

Introduction

By: Kristen Rose

Life is already difficult for young adults, and it became even more difficult in 2020 when the world was forced into lock-down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Everything became more challenging, especially socializing and keeping up with friends. While the pandemic has been hard for everyone, it has been especially challenging for teens, who are already facing new experiences and tough life decisions. There are many forms of escapism that can be helpful in these situations. They take our minds off current affairs and bring us into a whole new world. Dystopian and post-apocalyptic genres are one such form of escape. These genres have been popular for decades and continue to be popular amongst teens today.

Sometimes dystopian and post-apocalyptic content is misunderstood as violent, dark, and inappropriate for teens. This issue of the *YA Hotline* explains the value of these genres for teens. There is much to be gained from reading, viewing, and playing dystopian and post-apocalyptic content. It raises important questions about politics and government. It encourages critical thinking and inspires teens to advocate for change. In young adult dystopian fiction, teen protagonists are not afraid to challenge adults and to use their voices to make a difference. While these genres do include dark elements, they can also be inspiring and should not be overlooked.

This issue of the *YA Hotline* aims to expand readers' understanding of these genres, and to encourage professionals to include dystopian and post-apocalyptic content in programming. It provides many helpful tools, articles, and resources for suggested related books, movies, and video games. We hope this issue serves as an inspiration to explore these genres in depth and to appreciate the value that they can provide to young adult readers.