

Parents Read This About Teen Suicide!

Are your kids watching 13 Reasons Why? READ THIS!

The most recent Netflix series hit, *13 Reasons Why*, is creating a buzz among teenagers about teen suicide. It is also creating a buzz among school professions, mental health professionals, and many who work to prevent suicide. This series is based on the popular book by Jay Asher. The series follows a group of high school students as they piece together a story left behind for them by their classmate, Hannah Baker, who died by suicide. Though the series creates a buzz about important topics like suicide, according to mental health experts it falls short of talking about mental health issues and support for our teenagers. Instead it comes increasingly close to romanticizing suicide for some of our most volatile students.

Many students have become obsessed with the show and hence have obtained an unrealistic example of how tragic suicide really is. Most importantly the fact that suicide is forever. It is important for ALL students to know there is help and resources available. If your child is watching *13 Reasons Why* or even if your child isn't take a moment and talk with them assure them that help is available and suicide is never an answer. Below are some resources for parents. Take a few minutes to look them over and if you or your child needs support, contact your school counselor. Together we are determined to keep our children safe.

13 REASONS WHY TALKING POINTS

- 13 Reasons Why is a fictional story based on a widely known novel and is meant to be a cautionary tale.
- You may have similar experiences and thoughts as some of the characters in 13RW. People often identify with characters they see on TV or in movies. However, it is important to remember that there are healthy ways to cope with the topics covered in 13RW and acting on suicidal thoughts is not one of them.
- If you have watched the show and feel like you need support or someone to talk to reach out. Talk with a friend, family member, a counselor, or therapist. There is always someone who will listen.
- Suicide is not a common response to life's challenges or adversity. The vast majority of people who experience bullying, the death of a friend, or any other adversity described in 13RW do not die by suicide. In fact, most reach out, talk to others and seek help or find other productive ways of coping. They go on to lead healthy, normal lives.
- Suicide is never a heroic or romantic act. Hannah's suicide (although fictional) is a cautionary tale, not meant to appear heroic and should be viewed as a tragedy.
- It is important to know that, in spite of the portrayal of a serious treatment failure in 13RW, there are many treatment options for life challenges, distress and mental illness. Treatment works.
- Suicide affects everyone and everyone can do something to help if they see or hear warning signs that someone is at risk of suicide.
- Talking openly and honestly about emotional distress and suicide is ok. It will not make someone more suicidal or put the idea of suicide in their mind. If you are concerned about someone, ask them about it.
- Knowing how to acknowledge and respond to someone who shares their thoughts of emotional distress or suicide with you is important. Don't judge them or their thoughts. Listen. Be caring and kind. Offer to stay with them. Offer to go with them to get help or to contact a crisis line.
- How the guidance counselor in 13RW responds to Hannah's thoughts of suicide is not appropriate and not typical of most counselors. School counselors are professionals and a trustworthy source for help. If your experience with a school counselor is unhelpful, seek other sources of support such as a crisis line.
- While not everyone will know what to say or have a helpful reaction, there are people who do, so keep trying to find someone who will help you. If someone tells you they are suicidal, take them seriously and get help.
- When you die you do not get to make a movie or talk to people any more. Leaving messages from beyond the grave is a dramatization produced in Hollywood and is not possible in real life.
- Memorializing someone who died by suicide is not a recommended practice. Decorating someone's locker who died by suicide and/or taking selfies in front of such a memorial is not appropriate and does not honor the life of the person who died by suicide.
- Hannah's tapes blame others for her suicide. Suicide is never the fault of survivors of suicide loss. There are resources and support groups for suicide loss survivors.

If you're struggling with thoughts of suicide...

- Text "START" to 741741
- Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Talking points by:



Helpful Resources for Parents

<http://www.common sense media.org/>

This site provides reviews and age ratings on movies, television shows, books, games, apps, and websites as well as tips for parents.

<http://www.wiredsafety.org>

This site has a great deal of updated information on Internet safety, help, and education about the Internet. It has recent news stories that relate to the Internet, upcoming conferences on different Internet topics, groups that you can join as a parent, and this site will also answer many questions that you may have on different Internet topics.

<http://www.getnetwise.org/>

This site helps with questions on safety. It is also a good source for how to filter and block certain items from your computer.

<http://www.netsmartz.org>

This site provides on- and offline learning activities for parents to facilitate discussions with their children and teens about Internet safety.

<http://www.safekids.com/>

This site provides child safety information for the Internet, parent guidelines, and other related information.

<http://www.ikeep safe.org/>

This site has video tutorials and scenarios surrounding Internet safety for kids and parents to explore together.

<http://www.fosi.org/>

The Family Online Safety Institute provides tips and tools for good digital parenting.

<http://www.connectsafely.org/>

This site has updated parent guides for social media apps and news about youth technology.

<http://www.tucows.com/>

This site has software including various types of monitoring software, keystroke monitoring, and other parental needs. Some of the featured software may be free to download.

www.ala.org/greatsites/

The American Library Association's librarians evaluate websites to find useful sites for research for students and parents. This site is helpful when researching for school projects.

<http://www.fbi.gov/resources/parents/resources-for-parents/>

This is the FBI's site on parent Internet safety guidelines for their children, but this site also has the following link where you can report Internet crimes:

<http://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>

<http://protectthegoodlife.nebraska.gov/online-safety>

This site has some safety tips for parents from the Nebraska Attorney General.

<http://www.growingwireless.com/learn-engage/parental-control-tools/parental-controls-features-and-resources#QV>

This site lists content and monitoring settings that may be available through your phone carrier.

Microsoft Family Safety [PC]

<https://account.microsoft.com/account/ManageMyAccount?destrt=FamilyLandingPage&ref=www.bewebsmart.com>

Free features available on Windows devices

Secure Teen Parental Control App

Parents can monitor their child's online activities, manage screen time, and receive location alerts. The free trial ends after a couple weeks.

TeenSafe Control – Parental Control & App Blocker App

Parents can remotely pause/block all functionality on a child's device (except calls) and set different levels of restrictions for certain time periods. Although, text messages are not able to be viewed from this app (download the TeenSafe Monitor App for access). 1 week free trial and then \$14.95/month.

Life360

A free app for Android and iPhone that allows parents to track location, chat, and receive notifications when their children arrive at certain "places" (work, school, etc.). The app also sends information on top driving speed and phone usage while driving.

Huvi

This app allows parents to create personal playlists for their children (from YouTube) so that children can't search YouTube and find inappropriate content. It also allows parents to add screen time limits.

Lock2Learn

Especially useful on shared devices (multiple children using a device), this app allows parents to decide which apps are available to their child. The child then has to answer questions (Math or English based on grade level) in order to unlock the device.

Screen Time Parental Control

This app lets parents monitor screen time and set limits on what apps are available, and when.

Canary

Parents can receive real-time notifications if their child is engaging in risky behavior like using their phone while driving or speeding.

Checky

This free app keeps a tally of how many times a day a user has checked his or her phone.

VISR

This app allows notifies the adult when potentially unsafe activity or objectionable content is accessed, only flagging this content for you to review.