

Living in isolation can cause many emotions to arise and can lead people to reflect on their experiences with other people. Riverside High School created the production *Out of my Mind* to encapsulate those feelings and how they can affect a young person's sense of connection.

This production was written, directed, produced and captured entirely by the Drama 3 class at Riverside High School. Throughout this play, we follow the life of Victoria Emerson who, after her breakup with her idiot boyfriend Keith, suffers from her mental health and goes to therapy. There Benny, her therapist, aided her, and unpacked the deep-seated trauma of her past.

The class created a relatable story of a young person struggling with life in isolation and provides a message of hope to young people to keep going. This was an entirely virtual production with all scenes filmed over Zoom, yet it was easy to figure out where the actors were (directing - Rohan Jaiswal, Olivia Miniuk, Gabi David). The writing of this show was consistent for each character and appropriately tackled the stigma around mental health (Aadi Sinha, Rohan Jaiswal, Hailee Blubaugh, Zach Robinson).

The principal character, Vickie (Olivia Miniuk), was present in all scenes, but maintained a dynamic character that was always developing. Miniuk altered their voice and body language in each scene, indicating their change in moods, like when they went from therapy to talking to their parents. Another notable lead character was Benny (Rohan Jaiswal), the therapist. Jaiswal effectively portrayed the calming force in this narrative with their many mannerisms. They would perform tasks of the typical therapist, like taking notes and nodding their head to what Vickie was saying, showing active listening.

Amy's (Danielle Webb) mannerisms and actions were the most unique of any character in this play. Whenever Webb would talk to Vickie on the phone, they would paint, cook or do something else to divide their attention from what Vickie was saying, showing their lack of care toward their daughter. In contrast, Hazel (Heather Stuart) tried to provide support for Vickie, recommending that they go to therapy. Stuart played Hazel as insensitive to Vickie's overall struggles and clarified that she was the stereotypical best friend that thought her therapist was cute.

Considering that they filmed this production in fifteen different houses, the Zoom backgrounds were fitting for each character and showed where they were located in relation to one another (continuity team - Alexander Footen, Natalia Fernandez-Davila Parades). The makeup and hair also helped maintain continuity and showed the difference between the flashback scenes and present day. Riverside filmed this show in one shot over Zoom, which made it feel more like a live theatre piece than a pre recorded performance.

*Out of my Mind*, developed by Riverside High School's Drama 3 class, was a refreshing portrayal of the mental health struggles that many young people face. It tackled the shame of seeing a professional and the future difficulties surrounding childhood trauma. In the end, seeing a therapist is important because, "If you don't take charge of your own life, who else will?"