

How to Address Issues Related to “13 Reasons Why”

WITHIN A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

These components from the delivery system of the ASCA National Model (pp. 83-98) may be helpful when addressing topics associated with the Netflix series “13 Reasons Why.” The series exposes complex issues that students, particularly teens, may encounter. Issues include:

- ▶ Bullying
- ▶ Grief
- ▶ School violence
- ▶ Mental health concerns (stress, depression, anxiety, etc.)
- ▶ Sexual assault
- ▶ Unhealthy peer relationships

School counseling core curriculum lessons

- ▶ Present preventive classroom lessons and universal interventions such as working through transitions, dealing with stress or anxiety, developing coping skills, developing and maintaining healthy peer-to-peer relationships, managing emotions, balancing school/home/community activities, communicating feelings to others and recognizing when a peer is having difficulty.
- ▶ Deliver school counseling core curriculum that enhances awareness of mental health; promotes positive, healthy behaviors; and seeks to remove the stigma associated with bullying, sexual assault and mental health issues.
- ▶ Emphasize expressing any concerns about self or others to a supportive adult, including parents, teachers and the school counselor.
- ▶ Consider collecting results data. For example:
 - *Perception:* Seventh-grade students can recognize the signs of stress, depression and anxiety in self or others.
 - *Process:* 25 students participated in this lesson plan
 - *Outcomes*
 - Attendance:* Identified students have an attendance rate of 96 percent or higher each quarter of this school year.
 - Behavior:* Bullying behaviors of seventh-grade students will decrease by 15 percent by the end of the year.

Leadership, Advocacy, Collaboration and Systemic Change

- ▶ Recognize and address barriers to access of mental health services, including cultural and linguistic impediments.
- ▶ Discuss and discourage stigma related to bullying, sexual assault and mental health issues and services.
- ▶ Advocate and collaborate with school and community organizations to ensure students and their families have access to additional counseling and mental health services.
- ▶ Seek to continually update professional knowledge regarding student social/emotional needs.

Individual Planning

Provide individual planning with students to address academic, postsecondary and social/emotional needs. Discuss mental health support options including referral to third party practitioners (if necessary).

Responsive Services

Provide targeted interventions for students dealing with bullying, assault, victims of other violent experiences or mental and behavioral health concerns. Provide support for students dealing with sexual assault and abuse. Provide support for students dealing with sexual assault and abuse.

- ▶ *Individual counseling* – Provide short-term (six-eight sessions) counseling for students. Develop goals with students related to stress management and coping skills.
- ▶ *Consultation with families* – Share strategies with families to help them support their children. Encourage them to support appropriate coping and communication skills. Help families recognize a healthy balance between school, home and community activities. Share community resources and where to go for help, if needed.
- ▶ *Collaboration with stakeholders* – Collaborate with teachers, administrators and other school staff to develop plans to identify and support students dealing with these core issues.
- ▶ *Referrals for counseling and crisis intervention* – Work with your school district to develop a list of school community resources for additional assistance including individuals and organizations that provide support for those experiencing the core issues listed above. Offer this referral list when a student needs support beyond school counseling activities and short-term counseling. Make this list available to parents, teachers, administrators and other stakeholders.

What ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors Standards Apply to Issues From "13 Reasons Why"?

The following ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors standards may be helpful in guiding your discussions and activities.

CATEGORY 1: MINDSET STANDARDS

School counselors encourage the following mindsets for all students.

M 1: Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/ emotional and physical well-being
M 3: Sense of belonging in the school environment

CATEGORY 2: BEHAVIOR STANDARDS

Students will demonstrate the following standards through classroom lessons, activities and/or individual/small-group counseling

Behavior: Self-Management Skills

B-SMS 2: Demonstrate self-discipline and self-control
B-SMS 7: Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem
B-SMS 8: Demonstrate the ability to balance school, home and community activities
B-SMS 9: Demonstrate personal safety skills
B-SMS 10: Demonstrate ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities

Behavior: Social Skills

B-SS 1: Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills
B-SS 2: Create positive and supportive relationships with other students
B-SS 4: Demonstrate empathy
B-SS 5: Demonstrate ethical decision-making and social responsibility
B-SS 8: Demonstrate advocacy skills and ability to assert self, when necessary
B-SS 9: Demonstrate social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment

What ASCA Ethical Standards Apply to Issues From "13 Reasons Why"?

A. RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDENTS

A.1. Supporting Student Development

School counselors:

- a. Have a primary obligation to the students, who are to be treated with dignity and respect as unique individuals.
- b. Aim to provide counseling to students in a brief context and support students and families/guardians in obtaining outside services if the student needs long-term clinical counseling.
- c. acknowledge the vital role of parents/guardians and families.
- d. are knowledgeable of laws, regulations and policies affecting students and families and strive to protect and inform students and families regarding their rights.
- h. Provide effective, responsive interventions to address student needs.

A.2. Confidentiality

School counselors:

- d. Explain the limits of confidentiality in developmentally appropriate terms through multiple methods such as student handbooks, school counselor department websites, school counseling brochures, classroom curriculum and/or verbal notification to individual students.
- e. Keep information confidential unless legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed or a breach is required to prevent serious and foreseeable harm to the student. Serious and foreseeable harm is different for each minor in schools and is determined by students' developmental and chronological age, the setting, parental rights and the nature of the harm. School counselors consult with appropriate professionals when in doubt as to the validity of an exception.
- f. Recognize their primary ethical obligation for confidentiality is to the students but balance that obligation with an understanding of parents'/guardians' legal and inherent rights to be the guiding voice in their children's lives. School counselors understand the need to balance students' ethical rights to make choices, their capacity to give consent or assent, and parental or familial legal rights and responsibilities to make decisions on their child's behalf

A.6. Appropriate Referrals and Advocacy

School counselors:

- a. Collaborate with all relevant stakeholders, including students, educators and parents/guardians when student assistance is needed, including the identification of early warning signs of student distress.
- b. Provide a list of resources for outside agencies and resources in their community to student(s) and parents/guardians when students need or request additional support. School counselors provide multiple referral options or the district's vetted list and are careful not to indicate an endorsement or preference for one counselor or practice. School counselors encourage parents to interview outside professionals to make a personal decision regarding the best source of assistance for their student.

A.9. Serious and Foreseeable Harm to Self and Others

School counselors:

- a. Inform parents/guardians and/or appropriate authorities when a student poses a serious and foreseeable risk of harm to self or others. When feasible, this is to be done after careful deliberation and consultation with other appropriate professionals. School counselors inform students of the school counselor's legal and ethical obligations to report the concern to the appropriate authorities unless it is appropriate to withhold this information to protect the student (e.g. student might run away if he/she knows parents are being called). The consequence of the risk of not giving parents/guardians a chance to intervene on behalf of their child is too great. Even if the danger appears relatively remote, parents should be notified.
- c. Do not release a student who is a danger to self or others until the student has proper and necessary support. If parents will not provide proper support, the school counselor takes necessary steps to underscore to parents/guardians the necessity to seek help and at times may include a report to child protective services.
- d. Report to parents/guardians and/or appropriate authorities when students disclose a perpetrated or a perceived threat to their physical or mental well-being. This threat may include, but is not limited to, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, dating violence, bullying or sexual harassment. The school counselor follows applicable federal, state and local laws and school district policy.

A.11. Bullying, Harassment and Child Abuse

School counselors:

- a. Report to the administration all incidents of bullying, dating violence and sexual harassment as most fall under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 or other federal and state laws as being illegal and require administrator interventions. School counselors provide services to victims and perpetrator as appropriate, which may include a safety plan and reasonable accommodations such as schedule change, but school counselors defer to administration for all discipline issues for this or any other federal, state or school board violation.
- d. Develop and maintain the expertise to recognize the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect. Encourage training to enable students and staff to have the knowledge and skills needed to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect and to whom they should report suspected abuse or neglect.
- e. Guide and assist students who have experienced abuse and neglect by providing appropriate services.

Additional Resources

[The Role of the School Counselor](#)

ASCA Position Statement: [The School Counselor and Student Mental Health](#)

ASCA Position Statement: [The School Counselor and Trauma-Informed Practice](#)

ASCA Position Statement: [The School Counselor and the Identification, Prevention and Intervention of Behaviors That Are Harmful and Place Students At-Risk](#)

ASCA Position Statement: [The School Counselor and the Promotion of Safe Schools Through Conflict Resolution and Bullying/Harassment Prevention](#)

[13 Reasons Why Resources](#), Netflix (2018)

[Depression Resource Brochure](#)

[Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention: Model Language, Commentary and Resources](#)

[13 Minutes of 13 Reasons Why](#), *ASCA School Counselor* (2017)

[Self-Esteem in a Social Media World](#), *ASCA School Counselor* (2017)

[Lead Mental Health Efforts](#), *ASCA School Counselor* (2014)

[Students With Depression: Help Them Find Their Way Out](#), *ASCA School Counselor* (2014)

[Suicide: Err on the Side of Caution](#), *ASCA School Counselor* (2013)

[Student Suicide: Legal and Ethical Implications](#), *ASCA School Counselor* (2012)

[Mental health surveillance among children – United States, 2005-2011](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010).

Erickson, A., & Abel, N. R. (2013). [A high school counselor's leadership in providing schoolwide screenings for depression and enhancing suicide awareness](#). *Professional School Counseling*, 16(5), 283-289. doi: 10.5330/psc.n.2013-16.283

[Coalition to Support Grieving Students](#)

[Foundation for the Advancement of Alcohol Responsibility](#)

[National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#)

[The National Center for Victims of Crime](#)

[CDC Fact Sheet on Underage Drinking](#)