The Netflix original series “13 Reasons Why,” based off a young adult novel of the same name, has captured the attention of adolescents and adults alike since its release on March 31. The series tells the story of teenager Hannah Baker who takes her own life and leaves behind cassette tapes chronicling the 13 reasons why she did it.

The show, produced by popular singer and actress Selena Gomez, has come under scrutiny and criticism in recent weeks for its graphic themes, which include suicide, sexual assault, substance abuse and bullying.

School systems across the state and country have sent home memos to parents with warnings and tips for dealing with the series and the issue of suicide, but many parents are finding that their child has already watched or heard of the series.

“The challenging thing about Netflix and these types of series is that they are only a few clicks away for many kids,” said Laura Saunders, PsyD, ABPP, child and adolescent psychologist at the Institute of Living. “There is a way to review your child’s viewing history as a way to stay on top of what is going on, or you can ask intermittently, ‘What are you watching?’”

For parents whose child has already seen the show or if a parent wants to allow their child to watch the series, Saunders recommends that they watch the show with their child or become familiar enough with the story and topics so they can start a dialogue.

“This really is an opportunity to talk about very uncomfortable topics that, quite honestly, kids already talk about,” Saunders said. “And it’s easier to talk about these topics when it’s a show and it’s a hypothetical than if this were to ever happen in your community. We can use this as an opportunity for primary prevention.”
‘Next to Normal’ prompts discussion

Although these conversations aren’t easy for parents or children, they offer an opportunity to educate and connect around challenging topics.

“I recommend making things informational at first — What do you know about this topic?” Saunders said. “Another tactic is to ask about their friends or people they know. Do you know someone like this? What should you do if you know someone who’s been bullied, or is suicidal, or is engaging in self harm? It’s a little less touchy to start by talking about other people, before directly asking your child about their own feelings and experiences.”

The graphic nature of the show — which has scenes that depict sexual assault and suicide — can stir emotions, particularly for those who are vulnerable, Saunders warns.

“The kids that have experienced significant bullying, feel very isolated, have struggled with depression or suicidal thoughts, or have engaged in self harm — those are the kids we need to be most careful about.”

Regardless of whether a parent or child watches the show, Saunders stressed that the issue of suicide is one that needs to be openly talked about.

“We don’t want to wait for an incident to happen in our schools or community before we have this conversation with our children,” she said.

Join us and walk for awareness

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) in Connecticut will be hosting its annual NAMI Walk to support mental health awareness on Saturday, May 20, at Bushnell Park in Hartford.

The Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network will be a sponsor for this event, and we are looking for employees at each of the entities within BHN (Backus and HOCC behavioral health units, Institute of Living, Windham Hospital, Natchaug and Rushford) to sign up to walk in the event. We are hoping for a strong BHN representation at the event. Contact Laura Durst at laura.durst@hhchealth.org to register or learn more.
Brian Theodore Benton, MD, who retired as Medical Director for the Backus Hospital Center for Mental Health in 2015, died peacefully on April 27.

Benton grew up in Goffstown, N.H., and graduated from Providence College. He received his medical degree from the Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara, Mexico in 1980. He completed his psychiatric residency at the University of Connecticut in 1986. Following that, he worked as a psychiatrist at The William W. Backus Hospital in Norwich for 29 years, serving as the Medical Director for the Center for Mental Health for 20 years. He also served as the Medical Director for Catholic Charities of Norwich.

Benton contributed to the field of mental health as a whole and advocated for his patients through his work with the American Psychiatric Association (APA).

He served as a member of the executive committee as well as the representative of New England and Canada to the APA. He also served as a member of the Council on Minority Mental Health and Health Disparities. Given his Cherokee ancestry, he tirelessly worked with the Native American, Native Alaskan, and Native Hawaiian APA component.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made in his memory to The William W. Backus Hospital, Office of Philanthropy and Development, 326 Washington St., Norwich CT 06360; Catholic Charities, 331 E. Main St., Norwich CT 06360; or Eastern Connecticut Hematology and Oncology, 330 Washington Street, Suite 220, Norwich CT 06360.

Dr. Brian Benton, Backus mental health leader, passes away

Are you planning for your retirement?

Do you know how much money you will need in retirement? Are you taking too much or too little risk with your investments? Do you know Hartford HealthCare provides retirement education and planning resources at no cost to you?

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JUNE 19-25, 2017
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VOLUNTEERS
THE HEART OF THE EVENT

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BrainDance Awards honor creative talents

Nineteen students and one teacher from schools in Connecticut and Minnesota were honored at the 14th annual BrainDance Awards on April 27, presented by the Institute of Living (IOL) at Hartford Hospital.

The BrainDance Awards encourage high school students to learn about psychiatric conditions and develop a more tolerant and realistic perspective toward people with severe psychiatric problems. The competition also aims to promote student interest in careers in mental health care.

“Each project celebrated at the BrainDance Awards encompasses our mission of decreasing stigma and discrimination, and increasing the involvement of students in the lives and issues that face those with mental illness,” said Dr. Harold Schwartz, IOL psychiatrist-in-chief and vice president of behavioral health for Hartford HealthCare. “This is an important part of getting students involved not just in mental illness, but in mental wellness for a lifetime.”

Awards and cash prizes were given to first, second and third-place finishers in the Art, Academic and Mixed Media categories, and the students presented a brief overview of their projects.

The projects were judged by expert clinicians and researchers in the field, who determined winners based on creativity, accuracy, scientific rigor and relevance to the issue of mental health stigma.

Mrs. Michelle Papa, an advanced creative writing teacher at Woodland Regional High School, was also honored for her support of the BrainDance Awards and the work she has done to help stop the stigma of mental illness.

Awards were presented by Dr. Godfrey Pearlson, director of the Olin

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### 2017 BrainDance award winners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1st Place</th>
<th>2nd Place (tie)</th>
<th>2nd Place (tie)</th>
<th>3rd Place (tie)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ART</strong></td>
<td>“Minimal Effort” by Lorenzo Cavallo from Southington High School</td>
<td>“The Blizzard” by Helen Roets from Ellington High School</td>
<td>“Relapse” by Amelia Rozear from Sacred Heart Academy</td>
<td>“Exposed” by Brittany Cassidy and Faith Stimson from Norwich Technical High School</td>
<td>“Toss Down the Umbrellas” by Samantha Olbrias from RHAM High School</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ACADEMIC</strong></td>
<td>“Stomping the Stigma of Schizophrenia” by Kimaela Estelan and Anjoli Kamuda from Norwich Technical High School</td>
<td>“The BrainDance Magazine” by Angela Tabor and Grace Lancto from Norwich Technical High School</td>
<td>“Changing Attitudes Towards Panic Disorder” by Ashley Roch and Qameron Mendez-Neff from Norwich Technical High School</td>
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<td><strong>MIXED MEDIA</strong></td>
<td>“Mental Illness Project” by Emily Ren from Century High School</td>
<td>“The Tides Have Turned” by Mari Cullerton, Brooke Olownia, Kyra Cullerton and Eve Cullerton from Housatonic Valley Regional High School</td>
<td>“Call Me Crazy” by Katherine McGuire and Katherine Starr from Housatonic Valley Regional High School</td>
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Above: Amelia Rozear explains “Relapse,” the artwork that earned her second place in the Art category at the 2017 BrainDance Awards.

Left: Dr. Godfrey Pearlson shows a piece of student art at the 2017 BrainDance Awards at the Institute of Living.
Hartford is often discussed in terms of poverty, violence, and lack of resources. These stereotypes have serious implications for personal sense of worth and the overall mental health of city residents.

To combat these stereotypes, youth from the Institute of Living’s TOPS Extended Day Treatment Program used photography to share the ways they experience Hartford as a beautiful place.

The TOPS participants used disposable cameras to photograph beautiful things in their community and their artwork was displayed at the ‘Heart of Hartford’ photography exhibit on Friday, April 21, at the Commons Building.

The project was a joint effort by Dorothy Manley, Haley Rice and Tatiana Martínez, students from Smith College School for Social Work and TOPS Extended Day Treatment Program. Funding from Hartford Healthcare made this event possible.

“It is crucial to acknowledge the impact of adverse narratives as it fails to recognize the many positive aspects of the Hartford community,” said Tatiana Martínez, MSW intern in the child and adolescent outpatient clinic at IOL. “By empowering Hartford youth to define themselves and their city, it is our hope that stereotypes will be challenged and a stronger sense of community will emerge.”

After the exhibit, the artwork will be displayed throughout the IOL.

Family Resource Center Support Groups

The IOL Family Resource Center (FRC) holds regular support groups. For additional information, please contact the FRC at 860.545.7665 or 860.545.1888. All programs are free of charge and, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Massachusetts Cottage, First Floor Group Room at the IOL Campus, 200 Retreat Ave., Hartford. The upcoming IOL FRC Support Group schedule is as follows:

- **Support Group For Those Coping With A New Or Chronic Medical Condition.** May 5, 12, 19, 26, June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 (Every Friday), 1 - 2 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room. For young adults ages 17-26 struggling with a new diagnosis, chronic medical conditions, physical symptoms or limitations. The group will help with difficult losses and limitation due to a medical condition, and build a positive, future-oriented focus with realistic goals. To RSVP, please call Elizabeth Alve-Hedegaard, APRN, at 860.545.7050.

**continued on next page**
Family Resource Center Support Groups (continued)

- **Depression Bipolar Support Alliance Group (DBSA).** May 8, 15, 22, June 5, 12, 26 (Every Monday), noon – 1 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room and May 10, 17, 24, 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28 (Every Wednesday), 7 – 8 p.m. in the Commons Building, 2nd Floor, Litchfield Room. Peer run support group for those who have been diagnosed with depression or bipolar disorder.

- **Alcoholics Anonymous.** May 9, 16, 23, 30, June 6, 13, 20, 27 (Every Tuesday), 12:30-1:30 p.m. Join us for coffee and a one-hour topic discussion. To learn more, contact the AA General Service Office at 212-870-3400 or P.O. Box 459, New York, NY 10163.

- **Managing Schizophrenia.** May 9, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This presentation will discuss the impact that symptoms of schizophrenia have on everyday activities, and provide tips on what you can do to make things better at home.

- **Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning).** May 10, 24, June 14, 28 (Second and fourth Wednesday of each month), 5 – 6:15 p.m. in the Center Building, Young Adult Service Group Room. Support group for 16- to 23-year-olds who identify LGBTQ issues as being prominent in their lives. The goal is to discuss support strategies to manage life challenges.

- **Hearing Voices Network (HVN).** May 11, 18, 26, June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 (Every Thursday), 5 - 6:30 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room. Peer run support group based firmly on a belief of self-help, mutual respect and understanding where people can safely share their experiences of voices, visions, unusual sensory perceptions. The groups offer an opportunity for people to accept and find meaning in their experiences that help them regain power over their lives.

- **Al-Anon Parent Group.** May 11, 18, 25, June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 (Every Thursday), 7 - 8 p.m. One hour topic discussion.

- **Substance Use Educational And Support Group.** May 11, June 8 (Second Thursday of each month), 4 – 5 p.m. For family members impacted by loved ones with substance abuse.

- **Autism Spectrum Support/Educational Group Meeting For Parents.** May 17, June 21 (Third Wednesday of the month), 6 - 7 p.m. Providing a place for parents of children on the autism spectrum, or with another related disorder, to come together and get support and information. Monthly, peer-run support groups interspersed with special guests and speakers to offer additional guidance and perspective.

- **Support Group For Families Dealing With Major Mental Illness.** May 18, June 1, 15 (First and third Thursday of each month), 5:15 - 6:30 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room. For family and friends of individuals who have schizophrenia, bipolar or other related disorders. Share your success and struggles. Learn to care for yourself while caring for others.

- **Introduction To Mental Health Benefits and Services.** May 23, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This presentation will provide an overview of benefit programs available for individuals with mental health disabilities.

- **Yoga.** May 30, June 27, 5 - 6 p.m. in the Commons Building, Hartford Room. Open to adult staff and family members. Mats are provided or bring your own! The class begins with breathing exercises and gentle stretches, followed by a series of poses and ends with relaxation and meditation. Instructor: Valerie Raggio, LCSW, Yoga Fit, Level 1 Certified. To RSVP or inquire, call the FRC at 860.545.7716 or email laura.durst@hhchealth.org

- **Dementia Lecture: An Introduction.** May 30, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This program is for family members and friends of individuals who have dementia or a related disorder. It will present a basic understanding of the disorder, its treatment, along with specific suggestions to help family members and friends better cope with the illness.

- **Dementia Support/Educational Group Meeting.** June 6 (First Tuesday of each month), 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Donnelly Conference Room, First Floor. Please join us as we bring together experts and those who want guidance, direction, and support. Space is limited — reservations are required by calling 860.545.7665.
Students spend time at Blair Manor

The Enfield CDT school leadership group spent a morning engaging residents at Blair Manor nursing home in cognitive games.

The students and residents had such a good time that the leadership group was invited back to do it again in May. The students were incredible with the residents and are eager to return.

The leadership club also made Easter baskets for the domestic abuse shelter children.

The Pony Express

Students at Joshua Center Thames Valley enjoyed a visit from Lulu, a miniature therapy horse from Horses Healing Humans in Stonington on Wednesday, April 19.

First Annual Natchaug Hospital Charity Co-ed Softball Tournament

Saturday, June 24, 2017
Recreation Park, Willimantic

$200 per team – 12 team maximum
Limit 15 players per team (minimum of 6 female). All players must be over 18 years old.
Tournament format will be double elimination.
Participating players will receive a t-shirt. First- and second-place teams will receive a trophy.
Families are invited to attend (this is an alcohol-free event).

All proceeds from the event will support the Natchaug Hospital child and adolescent inpatient unit.
For more information, contact Ashley Laprade at ashley.laprade@hhchealth.org or 860.696.9872.

Natchaug Hospital Connect to healthier™

Hartford HealthCare Bone & Joint Institute and Westfarms invite you to a special event.

Come learn more about Hartford HealthCare’s Bone & Joint Institute! Connecticut’s first and only orthopedic hospital.

Schedule of Events:

10-11 am
Complimentary ZUMBA® with Freddie! Wear your sneakers and get ready for some fun! All ages are welcome.

11 am-1 pm
Rob Dibble Appearance – “Mini Golf against Rob.”

11 am-2 pm
Hartford HealthCare Bone & Joint Institute experts will be on hand showcasing our services – including a golf swing analysis.

Refreshments, giveaways and complimentary services all in Center Court.

Hartford HealthCare
Connect to healthier™
Aetna helps with Apple Watch price

Hartford HealthCare employees can buy an Apple Watch with a $75 discount from Aetna. The promotion is part of a partnership between Aetna and Apple designed to help employees stay active, track their health and keep track of their insurance.

From practicing mindfulness to reaching fitness goals, Apple Watch is designed to help you stay active, healthy, and productive throughout the day — right from your wrist.

Employees of Hartford HealthCare will be able to purchase an Apple Watch online and pay for it with a credit card or, if they are eligible, spread the cost over a year, using interest-free payroll deductions. To learn more, including purchasing instructions, click on the Wellness Incentives page of HHC Connect.

For more information, click on: www.2017rushfordclassic.golfgenius.com

Baskets needed for Golf Classic drawing

Part of the fundraising for the Rushford Golf Classic involves raffling off staff-created gift baskets. The Fund Development department is hoping staff will be inspired again this year to create baskets to help raise money for programs to support clients.

Suggested gift basket ideas include gift card, animal lovers, relaxation, coffee/tea, movie lovers, sports, readers, home and garden, gourmet food, beverages and chocolate lovers.

The group whose basket ends up with the highest number of tickets submitted, will win a pizza party! Please contact Kate McNulty (katherine.mcnulty@hhchealth.org) or Melissa Monroe (melissa.monroe@hhchealth.org) to sign up. Baskets are due by May 17.
The Institute of Living at Hartford Hospital explores gender identity from endocrinology and psychology experts. Hear from people living with the many aspects of gender identity and see the National Geographic documentary, “Gender Revolution: A Journey with Katie Couric.”

Panel includes: Laura Saunders, PsyD, ABPP, Clinical Coordinator of “The Right Track,” a LGBTQ Specialty Track at the Institute of Living, and Priya Phulwani, MD, Endocrinologist at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center and Director of Gender Identity Clinic, a parent member of PLFAG (Parents, Friends of Lesbian & Gays) and transgender youth.

Tuesday, June 6 | 6–9 pm
Real ArtWays
56 Arbor Street, Hartford

Institute of Living
A Division of Hartford Hospital

Registration required.
1.855.HHC.HERE (1.855.442.4373)
InstituteOfLiving.org/events