



Emotional Disturbance: As Good As It Gets (Movie)

Est. Time: 2 Hours Viewing/45 Minutes Class

Synopsis

Melvin Udall suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). This film chronicles his relationships with two other people who might also be considered societal “outsiders.”

Activity

View the following movie and be prepared to discuss the questions below in class:

Title: As Good As It Gets (1997)

Studio: Columbia/Tristar

Questions/Discussion Topics

1. List at least five of Melvin’s compulsive behaviors. To help you with this task, you may want to review the diagnostic criteria below.

Compulsions are defined by:

- Repetitive behaviors (e.g., hand washing, ordering, checking) or mental acts (e.g., praying, counting, repeating words silently) that the person feels driven to perform in response to an obsession, or according to rules that must be applied rigidly
- These behaviors or mental acts are aimed at preventing or reducing distress or preventing some dreaded event or situation; however, these behaviors or mental acts either are not connected in a realistic way with what they are designed to neutralize or prevent or are clearly excessive (DSM-IV-TR, 2000)

2. How does Melvin’s OCD affect his life and daily functioning?
3. What types of supports does the main character need to lead a successful, “normal” lifestyle?
4. Many people are concerned with cleanliness and use rubber gloves to perform some tasks. What is the difference between the way most people use rubber gloves and the way Melvin uses rubber gloves? How does this demonstrate that he suffers from OCD?
5. Can you imagine yourself in a relationship with someone with OCD? Why or why not?