

13 Reasons Why, Season 3

Discussion guide for young people



13 Reason Why is a fictional drama series that tackles real-life issues experienced by young people, including sexual assault, homophobia, child abuse, suicide, termination of pregnancy and more.

Filmed in a candid and sometimes explicit manner the show may resonate with you and your friends because of experiences you've had at your own school or in your daily life.

headspace developed the following information that may be helpful for viewers of the show and the wider community. The information included aims to make you aware of some of the themes covered in the series, as well as give you information to choose whether it's right for you to watch. There is also information to support you to look after yourself and your friends, where to seek help, as well as how to have conversations with your friends and families about the issues addressed in the series.



Important points to remember

- It's likely a lot of people will be talking about the series. It's important to be respectful and informed. The information included here can help to keep people safe and connected.
- Some people may be distressed by some of the themes in the series, while others are not. This will depend on individual life experiences and current circumstances. It is important to be respectful of other people's experience.
- Remember, this is TV, dramatized for viewer engagement, designed to entertain. The characters and events may not be realistic representations for every viewer.

Tips for watching the show safely

- If you are likely to be affected by any of the themes covered in the show, it is important to consider whether you watch it. You might choose not to, which is ok. Reading about some of the themes in the show can help you decide.
- If you choose to watch, you could make a plan to look after yourself. This might be with the support of family and friends. Letting them know what you might struggle with, and how they can help is likely to be useful.
- Your support plan could include self-care options such as:
 - take breaks between episodes
 - check in with family and friends between episodes
 - get information from reputable sources about the themes covered in the show.
- Take time to look after yourself. Some self-care tips include: prioritising sleep, eating well, staying active, maintaining close relationships with family and friends, learning ways to handle hard times (journaling, listening to music, quiet time out, relaxation), reducing alcohol and other drug use, keep on doing the things in your life that are fun and important to you.

Where to get help

**For immediate help contact:
triple zero (000) if it is an emergency**

National 24/7 crisis services:

Lifeline: 13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467 or suicidecallbackservice.org.au

beyondblue: 1300 224 636 or beyondblue.org.au

Additional youth support services include:

headspace: visit headspace.org.au to find your nearest centre or call eheadspace on 1800 650 890

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 kidshelpline.com.au

ReachOut: reachout.com

SANE Australia: 1800 187 263 sane.org

suicide

- Suicide is a complex issue with many contributing factors, including individual personality characteristics, coping styles, life history of experiences, current circumstances, support networks, and mental health difficulties.
- Unfortunately, thinking about suicide is more common than it should be. Despite this, it is still a serious sign that things are not ok. If you are experiencing suicidal thinking it is important to share this with a trusted adult.
- Thoughts of suicide can occur when life circumstances have been difficult and stressful, such as after a major loss or traumatic event.
- Some young people have thoughts of suicide when life seems unbearable and they want to end their pain. Most young people who have thoughts of suicide may not want to die, they just can't imagine another way out of what they are going through.
- It's important to know that young people can and DO get through these times in their lives. Most young people who've had thoughts of suicide find a way to work through them. With effective treatment, social support and time, many who have tried to end, or considered ending their lives can go on to live full, meaningful and productive lives.
- If you are experiencing thoughts of suicide, it's important that you seek support. It takes a lot of courage to reach out, but getting help can make a big difference to how quickly you can overcome these thoughts and get back on track with your life. Reach out to a trusted family member, carer, teacher, friend, an Elder, or a professional service.
- Seeking support helps. It helps people to understand:
 - how to stay safe
 - what things contribute to suicidal thinking
 - how to manage and overcome the things that contribute to suicidal thinking
 - how to manage suicidal thinking
 - what to do when things get really tough
 - how to create a life with meaning, purpose and fulfilment.
- Remember that thoughts about suicide are changeable. You don't need to act on thoughts about suicide. Like all thoughts, they can be challenged and they can come and go. It can be hard, but with practise you can learn how to react differently to them. For example, you can remind yourself that they are just thoughts and you don't need to act on them.



suicide

- Create a safety plan that includes warning signs, reasons to live, names of people who love you, distractions and self-care activities and places you can go to be safe. Even if things start to look better, it can help to have a safety plan in place and to look out for your warning signs. Some useful resources to help you create a safety plan:
 - The Beyond Blue [safety plan](#) and [Beyond Now app](#)
 - [Menzie's Stay Strong Plan](#), specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.
- Self-care is about finding healthy activities that make you feel better and less stressed. Some activities might include breathing exercises, mindfulness, hanging out with people you love, getting outdoors or listening to music. It's really up to you as everyone is different. For more ideas about self-care activities, see our tips for a healthy headspace.
- Thoughts of suicide should always be taken seriously – it can sometimes be very difficult to recognize early warning signs, or to predict when someone is really struggling. Sometimes people will say something like 'I feel like a burden to everyone', or they may have recently experienced difficult life events. That's why it's important to regularly check in with people and to develop close relationships and support networks, as it can help reduce the risk of suicidal thinking taking over.

If you, or someone you care about, are in crisis call triple zero (000). You can also go to your local hospital emergency department. Remember to stay with the person until they are able to access professional support.

If you're feeling overwhelmed and need to speak with someone now, contact:

- **Lifeline on 13 11 14**
- **the Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467 (if you're aged 15 years or older).**

More information

Learn How to Handle Tough Times to Help Your Headspace.

sexual assault

- Sexual assault is when someone is forced or tricked into sexual acts without consent or against their will. Sexual assault is a crime and never the fault of the person experiencing it.
- Sexual assault can happen between strangers, acquaintances or people in intimate relationships.
- If you feel unsafe or at risk of sexual assault, get support. You could call the Police on triple zero (000), or contact 1800respect.org.au, or a trusted adult.
- People with lived experience of sexual assault can go through a range of difficult feelings after an assault, including anger, rage, guilt, embarrassment, powerlessness, or feeling threatened, fearful, isolated, sad and confused. They can also experience flashbacks, avoiding particular people, places or events. And they may experience difficulties in relationships or have trouble concentrating.
- Look for regular opportunities to check in, and make shared plans on how you'd like to respond.
- It can be very difficult to talk with others about the experience or reach out for support. If you're finding it hard that is OK. It is important to try to seek support, such as from your family, a teacher, school counsellor, your GP, police or a professional service like 1800respect.org.au
- With the right support, people who have experienced sexual assault can recover and live full and meaningful lives.
- Building healthy, respectful and reciprocal relationships helps protect everyone. A crucial part of respectful relationships is knowing about consent for any sexual interaction. Consent involves knowing that:
 - nobody can touch another person sexually without their consent
 - consent must be given freely, fully, consciously and voluntarily
 - someone can always change their mind about what they consent to whenever they choose.

If a friend lets you know they have been sexually assaulted, it can be hard to know how to respond. Below is a guide on how to respond.

Do:

- take them seriously
- listen to them, and believe what they say
- make sure they're safe. Support them to talk with a trusted adult, professional service or the police
- acknowledge that it must have been difficult for them to talk with you
- ask them what they need from you
- ask them what might be helpful in supporting them
- ask permission to check in with them again in the future
- if they are, or you are worried about their safety, let them know you need to talk to a trusted adult to keep them safe – even if they don't want you to. Ask them who they would like to tell, and see if they want to do this together. If no trusted adult is available this can be a professional service, such as 1800respect.org.au

Don't:

- dismiss them, justify someone else's behaviour or judge them
- ignore them, or pretend it didn't happen
- listen and then not follow up or help them to get additional support
- tell them to cheer up, get over it or forget about it
- expect them to tell you everything
- talk to others about anything they've told you. Telling others must only be to a trusted adult or professional service about seeking support, and should be done in consultation with the person where possible.

homophobia

- Homophobia is a term used to describe prejudice and discrimination against people based on their same sex attraction. This can take the form of fear, bullying, hostility and hatred, as well as negative attitudes and beliefs.

Examples are:

- verbal abuse
- social exclusion
- humiliation
- rumours
- threats
- put down 'jokes'
- physical abuse.

- The impact of homophobia can have immediate and long term effects on a person's physical and emotional health and wellbeing, as well as contribute to feelings of confusion, shame, isolation and low self-esteem.
- Not all people who experience homophobia respond in the same way, however people targeted are at greater risk of suicide, self harm and alcohol and drug use.
- Social exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation are responsible for poor health outcomes in the LGBTIQ+ community, not an individual's sexual orientation or identity.
- Finding communities of acceptance, inclusion and celebration overcome poor health outcomes.
- Developing a same sex attraction in an environment of homophobia may lead to thoughts of shame and isolation and can make it more difficult for someone to share their sexual orientation with others.

How to challenge homophobia

- let the LGBTIQ+ people in your life know you're a friend
- don't ever use negative or offensive language to describe LGBTIQ+ including jokes, or saying things like, 'that's so gay'
- if you feel safe doing so, challenge homophobia – call out homophobic language and behaviour
- support whoever is being bullied, check in with them, 'are you OK?' can be a good start

If it's happening to you

It's important that you reach out for support. Speak to a trusted family member, friend, an Elder, school counsellor, or professional support about what is happening.

- stay calm and try not to get upset and angry
- if you feel safe doing so, challenge homophobia – call out homophobic language and behaviour
- if you don't feel safe, get away from the situation as soon as possible
- build up a support network. It is important that an individual does not carry these experiences on their own
- let the school know what is happening
- discrimination is a crime. You can make a complaint to [humanrights.gov.au](https://www.humanrights.gov.au)

child abuse and neglect

- Child abuse and neglect is when someone under the age of 18 is harmed by an adult – a parent, caregiver or other adults. It can take a number of forms including:
 - physical abuse
 - emotional abuse
 - neglect
 - sexual abuse
 - exposure to family violence.
- Child abuse and neglect is a crime. It's never OK and it's never the fault of the person experiencing it.
- If you or someone you know would like professional advice on what steps to take next, consider contacting 1800respect.org.au – they can help you understand your options and support everyone involved.
- Not all young people respond in the same way after experiencing child abuse and neglect. People with a lived experience might go through a range of feelings. These might include:
 - shame
 - self-blame
 - sadness, confusion and low self-esteem
 - anger
 - fear
 - rage
 - powerlessness.
- And they might experience:
 - trauma symptoms
 - flashbacks and nightmares
 - denial that it happened
 - relationship issues
 - aggression and violence issues
 - difficulties at school or work.
- People who have experienced child abuse and neglect are also at higher risk of developing drug and alcohol issues, mental health difficulties and are at increased risk of self harm and suicide.
- With the right support, people who have experienced child abuse and neglect can recover and live full and meaningful lives.
- It can be very difficult to talk with others about this experience, or to reach out for support. If you're finding it hard, that is OK. It's important to try to seek support from someone you trust. A family member, close friend, school counsellor, an Elder, your GP, police or a professional service such as 1800respect.org.au
- It is important to seek help early. This can help to reduce the severity and duration of the impact of child abuse and neglect.

If a friend lets you know they have experienced child abuse and neglect, it can be hard to know how to respond. Below is a guide on how to respond.



Do:

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termination of pregnancy

- Terminating a pregnancy (also known as an abortion) can be a complex decision and there may be a number of reasons why someone chooses this option. This can be a stressful time, so it is important to ensure the health and wellbeing of the woman seeking support.
- Freedom of choice, and access to quality health information is a fundamental component of health care in Australia.
- There are two types of abortion, surgical and by medication. Surgical abortion is a day surgery and medication abortion is the use of specific medication to end a pregnancy.
- With surgical termination, there is a choice between a local anaesthetic where you are awake, or a general anaesthetic where you are unconscious. This decision, like all medical procedures, is made in consultation with your doctor.
- These procedures are performed at specialist clinics and hospitals, and the specific laws around access to termination differ from state to state.
- Everyone responds differently to the termination of a pregnancy. It can bring up a range of feelings including guilt, anger, self-blame or relief.
- Some women recover quickly after an abortion however others may recover over a longer period or benefit from additional support.
- If you or someone you know is having a hard time, it's important to reach out to someone for support. Try talking to a trusted family member, friend, teacher, counsellor, an Elder or a professional service. You might also find this after termination of pregnancy resource helpful.

How to support a friend:

- help your friend get accurate, unbiased information such as from Pregnancy Counselling
- ask them what they might need from you
- offer to help them access professional support. You could go with them to an appointment, or help them talk with a parent or trusted adult
- offer to help plan their day with them
- encourage them to keep doing the things that support their mental health and wellbeing
- check with them to see if they are OK
- you might also be interested in how to help a friend going through a tough time.



If you would like further information on sexual health, contraception and termination of pregnancy, Family Planning Alliance Australia has links to the family planning clinics in your state.



headspace would like to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First People and Traditional Custodians. We value their cultures, identities, and continuing connection to country, waters, kin and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and are committed to making a positive contribution to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, by providing services that are welcoming, safe, culturally appropriate and inclusive.



headspace is committed to embracing diversity and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the provision of health services. headspace welcomes all people irrespective of ethnicity, lifestyle choice, faith, sexual orientation and gender identity.



headspace centres and services operate across Australia, in metro, regional and rural areas, supporting young Australians and their families to be mentally healthy and engaged in their communities.

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