

Parental Toolkit



Safeguarding young people with Autism from extremist ideologies





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Introduction and background for parents/carers

This toolkit is designed to be used alongside the Parental Guidance Booklet. It offers practical, autism-friendly resources to help you talk with your child about sensitive topics, especially those related to keeping them safe from the risk of radicalisation.

You know your child best. That's why this toolkit is flexible so you can choose the materials that suit your child's needs, interests, and level of understanding.

We hope this resource helps you:

- Understand some of the risks young people may face,
- Use autism-specific tools to support your child,
- Reduce the chance of harm by building awareness and resilience together.

This toolkit is part of a Crawley Borough Council-funded project, developed in partnership with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and a team of experts in autism, inclusion, and safeguarding. It's filled with high-quality, adaptable resources designed to help your child:

- Think critically,
- Understand the world around them,
- Build life skills they can use to stay safe now and in the future.

It's important to remember:

There's no "one size fits all" approach. These resources are templates for you to adapt. Use them in a way that works for your child's unique personality, communication style, and learning needs.

Above all, this toolkit is designed to be child-centred, supporting you to have meaningful, safe, and empowering conversations with your child.

Before diving into the more complex topics, it's helpful if your child already has some understanding of some key themes. For instance:

- Right and wrong,
- Legal and illegal behaviour,
- Emotions and feelings,
- Basic social concepts like friendship.

You'll find links, slides on discussion topics (like the one on friendship), and other tools in both this toolkit and the Parental Guidance Booklet to help with this pre-learning.

Above all, this toolkit is designed to be child-centred, supporting you to have meaningful, safe, and empowering conversations with your child.

Key terms



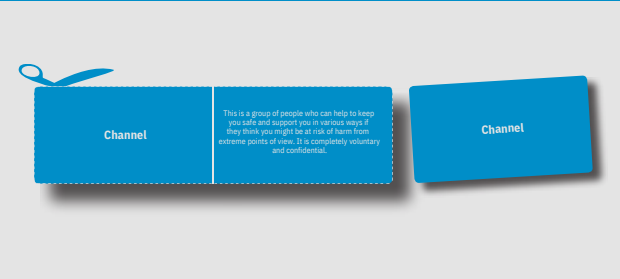
An activity to get your child thinking about important words.

(supervision may be required when using scissors for cutting out)



Activity

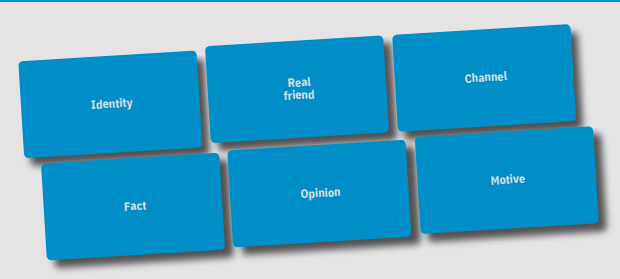
How to use the flashcards



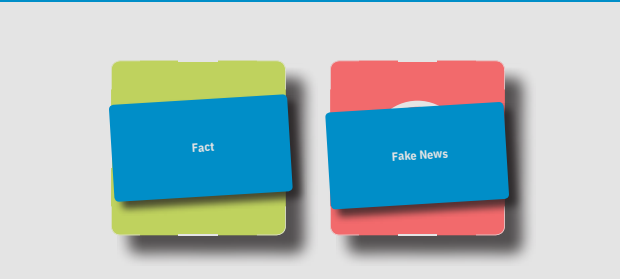
Step 1
Carefully cut out each flashcard. Then fold each in half along the white line in the middle.



Step 2
Carefully cut out the green (happy) and red (unhappy) faces on this page. This is where you'll put the flashcards after you've read them, if you think they are good or bad.



Step 3
Place all the cards with their names up. Taking turns with your grown up turn them over...



Step 4
If you think the card is good put it onto the green face. If it's bad, put it onto the red face.

Conspiracy Theory	<p>A conspiracy theory is a story some people believe that says a secret group is secretly causing big things to happen, even if there's no good proof. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">·Moon landing was fake – Some people think the astronauts didn't really go to the Moon and that it was all filmed in a studio.·Secret mind control – A theory says that TV or phones are secretly used to control how people think.
Disinformation	<p>This means telling people something that's not true on purpose to trick them. It's like lying to make others believe something that isn't real.</p>
Extremism	<p>Extremism is when someone uses fear, threats, or violence to try to force others to agree with their beliefs or point of view. It's never okay to hurt or scare people just because they think differently.</p>
Fact	<p>A fact is something that can be proven to be true. For example: "The sky is blue." You can check this by looking outside! You can also check facts using trusted websites like Full Fact or BBC Reality Check to make sure what you're hearing or reading is true.</p>
Fake news	<p>Fake news is information that might look or sound true, but when you check it carefully, it turns out it's not! That's why it's important to double-check what you read or hear, especially online. Trusted adults and websites like Full Fact or BBC Reality Check can help you find out what's real and what's not.</p>

Fake friend	<p>A fake friend is someone who pretends to be your friend. They might act kind at first, but they're not really trustworthy.</p> <p>They may only want to be friends so they can get something from you—like help, attention, or to get you to do something you're not comfortable with.</p>
Group identity	<p>Group identity means being part of a group where you feel like you belong.</p> <p>This could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Your family•Your school•Your sports team•Your religion <p>Or even a group of friends who like the same things as you!</p> <p>It's about feeling connected to others and knowing you're part of something special.</p>
Special interests	<p>A special interest is when you become really interested in one topic and want to learn everything about it!</p> <p>It could be dinosaurs, a band, space, a TV show, anything you love learning about.</p> <p>That's great! But remember:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Not everything you read or watch about your interest is always true.•Some people might try to trick you or make you believe something that isn't right. <p>If you're ever unsure, ask an adult you trust to help you check if the information is safe and true.</p>
Hypersensitivity	<p>Hypersensitivity means that sometimes things like sounds, lights, or even feelings can feel too much and make you feel anxious or overwhelmed. If you feel this when you are online, move away from what you are looking at until you feel better and explain to your trusted adult what made you feel this way and why it had this effect.</p>
Identity	<p>Things that make you, you. It could be your appearance, your interests, your religion – anything! Your identity may change over time too!</p>

Ideology	<p>Ideology means someone's beliefs or opinions—what they think is right or wrong. These beliefs can belong to one person or a whole group.</p> <p>Most beliefs are okay, but be careful if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•The ideas seem shocking or mean.•Someone wants to hurt others because of what they believe.•Something sounds true, but when you look closer, it's been changed or twisted to trick people.
Memes	<p>A meme is an image, video or piece of text that is copied and spread quickly, often on the internet.</p> <p>Sometimes people may pretend they are joking when they use these memes, but they can also have more negative secret meanings – so be careful if you are thinking of forwarding them on as they can make people feel bad.</p>
Motive	<p>Someone's reason for doing something. Some people might have good motives, but some might have bad ones and sometimes it's difficult to tell the difference! Some people's motives may be to share information (real or false) that makes someone dislike particular groups of people.</p>
Manipulation	<p>Manipulation is when someone tries to trick or control you to get what they want.</p> <p>They might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Pretend to be nice•Make you feel guilty•Leave out important information <p>It's not fair or kind, and it can make you do things you don't really want to do.</p>
Malinformation	<p>This is when someone shares something that's true, but they do it to hurt someone or cause trouble.</p> <p>It's like telling a secret just to embarrass someone or get them in trouble.</p>

Misinformation	<p>This means sharing something that’s not true, even if the person didn’t mean to lie.</p> <p>It’s like telling someone a fact that turns out to be wrong because you didn’t know better.</p>
Online radicalisation	<p>Where someone uses their relationship with you online to persuade you to believe or do something extreme. It could also be shocking, unkind or even violent content that someone has posted.</p>
Opinions	<p>An opinion is just what someone thinks about something. Sometimes people make their opinions seem like facts to persuade you to believe or to do something. For example, someone may try to persuade someone to dislike others or a particular group by sharing their opinion as if it is fact.</p>
Prejudice	<p>Prejudice is when someone makes a judgment about a person or group before getting to know them.</p> <p>For example, thinking someone is mean or bad just because of how they look, where they’re from, or what they believe and that’s not fair.</p> <p>Prejudice can hurt people’s feelings and cause problems. It’s always better to be kind, curious, and open-minded.</p>
Propaganda	<p>Propaganda is when someone shares information that is false or misleading on purpose, to try to make you believe something.</p> <p>It might look or sound true, but the facts have often been changed or twisted to trick people.</p> <p>Propaganda can show up in many places, like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•A poster or leaflet•A website or video•A game or social media post

Radicalisation	<p>Radicalisation is when someone tries to influence you, online or in real life, to believe in extreme ideas that could lead to someone getting hurt. Their goal is to change the way you think and get you to do something dangerous.</p>
Real friend	<p>A real friend is sosharesmeone who you can talk to, who listens and your interests and feelings, and really cares about your happiness.</p>
Self esteem	<p>What you believe and think about yourself. If you feel good about yourself, you have good self-esteem.</p>
Stereotypes	<p>Stereotypes are when we assume something about a person or group before we really know them. These ideas often come from things we’ve heard, seen online, or been told—even if they’re not true. Stereotypes can sound positive or negative, but they’re usually hurtful and unfair. It’s always better to get to know someone for who they really are.</p>
Theory of mind	<p>Theory of Mind means understanding that other people can think and feel differently from you. They might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Like different things•Believe different ideas•Feel happy, sad, or worried about things you don’t <p>Try to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling, even if it’s not the same as you. This helps us be kind, patient, and better friends.</p>

Identity – who am I?



A quick activity to get your young person thinking about their identity.



Why not look at the example and see what Tom likes. Would you and Tom have similar interests?

Identity: things that make you, you! It could be your appearance, your interests, your religion – anything! Your identity may change over time too!



List five things about yourself.

A

B

C

D

E

You can also draw a picture if you'd prefer (use page 27) and label different aspects of yourself.



Now put this in order of what the most important things to you are. Draw a line between them.

A

B

C

D

E

1st

2nd

3rd

4th

5th



List five things you like and five things you dislike

I like...

1

2

3

4

5

I dislike...

1

2

3

4

5

What words would you use to describe yourself to others? Are all of these positive? If not, why? Discuss these with your adult.

Repeat these activities in

- a week
- a month
- a year

Are your lists still the same? Have the most important things to you changed?

It is natural that our identity as well as our likes and dislikes and what is important to us changes over time – this is part of growing up!

If you are curious, or have worries or questions about your identity, this website may be able to help: www.themix.org.uk

Discussion topics

The following slides provide content to help you have discussions around the following topics:

- **Identity**
- **Being a good citizen**
- **Belonging**
- **Bullying**
- **Conspiracy theories**
- **Extreme beliefs**
- **Freedom of speech**
- **Friends**
- **Group identity**
- **Propaganda**
- **Communicating online**
- **Staying safe online**

Using these slides

These slides are designed to help you start meaningful conversations with your child about some of the important and sensitive topics covered in this guidance.

They are not one-size-fits-all solutions. Instead, think of them as flexible templates that you can **adapt to suit your child's unique needs, communication style, and level of understanding**. Taking a person-centred approach will help ensure these conversations are supportive, relevant, and effective for your child.



Thinking about identity

Every person has their own individual identity.

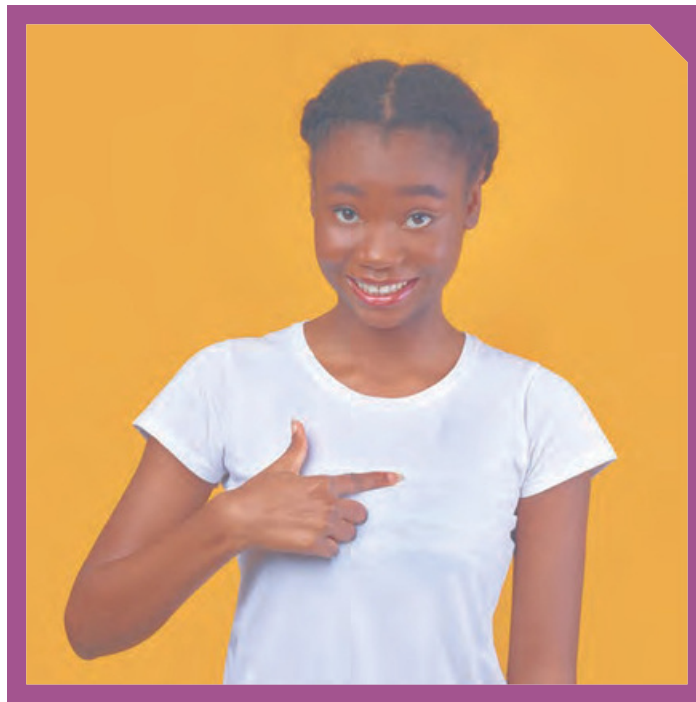
There are lots of things that make up a person's identity. Some of these include:

- The way they look
- Their likes and dislikes
- People who are important to them e.g. role models
- Things that they are good at
- Friendships groups
- Family
- The communities they belong to.

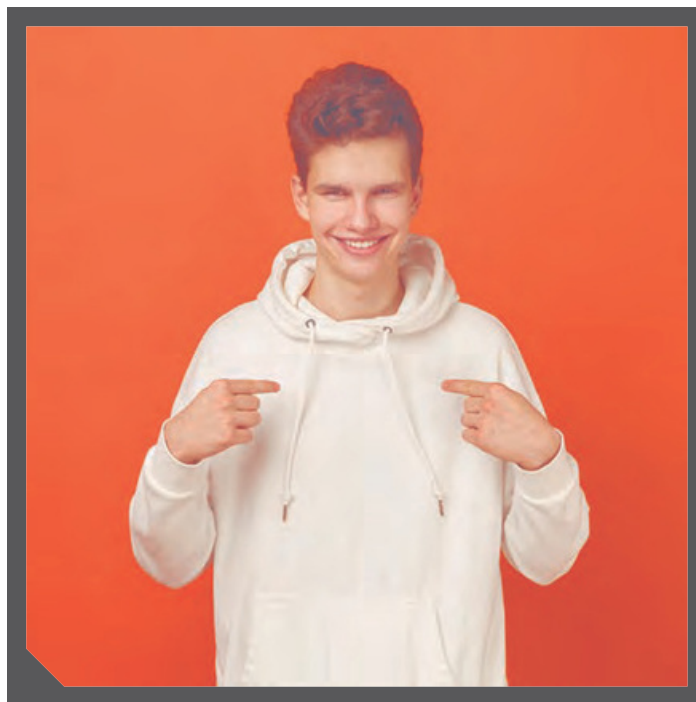


All of these things that make up a person's identity can change over time. They may change the way they look; what they like or dislike might change; they may change who they admire or who they see as role models; they may have different friendships groups; their families may change in some way and/or they may become part of new or different communities. This is okay.

My identity may change and that is okay.



If I am worried or unsure about my identity, I can try to ask for help.



Parents or teachers/lecturers at school/college or other trusted adults may be good to talk to about identity.



Activity

What is my identity?



Why not draw a self portrait

Being a good citizen

We are all humans and deserve to be treated with respect. We can help with this by helping others to feel happy and ensuring that everybody feels that they belong. This is being a good citizen.

For instance, we can show respect to other people by:

- Asking others about their beliefs, opinions, thoughts and feelings
- Listening and respecting them – even if we don’t agree. Listening to people makes them feel valued and happy
- Following the rules so that everyone gets the opportunity to get what they need, and no one gets hurt, is left out or is unhappy
- Being kind even if we think someone is wrong or we don’t agree with them.



People who are good citizens do things like:

- Obey rules and laws
- Help others
- Vote in elections
- Tell an adult if someone is a danger to themselves or to others
- Be responsible for their own actions and how they affect others.

Activity

How can i be a good citizen?

Talk to your grown up and ask each other these questions:

Do I ask others about their beliefs, opinions, thoughts and feelings?

Yes/No

Do I listen to and respect other people?

Yes/No

Do I listen to people so it makes them feel valued and happy?

Yes/No

Am I kind even if I think someone is wrong or I don’t agree with them?

Yes/No

Do I follow the rules so that nobody gets hurt?

Yes/No

Am I honest, polite and trustworthy?

Yes/No

Am I helpful?

Yes/No

No one is born a good citizen. We all must develop the skills to become a good citizen. The skills I can try to learn are:

- How to be cooperative and work together with others
- How to listen, share our ideas and be fair towards all people
- How to show respect, be patient and tolerant toward people who are different from us.

Some things I can do to practise or show that I am being a good citizen are:

- Volunteer and be active in my community, be a good neighbour
- Be honest, polite and trustworthy
- Follow the rules and laws
- Respect the rights and the property of others
- Be informed about the world around me and try to protect the environment
- Be helpful and be willing to put the needs of others first.



If I am concerned about other people who are not good citizens, I can tell my teacher/ lecturer or my parent or carer.

I will try to learn the skills needed to be a good citizen. I will try to be a good citizen. Everyone in my family, my community and my school/college will be pleased to see my good citizen skills.



Compassionate

‘ To be **compassionate** is to be **understanding and caring** towards someone else.’

Belonging

What does belonging mean?

Belonging means feeling like you are accepted and that you fit in. It's when you feel like you're part of a group and that people care about you.



You can feel like you belong in lots of different places, like:

- Your family
- Your school or class
- Your home
- A club or team
- Your neighborhood or community
- Online groups or games

When you feel like you belong, it can make you feel happy, safe, and important. It's nice to feel like people want you around and that you matter.



Belonging online

You can also feel like you belong when you talk to people online. Apps like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Discord, and Reddit let you share fun things like memes, photos, and videos. You can also chat with friends while playing games like Roblox, Fortnite, Rocket League, Counter-Strike, or League of Legends. These online spaces can help you feel connected, even if your friends live far away.



Be Smart and Stay Safe

Sometimes, when we really want to fit in with a group, we might believe everything they say or do things just to be liked. But it's important to stop and think:

- Is what I'm seeing or hearing true?
- Does it feel right?
- Am I being asked to do something that makes me uncomfortable?

If something online worries you, **talk to a trusted adult**—like a parent, teacher, or another grown-up you trust. If it seems really serious or wrong, you can also report it to the police.



Remember: You deserve to feel safe and respected - online and offline.



Activity

Where do you feel like you belong?

- ☒ Tick the circles next to places Where you feel you belong
- ☒ at **school**
- ☒ with **my family**
- ☒ with **my true friends**
- ☒ at **home**
- ☒ in **an online group**
- ☒ at **a club**
- ☒ in **my country**
- ☒ in **my community**
- ☒ anywhere else I feel **included, safe and happy.**

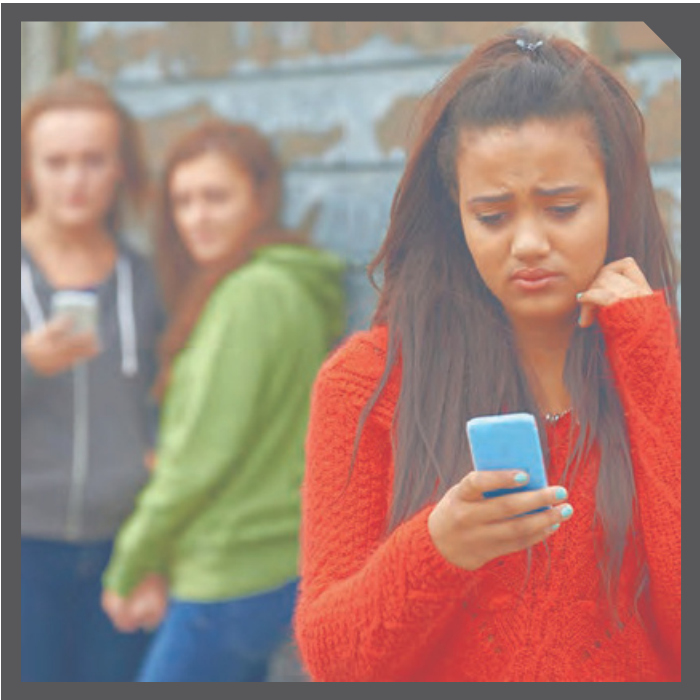
Bullying

What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone hurts you on purpose again and again. It’s not just a one-time thing, it keeps happening and it makes you feel upset, scared, or left out



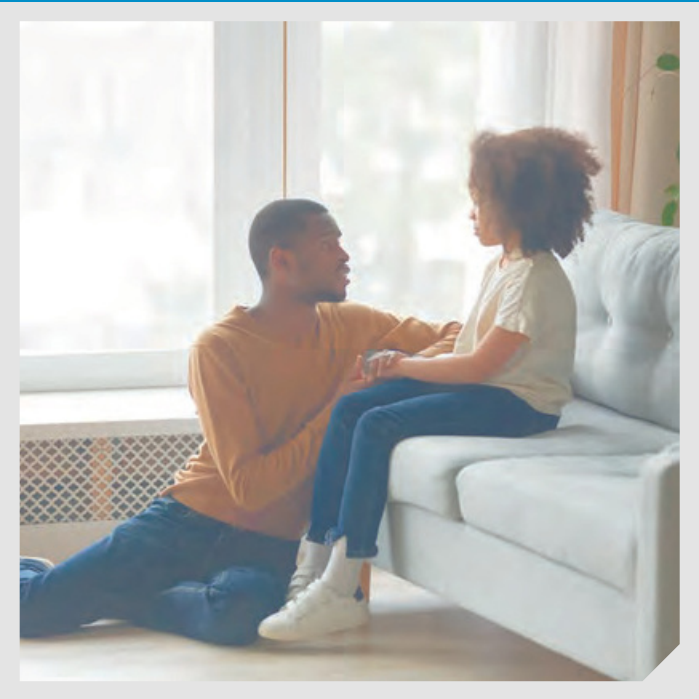
- Bullying can look like:
- Saying mean or unkind things
 - Hitting, kicking, or trying to hurt you physically
 - Telling you to do something you don’t want to do
 - Leaving you out on purpose or not letting you join in



If someone is bullying you or someone else, it’s important to **talk to a trusted adult**—like a teacher, parent, or school staff member. You are not alone, and there are people who want to help.

Activity: What can you do if you feel you are being bullied?

1. Talk to your **parent or carer**



2. Talk to your **teacher or adult at school**



3. Talk to a **friend**



4. Tell the bully to **stop**



5. If the bullying is online, you can **block or delete** them.



- ☒ I’ve talked to my **parent or carer**
- ☒ I’ve told a **teacher or adult at school**
- ☒ I’ve told a **friend**
- ☒ I’ve told the bully to **stop**
- ☒ I’ve **blocked or deleted** the bully online.

Everyone deserves to feel safe, happy, and included, bullying is never okay.

Conspiracy theories

What is a conspiracy theory?

A conspiracy theory is a story that tries to explain something in a way that’s very different from what trusted source like scientists, teachers, or the news say.

People who believe in conspiracy theories often think there’s a secret plan behind something big, like the government or the news. They might say that only a few people know the “truth,” and that there are hidden clues everywhere—if you know how to spot them.

Some examples of conspiracy theories are:

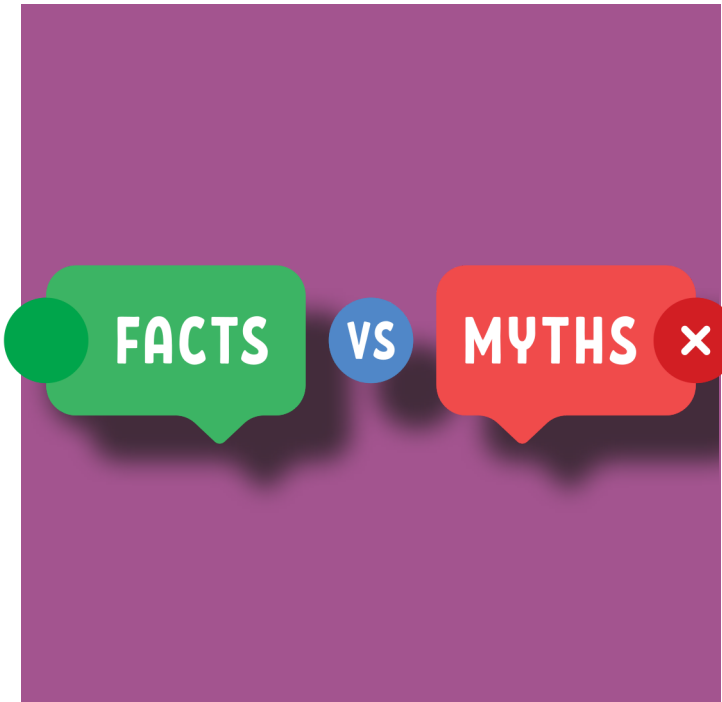
- Believing the Earth is flat
- Thinking the news is fake and acted out by performers
- Saying powerful groups secretly control the world



Some conspiracy theories can be misleading or even hurtful, especially if they blame certain people or groups unfairly.

If you hear something that sounds strange, scary, or very different from what most people believe, it’s okay to be curious, but it’s also smart to ask questions:

- “Could this really be true?”
- “Where did this information come from?”
- “What do trusted adults think?”



If people are calling you names, you can ask a grown-up at school or at home for help.



If someone calls you names like “sheep” or says you’re “stupid” for not believing them, that’s not okay. You can always talk to a trusted adult at home or school if something makes you feel uncomfortable or confused.



Remember: It’s great to ask questions and learn new things, but it’s also important to check the facts so you don’t get tricked into believing something that isn’t true.



It can feel exciting to think you’re ‘in on a secret,’ and some people spend a lot of time watching videos or talking to others who believe the same thing. Sometimes, people join in because they want to feel like they belong, especially if they’re feeling lonely. But here’s the thing:
Not everything you hear online or from others is true.

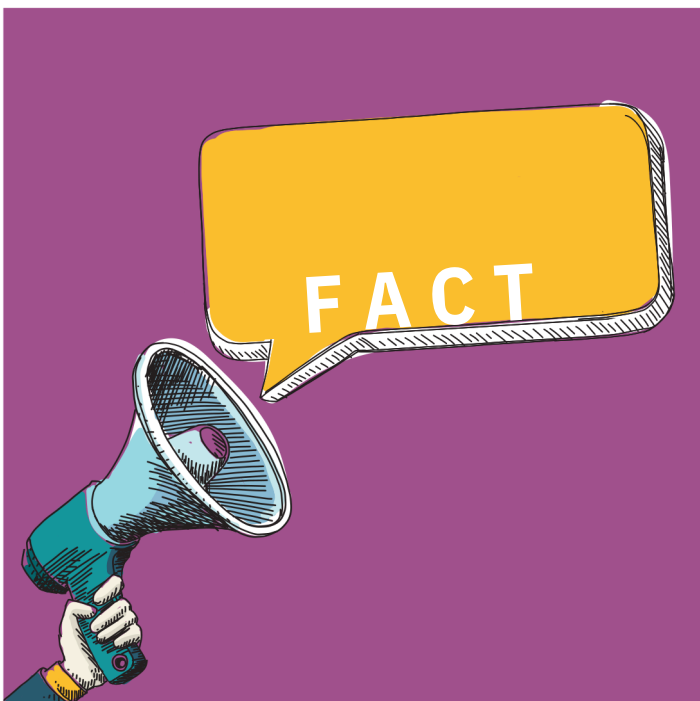
Top tip ‘ If something is **misleading** it could be giving you the **wrong idea about something.**’

Extreme beliefs

What Are Extreme Beliefs?

An **extreme belief** is when someone believes something very strongly that might seem **shocking, dangerous, or unfair**. It's often the kind of belief where the person thinks there's only one right answer and they won't listen to anyone else's ideas.

But here's something important to remember: **A belief is not always a fact.** Just because someone believes something doesn't mean it's true.



What Do Extreme Beliefs Look Like?

Extreme beliefs can include things like:

- Thinking it's okay to hurt someone
- Not liking people just because of their religion, skin colour, or where they're from
- Saying someone is bad just because of how they look or what they believe

Sometimes, people with extreme beliefs join groups that only want to share those ideas. These groups often try to get others to believe the same things and may not want to hear different opinions.

Why Is This a Problem?

Extreme beliefs can:

- Make people feel scared or unsafe
 - Cause arguments or even violence
 - Spread lies or unfair ideas
 - Make people feel left out or hated
- Sometimes, people with extreme beliefs might try to get you to:
- Say or do something hurtful
 - Share personal information
 - Join their group or spread their ideas

This is not okay. You should never feel pressured to do something that feels wrong or makes you uncomfortable.



How Can I Stay Safe?

If you see or hear something that feels wrong or makes you worried:

- Talk to a trusted adult**—like a parent, carer, teacher, or school staff member
- Block or report** people online who are saying scary or extreme things
- Think carefully** before believing or sharing something online

Extreme beliefs can be harmful and even **against the law**. In the UK, the government says that extreme beliefs go against important values like **respect, fairness, and freedom**.



can get in trouble if I share extreme beliefs or join an extremist group.

It is important that I think carefully about any extreme beliefs that I see or hear from the people around me or online. To keep myself safe I will think carefully about what I see or hear and share my concerns about anything that I am asked to do or share.



If I am worried about this or what someone is telling me, I can tell my parents or carers, my teachers/lecturers, or if it's online I can also block or delete them.



Remember:

You have the right to feel safe, respected, and included.

If something doesn't feel right—speak up. You are never alone.

Freedom of speech

What Is Freedom of Speech?

Freedom of speech means that you have the right to **share your thoughts and ideas**. You can say what you believe, ask questions, and talk about things that matter to you.

But with this freedom comes something very important:

We must use our words kindly and responsibly



Why Do We Need to Be Careful?

Freedom of speech means that we have to **think about what we say and act responsibly and consider other people's feelings**. Sometimes what we want to say can be offensive or upsetting to other people.

We don't want to upset someone or make them angry because of what we think. Even if we didn't mean to upset someone, our words can still have a big impact.

In the UK there are some things that we should not express or share, such as views that criticise other's religious beliefs, or views that are obscene and upsetting, or that make people unsafe and present a danger to the public.

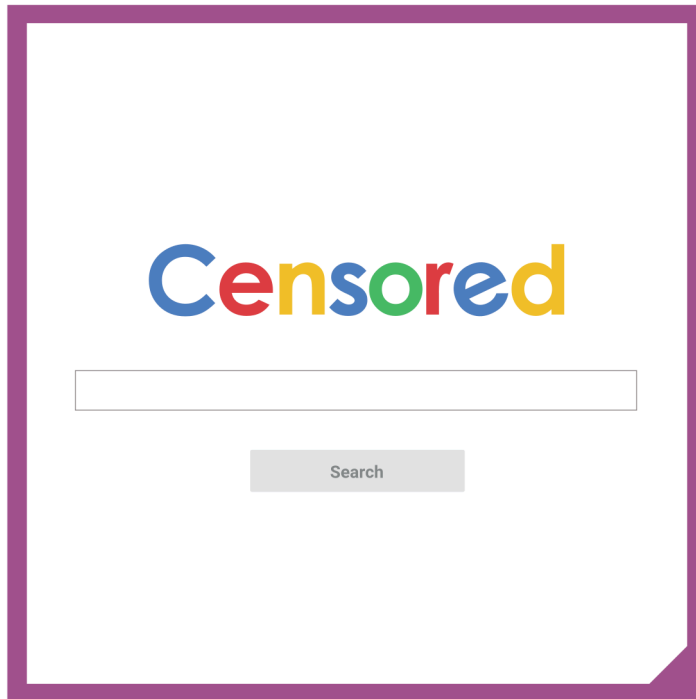
What Is Hate Speech?

Hate speech is when someone says something that is **unkind, unfair, or dangerous** about a person or group just because of things like their race, religion, or where they're from.

This kind of speech can:

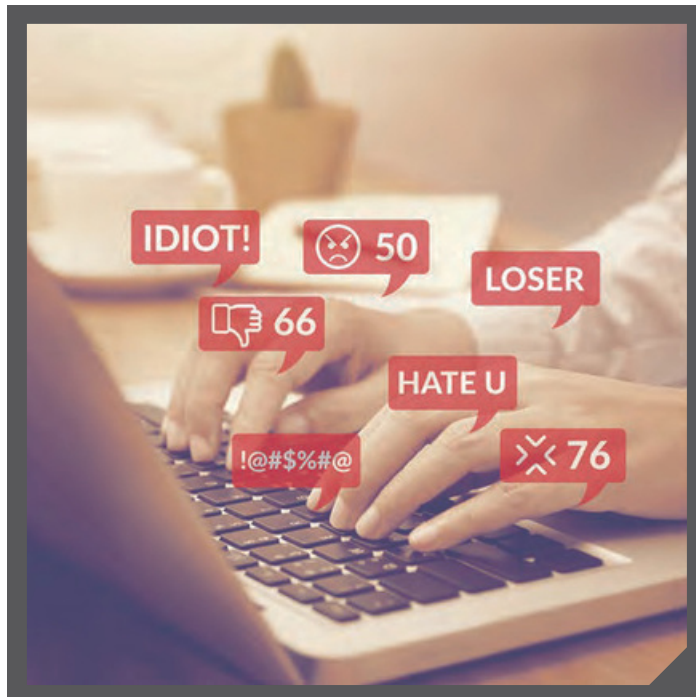
- Make people feel scared or upset
- Spread hate and lies
- Even break the law

In the UK, it's **not okay** to say things that are hateful, rude, or that make others feel unsafe.



Freedom of Speech Around the World

Not everyone in the world has the same freedom to speak. In some countries, people can get into trouble just for sharing their opinions. That's why it's important to **appreciate our freedom** and use it in a way that's kind and respectful.



How Can I Use My Voice Kindly?

- Think before you speak or post online
- Ask yourself: "Could this hurt someone's feelings?"
- Respect other people's beliefs, even if they're different from yours
- Speak up for what's right but do it in a kind way



What If I'm Worried About Something I See or Hear?

If someone says something that feels wrong or makes you uncomfortable:

- **Talk to a trusted adult**—like a parent, carer, or teacher
- **Don't share or spread** hurtful messages
- **Block or report** people online if they're being unkind or unsafe



Remember:

You have the right to speak up but it's just as important to listen, be kind, and respect others.

Friends

What Is a Friend?

A **friend** is someone you can trust, talk to, and have fun with. Friends are kind, caring, and make you feel good about yourself. You might make friends:

- At school
- In your neighborhood
- At clubs or activities
- Or even online



A friend is someone who is kind and you can trust. They do not want to hurt you or others.

Real Friends vs. Fake Friends

Most friends want the best for you. But sometimes, people might pretend to be your friend—especially online.

- A real friend will:
- Be kind and respectful
- Listen to you
- Never ask you to do something that feels wrong or scary

A fake friend might:

- Try to trick you
- Ask you to do something that could hurt you or someone else
- Make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe



Online Friends

It’s fun to make friends online, but remember: **You can’t always be sure who someone really is** if you’ve never met them in person.

If someone online:

- Asks you to keep secrets
- Wants personal information
- Tries to make you do something that feels wrong

They are not a real friend.



What Can I Do If Someone Isn’t Acting Like a Real Friend?

If someone, online or in real life, is making you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, you can:

- ✓ Talk to a trusted adult (like a parent, carer, teacher, or school staff)
- ✓ Say “no” if they ask you to do something that feels wrong
- ✓ Ask them to stop
- ✓ Block or delete them online so they can’t message you anymore



If you think someone is not behaving like a real friend in person or online you can ask them to stop. You can say ‘no’ if they ask you to do something that makes you uncomfortable.



Top tip

If you’re ever unsure about someone, you don’t have to figure it out alone.

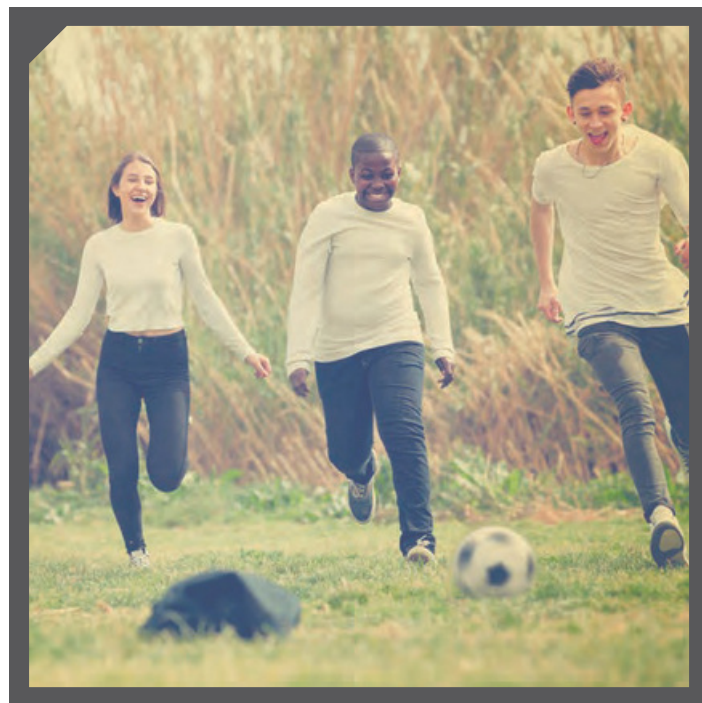
Talking to an adult can help you stay safe and feel supported.

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Group identity

What Is Group Identity?

Group identity means feeling like you belong to a group of people who share something in common with you. It's about feeling accepted, included, and connected.



Where Do We Find Group Identity?

You might feel a sense of group identity when you:

- Play on the same sports team
- Join a club or group at school or online
- Like the same music, TV shows, or games as your friends
- Spend time with people who enjoy the same hobbies
- Hang out with a group at break or lunchtime

These shared interests help us feel like we “fit in” and are part of something special.



Why Is Group Identity Important?

Being part of a group can:

- Help you make friends
- Give you support when you need it
- Boost your confidence and self-esteem
- Help you learn new things
- Give you a chance to help others

When a group is kind and respectful, it can make everyone feel stronger and happier.



Being Careful in Groups

Sometimes, when we're part of a group, we might:

- Hear new ideas or opinions
 - Feel pressure to go along with what others are doing
 - Be asked to do something we're not sure about
- Some ideas might be helpful or fun—but others could lead to trouble, especially if they:
- Hurt someone
 - Break the rules or the law
 - Make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe



How to Stay Safe in a Group

To keep yourself and others safe:

- ✓ **Think carefully** about what the group is saying or doing
- ✓ **Ask yourself:** “Is this kind? Is this safe? Is this right?”
- ✓ **Talk to a trusted adult** (like a parent, carer, or teacher) if something feels wrong
- ✓ **Say “no”** if someone asks you to do something that doesn't feel right



Remember:

It's great to be part of a group—but you should never feel forced to do something just to fit in. Real friends and good groups respect your choices and keep you safe.

Stereotypes

What Are Stereotypes?

A stereotype is when we believe something about a whole group of people without really knowing them. It's like making a quick judgment based on things we've heard, seen, or been told even if it's not true.

Stereotypes can be positive or negative.

Examples of stereotypes:



“All girls are bad at football.” ➤ Not true! Lots of girls are amazing at football and some even play for their country!



Men are stronger than women.” ➤ Some men are strong, but some women are stronger than some men.



“Everyone with autism is good at Maths.” ➤ Some autistic people are great at maths, but others might be better at art, music, or writing.



Old people are grumpy.” ➤ Some older people might feel grumpy sometimes, but many are kind, funny, and full of great stories.

Why Are Stereotypes a Problem?

Stereotypes can:

- Make us think we know someone before we’ve even met them
- Stop us from seeing people as **unique individuals**
- Make people feel **sad, left out, or misunderstood**
- Lead to **bullying** or unfair treatment
- Make people feel like they don’t belong

Where Do Stereotypes Come From?

We might learn stereotypes from:

- Things we hear from friends or family
- What we see on TV, in movies, or online
- Social media or the news

But just because we’ve heard something a lot doesn’t mean it’s true.



What Can We Do Instead?

- ✓ Get to know people for who they really are
- ✓ Ask questions and listen
- ✓ Notice what makes each person special
- ✓ Speak up if you hear someone using a stereotype

Remember:

Everyone is different.
Everyone is unique.
And everyone deserves to be treated with kindness and respect no matter what group they belong to.

Activity

Different types of people

With your grown up, look at these images and think about the people in them? **Are they good or bad stereotypes?**



Biker gang



Doctors and nurses



Football fans

Propaganda

What Is Propaganda?

Propaganda is when someone shares messages—like pictures, videos, or words—to try to change the way we think, feel, or act. It’s often used to make people believe something, even if it’s not completely true.

You might see propaganda:

- In adverts
- On social media
- On TV or in films
- In newspapers or online articles



Why Do People Use Propaganda?

People use propaganda to:

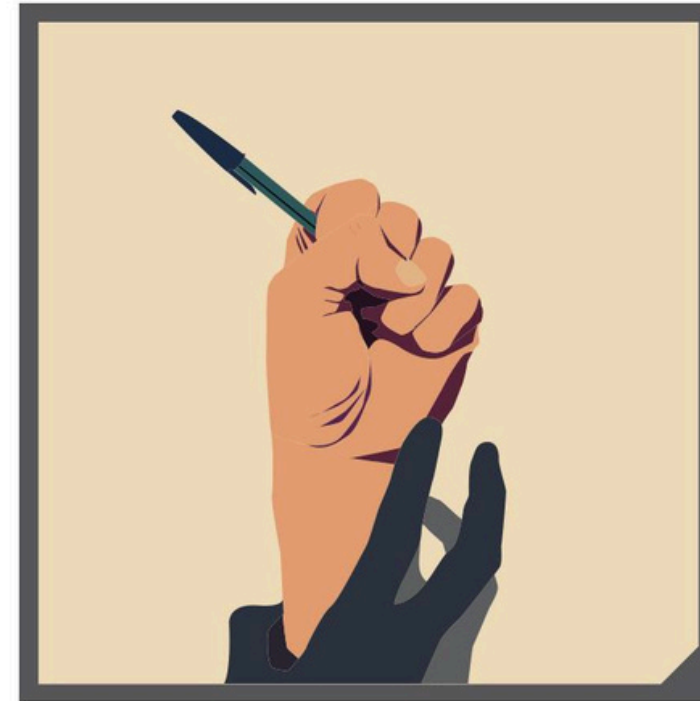
- Make you agree with their opinion
- Make you feel **angry, scared,** or **sad** about something
- Try to get you to support a person, group, or idea
- Make another group of people look bad



How Can You Spot Propaganda?

Propaganda often:

- Uses **strong or negative words** to describe people or groups
- Shows **scary or emotional images**
- Tries to make you feel like there’s only **one “right” way** to think



Remember:

Not everything you see or hear is true.

You have the power to think for yourself.



Top Tip: Think Before You Believe

When you see or hear something, ask yourself:

- ? What are they trying to make me believe?
- ? How does this make me feel? Angry? Scared? Sad? Why?
- ? Is this fair or kind? Could it hurt someone?
- ? Who made this, and why?

If something feels wrong or upsetting, **talk to a trusted adult**—like a parent, carer, or teacher. They can help you figure out what’s true and what’s not.

Sharing online

Sharing Online: Think Before You Post

There are lots of fun ways to talk and share things online, like chatting with friends, posting photos, or sharing videos and memes. But it's important to **think carefully** before you share anything.



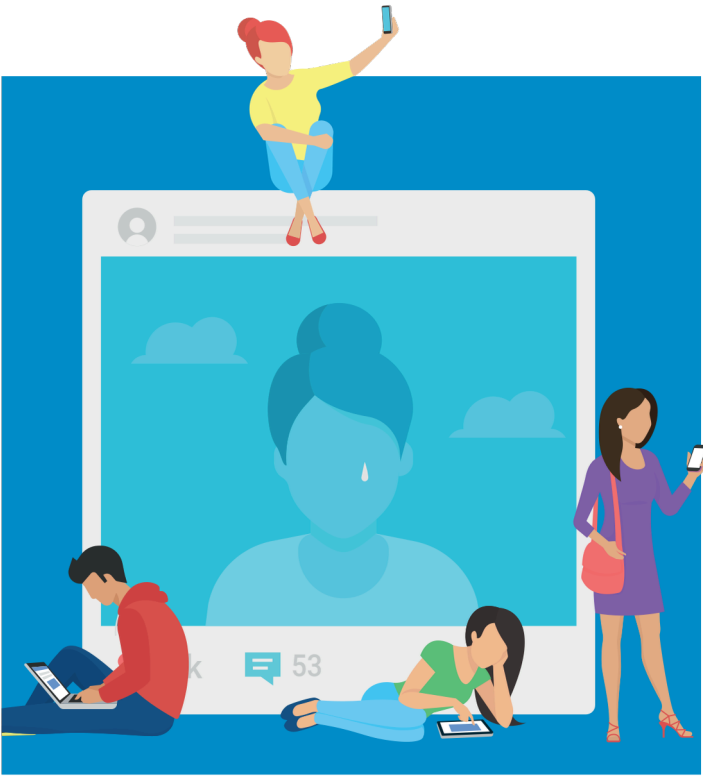
What Do People Share Online?

People often share:

- Information about themselves
- Things they believe or find interesting
- Funny or shocking stories, pictures, or videos

But just because something seems fun or exciting doesn't mean it's okay to share.

However, it is important to think about what information we are sharing and the effect this could have on others, or the consequences it could have for others and the person sharing information.



Before You Share, Ask Yourself:

- ? Is it true?**
Not everything online is real. It's easy for false information to spread quickly.
- ? Could it hurt someone's feelings?**
Even if it's meant as a joke, it might upset someone.
- ? Could it make someone angry or scared?**
Some posts can cause arguments or make people feel unsafe.
- ? Is it hateful or mean?**
If something is racist, sexist, homophobic, or targets someone because of a disability, it's not just unkind—it could even break the law.



How to Stay Safe and Kind Online

- ✓ **Stop and think** before you post or share
- ✓ **Check if it's true**—do a little research first
- ✓ **Ask a trusted adult** (like a parent, carer, or teacher) if you're unsure
- ✓ **Be kind**—if it could hurt someone, don't share it



Top Tip:
When you read or see something online, think about how it makes you feel:

- 😡 Angry?
- 😞 Sad?
- 😱 Scared?

Ask yourself why it makes you feel that way and whether it's something that should be shared at



Staying safe online: things to think about

There are lots of fun and useful ways to go online like chatting with friends, playing games, watching videos, or learning new things. But just like in real life, it's important to stay safe.

Think Before You Share

Before you talk to someone online or share anything, ask yourself:

- ? Do I know this person in real life?
- ? Are they a stranger?
- ? Is it safe to share this photo, message, or personal information?

Top tip: If you wouldn't tell a stranger on the street, don't share it online!



Meeting People Online

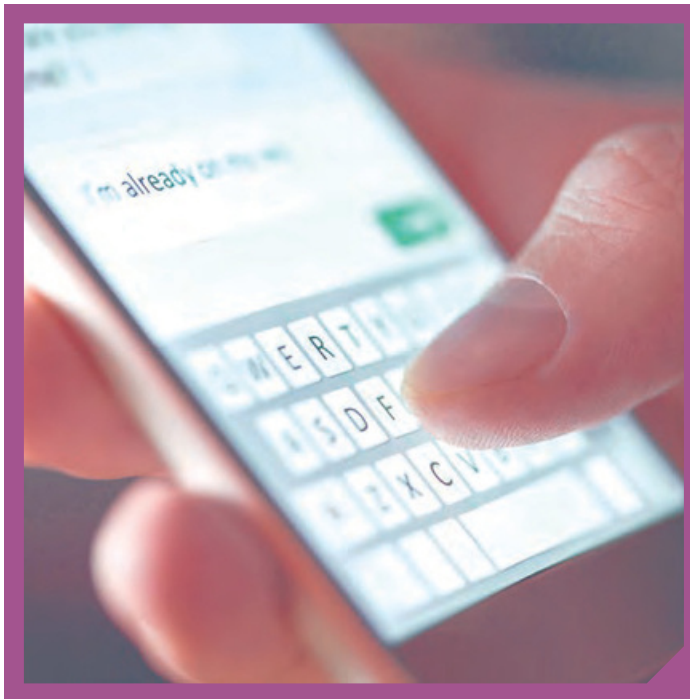
Some people you talk to online might be friends you already know in real life. Others might be people you've never met before.

When we meet people in real life, we can see what they look like, how old they are, and how they act. **Online, it's harder to know who someone really is.** People can pretend to be someone else.

Advice for parents and carers:

You can look at

[Connecting and Sharing, Childline | Free counselling service for kids and young people | Childline and Think you know Thinkuknow - advice from CEOP - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)



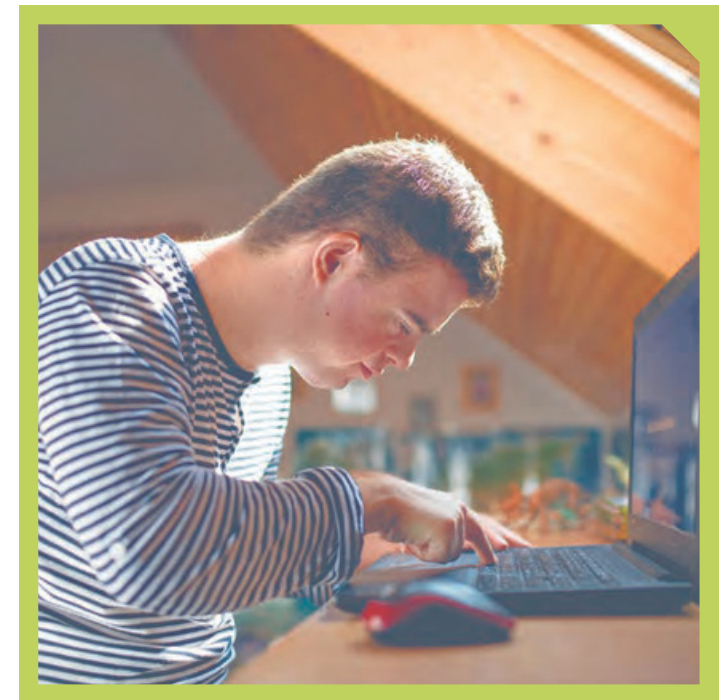
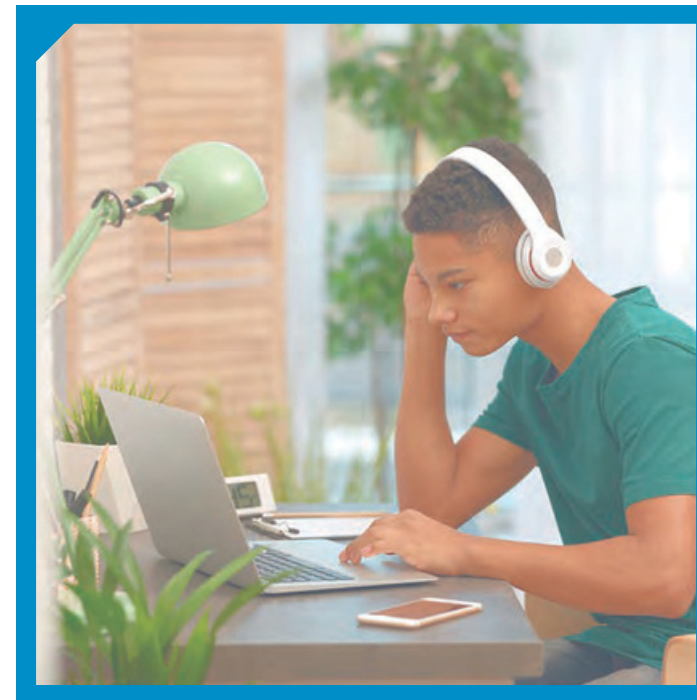
What Not to Share with Strangers Online

- Your full name
- Your address or school name
- Your phone number
- Personal photos or videos
- Passwords or private information

What to Do If You're Worried

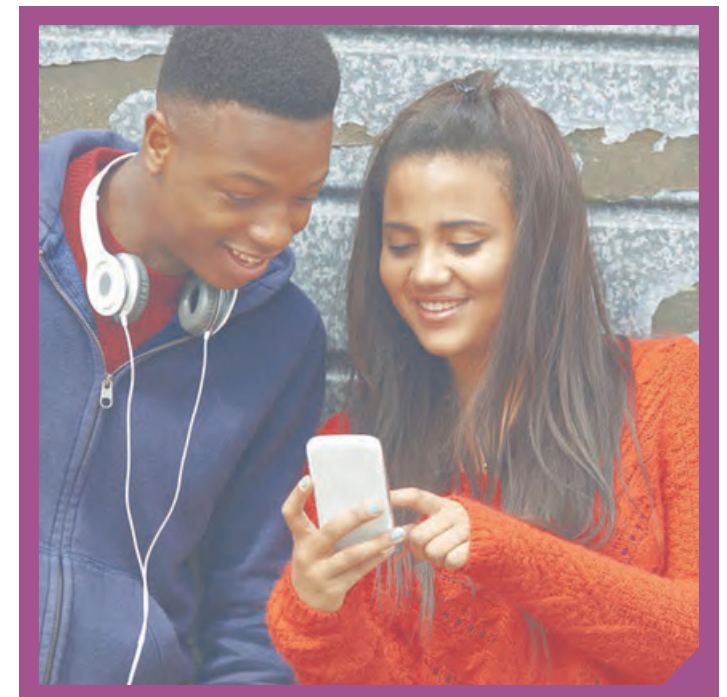
If someone online:

- Makes you feel uncomfortable
 - Asks you to keep secrets
 - Tries to get personal information
 - Says something mean or scary
- 👉 **Talk to a trusted adult**, like a parent, carer, teacher, or school staff member.
- 👉 **You can also block or report the person** to help keep yourself and others safe.



Where to Get Help

- Parents or carers
- Teachers or lecturers
- School counsellors
- Trusted websites with online safety advice (like Childline or Thinkuknow)



Remember:

You have the right to feel safe online. Think before you click, share, or chat. If something doesn't feel right, get help.

Why do some people get involved in actions that hurt others?

Growing up can be really tough. Sometimes you might feel angry, sad, or like no one understands you. That's totally normal, but it can also make you more vulnerable to people who don't have good intentions.

These people might pretend to be your friend, but they could be trying to trick you into doing or believing things that hurt others. This is called grooming, and it can happen online or in real life. They might take advantage of your feelings, especially if you feel like you can't talk to anyone about your thoughts or questions.

"If someone is trying to explain how they feel but no one listens, they might get more and more upset. People say autistic people are inflexible, but sometimes no one is being flexible with them."
(Quote from a young person with autism)

That's why it's so important to have safe spaces where you can talk openly, whether it's with family, friends, teachers, or support groups. Everyone needs to feel heard and supported.

Talking About Big Feelings and Different Opinions

Sometimes we have strong opinions or beliefs, and that's okay! But it's also important to listen to others and be open to different ideas. People often make quick judgments or believe stereotypes without really knowing someone.



For instance, in *The Little Mermaid*, Ariel wants to be a human and marry the prince, but her father assumes all humans are bad, even though he doesn't know any! (Quote from a young person with autism)

That's a great example of a prejudice. And just like not all humans are bad, not all girls want to be rescued by a prince! Stereotypes can hurt people and cause arguments.

It's okay to disagree with someone as long as we do it respectfully. Instead of saying, "I'm right and you're wrong," try asking questions and finding common ground.

'Right and wrong isn't always 'black and white'. Be open minded and compromise; is there an idea in the middle? There is something for everyone; options and choices.' (Quote from a young person with autism)

Is it important to share views in a positive way so that your voice is heard and taken seriously! For instance, through a campaign. Here are some links that direct you towards some positive ways to make a difference:

West Sussex Participation Wiki. Have your voice heard:



www.rixwiki.org/west-sussex-mmm/home/youth-participation-1

UK Youth Parliament – use your voice to bring about real social change:



www.byc.org.uk/uk/uk-youth-parliament

Council for Disabled Children – comment constructively on the latest issues affecting young people with SEND:

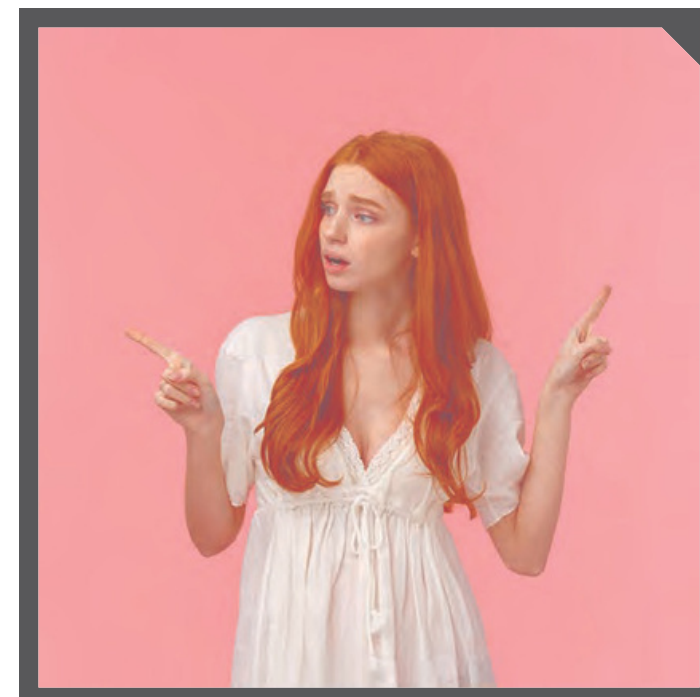


<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk>

Democratic Society – making democracy work for everyone:

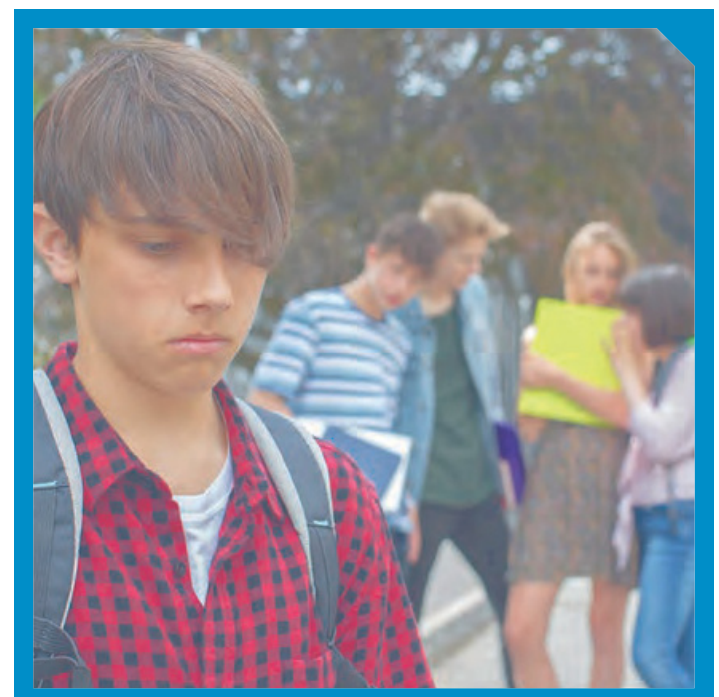


www.demsoc.org



Manipulation

'a certain tone, little chunks at a time, getting someone to do something. I have experienced that in some friendships' –
Quote from an autistic young person



You could also look for youth sections of mainstream political parties that match your values and interests, or support national campaign groups and charities, for example:



www.autism.org.uk/what-we-do/campaign

Prejudice

'An unfair and unreasonable opinion or feeling, especially when formed without enough thought or knowledge'

(Reference: The Cambridge Dictionary Online)

Continued: How might someone get involved in actions that hurt others?

What do ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ mean?

Legal means something is allowed by the law. It’s something you’re allowed to do and won’t get into trouble for.

Example: drive a car but only once you have a driving licence, get a piercing, or change your name

Illegal means something is not allowed by the law. It’s something you shouldn’t do, and you could get into trouble if you do it.

Example: use a sunbed or buy cigarettes if you are under 18, break into a building at any age, or cause harm to someone.



Case study

Breck Bednar was a 14-year-old boy who was manipulated and groomed by a 19-year-old man when they met playing games online.

If you are ever worried about what someone is telling you online, then you can block them and tell someone you trust.

Remember: it can be more difficult to tell if a person is telling the truth about themselves online

Radicalisation is when someone starts to believe very strong ideas that can lead them to think or act in dangerous ways.

Sometimes, people try to **change someone’s mind**

by showing them videos, stories, or messages that make them feel angry, scared, or like they don’t belong. These messages might try to **blame others**

or say that hurting people is the only way to fix a problem.

Radicalisation can happen slowly, and the person might not even realise it’s happening.

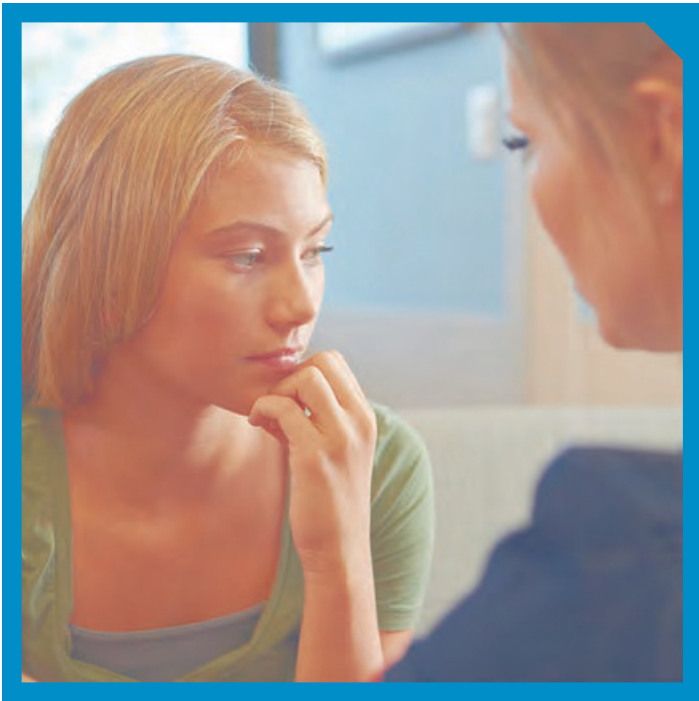


How can someone end up doing something that hurt others?

Sometimes, people can get involved in actions that break important rules or even hurt others without fully realizing it at first.

On the next slide, you’ll see a diagram that shows how this can happen. It helps explain how someone might slowly be influenced or pressured into doing something wrong, especially if they’re feeling upset, left out, or confused.

If you ever feel unsure about something you’re being asked to do, or if you’re worried about a friend, talk to an adult you trust. This could be a parent, teacher, youth worker, or another safe adult. You’re never alone, and there’s always someone who wants to help.



You can also have a look at the resources below to help you:



Childnet – resource that has been developed to help you think about the trustworthiness of content and people online:

www.childnet.com/resources/star-send-toolkit/t-for-trust



Books Beyond Words:

www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk/ebooks/making-friends



Kidscape, Friendship and ‘frenemies’ –

how to tell the difference: www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/advice-for-young-people/friendships-and-frenemies

You can also call:

- Childline: **0800 1111**
- ACT Early Prevent Advice Line **0800 011 3764**

How can someone end up doing something that hurts others?

Sometimes, people don't set out to hurt others, but they can slowly get pulled into doing things that are wrong or harmful. This can happen step by step, especially if they're feeling angry, confused, or just really interested in something.

If you're ever worried about yourself or a friend, **talk to a trusted adult**. You won't get in trouble for asking for help. It's much more important that you stay safe and get support.

If you feel there isn't an adult you can trust, or you are worried about a friend, you can contact:



ACT Early (Prevent advice line):
0800 0113764
www.actearly.uk

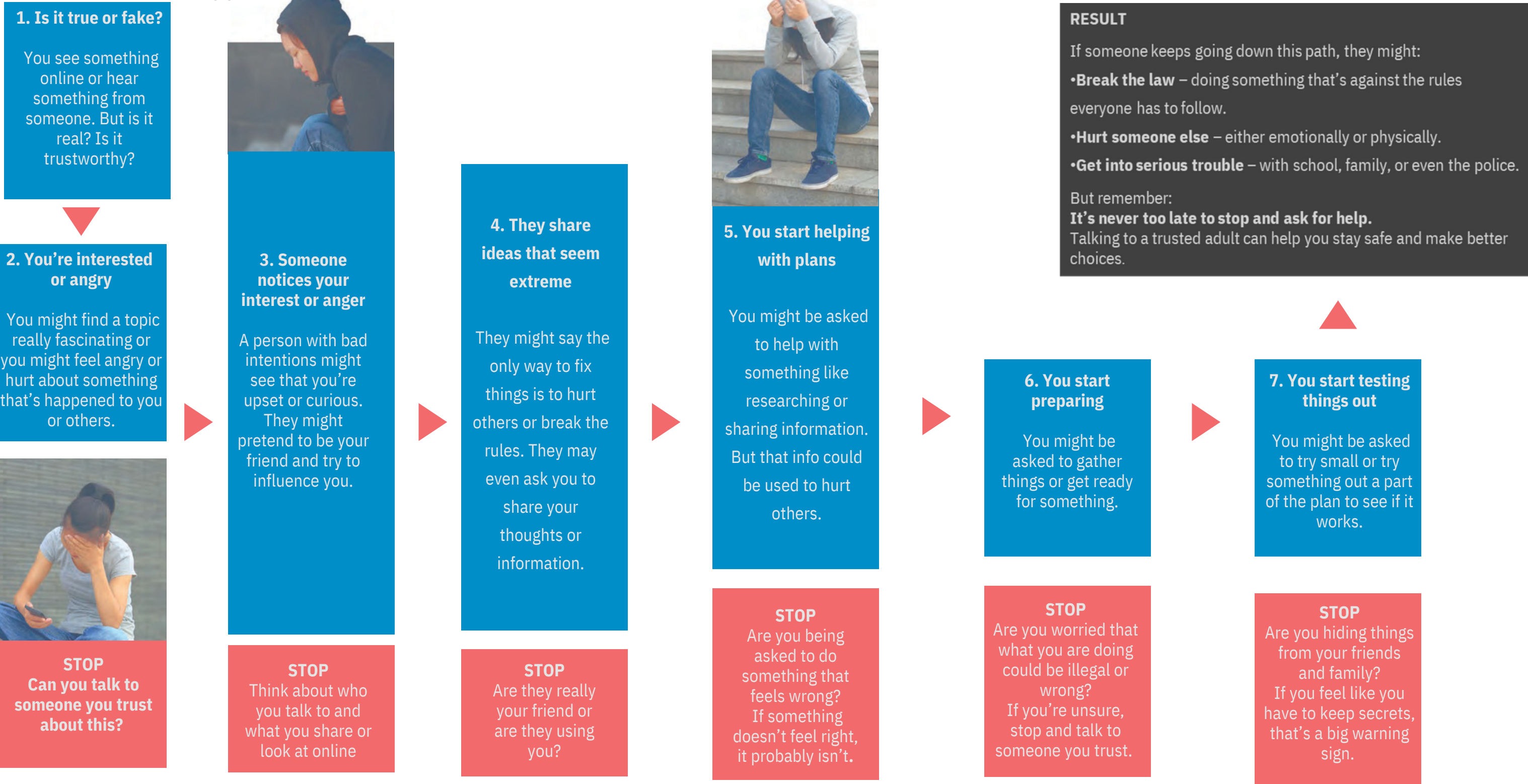


Childline:
0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk/get-support

Tell someone even if you have done something bad yourself, it is better to be honest than keep on carrying on and hiding it.'

(Quote from a young person with autism).

Here's how it can happen:



Suggested reading

For parents



Dealing with bullying – a guide for parents and carers: www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/bullying/bullying/parents



Making friends – a guide for autistic adults: www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/family-life-and-relationships/making-friends/autistic-adults



Learning Disabilities, Autism and Internet Safety. A guide for Parents by Cerebra – Download it here: cerebra.org.uk/download/learning-disabilities-autism-and-internet-safety



Learning Disabilities, Autism and Internet Safety – A Guide for Parents by Mencap and Cerebra: www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-11/Internet-Safety-web-2016.pdf

For young people



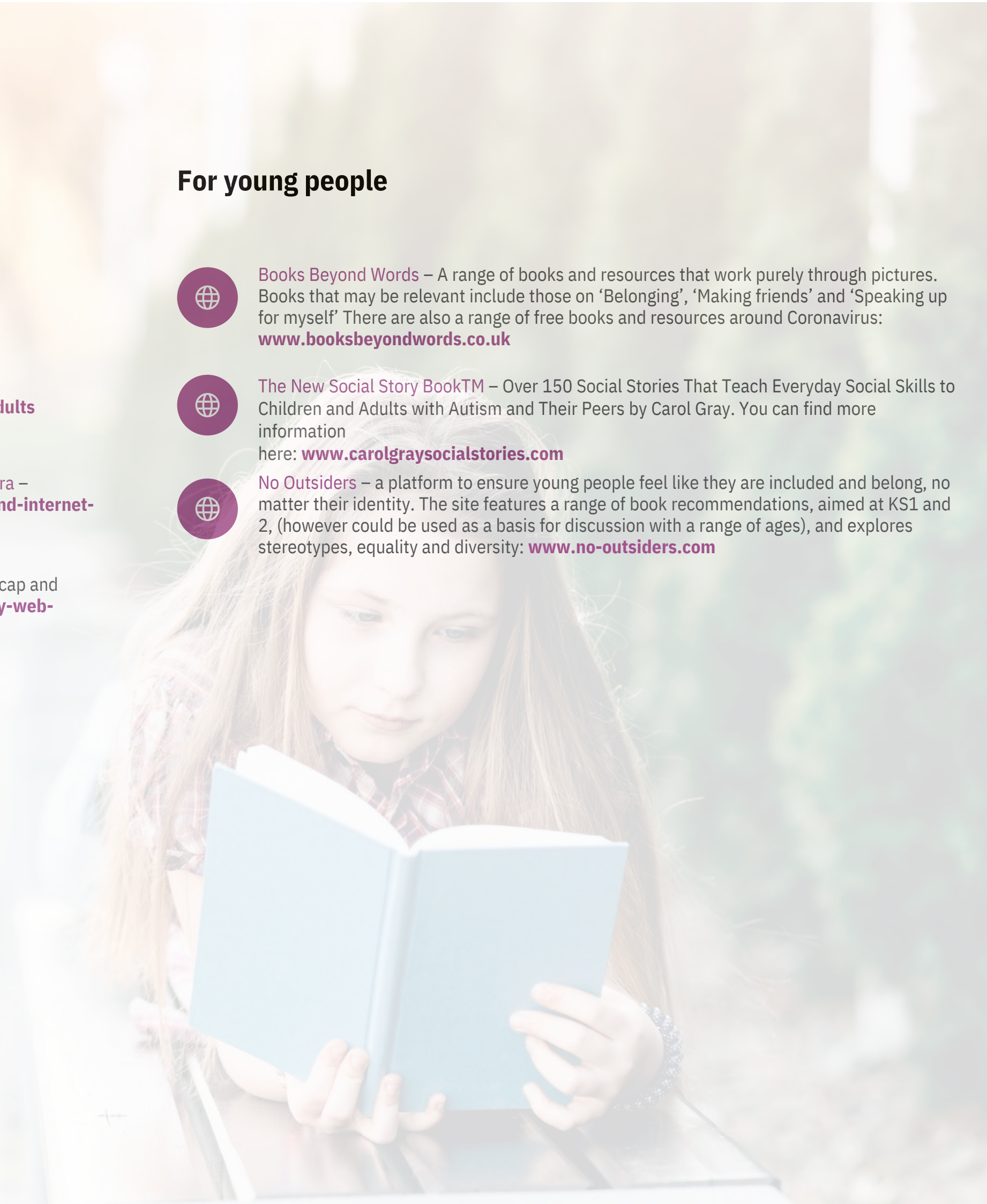
Books Beyond Words – A range of books and resources that work purely through pictures. Books that may be relevant include those on ‘Belonging’, ‘Making friends’ and ‘Speaking up for myself’ There are also a range of free books and resources around Coronavirus: www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk



The New Social Story Book™ – Over 150 Social Stories That Teach Everyday Social Skills to Children and Adults with Autism and Their Peers by Carol Gray. You can find more information here: www.carolgraysocialstories.com



No Outsiders – a platform to ensure young people feel like they are included and belong, no matter their identity. The site features a range of book recommendations, aimed at KS1 and 2, (however could be used as a basis for discussion with a range of ages), and explores stereotypes, equality and diversity: www.no-outsiders.com



Suggested watching

For parents



NSPCC – Parents worried about radicalisation:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOis5CFU8vs&feature=youtu.be



Helping young people manage their online identity created by Internet Matters: www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnHOFlaxQtI



Safeguarding Children with Autism on the Internet | NAS Conference 2015 – Explores the case study of a young boy with autism whose use of the internet led to an increased interest in violence, and explains the interventions that were put in place to safeguard this young person: www.youtube.com/watch?v=1miGnog3OBI

For young people



STAR films – Four animated films aimed at young people with additional needs in KS3 & 4, covering key messages about online safety: www.childnet.com/resources/star-send-toolkit/star-films



‘I’m Muslim but...’ – Could be used to explore stereotypes further: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMQjyRc7eiY



Who am I? Celebrating my identity – A BBC Bitesize video which explains what our identity is and how it can change through time: www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z7y3hbk



‘Rio Paralympics 2016- Yes I can...’ – Again could be a useful video to help explore perceptions and stereotypes: www.youtube.com/watch?v=-cPakutgQZY



How does fake news spread? – BBC Bitesize explains how fake news plays on our emotions and to think before we share: www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z6kxxyc



The seven types of people who start and spread viral misinformation – This BBC Bitesize video explores the different types of people who spread misleading stories online, including conspiracy theories particularly around the Covid-19 pandemic: www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zdb4vwx



Tips for spotting fake news online – Gives you four tips to check something online you’re not sure about: www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zrprj6



Impact - Preventing Radicalisation – A short clip which explores the story of an adult with additional needs being befriended by some people who may groom him into an extreme group: www.youtube.com/watch?v=1l_Fp2GjCNk



Parental Toolkit