

Portrayals of Suicide in Narrative Fiction



**MEDIA AND YOUTH SUICIDE: BEST
PRACTICES FOR REPORTING AND
STORYTELLING**

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Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide



Suicide is complex – there are almost always multiple causes including mental illness. These illnesses are treatable.

- Research shows that mental illness or substance abuse is present in 90% of the cases of suicide

Recommendations:

- Show warning signs
- Don't show suicide preceded by a single event like job loss, divorce or bad grades
- Avoid sensationalizing and glamorizing
- Add statements about treatment options and resources

(source reportingonsuicide.org)

Suicide in Narrative Films/Television?



- Ordinary People (1980)
- The Big Chill (1983)
- Dead Poet's Society (1989)
- Girl, Interrupted (1999)
- The Virgin Suicides (1999)
- The Hours (2002)
- 13 Reasons Why (2017)

- My small film is “The Valley”, in select theaters and on demand on June 8

The Valley



- Not Perfect
- Depicts depression as being the root cause of the suicide
- Shows symptoms: difficulty concentrating on academics, erratic sleep, anti-social, eating issues
- Does not have any instructional content on suicide
- Focuses on devastation of family and friends

End Card in The Valley



**THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION ESTIMATES
THAT MORE THAN 35% OF COLLEGE STUDENTS EXPERIENCE
ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION**

**IN THE UNITED STATES SUICIDE HAS SURPASSED HOMICIDE
AS THE SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH
AMONGST TEENAGERS AGES 15-19**

End Card in The Valley



For support contact:

Crisis Text Line

741741

www.crisistextline.org

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness

1-800-950-NAMI

www.nami.org

American Association of Suicidology

1-202-237-2280

www.suicidology.org