Study: Increase in Youth Suicides After Release of "13 Reasons Why"

Media depictions of suicide should follow recommended guidelines to avoid harm

Nationwide Children's Hospital

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Package Length: 1:35

Content provided by: Nationwide Children's Hospital

NEWS PACKAGE

SUGGESTED TEASE

EXPERTS SAY A NEW STUDY SHOWING A STRONG ASSOCIATION BETWEEN A POPULAR T-V SHOW AND YOUTH SUICIDE RATES SHOULD SERVE AS A WAKE-UP CALL TO MAINSTREAM MEDIA. DETAILS, COMING UP.

ANCHOR LEAD

SUICIDES AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE CONTINUE TO RISE AND ARE NOW THE SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS.¹

WHILE MENTAL HEALTH EXPERTS ARE WORKING TO REVERSE THIS TREND AND HIGHLIGHT EFFECTIVE PREVENTION STRATEGIES, SOME WAYS OF DEPICTING SUICIDE IN MAINSTREAM CULTURE ARE COUNTERING THESE EFFORTS.

BARB CONSIGLIO HAS DETAILS ON A NEW STUDY² THAT SHOWS A STRONG ASSOCIATION BETWEEN A POPULAR T-V SHOW AND YOUTH SUICIDE RATES.

(PACKAGE START) -----

CG: Courtesy: Nationwide Children's Hospital :00 - :03

Shots of teen sitting on couch, picking up remote control

CG: Deylyn Medina Teen advocate (Nats - Sound):02

THEMES OF SUICIDE OR SELF-HARM ARE ALMOST UNAVOIDABLE IN THE MEDIA TODAY. IT IS IMPORTANT TO BRING SUCH ISSUES TO LIGHT. :04

"Suicide is everywhere in movies and TV shows." :05

Shots of teens talking

WHILE STARTING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IS CRITICAL TO SUICIDE PREVENTION, THE MESSAGES ADOLESCENTS GET FROM SHOWS LIKE "13 REASONS WHY" OFTEN HAVE THE OPPOSITE EFFECT. :10

CG: Jeff Bridge, PhD Nationwide Children's Hospital "The graphic portrayal of the main characters suicide death completely went against proper reporting guidelines for suicide.":11

Shots of teen watching TV

IN THE SHOW, A SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL

Producers and Reporters: To download scripts, video and photos go to:

Jeff Bridge (CG'd earlier)

"For a vulnerable youth watching this show, they may see this as that could happen if they died by suicide, and so it's sending the wrong message.":08

WHO ENDS HER LIFE IS MEMORIALIZED IN A WAY

THAT GLAMORIZES SUICIDE. :08

Shots of teen watching TV

AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT MESSAGE CAN BE TRAGIC.

Shots of Bridge walking down hall

RESEARCHERS AT NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL EXAMINED SUICIDE RATES AMONG DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS AND FOUND THERE WERE ABOUT A HUNDRED NINETY-FIVE MORE SUICIDE DEATHS THAN EXPECTED AMONG TEN TO SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLDS IN THE NINE MONTHS FOLLOWING THE SHOW'S RELEASE.: 16

Graphic:

"This should serve as a wake-up call to the media to, you know, there are guidelines that exist for a reason, and

195 Additional Suicide Deaths among 10 to 17-year-olds in the two months after "13 Reasons Why" was released

it's important to follow those guidelines.":09

Jeff Bridge (CG'd earlier)

THE STUDY SHOWS JUST HOW CRITICAL IT IS FOR THE SUBJECT OF SUICIDE TO BE BROACHED IN A RESPONSIBLE AND HEALTHY WAY.:06

Shots of Deylyn at school with friends

AND IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD IS HAVING SUICIDAL THOUGHTS. ASK THEM ABOUT IT DIRECTLY.:05

File footage of teen and mom talking

> "The research has shown that asking about suicide will not put the thought in a child's head.":06

Jeff Bridge (CG'd earlier)

"Just ask. Yeah, I would say it's a lifesaving question." :04

Deylyn Medina (CG'd earlier)

AT NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, THIS IS BARB CONSIGLIO REPORTING. :03

Shots of Deylyn talking to friends at school

(PACKAGE END) ------

ANCHOR TAG

THE STUDY FOUND THAT SUICIDE RATES INCREASED MORE AMONG BOYS THAN GIRLS.

EXPERTS SAY IF YOUR CHILD WATCHES "THIRTEEN REASON WHY," IT'S BEST TO WATCH IT WITH THEM AND TALK THROUGH ANY TOUGH SCENES OR EPISODES.

FOR RESOURCES ON HOW TO TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH OR SUICIDE VISIT ON OUR SLEEVES DOT ORG.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Share it! Suggested tweet:

A new study by researchers at <a>@NationwideKids

Suggested post:

shows a strong association between youth suicide rates and a popular TV show. Experts say the data should serve as a wake-up call about how suicide is portrayed in mainstream media. http://bit.ly/2vlvjvk

TV shows and movies that sensationalize suicide can have tragic consequences for vulnerable youth. A new study by researchers at Nationwide Children's Hospital finds a strong association between the release of a popular TV series and suicide rates among 10- to 17-year-olds. http://bit.ly/2vlvjvk

EXTRA BITES

Bridge discusses the results of the study:

"Rates of suicide increased only among 10- to 17-year-olds in the United States. We found that the month immediately after the release of "13 Reasons Why" was the month with the highest suicide rate. It actually was the highest suicide rate of any month during the five-year study period." :18

CG: Jeff Bridge, PhD Nationwide Children's Hospital Bridge says the study showed a surprising impact on boys: "We expected there to be more impact on girls, particularly because the main character is female. What we found is that, when we stratified our analyses by sex, there was a significant association in males, but not in females.": 17

Bridge says if your kids watch the show, watch it with them: "Parents should watch it with them. They should have conversations about each episode. Take a pause; if you need, if you're watching it and some of the scenes are too intense, you can skip over some of the scenes.":13

Bridge says conversations about mental health should begin early:

"A lot of mental health problems begin in childhood, and so we should be having these conversations early in life. I think we should have them when we have conversations about our physical health, we should begin to have conversations about our mental health.":16

CG: Deylyn Medina
Teen advocate

Deylyn says action is needed to combat the rise in youth suicide:

"Now that we're acknowledging it, let's fix that. Let's help; let's talk about it. Why is this a statistic? Why is this like this? How can we avoid that? How can we fix that? How can we help?" :15

CG: Deylyn Medina Teen advocate Deylyn says conversation needs to counteract harmful content: "If we stop promoting that stuff, we can get past that. We just need to get, I don't know, more involved in the conversation. We need to talk about what's actually going on and not promote feeling sad." :16

References

¹Suicide Mortality in the United States, 1999–2017, Centers for Disease Control, November 2018. Online: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db330-h.pdf

²Association Between the Release of Netflix's 13 Reasons Why and Suicide Rates in the United States: An Interrupted Times Series Analysis, **Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**, **April 28**, **2019**. Online:

https://www.jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567(19)30288-6/fulltext

For viewer information on this story contact:

Nationwide Children's Hospital: (614) 355-0495 Log onto http://www.NationwideChildrens.org - click on "News Room"

Produced by:



1800 West 5th Ave. Columbus, Ohio 43212 Phone: (614) 932-9950 Fax: (614) 932-9920

www.mediasourcetv.com

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