

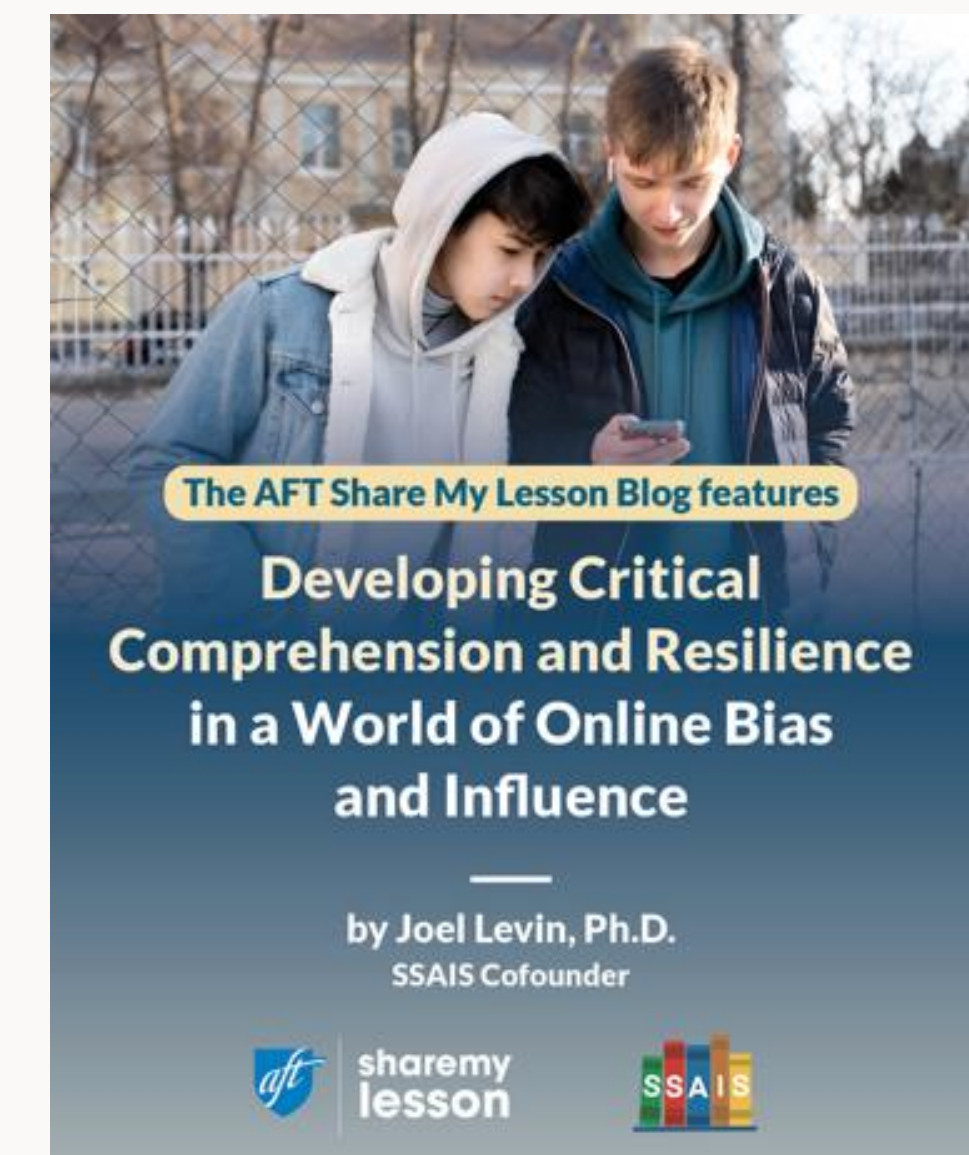
Student Wellness, Equity and Resilience in an Online World: Strategies for K–12



This slide deck accompanies the webinar **Student Wellness, Equity and Resilience in an Online World: Strategies for K–12** for the American Federation of Teachers 2026 Summer of Learning. This webinar is designed for those seeking practical, developmentally appropriate ways to support student wellness while addressing bias and harmful influences beginning in K–5 settings. Participants will explore how young students encounter and respond to online content, how these experiences show up in classrooms and school culture, and how early instruction can strengthen social-emotional growth, empathy, and resilience.

Watch the webinar anytime on [YouTube](#). Or register [here](#) to watch for professional development credit.

Read [Developing Critical Comprehension and Resilience in a World of Online Bias and Influence](#) published by the American Federation of Teachers. Discover how educators can foster critical comprehension, resilience and digital citizenship with practical classroom strategies and free K-12 resources to help students thoughtfully evaluate the messages they see online.



Student Wellness, Equity and Resilience in an Online World: Strategies for K-12



Christine German, Ph.D.

Deputy Director of Interventions
and Research Assistant Professor,
PERIL, American University

Otis McGresham, Ed.D.

Assistant Director,
Prevention Education,
Vanderbilt University
Project Safe Center



Student Wellness, Equity and Resilience in an Online World: Strategies for K–12



ABOUT THE PRESENTER:

Otis McGresham, Ed.D.

**Assistant Director, Prevention Education,
Vanderbilt University Project Safe Center**

- Higher education professional with experience dating back to 2003
- Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Change Management
- Master of Education in Student Affairs Administration



Student Wellness, Equity and Resilience in an Online World: Strategies for K–12



ABOUT THE PRESENTER:

Christine German, Ph.D.

**Deputy Director of Interventions and Research
Assistant Professor, PERIL, American University**

- More than 15 years of experience working at the nexus of youth engagement, media, radicalization, and preventing violence.
- Lead developer of DUCC, a K-5 digital literacy curriculum.
- Academic training in political science, development, qualitative and quantitative research methods.

What's Ahead

- What does the online life of young kids look like?
- Addressing digital literacy and safety from a young age
- Introducing a comprehensive digital literacy tool: DUCC
- Digital literacy as a foundation for building healthy, equitable, and resilient communities that combat gender violence
- Additional tools and resources

Student Wellness, Equity and Resilience
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Understanding Digital Literacy and DUCC



Kids have online lives

Whether it's watching videos on YouTube, playing games on Roblox or Minecraft, or scrolling social media, **two-thirds** of children ages 3 and up interact with digital media in some form every day.

Most schools don't address digital literacy until around 7th grade, with many waiting until high school.

That means for the youngest learners, there is a gap of about 10 years of online exposure without any education around digital literacy, manipulation, and resilience.

We also know that manipulation, bullying, and **predation** are widespread, taking advantage of young kids' lack of awareness and young age.

But online spaces are also where kids go to learn, play, and talk to their friends. Balancing mental health, resilience, and digital literacy is vital.



Why address digital safety with the youngest learners?

Digital literacy is vital for today's kids - they are growing up in a hyper-online world!

Digital literacy is not lessons on how to use the internet or a word processor, but instead a holistic approach built on critical thinking and social-emotional learning that empowers young people to be able to recognize when they feel unsafe and identify and reject harmful online manipulation.

This includes (for example) understanding how algorithms work, AI processes, and influencer tactics.

We also know that learning digital literacy **increases** overall academic achievement. Understanding the digital ecosystem helps kids achieve more.

Focus on preventing manipulation

- Focusing on manipulation builds on cognitive development and natural resistance to being “played.”
- It centers the manipulator and the negative belief as the problem, not the child.
- It applies to a whole host of potential topics, from eating disorders to racism, where outside actors are having an outsize impact on the lives of kids.

Poll Question

Do your kids - whether your own kids or kids you teach, mentor, or provide care for - talk about things they see on the internet?

1. Yes, every day
2. Yes, most days
3. Sometimes
4. Never



Developing & Using Critical Comprehension

Teaching kids *how* to think,
not *what* to think



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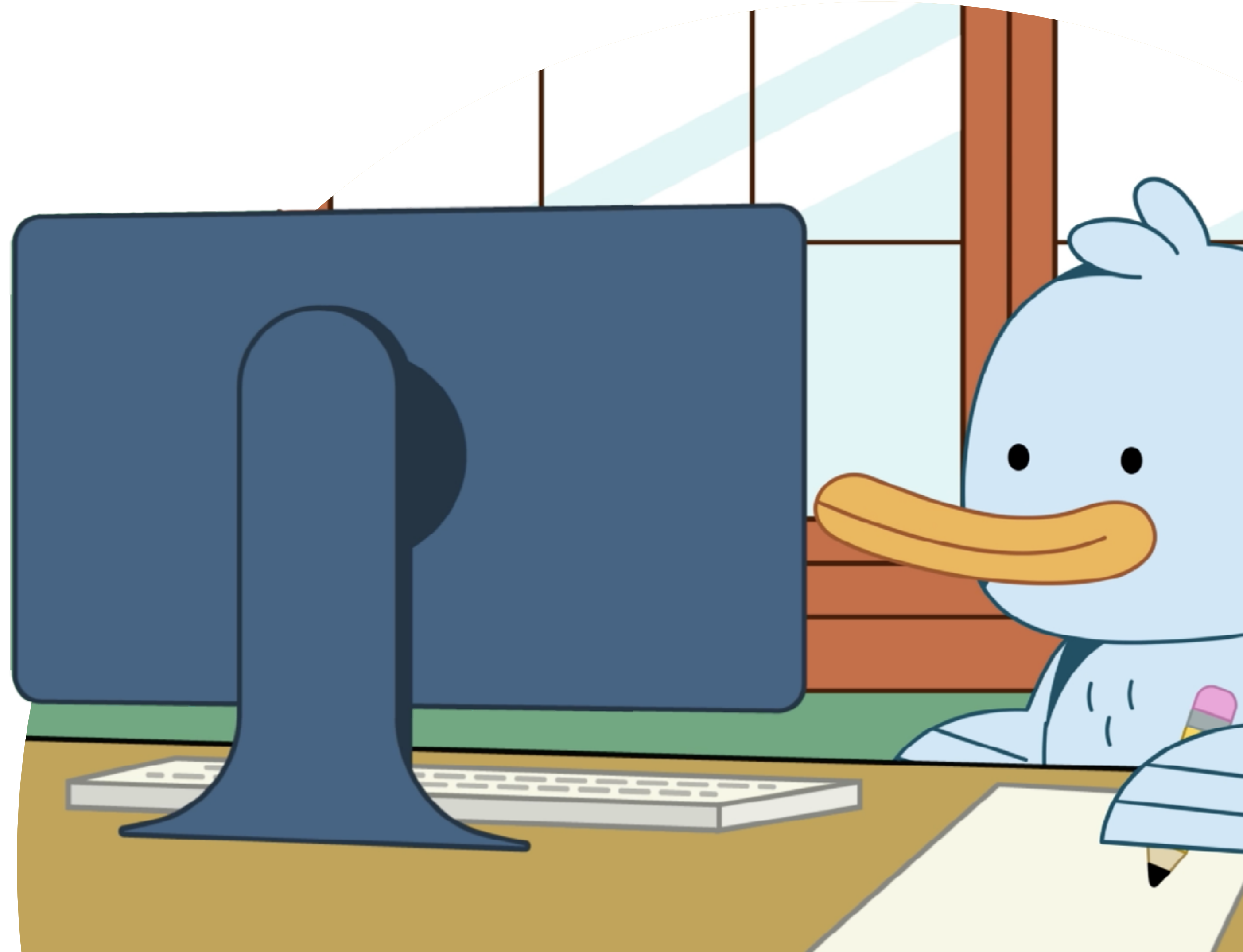
DUCC



What is DUCC?

Developing and Using Critical Comprehension (DUCC) is one of the first K-5 curricula to address digital literacy and critical thinking in kids ages 5-11, empowering them with the skills they need to navigate their hyper-online world. Kids of all ages are bombarded with information of varying levels of reliability; DUCC is specifically built to develop kids' skills in identifying reliable information, understanding the real-world impact of online actions, and developing their confidence to resist online manipulation.

The 24-lesson curriculum, including 4 lessons for each of grades K-5, was created by a team of experts in child psychology, teaching and literacy, digital literacy, and curriculum development, and approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics. DUCC is built on proven strategies and empirical research to build kids' ability to identify and avoid harmful online content. Learn more at www.danieltheducc.org.





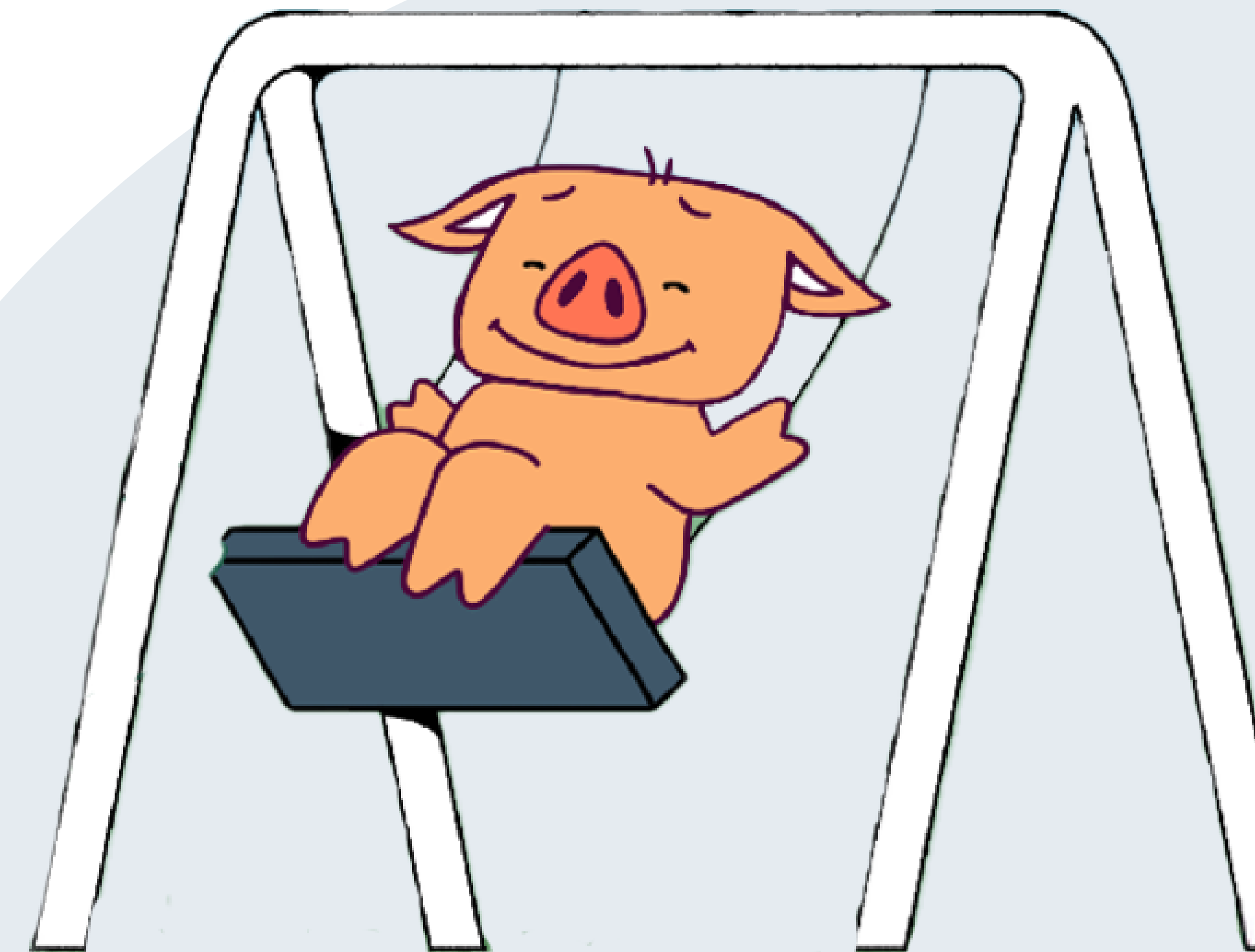
The DUCC Difference

Evidence-based. DUCC was developed by leading experts in education, digital literacy, child psychology, critical thinking, and social studies to **address** the **needs** of kids in grades K-5 growing up in a hyper-online world. It was tested by teachers in 22 classrooms in 3 US states and 2 countries.

Comprehensive. The 24 lessons of the DUCC curriculum contain everything a teacher needs to use the lessons in their classroom, from content to visuals to standards alignment with **Common Core**, **ISTE**, **CASEL**, and IB's **PYP** as well as integrating the **AAP's 5 C's of Media Use**.

Critical thinking. Underlying the DUCC approach is a focus on critical thinking and logical reasoning, helping build skills in kids to be able to evaluate complex topics like algorithms and AI.

Appealing. The cast of characters and high-quality videos and games in the DUCC curriculum allow kids to immerse into the lessons, identifying with the characters and their situations.





Lessons

Lesson 4.2: Fact or Fowl?

Persuasion and Emotional Response

In this lesson...

Learners will explore different persuasion tactics and reflect on how they evoke a variety of emotions.

DOWNLOAD THE COMPLETE PDF

[Lesson Plan](#)

[Handout 4.2A](#)

[Handout 4.2B](#)

[Handout 4.2C](#)

[Game: Fact Or Fowl?](#)

[Handout 4.2D](#)

[DUCC 5 Ws](#)

Score: 3

After school Daniel heads to the mall with Penny and notices a giant poster advertising a new energy drink.

This slogan is...

FACT **FOWL**

FLOCKSTAR

Designed to make you fly further...faster! 🦆

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DUCC

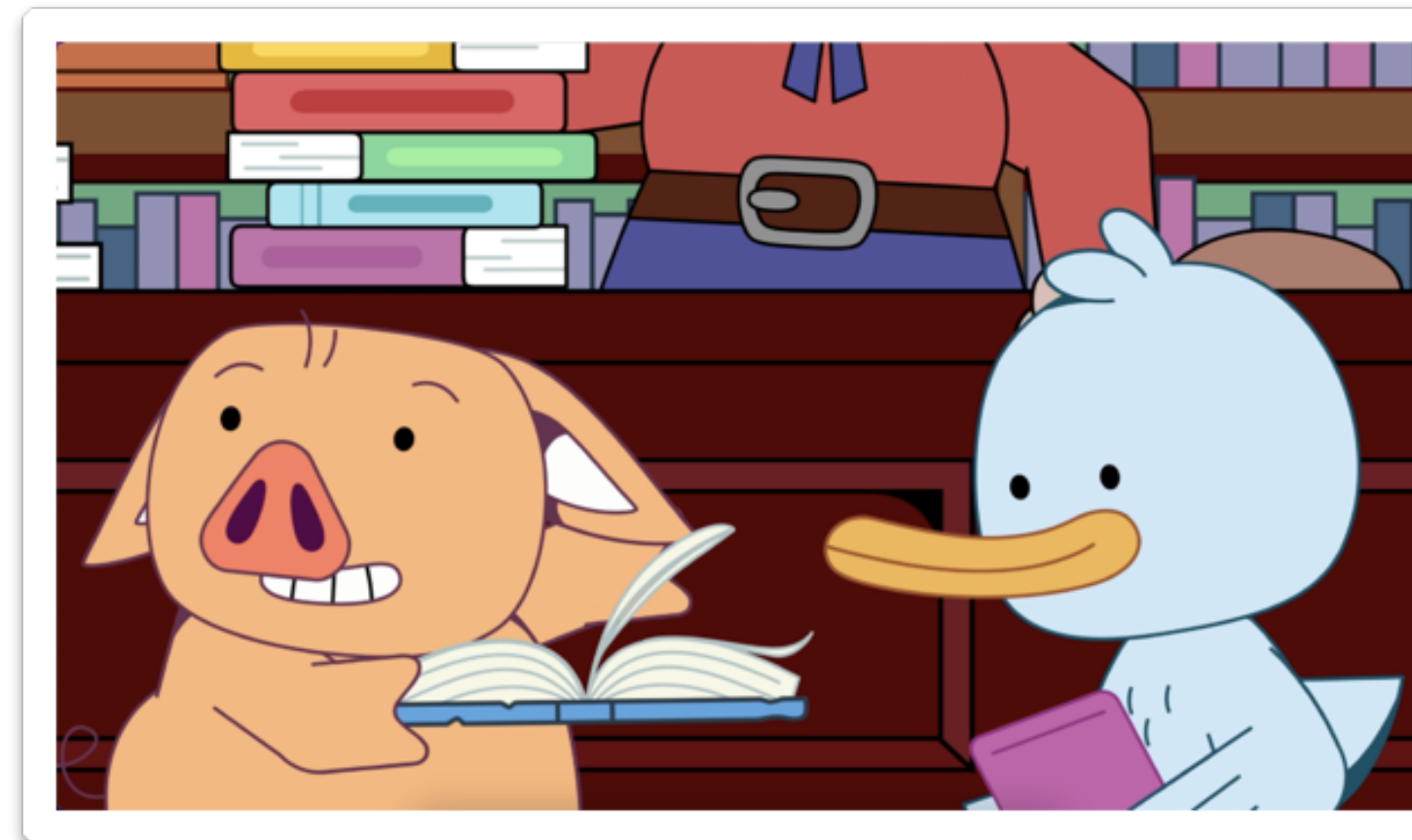


Videos

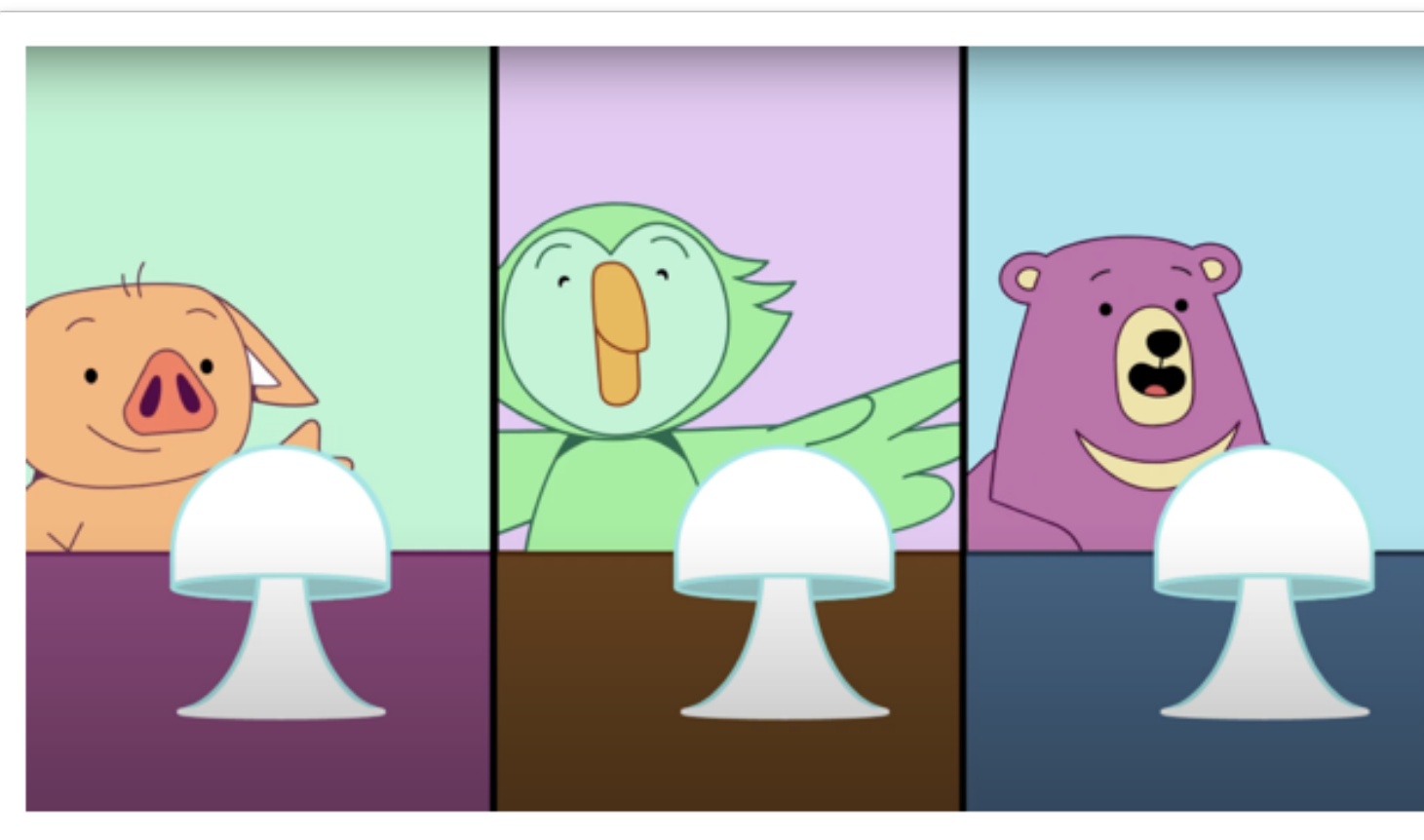
Chat Safety (K)



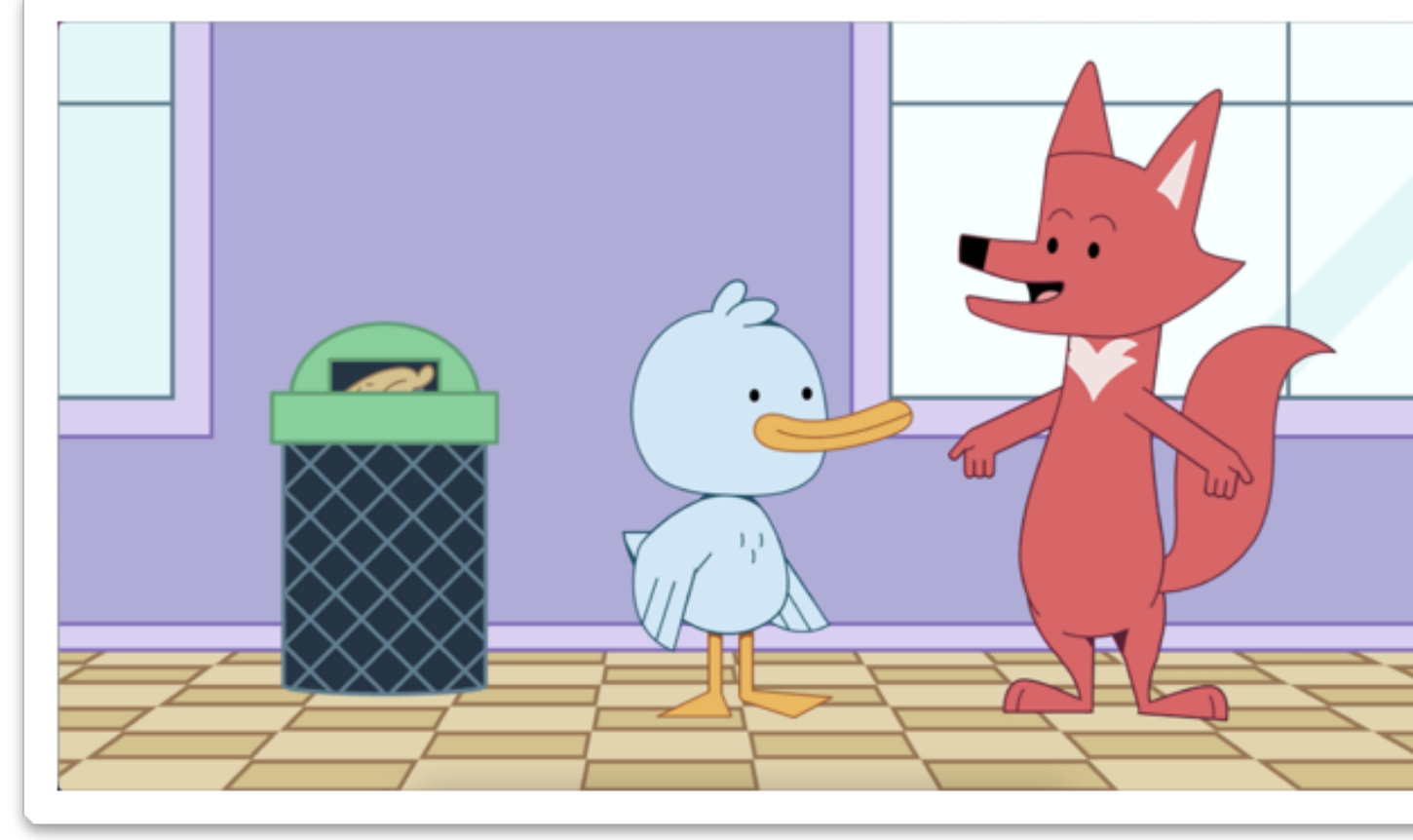
Pluto's Planetary Problem (2-3)



Miko the AI (1)



The Dirt Pie Debate (2-3)



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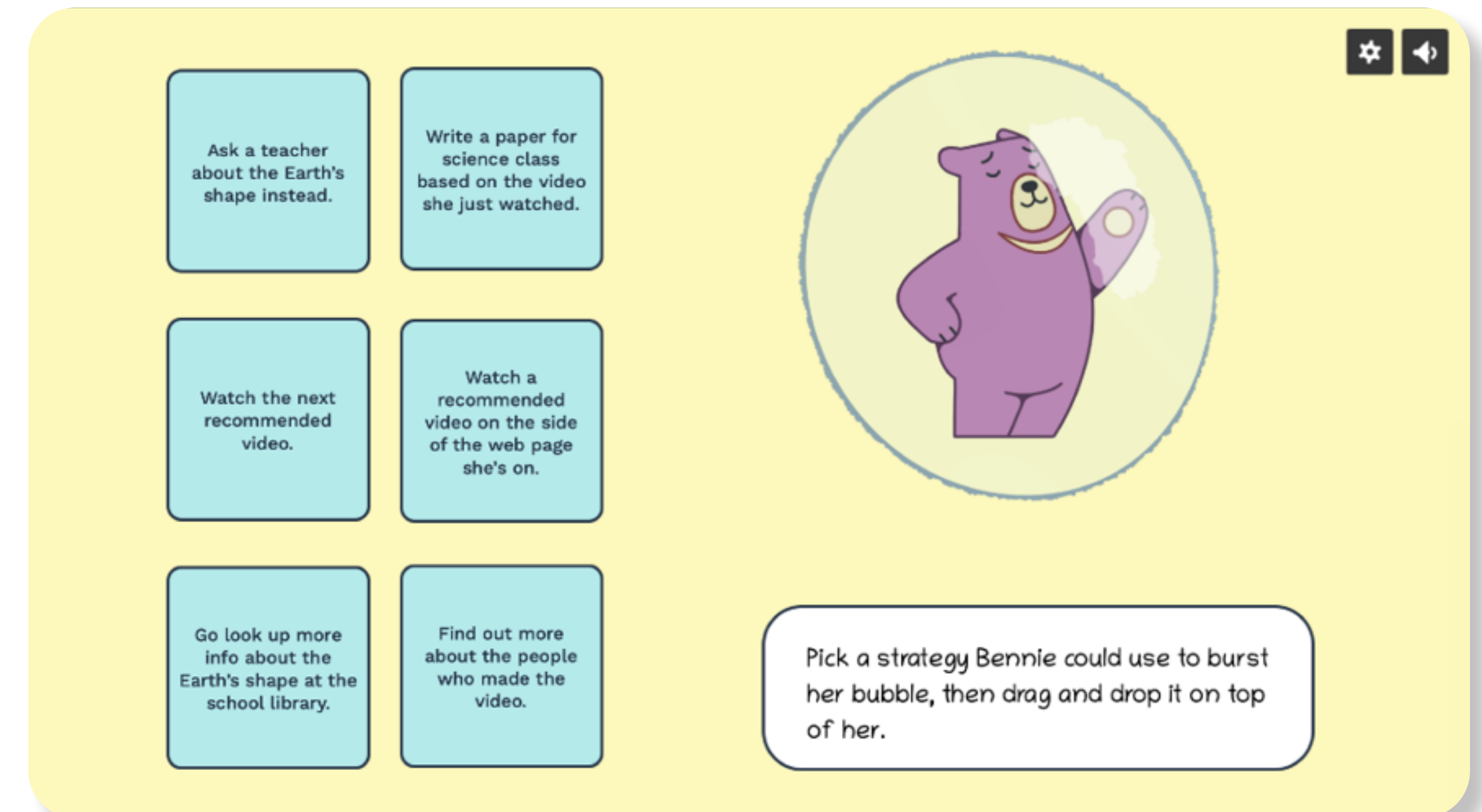
DUCC



Games



Fact or Fowl



Burst the Bubble (5)



Posters

QUACK!

How to Have Positive Conversations

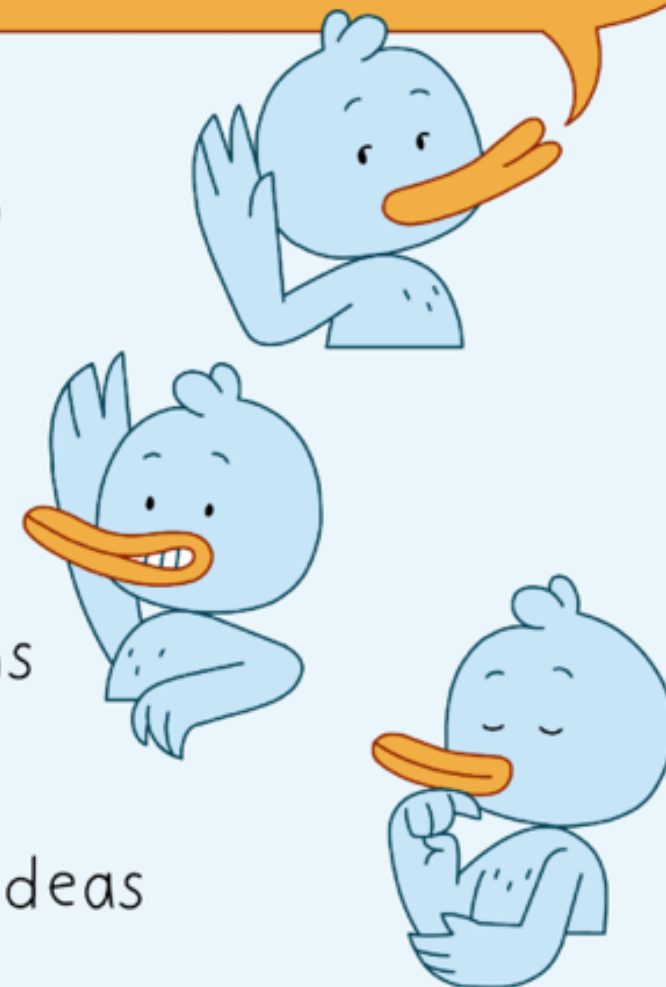
Quietly listen

Use respect

Ask questions

Contribute ideas

Know you can disagree



DUCC's 5 Ws

How to Check the
Reliability of Information

1.

Who made or shared it?

2.

What facts or evidence do they use?

3.

When was it made or shared?

4.

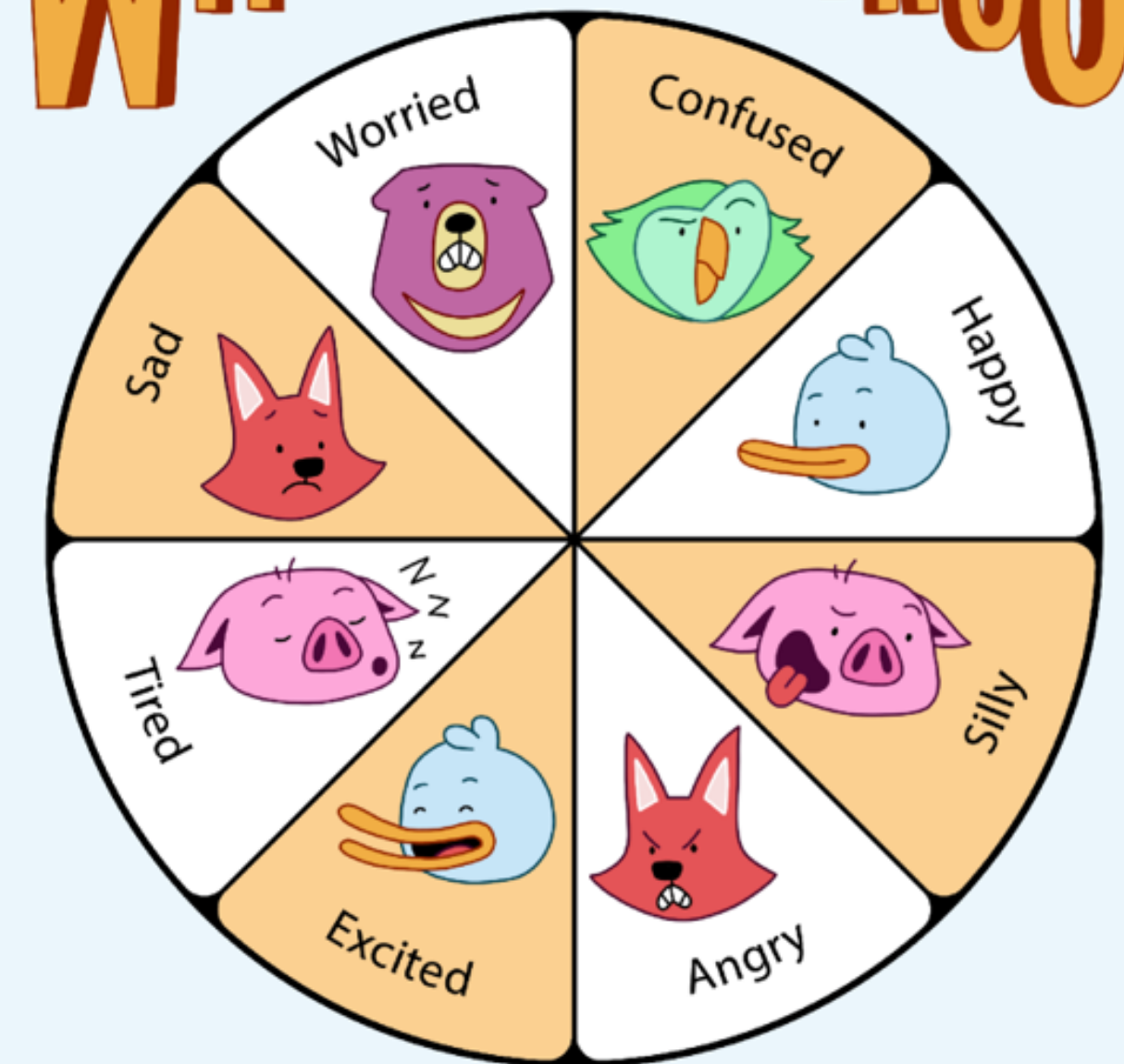
Where did you find it?

5.

Why did they make or share it?



WHEEL OF FEELINGS





Developing & Using Critical Comprehension

Curriculum for Grades K – 5



www.danieltheducc.org

Who is using the curriculum?

The DUCC curriculum is being shared as a resource for teachers in **New York City Public Schools in their 850+ elementary schools** as part of October's anti-cyberbullying month.

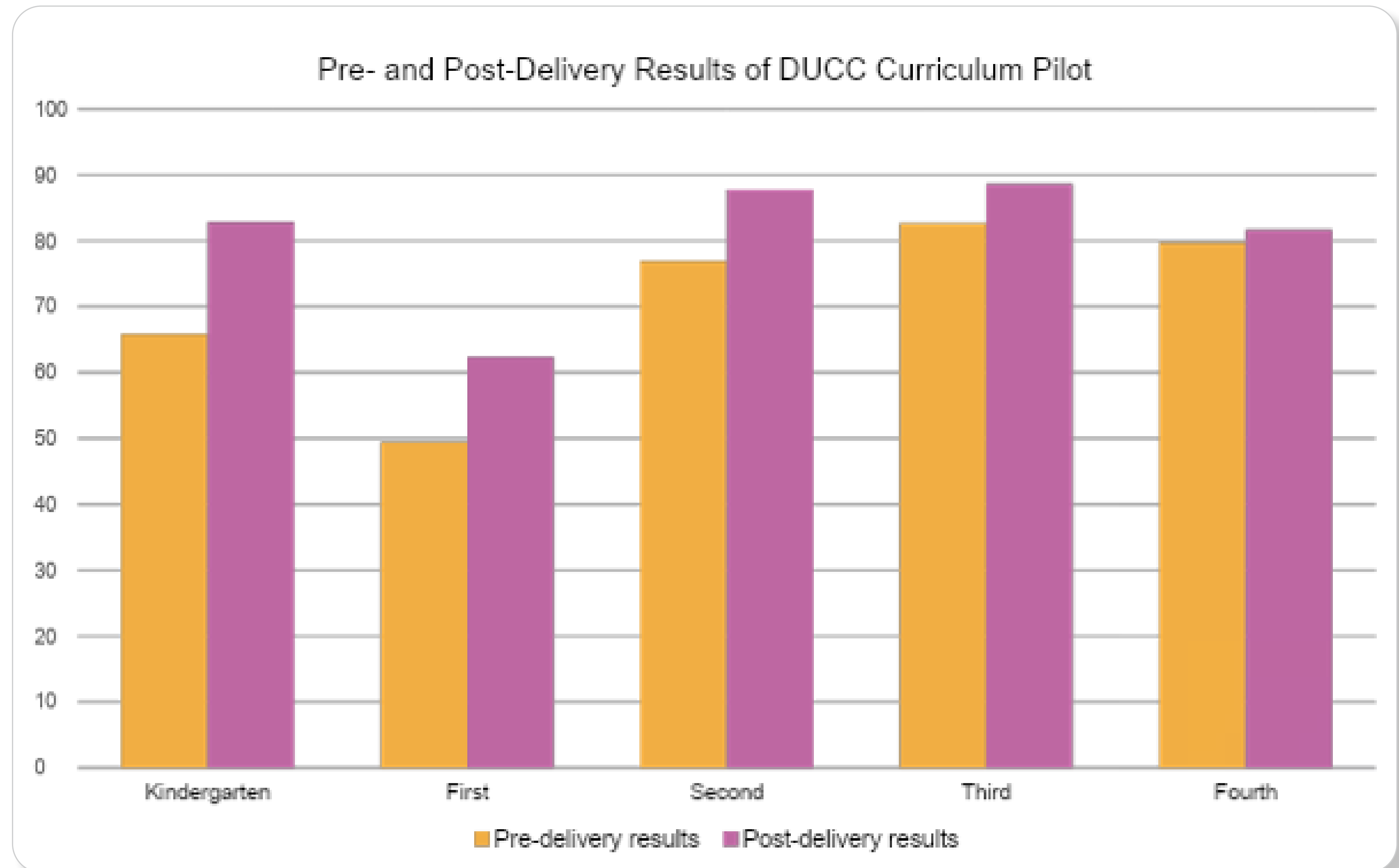
The **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** reviewed and approved the curriculum to be shared with their networks and care providers.

More than **194 educators** from **27 states** and **7 countries** have signed up at <https://www.danieltheducc.org/fullcurriculum>



Preliminary Findings

Participants gained an average of **12-point increase** in their digital literacy knowledge, skills, abilities, a statistically significant difference. The curriculum is **most effective for the youngest kids**.



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Poll Question

Do you currently use or teach digital literacy in your classroom or learning environment?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No





Tools and Takeaways

Bridging the gap between online and offline worlds - supporting critical thinking and social-emotional skills

- **DUCC**
- **AAP 5 C's of Media Use**

Addressing wellness and equity through digital literacy

- **DUCC**
- **PERIL's Parents and Caregivers Guide**

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Building Healthy, Equitable, and Resilient Communities



Elements of Online Radicalization

- Ease, accessibility, and addiction
- Algorithms carving a path
- A distorted consensus
- A soapbox community
- Bridges that can't bear the weight



Community and Belonging

- Focus on all of the spaces we exist in and what makes them feel safe.
- How do we recreate that feeling in other spaces?
- How do you create that for others?

An illustration of a hand holding a sign. The hand is brown-skinned and is holding a dark brown handle. The sign is a light beige rectangle with the word 'wellness' written on it in a dark blue, lowercase, sans-serif font.

wellness

Point of View & Community

- Stop to think about where perspectives come from and how have they developed.
- How do they fit in the community we are trying to create and maintain?

An illustration of a hand holding a sign. The hand is brown-skinned and is holding a light beige rectangular sign. The word "equity" is written on the sign in a dark blue, lowercase, sans-serif font.

equity

Fact or Feeling

- Identify persuasion tactics and emotional manipulation
- Differentiate facts from our feelings about those facts
- Manage emotional responses and build resilience

An illustration of a hand holding a sign. The hand is brown and is holding a dark brown handle. The sign is a light beige rectangle with the word 'resilience' written on it in a dark blue, lowercase, sans-serif font.

resilience

Escape the Echo Chamber

- Question perspective
- Seek news from a variety of sources
- Seek out opposing viewpoints
- Listen with the intent to learn
- Engage in hard conversations



Poll Question

How confident do you feel addressing sexist speech or behavior when it occurs among students at school or during school-sponsored activities?

1. Not at all confident
2. Somewhat confident
3. Mostly confident
4. Very confident

The CARE Method: A Four-Step Response

- **C**alm yourself first. Children learn more from calm correction than emotional confrontation.
- **A**ddress the stereotype or behavior. Focus on the comment, not the child's character.
- **R**einforce your values. State the norm you want to build.
- **E**ncourage a better way forward. Offer a better way to think or respond.

Learn how to respond to gender bias using sample scripts in Dr. Jo-Ann Finkelstein's new **toolkit**, *What to Say When You See Sexism*.

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“Our kids want to hear from us, even though in the moment they may shoot us daggers with their eyes, fire cannonballs of sarcasm, or run for cover.”

View the toolkit here

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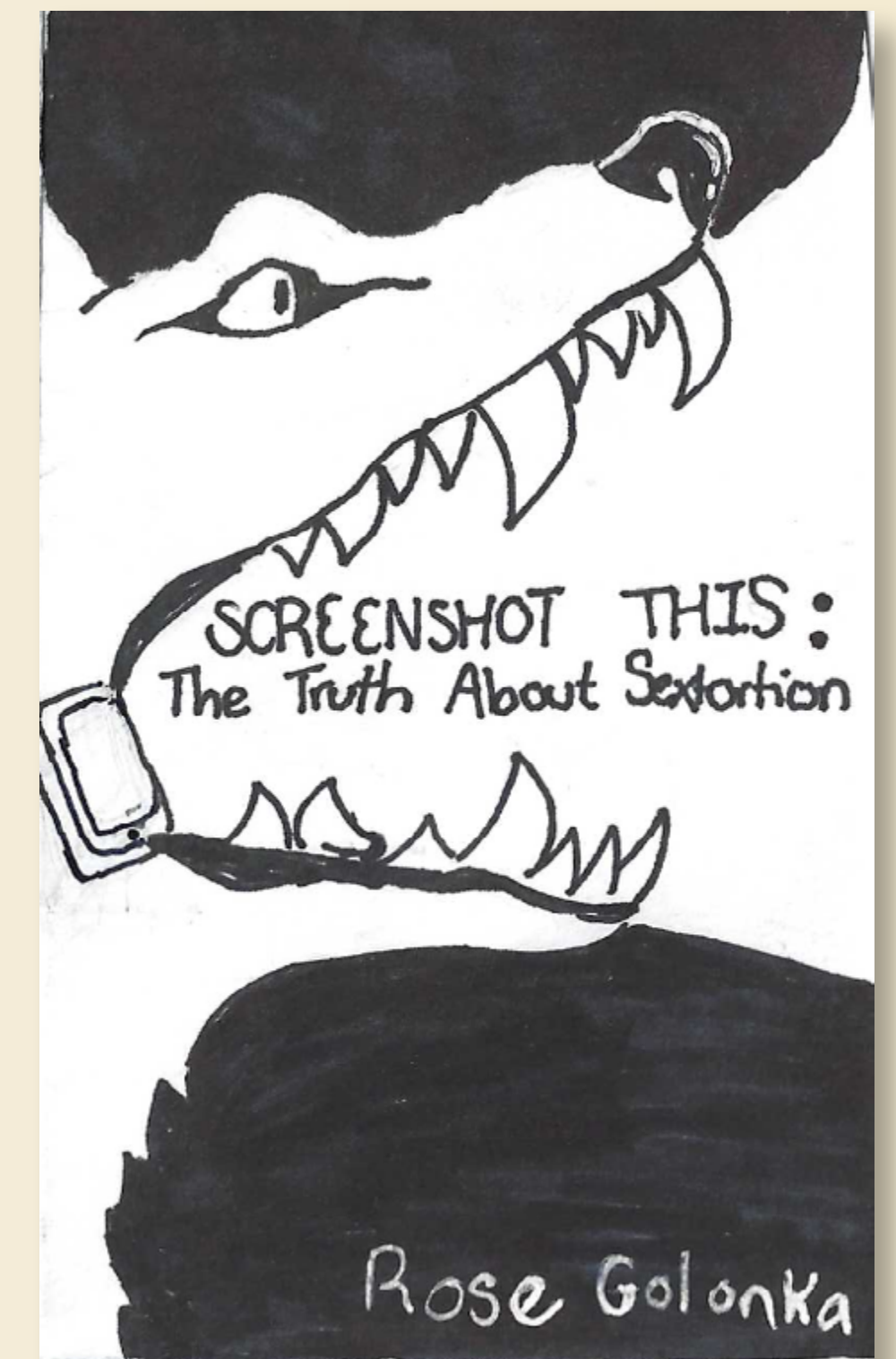
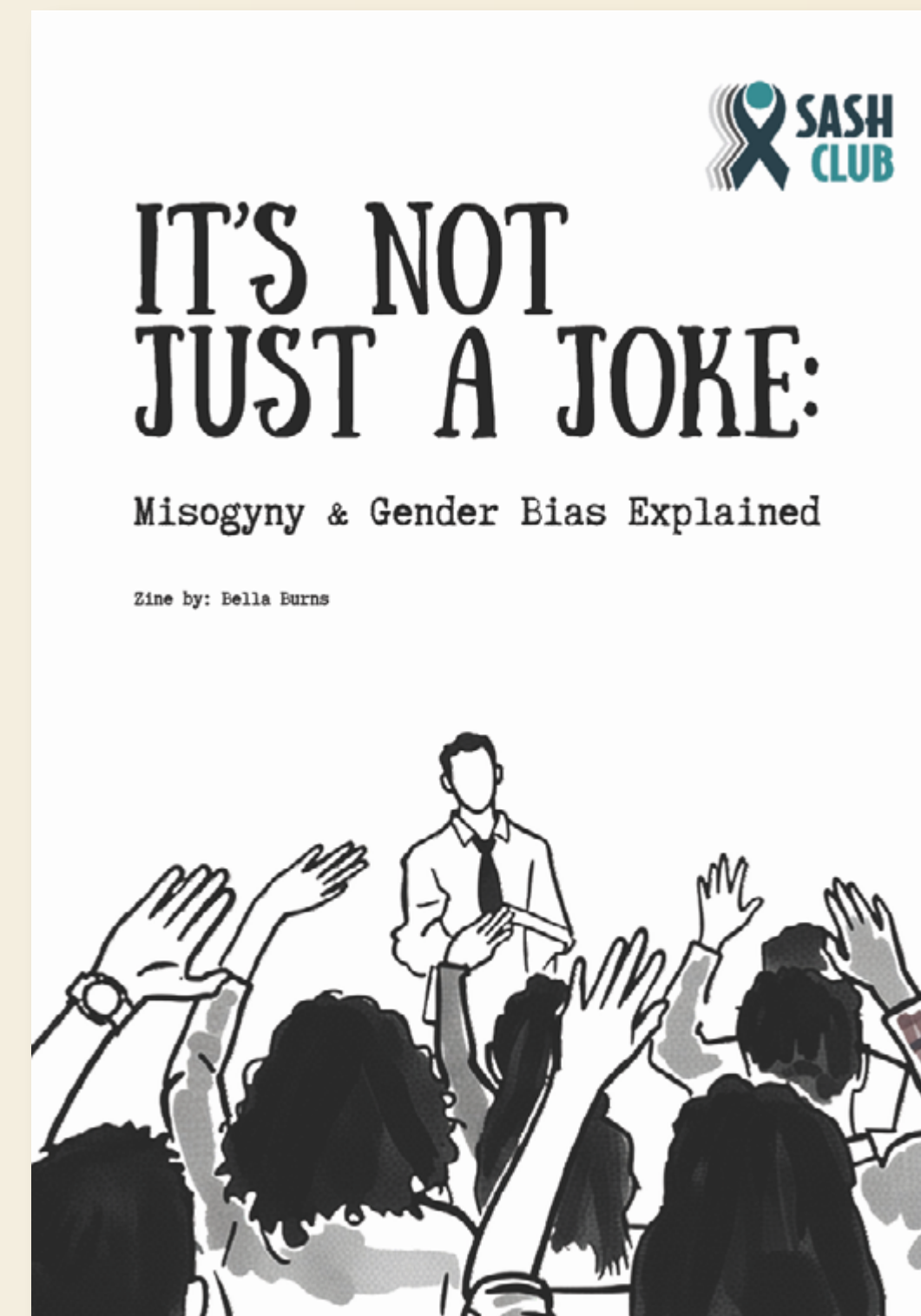
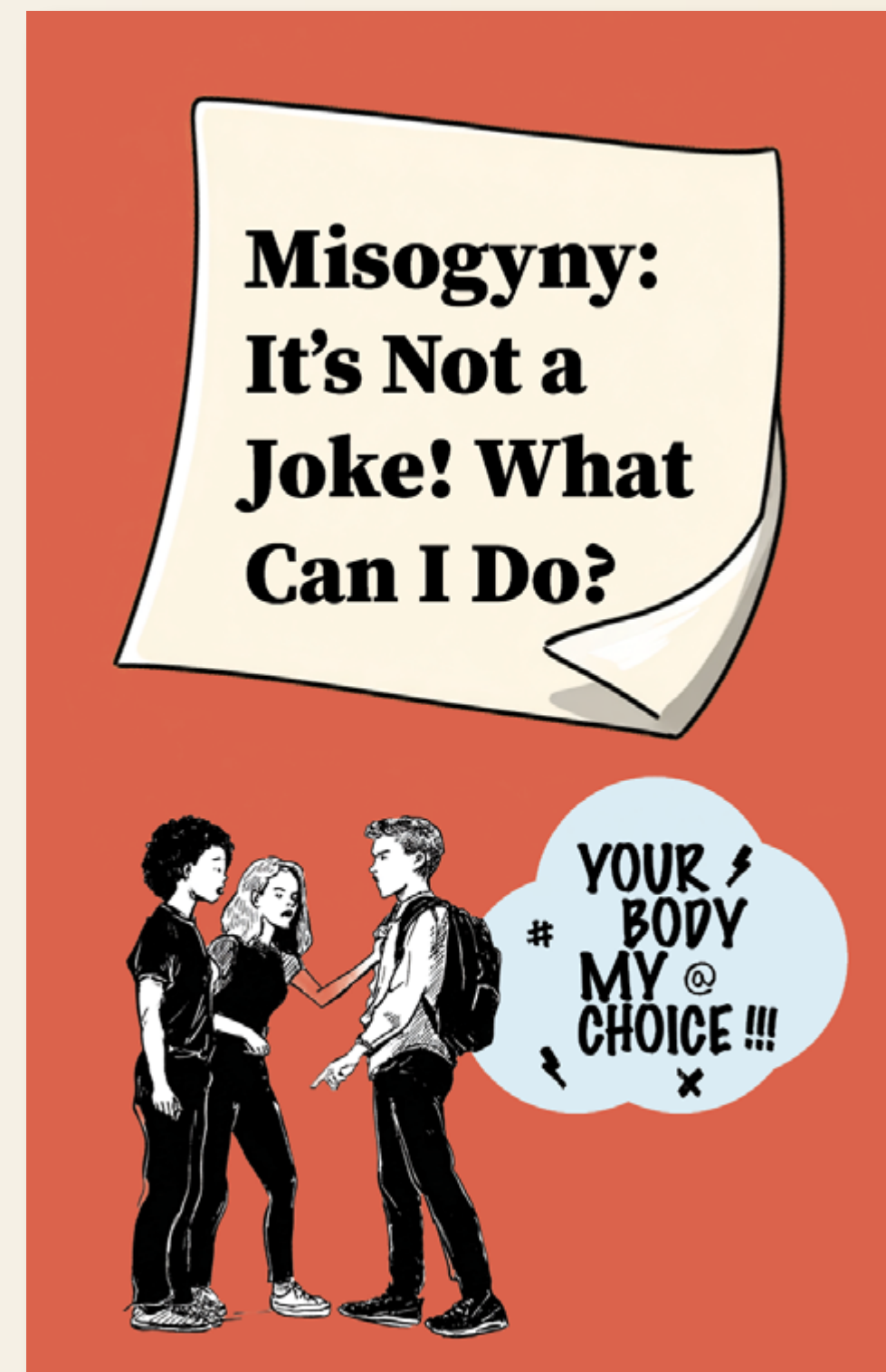
Student Engagement



Youth Safety and Equity Info-Zines

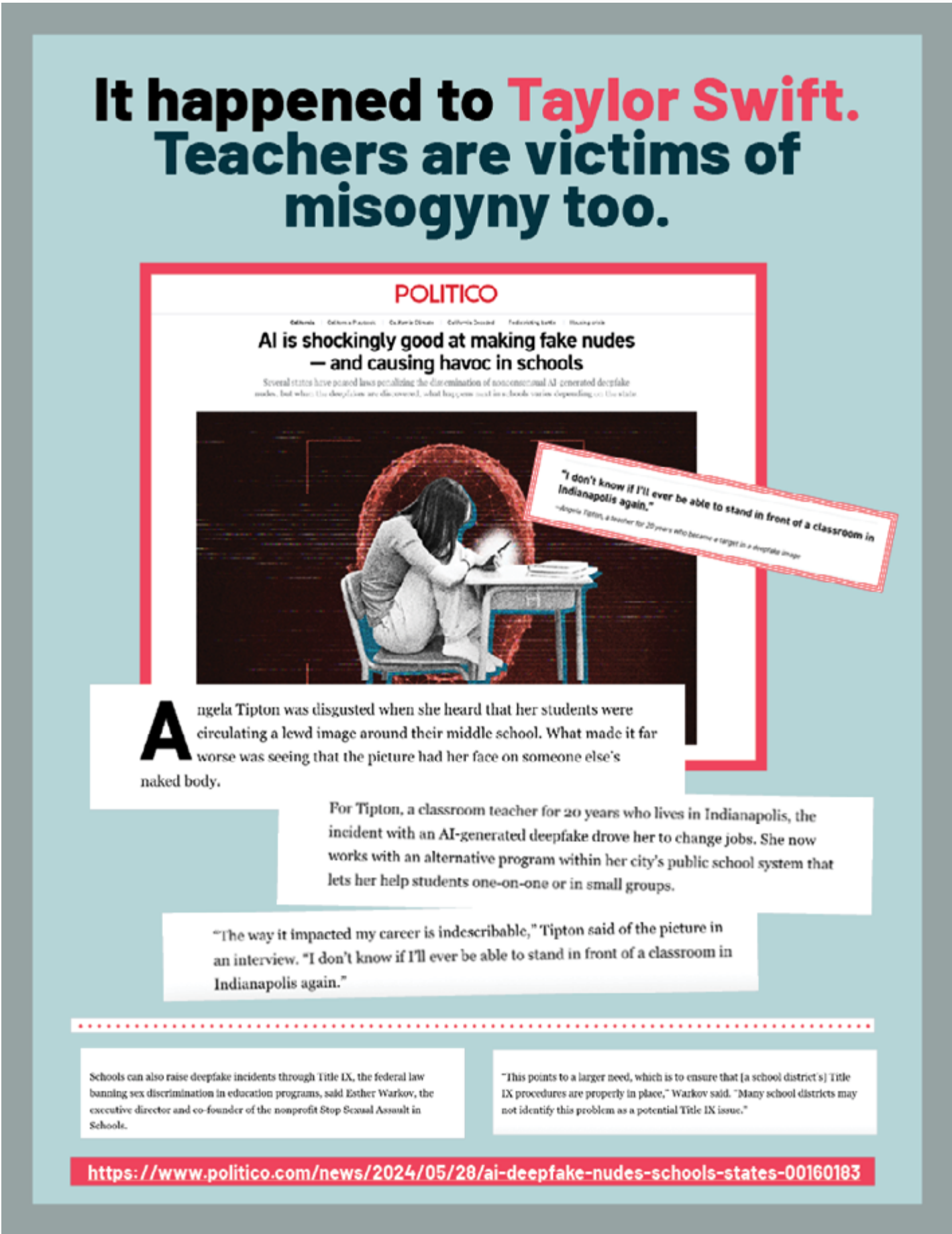
Students transform important information about safety, digital harm, healthy relationships, gender stereotypes, and education equity into creative zines that educate communities and help create a more positive school culture.

[Visit the project](#)



#MisogynyFreeSchools zine

View the zine



Student Wellness, Equity and Resilience in an Online World: Strategies for K–12



#MisogynyFreeSchools zine

View the zine

Content warning for
rough language and
abhorrent behavior!

The Andrew Tate Effect: Abuse of Female Students and Teachers

Female teachers are being sworn at, sexually harassed and physically threatened in high schools by male students.

These young men are under the thrall of Andrew Tate and other online influencers and are taking his misogynist ideas into the classroom.

Why have these so-called 'manfluencers' taken hold? And what can parents do to push back against this toxic content?

Dr Stephanie Wescott is a former teacher turned researcher who has studied Andrew Tate's impact on teens. She joins Bec Sparrow alongside a teacher who shares what's really going on in your child's classroom.

The advice in this podcast is general and does not consider your personal situation. If you require further advice specific to your needs, please consult a professional.

■ **QUEST:** Dr Stephanie Wescott

Listen here:
<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/parental-as-anything-with-maggie-dent/rise-of-andrew-tate-influence-in-teenagers/103990906>
—Submitted by a teacher who experienced sexual harassment and objectification.

Male student to teacher microaggression after being reprimanded:
"You're emotional, are you on your period?"

Who's responsible?

In our elementary school, boys are targeting girls with aggressive verbal threats and unwanted physical contact. My daughter was punched in her private parts in kindergarten. During a game at recess, an older boy yelled "I'll get you, bitch" at girls and threatened others saying, "I'll touch you later!" Boys intimidate girls screaming "F*** you!" My daughter has missed school because she feels unsafe and distracted in class. She's not alone.

It seems girls are now responsible for creating boundaries when the school district should have addressed its long history of gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment. So my daughter and I are practicing responses to these attacks like, "We wish we could play with you, but we don't feel safe," and "I don't feel comfortable answering you because there isn't an answer that feels safe." We need schools to step in to protect girls, and we also need the boys to get counseling and learn respectful behavior towards all students.

To make change, we need to unite and advocate together.

—Anonymous parent

I'M NOT BUYING WHAT THEY'RE SELLING!

What's the allure?

- Presenters are worldly, successful, confident, authoritative, engaging
- Recommend real self-improvement advice
- Frame success and masculinity in simple terms
- Offer a sense of identity and belonging
- Appeal to feelings of frustration, insecurity, rejection

[Why 'manosphere' content is appealing to some young men](#)

Ask before buying:

- Fact or opinion?
- Generalizations about all girls and women?
- "Us versus Them" approach?
- Oversimplified arguments about biology or behavior?
- Makes me feel better about myself, or angry and resentful?
- What other voices could I listen to?

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Poll Question

Do you think peer education using zines is a good way to inform students about online harms?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Uncertain



Student Clubs

SASH Club

SASH Club—Students Against Sexual Harassment—is a peer-education approach to addressing youth sexual harassment and assault. It was created in 2021 by the national nonprofit **Stop Sexual Assault in Schools**.

Watch the AFT webinar **SASH Club: A Peer-Education Approach to Addressing Sexual Harassment and Assault in Schools**.



Student Clubs

SASH Club

What does SASH Club offer?

- Informative **Power Topic** presentations on a wide range of topics including gender bias, digital harms, and wellness
- Educational videos, suggested activities, volunteer opportunities
- Power Topics can be shared with other school clubs or integrated into subject areas
- All resources freely available for download from the SASH Club website
- SASH Club resources are included in the American Federation of Teachers Share My Lesson library: [resources](#), [webinar](#), [article](#)

Student Clubs

Girls Learn International

Girls Learn International, a project of the Feminist Majority Foundation, provides a free student club framework and educational materials to learn about gender equality, access to equitable education, and human rights.

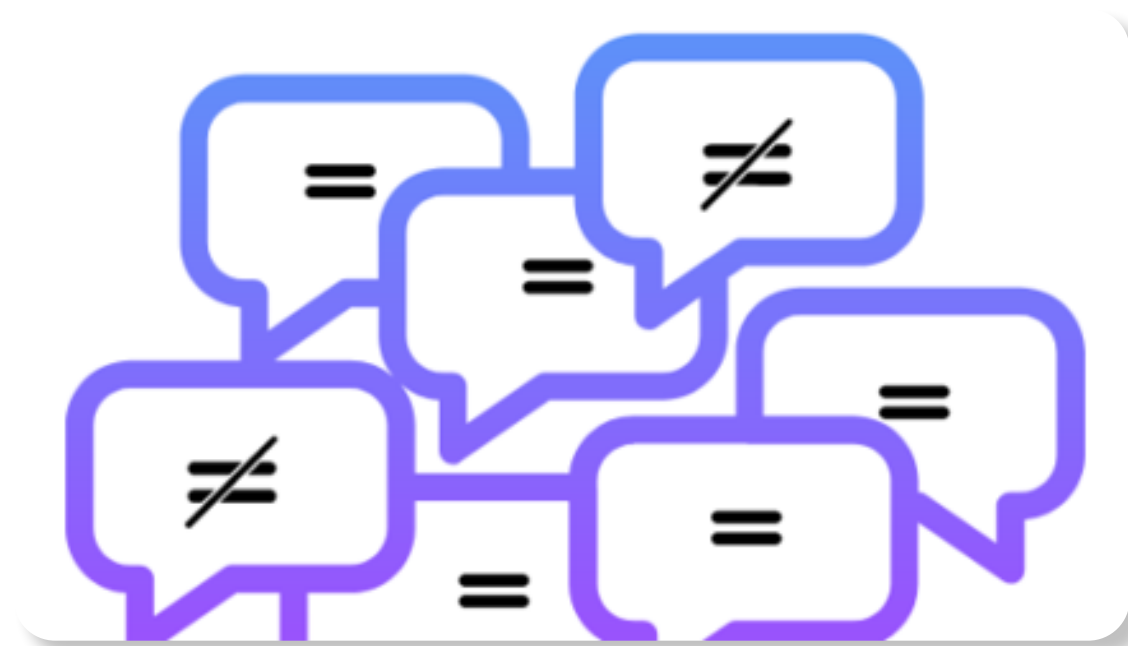
GLI program materials are designed to help participants develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and advocacy skills.

GLI supports more than 160 clubs in 26 U.S. states and 18 countries. Consider starting a club in your school or affiliate an existing club to access over 50 free courses.



Student Clubs

Girls Learn International



Rethinking the Language We Use

Learn about the implicit sexism in the English language to increase awareness and become more purposeful in speech



Analyzing Women in the Movies

Learn how gender is depicted in Hollywood films and assess the role of women in any film

[Click](#) to view open access courses.

Student Clubs

Girls Learn International



Women in the Media

Learn about sexism and colorism in the news, film, and media to address discrimination.



Representation in Media and Advertising

Learn to analyze advertisements targeted at young people.

[Click](#) to view open access courses.

Misogyny Free Schools

#MisogynyFreeSchools, an initiative of Stop Sexual Assault in Schools, combats the alarming rise of misogyny, hostile sexism, and gender bias that is impacting youth and shaping the next generation.

Now on the SSAIS YouTube Channel:

“Addressing the Rise and Impact of Misogyny Among Students in Grades 6-12”



Otis McGresham, Ed.D.
Prevention Specialist,
Project Safe, Vanderbilt University

With



Pasha Dashtgard, Ph.D.
Director of Research,
PERIL, American University



It's time to graduate from sexism!



Find out how:

Join the **#MisogynyFreeSchools** movement at stopsexualassaultinschools.org!

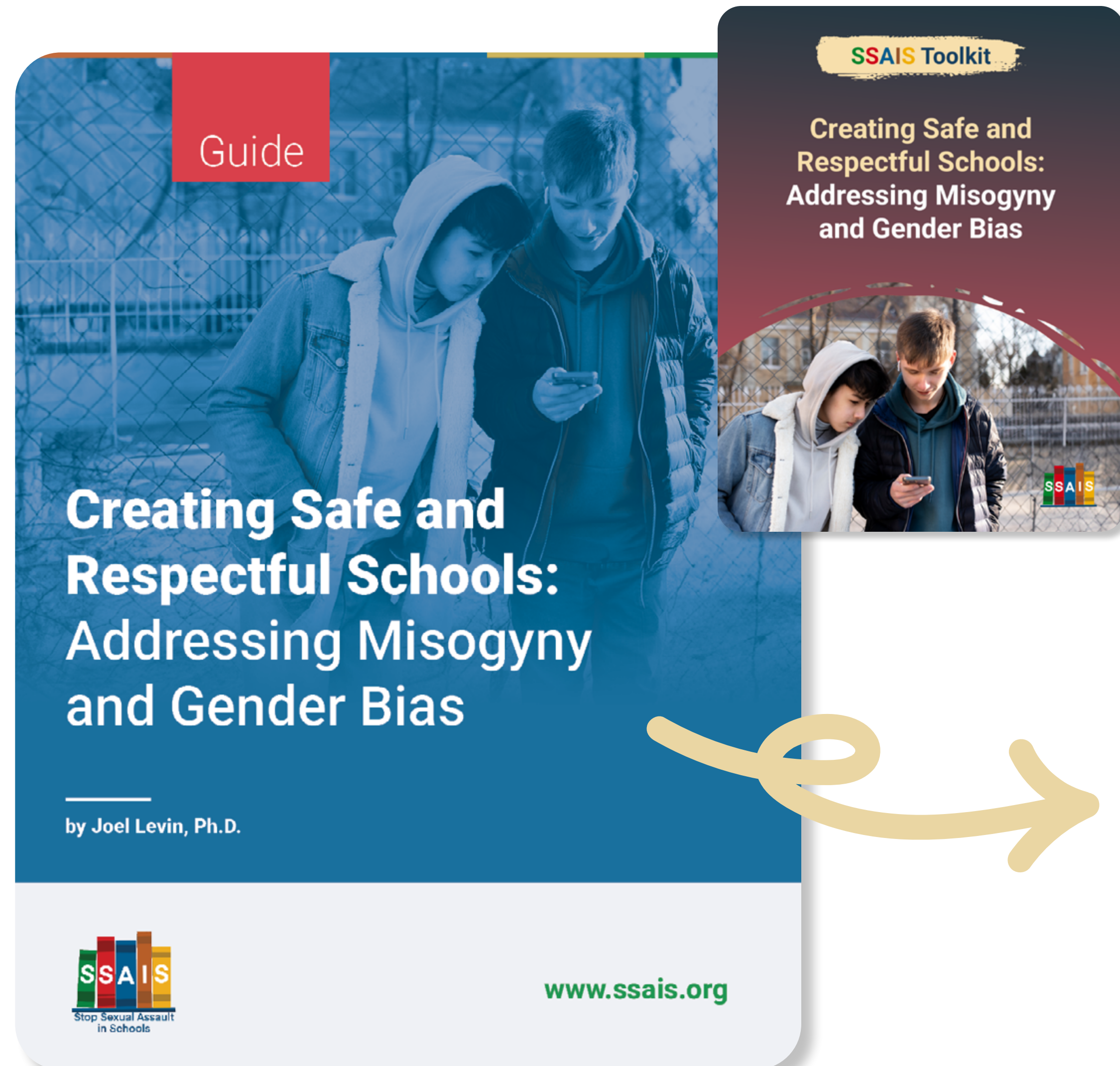


Student Wellness, Equity and Resilience
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Resources



Student Wellness, Equity and Resilience in an Online World: Strategies for K–12



This guide provides an overview of misogyny and gender bias in K–12 schools and offers practical strategies for educators, school leaders, families, and students.

View this toolkit here

Not Just a Joke

Not Just a Joke: Understanding & Preventing Gender- & Sexuality-Based Bigotry was developed by a collaborative team of experts at PERIL and SPLC. This guide provides all adults in the continuum of care that supports young people at home, in school and across their communities with the resources to help prevent manipulation by male supremacist and anti-LGBTQ+ disinformation. For further support and resources, please contact periltrainings@american.edu

To cite this guide, please use: Bates, Lydia, et al. 2024. "Not Just a Joke: Understanding & Preventing Gender- & Sexuality-Based Bigotry." Southern Poverty Law Center, December 10, 2024. <https://www.splcenter.org/peril>.



Misogyny and Male Supremacy: It's Not Just a Joke

In this **SASH Club Power Topic**, middle- and high-school students will learn:

- What is male supremacy?
- What are examples of male supremacist language and concepts?
- How are boys and young men exposed to misogyny and male supremacist beliefs?
- What is the appeal of male supremacist beliefs to certain individuals?
- What is the impact of misogyny and male supremacist beliefs on students of all genders?
- What are responses educators and students can take to counter misogyny and male supremacist language?



Sextortion Presentation



[View the presentation](#)

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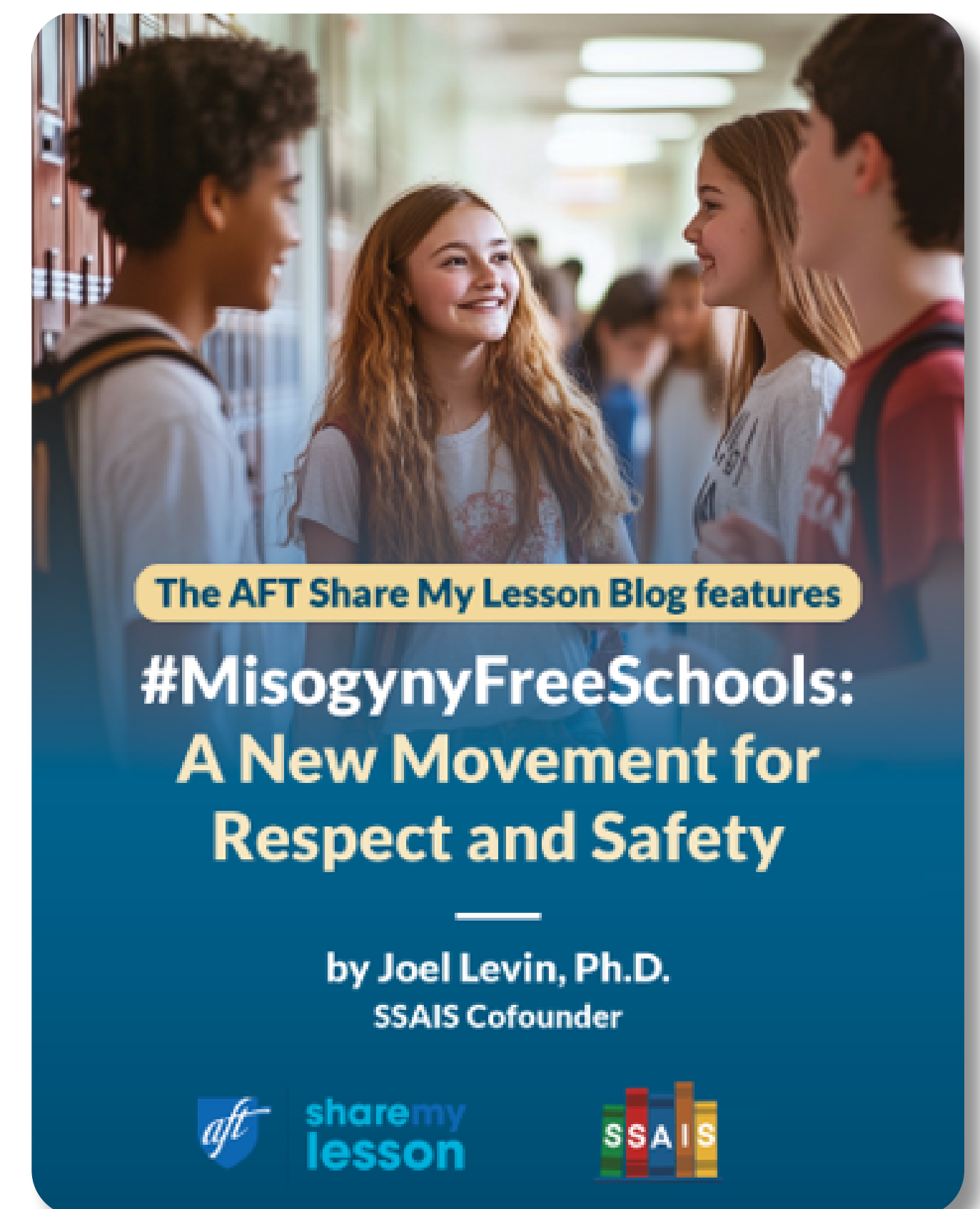
Articles



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[Click to read](#)



[Click to read](#)

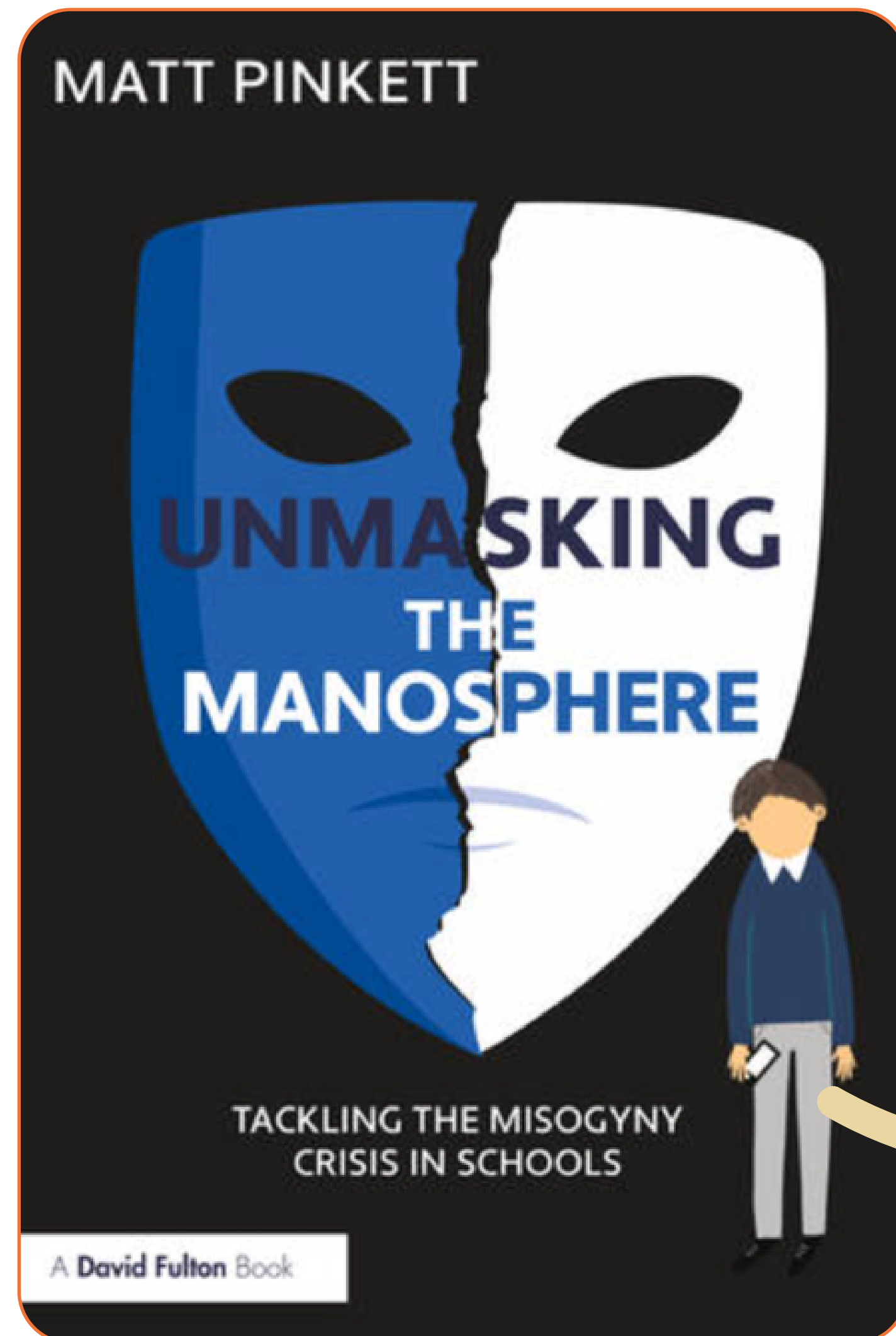


2026 publications

Schooling Misogyny by Stephanie Wescott and Steven Roberts explains how the online “manosphere” culture shows up in schools. Based on testimonies from Australian teachers, it shifts the focus from isolated student behaviors to a systemic problem requiring institutional action. It offers classroom teachers actionable, whole-school strategies to address gender-based harassment and encourage respectful digital citizenship.



Click to read



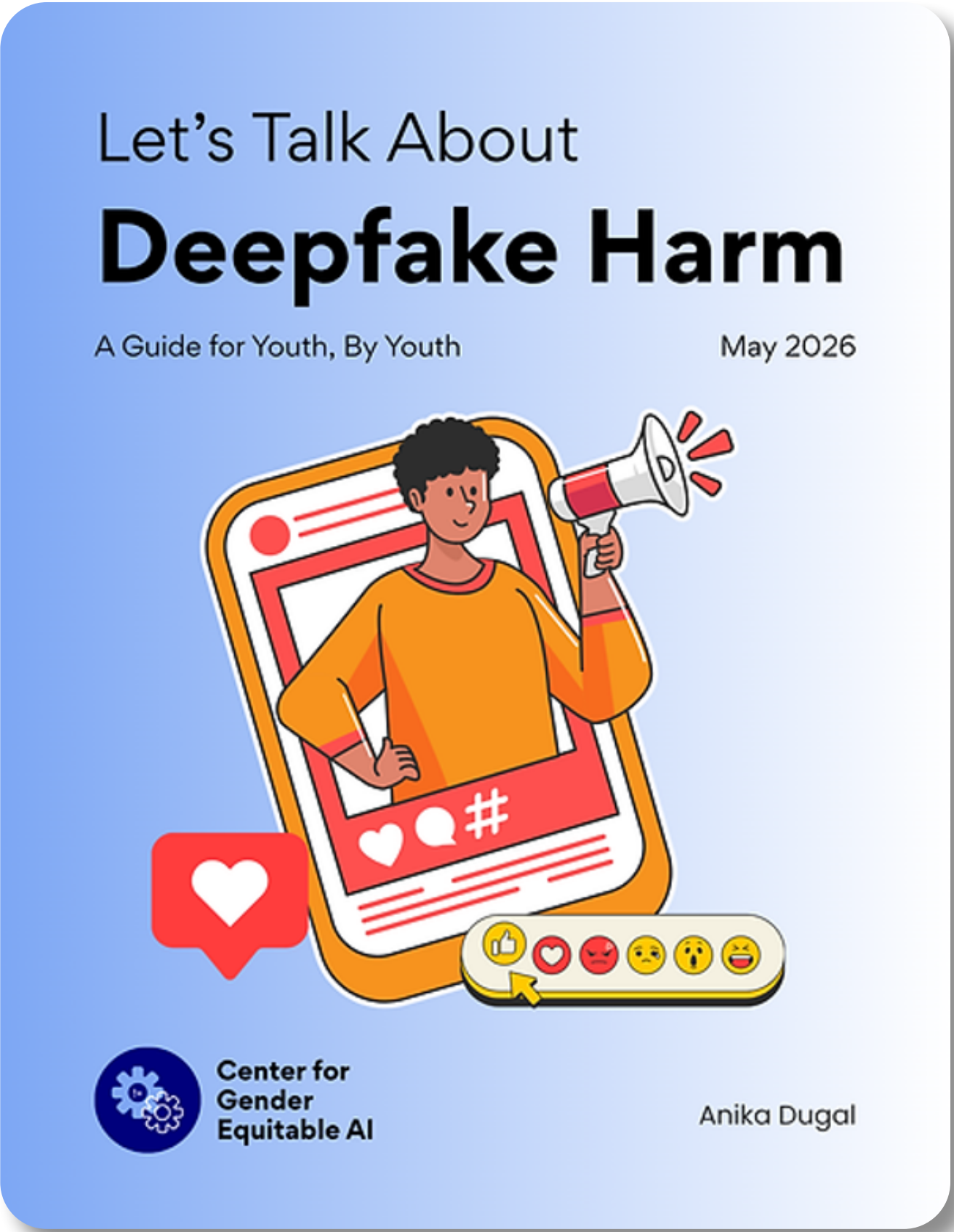
2026 publications

“Unmasking the Manosphere: Tackling the Misogyny Crisis in Schools” by Matt Pinkett offers practical, evidence-based strategies and conversation scripts to identify and challenge misogynistic behaviors in classrooms. This book uses real classroom situations to help educators de-escalate harmful rhetoric while addressing the underlying feelings that entice young boys to follow misogynistic influencers.



[Click to read](#)

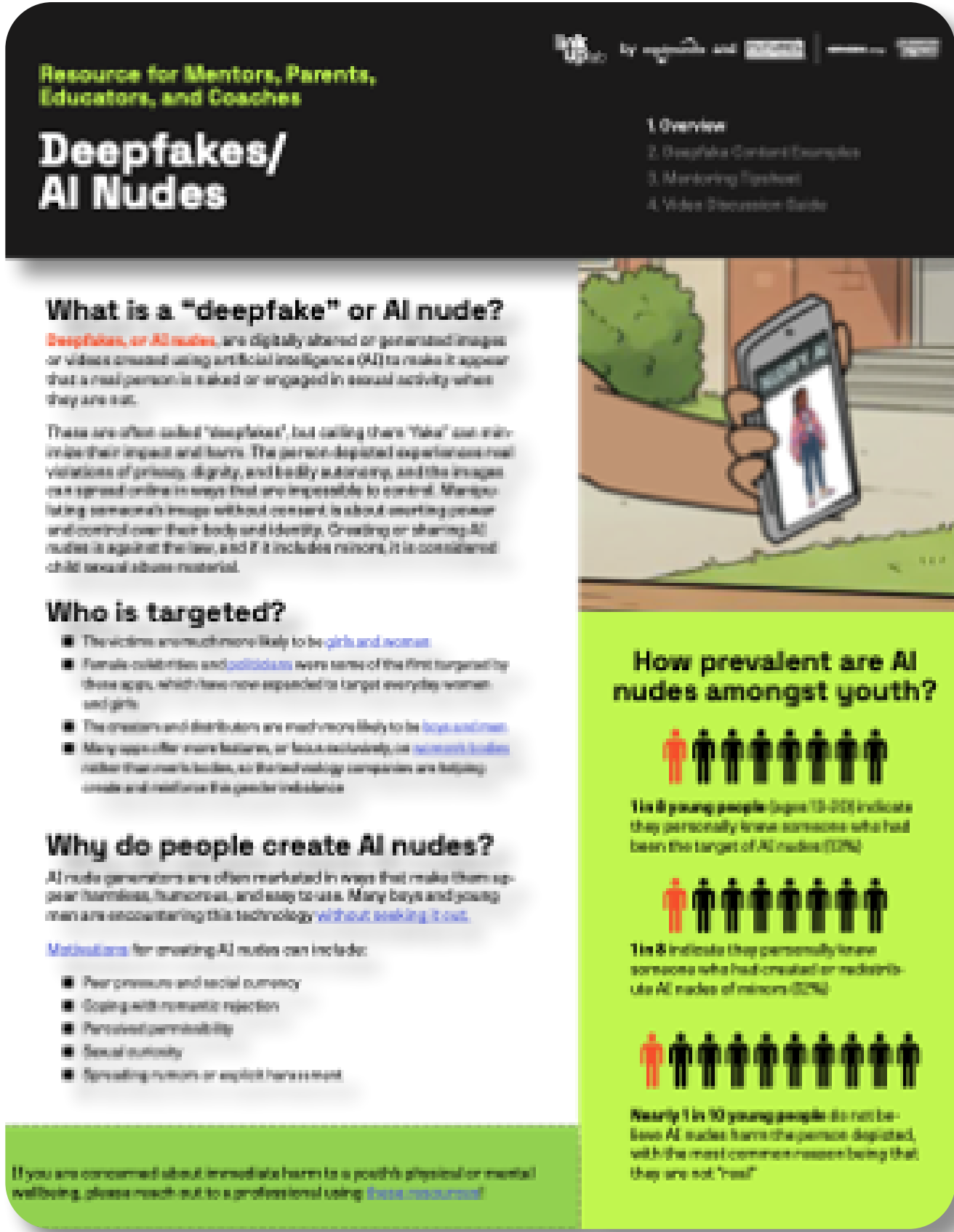
Digital Harm Resources



[Click to read](#)



[Click to read](#)



[Click to read](#)

Selected Resources

Combating Gender Bias

- **DUCC** Developing & Using Critical Comprehension, American University's Polarization and Extremism Research & Innovation Lab at American University (PERIL)
- **Not Just a Joke: Understanding & Preventing Gender & Sexuality-Based Bigotry** with curated resources Bates, Lydia, et.al 2024, Southern Poverty Law Center, Dec. 10, 2024
- **Misogyny and Male Supremacy: It's Not Just a Joke**, a youth-focused resource. Lydia Bates and research team at PERIL
- **#Misogyny Free Schools** Stop Sexual Assault in Schools (SSAIS) curated **resources**, **playlist**, **webinar**, **accounts**, and **action plan**

Take Action

- **Misogyny Free Schools toolkit**, SSAIS
- **Youth Safety and Equity Info-Zines**. Create, distribute, post on SSAIS, receive awards

Selected Resources

Articles

- **Misogyny is Rising in U.S. Classrooms: Where is the National Response?** Ms. Magazine
- **#MisogynyFreeSchools: A new campaign for respect and safety** SSAIS Share My Lesson blog
- **Misogyny and gender bias are on the rise: What can educators do?** SSAIS Share My Lesson blog
- **The Power of Peer Education to Combat Sexual Harassment** SSAIS Share My Lesson blog

American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Webinars on Demand

- Addressing the Rise and Impact of Misogyny Among Students in K-12 Schools Grades 6-12 with SSAIS and PERIL **YouTube recording**, linked **slides**, or **register** for credit
- **The Power of Peer Education to Combat Sexual Harassment** SSAIS Share My Lesson, **register**

Build #MisogynyFreeSchools with #YouthInfoZines

- SSAIS and SASH Club webinars **Creating #MisogynyFree Schools with zines** and **Celebrating Changemakers and Zine Reveal**
- **Misogyny Free Schools Zine**, a collaborative hyperlinked e-zine

Selected Resources

Toolkits and Guides

- [**How to Address Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault with Children**](#), Jo-Ann Finkelstein
- [**What to Say When You See Sexism**](#), Jo-Ann Finkelstein
- [**Creating Safe and Respectful Schools: Addressing Misogyny and Gender Bias**](#)
- [**Supportive Measures for Students Experiencing Sexual Harassment and Harm**](#)
- [**What is Sextortion? Protecting Ourselves from Adult Online Predators**](#)
- [**More SSAIS toolkits**](#)
- [**SSAIS resources at Share My Lesson**](#)



Selected Resources

Books

- **Schooling Misogyny: Exposing and Eliminating the Influence of the Manosphere in Education Settings**, Stephanie Wescott and Steven Roberts
- **Unmasking the Manosphere: Tackling the Misogyny Crisis in Schools**, Matt Pinkett
- A School Without Hate: Evidence from Education Interventions, Pasha Dashtgard and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, Harvard Education Press, forthcoming 2027

Websites

- **SASH Club** and Power Topic presentations
- **Stop Sexual Assault in Schools** with resources and toolkits for creating gender equity
- **Girls Learn International**



Contact Information

SSAIS website

SSAIS email

SSAIS Social media:

Instagram @ssaisorg

BlueSky ssais.bsky.social

Facebook

Youtube



SASH Club website

SASH Club email



Otis McGresham

otis.mcgrisham@vanderbilt.edu



Christine German

cgerman@american.edu

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Thank You!