

“13 Reasons Why” Series-Guidance for Families*

Parent, Guardians and Caretakers:

Ask your child if they have heard or seen the series “13 Reasons Why”. While we don’t recommend that they be encouraged to view the series, do tell them you want to watch it, with them or to catch up, and discuss their thoughts. If they exhibit any of the warning signs above, don’t be afraid to ask if they have thought about suicide or if someone is hurting them. Raising the issue of suicide does not increase the risk or plant the idea. On the contrary, it creates the opportunity to offer help. Ask your child if they think any of their friends or classmates exhibit warning signs. Talk with them about how to seek help for their friend or classmate. Guide them on how to respond when they see or hear any of the warning signs. Listen to your children’s comments without judgment. Doing so requires that you fully concentrate, understand, respond, and then remember what is being said. Put your own agenda aside. Get help from a school-employed or community-based mental health professional if you are concerned for your child’s safety or the safety of one of their peers.

See [Preventing Youth Suicide Brief Facts](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)) and [Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips or Parents and Educators](#) for additional information.

Safe Messaging for Students:

Suicide is never a solution. It is an irreversible choice regarding a temporary problem. There is help. If you are struggling with thoughts of suicide or know someone who is, talk to a trusted adult, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text “START” to 741741. Don't be afraid to talk to your friends about how they feel and let them know you care about them. Be an “up stander” and take actions to reduce bullying and increase positive connections among others. Report concerns. Never promise to keep secret behaviors that represent a danger toward another person. Suicide is preventable. People considering suicide typically say something or does something that is a warning sign. Always take warning signs seriously and know the warning signs.

Suicide threats, both direct (“I am going to kill myself.”) and indirect (“I wish I could fall asleep and never wake up.”). Can be verbal, written, or posted online. Suicide notes and planning, including online postings. Preoccupation with death in conversation, writing, drawing, and social media. Changes in behavior, appearance/hygiene, thoughts, and/or feelings. Emotional distress. Separate myths and facts.

MYTH: Talking about suicide will make someone choose death by suicide who has never thought about it before.

FACT: There is no evidence to suggest that talking about suicide plants the idea. Talking with your friend about how they feel and letting them know that you care about them is important. This is the first step in getting your friend help.

MYTH: People who struggle with depression or other mental illness are just weak.

FACT: Depression and other mental illnesses are serious health conditions and are treatable.

MYTH: People who talk about suicide won't really do it.

FACT: People, particularly young people who are thinking about suicide, typically demonstrate warning signs.

Always take these warning signs seriously. Never leave the person alone; seek out a trusted adult immediately. School-employed mental health professionals like your school psychologist are trusted sources of help. Work with other students and the adults in the school if you want to develop a memorial for someone who has died by suicide. Although decorating a student's locker, creating a memorial social media page, or other similar activities are quick ways to remember the student who has died, they may influence others to imitate or have thoughts of wanting to die as well. It is recommended that schools develop memorial activities that encourage hope and promote positive outcomes for others (e.g., suicide prevention programs). Read these helpful points from SAVE.org and the JED Foundation to further understand how "13 Reasons Why" dramatizes situations and the realities of suicide.

See Save a Friend: Tips for Teens to Prevent Suicide for additional information.

Additional Resources

[National Suicide Prevention Hotline](#), 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text "START" to 741741

[Center for Disease Control Suicide Datasheet](#)

SAMHSA Prevention Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools,

<http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Preventing-Suicide-A-Toolkit-for-High-Schools/SMA12-4669>

[Suicide Prevention Resource Center, After a Suicide: Toolkit for Schools](#)

[Memorials: Special Considerations for Memorializing an Incident](#)

Websites:

*National Association of School Psychologists, www.nasponline.org

American Association of Sociology, www.suicidology.org

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education, www.save.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, <https://afsp.org/>

www.stopbullying.gov

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, www.rainn.org

References:

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