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Dear Parents,

Sadly, youth suicide is a real issue in communities across the nation, including the Greater Cincinnati area. Recently, the streaming Netflix Series *13 Reasons Why* has prompted concerns among educators and mental health professionals about the potential of teenagers “binge watching” the series without appropriate adult guidance and support. The following information is adapted from the National Association for School Psychologists (NASP):

“13 Reasons Why” Netflix Series: Considerations

The trending Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*, based on a young adult novel of the same name, has raised concerns, and the following information provides cautions and guidance for addressing issues related to this widely-viewed TV series.

Cautions

Research shows that exposure to another person’s suicide, or to sensationalized accounts of death, can be one of the many risk factors that youth struggling with mental-health conditions cite as a reason they think of, or attempt, suicide. Discussions present an opportunity to help them process the issues addressed, consider the consequences of certain choices, and reinforce the message that **suicide is not a solution to problems** and that help is available. **This is particularly important for adolescents who are isolated, struggling, or vulnerable to suggestive images and storylines.**

Guidance for Families

1. Ask your children if they have heard of or seen the series *13 Reasons Why*. Please refer to the [Talking Points](#) document, which is posted on the CPS website, for processing this TV show.
2. Know common warning signs which include:
 1. Suicide threats, both direct (“I am going to kill myself.”) and indirect (“I wish I could fall asleep and never wake up.”). Threats can be verbal or written, including online postings.
 2. Giving away prized possessions.
 3. Preoccupation with death in conversation, writing, drawing, and on social media.

4. Changes in behavior, appearance and hygiene, thoughts, and/or feelings.
5. Emotional distress.
3. When warning signs are observed, take the following actions:
 1. Remain calm, be nonjudgmental, and listen.
 2. Avoid statements that might be perceived as minimizing the emotional pain (e.g., "You need to move on." or "You should get over it.").
 3. Reassure the person that there is help available and that he or she will not feel like this forever.
 4. Ask directly if the child has thoughts about suicide. Raising the issue of suicide does not increase the risk or plant the idea. On the contrary, it creates opportunities to offer help.
 5. Provide constant supervision. **Do not leave the person alone.**
 6. Without putting yourself in danger, remove means for self-harm, including any weapons the person might find.
 7. **Get help.** Never agree to keep a person's suicidal thoughts a secret.
4. **Suicide is never a solution. It is an irreversible choice for a temporary problem. There is help. If you are struggling with thoughts of suicide or know someone who is, talk to a trusted adult, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text "START" to 741741.**

More detailed information can be found on the [National Association for School Psychologists'](#) website. You also may contact your child's school mental-health staff with questions or concerns (school psychologist, school social workers, partner mental-health agency, etc.). Additional resources are available on the CPS website: cps-k12.org

Your child's safety and well-being are a primary concern for us, and we will continue to address this issue when we feel it is needed.

Sincerely,



Mary A. Ronan
Superintendent

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