



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
La santé mentale pour tous

CMHA National Statement
Responding to Netflix Series: *13 Reasons Why*
April 20, 2017

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA National) joins with the Centre for Suicide Prevention (CSP) in raising concerns about content in *13 Reasons Why*, a recent Netflix series that depicts the suicide of a young woman, and its aftermath.

CMHA is concerned that the series may glamorize suicide, and that some content may lead to distress in viewers, and, particularly, in younger viewers. The portrayal does not follow the media [guidelines](#) as set out by the Canadian Association of Suicide Prevention (CASP) and the American Association of Suicidology.

The reasons why an individual may die by suicide are complex. Stigma often prevents people from seeking help when they are feeling suicidal, and that's why it's important to raise awareness of this preventable public health concern. However, raising awareness needs to be done in a safe and responsible manner. A large and growing body of Canadian and international research has found clear links between increases in suicide rates and harmful media portrayals of suicide.

The following are ways in which portrayals of suicide may be harmful:

- They may simplify suicide, such as, by suggesting that bullying alone is the cause;
- They may make suicide seem romantic, such as, by putting it in the context of a Hollywood plot line;
- They may portray suicide as a logical or viable option;
- They may display graphic representations of suicide which may be harmful to viewers, especially young ones; and/or
- They may advance the false notion that suicides are a way to teach others a lesson.

If you are feeling suicidal, or know someone who is, please reach out for help. In Canada, call Kids Help Phone at 1 (800) 668-6868 or [visit the website to chat](#). Other general crisis lines in your community can be found here:

<http://www.yourlifecounts.org/need-help/crisis-lines>