

# RESPONDING TO HATE

**E**xtrémism 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.<sup>11</sup> Children and adolescents who experience bias harassment are more likely to experience feelings of isolation, depression, and anxiety.<sup>12</sup> 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.



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**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.