


# *Good Will Hunting*: Examining the Effects of Childhood Trauma & Navigating the Nuances of Boundary-Setting in the Clinical Setting

*AACAP 70th Annual Meeting -- Discussion Guide*

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*Feel free to use these questions as a starting point for reflection, and let us know your thoughts or your own questions during our discussion after watching the film!*

1. It is extremely difficult for some patients who have severe trauma to open up. At times, providers appropriately revealing personal information in the best interest of the patient can aid in fostering the therapeutic relationship. How can we navigate that fine boundary between maintaining professionalism and fostering that environment for our patients who have significant trauma and reluctance to be vulnerable?
2. How do you help patients experiencing significant financial and social stressors develop healthy coping strategies?
3. What are some critiques of this film in portraying childhood trauma?
4. What does the film teach us about the balance between professional detachment and personal connection in the context of therapy, and how do Sean's actions exemplify this balance?
5. How does the character of Sean Maguire (played by Robin Williams) in "Good Will Hunting" establish and maintain boundaries with Will Hunting, and what impact does this have on Will's progress in therapy?
6. In the movie, what are some instances where the boundaries between Sean and Will are tested or crossed, and how do these moments impact their therapeutic relationship?
7. In your opinion, how relatable is the film's portrayal of how highly intelligent or educated patients react to psychotherapy?
8. In what ways does this film influence the public's perception of psychotherapy, psychology, or psychiatry?
9. How does the music contribute to the portrayal of the major film tropes?
10. What would be a similar film released in the last 5 years that provides similar discussion points?
11. Does this film pass the Bechdel test? Duvernay test? Or any other tests that attempt to highlight diversity with regard to gender, sexual orientation, or racial/ethnic identity?