



## **BRIEFING IN CONNECTION WITH THE RELEASE OF SEASON TWO OF NETFLIX SERIES '13 REASONS WHY'**

In response to the upcoming release of season two of Netflix series '13 Reasons Why', the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF) and the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) have prepared a briefing expressing concern about the possible risks and negative impact on young people, in particular for those who are vulnerable and currently thinking about suicide.

Netflix producers have confirmed that a number of concerning themes including teen suicide, school violence and use of firearms in schools are to be covered in season two. In season one, released last year, a clip in which the protagonist ends her life, was depicted in great detail, and freely circulated on YouTube.

Internationally, there is consistent evidence of the negative impact of detailed and graphic portrayals of suicide in terms of an increased risk of copycat suicides, particularly among young vulnerable people.

Specific aspects associated with online media and risk of suicide contagion include:

- Online series and social media can be accessed at all times, which increases viewing patterns, such as 'marathon' or 'binge watching'.
- This can further intensify the over-identification with people who take their lives (real-life and fictional), and therefore increase the negative impact on vulnerable people.

International literature has found:

- An increase in suicide-related internet searches in the 12-19 days after the premiere of season one (15-44% higher than expected)
- An increase in internet searches on "how to commit suicide" (26%); "commitsuicide" (18%); and "howtokillyourself" (9%) in the same days (all significantly higher than expected)
- An increase in psychiatric presentations to an emergency department in the days following the release of series one
- An increase in public awareness of the topic of suicide

(Ayers et al, 2017; Salo et al, 2017)

Following communication with an international coalition of experts (including members of the NSRF) it is hoped that season two will take into account the [WHO-IASP Guidelines for Media Reporting on Suicide](#) (WHO, 2017). In addition, we encourage increasing awareness of evidence informed positive mental health promotion and effective strategies to improve mental health difficulties and prevent suicide if as expected topics such as depression, anxiety, and bullying are covered again.

However, parents, guardians, teachers and others should be aware of the need to talk with adolescents and children who are using Netflix or watching the series, and to discuss their emotions and thoughts.

International resources include:

[www.13reasonswhytoolkit.org](http://www.13reasonswhytoolkit.org) (Available from Friday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2018)

Relevant resources in Ireland include:

*Helplines:* Childline: 1800 66 66 66; Aware: 1800 80 48 48; Samaritans: 116 123; Pieta House: 1800 247 247

*Websites:* [www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com); [www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie); [www.yourmentalhealth.ie](http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie); [www.jigsaw.ie](http://www.jigsaw.ie), [www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)

*The Department of Education and Skills: Guidelines for mental health promotion in Primary schools* -<http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Well-Being-in-Primary-Schools-Guidelines-for-Mental-Health-Promotion.pdf>

*Guidelines for mental health promotion in Post-Primary schools* -<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Resources-Guidance/Well-Being-in-Post-Primary-Schools-Guidelines-for-Mental-Health-Promotion-and-Suicide-Prevention-2013.pdf>

For issues related to media reporting of suicide and similar topics, or to flag concerning reporting, please visit: [www.headline.ie](http://www.headline.ie)

National Suicide Research Foundation and National Office for Suicide Prevention,

May 2018

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***The National Suicide Research Foundation is in receipt of funding from the HSE's National Office for Suicide Prevention and the NSRF's research is linked to Connecting for Life, Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020.***

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