Learning Pack

civic digits

For all weblinks & videos within this document
www.eis.org.uk/gender-equality/manygoodmen

eis
The Educational Institute of Scotland

Many Good Men

Changing the story about online misogyny

With thanks to **Time for Inclusive Education** (TIE) and **Zero Tolerance** for reviewing the resource.

Creating a group agreement

In some cases, especially when the lesson is undertaken with a group of learners who are not in an established class, it may be useful to introduce a group agreement.

A group agreement promotes buy-in from learners to the process and engages them in taking accountability for creating a safer space for discussion. It enables the group to share their hopes and fears and for this to be accounted for, as well as agreeing modes of behaviour and boundaries.

A group agreement can be created by inviting learners to share what they individually need for a learning space to feel (safe / creative / collaborative), on post-it notes and grouping them together under themes. Learners can then sign their name to each theme.

Staff may wish to start with their school values, and additionally, consider the following:

What will be okay to share in this group (personal experiences vs others' experiences) and what is okay to be shared afterwards, including on social media?

What is appropriate behaviour in this room?

Who should we talk to if we feel negative or down after this lesson, or if we are personally affected by what's discussed?

How can we make sure everyone feels able to ask questions and engage?

How can we be non-judgmental, respectful, and curious about others' perspectives?

How can we have fun in this lesson?

What will happen if we don't uphold our group agreement?

Warm-up activities

Warm up exercises are a useful way to get the group focused and relaxed.

Loops

(10-15 minutes)

You need a ball for this game

Stand in a circle

1. Create a loop by throwing a ball between everyone in the circle until it goes back to the first thrower.
2. Repeat until everyone is sure of their order in the loop.
3. Create a loop with the names of people in the circle.
4. Do that loop and the ball loop together.
5. Create another loop by swapping places with different people in the circle.
6. Run all three loops together.

Value of the game: Fun, doing more than one thing at a time, making eye contact with other participants, working together, memory.

The Sun Shines On

(10-15 minutes)

Everyone except the facilitator sits on a chair in a circle.

The facilitator explains that they are going to say the phrase: “The sun shines on…” and add something that is true for as many people as possible. For example, “The sun shines on people who are wearing something blue today.” Everyone who is wearing blue then stands and swaps seats with someone else who is wearing blue. There should always be someone left in the centre, because the facilitator takes one of the seats when everyone else is swapping. The person in the centre has to think of something and say: “The sun shines on …” and everyone swaps again.

This can start as a neutral sharing game and develop to explore specific issues. So, you could change the rule so that, “The sun shines on anyone who (something to do with gender or masculinity). For example, in this version of the game you might say: “The sun shines on anyone who has been told to ‘man up’.”

Value of the game: Sharing experiences, seeing how many other people have shared experiences. It can also be challenging for this reason as you might be the only person who thinks or does something.

Emotion orchestra

Ask learners to come up with different emotions and put them in a jar (happiness, anger, sadness, excitement, fear).

Assign each learner a different emotion from the jar.

As 'conductor' the facilitator will now point to different learners to express their assigned emotion – they can express this through sound, through facial expression or through moving their body or something else!

The conductor can point to more than one person at a time, to create combinations of expressions.

The conductor can conduct slow, fast, loud, soft by choosing different learners.

Value of the game: Having fun together, thinking about how different emotions feel / look and are expressed and whether some are easier to express than others.

Stop, Go, Jump

Ask the group to walk around the room at a good pace. Don't bump into people and don't walk in a circle. Use the whole space and go in different directions.

When the facilitator says 'Stop', you stop.

When the facilitator says 'Go', you walk.

When the facilitator says 'Jump', you jump.

When the facilitator says 'Shout', you shout your name.

When the group has proved they can do this well, the facilitator then explains that they need to do the opposite. So, when you hear 'Stop', you go. When you hear 'Go', you stop. When you hear 'Jump', you shout your name and when you hear 'Shout', you jump.

Value of game: It is worth discussing with the group after playing the game why it is hard to do the opposite of what you are told to do. This can lead to a discussion of how and why we are taught to do what we are told.

Act like a man / Act like a woman

This activity is borrowed from parts of an exercise described in the Zero Tolerance Many Good Men report (2024).

Ask learners to stand up and take the stance of stereotypical man (embody a character). They can move around if they want to.

Ask the group:

- What do you notice about yourself and others around you?
- How does it feel to be standing like this?
- What does this say about what we expect from a 'stereotypical' man?

Ask learners to stand up and take the stance of stereotypical woman (embody a character). They can move around if they want to.

Ask the group:

- What do you notice about yourself and others around you?
- How does it feel to be standing like this?
- What does this say about what we expect from a 'stereotypical' woman?

Value of game: Learners begin exploring their own feelings in relation to gender pressures and become curious or empathise with others' experiences.

It may be useful to note how the body is balanced differently, for example whether someone portrays women/men standing as taking up more space or balancing on one leg. Reflect on what this means in terms of perceptions of robustness / confidence. Reflect on whether one portrayal looks more ready to act / more passive.

Cool down activities

It's important to take time at the end of each workshop/session to cool down and take time to leave the discussion in the room. This might be in the form of either sharing positive thoughts, shaking out your body and/or doing something just for fun together.

1) Positive thoughts:

Go around the group and share something that you are looking forward to doing later.

2) Fun:

Everyone passes the phrase 'Wispy Mixture' around the circle to the left, or you can change the direction by saying 'Mr Whispers' which sends the words back to the right. If you say 'Misty Vista' it sends the energy/words across the circle. If you make a mistake or laugh, you must run around the circle and back to your place. This game encourages you to enjoy making mistakes.

3) Shake it out:

Put on some loud high energy music and shake one bit of your body at a time, starting with your feet and going all the way to your head.

1

Lesson Primer

Gender pressures and mental health

For all weblinks & videos within this document

www.eis.org.uk/gender-equality/manygoodmen

Overview

This lesson can be used as a standalone, or to prime learners for the other lesson activities to follow, as it provides an introduction to thinking about gender stereotypes and pressures and their impact on mental health.

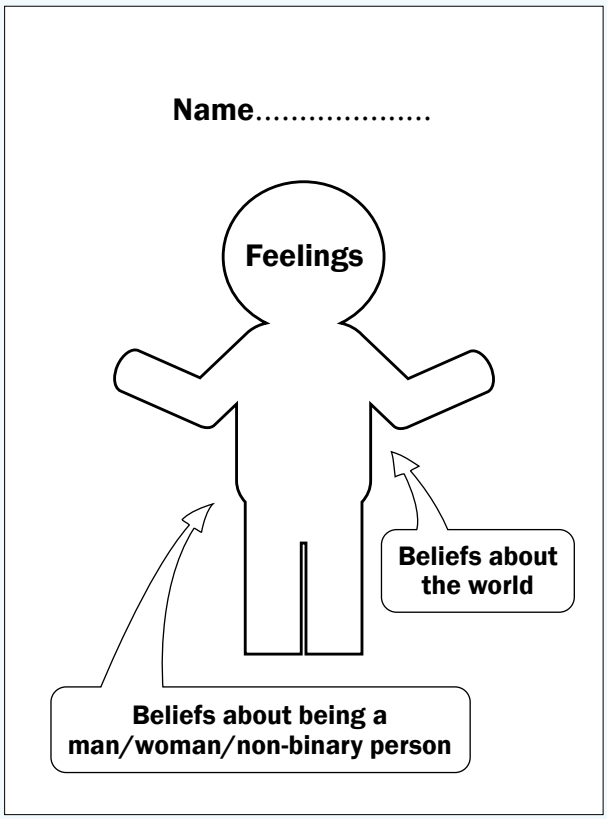
Suggested for Senior Phase (S4-S6) and College (all ages). Professional judgment should be used to determine whether materials are suitable for the learner cohort in question.

Learning objectives:

- Understand gender pressures and how they impact what we expect from ourselves and each other / social pressure
- Consider the impact of gender stereotypes on mental health

Warm up:

'Act like a man / Act like a woman'



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Activity 1:

How do we get our beliefs about the world?

Draw out a shape to represent a person, or print out the image at the end of this document.

Ask learners to discuss where our beliefs about the world come from.

Thereafter, ask learners to discuss where you get your information about what it means to be a man / woman / non-binary person?

Take feedback as whole group and populate outside the person.

Keep the circle created, for the next activity.

Activity 2:

Gender stereotypes

Show the video – 'Girl toys vs boy toys: The experiment – BBC Stories'

www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWu44AqF0iI

Ask learners to discuss: "What does the video tell us about gender?"

Explain to the group that how we express our gender is learned behaviour. We can choose how we express ourselves, but often we are influenced by others and societal cues, for example from media that suggest how we're supposed to be, based on what's expected of our gender.

Adding to the intro activity: "How do stereotypes affect the pressures we might feel?"

Ask learners for words to populate the inside of the 'person' shape created in the previous activity with pressures / feelings.

Follow up question: "Are there sometimes consequences if people don't follow what is expected of them in terms of their gender behaviour?"

Activity 3:

Stirling's Story

Play Stirling's video.

Hand out the written script, and ask the class to discuss:

- What does Stirling think it means to be a man?
- Where did Stirling get his beliefs about being a man?
- What pressures is he experiencing?
- What impact is that having on him, how does he feel?

Split into small groups and ask them to create a new character and write a scene that could make a difference to Stirling.

The groups can act out their scene, explain it or read out their scripts.

Select a cool down activity from page 6

2

Lesson Primer

Online influences

For all weblinks & videos within this document

www.eis.org.uk/gender-equality/manygoodmen

Overview

This lesson can be used as a standalone, or to prime learners for the other lesson activities to follow, as it provides an introduction to thinking about the influence of online spaces.

Suggested for Senior Phase (S4-S6) and College (all ages)

Professional judgment should be used to determine whether materials are suitable for the learner cohort in question.

Learning objectives

- Understand how algorithms work and the connection to extreme and prejudicial online influences
- Consider ways to stay safe online

Warm up:

Stop, Go, Jump

Activity 1:

Anonymous quiz

Invite learners to answer four questions as part of a quiz.

1. How long do you spend online a day?
2. List your 5 favourite apps
3. Who do you talk to about the content you see online?
4. On a scale of 1 – 10, how much do the adults in your life understand what your online life is like?

Ask learners to discuss how YouTubers and TikTokers make money.

Explain to learners that many companies want to make money and do this by collecting data about individuals to be able to sell them things or promote certain things to them.

Explain that the more someone engages with online content, the more data can be collected about them and that this data can be sold to third parties, mostly for advertising.

Activity 2:

What are algorithms

Create a mind-map with all the words learners associate with the word “algorithm”.

Explain that what we see on the internet, in our ‘for you’ pages and on YouTube, is decided not by us but by algorithms that someone else has created. Algorithms are a set of instructions that a computer program follows in order to do a task – the algorithm is a set of instructions that decide what to show you next.

Explain that algorithms exist in gaming, in google, on websites, on social media and they analyse what we look at online to suggest other content to us, including targeted advertising. If we look at cat videos online, we are more likely to receive advertising about things related to cats!

These algorithms also make assumptions about what you like based on your personal information, such as your age, location or gender.

Ask learners to come up with answers to the following question: “What are algorithms trying to do on social media?”

Prompts may include:

- keeping you on the platform for as long as possible
- telling you what you want to hear
- only showing you things related to what you’ve looked at before

Ask learners to consider what the risks are with the above (for example, creating an echo chamber with lack of diverse thoughts/ views).

Explain that this also means that if someone searches for harmful content, they are more likely to be suggested harmful content in the future. Learners should consider this carefully if they are tempted to google something related to the topics discussed, after the lesson. Learners should be encouraged to speak to an adult if they are seeing something online that concerns them, and engage critically with source material, especially on any content that is being suggested to them online after this lesson.

For specific advice on staying safe online, the following resources may be helpful:

Digilearn.scot section on cyber resilience and internet safety.

Digitaldiscourse.scot

Activity 3:

Critical and political literacy online

Show the video “How to get a girlfriend” – example from the Digital Discourse Initiative, which shows how quickly misogynistic content is suggested.

Remind learners that if they are searching the internet for content from the lessons, they are more likely to receive extreme or radicalised content, especially on TikTok and YouTube, but also if looking at any content generated or provided by AI. It is important to emphasise that online information may also be inaccurate and misleading.

The ‘SIFT‘ and ‘VERIFY‘ methods developed by the Digital Discourse Initiative can be used to support learners to critically engage with online content, and help them to develop their skills in identifying false or harmful information.

They help children and young people to put their developing critical and digital media literacy skills into action.

‘SIFT‘ is an easier acronym to remember and will, therefore, be more suitable for younger learners, while ‘VERIFY‘ can support and complement more advanced learning content about disinformation. (see page 12 & 13 for additional information)

Consider using recent media examples and inviting learners to use the SIFT or VERIFY method to consider these.

Select a cool down activity from page 6

SIFT

The SIFT method can help children and young people to identify whether the information that they have encountered is false. Before sharing or reading articles, news, video, or visual content:

Stop: Stop! Be aware of your emotional response to the content. Before continuing, use the next steps.

Investigate: Investigate the source. Look up the author, creator, or source - do they seem reliable?

Find: Find better coverage somewhere else. Look at reputable news sites - have they covered this information? What do reliable fact-checking websites say?

Trace: Trace any claims, quotes, or media to their original context. For example, if a video includes claims about research from an expert - try to find the original claims that they made.

VERIFY

The VERIFY method can help children and young people to identify whether the information that they have encountered is false. Before sharing or reading articles, news, video, or visual content:

Validate the source: Before sharing or reading information, check if the source is reliable and credible.

Evaluate intent: Consider why the information was created - what is the intention? Is it likely to be biased?

Research the facts: Check the information yourself using reputable sources - for example, if video content is sharing news, has this been covered by a reputable news source?

Identify emotion: Does the content include anything that seems designed to stir emotions like fear or anger?

Find manipulations: Identify if there are any obvious visual edits, photoshopped or artifically generated content, or misleading graphics.

Your critical thinking: If unsure, rely on your critical thinking skills and stay sceptical about the information

A

Lesson

Understanding 'incel' ideology

For all weblinks & videos within this document

www.eis.org.uk/gender-equality/manygoodmen

Overview

Zero Tolerance and Civic Digit's research has found that many young people are familiar with words associated with incel terminology, but are unaware about this connection between these words and incel ideology, and do not know what 'incels' are. The purpose of this activity is to demystify some of this language and raise awareness of some of the harms caused by incel ideology.

This lesson should be approached with care and consideration of its suitability to the learner group, using professional judgment. Depending on suitability, this lesson can be used as a standalone, combined with activities in other lessons, or follow on from an introduction to gender inequality and stereotypes.

Suggested for Senior Phase (S4-S6) and College (all ages)

Professional judgment should be used to determine whether materials are suitable for the learner cohort in question.

Learning objectives:

- Identify and demystify incel ideology
- Develop a greater understanding about vulnerability to and protective factors against incel ideology

Create a group agreement and select a warm-up activity.

Refer to the group agreement and explain to learners that we will be exploring terminology that could be harmful / offensive but understand we do so in the learning context.

Activity 1:

Incel terminology

Write the words on a display or on cut-out cards, providing the definitions separately. Ask learners in groups to match a word to the definition.

- **Chad:** a term for an 'Alpha male' or stereotypically highly attractive man, signified by a square jaw, being muscular, rich, heterosexual
- **Stacey:** a term for a stereotypically highly attractive female
- **Red pill:** referred to by incels as believing that men are oppressed by women because of feminism
- **Black pill:** The belief that men are oppressed by women because of feminism and lookism, which means that if you are less attractive than 80% of people, you will never have a girlfriend and you are doomed to be alone
- **Blue pill:** Men who are seen as weak by incels because they don't believe in incel ideology
- **LDAR - Lay Down and Rot:** An incel term that means you have given up all hope of ever finding happiness, because you will never have a romantic relationship
- **Female android (foid):** An incel term that refers to all women, dehumanising them as robots
- **Sigma male:** a 'lone wolf' type of man, signifies someone who is detached from society and community. They are considered 'cool' because they are alone, strong and determined
- **Incel:** short for 'involuntary celibate'. A misogynistic online community of men who are hostile to women because they feel they cannot attract women
- **Beta male:** a man that is viewed as passive and kind, suggesting that this makes him less attractive to women

You may want to include some red herring definitions such as: "a medicine", "a pop song", "a cool guy", "an app".

Ask learners to discuss how it might feel for someone to be exposed to these words online. What about this might be appealing for some people? What might put others off?

Ask learners to consider how it might feel for different people, for example for boys / girls / non-binary people.

Explain that incels are a very extreme group of people online and that some have been linked to serious crimes and even charged with murders. Despite this extremism, incels create a lot of content that has now become mainstream.

Explain that many people consume online content without knowing it is created by incels and that many people in the group will have come across this material online. Repeating or being interested in some of these words does not mean someone is an 'incel'. It's natural to be curious – this content is designed to appeal to young people.

Some online influencers tap directly into the legitimate concerns of young people, by validating and responding to their insecurities, promising seemingly appealing solutions that carry hidden risks to their relationships and health, as well as to wider society.

Not all men and masculinity influencers are misogynistic, but algorithms quickly push misogyny on those who are engaging with this material. On the surface, young men and boys might not realise or consciously engage with the misogynistic aspects of the media they are consuming

Explain that being regularly exposed to extreme materials online might mean we are less shocked by them, or less aware of how these ideas might influence us.

Video: Derek and Leo's story

Show Derek and Leo's video.

Ask the group to talk about their impressions of Derek. What is he like?

Ask the group to discuss why they think Derek became drawn to 'incel' online content, and why they think Leo was not drawn to the incel content.

Activity 2:

Create a new character

Place learners in groups and ask them to create a believable character, someone who could live in their area, or go to their school:

- Name
- Age
- Gender identity
- Cultural / racial background
- Sexual orientation
- Religious faith / belief
- Do they have a disability?
- What are their friends like?
- What music do they like?
- Where were they born?
- Do they like sports?
- How wealthy is their family?
- What are their fears?
- Do they have a romantic relationship?
- Do they think they're good-looking?
- Who do they admire?
- What is their relationship like with their parents/ family?
- What's their secret?
- What about them would make them vulnerable to online influence?
- What about them would protect them from online influence?

Activity 3:

Spectrum of difference

Create a 'line of agreement' in the room where one end means strongly agree, and the other means strongly disagree.

Explain that the characters the learners have created have been exposed to incel content online. Read out statements and ask the groups to move on the line depending on their character's beliefs after watching this content. Statements may include:

- "Pineapple belongs on pizza"
- "Summer holidays are the best holiday"
- "Dogs are better than cats"
- "If you are just being yourself, you will meet people who like you"
- "Women and men can be friends"
- "If you haven't had a girlfriend by the time you're 16, you're doomed to be alone forever"
- "Girls don't like boys who are nice"
- "It's important never to show weakness so you can be more successful"
- "Jaffa cakes are a biscuit"

The idea is that learners must move as one group to agree where the character 'stands' in relation to their beliefs about the statements.

Ask learners to share the reasons behind the placement of their character's beliefs.

Cool down activity

Explain that algorithms are designed so that if someone searches for harmful content, they are more likely to be suggested harmful content in the future. Learners should consider this carefully if they are tempted to google something related to the topics discussed after the lesson.

If they are searching the internet for content from the lessons, they are more likely to receive extreme or radicalised content, especially on TikTok and YouTube, but also if looking at any content generated or provided by AI. It is important to emphasise that online information may also be inaccurate and misleading. Critical literacy should be encouraged.

The following resources can assist:

Digilearn.scot section on cyber resilience and internet safety

Digitaldiscourse.scot

B

Lesson

Online Influences and Relationships

For all weblinks & videos within this document

www.eis.org.uk/gender-equality/manygoodmen

Overview

Content we access online may impact our beliefs and our relationships. The following activities will look at how some online misogynistic ideas may come into everyday life, and the impact this can have on our mental health and our relationships. The lesson offers an opportunity for learners to consider what makes a healthy relationship.

Please note there are four videos in total. Depending on time and suitability, you may want to focus on either:

- Derek and Leo's story, and Sam's story (Derek's ex-girlfriend)
- Stirling and George's story, and Grace's story (Stirling's mum)

Suggested for Senior Phase (S4-S6) and College (all ages)

Professional judgment should be used to determine whether materials are suitable for the learner cohort in question.

Learning objectives

- Consider ways in which online influences impact our beliefs and wellbeing
- Understand how our beliefs and feelings about ourselves influence our relationships
- Consider interventions that can support healthy relationships

Create a group agreement and select a warm-up activity

Activity 1:

What do we want from relationships?

Provide a list for learners about needs/wants in relation to relationships (romantic, familial or platonic):

- Safety
- Intimacy
- Gifts
- Respect
- Being able to be ourselves
- Entertainment
- Love

Ask learners to think about a type of relationship (friendship, family, romantic) and rank the needs/wants from most to least important. Consider discussing the differences between learners of different genders in the classroom and their answers.

Activity 2:

Introducing the characters

Ask learners to discuss how online spaces (social media apps, videos online, etc.) might influence our relationships.

Then, depending on time and suitability for the group, choose a set of videos to show the class. The videos contain similar themes, but different relationships are explored, which may generate different discussions with the learners.

Derek and Leo's story is more focused explicitly on incel ideology and romantic relationships, and deals with a mental health crisis more directly – recorded as a YouTube Channel video. Please take care to consider the suitability for the learner group. It would be helpful if the learner group has already undertaken the lessons on online influences and incel ideology before considering this video.

Sam's (Derek's ex-girlfriend) video focuses on her experience in the relationship and her views on harmful masculinity – recorded as a Twitch streaming video.

Stirling and George's story is more focused on masculinity pressures, the roles of men and women, as well as the breakdown of relationships.

Grace's story (Stirling's mum) shows her in a monologue after her son has thrown a cup of warm drink at her.

Option 1: Show the video: Derek and Leo's story, and Sam story (Derek's ex-girlfriend)

Option 2: Show the video: Stirling and George's story, and Grace's story (Stirling's mum)

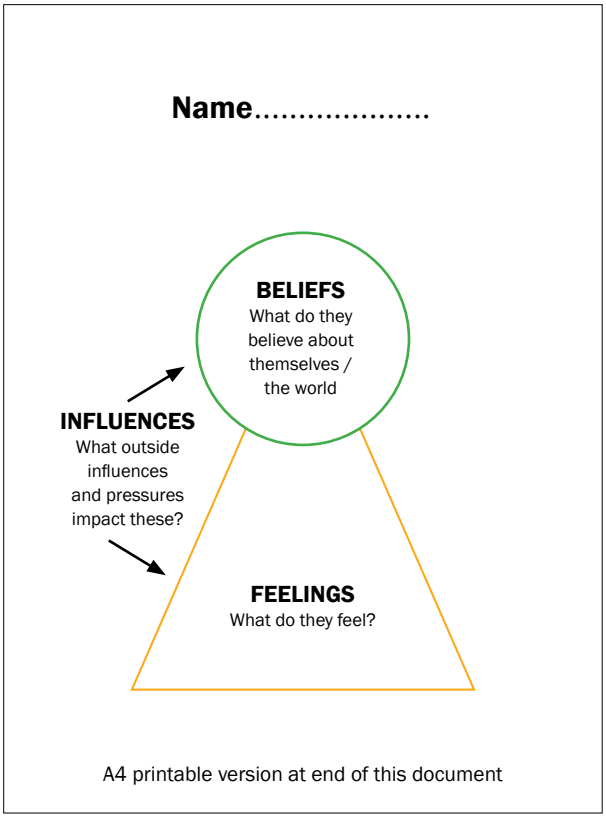
Depending on time, ask the group to discuss with one person sitting next to them:

- How would you describe each character in the video?
- What issues are they dealing with?
- How do they feel?
- What do you think their views are about each other?
- What do you think their views are about women and about men?

Activity 3:

What influences our feelings and beliefs

In small groups, hand out flipchart paper and ask each group to complete one character sheet for each character in the videos based on the information they have seen in the videos.



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Ask learners to share their papers and discuss as a group:

- What do you think about Derek and Sam's and/or Stirling and Grace's relationship?

Activity 4:

What can happen next?

Invite learners to work together to create a short script about the next time the characters meet.

Options to this activity:

- Learners can perform their new scripts or read it out to the class. The class can discuss the scripts and share what beliefs/feelings are present in the new story they have created.
- Learners can swap scripts and discuss how what might 'change the story' in each other's scripts to help the characters have a better relationship.
- Learners can swap scripts and 'freeze frame', recreate a still image that represents the character's internal world at that moment (for example using drawing or collage).

Select a cool down activity from page 6

C

Lesson

Dramatising interventions to online misogyny

For all weblinks & videos within this document

www.eis.org.uk/gender-equality/manygoodmen

Overview

This lesson invites learners to create their own scripts exploring interventions to online misogyny.

The project should be undertaken once learners have a basic understanding of gender pressures and misogyny, for example through the primer lessons.

This lesson is interactive and requires learners to engage in drama.

Suggested for Senior Phase (S4-S6) and College (all ages)

Professional judgment should be used to determine whether materials are suitable for the learner cohort in question.

Learning objectives

- Consider how the content we see online can shape our beliefs about what it means to be a man
- Explore what healthy and comfortable masculinity might look like

Create a group agreement and select a warm-up activity

Activity 1:

Spectrum of difference

Agree that standing at one end of the room means 'strongly agree' and standing at the other end of the room means, 'strongly disagree'. Ask participants to put themselves on the spectrum in relation to the following statements:

- Begin by asking the group a more neutral question, for example, asking one person "What is your favourite band/TV show" and then get the others to place themselves along the spectrum of difference depending on what they think about this band/TV show.
- "People's views about what women and men are like are shaped by what they see online".
- "Nothing can be done about/we can't do anything about online misogyny, so we just need to learn how to ignore it."

After each statement, ask participants to share why they are standing in that place in the room.

Activity 2:

Creating the character

Draw the outline of a person on a large piece of paper.

This is the outline of a boy/man who lives in the same place as the learners. Invite learners to get into four different groups. Each group has a set of character questions to answer.

It could be useful to print the questions out for groups in advance.

Group 1

1. How old is he?
2. What cultural/racial background?
3. What is his sexual orientation?
4. What is his earliest memory?
5. What is his religious belief/faith?
6. What year/class is he in?

Group 2

1. Does he have a disability?
2. How wealthy is his family?
3. Where was he born?
4. What is his favourite food?
5. Does he like sport?
6. Who is his favourite sportsperson?

Group 3

1. What is his favourite music?
2. Who does he love?
3. What is his relationship like with his parents/carers?
4. Who does he admire?
5. Does he think he is attractive?
6. What is his secret?

Group 4

1. What is he ashamed of?
2. What is he scared of?
3. What was the worst thing that ever happened to him?
4. Has he ever had a girlfriend?
5. Does he have siblings?
6. Does he have a favourite sports team?

Invite each group to share the information about the character and discuss. If there are contradictory aspects between the groups, encourage a "yes, and" approach. For example, "character X has had a girlfriend before AND is gay". This might on the surface be seen to be contradictory, but encourage the group to find solutions in exploring the contradictions. For example "character X has had a girlfriend before AND he is gay, because he realised his sexuality later in life".

Decide the characters' name as a full group.

Activity 3:

Online influences

Group stands or sits in a circle. The participants making the circle represent an internet platform.

Ask the group to decide what platform they want to be, for example YouTube/ Reddit/ Instagram/ TikTok.

One participant stands in the centre. They are acting as "Name": The character the group have just created.

Start with a gentle warm-up. "Name" asks the internet "Where can I post a letter to Australia?"

Each participant in the circle invents a snippet of content that this question might result in if entered into a platform such as YouTube/Reddit/Instagram/ TikTok.

Then, "Name" asks the internet, "How do I get a girlfriend?"

Each participant in the circle invents a snippet of content that this question might result in if entered into a platform such as YouTube/Reddit/Instagram/ TikTok. For example, "A step-by-step guide to getting a girlfriend".

This exercise can be repeated with different participants playing "Name", different platforms, and different questions.

Activity 4:

Creating the scenes

Everyone gets into groups of 4 or 5.

Each group identifies a time when the character feels comfortable being a man and creates a still image of it.

Each image is presented silently to the rest of the group and they say what they see.

The group explain what the image is of and why they chose it.

The workshop facilitator can explain that when they tap on the shoulder of people in the picture, they will say what they are thinking.

A member of the other group is invited to tap on the shoulder of a participant who they want to share their thoughts in that moment of the scene.

Each group makes an image of the character when they feel uncomfortable being a man.

Each group makes a scene of the 30 seconds leading up to this image.

The scenes are shared, and the facilitator encourages discussion about them. Why are these situations difficult for men or make men feel uncomfortable?

The group votes on which scene it would like to explore further.

Activity 5:

Forum theatre

Replay the chosen scene but this time, the audience can shout STOP if they think the character could try something different.

Try out various interventions from the audience. After each one, ask if any progress was made or if anything changed - encourage some debate.

Prompt the audience to think about what could be done in the future, maybe the next day?

Finish by asking what healthy masculinity would look like for our character? For example, you can use the following prompts:

- What are the things that make him uncomfortable about being a man, and how could he address this in a healthy way?
- Does he feel able to ask someone for help and support?
- How can he have good relationships with the people he cares about?

Cool down

Ask learners to share one word that represents what will stay with them about the session.

Ask leaners to close their eyes and think about a place where they feel happy and safe. Ask learners to breathe in through their nose for the count of 2 and out through their mouths for the count of 4.

Invite everyone to shake their bodies.

D

Lesson

‘Many Good Men’ documentary

The project shown in this documentary was developed by Civic Digits in partnership with IAMME, Stories Untold, Stellar Quines Theatre Company, and the generous support of Creative Scotland, Hearts of Midlothian FC, Zero Tolerance, YouthLink Scotland, Women’s Support Project, The Artist Wellbeing Company and Passion 4 Fusion and funded by Creative Scotland.

For all weblinks & videos within this document

www.eis.org.uk/gender-equality/manygoodmen

Overview

From 2023 - 2024, Civic Digits ran a participatory theatre project which culminated in two groups of young participants co-creating two plays - **Many Good Men** - that explored misogyny, mental health and masculinity. The characters in the story, and what happens to them, were imagined by two groups of learners.[1]

Many Good Men follows the dual stories of friends Derek and Leo, and Stirling and George. The characters are all football players who witness a misogynistic attack in broad daylight. The event changes their lives forever and although their lives take different paths all the characters’ beliefs about themselves and about their future are deeply challenged.

In both stories, the two pairs of friends start a campaign against online misogyny, and struggle privately with their mental health. In both stories, the characters end up becoming influenced themselves by what they are seeing online, in different ways, with significant consequences for their mental health and relationships.

Please note that the documentary that forms the basis of this lesson includes mention of a fictional violent ‘incel’ incident where some people are killed, swear words, and discussion of pornography. Staff should use professional judgment in considering suitability for your learner group. School or College leadership can advise on relevant procedures and policies for engaging with parents and carers and can advise on how to offer them support in the home, to navigate conversations that might arise from the lessons.

This lesson can be undertaken with learners who have existing knowledge about online misogyny, incel ideology and gender pressures.

Suggested for S6 and College (all ages)

Professional judgment should be used to determine whether materials are suitable for the learner cohort in question.

Learning outcomes

- Understand better the influence of online misogyny and the impact on mental health and relationships
- Understand some ways in which learners can intervene in or mitigate against the impact of online misogyny

Create a group agreement and select a warm-up activity

[1] Civic Digits’ ‘Play in a Week’ process is available for booking via **contact@civicdigits.com**

Activity 1:

'Many Good Men' introduction

Explain the background to the project as detailed above.

Invite learners to write down:

- What do you think is the biggest danger to you on the internet?
- What do you think are the differences that gender make to your experience of the internet?

Photography: Chi Wai Cheung

Activity 2:

Documentary

Begin by sharing the overview of this lesson with learners to explain the Many Good Men participatory theatre project.

Show the documentary video about the Many Good Men project (22 min):
https://youtu.be/qLgVoJrGJqU

There are several options for this activity.

Either:

1. Play the video and ask learners to write down points in the video they would like to discuss / have thoughts about, then play the video again and invite learners to say STOP when they want to make a point; OR

2. Play the video and whilst it is playing for the first time, invite learners to say STOP when they want to make a point or have a question – below are some suggestions for points you may wish to stop at, and some questions to facilitate discussion.

Play the video again, but pause at 07.50 for specific prompts about this clip:

- Why might the characters be vulnerable to online influences?
- What are the pressures on men 'to be men'? (This might include being strong, fit, rich, successful, brave, funny, sexually active, etc)
- What does Stirling's dad say to him that reinforces the pressure to 'be a man' in the world? ("You need to show everyone that you're a hero.")
- What does George say at the press conference that hints he might feel the pressure 'to be a man'? ("Men need to step up here. We need an army of good men.")

Possible follow up questions:

- Do women face pressures from the internet and society like men?
- What pressures do women face?
- What about people who do not identify as either men or women? What pressures are put on them by the internet and/or society?

- Do you agree with the definitions the boys give of what an 'incel' and a 'chad' is? What haven't they said/included?
- Why do you think there is a special language that develops in groups? (Sense of identity? Being secret/private? Funny/entertaining?)

Pause the video again at 08.50

Participant in the girls' group says: "We think of incels as the extreme, but there are so many little parts of misogyny in everyday life that can build up to incel behaviour, or being an incel, which I find the scariest."

Prompts for discussion:

- Why do you think she finds it more scary to think about misogyny in everyday life than about the extremism of incel culture?

Pause the video again at 09.14

Character description of girls' group's main character

- What are the issues that "Derek" faces? (He witnessed domestic abuse at a young age and became a young watcher of pornography)

Pause at 10.31

Discussion of domestic abuse and pornography

"George" tells "Stirling" a story about how watching porn influenced a real-life sexual encounter. The other character is an avatar that "George" and "Stirling" have created online. He represents what they have read about the manosphere and incels.

- How do you think "George" feels about this story? What impact does it seem to have on "Stirling"?
- What do you think about what the Avatar says? "She had her way with you, then beat you up for it!"

Pause at 12.10

Andrew Tate (online 'influencer'): "Life for a man is harder than life for a woman."

- Why do people watch his content?
- Why does he make content? What does he get out of it?
- Do you think he believes what he says?
- What do you think his body language is saying?

Pause at 17.55

An adult man takes the role of an uncle to talk to the father of "Stirling".

- What does the uncle try to do?
- What was the problem that the boys identified for Stirling at the beginning of the video? (His parents don't listen to him, he doesn't feel loved by his parents)
- Does the uncle manage to address the problem?

Pause at 19.51

The facilitator asks: What is the one thing that will stay with you? Three key thoughts or questions made are:

- "To what extent can you have empathy (with incels)?"
- "I think even if they weren't vulnerable, they might still be misogynistic."
- "It doesn't matter who you are or what your background is, (online misogynistic influencing) could happen to anyone."

Ask learners to consider whether they agree, disagree or want to add anything to these statements?

Activity 3:

Consider the characters

Depending on time and suitability for the group, chose a character video to show the class. The videos contain similar themes, but they may generate slightly different discussions with the learners.

Derek and Leo's story is more focused explicitly on incel ideology, romantic relationships, and deals with a mental health crisis more directly – recorded as a YouTube Channel video. Please take care to consider the suitability for the learner group.

Sam's (Derek's ex-girlfriend) video focuses on her experience in the relationship and her views on harmful masculinity – recorded as a Twitch streaming video.

Stirling and George's story is more focused on masculinity pressures, roles of men and women, as well as breakdown of relationships.

Grace's story (Stirling's mum) shows her in a monologue after her son has thrown a cup of warm drink at her.

It is helpful if the learner group has already undertaken the lessons on online influences, and incel ideology, before considering this video.

Option 1: Show the video: Derek and Leo's story

Option 2: Show the video: Stirling and George's story

Ask the group to discuss with one person sitting next to them:

- How would you describe each character in the video?
- What issues are they dealing with?
- How do they feel?
- What do you think their views are about each other?
- What do you think their views are about women, and about men?

Select a cool down activity from page 6

This documentary depicts a project by Civic Digits and the following partners

CREATIVE SCOTLAND
ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

Fidelis et Fortis

H·M F C 1874

PASSION 4 FUSION
IMAGINE... BELIEVE... ACHIEVE

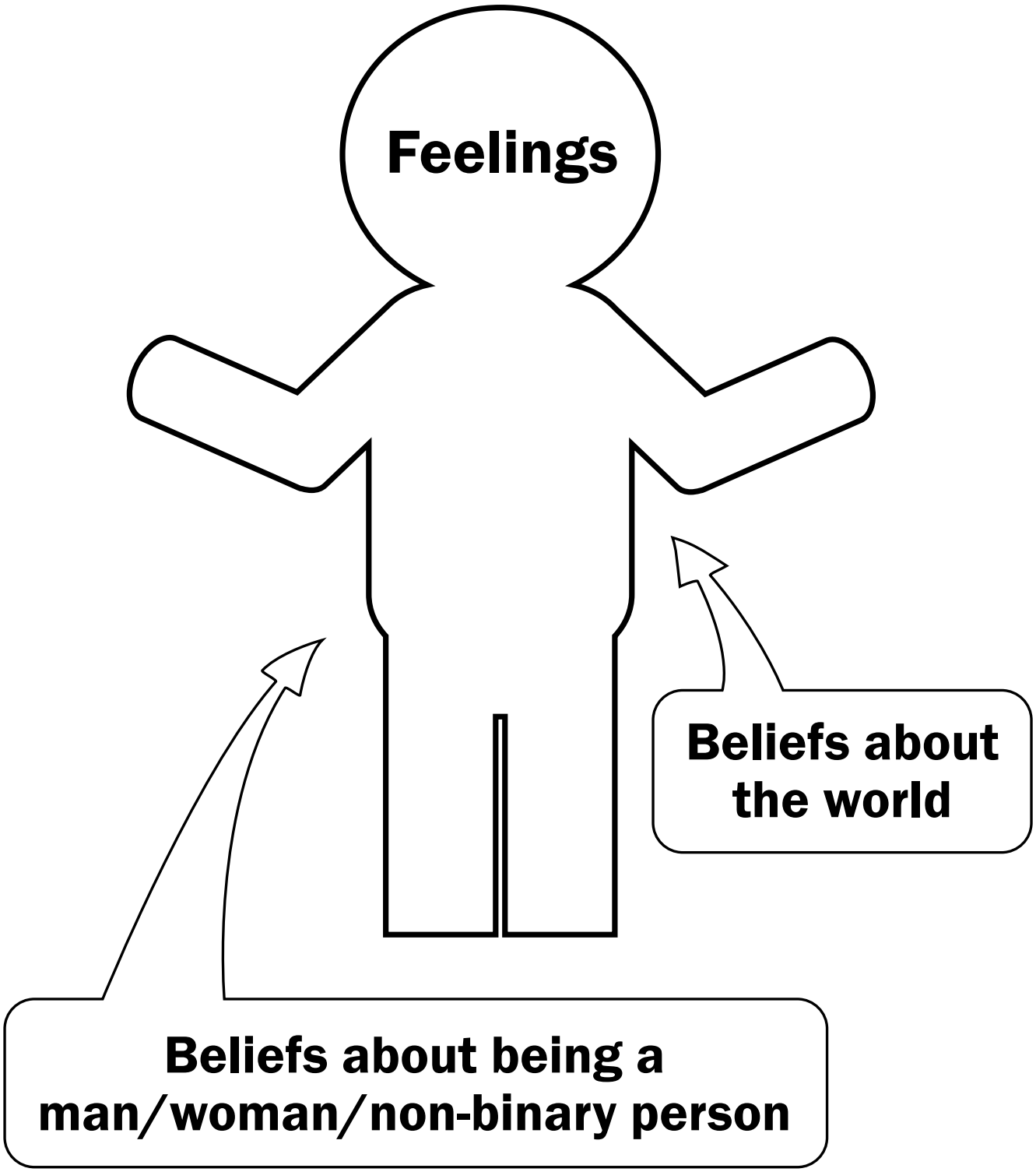
Stellar Quines

Stories UNTOLD

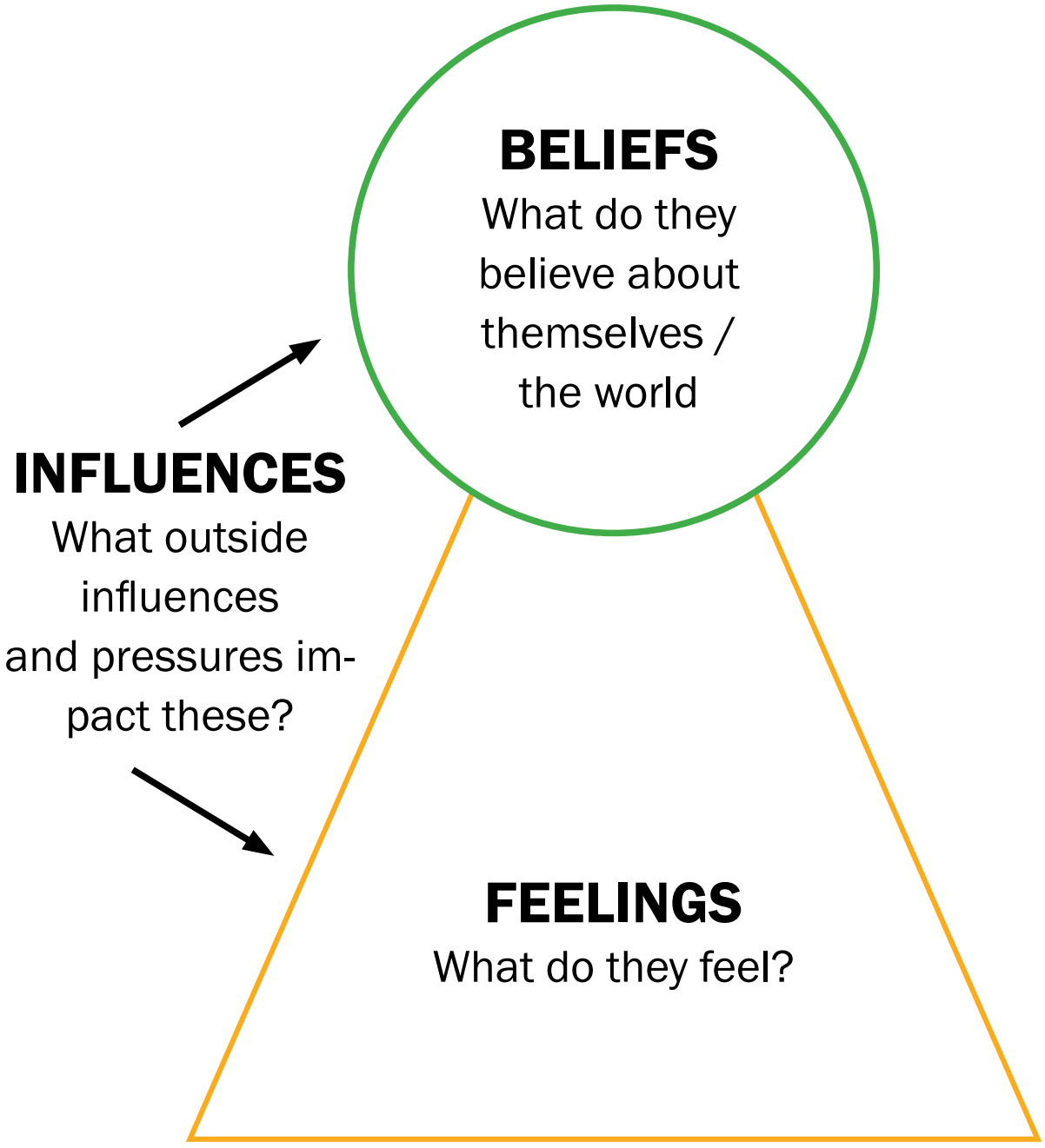
WOMEN'S SUPPORT PROJECT

YouthLink Scotland

Name……


Feelings
Beliefs about the world
Beliefs about being a man/woman/non-binary person

Name.....


BELIEFS
What do they believe about themselves / the world
INFLUENCES
What outside influences and pressures impact these?
FEELINGS
What do they feel?

civic digits

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