**WAHPSA Networking discussion**

**Cyril Jackson Senior Campus**

**Wednesday 10 May 2017.**

# Topic - “National and international research clearly indicates the very real impact and risk to harmful suicide exposure leading to increased risk and possible suicide contagion.”

Recently there has been much discussion regarding the Netflix series, 13 Reasons Why. Agencies such as headspace and Mental Health First Aid have produced resources explaining why they are concerned, and how to respond to students viewing the content.

The series revolves around a high school student and his friend, who committed suicide after suffering a series of demoralizing circumstances, brought on by select individuals at her school. A box of tapes recorded by Hannah before her suicide details thirteen reasons why she ended her life. (Source - Wikipedia)

**Discussion**

13 Reasons Why is a Netflix series rated MA. It is also able to be viewed online.

The series features graphic scenes including sexual assault and suicide. It is being viewed by WA young people, causing some concern from schools, parents and mental health agencies.

Positives:

* The series does provide a new perspective of issues that can be rarely talked about
* It has the potential to open the lines of communication with parents/schools/teachers
* It demonstrates the need for support. The series shows the main character being shut down by her peers who may have missed opportunities to help.
* There are many WA agencies providing support for schools. [SHQ](http://shq.org.au/) has resources covering the main topics, and support/workshops for students and adults from the [Samaritans](http://www.thesamaritans.org.au/) is also available.

Negatives:

* Concerns over glorification of suicide, and distinguishing reality vs TV. The series does not provide any strategies for seeking support with suicidal thoughts (although it has opened the discussion about ’13 Reasons Why Not’ in some schools). Young people may not be able to relate or reflect on their own actions (such as bullying) to the show.
* The topics in the series can be raised without the need for the graphic scenes, though the shock value may be a large part of the appeal for young people
* The series or individual shows could be watched in isolation or without opportunities to discuss. Parents may not be aware that their children have watched it, or be familiar enough with it and the topics raised to discuss it
* One of the main themes is degradation of women. More young males may benefit from watching it, but it was questioned as to whether it was mainly young women tuning in
* Implications for schools – teachers and school staff may not be confident or skilled to talk to students about the show’s themes. The MA rating may mean that it will not be viewed in schools.

Other points:

* Watch out for [4 Stage. Productions](https://www.facebook.com/4stage/) WA tour in term 3. This Queensland theatre company is producing a show called ‘Who Can Help’.
* Questions over the reporting of suicide in the media and the benefits and negatives of providing little information on details of suicide.

For more support:

headspace:

* [Dangerous content in 13 Reasons Why](https://headspace.org.au/news/dangerous-content-in-13-reasons-why)

Mental First Aid Australia:

* [13 Reasons Plot Summary](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzPKQ2gKLhy2QkpmUEhuVmdMem8/view)
* [Important talking points](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzPKQ2gKLhy2MzdscWhsekJ6Njg/view)