

10 TIPS

on how to talk to kids about radical influencers



- 1 Choose the right moment and ask for permission to discuss the subject.**
Ask for permission from an honest place of curiosity and care. Avoid preaching as this will often cause them to shut down the conversation.
- 2 Engage in the conversation – do not censor them or judge.**
Ask what they like and what they don't like about this particular character. Let them speak in their own words.
- 3 Start asking open questions about the context.**
How does listening to them make you feel? Do you talk about them with your friends? What is the conversation about? What do you agree with them on? What do you have a different opinion about?
- 4 Dig deeper into more critical topics after you've built trust in the conversation.**
Some topics could include: respecting women, having a ripped body, showing off their money, gender expressions, etc. Ex: Do you agree with his statement about women? Do you think the women in your life would be hurt by that point of view?
- 5 Help them identify both the positive and negatives aspects of influencers - and help to separate the two.**
Summarize and repeat back what they are saying. What sounds accurate? What might describe it differently or better than how you understood it? Recognize that they don't need to like/dislike everything about an individual and can admire elements while disagreeing with others. Ex: You can be successful and confident while being kind. You don't have to put others down to be successful.
- 6 Figure out what parts of the messaging resonate with boys.**
Consider which life stage they are at. What confuses/bothers them? What is inspiring them or important to them at the moment? How does this link to the message they get from the influencers. What are the alternative views from other role models? What other stories compare and contrast to these?
- 7 Talk to them about how social media works. (And if you don't know, learn for yourself too).**
Talk about how social media is designed to serve them stories similar to what they are already engaging with, as well as controversial and divisive ideas, so it amplifies certain kinds of content, which can create a false sense of reality. Recognize that even though influencers seem 'normal' their images are heavily staged and only show (the best) parts of their real lives. Show how what they see online is likely to be a limited view of a much broader world.
- 8 Show them what they have learned through this conversation, and acknowledge that you're learning too.**
It's about helping them to develop their own critical thinking, not imposing our perspectives. Thank them for teaching you and helping you think together about the subject.
- 9 Continue the conversation.**
Ask if there is anything else they would like to talk about. Keep checking in even if you're frustrated or finding the topic uncomfortable. It's better to discuss it together rather than ignore it.
- 10 Remind them that these issues are deeply embedded in our culture.**
Talk about how no single radical influencer is solely responsible for perpetuating harmful views. To challenge dangerous attitudes we must remember that this is a part of a wider societal problem.