

American Association of Suicidology Applauds Netflix & 13 Reasons Why Creators for Removing Graphic Suicide Scene

WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES, July 16, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) applauds both Netflix and the creators of the popular series 13 Reasons Why in their decision to remove a graphic suicide depiction from the first season. This is an example of a major player in the entertainment industry responding to research and expert consultation and attempting to mitigate further negative effects. Suicide remains the second leading cause of death for youth ages 15-24, the target demographic for this television series. For those experiencing thoughts of suicide, especially in this age range and those who are already vulnerable, graphic depictions of suicide can significantly increase risk of an attempt.



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“Our ongoing conversations with Netflix suggest that they are listening to feedback from the suicide prevention community about what works and doesn't work in their programming,” says Jonathan Singer, PhD, LCSW, AAS President and Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at Loyla University Chicago. “Some will say that Netflix's actions are too little too late. I believe that it is never too late to do the right thing in suicide prevention.”

There are thousands of suicide prevention expert members of AAS who are willing and able to provide consultation to Netflix and other media companies around issues of suicide. We look forward to continuing to work with them, with individual creators, and the entertainment industry to help solidify and strengthen the standards of depicting suicide and related risks in popular content.”

Recent research has shown increases in both suicide attempts in adolescents as well as an increase in emergency department visits of youth in the US following the release of 13 Reasons Why in 2017. While these associations don't necessarily imply direct causation, the phenomena was concerning to many suicidologists, researchers, and parents across the country. While this decision on the part of Netflix is very welcome, these conversations regarding mental health and suicide messaging certainly need to be prioritized in the creation of future content.

“Partnering with the media to help them portray suicide accurately and in a way that provides hope and resources for those impacted by experiences related to suicide can make a positive difference,” says John Ackerman, PhD, member of AAS's Communications Committee and Suicide Prevention Coordinator for the Center for Suicide Prevention and Research at Nationwide Children's Hospital. “There is more work to be done throughout the entertainment industry, but it is an encouraging step to see a high profile show making changes for the safety of viewers. We hope even more research and more media collaboration results from this decision.”

For the Media: Responsible reporting on suicide, including stories of hope and resilience, can prevent more suicides. Please visit the [Suicide Reporting Recommendations](#) for more information.

About AAS: Founded in 1968 by Edwin S. Shneidman, PhD, AAS promotes the research of suicide and its prevention, public awareness programs, public education and training for professionals and volunteers. The membership of AAS includes mental health and public health professionals, researchers, suicide prevention and crisis intervention centers, school districts, crisis center volunteers, survivors of suicide loss, attempt survivors, and a variety of lay persons who have in interest in suicide prevention. You can learn more about AAS at www.suicidology.org.

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