



Trigger warning - VIOLENCE

Several schools contacted us last week with concerns about the "Squid Game" played in the playground.

SQUID GAME is a Korean series airing on Netflix. Centered around 47-year-old Gi-hun, who lives with his mother and sometimes works as a chauffeur. After stealing his mother's savings and gambling with it, he is hunted down by debt collectors who threaten to take his kidney and eye if he does not come up with the money he owes within a month. His 10-year-old daughter lives with a wealthy stepfather, and many other things make life look pretty grim for Gi-hun. Then a mysterious stranger with a briefcase approaches Gi-hun in a subway station, enticing him to play a child's game for serious money. When he loses, he is slapped. When he wins, he makes good money. The messages in Squid Game are not appropriate for young teens and tweens.

Parents should know that the level of violence is highly intense in Squid Game, and it is not suitable for young teens and primary school-age children.

Some of the most popular and innocent children's games in the 1970s and 1980s South Korea are reinvented as a mysterious survival game with a 45.6 billion cash prize for the winner. There is a catch, however: losers must pay with their lives! A group of 456 financially desperate people voluntarily risk their lives for the penultimate prize. They participate in six twisted games Squid Game, in the words of writer-director Hwang Dong-hyuk, is a dark and macabre take on 'modern capitalism' that depicts extreme competition while still being able to incorporate emotional, dramatic & theatrical aspects to the story. Characters are killed and tortured for the sadistic pleasure of a game master. There is sex; there are threats of sexual violence, women assaulted. It also includes reference to the highs one gets from gambling; winning or coming into an enormous amount of money is the main focus of the squid game.

At a South Korean news conference for the show director, Hwang Dong-hyuk said he settled on "Squid Game" as the drama's title based on his recollections and rendition of the sport.

"Squid Game was the most physically aggressive childhood game I played in neighborhood alleys as a kid, which is why I also loved it the most," Hwang said. "In a way, it is the most symbolic game that reflects today's competitive society, so I picked it out as the show's title."

The Squid Game is named after the squid-like diagram usually drawn on sandy fields. Players split into two teams, with attackers trying to reach and dominate a "land" or home base, usually hopping on one leg out of bounds, while offense players push, pull and try to keep their opponents outside the lines.

Even though adults have overwhelmingly positive reviews about this series, there is a lot of torture and murder that seem to be celebrated. The concept of the super-rich using the misery of poor and desperate humans is certainly not new for horror. The series has compared to a hybrid of Money Heist meets The Hunger Games and Stranger Things, but way more violent.

The amount of killing is horrific, and the methods are awful. There is a graphic image of an eyeball being taken out of the body - it is not easy to skip if you do not know it is coming.

Sensitive or younger viewers should avoid watching Squid Game on Netflix. As always, we recommend that you watch it first and talk to your kids about the themes if you decide to let them watch it.

Consider the impact and possible desensitisation to extreme violence, gambling, and addiction.

Make sure your children/students know that playing violent games like this at school is not ok under any circumstances.