

ABOUT THE MOVIE



Title of the Movie: Perks of Being a Wallflower

Movie Rating: PG - 13

Length: 1h 45m

Reviewer Name: Rachel B

Age and/or Educational Level: 18, Senior in High School

Date reviewed: 8/8/2021

Overall Rating (1-10, 10 = best): 8/10

Warning: Spoilers ahead! CineWell reviews are intended to assess themes of mental health, violence and suicide for youth friendliness, authenticity and accuracy and may contain spoilers.

What is your initial impression and/or feeling after watching the movie?

I felt surprisingly satisfied after watching this movie. While the movie does have to deal with sexual assault, suicide and depression, they do a good job with the cinematography to minimize the exposure to the audience and end on a hopeful scene for the main character's future.

Brief Synopsis (1-2 sentences)

Charlie starts high school the summer after his friend dies by suicide and makes a new group of friends that help lift him out of his shyness and depression.

Trigger Warnings needed (e.g. self-harm, harassment, violence). If so, how would you rate the severity of the content: mild, moderate, or severe and a brief description. This reflects your personal watching experience and the emotional impact.

Suicide – moderate, method of suicide discussed/lack of note mentioned.

Self-Harm – mild, shows a brief shot of a character's wrists.

Sexual Assault – mild, briefly mentions but doesn't go into details.

CINEWELL MOVIE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How would you categorize the movie as? (e.g. comedy, romance, autobiography, coming-age, etc.)

Coming - of - Age

2. Describe the mood of the movie using 3-5 words or phrases (e.g. light, dark, suspenseful)

Hopeful, sorrowful, uplifting

3. How easy is the plot to follow and why? (1-10, 1 = very difficult, 10 = very easy)

7 - the viewer can usually understand what's happening though they cut between flashbacks and reality and the timeline is not chronological, so you have to pay attention to understand when in time the events happened to realize their impact on the character.

4. To your understanding and experience, how accurate and realistic was the movie's depiction of mental health topics and why? (1-10, 1 = not accurate or realistic, 10 = very)

8 - I would say this movie somewhat accurately displayed his depression following his friend's suicide and how it caused him to retract from others due to his own regrets and trauma. Additionally, I think they realistically portrayed the effects of his own abuse without showing anything graphic and were able to portray how friends and therapists were able to help him when he was at his darkest.

5. How entertaining was the movie throughout its entire duration and why? (1-10, 1 = not entertaining, 10 = very entertaining)

9 - Although the movie deals with hard topics, it shows the budding friendship and has some lighter, more humorous moments. Overall, it ends on a hopeful note that makes the viewer feel relieved to know Charlie will be ok even after everything he's been through.

6. List any themes surrounding mental health and wellness from the movie (e.g. depression, anxiety, grief, loss, relationship/friendship stressors, self-care)

Depression, friendship, grief

7. What is the character(s)'s impact on you? (1-10, 1 = not at all impactful, 10 = very impactful) Is the impact positive or negative? Both?

7 - Positive impact, we see how Charlie overcame his depression and sexual abuse through his friends and support of his family and therapist and that no matter what happens to you, there are always people there to support you.

8. What resonated with you and/or what takeaways do you have about this film?

I really liked how they didn't graphically show any of the suicide or sexual abuse scenes and just used fuzzy images. Additionally, I liked how throughout the film, even when he was depressed, the viewer always felt hopeful for his future and knew that he would pull through and have his happy ending.

9. How well do you think the movie reached its fullest potential? (1-10, 1 = room for improvement, 10 = film went above and beyond) If you answer below an 8, what do you wish to have seen instead/more?

8

10. Were there any inaccuracies/red flags in portraying mental health?

I believe they portrayed mental health accurately as people battle through depression at school all the time and "seem normal". Perhaps they could've lengthened the timeline of his recovery as it seems like he got better pretty quickly after his time in the hospital and seeing his friends come back.

11. Note any memorable quotes, moments, or scenes from the movie

"We are infinite."

"We accept the love we think we deserve."

"Enjoy it. Because it's happening."

12. Optional: How did the film relate to your own experiences or of someone you know about mental health?

My friends have had struggles with suicidal ideation and while the movie doesn't glamorize it, it leaves Charlie on a very happy, fulfilled note full on hope which is not everyone's experiences with depression or having a loved one die by suicide. However, the hope at the end could be a sign to someone with depression that life gets better and to live in the moment.

Does the film mention suicide? If yes, please complete the checklist below.

The guidelines below are adapted from Action Alliance’s [National Recommendations for Depicting Suicide](#) list). Research has shown that fictional portrayals of suicide can sometimes lead to increases in suicidal behavior or can help save lives if these established recommendations are followed.

SAFE MESSAGING ON SUICIDE GUIDELINES CHECKLIST

YES	QUESTION	COMMENTS
✓	Does the film describe suicide in a way that is complex and influenced by a range of factors (rather than one event or contributing factor)?	Briefly mentions his friend’s suicide and the method but doesn’t give further details.
✓	Does the film genuinely demonstrate that help is available?	The main character sees a therapist and spends time in the hospital when he’s feeling very depressed which helps him.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the film portray characters with suicidal thoughts who do not go on to die by suicide?	The main character doesn't have suicidal thoughts. But his friend/aunt died by suicide earlier that summer, so he suffers from PTSD and depression.
✓	Does the film include everyday character(s) who can be a lifeline, such as a teacher, parent, or fellow students providing a safe space to share on mental health topics?	His teacher is a nurturing figure to him and his new friends from high school are his main support system, especially Sam. Additionally, his parents and sister seem perceptive and cognizant of his needs
✓	Does the film avoid showing or describing the details about suicide methods and suicide notes?	Though the film mentions the method, it doesn’t describe further details of his friend’s suicide or note.
✓	Does the film avoid sensationalizing or glamorizing suicide (overdramatizing and/or glorifying language, scene, music)?	Yes, doesn’t display any scenes of the suicide but the aftereffects emotionally on the main character
✓	Does the film depict the grieving and healing process of people who lose someone to suicide?	Display how the main character grieved by pulling away from others but through his friends and family was able to start to enjoy life again
✓	Does the film use nonjudgmental language and behavior about suicide?	While it does say commit suicide, the movie tries to avoid any direct cinematography of the suicide or anything beyond briefly mentioning it and his friends are very supportive of him