



***Everything Is Fine* Teacher Resource**

A great deal of thanks and appreciation goes out to the members of our Teacher Advisory Committee, who volunteer their time to assist in the development of Sprockets teacher resources.

TITLE: *Everything Is Fine*

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Canada

RELEASE YEAR: 2008

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE: French

DIRECTOR: Yves-Christian Fournier

RUNTIME: 118 minutes

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY:

1. *Everything Is Fine* (2008)
2. *Sunk* (2001)

CURRICULUM LINKS:

- Social Studies
- Health & Physical Education
- Media Studies

FOCUSING QUESTION: What do you know about teen suicide?

SYNOPSIS:

A teenager struggles to come to terms with tragic loss in the sensitive and intelligent drama *Everything Is Fine*. When his four closest friends commit suicide, Josh grapples with being left behind. Finding it difficult to discuss his feelings, Josh rebuffs a psychologist brought in to help him process his pain. Instead, he tries to connect with others stricken by grief, including the father of one friend and the ex-girlfriend of another. But even with them, Josh remains unable to talk about what he is going through, leading him to push his emotions deeper inside. Meanwhile, places and



situations continually remind Josh of the times – both good and bad – he shared with his friends. Could these memories provide a key to help him begin reaching out?

Everything Is Fine features a realistic script that refuses to romanticize teen suicide, excellent performances from the cast and strong direction that seamlessly weaves together past and present and gives equal play to moments both big and small. The film powerfully chronicles the impact of loss on the friends and family of those who took their lives, and provides insight into the difficulties youth encounter when coping with tragedy. The screening will be followed by a discussion about coping with loss.

N.B. Youth smoking, drinking and using drugs. Sexual activity (partial nudity). Implied suicide.

Recommended for grades 10 through 12

AN EDUCATOR'S COMMENTS ON THE FILM:

"Many teenagers will be able to relate to this film, as our schools and communities have all dealt with suicide and death. The film is extremely raw, intense and emotional, but the filmmaker has done a good job of telling a story from the perspective of a teenager about an extremely hard topic.

"The film explores the impact of youth suicides by attempting to do something new with the narrative of teen tragedy. Disjointed scenes are at first tricky to figure out but effectively dramatize the never-satisfied yearning to understand why people would do such a terrible thing. There is sexual content, nudity and coarse language."

PRE-SCREENING PREPARATION:

The content in this film is both challenging and important to watch. Students will need to be aware of the sensitive content in the film prior to coming to this screening. For students who have never had any association with suicide, this may be their first introduction to the topic.

Teachers may host a discussion about suicide with their students by posing the following questions:



1. What are the warning signs that someone may be contemplating suicide?
2. What do you do if you think one of your friends wants to commit suicide?
3. Where and who can you turn to for help?

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITY:

Break students into groups of four or five and ask students to discuss the following questions:

1. Who can people turn to if they find out that their friends have a suicide pact?
2. Why do you think we are never told why the group of teenagers committed suicide?
3. Why do people need answers when someone is already dead?
4. What is the false object of desire and the real object of desire for Josh in the film?
5. What do you think is the purpose of the drastic shifts between time periods?
6. Is Josh a threat to himself? Why or why not?
7. What is the symbolism of golf in the relationship between Josh and Mr. Dagenais?

CONCLUSION/WRAP-UP:

Journal writing

If a friend of yours committed suicide, what feelings or responses might you have?

In the film, Josh asks Mr Dagenais, "What is normal?" How do you define normal?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Films

1. *The Chumscrubber* (2006) Troy Johnson (Joshua Janowicz) is a supplier of feel-good pills to the Hillside neighbourhood kids. After Troy is found dead the neighbourhood kids worry they won't receive their drugs. This film provides a different perspective about youth dealing with death and loss.
2. The film *Charlie Bartlett* (2007) "Expelled from yet another private school for his blossoming, though illegal, entrepreneurial activities, wealthy teenager Charlie Bartlett (Yelchin) finds himself at regular High School. His smart, geeky appearance gets him a first day beating from the school bully so his overly medicated mother (Hope Davis) calls in the family psychiatrist to help him out. An opportunity not to be missed, Charlie sets himself up as the school agony aunt, dishing out advice and prescription drugs, courtesy of the family shrink, from the school rest rooms. His charm, charisma and access to medication soon starts to win him new friends as well as the attentions of the principals daughter, much to the annoyance of the Principal (Robert Downey Jr.) a man battling his own demons in this cool, edgy comedy." (<http://www.vervepics.com/charliebartlett.shtml>)

Websites

1. Kids Health, www.kidshealth.org
2. Adolescent Suicide, http://bodyandhealth.canada.com/channel_condition_info_details.asp?disease_id=135&channel_id=9&relation_id=10860