



BEECHEN CLIFF

Hot Topic - Incel Subculture

During the summer holidays, the UK was rocked by a mass shooting in Plymouth committed by a 22-year-old young man. Whilst a motive has not been confirmed by police, the perpetrator was a regular contributor to “Incel” message boards and uploaded videos to YouTube of a highly misogynistic and homophobic nature.

Incel stands for “involuntary celibate” a term originally coined by a Canadian feminist over 20 years ago to describe single people looking for partners, but which has morphed into something much darker and sinister on internet message boards where men discuss their warped opinions of women. These message boards have become a sewer of unchecked misogyny with open discussion of violence, rape and sexual assault. In recent years several men who have associated themselves with the Incel subculture have committed violent acts in the real world, including mass murder. These violent acts are praised and lauded on Incel message boards where the perpetrators are described as “Saints”.

Young men are at risk of being radicalised by these extremist groups online. Owing to lockdown, students have been spending more time online, often in isolation, and Incel groups have been targeting young boys in order to groom them. Memes, jokes and videos are all used to try and persuade young boys that women are the enemy. The anti-extremism group Hope Not Hate recently published a study of young British people’s attitudes which found that 50% of young men believe that feminism has “gone too far”, making it more difficult for men to succeed in life.

It is important to be aware of not only the movement, but also some of the slang terms used within the Incel subculture that may indicate an awareness and participation in these online hate forums.

Terms to look out for:

- *Chad*: A man who is deemed to be sexually successful. He is smart, handsome and charming. Incels are caught between detesting these men and wishing they could be them.
- *Stacy*: A woman who has sex with lots of men, usually Chads. Stereotypically, Stacies are described as air-headed, dim, beautiful and promiscuous. The term is used to demean women.

- *AWALT*: An acronym for “all women are like that”. This is used to demean women and generalise them in a negative way.
- *Beta*: A man who is not an “alpha” (Chads). They are deemed as weak and afraid of confrontation.
- *Femoid or Foid*: Term used to describe women. It’s used to refer to women as sub-human and thus to dehumanise them.
- *Normie*: Used to describe anyone who is relatively neurotypical, of average intelligence and looks.
- *Roastie*: Another demeaning term for a woman often used to mean women who have had sex with multiple men.

Incel slang is finding its way into common language, owing to social media and the prominence of memes. This means that our pupils are being exposed to this kind of language and rhetoric, and may take it on board without really thinking about it. Alternatively, and more worryingly, they may be drawn into the Incel mindset.

Given the increasing use of these terms in social memes the use of these terms in isolation does not necessarily mean a strong familiarity or engagement with the Incel subculture, but may indicate some exposure. However, combined with misogynistic comments or any other concerns they should be reported as a safeguarding concern.

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