



Statement from Experts on the Upcoming Release of *13 Reasons Why*, Season 2

Last spring the Netflix series, *13 Reasons Why*, captured the attention of youth globally and created countless discussions among teens and some between teens and their families about suicide, mental health, bullying and more. Concerns were raised by mental health advocacy groups and experts about whether the series presented risks to some viewers because of how the show addressed some of these important and complicated issues.

The organizations listed below represent thousands of mental health and suicide prevention experts, education experts and professionals from around the world with decades of experience working with youth, parents, schools and communities. With the upcoming release of *13 Reasons Why* season 2 on Friday, May 18th, and following the recent school shootings and an increase in online violence, organizations from around the world have asked Netflix to cover the many difficult issues included in the series responsibly.

Research demonstrates that depictions of violence and self-harm can increase the likelihood of copycat behaviors. Adolescents are a vulnerable and highly impressionable group, frequently copying others' behaviors or reacting in response to things they have seen. Based on how season 1 ended and from the pre-release trailers, cast interviews and pre-release statements from Netflix blog posts, we assume that topics in the series might include: suicide, school and personal violence, bullying, sexual assault and substance abuse.

Given the gravity of these issues, we believe it is important to convey our concerns and recommendations to parents, educators and professionals in advance of the season release in an effort to help reduce the risk of a tragedy. This should be taken as an **alert**, not as a warning.

1. For vulnerable and at-risk youth (for example those living with depression or an anxiety disorder) we encourage families to make a thoughtful decision about whether or not to watch *13 Reasons Why* because of the triggering impact it might have on them. We recommend using the show's TV rating as a source of guidance about the intensity of the content. Some of the story lines could be quite upsetting and result in them needing additional monitoring, support and/or treatment.
2. If your teens do watch the series, make an effort to watch with them. This will allow you the opportunity to monitor the impact the show has on your child. It also affords you the chance to talk after each episode and ensure that they are comfortable enough to continue watching.
3. If you are not able to watch together, talk with your teens about their thoughts, reactions and their feelings about the content. Check in with them multiple times as it can take a few days to process the content and they will likely continue to talk about the show with their peers. Let them know that they can come to you with questions or worries about themselves or their friends and that you will be there to listen and help guide them.
4. Reassure youth that fiction and reality are not the same thing. Even though some might believe that what they have seen on television is or feels like reality, it is critical that you help them understand it is not and that the outcomes from the series do not have to be their outcomes.



5. Learn what resources are available in your local community where you can find help if needed. These might include: a local public health agency, a mental health professional, the counselors in your child's school, or a crisis phone service in your area. Knowing who you can reach out to for support is a good prevention strategy.

Along with the release of *13 Reasons Why* season 2, we plan to release a website with information, resources and toolkits for youth/peers, parents, educators and clinicians/professionals for families to address the specific topics raised in the episodes (www.13reasonswhytoolkit.org).

We applaud Netflix for consulting with experts from around the world in advance of the release of season 2 and providing helpful resources to their audience. We know that they will be releasing additional resources for viewers including an after-series video for parents and youth. Netflix has already released a very well done warning video and other resources that can be found at www.13reasonswhy.info.

Organizations participating in the support of this statement and the soon to be released toolkits:

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association of Suicidology
American Psychiatric Association
Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention
British Psychological Society
Danish Research Institute for Suicide Prevention
International Association for Suicide Prevention
International Academy for Suicide Research
Medical University of Vienna, Center for Public Health, Dept of Social and Preventive Medicine
Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand
National Association of School Psychologists
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Suicide Research Foundation, Ireland
Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health, Australia
Samaritans/Befriender's Worldwide
Stanford Psychiatry's Center for Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing
School of Public Health, University College Cork, Ireland
Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide
Suicidal Behaviour Research Laboratory, University of Glasgow, Scotland
Suicide Awareness Voices of Education
The Jason Foundation
The Jed Foundation (JED)
The Lancet Psychiatry
The Trevor Project