



<http://cemh.lbpsb.qc.ca>

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL BOARDS CONCERNING THE 13 REASONS WHY NETFLIX SERIES

The Centre of Excellence for Mental Health is sharing information regarding the series on Netflix called *13 Reasons Why*. This series is an adaptation of a novel of the same title that chronicles the experiences of a group of high school students as they learn more about how a classmate died by suicide.

This series has garnered a lot of public and media attention. The way in which suicide is addressed in the series has raised concerns. Consequently, Centre of Excellence for Mental Health is providing school boards with following information in order to respond to any situations related to this television show that may arise. School boards may wish to consider doing the following:

1. Share the resources contained in this document with schools and professionals. The intention is to raise awareness about the series. This can be done through a memo or staff meetings.
2. Consider communicating with parents to discourage watching this series. You may also wish to share suicide prevention resources and encourage conversation that does not glamorize or sensationalize suicidal behavior. It is understood that this is a sensitive topic and may require discussion with others at your school to decide if this is an appropriate action for your school community at this time.
3. Should students talk openly about the show, guide the conversation toward critical thinking and reinforce the following messages:
 - Suicidal behavior is complex. No one can clearly identify all of the reasons why someone dies by suicide. The reasons underlying suicide are complicated and nuanced. Suicide almost always involves a mental health problem like depression or anxiety. This show can be criticized for

oversimplifying the “why” of suicide and suggests there is a direct link between harassment/bullying and suicide.

- The show demonstrates what can happen when teens experience distress and do not go to adults to ask for help. However, the show falls short in that it does not model what actions can be taken when adolescents are in difficulty. This is unrealistic as we know that reaching out to others can make a difference and asking for help does make things better. The fact that the show depicts teens who are alone in facing these problems only contributes to a feeling of hopelessness for those watching it.
 - It is important to reach out to those who are going through a difficult time and encourage that students get help. Talking to parents, teachers, and professionals are all encouraged as is sharing resources that schools have at their disposal (e.g., helplines)
4. For students who do express suicidal thoughts, feelings or behaviors encourage your staff to contact your school mental health professional, a local crisis centre, or a mental health professional in the health and social service sector (hospital or CLSC).
 5. School-based Mental Health professionals need to be made aware of this issue and know that they may be called upon to provide assistance in the area of suicide prevention or to assist in responding to this television series.

The following resources are offered:

<http://www.newstatesman.com/culture/tv-radio/2017/04/netflix-13-reasons-why-suicide-irresponsible>

https://www.save.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/13RW-Talking-Points-Final_v5.pdf

<https://childmind.org/search/#!/term=13%20reasons>

Suicide prevention resources: <http://cemh.lbpsb.qc.ca/suicide.htm>

More information is also available in the attached resources that accompany this document. One is created by the National Association of School Psychologists, one is from the AQPS and the other is from the CISS des Laurentides.

April 28, 2017