



Baltic Engagement
Centre for Combating
Information Disorders

How are boys radicalized on social media?

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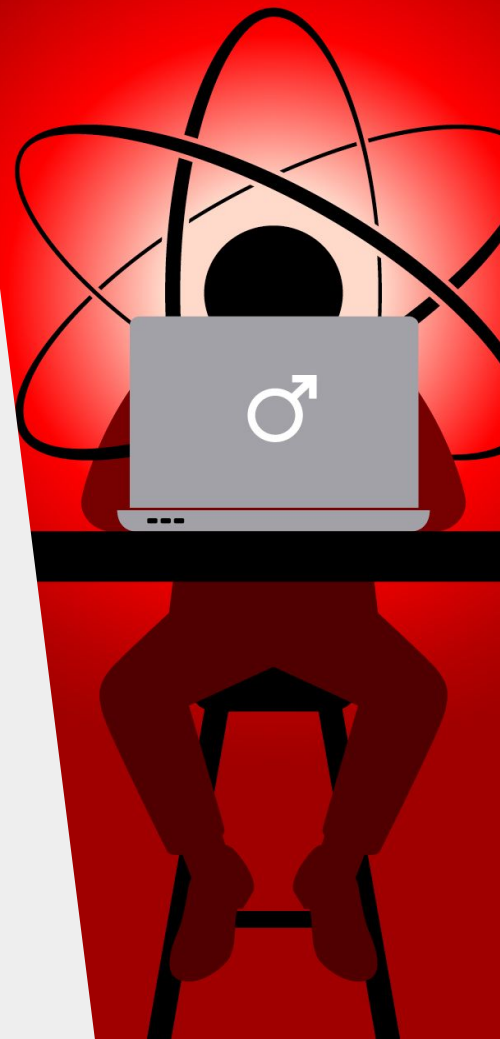
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April 17, 2025



Coming up today

- Why are we talking about this?
- Radicalization, sexism and misogyny
- How are boys radicalized?
 - Manosphere communities
 - Ideologies, how to recognize them
 - Why are they problematic?
 - Manfluencers
 - Ideologies, how to recognize them
 - Why are they problematic?
- Why do these ideas attract?
- Solutions: what to do & what not to do



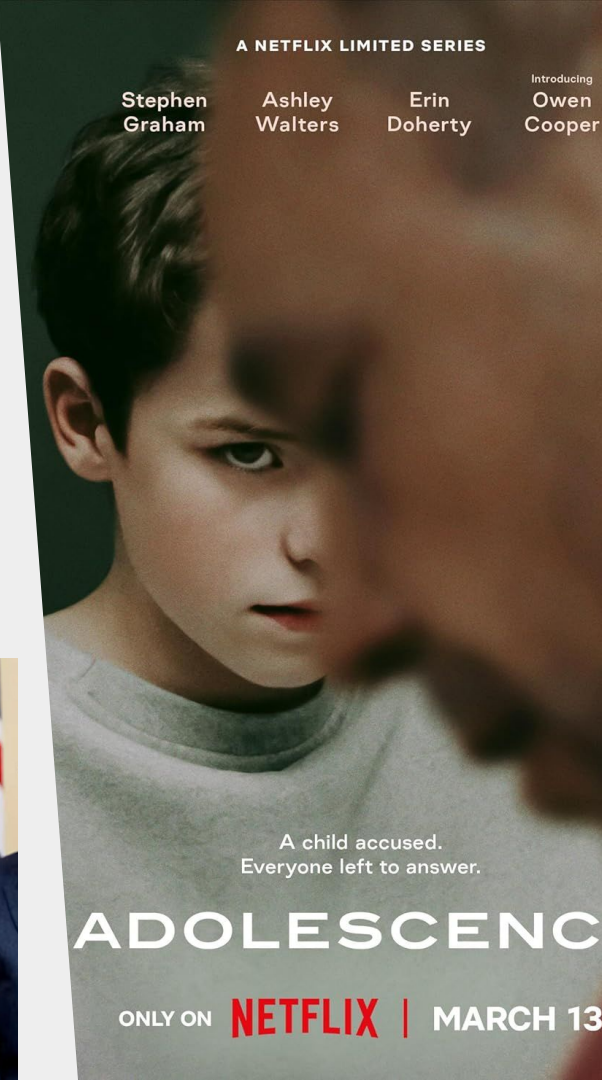
Why are we talking about this?

- *Netflix's hit-series Adolescence*
 - Problematic trends on social media
 - Larger problems with masculinity
 - Engagement & attitudes regarding the youth (schools, parenthood, etc.).
- Problematic trends among the views of boys and girls.



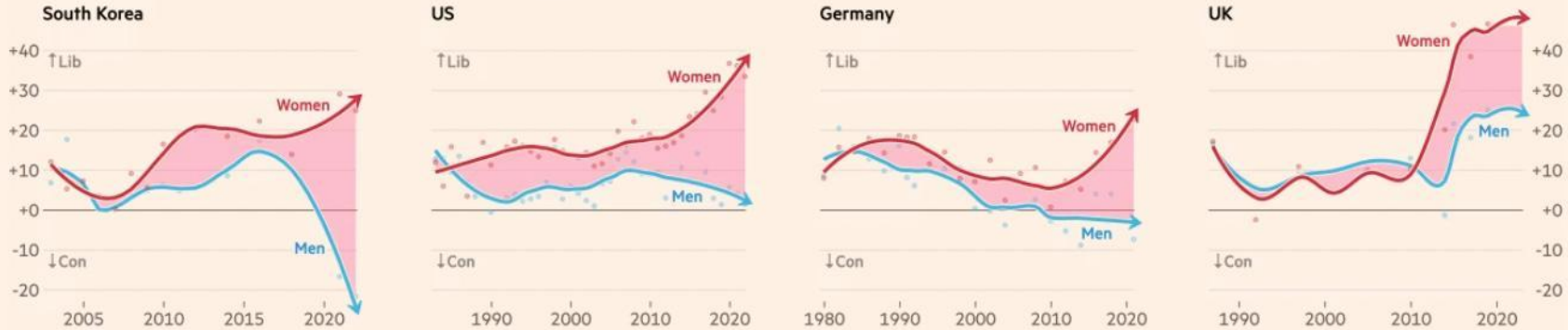
The UK wants to screen Netflix's Adolescence in schools. Should you watch it with your child?

Published: April 3, 2025 7:34am CEST



A wide ideology gap is opening up between young men and women in countries across the world

Political ideology of 18-29s (% liberal minus % conservative), by sex



Sources: Daniel Cox, Survey Center on American Life; Gallup Poll Social Series; FT analysis of General Social Surveys of Korea, Germany & US and the British Election Study. US data is respondent's stated ideology. Other countries show support for liberal and conservative parties. All figures are adjusted for time trend in the overall population. FT graphic: John Burn-Murdoch / @burnmurdoch © FT

'We see misogyny every day': how Andrew Tate's twisted ideology infiltrated British schools

A year ago, most teachers had never heard of the ex-kickboxer and social media influencer. Now, his toxic machismo is the talk of the playground - and the staffroom



Sally Weale

Thu 2 Feb 2023 11:00 CET

Essay

Mainstreaming the Manosphere's Misogyny Through Affective Homosocial Currencies: Exploring How Teen Boys Navigate the Andrew Tate Effect

Craig Haslop ¹, Jessica Ringrose ², Idil Cambazoglu ², and Betsy Milne ²

EDUCATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGIST
2024, VOL. 41, NO. 2, 125–128
<https://doi.org/10.1080/20590176.2024.2329083>



Australian Psychological Society



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COMMENTARY



To quell the problem, we must name the problem: the role of social media 'manfluencers' in boys' sexist behaviours in school settings

Steven Roberts and Stephanie Wescott

School of Education, Culture and Society, Faculty of Education, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia

KEY POINTS

What is already known about this topic:

- (1) Sexism and sexual harassment are longstanding issues in schools, identified by decades of research.
- (2) Young people who view social media masculinity 'influencer' content are more likely to normalise controlling and other harmful behaviours.
- (3) Narrow and limiting social constructions of masculinity are harmful for boys and young men's mental and general health.

What this topic adds:

- (1) Content by the most prominent masculinity influencer, Andrew Tate, has infiltrated classrooms across Australia; his tropes, quotes and ideas are invoked regularly by students.
- (2) Women teachers report a noticeable shift in boys' behaviour and attitudes towards women and girls that they attribute to Tate's influence.
- (3) Women teachers need greater support from school leadership to address boys' concerning attitudes and behaviour to make their workplace safe.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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KEYWORDS

Sexism; women teachers;
social media; masculinity;
boys; misogyny



Journal of School Psychology

Volume 106, October 2024, 101346



Understanding and preventing violent extremism in school settings

John Horgan ^a, Carrie Lorig ^a, Randy Borum ^b, Clare S. Allely ^c, Todd I. Herrenkohl ^d

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Article

Hating Women: A Constitution of Hate in Plain Sight

Kimberley Brayson

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2024, Vol. 39(17-18) 3954–3982
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The problem of anti-feminist 'manfluencer' Andrew Tate in Australian schools: women teachers' experiences of resurgent male supremacy

Stephanie Wescott , Steven Roberts and Xuenan Zhao

School of Education, Culture and Society, Faculty of Education, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia

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AGGRESSIVE COMMUNICATION ONLINE

From familiar anti-women sentiments to misogyny influencers and male supremacism in the manosphere

Allysa Czerwinsky

DOI: [10.4324/9781003392002-19](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003392002-19)

In September 2023, a clip of conservative streamer Nico 'Sneako' De Balinthazy interacting with fans went viral on Twitter. As Sneako poses for a selfie with two young boys, one excitedly shouts, "Fuck the women! Fuck the women!" (FearBuck, 2023). Though Sneako appears visibly taken aback by his young fans' brazen

The New York Times

'Brainwashing a Generation': British Schools Combat Andrew Tate's Views

Alarmed by an online personality's popularity among their students, educators are mobilizing to combat the sexism he promotes

UK schools grappling with teens brainwashed by Andrew Tate: report

By Patrick Reilly

Published Jan. 7, 2023 | Updated Jan. 7, 2023, 9:08 p.m. ET



Taylor Swift terror attack suspects planne huge number' of fans, CIA official says

Swift canceled three "Eras Tour" dates due to the alleged terror plot.

By [Julia Reinstein](#)
August 29, 2024, 7:07 PM



'Incel' who killed 11 in Toronto van murders sentenced to life in prison

Witnesses at Monday hearing describe devastation from 2018 attack in which Alek Minassian ploughed rented van into sidewalk



Two children dead and nine injured in dance workshop stabbing

30 July 2024
Gemma Sherlock, Monica Rimmer, Lauren Potts & Kara O'Neill
BBC News, Merseyside

Two children have been killed and nine injured, six critically, in a "ferocious" knife attack at a children's dance workshop.

Two adults are also in a critical condition after being stabbed as they tried to protect children at the Taylor Swift-themed event on Hart Street in Southport, Merseyside Police said.

A 17-year-old boy, from Banks in Lancashire, has been arrested on suspicion of murder and attempted murder.

young men are being targeted. Of the mass public shootings in academic settings since 1900, 100% of the shooters were men, according to a study by Ragy R. Girgis and their research team at Columbia University Irving Medical Center and the New York State Psychiatric Institute (NYSPI). From a statistics standpoint, it's a variable worth exploring.

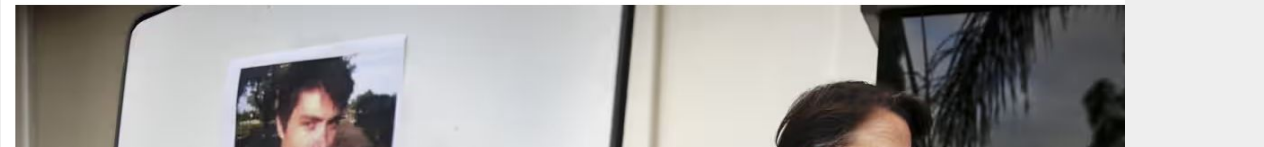
Plymouth gunman: a hate-filled misogynist and 'incel'

Videos Jake Davison posted online portray him as a man in despair who raged against success of others

[Plymouth 'in mourning' as gunman named - latest updates](#)

Chilling report details how Elliot Rodger executed murderous rampage

Sheriff's office report reveals plan was months in the making in 2014 attack that left six people dead, not including Rodger, and 14 people wounded



Sexism

Negative or stereotypical stances and behaviours based on a person's gender.
Bringing out a person's gender where it's irrelevant.

Misogyny

Stances and behaviours that aim to punish women for not conforming to gender roles.

Often through threats of violence.

What do we mean by radicalization?

- Adopting extremist beliefs systems (CPRV, 2019).
 - Willingness to use or encourage violence.
 - Aiming to promote an ideology or cause with the goal of social transformation.
- Consuming extremist material, affecting perceptions of society, justice and social behaviour (Boustras & Waring, 2020).



A woman with brown hair, wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt, is seated in profile, looking towards a young man. The young man, with dark hair, is wearing a white polo shirt and dark trousers, standing and looking down. They are in a room with a wooden floor and a wall featuring several rectangular windows. To the left, there are large beanbag chairs in blue and green. A small table with a slice of cake on it is between them. A black chair with a blue jacket draped over it is to the right.


THE MANOSPHERE

The manosphere

- Online communities focusing on men's perspectives, problems, and grievances, with women as frequent targets of hatred (Farrell et al., 2019).
- Various communities – similar ideologies, emphases differ.
- Subcultures of jocks, geeks, Christians, queer men, etc. (Ging, 2019).
- Usually associated with Reddit and 4chan, recent shifts to more mainstream environments (e.g., TikTok, YouTube, Instagram).



The manosphere

- United by a metaphor from *The Matrix*
 - Blue pill – living a life of obliviousness, while being exploited.
 - Red pill – learning the shocking truth about society. 
 - Society as geared against men, feminism as misandry
 - Victimisation of white, heterosexual, cis-gender men
- Genetic determinism to explain sexual behaviour (Ging, 2019).
 - Women as irrational hypergamous, seeking 'alpha males' and submission.



Incels

- Involuntary celibates 💣💊💊
- Unable to form romantic and sexual relationships with women (Krendel, 2024)
- Black pill – a fatalist version of the red pill.
 - Women are not attracted to personalities (e.g., ‘bad boys’) and only care about looks. Therefore, if you’re not attractive, you have no hope of forming romantic relationships.
- Sex with women as their right, a fundamental part of the male experience (Rothermel et al., 2022)
 - Forced monogamy – ensuring all men are guaranteed a romantic relationship.
- Nihilism, abusive responses (e.g., fantasies and actions of sexual violence for women’s perceived promiscuity), ideas for policymaking, mass violence (Rothermel et al., 2022).



Other manosphere communities (Rothermel et al., 2022)

- Pick-up Artists – focused on seduction, transactional nature to relationships, value is determined by the performance of masculinity.
 - Manipulating women for seduction
 - Negging – backhanded compliments to lower women's self-esteem (Ging, 2019).
 - The Barney Stinson type.
- Men's Rights Activists – sociopolitical focus, fighting against feminism. Advocate for policy change, mobilise and recruit.
- Men Going their Own Way – see the world as gynocentric. Advocate for limiting relations (interactions, marriage, etc.) with women. Self-reliance.



Language of the manosphere

- Chads and Stacys – archetypes who represent the romantically successful, desirable. Alpha-males and promiscuous women.
- Foid or femoid – (**Female Humanoid**) refers to women, dehumanising.
- False rape accusation
- Rapecel – or ‘rape pill,’ promotes sexual violence.
- Soy boys – men perceived as unmasculine (soy=lowering testosterone).
- 80-20 rule – 80% of women are interested in 20% of men. 100
- Lookism – similar to blackpill, personality doesn’t matter, looks determine romantic success.

https://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Manosphere_glossary

(Brzuskiewicz, 2020)

Hierarchy of masculinities

- Alphas – dominant, ‘pack leaders,’ athletic, confident, outgoing, desired by women.
- Sigmas – similar to alphas but stick to themselves, ‘lone wolves’.
- Betas – unable to dominate, often unsuccessful in forming sexual relationships, undesirable.
- “Alpha fux beta bux” – alphas for sex, while financially exploiting beta males.





MANFLUENCERS

Mainstreaming of the manosphere

– manfluencers

- Internet personalities who weaponise highly performative and extremist notions of masculinity, and who promote regressive, sexist ideas about women (Wescott, Roberts & Zhao, 2024).
- TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter (X).
 - Rumble
- Andrew Tate (top G)
 - Ex-boxer, accusations of sexual misconduct, human trafficking, money laundering
 - Deplatformed from mainstream platforms (except Twitter (X))
 - Ideologies (Haslop et al., 2024)
 - Men as naturally dominant,
 - Women as obedient to men
 - Male victimhood
- Developed into a category of influencers.



Main themes:

- General life advice (mindset, relationships, etc.)
- Fitness
- Finance



An illustration on the left side of the slide shows a person wearing a grey hood that covers their head and face, leaving only their eyes visible. They are holding a bright red smartphone in their right hand. The background behind the person is dark and indistinct.

Doom & Gloom Society

- Social chaos, moral decline.
- The ‘true’ man is endangered, therefore their coaching is necessary.

Longing for the past

- Opposing progressive contemporary topics

Victimhood

- Brainwashed masses vs good masculine men.
- Slang and profanities to emphasise victim status.

“Don’t mock men, especially nowadays when no one gives a shit about us.”

Suffering & Discipline

- If you want to live a better life than the average person, you need self-discipline, restraint, endurance.
- Condemned activities: porn, masturbating, nicotine, partying, gaming, mental health problems.

"I don't fucking want to do most things. That's discipline. Discipline doesn't care about your feelings. I have to work. I have to exercise. This is the mentality of a man."

Judgement

- Between other men, subordinating non-dominant masculinities (Tsuda, 2022; Rothermel et al., 2022).
- Metrics: financial success, family status, physique, mental health.





Dominance & Violence

- The need to be dangerous and violent, dominating women.

Combat

- Men as territorial, women as part of this territory.
- Protection is compulsory for women.

“Why would you put yourself in a situation where something can happen to you? Anything can happen because men are very territorial.”

Vilifying Women

- Blamed for men’s low self-esteem.
- Objectification, condescending language.

“And then, once you’ve given in a couple of times, she is like a dog at a table and you give her food once and she continues to beg.”

Monetisation Aspects

- Personal consultations (finance, fitness, mindset)
- Community building (e.g., Telegram groups, Discord servers)
- Products: e-books, clothes
- Masculinity camps



Freelancing

Freelancing is a form of self-employment where you offer your skills and services to clients on a project-by-project basis, without being tied to a long-term contract or employer. It's a great way to start making a side hustle while developing your skills.

Business Mindset

The mindset of a successful entrepreneur is crucial to your success. We aim to train you on staying focused, embracing learning, being brave, adaptable, and never stopping. You can be smart, but if you don't have the right mindset, you will always fail.

E-Commerce

Do you want to sell products or services online and reach customers all over the world? Do you want to take advantage of the booming e-commerce market and create a passive income stream? We'll teach you everything you need to know from finding products, dropshipping warehouses, building an online store, and promoting it.

Copywriting

Copywriting is a trillion-dollar industry. Mastering the art of writing engaging, persuasive, and converting copies is key to helping any brands generate more sales. We will teach you everything from email marketing, landing page copywriting, e-commerce product description, etc.

Artificial Intelligence

AI is racing ahead like never before, and it is the future. There's a golden opportunity for those who seize it. If you want to ride the wave of online success and secure your financial future, you've got to harness AI like a pro.

Social Media

Social media is the frontier of the internet. It's not just about likes and follows anymore; it's all about attention and influence. It's a goldmine waiting to be tapped. If you want to turn your passion for social media into serious cash, let's begin!

Cryptocurrencies

Cryptocurrencies are real and will be a vital part of our ever-changing world. You'll get to learn the basics about cryptos, and different ways to make money from this market such as Trading and Investing. Some subjects you will learn are Bitcoin, Ethereum, etc.

Stock Market

Stock is a financial asset that would give you ownership (partially) of the company it represents. We'll teach you about analyzing a stock, analyzing the market, trading platforms, and the mindset of a successful investor.

Fitness

Your health is your most precious asset. It's the cornerstone upon which you can build your dreams. Our team of expert trainers and nutritionists is here to guide you on the journey

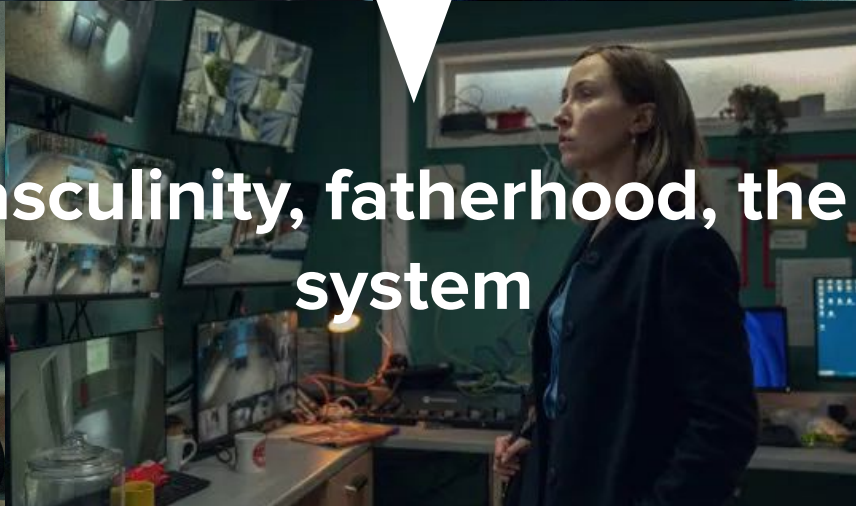
Why are these ideas successful?

- Rage-baiting, recommendation algorithms.
- Amplifying the anxieties of audiences.
 - Precarity of the contemporary society: inflation, wage cuts and stagnation, trouble finding a job, burnout, houses crisis, cost of education, privatisation of the health sector, political instability (Bujalka et al., 2022).
 - General context of trends facilitating insecurity, gender standards (looksmxing, mewing, extreme gym culture).
- Searching for answers a sense of control.
- Community, support, etc.
 - Homosocial bonding through manfluencers' and the manosphere's content.





The problem isn't only social media



Gender, masculinity, fatherhood, the education system

Detecting these ideologies among youth

- Be familiar with the general ideologies of the manosphere.
- Behaviour towards girls, other boys, LGBTQ+ people, different ethnicities.
- Code words (top g, chad, stacy, foid, emojis).
- Can be hard to detect, especially with diffused ideologies.

How to approach someone believing manosphere ideologies

- Don't attack the ideologies or blame the person. Build a bond and assess what's actually happening.
 - risk of further cementing the manfluencers' persona as mavericks and rebels.
- Banning the use of social media is a bad idea.
 - Social media is still an important tool, a part of most of our lives
 - Young people are natives on social media, they will find ways around bans.

How to approach someone believing manosphere ideologies

- Keep an open position so if someone sees/hears something disturbing, they feel they can talk to you.
- Facilitate a safe space for discussion, if you're going to tackle this topic, be prepared for various reactions, set rules and boundaries.
 - Discuss beforehand what sort of behaviour or sentence crosses the border and is not appropriate for discussion. What happens if someone doesn't follow the rule?
 - The rules need to be straightforward and easy to follow.
 - The rules shouldn't escalate the situation.
- Normalise encountering various ideas and interrogating them, understanding why something is problematic.

How to approach someone believing manosphere ideologies

- Reflect on your own knowledge beforehand – where are the limits of your competence? It's better to recognise gaps in knowledge than spread misinformation.
- Manfluencers are often getting their attention from valid problems that young people are struggling with. Try to understand and offer support in these underlying issues.
- If you're certain that a young person is being radicalized by online content, make sure to monitor the situation, notify parents if necessary

General improvements

- More emphasis on media literacy, critical thinking skills in schools.
 - How this type of content works, how people are influenced.
- Breaking harmful gender norms
 - Reflecting on your own expectations regarding masculinity, how this might restrict someone's behaviour, self-expression, etc.

Useful resources (links added to bio)

- The manosphere glossary – https://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Manosphere_glossary
- Activities to address gender with young people – <https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/activities>
- Teaching about gender stereotypes – <https://new.academy4sc.org/2025/03/19/teaching-about-gender-stereotypes/>
- Misogyny and gender roles (EST) – <https://meedia.ut.ee/soorollid/>
- Keep an eye on the BECID website.

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