

School District Advisory #17
13 Reasons Why – Netflix Series – Trend Alert
Effective Date: April 25, 2017



Geo Listening will notify client and non-client school district leaders when it has discovered safety or disruptive actions trending on Social Networks or from recognized studies, authorities or news agencies. These advisories will be sent to leadership via email.

There is a growing concern among mental health professionals, child counselors, parents and school administrators regarding a Netflix series that is called “13 Reasons Why”. The show is set in an American High School and is the story of Newcomer Katherine Langford plays the role of Hannah, a young woman who takes her own life. Two weeks after her tragic death, a classmate named Clay finds a mysterious box on his porch. Inside the box are recordings made by Hannah -- on whom Clay had a crush -- in which she explains the 13 reasons why she chose to commit suicide. If Clay decides to listen to the recordings, he will find out if and how he made the list. This intricate and heart-wrenching tale is told through Clay and Hannah's dual narratives.

The first episode date aired on March 31, 2017. Mental health professionals are concerned that the show romanticizes suicide and provides a new way to leave your story behind for those that impacted your life.

As you can see in the clip below from CBC News Chicago and may have seen covered by other local or national news agencies there is a great deal of concern and guidance proactively being made available to both parents and students. While the shows stated intended audience is mature the pervasive access to Netflix by teens and pre-teens accompanied by the fact that many children will isolate themselves while watching the series due to its emotional impact is of great concern especially for the at risk students that are already struggling with social emotional issues.

We urge you to educate yourselves and determine if the district wants to follow other districts from around the nation and craft a letter to parents. We have pasted links below so you don't have to start from scratch. You may wish to discuss with local resource groups that can lend support and make it a collaborative effort to inform and provide easy access to both parents and children that may need support in having a discussion about the show and its potential impact. This is the most stressful time of year for students as they cope with the many issues that have built up over the school year and transition to new schools and the loss of friendships by graduation. Our staff will be adding characters from the show and the show name to our keywords list. The show is expected to be planning a second season so the concern will be constant especially if they choose to use new characters and reset the tragedy.

Here is some of the coverage: The first link is most informative and balanced in its coverage of the issue.
<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/13-reasons-why-suicide-how-to-talk-with-your-teen-about-netflix-show/>
<http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/schools-warn-parents-netflixs-13-reasons/story?id=47006236>
<http://abc7.com/society/13-reasons-why-sparks-conversation-on-mental-health/1915842/>

District letters from around US to Parents:

<http://fox8.com/2017/04/26/ohio-school-district-sends-parents-letter-of-concern-over-13-reasons-why/>
<https://www.socsd.org/2017/04/21/letter-to-parents-guardians-regarding-13-reasons-why-series/>
<http://q13fox.com/2017/04/25/middle-school-advises-parents-to-talk-to-kids-about-13-reasons-why/>
<https://baristanet.com/2017/04/montclair-schools-send-message-to-parents-regarding-netflix-series-13-reasons-why/>