

INFORMATION ABOUT TEEN SUICIDE

Romans 5:3-5, “We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.” (NLT)

While God has provided excellent resources in the Bible to talk with your children on the subject of suicide, in light of the increasingly popular Netflix series “13 Reasons Why”, we want to come along side parents and provide some further resources on ways to talk to your students about this show and suicide.

While many youth are resilient and capable of differentiating between TV drama and real life, mental health professionals recommend young people watch this series with an adult to provide prospective and help them process what they are seeing and feeling.

Talking points for parents:

1. Ask your child if they have heard or seen the series *13 Reasons Why*. While we don't recommend they be encouraged to view the series, do tell them you want to watch it with them if they/you choose or to catch up afterward to discuss their thoughts.
2. If they exhibit warning signs don't be afraid to ask if they have thoughts about suicide or if someone is hurting them. Raising the issue of suicide does not increase the risk or plant the idea. On the contrary, it creates the opportunity to offer help.
3. Ask your child if they think any of their friends or classmates exhibit warning signs. Talk with them about how to seek help for a friend or classmate. Guide them on how to respond if they see or hear any warning signs.
4. Listen to your children's comments without judgment. Doing so requires that you fully concentrate, understand, respond and remember what is being said. Put your own agenda aside.
5. Get help from a school-employed or community-based mental health professional if you are concerned for your child's safety or the safety of one of their peers.

Warning signs:

Warning signs are indicators that a person may urgently need help:

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself;
- Looking for a way to kill oneself;
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose;
- Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain;
- Talking about being a burden to others;

- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs;
- Acting anxious, agitated, or reckless;
- Sleeping too little or too much;
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated;
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge; and
- Displaying extreme mood swings.

This list of Warning Signs for Suicide was developed by an expert review and consensus process that included SAVE's Executive Director and was informed by a review of relevant research and literature. Additional information about the warning signs can be found in the following published article: Rudd, M. D., Berman, A. L., Joiner, T. E., Jr., Nock, M. K., Silverman, M. M., Mandrusiak, M., et al. (2006). Warning signs for suicide: Theory, research, and clinical applications. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 36(3), 255-262.

What to do if you see the warning signs of suicide:

- Do not leave the person alone. If possible, ask for help from friends or other family members.
- Ask the person to give you any weapons he or she might have. Take away or remove sharp objects or anything else that the person could use to hurt himself or herself.
- If the person is already in psychiatric treatment, help him or her to contact the doctor or therapist for guidance and help.
- Try to keep the person as calm as possible.
- Call 911 or take the person to an emergency room.

Additional Resources

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education: www.save.org

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line: Text "Start" to 741741

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: <https://afsp.org/>
www.stopbullying.gov

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network: www.rainn.org

JED Foundation: www.jedfoundation.org

If you are interested in a referral for local Christian Counseling, please contact Susan Abbott at 260-469-3700 or susan@sonrisechurch.info.