

Counselor's Corner

Hello Edison Parents! It's been awhile since I have posted anything, so please accept my apologies. This is the time of year that high school staff and students start to feel the crunch of time as we wrap up the school year. I was in the process of writing to you about the recent Netflix show, "13 Reasons Why," when this informative and articulate email popped into my inbox. Paul Hogan, Jesuit's esteemed Principal, beat me to the punch and gave me permission to share this email he sent to Jesuit parents. I watched both shows he discusses and can attest to them coming up in our Edison community. As always, feel free to contact me with any questions.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Raising teenagers has never been easy. In this era of social media and rising levels of adolescent stress, anxiety, and depression, our role as parents and educators has never been harder, or more important.

In April, we joined schools around the nation in highlighting Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The statistics on sexual assault in high schools and colleges in our nation are alarming. Sexual assault is often connected not only to misuse of power, to drugs or alcohol, and to social media bullying, but also to trauma and mental health struggles, up to and including suicide.

We want to bring your attention to two significant and much-discussed shows. One is a Netflix documentary entitled Audrie & Daisy that we screened for parents and students on April 5; the other is a Netflix series called "13 Reasons Why," which many high schoolers have binge-watched in the past few weeks.

Though very different, both shows illuminate the insidious web that often connects sexual assault, social media "slut-shaming," and teen suicide. I am attaching study guides by professionals in adolescent mental health that can help parents and students to process these two powerful and at times disturbing videos.

If you have not had the chance to watch either of these shows with your child, you may wish to do so. If you do, be aware that there are some scenes that may be traumatic for someone who is a survivor of sexual assault. For that reason, we had representatives of Beaverton's Sexual Assault Resource Center (SARC) present when we showed Audrie & Daisy.

"13 Reasons Why," a dramatization of a YA novel, is very different than Audrie & Daisy. The series, while compelling, glorifies the suicide of the main character and gives her unrealistic "power from the grave." As the attached study guide from the National Association of School Psychologists says, "13 Reasons does not emphasize that common among most suicide deaths is the presence of treatable mental illnesses." There are good reasons not to watch "13 Reasons," but if your child has already seen it,

you may wish to watch it too, using the attached Parent Guide as a way into a conversation with your child.

In addition to the rather lengthy Parent Guide, [here is a resource for teens](#) that may be more direct and digestible.

Whichever resource you use, you will find yourself talking about social media, teenage dating pressures, the use of drugs and alcohol, and how to recognize warning signs of mental illness or depression.

We know that you talk to your children often about the first few topics on that list. Please pay special attention to the signs of mental illness, and seek the help of a professional (including your students' JHS counselor) if you see them. Intervention by a caring adult is the most important step in preventing tragedy and restoring hope.

For more resources, see these links:

- [Depression Information](#)
- [How to Help a Friend \(National Institute of Mental Health\)](#)
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention - Risk Factors and Warning Signs](#)

As we head into May, we will be celebrating the remarkable accomplishments of the young people we love so well. Let us work together to keep all of our students healthy and happy so that they can enjoy the manifold blessings that God has bestowed on them—the first of which is caring, involved, courageous parents.

*Sincerely,
Paul Hogan
Principal
Jesuit High School*