

Online misogyny and young people

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A briefing for teachers and professionals working with children

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Internet Matters research found that 56% of 25-34-year-old dads familiar with Andrew Tate have a positive impression of him.

Additionally, 23% of 15-16-year-old boys familiar with Andrew Tate have a positive impression of him. So, we've created this guide teachers and professionals working with children insight into addressing the influence of misogyny in schools.

What is the 'manosphere'?

The 'manosphere' is a term used to describe online communities which promote anti-feminist, sexist and misogynist views. These communities include forums, blog influencers and YouTube channels.

Manosphere communities generally share the view that female empowerment has worsened the lives and opportunities of boys and men.

The manosphere stretches from sharing anti-feminist opinions to the glorification of outright violence against women.

For example, some manosphere groups promote dangerous and false beliefs about sexual assault victims. These beliefs serve to excuse sexual violence.

"People exaggerate how common misogyny is"

Dads who agree:

40%

Mums who agree:

22%

"Misogyny is a serious problem online"

Dads who agree:

39%

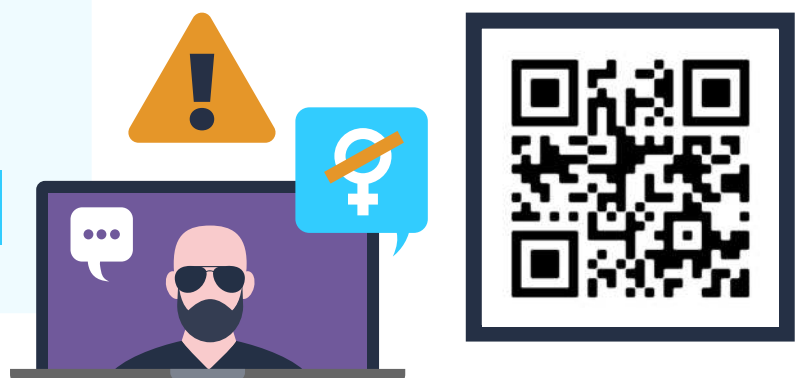
Mums who agree:

54%

"It's really east to go down that path."

If you like one video, suddenly your entire algorithm [...] it's all you get after a while if you're not careful."

– Teenage boy



Why do manosphere communities thrive?

Manosphere communities often succeed because they speak to real anxieties felt by many boys and young men. Such anxieties include the rising rates of male suicide and mental ill-health, barriers to employment and social isolation.

However, the manosphere's diagnosis of the cause of these issues (women's freedoms) is often misleading as well as harmful to both men and women.

"It's a bit too late now [for my younger brother].

He's watched so many of them TikToks that like he believes it [online misogyny]."

– Teenage girl



The manosphere and offline harm

Extreme wings of the manosphere are linked to online and real-world acts of violence. Additionally, some manosphere communities (in particular 'black pill' groups, 'involuntary celibates' or 'incels') have encouraged vulnerable boys and young men to commit acts of self-harm and suicide.

Case study:

Amy* is 17 and lives with her dad, step-mum and two brothers. She knows who Tate is and has heard some things he's said, but she feels she shouldn't investigate further because she finds what he says infuriating: "He tries to belittle women and uses that to say men are good."

At college recently, Amy worked on a group project where she was the only girl, and all of the boys really liked Tate. She was put in charge of the group and the boys kept quoting him to her. They repeatedly told her, "I'm not doing any work for you because you're a woman." The college were made aware but didn't talk to the boys about it. "They don't really get involved with that type of stuff".

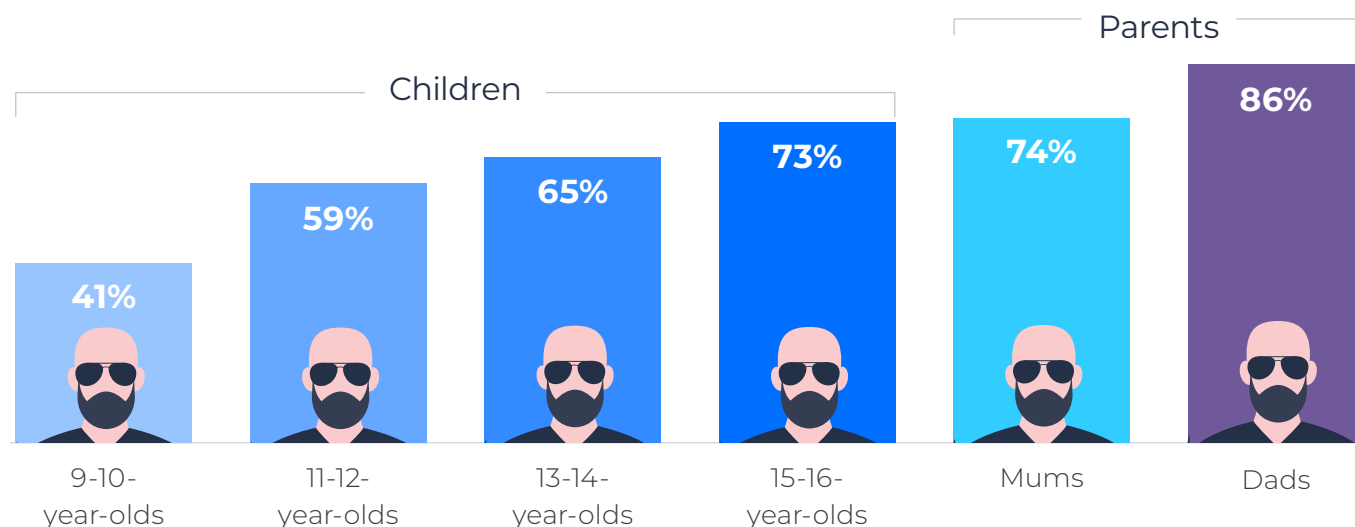
*name has been changed to protect the young person's identity.

Who is Andrew Tate?

Andrew Tate is a British-American kickboxer, social media influencer and self-described misogynist.

He is by far the most prominent member of the 'manosphere'. In July 2022 there were more searches for Andrew Tate than Donald Trump and Kim Kardashian combined. Before it was removed by the platform in 2022, there were over 14 billion views of #AndrewTate on TikTok.

Awareness of Andrew Tate



What are his beliefs?

Andrew Tate has:

- discussed owning women as property;
- advocated for dating 18- and 19-year-olds, over women in their 20s, because he can 'make an imprint' on them;
- suggested that female rape victims bear a degree of responsibility for their assaults.

"[He's] pretty troublesome...

He's had an influence on my teenage sons I think. [But] he does have some pretty legitimate things he touches on."

- Dad

Andrew Tate in his own words



"It's bang out the machete, **boom in her face and grip her by the neck.** Shut up bi**h."

"You can't be responsible for something that doesn't listen to you. You can't be responsible for a dog if it doesn't obey you, or a child if it doesn't obey you, or **a woman that doesn't obey you.**"

"The masculine perspective is you have to understand that life is war. **It's a war for the female you want.** It's a war for the car you want. It's a war for the money you want. It's a war for status. **Masculine life is war.**"

Why do young men accept his message?

In our focus groups, multiple teenage boys and young dads described the appeal of Tate's lifestyle. His wealth, financial advice and flashy lifestyle appeal to many. Additionally, teen boys and dads said Andrew Tate's comments about women were funny.

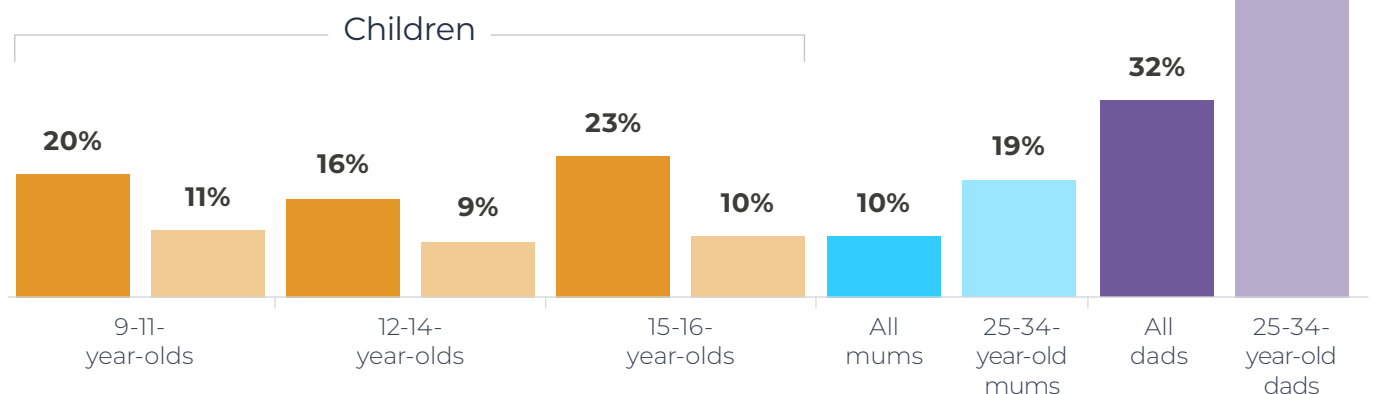
Outrageous videos tend to get more views. When users engage with content through likes, shares or comments, the algorithm learns that people want to see the content. So, it suggests it to more people.

Our research found that boys were more likely to see content from Andrew Tate on social media than girls. This number increased with older boys.

Have a positive impression of Tate*

*of those who have heard of him

Boys Girls





5 tips to counter misogynist views on young people

1. Understand the possible attractions of online misogyny

The success of manosphere influencers is a symptom of a real set of issues facing boys and young men:

- mental health issues
- bullying
- social isolation
- lacking a sense of direction or purpose.

If a child begins to express harmful views or joins manosphere communities, it's important to understand why.

For some, the manosphere may offer direction, solutions to their problems and a sense of belonging and community. Understanding the issues to which misogyny provides a 'solution' is the first step in addressing it.

2. Understand the content

By understanding the manosphere's language and message, teachers and parents can better counter it.

Watching content from misogynist influencers is challenging for most. Additionally, it might result in more recommendations of similar content due to platform algorithms. However, this content can give you more insight into the messages young people see and why they might take on those beliefs. Users can manage suggested content in account settings as well.

3. Avoid kneejerk reactions

Anger, fear and dismissal are natural reactions to misogynist views. But it's important to stay calm and remember that isolation and rejection often only serves to further reinforce harmful narratives that manosphere influencers spread.

4. Ask questions

Misogynist influencers often tell young followers to expect heated confrontation when they share their views. As such, keeping calm can help counter this narrative.

Instead, ask open questions for a more productive conversation. This can also help the child to identify the flaws in misogynist arguments for themselves.

5. Remain patient and supportive

It might not be possible to change a young person's attitude overnight – particularly if they have been consuming manosphere content over a long period of time. However, consistent empathy, tolerance and conversations overtime can help them reconnect to less harmful communities and values.



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