

## '13 Reasons Why' season three.

### How to discuss and support students when they may have watched disturbing content

Many young people in New Zealand may access and watch '13 Reason's Why' season three and some may also access previous versions covering issues such as rape, drug use, bullying and depression. The graphic suicide scene has now been edited out of season one after research in the United States showed that immediately after the screening of this programme there was an increase in self harm and suicide.

When students' access sensitive issues on media they may also know someone who is facing a difficult or sensitive issue or be supporting a friend who is feeling distressed. They may be experiencing guilt or shame and be concealing their actions about viewing the material and may worry about the consequences of what they viewed for themselves and others. This distress may contribute to thoughts of suicide or they may know someone who has died by suicide.

#### Talking about distressing issues with students

Taking opportunities to engage with students when they raise these issues does help build their understanding, confidence and resilience. Sometimes this is difficult. Let them know if you are finding it hard to talk about. The important thing is that you are open to having a conversation about the topic (at a time when you can, or when it is appropriate) or you can support access to someone who can have such conversations. The office of film and literature classified *13 Reason's Why' series 1 and 2 and 3* as R18 and they have provided resources and information for teachers and parents on the series:

<https://www.classificationoffice.govt.nz/index.php/news/featured-classification-decisions/13-reasons-why-season-2/>.

Be prepared to also support parents with similar information when needed:

<https://www.classificationoffice.govt.nz/assets/PDFs/Parents-Guide.pdf?>

Here are some other ways you can support a safer media environment for young people:

- Find out information about the content they may have viewed on line so you are prepared for the issues they might raise and think about how to respond to their questions or concerns
- It's important to help young people understand their behaviour, particularly if they actively accessed information on line that was disturbing. They can understand it in terms of wanting to seek information that others have and know/comprehend what was going on.
- Let them know who they can talk to about things when they need more information. Encourage young people to seek help from someone they trust and who won't judge them. This could be a teacher, counsellor, parent, friend, or helpline.
- Remind young people that when they're watching something that might be scary or offensive, they should be mindful of who they're watching it with. This is just as important when they're with friends at school as it is with younger siblings at home.
- Sometimes young people receive information from others that they didn't want to see and they automatically clicked onto the material. They need to know the options they have for reporting information they consider harmful and what to do if

someone is bullying them online such as through netsafe:

<https://www.netsafe.org.nz/>.

- Encourage young people to discuss issues with their parents and provide parents with support information to help with any discussions
- Encourage young people to seek help if they feel distress, fear, guilt or shame that feels unmanageable. Agencies available to provide free support include [Youthline](#), [Need to Talk](#) and [Kidsline](#)
- Young people are often exposed to inappropriate content through the internet and social media. Acknowledge that adults/platform providers have a responsibility to make the internet safer. Discuss with them how can they support this approach