



Dear Bache-Martin Families,

A social media issue is affecting youth around the country. It is the Netflix series called "Thirteen Reasons Why." It is important for parents and caregivers to be aware of the effect this program can have on youth and what you can do to help your child.

"Thirteen Reasons Why" portrays a teen, Hannah, whose faces struggles and ultimately chooses to end her life. The series includes graphic and sensitive issues including rape, bullying and the main character's suicide. Many students are watching and talking about the show. There might be students who identify with some of Hannah's issues and some young people might misunderstand the message and believe that suicide is the only logical option.

**We need students and adults to know and understand that adolescents have other options. There are always ways to seek assistance and make a situation better.**

We are concerned about the questions and feelings this series may raise with students, especially if they are watching it unsupervised. They may need to talk to you about it. Here is advice from mental health/suicide prevention organization about watching this show and talking about it with young viewers:

Considerations that parents can talk to youth about watching the show:

- Think carefully about whether or not you choose to watch the show. *If you have experienced significant depression, anxiety or suicidal thoughts or behaviors in the past, this show may be risky for you to watch.*
- If you choose to watch the show and you start to feel upset or depressed, are having trouble sleeping, or having thoughts of suicide, *stop watching it and tell a parent, trusted adult or counselor. You can also text start to 741- 741 for confidential, professional help 24/7.*
- If you choose to watch the show, *consider watching it with others and take breaks between episodes instead of binge watching. It would be especially good to watch with parents or other trusted adults. Discuss what you are seeing and feeling during the show and after.*
- Whether you choose to watch this show or not, we should all work to be caring of and vigilant about our family members, friends and ourselves. *If you or someone you know is struggling emotionally or showing signs indicating a [possible suicidal crisis](#) get them (or yourself) to [help](#). Professional mental health care when needed saves lives every day.*

Highlights of talking points to use to discuss the show with teens:

- You may have experiences and thoughts similar to those of some of the characters in 13RW. It is typical for people to identify with TV or movie characters, but it is

important to remember that *there are healthy ways to cope with the topics covered in 13RW. Acting on suicidal thoughts is NOT one of them.*

- *Suicide is NEVER heroic or romantic. Hannah's suicide is fictional. It is a story warning us. It is, NOT meant to appear heroic. Suicide is a tragedy.*
- *Suicide is NOT a common response to life's challenges or hardships. The vast majority of people who experience adversities described in 13RW like bullying or the death of a friend, do NOT die by suicide. Most reach out, talk to others and seek help, or find other better ways to cope. There are many treatment options, and treatment works. They go on to lead healthy, normal lives.*
- *It is important to know how to acknowledge and respond to your child if they share their emotional distress or their thoughts of suicide. Do not judge the child or their thoughts. Listen. Be caring and kind. Offer to stay with them. Offer to go with them to get help, or contact a crisis line.*
- The [entire list of talking points can be found here](#) (from Suicide Awareness Voices of Education)

Additional Resources you might find helpful:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/13-reasons-why-suicide-how-to-talk-with-your-teen-about-netflix-show/>

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

[PA Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative \(PAYSPI\)](#)

<http://www.youthsuicidewarningsigns.org/youth>

***If you or someone you know needs immediate help, text 741741 or call 800-273-TALK (8255).***

Our goal is to keep the health and well-being of all our students in mind. Suicide affects everyone and we want parents to be a part of the solution to prevent it. We are available to assist you, should you have questions.

**Suicide is preventable.**

Sincerely,

Mark Vitvitsky  
Principal  
Bache-Martin Elementary

Ashley Cocca  
School Counselor  
Bache-Martin Elementary

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE – The School District is holding 2 suicide awareness and prevention training sessions for parents and caregivers, and having a table with suicide prevention resources on [June 8th](#) from 4:30 to 7:30pm at the Family and Community Engagement end of year event at 440 N Broad St. We encourage all parents and families to attend!**