

<b>Resources:</b>  Appendix 1 and 2	<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain in simple terms what a content algorithm does and what it prioritises.</li> <li>• Describe how algorithms can create echo chambers and rabbit holes.</li> <li>• Reflect on how this affects the way people think, feel and behave online.</li> </ul>
<b>Timings:</b>	<b>Activities:</b>
<p>5 mins</p>	<p><b>Starter – ‘Why did I see this?’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin by suggesting a post that has appeared on someone’s feed. For example, a post about fitness or recipes and ask:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Why might this appear on someone’s feed?</li> <li>○ What might the platform be guessing about the person?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Through discussion draw out that platforms use algorithms to push content based on behaviour, interests, viewing time and what keeps people scrolling.</li> <li>• Ask the young people to share or list everything they can think of that drives our algorithm. Display the full list in appendix 1 and discuss:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How many were they aware of? Did any surprised them?</li> <li>○ Which ones do they think their favourite apps prioritise most?</li> <li>○ What impact could this have on us as users?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>15 mins</p>	<p><b>Activity – ‘Build the Feed’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Split the young people into groups and hand out a scenario card from appendix 2 to each group along with post it notes.</li> <li>• Ask the young people to build the feed of suggested posts writing one post per post it note and arranging them together as a feed. Ask the young people to write the suggested post on the main side and then why the algorithm has suggested it on the back.</li> <li>• Compare feeds around the room allowing groups to walk around and look at each other’s feeds. Then discuss together:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What patterns can you spot in the posts your group created?</li> <li>○ What signs might show that your feed has become an unhealthy place?</li> <li>○ How could seeing the same type of post again and again shape what someone thinks is normal or expected?</li> <li>○ Are there any posts in your feed you would want to challenge, report or remove, and why?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Timings:	Activities:
10 mins (optional)	<p><b>Optional Extension- ‘Redesign the Feed’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask groups to redesign the feed using a different priority such as wellbeing, learning, connection, or fun.</li> <li>• Revisit each groups feed and discuss how they have changed and what impact it might have on users.</li> </ul>
5 mins	<p><b>Discussion – ‘Reclaiming our feeds’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that feeds shift over time because platforms make guesses about what we want to see. Whilst we cannot change the algorithm, we can reclaim our feeds by taking small steps so that what we see supports our wellbeing rather than drags us down.</li> <li>• Ask the young people to share ideas for how they can reclaim their feed if they have noticed it shift into an unhealthy space. Allow for a few suggestions to be shared before guiding the group towards these 4 main actions they can do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Muting accounts or posts that feel draining or keep them feeling low.</li> <li>○ Unfollowing pages or creators that no longer feel right.</li> <li>○ Reporting posts or accounts that cross a line or feel unsafe.</li> <li>○ Actively searching for content that lifts us up, so the feed learns that this is what we want to see</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5 mins	<p><b>Plenary – ‘Who Can Help?’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recap that the algorithm within our apps has been designed to keep us watching based on engagement rather than how it might impact us.</li> <li>• Remind them to talk to a parent, teacher or helpline like Childline (0800 11 11) if they are ever worried about anything they see online.</li> </ul>

### Signposting to support

- **NSPCC Childline – 0800 1111** – free, confidential support for young people under 19, available 24/7
- **SHOUT – text ‘MRF’ to 85258** – free, confidential crisis text line for anyone, any age available 24/7
- **NSPCC Helpline – 0808 800 5000** or [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) - free, confidential support for anyone who is worried about the safety and wellbeing of a child

### Teach next...

- Use our lesson plan ‘Healthy vs Harmful’ to have discussions about the subtleties of content and the impact it can have on us.

# WHAT SHAPES YOUR FEED

## Small actions and patterns that guide what platforms show you

- Posts you **engage with** for longer, such as watching a full video or reading comments.
- Posts you **like, save, comment on or share**.
- Accounts you **visit often** or search for.
- Topics you **interact with repeatedly** such as fitness, beauty, gaming or sad quotes.
- Posts that **spark strong reactions** including anger, excitement or surprise.
- Content that is getting **lots of engagement** from other people.
- Posts that **match your recent behaviour** for example what you looked at in the last few days.
- Newer or fast-growing posts that are **gaining attention quickly**.
- Content from **similar accounts** to ones you already follow.
- Posts that **match your location, age group or language**.
- Content the platform wants to promote such as **new features or partner creators**.

## Appendix 2

**Someone who has watched lots of gym transformation videos in the last few days.**

**Someone who recently liked a post sharing a sad quote when they were having a difficult day.**

**Someone who likes and saves lots of beauty or skincare tutorials.**

**Someone who follows lots of motivational quotes about being a strong man.**

**Someone who reads about political arguments and comments on posts sharing their opinion.**

**Someone who follows celebrity gossip accounts and watches lots of reels discussing the latest TV shows.**

**Someone who clicks on conspiracy themed videos and tags friends in them.**

**Someone who follows a lot of accounts about self-improvement, achieving a healthy lifestyle and recipe sharing.**