SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE

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In this issue:

- The hidden meaning behind emojis
- 'Incel Culture'

UNDERSTANDING EMOJIS

What do these emojis really mean?

Emoji	Meaning
🍑 🍆	Body parts, often sexual innuendo
💦	Sexual references
🔌	'Plug' or drug dealer
🥶	Reference to being on drugs or emotionally numb
🚗 📦	Delivery, sometimes drugs
😈	Mischief or risky behaviour
🧃	Lean or drug-laced drinks
💊 🔴	"Red Pill" ideology-part of online misogynistic group
💣	Drop the truth-sometimes linked to extremist or aggressive views
🔵	Used to mock people who haven't woken up to Red Pill views
💯	Refers to the belief that 80% of women are only attracted to 20% of men - used to justify misogynistic beliefs

⚠ NOTE: THESE SYMBOLS ARE NOT INHERENTLY HARMFUL, BUT CONTEXT IS KEY. WHEN USED TOGETHER OR IN SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES, THEY CAN REFLECT EXPOSURE TO TOXIC OR EXTREMIST ONLINE CONTENT.
THE SYMBOLS MAY ALSO HAVE DIFFERENT MEANINGS DEPENDING ON AREA AND AGE OF CHILDREN.

In today's digital age, emojis have become a universal language, used across texts, social media and messaging apps. But did you know that some emojis don't always mean what they seem to mean?

With the recent release of Netflix's Adolescence, a mini-series exploring the digital lives of teenagers, the use of emojis in coded and sometimes concerning ways has been pushed into the spotlight. The series highlights how teens often communicate in ways that fly under the radar of adults, using innocent-looking symbols to convey deeper, and occasionally darker, meanings.

While most emojis are harmless and fun, a growing number of them are being used to communicate hidden messages—sometimes these are linked to bullying, inappropriate content or even illegal activity, such as drugs. That's why it's essential for parents to understand the double meanings behind some of these seemingly innocent icons.

Here are a few simple steps to support your child:

✅ **Start conversations:** ask your child about how they use emojis and what they mean to them.

✅ **Stay informed:** keep up with common digital slang and social trends.

✅ **Check in regularly:** know what platforms your child uses and how they interact online.

✅ **Create a safe space:** encourage your child to talk to you if they see or hear something concerning.

✅ **Use monitoring tools where appropriate:** but always use these alongside open communication.

If you are worried about the emojis your child is using or their online activity, speak to our safeguarding team. We're here to support you with guidance, resources and a listening ear.

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

Understanding and protecting your child from 'incel culture' online

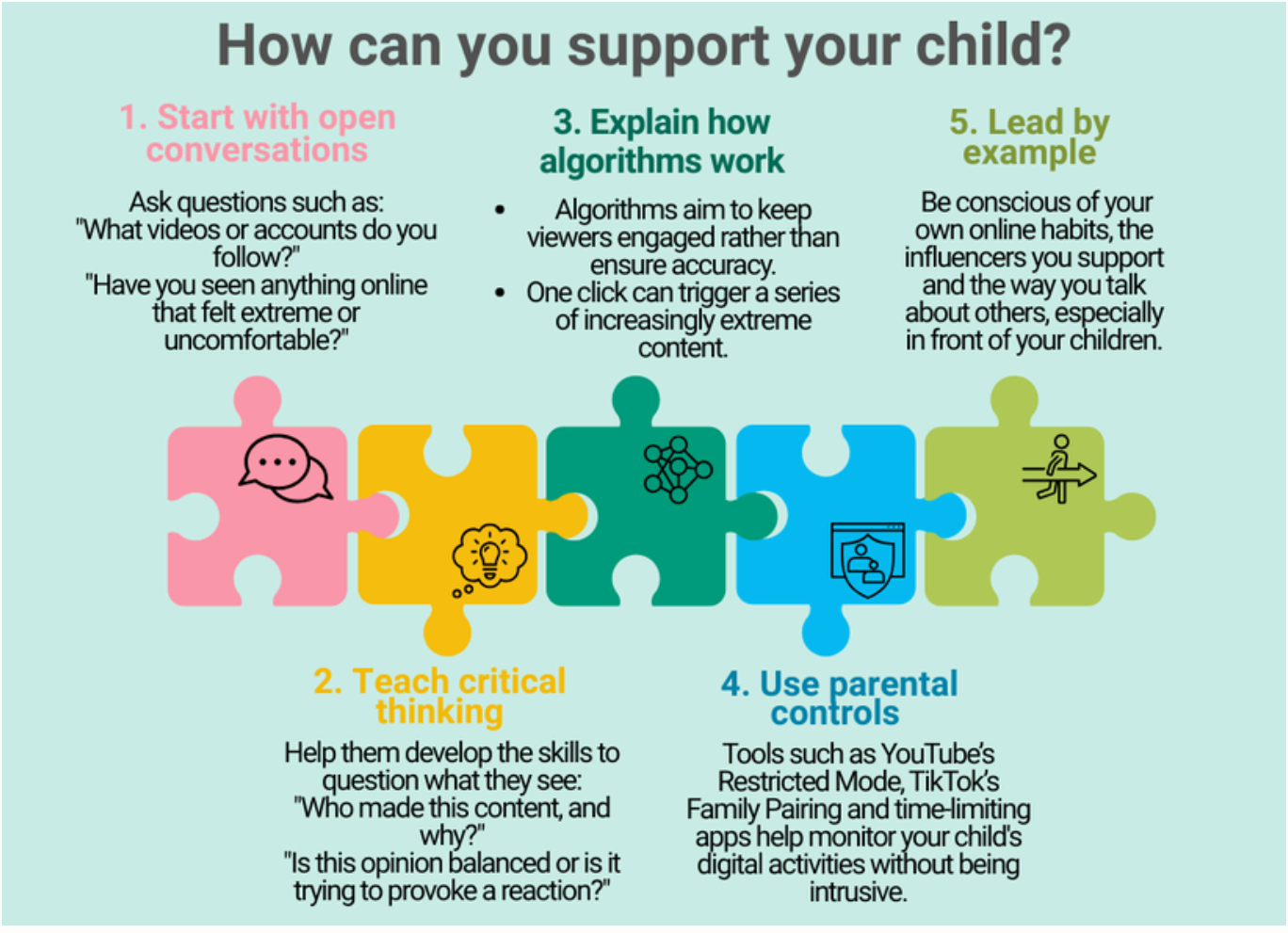
In today's fast-paced digital world, children and young people are exposed to a wide range of ideas, communities and influencers online. While many of these can be positive, informative and empowering, others can be harmful, manipulative and rooted in toxic ideologies. One such concerning trend is *'incel culture.'*

'Incel' stands for 'involuntary celibate.' It refers to an online community, made up mostly of men, who express extreme resentment, frustration or hatred toward women, as well as towards other men they perceive as more successful, socially or romantically.

Over time, this culture has grown to include misogynistic content, glorification of violence and deeply harmful worldviews. Some of its narratives promote hopelessness, anti-social behaviour and, in rare but worrying cases, extremist ideologies.

How might your child encounter this online?

'Incel' content can appear in many forms and platforms:

- **Social media platforms** like TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and Reddit.
- **Gaming communities** including Discord servers and Twitch.
- **'Advice' or 'self-improvement'** videos that begin with seemingly harmless content about fitness, dating or confidence, but slowly introduce harmful narratives.
- **Algorithm-driven suggestions** — once a user interacts with a few videos or posts, platforms may begin to recommend similar or more extreme content.

This can create what's called a 'content spiral', where the algorithm shows more and more intense material, pushing users deeper into a particular worldview, often without them even realising.