

## School Advisory

### 13 Reasons Why – Season 2

Effective Date: May 20, 2018



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.

Season 2 of the popular Netflix series 13 Reasons Why has been released on Netflix. For anyone not familiar with the first season and show's premise, a female high school student took her own life leaving behind 13 reasons why she did it in the form of audio tapes. It has become apparent from season 1 and season 2 that the deceased student and countless other female students were raped by a fellow student athlete on the boy's baseball team. Each of the 13 tapes coincides to a separate person and their perspective of what happened was shared.

Season 2 has many trailers, which did not prove out to be accurate to the actual season episodes. That said, there are some themes that are depicted in Season 2 and it is important for you to have insight on them so that you can better understand the way that your students will be experiencing it.

Ideally, all of us need the help of every stakeholder to engage in identifying opportunities to reach any student in need at any point with the correct resources. This advisory is not meant to be prescriptive in any manner nor we attempt to interpret or assume how any student's will individually relate to the respective characters, themes or actions depicted in the series. We trust that this will provide you some insight so that you are better prepared to engage your stakeholders regarding the various concerns raised.

Our only advice after reviewing the entirety of Seasons 1-2 is that if you have children of your own or serve children in any capacity that are grade 5 or above in today's schools, we highly encourage a review of the 26 episodes on Netflix during a 30-day free trial. We believe that you will gain insights that will bolster your foundation of experience and assist you in not only having a better understanding of the issues facing today's students, but also drive positive change for future students.

**This advisory is longer than normal due to the 13 hours of video content reviewed from season 2, but necessary to provide you with a solid base of information to share and utilize internally. This advisory contains descriptions of scenes from the series that include physical assault, sexual assault, and sodomy.**

#### **Season 2 Themes:**

Bullying, Slut Shaming, Isolation, Anger Control, Sexual Assault, Victim Fear, Heroin Addiction, Marijuana Use, Underage Drinking, unsupervised House Parties, Athletic Privilege, Affluenza, Absentee Parenting, Helicopter Parenting, Feeling of Being Powerless reinforced by school district needing to defend itself.

**Please review subsequent pages for more detail regarding these themes and the major theme of how a student was driven to become a potential school shooter. Real students are expressing anger on social media regarding the sexual assault of a male student and his effort for revenge as a school shooter.**

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Here is an example from Minneapolis Public Schools one way that they are providing resources to stakeholders regarding this series.

[http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/13\\_reasons\\_resources\\_for\\_families.html](http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/13_reasons_resources_for_families.html)

#### Research study of 5,000 teens by Northwestern University

<https://13reasonsresearch.soc.northwestern.edu/> - Main page of the study

[https://13reasonsresearch.soc.northwestern.edu/netflix\\_us-report\\_final-print.pdf](https://13reasonsresearch.soc.northwestern.edu/netflix_us-report_final-print.pdf) - US Report

#### Short documentary from the perspective of victims and the effect on them from watching 13RW

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0eWlpc2dsE>

**Trailers for Season 2 13RW** – *If you choose to watch the series or season, you will see that many of the scenes in the trailers are not in the final published version of Season 2.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8KuDLdRwEY> This clip shows interaction between students that reveals a sexual assault and suicide

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INuybFt2Zlo> This trailer begins with students on the floor during an active shooting in a school

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44KBzzk1EHM> This clip covers the frustration of a student over the school's response to a suicide

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ry-TOaM2Kfk> This is from the perspective of the cast and producers advocating for the conversation

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#### Major Theme:

No one understands students, not parents, not school staff and often not even other students that are just trying to survive without being caught up in the drama. The entirety of the season has the school staff and the legal system failing students once they had raised the courage to stand up for themselves.

During the entire season a pair of students and then a single student is portrayed as having the makings of a school shooter with nothing to lose. In the final episode the student returns to their school after having been assigned to a behavioral program after a vandalism incident. Upon his return, he has lost all of his meaningful connections and begins to feel isolated. There is an incident of retaliation for the vandalism from a group of baseball players and the student is beaten and sodomized with a mop handle in the boy's bathroom, which goes unreported.

The show asks the question, "The next time that someone is in desperate need and they are about to make a terrible mistake, what do we do?" The next paragraph describes the scenes that pose as an answer from the students.

In the final scenes of the season the troubled student prepares for an attack on classmates at a school dance and he texts a former love interest and she warns his friends. Rather than call the police, they decide that it would ruin the student's life, so they choose to intervene directly. One student meets the potential shooter outside of the school dance. The potential shooter is armed with several handguns, a backpack of ammo, pipe bombs and an assault rifle with a bump stock. He aims the rifle directly at the intervening student as he pleads why the potential assailant is important to him and that he cares. He is able to talk assailant into surrendering the rifle and another student rushes him away in a car before the police arrive while he is still armed and in possession of the pipe bombs.

#### The Potential School Shooter

The series depicts a collection of actions taken against the student by both peer students and staff of the school. Incidents start small after student was being picked on and made to feel like an outcast and run quickly toward firing a gun in the woods. Depict the thrill the student experiences of shooting a handgun. After the two teens are seen shooting handguns in the woods, a parent takes the two students shooting and teaches them how to properly handle and use a handgun.

- When kids feel powerless and unheard they lash out
- Violent video games were depicted as a factor in
- Vandalism of school property was a leading indicator of a student with a challenge
- Escalation and elation of shooting cans and bottles and then shooting a crow.
- Recruitment of another student into the use of firearms
- Exhibits and endorses the naming of the targets of the people that you don't like
- After becoming isolated a student struggles, then finds a group to bond with only to become isolated from them as well after he returns from a behavioral program.
- He had referenced having more guns to his former vandalism accomplice, but that relationship has dissolved and that student did not report

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#### Suicide

- The students were prohibited to talk about suicide with a punishment of suspension
- Recovery and struggle of one student that shot himself in the head in an attempted suicide He does not want to be afraid anymore.
- Guilt of being a witness and doing nothing
- Life is now divided between when the person was alive and then after the person is deceased
- A student gets a semi-colon tattoo on his wrist, which is symbolic of project semi-colon; a movement that gives hope to troubled teens that provides them a reminder to continue their story, like a writer choosing to continue a sentence that could have ended. <https://projectsemicolon.com/>
- Depicts the very emotional journey for students after a peer suicide and their need to understand why

#### Sexual Assault- Rape

The sexual assaults committed by the star baseball player are at the center of the theme for the series as the students that are in the know work to get justice both by their own hand and through what are deemed as the proper channels (The System) However, there is a continuous cover up of the sexual assault by players, avoidance by victims and denial by parents that were not knowledgeable of their children's activities.

- Sexting was presented as part of the school district's defense saying that she was soliciting for it and was a promiscuous girl. Based on the script, those were the rumors and not the actuality.
- A detailed description during a support group session for sexual assault regarding the rape of a female cheerleader by a boy's baseball team player
- Boys brag about things that they do with girls sexually and make up the narrative for what they did not do
- A girl that was slut shamed from a single photo that stood her ground against harassment and sexual advances was able to make a true friend and lose their mutual virginity together. This was a factor in her eventual rape by a jealous teammate on the boy's baseball team
- The show depicts the historic and continuous sexual abuse and resulting slut shaming between male athletes and students
- Maybe we will never stop being victims
- Depiction of female victims caving in under the pressure of testifying or sharing their experience
- The fear that victims face day in and day out about coming forward
- Victim providing her testimony of being sexually assaulted
- Guilt of not having stopped a sexual assault and not coming forward afterwards to defend student
- The show utilizes the theme of the MeToo movement to make a point that schools must do better
- The final episode opens with the sentencing hearing for the sexual offender. It starts with the victim and then uses a flow of victims that tap into the MeToo movement as they testify while being embodied as the single victim at the rostrum.
- After all of the buildup the sexual offender received 3-months of probation as a sentence.

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#### Drug Use

- Crack cocaine use
- Drug overdose
- Use of heroine
- Buying drugs from someone at school
- Casual use of marijuana
- The student recovering from a heroin addiction relapses in the last episode

#### Bullying

- Bullied to death
- Justice for the dead and those that are still suffering
- Lies become truth

#### Athletic Prowess and Privilege

Baseball coach expected favors regarding player behaviors from disciplinarians. The coach provided access to player to a shed behind the baseball field for their use, but left it unsupervised. The star player sexually assaulted girls in the shed after providing both drugs and alcohol as well as kept a Polaroid collection of the visiting girls and the assaults. The baseball coach also provided clean urine to players for drug testing. The theme of entitlement ran throughout the 2 seasons for both the athletes and the affluent.

The baseball team as a whole was depicted as rapists although they allowed for several players to state their abstinence from the shed and other activities. Most of the activity centers around the star player, which ultimately receives 3-months of probation as a sentence for raping a passed out female student at an off campus party. There were a continuous series of retaliations by several players for the boy's baseball team against anyone that tried to speak up about what was going on. There were 3 major physical assaults in season 2 and no punishments were handed out as 2 of the 3 incidents went unreported due to the students feeling powerless. During the 3<sup>rd</sup>, a hallway fight between a sub group of baseball team players and the students trying to be heard on the issues of the school and the assault, the athletes were lightly disciplined due to state playoffs and the others were more severely disciplined.

- A strong belief by those being affected that there are students that the rules don't apply to. They can get away with anything.
- Cover up by the coaching staff of the clubhouse - place where students were sexually assaulted on campus
- Parental inability to control male dominant child.

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#### Affluence

- Shows affluent HS student drinking wine with his family at dinner with his girlfriend
- Wealth wins out over righteousness
- Shows student, that basically lives alone in a large house absent of supervision, consuming hard liquor

#### School and School District

- Poisonous school cultured
- Depiction of school administrators protecting selves
- Counsellors and administrators that may feel powerless to help
- Administrator stating, "Suicide contagion is a real thing and we need to protect kids."
- Secret places on campus
- Perspective of school counselor: You try to keep an eye out for every kid, but you can't. You rely on them to come to you when they need you. But not every kid that comes to you knows how to ask for the help that they need nor can they tell you the truth.
- School District attorney used low self-esteem of deceased/suicide student as defense and asked, "When do we hold the parents responsible?"
- Blame falls to the school
- In a jury trial the school district was found not responsible for the death/suicide of student.

#### Student's Perspectives and areas of concern

- No one looks out for us
- There are people who get hurt and people that do the hurting
- Must isolate one's-self in order to survive
- Words of children (You're Ugly) are more powerful than the words of parents (You're Beautiful)
- Sexual encounters and their awkward moments during first experiences
- Sometimes keeping secrets is how you survive
- One picture, one moment can define you and become your truth
- When rumors spread you can fight them, but they never go away
- Telling the truth can only bring personal harm
- Once you are tagged, that's it. You can't be seen outside of the defined group
- Shows several HS students using "hook up" apps. These are restricted to 18+
- Shows a student using a live streaming sex video chat. These are restricted to 18+
- Someone sent a loaded gun to a student that had a failed suicide by gun attempt
- Continuous suggestion that students are left with no other choice, but to take matters into their own hands for a sense of justice.
- Most afraid of being all alone after losing all of your friends
- Student stuck in their own head engaging with the deceased student from season 1