

“13 Reasons Why” misrepresents mental health

STEPHANIE MAJINIAN

Thirteen audio tapes about suicide thrill teenagers across America to watch a fictional Netflix series.

Thirteen episodes later, how many of those teenagers actually helped someone who was struggling mentally?

Thirteen episodes later, how many of those teenagers who are mentally ill were inspired to actually seek help?

“Thirteen Reasons Why” is a two-season Netflix show that is based on the suicide of a traumatized high schooler, Hannah Baker, who recorded thirteen audiotapes explaining why she committed suicide. Among these, the main reasons were bullying, sexual harassment, and lack of support from her friends and peers.

The show focuses more on the story of her character and her romantic affairs rather than spreading awareness about mental health and what a serious problem it is, especially in the current generation.

The purpose of the show was to provide a perspective inside the mind of a suicidal child with mental struggles, but it never explained how to help those in need; it only showed the

aftermath of suicide.

“I really couldn’t bring myself to watch past the third episode, because it was an unbearably bad representation of issues I’ve experienced firsthand,” Isabella Dahl (’21) said. Dahl previ-



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ously had suffered from depression and said that the show “made depressed teens not want to watch it.”

Dahl also explained that the show was “received as exactly what it is: a watered down, normalized attempt at talking about suicide in a socially acceptable context. Nobody took it se-

riously.”

According to SELF.com, an American newsletter that focuses on health and wellness, even mental health experts agree that the show’s plot “conflates suicide with a teenage revenge fantasy,” which is very likely to send a dangerous message to impressionable viewers.

An anonymous junior argues that “‘13 Reasons Why’ shows suicidal people that people really did care after all, she just didn’t see it.”

Although, how is someone who is depressed supposed to be ensured that people cared about them whenever they were struggling, and no one checked in on them?

Not only did the show display that Baker was cared for only after she had died, but it also depicted how reaching out for help could result in something negative, rather than encouraging suicidal and depressed people to reach out for support.

“Thirteen Reasons Why” made suicide look interesting, which is what it should NOT be, and romanticized a story based on mental health. It failed to dig deep in regards to how reaching out for support could help save a life.

Way one dresses is never “asking for it”

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Even in 2018, our society continues to contribute to rape culture.

Rape culture is defined as “a society or environment whose prevailing social attitudes have the effect of normalizing or trivializing sexual assault and abuse,” according to the New Oxford American Dictionary.

Far too many times, assaulters and rapists have used the excuse of how one’s outfit was “tempting” them, and how the victims’ showing of skin was “basically asking for it.”

When will it be known to society that con-

the way a woman dresses is not an open invitation for them to be touched or engage in sexual activity?

According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), “one in 5 women and one in 16 men are sexually assaulted while in college. Rape is the most under-reported crime; 63% of sexual assaults are not reported to police.”

Supreme Court appointee, Brett Kavanaugh, faced sexual assault allegations during his recent nomination hearing. He was said to have committed assaults when he was in high school and in college.

Would you want someone who has been accused of such crimes being a part of the highest court in the United States of America? It is bad enough that we have a president who mocks sexually assaulted victims.

Mockery from Trump is not only sending the message that victims will be belittled if they speak up, but it is contributing to rape culture, and the message that victims will not be believed because it will

lead to a “man’s life [being] in tatters. A man’s life [will be] in shatters.”

Rape culture is not only silencing newly-found victims, but it is discouraging victims who have been suffering from years of trauma to reach out for professional help.

“Sixty-three percent of sexual assaults are not reported to the police,” according to NSVRC. Sexual assault victims have been scared into silence because of how ashamed people are taught to be of their bodies and their personal space.

The #MeToo movement has opened up a vast platform for victims to come forward, but how are we, as a society, supposed to move forward if a teenage girl is sent to the office for wearing spaghetti straps that expose her shoulders?

How are we, as a society, supposed to move forward if a boy is never shamed for partaking in cat-calling, and is casually congratulated by his group of friends for making an unsolicited remark of a girl walking down the street?

All these societal norms are degrading. The problem is that women receive too much shame for their bodies, and men are never taught that women are not their property.

Even something as empowering as women’s body positivity is sexualized.

The issue is never what someone is wearing that got them assaulted or raped.

The issue is that no one is ever taught about consent and personal space—especially men.



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sent is mandatory, and not an option?

When are young men going to be taught that

the TORNADO TIMES staff



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