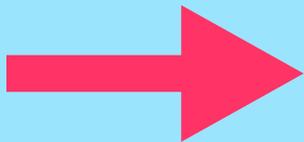


internet  
matters.org

# How to talk about misogyny

Effective ways to  
spread positivity online



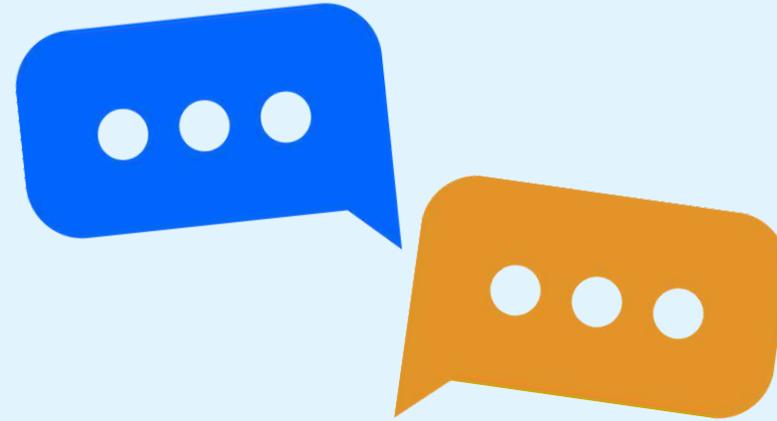
# Jump to...

→ **Talk about it**

→ **Understand the pressure**

→ **Challenge the narrative**

**Talk about it**



**Get there first →**

**Let them tell you what they know →**

**Keep talking about it →**

# Get there first

**If your child asks you about misogyny, pornography or other issues, that is your sign they are ready for that difficult conversation.**

Sometimes, we might feel like they're too young and explain that we'll tell them when they're older.

But if they are curious, they will find other ways to learn.

So, **get there first.**

Ask them what they know and would like to know.

Clear up any confusion.

Talk about how misogyny and hate spreads online.

You'll both feel better for having an open and honest conversation.

# Let them tell you what they know

**Instead of telling children to avoid something or that it's wrong, ask them what they've heard about it.**

If something started on social media or online, your child will likely already know a lot about it. So, ask them about it.

What can they tell you? Why is it in the news? Have they ever seen any of the content? What do they think about it all?



# Let them tell you what they know

**The conversation then becomes a learning moment for both of you.**

They get to talk through the issue, and they might teach you a little bit too.

It can also help guide them on what they can do. When they saw the misogyny, did they report it? Why or why not? Do they know how?

Discuss the right steps for your child to help them take action and stay safe from harms.

# Keep talking about it

**Slow and steady wins the race when it comes to a topic like online misogyny.**

When something comes up in the news or at your child's school, it is natural to feel like you need to tackle it right away.

However, this might lead to a quick conversation once without any follow up.

So, take your time and keep

talking about it.

Talking while you're driving in the car or during an advert break can help you both feel at ease.

Then, give each other time to reflect and talk again, always giving your child time to form and voice their thoughts.

# Get support

[Return to menu](#)

Get more information about talking to your child about different online issues to help keep them safe.

[Conversation starters to understand your child's digital life](#)

[Tackling online extremism and hate speech](#)

[Cyberbullying conversation starter guide](#)



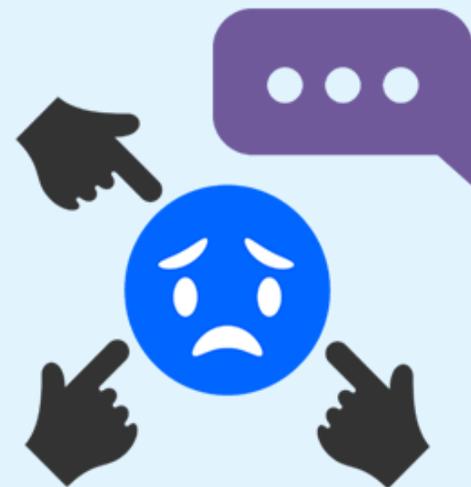
[\*\*Next section\*\*](#)

# Understand the pressure

How do their friends influence →  
their actions?

Work together to set boundaries →

Show them how to →  
get support



# How do their friends influence their actions?

**Peer pressure may influence uncharacteristic behaviour because the alternative could be losing a friend.**

Children often feel pressure from friends and those they see online to act a certain way or believe certain things. Even if they spread online hate against women or girls, they might not actually see themselves as a misogynist.

Discuss with them the pressures they feel from their friends.

What would happen if they stepped up and called a friend out? Are there other people they'd like to be friends with? Are there



opportunities for other friendship groups to form? How far would their friend have to go for your child to no longer want their friendship?

Talking about these pressures can help them feel heard.

It may also get them to understand their own actions and how they're influenced. This may be something they do without even thinking about it.

# Work together to set boundaries



**Talk about the limits they set for themselves when it comes to the influence others have on their actions.**

It can be very difficult for young people to stand up to their friends when they do something wrong.

So, work with your child to help them understand which feelings tell them that it's time to step away.

For example, encourage your child to follow their 'gut feeling'. If they feel uneasy, worried or scared, that's their brain telling them it's time to seek out help.

Empower them to step away and seek out healthy and positive friendships with others.

# Show them how to get support

**Help your child understand where they can go for help when they need it to empower them to take this step.**

While most parents would love their child to come to them when they need help or are worried, many children do not. They might feel scared that they will get in trouble or embarrassed.

So, help them manage this

fear by showing them the alternatives.

Helplines like Childline and The Mix, or forums like Ditch the Label are great examples in addition to school staff and counsellors.

# Get support

[Return to menu](#)

Learn more about peer pressure and the different types of support your child can seek out when they need it.

[Encourage children to report cyberbullying among friends](#)

[Stop, Speak, Support code](#)

[Resources to find support](#)



**Next section**

# Challenge the narrative

**What is the narrative? →**

**Ask children to explain their →  
beliefs**

**Choose questions to get them →  
thinking**



# What is the narrative?

**'The narrative' refers to the story and beliefs that influencers and online communities share to spread misogyny online.**

When a person or group of people want a message to spread, they prepare their followers in different ways.

Those who spread hate or prejudice about women and girls online prepare their followers for the pushback from others who don't believe the same things.

They tell their followers that people will be angry with them for sharing their views about women or girls, or that people will challenge their beliefs.

So, when we are angry and tell followers they are wrong, we actually support the narrative as true.

# Ask children to explain their beliefs

**Instead of getting angry and telling a child or young person they are wrong, ask them to explain it all.**

Admittedly, this can be difficult to do if you don't share the same beliefs, but remaining calm and positive are so important.

If your child doesn't receive the challenges that they were promised by those

spreading misogyny, they are already introduced to the idea that the influencer or community isn't right about everything.

Ask them to explain what their beliefs are and why they think they're important.

# Choose questions to get them thinking



**Critical thinking is all about taking a deep dive into a topic to clarify understanding. This can help children explore new ideas and reach new conclusions without judgement.**

When it comes to tackling misogyny, approach the conversation with an open mind and positivity.

Becoming angry, turning a conversation into an interrogation or making assumptions can lead to

hot tempers and little progress.

A calm, constructive conversation is likely to result in more change than one that tells them they are wrong.

**Here are some questions to help promote critical thinking about misogynistic beliefs:**

What do you find interesting about what the influencer/community says?

What personal experiences does the influencer have to support their beliefs? What experiences do you have?

What do the girls at school think about all of this? Have you spoken to them about it?

What do the older or younger kids say about it all? Do they have similar or different beliefs?

Where do you see your beliefs leading you in the next few years?

Why do you think people are talking so much about it?

Can you think of how the issue is important to those who share your beliefs? What about those who don't?

In the communities or through the influencers you follow who share your beliefs, are there any parts you don't agree with? Why or why not?

What do a lot of people on both sides of the issue miss?

Tell me about the influencer or communities you follow most who share these beliefs. Where do they come from? How you similar to them? How are you different?

Are there any ways to approach the issue to help people on both sides reach a positive solution for all?

# Get support

[Return to menu](#)

Find resources to encourage critical thinking about important issues like online hate and misogyny.

[How can I help my child to think critically?](#)

[How can I help my child think critically about the social media influencers they follow?](#)

[Thinking critically on social media](#)

[Online Critical Thinking Guide](#)

**Finish**