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Benefits of movies provide alternative psychological self-help

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The word "therapy" elicits images of clinics, doctors and medication. However, one form of healing is as simple as turning on your DVD player.

The practice of cinema therapy, popularized in the 1990s by Gary Solomon, is an alternative to the traditional methods of dealing with psychological issues. Instead of lying on a couch in a doctor's office, one can rest on a couch in the comfort of one's own home to deal with problems.



Jordan Mizell Collegian

Recently, the emotional impressions made on viewers of Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" have questions abounding about the psychological effects of the silver screen.

Solomon, in an interview with Internet health site WebMD.com, said the personal aspects of gaining insight and self-knowledge through cinema therapy is one of the main benefits.

"This is an opportunity to do interventional work by yourself," Solomon said.

As more Americans look to alternative therapeutic forms, more groups have invested time and resources into understanding the ways films can be used in a professional setting.

Among those groups is the Chicago Institute for the Moving Image (CIMI). Although not a clinical group, CIMI serves as a research organization specializing in the ways in which film images affect individuals.

Sami Valenti, sophomore in mass communications, said she believed the realities on which films are based can provide a unique way to understand one's problems.

"I think film is somewhat based on people's experiences, whether fictional or not," said Valenti. "It can help in many situations. Sometimes seeing problems played out visually helps and can be very beneficial."

A number of Internet resources praise the benefits of cinema therapy, including www.cinematherapy.com, a site run by psychotherapist Birgit Wolz.

Wolz's site contains information about this fairly new approach to therapy, as well as guidelines for choosing certain films for cathartic purposes.

The wealth of resources provided by the Internet may not always be the most useful in determining the best method of therapy to pursue. Many therapists urge people currently seeking one-on-one therapy with a licensed therapist not to abandon such counseling unless it is no longer necessary.

For more information about cinema therapy, a number of recent books were published concerning the method's validity, including John and Jan Hesley's "Rent Two Films and Let's Talk in the Morning."

INFOBOX:

Psychotherapist Birgit Wolz suggests a number of films to help in various therapeutic

situations:

"Cast Away" to develop inner resources.

"It's a Wonderful Life" to gain insight on ethics.

"Terms of Endearment" to cope with severe illness.

"What's Eating Gilbert Grape" to understand mental disorders and intellectual functioning.

Source: www.cinematherapy.com

Campus Calendar

- The spring break hours for the Chester E. Peters Recreation Complex will begin today. The hours are 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday and noon to 9 p.m. on Sunday. For a full listing of spring break hours call 532-6556.
- The residence halls will close Saturday and reopen March 28.
- Saturday is the first day of spring.

Talk Back

See poll results here!

Is your spring break being spent:

- ☐ Working on homework.
- ☐ Traveling to an exotic destination.
- ☐ Earning money.

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Photo Galleries

In the future, photo galleries related to the news will be available here.

At the Movies

Coming Soon : A listing of what's currently showing!



Today's front page.