



Haldimand - Norfolk

REACH

supporting children, families, communities

13 Reasons Why

As most people are now aware, '13 Reasons Why' is a new series that was released on Netflix in its entirety in recent weeks. The series depicts the story of teenager Hannah who dies by suicide. The series focuses on the reasons why Hannah took her own life.

Young people, parents, teachers and caregivers all have varying opinions about the series, all with good intentions to be sure. Suicide is a difficult topic to think, hear and talk about and bringing graphic details to the screen can be impactful for anyone watching. Some adults are asking that the series be taken down from Netflix, or that youth not be allowed to watch the series since it may cause undue stress and worry and in fact evoke such strong feelings that will put some youth at risk. Some youth have cited the series as groundbreaking, highlighting the real issues and problems that youth face and some of the consequences that can come about as a result.

What we know is that there are very strong feelings on all sides of this issue. There is also research that indicates that "glamourizing" suicide can potentially negatively impact youth who may be at risk. We also know that the series has been widely viewed by youth and will continue to be. What better time then to start a conversation with the youth in your life about suicide and most importantly suicide prevention? There is an opportunity here to check in with the youth in your life about their thoughts and feelings about the issue of suicide, how they feel the series represented the issues and help them reflect on any concerns they may have as a result of watching the series. It will provide an opportunity to help you understand and highlight the way the youth deals with stress and challenges focusing on their skills and positive ways of coping.

We would encourage all parents and caregivers to open up this conversation with the youth in your life. Watching the series with your youth would be a good idea. Learning from youth what their thoughts and feelings are about this difficult issue and listening without judgement is also a good place to start. If you have any concerns related to what you are hearing please reach out for help and support at the numbers below. Please also share this information with the youth in your life and encourage them to seek help if they feel they may be at risk. We have also attached a list here of points to consider that was distributed by the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council that may be helpful.

Haldimand-Norfolk Child and Youth Crisis Service: 24/7/365 1-866-327-3224

www.hopemore.ca : a website with local helping resources for youth

Be Safe app: a free app for smart phones that provides local information, phone numbers and safety planning for youth in Haldimand-Norfolk. Make sure you choose the Haldimand-Norfolk area when you download.

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868