



who are we
BECOMING?
CSA STATE CONFERENCE 2024

on demand package
Facilitator's Guide



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Icons Explained

Icons are in use throughout this guide and help to provide a snapshot of activities, actions and program items



Watch Video



Worksheet



Bonus Video



Reading



Table Discussion



Brainstorm and Discussion



Reflective Questions



Discussion as a whole group or at tables

How to use this Guide

This guide is provided for facilitators who will plan and deliver the on-demand package for staff within their school.

Throughout this document, there will be mention of videos and other resources provided for the day. All of these will be accessed via the on-demand event page. Only facilitators will have access to this site. Please contact events@csa.edu.au if you are unable to successfully access the event page.

The on-demand package is divided into 3 sessions, with 90 minutes worth of content for each session. Content for each of the sessions may be adjusted or adapted according to how schools wish to use the provided material.

Preparing for the Event

Preparing for delivering the on-demand package

The program is divided into 3 sessions, with 90 minutes worth of content for each session.

Please follow the steps below to ensure you are fully prepared to deliver the on-demand package for your school/organisation:

- » Download all videos and resources from the on-demand event website or from the links within this guide. Articles and worksheets are also included at the back of this guide in the Appendix Section.
- » Familiarise yourself with all the materials and create a plan for how you will use them.
- » Adapt the provided program, as required. For example:
 1. Will you start the day with worship or a devotional message?
 2. Are there other elements you want to include in your day?
 3. Will you use the package in one day or over several days?
- » Download the PowerPoint Slides and adapt to suit your program for the day.
- » Make copies of the Participants Guide for each staff member.

Setting up for the day

We have provided, below, recommendations to ensure you have everything you need for a successful event.

- » We recommend having staff sit around tables enabling them to engage in group discussion. Groups of 5-6 in each group would be a good group size
- » You will need a suitable screen with sound for watching the videos
- » You will need to print a copy of the Participant's Guide for each staff member
- » You will need enough copies of the A3, Session 3 Worksheet for at least one per table

Sessions Overview

Session 1: The Cultural Compass: What's Shaping Identity?

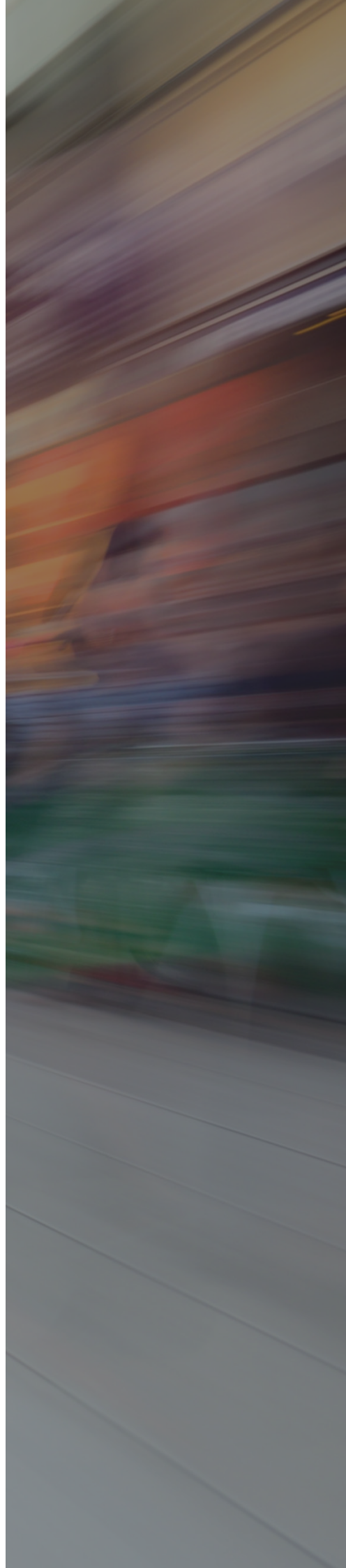
In order to effectively speak into the lives of young people with the biblical story, we need to understand how the influences of the broader culture are forming us. This session will explore the pervading 'cultural stories' which are shaping us and the young people in our schools. It will ask the questions, 'What are we being told about who we are and what we should desire, and what impact is this having on identity formation in our cultural moment?'

Session 2: Understanding our formation in the light of the Biblical story

Formation occurs within the context of story. Stories help to form our identity, meaning and purpose, and allow us to make sense of our place in the world. They provide a vision of who we are, why we are here, where we are going and what constitutes the good life. The story we live out of becomes the lens through which we see, interpret and engage with the world around us. This session will explore how the biblical story provides a compelling alternative to our culture and how it reshapes our imagination around identity and purpose.

Session 3: From formation to transformation: a practical approach

In a culture of competing narratives that seek to shape us, Christian schools have the opportunity to invite students to know, understand, imagine, embody and expand God's story. This session will introduce a practical, whole school approach to being intentional in the creation of opportunities which enable people to find their own story within the bigger story of God's kingdom.



Session One Plan



State Conference Introduction with Mark Ryan (CSA)

This video provides an introduction to the Conference theme and frames the program content.

6m



Table Discussion

What do you think are some of the overt/covert messages about the meaning of life which are being communicated to young people through culture? How are these communicated? Who are the influential voices?

10m



A Question of Identity with Jonathan and Karen Doyle (Choicez Media)

This video explores cultural narratives around the nature of identity and what it means to be human.

19m



Discussion Questions - Whole Group or at Tables

1. What do you believe are the most important truths we need to be sharing with young people about who they are and why they exist?
2. How can your school community develop a greater practical focus on these truths?

10m



The Cultural Compass: What's Shaping Identity? with Eric Agyeman

This video highlights some of the key cultural influences which are forming the identities of young people

13m



Individual Quiet Reading

Refer to the Participant's Guide for the two articles for reading:

- » Weale, S. (2023) *We see misogyny every day*
- » Englen, R. (2023) *How Influencers make young women feel bad*

Have each staff member quietly read the articles

13m



Discussion Questions - Whole Group or at Tables

1. In your experience, what kinds of social media influencers do you see students following or discussing the most and how does this impact the behaviour, attitudes, and aspirations of students?
2. What role do you think schools should play in addressing or mitigating the influence of social media influencers on students?
3. What is/can your school be doing to ensure that there is an ongoing and whole-school approach to respectful relationships?
4. Is there a particular role that men need to play in role-modelling and training boys in relation to respectful relationships?

10m

Additional Resource

This recent Australian research paper explores women teachers' experiences of Tate-inspired sexism in Australian schools.

Wescott, S., Roberts, S., & Zhao, X. (2024). The problem of anti-feminist 'manfluencer' Andrew Tate in Australian schools: women teachers' experiences of resurgent male supremacy. *Gender and Education*, 36(2), 167-182. [Click here to download](#)

See overpage how to access

Session One Content

Session One PowerPoint Presentation

Click here to download a .pptx file to assist you with projecting content for the event. This file includes slides for sessions, as well as discussion questions



State Conference Introduction with Mark Ryan (CSA)

Click here to download the video



A Question of Identity with Jonathan and Karen Doyle (Choicez Media)

Click here to download the video



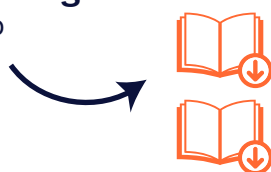
The Cultural Compass: What's Shaping Identity? with Eric Agyeman

Click here to download the video



Articles for Reading

Click the icons to download each article



» Weale, S. (2023) *We see misogyny every day*

To read, see Appendix A

» Englen, R. (2023) *How Influencers make young women feel bad*

To read, see Appendix B

Additional Resource - Article from Gender & Education

Click here to download the article: The problem of anti-feminist 'manfluencer' Andrew Tate in Australian schools: women teachers' experiences of resurgent male supremacy



Session Two Plan



Student Vox Pop: What influences you?

This video showcases students from member schools talking about their key influencers.

3.5m



Table Discussion

Reflecting on the Vox Pop...

What do you think your students would say if they were asked the same question both on camera at school and if they were talking with their friends?

10m



Reading

Refer to the Participant's Guide for the article for reading:

» Rosner, B. (2022) *Is it good advice to "be yourself"? Why looking inward is not necessarily the answer*

Participants either read the article followed by a short whole group discussion **OR** the facilitator speaks to the article and then facilitates a whole group discussion.

15m



Discussion Question

1. What are the positives and negatives of the cultural imperative to look inward to find your own identity and be true to yourself?



A Better Story: God's Plan for Human Flourishing with Steve McAlpine

In this video, Steve unpacks the biblical narrative for human flourishing.

19m



Activity: Session 2 Worksheet - A Better Story

Work through the Session 2 Worksheet (found in Participant's Guide)

35m



MyChristianSchool

Watch the highlight video (1m 22s) and then invite your Principal to take some time to encourage staff to engage with the mychristianschool.au website and share their stories.

5m

Session Two Content

Session Two PowerPoint Presentation

Click here to download a .pptx file to assist you with projecting content for the event. This file includes slides for sessions, as well as discussion questions



Student Vox Pop: What influences you?

Click here to download the video



Article for Reading

Click the icon to download this article



Rosner, B. (2022) *Is it good advice to “be yourself”? Why looking inward is not necessarily the answer*

To read, see Appendix C

A Better Story: God’s Plan for Human Flourishing with Steve McAlpine

Click here to download the video



Session 2 Worksheet: A Better Story

Click here to download the worksheet



To view, see Appendix D

My Christian School Highlight

Click here to download the video



Session Three Plan



A Practical Approach: From Formation to Transformation with Mark Ryan

This video explores the crucial role of Christian schools in the healthy formation of young people. As we adopt a whole school approach, we can cultivate an environment where students are not only formed well, but can become a transformational influence in our prevailing culture.

8m



Activity: Worksheet, Brainstorm and Discussion

Session 3 Worksheet: Faith Formation – A Whole School Approach

This activity engages staff in an audit of your school's current intentional approaches for staff and student formation. Provide copies of the **Session 3 Worksheet** (A3 paper size) for each table. Have participants complete the worksheet in groups.

We encourage you to collect the sheets at the end of the session as a useful source of feedback for the leadership team.

30m



Discussion

You might like to include a whole group report-back/sharing time.



Veta: A practical example of an intentional approach to formation with Rohan Waters

This video provides an example of the powerful impact an intentional focus on formation can have on the lives of young people. It serves as both an inspiration and a stimulus for thinking about what other strategies schools might employ.

12m



Faith Formation: Lessons from the *Your Story* Research with Graham Stanton (Ridley College) & Rowan Lewis (ACOM)

This video outlines the findings from the *Your Story* research into the developmental faith markers identified by young people. The research investigated stories from young people about what has shaped and what continues to shape their faith journeys - both in positive and negative ways.

The video is a helpful primer for discussion around the school culture and practices that either attract or dissuade young people from faith. The content includes comments from students reflecting on their church/school experience.

26m



Reflective Questions in relation to the *Your Story* Research

1. How could we be better listeners?
2. How can we be more attentive to the story that each young person brings?
3. How can we make the most of each moment/each interaction we have with students?

10m



Bonus Video: Global Connect - Service Learning Opportunities

This short video outlines the ways that Global Connect can assist schools in developing service learning opportunities for staff and students

4m

Session Three Content

Session Three PowerPoint Presentation

Click here to download a .pptx file to assist you with projecting content for the event. This file includes slides for sessions, as well as discussion questions



A Practical Approach: From Formation to Transformation with Mark Ryan

Click here to download the video



Session 3 Worksheet: Faith Formation – A Whole School Approach

Click here to download the worksheet



To view, see Appendix E

Veta: A practical example of an intentional approach to formation with Rohan Waters

Click here to download the video



Faith formation: Lessons from the *Your Story* Research with Graham Stanton & Rowan Lewis

Click here to download the video



Bonus Video: Global Connect – Service Learning Opportunities

Click here to download the video



Speaker Information



Mark Ryan, CSA

Mark Ryan has been part of the CSA team since 2019 in the role of Executive Officer, SA. Mark has previous experience in leadership roles at Temple Christian College and has degrees in both education and theology. He has also held pastoral roles in a number of churches. Mark serves as a Director on the Board of Compass and with such an excellent grasp of biblical literacy, worldview and its application to culture, learning and vocation, is well-placed to lead CSA's national portfolio of, Christian Formation.



Jonathan and Karen Doyle, Choicez Media

CHOICEZ MEDIA has been serving Christian schools and families in Australia since 2004. Delivering high quality presentations and digital resources Choicez Media is now Australia's leading provider of values and faith-based puberty, consent, sex and relationships education. CHOICEZ MEDIA exists to support teachers and parents in the task of educating young people in the area of human sexuality and relationships. At the core of all CHOICEZ MEDIA resources is a deep focus upon the value and dignity of the human person as made in the image and likeness of God. Jonathan and Karen are often contracted to Christian schools and education peak bodies to consult on respectful relationships, consent curriculum and teacher formation and professional development. They are sought after speakers for conferences and school events.



Eric Agyeman, Author

After his fourth suspension in high school, Eric Agyeman was given a holiday ticket back to his birthplace, Ghana. He was told it was a 3-week holiday, a gift from his father. This so-called 'holiday' became the toughest but most life-changing 7 years of Eric's life. 7 years of experiencing poverty, isolation and deep depression led him to a breaking point; attempted suicide. Near the end of this dark period in Eric's life as a teenager, he stumbled into a Church, gave his life to Christ. It was there that he began to understand there was a purpose in living.

Eric is now the author of 4 inspirational books, a John Maxwell accredited leadership coach, a previous nominee for the Young Victorian of the Year for his work with youth and most recently, he was awarded the 2022 African Australian Achievement award. Eric and his team are on a mission to reach, inspire and transform 1 million Youth by 2031, bringing life and hope to young people. Whether it's his captivating story of resilience or developing students' leadership skills or his signature Boys to Noble Men program, Eric has been a great support to Wellbeing teams in Christian Schools across Australia.

Speaker Information



Stephen McAlpine, Author

Stephen McAlpine (Steve) has been involved in pastoral ministry and church planting for three decades in Perth, with long-term involvement at board level in Christian schools in Western Australia. He has a background in journalism and writing, and is a blogger and author, focusing on the cultural pressures facing the church and Christian institutions in the increasingly secular West. His latest book, *Being the Bad Guys* was 2021 Australian Christian Book of the Year.



Rohan Waters, Veta Youth

Rohan Waters is an ordained minister and registered teacher. Rohan has pursued a life-long calling and commitment to youth discipleship, and seeing young people raised up as the men and women God created them to be. He has worked as a teacher, chaplain, minister, and in denominational and para-church leadership. As the founder and director of Veta Youth he has, for over 20 years, been helping teachers and school leaders across Australia engage young people in transformational Christian learning. In 2010, Rohan was awarded the Farmington Fellowship to study at Oxford University, where he developed Veta Youth's Model for Supporting the Spiritual Development of Teenagers. Rohan loves paddling his surf-ski, swimming at the beach, and doing life with Cindy and their three children on the Mornington Peninsula where they live.



Dr. Graham Stanton, Ridley College

Graham is Lecturer in Practical Theology at Ridley College, Melbourne, and Director of the Ridley Centre for Children's and Youth Ministry. Graham is a member of the teaching faculty for the Compass Student Leaders Conference, was the founding Principal of Youthworks College, Sydney, and served as a project officer for the Anglican Education Commission in Sydney. Graham has published research articles in youth ministry, Christian education, and leadership. He is the author of *Wide-awake in God's World*. His latest research is exploring how young Australians experience and understand God and the stories of how those beliefs have been formed. Graham and his wife Kate live in Melbourne and are members of St Jude's Anglican Church, Parkville. They have three young adult children and one son-in-law. Apart from Jesus, his personal heroes include Bruce Springsteen and Leslie Knope.



Dr. Rowan Lewis, ACOM

Rowan is the Head of Pastoral Theology at ACOM (Australian College of Ministry) and co-researcher with the YourStory project. He is an experienced researcher and educator in formation and spirituality especially as it relates to younger people. Over the last 15 years, he has created and led formation programs for youth and young adults as well as specialising in accompanying young people amidst times of doubt and spiritual transition – which ultimately became the focus of his PhD. Your Story is a national research project seeking to understand the influences that shape young people's journey of faith. It has surveyed over 400 young people and will be releasing findings throughout 2024. Together with his wife Kirra, Rowan lives in Melbourne with three energetic teenagers who keep life suitably animated.

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‘We see misogyny every day’: how Andrew Tate’s twisted ideology infiltrated British schools

A year ago, most teachers had never heard of the ex-kickboxer and social media influencer. Now, his toxic machismo is the talk of the playground – and the staffroom



[Sally Weale](#)

Thu 2 Feb 2023 21.00 AEDT

Daniel is 10. He likes football, Fifa, the gaming website Poki, coding and basketball. Last year, he asked his dad if he had ever heard of Andrew Tate. “I hadn’t,” admits his father, Nick, who went away, did some research and was horrified at what he found.

Today, it seems as if virtually every parent in Britain has heard of the ex-kickboxer, social media influencer and self-professed misogynist, whose videos have been watched millions of times and whose recent arrest in Romania on suspicion of human trafficking, rape and forming an organised crime group to exploit women has kept him in the headlines.

Children are not only mainlining Tate’s toxic social media content, which has resulted in him being banned from most major platforms; they are also tracking his progress through the Romanian criminal justice system, where he and his brother, Tristan, have been remanded in custody until 27 February while investigations continue. An appeal against their detention was rejected yesterday. They deny all the allegations.

Among those following developments in Bucharest is 14-year-old Isaac. “I want to know what happens,” he says, with some glee. Isaac seems to be an average teenager. He plays a lot of football and goes to the gym. He likes Fortnite and goes fishing when he gets the chance. He thinks Tate is an idiot, but he says there are other boys at his inner-city state school who idolise him.

“I probably first heard of him about six months ago and really quickly he was just everywhere online. You couldn’t avoid him,” says Isaac. “When I first saw him, I was quite interested. Now, I think he’s absolutely stupid. When we’re talking about him, mostly we make fun of him. Out of my friends, I only know about two people who support him. They like the fact that he is rich and strong.”

Tate, 36, a US-British citizen who came to public attention when he was thrown off the reality show Big Brother in 2016, likes to pose with a cigar in front of expensive cars and private jets, and often dispenses dubious advice to young men (he once claimed reading books is “for people with slow brains”). But it is his extreme misogyny that has gained him notoriety, prompting fears that boys and young men are being radicalised by his views. He has said women are partly responsible for being raped and that they “belong” to men. In one video, in which he imagines a woman accusing him of cheating, he is shown saying: “It’s bang out the machete, boom in her face and grip her by the neck. Shut up, bitch.”

Campaigners fear Tate's views are even seeping into the minds of primary schoolchildren. Last month, the Labour MP Alex Davies-Jones spoke in parliament about Tate's "toxic" influence on schoolboys and criticised Rishi Sunak for being "too slow to recognise the damage this is causing". As a result, she was "bombarded" with rape and death threats. But wall-to-wall media coverage in the past few weeks means teachers and parents are increasingly aware of Tate's poisonous messaging and the threat it poses. Secondary schools across the country have mobilised to arrange additional training for staff, workshops for pupils and awareness-raising events for parents.

So far, Daniel's inner-city primary school has not raised the issue, with either parents or children. "It's worrying," says Nick. "I think the school should address it. They should talk about it in class. Children are getting hold of stuff earlier than parents think they are."

Many secondary school teachers feel they were slow to pick up on Tate's influence. Last year, they began to notice pupils using phrases they didn't recognise: "What colour is your Bugatti?" (a way of bragging about status); "Make me a sandwich" (to belittle women and girls).

"Students knew more than teachers in those early stages," says Lisa McCall, the deputy headteacher at Wales high school in Rotherham. "We were in the dark." Now that teachers are catching up, they are worried about the corrosive influence of the extreme misogyny espoused by Tate. One says she is concerned about some of the behaviour between boys and their girlfriends in school: one boy was seen pinning his girlfriend to the wall by her shoulder; another was seen trying to confiscate his girlfriend's phone. "There seems to be an increased need for boys to control girls," she says. "There's an expectation from boys that girls are going to do what they tell them to do."

Sean Maher, the headteacher at Richard Challoner, a Catholic boys' school in New Malden, Surrey, with a co-educational sixth form, describes how he has seen Tate's influence spread through his school. "It wasn't really coming up last year," he says, adding that isolated incidents were dealt with as they arose. "But now it's got to a point, probably due to the arrests, that he is mainstream. In terms of student knowledge, it's a common discussion point."

A lot of it is covert – pupils using a hand signal associated with Tate, for example – but the school has decided to tackle it head on, talking to pupils about the impact of "toxic masculinity" and highlighting positive role models. Maher is planning to send a letter to parents with advice on how to talk to their children about Tate. "I don't think schools can tackle this on their own. Parents play a very important role."

In other schools, it has become a behavioural issue, with pupils mimicking Tate and sometimes openly expressing support for him. Teaching staff are signing up in growing numbers for training sessions from organisations such as [Men at Work](#). Its founder, Michael Conroy, offers advice on how to build constructive dialogues with boys and young men.

I listen in on one Men at Work training session, attended by 20-plus teachers from state and private schools. Many of those attending are also parents, worried about the impact of influencers such as Tate on their sons. "We see misogyny every day in my school, with everything from boys ignoring instructions in corridors from female staff to serious sexual assaults," says one teacher. "We need to do something." Another describes how boys entertain themselves by seeing how many times they can slip the phrase "Make me a sandwich" into her lesson.

“They feel a shared confidence, as they are all accessing the same content online,” says one teacher. Another adds: “Our boys have an emotional connection to the influencers they are accessing. They will use any argument to defend both their views and their behaviour.”

Tate’s particularly nasty form of misogyny has not appeared out of thin air. As Conroy makes plain, misogyny is as old as the hills. Almost three years ago, Soma Sara founded the [Everyone’s Invited](#) initiative, which began as a website for survivors to share anonymously their experiences of rape culture and has lifted the lid on the scale of sexual violence and misogyny in schools. Since then, there have been several high-profile killings of women, including [Sarah Everard](#), while [official statistics](#) published last month showed a large rise in the number of young men referred to the government’s Prevent scheme in relation to misogynistic “incel” ideology.

“We need to focus on the issues and not the individual,” says Conroy, who spent 16 years working in secondary schools before setting up Men at Work. “It’s not about Andrew Tate; it’s about misogyny. These issues have been there for ever.” He is, however, concerned about the amount of pornography to which children and young people are now exposed. [Recent research](#) revealed that one in 10 children in England have seen pornography by the age of nine, and one in four by 11.

“Porn is a huge accelerant to this,” says Conroy, who believes Tate should be a wake-up call for parents to “get with the programme” and learn what their children are exposed to online. “It’s only by the rigorous actions of some parents and carers that any child has any form of filter.”

As well as training for teachers, schools are also bringing in teams from organisations such as [Beyond Equality](#), [School of Sexuality Education](#), [Hope Not Hate](#), Everyone’s Invited and [Bold Voices](#) to work with pupils on gender equality, gender-based violence and misogyny.

Natasha Eeles, the founder of Bold Voices, says her team has worked with more than 50 schools since June 2022, when they started hearing Tate’s name mentioned by young people. “Now, we can’t go into a school without hearing his name in every workshop. Since the beginning of January, we have seen an unprecedented rise in inquiries, with concerned staff getting in touch to ask for support on Tate specifically.

“None of our talks or workshops focus exclusively on Tate, as we try to support young people, staff and parents to understand the roots of gender inequality and gender-based violence and see Tate as one small part of that wider issue.”

The messenger can be as important as the message, though, says one senior staff member in a London secondary school. Their school has invited a number of external groups to give talks on misogyny and related issues, but worries that they are often presented by “middle-class white women”, who might not make an impression on the school’s diverse cohort of boys. The school is considering training a young, male teacher as an alternative.

Jessica Ringrose, a professor of the sociology of gender and education at University College London’s Institute of Education, has worked in schools on issues of masculinity, gender inequality and sexual violence. She focuses on 13- to 15-year-olds who are particularly vulnerable to gendered misinformation online. From her experience, 15% to 20% of the boys taking part in her workshops are “somehow buying into this ideology”.

“It’s not surprising that these kinds of norms are continuing to filter through when they’re being championed by somebody like Tate, who embodies these kind of superdominant, aggressive – ‘Here’s my Bugatti and my 30 cars and my knife collection’ – tough, virile masculinities.”

Ringrose says the government should take a stronger line: “Where is the Department for Education [DfE] response on this? What is it actually doing to support schools?” She says she was commissioned by the DfE to do a report on harmful sexual behaviour in schools and how to address it, which she and her team handed over last March, but it has not been published.

Her paper argued for a preventive, whole-school approach, raising awareness about and challenging harmful sexual cultures, rather than responding once harmful behaviour has already taken place, which is what often happens now. “You can’t just teach one RHSE [relationships, health and sex education] lesson on this; you need to have a whole-school ethos. We need to make it a priority.”

In response, the government said it had made RSHE a compulsory part of the curriculum and had published statutory guidance stating that schools should be alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny and gender stereotypes. “We will be publishing further non-statutory guidance later this year to provide practical advice on how to create a whole-school culture of respectful relationships, and how to teach about sexual harassment, sexual violence and violence against women and girls.”

Rather than focusing on Tate and his ilk, Ringrose recommends an affirmative approach. “It’s about calling boys and men allies and trying to find relatable ways to understand equity and want to fight injustice. There are really great programmes trying to call boys and men into the conversation, raise their awareness of gender inequality and gender stereotypes. They’re doing good work.”

Some names have been changed

Reference

Weale, Sally. (2023, February 2). “We See Misogyny Every Day’: How Tate’s Twisted Ideology Infiltrated British Schools.” The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/feb/02/andrew-tate-twisted-ideology-infiltrated-british-schools>

How Influencers Make Young Women Feel Bad - [Renee Engeln Ph.D.](#)

A new study shows that viewing images of influencers hurts mood and body image.

Posted September 25, 2023 | Reviewed by Devon Frye

Concerns about how media images affect young women's [body image](#) are nothing new. A few decades ago, the focus was on images of models that appeared in fashion magazines. Today, concerns about photos of models in magazines seem quaint compared to worries about how a flood of [social media](#) imagery can [increase women's dissatisfaction](#) with their appearance.

To date, most research on the [impact of social media](#) on body image has focused on images of either celebrities (like actresses or models) or peers. Researchers have mostly ignored the breed of semi-celebrities called "influencers," despite the fact that these individuals play a major role in shaping the content of social media feeds.

[Newly published research](#) from Flinders University in Australia tested whether viewing images of Instagram influencers negatively affected women's mood and body image. The short answer? It does. Especially influencer images that are sexualized (think lingerie and bikini shots).

The term "influencer" was added to official dictionaries just a few years ago. As a testament to the broad reach of influencer culture, several recent surveys found that a shocking number of young people hope to become influencers—ranging from 25 percent in [one survey](#) to 54 percent in [another](#). Though influencers are generally selling something—whether it be specific products or the "brand" they've created for themselves—the fact that they may seem closer to ordinary people than celebrities can make their sales pitches particularly effective.

Most research on the impact of social media imagery suggests that regardless of whether photos are of celebrities or peers, exposure to these images often [increases women's negative moods and body dissatisfaction](#). Fashion-focused influencers often use highly sexualized images in order to increase the [attention](#) given to their posts. These types of sexualized images can be [particularly potent](#), not just affecting body image but also decreasing perceptions of women's competence.

In this [new study](#), researchers investigated the effects of viewing content posted by female influencers. They began with a search for the most-followed female Instagram influencers who were not actresses or musicians, and who had at least 1 million followers.

Next, the researchers collected Instagram posts from these influencers. They chose influencers who made both sexualized posts (e.g., posts in which the influencer was wearing lingerie or a bikini, posed in a suggestive manner) and standard fashion-focused images that were not sexualized. All images showed at least three-quarters of the influencer's body. The researchers also collected posts that showed fashion products like shoes or bags with only a model's hand or foot visible.

Participants in the study were 230 young women (17-25 years old), most of whom were university students. The study was described as focusing on social media [advertising](#).

Participants were randomly assigned to view one of three sets of images: 1) influencers wearing fashionable attire; 2) sexualized images of influencers; or 3) fashion products that either included no body or showed only influencers' hands or feet. The images of fashion products served as the control condition. All images were presented in the format of a standard Instagram post. Images were matched so that women saw posts from the same set of influencers regardless of condition.

Before viewing their set of images, participants first completed measures of mood and body satisfaction. While they viewed their assigned images, the women rated the quality of each image. After viewing the images, participants again completed the mood and body satisfaction measures. Finally, they completed an appearance comparison scale that assessed how much they thought about their own appearance while viewing the images. In order to give the impression that the study was focused on social media advertising instead of body image, the researchers included filler questions about the fashions and products viewed in the images.

Overall, results showed that viewing images of influencers increased women's negative mood and body dissatisfaction, whereas women who viewed images of products showed slight improvements in mood and body image. The sexualized images of influencers had an even more pronounced negative impact on mood and body satisfaction.

Viewing influencer images also increased women's [appearance comparisons](#). In fact, results suggested that comparing your appearance to the influencers in the images was the likely explanation for *why* women felt worse after viewing images featuring influencers compared to control images.

A take-home message from this study is clear and consistent with [previous research](#) focusing on social media images of celebrities or peers. If you use social media, consider limiting how often you use it so that you're exposed to fewer of the types of posts that tend to leave women feeling awful about themselves and their bodies.

Be particularly wary of influencers who use sexualized imagery to get attention and sell products. These types of images may be even more damaging than standard types of fashion-used images.

It may also be [wise](#) to unfollow any accounts—influencer or otherwise—that prompt you to focus on shortcomings in your own appearance. Too often, influencer accounts seem to be influencing girls and young women to [hate their own bodies](#). That alone is a good reason to put down your phone whenever you can and spend more time with people who care more about who you are than how you look.

Reference

Glenn, R., (2023, Sep. 25). *How Influencers Make Young Women Feel Bad*. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/beauty-sick/202309/how-influencers-make-young-men-feel-bad>

Appendix C

Is it good advice to “be yourself”? Why looking inward is not necessarily the answer

Brian Rosner

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Consider the following statements.

From Marvel’s Thor: “I need to figure out exactly who I am”.

From [Dylan Alcott](#), the 2022 Australian of the Year: “Be yourself and watch your world change. The hardest thing to understand is that it’s the easiest thing in the world to do. You’ve gotta believe me, mate. It changes your life.”

From Taylor Swift, when accepting her honorary doctorate: “We are so many things, all the time. And I know it can be overwhelming figuring out who to be ... I have some good news: It’s totally up to you. I also have some terrifying news: it’s totally up to you.”

Knowing who you are and being true to yourself have never been more important than in the West in the twenty-first century. They are said to be signs of good mental health and wellbeing, the keys to authentic living and true happiness.

Common wisdom today has it that there is only one place to look to find yourself, and that is *inward*. Personal identity is a do-it-yourself project. All forms of external authority are to be rejected, or at least questioned, and everyone’s quest for self-expression should be celebrated — personal happiness is the ultimate goal. Self-determination, once a principle for nations emerging from the First World War, is now the responsibility of every individual. A novelty in the history of ideas, this strategy of identity formation is sometimes labelled “expressive individualism”.

Clearly, there is nothing wrong with looking inward. There are many gains to living an examined life. And the alternative is far from attractive. As the philosopher [Charles Taylor](#) explains, the movement of expressive individualism is, in part, a reaction against a 1950s culture of conformity, which is believed to have “crushed individuality and creativity”.

Authenticity is also desirable. It is much better for a person to inhabit an identity that they own and can fully appropriate for themselves; there is something to be said for feeling comfortable in your own skin. Psychologists generally regard authenticity as a basic requirement of mental health.

So, are there any downsides to looking inward and being yourself? I can think of three pretty big ones: it seems to produce fragile selves; it’s failing in terms of outcomes for individuals and society; and it is faulty in its assumptions about human nature. Let me briefly discuss these in turn.

Though there have always been life experiences that can destabilise a person’s identity, the rise of expressive individualism, aided by the powerful tools of social media, means that more people than ever are unsure who they really are and consequently have a fragile sense of self. Defining yourself by means of social media is fraught with dangers and can lead to projecting an inauthentic self. Because, along with the exciting opportunity to find yourself comes the daunting possibility of not succeeding, or of not liking what you find. The cruel irony is that, while it’s never been more important to know who you are, it’s rarely been more difficult.

Expressive individualism is also failing to deliver on its promise of the good life. Anxiety, depression, narcissism, anger, and resentment are all on the rise. And happiness, by any measure, is actually in decline. While we cannot lay all the blame for this on looking only inward to find yourself, it would hardly be surprising for such a self-focussed approach to personal identity to produce selves that are self-deceived, self-absorbed, and self-centred. [Francis Fukuyama](#) writes: “The problem is that the inner selves we are celebrating may be cruel, violent, narcissistic, or dishonest. Or they may simply be lazy and shallow.”

“Look into your heart” and “follow your dreams” is the frequent advice from celebrities, with the sometimes-explicit message that you could achieve greatness if you did the same. But, by definition, we can’t all be exceptional. After all, the people in question are being interviewed precisely because they are set apart from the rest of us. [Jane Caro](#) puts it nicely when she writes that the constant message that we all can be exceptional is a lie:

You are not fabulous. Nor are the [men and] women — no matter how fabulous they may look or sound — who like to sprinkle such adjectives around. No one is. We are all flawed, insecure, tired, self-indulgent, often bewildered human beings who mostly struggle to stay on top of the demands of everyday life.

Despite the amazing advances in medical science in our lifetime, all human lives are marked by things like serious illness, heartbreak, tragedy, loneliness, and grief. According to social researcher [Hugh Mackay](#), many young people in the West today are in the grip of what he calls “the utopia complex”: “a world we dream of and think we are entitled to with outcomes that are always positive”.

A few years ago, my younger son finished primary school. The school held a graduation of sorts where every student was introduced by their teacher as they walked across the stage, beaming with promise; in every case the teacher gave a glowing description of their likely future and promise. I was struck by how fortunate I was to be in the presence of so many forthcoming music and movie stars, world leaders and captains of industry! Interestingly, there was not a single office worker or tradie in sight.

The biggest problem with looking only inward to find yourself is that it is hopelessly reductionistic, ignoring crucial dimensions of what it means to be a human being. The sociologist [David Jopling](#) is, I think, on to something when he writes that “the self is too complexly configured to be accessible to a single finite mind inquiring into itself by itself”. Along with looking inward to find yourself, we look around to others; we know ourselves in being known by others, especially those who know and love us intimately. We also look backwards and forwards to our life stories. Human identity does not exist in isolation, and it cannot be defined without reference to the narrative in which it finds itself.

But as much as we might like to think of ourselves as the narrator and main protagonist and as writing our own script, each of us participates in shared stories. As [Trevin Wax](#) puts it, “a restless, individualistic pursuit of happiness evolves into a strange conformist impulse. We think we’re blazing our own path, but the paths we take look strangely like everyone else’s.”

There is, in fact, a fourth direction to which you can look to find yourself — a direction that many believe offers a better story. They insist that personal identity requires *looking up*. Former Archbishop of Canterbury, [Rowan Williams](#), writes: “Without the transcendent we shall find ourselves unable, sooner or later, to make any sense of the full range of human self-awareness”. On the other side of the ledger, [some have argued](#) that Friedrich Nietzsche, sometimes described as the first real atheist because of his fearless pursuit of the consequences of his antitheist stance, has no place for the notion of personal identity. Does looking up have a role to play in identity formation?

The key to an authentic, stable, and satisfying sense of self is to inhabit a narrative identity that is worth living. One that deals well with life’s joys and sorrows, triumphs, and disappointments, and responds well to injustice.

[Brian Rosner](#) is the Principal of Ridley College, and a Fellow of the [Centre for Public Christianity](#). His latest book is [How to Find Yourself: Why Looking Inward is Not the Answer](#).

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<https://www.abc.net.au/religion/brian-rosner-is-it-good-advice-to-be-yourself/13957180>

Appendix D

Session 2 Worksheet

A Better Story: God’s Plan for Human Flourishing

“Western society promises us that we can find ultimate meaning and purpose as we look within ourselves. Self-discovery—finding our authentic self—can provide us with every resource needed to achieve fulfilment and find purpose. Anything that restrains self-fulfilment is a threat to individual and social wellbeing. Hence the default position is to assume that we belong to ourselves, and any authority that challenges this will be met with a vociferous and hostile response.” (McAlpine, S., 2024 Futureproof p 33)

1. Think about what you’ve read or watched recently. (10 minutes)

Consider movies, advertising, novels, series, social media etc.

What messages are being promoted about where we find identity and what constitutes the “good life”?

The example	The message it promotes

Share at your table

2. What's shaping us and our schools? (15 minutes)

Self-reflection: Think about the things that are shaping your identity and vision of a flourishing life, as determined by the things you value and give your time, attention and imagination to.

Spend some time reflecting on your own, and then discuss at your table group

What vision of flourishing life is being promoted by your school as determined by the things your school community values and gives their time, attention, and imagination to?

Table discussion/whole group discussion

3. The modern self is exceptionally fragile. (10 minutes)

“The modern self is exceptionally fragile. While having the freedom to define and validate oneself is superficially liberating, it is also exhausting: You and you alone must create and sustain your identity. This has contributed to unprecedented levels of depression and anxiety and never-satisfied longings for affirmation.” (Tim Keller, quoted on p 39)

How are people coping with the need to define themselves in our culture?

Read Galatians 3:26-29. How does this passage reframe our identity as God’s people?

How does the church/Christian school model a different sense of identity to the surrounding society?

Some questions above have been adapted from Stephen McAlpine’s **Futureproof Application Guide**. **Futureproof** (Steve’s latest book) can be purchased [HERE](#)

Appendix E

FAITH FORMATION – A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

The holistic formation of students requires a whole school approach. That is, it needs vision and intentionality from school leadership, a strong school culture and community, investment in staff formation, as well as pedagogical approaches and curriculum design which facilitate healthy formation. Students require access to a well-planned and thoughtful Christian studies program and the provision of formational experiences such as chapel services, camps, rites of passage programs and other peak experiences. Furthermore, they need opportunities for service learning, mentoring from mature Christians, and belonging to a strong peer community. Finally, schools should involve the wider community and build strong partnerships with families, local churches, local community, as well as external ministry and vocational agencies.

AREA	ACTION	EVIDENCE WE ARE DOING THIS WELL	OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT
Leadership	Articulate a vision for student formation i.e. What do we want our students to become?		
Staff Formation	Facilitate opportunities for staff to deepen their Biblical literacy		
Pedagogy	Ensure teaching and learning frameworks and pedagogical approaches are designed to promote healthy formation, and are consistent with a Christian worldview		
Curriculum	Embed a Biblical worldview across all curriculum areas		
Christian Studies	Help students to critique our prevailing culture and the cultural narratives that shape us		

		<p>Help students develop a gospel shaped vision of life that informs and shapes all aspects of society and culture</p>	
<p>Service Opportunities</p>	<p>Provide opportunity for students to develop a Biblically shaped vision of and for life focused on living beyond themselves</p> <p>Provide opportunity for students to serve others at a local, national and global level</p>		
<p>Mentoring</p>		<p>Provide a process and structure for students to mentor and be mentored</p>	
<p>Peer Community</p>		<p>Cultivate a student community where students experience a strong sense of belonging and are free to explore, develop and express their faith amongst their peers</p> <p>Encourage student agency in designing and running activities which facilitate faith formation and expression</p>	

Adapted from the [CSA Formation Framework](#)



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