On campuses across the United States, kids are talking about social trends that heavily focus on suicide in the youth culture. While these conversations are creating opportunities for teachers, counselors and school psychologists to talk to students about suicide prevention, we recognize that the most powerful conversations can occur in the home.

To empower families with information about these potentially harmful social trends, this Parent Bulletin is being shared districtwide. Below is information about two of the constantly evolving topics trending online. We encourage parents to remain attuned to the changing landscape of youth culture and keep open lines of communication with your child.

Education is a partnership, and our team is ready to work together to create a healthy community. If you have any questions, please reach out to your neighborhood school, or visit the Clovis Unified School District Emotional Wellness website for additional resources: http://www.cusd.com/homepage-articles/wellness/. This year, a series of Parent Academy nights have been hosted in the District on the topic of emotional wellness and internet safety, with plans already underway for the series to continue monthly in the coming school year. Watch for more information from your neighborhood school about Parent Academies in your area.

13 Reasons Why

This Netflix series, released in March 2017, is based on the 2007 novel by Jay Asher. In its first week the series racked up 3.5 million social volume impressions (views and social media comments). The series contains graphically visual scenes depicting suicide and adult content such as sexual assault, drunk driving, bullying and self-harm. Psychologists and members of the medical community are warning of the series’ content increasing suicide ideation and behaviors among school-aged students.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has created a resource for families that includes conversation starters for parents. Below are some of the tips shared by NASP:

1. Ask your child if they have heard or seen the series 13 Reasons Why. While we don’t recommend that they be encouraged to view the series, if they say yes, do tell them you want to watch it, with them or to catch up, and discuss their thoughts.

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Have a Conversation

It is really important to chat with your children on an ongoing basis about staying safe online.

Not sure where to begin? These conversation starter suggestions can help.

1. **Ask your children to tell you about the sites they like to visit and what they enjoy doing online.**

2. **Ask them about how they stay safe online.** What tips do they have for you, and where did they learn them? What is OK and not OK to share?

3. **Ask them if they know where to go for help, where to find the safety advice, privacy settings and how to report or block on the services they use.**

4. **Encourage them to help someone.** Perhaps they can show you how to do something better online or they might have a friend who would benefit from their help and support.

5. **Think about how you each use the internet.** What more could you do to use the internet together? Are there activities that you could enjoy as a family?

**Warning Signs**

If they exhibit any of the warning signs below, don’t be afraid to ask if they have thought about suicide or if someone is hurting them. Raising the issue of suicide does not increase the risk or plant the idea. On the contrary, it creates the opportunity to offer help.

- Suicide threats, both direct (“I am going to kill myself.” “I need life to stop.”) and indirect (“I need it to stop.” “I wish I could fall asleep and never wake up.”). Threats can be verbal or written, and they are often found in online postings.
- Giving away prized possessions.
- Preoccupation with death in conversation, writing, drawing, and social media.
- Changes in behavior, appearance/hygiene, thoughts, and/or feelings. This can include someone who is typically sad who suddenly becomes extremely happy.
- Emotional distress.

**Blue Whale Game**

This online game purportedly encourages multiple days of self-harm, culminating in suicide, and has been the focus of a growing amount of online commentary. While reports of the rise of suicides in Eastern Europe as a result of this online gaming app have been found to be exaggerated, medical professionals warn that the youth culture conversation about the game poses a risk to those who may already be struggling emotionally.

According to the UK Safer Internet Center: “The internet is constantly changing, and new issues and online platforms are arising all the time. We would advise parents and care givers to have an open and honest conversation with their children. Ask your children about what they’re seeing online, talk through some of the issues that this game has brought to light, such as self-harm and negative influences online.”

**Other things to consider to keep your child safe online are:**

- **Age restrictions:** Think about the age restrictions on the sites your family uses. Common Sense Media and Net Aware are great sites to see what other parents think of the age rating on different platforms so that you can make an informed decision of whether your family should be using them.

- **Privacy setting:** Most social networking sites have privacy settings to help you manage the content you share and who you share it with; you can decide if you want your posts to be shared with your online friends and followers only or with the public. You can also decide who can contact you on sites you use within the privacy settings.

- **Block and report:** Make sure your children know that they can block or report any user that makes them feel uncomfortable online. Childnet has some guidance on how to make reports on different websites.

Source: https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/advice-those-concerned-about-%E2%80%98blue-whale%E2%80%99-service-those-concerned-about-%E2%80%98blue-whale%E2%80%99-st