

Factsheet: Incels and Misogyny

Due to the response from schools and professionals regarding the recent Netflix miniseries called [Adolescence](#) – we have created this factsheet for awareness about the content that was raised during the show, relating to Incels, Misogyny and the Manosphere.

Manosphere

The manosphere is a collection of websites, blogs, and online forums promoting toxic masculinity, misogyny, and opposition to feminism. While the manosphere used to be limited to dark corners of forum websites like Reddit and 4chan, it has now permeated regular social media, with manosphere commentary present (and popular) on Instagram and TikTok.

Toxic Masculinity

Toxic masculinity is a term that refers to gender stereotypes associated with how a man should act. Some of these stereotypes say that men can't cry or that they're expected to provide for their family.

These kinds of stereotypes are harmful to men and boys' mental health. This is because they might feel like they have to keep their feelings to themselves, struggle to talk about their struggles or like they can't ask for help.

Misogyny

Misogyny is form of online hate that targets women and girls. It's promoted in different communities online where influencers promote a narrative that women should be treated as less than men.

Incel

Incel means involuntarily celibate. This is a self-descriptive term used by men who consider themselves unable to attract women sexually. Incels have been known to turn the blame outwards, leading to a hatred of women.

The term incel has been linked to multiple high-profile incidents of violence against women. Elliot Rodger, the University of California student who killed six people and injured fourteen others before killing himself, was a self-described incel and has become an icon in some incel communities.

Plymouth shooter Jake Davison, who killed five people in August 2021 including his own mother, was also a self-described incel.

Andrew Tate

Andrew Tate is a British American social media influencer who has become popular for his misogynistic views and beliefs about traditional masculinity.

He believes that women should belong to men, shouldn't drive and shouldn't leave the house. He has also said that women should "bear responsibility" for their own sexual assault. He has spoken out in favour of Russell Brand, conspiracy theorist Alex Jones and the Nazis, questioning whether they were really the "bad guy" in World War II.

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Red pill

The red pill emoji mentioned in Netflix's *Adolescence* is indeed a reference to 1999 film *The Matrix*, although it has now become incredibly convoluted and warped by the manosphere.

In *The Matrix* film, protagonist Neo is offered a choice of two pills. If he takes the blue pill, he will continue to exist in the world as he knows it, which is actually a simulation. If he takes the red pill, he will be released into the "real world", where the truth is revealed.

To be red pill in the manosphere means you see the world as it really is. This means that men "see" the true nature of women's behaviour and dating preferences (i.e. that women are "shallow", focused on traditional masculinity) and believe that women are the problem.

Alphas, betas and sigma's

Alphas are traditionally masculine men (or "chads"), betas are subservient men (or "cucks"), and sigma's are said to be lone wolves.

Many incels seek to become more "alpha" to attract women, as they believe these are the only type of men that women are attracted to.

It is believed by incels that alpha is the "ideal" male archetype, a recent trend has seen young men become increasingly interested in becoming a "sigma", with this becoming the manosphere's archetype terminology.

It has entered mainstream youth vocabulary now routinely crops up in popular culture.

The 80/20 rule

Incels often reference 80/20 rule (stemming from the Pareto principle), which describes the idea that 80 percent of women want to date only the top 20 percent (in terms of attractiveness and wealth) of men.

This can be seen to help shift the blame of men who struggle to attain romantic interests back onto women, as they're believed to be too "fussy" to date other types of men.

It is important to note that this is a less common phrase that is used in Incel Communities than portrayed in the Netflix drama.

Looksmaxxing

Looksmaxxing is the act of maximising your perceived attractiveness through various methods, ranging from basic hygiene and skincare to more extreme measures like cosmetic surgery. It also includes mewing.

It is now common that the term "maxxing" is now applied to many things ironically, i.e. if you get your 10,000 steps in you could joke that you're "walkmaxxing". While this term may have originated in the incel community, it is now often used ironically in ways entirely unrelated to incel ideologies.

Mewing

This tends to occur in years five, six, and seven, and it is the process by which a person places their tongue on the roof of their mouth in an effort to secure a sharper jawline, named after its orthodontist creator, Dr John Mew.

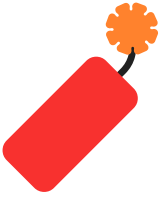
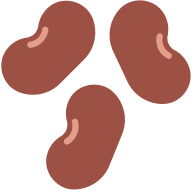
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If it sounds familiar, that's because it was adopted by incels as one of their pro-masculinity techniques a few years ago.

Now, it's made its way to young boys. Orthodontia-wise, mewing has very little merit and has mostly been debunked by the dental community.

"The reality is that like any oral exercise, it has to be performed for hours and hours and hours," says the President Elect of the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, Dr Sam Jethwa. "We're talking hundreds of hours consistently with possibly no breaks. So it's unlikely to do anything."

Emojis used during the drama:

	The red pill is like, 'I see the truth'. It's a call to action by the manosphere. The manosphere refers to a varied collection of websites, blogs, and online forums promoting masculinity, misogyny, and opposition to feminism.
	dynamite, which refers to an "exploding red pill" meaning that someone is an incel.
	kidney bean emoji is also used to identify or self-identify as an incel. This might be linked to its similarity to the coffee bean. The coffee bean meme, popular on platforms like 4Chan and Reddit, has been used to belittle women and reinforce harmful stereotypes.
	Incels have long used a coffee cup emoji to express disdain for women, often on its own or with the word "women ☕" beforehand. As such, it can also be used to show that someone is an incel but is more commonly used <i>by</i> incels.
	'80/20 rule', an idea shared among his classmates, and its connection to the '100' emoji.

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	Red Heart Emoji means 'love'
	Purple Heart Emoji means 'Horny'
	Yellow Heart Emoji means 'I'm interested, are you interested?'
	Pink Heart Emoji means 'I'm interested, but not in sex'
	Orange Heart Emoji means 'You're going to be fine'

Resources and information:

- Further information about Incels for Year 10 and above can be found on the resource from Educate against Hate (The UK Government's) Hate and Prevent teaching resource website.
Weblink: <https://www.educateagainsthate.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Incels-A-guide-for-those-teaching-Year-10-and-above-1-1.pdf>
- London Grid for Learning have also published some resource about Incels and the manosphere.
Weblink: <https://lgfl.net/safeguarding/incels>
- BBC have a very good article on Incels on their news website.
Weblink: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-44053828>
- The institute for Strategic Dialog has an Explainer on their website about incels.
Weblink: <https://www.isdglobal.org/explainers/incels/>
- Internet matters have a website on Misogyny which may be of use.
Weblink: <https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/online-hate/what-is-misogyny/>
- Further reading on Andrew Tate
Weblink: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-64125045>

Please note that the information contained within this document was gathered at pace from multiple public sources.