

The Threat Landscape: Incel and Misogynist Violent Extremism

Read-Ahead Materials for the US Prevention Practitioners Network

Background - the US Prevention Practitioners Network

Over the next two years, [the McCain Institute](#), with support from [the Institute for Strategic Dialogue](#) (ISD) and a steering committee of violence prevention and social safety experts, will develop and engage a [US practitioners network](#) for individuals working in **targeted violence and terrorism prevention (TVTP)**. The aim of this is not only to connect practitioners across the US with one another, but also to build their capacity and the efficacy of their programs through a series of workshops that cover both theoretical and practical elements of delivering prevention and intervention initiatives. This information pack is for the second workshop in a four-part mini-series about the targeted violence and terrorism **threat landscape in the US**.

Why is it important to understand the threat landscape?

To be able to address targeted violence and terrorism in a focused and proportionate manner, practitioners must first build an evidence-based understanding of the specific nature of the challenge, particularly the dominant ideas, movements and narratives that comprise the domestic threat landscape. The McCain Institute and ISD are therefore hosting a series of workshops to equip participants and members of the emerging Practitioners Network with an understanding of the nature of the contemporary challenge. Reflecting the [National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism](#), which was released in June 2021 and identifies racially or ethnically motivated violence and anti-government violence as primary threats, the first workshop in this mini-series addressed white supremacist and militia violence. This information pack is for the second workshop in the threat landscape series, which covers **Incel and "manosphere"-related misogynist violence**. This will be followed by workshops on internationally-inspired violent extremism and the role of mis- / disinformation in driving targeted violence.

What is the purpose of this document?

These read-ahead materials provide an overview of Incel and misogynist violent extremism in the US, and is informed by both desk-based and ethnographic research. Rather than comprising an exhaustive deep-dive into extreme misogynist movements, this document provides high-level insights about the contours and narratives that underpin these complex movements, which may help practitioners as they incorporate TVTP into their work. This information pack provides:

- an introduction to the "manosphere";
- an overview of different misogynist communities and a run-through of prevalent narratives and terminology;
- a look at how violent misogyny may overlap with other forms of targeted violence;
- challenges with responding to Incels and misogynist violence;
- a glossary of terms and phrases and further reading recommendations.

This document provides names of extremists to aid practitioners in understanding specific ideologies. Publicizing names of extremists widely raises ethical issues with increasing visibility and promotion of violent movements. This document also mentions rape and suicide, so ISD, the McCain Institute and the Prevention Practitioners Network Steering Committee urge caution when sharing this with others.

Documents like this one are provided ahead of every workshop. Past documents and workshop recordings can be [found here](#). For any inquiries, please contact [the McCain Institute](#) or [ISD](#).

Background - the "manosphere"

The "manosphere" is an umbrella term referring to a number of interconnected misogynistic communities online. It encompasses multiple types and degrees of misogyny – from broader male supremacist discourse to men's rights activism and "involuntary celibates". This document explores the following more extreme and harmful proponents of the "manosphere":

- **Incels** - short for "involuntary celibates", Incel communities believe they are entitled to sex and because they haven't had sex recently or at all, they feel a bitterness or hatred towards women (most self-identified Incels are men) and their stations in life.
- **Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW)** - a male separatist movement present primarily in North America.
- **Men's Rights Activists (MRA)** - an anti-feminist movement that believes male privilege is a myth and, to the contrary, that societal and political structures privilege women.
- **Pick-up Artists (PUA)** - a movement that dehumanizes women as sexual objects, and that claims women need to be sexually available for men at all times. Some affiliates advocate for the legalization of rape.

Why is it dangerous?

The "manosphere" is dangerous because it is founded in anti-women hate. Individuals and networks in the "manosphere" express conspiratorial and often violent beliefs about women, where a woman's only value is her ability to procreate or to fulfil the sexual needs and desires of men, where women are referred to as subhuman sexual objects, and where feminism is seen as an enemy of mankind, among others.

Perhaps most pointedly, the "manosphere" is also dangerous in its proven potential to lead to violence and to serve as a gateway to other types of hate. There exists, for example, significant overlap between narratives espoused within the "manosphere" and those put forth by white supremacist groups. The "manosphere", specifically Incels, have also been associated with acts of mass violence (see [page 6](#) for more information). Incel-related violence is increasingly regarded as a form of terrorism - in Canada, for example, the perpetrator of a fatal stabbing was [charged](#) with terrorism offences, while in the UK a recent [Incel-related arrest](#) was charged under the UK's Terrorism Act. In the US, the National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism [recognizes](#) Incel violent extremism as a potential single-issue motivator for terrorism.

This threat is exacerbated by a lack of (or slow) response from the tech. companies and public safety stakeholders - the relative nascency of the "manosphere", its coded language, and a historical focus on other forms of targeted violence means that there has been little streamlined effort to counter the threat posed by violent elements of the "manosphere". Much of the harmful content posted by related individuals therefore stays online and is easily accessible.

Incels - Background, Key Narratives and Related Violence

- **Background:**

While Incel violence is a relatively new phenomenon, the label of "Incel" has been around since the 1990s, when a Canadian college student created a website titled the "Involuntary Celibacy Project" to help those struggling with dating and intimate relations with others. Incel forums therefore started as well-intended support communities where individuals could exchange their anxieties about dating. It wasn't until the early 2000s that Incel forums became increasingly misogynistic, when new, less-moderated forums arose in which users started scapegoating - where women were blamed for the struggles faced by single men - rather than just providing each other with support and exchanging dating concerns.

Today, Incel forums are overwhelmingly male-dominated and rife with misogyny that ranges in severity from broader generalizations of women to pro-rape discourse. Violent Incel discourse and propaganda is now readily available across fringe platforms like 4chan and 8Kun, as well as more mainstream sites like Reddit. Also prevalent are sites created by Incels for Incels, many of which remain online despite incitements to and glorification of violence present throughout. Often when these sites have been taken down, new ones have emerged shortly after.

- **Incel "culture" - key narratives and terminology:**

Incels use coded language to express themselves. This includes*:

- **Characterizations** - Incels use labels to stereotype men and women into different "types", including:

-cel:

Some Incels add the suffix "cel" to other words to categorize themselves further. This includes labels to refer to:

- **Physical traits they deem responsible for their involuntary celibacy.** Examples include: "acnecel", "heightcel", "baldcel", "stuttercel".
- **Harmful or illegal desires.** "Pedocel", for example, is short for "pedophile Incel". Also prevalent is "rapecel", or Incels that glorify sexual violence and in some cases advocate for the legalization of rape.
- **Other identities.** Some south Asian Incels call themselves "currycels", for example, while Incels of southeast Asian descent may call themselves "ricecels". This may also refer to religious identity (e.g. "Muslimcel").
- **Coping mechanisms** Incels use to deal with their sexual "failings" (e.g. "gymcel", "escortcel").
- **Incel status** - some Incels may accuse others of being "fakecels". Other examples include "nearcels", which is used to refer to those who rarely have sex but don't quite qualify as Incels, and "wizardcel", which is an Incel who is a virgin at 30+ years old.

* For more, see [Moonshot CVE's "Incels: A Guide to Symbols and Terminology"](#) and Dr. Tim Squirrell's ["A Definitive Guide to Incels - the A-Z Incel Dictionary"](#).

Alphas, Betas and Omega:

Incels generally self-identify as Betas or Omegas, where, in contrast, Alphas are men that are considered sexually “successful” and traditionally handsome, and are characterized as confident, assertive and dominant.

Chads, Stacys and Beckys:

Similarly to Alphas, Chads are considered the opposite of Incels in that they are “successful” with women and “conventionally handsome”. Incels may refer to Chads in a mocking sense or with admiration. Incels may also use racialized versions of Chad, including “Chadpreet”, “Chaddam”, “Chang”. In some cases, Incels may use “Tyrone” to refer to Black “Chads”. These are founded in racist stereotypes and are but one example of how Incels may integrate misogyny with other forms of bias.

Stacys are the female equivalent to Chads, but generally referred to more negatively than Chads are. Stacys are often characterized as beautiful, hyper-feminine but “dumb” and promiscuous. Incels believe Stacys will only go for Chads or “Alphas”. Beckys are considered more basic and therefore beneath Stacys in terms of appearance.

Pictured right: Beckys vs Stacys from Jennings, Rebecca. “[Incels Categorize Women by Personal Style and Attractiveness](#)”, VOX, 2018.



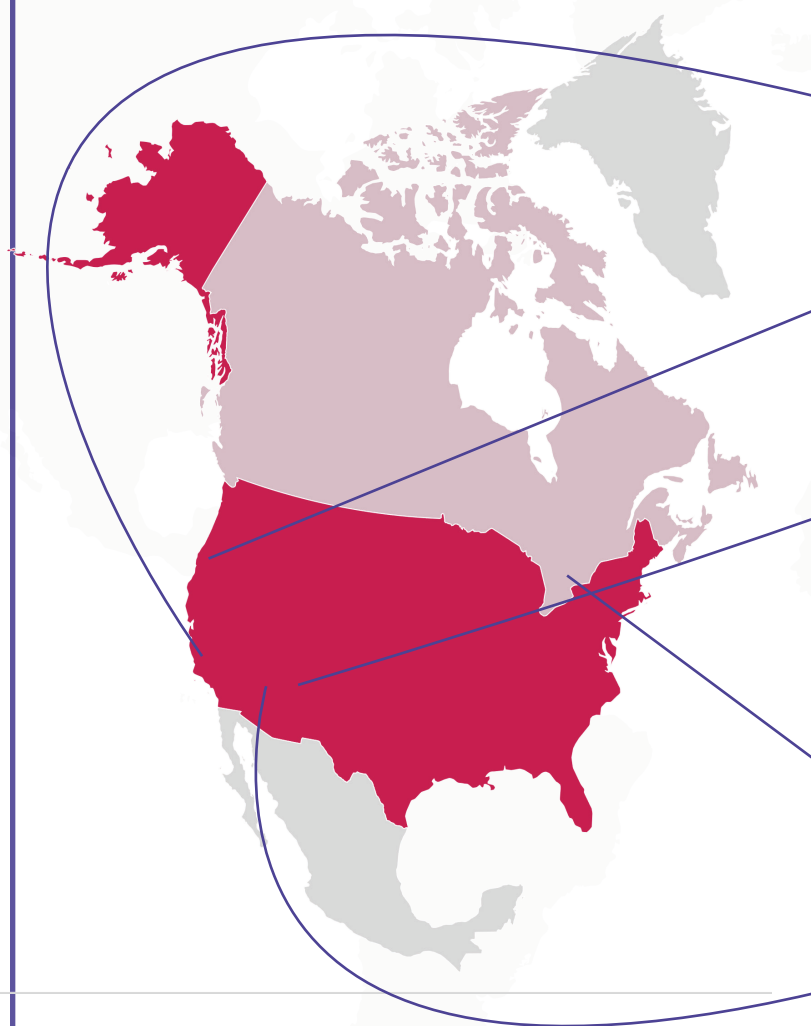
- **Dehumanization of women** - in addition to labels like "Becky" and "Stacy", Incels use other terms and narratives to belittle and degrade women, including:
 - **"AWALT"** - short for "all women are like that", used to generalize and stereotype women.
 - **"Femoids", "foids" or "FHO"** - short for “female humanoids” or “female humanoid organism”, these terms position women not only as less than men, but as less than human.
 - **Hypergamy** - taken from animal biology and inaccurately applied to women, hypergamy is the concept of “mating upwards”. Incels believe women are hypergamous and therefore will always seek relationships with men of higher status than themselves, or than the men they are currently with. This, in turn, stereotypes women as disloyal, opportunistic, and greedy. Incels may therefore also refer to women as "branch-swingers" or "vine-swingers" to enforce the belief that women are always seeking "better" men, and are therefore always "swinging" from one relationship to the other for opportunistic reasons, be it money, looks, or the status a certain (Alpha) partner may give them. **The belief that women are hypergamous is core to Incel ideology.**

- **"Pilling" language** - Terminology used in Incel and other "manosphere" forums often reference different colored pills, each of which refers to a different level of exposure to and/or acceptance of what these groups deem to be reality. These metaphorical pills are inspired by the film *The Matrix*, in which the protagonist is offered a blue pill or a red pill, the latter of which will show him how the world really is. In this vein, affiliates of these different online communities refer to being "redpilled" as recognizing and embracing their worldview. **"Pilling" language as such is also seen in racially or ethnically motivated violent extremist (REMVE) groups, further nodding to the overlap that exists between these ideologies.**

Importantly, given the popularity of the film that inspired this terminology, if an individual uses such language it does not mean they necessarily associate with hateful movements. "Pilling" language therefore needs to be understood in the broader context of how it is used.

- **The Red Pill:** The red pill is essentially an acceptance of the worldviews put forth by whatever individual or group is using the term. In the context of the "manosphere", therefore, the red pill is recognizing among others that feminism is harmful to men, that men are the victims of a gynocentric world, and, especially amongst Incels and PUAs, that men are entitled to sex and that women should therefore be sexually available to them. Importantly, the red pill is used not only to denote abidance by these narratives, but also as a call to action to further disseminate them. Many Incel forums and MRA websites now feature videos or threads about "how to redpill" others, especially women. Similarly, some sites directly call to its visitors to "take the red pill", where the red pill is offered as an explanation for and solution to all the woes and ills of men, whether that's unhappiness in marriage, unemployment or self-esteem. Finally, individuals that consider themselves "redpilled" may refer to those that aren't as "normies" or as "bluepilled", usually derogatorily.
- **The Blue Pill:** The blue pill sits opposite the red pill. If you are bluepilled, you are considered to be ignorant of how the world really is. In other words, you don't abide by the worldview put forth by those that consider themselves redpilled.
- **The Black Pill:** The black pill is not as common across all components of the "manosphere" as the red pill is. Most notably, it is used by Incels to refer to hopelessness – that there is no way out of being an Incel. While both redpilled and blackpilled Incels are unhappy with being "involuntarily celibate", those that identify as redpilled generally feel there are ways out of that status, while those that identify as blackpilled believe "that their situation is permanent and inescapable". Dissimilar to MRAs and PUAs, Incel forums are therefore often rife with imagery and mentions of suicide, of "LDAR" (lie down and rot) or of "going ER", in which ER refers to Elliot Rodger of the Isla Vista killings.
- **The Pink Pill:** As noted by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), "while many Incels argue that women by definition cannot be Incels, since there will always be Incels willing to sleep with women, femcels (female Incels) do make up a small subset of Incel culture". The pink pill is used by female Incels essentially the same way the black pill is used by male Incels – it is the belief that nothing will change their situation and they will never be considered desirable by men.
- **The Rape Pill:** the rape pill is used exclusively amongst a subset of the Incel community (rapecels) that believe male-female sexual relations should always be decided by the man and that female consent is therefore not necessary.

- **Violence** - while Incel forums vary in severity, the danger of the movement is evident in recent violent acts of self-identified incels. Elliot Rodger and Alek Minassian, both of whom identified as Incels and committed mass murder targeting women and/or couples, are two high profile examples. In addition to their violent attacks, both left behind graphic "manifestos", with Elliot Rodger's "manifesto" speaking of the need for concentration camps to exterminate women, with the exception of a select few that are kept for reproductive purposes. Notably, many Incels have not condemned either individual nor tried to distance the movement from these acts – on the contrary, some forums refer to Rodger as "Saint Elliot" or "Supreme Elliot Rodger" and call for more men to replicate his actions, echoing the lionization of terrorists as "Saints" by white supremacists.
- Listed below are some high profile instances of Incel-related violence and plots in the past decade. See the [ADL's record](#) of Incel violence and plots for more.



Isla Vista, California (2014)

Elliot Rodger kills seven (including himself) and injures an additional seven in an attack on women and couples. He is still revered in many Incel forums.

Roseburg, Oregon (2015)

Chris Harper Mercer kills ten (including himself). He frequented Incel forums as an active poster, expressing anger over his perceived lack of sexual success.

Aztec, New Mexico (2017)

William Edward Atchison kills two at a high school and then shoots himself. He previously praised Elliot Rodger online.

Toronto, Canada (2018)

Alek Minassian kills ten and injures 15 in a vehicle-ramming attack. On his social media channels, he expressed admiration for and being inspired by Elliot Rodger, and that he hopes his own attack will in turn inspire more violence.

Glendale, Arizona (2020)

A man who [identified as an Incel](#) online attacks a mall, injuring three.

Did you know? In the past seven years, [more than 53 people have been killed and hundreds injured](#) in Incel-related attacks. 2020 saw a rise in Incel-related violence and even though only [one attack resulted in fatalities](#), there were many more incidents where Incels expressed an interest in or carried out attacks that failed. There are also increasing signs that the Incel ideology is [spreading beyond North America to Europe](#). In the UK, for example, a man who was [known to engage in Incel forums](#) was recently charged with [seven terrorism-related offenses](#).

Background:

It is difficult to draw a clear-cut line between Incels, Men's Rights Activists (MRA), Pick-Up Artists (PUA) and Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW). They all draw on the same underlying belief of male victimhood – specifically that women and feminism are at fault for the "lowly" status in which modern men find themselves. Incels, MRA, PUA and MGTOW communities may also borrow each other's language and aspects of each other's ideologies. Affiliates of each may also incite or glorify violence, especially sexual violence against women. There are, however, areas in which they diverge:

- **MRA** - MRA communities differ from Incels in that affiliates do not define themselves by the status of their sex life or intimate relations with women. MRA rhetoric focuses much less on sex, rather it criticizes gender equality, women's rights, and women's status in society more broadly. Some believe, for example, that women's suffrage, women's right to education and to a life in the public sphere rather than just domestic sphere have all contributed to a declining status and power of men in society, and that this needs to be reversed. In contrast to both Incel and PUA discourse, MRA movements generally make a more concerted effort to "formalize" their discourse by framing it within academic terms, thus adding a false sense of legitimacy to their claims. For example, *A Voice for Men*, one of the most visible MRA websites, claims its mission statement is to "provide education and encouragement to men and boys: to lift them above the din of misandry, to reject the unhealthy demands of **gynocentrism** in all its forms...". While this seems harmless, the site is full of misogynistic content. In an audio recording on the site, for example, the site's founder states that "p**** is the only real empowerment women will ever know", effectively belittling women down to sexual objects. There has also been MRA-related violence - in 2020, an [MRA-affiliated individual attacked the home of a federal judge](#), who previously presided over a case that involved the individual. While the judge wasn't home, her family was - her son was killed and her husband seriously injured.

Similarly to Incels, MRA movements purport the idea that women are by nature **hypergamous** – they will always marry or mate "upwards", with a man of higher status than themselves or the one they are currently with. MRAs argue that this is because of the gynocentric environment and society in which women have been raised.

Did you know? Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "gynocentric" as "dominated by or emphasizing feminine interests or a feminine point of view". MRA movements argue that society is gynocentric and therefore favors women over men. Female privilege is therefore seen as reality, whereas male privilege is seen a lie espoused by mainstream media and by feminists. MRAs argue that gynocentrism is prevalent across all aspects of life, particularly in courts of law, which they accuse of favoring women especially in divorce or rape cases. Many MRA affiliates believe modern marriage is also gynocentric, in that it is burdensome on men financially and emotionally. That said, not all MRA affiliates are opposed to marriage so long as the husband-wife dynamic is ideologically appropriate. There are a number of articles on MRA sites on how to choose an appropriate wife, for example, and how to address and handle your marriage after you've been redpilled.

- **PUA** - This movement compares to incel communities in that they feel men are owed sex and that women therefore need to be sexually available at all times. As their names suggest, PUA communities focus on teaching its affiliates how to manipulate women into sex. Arguably the most visible name within these communities is "Roosh V", founder of the *Return of Kings* website. Derogatory, homophobic terms like "soy boy" and "faggot" are commonplace across the site while women and feminism are blamed for what is perceived to be an increasing intolerance towards men. The site also contains articles that mock sexual violence and sexual consent, claiming among others that all girls have a rape story because it is how they compete with one another. Roosh V's own site takes this further by proposing rape be legalized on private property, in which he writes "Let's make rape legal. Less women will be raped because they won't voluntarily drug themselves with booze and follow a strange man into a bedroom..."
- **MGTOW** - Similar to MRAs, MGTOW communities blame feminism for the "woes" and perceived decline of modern men. However, while MRAs and related anti-feminist groups celebrate patriarchy and may advocate for confining women to the domestic sphere, MGTOW affiliates advocate for a world without women. They believe that existing societal structures are impossible to change, and that the only remaining avenue to protect male interests is to segregate along gender lines. MGTOW narratives are therefore full of misogynistic fear-mongering, where women are stereotyped as deceptive, incapable of honesty, "out to get men" and where society is positioned as matriarchal. Similar to MRAs, therefore, MGTOW believe that men are victims of gynocentrism, and that men are entrapped by modern society as silent breadwinners.

MGTOW differ from MRAs, however, in that the movement is exclusively male. While MRA is male-dominated, it accepts women as "men's rights activists" so long as they are ideologically aligned and serve to abolish feminism. MGTOW, however, explicitly forbid participation from women. This is similar to Incels - whereas there are women that identify as Incels (e.g. "femcels"), most Incels reject the idea that women can be "involuntarily celibate".

In addition, MGTOW have strict entry requirements and have provided potential affiliates with stages through which they can track their commitment to the MGTOW cause:

Stage Zero:

"Situational Awareness" - the "red pill" has been taken - gender equality is understood as a feminist lie.



Stage One:

"Rejection of Long-Term Relationships" - the individual abstains from long-term intimate relations with women.



Stage Two:

"Rejection of Short-Term Relationships" - the individual abstains from all sexual relations with women, including one-time hookups.

Stage Three:

"Economic Disengagement" - the individual harbors anti-government sentiment, where the government is deemed a tyrannical force seeking to drain its citizens financially. The individual commits to earning no more than is necessary to sustain him.



Stage Four:

"Societal Disengagement" - the final stage, where the individual commits to separatism by refusing to interact with society.

Overlap with Other Types of Targeted Violence

While the misogyny and violence that has become so prevalent in "manosphere" communities merits concern in and of itself, Inceldom and the wider violent misogynist landscape is also dangerous in its potential to act as a ["gateway drug"](#) to other types of hate. This section outlines some of the overlaps between violent misogyny and other types of targeted violence.

- **Overlap with REMVE*:**

Research by the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) (SPLC) shows significant cross-pollination between the "manosphere" and REMVE. While affiliates of one may not explicitly identify as the other, there have been instances of graphic misogynistic content on REMVE sites and reference to REMVE ideology in Incel forums. Incel forums are often riddled with racist stereotyping, for example, including the fetishization and objectification of Asian women and the belief that features considered to be Aryan are superior to all others. On the other hand, REMVE communities, especially white supremacist ones, are full of toxic masculinity, expressed through anti-LGBTQ and anti-feminist sentiment that blames both for the perceived decline of the white race. REMVE groups may also advocate for abolishing feminism and restricting women to the private sphere of the household, thus overlapping clearly with MRA narratives.

A telling, more specific example of the overlap between violent misogyny and REMVE can be found in the *The Daily Stormer* and its founder, Andrew Anglin. *The Daily Stormer* is a neo-Nazi, antisemitic site that also features dehumanizing discourse towards women and prides itself on being "the most censored publication in history". This symbiosis of rhetoric is evident in quotes from Anglin's articles that read "women are the Jews of gender" and that "women use their bodies like Jews use their Jew gold – as a manipulation tool to get what they want". Here, Anglin employs antisemitic tropes to denigrate women, as Incels and other affiliates of the "manosphere" do. The site is riddled with instances of such rhetoric. Anglin has also praised PUA-affiliate Roosh V and the misogynistic content on his *Return of Kings* website.

Equally, some Incels explicitly identify with REMVE, labeling themselves "stormcels", in which "storm" refers to *Stormfront*, a popular white supremacist website rife with othering and dehumanization on racial grounds. Stormcels add white supremacist undertones to their sexual grievances, stating, for example, that they will not engage in sexual activity with non-white women.

Finally, similarities can also be found in the communication and propaganda tactics of REMVE and violent misogynistic communities. This includes the use of "manifestos" to formalize and propagate hateful ideologies, and the use of coded language (see page 5 and the Glossary of Terms on page 12) to express their beliefs. For example, both REMVE and groups within the "manosphere" use "pilling" language (e.g. "red-pilled") and may refer to those outside of their communities as "normies". Both also have extensive online presences, using mainstream and fringe platforms to network and radicalize.

* The McCain Institute and ISD hosted a workshop for the emerging Practitioners Network on REMVE, specifically white supremacy. For more about white supremacist narratives, see the [read-ahead materials](#) provided to participants of the workshops.

- **Overlap with internationally-inspired terrorism:**

There is some reference to violent jihadist movements across the "manosphere", particularly in Incel forums. The term "jihadmaxxing" or taking the "jihadpill", for example, encourages Muslim Incels to join violent jihadist groups in order to access sexual relationships, as the promise of marriage often appears in ISIS propaganda, for example.

- **Overlap with other mass shooters:**

Perpetrators of mass shootings often demonstrate a sense of entitlement to something that the world is not giving them, something they strongly believe they deserve. The same can be said about Incel perpetrators, as they execute attacks to avenge the fact that they are sexually "unsuccessful". According to the [Fordham University Center for Ethics Education](#), while the rise of digital feminism and sex positivity enrages Incel and other misogynistic communities, what ultimately pushes them to violence is entitlement. While Incel communities consider their unattractiveness to be personal failures, they strongly believe they are owed sex, and that ["there is something wrong with a society in which women don't give their bodies to them"](#). Similarly, perpetrators of mass shootings may blame external societal factors for their grievances, where violence is seen as a means for retaliating against their perceived injustices.

Lastly, the violent attacks that have been successfully executed targeted men, women and couples, and the perpetrators, like mass murderers or spree killers before them, aimed to kill as many people as possible and often committed suicide before being arrested.

In Practice: Challenges for Practitioners

Increasingly recognized as a serious and emerging threat to public safety, practitioners and policymakers have started formulating responses to violent components of the "manosphere". Counter-hate organizations have started [mapping](#) male supremacy, for example, while increased moderation on platforms has meant misogynistic forums like the /r/incels and /r/braincels subreddits have been banned.

There are, however, significant challenges for effective practitioner responses to the "manosphere". This page outlines some of these, to make practitioners aware of potential obstacles they should consider as they incorporate misogynist TVTP into their work. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **The relative nascency of the "manosphere"**-- this field has only really entered mainstream discussion in the past few years with the recent rise of Incel-related violence. This means there is still a significant knowledge gap in our understanding of the scope and scale of violent "manosphere" communities and content online. While significant strides have been made in mapping and analyzing the landscape of violent misogyny, more research needs to be conducted to understand dynamics of radicalization, grooming and recruitment, among others.
- **The decentralized nature of the "manosphere"** -- the broad "manosphere" and sub-movements within operate without a clear organizational or leadership structure. Incel violence has not to date been directed by a specific group for example, but rather represents a "post-organizational" threat, where offenders plan and execute attacks autonomously, inspired by broad online extremist subcultures. This makes it difficult to prevent related violence and to assess individual radicalization, as there are no specific organizational frameworks, nor ["command and control"](#) centers that dictate activity.
- **Limited offline presence and the use of coded language** -- contrary to historic REMVE and internationally- inspired targeted violence, the "manosphere" originated almost entirely online. This, alongside the movement's decentralized character, means it has a limited offline presence. There has been no "Unite the Right" counterpart for the "manosphere", for example, nor have there been concerted efforts to radicalize and recruit others offline. There are also no known ["targetable offline organizing and funding streams"](#). This suggests that assessing an individual's commitment to the "manosphere", and whether that commitment might inspire violence, relies largely on an understanding of online activity. This is also challenging - while many "manosphere"-related forums, including Incel forums, are publicly accessible, users are generally anonymous and may ["shitpost"](#), or deliberately post provocative content to derail or distract discussion (and throw off any monitoring efforts). In addition, online forums, chat rooms and websites affiliated with Incels, PUAs, MRAs and MGTOW use language that may not be as explicitly alarming as language used by other targeted violence or terrorist groups. The "manosphere" is full of dark humor, abbreviations and references that may not always be picked up as "violent" or "graphic", which makes it harder for platforms to moderate or identify risk effectively, and may make it harder to assess an individual's ideological commitment to the "manosphere".

Glossary of Related Terms

Provided are additional terms commonly used by Incels, MRAs, PUAs and affiliates of MGTOW communities. For more information, refer to Moonshot CVE's ["Incels: A Guide to Symbols and Terminology"](#) and Tim Squirrel's ["A Definitive Guide to Incels - the A-Z Incel Dictionary"](#).

- **Alphas** - men that Incels consider sexually "successful", generally attributed to their looks and/or financial and social status. Most Incel forums consider chiseled, muscular features, a wide jaw and strong social or financial status as Alpha traits.
- **Betas** - Incels identify as Betas, believing they are celibate because they don't exhibit Alpha traits. Women, who are considered hypergamous (see below) are accused of disproportionately favoring or making themselves sexually available for Alphas.
- **Omegas** - Similar to a beta, but used to refer specifically to men who struggle to interact women at all (sexually or otherwise).
- **Chads** - a similar concept to "Alphas" above, Chads are men that Incels deem traditionally handsome and Incels assume to be sexually successful. Chads may be referred to with admiration or mockingly.
- **Stacys** - the female equivalent to a "Chad". Incels believe Stacys will only engage with Alphas or "Chads".
- **Beckys** - women considered to be more "basic" and less attractive than Stacys.
- **"-cel"** - suffix used to categorize types of Incels. Incels may use this to describe themselves or others. See page 18 of [Moonshot's guide](#) for examples of how this is used.
- **"-maxxing"** - suffix used to indicate that an Incel is trying to improve an aspect or multiple aspects of their lives in order to achieve sexually. Examples include "looksmaxxing" and "gymmaxxing", where Incels strive to "better" their physical appearance, "moneymaxxing", where an Incel tries to improve his financial status in order to increase their dating "game" (many Incels believe women are hypergamous - see below), and "jihadmaxxing", where Incels are encouraged to become Jihadists in order to achieve intimate relations with a woman.
- **"-fuel"** - generally used to refer to suicide. If something is considered "suifuel" or "ropefuel", it is deemed to contribute or cause suicidal thoughts or behavior.
- **Gynocentrism** - dominated by feminist interests. MRAs believe society is gynocentric and that female privilege is reality, whereas male privilege is considered a feminist fabrication and propaganda tool.
- **Hypergamy** - Taken from animal biology and inaccurately applied to women, hypergamy is the concept of "mating upwards". Some Incels believe women are hypergamous and therefore will always seek relationships with men of higher status than themselves, or than the men they are currently with.
- **Sexual Market Value (SMV)** - prevalent especially in Incel and PUA forums, this term is used as a metric to measure an individual's "sexual desirability". "Stacys", for example, are considered to have a higher SMV than "Beckys". **In Incel communities, one's SMV is the primary measure of their worth.**

Further Reading

In addition to the sources hyperlinked to throughout this information pack, we recommended the following resources.

About Incels:

- "[Incels: A Guide to Symbols and Terminology](#)" by Moonshot CVE.
- Dr. Tim Squirrel's Definitive Guide to Incels:
 - Part One - [Incelocalypse](#)
 - Part Two - [The A-Z Incel Dictionary](#)
 - Part Three - [The History of Incel](#)
 - Part Four - [Why Can't Everyone be Blackpilled?](#)
 - Part Five - [Why are Incels Becoming More Extreme?](#)
- "[Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism - Overview and Recommendations for Addressing the Threat of Male Supremacist Violence](#)" by Megan Kelly, Alex DiBranco, Dr. Julia R. Decook for New America.
- "[Adding Fuel to the Fire: How Digital Media Has Transformed Inceldom](#)" by Victoria Munoz for Ethics and Society.
- "[Inceldom 101 & How You Can Help](#)" by Joyous Njoku for Risk Intervention & Safety Education.
- "[Incels: America's Newest Domestic Terrorism Threat](#)" by Bruce Hoffman and Jacob Ware for Lawfare Blog.
- "[Inside Incels' Lookmaxxing Obsession: Penis Stretching, Skull Implants and Rage](#)" by Jesselyn Cook for Huffington Post.
- "[Incels Categorize Women by Personal Style and Attractiveness](#)" by Rebecca Jennings for VOX.
- "['Incel' violence is a form of extremism. It's time we treated it as a security threat](#)" by Sian Tomkinson, Katie Atwell and Tael Harper for The Conversation.
- "[Our incel problem - How a support group for the dateless became one of the internet's most dangerous subcultures](#)" by Zack Beauchamp for VOX .

About the broader "manosphere":

- "[Male Supremacy](#)" by the SPLC.
- "[The Extremist Medicine Cabinet: A Guide to Online 'Pills'](#)" by the ADL.
- [The Institute for Research on Male Supremacism](#), specifically their research.
- "[When Women are the Enemy: The Intersection of Misogyny and White Supremacy](#)" by the ADL.

