**One Good Reason to Talk About “13 Reasons Why”: To Help Save a Life**

From social media to the Sunday paper, classrooms to kitchen tables, Netflix’s show “13 Reasons Why” is provoking lots of conversation. As the choruses of praise and protest get louder and louder, they spotlight the undeniable truth that we *weren’t* talking enough about suicide and suicide prevention before. This time serves as an opportunity to have much-needed conversations about mental health and suicide prevention.

Suicide can be an uncomfortable subject and we often wonder when is the appropriate time to inquire if someone is having thoughts of suicide. The answer is, when you think you need to ask about suicide, then that is when you need to discuss suicide. But too often, we fear we will say the wrong thing and therefore say nothing. It’s time for this to change. We all need to be prepared to talk with our loved ones about suicide.

California’s suicide prevention campaign, ([www.SuicideIsPreventable.org](http://www.SuicideIsPreventable.org)) offers valuable information about warning signs and how to talk to someone if you’re concerned they may be having thoughts of suicide. On the “Reach Out” tab, you can also find local and national resources ranging from attending a training to crisis services in your area.

The most important conversations we can be having right now are not about “13 Reasons Why,” they are about the issues raised, and those avoided by the series, not just suicide. Many youth feel that this show identifies very strongly with their lives and the issues they face, from substance abuse and self-medication to sexual assault and how often it is inadequately addressed, to the pressures that youth feel to be “normal,” and, of course, to mental wellness and suicide.

If people are ready to talk, then let’s really talk about suicide and suicide prevention -- not behind closed doors, and not only with our peers or those in our own age group. Use this time as a teachable moment to open the door to conversations we too often avoid. Suicide is a big deal, but opening up about it doesn’t have to be.

Everyone should all have the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/) (800.273.8255), and the (INSERT INFO ON LOCAL CRISIS LINES IF APPLICABLE) programmed into their phones. We need to understand that this number is not just for people in crisis, it is also for us when we are supporting someone through difficult times. It is encouraged that everyone share information about the [Crisis Text Line](http://www.crisistextline.org/) (text CONNECT to 741741), [The Trevor Lifeline](http://www.thetrevorproject.org/section/trevor-support-center) (866.488.7386), and any of the other amazing resources that exist in our county and in our communities.

Now is not a time to have fewer conversations about suicide. Now is a time to bring suicide prevention into the spotlight, to ask ourselves the tough questions, even if we don’t like the answers, and then be vigilant until we’ve acquired the knowledge, skills and comfort to prevent suicide by encouraging our loved ones to keep living.

(Optional: Include Critical Questions Section *below*)

For parents:

* Ask your children and their friends:
	+ Have any of your friends ever thought about or attempted suicide?
	+ Do you know what to do in these situations? Will you promise to talk to me about it? I promise to help.
	+ Have you ever thought about suicide? Do you know you can talk to me if you do?
	+ Do you know about the Crisis Text Line or National Suicide Prevention Lifeline?
* Ask your children’s school:
	+ What policies do we have in place to address suicide prevention?
	+ What trainings are offered for staff?

For everyone:

* Ask yourself:
	+ Do I feel prepared to respond to my loved ones if they tell me they don’t want to live anymore or are feeling suicidal?
	+ Would I recognize the warning signs?
	+ What can I do, and who can I talk to, if I ever have thoughts of suicide?

***Resources for addressing “13 Reasons Why”:***

* “**Talking Points for 13 Reasons Why”, Jed Foundation/SAVE:** <https://www.save.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/13RW-Talking-Points-Final_v6.pdf>
* “**Considerations for Educators”, National Association of School Psychologists**: <http://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/preventing-youth-suicide/13-reasons-why-netflix-series-considerations-for-educators>
* **Resources from Suicide Prevention Resource Center for “13 Reasons Why”:** <http://www.sprc.org/13-reasons-why>
* **“Safe Messaging for Suicide Prevention”, National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention:** <http://suicidepreventionmessaging.org>