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May 11, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The Derry Cooperative School District Counseling Team wants to make you aware of the recent release of the Netflix series *Thirteen Reasons Why*. The series is based on the fictional book by Jay Asher, released in 2007. The purpose of this letter is to inform you about some concerns that the series has raised among students, parents, and school staff.

The trailer and advertisements for the series can be misleading. In watching the series, young people and teenagers could perceive the message that suicide is a viable and/or romanticized option. The content of the series is extremely graphic with troubling scenes throughout each episode, which may be difficult for the teenage mind to watch and process in an appropriate way.

To proactively address these issues, the middle schools have been offering depression awareness and suicide prevention training as part of the SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program. The program aims to increase help-seeking by students concerned about themselves or a friend.

Please note that we are not recommending viewing this series. Instead, this letter is intended to provide you with information we believe is relevant to the health and well-being of our students. You may want to find out if your child has either heard of or viewed the series or perhaps read the book. The following discussion points may be helpful when speaking to your child about the series or book.

Feel free to contact your child's school counselor if you would like to discuss anything further or receive additional information. Derry Cooperative School District counselors have resources and systems in place for responding to students in crisis.

Discussion points for *Thirteen Reasons Why**

- There are always supportive adults willing to help and listen to you. There is never a problem that is too big or too difficult to resolve. Suicide is never a solution and help is always available. Parents, teachers, school counselors, coaches, community leaders, and crisis hotlines are examples of trusted adults that can provide help.
- You may have similar experiences and thoughts as some of the characters in *Thirteen Reasons Why*. People often identify with characters they see either on television or in movies. However, it is important to remember that there are healthy ways to cope with the topics covered in the series and acting on suicidal thoughts is not one of them.

- Suicide is never a heroic or romantic act. The main character's suicide (although fictional) is a cautionary tale, not meant to appear heroic and should be viewed as a tragedy.
- If you are concerned about someone, ask them about it. It will not make someone more suicidal or put the idea of suicide in their mind. Knowing how to acknowledge and respond to someone who shares their thoughts of emotional distress or suicide with you is important. Remind your child of the Signs of Suicide acronym: ACT (Acknowledge; Care; Tell).
- When someone passes away, they do not get to make a movie or talk to people anymore. Leaving messages from beyond the grave is a dramatization produced in Hollywood.

*Resources: www.save.org; www.jedfoundation.org
<https://mentalhealthscreening.org/programs/sos-signs-of-suicide>

If you ever feel that your child might be at risk for suicide, please access professional help immediately. Some local resources are included below for your reference.

Local Derry, NH Resources:

CLM Center for Life Management 10 Tsienneto Rd., Derry, NH (603) 434-1577
 Emergency Services Option 1 <http://www.centerforlifemanagement.org/>

Community Alliance for Teen Safety (603) 434-5251
<http://www.communityallianceforteensafety.com/>

Derry Police Department 1 Municipal Dr., Derry, NH (603) 432-6111

Elliot Hospital 1 Elliot Way, Manchester, NH (603) 669-5300

New Hampshire Treatment Locator- <http://www.211nh.org/>

Parkland Medical Center 1 Parkland Dr., Derry, NH (603) 432-1500
 Emergency Services (603) 421-2220

Sincerely,

Derry School District Counseling Team

MaryAnn Connors-Krikorian, Ed.D.
 Acting Superintendent of Schools