



Harpeth Hall

From the office of Jennifer Adams
Director of Community Support,
Development, and Inclusion

Dear Upper School parents,

The Harpeth Hall counseling department wants to inform you of a new Netflix series called *13 Reasons Why*. It is a thirteen episode show that is based upon a young adult novel with the same title authored by Jay Asher. The book offers a more balanced approach than the Netflix series does. The series is about a teenage girl who kills herself, and leaves behind 13 cassette tapes to be listened to by friends and peers in her life. These tapes explain the reasons she ultimately decided to end her life. This show seems to be very popular among middle school and high school aged students – especially with girls.

The following themes within the series are concerning:

1. It highlights the attention given to the girl (Hannah) who takes her life.
2. There is a graphic sexual assault.
3. There is a graphic depiction of the suicidal act.
4. The suicide is depicted as the solution for Hannah's difficulties.
5. There is highlighted blame and shame placed on the students Hannah leaves behind.
6. The counselor in the series does not offer help or any treatment options for Hannah.
7. There is a graphic depiction of Hannah cutting.

As you can see, the series has important yet very tragic themes within it. We write to you today to share concerns that we as counselors have with this series. These are topics that we discuss in our Life Balance classes at the proper developmental age, and that we encourage parents to discuss with their children; however, the graphic nature depicted in this series is not a healthy path for these topics.

We want to encourage you to talk to your daughter and learn if she is watching or has watched this show. If she has, we recommend speaking with her about her feelings, reactions, and interpretation of the series. If your daughter has not watched the show, we advise you as her parent to discuss the impact that this show can have and then determine the course of action you feel appropriate for your family.

As parents, it is important for us to discuss these difficult subjects with our daughters although it may feel scary. When discussing difficult topics such as suicide, sexual assault, and cutting with your daughter, we recommend speaking in general terms and not with specific examples. It is also important to help your daughter identify a "safe person" that she feels comfortable going to if she ever experiences an assault, suicidal thoughts, or thoughts of self-harm.

Please feel free to contact any of the Harpeth Hall counselors to discuss this series or any of these topics at any time - [Devon Bridgwaters](#), [Pia Chocklett](#), or [Rachel Cupit](#). We are here to provide support to your daughters!

Jennifer