

6 Movies / TV Shows That Give Us Hope About Mental Health



Created by the:
Youth Cinewell Critics Council



1. **Words on Bathroom Walls by Daniela V. (PG-13)**

I thought *Words on Bathroom Walls* movie was really well done. It's about a boy named Adam who is recently diagnosed with Schizophrenia, and the movie follows his struggles with finding a treatment plan that works for him. It also shows his fear of being misperceived by others as dangerous because of his mental illness, and initially, he tries hard to keep it a secret from his family and a girl that he falls in love with. I love this movie because it shows that sometimes all it takes is kindness to support someone who is struggling with mental illness and the importance of breaking down false, societal misconceptions about mental health.

2. **Violet Evergarden, episode 10 by Nathan N. (PG-13)**

Violet Evergarden is an anime TV series about a letter writer named Violet Evergarden who helps people write letters to their loved ones during a time period when most people don't know how to write. One of her clients is a woman who is really sick, and the episode follows her relationship with her daughter and the struggles her daughter has with knowing that her mother is slowly dying. The movie does a good job of showing the grieving process of losing someone to a serious illness whose death isn't quick or sudden, but instead, a process that goes on for a very long time. It's a very emotional premise, but the ending is where I got really choked up. This show describes death and grieving in a way that I've never seen portrayed before, and it made me really think about and appreciate all the people I have now.

3. **It's Okay to Not Be Okay by Pogisa T. (Rated R)**

When I think of a show that gives me hope about mental health, I think of the Korean drama, *It's Okay to Not Be Okay*. It's one of the few shows produced in Korean media that really highlights mental health in their story. It follows two brothers with the eldest who is diagnosed with autism. Their parents were murdered early in their lives, and it follows their healing journey through the help of a psychiatrist at a hospital where the younger brother works. There are also other characters in the show that tell their different stories about their mental health journeys. All these different stories really drew me in to where I completed the whole series, so I highly recommend it.

What gave me hope about this show is that it's very different from the other Korean dramas I've watched before and does a great job shining light on mental health and wellness topics for its broader, international audiences.

4. *Midnight Sun* by Yvette M. (PG-13)

Midnight Sun is about a girl who is diagnosed with a rare health condition that prevents her from going into the sun or else she can die. She has lived her entire life at home, which I felt was like being quarantined. Since we have all been quarantined due to the pandemic, I felt like she went through what we went through, but much worse. Though this movie doesn't specifically highlight mental health topics, because she was isolated from people for so long and for such a big part of her life, I think the isolation would have taken a big toll on her, and she probably did have some mental health challenges. Something that gave me hope from watching this movie was her attitude. Though it's a really sad movie, she was a very enthusiastic person who was happy and stayed positive despite her having this illness.

5. *King of Staten Island* by Everardo EC. (Rated R)

King of Staten Island is a semi-autobiographical movie about Pete Davidson. The reason why I really like this movie is because it is a more honest portrayal of borderline personality disorder and the issues that come with struggling with it. The movie gave a better representation of themes around our sense of self and feelings of worthlessness and self-hatred that people with mental health disorders may have that most other movies do not portray very well. The movie is pretty emotional as you watch the main character deal with the grief and loss of his father and when his sister leaves for college. He also struggles with not feeling like he has a community he belongs to and issues around abandonment. The movie really engages with the viewers and tries to help them relate to someone who lives with a mental health disorder as much as possible.

6. *Good Will Hunting* by Emily W. (Rated R)

Good Will Hunting follows Will's begrudging but touching journey to coping with his childhood and personal struggles through therapy. This film was one of the first movies I saw that realistically depicted an individual's path to receiving mental health treatment. I believe that many could relate to Will's initial hesitation in accepting help and that we can all find hope in his courage to move forward in his life. This movie beautifully shows the countless facets of human emotion, from instinctively defensive anger to vulnerable fear to pure joy. Upon every watch, I'm reminded to be kind and patient with my own and others in our individual mental and emotional struggles.