

Suicide Safety Alert for Parents:

“13 Reasons Why: Season 2” to begin on 05/18/18

May 17, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Netflix has announced that it will release the second season of a miniseries called "13 Reasons Why" on Friday, May 18th. Season 1 of the miniseries was a graphic fictional account of a teenage character who dies by suicide. Netflix has not confirmed the Season 2 storylines other than to say that difficult issues will again be explored.

We want to bring this to your attention because we have found many of our students have already watched Season 1 of the miniseries, have heard about it, or are asking questions about it. Importantly, there are indications that young people are watching, re-watching, or “binge watching” the first season in order to “be up to speed” for the second season. After reviewing season 1, mental health professionals both within and outside of our school recommended students not watch the miniseries. Season 1 was rated TV-MA (Mature Audience Only), which means it was specifically designed to be viewed by adults and therefore is unsuitable for children under age 17 because of crude indecent language, explicit sexual activity, and/or graphic violence.

We want all parents to especially be aware that the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) strongly recommends that vulnerable children and youth (such as those struggling with depression, previous suicidal thoughts or behavior, or trauma) not watch this miniseries, and most certainly not alone.

This miniseries attempts to address many topics that can lead to important conversations with students, such as bullying, cyber-bullying, assault, rape, and suicide. However, aspects of the miniseries have gone against the recommendations of mental health professionals and suicide prevention models. Having not previewed the second season, we do not know if Netflix followed recommendations from mental health professionals to responsibly address these extremely sensitive topics. If your child is going to or has already watched either season, we encourage you to watch it together and discuss your reactions to the issues raised in the miniseries. Children and youth who view this miniseries should have supportive adults available to help them process it. The difficult issues portrayed do occur in schools and communities, and it is important for adults to listen, take adolescents’ concerns seriously, and be willing to offer help.

It is important for adults to be aware of what children and youth in their care are watching. This includes monitoring access to content via televisions, computers, tablets, and mobile devices.

Adults should always take suicide risk warning signs seriously, and NEVER promise to keep them a secret. Warning signs are indicators that a person may be in danger and may urgently need help. Suicide risk warning signs include:

- **Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself**
- **Looking for a way to kill oneself**
- **Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose**
- **Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable physical or emotional pain**
- **Talking about being a burden to others**
- **Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs**
- **Acting anxious, agitated, impulsive, or reckless**
- **Sleeping too little or too much**
- **Withdrawing or feeling isolated**
- **Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge**
- **Displaying extreme mood swings**
- **Giving away possessions**

****If you or a child you know needs help, resources are on the next page****

Resources available if you or a child you know needs help or you have concerns about suicide risk behaviors:

Trained school staff:

- Kathleen Bremer- District Social Worker
315.539.1442 kathleen.bremer@waterloocsd.org
- WHS Counseling Office 315.539.1552
- WMS Counseling Office 315.539.1542

These trained school staff work daily to prevent suicide by recognizing and assisting students who show warning signs or risk factors. They screen identified students, notify parents/guardians, and connect them with community services when appropriate to address their needs. We watch, we listen, we understand, and we do it without judgment.

Community and National Resources:

- Seneca County Community Counseling Center
315-539-1054
- Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP) – Clifton Springs Hospital
315-462-1080
- Finger Lakes Lifeline
211
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Crisis Call or Online Chat
1-800-273-TALK (8255) or <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>
- Crisis Text Line
Text TALK to 741741
- Seneca County Suicide Prevention Coalition on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/SenecaSuicidePrevention/>
- **If your needs are immediate, dial 911**

If your child views the miniseries, here are some resources to help you have a meaningful conversation about the subject matter:

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: www.afsp.org/13reasonswhy
- Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE): [Tips for Watching New Netflix Miniseries '13 Reasons Why'](#)
- Common Sense Media: [5 Conversations to Have with Your Teens After "13 Reasons Why"](#)