Many of the films in this chapter vividly capture the human experience of emotional distress. As you view each film, consider the following questions:

- Do the characters in the movies you are watching exhibit any traits of a specific psychiatric disorder?
- What societal or cultural attitudes are reflected in the depiction of mental illness, its treatment, and the role of the nurse?
- What ethical questions have arisen in the movies you are watching?
- How do you react to the characters in each film? Does your knowledge of the field of psychiatric nursing change your response to the film or to its characters?
- How would you use the film to help clients, families, populations, or health care staff to better understand mental illness or its treatment?
UNIT 1: FOUNDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Chapters 1, 2, and 7: Psychiatric Institutions, Psychiatric Care, Cultural Considerations
- Down to Earth (1917)
- Day at the Races (1937)
- Titicut Follies (1964)
- King of Hearts (1966)
- Marat Sade (1966)
- One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (1975)
- Network (1976)
- The Ninth Configuration (1979)
- A Man Facing Southeast (1986)
- The Madness of King George (1994)
- Kids in the Hall: Brain Candy (1996)
- Twelve Monkeys (1995)
- Being John Malkovich (1999)

UNIT 2: CLIENTS WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

Chapter 10: The Client Undergoing Crisis
- Seventh Veil (1945)
- On the Beach (1959)
- Cleo from 5 to 7 (1962)

Chapter 11: The Client Experiencing Anxiety
- Caine Mutiny (1954)
- The Burmese Harp (1956)
- High Anxiety (1977)
- The Onion Field (1979)
- Johnny Stecchino (1991)
- The Fear Inside (1992)
- Copycat (1995)
- Vertigo (1958/1997)

Chapter 12: The Client Experiencing Schizophrenia
- Mine Own Executioner (1947)
- Sorry, Wrong Number (1948)
- El: This Strange Passion (1952)
- Through a Glass Darkly (1961)
- David and Lisa (1962)
- The President’s Analyst (1967)
- They Might be Giants (1971)
- The Story of Adele H (1975)
- The Tenant (1976)

Chapter 13: The Client Experiencing Depression
- The Snake Pit (1948)
- Raintree County (1955)
- The Fire Within (1963)
- Face to Face (1976)
- Despair (1978)
- The Bell Jar (1979)
- Ordinary People (1980)
- Vincent and Theo (1990)

Chapter 14: The Client Experiencing Mania
- A Fine Madness (1966)
- Animal House (1978)
- Mosquito Coast (1986)
- How to Get Ahead in Advertising (1989)
- Mr. Jones (1993)

Chapter 15: The Client Who Is Suicidal
- It’s a Wonderful Life (1946)
- The Slender Thread (1965)
- Harold and Maude (1971)
- Ordinary People (1980)
- The Big Chill (1983)
- Vincent and Theo (1990)

Chapter 16: The Client Who Abuses Chemical Substances
- The Lost Weekend (1945)
- I’ll Cry Tomorrow (1955)
- The Man with the Golden Arm (1955)
- Days of Wine and Roses (1962)
- Long Days’ Journey into Night (1962)
- Panic in Needle Park (1971)
- The Seven Percent Solution (1976)
- I’m Dancing as Fast as I Can (1982)
- The Verdict (1982)
- Educating Rita (1983)
- Clean and Sober (1988)
- Postcards from the Edge (1990)
- Trainspotting (1996)

Chapter 17: The Client with a Personality Disorder
- Gone with the Wind (1939)
- Rebecca (1940)

I Never Promised You a Rose Garden (1977)
Clean, Shaven (1993)
Don Juan de Marco (1995)
Angel Baby (1995)
UNIT 3: SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Chapter 20: The Physically Ill Client Experiencing Emotional Distress
- The Pride of the Yankees (1942)
- The Elephant Man (1980)
- The Shadow Box (1980)
- Parting Glances (1986)
- Beaches (1988)
- Awakenings (1990)
- Passion Fish (1992)

Chapter 21: Forgotten Populations: The Homeless and the Incarcerated
- Short Eyes (1977)
- Dead Man Out (1989)
- The Fisher King (1991)
- The Saint of Fort Washington (1993)

Chapter 22: The Child
- The 400 Blows (1959)
- The Effect of Cosmic Rays. . . . (1988)
- Small Change (1976)
- Rain Man (1988)
- Lorenzo's Oil (1992)

Chapter 23: The Adolescent
- Mouchette (1967)
- Gaby: A True Story (1987)
- My Left Foot (1989)
- Wildflower (1991)
- Good Will Hunting (1997)
- The Virgin Suicides (2000)

Chapter 24: The Elderly
- The Last Laugh (1922)
- Kotch (1971)
- Harry and Tonto (1974)
- Gin Game (1984)
- Driving Miss Daisy (1989)
- Children of Nature (1991)
- A Woman's Tale (1991)

Chapter 25: Survivors of Violence or Abuse
- Murmur of the Heart (1971)
- Judgment (1990)
- Sleeping with the Enemy (1991)

UNIT 4: NURSING INTERVENTIONS AND TREATMENT MODALITIES
- Secrets of the Soul (1926)
- Spellbound (1945)
- Freud (1962)
- Pressure Point (1962)
- Lilith (1964)
- Frances (1982)
- The Dream Team (1989)
- Prince of Tides (1991)
- Shall We Dance? (1996)

COMPETENCIES

This chapter is provided for the student to experience learning while enjoying a movie! Remember, learning is possible in many situations: Invite your friends to watch with you, keep up your skills in observation, and don't forget the popcorn.
Acknowledgment

We are grateful to Mary Sherman of Wichita State University for sharing the filmography developed for her class “Critical Studies in Film: Psychology, Psychiatry, and the Cinema.” Some of these films have been selected for review in this chapter.

While only some nurses will practice exclusively in psychiatric settings, all will work closely with clients to help each achieve his or her optimum physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. The subject of mental health nursing is human psychological makeup and variation—the normal varieties and the abnormal extremes of the human response to life events. Grief, loss, depression, anxiety, disordered thought, substance use and abuse, these are among the essential human experiences, experiences not just of the psychiatrically disturbed but also of many individuals at some time in their lives. The nurse who learns to listen to, understand, empathize with, and provide help for the emotional aspects of a client’s life and illness will have at his or her disposal some of the most powerful tools of a skilled healer. The core of psychiatric mental health nursing involves the understanding of human experience, an understanding also sought by writers and, in recent decades, by film makers. The editors and authors of this book feel strongly that there is no better way to understand nursing clients and their varied psychiatric conditions and diagnoses than by entering into their lives through reading literature or by turning down the lights and experiencing the magic world of film. The purpose of this chapter is to offer summary descriptions of more than 100 films, each available on VHS video, that complement the various sections of the text. Some of these films were made for television and may be difficult to find in video rental stores, while others are among the most famous classic films. Some were made decades ago, and others are as recent as this textbook itself. No attempt has been made to censor this list, and many viewers may find the violence or sexuality in a few of the films to be disturbing. The authors have tried to indicate which films should be viewed selectively, and it should be possible to choose films from the given list that are consistently appropriate for adult viewers. Your “Friday Night at the Movies” need not be Friday, nor does it have to be every week. We think, however, that the more of these films you are able to watch, the more we will achieve our goal of communicating to you something of the experience of human transitions and human distress.

UNIT 1: FOUNDATIONS FOR PRACTICE
Chapters 1, 2, and 7: Psychiatric Institutions, Psychiatric Care, Cultural Considerations

The films in this section provide an introduction to psychiatric care and its special challenges both in the contemporary United States and at other times and places.

Down to Earth
(1917) Douglas Fairbanks Pictures

A remarkable silent-era film starring the great Douglas Fairbanks as the “liberator” of a mental institution in which his girlfriend has been placed. The film offers a marvelous view of a now-distant institutional world through the camera skills of a (then) young Victor Fleming, who went on to direct two immortal films: Gone with the Wind and The Wizard of Oz.

Day at the Races
(1937) MGM

In this Marx Brothers farce Groucho plays a veterinarian who, through a series of not entirely accidental misunderstandings, becomes chief psychiatrist at an institution for the mentally ill. While neither a lifelike portrayal of an earlier era’s mental institutions nor one of the Marx Brothers’ greatest, this film is still an amusing spoof on psychiatry and the definition of sanity in a bureaucratic society.

Titticut Follies
(1964) Bridgewater Film Productions

This film is now almost impossible to obtain, though some libraries may have copies. Titticut Follies is a true-life documentary about the squalor and degradation experienced by patients at a large public mental institution near Boston. The public outcry that director Frederick Wiseman’s film generated on its release gave great impetus to deinstitutionalization. The film is highly disturbing in its shocking depiction of dehumanization but is a “must see” if it can be located.

King of Hearts
(1966) Compania Cinematografica Montoro

A notable film about a war-torn French town repopulated by inhabitants of the local institution for the mentally ill. While decidedly odd in some ways, the society created by these “sick” individuals seems abundantly more sane than that of the world around them. This is a memorable film of great warmth, charm, and humanity.
**Marat Sade**  
(1966) United Artists

An imagining of the 18th-century insane asylum where the infamous Marquis de Sade was housed for many years as a (probably thoroughly sane) threat to French public morals. In this film—as he did in real life—the Marquis produces a play with his fellow patients as actors. The film is intriguing, and it provides a somewhat fanciful view of the care of the mentally ill in another country and another era.

**One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest**  
(1975) United Artists

A very fine film produced at the height of the deinstitutionalization movement. A sane but personality disordered patient meets his match in the person of Big Nurse. This film defined a whole generation's view of mental health facilities and personnel. Its negative view of the abuse of medical and nursing authority contributed to public and legislative enthusiasm for the downsizing of mental health institutions. One Flew is regarded by many as among the greatest films of the last 25 years.

**Network**  
(1976) MGM United Artists

This film tells the story of a television newscaster who develops a debilitating mental illness that severely interferes with his work. In the noncelebrity world he might be expected to receive treatment and then return to this (or another) job. In this four Oscar dramatic version of life lived in the limelight, the television network attempts to benefit financially from Peter Finch's illness, turning him into a celebrity in the process. The story is familiar at least to politicians: People in the public eye often must give up all hope of maintaining private lives, even in the face of serious health concerns.

**The Ninth Configuration**  
(1979) The Ninth Configuration. Distributed by Warner Brothers

See this strange movie along with *Twelve Monkeys*, or if you want to have a really bizarre movie evening, add *Being John Malkovich* as well. *The Ninth Configuration* is a story about a military hospital for the mentally ill where the uniformed inmates plot a rebellion under the watchful eye of the hospital commander (who may be as unbalanced as they).

**A Man Facing Southeast**  
(1986) Cinaquanon

A film from Argentina about an unexpected visitor to an institution for the mentally ill. The movie describes a psychologist's attempt to determine if the visitor is truly insane or if, as he claims, he is really an alien from another world. The movie offers insights into mental health care in another culture and raises intriguing questions about the nature of sanity.

**The Madness of King George**  
(1994) Samuel Goldwyn Company

Another view of madness in a distant country and time, but this time the madness of King George III, the ruler of England at the time of the American Revolution. It is currently believed that George suffered from hereditary porphyria, a metabolic disorder that produces episodic abdominal pain and psychosis. In the movie George is odd, if not psychotic, and his caretakers give some insight into competing 18th-century views of psychiatric management.

**Kids in the Hall: Brain Candy**  
(1996) Paramount Pictures

Most of the films reviewed in this chapter are serious attempts to depict and understand the human experience of mental illness. *Brain Candy* is the exception: a (more or less) comic story about the invention of a new antidepressant medication. While highly successful in reversing depression, the new drug, “Gleemonox,” turns out to eventually cause irreversible coma in its users. The film turns improbable, but with a disturbing hint of truth, when the drug's promoters attempt to market the comatose state as a desirable outcome. *Brain Candy* is far from an accurate portrayal of depression, antidepressants, or even the ethical problems of postmarketing drug side effects. It is sometimes funny and would make a good Friday night break from studies.

**Twelve Monkeys**  
(1995) Universal Pictures

A combination of *Back to the Future*, *Outbreak*, and *On the Beach*, *Twelve Monkeys* stars Bruce Willis as a
time-traveling envoy from a future haunted by a deadly virus. His romantic interest is a psychiatrist, so there’s plenty of lunacy (including, some believe, the movie itself). Strange plot (what there is of it), curious but compelling movie, and only peripherally about recognizable mental illness.

Being John Malkovich
(1999) Gramercy Pictures

One of the most valuable abilities a nurse can have is the skill of entering into the mind of another individual. The result is a better understanding of how the world looks “from the inside.” Unless, that is, you are director Spike Jonze and you are making this movie. Somehow the 7th floor of a New York office building contains a tunnel that allows direct entry into the mind of the actor John Malkovich. Anyone crawling into the tunnel soon finds himself or herself inside this poor fellow’s head and looking at the world through Malkovich’s eyes. This “insight” lasts 15 minutes before the inhabitant is summarily ejected onto the soft shoulder of the New Jersey Turnpike. Jonze’s idea of entering the client’s mind is decidedly different from what most psychiatric nurses mean by this concept, but the results of taking the idea this literally are intriguingly whacky—and at times even thought provoking.

UNIT 2: CLIENTS WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

Chapter 10: The Client Undergoing Crisis

The films in this section depict real or (in the case of On the Beach) imagined physical or psychological crises and the human reactions that follow them.

Seventh Veil
(1945) Universal

The heroine is a pianist whose hands are severely burned in an accident. This crisis precipitates deep depression, suicidal thoughts, and seems to bring an end to the heroine’s artistic career, but all is restored through hypnosis and psychotherapy. James Mason and Ann Todd make a memorable movie out of a melodramatic script.

On the Beach
(1959) United Artists


Cleo from 5 to 7
(1962) Rome-Paris Films

This French film follows Cleo’s wanderings through Paris while she waits to learn whether or not she has cancer. A well-respected film from the 1960s, Cleo realistically portrays the stress that comes from uncertainty about illness.

Chapter 11: The Client Experiencing Anxiety

Anxiety is one of the most common and most distressing human experiences. Many films powerfully depict anxiety in its various forms.

Caine Mutiny
(1954) Columbia

A Bogart movie classic about a (fictional) court martial in the U.S. Navy during WW II. Captain Queeg (Bogart) develops symptoms of mental illness, probably depression complicated by obsessive-compulsive disorder, and his command is taken over by the ship’s lieutenant who is then accused of mutiny by Queeg. Under pressures of command and the trial, Queeg compulsively manipulates several small steel balls to help relieve his anxiety. One of the great Bogart performances.

The Burmese Harp
(1956) Home Vision Cinema

This film is about a private in the Japanese army who is so troubled by his war experiences that, instead of returning to Japan, he stays behind in Burma, dresses as a Buddhist monk, and works to bury the many dead of the war. Perhaps not exactly on the subject of post-traumatic stress disorder as we understand it psychiatrically, this movie looks at the way spiritual atonement can help bury violent and frightening past memories.

High Anxiety
(1977) 20th Century Fox

In this film, comic director Mel Brooks (Blazing Saddles) spoofs both fear of heights and some of Alfred Hitchcock’s most famous thriller films. The leading character is a psychiatrist who is afraid of heights and gets caught up in solving a murder mystery that requires him to visit a number of very scary high places. Since such “exposure therapy” has been shown to be of value for persons with phobias, this otherwise whacky film contains a core of serious psychological truth.

The Onion Field
(1979) Columbia Pictures

A violent and disturbing film about the kidnapping and murder of a policeman and the effects on his police partner, who proves unable to help and (barely) escapes with his life. The film portrays post-traumatic stress disorder and the power that anxiety can have to destroy a strong, healthy individual who faces terror and death without any power to intervene. Adapted from a true story.
Johnny Stecchino
(1991) MGM

Obsessive-compulsive disorder is only one of the subplots in this delightful Italian film about mistaken identity. Dante (Roberto Benigni), a charming but decidedly odd school bus driver with a Down syndrome best friend, looks surprisingly like a notorious Mafioso who is also played, not surprisingly, by Benigni. Ever naive, Dante enjoys a free trip to Sicily—never suspecting that the beautiful woman who invites him there plans to have him bumped off by his Mafia look-alike's enemies. A series of improbable events puts Dante back in Rome and his look-alike underground. You may have seen Benigni in the better-known film Life is Beautiful. Johnny Stecchino (Johnny Toothpick) lacks the later film's serious message, but not its comic charm and intensity.

The Fear Inside
(1992) Viacom Pictures

Agoraphobia makes the heroine of this film deathly afraid of the world outside her home. The strength of this movie is the realistic sense of ungrounded fear that it conveys. Not one of the all-time greats, but a good portrayal of a common anxiety disorder.

Copycat

In this film, Sigourney Weaver plays a criminologist whose near murder leads to a profound post-traumatic agoraphobia. From the seclusion of her apartment she is able to help a trusting detective (Holly Hunter) find a vicious serial killer. Serial killers generally have antisocial personality disorder, but the movie is not an extraordinary example of this psychiatric diagnosis. It does convey fairly accurately the terror that keeps persons with agoraphobia out of situations in which they feel exposed and threatened. Few persons become agoraphobic because, like Sigourney Weaver, they have been assaulted and suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. However, if you can tolerate gratuitously violent movies, you will come away from Copycat with a better understanding of the experience of agoraphobia.

Vertigo
(1958, 1997) Paramount Pictures

A classic Alfred Hitchcock film (spoofed in Mel Brooks's High Anxiety discussed previously) in which the hero's fear of heights leads to the death of a friend and (perhaps) to the death of a mysterious woman who returns to haunt his days and nights. Anticipates by 20 years some of the themes in The Onion Field. A great dramatic portrayal of two anxiety diagnoses: fear of heights and post-traumatic stress disorder. Vertigo, re-released in a much improved 1997 version is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest of all motion pictures.

Chapter 12: The Client Experiencing Schizophrenia

Filmmakers have been powerfully attracted to stories involving schizophrenia and other psychotic states. The results have been a number of powerful and fairly accurate portrayals of both the experience of schizophrenia and a number of other psychotic—primarily delusional—states.

Mine Own Executioner
(1947) London Films

In this preneuroleptic film, schizophrenia combines with post-traumatic stress disorder to complicate the lives of both patient and (not completely sane) therapist.

Sorry, Wrong Number
(1948) Columbia Pictures

Another film about delusions, this time with a who-done-it subplot. A woman thinks she overhears her husband plotting a murder, and her growing paranoia leads them both into an exciting series of suspenseful complications. Remade in 1989, but the original starring Barbara Stanwyck and Burt Lancaster is the better of the two versions.

El: This Strange Passion
(1952) Nacional Film

A film about delusion. The hero, convinced his wife is unfaithful, becomes obsessed and in his jealousy increasingly loses touch with reality. A good portrayal of the progressive development of delusional psychosis. Directed by the famous Spanish director Luis Bunuel. (Spanish with English subtitles.)

Through a Glass Darkly
(1961) Svensk Filmindustri

One of Ingmar Bergman's most somber films; about a young schizophrenic woman, her husband, her family, and a remote Swedish island. A visually remarkable film by one of the 20th-century's great film makers. The title derives from the New Testament metaphor about the human inscrutability of God's ways. A dark film that seeks existential truth perhaps more than mere psychological accuracy.

David and Lisa
(1962) Continental Distributing

A classic film about psychotic mental illness. David and Lisa are institutionalized adolescents who fall in love and, as a consequence, pose immense problems for their paternalistic caretakers. A beautiful and touching movie.

The President's Analyst
(1967) Pioneer Entertainment

A psychiatrist is secretly employed to provide counseling for the U.S. president. He becomes increasingly
paranoid, though we are never sure whether his fears and suspicions are symptoms of evolving mental illness or are based in a crazy double-agent reality. A great study of paranoia.

**They Might Be Giants**  
(1971) Universal Pictures

This film can be hard to find but makes a good antidote to the extreme seriousness of films such as *Through a Glass Darkly*. Starring Joanne Woodward as a psychiatrist who treats actor George C. Scott for delusions of grandeur. He believes he is Sherlock Holmes. If he is pronounced insane and committed, Scott’s money goes to another character, so Woodward is under a lot of pressure. Parts of this film are very funny, and it serves as a good introduction to grandiose delusions.

**The Story of Adele H.**  
(1975) Les Productions Artistes Associés

A young French woman becomes psychotic after her betrayal and rejection by an English soldier. She lives out her last years in an institution, writing letters in an indecipherable code. Captures the experience of psychosis as well as any film that has been made. Sad, but not as depressing as most other films about mood and thought disorders. Beautifully photographed and directed by François Truffaut—a “must see.” (French, with English subtitles.)

**The Tenant**  
(1976) Paramount

The previous tenant committed suicide; the present one becomes more and more certain that his neighbors are plotting to kill him. A study in paranoia, directed in 1976 by Roman Polanski (*Knife in the Water, Rosemary’s Baby*); stars Polanski, Jo van Fleet, and Shelley Winters. Film is of more psychological than dramatic interest.

**I Never Promised You a Rose Garden**  
(1977) New World

A film version of the popular 1960s book of the same name that portrays the development and treatment of schizophrenia in an adolescent woman. Realistic and touching but very hard to find in most video stores. The book is just as good and much easier to come by.

**Clean, Shaven**  
(1993) Good Machine

It is hard to imagine a better, and more disturbing, movie about the experience of schizophrenia. This is a film starring Peter Greene (also seen in *Pulp Fiction*) as a young man with schizophrenia trying to survive in a confusing and sometimes terrifying world. While the film’s soundtrack reflects seemingly random noise and disconnected speech, the camera brilliantly details Peter’s obsessions and his fearful encounters with daily reality. The plot is loosely about Peter’s search for a daughter from his preillness life and about the way schizophrenia robs him, but not completely, of the ability to love and be loved. Shocking, touching, unnerving, *Clean, Shaven* is the movie about psychosis. Not easy to watch, it should not be missed.
**Angel Baby**  
(1995) Cinepix Film Properties

An unforgettable movie, *Angel Baby* describes the ultimately tragic love affair between two persons with schizophrenia who meet in therapy. Harry hears voices but on medication is functional enough to write computer software. Kate is more seriously disturbed and has a complex delusional system. When Kate becomes pregnant, she decides to stop her antipsychotic medication to avoid potential fetal damage. Harry stops his as well, and their ensuing psychoses spiral to a catastrophic conclusion. While both Harry and Kate are somewhat atypical in having almost exclusively “positive” schizophrenic symptoms of delusions and hallucinations, they are portrayed with great sensitivity. This film joins *David and Lisa*, *Clean*, *Shaven*, and the hard-to-find *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* as our pick for the best films about living with psychosis.

**Chapter 13: The Client Experiencing Depression**

Loss and depression are nearly universal human experiences that a number of excellent films have explored sensitively.

**The Snake Pit**  
(1948) 20th Century Fox

One of Hollywood’s first explorations of mental illness and psychiatry. A good portrayal of some aspects of depression and of what was available to clients in the 1940s—at worst only a snake pit. In typical Hollywood fashion, the emphasis is on the pretty heroine, not the disgraceful condition of public psychiatric care. Compare the films *Marat Sade* and especially *Titticut Follies*.

**Raintree County**  
(1955) Warner Home Video

It was hoped that this film would be *Gone with the Wind II*, but it never proved popular with audiences. Another Civil War epic, the movie stars Elizabeth Taylor as a young woman who becomes psychotically depressed under the stress of war. Her husband is played by Montgomery Clift whose performance (following a severe head injury during filming that essentially ended his acting career) might make anyone depressed. Filmed as a 1950s epoch and featuring convincing acting by Taylor.

**The Fire Within**  
(1963) Nouvelles Editions de Films

As depressing as movies come. The hero, despondent and alcoholic, becomes increasingly depressed after his psychiatric hospitalization. He gives up hope and calmly makes plans to kill himself. A realistic evocation of the very depths of despair. Based on the true story of the life of a well-known French writer.

**Face to Face**  
(1976) Paramount

First we see *through a glass darkly* and then *face to face*, so the New Testament tells us. Ingmar Bergman’s *Face to Face* followed his *Through a Glass Darkly* (see films under Chapter 11 above) by 15 years, but it is no more cheerful. Liv Ullmann plays a psychiatrist who becomes increasingly depressed and psychotic until her suicide attempt brings both help and (some) hope. Not as dark as *Through a Glass* but heavy going. A good evocation of severe depression. See it with a cheerful friend.

**Despair**  
(1978) NF Geria

Aply titled. Features three greats: the two screenwriters (novelist Vladimir Nabokov and playwright Tom Stoppard) along with director Werner Fassbinder. A tragic story of a German factory owner whose increasing depression and madness parallel the simultaneous rise of Hitler and Nazi power. Full of despair but remarkably funny in parts.

**The Bell Jar**  
(1979) AVCO Embassy Pictures

Not a particularly great film and not particularly easy to find (probably for that reason). The book of the same name (see Chapter 14) is much better, but if you can find this video, it is worth seeing.

**Ordinary People**  
(1980) Paramount

In this film, depression, suicide attempt, hospitalization, and ECT all follow the accidental death of the hero Conrad’s brother in a boating accident. Psychoanalysis comes to the rescue, with some fairly good scenes of therapist/client interaction. Conrad’s mother—the source of many of his problems—could benefit from therapy as well.

**Vincent and Theo**  
(1990) Arena Films

This textbook includes reproductions of a number of paintings by the great 19th-century artist Vincent van Gogh, who is the subject of this exquisite film about art, mental illness, and the love of friends and brothers. This is a beautiful and touching film that (despite Vincent’s tormented life and eventual suicide) is probably more about art and love than mental illness.

**Chapter 14: The Client Experiencing Mania**

Movies are particularly useful for understanding mania because, unlike depression, which we all feel at some time, mania is an unusual experience of extra-
Several films do a remarkable job of portraying this seriously disruptive mood disorder.

**A Fine Madness**  
(1966) Warner Brothers

A probably manic poet cavorting through the fairly pleasant New York of the 1960s and surviving the malignant efforts of his psychiatrists. (See this film along with *The Fisher King*, which shows an equally manic Robin Williams in a far more threatening modern New York.)

**Animal House**  
(1978) Universal Pictures

A movie whose tone is abundantly manic. So, it might seem, was John Belushi, who stars in *Animal House* and went on to a number of equally zany acting roles before his untimely death. The film’s subject is fraternity life (or some fictional view of what fraternity life could be at its very worst); it includes moviedom’s grossest foodfight. Primarily a cult film, but it does give a good sense of the energy that gives rise to manic behavior.

**Mosquito Coast**  
(1986) Warner Brothers

Not a particularly successful film, but probably evokes something of the spirit of mania. The hero moves his family to a remote jungle location. He battles to overcome a range of obstacles that seem more interesting in the book (by Paul Theroux) than they do in the movie.

**How to Get Ahead in Advertising**  

Is this guy obsessive-compulsive or manic (or both)? Although the hero works selling acne cream, it is hard to believe that his own pimples would really talk back to him (certainly an unusual form of auditory hallucination). However, no one could see this film and doubt that both the hero and the whole world of commercial advertising are thoroughly mad. A funny satire on defining one’s life and sanity through selling things that people do not need.

**Mr. Jones**  
(1993) Columbia Tri-Star

There is much to dislike about this movie, perhaps its ending and especially its love affair between the manic-depressive patient (Mr. Jones) and his psychiatrist. While psychiatrists do continue to become emotionally involved with their clients, outside a Hollywood movie any romantic involvement is considered unethical and can lead to loss of licensure. Although actor Richard Gere is thoroughly convincing at both poles of his bipolar disorder, no other film we know of gives such a great portrayal of mania. Seeing this film, you may wish the psychiatrist would give Mr. Jones a little less attention and a little more lithium, but you will have a great understanding of what it means to be manic.

**Chapter 15: The Client Who Is Suicidal**

**It’s a Wonderful Life**  
(1946) RKO Pictures

This is a 1940s “feel good” film that evokes a postwar Hollywood view of optimism and hope. The hero, played by James Stewart, is saved from suicidal depression by an unlikely visit from a (heavenly) angel who shows him the love and warmth that truly surrounds his life. This film is sugary and far from an accurate depiction of the suicidal depths of depression. Few nonpsychotic individuals are saved from suicide by a celestial visitor, but this is otherwise vintage Hollywood at its best. *It’s a Wonderful Life* would probably have walked away with all of the Oscars for 1946, but it was released the same year as the even greater *The Best Years of Our Lives*. See them together to understand how deeply the stresses of war affected American life in the 1940s.

**The Slender Thread**  
(1965) Paramount Pictures

A film produced at a time when Community Mental Health Centers and suicide hotlines were first making their appearance. Adapted from a supposedly true story published in *Time Magazine*, the movie portrays a college student who answers a suicide hotline and has to keep the heroine talking long enough for police to trace the call before she dies of the sleeping pill overdose she has taken. In real life, and on the screen, the student saves the day and the young woman. Probably not Hollywood’s greatest film, but starring two of its best: Anne Bancroft and Sidney Poitier.

**Harold and Maude**  
(1971) Paramount Pictures

A 1970s cult classic that looks wryly at youth, old age, and love. A suicidally depressed 20-some-year-old and an 80-year-old fall improbably in love; the result is at times very funny and often very touching. Harold and Maude is perhaps a bit dated, and its view of depression may be more theatrical than realistic, but this is an often remarkable “must see” film.

**Ordinary People**  
(1980) Paramount Pictures

A powerful story about how death and suicide can stress the limits of a not completely functional family. This film garnered four Oscars in 1980, including best picture. Directed by Robert Redford and starring Mary Tyler Moore and Donald Sutherland.
Who's Life Is It Anyway?
(1981) MGM

A funny movie that raised important questions about assisted suicide of the severely ill long before such questions reached wide public attention. Richard Dreyfuss plays a sculptor who becomes paraplegic and wants to die. The acting is excellent, and the issues remain contemporary many years after the film’s release.

The Big Chill
(1983) Columbia Pictures

A friend’s suicide leads to the reunion of a group of college friends who recall his life and its intermingling with their own. A beautiful and touching film about friendship, death, and changing eras and values.

Vincent and Theo
(1990) Arena Films

This textbook includes reproductions of a number of paintings by the great 19th-century artist Vincent van Gogh, who is the subject of this exquisite film about art, mental illness, and the love of friends and brothers. This is a beautiful and touching film that (despite Vincent’s tormented life and eventual suicide) is probably more about art and love than mental illness.

Chapter 16: The Client Who Abuses Chemical Substances

It sometimes seems hard to find a film that does not depict excessive drinking or other substance use. Some films, however, do an extraordinary job of portraying the experience of substance dependence and addiction.

The Lost Weekend
(1945) Paramount Pictures

One of Hollywood’s all-time great films and a stunning depiction of alcoholic denial. This film won four Oscars in 1945, including best picture. It remains eminently worth seeing despite a less than realistic ending.

I’ll Cry Tomorrow
(1955) MGM

One of Susan Hayward’s great 1950s films about an actress’s struggle with alcoholism. This movie features a variety of notable period songs.

The Man with the Golden Arm
(1955) United Artists

A great Frank Sinatra movie about heroin addiction. While 1955 audiences found this film shocking, it may seem somewhat melodramatic today. Realistically portraying many aspects of addict life, this is a film in the same spirit as William Burroughs’s heroin memoirs (see Chapter 15).

Days of Wine and Roses
(1962) Warner Brothers

A convincing dramatization of the development of alcoholism in an upwardly mobile couple. Originally made for television, this film was one of the first realistic portrayals of middle-class alcohol abuse. Now 40 years old and dated, but still worth seeing.

Long Day’s Journey into Night
(1962) Ely Landau (Republic Pictures)

There are several film adaptations of the Eugene O’Neill play about a family’s struggles with alcoholism, other substance use, and self-destruction. Katharine Hepburn’s 1962 version is probably the best. This play and film were shocking at the time for their strikingly realistic portrayals of the underside of American life. Both the play and film remain among the great accomplishments of 20th-century American arts and letters.

Panic in Needle Park
(1971) 20th Century Fox

Al Pacino’s first major film, Panic in Needle Park, is a realistic portrayal of substance abuse, crime, and prostitution. While crack cocaine has significantly changed the culture of addiction, this film still gives an accurate picture of the desperate lives of many substance abusers. Far less violent than Pacino’s later films (The Godfather, Scarface), Panic is not for the easily depressed.

The Seven Percent Solution
(1976) Universal

Dr. Watson meets Dr. Freud. Or rather, Sherlock Holmes is referred to Dr. Freud by his friend, Dr. Watson. The reason? Holmes’s cocaine habit. Readers of this textbook will know that Freud was no stranger to cocaine himself, and while Conan Doyle never actually brought him into a Sherlock Holmes story, Freud and Holmes were more or less contemporaries. Here he is right at home solving a mystery with his contemporary. Lots of fun, for a Sherlock Holmes flick.

I’m Dancing as Fast as I Can
(1982) Paramount Pictures

Not a great film, but a fairly realistic 1980s portrayal of prescription drug abuse, a problem that often seems less visible than the abuse of street drugs. Based on a true story.

The Verdict
(1982) 20th Century Fox

Many regard actor Paul Newman as a model of social responsibility for his many financial contributions to the
physical and mental health of children. In this 1982 film, Newman plays an alcoholic lawyer who struggles to recover from his addiction. This is Newman at his very best.

**Educating Rita**  
(1983) Columbia Pictures

A warm and optimistic film about a somber subject, this film suggests that love, hope, and a sense of vocation can help overcome addiction. The movie offers a particularly realistic portrayal of alcoholism by Michael Caine.

**Clean and Sober**  
(1988) Warner Brothers

Morgan Freeman turns in a fine supporting performance as Michael Keaton plays a substance-abusing real estate salesman who struggles to kick his habit. A tough film that effectively captures some of the desperation behind addiction and substance abuse.

**Postcards from the Edge**  
(1990) Columbia Pictures

An amazing cast, including Meryl Streep, Shirley MacLaine, Gene Hackman, and Richard Dreyfuss. Drug dependence (Meryl Streep) is only part of this story about an aspiring actress. Perhaps not one of Streep's all-time greats, but a fast-paced and captivating movie worth seeing on a Friday night.

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**Trainspotting**  
(1996) Mirimax Films

A violent and “in your face” movie about heroin abuse. This film is tough, disturbing, and sometimes hard to understand with its strong Scottish accent. Nonetheless, it is one of the best modern films about the culture of addiction.

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**Chapter 17: The Client with a Personality Disorder**

With the exception of the antisocial personalities who flourish in *film noir* and inhabit most of Hollywood’s most violent movies, few directors set out to depict any specific DSM-IV-TR personality disorder. However, elements of both the dramatic and the eccentric personality categories are frequently and effectively depicted in numerous films.

**Gone with the Wind**  
(1939) Selznick International Films

On nearly anyone’s list of all-time great movies, *Gone with the Wind* is far more than a study of Ashley Wilkes’s avoidant personality disorder. This immortal Hollywood epic runs to nearly four hours, and Ashley’s avoidant personality is central to the story.

**Rebecca**  
(1940) Selznick International Pictures

This classic Alfred Hitchcock movie is richly suggestive of several personality disorders in its leading characters. This is the only film that won Hitchcock a best picture Oscar (1940), and it remains an excruciatingly suspenseful movie whose character studies are only part of its appeal.

**A Canterbury Tale**  
(1944) Eagle Lion

This film about England during World War II is included here because it includes a character, “the Glue Man,” with an eccentric personality disorder manifesting itself as an obsession with English history and female purity. In order to prevent young women from being seduced by soldiers on leave, the Glue Man pours glue on their heads (resulting in a 1940s version of dreadlocks), presumably to make the women unattractive to the GIs. Better than it sounds, but hard to find.

**The Secret Life of Walter Mitty**  
(1947) RKO

Danny Kaye starred in this cheerful adaptation of James Thurber’s story about avoidant personality disorder. Unlike Ashley in *Gone with the Wind*, Mitty does not worry much about his pattern of avoiding conflict and involvement. Instead, he withdraws into his own life of fantasy.

**Gypsy**  
(1962) Warner Brothers

A musical adaptation of the Broadway play about (among other matters) histrionic personality disorder. See the 1962 version starring Rosalind Russell and Natalie Wood, although there is a 1993 remake with Bette Midler in the title role.
Clockwork Orange  
(1971) Warner Brothers

This 1971 classic vividly portrays antisocial personality disorder. While many find the violence and sadism of *Clockwork Orange* repellant, others regard the film as director Stanley Kubrick’s greatest; one of the outstanding films of the past three decades.

Pee Wee’s Big Adventure  
(1985) Warner Brothers

Pee Wee is too charming to be schizoid, too socially committed to be avoidant, and probably too unique to have a clearly diagnosable personality disorder. Still, it would be hard to find a movie that gives a more sympathetic view of the problematic interaction between ordinary society and a distinctly “odd” personality. A great introduction to the topic of personality disorders and a delightful not-to-be-missed movie experience.

The House of Games  
(1987) Filmhaus

Two personality disorders clash in this labyrinth of a crime thriller where nothing is ever what it seems to be. Uptight female psychiatrist (with obsessive-compulsive personality disorder?) meets (no doubt about it: antisocial personality disorder) gambler and con man. She’s ready for a little change in her uptight style, but perhaps not for all that follows. Written and directed by David Mamet. If you have seen his *The Spanish Prisoner*, you’ll want to see this film too; if you haven’t, see both together. *The Spanish Prisoner* may be better, but they’re both full of more mind-boggling twists than the road up Pike’s Peak.

Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer  
(1990) Maljack

X-rated because of extreme violence, this film is definitely not for the faint of heart. However, for those who can stomach its real-life blood and gore, *Portrait* offers a minimally fictionalized view of antisocial personality disorder. The film is based on the real life and violent deeds of a convicted serial killer.

Heavy  
(1995) Columbia Tri-Star Home Video

Victor is an obese young man with a severe personality disorder that keeps him from all but the most limited forms of social relationships. His transformation through falling in love with a younger woman is touchingly unbelievable. A good introduction to odd and eccentric characters.

Stuart Saves His Family  
(1995) Paramount Pictures

Adapted from a *Saturday Night Live* routine, this movie depicts a decidedly eccentric character whose family background includes nearly every imaginable psychiatric pathology. While Stuart saves neither his family nor the movie itself (which is not always funny), he does represent a striking “antihero” with charm and humanity.

Dissociative Disorders (Multiple Personalities)

The concept of multiple personalities has captured popular imagination for many years. How real or common this abnormality is remains controversial among experts, but this controversy has not stopped film makers from producing at least three well-known films.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde  

The Robert Louis Stevenson classic of split personality has been filmed at least six times. The 1932 version is arguably the best.

The Three Faces of Eve  
(1957) 20th Century Fox

A 1957 drama starring Joanne Woodward (see *They Might Be Giants*, Chapter 11) as a psychologically distressed woman who turns out to have three distinct personalities. Not as many faces as *Sybil*, but a far better film.

Sybil  
(1976) NBC/Lorimar

A television production about a woman who seems to have had 16 separate personalities. While dissociative disorder is not a major topic of this book, the film makes for excellent drama and a good introduction to the somewhat controversial diagnosis.

Chapter 18: The Client with a Psychosomatic Illness

The Barretts of Wimpole Street  
(1934) MGM

Few films feature somatization disorders, but this 1934 movie takes on the real-life story of 19th-century poets Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett. Until she met and married Browning, Elizabeth was confined to bed with a succession of ill-defined sicknesses. Somatization disorder may today present somewhat differently, but this film emphasizes what a profound effect somatization may have on an individual’s life. While Freud attributed many of the symptoms of hysteria to repressed sexuality, falling in love is rarely the cure that it was for Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Send Me No Flowers  
(1964) MCA Home Video

A comedy! Here, Rock Hudson (with somatization disorder and the bad luck to overhear doctors talking
about someone else’s fatal disease) plans for his own imminent death by preparing to marry his wife off to his best friend. Wife (Doris Day) isn’t quite sure what’s going on but suspects the worst (or rather what she thinks would be the worst), and the results—for the 60s, anyway—are moderately funny.

**Safe**
(1995) Sony Pictures Classics

_Safe_ is the story of a Los Angeles woman who becomes profoundly ill, perhaps as a result of exposure to chemical fumes and odors in her home environment. The illness progresses dramatically, and she receives little help from traditional medical or psychiatric care. Her search for healing in a highly unconventional and probably exploitive “therapeutic environment” highlights the complex interaction between physical and emotional factors in illness. The film portrays its heroine’s illness as primarily somatic, but because “environmental sensitivity” is a highly controversial medical diagnosis, many psychiatrists would probably give Conversion Disorder as an alternative. A good introduction to the complexities of the somatoform disorders as well as some of their unusual medical mimics.

**Chapter 19: The Client with Disorders of Self-Regulation: Sleep Disorders, Eating Disorders, Sexual Disorders**

Film makers have frequently portrayed individuals who live “at the edge” of society and social norms. The disorders of regulation are not infrequently depicted in films and documentaries.

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**The Mark**
(1961) 20th Century Fox

A study of pedophilia, this film effectively presents scenes from the life of a convicted child molester on his release from prison. From the early 1960s, but still a convincing portrayal and a moving film.

**The Best Little Girl in the World**
(1981) ABC

A fine 1980s TV movie about anorexia nervosa. This film can often be found in video rental stores and, if available, should not be missed.

**Dreamchild**
(1985) Universal Pictures

Lewis Carroll (his real name was Charles Dodgson) wrote _Alice in Wonderland_, but he also photographed naked young girls (amazingly, with their mothers’ permission) and likely today would have been diagnosed as having pedophilia. This is a fictional movie about the “real” Alice, who, more than 70 years after her encounter with Carroll, remains haunted by his memory and the fictional creations of his imagination. _Dreamchild_ is a beautiful movie about childhood reflected in old age; it features dream sequences filled with stunning Muppet characters. Only partly about pedophilia, it suggests how disturbing but “forgotten” childhood experiences can remain as subconscious images through an entire lifetime.

**Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story**
(1987) Iced Tea Productions

In real life, Karen Carpenter was a highly successful nineteen-sixties popular singer who died at age 32 from complications of anorexia nervosa. This extraordinary 43-minute film features no human actors after the opening depicting Karen’s death, but only “barbie dolls” playing the roles of Karen and the often uncaring people around her. This film can be hard to locate but is so unusual that it should definitely be seen as an introduction to eating disorders and the way in which society’s expectations about behavior and appearance influence the way women live and die.

**The Offence**
(1973) United Artists

Sean Connery (_Goldfinger, Indiana Jones_) plays a policeman whose lethal violence toward an arrested child molester derives from his own repressed childhood experiences. A useful study of repression as well as pedophilia.

**Life Is Sweet**
(1990) Film Four International

An English movie about obsessive eating. More accurately, a movie about middle-class English life in which
eating plays a disproportionately important role. Although not a clinical study of bulimia, this movie offers realistic portrayals of binging and purging behaviors and how they are hidden from friends and family.

**The Hairdresser’s Husband**  
(1990) TF1 Film Productions

A film about paraphilia: The hero has a “hair fetish” and finds happiness married to a woman who cuts others’ hair. An unusual film about an unconventional subject, but overall pleasant entertainment despite a sad ending.

**Le Cri de la Soie**  
(1996) Mimosa Productions

An odd but touching movie about a woman who is hospitalized because she has a fetish for silk and cannot resist stealing swatches of it from fabric stores. She is treated by a sympathetic doctor who, it turns out, is also a silk fetishist. Silk fetish is rare enough that the probability of such an encounter between therapist and client is highly unlikely. “The Scream of the Silk” is an attractive evocation of World War I France, but it also makes a particularly useful introduction to understanding paraphilia.

**Witman Fiuk**  
(1997) MTM Kommunikacio

A disturbing but not overtly graphic story about two adolescent brothers who develop necrophilia (attraction to dead persons and animals) after their father dies. Necrophilia is not a pleasant subject at best, and this Hungarian film is only for those with strong stomachs.

**UNIT 3: SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

**Chapter 20: The Physically Ill Client Experiencing Emotional Distress**

A few films have explored the human response to illness with great sensitivity.

**The Pride of the Yankees**  
(1942) RKO Pictures

The great New York Yankees baseball player Lou Gehrig died young of the devastating neuromuscular disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. This 1942 Gary Cooper film tells his story vividly and movingly. For a more modern view of another extraordinary man’s battle with this same neurological disorder, see *A Brief History of Time*, a biographical study of a great modern physicist confronting the same neurological handicap that felled Gehrig over 50 years before.

**The Elephant Man**  
(1980) Paramount Pictures

A somewhat fictionalized account of a man afflicted with a grotesquely deforming hereditary skin disease, probably neurofibromatosis. Based on a real story, this film boldly illustrates the rejection that deformed persons face in conventional society. Recent popular films have tended to offer generous and colorful portrayals of Victorian and turn-of-the-century British life; this film uses stark black-and-white images to detail Victorian upper class intolerance.

**The Shadow Box**  
(1980) ABC/The Shadowbox Film Company

This film may be difficult to find, but it is a fine movie version of the prize-winning theater production excerpted in Chapter 9 of this textbook. A film that takes place in a hospice and explores the impending cancer death of three residents. Another powerful film starring Joanne Woodward (*The Three Faces of Eve*) and directed by Paul Newman (*The Verdict*).

**Beaches**  
(1988) Touchstone Pictures

Bette Midler stars in this film about friendship and dying. A touching story about the healing role of relatedness in life’s crises.

**Awakenings**  
(1990) Columbia Pictures

*Awakenings* is a dramatization of Oliver Sacks’s book about the (temporary) effectiveness of the drug L-Dopa in restoring responsiveness to persons “frozen” by postencephalitic parkinsonism. Sacks’s book reminds us that persons who seem unaware and even unconscious can sometimes be remarkably in touch with their environment. A decent movie with several Oscar nominations, *Awakenings* is worth seeing, especially if you cannot read the book. Robin Williams stars as a character based on Oliver Sacks himself, and the movie features Robert De Niro as one of the patients who “awaken” after L-Dopa treatment. More about neurology than psychiatry, but an attractive film about the potential for modern pharmacology to change the lives of physically and mentally ill individuals.
Passion Fish  
(1992) Atchafalaya

This film may not always avoid sentimentality, but it offers a touching and realistic portrayal of the difficulties posed by catastrophic spinal cord injury. A vigorous New York actress becomes paralyzed and returns to her home in the rural South. The film portrays her efforts to find personal fulfillment in her newly dependent role.

Chapter 21: Forgotten Populations:  
The Homeless and Incarcerated

Prison inmates are frequently depicted in modern films, but neither prisoners nor the homeless are frequently given sympathetic hearings. A few films have approached these special populations with sensitivity.

Short Eyes  
(1977) Short Eyes Entertainment

More a film about the harshness of prison life than pedophilia, this film describes the prison persecution of a convicted child molester. A highly realistic view of New York penal life, with excellent acting.

Dead Man Out  
(1989) HBO

A convicted murderer becomes insane while waiting on Death Row. Can he be cured so that his execution can take place? Does society—and his psychiatrist—have a moral responsibility to return him to sanity for the purpose of facing his death sentence? An intriguing, thought-provoking, and exciting film. Also an excellent film to see while reading about the ethics of mental health care.

The Fisher King  
(1991) Columbia Pictures

A somewhat surrealistic film mostly about bipolar (manic-depressive) psychosis. Some will find the psychologically portrayed psychosis unconvincing, but this remarkable Robin Williams (Dead Poets’ Society, Mrs. Doubtfire) film excels above all in capturing the desperation and squalor in which America’s homeless live.

The Saint of Fort Washington  

A film about homelessness that also gives a fairly convincing portrait of schizophrenia and of post-traumatic stress disorder. Most of us look the other way when confronted by the reality of homelessness and the mental illness that often accompanies it. This film allows us to hide behind the camera and look fairly accurately at a world we might not otherwise see. At times the film focuses too much on the “drama” of physical violence and exploitation; it is probable that the day-to-day experience of homelessness involves far more “quiet desperation” than violence, but desperation does not sell movies.

Chapter 22: The Child

Children frequently appear in films, but movies about mentally ill children are relatively rare. The French director François Truffaut had a particular fondness for children and a remarkable vision of the bittersweet nature of childhood.

The 400 Blows  
(1959) Les Films du Carrosse

One of the great movies of the 20th century, The 400 Blows attempts to capture the complexities of early adolescence as seen through the eyes of a 12-year-old boy. There is little explicitly about mental health in this film of growing up in France, but few artists have managed to convey the joys and trials of childhood with as little sentimentality as does François Truffaut in this semiautobiographical movie.

The Effect of Cosmic Rays on  
Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds  
(1988) 20th Century Fox

Possibly the longest movie title of the 1980s (though shorter than Oh Dad, Poor Dad Mamma’s Hung You in the Closet and I’m Feeling So Sad, which preceded it as an off-Broadway play and then became a forgettable movie in 1967). Cosmic Rays is a story of growing up more or less successfully in a dysfunctional family. An oddly upbeat story directed by Paul Newman and starring both his wife, Joanne Woodward, and their daughter, Eleanor (Nell Potts), as Matilda, the family’s survivor. Perhaps heartened
by the fictional Matilda’s fortitude in facing psychological adversity, Newman and Woodward have in real life funded many programs for children battling cancer and other childhood disabilities.

**Small Change**  
(1976) Les Films du Carrosse

Another Truffaut movie made almost 20 years after *The 400 Blows*, *Small Change* celebrates childhood—despite deprivation and parental neglect—as a golden time. More sentimental than its famous predecessor, *Small Change* is still a heartwarming film about the everyday lives of children.

**The Rain Man**  
(1988) United Artists

One of the classics of the 1980s with Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise, which won four Oscars. This is a story of two brothers, one autistic, and how they come as adults to find a relationship despite the serious emotional limitations of each. This relationship begins on fairly sordid terms as Cruise seeks out his abandoned brother only so he (Cruise) can inherit a fortune. The motives change as Cruise begins to develop genuine affection for a brother who can’t express or perhaps even feel emotion. Hoffman is in one of his best roles as the autistic idiot savant brother who emerges from years of neglect and institutionalization to help deepen the emotional world of those around him.

**Lorenzo’s Oil**  
(1992) Universal Pictures

This film describes one family’s real-life struggles to find a cure for their child’s rare neurological disorder. This is a good film for health professionals to watch because it portrays hospitals, doctors, and nurses as they too often appear to anxious families in need: unhelpful, impersonal, and uncaring.

**Chapter 23: The Adolescent**

Adolescents suffer from most of the same psychiatric disorders that affect adults, but their responses to these disorders are powerfully influenced by their developmental status. Some remarkable films have captured some of the poignancy of adolescent experience with mental illness and psychological distress.

**Mouchette**  
(1967) Parc Films

*Mouchette* can be difficult to find and for some is difficult to watch. The story of a lonely, depressed adolescent, this film ends in her suicide. This film has a very Catholic viewpoint and, despite its somber story, can serve as an important reminder of the importance of spiritual values in a healthy life.

**Gaby: A True Story**  
(1987) Columbia Tri-Star

A similar story to *My Left Foot* but not as successful (no Oscars) or as emotionally powerful. With the aid of her supportive family, a young woman battles cerebral palsy to become a successful author.

**My Left Foot**  
(1989) Palace/Ferndale Films

This movie won two Oscars (plus three additional nominations) for its portrayal of Christy Brown’s triumph over devastating neurological impairment from cerebral palsy. The acting is superb, and the film, based on a true story, is a testimony to a mother’s faith in her child’s potential. A must-see.

**Wildflower**  
(1991) The Polone Company

A highly emotional film about physical illness (epilepsy, hearing loss) and child abuse, *Wildflower* suggests that friendship and goodwill can occasionally overcome the severest of human handicaps. This film raises important questions about families and social responsibility. It also serves as a reminder of the potential for adolescence as a time for growth and caring.

**Good Will Hunting**  
(1997) Miramax

About psychotherapy, sort of. And Asperger’s syndrome, again sort of, though Will seems to have more social skills (in his own way) than might be likely, given that diagnosis. The movie is pretty good, even if for the most part the fictional Will isn’t. He (Will Hunting) is something of a genius in the rough: more at home in the bars and tough streets of South Boston than at MIT (where he solves unsolvable math problems while working as a janitor). Sentenced to psychiatry instead of jail, Will enters therapy with Robin Williams. Williams’s character has his own problems, which Will quickly recognizes, though ultimately the two of them form a kind of alliance to the benefit of both. Captures something of the challenge of Asperger’s syndrome and perhaps also something of the intense honesty required for effective psychotherapy.

**The Virgin Suicides**  
(1999) Paramount

First one sister, then the other four, commit suicide in this evocation of 1970s America. Although it can be infectious, suicide doesn’t usually happen this way in families. But, however it happens, suicide inevitably provokes
questions that can never be answered. This movie is about those questions, here asked by a group of young men who knew the five sisters and never forgot either them or their deaths. The sisters grew up in a home made oppressive by strict religion, but so did many in that era (and our own). They were close to one another, but so are many children who face loss—even loss by suicide. Is this a film likely to provoke suicide in others? Does the film have any real message, or is it at bottom an exploitation of our feelings about making the sometimes difficult transition to adulthood in a harsh, perhaps meaningless world? This is a very different movie from Mouchette—also about the suicide of a young Catholic woman. In Virgin Suicides the sisters remain abstractions, living more in the voice-over memories of neighbor boys than in front of us on the screen. In contrast, in Mouchette we share a young girl's intense anguish and reluctantly feel her separate herself further and further from life. The two films were made 30 years and several thousand miles away from each other (though perhaps only coincidentally The Virgin Suicides soundtrack is by the French Pop duo Air.) See both films if you can, with a friend and a hankie.

Chapter 24: The Elderly

Old age is inevitably a time of loss, of either friends or personal capabilities or of both. It is also a time for growth, wisdom, and sometimes great joy. All of these attributes of elder life have been depicted in a number of fine films.

The Last Laugh
(1922) Fox Film Corporation

A silent film about how in upper-class European society aging leads inevitably to loss of position and status. An influential film because of its technical innovations, but also a moving portrayal of the triumph of human dignity in the face of prejudice.

Kotch
(1971) Kotch Company Productions

A fine film starring Walter Matthau and directed by Jack Lemmon about the relationship between aging parents and their children.

Harry and Tonto
(1974) 20th Century Fox

A wonderful film about the travels of 70-something Harry and his cat Tonto. Art Carney stars in this film, which serves as a forceful reminder that aging need not lead to a loss of vitality or the ability to care deeply for others—human and animal alike. This film also reminds viewers that the quality of life can sometimes be greatly improved by slowing down its pace.

Gin Game
(1984) RKO

A celebrated film about love in a nursing home starring Jessica Tandy (Driving Miss Daisy) and Hume Cronyn (Age Old Friends). Two wonderful actors in a warm and touching story.

Driving Miss Daisy
(1989) Warner Brothers

One of the most celebrated recent movie portrayals of aging, Driving Miss Daisy won a best picture Oscar in 1989. This film perhaps treats issues of race prejudice more directly than those of aging, but Jessica Tandy’s portrayal of Daisy is particularly memorable.

Age Old Friends

A touching film about the effects of dementia on friendship and family ties. This movie features marvelous acting and highly realistic subject matter. A wonderful introduction to the special concerns and needs of the elderly and their children.

Children of Nature
(1991) Northern Arts Entertainment

A warm movie from a very cold country, this film in Icelandic (with English subtitles) is a charming tale of romance involving two nursing home residents.

A Woman’s Tale
(1991) Illumination Films

A film about the last days of a vital 78 year old. Wonderful acting by Sheila Florence, who herself died of cancer soon after the film was completed. A very special movie about the richness of a fully lived life.

Chapter 25: Survivors of Violence or Abuse

It seems hard for many parents and moviegoers to find a film that is not about violence. The film world has been relatively slow to address intrafamilial violence and sexual abuse, but some excellent movies have treated these and related topics.

Murmur of the Heart
(1971) NEF Filmproduktion

There are few films about incest. Murmur portrays an adolescent coming of age in France and depicts an episode of mother-son incest that apparently occurs without much consequence for either. Not a terribly realistic view of a typical incestuous relationship: more commonly involving both a daughter and some element of physical coercion or intimidation.
Judgment
(1990) HBO

This made-for-cable-television film dramatizes a true case of child sexual abuse perpetrated by a parish priest. An important truth in this story is that many parents know of their children’s molestation but remain silent. Such “conspiracy of silence” is not an infrequent finding when children have been sexually abused, especially when the perpetrator is a parent.

Sleeping with the Enemy
(1991) 20th Century Fox

One of the better recent films about intrafamilial violence, this movie emphasizes the real danger and abject fear that affect many abused women’s lives.

UNIT 4: NURSING INTERVENTIONS AND TREATMENT MODALITIES

Few directors set out to write films about psychiatric treatment modalities, but some films seem to help us understand better what treatments can “work” and occasionally why. Others have looked with interest at popular or controversial psychiatric treatments such as psychotherapy or electroshock therapy.

Secrets of a Soul
(1926) Neumann-Filmproduktion

A silent film about psychoanalysis and the interpretation of dreams. Beautiful film work, especially in the dream sequences, and a relatively painless introduction to the theory and practice of psychoanalytic therapy. Produced when Freud’s influence and reputation were particularly strong.

Spellbound
(1945) Selznick International Pictures

Another Freudian movie featuring both psychoanalysis and the interpretation of dreams. This film is an Alfred Hitchcock great starring Gregory Peck and Ingrid Bergman. The dream scenes were designed by the artist Salvador Dali, and the plot, involving murder and amnesia, offers its share of excitement and unexpected developments. This film received multiple Oscars, including best picture of 1945.

Freud
(1962) U-1 Films

Freud has fallen a bit from intellectual favor in some circles, and this film may be difficult to find. Worth seeing if it can be located.

Pressure Point
(1962) United Artists

Another intense film on the troubled relationship between therapist and client. The great actor Sidney Poitier plays a psychiatrist who must treat an imprisoned Nazi and racist. Based on a true story, this film dramatically addresses the difficulties that arise in therapy when personal values and beliefs separate therapist and patient.

Lilith
(1964) Columbia Pictures

Warren Beatty, playing a young psychotherapist, experiences countertransference as he falls in love with his patient and nearly loses his own sanity. This film raises more than just ethical questions and is worth seeing for its often realistic exploration of the difficult relational issues that can arise during intense therapy.

Frances
(1982) Brooks Films

A moving and tragic account of the mental illness of actress Frances Farmer, whose depression, substance abuse, and seemingly atrocious mental health care led to disaster. Frances ultimately had a prefrontal lobotomy, and the movie offers a dramatic portrayal of the worst effects of surgery for psychiatric conditions. Excellent acting by Jessica Lange keeps this film from being a melodrama about inept psychiatric treatment.

The Dream Team
(1989) Universal Pictures

A sometimes charming comedy about therapy, murder, and insanity, The Dream Team depicts four mentally ill individuals who leave their psychiatric unit on a
furlough and, losing their psychiatrist escort to an act of random violence, find themselves wandering freely (and off medication) in New York City. This movie offers a nice depiction of Axis II obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (probably combined with delusions of grandeur). Three of the “escapees” are also interesting and well-cast “odd personalities” who may or may not truly be candidates for inpatient psychiatric care. The plot (preventing their psychiatrist’s murder by the mob) is a bit far-fetched, but the movie is a worthy exercise in understanding and sympathizing with four unusual men trying to accomplish good against physical and psychological odds.

**Prince of Tides**

(1991) Columbia Pictures

A psychiatrist (played by Barbra Streisand) helps two troubled twins sort out deeply troubled lives. This film is at times not a fully realistic portrait either of mental illness or of psychiatry, but it is a fine story and a beautifully filmed movie. It received multiple Oscar nominations in 1991, including best picture and best actor.

**Shall We Dance?**

(1996) Mirimax Films

A marvelous Japanese movie that can be seen as a metaphor for the cognitive-behavioral therapy of depression. The hero is a middle-aged businessman who lives his life without pleasure from work, family, or social interaction. Walking down the street at night he is captivated by the image of a woman standing in a second-floor dance studio. Taken by her beauty, he conquers his shyness, physical ineptness, and the strong social disapproval of dancing in traditional Japanese culture. Practicing his steps as he works and walks, he begins to dance with the beautiful dance-studio instructor. Their relationship is limited to dancing, but it transforms his life into one of fullness and joy as dancing meets and overcomes dysthymia. (If you have missed *Strictly Ballroom*, see both of these films for a dancing treat!)
REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Consider how you might provide nursing care to one of the characters in the movies you saw. Write a nursing care plan for the character (include assessment questions, nursing diagnoses/DSM-IV-TR diagnoses, desired outcomes, and nursing interventions).

2. As a nursing professional, you may be caring for people with many of the psychiatric disorders you have seen depicted in these films. Consider what you can do to foster in yourself an attitude of understanding, empathy, and respect toward these people.

3. Our past personal experiences, family backgrounds, and relationships can affect our attitudes toward people with certain psychiatric disorders. Think about your reaction (either positive or negative) to one of the characters in the films you watched who remind you of someone you know. Did your past experience cause you to react more strongly to this character? If so, how might this affect your interaction with a client who has a similar disorder?

4. Think about the ethical questions that arose in one or more of the films you viewed. Were there nursing actions that you might handle differently? How would you treat a client experiencing that particular psychiatric disorder?

5. Some of these films portray mental health treatments and psychiatric personnel (nurses and psychiatrists) in a very negative way. Could clients watching these movies make decisions about their own treatment based on the films, rather than on reality?

6. Many of the films listed have scenes depicting romance between client and therapist. Some suggest that such romance is the basis for therapeutic success. What is “transference”? Is a therapist (or nurse) ever justified in having a romantic relationship with his or her clients?