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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY

Suicide Prevention is **Everyone's Business**
AAS is a charitable, nonprofit membership organization

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American Association of Suicidology Responds to '13 Reasons Why'

Suicide is preventable and depression is treatable. Since the release of the Netflix series "13 Reasons Why" (13RW), there has been a significant uptick in reports from mental health professionals that teen viewers are being negatively impacted, evidenced by increases in emergency department visits and hospitalizations.

Over 120 Americans die from suicide daily; 15 of them are young people between the ages of 15 and 24 (Drapeau & McIntosh, 2016). Direct, non-judgmental conversations with youth about mental health, suicide, hope, and recovery have positive effects that last throughout the lifespan. Every community member can save a life. The suicide prevention community needs the media to spread this message to protect the lives of young people in the U.S.

13RW highlights many challenging situations students often experience during their educational careers, including loss of romantic relationships, sexual assault, bullying, and suicide. This presents an opportunity for parents to examine how schools handle their policies regarding mental health and suicide prevention/postvention in their districts (if at all). The new book *Suicide in Schools* (Erbacher et al) is an easy-to-read, comprehensive, critical resource that can be utilized to develop programs, policies, and procedures to prepare and improve school systems across the country. The effects of the series also shine a spotlight on the importance of communication within family groups. Suicide and self-harm are a prevalent theme in pop culture and on social media. It is important for parents and guardians to have open, reciprocal dialogue with their children about it. Talk to your children about their challenges, take care not to conflate them with their issues; better outcomes are associated with teens who receive emotional support focusing on the complexity of interactions they may be experiencing. As parents or guardians, take the time to learn about your local resources. Crisis call centers can provide additional, outside support and are typically available 24/7. You can find your local National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Network crisis center here - <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/our-network/>

AAS Board members have been in contact with Netflix, urging them to develop additional warnings before each episode to share relevant crisis and intervention services. If you are a Netflix subscriber, we urge you to contact them via phone or their live chat feature and request they add these warnings. Their

support phone is 1 (866) 579-7172 or email the CEO of Netflix Reed Hastings: reed.hastings@netflix.com.

In 2017, AAS and its membership are working to develop further inroads with various entertainment industry stakeholders to collaborate more openly on messaging surrounding suicide, crisis and self harm in a manner that is more beneficial to the public and practical for writers and performers. By working together can we address this in realistic, effective, and appropriate ways.

Resources:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255; suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Safety Planning App - my3app.org

Crisis Text Line - Text Start to 741 741; crisistextline.org

Trevor Project - 1-866-488-7386; trevorproject.org

Trans Lifeline - 877-565-8860; translifeline.org

www.youthsuicidewarningsigns.org

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About AAS: Founded in 1968 by Edwin S. Shneidman, PhD, AAS promotes suicide as a research discipline, public awareness programs, public education and training for professionals and volunteers. The membership of AAS includes mental health and public health professionals, researchers, suicide prevention and crisis intervention centers, school districts, crisis center volunteers, survivors of suicide loss, attempt survivors, and a variety of lay persons who have in interest in suicide prevention. You can learn more about AAS at suicidology.org. In honor of those who have died from suicide, or in the service of the families and communities grieving a loss, consider making a donation to the American Association of Suicidology [here](https://suicidology.org).