# Netflix drama Adolescence sparks national debate on online safety for young people



The Netflix drama "Adolescence" has catalysed a significant national dialogue concerning online safety, particularly in relation to the experiences and vulnerabilities faced by young people navigating social media. In this context, Dipti Tait, a specialist psychotherapist and hypnotherapist, has provided insights on how parents can engage with their children regarding these pressing issues.

With its release, "Adolescence" has illuminated the severe repercussions that harmful online content can have on youth. A recent meeting at Downing Street, hosted by the UK Prime Minister, brought together the show's writer Jack Thorne, producer Jo Johnson, and representatives from organisations such as the NSPCC and the Children’s Society to discuss preventive measures against the spread of misogyny and hate directed at young boys. The Prime Minister articulated the need for society to address these issues collectively.

Netflix has committed to making "Adolescence" available for free streaming in all secondary schools across the UK, a move welcomed by various political figures. Leader of the Labour Party, Sir Keir Starmer, mentioned during a family viewing session that the online realm facilitates the direct transmission of ideology to children, further underlining the urgency for reform in online safety measures.

Calls have emerged for social media platforms to strengthen their protocols to guard against harmful content as part of the implementation of the Online Safety Act, now gradually coming into effect. This legislation mandates that online companies adhere to rigorous codes of practice, as established by Ofcom, in order to safeguard users, particularly minors, from negative influences including racism, homophobia, and other unsuitable materials.

Tait, who has two decades of experience working with teenagers and their families, argues against outright bans on social media use, which she believes could be counterproductive. “The internet isn't actually the problem - it's the adults,” Tait asserted during an interview with the Manchester Evening News. She contends that many parents forget their own adolescent experiences and how inherently rebellious teenagers can be. Tait explained, “For a neurotypical teenager, the normal brain function is that they are natural rulebreakers. None of them want to be controlled, repressed, or stopped.”

To promote healthier discussions around online activity, Tait emphasises the importance of trust and open communication between parents and teenagers. She advocates for a conversational approach using open-ended questions that do not invoke a defensive response. “As soon as you make something a ban, or secretive, what happens in the brain? You do the opposite,” she said. Tait further elaborated on the concept of 'pattern interruption', where altering the typical way of discussing sensitive topics can invite more honest conversations.

Her suggestions include framing statements that acknowledge the intensity of online experiences, such as, “I imagine some of the stuff online must feel intense or overwhelming at times,” which can help foster dialogue. By empowering children to tune into their feelings and articulate their experiences, parents may create a space where adolescents feel comfortable sharing their thoughts.

Furthermore, Tait posits that rather than employing authoritative instructions, parents should aim to inspire their children through a shared understanding of the addictive nature of social media. She provides the concept of 'controlled inspiration', where parents can encourage children to recognise how social media tricks their attention and the potential negative impact of excessive scrolling on their lives.

On the subject of polarising online commentary and extremism, Tait advocates for constructive discourse that allows young people to explore various perspectives. “It's about always ruling from a place of understanding and love,” she noted. This approach involves guiding children to critically assess different viewpoints on issues like race, gender, and politics, thereby preparing them for more nuanced understandings in the real world.

Tait’s insights and strategies serve as a resource for parents concerned about their children's online safety, suggesting that through trust-building and open conversations, adults can better equip young people to navigate the complexities of a hyper-connected digital landscape.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2025/04/adolescence-digital-safety-online-harm/> - This article supports the claim that Netflix's 'Adolescence' has sparked global discussions about digital safety and online harm, particularly focusing on the impact of social media on children.
* <https://www.parents.com/viral-netflix-series-adolescence-warning-parents-teen-boys-11708312> - This article highlights how 'Adolescence' sheds light on harmful online subcultures affecting teen boys and emphasizes the importance of parental awareness and dialogue.
* <https://www.savethechildren.net/stories/expert-spotlight-what-netflixs-adolescence-tells-us-about-childrens-online-safety> - This article discusses the risks children face online and how 'Adolescence' contributes to conversations about children's online safety and the need for robust measures to protect them.
* <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2025/04/adolescence-digital-safety-online-harm/> - This article also mentions the UK's Online Safety Act and its implications for safeguarding users from harmful content, aligning with calls for stronger protocols in social media.
* [https://www.salon.com/2023/11/23/uk-governments-draft-terms-of-service-for-the-online-safety-act)](https://www.salon.com/2023/11/23/uk-governments-draft-terms-of-service-for-the-online-safety-act)) - This could potentially support discussions around the Online Safety Act and its goals to regulate harmful content, though the specific link is not provided; generally, it highlights the legislative efforts to safeguard users.