



*Understanding and addressing
gender-based violence with boys*

AMANDA KEDDIE, DEAKIN UNIVERSITY



ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY



Overview of presentation

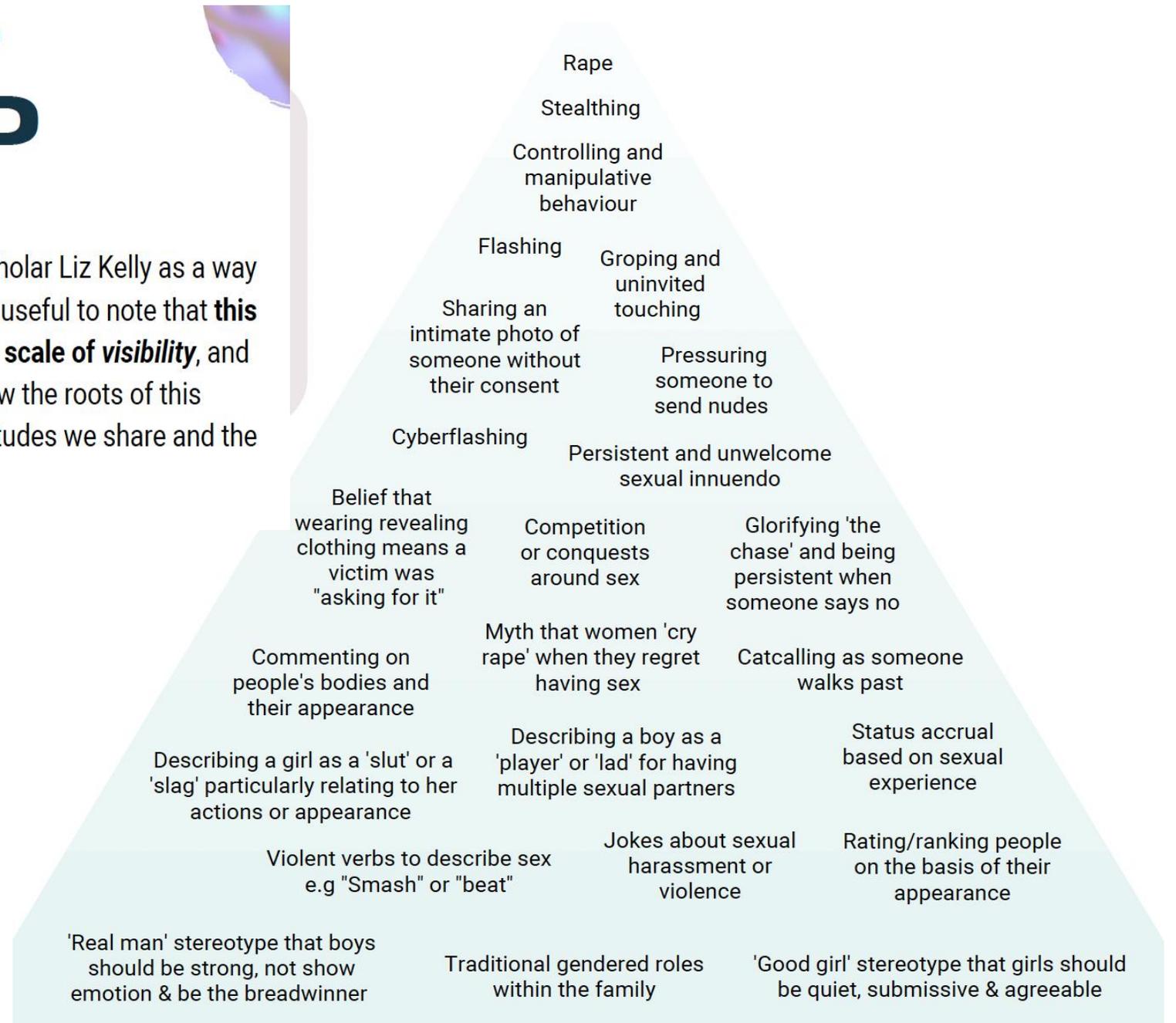
- What is gender-based violence?
- Gender-based violence in schools
- Myths and misconceptions that shape schools' response to gender-based violence
- Young men's online lives
- How are schools responding?

CONTINUUM OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The gender-based violence continuum was developed by scholar Liz Kelly as a way of visualising the culture which leads to sexual violence. It's useful to note that **this is not a severity scale**, rather, it can be helpful to view it as **a scale of visibility**, and even of **acceptance** in our society. It's also useful to note how the roots of this culture stem from gender stereotypes, which inform the attitudes we share and the ways in which we treat each other.

A BOLD VOICES SCHOOLS TOOLKIT

What is gender-based violence?



Gender-based violence in schools

Melbourne private school boys' ongoing sexist culture is unacceptable, but fixable

Police investigate sexually explicit deepfake images of students at Gladstone Park Secondary College

Sydney teenager allegedly used AI to create deepfake pornography of students

Students at Yarra Valley Grammar suspended over offensive ranking of female students

Cranbrook school principal resigns over allegations he knew about teacher's 'extremely concerning past conduct'

Victorian teachers also victims of fake explicit images created by students using AI

'Do they even know they did this to us?': why I launched the school sexual assault petition

Chanel Contos

STUDENT WELL-BEING

Misogynist Influencer Andrew Tate Has Captured Boys' Attention. What Teachers Need to Know



By [Madeline Will](#) — February 02, 2023 ⌚ 9 min read

Abuse scandal shocks St Kevin's College

Wesley College refers sexual assault and harassment complaints to police



Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education >

Volume 24, 2003 - Issue 3

Submit an article

Journal homepage

498

Views

32

CrossRef citations to date

13

Altmetric

Original Articles

Little Boys: tomorrow's macho lads

Amanda Keddie

Pages 289-306 | Published online: 03 Jun 2010

Cite this article <https://doi.org/10.1080/0159630032000172498>

Gender-based violence in schools: what does it look like?



Oxford Review of Education >

Volume 32, 2006 - Issue 4

Submit an article

Journal homepage

Enter keywords, authors, DOI, etc

465

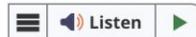
Views

22

CrossRef citations to date

0

Altmetric



Original Articles

Fighting, anger, frustration and tears: Matthew's story of hegemonic masculinity

Amanda Keddie

Pages 521-534 | Published online: 20 Nov 2006

Cite this article <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054980600884243>

Myths and misconceptions

- More male role models?
- Boy friendly curriculum?
- Dangers of collusion through essentialising boys and young men...



Myths and misconceptions

YOUNG MEN ARE
UNCRITICAL/TOXIC?

Being a young man online

Tensions, complexities
and possibilities



What we found: young men are highly critical. Across both studies, young men:

- Recognise manipulation, exaggeration, and monetisation
- Many reject hyper-masculine norms
- Understand how algorithms target insecurity and gender
- Algorithms curate their feeds
- Show strong scepticism toward influencers





Young men's critical engagement with misogyny and sexism online

- 'Tate's justifications for cheating on his partners as not "cheating" but "exercise", his focus on how much money he's got and how many girls he's been with, and his alleged trafficking. I don't really wanna consume his content.' – Jase, age 20
- '[H]e really wants to be a loving father and he really respects the women in his life, but [he] also runs a freaking [human] trafficking ring ... [H]e's going on about how he doesn't own anybody, but he's getting arrested for literally owning and stealing money off of webcam models.' – Lionel, age 20
- 'If Andrew Tate is your role model, it's pretty concerning' ... 'the things he says makes me so uncomfortable' Felix, age 20

Young men's critical engagement with online pornography

- '[pornography] makes you view [women] more as a sexual object rather than a human being ... I think a lot of people grow up with it, and then they end up not having total respect for women, as just regular people at the end of the day.' – Nico, age 18
- '[Online pornography] alters a lot of your perspectives on women ... The second you see one, your first thought is, what would she look like with her clothes off instead of, you know, that's actually a person. I think it's the whole reason behind the objectification in today's society.' – Omer, age 17
- '[porn affects] their idea of what consent is, because there's no consent in porn and so they don't have that real concept of it.' – Jesse, age 18



How are schools responding to gender-based violence?

Transformative / Gender-Justice Aligned

- **Critical pedagogies** – interrogating power, privilege & gender norms.
- **Critical digital literacy** – navigating & challenging harmful online content.
- **Whole-school approaches** – respectful relationships embedded across policy, curriculum & culture.
- **Youth participatory action research** – students as co-designers of change.
- **Peer-led initiatives** – student clubs, campaigns, allyship programs.
- **Staff professional learning** – sustained reflection & capacity building.

Broader / Limited (if stand-alone)

- **One-off assemblies/guest speakers** – raise awareness but little follow-up.
- **Behaviour management frameworks** – discipline without culture change.
- **Wellbeing/resilience programs** – focus on individuals, not structures.
- **Generic values education** – promotes respect/kindness without tackling power.
- **Sport/male role model programs** – risk reinforcing stereotypes.
- **Reactive responses** – act only after incidents, not preventative.

What are some ways forward?

- A whole-school approach
- Curriculum resources
- Sustained professional learning for teachers



Ongoing and sustained support for a whole school approach



Curriculum resources

Building
Respectful
Relationships

Stepping out against gender-based violence



**A BOLD VOICES
SCHOOLS TOOLKIT**

**HOW TO TALK
TO YOUNG
PEOPLE ABOUT
ANDREW TATE**

<https://www.boldvoices.co.uk/resources>

Teaching for gender justice with boys involves:

- **Challenging dominant masculinities**
 - Question boys' investments in ideals of domination, control, physical strength, and rejection of femininity.
 - Open up space for alternative, equitable ways of being male.
- **Broadening understandings of difference and diversity**
 - Teach boys to see gender as complex and relational.
 - Connect gender to other identity markers (race, class, sexuality, ability) to expand empathy and inclusion.
- **Fostering critical self-reflection**
 - Support boys to reflect on how they construct and perform their own identities.
 - Encourage them to consider how they perceive and represent others through the lens of gender.



Creating safe, respectful and trusting environments

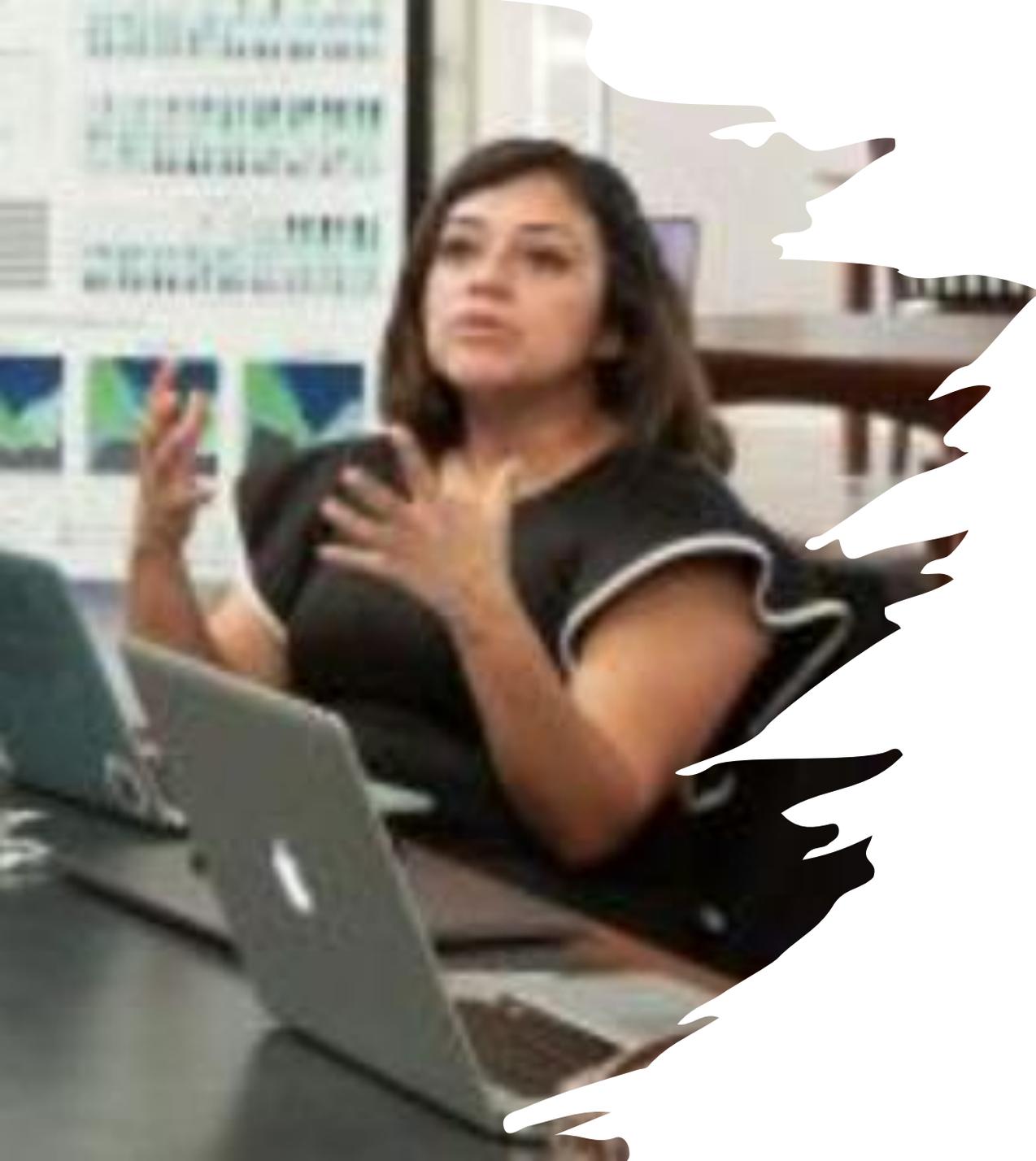
- **First: how we position boys.**
Use strengths-based approaches—notice boys' empathy, curiosity, and ethical concern.
- **Second: how we communicate.**
Avoid alarmist narratives. Use language that resonates and recognise that boys are not a homogenous group
- **Third: what we build.**
Develop emotional literacy and practical skills: how to respond to harmful content, how to regulate, how to engage ethically.



Ongoing and sustained professional learning for teachers

- Teaching for gender justice is challenging, relational, and often contentious
- Requires courage, care, and sustained commitment from educators
- One-off training is insufficient for meaningful cultural change
- Teachers need time and space to reflect, collaborate, and build shared practice
- Professional learning must include critical reflection on gender, power, and pedagogy





Principles for teacher self-reflexivity in gender justice work

- Interrogate biases and assumptions about boys and masculinity
- Recognise everyday forms of complicity in gendered practices
- Navigate pedagogic discomfort when power and privilege are challenged
- Practise mutual vulnerability through openness and humility
- Engage in ongoing ethical self-reflection about impact and responsibility

Teaching for gender justice with boys — concluding reflections

- Gender-based violence is shaped by everyday gender norms
- Boys' lives and engagements with gender are complex and uneven
- Schools are powerful sites of prevention and possibility
- Gender justice work requires sustained, whole-school commitment