

Media release



headspace[®]

National Youth Mental Health Foundation

Level 2, South Tower
485 La Trobe Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel +61 3 9027 0100 Fax +61 3 9027 0199
headspace.org.au

Letter to the Editor

18 April, 2017

Dear Editor,

I am writing on behalf of **headspace** to address growing concerns raised by schools, parents and young people across Australia about some content featured in US Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*.

The series – which debuted in Australia in late March and is currently streaming on Netflix - depicts a young woman who suicides. It presents the viewer with very confronting and graphic messaging and imagery inclusive of suicide method and means.

Since its debut both the national **headspace School Support Program**, which supports school communities in the aftermath of a suicide, and **eheadspace**, the national online and over-the-phone counselling service has received a growing numbers of calls and emails directly related to the program.

The show exposes viewers to risky suicide content and may lead to a distressing reaction by the viewer particularly if the audience is children and young people.

National and international research clearly indicates the very real impact and risk to harmful suicide exposure, leading to increased risk and possible suicide contagion.

Clinicians working for **eheadspace** have been dealing with a steady stream of concerned parents and young people since the show first aired.

There is a responsibility for broadcasters to know what they are showing and the impact that certain content can have on an audience – and on a young audience in particular.

headspace School Support and **eheadspace** is urging school communities, parents, and mental health services to be aware of the dangers and risks associated for children and young people who have been exposed to this content.

The national suicide media initiative, **Mindframe**, also has significant concerns and warnings related to this content.

Please see the following links for helpful information for schools, mental health services, and parents if they are aware that children or young people have been exposed to the content and have expressed concerns around their own mental health, distress, or suicidal thoughts and feelings.

Kristen Douglas
National Manager **headspace** School Support
headspace

Media release



headspace[®]

National Youth Mental Health Foundation

Level 2, South Tower
485 La Trobe Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Tel +61 3 9027 0100 Fax +61 3 9027 0199

headspace.org.au

Managing social media following a suicide:

<https://headspace.org.au/assets/Uploads/Corporate/Managing-social-media-following-a-suicide-web.pdf>

Grief – How a young person might respond to a suicide:

<https://headspace.org.au/assets/Uploads/Corporate/Grief-How-young-people-might-respond-to-a-suicide-web.pdf>

How to talk about suicide with a young person:

<https://headspace.org.au/assets/School-Support/How-to-talk-about-suicide-with-young-people.pdf>

headspace has 99 centres across Australia, for details visit www.headspace.org.au.

If you are aged 12 to 25 and having a tough time, visit your local centre or contact **eheadspace** on 1800 650 890 or www.eheadspace.org.au.