!
- Following the movie, two faculty moderate discussion.
  - Attendees share what they think of the movie
  - Relationships between and among characters
  - Perceptions of the motivations of characters
  - Reflections on art, life, human health
  - Implications within and beyond medicine
- Focus is personal reactions and **organic discourse** driven by what attendees bring to the table