



Many Good Men

Changing
the story
about online
misogyny

Educator Pack



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.

www.eis.org.uk/gender/many-good-men

Every young person deserves to be safe, to be themselves, and to flourish.

Misogynistic attitudes and behaviours are not new, but the influence of online spaces and algorithms are enabling a rapid spread of content that aims to perpetuate rigid gender stereotypes and justify harmful attitudes.

The consequences of misogyny can be far-reaching. Even casual jokes and comments enable a culture of permissibility for violence against women and girls and puts pressure on men and boys to uphold restrictive ideas of what it means to be a man.

This education resource gives suggestions to engage learners in changing the story about online misogyny.



What is online misogyny?

Learners in our schools and colleges are growing up in an increasingly insecure and polarised world which significantly impacts their mental health and stress levels. Online influencers can 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.

In this context, where do men and boys find information about what it means to be a man? Recent research has found that men and masculinity influencers are increasingly gaining a mainstream following, with nearly two-thirds of young men aged 16-25 in UK watching this content online (Movember, 2025). Unfortunately, young men and boys who regularly engage with this content are more likely to have poorer mental health outcomes than young men who do not regularly engage with masculinity influencers (Movember 2025).

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 misogynistic aspects of the media they are consuming, but the attitudes underlying the content can have a significant impact on their beliefs and behaviours.

In focus groups carried out by Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) as part of the free online e-learning for education staff on strategies to counter online hate, “some boys showed awareness that what they watch is negatively impacting their behaviour and their language use. They mentioned the addictive nature of watching online content and how that affected their focus in school. They discussed ‘brainrot’ language becoming ingrained and worries that it may affect future career prospects; peer pressure making them act in ways, and do things, they normally wouldn’t, and the normalisation of racism, homophobia, and misogyny”.

Extreme misogyny relies heavily on the patriarchal values found in far-right ideology. In terms of gender, far right ideologies tend to be strongly rooted in patriarchal ideas, *inter alia*, which frame gender and gender roles as determined by biology. The far-right also frequently frame their interventions as motivated by a desire to protect women and girls from harm, whilst falsely blaming the threat of misogyny on minoritised groups.

The reality is that harmful patriarchal values are at the root of misogyny and with twice as many girls in the UK feeling unsafe due to sexism in 2024 compared to ten years ago, the mainstreaming of misogyny should be a concern for all. (Girlguiding 2024). Already in 2021, children and young people reported that sexual harassment occurred so frequently that it had become ‘commonplace’, with 92% of girls and 74% of boys reporting sexist name-calling (Ofsted, 2021).

In 2023, a majority of branches surveyed by the Educational Institute of Scotland reported that boys were more likely to exhibit ‘violent and aggressive’ behaviour towards women teachers than men teachers. Over 80% said there is a violent or aggressive incident every week in their schools (EIS, 2023).

A photograph of two young men, one with dark hair and one with braided hair, looking down at their smartphones. They are wearing blue and white shirts. A white speech bubble is overlaid on the image, containing a quote.

"All I wanted was to feel better, so I immersed myself in the world of online masculinity influencers. Not intentionally — I just got hooked. There was nowhere else offering a clear roadmap to masculinity, no one else showing me how to navigate what it meant to be a man."

‘Young men’s health in a digital world’ [Report]
Movember, 2025

Using stories in teaching about misogyny

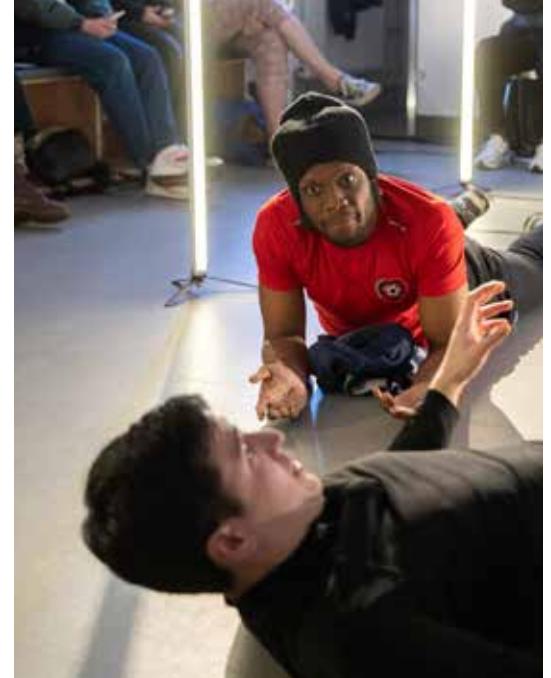
“The process of creating fictional characters to explore the radicalisation of masculinity was helpful for both groups as it enabled both young women and young men to protect themselves from being implicated personally in the issues” ‘Many Good Men’ [Report] Zero Tolerance, 2024

With rising violence and aggressive behaviours towards women teachers in schools, more and more girls feeling unsafe due to sexism, and boys and men under significant pressure to uphold misogynistic attitudes, a shift is urgently needed.

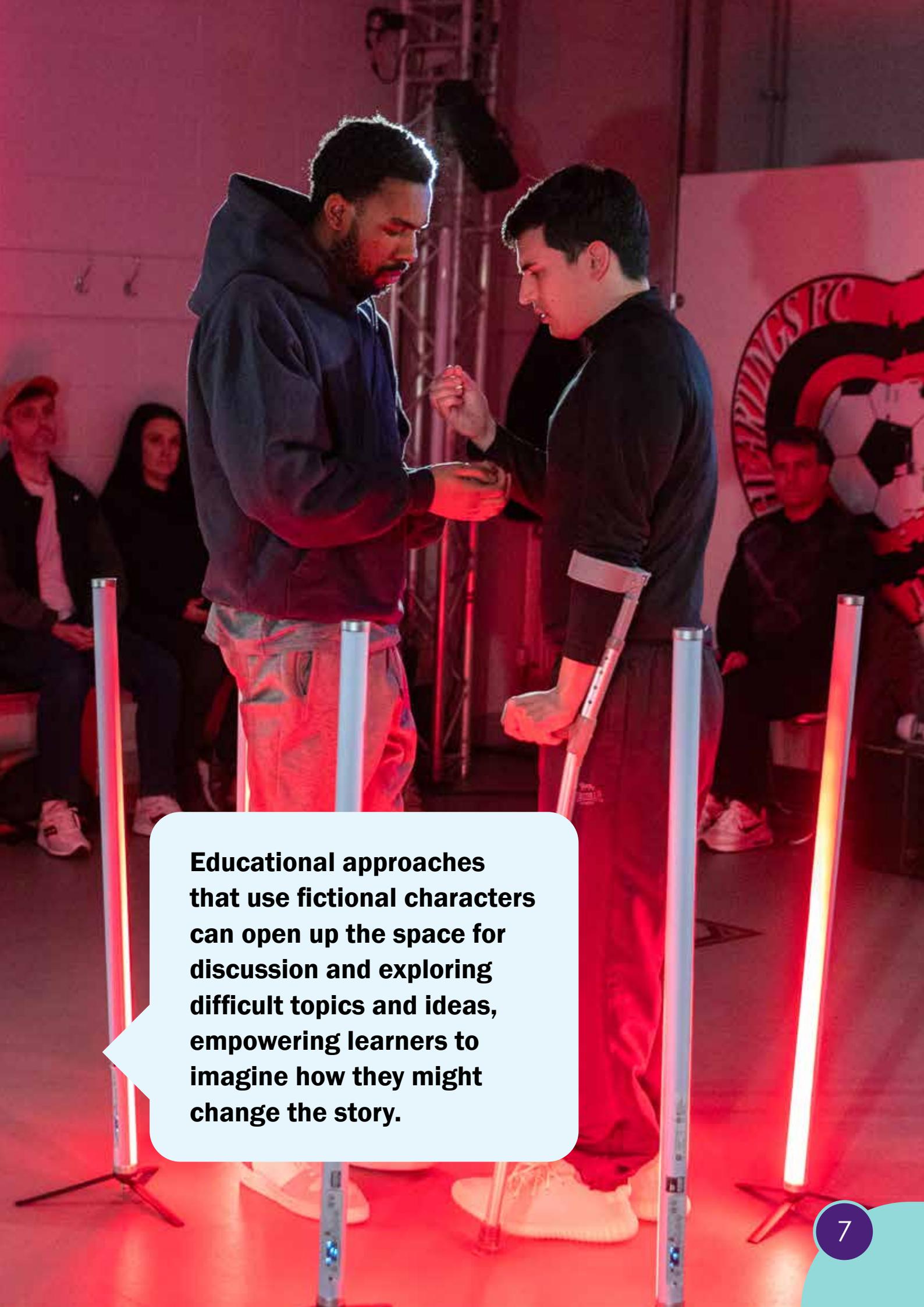
Talking about our own attitudes and experiences with gender norms, relationships, misogyny, and online habits can be difficult. Learners can feel vulnerable, embarrassed or even withdrawn if asked to share their own experiences or opinions.

Educational approaches that use fictional characters can open up the space for discussion and exploring difficult topics and ideas, empowering learners to imagine how they might change the story.

The medium of storytelling is used frequently in education to convey learning. You do not have to be a drama expert to use stories that facilitate the opening of learners’ imagination and engage them in discussion about how they can change the trajectory of the characters in these stories, and ultimately, better understand and challenge misogyny.



Photography: Chi Wai Cheung



Educational approaches that use fictional characters can open up the space for discussion and exploring difficult topics and ideas, empowering learners to imagine how they might change the story.



About Civic Digits

Civic Digits is a data-driven creative learning company, founded in 2018 by award-winning playwright Clare Duffy, using research, development, and immersive live performance to create change that empowers young people, their families, communities and the institutions that work with them.

“Our assumption is that we meet the young people where they are, to ask questions with curiosity, listen with compassion, and then use storytelling, drama, and art to explore and address the deeper issues. This approach aims to take the conversation away from the young person’s personal experience, where they might feel too vulnerable to really be explorative and curious. A fictional space allows us all more security to explore ideas, because we don’t have to be personally accountable for what a fictional character thinks, does or says.

This project aims to open the door to critical thinking, promoting the bravery to explore the taboo question of what masculinity is and how it functions in the world without putting any blame at the feet of the young people. Above all, it promotes healthy masculinity. It assumes most men and boys want to help anyone who is a victim of online gender-based violence and/or radicalisation.

Between 2023 and 2025, we made three versions of the ‘Many Good Men’ play with three different groups of young people – a mixed gender group, a boys’ group, and a girls’ group, who each brought their own insights and had their own benefits and challenges.

The aim of this project is to embrace and celebrate coming together to work on the problem and to stay with the problem particularly when it feels irresolvable. Questions of power, gender and violence have always troubled humanity. We can live with uncertainty if we remember that it is better not to know anything for sure, than to hate and blame”.

Clare Duffy, Artistic Director
Civic Digits

About the Educational Institute of Scotland

The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) is the largest education union in Scotland, representing over 80% of the teaching profession. Founded in 1847, the EIS is also the oldest teaching union in the world.

The EIS has developed a central role as one of the most respected voices in education in Scotland and has a longstanding commitment to and history of advancing social justice in education.

In 2016, the EIS published 'Get it Right for Girls', guidance for teachers on challenging misogynistic attitudes among children and young people. The EIS continues to be a voice for gender equality in the workplace and beyond.

About Many Good Men

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 designed by groups of learners. The process and learning from the project are described in the Zero Tolerance Many Good Men report (2024).

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.

The project values the contribution all men can make to changing gender-based violence and takes the problems men face seriously and with compassion. The participatory nature of the play engages young people to imagine how to positively intervene to change the trajectory of these young people's lives.

The success of the project demonstrated the power of using creative and character-based approaches to discuss difficult topics – empowering young people to imagine how they can be part of changing the tide on issues they themselves may be affected by.

Since then, the project has expanded, using the fictional stories of Derek and Leo, Stirling and George to facilitate wider discussions about misogyny, gender pressures, and mental health, including this education resource. Civic Digits' 'Play in a Week' process is available for booking via contact@civicdigits.com.

About this resource

The Many Good Men Education Resource, developed in partnership with Civic Digits and the EIS, offers educators the scripted stories of ‘Many Good Men’ as well as tools and plans that aim to open learners’ imagination and engage them in discussion about how they can change the trajectory of the characters in these stories, and ultimately, better understand and challenge misogyny.

The resource also provides advice on how to facilitate activities to engage learners in understanding and responding to misogyny, through exploring the characters of Derek, Leo, Stirling, George as well as Grace (Stirling’s mum) and Sam (Derek’s ex-girlfriend).

Overview:

- **Educator pack (facilitator notes and guidance)**
- **Learning pack (activities and lesson plans)**



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.

When undertaking the activity within this Education Resource, it is recommended that educational establishments engage at least two staff members per group, at all times. Teachers and lecturers should use their professional judgment in determining whether the activities are suitable for their learners and in tailoring activities as appropriate. Care should be taken to ensure that learners who have negative personal experiences related to the subject matter are supported in considering whether they wish to participate, and that suitable alternative activities are identified for them, where appropriate.

The Education Resource complements the Mentors in Violence Programme and Equally Safe at School whole-school approach for Secondary schools.

For schools, activities would be suitable as part of RSHP, PSE, English (for example as part of assessment for Senior Phase), Modern Studies, and Drama, as well as stand-alone learning. Some content may be suitable for year-group wide learning, but we advise that establishments may want to consider foundational learning taking place in specific subject areas first.

For colleges, activities would be suitable as part of guidance classes, courses with a specific focus related to this area (such as Social Sciences), supported learning programmes or as stand-alone learning units designed to address issues identified at a local level, for example as part of equality-related initiatives.

Teachers and lecturers should use their professional judgment in determining whether the activities are suitable for their learners and tailoring activities as appropriate.

Connection to Curriculum for Excellence

The Four Capacities

The project encourages young people to become:

- **Confident Individuals**

By providing a safe space to discuss sensitive issues, the project builds self-confidence and an ability to navigate complex social situations, online and in person.

- **Responsible Citizens**

The project encourages critical thinking about misogyny and online safety and nurtures the skills young people require to engage positively with their world.

- **Effective Contributors**

Through participatory theatre and discussion, learners collaborate and explore ideas, developing team-working, problem-solving and communication skills.

- **Successful Learners**

The project's active learning helps young people develop an enthusiasm for exploring complex personal, social and emotional issues and how to apply knowledge and skills in real-life contexts.

Curricular Areas

The project can be undertaken in a range of disciplinary and cross-curricular contexts. The following is not an exhaustive list.

- **Health and Wellbeing (HWB)**

The project is a rich learning context exploring emotional, social, and mental wellbeing.

- **Relationships**

Understanding healthy relationships and addressing issues like online misogyny, vulnerability and mental health.

- **Personal Safety**

Learning to stay safe online and assessing risk.

- **Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing**

Discussing sensitive aspects of learners' lives in a safe environment.

- **Social Studies**

The project explores civic identity, social issues, and how young people are influenced by media, their families, peers and communities.

- **Expressive Arts**

Originating from a participatory theatre project, the lessons link naturally to drama, creativity, and self-expression.

- **English and Literacy**

The project involves talking and listening, creation and interrogation of texts, and analysis of information and opinions.

Qualification Scotland qualifications

The project provides learning contexts and content appropriate to a number of National Qualification courses and supports the Health and Wellbeing elements embedded across Senior Phase units. It also aligns well with some SQA Awards such as Internet Safety and Mental Health and Wellbeing, which can be integrated into PSE programmes.

Guidance for using the resource

Before undertaking the lessons within this resource, please consult the EIS website for suggestions of professional learning in this area.



www.eis.org.uk/gender/many-good-men



Establishment buy-in and agreement

As with many topics of a sensitive and/or challenging nature, it is important that practitioners liaise with senior management and pastoral staff prior to delivery. School leadership can advise on relevant school procedures for engaging with parents and carers and can advise on how to offer them support to navigate conversations that might arise from the lessons, in the home.

Facilitating safer spaces

The content of the education pack should be approached with sensitivity. It is important to be aware that the topics explored in this resource may be difficult, and that learners and staff may have personal experience of the issues raised.

The resource should only be delivered by staff who feel comfortable and confident to do so.

Some learners may be anxious that they will be asked about their personal experiences. Learners should be informed about what to expect from the sessions and encouraged to speak to a member of staff if they would like further information or if they have concerns. If there is a concern regarding a learner in the class being adversely affected by the content, alternative models of engagement should be explored – for example, offering the activities as an opt-in session, or separate project.

Undertaking these lessons may result in disclosures being made by learners. If staff have concerns about a child or adult, the establishment's child protection or safeguarding procedures should be followed. It may be a good idea to discuss the content with a senior member of staff to identify if any learners may require additional support or follow-up. As outlined above, staff may also want to consider communication with parents regarding the learning material, if relevant and appropriate.

Promoting engagement, establishing trust

It will be essential to establish trust when delivering these lessons.

Social media is very significant in learners' lives, and it is understandable that this may result in some defensiveness or concern in terms of engaging in discussion about online habits and experiences. A non-judgmental approach should be taken,

and clarity around expectations – for example that learners will not have to share their personal experiences – should be set at the start.

Care should be taken not to make assumptions or label learners, for example by invertedly signalling support for the false assumption that all men benefit from misogyny and every individual woman is victimised.

There are many young men and boys who admire online masculinity influencers, for example in relation to their wealth or success. This does not always mean that they agree with the misogynistic attitudes often found within this type of content. Zero Tolerance (2024) found that young men surveyed in Scotland agreed that Andrew Tate is a “motivational speaker” and says positive things about being a man. It is important not to be too direct in challenging, or to ridicule such views, but rather consider ways in which to engage learners in critical thinking and foster empathy for those negatively affected by the rhetoric perpetuated by online influencers (for example, through storytelling).

Depending on the learner population, it may be favourable to create smaller and separate groups and invite learners to choose the group they feel most comfortable with. If splitting groups by gender, care should be taken to make this inclusive of gender diverse learners and avoiding binary separation (for example, by requiring non-binary learners to choose a binary group for ‘girls or boys’). Creating smaller groups and asking all learners to separate themselves into a group can be a good way to foster greater comfort and engagement.

In some cases, especially when the activity is undertaken with a group of learners who are not in an established class, it may be useful to introduce a group agreement. Further detail can be found in Warm-up Activities.

Dealing with difficult conversations

When challenging norms and beliefs, it is natural that strong feelings can emerge, including worry or defensiveness. Inviting greater exploration of these feelings can lead to more transformative change, but doing so should be approached with caution and sensitivity.

Young men and boys may feel defensive in relation to feeling blamed for misogyny or misunderstood in relation to their interests in online men and

masculinity influencers. It is important to not reinforce this narrative when speaking about online misogyny.

“Boys and men are also impacted by harmful gender stereotypes and expectations around masculinity. For example, being made to feel under pressure to be both physically and emotionally strong, to be financially successful, as well as to be heterosexual. Challenging gender stereotypes and addressing gender-based violence is therefore beneficial to people of all genders.” *Equally Safe at School*

It will be important to acknowledge learners’ feelings and make clear that masculinity is not a bad thing in itself and being a man is great! Be clear in the message that gender stereotypes and misogyny harms everyone and undermines our ability to be ourselves.

It will be important to encourage empathy, to invite consideration of how other groups might feel about the topics, for example girls may also find it unsettling to hear about how some boys are behaving online.

The focus on boys’ behaviours may also be pushed back on in relation to prevalence, with learners highlighting that men, for example, are also victims of abuse or harm. Though abuse is never okay, whoever is affected, it is important to be clear on the gendered nature of prevalence. Staff may wish to consider carefully highlighting statistics in this area, for example that the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (2019) found that 0.8% of men (compared with 6.2% of women) in Scotland have experienced at least one type of serious sexual assault since the age of 16.

Though open conversations and sharing of views should be encouraged, it is important that expressions that intend to make others uncomfortable are not tolerated. Refer to the group agreement, where relevant.

Open ended questions that encourage reflection can be used to sensitively challenge views. Questions can also be ‘parked’ if they are not relevant specifically to the activity, but staff should make sure these are returned to and addressed.

Remind learners of the group agreement and purpose of the session to redirect conversations if they become derailed.

Further Online Resources



Being safe online

Care should be taken to inform learners about algorithms – 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.

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

Digilearn.scot section on cyber resilience and internet safety
Digitaldiscourse.scot

Professional learning and further reading

Digital Discourse Initiative – Professional Learning Course

Zero Tolerance - Many Good Men

Movember – Young Men’s Health in a Digital World

Young Women’s Movement Guide to AI

Publications - ISD

Support services

Ensure that signposting to support is accessible to learners taking part. A list of support services is below.

Scottish Women’s Aid Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage 24 Hour Helpline

CEOP Education - Resources and information for 11-18 year olds

CEOP Education - What to do if you’re worried about something online

Childline - Online safety

Young Scot - Internet Safety Resources

Revenge Porn Helpline UK

Rape Crisis Scotland

Stop Hate UK - 24 hour reporting services

Internet Matters - Staying safe online

Whole establishment approaches

Equally Safe at School

Scottish Government Guidance - Whole School Approach to GBV

Education Scotland - Mentors in Violence Programme

Education Scotland – Domestic Abuse in Education resource

EIS - Get it Right for Girls

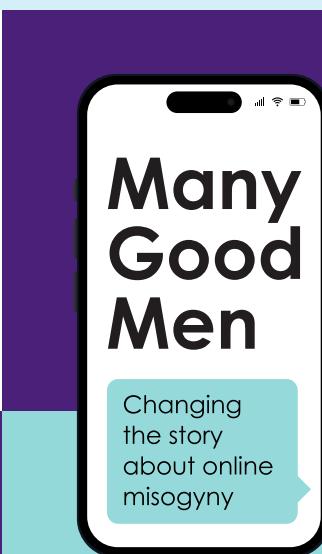


**Every young person
deserves to be safe,
to be themselves,
and to flourish.**



eis

The Educational
Institute of Scotland



www.eis.org.uk/gender/many-good-men

Printed and published by The Educational Institute of Scotland,
46 Moray Place, Edinburgh EH3 6BH, Jan 2026