



The Public Schools of Brookline
Brookline Town Hall
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Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent

April 27, 2017

Dear Brookline Families,

Supporting the social and emotional health of our students is an important aspect of the work of the Public Schools of Brookline. As part of this work, when necessary, we reach out to families to make them aware of issues that may be of concern. We write to you today to make sure you are aware of the new Netflix series, *13 Reasons Why*, which is raising concerns from suicide prevention experts about the potential risks posed by its sensationalized treatment of youth suicide.

In recent days, a growing number of our students are talking about *13 Reasons Why*. The story's main character is a high school student who commits suicide, leaving behind thirteen tapes which detail the reasons behind her taking her own life. The series deals with challenging issues including bullying, cyberbullying, depression, and abuse. The series contains graphic scenes of sexual assault, rape, and suicide.

We write to you today to ensure that you are aware of the show. Teenage suicide is an extremely difficult topic that both students and adults struggle to understand and process. We encourage you to:

- Ask your child if they have watched the show or discussed the show with peers who have watched it.
- If your child has already watched or discussed the show, we encourage you to discuss the show with them.
- If your child has not yet watched the show but asks to view it, we encourage you to watch it with them or preview it prior to their watching.

Our team of school counselors has been made aware of the impact of this show and are prepared to provide any supports you may need. Our multidisciplinary team of counselors, nurses, social workers, and health and physical education teachers will be participating in a meeting to discuss the importance of being aware of the film's potential silent impact, and will be encouraged to keep it in the forefront when working with our students. If you have a concern or question, we encourage you to work closely with the school counseling team at your child's school.

Below are several links which provide additional resources to support conversations with your child about this series, and a list of our school-based guidance counselors is attached.

National Association of School Psychologists (background)

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/preventing-youth-suicide/13-reasons-why-netflix-series-considerations-for-educators>

Jed Foundation (issues raised)

<https://www.jedfoundation.org/13-reasons-jed-point-view/>

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (talking points)

<https://www.save.org/13-reasons-why/>

Sincerely,

Andrew Bott
Superintendent

Christina Palmer
Director of Guidance

Tricia Laham
Coordinator of School Health

Public Schools of Brookline: School Counseling Staff

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