

How to talk to your children about Andrew Tate and online misogyny

Andrew Tate is behind bars and banned from TikTok but he still has plenty of supporters — including children. Here's how to talk to yours about the world's most infamous misogynist

“My teenager worships him. I feel I have failed as a parent.”

Lucy* has been arguing with her son for weeks about Andrew Tate, the 36-year-old cigar-puffing, kickboxing social media influencer with a penchant for sleek supercars and boasting about violence against women.

She's not alone in her despair. Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, as well as private WhatsApp group chats, are teeming with parents horrified by how Tate — who claims rape survivors must “bear responsibility” for their attacks — has become a hero to their children.

Tate is currently in police custody in Romania on charges of organised crime, human trafficking and rape. But before this registers as a victory for anyone repulsed by his claims that women are the property of men or soundbites such as “bang out the machete, boom in her face and grip her by the neck... Shut up bitch”, consider that Tate has supporters. Plenty of them.

And they're not just angry incels (involuntarily celibate men) who still live in the box rooms of their mother's houses with only their laptops for company. Children — including teenage girls — are backing Tate.

To put his influence into context, in July 2022 there were more Google searches for Tate, who was raised on a Luton council estate, than for Donald Trump or Kim Kardashian. Before he was banned from TikTok (he is also excluded from Facebook, YouTube and Instagram) his videos had racked up over 11 billion views.

One anonymous woman was shocked to discover her 13-year-old cousin, a boy, was not repulsed by Tate or his content. “He basically thought that people were saying [Tate] was worse than he was and that he was interested in his cars and travel. I asked him if he thought his views about women were right and he replied ‘obviously not, but he wasn't that bad...’ I asked what the boys at his grammar school thought of [Tate], to which he replied, ‘The same as me’.”

Another said Tate had had a “profound effect on my 13-year-old and his friends”, which makes her feel both angry and guilty. She details how her son poses like Tate in photos and has told her he doesn't believe that the influencer's recent arrest was real.

Stories like this might seem shocking but they are common and demonstrate just how successfully social media and its algorithms can promote and normalise hateful, controversial and divisive narratives. It can leave parents or carers feeling totally powerless.

Yet there are plenty of ways to talk to and educate children not only on Andrew Tate, but also about both the dark side of social media and misogyny in general

Here's how...

Watch what they're watching

Before you address the problem, you must grasp the nettle by going online to see exactly what your kids see. It's likely to be a shock but that's kind of the point. "The key thing to do is treat the online world as you would do any world your children inhabit," says Charlotte Aynsley, a safeguarding expert with a focus on keeping children safe online. "Parents have a responsibility to engage with the environment and understand it better. You need to risk assess it like you would a swimming pool. We need to deploy that logic in the online context."

Listen and ask questions

Be prepared to listen, even if all you want to do is lecture. Ask your children what they know about Tate. If they like him, ask them why. Ask them how he makes them feel. When they respond, try to suspend judgement – interrupting or scoffing is a non-starter. This is a view shared by actor Angus Castle-Doughty, who plays a misogynist incel in *Hollyoaks* and who prepared for the role by undertaking extensive research into the dark world his character inhabits. He has been particularly struck by how online misogynists make boys feel seen and heard. "Some boys feel they are being heard for the first time," he says. "The biggest take-aways from my storyline are [to think about] the way we talk to boys and how lonely some boys are. The first thing to do is listen to them, rather than talk at them. Then you'll get to the emotion behind the thing they are saying. Otherwise you are going 'what you've said is bad and here's why' and it doesn't change anything because [your son] will still feel scared and alone."

Pick the right moment

Fraser Halliwell, head teacher at Radnor House Sevenoaks, a day school for girls and boys aged from two to 18 years old, is working hard to address antisocial online influence, hate speech and prejudice via conversation in PSHE lessons or smaller discussions in tutor groups. "You can't tackle these issues in a lecture," he says. "It's a coaching conversation more than anything else." Halliwell advises parents to carefully pick their moments to discuss such complex issues as Andrew Tate's influence. "Have the conversation in a considered manner – on a walk or sitting down together. Never try to do it quickly or squeeze it in."

Ask the school for help

Halliwell believes that from very early on in a child's life parents should work to create a culture within the family where no topic is off limits. However, he accepts that these sorts of conversations can be tough for parents. "Schools can work in partnership with parents. Often there is a conversation a teacher can have with a child that is really difficult for a parent to have with the child because the child sees the teacher as a different sort of person. Schools are used to this – it's a part of education. Asking school to help is normal."

Give your kids a social media toolkit

It might seem obvious but it bears repeating, especially to children: social media makes it easier to say offensive things because you can be anonymous. But that doesn't mean it's harmless or acceptable.

Gemma Campbell, counsellor and clinical content specialist at [Kooth](#), the UK's leading provider of NHS-commissioned personalised digital mental health support, advises that "when determining whether content may be misogynistic, think about whether you could say this to a girl or women you respect in person." She also has a little social media toolkit of questions for children to keep in mind when using social media: "How does this content make me feel? How does this content affect those I care about? Is there a counter argument, or challenge to what I've just viewed?"

Lean on movies, books and apps

There are so many resources available that offer either the flipside to Tate's ideology or lift the bonnet on the workings of social media. The best example of the latter is Netflix's *The Social Dilemma* which should be essential viewing for teenagers. Then there are apps such as [luna](#) which is dedicated to teen health and wellbeing – and is an antidote to unregulated content creators, powerful algorithms and the spread of inaccurate information. "We've built luna so that teenagers can feel supported throughout adolescence and know that whatever they read or watch on luna is accurate and made with their best interests in mind," explains co-founder Jas Schembri.

For younger children it's important to expose them to story books that have strong, intelligent female protagonists (*Rosie Revere, Engineer* by Andrea Beaty is brilliant) or showing male characters who are gentle (*The Story of Ferdinand* by Munro Leaf is a classic example). Teenagers would do well to read *The Beauty Myth* by Naomi Wolf, as well as *Men Who Hate Women* by Laura Bates. Parents should be prepared to discuss books, TV shows, podcasts, films or any online content that explores misogyny with their children.

Show your kids how to block content

Enabling your kids to take control of the types of content they're seeing as well as general education about how to be safe online can help them to see that social media is a place to both be wary of and enjoy. Show them how to block or report misogynistic (or generally hateful) content on the various social media platforms.

Don't give up

However difficult it is, however awkward you find it or however angry it makes you - the most important thing is to talk about it. Andrew Tate and all he represents is too dangerous to stay silent on.