



An Introductory Guide to **the Manosphere** and the Impacts for Young People, Teachers and Schools

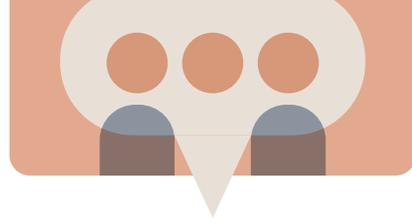
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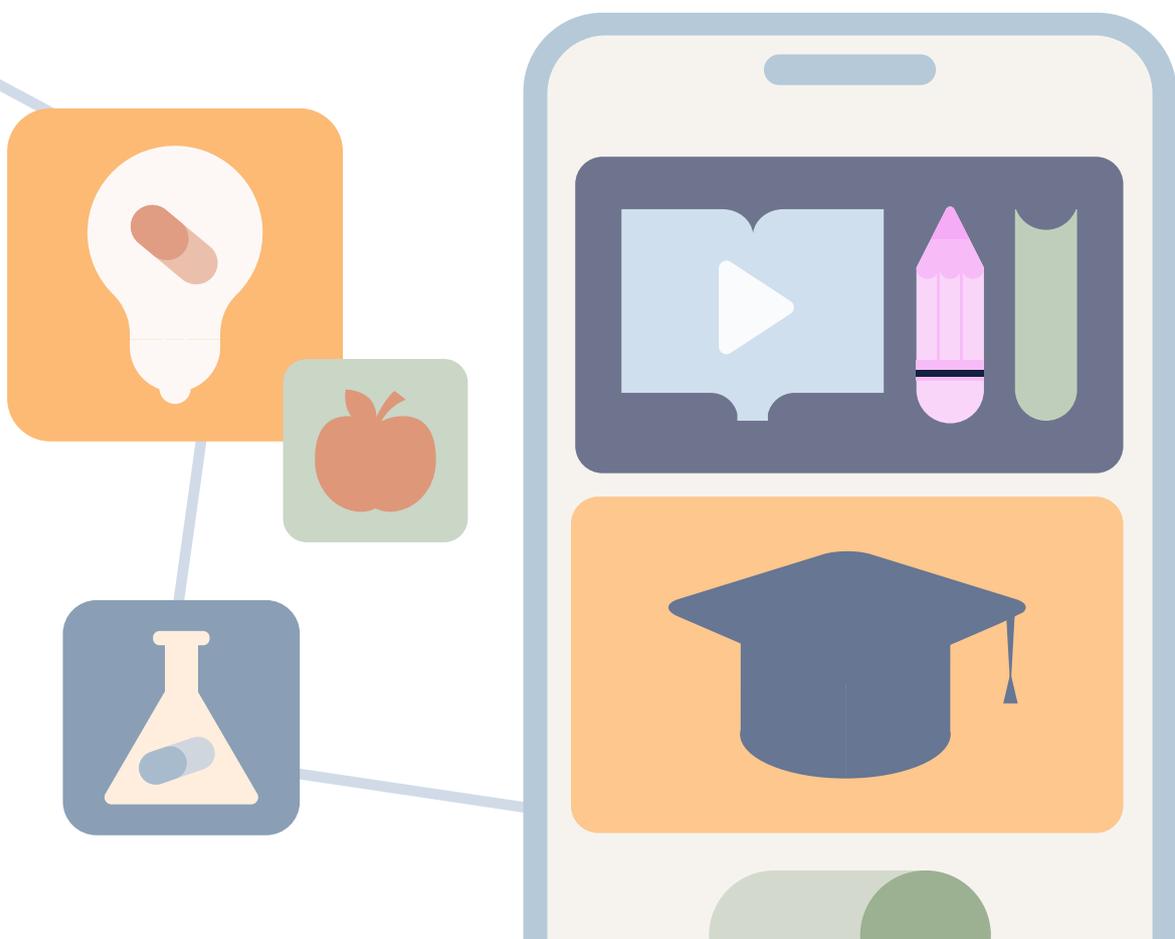


Hello & welcome

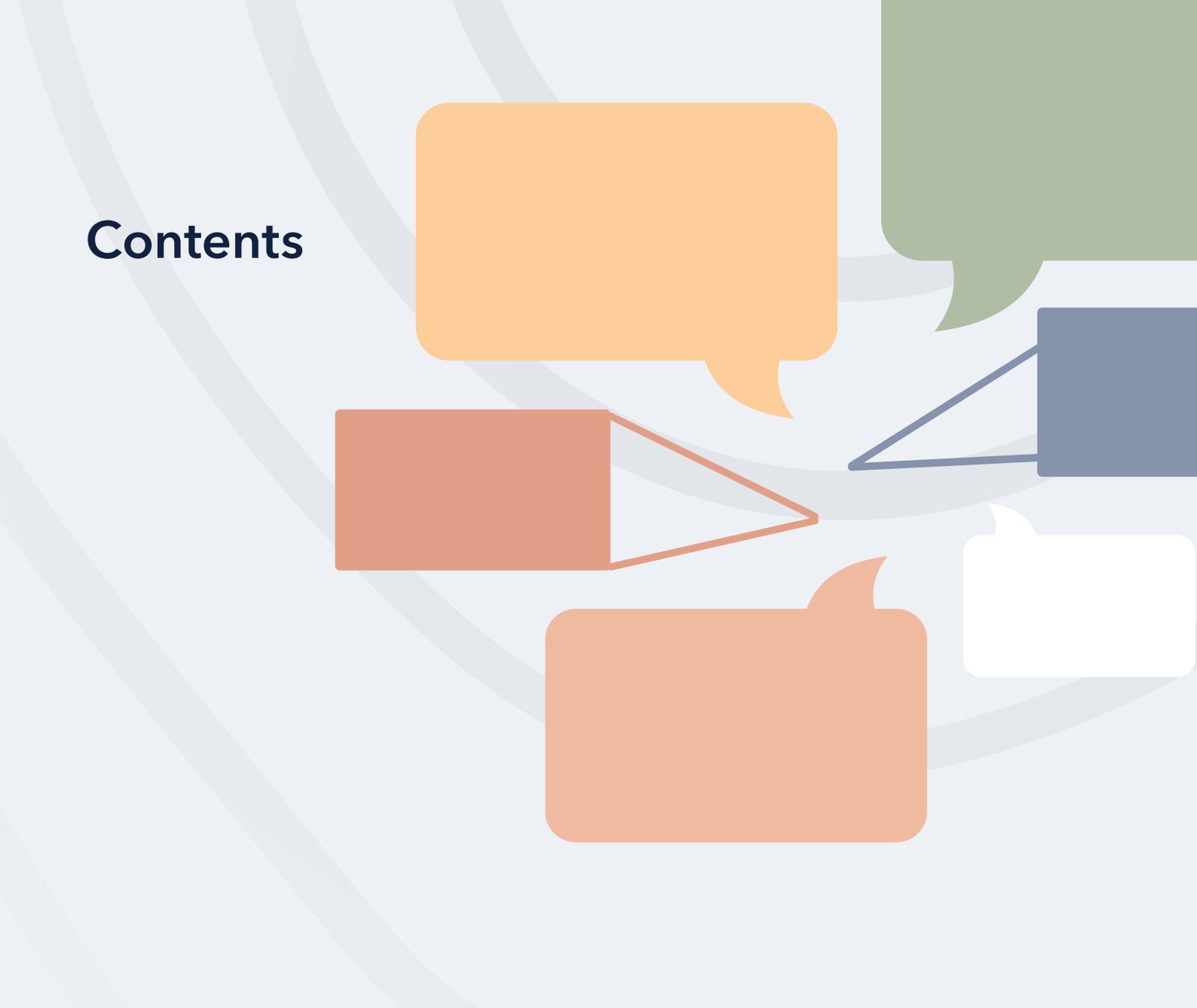
Who is this guide for?

Growing evidence suggests that sexist and misogynistic discourses promoted in the manosphere are gaining traction in Australian society and overseas. Popular content creators and influencers in the manosphere promote content that sees men and boys as “victims” of gender equality movements, reasserts patriarchal and traditional gender roles, and promotes men’s rights and “natural” superiority. These ideas are filtering through to classrooms and having harmful impacts in Australian schools.

This guide is **a resource for teachers and other school staff** who work with young people in secondary schools. It includes an overview of the harmful impacts of the manosphere for young people, teachers and school communities, and an introduction to the manosphere, including the key beliefs and links to violence, recruitment pathways for boys and young men, and the role of social media.



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The impacts of the manosphere for young people, teachers and schools

Key beliefs and behaviours promoted in the manosphere encourage men and boys to disrespect women and girls, use violence and aggression, and reject authority. A growing body of evidence from Australia and elsewhere demonstrates the harms this is causing for young people, teachers and school staff.¹ Pages 8-9 of this guide explain the main beliefs.

It is important to recognise that **sexism and misogyny in schools is not new**. However, in recent years **the manosphere has amplified aggression, disrespect, violence and harassment** among boys and men, and has told them to ignore any accountability for their harmful behaviour.



Impacts for young people

Girls and young women have reported **feeling unsafe and experiencing physical and sexual abuse** by boys and young men, including online and at school.² For example, one study from 2024 with Australian high school students found that 1 in 4 girls felt unsafe at school due to boys' behaviours.³ Girls also reported negative impacts on their schooling, including anxiety, reduced class participation and skipping class or school.

Online content shapes young people's attitudes towards relationships, gender norms and violence. Children and young people who engage with misogynistic online content are more likely to support unhealthy ideas about relationships, such as that a relationship should always have one dominant person and that it's okay to physically harm someone if you are sorry afterwards.⁴

Boys and young men who follow manosphere influencers are **more likely to hold sexist and misogynistic** attitudes and agree with ideas about masculinity promoted within the manosphere than boys and young men who do not follow manosphere influencers. This includes negative attitudes towards gender equality and feminism, blaming women and girls for social and personal problems, dehumanising women and believing that men should be self-reliant and not show emotion.⁵⁻⁸ Among some boys, these attitudes translate to increased resistance, hostility and backlash towards classroom conversations about gender equality, consent and respectful relationships.⁹

Many boys feel uncomfortable with the misogyny they witness online and the harmful behaviours of their peers at school.¹⁰ However, they may feel unsafe or unprepared to challenge their peers, or may feel social pressure to go along with the "joke" or "banter".⁵

Impacts for teachers and schools

Unfolding research from Australia and elsewhere has found consistent patterns in the experiences of women teachers that are linked to manosphere-related behaviours by boys.^{2, 11-13} These behaviours **cover a spectrum of sexism and misogyny**, from verbal comments and harassment, like:

- “make me a sandwich” (to imply that a woman’s place is in the kitchen)
- barking or making other animal sounds, to ignoring women teachers (and only responding to men)
- making sexually suggestive comments or asking about teachers’ sex lives.

Such behaviours can also include intimidating conduct like circling women teachers in the school yard and direct physical and sexual assault.

Women teachers also report being asked **“baiting” questions** by boys that may appear legitimate but are intended to undermine authority, disrupt class discussions and humiliate the teacher. For example, boys might ask whether the gender pay gap is real, whether the teacher identifies as a feminist, whether the teacher supports abortion or about a teacher’s clothing and make-up.

School responses to these incidents can create further harm if women and girls are not believed or taken seriously. Some women teachers have reported that they have moved schools **or left teaching** due to the significant harms they’ve experienced and the lack of appropriate school support.¹⁴

These incidents and impacts can equate to **workplace sexual harassment** and **school-related gender-based violence** against teachers and school staff.¹⁵ Violence, aggression and harassment, including sexual and gender-based harassment, are recognised in Australia as workplace **psychosocial hazards**.¹⁶ Employers, including schools, have a positive duty to address sexual harassment and are obliged to manage psychosocial hazards in order to provide a safe work environment. This includes documenting and recording incidents, providing transparent and timely communications to school communities, and reporting to authorities and regulatory bodies.

What is the manosphere?

The “manosphere” is a term used to describe the global collection of online forums, websites, social media communities, influencers and podcasters that talk broadly about men’s rights and contemporary issues facing men and boys.¹⁷ The term has become increasingly common in public and media conversations about online misogyny, especially in reference to key actors like the “self-proclaimed misogynist” Andrew Tate⁴⁵ and the 2025 television series *Adolescence*.⁴⁶ Importantly though, groups and influencers that make up the manosphere do not necessarily identify with the term or see themselves as one cohesive, interconnected community.

Groups commonly linked to the manosphere include men’s rights activists (MRAs), pick-up artists (PUAs), incels (people who identify as “involuntarily celibate”), Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW) and self-improvement gurus.¹⁸ This is not a complete list, and manosphere communities and influencers overlap, with new trends and ideas quickly coming and going. These groups offer information, advice and peer support that claims to help men and boys navigate day-to-day life. Key beliefs and ideas range from less to more extreme **promotion of traditional masculinity, male supremacy, misogyny, violence and conservative or far-right politics**.^{19, 20} Pages 10-11 of this guide provide more information about links to gender-based violence.

Content shared in the manosphere often reinforces rigid ideas about masculinity or how men and boys “should be” and how men and boys should relate to women and girls.²¹ Some commentators use the term “**manfluencers**” to describe the popular content creators, podcasters and influencers of the manosphere.²² Page 12 of this guide provides more information about pathways into the manosphere and how young men are recruited through content.

While this guide focuses on the manosphere, social media also has a growing presence of women promoting rigid and conservative ideas about femininity or how women and girls “should be”.²³ These content creators and influencers are sometimes collectively referred to as the “**femosphere**”^{24, 25} and often promote ideas that support gender inequality, including anti-feminism, the re-domestication of women and a return to traditional femininity. Some also share content that pushes heterosexuality as the only “natural” sexual orientation and relationship, and that reinforces **white supremacist** ideals.²⁶

Some influencers, communities and key beliefs of the manosphere overlap with other hate-based and **far-right** groups, movements and actors with identified links to **homophobia** and **transphobia**, **white supremacy** and **racism**, anti-immigrant views (i.e. **xenophobia**) and **nationalism**.^{19, 20} For schools, it is therefore important to consider how incidents that reflect beliefs and behaviours promoted in the manosphere may contribute to other forms of discrimination and harm in addition to sexism and misogyny.



What are the main beliefs and ideas of the manosphere?

The manosphere includes groups and influencers with varying perspectives on gender. However, they share some common beliefs and ideas discussed here.

Male supremacy, misogyny and “lost” roles for men

The gendered beliefs promoted in the manosphere are often based on “traditional” or conservative ideas about masculinity and femininity, including the belief in “natural” roles for men and women (i.e. the **gender binary**) and that men are superior to women (i.e. **male supremacy**).^{18, 19} Another common belief in the manosphere is that gender equality movements have gone too far, and that men and boys are now victims of feminism (i.e. **anti-feminism**).^{17, 27} Common beliefs about the negative impacts for men of women’s rights and LGBTQ+ rights include that men are now discriminated against in education, healthcare, employment and family law. Some communities argue that men and boys have “lost” their natural place in society and that men’s control should be returned or claimed back. Some groups and influencers actively promote discrimination and hatred of, and harmful ideas about, women and girls (i.e. **misogyny**), including support for violence and harassment against women and girls.^{1, 20, 28}

Hierarchies among men

Communities and influencers in the manosphere use shared language to describe perceived categories among men and to define group membership.^{1, 17, 19} **Alpha males** (sometimes called **Chads**) are believed to be at the top of the hierarchy due to their perceived sexual success with women, which is attributed to physical fitness, confidence and wealth. **Beta males** are perceived to be inferior to alpha males due to

their lack of success and confidence with women. **Sigma males** are seen to sit outside the hierarchy as powerful men who reject social norms and traditional authority to pursue personal success – with violence, if necessary. Some content producers use these terms to encourage their audiences to become **high-value men** (that is, an alpha or sigma) or to blame women and alphas for a perceived failure on the “**sexual marketplace**”. Each category reinforces harmful ideas about men’s sexual entitlement and that women are sexual objects to be “scored”.

Red Pill, Black Pill, Blue Pill

Some communities in the manosphere, such as incels, use coded “pilling” language. Different coloured “pills” refer to different levels of accepting or rejecting worldviews that are inspired by specific interpretations of the red and blue pills in the movie *The Matrix*⁴⁷ – although these interpretations are not what the film-makers intended.^{17, 21}

Within the manosphere:

- The **Red Pill** means someone sees the world according to the manosphere, including anti-feminism and a belief that men are discriminated against by women and society.
- The **Black Pill** is a more extreme worldview, including that women will always pursue **high-value men** and that these categories will never change. People who identify with the Red or Black Pill may also support other far-right beliefs, conspiracy theories or extremist ideals, including white supremacy.²⁸
- The **Blue Pill** means someone does not see or has decided to reject the Red and Black Pills and may question and exit the manosphere.

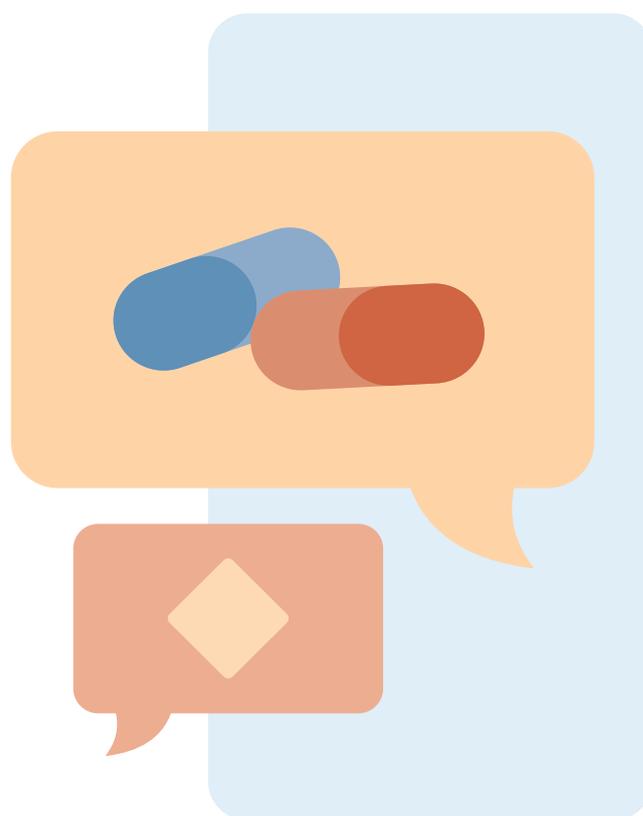
Self-improvement, success and the “grind mindset”

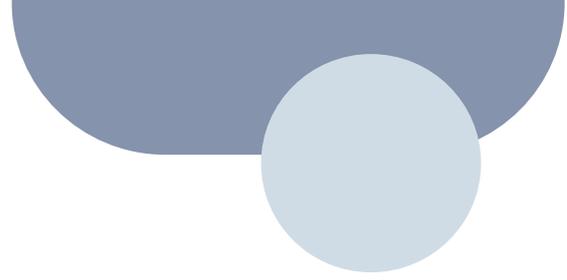
Some manosphere communities and influencers focus on promoting self-help and self-improvement content for boys and men, including advice on fitness, fashion, physical appearance, mental health, sex, dating and relationships, study tips, finance, business, and career development.^{1, 19} While some of these content creators have backgrounds in personal training, health or finance, many are **self-help gurus** who share their own experiences or versions of how to be a successful man – and they often actively sell a product or course to their audiences.¹⁸ This self-improvement content ranges from less to more extreme – from tips like making your bed every day or intensive fitness plans and “looksmaxxing” (a trend that encourages men to “maximise” their physical appearance using skincare, exercise and diet) through to “hardmaxxing”, which includes steroids and cosmetic procedures.²⁹ Some of this content uses messaging about the “**grind mindset**” or “**CEO mindset**”, which encourages the audience to push themselves as hard as they can or “**hustle**” to achieve the ultimate lifestyle and become a **high-value man**. These beliefs about self-improvement and success are promoted to viewers regardless of age and are a key pathway into more extremist and misogynistic manosphere content.^{19, 24}

Indoctrination and the anti-“woke agenda”

Young people, particularly young men, are increasingly turning to social media influencers for political information, so it is important to recognise the political reach of the manosphere.³⁰ The term “woke” originated in African American culture and is used in progressive communities to describe someone becoming critically aware of social injustices in the world, like racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia and class inequalities. In the manosphere and other conservative political communities, the terms “**woke agenda**” and “**woke-ism**” are used negatively to suggest that we

are living in a weak society that is hyper-fixated on cancel culture and political correctness.²⁴ According to this viewpoint, movements for equal rights are seen as false and biased. Some influencers and networks in the manosphere promote the idea that schools, universities and the mainstream media are **indoctrinating** young people into the woke agenda. They argue that men and boys are being unfairly portrayed as oppressors when they should be seen as victims neglected by the education system. These manosphere influencers and communities encourage their audiences to challenge and **reject the authority of teachers**, and see school and university as a waste of time.²⁴ Similar beliefs about indoctrination and the woke agenda have been pushed by some Australian and overseas politicians who criticise diversity, inclusion and anti-discrimination initiatives, including consent and respectful relationships education.^{31, 32} While manfluencers tell their audiences to question their teachers and think for themselves, they also pressure boys to accept and agree with the beliefs of the manosphere.





What are the links between the manosphere and violence?

Important links exist between the support for the misogynistic ideologies promoted in the manosphere and men's use of domestic, family and sexual violence, gender-based violence and violent extremism.^{19, 20, 28} Some examples are provided here.

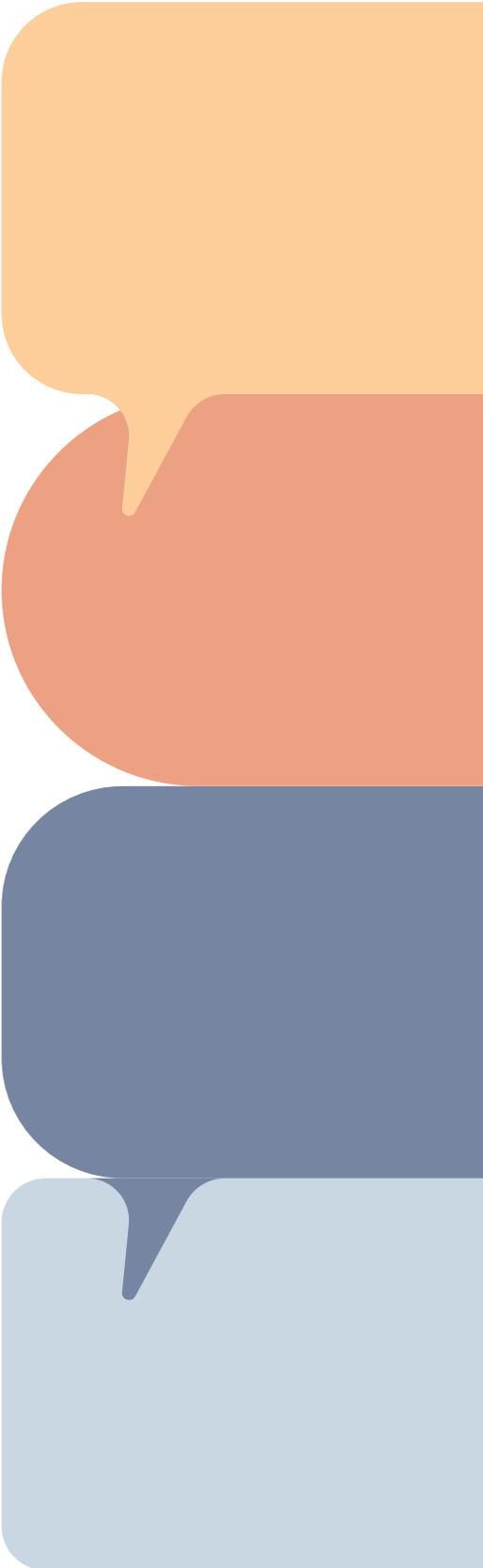
Violence itself is frequently normalised in the manosphere as a **“natural” part of being a “real man”**. Many popular content creators are current or former martial artists or bodybuilders who advocate physical strength and aggression as solutions to challenges and how to handle conflict.²⁴ Others are more direct in calling for sexual and physical violence against women, whether as a “joke” to gain followers or as part of their main messaging.¹⁹ In many examples from Andrew Tate’s social media, he has encouraged his viewers to use violence against other men and to use force in dominating women.³³

Gendered narratives that are promoted in the manosphere often **justify, excuse, minimise or dismiss violence** by men and boys.²⁷ These narratives include, for example, myths about women and girls making up claims of sexual violence, beliefs that it’s acceptable for men to be controlling and physically dominant over their wives and girlfriends, and that joking about violence, homophobia, transphobia and racism is not harmful

and that some people are too sensitive.¹⁹ Attitudes like these can make harmful behaviour more likely by normalising sexism and misogyny and by making it harder for someone to speak up or call out sexism and misogyny in the moment – both online and in-person.³⁴

Frontline domestic and family violence workers in Australia have documented the presence of manosphere ideologies and anti-feminist attitudes among men who have used domestic, family and sexual violence.³⁵

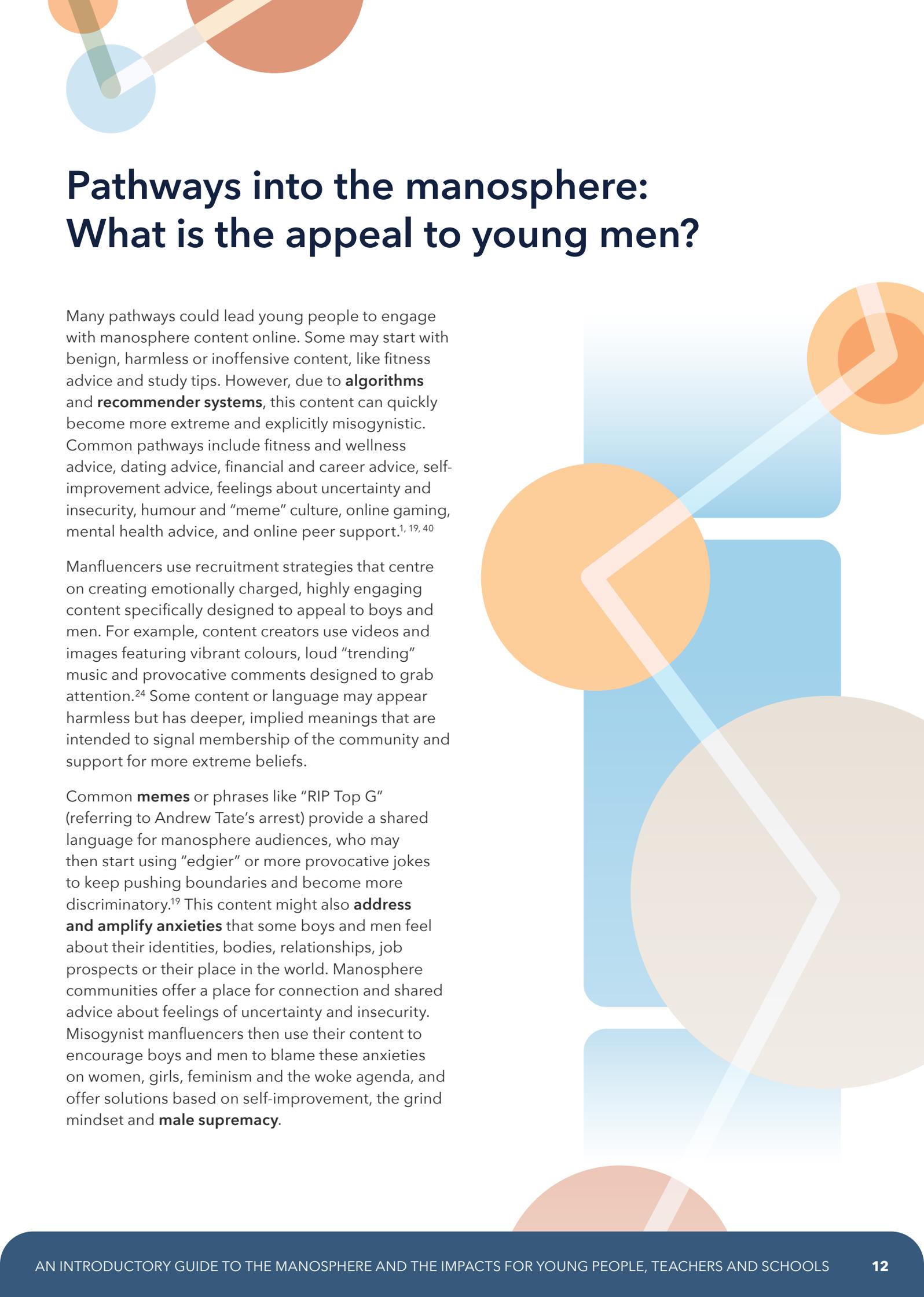
Misogynistic attitudes are strongly associated with violent extremism. Several high-profile incidents of **misogynistic extremism** have been carried out by men who identified as belonging to manosphere communities. These include attacks against women such as the 2025 stabbing of three high school students by their 16-year-old male classmate in Finland,³⁶ the 2020 plot by a 24-year-old man to mass murder women at a university in Ohio, USA,³⁷ the 2018 van attack that killed 11 people – mostly women – in Toronto,



Canada, and the 2014 mass shooting in Isla Vista, California, USA.²⁸ In some cases, these men have become key figures or martyrs of the manosphere, with their actions celebrated in online forums and communities.

The manosphere can also encourage ideas about masculinity that reward loyalty and conformity with the group and discourage independent critical thinking. These ideas promote a feeling of strength in numbers, which can lead to a **“pack mentality”** where boys and men who agree with manosphere beliefs group together to harass and threaten others, both online and offline. For example, it has become common for women who speak out about gender-based violence, either online or offline, to experience coordinated harassment and threats of violence by men linked to manosphere communities.³⁸ At school, boys may gang up together to physically intimidate girls and teachers or to pressure other boys to go along with the “joke”.⁷ This peer pressure can also make it feel unsafe to disagree or challenge harmful behaviours.

Some communities and influencers in the manosphere also promote white supremacist and nationalist beliefs and conspiracy theories that **encourage racist violence and discrimination** against people of colour, including First Nations peoples and migrant communities.^{19, 20, 39} For example, some beliefs portray white men and boys as victims of both feminism and multiculturalism, promote racist myths about men of colour as being lesser than white men and encourage white heterosexual couples to reproduce and “save” the “white race”. Instances of mass violence against women of colour by men have been linked to manosphere communities, including the 2021 mass shooting in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.²⁸



Pathways into the manosphere: What is the appeal to young men?

Many pathways could lead young people to engage with manosphere content online. Some may start with benign, harmless or inoffensive content, like fitness advice and study tips. However, due to **algorithms** and **recommender systems**, this content can quickly become more extreme and explicitly misogynistic. Common pathways include fitness and wellness advice, dating advice, financial and career advice, self-improvement advice, feelings about uncertainty and insecurity, humour and “meme” culture, online gaming, mental health advice, and online peer support.^{1, 19, 40}

Manfluencers use recruitment strategies that centre on creating emotionally charged, highly engaging content specifically designed to appeal to boys and men. For example, content creators use videos and images featuring vibrant colours, loud “trending” music and provocative comments designed to grab attention.²⁴ Some content or language may appear harmless but has deeper, implied meanings that are intended to signal membership of the community and support for more extreme beliefs.

Common **memes** or phrases like “RIP Top G” (referring to Andrew Tate’s arrest) provide a shared language for manosphere audiences, who may then start using “edgier” or more provocative jokes to keep pushing boundaries and become more discriminatory.¹⁹ This content might also **address and amplify anxieties** that some boys and men feel about their identities, bodies, relationships, job prospects or their place in the world. Manosphere communities offer a place for connection and shared advice about feelings of uncertainty and insecurity. Misogynist manfluencers then use their content to encourage boys and men to blame these anxieties on women, girls, feminism and the woke agenda, and offer solutions based on self-improvement, the grind mindset and **male supremacy**.

What are the roles of algorithms and social media?

Websites and online forums focused on men's rights and interests have existed on the internet for many years. More extreme communities of the manosphere were originally identified on social media platforms linked to far-right networks, like **4chan** and **8chan** unmoderated websites. Manosphere influencers and groups have increasingly spread to more mainstream platforms like **Reddit**, **Discord** and **Twitch**, and are now very common across **YouTube**, **TikTok**, **Instagram** and **Snapchat**.²⁴ Instant messaging apps like **WhatsApp** and **Telegram** also host dedicated communities and channels for manosphere influencers and networks to communicate in real-time, across international boundaries and with a large degree of anonymity.³³

While platforms initially provided forums and spaces for users to virtually discuss and reshare content, **recommender algorithms and systems** now play a key role in the spread of manosphere content.²⁴ Platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat use recommender algorithms to decide what content is shown to a user based on user behaviour, preferences and previous content they have watched, reacted to or interacted with. This technology is designed to keep feeding viewers relevant content to match their interests, but it also produces **filter bubbles**, **echo chambers** and **feedback loops** where the same voices and ideas are repeatedly pushed and reinforced, and new or alternative content is not seen.⁴¹ Many young people are critically aware of how algorithms shape what they see online, and they will actively curate their "feeds" to encourage some content or to try and avoid content they don't like.⁴²

Manosphere influencers often have large followings. Content is reshared across multiple platforms both by the original content-makers and by their audiences, making these harmful ideas almost unavoidable for

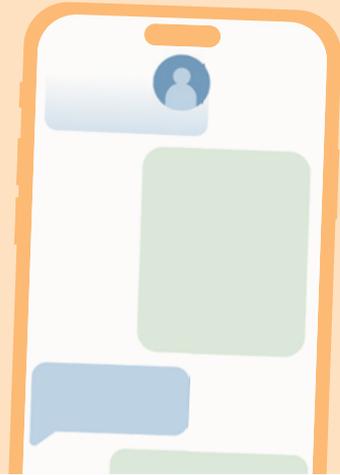
social media users. Several studies have also found that where a social media platform assumes the viewer is a man or boy, the algorithm will quickly start recommending increasingly more extreme content from manosphere influencers.^{24, 43, 44} In these ways, technology can contribute to **radicalisation** among boys and men as more extreme and misogynistic content is normalised by how often they see it.^{19, 24}

Importantly, while this content is created and shared online through social media platforms, young people often **do not draw a clear distinction between online content and offline behaviours or attitudes**.³⁴ It is important not to assume that what happens online will stay online, and to recognise how exposure to online content can influence someone's values, beliefs and behaviours.



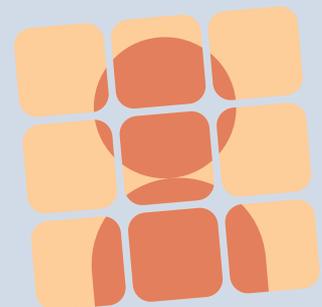
How can schools help young people navigate the manosphere?

Manosphere communities hold a range of hostile beliefs towards women and girls but not all online content is directly harmful or misogynistic. Some influencers and communities can help boys and men feel connected and support their mental health.^{6, 10} Others provide lifestyle advice that boys can find helpful. However, engaging with this content can lead to viewing more misogynistic and extreme content over time.²⁴ **Critical digital media literacy** is therefore crucial to help young people distinguish between misogynistic content and influencers and to recognise the possible harms for themselves and others.



Many young people - including boys - reject the manosphere content. While the manosphere gets a lot of attention, plenty of young people do not engage with it. **Many actively resist its influence** and try to limit its impact on their lives.^{1, 10} Schools can play a critical role in supporting young people to develop skills that help them navigate online platforms, social media and content creators, and make informed choices about what they engage with and how.

Clear and consistent responses to incidents of sexism and misogyny are essential for setting behavioural expectations for students and staff and building safe and respectful school cultures for everyone. Strong **leadership** and **fully resourced, whole-school responses** are crucial in making sure teachers and students who have experienced sexism and misogyny feel supported, and that boys and men who have caused harm are held accountable.



This is **not just an issue for young people and online safety**. Many manosphere communities are linked to real-world groups and networks for men. Most content creators and influencers are adult men who target men of all ages, though some specifically try to recruit young men and boys.^{1, 19} People inside and outside of schools – such as teachers, family members, coaches, neighbours and the wider school community – may be engaging with the manosphere. Schools cannot do this work alone. Parents, carers and school families need to be active partners in a **whole-of-community approach**.



Further reading

Manosphere groups and influencers constantly evolve as new trends and ideas emerge and fade. We encourage you to explore the resources linked throughout this introductory guide for deeper understanding.

Organisation / Publisher	Resource Title	Reference
eSafety Commissioner, Australia	Young men online	Endnote 10
Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) Explainer	The “manosphere”	Endnote 18
CREST, UK	Introductory guide to understanding misogyny and the far-right	Endnote 20
Anti-Bullying Centre, Dublin City University	Addressing the impact of masculinity influencers on teenage boys: A guide for schools, teachers and parents/guardians	Endnote 1
SPLC & PERIL, USA	Not just a joke: Understanding & preventing gender- & sexuality-based bigotry	Endnote 19
ALIGN, UK	How does social media influence gender norms among adolescent boys? Key evidence and policy implications	Endnote 5



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ANROWS acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land across Australia on which we live and work. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present, and we value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and knowledge. We are committed to standing and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, honouring the truths set out in the [Warawarni-gu Guma Statement](#).



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