

Netflix Wellness Initiative

By Jacqueline Franco

Background: Netflix released the teen drama show “13 Reasons Why” on March 31, 2017. The show follows the story of Hannah Baker, a girl who commits suicide, leaving 13 tapes of her behind explaining her actions. The show hoped to highlight the need for conversations about mental health but instead garnered criticism and received backlash due to its romantic, glamorized and graphic depiction of suicide with inadequate trigger warnings.

Statement of problem: Netflix has caused emotional distress for many viewers by failing to consider the implications of “13 Reasons Why” on mental health.

Research:

1. What impact does the show have on viewers?
 - a. Case study of those who have watched the show: Is it negative or positive? How are they walking away from the show feeling? How does this differ for viewers struggling in similar ways?
 - i. Primary/qualitative research
 - b. Researching public sentiment: How is social media reacting? How do opinions differ through different age groups? Are there any specific scenes that people see as insensitive than others?
 - i. Secondary/qualitative data
2. What is the consensus of mental health professionals concerning the show?
 - a. Interview: What are their opinions on how the show depicts mental illness? What aspects of the show do they feel could be the most triggering? How do they think we could have done a better job?
 - i. Primary/qualitative research
3. What kind and quantity of warnings did the show use?
 - a. Looking back through the show
 - i. Primary/quantitative research

Situation Analysis

<u>Strengths:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Leader in the online streaming industry- Large presence and influence in culture- Digital platform that can modify content and adapt to real-time feedback.	<u>Weaknesses:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Failed to consider implications of content due to rapid content production.- Lacked content warnings
<u>Opportunities:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Educate viewers.- Collaborate with health care professionals.- Create a task force that focuses on the implications of content on mental health.- Try again to communicate the desired message of the show (destigmatizing mental health struggles)	<u>Threats:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Loss of subscribers- Legal challenges from advocacy groups, individuals and families claiming that content had a detrimental impact on the viewer's mental health

Strategies & Tactics

1. Improve Netflix's content advisory system, ensuring customers that the company values their well-being.
 - a. Release a public statement apologizing and outline the changes we are implementing.
 - b. Collaborate with the creators and producers of "13 Reasons Why" to remove overtly graphic content from the show.
 - c. Add more warnings to existing and future Netflix content.
 - d. Offer resources to viewers before and after episodes (direct them to websites/hotlines)
2. Work with healthcare professionals to better protect subscribers in the future.
 - a. Social media campaign in partnership with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention on the importance of destigmatizing conversations around mental health (a message of the show that got lost amongst more significant controversy).
 - b. Create an educational website with the help of professionals that provides links to resources/hotlines related to topics covered in "13 Reasons Why" (suicide, depression, sexual assault) and other potentially triggering shows on Netflix.