

Intellectual Disability: What's Eating Gilbert Grape (Movie)

Est. Time: 2 Hours Viewing/45 Minutes Class

Objective

Better understand some of the characteristics and needs of an individual with an intellectual disability.

Synopsis

Gilbert Grape lives in a small town with his younger sister, his obese mother, and his brother Arnie, who has an intellectual disability. As a young adult, Gilbert becomes the patriarch of the family, and therefore must provide for his dysfunctional family and act as the primary caretaker for his brother. When Gilbert falls in love with Becky, who is passing through town with her grandmother, he begins to readjust his priorities but feels guilty for putting his needs before those of his family's.

Activity

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

Title: *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* (1993)

Studio: Paramount

For Your Information

To learn more about intellectual disabilities before completing this question, visit:

- [Intellectual Disability](#) (Center for Parent Information and Resources)

Questions/Discussion Topics

1. In this film, Arnie has an intellectual disability. Which of his behaviors are characteristic of an individual with an intellectual disability?
2. What experiences challenge Arnie's adaptive skills (skills that allow an individual to function in daily life)?
3. Think about Arnie's needs.
 - a. What types of support would you recommend for him?
 - b. How could Arnie's family access these supports?
4. Imagine that you have a sibling with an intellectual disability.
 - a. What do you think you would find most difficult?
 - b. What do you think would be most rewarding?