

Dear Parents & Guardians,

We would like to inform you of a new Netflix series entitled "13 Reasons Why" about teen suicide. Dr. Melissa Reeves, current President of NASP (National Association of School Psychologists) states: "The series revolves around 17-year-old Hannah Baker, who takes her own life and leaves behind audio recordings for 13 people who she says in some way were part of why she killed herself. Each tape recounts painful events in which one or more of the 13 individuals played a role." This series has graphic scenes and is rated TV-MA (for mature viewers only). There are many concerns about this series and the impact it may have on young teenagers. We would like to provide you with some information from a few well qualified individuals and organizations and what they have to say about this series. There are links in this email to resources about the series, as well as warning signs of suicide and helpful documents. If you cannot access these links, please call the counseling office. This communication is meant to inform parents of this Netflix series so each parent may make an informed decision for their children. If you have any questions, please contact the Counselors or the Administrators.

Thank You,
Diamond Fork Junior High

"There is a need for awareness of the public health crisis we have in the nation and certainly in our state, around suicide. However, this series, as Brooke Fox, LCSW and author of 13 Reasons Why, and Its Unintended Consequences states, "13 Reasons Why is a suicide revenge fantasy". As stated by Fox, "Hannah received everything in death that she was hoping for: sympathy, deep regret, guilt, and ultimately love. However, what the teen brain cannot process is the fact that Hannah is dead - permanently, and never coming back. The concept of the permanence of death is not solidified for a teen at this point in development. This makes suicide seem like an actual option if this can be achieved."

*As educators and adults, we know some students will watch this series. By nature, the conversation and word will spread from teenager to teenager. **So how do we embrace the impact of this ripple?** I encourage you to have conversations with your teachers, counselors, and families (adults). Share the resources listed below. Review the article: [13 Reasons Why, and Its Unintended Consequences, by Brooke Fox, LCSW](#) . By reaching out to the adult population, we can educate and prepare them for any impact that students may have as they navigate the world. Hence, not spreading the word to the youth, but preparing adults on the best way to address the concern and the topic of suicide. (Lillian Tsosie-Jensen, Utah State Board of Education)*

"13 Reasons Why" has some **danger points** parents should be aware of," said Dr. Christine Moutier, chief medical officer of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. "Some teens may take away a disturbing message that suicide is presented as an acceptable solution." It is necessary for parents to become informed about suicide and warning signs.

If a parent does choose to allow their teenager to watch "13 Reasons Why," Dr. Moutier offers these tips for making it as successful an experience as possible:

1) **Start with an open conversation:** "Ask your teen have you heard of this show? Have you watched it? How did it affect you? And really listen because it might provide a window into some of their own thoughts and feelings and which themes they gravitated toward the most."

2) **Watch with your teenager:** "Watch it together every few days and talk about it while watching it."

3) **Educate yourself on suicide prevention:** "It's really helpful to know basic facts and how to approach a conversation about suicide. Learning the warning signs is one of the most obvious things that any parent can do."

The AFSP (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention) plans to release in the coming days a webinar for parents and educators on how to start a conversation around "13 Reasons Why" with children. The foundation is partnering with the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) on the resource.

For those in need of further guidance on suicide prevention, especially in schools, the three organizations have already collaborated on a "model school policy for suicide prevention," available online. The NASP also has its own "13 Reasons Why" guide for educators and families on its website.

Series Information:

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2017/04/17/suicide-13-reasons-why-mental-illness-column/100562428/>

<http://www.foxlevineandassociates.com/blog/2017/4/19/13-reasons-why-and-its-unintended-consequences>

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/preventing-youth-suicide/13-reasons-why-netflix-series-considerations-for-educators>

Suicide Information:

<https://afsp.org/our-work/education/model-school-policy-suicide-prevention/>

<https://afsp.org/about-suicide/risk-factors-and-warning-signs/>

2 Documents:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=8466656514&view=att&th=15ba59dccfa54aa2&attid=0.2&disp=inline&safe=1&zw>

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=8466656514&view=att&th=15ba59dccfa54aa2&attid=0.1&disp=inline&safe=1&zw>