



Math, Science & Technology Community Charter School

*1800 E. Byberry Road Philadelphia, PA 19116
Telephone: (267) 348-1100 Fax: (267) 348-1217
<http://mastccs.org>
John F. Swoyer III, Chief Executive Officer*

April 25, 2017

Dear MaST Parents and Guardians,

The Netflix series, *13 Reasons Why*, debuted on March 31, 2017 and is trending nationally as well as in our school community. It is a 13 hour series depicting strong and graphic themes of suicide, bullying, sexual assault, drug use, and other social issues. While the show has become very popular, it is also generating a tremendous amount of controversy and concern among mental health experts. Dan Reidenberg, Executive Director of SAVE (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education) says, “the show does not address mental illness or present viable alternatives to suicide.”

The MaST Community Charter School Counseling Department would like to offer some tips:

- Check it out yourself, do some reading, watch an episode to be aware of the issues in the show.
- If your teenager is watching it, take the time to have conversations about the content, possibly watching together.
- Experts feel that the series may be romanticizing suicide and not encouraging teenagers to seek help from family or counselors.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK or text 741471.

Suicide is NEVER the answer, getting help is the answer. Prevention, Awareness, and support is available at Suicide.org or [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255](http://NationalSuicidePreventionLifeline1-800-273-8255). The National Association of School Psychologists has published, "[13 Reasons Why](#)" [Netflix Series: Guidance for Educators](#), that provides guidance for educators, parents, and students regarding the series.

What can you do if you are concerned about a student? Teachers and other school staff are well positioned to observe student behavior and to act if there is a suspicion that a student may consider self-harm. Young adults often lack the perspective of time. Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem, but for kids, their problem can seem endless at this stage. If we get them through the crisis, they are very unlikely to attempt suicide.

Sincerely,

MaST Community Charter School Counseling Department

Jaclyn Murphy
K-4 Guidance Counselor
jmurphy@mastccs.org

Nicole Smith
5-8 Guidance Counselor
nsmith@mastccs.org

Kathleen MacConnell
9-12 Guidance Counselor
kmacconnell@mastccs.org