



BUILDING RESILIENCE & CONFRONTING RISK

A PARENTS & CAREGIVERS GUIDE
TO ONLINE RADICALIZATION



SPLC
Southern Poverty
Law Center



**POLARIZATION & EXTREMISM
RESEARCH & INNOVATION LAB**
CENTER *for* UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE

POLARIZATION AND EXTREMISM RESEARCH AND INNOVATION LAB (PERIL)

PERIL brings the resources and expertise of the university sector to bear on the problem of growing youth polarization and extremist radicalization, through scalable research, intervention, and public education ideas to reduce rising polarization and hate.

SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

The SPLC seeks to be a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people.

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY CLAUDIA WHITAKER

PARENTS & CAREGIVERS GUIDE

Who is this guide for? We wrote this guide with a wide range of caregivers in mind.

Caregivers living with children and young adults. This includes parents, grandparents, foster parents, extended families, and residential counselors who are the guardians and caregivers of children and youth living at home, in group homes, and other residential settings. They are on the front lines of recognizing and responding to radicalization.

Caregivers outside the home. This includes teachers, principals, school counselors, coaches, music teachers, religious and youth group leaders, scout troop leaders, employers, social workers, mental health therapists, and other adults who engage with youth, even in virtual settings. These adults can form a dense network of trusted role models and authority figures, and are well-placed to recognize warning signs of radicalization. Adults outside the home also offer a key network for in-home caregivers and parents to connect with as a resource and sounding board.

Whether you live with a young person or work with youth virtually or in-person, radicalization to extremism is something we all should be concerned about. Extremists looking to recruit and convert children are predatory. Like all forms of child exploitation, extremist recruitment drives a wedge between young people and the adults they would typically trust. The radicalization of young people is a threat to civil society, from the innocent people it victimizes to the family bonds it breaks apart.

Radicalization occurs in an era of converging crises. From the COVID-19 pandemic to ongoing Black Lives Matter protests against the legacy of police brutality to the systemic racism of voter suppression and legislation that forbids critical appraisals of race and racism in schools. These conditions affirm the need to end and to dismantle white supremacy as an essential step to preventing extremist radicalization. Extremists are seeking to direct these crises in ways that heighten the risks of violence and online radicalization. This guide will help families, caregivers, and youth recognize and confront new risks posed by far-right extremists during this time. It will also help you build resilience against these risks well beyond this moment.

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WHAT IS ONLINE RADICALIZATION? WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

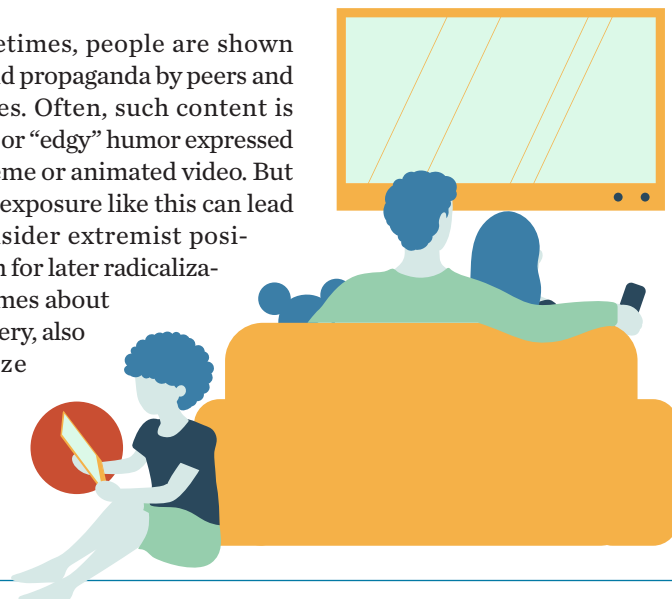
Online radicalization occurs when someone’s online activities—reading, watching videos, or socializing—help lead them to adopt politically or religiously extremist views. Extremist beliefs say that one group of people is in dire conflict with other groups who don’t share the same racial or ethnic, gender or sexual, religious, or political identity. Extremists believe that this imagined conflict can only be resolved through separation, domination, or violence between groups. This frequently leads to anti-democratic opinions and goals, such as a desire for dictatorship, civil war, or an end to the rule of law.¹

“Radicalization” simply means any process that leads a person to hold extremist beliefs. These beliefs may or may not lead to overt violence. Just as there are many forms of extremism, there is no single pathway to radicalization. It is a complex process, involving many personal and external influences. Finally, it is important to note that not all ‘radical’ politics are extremist. Beliefs that challenge established systems of political power are sometimes unfairly labeled this way in order to discredit them. Remember: for someone’s political views to be a matter of serious concern, they should match the definition of extremism provided above. Here are some of the most common ways people radicalize online:

Content “Rabbit Holes.” People can radicalize by reading or viewing increasingly extreme texts, videos, memes, or other content online. Gradual encounters with more and more extreme content—sometimes through automatic recommendations that suggest other videos to watch, books to purchase, or articles to read—can open pathways to radicalization for at-risk people. Healthy skepticism of government can develop into views that promote societal breakdown or violent conflict with democratic institutions. For example, an interest in conspiracy theories might lead to antisemitic world views.

Filter Bubbles. Online radicalization is helped by a lack of competing views or challenges to the ideologies people encounter online. Research shows that when someone only spends time with like-minded people, they are more likely to move to extremes.²

Peer Sharing. Sometimes, people are shown extremist content and propaganda by peers and online acquaintances. Often, such content is treated as a dark joke or “edgy” humor expressed through a playful meme or animated video. But research shows that exposure like this can lead some people to consider extremist positions, preparing them for later radicalization.³ Jokes, like memes about the Holocaust or slavery, also help to dehumanize entire groups of people, making it easier to rationalize violent action in the future.



Online radicalization is helped by a lack of competing views or challenges to the ideologies people encounter online.

Direct contact with extremists online. In the past, extremists were limited in their chances to speak directly with young people. But the internet connects extremists and potential recruits anywhere in the world—including a teen’s phone or the family computer. Direct conversations with extremists on social media, online games, and in other online spaces can be a gateway to online radicalization.

This process is not inevitable. Just because a child has encountered extremist content online doesn’t mean they are automatically being radicalized. Other vulnerabilities must be present (*see “Understanding the Drivers,” below*). But if a child seems to be enjoying increasingly extreme content, this indicates radicalization may be occurring.

RECOGNIZING WARNING SIGNS

There are some specific warning signs that should send up a red flag about the kind of content a child is being exposed to online. If a young person in your life begins to share the following ideas, there is a strong chance they have been exposed to radicalizing material. Here are some signs to watch out for:

Fear of a “Great Replacement” or “White Genocide” in which a white minority is politically oppressed by a non-white majority. Sometimes, this is tied to conspiracy theories that a global elite seeks to remove whites, as they are the greatest threat to global government.

Belief in antisemitic conspiracy theories. Sometimes, sincere antisemitism is disguised as ironic belief in more outlandish conspiracy theories (e.g. that Jews are shape-shifting aliens). This can act as a radicalization pathway to more conventional antisemitic views. *(See “Peer Sharing” for more on the role of humor and irony in radicalization)*

Belief in the necessity of violent insurrections. This can take the form of support for an upcoming second American Civil War. Or, it can be attached to previous events, such as the January 6th Capitol insurrection or the many stand-offs that have historically taken place between the US government and unlawful militias. Be alert and listen for clues that a young person might be valorizing these events.

Belief in male supremacy or expressions of misogyny, including policing the behavior of girls or young women. Radicalization of this type often includes a view of history in which feminism fatally ruined the stability of American society. At another extreme, male supremacy can take the form sexual nihilism, the belief that sex and romance are either worthless or unattainable, and that women are to blame for this.

Belief in the necessity of violence to suppress the broader Movement for Black Lives and/or protests or uprisings against racial injustice and police brutality. Or, the belief that critical education about the history and structural legacy of race and racism represents a plot to undermine society.

Sharing concepts associated with scientific racism—that is, using language of genetics, evolution, and psychology to support racist stereotypes and justify racial hierarchies. This commonly takes the form of anti-black and anti-Hispanic racism, rationalizing old stereotypes using new scientific jargon. But it can also assume the form of a backhanded compliment; for example, claiming that Jews and Asians are biologically smarter and more collectivist than whites and, therefore, should not be allowed in white countries.

Blaming immigrants for societal shortcomings. Attitudes that treat immigrants as dirty, disease-carrying, criminal, or taking more than their fair share are red flags that someone is being exposed to radicalizing material. Immigrants are especially common scapegoats for people who feel that they’ve been denied something they were entitled to—social status, in particular. *(See “Anger and Betrayal” in the “Understanding the Drivers” section, below.)*

Looking forward to societal chaos or collapse. A sense of violent nihilism with little political substance is emerging as a more and more common kind of extremism. Comments that express a desire for complete societal breakdown, with slogans like “there is no political solution,” should be cause for immediate concern.



UNDERSTANDING THE DRIVERS

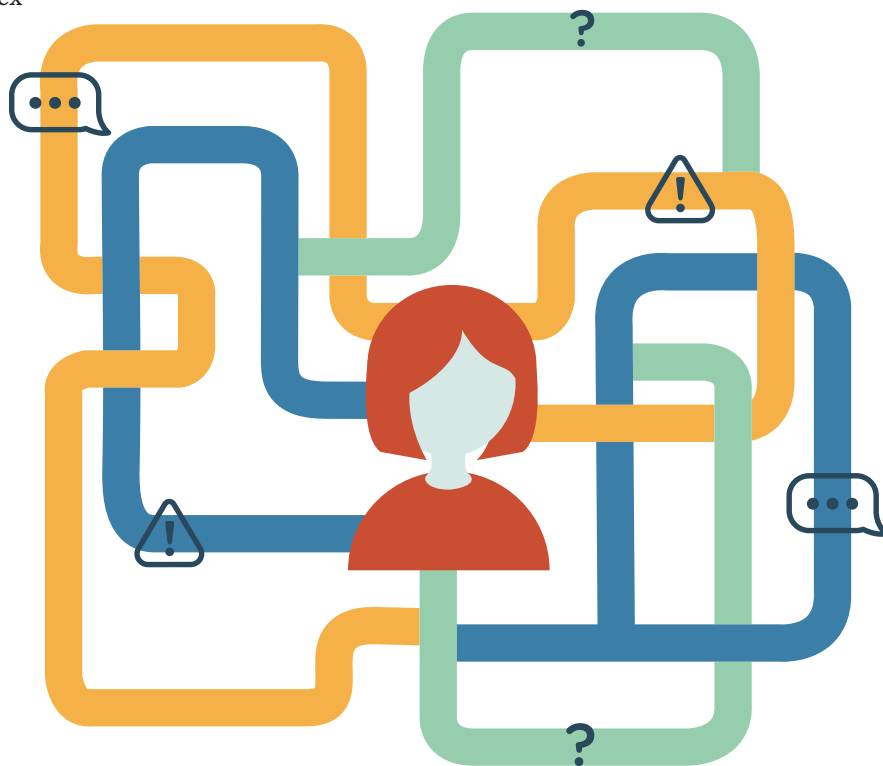
Parents and caregivers can help prevent and interrupt radicalization processes by staying alert to the kinds of vulnerabilities that make youth more susceptible to extremist rhetoric or recruitment. There is no single formula that can explain why one person will be drawn to extremist groups and another one will not, but we do know that most extremists have experienced some combination of the following:

Trauma, Disruption, and Loss. Sudden unwanted changes to our everyday lives can leave people feeling powerless, which makes them more vulnerable to radicalization. Disruptions can be dramatic, like the death of a loved one, a violent assault, or economic hardships. Or they can be seemingly small, like the switch from middle school to high school. There are all-too-many reasons today for youth to lack the most basic sense of security, leaving many dislocated and even traumatized by current events. Extremists are there to offer a false sense of security and the promise of belonging.

Confusion and Uncertainty. From global climate change to the COVID-19 pandemic, ours is an age of unprecedented crisis. This can leave anyone—but young people in particular—struggling to make sense of it all. Extremists offer simple, false solutions to complex problems, while conspiracy theories offer a sense of control when we feel otherwise powerless.⁴

Anger and Betrayal. When people feel something has unjustly been taken from them, they may turn to extremists for easy answers and a scapegoat to blame. We live in an age of declining living standards, precarious social institutions, and environmental disasters. Many are afraid for their future, and no one knows how these crises might in the end be solved. These fears and the justified grievances that accompany them can offer extremists an “open door” to radicalize and recruit. Extremists use scapegoating and extreme black-and-white thinking to direct that anger and sense of betrayal toward others.

Rebellion and Status. Youthful rebellion can be harmless, or even a healthy part of growing up. But when adolescents rebel with hateful and extremist content, they can cause real damage to themselves and those around them. Rebellion increasingly occurs online, such as by sharing provocative content with both friends and strangers. Some former extremists report that their radicalization began with sharing “edgy” or shocking material as a joke, a way to shock authority figures, or as a way to impress their peers. But all too often, these attempts to rebel and gain status with peers can evolve into actual extremist beliefs. New research even suggests that participating in delinquent online activities like trolling can make a young person find extremism more appealing.



Desire for Love and Friendship. Strange as it sounds, many extremists embrace hate hoping it will bring them closer with someone they love.⁵ Whether a family member, boyfriend/girlfriend, or close friend, we all want to be in agreement with those we care about. It is sometimes easier to embrace extremism than to reject a loved one and their beliefs. When a loved one is radicalized, it puts everyone around them at risk.

Isolation and Lack of Belonging. A major driver toward extremist groups is a desire to be a part of something bigger than oneself. Youth who are highly isolated or lack a sense of belonging to groups outside their families are at higher risk from groups that offer them purpose, meaning, or belonging. Former extremists often mention that extremist groups had become like a family to them, countering their loneliness and isolation.



Extremists offer simple, false solutions to complex problems, while conspiracy theories offer a sense of control when we feel otherwise powerless.

Curiosity. Boredom and idleness can help spread conspiracies or lead people to adopt radical ideologies. These beliefs engage a person's curiosity and give them an emotionally rewarding subject to explore. For already vulnerable people, the world of online conspiracy theorists and hate groups can become even more attractive. It is not uncommon for boredom to accompany other risky circumstances, such as social isolation or the search for love.

Most People Do Not Become Extremists. Even if a child is at risk from one of these factors, it does not mean they will automatically adopt extremist beliefs. A little attention can prevent risks from becoming full-blown problems. Pay extra attention to what the youth around you say and where they go online. Then, be ready to listen.

ENGAGE & EMPOWER

The good news is that parents and caregivers are the people in the best position to stop radicalization in its tracks. If you're concerned about a child or young adult you know becoming radicalized, here are some strategies to engage them:

LISTEN to what young people are saying. If they begin to repeat themes or vocabulary associated with extremists and conspiracy theories, try not to ridicule or punish them. Ridicule and scolding have actually been shown to strengthen problematic belief systems.⁶ Instead, suggest that the people spreading these messages may have their own motives besides the truth and a child's well-being. Then, reach out for help from one of the resources provided at the end of this guide.

ASK QUESTIONS about what children are doing online, what they are learning, and what kinds of websites and platforms they spend time on. Approach these questions from a place of curiosity rather than monitoring. Ask open ended questions, like "What values do *you* stand for?" or "What kind of person do *you* want to be?" Asking questions that show genuine interest in a child's activities and hobbies may open up new lines of communication and sharing about what they do online. Ask questions that let them teach you something from their lives, like "How does that game work?" or "How do you think your teachers could be do better in the way they speak about racism?" Teenagers may open up more if you raise questions during casual activities where they are not the only focus of your attention. Talking while driving in the car, folding laundry, or taking a walk can reduce the pressure.⁷

DISCUSS the news with children in an age-appropriate way. Visit sites like the News Literacy Project to learn how you can avoid misinformation and propaganda. Screen content they are watching by looking at the reviews and parent/child ratings on Common Sense Media. Proactively suggest materials published by trustworthy news sources and read an article together each day. Subscribe and listen



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to a credible current events podcast together. Pay attention to the news sources children favor and ask them how they know the sources of their information are credible. Help direct them toward reliable news sources. Continue to educate yourself on how to identify misinformation and disinformation in the news and elsewhere.

EDUCATE children on the ways that propaganda and misinformation are used to manipulate people. Talk to them about both the styles and strategies of extremist propaganda (such as scapegoating or offering simple solutions to complex problems).⁸ Explain that propaganda can be delivered in any medium—writing, video, music, memes, etc.—and can often disguise itself as humor.

ADVISE children to practice good internet safety. They should be cautious about clicking on links they don't recognize and should not click on links sent from people they don't know. Maintaining privacy settings—and updating them regularly—on all apps and social media accounts is important.

ENCOURAGE your children to critically examine messages they receive and to treat the information they consume as persuasive devices, meant to convince them of a worldview. Talk about what they can do if they encounter an extremist message online or in real life ([see "Responding to Hate," below](#)). These critical thinking skills and vigilance can help a child spot and overcome radicalizing messages.

EXPOSE the way extremists prey on a young person's sense of vulnerability and identity. Demonstrate to children how these messages might even appeal to them. Be honest about a time in the past when you may have been deceived by an individual or group who didn't have your best interests at heart. See the resources provided at the end of this guide to learn more about the experiences of former extremists and share them.

REMIND children that people may not be who they say they are online. The internet allows anyone to wear a mask—especially predators. Sometimes, people who seem popular and successful are really failures. People who seem fun and accepting can be intolerant and even abusive. This is especially true in extremist spaces, where violence and exploitation within groups is quite common.

Preventing online radicalization is about more than just recognizing and avoiding risks. It's also about building resiliency and strengthening a sense of belonging and identity so that youth are less vulnerable or susceptible to extremist rhetoric. Here are some strategies you can use to help strengthen youth resilience:

REASSURE children and share your vision for making a better society and world. Explain that it is okay to feel uncertain. Point out everyday people—volunteers, community members, neighbors, and charitable organizations—who help others during times of crisis. Show children safe ways in which they can help, too. This might include helping an elderly neighbor, reaching out to a classmate who may lack social support, or doing volunteer work for disaster relief organizations.

EMPOWER children to take charge. Extremist groups thrive when ordinary people feel their lives are out of control. Find everyday ways a child can exercise control over their environment. Talk to children and try to remember times when they took control of a situation—a sporting or gaming success, a minor emergency they helped solve, an important errand or chore they accomplished. Allow them to plan meals or to make family TV and movie viewing choices. Where appropriate, ask older adolescents for their opinion in household decisions and show them when you follow their advice.

CHALLENGE harmful gender stereotypes that encourage violence by engaging young people in thoughtful discussions around empathy and emotions. Help them develop an understanding and appreciation for gender beyond the binary of boys and girls.

CREATE roots and strengthen children's identity at home, in their family and their broader community. Extremists prey on young people who lack a sense of belonging, and one of the best ways to create resilience to extremist messaging is to strengthen youth's sense of positive identity and belonging. Youth who already have a strong sense of meaning, engagement, and purpose in their lives are less likely to be drawn to the promises of extremist groups who offer it to them. Parents and caregivers can help by sharing family stories, highlighting friends and relatives who have fought for justice against oppression, and reinforcing values about community and caring for others.

SHARE cultural practices and knowledge that are different from your own. Listening to and learning about others' lived experiences is a critical step in anti-racist practice. Exposure and deep engagement with different kinds of people, along with rich cross-cultural experiences, have been shown to create "off-ramps" from extremist movements

and ideologies.⁹ The more people spend time in like-minded groups, the more likely they are to move toward extremes. Don't stay silent about the history and ongoing injustices of white supremacy and male supremacy. (See "How to Get Help" below for resources and where to get started.)

MODEL acceptance, kindness, and empathy for others. Individuals who have left extremist movements regularly point to the kindness of others—even in the face of hate and violence—as a driving factor for leaving the movement. Schools who have launched kindness campaigns have reported fewer disciplinary referrals and reduced bullying.¹⁰ Finding concrete ways for children to help others—by gathering donations for a food pantry, joining you in helping a neighbor who is elderly or has a disability, participating in neighborhood cleanups—can help forge kindness in ways that make it harder to be drawn to hate.

CONNECT with the broader network of trusted adults in the child's life for additional resources and help. If a child needs deeper understanding of the historical experiences of marginalized peoples, hate speech, or extremism, reach out to their teachers and principals and request resources. Religious leaders, therapists, coaches, youth group leaders, and other adults in a child's life can be an important sounding board and brainstorming partner for how to better engage with youth or assess warning signs.

REMEMBER that you are not alone. There are dozens of organizations working to prevent and intervene in radicalization pathways. The following section and resource list at the end of this guide offers websites, downloadable guides and toolkits, and phone numbers to call to seek additional help.



RESPONDING TO HATE

Extrémism online affects everyone, not just those young people whom extremists intend to radicalize. We must always remember and emphasize the impact extrémism has on its victims. Here’s what to do if a child is the victim of online hate or is targeted with harassing content.

Take it seriously. Hateful or harassing conduct has real-world consequences. Many victims of online harassment curtail their online use, and some stop altogether.¹¹ Children and adolescents who experience bias harassment are more likely to experience feelings of isolation, depression, and anxiety.¹² And because these attacks are identity-based, they can affect anyone in a community belonging to that group—not just the direct targets of harassment.

Create a record. If you are able to file a report with your school or school district, do so. If you cannot, or do not trust that a report will be responded to appropriately, write a detailed email describing the incident and send it to the child’s school. Save a copy for yourself some place safe. Remember, even if schools cannot immediately respond to your case, your record will support other victims of bias harassment and help to create a record of ongoing issues.

Discuss online safety and privacy practices. Make sure your children do not share any identifying information online. This includes their home address, phone number, or those of family and friends. Make sure that social media and email accounts have unique passwords and change them every six months. Consider setting social media accounts to “private,” so that only a child’s friends can connect with them.



Children and adolescents who experience bias harassment are more likely to experience feelings of isolation, depression, and anxiety.

Remind children that extremists are relatively few in number. There are many, many more people of good will who want to live in a diverse, inclusive nation. But the internet and other media amplify extremists, making them seem more numerous and powerful than they really are.

Get Help. Reporting hate can lead to more responsive and comprehensive tools to prevent future incidents. There are a range of advocacy groups who collect reports of witnessed or experienced harassment, hate speech, bullying, and violence and can refer you to resources for reporting, pursuing legal action, financial assistance, or support for physical and mental health needs. For example, the Victim Connect Resource Center website offers a list of advocacy groups and resources, including a Victim Connect Hotline that can refer you to services: 1-855-4-VICTIM. See the resource list below as a starting place for reporting and tracking hate.

HOW TO GET HELP

If a child or young adult you know seems to be at risk for radicalization, reach out for help. Find out who your child trusts. If there is a trusted teacher, coach, clergy member, or other adult outside the home who can offer support, speak with them. If you are a caregiver outside the home, look for support within your organization and try to determine if the child has good support at home. Below is a sample list of resources that can help. Extremism is a problem that affects everyone. You do not have to face this problem alone.

Addressing Violent Extremism & Radicalization

- Life After Hate is a compassion-forward organization of former extremists who offer disengagement counseling and ongoing support to people leaving extremism: www.lifeafterhate.org/

- Organization for the Prevention of Violence’s EVOLVE Program (Canada) is a professional counseling program providing counseling and social services to both victims of hate crimes and anyone looking to disengage from extremism: <https://preventviolence.ca/>

Styles & Strategies of Extremist Propaganda

- Anti-Defamation League’s Hate Symbols Database and its Propaganda, Extremism & Online Recruitment Tactics: <https://www.adl.org/hate-symbols>

- “Guide to Radical Right Symbols, Slogans and Slurs,” Centre for Analysis on the Radical Right (CARR): www.radicalrightanalysis.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CARR-A-Guide-to-Online-Radical-Right-Symbols-Slogan-and-Slurs.pdf

- A glossary of male supremacist extremism: https://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Manosphere_glossary

- Berger, J.M. “The Strategy of Violent White Supremacy is Evolving.” *The Atlantic*, August 7, 2019: www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/08/the-new-strategy-of-violent-white-supremacy/595648/

- Hayden, Michael. “Why White Supremacists Are Targeting Zoom Meetings during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” SPLCs *Hatewatch* blog, May 5, 2020: www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2020/05/05/why-white-supremacists-are-targeting-zoom-meetings-during-covid-19-pandemic

- Miller, Dr. Cassie. “The Boogaloo Started as a Racist Meme.” SPLCs *Hatewatch* blog, June 5, 2020: www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2020/06/05/boogaloo-started-racist-meme

- The News Literacy Project: <https://newslit.org/>



Teaching Children about Prejudice & Racism

- No Racism in Schools #1865: <https://www.noracis-minschools.org>
- Embrace Race, Resources: <https://www.embracerace.org/resources>
- Telling the Truth About Slavery Is Not Indoctrination by Clint Smith III: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/09/real-stakes-fight-over-history/616455/>
- The Antiracist Research & Policy Center: <https://www.bu.edu/antiracist-center/>
- The Western States Center’s toolkit on addressing white nationalism in schools: <https://www.western-statescenter.org/schools>
- “Anti-Racism Resources for Parents and Kids,” Healthline: <https://www.healthline.com/health/parenting/anti-racism-resources-for-parents-and-kids>
- “Anti-Racism Resources for All Ages,” Padlet: <https://padlet.com/nicolethelibrarian/nbasekqoazt336co>
- Bertelsmann Foundation and PERIL, “The Boogaloo Ballad of Henry Graves: Education Guide.” www.bfna.org/democracy/the-boogaloo-ballad-of-henry-graves-2eim66gep6/
- “How to Talk To Your Kids About Anti-Racism,” PBS SoCal: <https://www.pbssocal.org/education/at-home-learning/talk-kids-anti-racism-list-resources/>
- Guide to Allyship: <https://guidetoallyship.com/>
- “Black Lives Matter at School,” NEA EdJustice: <https://neaedjustice.org/black-lives-matter-school-resources/>
- De Nichols’ Deliberate & Unafraid Book Club: <https://www.denichols.co/bookclub>
- Black Lives Matter: <https://blacklivesmatter.com>
- GLSEN’s resources for creating LGBTQ-inclusive environments: <https://www.glsen.org/resources>

From SPLCs Learning for Justice:

- Resources for Confronting White Nationalism: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/new-resources-for-confronting-white-nationalism>
- Learning the Landscape of the Digital World: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/learning-the-landscape-of-digital-literacy>
- LFJs Digital Literacy Framework: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/frameworks/digital-literacy>
- Teaching Hard History | American Slavery resources: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/frameworks/teaching-hard-history/american-slavery>
- LFJ Text library (historical, primary documents, fiction): <https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/texts>
- Let’s Talk: Facilitating Critical Conversations: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/lets-talk>
- “Speak Up At School,” SPLCs Learning for Justice: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/speak-up-at-school>
- Speaking Up Against Hateful Rhetoric in Public Discourse: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/speak-up-against-hateful-rhetoric>
- “Speak Up: Responding to Everyday Bigotry,” SPLC: <https://www.splcenter.org/20150125/speak-responding-everyday-bigotry>
- “Learning the Landscape of the Digital World,” SPLCs Learning for Justice: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/learning-the-landscape-of-digital-literacy>
- “Responding to Hate and Bias at School,” SPLCs Learning for Justice: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/responding-to-hate-and-bias-at-school>

Preventing & Dealing with Extremism

- My Child Is Sharing Conspiracy Theories and Racist Memes. What Do I Say?,” Western States Center: <https://westernstatescenter.medium.com/my-child-is-sharing-conspiracy-theories-and-racist-memes-what-do-i-say-ealc8916d064>
- “Ten Ways to Fight Hate: A Community Response Guide,” SPLC: <https://www.splcenter.org/20170814/ten-ways-fight-hate-community-response-guide>
- “Five Things Educators Can Do to Address Bias in Their Schools,” NEA EdJustice: <https://neaedjustice.org/2019/10/11/5-things-educators-can-do-to-address-bias-in-their-school/>
- “A Teacher’s Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism,” United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000244676>
- “What if I was Wrong?,” an Educator’s Book of Activities to Prevent Radicalization: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/57aec2f5-a65e-49fb-941f-aa85e600c4f9>
- “Radicalization and Violent Extremism: How Do I Talk About It With My Child?,” https://info-radical.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/How-do-I-talk-about-it-with-my-child_CPRLV.pdf
- An Information Kit for School Personnel, Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence: <https://info-radical.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/INFORMATION-KIT-FOR-SCHOOL-PERSONNEL.pdf>
- “The Oxygen of Amplification: Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators,” Data & Society: <https://datasociety.net/library/oxygen-of-amplification/>

Online Safety

- The National Online Safety website, which hosts a variety of guides, webinars, and learning modules for parents, teachers, and caregivers about internet safety, platforms, and online learning: <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>
- The Center for Internet and Technology Addiction: <https://virtual-addiction.com/>
- The National Substance Abuse and Mental Health Helpline: www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline
- “What Parents Need to Know about Tik Tok,” National Online Safety: <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/what-parents-need-to-know-about-tiktok>
- Common Sense Media: www.commonsensemedia.org/

Hate Tracking, Reporting, & Maps in the United States

- SPLCs Hate Map: www.splcenter.org/hate-map
- SPLC Map of White Supremacist Flying in the U.S.: <https://www.splcenter.org/flying-map>
- The “Stop AAPI Hate” Reporting Center from the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council: www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/stop-aapi-hate/
- The Anti-Defamation League’s Bias and Discrimination Incident Reporting Site: www.adl.org/reportincident
- Report anti-LGBTQ media content to GLAAD: <https://www.glaad.org/reportdefamation>
- Council on American Islamic Relations Incident Reporting Site: www.cair.com/report/
- The U.S. Department of Justice Hate Crimes Reporting: www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/get-help-now
- The Victim Connect Resource Center: <https://victim-connect.org/learn/types-of-crime/hate-crimes/>

APPENDIX

STAYING ALERT TO SITES, PLATFORMS, & APPS FREQUENTLY EXPLOITED BY EXTREMISTS

Certain applications and online platforms should raise red flags for parents and caregivers. They can be the starting point for a conversation with youth about why they are using those platforms. Of particular concern are apps and platforms that use a high level of encryption, hide other apps, and applications designed to provide content banned on mainstream sites. This is a constantly evolving space, and new sites and applications are always emerging. The best advice is to ask children about their browser history along with any applications, platforms, or sites they use that you don't recognize. As a starting point, look for the following on a child's smartphone, tablet, or computer and web browsers.

Toxic online communities

The following sites are known to foster cultures of hate and intolerance and to seed online campaigns of disinformation and harassment. If you see a child is active on one of these sites, it should be cause for immediate concern.

- 4Chan
- Gab
- 8Kun
- KiwiFarms
- incels.co

Mainstream sites exploited by extremists

The following sites are popular with children and young adults. However, extremists and other harmful actors and predators seek to exploit these sites to prey on vulnerable people. Targeting can take the form of one-on-one grooming or through the spreading of propaganda. If your child uses one of the following sites, talk with them about the fundamentals of internet safety and how to spot extremist activity.

- Reddit
- Discord
- iFunny
- Twitch
- Tik Tok
- YouTube
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Teamspeak
- (via Steam, Xbox, PS4)
- VKontakte (VK)

Apps & sites with limited moderation

These sites and applications employ varying degrees of content moderation that often rely on users to report violations. Extremists seek to exploit such a reliance to spread content and to recruit.

- Minds
- BitChute
- Riot Chat
- Rocket Chat
- Odysee/Lbry
- Parler
- MeWe
- DLive
- Rumble
- Patriots.win

Highly encrypted & anonymizing apps & services

The following applications use encryption and other privacy technologies to keep their activities secret. If your child is using one of these applications, find out why and reach out for help.

- Telegram
- Signal
- Wickr
- WIRE
- Jitsi Meet
- PIA VPN
- Nord VPN
- Proton VPN
- Protonmail
- Unseen.is Email
- Tutanota Email
- Tor/Onion Browsers
- Brave Browser
- Threema
- Keybase

ENDNOTES

- 1 See for example Berger, J.M. 2018. *Extremism*. MIT Press; Mudde, Cas. 2019. *The Far Right Today*. Polity Press.
- 2 See Sunstein, Cas. 2013. *Going to Extremes: How Like Minds Unite and Divide*. Oxford University Press.
- 3 See Phillips, Whitney. 2019. "It Wasn't Just the Trolls: Early Internet Culture, 'Fun', and the Fires of Exclusionary Laughter," *Social Media and Society* Vol. 5(3); Greene, Viveca S. 2019. "'Deploable' Satire: Alt-Right Memes, White Genocide Tweets, and Redpilling Normies," *Studies in American Humor* Vol. 5(1).
- 4 See Rosenblum, Nancy and Russell Muirhead. 2019. *A Lot of People are Saying: The New Conspiracism and the Assault on Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- 5 McCauley, Clark and Sophia Moskalenko. 2017. *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us*. Oxford University Press.
- 6 Kent, Stephen A. and Joseph P. Szimhart. 2002. "Exit Counseling and the Decline of Deprogramming," *Cultic Studies Review* Vol. 1(3).
- 7 For guidance on how to talk to children and teens, see Faber, Adele and Elaine Mazlish's books *How to Talk so Teens will Listen and Listen so Teens will Talk* (Harper Collins 2006) and *How to Talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk* (Scribner 2012).
- 8 For more on the strategies of extremist propaganda, see the Anti-Defamation League's discussion, "Propaganda, Extremism and Online Recruitment Tactics," available at <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk/propaganda-extremism-online-recruitment>
- 9 See Miller-Idriss, Cynthia. 2009. *Blood and Culture*. Duke University Press.
- 10 See the City of Kindness website at <http://cityofkindness.org/portfolio/get-inspired/> for resources. Read more about the story of the city of Anaheim's kindness campaign and its impact on school bullying, disciplinary referrals, and local crime in Humphries, Monica. "One Mayor Transformed His Town Into the 'City of Kindness' — and Inspired Over 1 Million Kind Acts." *Nation Swell*, August 19, 2019, available at <https://nationswell.com/anaheim-city-of-kindness/>
- 11 See Lenhart, Amanda, Michele Ybarra, Kathryn Zickuhr, and Myesha Price-Feeney. 2016. "Guide to Online Harassment, Digital Abuse and Cyberstalking in America." Published by the Data and Society Research Institute and the Center for Public Health Research, available at https://www.datasociety.net/pubs/oh/Online_Harassment_2016.pdf
- 12 See the 2009 guide, "Preventing and responding to hate crimes: A resource guide for NGOs in the OSCE region," published by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights," available at <https://www.osce.org/odhr/39821?download=true>

CREDITS

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