

Challenging misogynistic narratives through PSHE education

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What is PSHE education?

PSHE education is the school subject through which children and young people acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives, now and in the future.

PSHE education develops the qualities and attributes pupils need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society.

PSHE | ASSOCIATION

Supporting children and young people with change at every stage

by the PSHE Association

Teaching and Learning



It's important that we prepare pupils for the opportunities and challenges they may face — academically, socially and emotionally — as they progress through the key stages.



Teaching about misogyny: key considerations

- Take a whole school approach to addressing the issues and challenging harmful narratives
- Promote positive male role models – share examples of men who lead with empathy and build respectful relationships
- Ensure boys are included in the conversation and reflect different cultural attitudes towards masculinity
- Create opportunities for boys to see themselves differently, lead, express themselves and have a positive impact

“I am always told that I am part of the problem but never allowed to be part of the solution”

Key considerations

- Balance responding to events and reacting to them (e.g. Adolescence)
- Avoid focusing lessons on specific influencers, websites or groups that promote harmful attitudes
- Don't cover misogyny in isolation – think about the complementary factors and related issues



How can the manosphere be addressed through PSHE lessons?

Throughout the PSHE curriculum, teachers can create positive counter-narratives and unpick some of the disinformation from the manosphere...

SECONDARY PSHE EDUCATION: LONG-TERM OVERVIEW – THEMATIC MODEL						
	Autumn 1 Health & wellbeing	Autumn 2 Living in the wider world	Spring 1 Relationships	Spring 2 Health & wellbeing	Summer 1 Relationships	Summer 2 Living in the wider world
Year 7	Transition and safety Transition to secondary school and personal safety in and outside school, including first aid	Developing skills and aspirations Careers, teamwork and enterprise skills, and raising aspirations	Diversity Diversity, prejudice, and bullying	Health and puberty Healthy routines, influences on health, puberty, unwanted contact, and FGM	Building relationships Self-worth, romance and friendships (including online) and relationship boundaries	Financial decision making Saving, borrowing, budgeting and making financial choices
Year 8	Drugs and alcohol Alcohol and drug misuse and pressures relating to drug use	Community and careers Equality of opportunity in careers and life choices, and different types and patterns of work	Discrimination Discrimination in all its forms, including: racism, religious discrimination, disability, discrimination, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia	Emotional wellbeing Mental health and emotional wellbeing, including body image and coping strategies	Identity and relationships Gender identity, sexual orientation, consent, 'sexting', and an introduction to contraception	Digital literacy Online safety, digital literacy, media reliability, and gambling hooks
Year 9	Peer influence, substance use and gangs Healthy and unhealthy friendships, assertiveness, substance misuse, and gang exploitation	Setting goals Learning strengths, career options and goal setting as part of the GCSE options process	Respectful relationships Families and parenting, healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and relationship changes	Healthy lifestyle Diet, exercise, lifestyle balance and healthy choices, and first aid	Intimate relationships Relationships and sex education including consent, contraception, the risks of STIs, and attitudes to pornography	Employability skills Employability and online presence
Year 10	Mental health Mental health and ill health, stigma, safeguarding health, including during periods of transition or change	Financial decision making The impact of financial decisions, debt, gambling and the impact of advertising on financial choices	Healthy relationships Relationships and sex expectations, pleasure and challenges, including the impact of the media and pornography	Exploring influence The influence and impact of drugs, gangs, role models and the media	Addressing extremism and radicalisation Communities, belonging and challenging extremism	Work experience Preparation for and evaluation of work experience and readiness for work
Year 11	Building for the future Self-efficacy, stress management, and future opportunities	Next steps Application processes, and skills for further education, employment and career progression	Communication in relationships Personal values, assertive communication (including in relation to contraception and sexual health), relationship challenges and abuse	Independence Responsible health choices, and safety in independent contexts	Families Different families and parental responsibilities, pregnancy, marriage and forced marriage and changing relationships	

Where can the manosphere be addressed?

Mental health and wellbeing

- Everyone feels emotions such as sadness and worry
- Anyone can suffer from mental health conditions or mood disorders, including depression and anxiety.

Body image

- Social media can influence and impact how someone feels about their looks
- Influencers profit or otherwise benefit from making people feel insecure

Relationships

- Consent, equality, respect and trust in important in all relationships
- Both people in a relationship can be harmed if someone is controlling or manipulative

Digital literacy

- Mis- and dis-information is shared online
- Influencers can use tactics to make their followers believe that they have more wealth and expertise than they really do

Mental health and wellbeing

Managing emotions

Tao has been finding his French lessons difficult recently, so an older pupil is helping him practise after school.

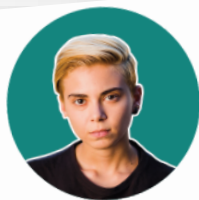
If Tao notices he is feeling embarrassed and nervous he might:

- try to calm down before the session
- tell the older pupil he is feeling nervous
- remind himself the pupil has offered to help because he wants to, and he enjoys helping

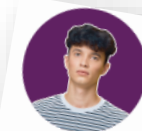
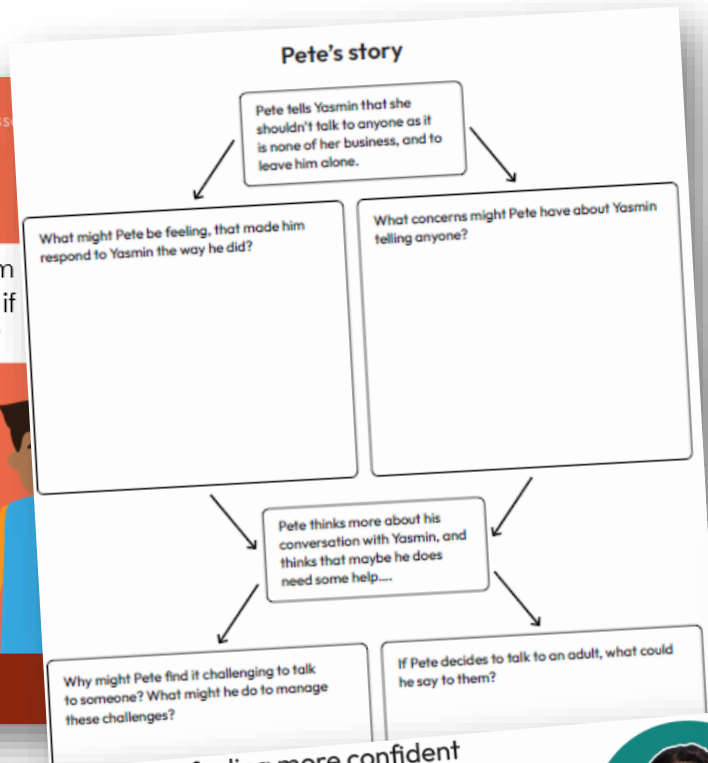
What if they think I'm silly or get annoyed if don't understand..?



Jayden has loved netball since primary school and has been practising a lot to improve their skills. They were excited to try to play for the school team this year. When they find out they haven't been selected, they aren't sure what to do next.



Dean has been feeling more confident in his friendships lately, so when he finds out that some of his friends have a group chat he wasn't included in, he doesn't know what to think. He starts looking back at recent conversations and wonders if he missed something.



Sami's story

Sami used to be full of energy but, right now, even getting out of bed feels exhausting. He wakes up tired, feels like he's going through the school day on autopilot and comes home feeling completely drained.

At first, Sami thought he was just tired, but over the past few weeks he hasn't really felt much at all. He feels a bit numb. He doesn't laugh at his friends' jokes, and even when something good happens, it doesn't seem to matter. The hobbies that he used to love just don't feel very exciting at all.

Idealised bodies

- What are the possible influences that have led Lola and Ash to consider cosmetic treatments?
- What advice could you offer Lola and Ash?
- What risks should they be aware of?



Internal influence

A pressure that comes from inside the person, relating to their own thoughts, feelings, perceptions or attitudes

External influence

A pressure that comes from others, the media, or the environment around a person, which can affect their ideas and actions

Digital literacy

Alex's social media feed

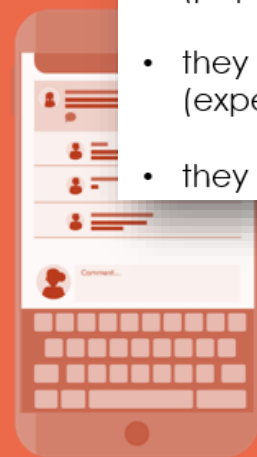
- What might affect what Alex sees on social media?



What motivates posting?

For example, a social media influencer might post content because:

- they think people will enjoy it (entertainment)
- they think people will agree with it and 'like' it (popularity)
- they want to show off (expertise)
- they want to help others



Who or what decides?

- Algorithms are used to decide what someone sees on their feed.
- Content and adverts are shown based on a user's history and demographic information (e.g. age, gender, location), as well as what they watch on the platform.
- Even though the algorithm recommends content tailored to users' interests, it is also driven by what will make platforms the most money.

What impact does advertising have?

- Social media business models are usually based on selling advertising space.
- The more people who view the content, the more companies will pay to advertise their products.
- Advertisers and social media platforms encourage influencers to post content, so more people see the content on the platform.
- Influencers also make money in a variety of ways by posting content on social media.

Darren's story

Darren's dad lost his job last year and is finding it hard to find a new one. Darren has been working part time at weekends to try to support him. His shifts at work mean that he doesn't get to see his friends from school much anymore. They used to ask him to hang out at the weekends, but when he couldn't go, they stopped inviting him.

Some of his colleagues have been talking about a new online game they've been playing, including Sara, a girl he's worked a few shifts with who seems really nice. Everyone chats on there outside of work; he wonders if this will help him to fit in with them more and give Sara and him something to talk about. So, he starts to play the game in his free time. Now when he's at work, he's able to join in the conversation.

After a few months, Darren has started to make

he's been seeing online. Sara tells him that he probably shouldn't listen to what people say in those forums – she says that they're 'just full of people with a lot to say and nothing to do'. Darren wonders if that's what Sara, and the other people he works with, really think about him too.

When Darren gets home, he sees that Kane, who's been leading a lot of the conversations in the forum, is online. Kane always responds to people's posts and people seem to really respect him – they always want to know what his opinion is. Darren makes a joke about what Sara and his colleagues said, and Kane responds by telling Darren that, 'if he agrees with them, he's just like them and is a part of everything that's wrong with society... if he really wants things to improve, he needs to pay attention to what he [Kane] is saying

Questions

- Why might Darren have started to spend more time in the forums?
- Where do you think the views being shared on the forum posts have come from? Is there anything concerning about some of the ideas being shared?
- What could Darren have done if he wasn't sure he agreed with everything he was seeing online?
- What techniques did Kane use to influence Darren's thoughts and feelings?



Responding to questions/comments



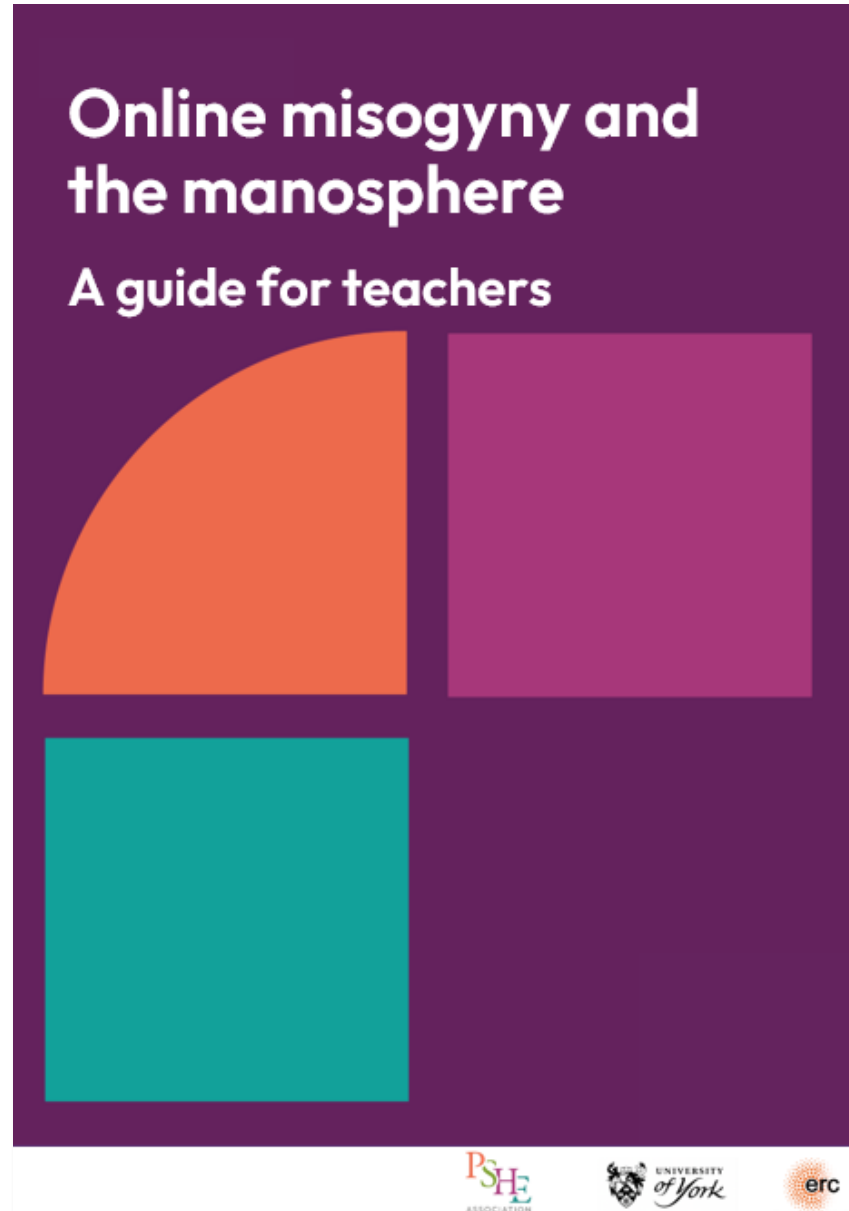
- Does this breach our behaviour policy?
- Is anyone directly harmed?
- What's the class reaction? Was the intention to provoke a reaction?
- Is it age appropriate?
- Where has this comment come from? What might the background to it be?
- Does it need an individual response, or could it be opened up to the class?
- Is it personal? Can I keep my own feelings 'in check'?
- Can I challenge misconceptions? Will I make anyone defensive?
- What are the facts? Are these appropriate to share?

Next steps...

Download our new guide for teachers: **Online misogyny and the manosphere!**



<https://pshe-association.org.uk/guidance/ks1-5/manosphere-guide-for-teachers>



We're here to help

Print ready pack

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KS1-4


Belonging & community: addressing discrimination and extremism

Teacher guidance

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KS3-5

Body modifications



Speak Up, Stand Together, Stay Safe



Teacher guidance

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KS3-4


Under the influence



PSHE Association

KS1-5

Teaching about consent Guidance



We're here to help

- Online and face-to-face CPD
- School staff training
- Guidance
- Policy and practice updates
- Evidence and research
- Tailored support from the Subject Specialist team



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