

### [Sixth Sense, The](#)

**Genre:** Drama   **Year:** 1999   **Rating:** PG-13

**Actors:** Bruce Willis, Haley Joel Osment, Toni Collette

**Topics:** Psychopathology, Treatment

Bruce Willis as a child psychologist whose 6-year-old patient claims to see the spirits of dead people around him. Good film; nice plot twist. Also interesting brief portrayal of Munchausen's by Proxy. Willis is a much more ethical psychologist in this film than in the horrible Color of Night.

### [On Golden Pond](#)

**Genre:** Drama/Comedy   **Year:** 1981   **Rating:** PG

**Actors:** Katherine Hepburn, Henry Fonda, Jane Fonda

**Topics:** Neuropsychology, Marital/Family Dynamics

Academy Award winner for Best Actor and Best Actress. Beautiful story of enduring love in an elderly couple, the husband's suffering from the early stages of dementia, and its effect on family members. Acting doesn't get much better than this.

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### [I Am Sam](#)

**Genre:** Drama   **Year:** 2001   **Rating:** PG-13

**Actors:** Sean Penn, Michelle Pfeiffer, Dakota Fanning

**Topics:** Psychopathology, Neuropsychology, Forensic, Marital/Family Dynamics, Social

Sean Penn portrays a man with mental retardation fighting for custody of his 7-year-old child. Sam's group of friends are entertaining – two are truly developmentally disabled – his close neighbor is agoraphobic. His lawyer is the stereotypical overworked yuppie professional woman, estranged from her family. The film is a classic tearjerker. Despite significant research for the film (watch the supplemental documentary), how realistic were the events? Did he take her to a pediatrician? Did the pediatrician have any concerns about his care? Was that a realistic portrayal of cross-examination of an expert witness? Could Sam really have afforded the apartment at the end in Los Angeles, making somewhere around \$8/hour? What really was in the best interest of the child? Was the opposing attorney all that wrong? Many things to consider.

### [Gone with the Wind](#)

**Genre:** Drama   **Year:** 1939   **Rating:** NR-PG

**Actors:** Vivian Leigh, Clark Gable, Olivia de Havilland

**Topics:** Psychopathology, Personality Disorders, Marital/Family

Dynamics Academy Award winner for Best Picture, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actress. A woman coping with life during the Civil War. A classic. Scarlett's diagnosis? Histrionic? Borderline? Antisocial? Consider her behavior in light of the culture of the time. My favorite line in the movie, "Askin' ain't gettin'."

### [Canvas](#)

**Genre:** Drama   **Year:** 2006   **Rating:** PG-13

**Actors:** Joe Pantoliano, Marcia Gay Hardin

**Topics:** Psychopathology, Psychotic Disorders, Marital/Family Dynamics, Treatment, Stress and Coping

Seen through the eyes of a young boy, this film demonstrates the impact of schizophrenia on the family. As such, I imagine it would be useful in working with families dealing with mental illness in a loved one. Great music and photography.

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### [Beautiful Mind, A](#)

**Genre:** Drama **Year:** 2001 **Rating:** PG-13

**Actors:** Russell Crowe, Ed Harris, Jennifer Connelly

**Topics:** Psychopathology, Treatment, Schizophrenia, Marital/Family Dynamics, Stress and Coping

Academy Award winner for Best Picture and Best Supporting Actress. Russell Crowe portrays Nash, a brilliant mathematician. There is a major plot twist – stop reading here if you don't want it spoiled...We learn that we are misled – situations and characters turn out to be portrayals of Nash's delusional thinking and hallucinations. We see him spiral downward in the throws of his psychotic thinking or the side effects of his medications. What do you think about the suggestion that he was able to self-challenge the reality of the hallucinations, as at the end of the movie? What do you think this movie did for public perception of schizophrenia? If you really want to know his story, read the book – not an easy read, mind you, but with plenty more information missing from the Hollywood version...

Asperger's?

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### [Bad Seed, The](#)

**Genre:** Drama **Year:** 1956 **Rating:** NR-PG-13- There is also a re-make

**Actors:** Nancy Kelly, Patty McCormack, Henry Jones

**Topics:** Psychopathology, Developmental, Marital/Family Dynamics

The original classic. Useful for exploring the nature/nurture issue. Can evil be genetic?

### [Awakenings](#)

**Genre:** Drama **Year:** 1990 **Rating:** PG-13

**Actors:** Robin Williams, Robert DeNiro, Julie Kavner

**Topics:** Psychopathology, Neuropsychology, Treatment

Wonderful movie. Based on Oliver Sacks' clinical cases. L-dopa's effects on encephalitis lethargica. Interesting glimpse inside a mental hospital in the 1960s. Why do you think paranoia/psychosis developed after prolonged L-dopa treatment? Neuronal supersensitivity? And what about Dr. Sacks' interpersonal anxieties – social phobia? Asperger's?

### [As Good As It Gets](#)

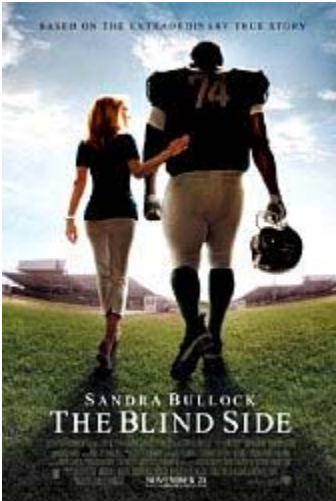
**Genre:** Drama/Comedy **Year:** 1997 **Rating:** PG-13

**Actors:** Jack Nicholson, Greg Kinnear, Helen Hunt

**Topics:** Psychopathology, OCD, Personality Disorder, Social

Academy Award winner for Best Actor and Best Actress. Jack Nicholson with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, as well as plenty of Axis II. Also addresses bias (homophobia) and attitude change. Really great movie.

#### 4. [“The Blind Side”](#)



Biographical/sport (2009)

**Topics:** Social psychology, including social influence, family relations **Actors:** Quinton Aaron, Sandra Bullock, Tim McGraw, Kathy Bates **Plot:** “The Blind Side” is the true story of Michael Oher, a homeless African-American boy who is adopted by a wealthy white family, the Tuohys. Michael realizes his full potential, succeeding in school and becoming a first-round pick in the 2009 NFL draft. **Recommended by:** Dr. Helen Oderinde

**Why recommended:** This film does a good job of highlighting some of the difficulties and misunderstandings that take place when people of different cultures attempt to bridge cultural and racial differences and connect on an intimate level. The film also shows how mutually beneficial this engagement can be: the Tuohys open the door to educational and financial opportunity for Michael and he, in turn, opens their minds.

#### 5. [“Driving Miss Daisy”](#)



Comedy/drama (1989)

**Topics:** Social psychology, developmental psychology/aging, Alzheimer’s disease **Actors:** Jessica Tandy, Morgan Freeman, Dan Akroyd **Plot:** The movie begins in 1948 when, at the insistence of her son who decides his mother must stop driving, Miss Daisy Werthan, a wealthy Jewish Southern woman, hires an African-American chauffeur, Hoke Colburn. The story of their friendship unfolds over the following 25 years as they overcome their differences and discomforts and develop a loving friendship. **Recommended by:** Dr. Antonio Laverghetta

**Why recommended:** In addition to addressing the degenerative nature of Alzheimer’s disease, this film explores some of the big questions of interest in the field of social psychology: how prejudice develops and how it can be overcome.

## "Good Will Hunting"



**Drama (1997)**

**Topics:** Social and developmental psychology, treatment, giftedness

**Actors:** Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Robin Williams, Minnie Driver

**Plot:** Will Hunting is a young, headstrong janitor at MIT with exceptional mathematical abilities. Abused as a child, he has numerous run-ins with the law and does not realize his full potential. With the help of a psychology professor, he finally receives the counseling he needs that will enable him to find his identity and change his life.

**Recommended by:** Dr. Glenn Lowery

**Why recommended:** "Good Will Hunting." serves as a good teachable opportunity. This movie depicts a difficult therapeutic relationship between an ambivalent client and a somewhat unorthodox counselor.