YOUTH RADICALIZATION IN FOCUS

LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

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.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the increase in extremist online activity that accompanied it, the Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL) at American University and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) developed a rapid response resource called *Building Resilience & Confronting Risk in the COVID-19 Era: A Parents and Caregivers Guide to Online Radicalization*. We designed this guide to help build community expertise to interrupt the spread of radicalization in youth during a moment of unprecedented online activity and social isolation.

The Parents and Caregivers Guide is the first step toward a larger project of integrated support resources—both online and off—to help local communities intervene on behalf of young people at risk for radicalization. The focus groups described in this report represent another step toward that goal. Further development of the guide will include expanded content, tailored supplements to meet the specific needs of different practitioner communities—such as counselors, coaches, educators, school administrators, and social workers—and more. This process is driven by PERIL's 360-degree approach to research and intervention, which is based on an ongoing cycle of stakeholder needs assessment, research and experimentation, impact assessment, and iterative study and intervention design.

In early 2021, PERIL conducted thirteen virtual focus group discussions in three clusters: with teachers and educators; with school counselors and social workers; and with coaches, mentors, and youth group leaders. A total of 43 professionals across those categories participated in those focus groups, helping our team better understand the range of concerns and needs that each group shared in reaction to reading the *Parents and Caregivers Guide* and through broader discussions about youth radicalization. A fuller review of the project methodology, along with the research instruments, are provided in the appendices to this report.

WHAT WE LEARNED

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ADDRESSED THREE KEY SUBJECT AREAS:

1. **GENERAL FEEDBACK**—both positive and critical—on the Parents and Caregivers Guide.
2. Suggestions for future **ADDITIONS AND REVISIONS** to the guide.
3. Recommendations—both specific **POLICIES** and general **PRINCIPLES**—for implementing the ideas presented in the guide and its supplements.

EDUCATORS

GENERAL FEEDBACK

Avoid conflict & build constructive conversations: Educators expressed concern that broaching certain topics with students may lead to conflict. They noted the need to develop strategies for holding constructive conversations on difficult topics and for reducing the risk of conflict during these discussions.

Eliminate assumptions & broaden target audiences: To many educators we spoke with, the guide came across as having been written by white authors, targeting a white audience. Greater effort should be made to be inclusive of nonwhite parents and caregivers, and to provide trauma-informed care to victim-survivors, their parents, and caregivers. Many educators also felt that the guide presumed an audience that was already opposed to extremist attitudes. Additional attention should be paid to communicating with readers for whom these ideas are either new or even potentially controversial.

ADDITIONS & REVISIONS

Eliminate jargon & streamline: Some educators found the content of the *Guide* to be heavy and/or dense, and they would have preferred parts of it to be written more simply and more concisely. Some mentioned that information could be organized into smaller, more clearly defined subsections, and that key words and ideas could be highlighted as well. Several educators pointed out that the *Guide*'s vocabulary sometimes exceeded its aimed-for 8th grade reading level.

Increased use of multimedia: Educators noted that increased use of images, audio, video, and other forms of data visualization could help to capture readers' attention and provide a more interactive learning experience.

Addressing administrators: Educators explained that lack of support by administration stands in the way of implementing many of the *Guide*'s recommendations. The *Guide* should present more information to encourage this kind of "top-down buy-in" that is so crucial to the success of these approaches. For example, the *Guide* should explain to administrators that school policies dealing with extremism are clearly linked to higher test scores, higher graduation rates, and higher attendance.

Student led initiatives are key

Age-specific recommendations: Educators highlighted the need for content explaining how to approach conversations about extremism differently depending on a student's age.

"How-to" behavioral interventions: Educators emphasized a need for de-escalation techniques and other methods to prevent dangerous behavior in school settings.

Conversation starters & scripts: Educators expressed a desire for scripted conversation starters, "sentence stems," basic question formats, and phraseology to have on-hand during moments of high tension and discomfort.

Curricula: Our respondents requested curriculum materials that combined teaching on extremism, history, civics, and media literacy. Educators pointed out that these could take a variety of forms—as pre-packaged one-day modules, week-long units, or longer courses.

POLICIES & PRINCIPLES

Let students lead: Student-led initiatives are key in empowering young people to confront issues related to extremism. Our respondents recommended that youth should be looked to as leaders in recognizing and responding to the warning signs of radicalization in their friends, fellow students, and loved ones.

A digital network of support: Information sharing is key to a community's ability to address radicalization and extremism. Educators identified the need for an online platform that could facilitate resource sharing with their colleagues. This platform would provide space to discuss the issue of extremism in schools without fear of reprisal. There, they could solicit advice, offer support, and receive assistance, particularly if they lack administrative support or face parental opposition.

Non-carceral solutions: Carceral and punitive solutions to school discipline and behavioral issues—related to extremism or not—have shown very little positive impact. Educators agreed that carceral solutions and punishment models should be avoided when addressing youth extremism and radicalization. Educators and administrators should also take extra care to ensure that carceral and punitive solutions are not being applied to students of color. Considerations related to mental health must also be foregrounded when evaluating the behavior of all students, not just white students demonstrating warning signs.

Third-party interventions: Some students who express extremist ideas or beliefs may need more support than educators or administrators can provide. Our respondents suggested that greater resources be made available for youth interventions, potentially through third party organizations which are not bound by the regulatory bureaucracy of educational institutions.

Data-driven assessment: Educators explained that better availability of data proving the effectiveness of preventative interventions into radicalization would help to enlist support from school administrators and other leaders. Such data is currently very limited. Assessments of programs dealing with extremism in schools should study impact carefully in order to demonstrate effectiveness, rectify shortcomings, and prevent harms.

Center victim support with trauma -informed care

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS & SOCIAL WORKERS

GENERAL FEEDBACK

Center victim support: Educators recommended that efforts addressing extremism in schools should center targeted individuals and groups, and should offer trauma-informed care to address both the direct and indirect effects of violence and harassment. While our respondents recognized the need to treat young people at risk for radicalization, focusing on perpetrators and their needs cannot come at the expense of victim-survivors.

Address family-based radicalization: Parents and caregivers may not always be supportive of intervention into problematic beliefs and behavior. Indeed, a young person's family may be the primary source of their radicalization. In cases such as these, disrupting radicalization pathways requires sustained support for at-risk youth outside of the home. In these cases, intervention may be prolonged and prove more challenging.

Focus on rehabilitation: Even when radicalization is halted, our respondents emphasized the need to prevent individuals from returning to extremist beliefs and behaviors. A rehabilitative approach, one which provides continued patient support, facilitates the ongoing process of "off-ramping," moving the patient further away from extremist attitudes and towards healing the underlying drivers of radicalization.

ADDITIONS & REVISIONS

Eliminate jargon: Counselors and social workers involved with the study agreed that the *Guide* content should be simplified and its language should be more concise. As noted by educators as well, writing should be tailored for comprehension by readers of all skill levels. Counselors and social workers also noted that information could be organized into smaller, more clearly defined subsections, and that key words and ideas should be highlighted.

Treatment protocols: Learning the right questions when approaching sensitive topics from the proper perspective are vital approaches for successfully intervening in radicalization. Our mental health counselors and social workers expressed the need for more in-depth protocols that outline de-escalation techniques designed to prevent the adoption of extremist beliefs, behaviors, and values.

Guided practice & role playing: Counselors and social workers expressed the need for training specifically aimed at addressing radicalization and extremism. They expressed concern that broaching certain conversations with students may lead to conflict, and specified that these materials should be crafted to emphasize conflict reduction. Our respondents recommended formats such as video-based scenarios, role playing scripts, conversation models, and decision trees.

More detail describing red flags & warning signs: Counselors and social workers expressed a need for more in-depth and detailed guidance to recognize the language, symbols, and behavioral changes that indicate risks for radicalization. This expanded content would emphasize the necessity of confronting internalized biases that can lead counselors and social workers to overlook early warning signs. This content should make clear distinctions between high and low-risk individuals in order to avoid unnecessarily targeting young people who are not truly exhibiting signs of radicalization.

POLICIES & PRINCIPLES

Proactive & community-based intervention: Our respondents agreed that proactive interventions, tailored to each case's unique circumstances, offer the best chance of "off-ramping" youth at risk for radicalization to extremism. They emphasized the need for intervention strategies involving local community members taking community conditions into account.

Connecting at-risk students with support: Our respondents agreed on the need to build support systems at every level of young people's lives, from the school/classroom to extracurricular spaces, the local community, and beyond. This holistic approach to community health and resilience ensures a variety of "off-ramps" as alternatives to radicalization.

Additional training: No guide, however comprehensive, will ever be complete. Radicalization tactics change quickly and evolve, which makes confronting extremism a necessarily iterative process. Our respondents called for ongoing training on topics such as equity, socio-emotional skill building, culture and personal bias, and anti-bias/bystander intervention to supplement the information provided in the *Guide*.

COACHES, MENTORS, & YOUTH GROUP LEADERS

GENERAL FEEDBACK

Rhetoric, language, memes: The coaches, mentors, and youth group leaders we spoke to asked for help recognizing extremist recruiting tactics and for help telling the difference between harmless and dangerous material which young people might encounter online. Respondents expressed special interest in learning more about conspiracy theories, propaganda, and memes, which may illuminate the extent of an individual's radicalization and catalyze interventions earlier.

Easier reading level: Respondents recommended that the guide be written at an 8th Grade level to ensure comprehension by all readers.

Eliminating assumptions, broadening target audiences: Like our educators, these respondents felt that the *Guide* came across as having been written by white people for a white audience. They also noted it seemed to address an audience who already agreed on what beliefs and actions constitute extremism and radicalization and how they ought to be addressed. Our respondents suggested that greater effort should be made to be inclusive of nonwhite parents and caregivers, and that the *Guide* should provide information about trauma-informed care and support to victim-survivors and their caregivers.

Bare-bones guide: Several of the coaches, mentors, and youth group leaders we spoke to requested a stripped-down version of the *Parents and Caregivers Guide*, which could be printed in black-and-white, for easier distribution among their colleagues and in their communities.

ADDITIONS & REVISIONS

More interactive scenarios: The coaches, mentors, and youth group leaders we spoke to agreed on the need for interactive activities and detailed case studies illustrating patterns of radicalization discussed in the *Guide*. These additions could be used for practice and training by both youth and adults.

Content for youth: Our respondents pointed out that adults are also vulnerable to radicalization, and they advocated for resources designed to help youth hold safe and constructive conversations with any adults in their lives who may themselves be espousing extremist attitudes.

Detail risk factors: Respondents requested more detailed content describing vulnerabilities to radicalization and warning signs that radicalization was taking place. They also underscored the need for content that centers the experiences of young people who may become the target of extremist violence and harassment. These resources, they believe, will help them foster inclusivity and victim advocacy while also benefiting at-risk youth.

Appeal to conservatives: Respondents described a need for resources which appeal to conservatives within their community. Our coaches, mentors, and youth group leaders explained that such resources would help them to cultivate conservatives as stakeholders willing to address the dangers of radicalization with their community.

Find content to reach conservative audiences

POLICIES & PRINCIPLES

Develop proactive, local interventions: There is no one-size-fits-all solution to youth radicalization, and our coaches, mentors, and youth group leaders agreed that interventions should be proactive and contextual. As with other respondents, these practitioners also underscored the need for intervention strategies to involve the broader community and address extremism locally.

Teach positive identity & belonging: Respondents noted that school systems and afterschool settings must develop curriculums that center positive identity construction. When youth have a strong sense of positive identity and belonging in their community, they are less likely to become at risk for radicalization.

Foster student-led action, bottom-up buy-in: As with our educator respondents, the coaches, mentors, and youth group leaders we spoke to believed that student-led initiatives are key to confronting extremism in their communities. Our respondents recommended that young people be educated in tactics for staying safe from extremist violence and harassment, as well as how to recognize and respond to the warning signs of radicalization in fellow students, friends, and loved ones.

Establish community & workplace standards: Developing healthy communities and spaces for youth depends on establishing clear standards for what conduct is and is not acceptable. Respondents highlighted how clearly articulated statements of community values and codes of conduct have helped them to model and reinforce safe, positive boundaries within their spaces. Institutions should articulate these values and collaborate with communities to consistently express and revitalize them.

REFLECTIONS ON GROUP FEEDBACK

Focus group respondents reported that the *Parents and Caregivers Guide* provided them with invaluable information about radicalization and how to approach youth who are exposed to extremist ideologies. They also noted areas where further development and subsequent testing may be necessary.

Teachers and educators were in some ways the most effective in articulating their unique needs. Perhaps this is because they are well positioned to recognize the early stages of radicalization and must address these difficult topics with both youth and parents as they manifest. Coaches and youth mentors, by contrast, may see youth less frequently and often for shorter amounts of time. Coaches and mentors must, therefore, identify potential warning signs even more quickly in order to know when to notify parents and school officials and, if necessary, when to reach out to professional mental health service providers. School counselors and social workers were the most in need of resources, guidance, and support related to direct intervention, as they are responsible for treatment, intervention, and harm reduction.

Regardless of their profession, all of our respondents expressed the need for safe, secure online forums where networks of mutual support and learning can be fostered. There, teachers and school administrators facing these same difficult, potentially dangerous situations could connect and share their successes and struggles. Mental health professionals could connect to share research, insights, and strategies critical to developing actionable interventions. And coaches, mentors, and youth group leaders could connect to collaborate on activities and exercises fostering more resilient, inclusive communities.

Reducing harms and building resilience to extremism requires an iterative, evidence-based approach. This work is rooted in listening to the people who work closely with youth to identify gaps in existing resources, knowledge, and support. Future projects based on the *Parents and Caregivers Guide* should begin by providing for the needs expressed in our focus groups, and then continue with testing to determine efficacy. Finally, old materials should be revised and new material should be developed based on the evidence of those outcomes. As extremism is a constantly evolving problem, so too must our solutions evolve as we work to build inclusive and resilient communities.

APPENDIX A
OVERVIEW OF FOCUS GROUP METHODS

PARTICIPANTS

In January-February 2021, in a series of thirteen focus groups, PERIL brought together panels of 1) teachers and educators; 2) school counselors and social workers; and 3) coaches, mentors and youth group leaders in order to identify gaps in the *Parents and Caregivers Guide* and to address each group's specific needs and concerns related to youth radicalization. These practitioner groups were prioritized due to the critical role that schools, after-school programs, and mental health agencies—as well as related personnel within these environments—play in interrupting youth radicalization.

All research protocols were approved by American University's Institutional Review Board, which supervises research with human subjects. In total, PERIL recruited 43 subjects to participate—30 women and 13 men. Focus group participants were recruited from professional networks and from a pool of prior webinar attendees, based on their professional expertise, as well as their interest in previous SPLC webinars on extremism, the work of PERIL, and/or their broader interest in youth radicalization. Demographic information related to racial-ethnic identity and age were collected on a voluntary basis. PERIL researchers divided the focus groups into three categories that corresponded with the three audiences for whom PERIL prioritized the first round of guide supplements: teachers/educators, school counselors/social workers, and coaches/mentors/youth group leaders.

Focus groups were then conducted via the Zoom video conference platform. Teachers and educators composed the first set of focus groups. There were a total of 5 focus groups in this set, with 20 total participants—13 women and 7 men. This included grade school teachers, higher ed faculty, administrators and principals from public schools, and former teachers who now work in the field of professional educator development.

School counselors and social workers composed the second set of focus groups. In this set, there were 4 total focus groups, with 12 total participants—9 women and 3 men. This group spanned a broader range of professions: mental health professionals (e.g. counselors, therapists, clinical social workers) and professions that frequently must connect youth with mental health resources (e.g. law enforcement, attorneys). Since these professionals encounter youth both in and outside of school, this second set of focus groups offered a more expansive but less focused perspective on youth radicalization.

The final set of focus groups was composed of coaches and youth mentors. This set had 4 total focus groups with 11 total participants—8 women and 3 men. The goal of these focus groups was to capture the needs of coaches, after school program coordinators, camp counselors, youth ministers, and adults who work for community agencies that serve youth. This group was intentionally composed of the broadest set of professionals in order to capture the perspective of adults who interact with youth in recreational settings and voluntary capacities.

MEASURES & MATERIALS

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Focus group protocols were tailored to each specific audience. In order to accommodate participant schedules, focus group sessions were limited to approximately one hour. Consent, confidentiality, and anonymity were addressed prior to the start of focus groups, as was the purpose of the groups and its hoped-for outcome. Focus group members gave their consent to participate by agreeing to proceed with the focus group following these initial disclosures.

Each protocol contained between five and seven open-ended questions. Early questions were designed to ease participants into conversation, while later questions solicited information about specific strategies for addressing radicalization risks in the youth with whom respondents work. Every focus group participant was asked to share feedback on the guide, including what they liked the most about it, suggestions for improvement, and insights into specific additions to assist practitioners in their field. (See Appendix B for the teachers/educators focus group protocol as an example.)

PRE-/POST-QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

In addition to the interview protocol, a quantitative pre-/post-focus group assessment was also administered. Prior to participating in the focus group, respondents were asked to fill out a 12-item survey using a 7-point Likert scale (ranging from "Not at all" to "Completely") via email. Participants took this same survey again after participating in their focus group. This assessment gauged their

understanding of extremism and their willingness to intervene on behalf of young people at risk of radicalization. (See Appendix C for this assessment tool.)

PROCEDURES

Potential focus group participants were informed of their rights to confidentiality. Following receipt of their consent to participate, participants received a PDF version of the *Parents and Caregivers Guide* and took the pre-test quantitative assessment (see Appendix C) via email.

On the day of their respective focus group, respondents logged on to the Zoom platform, where they verbally consented to being recorded and having their ideas used to inform future content. Participants then responded to a series of open-ended questions posed by the facilitator, which led to further discussion with and among other members of the focus group. The facilitator and (at minimum) one other PERIL team member were present during the focus groups, taking notes on both verbal content and body language/non-verbals. When focus groups concluded, participants were contacted one final time with a request to complete a post-test quantitative assessment.

DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

Following each focus group, a minimum of three PERIL staffers individually watched a recording of the session, taking additional notes on data that may have been missed during the focus group. Once they were finished, the PERIL team consolidated notes into three documents of "lessons learned," one for each of the three sets of focus groups. This document was coded to identify suggestions for revisions and additional content, practitioner needs, and policy recommendations. Findings were then synthesized according to overlapping information derived from each PERIL team member's notes. Redundancies were condensed where possible, and recurring themes were emphasized where found. Frequent suggestions and useful insights emerged from this synthesis and coding procedure. This information was then used to inform strategies for further development of the *Parents and Caregivers Guide*, according to the PERIL 360-degree approach to iterative research and intervention.

APPENDIX B
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

TABLE 1. FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOLS FOR TEACHERS/EDUCATORS

MEETING DATA	PARTICIPANT DATA
Date: PERIL Staff: Start Time: End Time:	Number Participants Scheduled: Number Participants Attended: Job Classification: Length of Service:

INTRODUCTION

Good (morning/afternoon). I'm Pasha Dashtgard from PERIL. This is (PERIL staff member #1) who is my co-host and (PERIL staff member #2) who is our notetaker. We'd like to start today by reviewing why we're here and what it is we are doing, as well as going over the rules of this focus group.

PURPOSE

This focus group is being conducted with the goal of eventually creating a guide that teachers, school counselors, and school staff can use to identify, prevent, and intervene on behalf of students who may be falling down the rabbit hole of online extremism and radicalization. We've already developed a *Parents and Caregivers Guide*, but now we'd like to adapt that to a new context - teachers and schools. We want to know what tools and strategies would be most helpful for you when addressing students who are at-risk of or already have started down the path of extremism. We believe that teachers and schools play a critical role in identifying and intervening on behalf of young people who are coming into contact with radicalizing content online. As is addressed in the *Parents and Caregivers Guide*, understanding these extremist groups and being able to identify students who are at risk of radicalization is critical to interrupting this process.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I want to stress that everything said here today is strictly confidential. None of it leaves this Zoom. No one's name will be attached to any response, and we will make sure that your identity is in no way discernable. If we ask you a question you are uncomfortable answering, please just let us know, and we'll move on. If you want to withdraw from this focus group, just let us know, and you are free to leave the session. This session should take about 90 minutes, including time for any lingering questions you may have for the PERIL team at the end.

CONSENT

Reminder that consent was received via email confirmation and by agreeing to join the Zoom call for the focus group. This means that you've agreed that it is okay for us to record this focus group for our own analysis, and you are okay with us using quotes from this session in our reports for PERIL & SPLC's use only. To reiterate per that same email, your feedback, commentary, as well as transcriptions of said audio, will be used for further analysis of prevention and intervention strategies within the field of education.

ROUNDTABLE INTRODUCTIONS

I'd love to go around the group and get a sense of who is here, what your job or role is with students/youth, and how long you've been doing that for. I'll start ...(move onto PERIL staff, then participants). Please either put in the chat or write down any questions or ideas you are having as they come up for you. We want to address any thoughts you have that aren't explicitly asked of you by me.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Question 1: Have you had an experience or instances where a student has said or done something that reflects racist, sexist, or homophobic beliefs? What was it?	**Probes:** • How did you feel? • What did you do? • Who (if anyone) did you tell? • What would you have wanted beforehand to address it, or to address it more effectively?
Question 2: Have you had an experience or instances where a student has said or done something that reflects more extreme/fringe beliefs, such as views in line with white supremacy, Qanon, incels, or neo-Nazis?	**Probes:** • What did you do? • How did you feel? • Who did you tell? • What would you have wanted beforehand to address it, or to address it more effectively?
Question 3: What do you think schools should be doing to address extremism among students?	**Probes:** • What is the right format to broach this topic at your school? ○ Building a school coalition with teachers/ administrators? With students? ○ Bring it to the PTA? ○ Get school administrators involved? ○ Student assemblies?

Question 4: What do you think would be some effective ways of preventing online radicalization among students?	**Probes:** • What are some things teachers/educators could do if they are trying to de-radicalize a student who is being exposed to this stuff at school? • What are some things teachers/educators could do if they are trying to de-radicalize a student who is being exposed to this stuff at home? • What are some challenges you anticipate in trying to prevent online radicalization among students? • What would be helpful in mitigating these challenges?
Question 5: What did you think about the *Parents and Caregivers Guide*?	**Probes:** • What stuck with you? • What are some changes you would like to see made for an audience of educators? • What is needed that was not present? • What resources would you want added? • Did you have trouble finding information in the guide/using the guide?
Question 6: How would you broach this topic with parents (as a teacher/educator)?	**Probes:** • What strategies should teachers use to connect with parents/caregivers? • What would you need from parents in order to broach this topic with their student? • What would you need from school administrators/school counselors to broach this topic with a student's parents or caregivers?
Question 7: How would you broach this topic with school administrators, a principal, or school counselor(s)?	**Probes:** • What might you need from school administrators/school counselors to broach this topic with them effectively?

WRAP-UP

Thank you so much for your insights and feedback! This has been a tremendous success. We are going to conclude the focus group now by going over how this data will be analyzed and soliciting any final thoughts or questions you may have for us.

DATA ANALYSIS & USE

The information that you've provided to us today will be used to make changes to the *Parents and Caregivers Guide* that you have already seen. We will use your responses to help craft a teachers and educators guide that is specifically designed to help those working with students and youth address online radicalization, as well as develop strategies for talking about online radicalization and extremism with school administrators, parents, caregivers, and other adults that work with youth. We will transcribe the recording of this focus group, analyze the transcript for themes and ideas, and compare responses with other focus groups that we've conducted in order to develop the most useful and effective guide possible for teachers and educators.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FOR THE PERIL TEAM

Any final thoughts or questions you have for us? Anything that you want to get off your chest before we conclude?

APPENDIX C
FOCUS GROUP PRE-/POST-QUANT ASSESSMENT

TABLE 2. FOCUS GROUP PRE-/POST-TEST QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

QUESTION	RATING SCALE						
	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 Completely
1. Do you think you are prepared to talk with a young person about online extremism?							
2. Do you think you are prepared to talk with a young person about online extremist groups?							
3. Do you think you know where to get help if you suspect a young person is coming into contact with extremist ideas?							
4. Do you think you know where to get help if you suspect a young person is in contact with extremist groups?							
5. Do you think that you understand the process by which youth become radicalized online?							

6. Do you think you could intervene with a young person that you suspect is in contact with an extremist community over the internet?							
7. Do you think you could help parents or caregivers understand the threat of online radicalization?							
8. Do you think you could help parents or caregivers understand the threat of online extremist groups?							
9. Do you think you could help parents or caregivers recognize extremist content or websites?							
10. In terms of online extremism, do you know which websites or digital spaces to look out for?							
11. In terms of online extremism, do you know what kinds of language, speech, or phrases to look out for?							
12. In terms of online extremism, do you know which conspiracy theories to look out for?							

CREDITS

This report is a joint project of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project and American University's Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL). We gratefully acknowledge the parents, caregivers, teachers, therapists, principals, and researchers whose insights informed this report. For more information on PERIL, visit *www.american.edu/peril*. For more on the SPLC's Intelligence Project, visit *https://www.splcenter.org/PERIL*.

Pasha Dashtgard, PERIL Senior Researcher
Lydia Bates, SPLC Senior Research Analyst
Emily Pressman, PERIL Research Assistant
Wyatt Russell, PERIL Project Manager
Daisy Gebbia-Richards, PERIL Research Assistant
Brian Hughes, PERIL Associate Director
Cynthia Miller-Idriss, PERIL Director

With special thanks to Claudia Whitaker, Designer at SPLC; Elijah Hawkes, PERIL Education Advisor; and several external reviewers and all research participants who remain anonymous.

SPLC
Southern Poverty
Law Center

Polarization & Extremism
Research & Innovation Lab
Center *for* University Excellence