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Finding Confidence, Balance, and Self-acceptance: a Clinician's Guide to Treating Involuntary Celibates

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Finding Confidence, Balance, and Self-acceptance: a Clinician's Guide
to Treating Involuntary Celibates

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Abstract

Involuntary Celibates (incels) are a new and poorly understood population. In the field of psychology, very little research has been done on the population, and even fewer clinicians have successfully worked with clients from this group. This handbook was created in an attempt to outline the history, belief system, terminology, and common mental health problems of incels and their related groups. This information is distilled down and presented as a primer for anyone looking to understand this new population. Also, possible treatment recommendations are suggested and discussed in detail based on the particular psychological difficulties that incels often face.

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I would like to begin by acknowledging my parents, Chris and Patti Keller, without whom I would not have achieved what I have achieved and more importantly, I would not be who I am. My brother John Keller for always paving the way for me in life. Being the first child, he took on many of life's hardships before me and always used what he learned to make my experience easier and more fulfilling.

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Part 1: Introduction

Statement of Problem and Significance of Issue

Involuntary celibates (incels) are a relatively new group that have been slowly gaining mainstream awareness. These individuals are predominately men who have had little to no success finding a sexual partner or having sexual experiences at all (Daly, 2020). The internet is the primary vehicle that has given rise to incels and the many online groups and forums that they frequent. In these forums, an ideology has been proposed, codified, and refined over the last twenty years. Though they are not uniform across the groups, many incel ideas have jumped into the mainstream awareness causing disgust, panic, and condemnation from most of society. Some of these ideas include violent or threatening language toward women, pro-suicidal behavior, threats of mass shootings and other random violence, and racist, sexist, and generally offensive material.

A primary tenant of Inceldom (the state of being an incel) is the lack of control that the incel has over their fate. Their sexless status is often considered to be a product of bad genes, awkwardness, missed sexual milestones, poor mental health, and other external factors. Their rhetoric and ideology often reaches young, introverted, counterculture boys and men who find a connection with those who have had similar social difficulties and are enticed by the explanations that the group offers for their celibacy. Over time, many of these individuals end up spending many years reading, interacting, and posting on these forums. This creates a worldview that is often damaging to the individual and can lead some to commit acts of violence due to their desperation and disgust with society.

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Purpose

Incels as a group are understudied, undertreated, and woefully misunderstood by the vast majority of mental health professionals. This handbook will attempt to give an overview of the history, ideology, and damaging effects of inceldom and related groups. Further, this handbook will provide an in-depth glossary of incel/internet terms and a treatment path that will target the most prevalent mental health struggles that incels experience.

Part 2: Literature Review

History

For the best psychological treatment outcomes, as with any culture, it is paramount that the clinician educate themselves regarding the important aspects of that culture, the terminology/language of that culture, and the most common mental health issues that the culture faces. Inceldom is no different. Though it is often obtuse and full of foreign concepts, having a basic understanding of this group will behoove any clinician who encounters an incel in their clinical practice.

Firstly, it is important to have an understanding of the history of this group and how it has formed over the years. Incels may well have existed in many societies throughout history. This idea of an introverted, awkward, weak man has been around for quite a while. It is not until the advent of the internet that the archetype of the modern incel became more clear. The internet, by its very nature, is an attractive place for someone who shares many incel qualities. These interactions are nameless, faceless, uncensored, and especially in the early days of the internet, do not follow normal social rules. For an introverted unconfident person, it is a perfect place to interact with others without fear of inescapable ostracization or condemnation. This meant that in the late 90s and early 2000s, many of these individuals frequented a number of websites, forums, and chat rooms in order to feel connect to others in a safe way. For many, it became their primary source of interpersonal interaction. A subset of these people would lay the foundation of what is now seen as modern incel beliefs.

In the mid 2000s, more organized and advanced message boards started to gain popularity. In 2003, 4chan was created. Often considered to be a part of the "dark side" of the internet, its founding principle was the free uncensored sharing of ideas with every user being

involuntarily named "anonymous." Here, the anonymity inherent in the structure of the site, as well as its wild west approach to moderation allowed for many extreme ideas to have a platform. This is where many early incel ideas were first shared and discussed en masse. Moving forward, the website Reddit was created in 2005. This website is structured into a collection of user created "subreddits" that are discussion boards about anything the userbase desires. The recently banned subreddit r/incel was one of the internet's foremost gathering places for incel discussions and ideas. Both 4chan and Reddit still exist today and have become much more mainstream as time has gone on, with Reddit having a site wide user count of 330 million leading more individuals to stumble upon various incel posts and ideas. These websites and many others are where this group discussed their experiences and concepts, radicalizing those of similar backgrounds to perpetuate and grow the phenomenon.

General Beliefs

Next, one must understand the primary ideology and belief system of incels. To start, incels often do not consider themselves a group or a movement, but rather, a state of being. One can move in and out of this state based on sexual experiences. As such, most will balk at the idea that it is some sort of anti-women hate group or a collection of dangerous individuals. For many, the online forums are a places to voice common experiences and strategies to improve their situation in life. For some, they act as places to vocalize their lament and frustration with society and their perceived place in it. For even fewer, they are used as vehicles to spew violent and angry rhetoric about women and the systematic loss of men's rights. With that said, moving forward, incel beliefs and ideas will be referenced in generalities in order to convey the most information possible. Please note that all or none of these beliefs might be found with a client that identifies as an incel.

Incel culture is inextricably linked to the overarching internet culture. They grew together and as such share many qualities and terminology. It is important to note the distinction that, though there is invariably much overlap, internet addiction or overuse does not necessarily correlate with inceldom. It is safe to say that most if not all incels are avid internet users, but relatively few avid internet users are incels. This concept is important for any clinician to understand lest they jump to conclusions regarding their client and their beliefs.

One of the most, if not the most prevalent term in inceldom is "Chad." This concept is a critical component of the Incel Ideology and holds most of the rest of the system together. A Chad is the term used to describe any man who exemplifies the traditional concept of male attractiveness. This person is physically fit, facially attractive, outgoing, sociable, and popular. This person is also considered to be the direct opposite of most incels who are generally considered weak, ineffectual, unattractive, and introverted. The existence of Chads is only half of the equation, however. The other half comes from the widespread incel idea that women primarily base their sexual and romantic decisions on surface level qualities such as wealth, social status, and most importantly, physical attractiveness. This gets at something often referred to as the 80/20 rule (see Pareto Principle in glossary). The 80/20 rule states that 80 percent of women are only attracted to the top 20% of men. With only 20% of men being truly desirable, the other 80% must compete heavily with other things like careers or personality. If you are severely lacking in looks and have little to nothing to make up for it, you are a likely candidate for inceldom (Daly 2020.)

Another common aspect of the incel belief structure is its tendency to be contradictory with itself. For example, there is an overarching theme that sex and/or a romantic relationship is the main goal worth striving for in life. It is the most direct road to lasting happiness, meaning

the inability to obtain it will lead to everlasting despair. As such, women are held up as a sort of achievement or badge of honor. To find a woman who will have sex with you or date you is to "ascend" (See glossary.) This leads to an interesting dichotomy within the group of praising, glorifying, and desiring women above all else while also insulting, condemning, and stereotyping them. Many incels resent the way society is built because it creates things such as the 80/20 rule. The idea that women are trained to only be attracted to chads through social media, television, movies, and accepted norms of masculinity leads many incels to develop a disdain for this society. This spills over into a dislike or even a hatred for women in general for perpetuating the unfair status quo, whether they know it or not.

Another consistent aspect of incel rhetoric is the rampant overgeneralization of both men and women. Terms such as AWALT "all women are like that," and the widespread use of various stereotyping phrases such as chad, simp, cuck, and beta (see glossary) all point to this core issue in incel culture. Often within the culture, these are not seen as overgeneralizations, but rather, they are seen as inescapable and overarching truths. For example, if any man comes to the aid of a woman who is being verbally assaulted in an online forum, he is called a "white knight." This is a derogatory term implying that the man is only defending the woman because she is indeed a woman and he is attempting to gain her favor. Many incels use this term as if this is an absolute truth. That there is no other possible reason for a man to defend a woman online besides the slight possibility of female attention. Further, the base incel belief of women being only interested in physically attractive men is itself a massive overgeneralization. The very foundation of inceldom relies on this being an inarguable truth. If it were not true, then true incels would not exist because men would be desirable for any number of other qualities. In addition to this, incels

have a tendency to speak irreverently regarding things like race, socioeconomic status, sexuality,

and gender identity often leaning into mainstream stereotypes for these groups.

Through approximately two decades of the existence of modern incels, the generally

accepted beliefs have gone through many iterations. This has created other groups that share

some values with incels. The overarching term for this conglomerate of similar groups is the

"manosphere." Most groups within this umbrella are chiefly concerned with men's rights and

the societal issues that perpetuate unfair conditions for the male half of the population. Such

groups include "The Red Pill," "Men Go Their Own Way (MGTOW)" (see glossary) and

various smaller men's rights activist groups. All of these groups share a general disapproval with

current societal conditions, though they all have different methods for improving or coping with

these differences. For example, The Red Pill often advocates for adjusting your worldview to

give up on the idea of a "fairytale" romance. To these men, the harsh reality is that women are

solely or predominantly attracted to physical appearance or domineering personalities. By

understanding this truth, one can focus on "maxxing" these qualities in order to find a partner.

Though similar methods of improving oneself may be found in other groups, the overarching

philosophy found in The Red Pill may not apply to every section of the manosphere.

Autism

From the general description of the incel archetype, one may assume that many incels are

likely on the autism spectrum. The small amount of data that exists about this issue seems to

support this. A survey administered by the moderators at incel.co has looked at this and many

other qualities of their members. Note that these moderators are not scientists or affiliated with

any academic entity, but their data has been made available and analyzed. From this survey,

28.5% of the 670 respondents stated that they have ASD (autism spectrum disorder.) Though, it

should be noted that it is unclear whether this is simply self-diagnosis or professional diagnosis. This data suggests that autism is approximately 18 times more prevalent in this sample than in the general population according to the CDC (Daly 2020.)

Though information on confirmed incels is scarce, there is research to suggest that autisms is associated with high levels of internet use. Specifically, studies have found a positive correlation with high autistic traits and characteristics and compulsive internet use. Compulsive internet use is defined by a preoccupation with internet related activities above all other types of activities (Shane-Simpson et al. 2016). This suggests that individuals with ASD are more likely to gravitate to the internet and to be more extreme in its use than their neurotypical counterparts. With high internet use as a main facet of inceldom, it is possible that many autistic individuals stumble upon and are drawn into incel communities due to their large amount of time spent browsing the internet.

Research has also shown that autistic individuals are generally less successful in obtaining a romantic/sexual relationship. In a small survey of young adults with ASD, it was found that 70% wanted to be in a romantic relationship. From these interviews, a particular quote from an 18 year old participant is quite telling: "I'm nice to them [girls]. I make jokes. I try to be the nicest person I can." (Cheak-Zamora et al. 2019). Here, the participant is lamenting his lack of success with women with a clear lack of understanding of where he has gone wrong. He goes on to say "… the computer understands me more than people do." (Cheak-Zamora et al. 2019.) Though these quotes are from one young man, they are representative of a subset of individuals with ASD, and by extension, a subset of incels as well. His statements are reminiscent of the many posts from incels stating that they try their best with women, only to fail and to fall back to socially interacting behind the safety of a computer monitor. As always, it is important to note

that not all individuals with ASD are incels, just as the inverse is not true. But there seems to be a

considerable overlap between the two groups that should be explored further.

Depression and Anxiety

From the same aforementioned incel survey, it was found that 74% suffer from anxiety

related symptoms and 67.5% suffer from long lasting depression. Further, it was found that 88%

consider themselves to be unhappy. 51% state that they have no friends (Daly 2020,) All of this

data shows much higher rates of depression, anxiety, and general unhappiness than average. The

crux of an incel's reason for these negative feelings seems to be hopelessness and a massive lack

of self-esteem. When the same group is asked to rate themselves generally on a scale of 1-10, the

highest responses by far are a 3 and a 4 with 30% and 25% of the answers respectively (Daly

2020.)

One does not have to look far for an explanation of these statistics. The very basis of

inceldom is hopelessness. Many feel as though this is simply their lot in life and there is little to

nothing to be done to increase their chances at happiness. This amount of hopelessness over the

span of many years would put most people into a major depressive episode. Other aspects of

inceldom that are related are discussed in the "Suicidality" section below.

Again, with a dearth of research on incels specifically, we must turn to research regarding

the general population. It has been found through numerous studies over the entire world that

there is a significant correlation between internet addiction and loneliness. The strength of this

correlation varies by age group, but it stays constant regardless of culture, country of origin, or

comorbid conditions (Tokunaga, 2017). This extremely widespread phenomenon can be

described in one of two ways. Either sad lonely people go to the internet more often to gain

social interaction or being on the internet so much at the expense of other activities makes the

individual lonely and depressed. In the case of incels, it is likely a combination of both. For

example, a young man misses sexual or relationship milestones, consistently fails to succeed

socially, and is lonely due to feeling isolated. He goes to the internet for some semblance of

community and acceptance. Here, he finds a group that accepts him and shares similar

experiences. But that group also tells him that his loneliness is a product of unalterable and

powerful circumstances out of his control (society, genetics.) He then continues interacting with

that group because it is one of the few places he feels accepted, yet the group itself is reinforcing

the idea that he would not and could not be accepted anywhere else. Herein lies the depressive

cycle of loneliness that a typical incel experiences. Incels often get trapped in this recursive

logical loop of not being good enough for a relationship, blaming society for not accepting them,

and then becoming hopeless and depressed to the point of not being able to affect positive

changes in their lives.

Suicidality

Suicide, suicide related jokes, and general pro-suicidal behavior is a cultural facet all its

own in inceldom. Suicide notes and goodbye posts are concerningly common on incel forums

with a significant amount of posts truly being the final post those users ever made. Oftentimes,

fellow incels will be encouraging or understanding of the decision to take one's own life posting

supportive messages like "I hope he finds peace." Encouragingly, there are often a significant

contingent of posts calling for the poster not to kill themselves, stating that there is still a chance

for life to get better (Daly 2020).

This topic cannot be fully explored without speaking about one of the darker parts of the

incel community, The Black Pill. Stemming from the same reference that The Red Pill moniker

is making (see glossary), The Black Pill is used to describe someone who has fully given in to

the hopelessness of their inceldom and is in the throes of despair about their life. This state is often seen as the endgame for many incels and is generally difficult to come back from. The two options here are to either kill oneself or "rope," or to LDAR "lay down and rot."

The constant references to suicide and the common use of suicidal jokes on incel forums is a notable factor. A sort of resignation to being depressed or suicidal is common within different parts of internet culture. This goes beyond inceldom and can be seen in the more mainstream parts of the internet as well. One possible reason for this is the creation of a "suicidal identity." It was found that some individuals who post on suicide support forums do so seemingly for the purpose of receiving anonymous general support for their life difficulties. One study suggests that some individuals frequent these forums not for actual help or support, but for validation that their suicidal feelings are justified (Horne & Wiggins 2009). Though this was not an incel sample, you can see similarities to this behavior within incel forums. Incels often validate each other's feelings regarding their hopelessness, even when it is presented as suicidality. The constant validation of suicidal thoughts may slowly push someone to actually complete the act.

r/Incelgraveyard is a unique corner of reddit that chronicles the final posts of many incels whose usernames went dark after a "goodbye" post. Though it is impossible to confirm whether or not the individual actually took their own life after the post, the sentiments listed here echo much of the "blackpill" ideology found within inceldom. An excerpt from a user u/IHopeForNothing states "I didn't kill myself, this society murdered me – because everybody thought it was okay to hurt and bully me because of something I couldn't control. I want the normies to remember that." He goes on to simply thank the other members of the forum for their support and say goodbye. It was the last post from that user. Whether or not these individuals

actually kill themselves, these types of posts are often lauded for their raw and presumably accurate depiction of the incel plight. These individuals who decide to "rope" are remembered as fallen warriors; victims to the unfairness built into the fabric of our society. It can be encouraging to those experiencing suicidal ideation to know that your own "goodbye" post will be treated with such reverence and respect.

Violence

Perhaps the most concerning, and luckily the least common outcome of inceldom is violence against others. From what little information that has been gathered, it seems that incels are far more likely to harm themselves than others. Also, it seems that most moderators of various incel boards and forums are aware of this problem within the community and are cracking down on posts suggesting assault, mass shootings, or other forms of violence against society (Daly 2020).

With that said, rage and anger against society, women, and the unfairness of life is still rampant in incel forums and posts. For example, in an audit of incel posts on incel.co, it was found that 7.8% of posts made allusions to racist, homophobic, or anti-semetic beliefs while 5.1% made direct references to past or future acts of violence, and 19.3% of posts used derogatory language or insensitive expressions towards women (Daly 2020). These stats show a propensity for violent language, if not violent actions. This phenomenon brings another inconsistency to light. Incels are often depressed, ineffectual, and passive. This means that the vast majority of posts that are violent, suicidal, or at all active in content will generally not amount to actual action. In these forums, anyone can say anything they wish as long as the mods allow it. With the added freedom of anonymity, idle threats and emotional posts are commonplace.

Though violent action is extremely uncommon when compared to violent words, there have still been some reported occurrences of incels committing known acts of violence. The most notable and clear-cut case is that of Elliot Rodger, a 22-year-old man who murdered six people and injured 14 others before killing himself on May 23rd 2014. Before his rampage, Elliot posted a 7-minute youtube video outlining his reasoning for the acts he was about to commit. He cited rejection from females as the primary reason, as well as a general hatred for society as a whole for putting him through this pain (Daly 2020). Beyond Elliot, there are a number of mass shooters who did not outright state their identity as an incel, but who certainly fit the archetype. Often male, lonely, dejected, and internet addicted, many of these men have developed a disdain for society so great that they commit these acts of violence. More research and discussion needs to be had about the prevalence of violent incels as well as past offenders who may fit into this group.

Part 3: Program Overview and Development

Overview

      This section will outline the proposed treatment modalities and important considerations for working with incel clients. This population is here to stay and is growing, so it is very likely that most clinicians will run into a client with at least some of these traits. Generally, the treatment will follow a CBT framework. The primary damaging aspect of inceldom is the constant negative thoughts that have been bolstered by the core beliefs of the group. Challenging those beliefs will be a fundamental component of this proposed treatment. Secondly, suicidality will be addressed in any client who exhibits suicidal tendencies with the use of Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS.) Reasons for choosing this particular modality will be discussed below. Finally, the treatment will conclude with social skills training, varying in intensity depending on the level of social anxiety, autism, or other circumstances that effect social ability.

      In interviewing a number of self-described incels, Dr. Sarah Daly discovered that though many are reluctant to attend therapy, assuming they will not be understood by the clinician. For those open to therapy, the crucial attributes of their therapist were that they are male, they understand incel and internet culture, and that they are not judgmental (Daly 2020.) Being non-judgmental is critical with this population as they are often sensitive to any form of social discomfort due to their backgrounds. Regardless of their phrasing, demeanor, or social ability, the clinician must do all they can to appear accepting and helpful. It should be noted that although the small sample of incels stated they would prefer a male therapist, that does not mean that women cannot treat these clients. The clinician should just take note of possible difficulties that may arise due to their gender.

The first half of this handbook was created to address the final proposed requirement of working with incels. Knowledge of the culture and the background of the group is necessary to address the multitude of long held damaging beliefs that many incels share. Without a basic knowledge of the terms, beliefs, and history, most incels likely won't feel comfortable sharing their beliefs or experiences with a clinician. To be clear, as with any culture, a clinician should never purport to know the client's own culture better than they do. Though you can be relatively well versed in the generalities of the culture, the client is always the expert on what they believe as an individual. Similarly, asking for clarification about a term or a concept is preferable to pretending that you understand. Showing interest in the culture rather than disgust will likely be a welcome novelty to many incels.

When it comes to terminology, Appendix A of this document contains a comprehensive glossary of internet and incel terms that you might encounter when working with this population. It is recommended that every clinician make themselves at least somewhat aware of many of these terms to ensure that they do not come off as a complete "normie" (see glossary) to their clients. Again, making the effort is what matters and what will likely be noticed by your client.

Another important aspect of working this population is checking your own bias as a clinician. If you feel that you are quick to judge people who exhibit many of the tendencies described above, then you either need to work through those biases before working with this population, or you must avoid working with this population. This does not mean that you must accept everything within the culture, such as the high rates of sexism or racism. In fact, in treating these clients you will likely need to challenge some of those beliefs. Instead, it simply means that you need to be aware and in control regarding your emotional reactions to these and other possible issues. Early in treatment, reacting strongly to some of the terms, beliefs, or

phrasing may alienate the client and make it harder to move forward to eventually challenging those beliefs.

All of this information gathering is moving toward one major step in working with this population: Rapport building. These individuals by definition are socially ostracized and overlooked. They will often be wary of interacting with new people, let alone someone who is going to try to help them out of a seemingly unchangeable situation. Because of the intensity and rigidity of many incel beliefs, the clinician must have a very strong basis of rapport with the client for them to accept challenges to those beliefs.

Assessment

The first part of working with a client from a culture that is not your own is to determine the level of connection they have with that culture. There are few formal incel rating scale or way to measure agreement with incel beliefs, but this can be done informally. What can be ascertained more formally is their level of weight they put on these beliefs. Using an adapted version of the Over-valued Ideas Scale (OVIS), one can get a better idea of the depth of the individual's commitment to incel ideology (Neziroglu et. Al 1999). This scale was originally intended for use with OCD obsessions and compulsions, but due to the almost compulsive and often vehement nature of many incels' ideas, it would provide a standardized measure of their level of engagement with these ideas.

Their ideas about women, sex, dating, and society at large will be strong indications of how strongly they hold onto traditional incel beliefs and values. During the intake and the first couple of sessions, the intensity of their involvement in incel ideology should be probed with open ended Socratic questions. Questions about their involvement on the forums, how often the frequent them, positive and negative experiences there, their dating life, their sexual milestones,

their perception of women and the dating scene as a whole, their self-perception, and any and all questions that will provide information about their core beliefs. Questions specific to general or common incel ideas should be answered by administering the OVIS.

Further, it is important to note the more fixable issues that may be influencing their social troubles. Things like objective attractiveness, hygiene, dress, and overall appearance. Though this is not something to be formally assessed, it should be noted by the clinician. If the individual's chief complaint is social ostracization, these issues will likely need to be addressed fairly early in their social skills training.

Suicidality

First and foremost in treating incels, the clinician must assess for suicidality. As mentioned previously, suicide is a common topic on incel boards and some go so far as to encourage each other to attempt suicide. As such, this is certainly something to assess early in treatment. If the client shows suicidal tendencies or concerns, it is this programs recommendation that the clinician immediately begin using CAMS with the client.

CAMS is a very structured 12-week collaborative approach to treating suicidality. It focuses on addressing the "drivers" that are pushing someone to have suicidal thoughts. The clinician and the client sit down, literally next to one another, and work through a structured form that goes over the reasons for living, reasons for dying, drivers for suicide, and personal strengths. This culminates in the first session by jointly creating a safety plan for the next time the client feels suicidal including alternative coping strategies, reducing access to lethal means, and an emergency plan. It has been shown to work very well across dimensions of sex, gender, race, age, and backgrounds (Jobes, 2012). Trainings and certification courses for CAMS can be found online at cams-care.com.

CAMS is a particularly good choice for the incel population because of its inherent use of examining reasons to live to combat the drivers for suicide. For an incel, this will immediately force them to challenge some of their long-standing hopelessness and negative thoughts. Additionally, the collaborative aspect will likely appeal to many incels, assuming you can generate some amount of rapport in the first session. Following the CAMS model, the client's suicidality will hopefully resolve within the following 12-weeks. Then the clinician can move on to the crux of the treatment which is CBT

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

This part of the treatment is perhaps the most crucial of the program. An incel's beliefs about the world and themselves is often at the heart of their anxiety, depression, and lack of social success. When asked what is prohibiting incels from finding a partner, the survey shows that physical appearance is in the lead with 86.5% followed by self-confidence (74.2%), lifestyle (65.9%), and status (59.5%) (Daly 2020,) This is a clear representation of the kinds of negative thoughts incels are having. They feel unlovable for many reasons, though physical appearance is by far the most agreed upon. Also remember that a primary incel belief is that these qualities are mostly unchangeable. This belief magnifies the hopelessness one would feel if they were ugly by making it an inescapable circumstance.

CBT treatment should ideally focus on the overgeneralizations about society and women, as this is a driver for the hopelessness and low self esteem often found in incels. While this belief still has power over the individual, they will likely have trouble seeing the purpose in improving things like self-esteem or finding other interests or coping strategies. Moving forward from that belief, the clinician should focus on building self esteem through strength focused interventions.

For example, if the client enjoys writing, perhaps introduce a journaling exercise in order to keep track of their thoughts.

Social Skills

This section will likely overlap with the CBT section as so many of these individuals judge their self-worth on their social success. As such, this section should begin once the self-esteem targeted CBT treatment has begun. One of the primary facets of inceldom is a perceived or true lack of social ability. This could be due to autism, social anxiety, eccentricity, introversion, uncontrolled anger, or peculiar interests. Once again, it is important to ascertain what your client specifically is having trouble with in the social space. Once that is determined, The clinician should work with the client using role-plays, social stories, and post interaction analysis to help build those social skills and alleviate social anxieties.

During this process, the clinician should challenge the idea that the client knows what the other person in the social situation is thinking i.e. "mindreading." Incel ideology likely has equipped the client with many generalizations about different groups, predominately women. They may feel that they know what the person is thinking of them or what kind of person they are from just a few short interactions. This is a distortion that is particularly harmful to social interaction. As incels often feel victimized, ignored, or insulted, they may perceive those qualities in social interactions that do not actually contain them. Challenging these perceptions is crucial to breaking down those negative beliefs about themselves and others.

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Future directions

This program is the first step toward an eventual standardization of how to work with this relatively new and barely understood population. As more research on incels comes out, and as more research about specific treatment modalities is done, this program will undoubtedly change drastically. Hopefully, as incel ideas become more well known and understood, the necessity of the first half of this handbook will diminish. However, as it stands, most clinicians are unaware of the intricacies and difficulties brought upon by inceldom and incel culture. As these people become greater in number and/or more radicalized in their beliefs, clinicians who are equipped with the tools to treat them are going to be indispensable.

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A Clinician's Guid to Treating Involuntary Celibates

Appendix A:

Glossary of Internet/Incel Terminology

Please note that many of these terms are offensive, racist, sexist, and otherwise insensitive. That said, they are also ubiquitous within the forums that these groups frequent and are often used verbally in real life conversations as well. As such, it is important for a clinician to understand what they mean, where they come from, and the connotations surrounding them.

NOTE: These definitions are written as the incel community defines them. None of the views or beliefs shared in these definitions are representative of the creator of this document.

4chan: A image based forum with various different "boards" for posting whatever the users wish. Often referred to as one of the "dark" places of the internet, it is frequented by many individuals who use the internet as their primary form of socialization and communication. Many incel ideas, memes, and concepts were born here. (See Reddit Below)

Ascend: For an incel to succeed in finding a romantic or sexual partner. Considered to be the ultimate goal, though for many incels it is expected to be unreachable.

BBC: "Big Black Cock." This is a term often used interchangeably with "Chad." It is referencing the notion that men of African decent often have larger penises than other races. Because penis size is considered by incels to be one of the most important things for women, the term is used to represent some of the Chad qualities that women are attracted to. The term is also often used in pornography and likely originated there.

Beta: Deriving from the idea of an "Alpha Male," a beta is someone who is weak, unassuming, ineffectual, and generally does not fit with traditional masculine characteristics. (See also cuck, simp).

Chad: The cornerstone of Incel ideology. A "Chad" is a man who exemplifies all of the traits of the traditionally attractive male. This person is outgoing, fit, tall, and successful with women. Often used as a term to generalize non incels. He is the reason that those who do not "win the genetic lottery" will have no romantic options.

> **Chad Thundercock:** The full name of the Chad archetype. Stems from a meme outlining the features of a "Chad."

> **Gigachad:** The highest form of a "Chad." This is an individual who is in the top 1% of attractiveness.

> **Tyrone:** A black "Chad."

Cuck/Cuckold: Derived from the Shakespearean term, a "cuck" is a man who, often unknowingly, gets cheated on by his significant other. It is one of the most common insults, not just in inceldom, but on the internet in general. The term is often not used literally, but rather, to describe a man who allows his woman to walk all over him or who spends an inordinate amount of time, money, or energy doing things to keep her happy (See Simp below.) Like many terms, this is also used in the porn industry to describe the fetish of willingly allowing your wife/significant other to sleep with other men.

Edgelord: A derogatory term for a forum poster who posts offensive, violent, or otherwise shocking content for the purpose of appearing cool. The more violent or extreme incel posts are often flooded with comments calling the poster an edgelord.

Fakecel: Someone who is either pretending to be unsuccessful in romantic life or is unaware that they could be successful if they tried. Someone who is not unlovable/ugly/awkward enough to be considered truly an incel.

Fap: Synonym for masturbation.

Femcel: The rare female incel. Their existence flies in the face of some core incel ideology, such as the idea that any woman can get a sexual partner if they desire due to the structure of our society. Some are accepted if their reason is compelling enough, though most are considered "Fakecels."

Femoid/Foid: Synonym for woman. Used as an almost dehumanizing term, deriving from the term humanoid which means human like. Often used in place of "woman" or "girl."

Hypergamy: The social science term for "marrying up." Referred to in inceldom often as the "Law of Hypergamy." This idea assumes that women are always looking to marry up in either wealth, attractiveness, personality, or all three. This law means that there will always be a lower caste of men that will not be considered by any woman i.e. incels.

Incel: "Involuntary Celibate." Someone who has had little to no success finding a sexual or romantic partner. Often has missed many sexual "milestones" such as first kiss, manual stimulation, oral sex, or intercourse. The purported reasons for their lack of success ranges from societal ideas of attractiveness and sexuality to genetic predisposition to be ugly, awkward, or unlovable.

IRL: "In Real Life." For example: I am an accountant IRL

ITT: "In This Thread." "Thread" referring to the string of replies or posts in a forum. Example: a poster may type in a forum about maxxing "ITT lists of methods to increase attractiveness."

Kek: Synonym for "lol" or laughing out loud. Derived from the Korean onomatopoeia for laughter. Has recently invaded most corners of internet culture but was primarily used in more niche forums for many years such as 4chan.

LDAR: "Lay Down and Rot." Often seen as a reply to Black Pill posts claiming that their only

option besides suicide is to just wallow in misery until they die.

Lurk/Lurker: General term for anyone who reads an internet forum without posting.

Manosphere: The collection of online forums, websites, organizations, and groups that all

generally concern themselves with men's rights, societal concepts of sexuality and

relationships, and often railing against mainstream progressive ideas. Incels are one

subset of this large group and often overlap with the many others within the manosphere.

Maxxing: The act of attempting to greatly improve one or multiple aspects of your attractiveness

in an attempt to increase your chances of romantic success. Originating from board/video

games in which you can increase your character's statistics to allow them to complete

their quests more successfully.

    Careermaxxing: Focusing on career success and earning potential to attract a woman.

    Chadmaxxing: Increasing one's charisma or machismo in order to be found more

attractive.

    Lookmaxxing: Increasing one's physical attractiveness through working out

(gymmaxxing) or plastic surgery (surgerymaxxing.)

    Therapymaxxing: The act of bettering oneself through mental health treatment. Often

considered to be only a viable avenue for Mentalcels, or those with actual mental health

diagnoses.

Mentalcel: An incel who has a legitimate mental health diagnosis that is likely influencing his

ability to succeed romantically. Autism, depression, anxiety disorders, PTSD, and

addiction all fall under this umbrella.

MGTOW: "Men go their own way" is another example of a men's rights group. Those involved often refer to it as a lifestyle choice or a personal decision for how to handle living in this society. As the name implies, it encourages disconnecting from the norms or expected paths for men in modern society. These individuals tend to focus on making themselves happy through whatever means they see fit and strive to ignore whatever hate they may get for their unconventional interests or choices.

Normie: Description of those who do not fit into inceldom or other online groups. A well-adjusted, fairly attractive, unaware of online culture person Derived from normal. Sometimes used as an insult e.g. "normies just don't understand." Or "my parents are such normies."

Pareto Principle: Also known as the 80/20 rule, this is an economic theory that has been adapted by incels to describe a primary tenant of their belief structure: that 80% of women are only attracted to the top 20% of men. This idea suggests that any woman who is dating below that 20% would 1. Leave their significant other if offered a top 20% opportunity and 2. Will never truly be satisfied by the majority of the male population.

Pills: This group of terms is a reference to the movie "The Matrix" in which a character is offered a bluepill that will allow them to stay asleep and unware to the truths of the world and a redpill that will open their mind to these truths. In inceldom, this refers mainly to the perceived truths about sexuality, attractiveness, and societal stigmas that perpetuate the existence of incels.

Bluepill: Used to describe an incel who still naively believes that there is hope for everyone to find someone and that they have a chance to find a loving romantic relationship. Often used as a put-down to incels who are holding on to false hope. An incel who does not yet know he is an incel.

Redpill: The "awakened" state of understanding the realities of sexuality and relationships in our culture. I.E., that physical attractiveness is the primary requirement in order to find a partner and that women, at a fundamental level, desire to be dominated and ruled over by a strong, domineering male. This belief system has spawned a very active subreddit at reddit.com/r/theredpill. There, men discuss strategies for maximizing their attractiveness and advocate for thinking of women as submissive and not in control of their emotions/desires.

Blackpill: This group are individuals who have fully accepted their hopeless situation. They feel as though they will never succeed romantically and are often isolated, depressed, and suicidal. The community often sees two options once an incel reaches this point: kill yourself due to the hopelessness, or simply give up on attaining happiness from a relationship and attempt to find it in other avenues.

Reddit: A website self-described as the "front page of the internet." Here, groups can form into "subreddits" for various interests, fictions, professions, cities, fetishes, and anything the users wish. More tame and organized than 4chan, this is where many Incel communities flourished for years. Recently, many incel subbreddits were banned by the administrators of the site, fearing the possible danger of harboring such communities. Most notably, the primary subreddit r/incel was banned last year. That said, many incel subreddits and offshoots of inceldom such as r/theredpill still exist.

Rope: A synonym for suicide. Derived from the common suicide method of hanging oneself.

Used as a noun or verb. Example: "Rope is the only option" or "I guess I'll have to rope

myself."

Simp: Deriving from the term "simpleton," it has evolved to also be used as an acronym:

"Suckers Idolizing Mediocre Pussy." Much like a "cuck," the "simp" often goes out of

his way to glorify, praise, or give gifts to a woman. It is believed that these men are seen

as dispensable by the woman they are idolizing and will be tossed aside as soon as a more

suitable mate, likely a chad, shows up.

Stacy: The prototypical Chad-loving woman. A Chad's girlfriend is a Stacy. A stand in for the

basic woman who is attracted to Chad characteristics.

Weeaboo/Weeb: This refers to an individual of western culture and upbringing who glorifies

and is overly interested in Japanese culture. There is much overlap with this idea and

inceldom, as many incels share interests in anime, video games, and Japanese culture.

Waifu: A Japanese word for "wife." A term of endearment to describe a fictional character,

often animated, who is desired. Sometimes used as a template for what a real significant

other should be.

White Knight: Derived from the mythological Arthurian protectors of the same description, this

term is often used as an insult. It is used to describe men who come to the defense of

women, often women considered to be of ill repute, presumably in the hopes that that

woman will then sleep with him. This can be seen on any hate thread targeting a woman.

If a man defends her, he will invariably be accused of being a white knight, implying that

his defense of her is not genuine, and that he is doing it in a pathetic attempt to gain her

favor.