

13 Reasons Why – The Norwegian Experience

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Warning – Episode 1

This fictional series covers several difficult issues, including depression and suicide.

If you or anyone you know need help finding support and crisis resources in your area, go to 13reasonswhy.info for more information.



Warning – 3 of the most graphic episodes

The following episode contains scenes that some viewers may find disturbing and/or may not be suitable for younger audiences, including graphic depictions of violence and suicide. Viewer discretion is advised.

If you or anyone you know need help finding support and crisis resources, go to 13reasonswhy.info for more information.



Suicide Alarm in the Municipality of Trondheim – Warning Letter to All Parents



The image is a screenshot of a news article from VG (Verdens Gang) titled "Trondheim kommune slår alarm etter flere selvmord" (Trondheim municipality issues a warning after several suicides). The article is dated May 1st, 2019. The main headline is in large, bold black text. Below the headline is a large photograph of Trondheim, Norway, featuring the prominent green spire of Nidaros Cathedral. A text box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the article's content. The text discusses the increase in suicides in Trondheim during the month of May, mentions the pressure of exams and social media, and references the Netflix series "13 Reasons Why". It concludes with a warning to parents to be more attentive to their children's mental health.

VG NYHETER

< Nyheter

Innenriks Utenriks Siste 48t Meninger

Trondheim kommune slår alarm etter flere selvmord

Kjære foreldre og foresatte

Den siste måneden har vi dessverre opplevd både selvmord og selvmordsforsøk i Trondheim. Mai måned er en særlig utfordrende måned med mange arenaer hvor ungdom utsettes for ulike typer press, som eksamen, rus og kanskje brutte forventninger om å høre til. Alle ungdommer har behov for økt omsorg i en sårbar tid og det er derfor du får denne meldingen nå.

De aller fleste ungdommene håndterer tenårene fint. Men det finnes noen ekstra sårbare som trenger økt omsorg fra foreldre og andre voksenpersoner rundt seg. Vi ønsker derfor å oppfordre alle til å bry seg og gi våre barn og ungdommer den støtten de trenger.

Vi vet at Netflix-serien "13 reasons why" eller "13 gode grunner" går som en farsott blant tenåringene. Serien handler om Hannah på 17 som tar sitt eget liv og som etterlater seg kassettopptak der hun peker på 13 grunner til at hun beslutter å begå selvmord. Serien er av ulike instanser kritisert for å forherlige selvmord, og har vakt debatt både i Norge og i utlandet. Svært mange elever i ungdomsskolen ser på serien og er opptatt av den. Vi vet at barn helt ned i 4. klasse følger med. Denne meldingen går derfor til alle foreldre i Trondheimsskolen.



Background

- Abnormal increase in suicide and suicide attempts during a period of 4-5 weeks
- Local government in the municipality raised the alarm
 - Alerted the emergency clinic at the hospital, doctors, schools, other relevant services for children etc.
 - Warning letter signed by all the principals at all elementary schools where distributed to the parents of the pupils on these schools
 - Encouraged everyone to care and look after the children due to the increase in suicide/attempts
 - Mentioned 13 Reasons Why and explained the content of the series



Background cont.

- The local police supported this action and the advice on talking to ones children
 - «In some of the cases it might seem like the person concerned have been inspired by this series. We have no statistics on this, but we know that young people are easily influenced.»
- The young people
 - «I think it is a good thing that the local government have sent a letter to the parents. But I think they should have written a letter to us pupils as well.»



Letter to the Prime Minister

- Leader of a parental committee at one of the schools in Trondheim wrote a letter to the Prime Minister
 - Said two girls in Trondheim had committed suicide and a third girl had attempted to commit suicide but was stopped just in time
 - They had all seen 13 Reasons Why – and might have been inspired by the series
 - Asked Netflix to stop streaming the series in Norway – Netflix referred to their parental control system
- Question: Is the Prime Minister able to stop the streaming of this series – at least in Norway?



Case Referred to the Ministry of Culture

- Two legal questions
 - Does Norwegian authorities or courts have any legal basis to instruct Netflix to remove or block the streaming of this series from the Norwegian version of Netflix?
 - Can Norwegian authorities demand that Norwegian distributors/Internet service providers block the access to the series for Norwegian viewers?
- Media Authority asked to assist



First Question – Instruct Netflix?

- Jurisdiction – AVMSD
 - European headquarter in the Netherlands – Netflix not subject to Norwegian jurisdiction; Norwegian law cannot be enforced towards Netflix
- The answer: NO



Second Question – Blocking by Norwegian Distributors/Int. Serv. Prov.?

- No regulation that gives the authorities the right to demand that Norwegian Internet Service Providers may block/filter foreign streaming services
- The content was not considered to be in violation with the Penal Code or any other Norwegian regulation
- Blocking would most likely be in breach with the right to freedom of speech in the Convention on Human Rights

- The answer: NO



How Did This Case Affect the NMA?

- Three employees used their spare time to watch 13 hours of a tv-series we do not regulate in order to be able to (and be prepared to) participate in the public debate
 - Not the last time we have to focus on global phenomenons outside our jurisdiction?
- Challenging issues
 - We do not regulate or supervise – how to communicate this to the media?
 - This is not solved through regulation – media literacy and involvement from parents, teachers and tutors are much more important tools than regulation



Classification

- The graphic depiction of the suicide – Age limit 15
- We have not classified other episodes or the rest of the series as such
- The series covers many problematic themes – demands a mature viewer



MyStory on Snapchat – Girl (11-12 years)

Lets play 13 reasons why

Send me a number to play, then go on my story.

If you get 'no tape' you have done nothing to hurt me

If you get 'tape' you have done something to hurt me, the thing is you have to figure out what you have done to hurt me without my help



Thank you for your attention!



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