

**CALL ME CRAZY**  
By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.



*Call Me Crazy* is a Lifetime movie that offers five sensitive portraits of people and their families in the grip of mental health conditions. Lifetime is known for their audience-specific films that seem to cater mostly to women of a specific socio-economic group. We are told five stories that are easy to relate to if you know someone who has been diagnosed as having schizophrenia, depression, bi-polar disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder. The movie does a great job also at showing the impact on loved ones and family members.

Symptoms are accurately displayed and issues, such as the need for support systems, medication management and personal responsibility, are openly dealt with. The cast is wonderful, and each one gives an honest performance that is believable and honors the experience of the character. Denial and the shame of having a disorder are also well demonstrated.

The hospital experience is accurate for those who have good insurance carriers. While it is clear that these short films were intended to help the viewer better understand who, what, when and the where of these conditions, it does much less in terms of addressing the why. The truth is, we don't really know why one person develops a disorder and another person does not. We can expound on the genetic, social and environmental factors but, in the end, what we have are our societal attempts to better understand human behavior by agreeing that a certain constellation of impairments and disruptions to mood, thought and actions equal a particular condition.

What *Call Me Crazy* does is look at those conditions and invites us to be more aware, more supportive and less judgmental when we encounter people even those who live with us. It helps us see the humanity behind the diagnosis and acknowledges that with the right interventions, motivation and support, recovery

is, indeed, possible. What it does not do and sadly cannot do is tell the same stories for those who do not have that level of education, family involvement, self-awareness and access to the services that lead to that level of recovery.

The populations that we deal with on a daily basis often don't have access to adequate food, clothing or shelter. Often they are afflicted with substance use problems, lack of education, immigration and language barriers. I wish that someone would make a film that identifies something that can help those populations that do not have the middle class resources.

All of us need family, friends, meaningful work, play and rest to maintain our well-being. When those things are compromised over time, the ability to rebound from setbacks is less and less evident. The resilient spirit must be nurtured and cherished in order to survive the harshness of living with these disorders. Figuring out how to do that is our daily challenge. Helping others do that is our daily mission.

I applaud the efforts made by Lifetime to bring these topics to light. I hope one day a light will shine on those less fortunate, and that we can be part of making those stories happen for the people we serve.

I give *Call Me Crazy* four couches. Check your local cable listings.

