

The Themes Covered in *Dear Evan Hansen*

The themes covered in *Dear Evan Hansen* are a representation of issues that teenagers face everyday. From anxiety and depression to grief and forgiveness, the novel exemplifies the struggles of living with hardships and learning to find peace. Evan Hansen is a 17 year-old high schooler who struggles with severe social anxiety. When his 'friend,' Connor, commits suicide and is found with a letter titled "Dear Evan Hansen," Evan is faced with the decision to either tell the truth or lie and reinvent a false perception of Connor. Evan chooses to create a lie that eventually snowballs into an even bigger issue, causing more pain than he would have by telling the truth. Through this choice, the book demonstrates how telling a small lie can lead to a much larger problem.

The book displays how people can all experience a similar situation or issue, but in a different way. All of the main teenagers in the beginning of the book are experiencing similar issues of feeling alone, depressed, and anxious. The mothers of Evan and Connor are also experiencing similar issues of not knowing how to parent their child correctly. Heidi and Cynthia both have two very different kids who have very different problems, yet they undergo the same challenges as parents. Evan struggles more with social anxiety while Connor faces drug abuse and depression. Alana faces a different problem of needing to prove herself to everyone, but all three of them have an overall feeling of isolation and poor mental health.

Evan and Connor both struggle with being afraid to ask for help. Unfortunately, it was too late for Connor before he was able to get proper help for his mental health issues, but Evan was able to find support before he really decided to take his life. When Connor killed himself, Evan went through a world of new problems. Since he was struggling with communicating his problems, when he told the lie about Connor he felt trapped and unable to tell anyone out of fear

of causing more of a problem. If Connor had reached out and asked for help, then he could have had a different fate. It wasn't until Evan saw that his lie was going to tear apart Connor's family that he decided to tell the truth. If he would have told the truth prior, he would have caused less pain to the Murphy family.

Forgiveness is a crucial part of the lesson being taught in *Dear Evan Hansen*. Toward the end of the story when Evan admits to his lies, the Murphy family is faced with a choice. They can either learn to forgive Evan for what he did, or go public with everything. The Murphys decided that they don't want to make the problem worse because they have been dealing with so much already. If they told everyone about Evan's lies, then their son's new image will be negative again, and also ruin Evan's life. They had to learn to forgive someone who created a huge lie about their dead son, and that hurt them. It's important that they were able to forgive Evan, if not for him, but for their mental health.

Dear Evan Hansen portrays different life struggles that many individuals experience everyday such as anxiety, depression, loss, and grief. The characters undergo different challenges that they have to deal with in their own ways. Through forgiveness, the Murphy family was able to change the outcome of their unfortunate situation, and in the end, keep the public's positive perception of their son while knowing the truth. The strong lessons taught in the play can be applied to everyone's life to become better people. By addressing difficult and taboo subjects, *Dear Evan Hansen* connects deeply to readers with lessons they can use to become better people.