

Civic Minds

Date: Friday, May 5, 2017

Print Replica Date: Tuesday, May 2, 2017

Article Title: Netflix series about teen girl's fictional suicide raises alarm

Section: MAIN, A10

****Please review the article prior to starting the lesson in your classroom, to determine whether the content is appropriate for your students and grade level.***

Learning Objectives

- ✓ Students will examine why it's important to discuss issues like mental illness and suicide prevention.
- ✓ Students will discuss the impact depression can play on a teenager.
- ✓ Students will debate how a controversial Netflix show is impacting the topic of suicide.
- ✓ Students will learn tools and resources to help someone in need of suicide prevention.

CCSS Standards

Social Studies EALR 1: Civics

The student understands and applies knowledge of government, law, politics, and the nation's fundamental documents to make decisions about local, national, and international issues and to demonstrate thoughtful, participatory citizenship.

Social Studies EALR 3: Geography

Understands the cultural universals of place, time, family life, economics, communication, arts, recreation, food, clothing, shelter, transportation, government, and education.

Social Studies EALR 4: History

- Analyzes the motives and interests behind an interpretation of a recent event.

Social Studies EALR 5: Social Studies

- Analyzes consequences of positions on an issue or event.
- Analyzes the short-term and long-term implications of decisions affecting the global community.

Vocabulary

Look up the definition for ***vengeful***. Please write the definition and create a new sentence, using your own words.

The tapes are part justification for her suicide and part ***vengeful*** accusation of her peers.

Vengeful definition:

New Sentence:

Civic Minds Activity:

Take a moment to review today's print replica of The Seattle Times. Can you find a story that stands out to you regarding a global issue or someone that was inspired to help others?

Pre-Reading Questions

- What do you think the article will be about?
- Do you think mental illness is more accepted now? Why or why not?
- Do you know anyone that has a mental illness? How does it affect their life? How does it affect the lives of those closest to them?
- Has suicide affected your school or community? If so, have you been able to talk with your parents, counselors or teachers about how the incident made you feel?
- Is there a way to help those who are in pain or have signs of depression?
- Have you heard about the Netflix show "13 Reasons Why?" What is it about? Have you watched it? Do you watch it with your parents? Why or why not?
- Is watching TV shows that highlight teen problems a good way for parents to communicate about important issues with their children? Why or why not?
- Do you know of local community resources or hotlines for those struggling with depression or suicidal thoughts and where they can get help?
- Is it good to talk about important topics like this in school and at home? Why or why not?

Comprehension Questions:

1. But in the month since the show's release, a rising chorus of mental-health experts contend that too many of the show's messages on suicide are inaccurate and potentially dangerous. Superintendents and school counselors around the country have issued warnings to parents that "13 Reasons Why" glorifies suicide and could lead to what?
2. Its creators have defended the show, saying they aimed to make the drama what?
3. Netflix has created an accompanying 30-minute documentary "Beyond the Reasons," which includes the cast, producers and mental health experts discussing some of the show's more difficult scenes. In the documentary, Brian Yorkey, the creator of the series, said what about the suicide in the show.
4. What is the JED Foundation? What did the group issue about the show?

5. The National Association of School Psychologists has advised teenagers who have had suicidal thoughts to avoid the series entirely. What do they recommend?
6. The problem, suicide-prevention experts said, is that even an ugly suicide can beget copycats. What does the research show?
7. The statement runs counter to the advice given to teachers and peers about how to help those struggling with depression and suicidal thoughts. What are the three key things to do when you think someone is struggling?
8. What is the National Suicide Prevention line number?

Class Discussion Questions or Journal/Essay Prompts:

- Do you think watching a show like this would prompt someone with suicidal thoughts to harm themselves? Why or why not?
- Have you ever had negative thoughts in your mind that you might want to hurt yourself? Who did you turn to for help?

“We are concerned about our children watching this series without adult supervision because it romanticizes and sensationalizes the idea of suicide,” Lisa Brady, superintendent of schools in Dobbs Ferry, New York, wrote in an email to parents.

“If kids have a history of depression, self-harm or suicidal thoughts, I don’t think they need to watch it.”

- Do you agree or disagree with Brady’s statement above?

In a statement, Netflix said the writers sought the advice of medical professionals while writing the script, and the show carries a TV-MA rating as well as a warning about graphic content. “Our members tell us that 13 Reasons Why has helped spark important conversations in their families and communities around the world,” the statement said.

- Do you believe that this show and its content are sparking important conversations? Why or why not?

Some parents have defended the show. Dawn Zawadzki, a paralegal from Fort Mill, South Carolina, said she watched part of the series with her 16-year-old daughter. “Everybody is saying ‘it glamorizes suicide,’ but I don’t think it does,” she said. “It’s making us wake up and look at it.”

- Do you agree with Dawn’s take on the show? Why or why not?

“It’s complicated, because they got a lot of important issues out on the table,” Schwartz said. But he’s concerned that students could think of suicide as a way to get back at people and worried that showing the specific way Hannah died would spur imitators. “The missteps are high stakes,” he concluded.

- Do you think teens will think of suicide as a way of getting back at people? Why or why not?

Although the creators of “13 Reasons Why” aspired to educate, the show itself never mentions a critical point: most children who die by suicide have a mental-health disorder like depression that is treatable.

- Why do you think the show didn’t focus on the mental health side and that it can be treated?

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