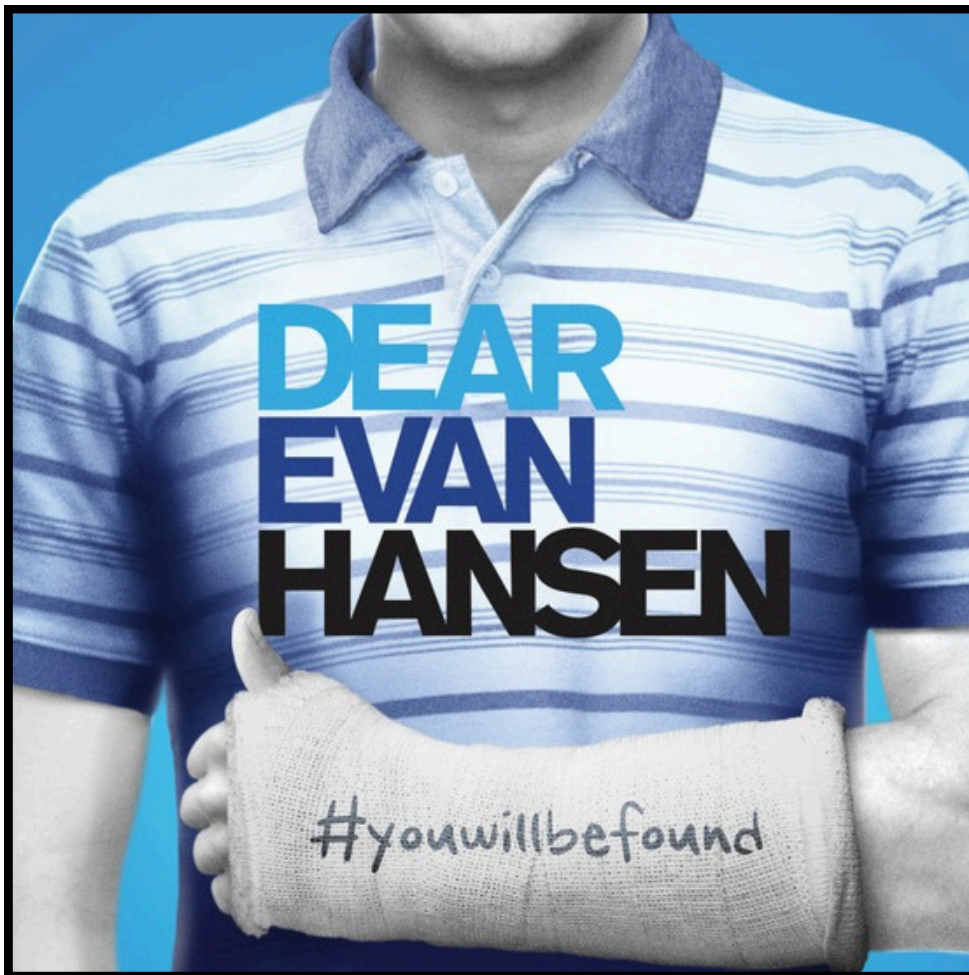


CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Dear Evan Hansen



Major support for the Student Enrichment Through the Arts program has been provided by



Frederick A. DeLuca
FOUNDATION

What's included in Curriculum Connections:

Letter to Teachers

Theater Etiquette

Student Theater Review

Pre and Post Show Worksheets/Links and Activities

Post Show Cooperative Learning Opportunities

(Group Work Ideas for Teachers)

Student to Family Cooperative Activity Ideas

Florida Standards Alignment

Know Before you Go:

- Arrive at the theater 15 to 20 minutes before show time. Allow extra time for Broward County traffic. We are unable to start a show late.
- Please stay on the bus until greeted by a SEAS usher. At that time, please give the usher your BUS document and the usher will escort you to the theater.
- Remember to watch our Know Before You Go Video:

<https://tinyurl.com/SecondaryWelcomeSEAS>

Dear **TEACHER**,



We are excited to present this Curriculum Connection (Study Guide) as a valuable resource to support your teaching journey. This guide has been carefully designed to offer engaging and meaningful activities for use in your classroom before and after seeing a S.E.A.S. performance at The Broward Center's Amaturo Theater, The Parker, or Miniaci at NSU. Each section is structured to make it easier for you to integrate cross-curricular connections, providing a seamless experience for students to deepen their understanding while exploring the creative process.

The activities and lessons in this guide have been intentionally crafted to complement Florida's B.E.S.T. standards. By utilizing these resources, you will be able to foster a dynamic and creative learning environment while ensuring students meet key academic goals. We encourage you to adapt the materials to best fit your classroom's needs and objectives, empowering students to think critically and creatively across all disciplines.

We want to take a moment to express our sincere appreciation for the passion and dedication you bring to your classrooms every day. Your commitment to infusing art-full moments into education not only enriches your students' learning experiences but also ignites their curiosity and creativity. Thank you for inspiring the next generation of thinkers, creators, and innovators. We are truly grateful for the impact you have on your students' lives. Consider joining the Teacher's Lounge (QR code below) to be notified of special events and discounts just for Teachers.



Don't forget to distribute your S.E.A.S. stickers when you return to school (after the trip) and share the magic that is Student Enrichment Through the Arts!





Theater Etiquette

There is so much that goes into creating a show for the stage. Behind the scenes, there are people who control the lights and the sound, the sets and the props. There are directors, writers, producers, musicians, and choreographers. So many people work together to create the performance you and everyone in the audience watches.

It is helpful to remind students of appropriate audience etiquette by explaining and discussing WHY these rules of behavior are important:

- Restroom visits are best made prior to the performance.
- Listen carefully to the ushers and your teachers. This gets everyone to your seats quickly and ensures a pleasant experience.
- Turn watches and cell phones to silent.
- Walk single file, hold hand rails as you use the steps for your safety.
- Listen carefully to each performer. They are working hard to entertain and inform with lots of clues about the story.
- Refrain from TALKING. This allows everyone to enjoy the show without distraction. Sometimes we think that if we whisper it is okay. But, if everyone in the audience whispers, it becomes disruptive.
- Laugh if something is funny, but not too loudly, you don't want to miss any dialogue.
- Photography and recording are not permitted.
- Pay attention to the lighting, scenery, costumes and music. All of these elements help provide more details to tell the story in an interesting way.
- Applaud (clap) and laugh at the right moments. This shows the performers that you respect and appreciate their work.



Slow Burn Theatre Company began in 2009 with a dream shared by co-founders Matthew Korinko and Patrick Fitzwater, two passionate artists who believed South Florida deserved a theatre company that pushed creative boundaries while celebrating the heart of musical theatre. From their very first production, *Bat Boy: The Musical*, staged in a high school auditorium in West Boca Raton, Matthew and Patrick set out to fill a theatrical void by producing contemporary, daring, and rarely staged musicals that other theatres wouldn't attempt.

Matthew, a skilled performer and producer, and Patrick, a visionary director and choreographer, combined their artistic talents with a deep commitment to building a company with purpose and heart. Together, they curated bold seasons that mixed cult favorites, Broadway blockbusters, and challenging contemporary works—striking a chord with audiences, critics, and South Florida's creative community. In 2014, Slow Burn moved into the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, where the Southeastern premiere of *Big Fish* launched a new chapter in the 590-seat Amaturio Theater. This partnership cemented Slow Burn's place in South Florida's cultural landscape and provided a professional home for more than 70 full-scale musicals to date.

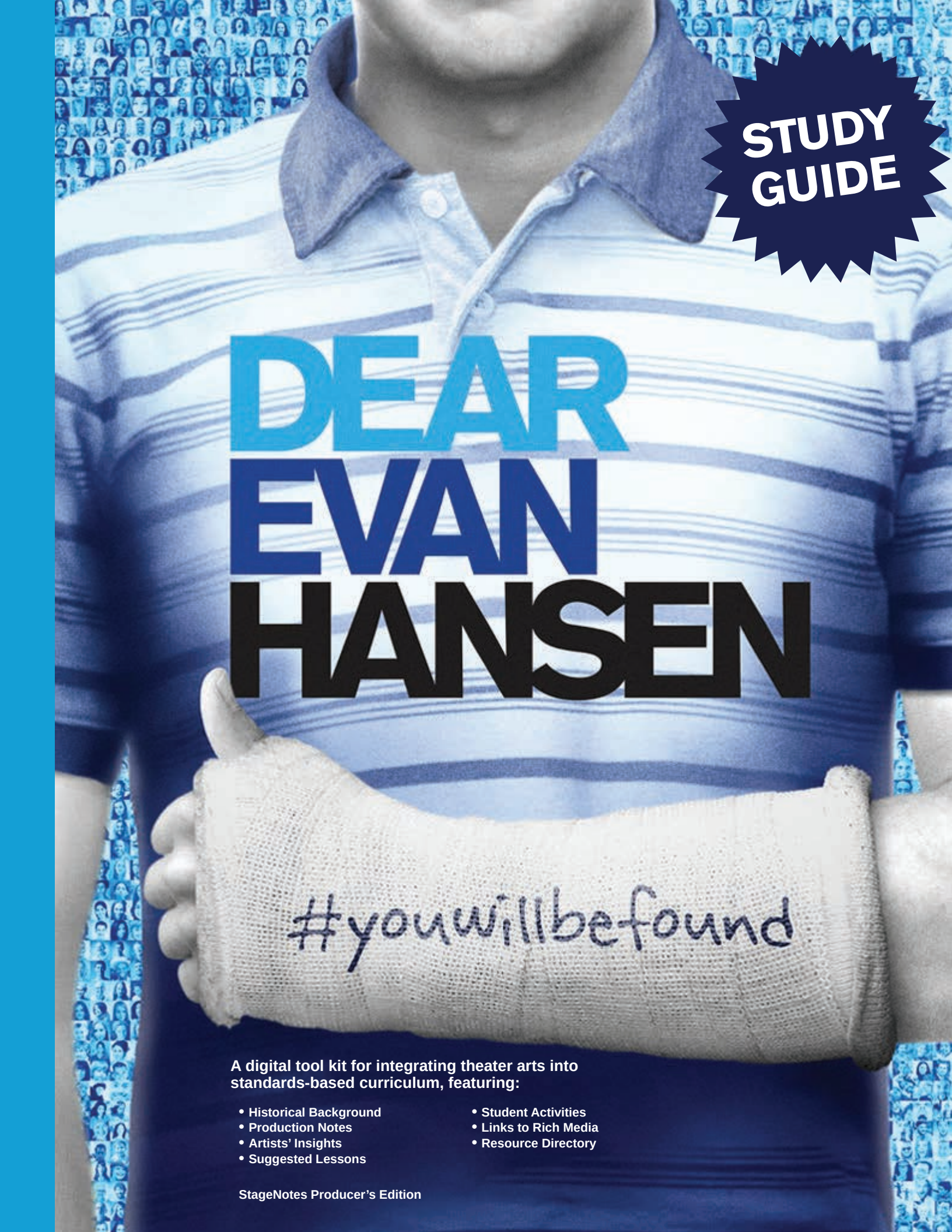
At its core, Slow Burn's mission is to showcase the best of contemporary musical theatre in South Florida, while recognizing and nurturing the incredible talents of local creative professionals. The company has earned praise for its high production values, fearless storytelling, and inclusive spirit—fostering a loyal community of theatre lovers along the way.

Slow Burn Theatre Company is dedicated to producing high-quality, professional musical theatre that challenges, inspires, and entertains. They embrace bold storytelling and diverse voices, presenting a mix of contemporary works, cult favorites, and Broadway classics that push creative boundaries and connect deeply with audiences.

Committed to accessibility, inclusion, and community engagement—offering educational outreach, accessible programming, and opportunities that welcome everyone into the transformative power of live theatre.

At Slow Burn, we don't just tell stories.
We ignite them—with passion, purpose,
and heart.





**STUDY
GUIDE**

DEAR EVAN HANSEN

#youwillbefound

A digital tool kit for integrating theater arts into standards-based curriculum, featuring:

- Historical Background
- Production Notes
- Artists' Insights
- Suggested Lessons
- Student Activities
- Links to Rich Media
- Resource Directory

StageNotes Producer's Edition

Stacey Mindich
Mickey Liddell Hunter Arnold Caiola Productions Double Gemini Productions
Fakston Productions Roy Furman Harris Karma Productions
On Your Marks Group Darren Bagert Roger & William Berlind
Bob Boyett Colin Callender Caitlin Clements Freddy DeMann Dante Di Loreto
Bonnie & Kenneth Feld FickStern Productions Eric & Marsi Gardiner Robert Greenblatt
Jere Harris and Darren DeVerna The John Gore Organization Mike Kriak Arielle Tepper Madover
David Mirvish Eva Price Zeilinger Productions Adam Zotovich Ambassador Theatre Group
Independent Presenters Network AND The Shubert Organization

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
Wendy Orshan and Jeffrey M. Wilson

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
Arena Stage Second Stage Theatre
Molly Smith, Edgar Dobie Carole Rothman, Casey Reitz

DEAR EVAN HANSEN

BOOK BY
STEVEN LEVENSON

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY
BENJ PASEK & JUSTIN PAUL

SCENIC DESIGN BY PROJECTION DESIGN BY COSTUME DESIGN BY LIGHTING DESIGN BY SOUND DESIGN BY
DAVID KORINS PETER NIGRINI EMILY REBHOLZ JAPHY WEIDEMAN NEVIN STEINBERG

HAIR DESIGNER
**DAVID BRIAN
BROWN**

MUSIC DIRECTOR
BEN COHN

MUSIC COORDINATORS
**MICHAEL KELLER
MICHAEL AARONS**

VOCAL ARRANGEMENTS &
ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS BY
JUSTIN PAUL

ADVERTISING
SERINO COYNE

PRESS REPRESENTATIVE
DKC/O&M

DIGITAL MARKETING
SITUATION INTERACTIVE

MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS
ROSE POLIDORO

CASTING BY
**TARA RUBIN CASTING
LINDSAY LEVINE, C.S.A.**

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT
**JUNIPER STREET
PRODUCTIONS**

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
JUDITH SCHOENFELD

COMPANY MANAGER
KATRINA ELLIOTT

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
ADRIENNE CAMPBELL-HOLT

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS
**JAYNE HONG
RACHEL WEINSTEIN**

GENERAL MANAGER
101 PRODUCTIONS LTD.

MUSIC SUPERVISION, ORCHESTRATIONS
& ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS BY
ALEX LACAMOIRE

CHOREOGRAPHY BY
DANNY MEFFORD

DIRECTED BY
MICHAEL GREIF

Originally presented by Arena Stage – July 9, 2015 to August 23, 2015
New York premiere at Second Stage – March 26, 2016 to May 29, 2016

Original Cast Recording Available on Atlantic Records.

DEAR EVAN HANSEN

Dear Evan Hansen,

Today is going to be a great day, and here's why:

Dozens of schools have booked tickets for your show. Just imagine how thrilling it will be to welcome thousands of students – their teachers and parents – to Broadway's Music Box Theatre, and to theaters presenting the tour across the country. We know that your story will resonate with them, as it is so apropos to teenage life today, and hopefully, by sharing your story, you will inspire them to reflect upon and share their own.

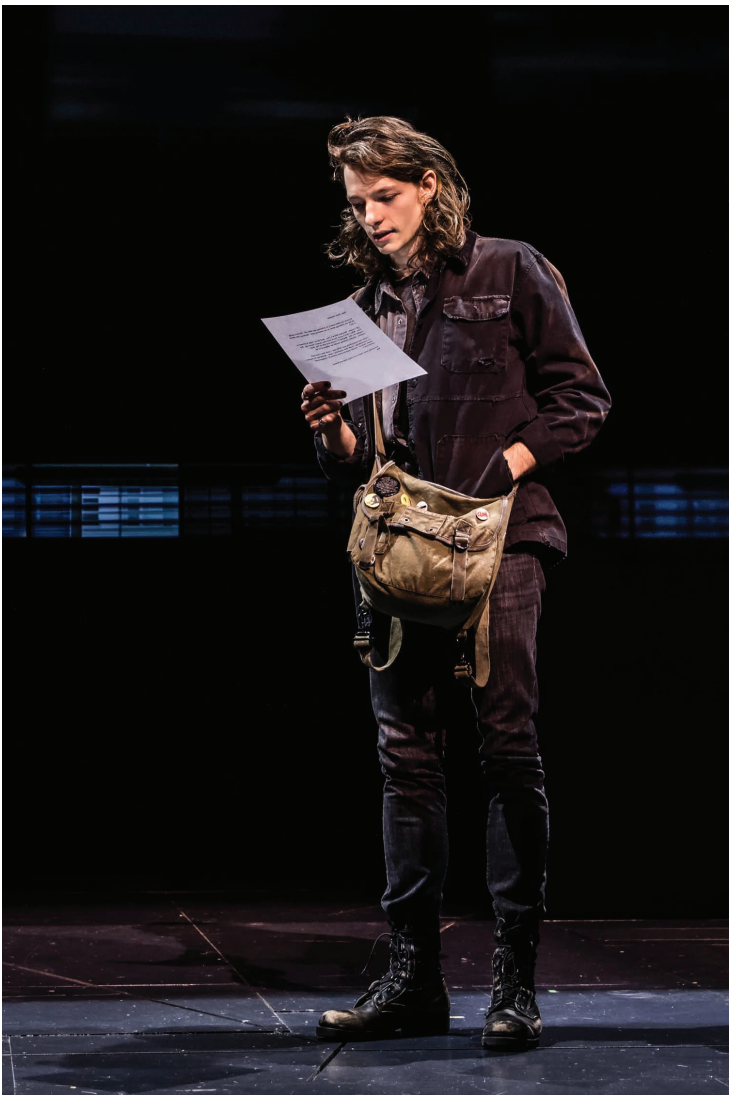
We want them to make the most of their theater experience, so we've created this study guide to give them a glimpse into your world and how it was created, as well as to provide teachers with follow-up activities and discussion prompts for the classroom. We realize that each classroom is unique, so we hope that teachers will feel free to pick and choose the sections that are most relevant and appropriate for their students and curriculum. So as not to leave out the adults, we've also included a page for parents and teachers with links to articles that relate to many of the topics and themes covered in your show.

So, get ready, Evan. The students are coming with their exuberance and energy, and they eagerly await your story. It's time to step into the sun....

Sincerely,
Me

A LETTER THAT WAS NEVER
MEANT TO BE SEEN, A
LIE THAT WAS NEVER
MEANT TO BE TOLD, A
LIFE HE NEVER DREAMED
HE COULD HAVE. EVAN
HANSEN IS ABOUT TO
GET THE ONE THING
HE’S ALWAYS WANTED: A
CHANCE TO FINALLY FIT IN.

Both deeply personal
and profoundly
contemporary, *Dear
Evan Hansen* is a new
American musical
about life and the way
we live it.



Mike Faist as Connor Murphy (Original Broadway Cast)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction4
Cast of Characters.....5
Musical Numbers.....5
The Journey to Broadway.....6–7
In Conversation with Steven Levenson.....8
Composing with Pasek & Paul.....9–10
Direction from Michael Greif11
On Movement from Danny Mefford11
Making Music by Alex Lacamoire12
Eye for Scenery by David Korins.....13
Focus on Projection by Peter Nigrini14
Costuming Today by Emily Rebholz15
Spotlight on Ben Platt.....16
Consider Music17
Analyze Choices18

Reflect on Social Media19
Compare Music & Lyrics.....20
Examine Songs21
Discuss Scene Dialogue.....22
Evan & Connor, Act II23
Take Action & Be Creative24
Empower: Inside Post It Forward.....25
Write to Inspire26
Understanding Social Anxiety27
Don’t Be Afraid to Ask for Help28
Help a Friend in Need29–31
Resources for Teachers & Parents32
Education Standards for Lessons.....33
Production Resources34

CAST OF CHARACTERS

FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF BOOK WRITER STEVEN LEVENSON

Evan Hansen (17) Smart, sincere, and cripplingly self-conscious, Evan prefers to hover in the background, a supporting player in his own life, too afraid to step forward into the spotlight and risk ridicule or, what might be worse, no one noticing him at all.

Heidi Hansen (40s) Evan's mother. Overworked and stretched too thin, Heidi loves her son fiercely, but fears they have begun to grow apart. She is prepared to do anything to repair the damage.

Zoe Murphy (16) Sensitive and sophisticated, Zoe couldn't care less about the status games and popularity rites of high school. Funny and bright, she feels a terrible ambivalence about her brother's death, finding it difficult to forgive him for all he did, and forgive the part of herself that finds relief in the fact that he's gone.

Connor Murphy (17) An angry, disaffected loner, Connor has been a troubled kid for as long as anyone can remember, an enigma and a source of endless consternation to his long-suffering parents and sister.

Cynthia Murphy (40s) Connor and Zoe's mother. To Evan, she seems to be the perfect mother, nurturing, available, and willing to talk about anything. To her own children, it's a bit more complicated.

Larry Murphy (40s) Connor and Zoe's father. Though often tense and taciturn, Larry shows a different face to the world, representing for Evan the dad he always wished for: strong, confident, and, more than anything, reliable, someone to be counted on.

Jared Kleinman (17) Droll and sarcastic, Jared claims to be forced by his parents to hang out with family friend Evan, for whom he ostensibly has nothing but disdain. Jared covers his own obvious insecurities with a well-practiced braggadocio and a know-it-all arrogance.

Alana Beck (17) Alana is an incredibly genuine person. Everything she does comes from a place of deep honesty and tremendous feeling. All of the characters in this musical put up masks of sorts. For Alana, it's a façade of cheerfulness. She is always ready with a smile, a note of encouragement. This hides the loneliness underneath.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

"Anybody Have a Map?" Heidi, Cynthia
"Waving Through a Window" . . Evan, Company
"For Forever" Evan
"Sincerely, Me" Connor, Evan, Jared
"Requiem." Zoe, Larry, Cynthia
"If I Could Tell Her" Evan, Zoe
"Disappear" Connor, Evan, Alana,
Jared, Cynthia, Larry,
Zoe
"You Will Be Found" Evan, Company

ACT II

"Sincerely, Me" (Reprise) Connor, Jared
"To Break in a Glove" Larry, Evan
"Only Us" Zoe, Evan
"Good for You" Heidi, Alana,
Jared, Evan
"You Will Be Found" Company
(Reprise)
"Words Fail" Evan
"So Big/So Small" Heidi
"Finale" Company

To listen to the *Dear Evan Hansen* Original Broadway Cast Recording, explore character-inspired playlists and more, visit the Dear Evan Hansen [artist profile on Spotify](#). Have you created a show-inspired playlist of your own? Share it with us @DearEvanHansen.

THE JOURNEY TO BROADWAY



@BenSPLATT

Say what you want about it, but in my opinion, there's nothing as exciting and awe-inspiring as a really good piece of new musical theatre.



@pasekandpaul

Cooking up something new this week



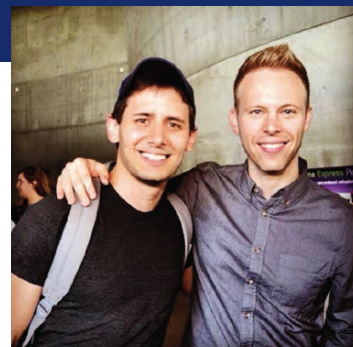
@benjpasek

Today was one of those creatively fulfilling days that can come once in a decade. Inspired & buzzing from being around such wonderful people



@LacketyLac

Planting some seeds



pasekandpaul

At the first day of rehearsal for Dear Evan Hansen in DC! #tbt since this pic was taken... yesterday! :)

MAY 2014, DEVELOPMENTAL READING

JULY 2014, DEVELOPMENTAL READING

SEPTEMBER 2014, DEVELOPMENTAL READING

NOVEMBER 2014

DEMO RECORDING

@benjpasek

Excited to announce our new (& 1st original) musical DEAR EVAN HANSEN is premiering in DC this summer at @arenastage!



FEBRUARY 13, 2015

JULY 25, 2015



@DearEvanHansen

Broadway performances begin in Nov!

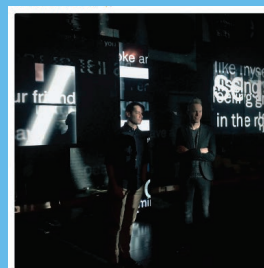


bensplatt

We did @dearevanhansen for 300 high school kids and it was THRILLING Y'ALL.



OCTOBER 2016

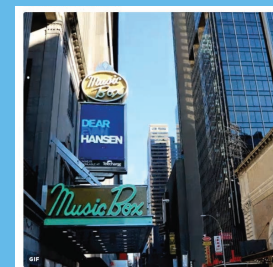


@DavidKorins

These 2 superstars checking in (bright & early) on load in of @dearevanhansen at #TheMusicBox.

@pasekandpaul

First preview for Dear Evan Hansen on Broadway is tonight! Here. We. Go. #DearEvanHansen



NOVEMBER 2016

MAY 2016

MAY 2016



@washingtonian

The Notorious RBG showed up at the premiere of @arenastage's @DearEvanHansen.



Top trend

TOP TREND

Dear Evan Hansen

Dear Evan Hansen Will Shuttle from D.C. to Off-Broadway's Second... Just Started Trending



alacamoire

@pasekandpaul

New songs are brewing at #dearevanhansen rehearsals @2STNYC w/@rachelbayjones and @JLTsayswhat! #whoisevanhansen

@pasekandpaul

The one and only @LacketyLac CRUSHING the orchestrations for #dearevanhansen at today's sitzprobe!!!



@DearEvanHansen

Congratulations to the entire #DearEvanHansen at @2stnyc family! Now it's time to celebrate!

AUGUST 2015

AUGUST 2015

MARCH 20, 2016

MARCH 2016

MAY 2016, OPENING NIGHT OFF-BROADWAY



@pasekandpaul

It's happening! @DearEvanHansen will record a cast album released on Atlantic Records!



@TheaterMania

@DearEvanHansen makes highest-charting @billboard debut of a cast album since 1961



@DearEvanHansen we finally get to meet out friends across the country as #DEHtour begins October on its way to more than 50 cities.



@DearEvanHansen

A huge congratulations to our #DearEvanHansen family on a successful #openingnight!



@The Tony Awards

@DearEvanHansen accepts a #TonyAward2017 for Best Musical.

NOVEMBER 2016

DECEMBER 4, 2016

FEBRUARY 13, 2017

JUNE 12, 2017

SEPTEMBER 7 2017

IN CONVERSATION WITH STEVEN LEVENSON



Steven Levenson

Steven Levenson is a celebrated playwright, and a 2017 Tony Award winner for writing the book for *Dear Evan Hansen*.

ON THE ROLE OF A BOOK WRITER

In the case of the musical, as a book writer, your job in a lot of cases is to support the score and to make sure the most important moments emotionally are happening in

song. So, it's a lot of figuring out when to step out of the way, and to make sure that you've laid the ground enough — and not too much — so that those characters can make the leap into song.

ON CREATING A NEW MUSICAL

In a way, there's a great freedom about [creating an original work]. We are not beholden to any preexisting vision, but with that freedom comes a lot of anxiety — because we can do anything we want. That can be both freeing and terrifying. [As told to *The Washington Times*]

ON COLLABORATING WITH BENJ PASEK AND JUSTIN PAUL

I think the role of the book writer can be very different things. In this case, since there was no source material, it was really the three of us coming up with this idea together. We started with this idea of “connection” — people's desire and thirst and need for connection. My instinct was to create a story about someone who could not connect in a world that is all about connection and interconnectedness. What does it mean to have a protagonist who is somehow unable to connect? So slowly, *Evan* began to take shape.

It seemed like the best idea was for me to just write the story like it was a play, because we didn't have anything else to go on. So I started writing the first act. Where we had talked about possibly placing songs, I would leave space in the script. I would either have nothing or I would have a long monologue — a soliloquy, really — with a character diving into his thoughts to suggest what was happening emotionally. That's how it all started, with this first draft.

From there, Benj and Justin started writing songs, but there was a lot of back and forth and rewriting. It was an endless dialogue — two steps forward and one step back — because you are building this thing together. It's a little bit chicken and the egg. You have to be constantly making it and remaking it to accommodate one another — always in service to the story.

ON WRITING PLAYS VERSUS MUSICALS

It's so different in so many ways. The big obvious difference is that it's collaborative from the start — and that your vision is not the only vision. It's about finding a shared vision with your collaborators. You

want to be a little bit hidden in the background at times — you want the music to be the star and the music to do the heavy lifting. So it's a lot of cutting the things you love the most, and allowing the ideas that you have or the dialogue that you've written to become a song. It's actually really amazing, though, because it feels like something that you just had in your head becomes three dimensional in a way that you could never imagine.

ON SOCIAL MEDIA AS A CHARACTER IN THE SHOW

We knew we wanted to tell a contemporary story that's set today, and we knew that we had to somehow talk about social media. I compare it to *Bye Bye Birdie*, when they're using the telephones in “The Telephone Hour.” It's like they're not using the telephones to talk about telephones, they're using them because that's how their world functions. And if we tried to tell our story today without cell phones and social media, there would be a real inauthenticity about the show. And at the same time we wanted to be sure we're using social media as a storytelling device and we were never interested in exploring social media as a theme or as an idea. We always wanted to make sure it was grounded in the story and part of the grammar of the show. [As told to Broadway Direct]

ON CREATING TWO VERY DIFFERENT FAMILIES FOR *DEAR EVAN HANSEN*

Both families really came into focus as the story itself took shape. Larry and Cynthia Murphy, we knew, had to represent everything that Evan's own splintered family wasn't, his fantasy of what two stable and emotionally available parents might look like. As with all fantasies, Evan's rose-colored vision of the Murphys turns out to have a tenuous relationship to the reality underneath, but that discovery will only come later for him. In contrast to this ostensibly perfect family, Evan's mother, Heidi Hansen, strives to be what her son needs her to be, but everything she does seems only to push him further away. The most important thing for us, in creating these characters, was to present them honestly and without judgment: three parents striving in their own flawed and imperfect way to do what's best for their children.

Original Source Material:

DiLella, Frank. “*Dear Evan Hansen: A Contemporary Musical for All Ages*.” BroadwayDirect.com, November 1, 2016.

Leslie, Emily. “*Levenson's Dear Evan Hansen Opens at Arena Stage*.” *The Washington Times*, July 7, 2015.

STEVEN LEVENSON (*Book*) Author of *The Unavoidable Disappearance of Tom Durnin* (Roundabout Theatre Company, Outer Critics Circle Award), *Core Values* (Ars Nova, Drama Desk nomination), *Seven Minutes in Heaven* (Colt Coeur), *The Language of Trees* (Roundabout), and the book for *Dear Evan Hansen* (Second Stage; Obie, Outer Critics Circle Awards for Best Musical and Best Book of a Musical; Arena Stage, Helen Hayes Award). His plays are published by Dramatists Play Service and Playscripts. A graduate of Brown University and former artist in residence at Ars Nova, he is a founding member of Colt Coeur and an alumnus of MCC's Playwrights Coalition.

COMPOSING WITH PASEK & PAUL



Benj Pasek and Justin Paul

This Tony Award-winning pair have worked together as a dynamic musical duo since their college days — a partnership that has taken them to Broadway, Hollywood, and beyond. At the same time that they were developing *Dear Evan Hansen*, Pasek and Paul were also writing lyrics for the award-winning film *La La Land*, which earned them a Golden Globe® and Academy Award® for Best Original Song.

Here, the two talk about how their collaboration began and how they brought their original musical to life.

How did you become a composing team?

BP: We both went to the University of Michigan for musical theater. We went there to be actors. For a lot of people who love the theater, when you're young, acting is your way in. But halfway through school we realized maybe we're not cut out to be performers.... After many failed attempts to get good roles in our school shows, we saw the writing on the wall and thought, "Why don't we write our own show, and see what we can make of that?" [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

JP: We just started doing it for fun. We were freshmen in college when we began tinkering. It was fun to develop songs thinking from characters' perspectives. We decided to string some of these songs together and make a song cycle our sophomore year. People were receptive. I think before we even knew what was happening we had begun a collaboration. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

What role did music play in your childhood?

JP: I grew up in a pretty musical household. Neither of my parents are professional musicians, but they're very, very musical. My dad and my mom would sit down and play the piano. I grew up playing a lot of music in church, and singing with my parents. I started taking piano lessons when I was 7. So they were always very encouraging and they knew that I had a love for it and a knack for it. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

In addition to being a performer, I always wanted to be in the pit orchestra, playing piano or percussion. I always saw myself being involved on the musical side of things in musical theater. I just figured it would be interpreting and teaching and working out other people's music. I hadn't really planned on it being my

own music. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

BP: My mom created a bunch of kids' albums where she would document whatever we were doing growing up and she would turn those moments into songs. She had a children's music group in our local area of Philadelphia. So I grew up just witnessing my mom, who's a psychologist — not a professional musician — turning life moments into song. That's essentially what we do every day, when we try to create theater. Watching her interpret things that were happening in the world, or in my world as a kid, and setting them to music — I think that really sparked an interest in writing and creating and interpreting life



Ben Platt as Evan Hansen with Rachel Bay Jones as Heidi Hansen, his mother (Original Broadway Cast).

moments into song lyrics. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

Facebook and YouTube were instrumental in circulating your early music. Can you elaborate on the role the Internet played in launching your career?

JP: For us, in terms of songwriting, having our stuff out online was a huge way to be able to connect with people, and musical theater fans all over the country and all over the world, in a way that couldn't have happened 20 years ago. People knew our songs and knew our music before we ever had a show in New York City.

BP: In terms of our careers, I think we were in the right place at the right time, and started writing songs at the right time. We were in college in 2005 and that was a year after Facebook began. And the year that YouTube began. And I think that really changed the way that people had access to new material.

BP: Before that, shows needed to exist in New York — you needed at least an Off-Off-Broadway production to spread the word. What was so revolutionary about Facebook and YouTube was this democratization of who could have access to putting stuff online, and being able to see it right away. So, you could be in Iowa or Singapore and you could see your content immediately without having to go to New York. And as

COMPOSING WITH PASEK & PAUL

writers, we didn't have to go through any traditional means of getting it out there [through agents or producers] — we just put it online. [As told to TCG]

Tell us a bit about how the idea for *Dear Evan Hansen* originated. I understand that it was born out of your own high school experience.

BP: There was a student who was sort of anonymous. He died of a drug overdose, and it was sort of unclear whether it was intentional or not. After he passed away the student body became very, very close to him. Everybody sort of claimed him as their best friend after he died, and began to write their college essays about him, and began to talk about how amazing he was and how important he was in their lives. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

When Justin and I met in college, and we began to write musicals, this moment from my high school days continued to be fascinating. We talked about exploring it in a musical. Since then, we've brought up a lot of other themes that we wanted to talk about — there's sort of a need to connect, the need to be part of a community, the need to be a part of something larger than yourself, especially in the digital, isolated age that we now find ourselves in. We began to explore how we could take those themes and turn them into a musical. And that's when the amazing Steven Levenson came into the picture and helped us to churn our ideas into an actual plot. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

JP: We noticed certain things about our culture ... some things that were fascinating about the modern response to tragedy and loss. We became very interested in the world's response to loss. And how people grieve and also communicate in the era of social media.

JP: It made us think about our desire to connect, and our desire to be a part of something larger than ourselves. Despite our great connectedness through Facebook and Twitter and all of these social media platforms, despite being as connected as we've ever been as a society ...

BP: We're more isolated than ever. All of us, teenagers and adults alike.

JP: And so we wanted to use that as the backdrop of our story, but we're telling it through the specific story of a family. This family is looking for that kind of connection, and in losing someone they love, they try to fill that void.

Can you talk a bit about the character of Evan Hansen? He is a risky, unusual protagonist.

JP: It's definitely an unusual one in that he's riddled with issues and anxieties, and with lots of self-esteem issues and a lot of other things. But I think that's what makes him very accessible and identifiable and relatable. Hopefully everyone can go and see the show and see a little bit of Evan

in themselves, and feel like they can connect with him, or at least connect with the situations that he finds himself in — he doesn't know the right thing to say to people, or how to fit into a conversation, or how to be himself and not try to create or embellish a story about himself that is better than what he thinks his real life is. It's a different sort of character and maybe not your typical musical theater leading man, but that's definitely what we were hoping to write — a contemporary and relevant and accessible character. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

BP: Traditionally, in Musical Theater 101, you learn to try to write a protagonist who people like and root for on their journey. In *Dear Evan Hansen*, we have a protagonist who does things that are really morally questionable. It's our jobs as writers to try to get the audience to identify with him and to support why he does what he does. We wanted to try to create a character who was more complex — and more nuanced — than maybe more traditional musical theater characters. We'll let critics and audiences be the judge of whether or not we have succeeded or failed. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

Original Source Material:

Rule, Doug. "Perfectly Composed: Pasek and Paul are the future of the American musical." *MetroWeekly.com*, August 13, 2015.

Evans, Suzy. "You Tubesicals: The Internet Is Reinventing How Musical Theatre Is Distributed and Licensed — and Even How Shows Are Being Written." *American Theatre*, *Highbeam.com*, July 1, 2014.

BENJ PASEK AND JUSTIN PAUL (*Music and Lyrics*) are the Tony, Oscar and Golden Globe-winning songwriting team behind *Dear Evan Hansen*. Other Broadway: *A Christmas Story*, *The Musical* (Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle nominations). Off-Broadway: *Dear Evan Hansen* (Second Stage; Obie Award, Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award); *Dogfight* (Second Stage; Lucille Lortel Award and Drama League, Outer Critics Circle, London Evening Standard Award nominations). Regional: *James and the Giant Peach* (Seattle Children's Theatre) and *Edges* (Capital Repertory Theatre). Film: *The Greatest Showman*, *La La Land*, *Trolls*, *Snow White*. Television: "Smash," "The Flash." Additional honors: Richard Rodgers Award for Musical Theatre (American Academy of Arts and Letters), ASCAP Richard Rodgers New Horizons Award, Jonathan Larson Award. Both are graduates of the University of Michigan Musical Theatre Program and members of the Dramatists Guild of America, Inc.

Watch Benj Pasek and Justin Paul's TEDxBroadway discussing art, artists, and the age of YouTube composers, from April 20, 2015.

DIRECTION FROM MICHAEL GREIF



Michael Greif

Q: *Dear Evan Hansen* marks the eighth original musical you have directed, including your award-winning productions of *Rent*, *Next to Normal*, and *Grey Gardens*. Can you talk a bit about the process of developing a new musical? What drew you to this project in particular?

A: What drew me to the piece initially was the opportunity to work with these collaborators, who I thought were exciting, and young, and very interesting theater makers. And then, when I first heard about what the piece was, I was very drawn to the complicated and emotional lives of the characters. I really thought that Benj, Justin, and Steven were creating a piece where the characters ... had very good reasons to express themselves through song and music. In such a heightened emotional arena it ... the stakes are so high that it feels like the characters are singing for their lives. [As told to Playbill.com]

Q: How would you describe the story of *Evan Hansen*?

A: It's a really truthful, smart, and sophisticated story about how 17-year-olds live in the world today ... and about how parents relate to their children and how kids relate to their parents.... [It's] about a lonely kid, and how a family in crisis, a grieving family, in many ways adopts this lonely kid. And this kid finds a lot of love and a lot of support from this family, but also always knows that in many ways he doesn't deserve their love and support. At the same time the family is dealing with

an extraordinary loss. And ... they really make this kid a part of their family because they need this kid to be a part of their family. It fulfills an enormous need that they're suffering from — to have a surrogate son. [As told to Playbill.com]

Q: What message would you like for people to take away from *Dear Evan Hansen*?

A: That everybody deserves a chance. And everybody deserves a second chance.

Original Source Material:

Rothstein, Mervyn. "*Next to Normal's* Michael Greif Stirs Up More Family Drama with *Dear Evan Hansen*." Playbill.com, July 6, 2015.

MICHAEL GREIF (Director) Broadway credits: *Rent*, *Grey Gardens*, *Next to Normal*, (Tony noms.); *Never Gonna Dance*; *If/Then*, *War Paint*. Recent work includes *A Parallelogram* (Second Stage), *Our Lady of Kibeho* and *Angels in America* (NY's Signature Theatre); *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide...* (Public); and *The Tempest*, *A Winter's Tale* and *Romeo and Juliet* at The Public's Delacorte Theater. Off-Broadway, he's received Obie Awards for *Machinal*, *Dogeaters* (Public) and *Rent* (NYTW), and has directed new plays and musicals at Playwrights Horizons, Roundabout, MTC, MCC, New York Theatre Workshop and at Second Stage, where he directed *Next to Normal* and *Dear Evan Hansen*. Regional work includes premieres and revivals at Williamstown Theatre Festival (ten seasons), La Jolla Playhouse (AD, five seasons), Arena Stage, Center Stage, Mark Taper Forum, Dallas Theater Center, Trinity Repertory Company. Greif holds a BS from Northwestern University and an MFA from the University of California, San Diego.

ON MOVEMENT FROM DANNY MEFFORD



Danny Mefford

My ideology is that everything that happens on stage should flow from the story. If you are thinking about the why they are dancing rather than just enjoying the moment, I haven't done my job correctly. It should seem the actors have no choice but to dance. —Danny Mefford

DANNY MEFFORD (Choreographer) Broadway: *Fun Home*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *The Bridges of Madison County*. Other New York: *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Good Person of Szechwan*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Pump Boys and Dinettes* for City Center Encores!, *Melancholy Play*, *Dance Dance Revolution*. Other: *The Sound of Music* (U.S. tour), *Miss You Like Hell* (La Jolla Playhouse). Directing: *Becoming Liv Ullmann* (NY Fringe), *Wasted* (Ars Nova), *The Maids*. Drama Desk, and Lortel and Astaire Award nominee for choreography. MFA from Brown University, BS from the University of Evansville.

MAKING MUSIC BY ALEX LACAMOIRE

Q: What exactly is the role of the musical supervisor and how do you work with the composers to deliver the musical elements of the show?

A: The actual job of the music supervisor is to oversee all of the music in the show. I teach music to the actors. I work as a liaison between the composer and the actors so if the composer wants to have a phrase sung a certain way or a song to be interpreted in a certain way, he will tell me and I will tell the actors and/or the music director. All musicals need a music director, but not all shows have a music supervisor. A music director, in our case, is the person who is actually conducting eight shows a week, playing piano, leading the band. As music supervisor, I have global supervision without having to be at the theatre for every performance.



Alex Lacamoire

As music supervisor I also work with the band to give them notes about how I think the music should be interpreted. I also work with the sound designer and give him notes about balance — “For this song I need the acoustic guitar to be softer, and for this other song I would love for you to play with the amount of reverb you have on the singer’s voice.” I also work with the director of the show, Michael Greif. He will give me notes about certain things that he sees, like if he thinks that something isn’t sounding clear or if there’s an issue of musical timing. It’s my job to actually figure out how to help music time out with the lights and time out with the scene so that it feels right and organic and it is to the director’s wishes.

So it’s a lot of servicing. I cater to the director. I cater to the composer. I try to make the actors feel comfortable. And that is what I do just as a music supervisor without even discussing the fact that I’m also the orchestrator!

Q: Tell us about your role as orchestrator.

A: The job of an orchestrator is to actually write down what every individual instrument in the orchestra plays.

As an orchestrator, it was my job to decide what I thought was the best number of musicians to have in the band for *Dear Evan Hansen*, which has eight players. And then it was my job to actually write out what we call “charts” — the sheet music for

the band. So, for example, if I want the strings to play a chord, I have to sit down and figure out, “OK, the violin plays this note, the cello plays that note, and the viola plays this note, and the three of them together make *this* chord.” I make decisions about what instruments play at any given time, because you don’t want to have all eight instruments playing every second of the show — you need to use different colors at different moments. For example: The guitarist doesn’t play just one type of guitar; he has an electric guitar and a steel-string guitar. It’s my job to decide which of those instruments he plays in any moment based on what I think sounds best for that song. I could have also asked for other guitars, like a mandolin or a nylon-string acoustic, but I didn’t think those were the right flavors to have in the score. Same thing for the bass player: He has an electric bass and an acoustic bass and I have to decide which of those two he’s going to use for which song, and when he’s playing the acoustic bass I decide if he should use the bow to play it or does he use his fingers to pluck it. I have to make those decisions and actually write that down for every bar of music in the show.

Q: That’s incredible because, when the composers give it to you, it might only be the piano part.

A: That’s exactly right. A composer might hear in his head what he wants, but he might not have the technique or the vocabulary to make it happen. So I’m a translator in that respect.

Q: You have experienced hearing loss since you were a child. How has this impairment affected your music and the work you do as musical supervisor?

A: My hearing loss probably makes me listen a little harder, makes me listen a little more closely to music. It’s hard for me to hear someone when they are talking from far away, so because of that it allows me to live in my own bubble. I think that actually developed a lot of focus for me, because I can really zero in on music and just tune out the world and everything around me. Maybe because of the fact that I have to work to listen, it makes me really get into finer details of music that by now are very second nature to me. I often wonder, Is my handicap actually an asset? [As told to the *Miami Herald*]

Frias, Carlos. “How a Miami musician overcame hearing loss to help create the music to *Hamilton*.” *MiamiHerald.com*, October 13, 2016.

Alex Lacamoire (*Music Supervisor/Orchestrator*) is a three-time Tony and two-time Grammy winner for his work on *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Hamilton* and *In the Heights*. As music director, arranger and/or orchestrator: *Annie* (2011 B’way revival), *Bring It On*, *The People in the Picture*, *9 to 5* (Drama Desk and Grammy noms.), *Legally Blonde*, *High Fidelity*, *Wicked*, *Bat Boy*, *Godspell* (2001 national tour). He is an Emmy-nominated composer for “Sesame Street.”

EYE FOR SCENERY BY DAVID KORINS

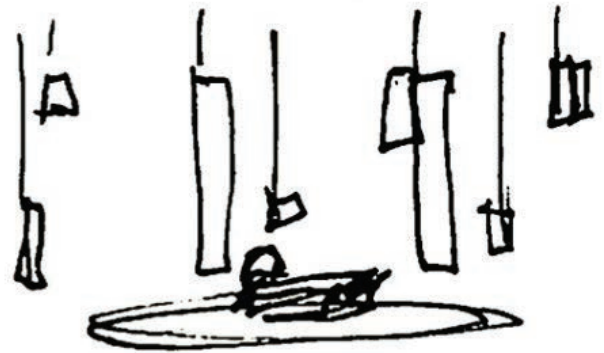


David Korins

“Every design process has many steps — there is research involved, and ground plans, renderings, and models — but what was unique about the *Dear Evan Hansen* process was that I had an immediate visceral, emotional response to what I was seeing and hearing. I was trying to maintain this idea of people floating through a void, on tectonic plates of life with their own internal monologues and their own emotional space, while at the same time trying to connect to each other and the world around them.”

—David Korins

DAVID KORINS (Scenic Design) Broadway: *Hamilton* (Tony nom.), *Bandstand*, *War Paint* (Tony nom.), *Misery*, *Motown*, *Vanya and Sonia...*, *Annie*, *Bring It On*, *Magic/Bird*, *An Evening With Patti LuPone* and *Mandy Patinkin*, *Godspell*, *Chinglish*, *The Pee-wee Herman Show*, *Lombardi*, *Passing Strange* and *Bridge and Tunnel*. TV: “Grease: Live!” (Emmy Award). Concert: Bruno Mars, Lady Gaga, Kanye West, Sia, Mariah Carey, Andrea Boccelli. Extensive Off-Broadway, regional theatre, hospitality, event and experience design.

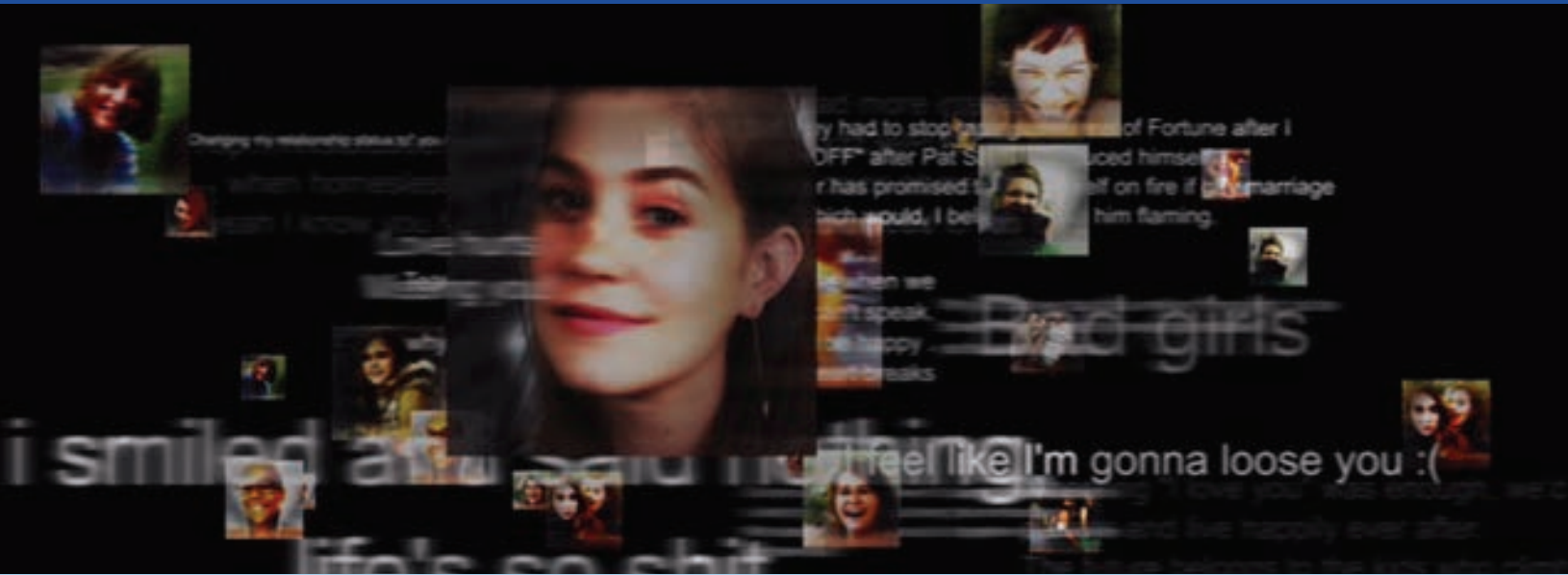


David Korins' initial sketch for the *Dear Evan Hansen* set.



The evolution of David Korins's scenic design for *Dear Evan Hansen* from concept to full production on stage at the Music Box Theatre on Broadway.

FOCUS ON PROJECTION BY PETER NIGRINI



Q: Can you talk a bit about the role of projections in the show?

A: From the beginning of my involvement, which was shortly after the script and score were solidified and really before there was an idea of what the whole physical production would become, the basic question revolved around the fact that so much of this story is about the way our characters interact with an online community, with social media, with people who maybe are not communicating face to face, but rather via Facebook and Snapchat and various social media platforms. So Michael Greif asked me, "How do we put that community on stage and how do we represent them theatrically?" That was the challenge — how to breathe life into this online world, which is often very difficult to portray onstage, and how to do that theatrically. That was the most important part. How do we both show those interactions but keep them poetic and lyrical? The same way that emotion is lifted by song, we needed to take what are often rather mundane interactions, like looking at our Facebook feed on our cell phones, and make that into something theatrical.

Q: What is your process for building the projections?

A: The design process really started with coming up with a visual style and visual metaphor for how we wanted to present this information. So, long before we ever knew what David Korins was going to design for the set, there was this question of coming up with the style, coming up with a language for how image would be used and how it would move. So that's very abstract. That's about looking at art and other images and resources and trying to capture the feeling of the show. After that's done, it's then about how we implement that style. A major part of the design comes from social media and using fragments of images that are part of social media. In a

way, all of the images in the production are also drawn from that. So even in the situations where what we're trying to do is ultimately set a scene, like in the Murphys' living room, the way we are manifesting that onstage is by actually using fragments of images you might believe are snapshots that someone took of the Murphys' Thanksgiving dinner, for example. Then from that we're taking tiny little fragments of those photographs and piecing together almost a memory what the Murphys' living room might have been. So what that means is that the entire design is constructed out of tiny, tiny, little fragments of images that we've gathered from anywhere and everywhere so that the design is made up of over 1,000 images, and each of those is carefully processed and stitched together into this sort of collage that is the overall look of the show.



Peter Nigrini

Peter Nigrin (*Projection Design*) Broadway: *SpongeBob SquarePants*, *Amelie*, *An Act of God*, *The Heidi Chronicles*, *The Best Man*, *Fela!*, *9 to 5*. Elsewhere: *The SpongeBob Musical* (Chicago), *Grounded and Here Lies Love* (Public Theater), *Far From Heaven* (Playwrights), *Notes From Underground* (TFNA), *Grace Jones Hurricane Tour*, *Don Giovanni* (Santa Fe), *Blind Date* (Bill T. Jones). For Nature Theater of Oklahoma: *No Dice and Life & Times* (Burgtheater, Vienna), *Monsoon Wedding* (Berkeley Rep), *The Skin of Our Teeth* (TFNA).

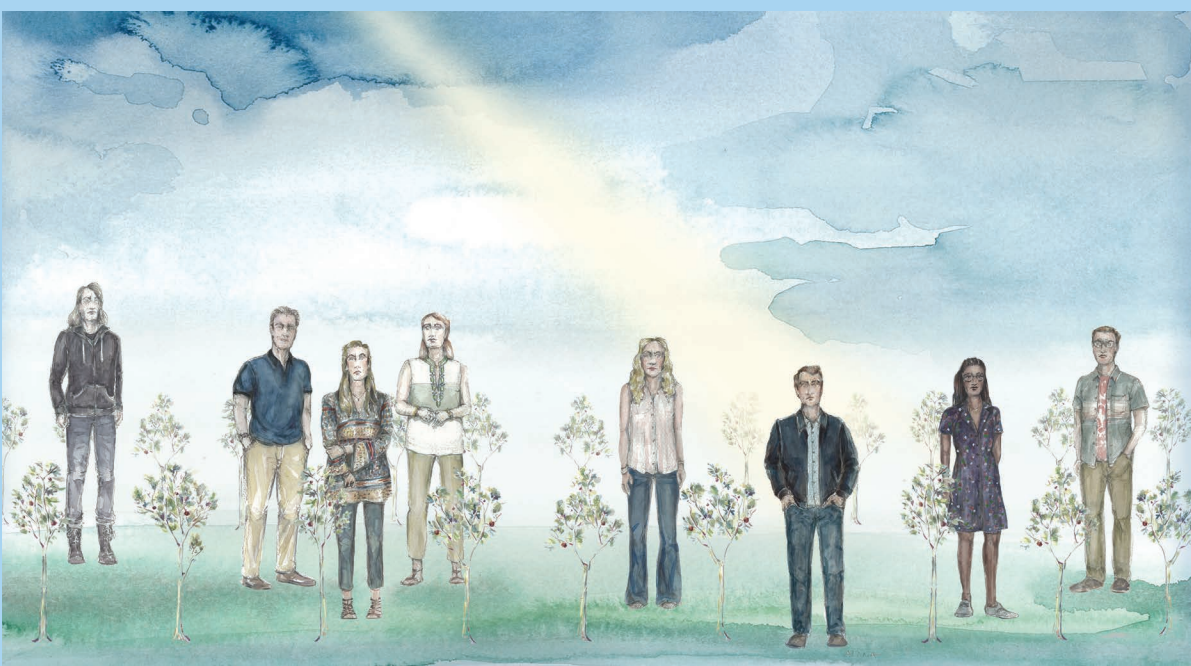
COSTUMING TODAY BY EMILY REBHOLZ



Emily Rebholz

“I build a closet for each character and try out different options depending on the set and lights. But that L.L. Bean polo for Evan was never in question. It’s an iconic piece of clothing ... a safe choice for a teenager who is just trying to blend into the background.”

— Emily Rebholz



Emily Rebholz's creative concept for the *Dear Evan Hansen* costumes.



“Footwear or something like that, especially for guys, it tells a lot about someone: where they shop, what they want to project, what clique they’re in. Especially with teenagers, there’s so much about image and what you’re putting forward.”

EMILY REBHOLZ (Costume Design) Broadway: *Indecent*, *Oh, Hello*; *If/Then*; *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*; *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*. Select Off-Broadway: *Indecent* (Vineyard Theatre); *All the Ways to Say I Love You* (MCC); *Dear Evan Hansen*, *The Way We Get By* (Second Stage); *The Robber Bridegroom* (Henry Hewes Design Award nomination, Roundabout); *The Tempest* (Shakespeare in the Park). Recent designs include *Don Giovanni* (Santa Fe Opera), *La Bohème* (Opera Theatre of St. Louis), *Another Word for Beauty* (Goodman Theater) and Disney's *Freaky Friday* (Signature Theatre). MFA, Yale University.

SPOTLIGHT ON BEN PLATT

(EVAN HANSEN – ORIGINAL BROADWAY CAST)

FOLLOWING PERFORMANCES RANGING FROM AWKWARD MAGICIAN BENJI APPLEBAUM IN *PITCH PERFECT* TO NERDY SIDEKICK ELDER CUNNINGHAM IN *THE BOOK OF MORMON*, BEN PLATT STEPPED INTO THE SPOTLIGHT WHEN HE ORIGINATED THE TITLE ROLE IN *DEAR EVAN HANSEN* ON BROADWAY

Q: How much do you identify with the character of Evan Hansen?

A: I can certainly relate to the feeling of wanting to be part of something and to be sort of accepted. I think everybody kind of has that in them. I would consider myself a little bit more socially sufficient in terms of my ability to speak to people. I had to base his social awkwardness more on people I've encountered in my life, the way that I may feel in certain situations, and how I might manifest my anxiety were I not better at keeping it squelched, because I do have my fair share of anxiety. I come from a big Jewish family and we all have our neuroses and our anxieties. And I've definitely had experiences in the past having to deal with that in terms of therapy and that sort of thing. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

Q: Is playing this emotionally charged role exhausting?

A: Yes, it's certainly draining. And I do have to give all of myself during those two hours. But it's really a joy to feel like you're using everything at your disposal and all the tools in your box. I've had a lot of experience in the preceding years playing characters who are very marginalized and specific. Of course, I've loved all the projects that I've been able to work on, but in doing them for so long it can get exhausting because you're using the same facilities over and over again. Whereas with Evan, while it may be draining night to night, it's just incredibly fulfilling. I can experience the full range of emotions, use all the parts of my voice, use my whole body, and live a whole story. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

Q: Evan is not your typical protagonist. He makes some ethically questionable choices, and yet you manage to somehow keep us on his side.

A: That was definitely the danger and the fear of the creative team. He makes a lot of morally ambiguous choices, and this is the hero of the story. And he's not always doing necessarily what's right. I think the reason it's so successful is because they make sure that you are fully aware of what Evan is thinking at all



Ben Platt as Evan Hansen (Original Broadway Cast)

times and what his intentions are in every moment. I feel like if there was ever a moment where you feel like you couldn't really see inside him, you may not necessarily stay with him or stay on his side. So the fact that it's written so fully from Evan's perspective, and that you really feel like you know this kid, helps you to stay with him. [As told to *Metro Weekly*]

Q: In *Dear Evan Hansen*, something goes “viral” that shouldn't have necessarily gone viral. Do you ever worry about what you put out on social media?

A: It's always scary, especially with all the *Pitch Perfect* stuff. I keep gaining followers, and it's becoming a bigger thing. When I first started on Twitter, I was in high school, and it was just my Twitter. I would say funny things and talk to my friends, and now it's this big platform where I need to say politically correct things and promote things. It's scary because anything you post on there or on Instagram is in the world forever. You can never take it back, so you have to be really careful, and you have to take things in stride and not take comments and criticisms too seriously. Just be confident in what you want to share. [As told to *TCG American Theatre Magazine*]

Evans, Suzy. “Ben Platt Goes From Nerd to Leading Man in *Dear Evan Hansen*”. *AmericanTheatre.org*. Theatre Communications Group. June 17, 2015.

Rule, Doug. “New plateau: Ben Platt's pitch perfect rise to stardom.” *MetroWeekly.com*. August 13, 2015.

BEN PLATT (*Evan Hansen*) won the 2017 Tony Award for Best Leading Actor in a Musical and the Drama League's Distinguished Performance Award for his portrayal of Evan Hansen after creating the role at Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. and Off-Broadway at Second Stage Theatre (Lucille Lortel Award, Obie Award, Clarence Derwent Award, Outer Critics Circle and Drama League nominations). Platt was the original Elder Cunningham in the Chicago production of *The Book of Mormon* and reprised the role on Broadway. National tours: *Caroline, or Change* (dir.

George C. Wolfe). Regional credits include *The Black Suits* (Barrington Stage Company), *The Power of Duff* (New York Stage and Film), *Dead End* (dir. Nicholas Martin, Ahmanson Theatre). Concerts: *I'm Here* (solo show, 54 Below sold out engagement), *The Secret Garden* (25th anniversary). Film: Benji Applebaum in Universal Pictures' smash hits *Pitch Perfect* and *Pitch Perfect 2*, *Ricki and the Flash* (dir. Jonathan Demme, starring Meryl Streep), *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* (dir. Ang Lee). Upcoming: *Drunk Parents*, *The Female Brain*.

ANALYZE CHOICES

MAKING CHOICES

Every protagonist makes choices that inform his or her journey — and sometimes the journey of others. Some are proactive choices, others reactive. Some are carefully considered, others impulsive. Some are clear cut, but more often than not, debatable.

DISCUSS:

Discuss Evan's choices throughout the musical and in particular his decision to lie to the Murphy family about having known Connor. How does the lie begin? How does it change? What is Evan's motivation? How does his choice impact the Murphys? Evan's mom? His fellow students? What are the outcomes — both positive and negative? What do you think of Evan's choice?

WRITE:

Persuasive Essay: Is it ever OK to tell a lie?

From a young age, children are taught the negative implications of lying, but as we grow, sometimes our

perspectives shift. We learn that the morality of lying is not always black and white and that perhaps there might be times when it is acceptable — maybe even appropriate — to lie.

Drawing from scenarios in your own life, historical events, or Evan's experience, take a position and make your case. Consider every angle. What might be the benefits and the ramifications? Consider short- and long-term implications.

Perspective: Look at it from the other side.

How does it feel to be on the receiving end of a lie? How might each member of the Murphy family feel about what Evan has done? And how about Evan's mom and the added lies he has told her?

Choose a supporting character from the musical. Write a journal entry (or song, if you are feeling ambitious!) in his/her voice, conveying his/her emotions once Evan has revealed the truth.



The original Broadway company of *Dear Evan Hansen*.

CONSIDER MUSIC



Ben Platt as Evan Hansen, Will Roland as Jared Kleinman, Mike Faist as Connor Murphy (from left) (Original Broadway Cast)

MUSIC

Reinvention: Shaping your own personal narrative

In *Dear Evan Hansen*, Evan — with the help of his friend Jared — “reinvents” Connor through a series of fictitious emails detailing their “friendship.” Through this imagined friendship, Evan also begins to reinvent himself. Together in “Sincerely Me” they sing:

“CAUSE ALL THAT IT TAKES IS A LITTLE REINVENTION
IT’S EASY TO CHANGE IF YOU GIVE IT YOUR ATTENTION
ALL YOU GOTTA DO
IS JUST BELIEVE YOU CAN BE WHO YOU WANNA BE
SINCERELY, ME”

DISCUSS:

Do you think it is possible to “reinvent” yourself — either how you perceive yourself or how others perceive you? How can believing in yourself help to shape your personal narrative?

REFLECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

THE DIGITAL EFFECT

Social Media: Catalyst and Accelerator

It happens every day in our modern world. We post a photo, a video, or a “newsworthy” event to Facebook, Instagram or Twitter and within seconds the “likes” come pouring in, followed by dozens of comments and countless re-tweets and shares. Within minutes these numbers can multiply and within hours they can explode. Before we know it, that story is trending.

The speed at which information can spread over the Internet is undeniable.

WRITE: Write an essay discussing the positive and negative implications of this catalytic impact. How can social media be used to control the flow of information/mobilize events/shape perceptions and alternatively how can it spin out of control — taking on a life of its own? Draw from examples in *Dear Evan Hansen*, your daily life, and the world at large.

Your online self: Is it the real you?

Some might say that social media sites offer them a place to share more of themselves than they might feel comfortable sharing in real life (IRL). Others might feel pressure to curate the most perfect version of themselves since it's so publicly on display.

DISCUSS: How do you feel? Is the persona you project through social media the real you? Why or why not? Do you behave differently on different forms of social media? Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram — and how about on your Finsta account?



Ben Platt with Jennifer Laura Thompson and Michael Park as Mrs. and Mr. Murphy (Original Broadway Cast)

For Common Core State Standards see page 33.

A MESSAGE FROM ALIZA WEINBERGER, AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT AT MASHABLE

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There's a moment near the beginning of *Dear Evan Hansen* when Alana reprises a few lines of “Waving Through a Window,” tapping on the screen of her phone. The first time I saw the show, I immediately fell in love with that song. But seeing Alana's moment hit me hard. I've often been that person staring into my phone or my laptop screen, wondering if anyone is listening and convinced no one is. That's why I, like so many others, obsess over the number of likes I get on any given post. That social media engagement validation is quantifiable, immediate, and compelling.

It's even harder to ignore since getting online engagement is now my job. I'm a digital content marketer, a job that didn't exist when I was in high school, and I've been trained to know all the ways to get as many likes online as possible. Because of that, I know how arbitrary those likes can be. And just like Evan's viral speech, what goes online is rarely the full story.

The Internet is a complex place. Terrible things can happen there, like bullying, no privacy, and miscommunication. You can waste so much time scrolling through other people's Instagram photos or swiping through Snapchat stories and imagining their lives are better than yours. But the Internet is also pretty amazing. I wouldn't work with it otherwise. You can connect with people around the world, finding new friends you'd never have met. You can learn almost anything, and you can never really be bored. It can be a real force for good, when channeled the right way. The fans who contributed to #YouWillBeFound are proof of that.

Spending my work days glued to my screens has made me take a hard look at how social media impacts my life, the good and the bad. People talk about not wanting to bring their work home, but I always seem to have my personal accounts open when I'm out with friends or see something Snapchat-worthy while out and about. Unplugging is hard, but it's a good idea. Taking the time to breathe and reevaluate, to remember what you love about your social media and what you want to come back to, is a great idea. Evan would take a break to hang around some trees, whereas I prefer taking walks around New York or reading a book. No matter what you do, screen-free time doesn't need to be a punishment or a chore.

The Internet, and social media, is a tool; it's not good or bad. But what you do there can be either. It helps to take a step back and see. Stop waving through that window and stop to decide if you really wanted that view in the first place.

COMPARE MUSIC & LYRICS

MUSIC/LYRICS

What role do the songs play in a musical?

Songs have a dramatic function that are an integral part of the storytelling: They help to develop character and/or move the action of the plot forward.

In musicals, it is a general rule that characters break into song when the emotional stakes have become so high

that ordinary speech fails them. Through their songs, the characters can reveal their innermost thoughts, fears, hopes, and dreams, grapple with difficult decisions, and come to important realizations about themselves.

Musical theater lyrics use many poetic devices, including rhythm, rhyme, repetition, figurative language, symbolism, and metaphor.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

WRITE: Read the lyrics of “Waving Through a Window.” Write an essay exploring how Pasek and Paul use figurative language to reinforce the isolation and insecurity that Evan feels at the beginning of the musical.

WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW

I'VE LEARNED TO SLAM ON THE BRAKE
BEFORE I EVEN TURN THE KEY
BEFORE I MAKE THE MISTAKE
BEFORE I LEAD WITH THE WORST OF ME

GIVE THEM NO REASON TO STARE
NO SLIPPIN' UP IF YOU SLIP AWAY
SO I GO NOTHIN' TO SHARE
NO, I GOT NOTHIN' TO SAY

STEP OUT, STEP OUTTA THE SUN
IF YOU KEEP GETTIN' BURNED
STEP OUT, STEP OUTTA THE SUN
BECAUSE YOU'VE LEARNED, BECAUSE YOU'VE LEARNED

ON THE OUTSIDE ALWAYS LOOKIN' IN
WILL I EVER BE MORE THAN I'VE ALWAYS BEEN?
'CAUSE I'M TAP-TAP-TAPPIN' ON THE GLASS
WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW

I TRY TO SPEAK BUT NOBODY CAN HEAR
SO I WAIT AROUND FOR AN ANSWER TO APPEAR
WHILE I'M WATCH-WATCH-WATCHIN' PEOPLE PASS
WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW
OH
CAN ANYBODY SEE?
IS ANYBODY WAVING BACK AT ME?

WE START WITH STARS IN OUR EYES
WE START BELIEVIN' THAT WE BELONG
BUT EV'RY SUN DOESN'T RISE
AND NO ONE TELLS YOU WHERE YOU WENT WRONG

STEP OUT, STEP OUTTA THE SUN
IF YOU KEEP GETTIN' BURNED
STEP OUT, STEP OUTTA THE SUN
BECAUSE YOU'VE LEARNED, BECAUSE YOU'VE LEARNED

ON THE OUTSIDE ALWAYS LOOKIN' IN
WILL I EVER BE MORE THAN I'VE ALWAYS BEEN?
'CAUSE I'M TAP-TAP-TAPPIN' ON THE GLASS
WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW

I TRY TO SPEAK BUT NOBODY CAN HEAR
SO I WAIT AROUND FOR AN ANSWER TO APPEAR
WHILE I'M WATCH-WATCH-WATCHIN' PEOPLE PASS
WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW
OH
CAN ANYBODY SEE?
IS ANYBODY WAVING...?

WHEN YOU'RE FALLIN' IN A FOREST
AND THERE'S NOBODY AROUND
DO YOU EVER REALLY CRASH
OR EVEN MAKE A SOUND? (4X)

DID I EVEN MAKE A SOUND?
DID I EVEN MAKE A SOUND?
IT'S LIKE I NEVER MADE A SOUND
WILL I EVER MAKE A SOUND?

ON THE OUTSIDE ALWAYS LOOKIN' IN
WILL I EVER BE MORE THAN I'VE ALWAYS BEEN?
'CAUSE I'M TAP-TAP-TAPPIN' ON THE GLASS
WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW

I TRY TO SPEAK BUT NOBODY CAN HEAR
SO I WAIT AROUND FOR AN ANSWER TO APPEAR
WHILE I'M WATCH-WATCH-WATCHIN' PEOPLE PASS
WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW
OH
CAN ANYBODY SEE?
IS ANYBODY WAVING BACK AT ME?

IS ANYBODY WAVING
WAVING
WAVING
OH
OH

EXAMINE SONGS

CHARACTER JOURNEY: COMPARING “WAVING THROUGH A WINDOW” AND “YOU WILL BE FOUND”

WRITE: Examine the first stanza/chorus of “You Will Be Found,” the finale to Act 1, and compare the lyrics to those in “Waving Through a Window.” Has Evan changed? If so, how? How do Pasek and Paul use the continuity of metaphors and symbolism to show Evan’s emotional journey throughout the first act of the musical? Consider the audiences of each song — to whom is Evan singing?

YOU WILL BE FOUND

(First stanza and chorus)

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE NOBODY WAS THERE?
HAVE YOU EVER FELT FORGOTTEN IN THE MIDDLE OF
NOWHERE?
HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE YOU COULD DISAPPEAR?
LIKE YOU COULD FALL, AND NO ONE WOULD HEAR

SO MAYBE LET THAT FEELING WASH AWAY
MAYBE THERE’S A REASON TO BELIEVE YOU’LL BE OK
’CAUSE WHEN YOU DON’T FEEL STRONG ENOUGH TO STAND
YOU CAN REACH, REACH OUT YOUR HAND

OH, SOMEONE WILL COME RUNNIN’
AND I KNOW THEY’LL TAKE YOU HOME

EVEN WHEN THE DARK COMES CRASHIN’ THROUGH
WHEN YOU NEED A FRIEND TO CARRY YOU
AND WHEN YOU’RE BROKEN ON THE GROUND
YOU WILL BE FOUND
SO LET THE SUN COME STREAMIN’ IN
’CAUSE YOU’LL REACH UP AND YOU’LL RISE AGAIN
LIFT YOUR HEAD AND LOOK AROUND
YOU WILL BE FOUND

YOU WILL BE FOUND
YOU WILL BE FOUND
YOU WILL BE FOUND
YOU WILL BE FOUND

For Common Core State Standards see page 33.



Ben Platt as Evan Hansen (Original Broadway Cast)

DISCUSS SCENE DIALOGUE

honesty

1. a : fairness and straightforwardness of conduct
b : adherence to the facts : sincerity

Review the final conversation between Evan and Connor at the end of the second act.

DISCUSS:

What dramatic conceit does book writer Steven Levenson use to present this conflict? What does this conversation reveal to us?



Ben Platt as Evan Hansen, and Laura Dreyfuss as Zoe Murphy (Original Broadway Cast)

Scene begins

Evan, alone.

EVAN

I'm not doing this. I'm done.

CONNOR

You can't just stop now.

And Connor is there.

EVAN

I don't think I can live with this anymore.

CONNOR

What about my parents?

EVAN

No more emails.

CONNOR

How can you do this to them?

EVAN

No more Connor Project. No more orchard.

CONNOR

After everything they've done for you? They need you.

EVAN

Need me for what? To keep lying to them?

CONNOR

That lie is the only thing that's keeping them together.

EVAN

That's not true.

CONNOR

Oh really? They seemed like a pretty happy family when you met them?

EVAN

I don't want to lie anymore.

CONNOR

And what about Zoe?

EVAN

Zoe said, she just ... she wants me.

CONNOR

Right.

EVAN

She likes me for who I am.

CONNOR

Except you didn't happen to mention that everything you've told her, it's all been one big fucking lie, did you?

Evan says nothing.

Oh. You left that part out.

EVAN

So then, what if ... what if I did tell her the truth?

CONNOR

She'll hate you.

EVAN

Maybe she would understand. Maybe everyone would understand.

CONNOR

Everyone will hate you.

EVAN & CONNOR, ACT II



Mike Faist as Connor with Ben Platt as Evan (Original Broadway Cast)

EVAN

Not if I can just, if I can explain it, you know?

CONNOR

You'll go right back to where you started. No friends.

EVAN

I want to be done/ with this.

CONNOR

/ Nobody. Nothing. Alone.

EVAN

I'm ready to be done with it.

CONNOR

If you really believe that, then why are you standing here, talking to yourself? Again?

Beat.

CONNOR (*cont'd*)

You think you're going to turn around all of a sudden and start telling everyone the truth?
You can't even tell yourself the truth.

EVAN

What are you talking about?

CONNOR

How did you break your arm?

A pall comes over Evan.

How did you break your arm, Evan?

EVAN

I fell.



Laura Dreyfuss as Zoe Murphy (Original Broadway Cast)

CONNOR

Really? Is that what happened?

EVAN (*less and less confident*)

I was, I lost my grip and I ... I fell.

CONNOR

Did you fall? Or did you let go?

Beat. MUSIC IN.

You can get rid of me whenever you want. You can get rid of all of it. The Connor Project.
The orchard. But then all that you're going to be left with is ... you.

For Forever (Reprise)

CONNOR

END OF MAY OR EARLY JUNE
THIS PICTURE PERFECT AFTERNOON
WE SHARE.
DRIVE THE WINDING COUNTRY ROAD
GRAB A SCOOP AT "A LA MODE"
AND THEN WE'RE THERE ...

CONNOR

Think about it.

Evan stands there for a moment, lost.

He makes a decision.

Lights shift and Evan and Alana are in their bedrooms, online.

Connor is gone.

TAKE ACTION & BE CREATIVE

TAKE ACTION

In *Dear Evan Hansen*, Evan, Alana and Jared become activists, developing a campaign to raise awareness about suicide and promote suicide prevention within their school and community. Some of the actions they take include:

- Creating and displaying awareness posters at school
- Selling awareness-raising buttons
- Developing a social media campaign
- Speaking at a student assembly
- Launching a Kickstarter fundraising campaign

DISCUSS: Together as a class, discuss some of the ways in which they take action. Now discuss what causes are important to you. Do you unite behind a single cause or are there many individual interests? What are some of the actions you can take to be a changemaker around an issue that is important to you?



Kristolyn Lloyd as Alana Beck with Ben Platt as Evan Hansen (Original Broadway Cast)

CREATE: Think specifically about an issue that is important to you and develop a plan of action. What campaign would you propose to raise awareness? How might you volunteer your time? What might you be able to do on a personal one-to-one level? How will you engage other friends and members of your community?

MAKING ART ABOUT ART

Artists take inspiration from all of their life experiences, including other art forms.

Dear Evan Hansen has inspired a tremendous outpouring of fan art, some of which was featured in our music video for “Waving Through a Window” (visit *Dear Evan Hansen*’s official YouTube channel to watch the video).

CREATE: How do the music, story, and emotions of *Dear Evan Hansen* inspire you artistically? Using any medium you like, create a piece of art that captures the most memorable moment of the play for you. Will you draw, paint, sculpt, make a collage or a film, write a song...?

We hope you will share your creations with us! If you feel so inspired, please tag us @dearevanhansen #dearevanhansen



See more at dearevanhansenofficial.tumblr.com

For Common Core State Standards see page 33.

EMPOWER: INSIDE POST IT FORWARD

KATHERINE BARNA, FORMER HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS AT TUMBLR (NOW VP OF COMMUNICATIONS AT AWESOMENESS), ON THE SYNERGY BETWEEN HER WORK AND *DEAR EVAN HANSEN*



Q: How did you first become aware of *Dear Evan Hansen*?

A: I first became aware of *Dear Evan Hansen* when it was playing Off-Broadway. I love the theater. I studied theater performance in college, so I try to stay in the loop of what's on stage. At that time, I was working on Post It Forward, which is a program I had developed and launched at Tumblr that touches on a few of the themes in *Dear Evan Hansen*. It just so happens that the PR agency I was working with was also working on *Dear Evan Hansen*. They said, "This show and Post It Forward are spiritual soul mates. You have to see it." So I went to see it and was completely wowed and amazed by how beautiful it was and how much it resonated with me personally because of its themes, which are important to me in both my life and my work.

That same PR agency was kind enough to set up meeting for me with Stacey Mindich, the producer of *Dear Evan Hansen*. So I went over to her office and had an awesome chat about the show and what I was working on and social media and social media for *Dear Evan Hansen* and how they could be tapping into that community. At the end of that amazing meeting, she said, "You know we have this Digital Board if you want to think about being a part of it." She probably hadn't even finished the sentence before I was like, "Oh, my god, yes!" It really is for me so funny because it's so many of the interests that I've had in my life for a long time: theater and connection over social media and themes of mental health awareness, and they all converged into one. So I get to play a tiny, tiny little part in the story of this production and that's really exciting for me.

Q: Can you tell me a bit more about Post It Forward? What is it exactly?

A: Post It Forward is a community hub on Tumblr that was created to give a safe space for conversation sharing around a myriad of issues that fall under what we call mental and emotional well-being. So this can be anything on the spectrum that someone could be dealing with, whether it is bullying or self-harm or eating disorders or LGBT issues. There is a lot happening in young people's lives and we really just wanted to create a place where people could talk and share and find community and support each other around these issues.

Q: How did it start? What was the impetus for Post It Forward?

A: It's something that we've been thinking about for a few years and I think we've been taking small steps toward figuring out how to best help support this community.

For many years, Tumblr as a platform has done a lot to try to help catch people at moments of intervention. We've tested out putting PSAs on the site so that if you are searching for a particular term that falls into this spectrum, a PSA pops up that says, "Hey. Is everything OK? How can we help you?" and directs you to helplines such as the



Crisis Text Line or to a center where you can actually find the support that you need. But we felt that we could do more. We kept feeling like we shouldn't only be talking about these issues of mental health in the aftermath of when something really scary has happened, when everybody is saying, "What could have been done?" Rather, we wanted to bring the conversation to the forefront — completely devoid of any tragedy — in the hopes that by talking about these issues and destigmatizing them little by little we can start to break down some of the shame people experience.

In addition, we have a lot of amazing content on Tumblr that is very supportive, including people sharing their personal experiences around mental illness. It is

people, on their own, connecting with other people — sometimes in the same state or sometimes a different country — going that extra step of saying, "Hey, I've been there. I can help you. Let's share our stories together." We also have a lot of amazing resources on Tumblr in regards to nonprofits who are using the platform in a similar way. So part of creating Post It Forward was realizing that there was all this amazing stuff organically happening, and that we needed to gather it into a hub and put it in one place where we could really amplify the voices of our community. So that's what we built Post It Forward to achieve. To bring together our experts in the community, our amazing users who are already doing this great work, our celebrity partners, who have their own stories to tell and to open it up to say "Hey, this is a safe space to share." And more importantly, to bring home the idea that by sharing your experience, and what you've been through, you might be helping somebody else.

The response has been so positive and so overwhelming. I've had the opportunity of meeting many, many of our users who have become Post It Forward superstars and have gone above and beyond to reach out to other people. They create their own original content and come into our office for our mental health seminars and get certified to become Crisis Text Line Ambassadors. They have really just taken this beyond our wildest expectations and it's so awesome to see them doing that in service of other people who, like them, are maybe just going through a hard time.

Q: What advice would you give to young people who want to become activists in this kind of way — whether it is around this issue or another issue that might be important to them — and how might they be able to use the Internet as a platform to create change?

A: I can't understate enough the power of your own voice and your own story. Whether it is on social media and the Internet or whether it is in the halls of your school. Your story and your perspective — whether you've been through a certain experience or whether you just have seen something that you feel you want to speak out on. I've seen firsthand the power of sharing your personal story and how that can impact someone. Every voice matters. No one person is too small. Use whatever tools you have at your disposal to make yourself heard. There's real power in it!

WRITE TO INSPIRE

THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING

At the beginning of the show, Evan has an assignment: to write an inspirational letter to himself.

“Dear Evan Hansen,
Today is going to be a great day and here’s why ...”

Much has been written about the power of positive thinking, the benefits of an optimistic outlook, and the value of self pep talks. Together these techniques can:

- Relieve stress and anxiety
- Reshape attitudes
- Increase self-esteem
- Influence behavior
- Impact goal achievement
- Improve overall health

WRITE: Write an inspirational letter to yourself.

Dear me,

“This is going to be a great [day/week/year] and here’s why ...”
What are you most looking forward to? What, if anything, do you hope to achieve? What are the challenges you might face? How will you work to overcome those hurdles?



LITERARY COMPARISONS

OUTSIDERS

Literature, both classic and contemporary, is filled with “outsiders” – characters who, like Evan, feel isolated and struggle to connect. Although each character has his/her own unique backstory and challenges, one can find commonalities between them.

WRITE: Choose an “outsider” from another book you have read or are currently reading. Write a comparative essay showing the similarities and differences between that character and Evan. How do their emotions/choices/journeys parallel one another and where do they diverge? What impact does each have on other characters in their respective stories?

Some suggested character comparisons.

- Laura from *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams
- Holden Caulfield from *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
- Charlie from *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
- Christopher from *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon
- Oscar from *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz
- Eleanor from *Eleanor and Park* by Rainbow Rowell
- Aza Holmes in *Turtles All the Way Down* by John Green
- Greg Gaines from *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews

FLAWED HERO/DECEPTION

Evan is a flawed hero. As a class, discuss the characteristics of a flawed hero. How does the presence of a flawed hero serve the overall storytelling of a fictional work? Why is it important for protagonists to have character flaws? How do authors go about creating protagonists who are likable despite their flaws?

Many times, flawed heroes – like Evan – lie to gain status with others and/or a sense of belonging. Sometimes these lies stem from uncorrected misconceptions or omissions of the truth and grow into greater deceptions. This convention appears not only in literature but also many modern-day films.

WRITE: Choose a book/movie you have recently read/seen in which lying/deception is a central theme. Compare it to *Dear Evan Hansen*. How does the lie begin? What are the character’s motives and what are results?

Some suggested character comparisons.

- Gatsby from *The Great Gatsby*
- Tom from *The Talented Mr. Ripley*
- Huck from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
- Olive from *Easy A*

For Common Core State Standards see page 33.

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL ANXIETY

SOME INSIGHTS FROM OUR PARTNERS AT THE CHILD MIND INSTITUTE

In *Dear Evan Hansen*, the title character struggles with social interaction and maintaining relationships, isolates himself, and fears being judged by others. Although Evan's specific problem is not named in the play, these are classic signs of social anxiety disorder, a mental health disorder that affects many young people, usually beginning during the early teen years.

Also in the play, the character Connor Murphy takes his own life. Before his suicide, he is depicted as angry, oppositional, and isolated, which may be seen in young people struggling with depression. Self-harm, suicide attempts, and completed suicide are also strongly linked to adolescent mood disorders such as depression.

WHAT IS SOCIAL ANXIETY?

In the teen years, young people start being more aware of what other people think. There are "right" things to wear, or say, or do — and things that teens *shouldn't* do that could be embarrassing or weird. Some feel so worried about what others are thinking about them that it starts to impact negatively on their everyday lives. This kind of worry is called social anxiety disorder.

Kids with social anxiety disorder aren't just nervous when they are at parties or giving a speech in class. Even answering a question in class can feel extremely scary; some kids worry they will humiliate themselves simply by eating in the school cafeteria or walking into a room. That's because kids with social anxiety fear they might do something embarrassing or offensive, and it will make others judge or reject them.

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

A young person with depression experiences persistent, intense feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and irritability that make it hard to function day to day. We don't know exactly how or why depression develops, but it's not usually caused by bad things happening.

Depression is called an "internalizing disorder," which means that it primarily affects a young person's emotional life rather than their behavior. Because of this, it can take a while for others to recognize it — or for a young person to realize that his/her thinking, and emotional responses, is troubled. Adolescent depression is more common than some people think. According to some statistics, **more than 12 percent of teens ages 15 and 16 struggle with depression. For teens ages 17 and 18 it jumps to more than 15 percent.**

HOW CAN YOU SPOT SOCIAL ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION?

Young people with social anxiety disorder often think their anxiety is obvious, which can create more anxiety. But, in actuality, other people might not recognize it, because a lot of the symptoms of anxiety are happening under the surface. Panicked thoughts, a racing heart, or an upset stomach aren't apparent from the outside. For other kids, however, anxiety can produce outward signs such as anger or aggression.

Similarly, since adolescents are often moody, it can be difficult to recognize when someone has become depressed. The first sign people tend to notice is withdrawal from friends, or when someone stops doing things he/she usually likes to do.

These are some of the most prominent signs of depression in teens:

- Persistent sadness or irritability
- Feeling worthless, or hopeless about the future
- Diminished interest in most activities, especially things they used to enjoy
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Low energy and motivation
- Decline in academic performance
- Decreased ability to think or concentrate
- Thinking about suicide or death

THE STIGMA OF MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

Many people don't want to believe that young people can have mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety. They say that young people with serious mental health problems are just going through regular growing pains. As we see in *Dear Evan Hansen*, the emotional problems that young people face are very real.

Adolescent psychiatric disorders are common (one in five children and teens struggle with a diagnosable disorder), and have real biological and environmental causes. But the denial of these facts leads struggling teens and their families to feelings of shame and fear of judgment. Millions of children and teens don't seek treatment because of this stigma, but it is vital to be open and ask for help.

HOW CAN TEENS GET HELP IF THEY ARE ANXIOUS OR DEPRESSED?

Teens who think they need help with an emotional or mental health issue might not know how to ask for help. If they are very anxious, it might be embarrassing for them to admit that things that seem easy for other people are very hard for them. If they are depressed, they may worry that others won't understand and will tell them to "snap out of it" — or that family and friends will be disappointed.

But parents, teachers, and friends can be more sympathetic and less judgmental than teens imagine. First, however, they need to know how a young person is feeling. The sooner a teen asks for help, the sooner they will start feeling better.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP



childmind.org

The Child Mind Institute is an independent, national nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of

children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders. Their teams work every day to deliver the highest standards of care, advance the science of the developing brain, and empower parents, professionals, and policymakers to support children when and where they need it most.

The Child Mind Institute is dedicated to helping children reach their full potential in school and in life and is driven to create a brighter future for children through the following three commitments:

- Give children access to the best, most effective treatments
 - Advance the science of the developing brain to improve diagnosis
 - Provide information that empowers families and communities to get help
- The organization does not accept funding from the pharmaceutical industry. All resources are free.

Connect with Child Mind Institute:

[f](#) [@](#) [v](#) ChildMindInstitute
[t](#) ChildMindDotOrg
[in](#) company/Child-Mind-Institute

CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Text **HELLO** to **741741**

Free, 24/7, Confidential

crisistextline.org

When a young woman texted DoSomething.org with a heartbreaking cry for help, the organization responded by opening a nationwide Crisis Text Line for people in pain. Nearly 29 million text messages later, the organization is using the privacy and power of text messaging to help people handle addiction, suicidal thoughts, eating disorders, sexual abuse, and more. But there's an even bigger win:

The anonymous data collected by text is teaching us when crises are most likely to happen — and helping schools and law enforcement to prepare for them.

Text the Crisis Text Line at 741-741.



thejedfoundation.org

JED is a nonprofit that exists to protect emotional health and prevent suicide for our

nation's teens and young adults. JED partners with high schools and colleges to strengthen their mental health, substance abuse prevention and suicide prevention programs and systems; equips teens and young adults with the skills and knowledge to help themselves and each other; and encourages community awareness, understanding, and action for young adult mental health.

Learn more about JED programs: JED Campus ([jedcampus.org](#)), ULifeline ([ulifeline.org](#)), Half of Us ([halfofus.com](#)), Love Is Louder ([loveislouder.com](#)) and Set to Go ([settogo.org](#)).

Connect with JED:

Email: jedfoundation.org/email

[f](#) [t](#) [@](#) [v](#) jedfoundation
[in](#) company/the-jed-foundation



thetrevorproject.org

Founded in 1998 by the creators of the Academy Award®-winning short film *Trevor*, The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) young people ages 13 to 24.

Every day, The Trevor Project saves young lives through its accredited, free, and confidential phone, instant message, and text messaging crisis intervention services. A leader and innovator in suicide prevention, The Trevor Project offers the largest safe social networking

community for LGBTQ youth, best practice suicide prevention, educational trainings, resources for youth and adults, and advocacy initiatives.

Connect with The Trevor Project:

[f](#) [@](#) [v](#) TheTrevorProject
[t](#) [@](#) [v](#) trevorproject



bornthisway.foundation

Led by Lady Gaga and her mother, Cynthia Germanotta, Born This Way Foundation was founded in 2012 to support the wellness of young people and empower them to create a kinder and braver world. To achieve these goals, Born This Way Foundation leverages rigorous academic research and authentic partnerships in order to provide young people with kinder communities, improved mental health resources, and more positive environments — online and offline.

Connect with Born This Way Foundation:

[f](#) bornthiswayfoundation
[t](#) [@](#) BTWFoundation

HOTLINES FOR HELP

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, don't wait—

- Tell a trusted adult (parent, teacher, school nurse, coach, pediatrician, etc.)
- Call an anonymous hotline

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)

The Trevor Lifeline at 1-866-488-7386

1.800.LIFENET (543-3638)

Text the Crisis Text Line at 741-741

HELP A FRIEND IN NEED



HERE ARE POTENTIAL WARNING SIGNS ON SOCIAL MEDIA THAT A FRIEND MIGHT BE IN EMOTIONAL DISTRESS AND NEED YOUR HELP, FROM THE JED FOUNDATION (JED), A NONPROFIT THAT EXISTS TO PROTECT EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND PREVENT SUICIDE FOR OUR NATION'S TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS.



POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

If you see someone posting distressing content on social media, or if they are behaving dramatically differently than usual, it may signal that this person needs help. If you have a gut feeling that something is not right, you should act on it.

Be aware of statuses/posts, messages, photos, videos, links, comments, or hashtags that include the following themes:

- Feeling alone, hopeless, isolated, useless, or a burden to others: "I feel like I'm in a black hole"; "I don't want to get out of bed...ever"; "Leave me alone"; "I can't do anything"
- Showing irritability and hostility that is out of character: "I hate everyone"; "F*@K the world"
- Showing impulsive behaviors: such as driving recklessly, a significant change in, and especially increase in, substance use, or taking other risks
- Insomnia posts: "3am again and no sleep"
- Withdrawal from everyday activities: "Missed another chem lab — I'm such a waste"; "Another day in bed under the covers"



- Use of negative emoticons: for example, repeatedly using emoticons that suggest someone is feeling down or thinking about using a tool to hurt themselves.

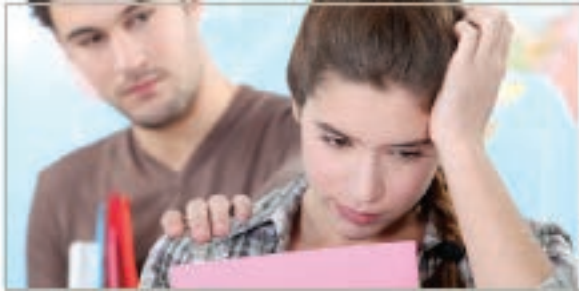
- Use of concerning hashtags: #depressed #lonely #whenimgone #noonecares #suicidal #selfharm #hatemyself #alone #sad #lost #worthless #neverenough #givingup

Currently, when someone searches for a hashtag indicative of self-harm (for example, "#cutting") on Instagram, a content advisory warning pop-up will appear. People have the option to select "Learn More" before viewing any posts.

- Following activity: On either Facebook's News Feed, or Instagram's Following Activity, you can see the accounts and posts people start to follow. If you notice a friend liking or following feeds or posts that promote negative behaviors, even if they aren't sharing concerning content themselves, that may serve as a warning sign that they are engaging with troubling messages or communities.
- Trust your instincts: If you see someone posting messages, photos, videos, links, comments, or hashtags that suggest the person is in emotional distress, you should reach out and get them the help they may need.

I can't handle any of this 😞

HELP A FRIEND IN NEED



"I've noticed you haven't been yourself lately. Are you okay?"

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND IN NEED

If you have a friend who seems to be struggling with an issue that may be more serious than they can handle, there is a lot that you can do to support them.

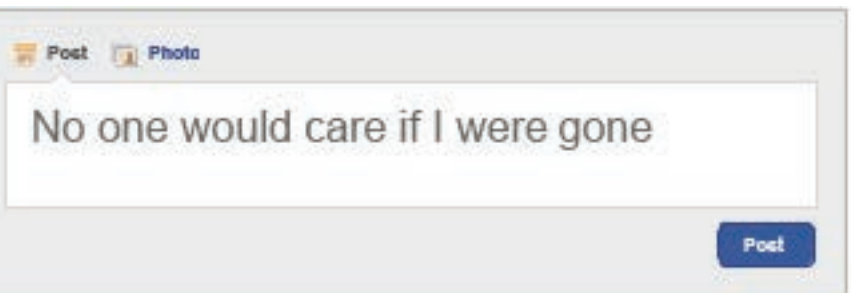
Reach out — pick up the phone, swing by their place, walk with them to do errands, let them know they are not alone in feeling this way and that it's OK to ask for help. Be clear and direct, and do not use hints such as liking a post or replying with an emoticon, as these could be misinterpreted by the person you're trying to help.

Understanding that it can be tough to start this conversation, here are some suggestions on how you can reach out:

– "I'm worried about you because you seem..." (e.g., sad, withdrawn, etc.).

- Have examples ready such as, "It concerned me when you said..." Be specific about what you noticed.
- "Do you want to talk about it?"; "What can I do to help?"
- If they say no, then you might say: "It's OK if you don't want to talk to me, but it is important that you talk to someone."
- Offer to help them connect with support.

NEVER BE AFRAID TO GIVE YOUR FRIEND A CALL, PAY A VISIT, OR SEND THEM A FACEBOOK MESSAGE TO LET THEM KNOW YOU ARE CONCERNED, AND OFFER TO HELP CONNECT THEM WITH ANY EXTRA SUPPORT NEEDED.



WARNING SIGNS THAT SOMEONE MAY NEED URGENT HELP OR MAY BE AT RISK OF SUICIDE

While it can be hard, particularly on social media, to know if someone is exaggerating, being sarcastic or being serious, if someone threatens to take their own life, you should always take them seriously.

Here are some examples of things someone at risk of suicide might post about:

- Suicide or wanting to die: "I want out"; "Everyone would be better off without me"; "No one would care if I were gone"; "There's no reason to live"
- Intense and urgent emotional despair or intense guilt or shame, feeling trapped: "I can't take it [the pain] anymore"; "There is no way out"; "I'm done"; "I'm so sorry for all the trouble I've caused everyone"
- Rage or seeking revenge: "I'll show you all"; "She'll be sorry"
- Saying goodbyes, giving away personal possessions: "I'll miss you all"; "You won't have to worry about me anymore"
- Glorifying or glamorizing death, or making death seem heroic: "Death is beautiful"
- Where/how to get potentially lethal means, like access to pills or weapons

HELP A FRIEND IN NEED



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Text Line: Text "START" to 741-741

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND IN URGENT NEED OR WHO MAY BE AT RISK OF SUICIDE

1. If someone is threatening their own life or someone else's life, this is an emergency. If you feel comfortable, you should bring your friend to the emergency room. Or you call 911 or campus emergency services immediately. If it's safe to do so, stay with that person or do what you can to contact them or find someone to stay with them until help arrives.

2. You can use the following free, 24/7 national services any time:

Crisis Text Line: Text "START" to 741-741 or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

REMEMBER TO:

- Listen without judgment, assumptions, or interruptions. Let them know that you believe what they are saying and take them seriously
- Know your limits and do not place yourself in physical danger — the best way to help is to connect your friend to a mental health professional.

NO MATTER WHAT, YOU SHOULDN'T BE EMBARRASSED OR WORRIED ABOUT OFFENDING OR UPSETTING YOUR FRIEND. HELPING YOUR FRIEND MAY TAKE SOME COURAGE, BUT IT IS ALWAYS WORTH THE EFFORT TO SUPPORT THEIR HEALTH AND SAFETY.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



jedfoundation.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH AND HOW TO HELP YOURSELF OR A FRIEND, VISIT:

www.jedfoundation.org

This guide, while evidence based, is for informational and educational purposes only and is not intended to constitute medical advice or be a substitute for professional diagnosis and treatment.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS & PARENTS

FOR ADDITIONAL READING AND REFERENCES ON SOME OF THE TOPICAL ISSUES RAISED IN *DEAR EVAN HANSEN*, PLEASE VISIT THE FOLLOWING LINKS:

Dowd, Stephanie Psyd. **“How To Help Your Depressed Teenager.”** Child Mind Institute. Childmind.org

Ehmke, Rachel. **“How Using Social Media Affects Teenagers.”** Child Mind Institute. Childmind.org

Ehmke, Rachel. **“Tips for Communicating With Your Teen.”** Child Mind Institute. Childmind.org

Foster, Brooke Lea. **“Married to Their Smartphones.”** NYTimes.com. October 28, 2016.

Green, R. Kay. **“The Social Media Effect: Are You Really Who You Portray Online?”** The Blog, HuffingtonPost.com. August 7, 2013.

Heitner, Devorah. **“Rules for Social Media Created by Kids.”** NYTimes.com. January 5, 2017.

Lublin, Nancy. **“How Data From Crisis Text Line Is Saving Lives.”** TEDWoman. May 2015, CEO and founder of Crisis Text Line, Nancy Lublin is using technology and data to help save lives. Crisis Text Line is free 24/7 support for those in crisis. Text START to 741741 from anywhere in the USA to text with a trained crisis counselor.

McGrath, Keenan. **“Your Facebook Life Doesn’t Fool Me.”** scarymommy.com

Price, Michael. **“Alone in the Crowd: American Psychology interview with Sherry Turkle.”** apa.org. June 2011 Vol. 42, No. 6 (print edition, page 26).

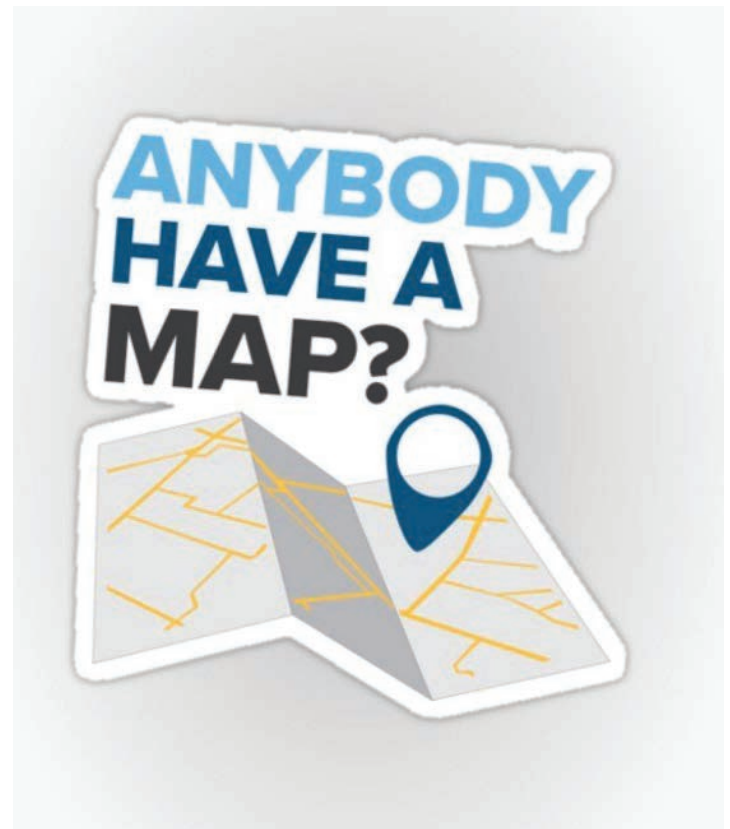
Steingard, MD, Ron J. **“What are the Symptoms of Depression in Teenagers?”** Child Mind Institute. Childmind.org

Stone, Zara. **“Psychology of Facebook: The Facebook Self vs. The Real Self.”** www.chipchick.com. November 30, 2011.

Turkle, Sherry. **“Connected, but Alone?”** TEDTalk. TED.com. April 3, 2012.

As we expect more from technology, do we expect less from each other? Sherry Turkle studies how our devices and online personas are redefining human connection and communication — and asks us to think deeply about the new kinds of connection we want to have.

White, Thomas. **“Why Social Media Isn’t Social.”** The Blog, HuffingtonPost.com. September 4, 2013.



Fan art

EDUCATION STANDARDS FOR LESSONS

ANALYZE CHOICES: MAKING CHOICES

(PG. 17)

Common Core State Standards

Grades 9-10:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Grades 11-12:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

WRITE TO INSPIRE: THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING

(PG. 26)

Framework for 21st Century Learning: Life and Career Skills

- Set goals with tangible and intangible success criteria
- Set and meet goals, even in the face of obstacles and competing pressure

Framework for 21st Century Learning: Health Literacy

- Understanding preventive physical and mental health measures, including proper diet, nutrition, exercise, risk avoidance, and stress reduction

TAKE ACTION AND BE CREATIVE: MAKING ART ABOUT ART

(PG. 24)

National Core Arts Standards

- VA:Cr1.2.1a: Shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present-day life using a contemporary practice of art or design.
- VA:Cr1.2.1a: Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.
- MU:Cr2.1.1a: Assemble and organize sounds or short musical ideas to create initial expressions of selected experiences, moods, images, or story lines.
- MA:Cr2.1.1a: Apply aesthetic criteria in developing, proposing, and refining artistic ideas, plans, prototypes, and production processes for media arts productions, considering original inspirations, goals, and presentation context.

REFLECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA: THE DIGITAL EFFECT

(PG. 19)

Common Core State Standards

Grades 9-10:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas,

concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Grades 11-12:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

COMPARE MUSIC AND LYRICS

(PG. 20)

AND EXAMINE SONGS

(PG. 21)

AND CONSIDER CHARACTER AND MUSIC: MUSIC

(PG. 18)

Common Core State Standards

Grades 9-10:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

Grades 11-12:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

DISCUSS SCENE DIALOGUE

(PG. 22-23)

Common Core State Standards

Grades 9-10:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3
Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations)

develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Grades 11-12:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5
Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

Grades 11-12:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3
Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5
Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

WRITE TO INSPIRE: LITERARY COMPARISONS

(PG. 26)

Common Core State Standards

Grades 9-10:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Grades 11-12:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

TAKE ACTION AND BE CREATIVE: TAKE ACTION

(PG. 24)

Framework for 21st Century Learning: Creativity and Innovation

- Use a wide range of idea creation techniques (such as brainstorming)
- Elaborate, refine, analyze, and evaluate their own ideas in order to improve and maximize creative efforts
- Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the field in which the innovation will occur

DEAR EVAN HANSEN

Official Website

dearevanhansen.com

Book

By Steven Levenson (TCG Edition)
Available in Paperback and Kindle Edition

Cast Recording

Available through Atlantic Records as
Streaming, MP3, Audio CD and on vinyl

Photography

Matthew Murphy

The *Dear Evan Hansen* Official Study Guide has been
compiled by Rachel Weinstein and Caitlin Clements.

#youwillbefound



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STAGENOTES

Post Show Cooperative Learning Opportunities

(Group Work Ideas for Teachers)



1. Group Reflection Circle

Sit together and share your favorite moments, characters, or songs from the performance. Encourage everyone to explain why they liked those parts.

This builds listening skills and helps everyone appreciate different perspectives.

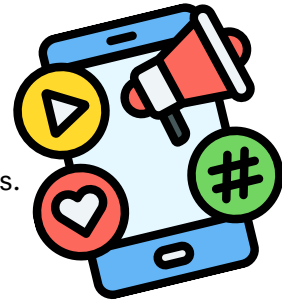


2. Create a Mini Review Together

Work as a team to write a short review of the show.

Assign roles: one person writes, another edits, others brainstorm key points.

You can post it on social media or keep it in a class journal.



3. Reenact a Scene

Pick a favorite scene and act it out as a group.

Add your own twist—maybe change the setting or improvise new dialogue.

This sparks creativity and teamwork.



4. Design a Poster or Program

Collaborate to create a poster or program for the performance you saw.

Include drawings, quotes, and fun facts.

This is great for artistic expression and memory keeping.



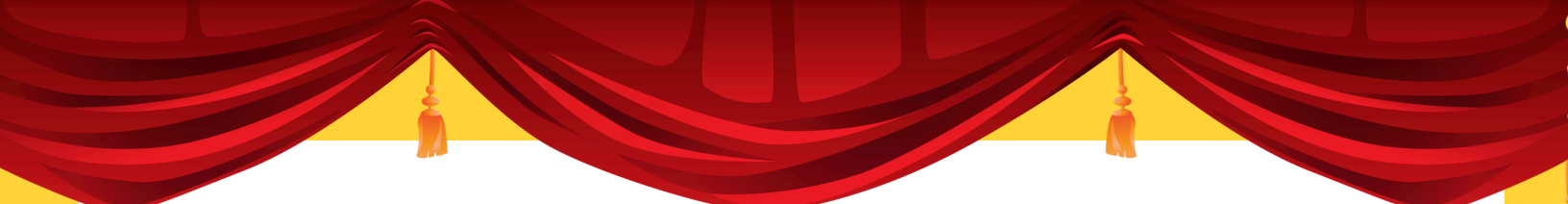
5. Plan a "Behind the Scenes" Discussion

Research how the performance was made (costumes, music, choreography).

Assign each group member a topic to present.

This turns curiosity into a cooperative learning activity.





My Theater Review

I saw: _____

Reviewed by: _____

This play/musical was about...

Here's a drawing of
my favorite character:

It made me feel:

I learned:

I gave this play/musical stars.



**We'd love to hear from you! If you'd like to submit this review,
please send to jenriquez@browardcenter.org**

M/H Student to Family Cooperative Activity Ideas:

- Cook a themed meal: If the play had cultural or culinary references, consider cooking a themed meal together as a family. Research recipes from that culture or recreate dishes mentioned in the play. This culinary exploration can add a delicious dimension to your theater experience and allow you to immerse yourselves further in the production.
- Watch a related film or documentary: If there are any film adaptations or documentaries related to the play or its subject matter, plan a family movie night to watch them together. This can provide additional context, offer a different perspective, or deepen your understanding of the themes explored in the theater production.
- Share impressions and discuss the play: Sit down with your kids and have a conversation about the play you all watched. Share your impressions, thoughts, and emotions. Discuss the elements that stood out to each of you, such as the performances, the set design, or the storytelling. This exchange of perspectives can deepen your understanding and appreciation of the production.
- **Remember, the goal is to create a memorable and immersive experience. Adapt these ideas based on your family's preferences and the resources available to you. The key is to have fun and enjoy the theater experience in your digs!**

Additional Activity Ideas:

- Attend workshops or classes: Look for theater workshops or classes that interest you and your child. Participating in these educational opportunities can help your kids develop their skills, gain confidence, and connect with others who share their interest in the performing arts.
- Encourage your kids to create their own journals or scrapbooks to document their childhood memories. Take the opportunity to share your childhood stories as you help them with their own projects. You can even contribute by adding some of your own stories or mementos to their journals.
- What was your favorite song, band or genre growing up? Play a few songs for your child/children and let them play a few of their favorites for you!
- Volunteer or participate in theater activities: If your kids have developed a keen interest in theater, encourage them to get involved in local theater groups or school productions. Volunteer backstage, audition for roles, or assist with set design and costumes. This hands-on experience allows us to gain practical knowledge and further nurture a passion for the performing arts, and the whole family can volunteer with the show!

Standards Alignment: The activities in this guide are aligned with the standards listed below. When teachers incorporate the arts, they increase student engagement, offer multiple points for students to access the curriculum, and provide alternate means for students to demonstrate what they know.

Florida's Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.)	
Kindergarten through Grade 12/ English Language Arts	
ELA.K12.EE.1.1	Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.
ELA.K12.EE.2.1	Read and comprehend grade-level complex texts proficiently.
ELA.K12.EE.3.1	Make inferences to support comprehension.
ELA.K12.EE.4.1	Use appropriate collaborative techniques and active listening skills when engaging in discussions in a variety of situations.
ELA.K12.EE.5.1	Use the accepted rules governing a specific format to create quality work.
ELA.K12.EE.6.1	Use appropriate voice and tone when speaking or writing.
Theater	
TH.K.C.3.2	Share reactions to a live theatre performance.
TH.1. H.3.1	Identify similarities between plays and stories.
TH.2. O.3.1	Identify theatrical elements and vocabulary found in everyday life.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

DONORS

We thank the Broward Performing Arts Foundation and the following funding partners for their support of educational programming at the Broward Center this season.

Linda and Ed Appleby & Family
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
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The Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation
Florida Power & Light Company
Florida Panthers Foundation
Florida Theatrical Association
Charles F. and Esther M. Frye Foundation
Funding Arts Broward
Genesis Inspiration Foundation
City of Hollywood
David Kilmnick Scholarship Fund
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Robert Wood Johnson Family Charities
Kapila Family Foundation

D Richard Mead Charitable Foundation
The Rose Miniaci Family
Miramar Cultural Trust
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Ronald Plotkin Scholarship Fund
PNC Foundation
City of Pompano Beach
Harold Rosenberg Fund
for Children's Education
Salah Foundation
Taft Foundation
Jerry Taylor and Nancy Bryant
Trust
Wayne and Lucretia Weiner

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Joel & Beverly Altman
Endowed Fund for Education
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Albert E. & Birdie W. Einstein Endowed Fund
Doug Gorab & Ron Plotkin
Fund for Children's Education
Dr. Stanley & Pearl Goodman Endowed Fund
Gotta Dance Ted Stephens Endowed Fund
Barbara & Arnold Grevior Education Endowed Fund
Mary Jane Harlow Charitable Trust
Education Endowed Fund

JM Family/Jim & Jan Moran Endowed Fund
Kapila Family Foundation Endowed Fund
Kapila Family Foundation Endowed Fund
for Sensory-Inclusive Preschool Programs
Rose Miniaci Education Endowed Fund
Anita Perlman Endowed Fund
Sandy and Kenny Tate
Endowed Education Fund
I. Lorraine Thomas Endowed Fund for Children
Jerry Taylor and Nancy Bryant
Endowed Fund for Education