iNEQE SAFEGUARDING GROUP
SAFER SCHOOLS

DECODING DIGITAL

A Guide for Decoding Acronyms, Slang and Emojis

Does it feel like the children and young people in your care are speaking a different language sometimes? As technology evolves, the online world allows them to create and share new slang, acronyms and emojis to communicate with each other. Think of it as their own secret code!

They can change frequently, as the online world and trends progress rapidly. Additionally, although there are explanations for certain words, phrases and emojis, it also depends on situational context and the intention of the user.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

5 min ago

Context is Key

Language can have various meanings and is not always literal or a cause for concern.

8 hours ago

Intention Matters

Seek to understand what the child or young person wanted to achieve from using the language. Did they intentionally use harmful language, or did they use it because it's popular to do so?

3 days ago

Have Open Conversations

If you're unsure about what is going on from their language, ask them! Talking about their life, both online and offline, should be an ongoing conversation that addresses their safety and wellbeing without invading their privacy.

RED FLAGS

Throughout this guide, we will highlight any words, phrases or emojis that might raise concerns with a red flag. They may be associated with harmful content or behaviours such as bullying, grooming or adoption of harmful ideologies.

Acronyms

An acronym is an abbreviation of a word or phrase and is often used by young people for speed and efficiency when messaging each other online. However, they also use them for other reasons, such as humour, following a trend or as an 'in-group' code that is personal to their friendships.

121: Talk in private message

AF: As f**k (e.g. cool AF)

ASL?: Age, Sex, Location?

BFF: Best friends forever

BRB: Be right back

DM: Direct message

DTF: Down to f**k

FB: Facebook

FU: F**k you

FWB: Friend with benefits (casual partner)

GOAT: Greatest Of All Time

GTFO: Get the f*** out

GTG/G2G: Got to go

IDC: I don't care

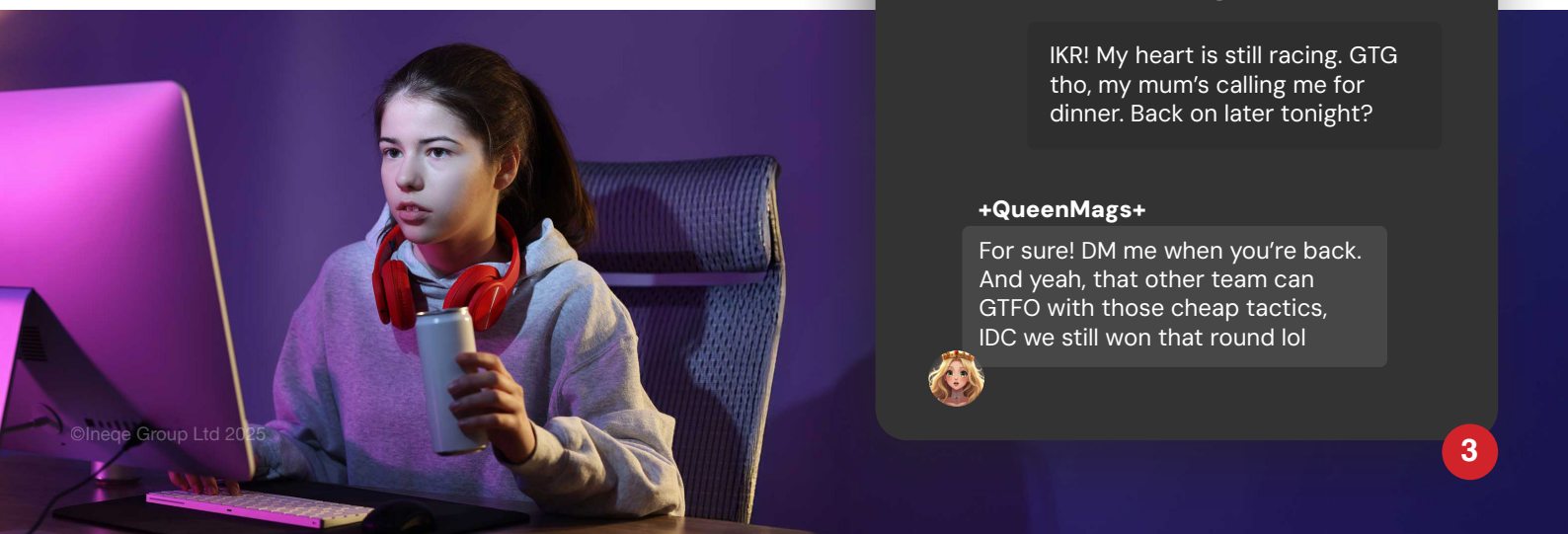
IDEK: I don't even know

IKR: I know, right?

🚩 A groomer may use this to lead a child away from a public online space to groom them via private messaging.

🚩 A groomer may use this to gather personal information from a child to exploit them.

🚩 This indicates a sexual relationship with another person.



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ILY:	I love you
IMO:	In my opinion
IRL:	In Real Life (Used online to refer to offline)
JK:	Just kidding
KMS:	Kill myself (Mostly used to be overdramatic and is not always literal)
KMT:	Kissing my teeth (Used as a sign of disrespect/disapproval)
KYS:	Kill yourself (Mostly used to be overdramatic and is not always literal)
LMAO:	Laughing my a** off
LOL:	Laughing out loud
LOML:	Love of my life
NGL:	Not going to lie
NP:	No problem
NSFW:	Not safe for work
OMW:	On my way
PM:	Private Message
POV:	Point of view
RN:	Right Now
RU18:	Are you 18?
SMH:	Shaking my head, can also be 'so much hate'
STFU:	Shut the f**k up
SWYP:	So, what's your problem?
TBF:	To be fair
TBH:	To be honest
TF:	The f**k?
TTYL:	Talk to you later
WTF:	What the f***
WTH:	What the hell
WUA:	What you at?
WYD:	What you doing?

Indicates content that is intended for an 18+ audience.

A groomer may use this to find out the age of a user that they suspect is a child.

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Words and Phrases

67 / Six Seven A nonsensical expression used mainly in response to someone saying the numbers six or seven, often said alongside a 'juggling' hand gesture. It originates from a rap song that gained popularity through viral videos.

Aura Used to compliment someone's ability or power.
"He has unlimited aura."

Ate That To do something successfully or with flair.
"I saw your pics on insta, you ate that!"

Basic Someone, or something, that is unoriginal and follows trends (usually an insult).
"She is so basic"

Bet Okay, in agreement with something.
"You want me to come over? Bet."

Body Count The amount of people someone has slept with.
"I'd never go out with her, her body count is too high."

Butters Unattractive or ugly.
"She is so butters."

Cap Lying or faking.
"They are capping."

Caught in 4K Someone caught doing something with evidence that can't be disputed.
"He said he didn't speak to her but she sent me screenshots – caught in 4K!"

Cheugy A term used to describe something 'basic', or trying too hard.
"I can't believe she's still wearing skinny jeans, that's so cheugy."

Clout Refers to fame or popularity and usually relates to social media – if someone 'has clout' or is 'chasing clout', they have (or are seeking) a lot of followers and likes.
"He's just doing it for the clout."

Cringe Feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable.
"I can't watch that video, it makes me cringe."

Delulu Short for 'delusional'.
"I might be delulu, but I think he likes me."

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Dub	Short for 'W', meaning 'win' or 'winner'. Often used in the context of gaming. *"We took the dub on that game earlier."*
Extra	Attention grabbing or dramatic. *"She's so extra, she's always dressed up."*
Face Card	Someone is so facially beautiful that they can get anything they want, like an unlimited credit card. *"Her face card never declines."*
Fam	Very good friend, they are almost like family.
Fanum Tax	Refers to stealing food from a friend. Originates from a streamer (named Fanum) 'taxing' his friends by taking their food.
Finsta	Stands for 'fake Instagram', but refers to an Instagram account a user creates to share less polished photos of themselves to a smaller and selective group of close friends. This is usually an additional profile to a user's main, 'insta-ready' profile.
Fire	Amazing or great. *"That song is fire."*
Fresh	Used to describe something good or cool. *"Those trainers are fresh."*
Gyat(t)	An expression used to express shock, usually in reaction to an attractive girl with a curvy figure. You might see young boys commenting *"gyatt"* on a female celebrity's Instagram post.
Hawk Tuah	An imitation of a spitting noise, referring to sexual acts. Originates from a viral video and is often used in a nonsensical way to be funny.
Highkey/ Lowkey	Highkey means that something is obvious, and lowkey means the opposite. *"I lowkey want to go to the party"* *"I highkey want to go to the party"*
Insta	Instagram

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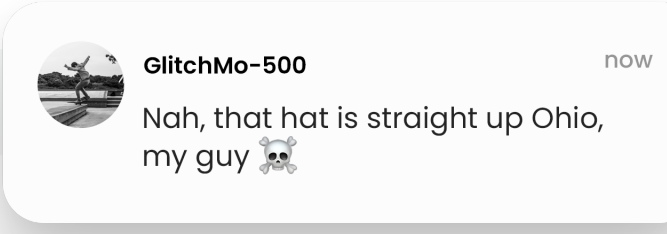
Mewing	A technique used to show definition on your jawline. Often done in online videos to be funny and doesn't have any significant meaning.
Mid	Describes something average or low quality. Often used to insult someone's looks. *"Everyone thinks that she's good looking but she's so mid."*
No Cap	To indicate truth and that you're not exaggerating. *"I really did that – no cap!"*
Ofc	Of course
Ohio	Used to describe something strange. *"The new teacher is so Ohio."*
Opp	Short for 'opponent'. *"He's an opp, for real."*
Pic	Picture
Rizz	Short for 'charisma'. *"He has so much rizz, he can get any girl he wants."*
Say less	Agreement or understanding. *"Pizza for dinner tonight? Say less."*



Shading	Showing subtle dislike for someone. *"She's throwing shade at them."*
Ship	To support a romantic relationship. *"I really ship them."*
Sick	Means the opposite of its original meaning (positive/good/amazing).
Sigma	A man who is popular and successful, but follows their own rules. Can also mean *"cool"* or *"the best"*. *"Did you see that Josh skipped class? He's such a sigma."* It can also be used as a nonsensical word with no meaning. *"What the sigma?"*
Skibidi	A nonsensical word that has no inherent meaning, but can be used to mean 'cool', 'bad' or 'dumb'.
Slay	To do something amazing or look good. *"She's slaying so hard today!"*
Snap	Snapchat

He doesn't care about being popular, just does his own thing and succeeds.

Total sigma vibes.

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Sus	Suspicious – it originates from the game 'Among Us'. *"They were acting so sus."*
Tea	Interesting gossip. *"Give me the tea!"*
Thot	That 'hoe' over there – often derogatory.
Tweaking	Someone is delusional or saying insane things. *"Nah, he's tweaking for sure."*
Unc	Short for 'uncle', referring to an older, male friend or to point out that someone is acting in a way that is out of place for their age. *"He's way too old to be doing that, it's giving unc behaviour."*
W/L	'W' stands for 'win' and 'L' stand for 'loss'. Would usually be phrased as 'taking a W' or 'taking an L'. *"We took the W."*
Woke	When someone is aware of social issues. Can be used as an insult. *"They get offended by everything, they're so woke."*

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Emojis

🥲	Embarrassment, social anxiety, or low mood.
🫣	Embarrassment or watching something you shouldn't.
🍑 🕳️	A**hole
✍️	Pretending to quote something or indicating you find something useful and you're taking notes. Can be used sarcastically.
🍆 / 🍌	Penis
🥴	Used to express drunkenness, sexual arousal, or a grimace.
🍑	Butt
🥵	Means 'hot' in a sexual sense. A young person might comment this on their crush's Instagram selfie, for example.
🚚	'Dump truck', which refers to a large and/or shapely bottom.
🌮 / 🐱	Vagina
🚩	Indicates toxic behaviour, usually in a relationship.
🐍	Someone being fake, two-faced or 'snakey'.
🙃	Used to express annoyance about something.
🤡	Used when getting caught in a mistake or when feeling like a fraud or a 'clown'.
👻	Indicates being 'ghosted' (dumped with no explanation).
🧢	Symbolizes a lie, which could also be called a 'cap'.

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👉👈	Shy or nervous (usually in the context of flirting).
🧠	Oral sex
💦	Ejaculation
👅	May indicate sexual activity, especially oral sex.
⌛	Used when someone has an ‘hourglass’ body shape.
🥶	Often used in response to a snarky or savage comment, as in ‘that was cold’.
😈	To express sexual desire. Referring to being ‘horny’, used as the emoji has horns and a menacing expression.
👁️👄👁️	A response that means, ‘it is what it is’.
🧚✨	Can be used in social media comments to denote a sarcastic, mean-spirited tone.
🌿	Marijuana
🔌	Refers to a ‘plug’ (a drug dealer)
🤤	Desiring someone sexually
🍒	Breasts
🍤	Represents nudes, which are often called ‘noods’ to bypass social media content filters.
💳	Often used on TikTok to express wanting something portrayed in the video, meaning ‘take my money’.
💯	A stamp of approval - ‘I agree’.
🔨	Used to refer to sexual activity.
🌶️	Indicates ‘spiciness’, referring to inappropriate or sexual content. If someone has this emoji in their social media bio, it usually means they make sexual adult content, such as an OnlyFans creator.
🌽	Used in place of the word ‘porn’ (as it rhymes with ‘corn’) to get around social media content filters .
🍇	Used in place of the word ‘rape’ (as it rhymes with ‘grape’) to get around social media content filters.
👻	Snapchat
💿	Discord

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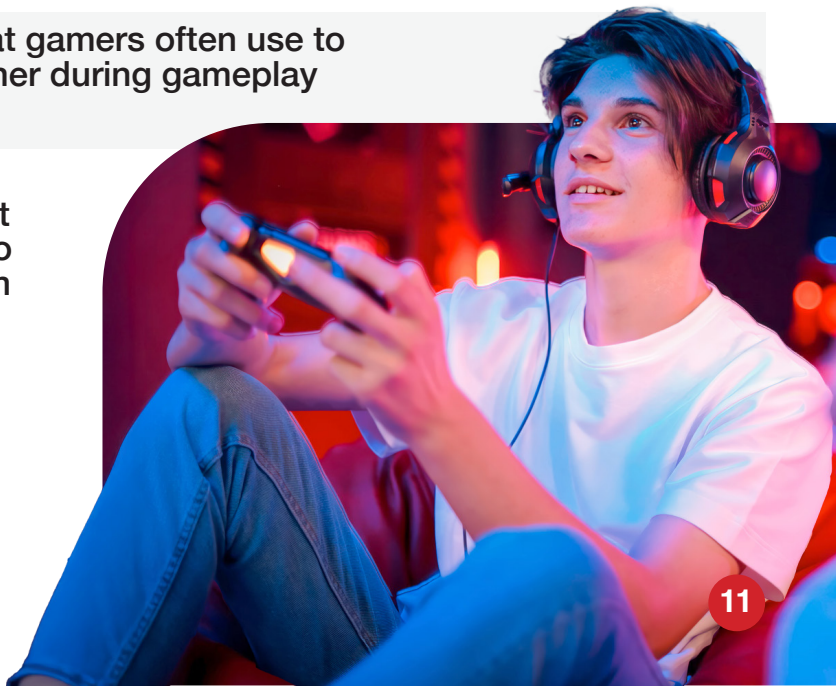
Gaming

Acronyms, Words and Phrases related to Gaming

Gaming is one of the most popular activities for children and young people and they can spend a lot of their free time within this world. Naturally, they will pick up words and phrases related to gaming, so we have put some together to help you gain some insight into a world that can hold significant importance to many children and young people.

AFK	Away from Keyboard.
Avatar	The character that a player chooses to represent them during gameplay. These can be customisable, with props, clothes and more.
Boss	A final enemy that a player must defeat at the end of a level. They are usually the strongest enemy in that level.
Bug	An error in a game's programming or design.
Camping	When a player stays in one spot to observe and attack other players without being seen.
COD	Short for 'Call of Duty'.
Combo	A combination of attack moves in a fighting game, during which an opponent is helpless to defend themselves.
Console	The device specific to linking gameplay to an outer screen, such as an Xbox, PlayStation or Nintendo Switch.
Cooldown	The minimum length of time that a player needs to wait after using an ability before they can use it again.
Crafting	Making virtual items in-game. For example, collecting iron and sticks to make a pickaxe in Minecraft.
Discord	A social media platform that gamers often use to communicate with each other during gameplay through text or voice chat.
DLC	Short for 'downloadable content'. Additional content created for a released video game which can range from item upgrades, new levels and even entire game expansions.



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Easter Egg	A hidden feature or item in a video game. If you're playing a video game and come across an easter egg, you have found something that the developers hid as a bonus. Usually, they will feature an item that's a nod at another game or popular topic.
Forfeit	Giving up or conceding a game or match.
FPS	Short for 'first person shooter'. These games involve shooting a gun or weapon from a first person's perspective.
Gameplay	Describes the player's experience of a game.
Gamertag	The username or nickname of a player.
GG	Short for 'good game'. Said after an online game by people whether they win or lose.
Graphic Content Filter	A setting that controls whether the game displays graphic violence.
Inventory	A menu or area of the screen where items collected by the player during the game are stored. This allows the player to retrieve any item and use it as an instant effect.
Killstreak	The total number of consecutive kills a playing racks up in a short amount of time.
Lag	When there's a delay between a player's actions and their in-game activity.
Lobby	A loading room where players await the start of a game. Here, they can usually talk to other players, change game settings and look at stats from their last game.
Loot box	In-game 'treasure chests' that can be purchased or won. They contain an unknown assortment of items and modifications that players can use in-game.
Matchmaking	The process of how games assign players into teams or against each other. This usually considers skill level and ranking.
MMORPG	Stands for 'Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games'. Role-playing games where participants assume the roles of fictional characters and create or follow stories. These are usually sci-fi or fantasy games, like World of Warcraft, that allow players to interact with large numbers of other players.

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MnK	'Mouse and Keyboard'.
Mod	Short for 'modification'. This refers to the process of changing an aspect or aspects of a game, such as how it looks or how it behaves. This can range from small tweaks to full overhauls of in-game content. Games that players often 'mod' are Minecraft and The Sims.
Multiplatform	A game that allows multiplayer gameplay across different devices.
Multiplayer	A game that multiple people can play at one time. Players may be able to play on the same team or against each other, depending on the game.
Noob	A 'newbie', or someone who is new to a particular game. Also: Noobie, Newb.
NPC	Stands for 'non-playable character'. This can be main characters in a game or extras in the background of the game.
OP	Stands for 'overpowered', usually referencing to an in-game character or weapon with strong fighting characteristics that gives an unfair advantage.
Open World	A type of video game where the character can roam freely around an environment. Examples include Skyrim, World of Warcraft, and Grand Theft Auto.
Patch	An update to a game where bugs are fixed, characters are balanced, and/or content is added.
PWN	To 'own' someone in a game, or render them helpless. The term was coined by accident – a typo, as 'p' is beside 'o' on the keyboard.
PVE	Stands for 'Player Versus Environment'. The videogame is played against the computer.
PVP	Stands for 'Player Versus Player'. The videogame is played against another human being.
Rage Quit	The act of quitting a game mid-progress instead of waiting for the game to end.
Respawn	When a character in a game reappears after being killed.
RPG	'Role-playing game'. This is when the player assumes the role of a fictional character in a fictional setting and makes choices that impact the character's journey.

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Season Pass or Battle Pass	A pass that provides additional content for a game, such as cosmetics, weapons or characters. Once the pass is bought, the items are usually earned through a tiered system, rewarding the player with the in-game items for playing the game and earning experience points or completing challenges.
Skins	In-game cosmetics that impact the appearance of the player's avatar or items.
Speedrun	When a player plays a game with the intent of finishing it either as quickly as possible or as fully completed as possible.
Streamer	A person who live streams or broadcasts themselves playing a game on a platform such as Twitch or Discord.
Streaming or 'live streaming'	A live broadcast of a gamer playing a game online, typically through a platform like Twitch.
Twitch	The most popular streaming platform for gamers, including amateurs and pro-gamers.
Walkthrough	A step-by-step guide on how to play the game, usually via a YouTube video.
XP	Stands for 'experience points'. These are accumulated as you progress through a game. Hitting milestone levels of XP usually sees your character level up and gain new abilities or weapons.

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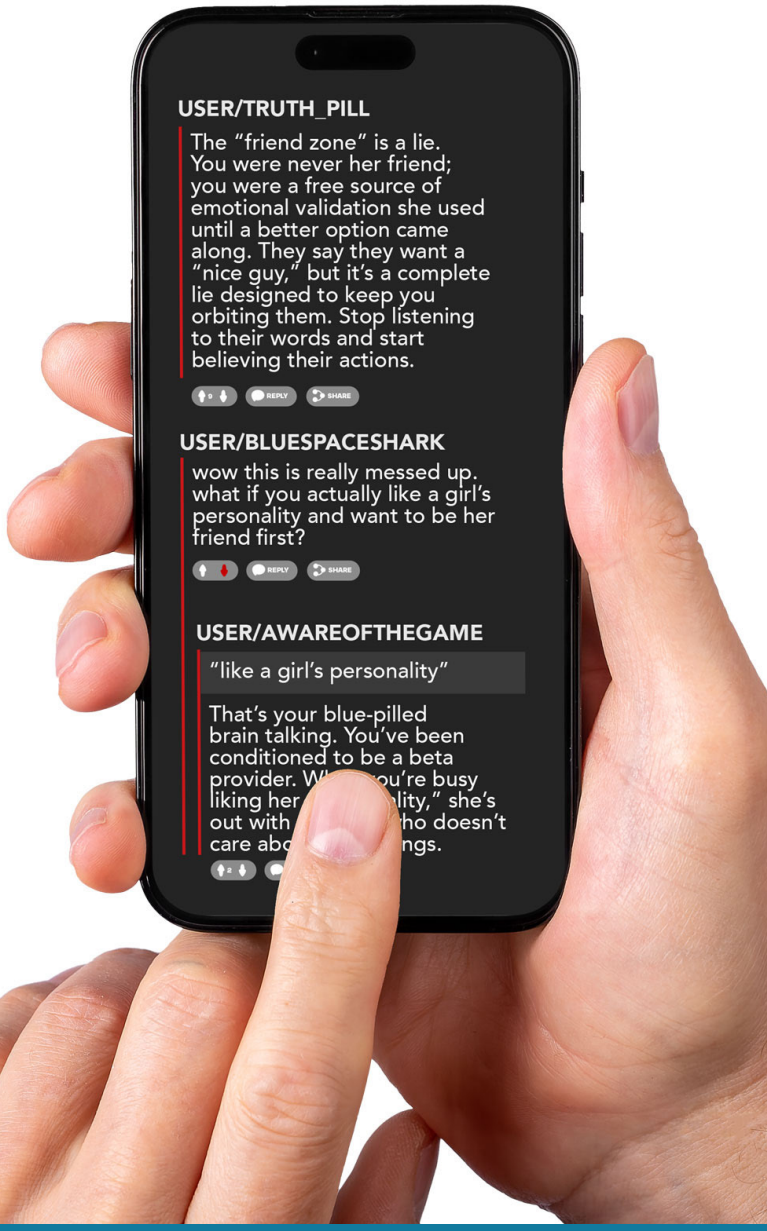
Incel Culture

Words, Phrases and Emojis Related to Incel Culture

Incel, short for 'involuntary celibate', is a member of an extremist online subculture of men who see themselves as romantically and sexually excluded from society and blame women for this. They also hold hostility for men who are successful with women. They often express their resentment through misogynistic language and sometimes even violence.

This extremist online community target young boys who are vulnerable and seek to radicalise them by validating their feelings of victimhood that are often related to failures of romantic relationships with women.

It is important to note that phrases and 'hidden meaning' emojis don't radicalise young people, but they enable harmful ideologies to be shared without detection from parents and carers. Individuals who push these harmful ideologies can use code phrases and emojis to bypass community guidelines on online platforms to target young people.



CONTEXT IS KEY!

Language always depends on context and does not always indicate the most negative meaning, so it is important to have regular, open conversations with the young people in your care if you suspect they are being radicalised or are displaying negative attitudes that don't reflect their own beliefs.

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Female Hypergamy	A concept believed by incels that women have too much freedom to choose their sexual partners and use this to advance their status within society by 'marrying up'. Incels believe that intelligent men should instead select sexual partners for women, rather than women deciding for themselves.
Sexual Marketplace	An imagined idea that everyone has a 'sexual market value' (SMV) dependent on their attractiveness. They trade on this value to have relationships with those who have a similar SMV. Incels believe they have a low SMV and that the market is 'rigged' against them.
Chad	An idealised version of a man who is physically attractive and successful with women.
Stacy	An idealised version of a woman is physically attractive and sought after by men. The female equivalent to a 'Chad'.
Becky	An average female.
Brad	An average male.
Femoid or Fembot	Derogatory terms for women, often used in incel communities to dehumanise women.
Alphas	Elite, confident men who are 'leaders' and fit the traditional standards of masculinity.
Betas	Weak, submissive men who do not fit the traditional standards of masculinity.
MGTOW	'Men Go Their Own Way'. This is a movement that promotes the idea that men should separate themselves from traditional relationships with women to prioritise their own independence. Followers of this movement believe that women only seek to manipulate and exploit men for their own benefit.
AWALT	'All Women Are Like This'. The belief that all women are empty of any individuality and possess the same negative traits such as being insincere, selfish, exploitative of men and are driven by emotion instead of rationality. It also seeks to emphasise the claim that men are everything a woman isn't - moral, rational, intelligent and loyal.
Sub5s	A 'rebrand' name for incels to avoid detection on social media platforms, indicating that they rank a 5 or below on the 'PSL scale' and are 'objectively unattractive'. The most highly ranked men are known as 'PSL gods', and above average men are known as 'chads'.
PSL Scale	A scale used to rate men from 1 to 8 according to attractiveness, reinforcing the incel belief that society is organised by a looks-based hierarchy. The letters 'PSL' are an acronym for the first letter of three incel sites.

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Looksmaxxing	Aimed primarily at young boys, it is the process of maximising your own physical attractiveness and ranges from going to the gym to extreme body transformations using harmful methods. It originates from incel community message boards where users would post a photo of themselves and ask other users how they can 'looksmax' to be the most attractive version of themselves.
Ascend	When an incel moves on from the community to be in a relationship.
ER	Referring to Elliot Rodger, a man who carried out several mass shootings with the intent of 'punishing women' and is thought of as a 'god' and 'original incel' in the community. Members of the incel community might say they are 'going ER' which indicates a dangerous escalation in mindset and possible violent actions.
🚩	Although many aspects of incel culture are worrying, interest or deep knowledge of previous violent attacks carried out by incels is a sign that a child or young person may be in the process of being radicalised or seeking to replicate an attack.
💊	Awakening to the 'truth' about gender roles, commonly referenced in the manosphere. This idea originated in the movie 'The Matrix' - by taking the red pill, you 'wake up' to a reality.
💣	Represents an 'exploding red pill', indicating someone identifying as an incel.
💯	Associated with the '80/20 rule', a belief that 80% of women are attracted to only 20% of men. This often is a justification that incels will use for their behaviour, implying that they are destined from birth to not be successful with women due to their biological traits that they can't change. Keep in mind that there are other common uses for this emoji and it doesn't always indicate interest in incel ideologies.
🫘	Used to signify incel identity, possibly linked to certain online memes.

❤️	Love or deep romantic feelings.
💜	Sexual desire or 'horny' intentions.
💛	Interest and flirtation.
💗	Emotional interest without sexual intent.
🧡	For reassurance and comfort.

Heart emojis are most often used **without any coded meaning**, so keep this in mind if you see a child in your care using them.

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