



CONTENT WARNING

This article discusses themes of online radicalization, misogyny, violence, and teen mental health.

Reader discretion is advised.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ADOLESCENCE

Online Radicalization and the Child in the Next Room

A story every parent needs to see.
A conversation every family needs to start.

ABOUT THE SERIES

Netflix's *Adolescence* follows 13-year-old Jamie Miller, arrested for the murder of a classmate. Across four one-take episodes, the series shows how online influences, peer dynamics, and hidden pain can lead a boy down a dangerous path—while the adults around him are left in the dark.

WHAT CHILDREN LEARN FROM THE SERIES



Online worlds shape beliefs and identity.



Harmful ideologies can feel like truth.



Silence and secrecy create danger.



Pain and shame can be exploited by others.



Connection, empathy, and guidance heal.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What part of Jamie's story stood out to you the most—and why?
- How do you think Jamie felt inside as he spent more time online?
- What online messages or communities might have influenced his thinking?
- Why didn't Jamie's family see what was happening?
- What signs might parents miss in their own child?
- How does the show depict the impact on the family?
- What do you think Jamie needed most from the adults in his life?
- What can families do differently to stay connected?
- What gives you hope after watching this story?

ACTIVITY: EMPATHY MAP

Help your teen build empathy by considering different perspectives.



Talk about how each piece can shape choices.

GO DEEPER



How do algorithms and social media platforms influence what teens see and believe?



How does the concept of the "manosphere" affect vulnerable boys?



What role do mental health struggles play in radicalization?



How does the show challenge us to think about responsibility, empathy, and justice?



What can communities do to create safer spaces for boys to grow and talk?

FAMILY REFLECTION

Life happens online.
Connection happens in real life.
Presence today can prevent regret tomorrow.

FOR PARENTS: START HERE



BE PRESENT

Show interest in their world without constant surveillance.



LISTEN MORE

Ask open questions and really listen to the answers.



BUILD TRUST

Trust is the bridge that allows hard conversations.



SET BOUNDARIES

Clear, consistent boundaries protect and guide.



KNOW THEIR WORLD

Learn the platforms, games, and creators they engage with.



SEEK HELP EARLY

If something feels off, reach out to a professional or trusted adult.

REMEMBER

Your child doesn't need perfect parents.
They need present parents who keep learning and keep showing up.



DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.
Psychologist for Parenting | Z Psychology



Understanding minds.



Strengthening connections.