

**Activity: View and discuss the film titled *The Farewell* (2019)**

**Directed by:** Lulu Wang

**Genre:** Drama / Family / Cross-cultural narrative

**Runtime:** 1 hr 40 min

**Rating:** PG

Why This Film Works for BHSS education:

The Farewell offers a nuanced, emotionally complex portrayal of:

- Cultural worldview differences (Eastern collectivist vs. Western individualist),
- Family systems and obligations,
- Immigrant identity and dual-cultural experience,
- Ethical dilemmas in care and end-of-life decision-making, and
- Intergenerational and cross-cultural tension.

The film follows Billi, a Chinese-American woman who returns to China when her family decides not to tell her grandmother (“Nai Nai”) about a terminal cancer diagnosis. The story explores how culture, values, lived experience, and identity shape responses to illness, truth-telling, grief, and care.

Themes Aligned with the Learning Objective:

- The grandmother’s worldview is shaped by collectivist cultural norms, familial roles, and traditional Chinese views on health, death, and the individual’s place in society.
- Billi’s conflicted feelings reflect her hybrid identity as a Chinese-American raised in the U.S., struggling with differing expectations and moral frameworks.
- The film shows how systems of privilege and marginalization (e.g., immigration, diaspora, cultural dislocation) shape patient and family perspectives.
- There are moments where implicit bias and cultural misunderstanding are explored through subtle character interactions.

Discussion Questions for BHSS Training: (discuss after the movie)

1. How do the characters’ cultural identities influence their understanding of illness and care?
2. What ethical conflicts arise from cultural differences in health communication?
3. How do lived experiences of immigration and identity duality affect Billi’s perspective?
4. How might a Western-trained BHSS professional respond differently than a culturally informed one?
5. What would a culturally responsive intervention look like in this family context