

Siuslaw News
 P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Parents need to be informed about '13 Reasons Why'

Dear Mapleton and Siuslaw School District families:

We have become aware of a recently-released Netflix series titled "13 Reasons Why."

For those who may be unfamiliar with this series, it is a fictional story about the suicidal death of 17-year-old Hannah Baker, and the audio recordings she leaves behind for 13 people — each of whom she attributes a share of the reason for her death. The series is based on a book by the same title.

"13 Reasons Why" has raised concerns among education and mental health professionals and we want to make sure parents and guardians are informed.

The series is very graphic in nature, explicitly portraying rape, bullying, substance abuse and suicide, all intertwined within a teenage love story.

While the series heightens awareness and sensitivity about these issues, it can also create misperceptions in young viewers that may put them at further risk of suicidal ideation, misunderstanding or self-blame.

As you can imagine, this graphically depicted

story raises serious issues for us all as we care for the health, safety and well-being of the teenagers in our lives. For this reason, we wish to communicate with you some thoughts, concerns and suggestions regarding this series.

The film depicts suicide and yet does not show what people can do to help prevent a suicide. In real life, the majority of young people who experience bullying, death of a friend, sexual assault or other events described in this film do not act on suicidal thoughts.

There are healthy ways to cope, including talking with a trusted adult and seeking mental health support. Most people go on to lead healthy, normal lives.

Discussion points that can help parents in

talking with their children about suicide as it relates to this film series include:

- Suicide is not a common response to life's challenges or adversities.
- Suicide is never a heroic or romantic act. The film portrays suicide as a romantic and revengeful act.
- Suicide is simply a tragedy.
- In spite of the portrayal of a serious treatment failure in the film, there are many treatment options for life challenges, distress and mental illness.
- Treatment works.
- When you die, you do not get to make a movie about it. Leaving messages from beyond the grave is a dramatization produced in

Hollywood and is not possible in real life.

- Suicide affects everyone and everyone can do something to help if he or she sees or hears warning signs that someone is at risk of suicide.
- Talking openly and honestly about emotional distress and suicide is ok. It will not make someone more suicidal or put the idea of suicide in his or her mind. If you are concerned about someone, ask him or her about it.

For a complete list of discussion points created by SAVE (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education), the nation's first organization dedicated to the prevention of suicide, visit www.save.org/blog/tips-watching-new-netflix-series-13-reasons/

For support before or after watching "13 Reasons Why," visit www.linesforlife.org/blog/suicide-prevention-after-13-reasons-why.

Crisis Resources: Teen to Teen YouthLine 1-877-968-8491 or Text "teen2teen" to 839863; Lines for Life 1-800-273-TALK or Text: "LIFE" to 61222.

— Respectfully,
 Jodi O'Mara, 541-268-4312
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GUEST VIEWPOINT

JODI O'MARA
 MAPLETON SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT
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LETTERS

RESET THE MORAL COMPASS IN CONGRESS

The day after the firing of FBI Director James Comey, who was leading an investigation of the Trump campaign's possible ties with Russia, the President of the United States shared classified information with the Russians. While I acknowledge the President has the right

to declassify information when he so chooses, just because you *can* do something, doesn't necessarily mean you should.

I don't know if President Trump colluded with the Russians during the election, or if he has business and financial dealings with the Russians. Based on his actions, it makes me at least suspect there could be.

By giving the Russians classified informa-

tion, he has put our country at risk because it has the potential of making our allies less apt to share information — or possibly put American agents and sources in the field in danger.

It is time for Paul Ryan, Mitch McConnell and other Republicans in Congress to reset their moral compass and stop the damage being done by the President to our democracy.

Republicans control the House and the

Senate. They have the power to bring the checks and balances back to government.

Thank goodness there are some members of Congress like John McCain and Lindsey Graham who still put country before party.

— Marybeth Marengo
 Florence

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