Attribution and Disclaimer

Attribution

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Disclaimer

- The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this program are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

Creating a Psychologically Safe Space for Vulnerable Youth and All Youth

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Professor

Clemson University

Youth are in a Mental Health Crisis (Part 1)

The Percentage of High School Students Who:*	2011 Total	2013 Total	2015 Total	2017 Total	2019 Total	2021 Total	Trend
Experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness	28	30	30	31	37	42	🛑
Experienced poor mental health†	–	–	–	–	–	29	–
Seriously considered attempting suicide	16	17	18	17	19	22	🛑
Made a suicide plan	13	14	15	14	16	18	🛑
Attempted suicide	8	8	9	7	9	10	🛑
Were injured in a suicide attempt that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse	2	3	3	2	3	3	🔶

Source: CDC. 2023. *YRBS Data Summary & Trends*.

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Youth are in a Mental Health Crisis (Part 2)

- Exacerbating risk factors:
  - Substance use disorder
  - Isolation and disconnection during the COVID-19 pandemic
  - Problematic social media use
  - Witnessing community violence
  - Interpersonal violence victimization
  - Low parental monitoring
  - Housing instability
  - Stigma
  - Marginalization
  - Lack of access to resources

Youth are in a Mental Health Crisis (Part 3)

- More than half of adults (53 percent) with children under 18 in their household say they are concerned about the mental state of their children.

- Female students and LGBTQ+ students more likely to experience poor mental health and suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

- Thirty percent of female high schoolers reported they had seriously considered attempting suicide in the 12 months, almost 1 in 4 made a plan (23.6 percent), and 13.3 percent attempted suicide.

Source: CDC. 2023. *YRBS Data Summary & Trends*.

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Prevalence of Poor Mental Health

Source: CDC. 2023. *YRBS Data Summary & Trends*.
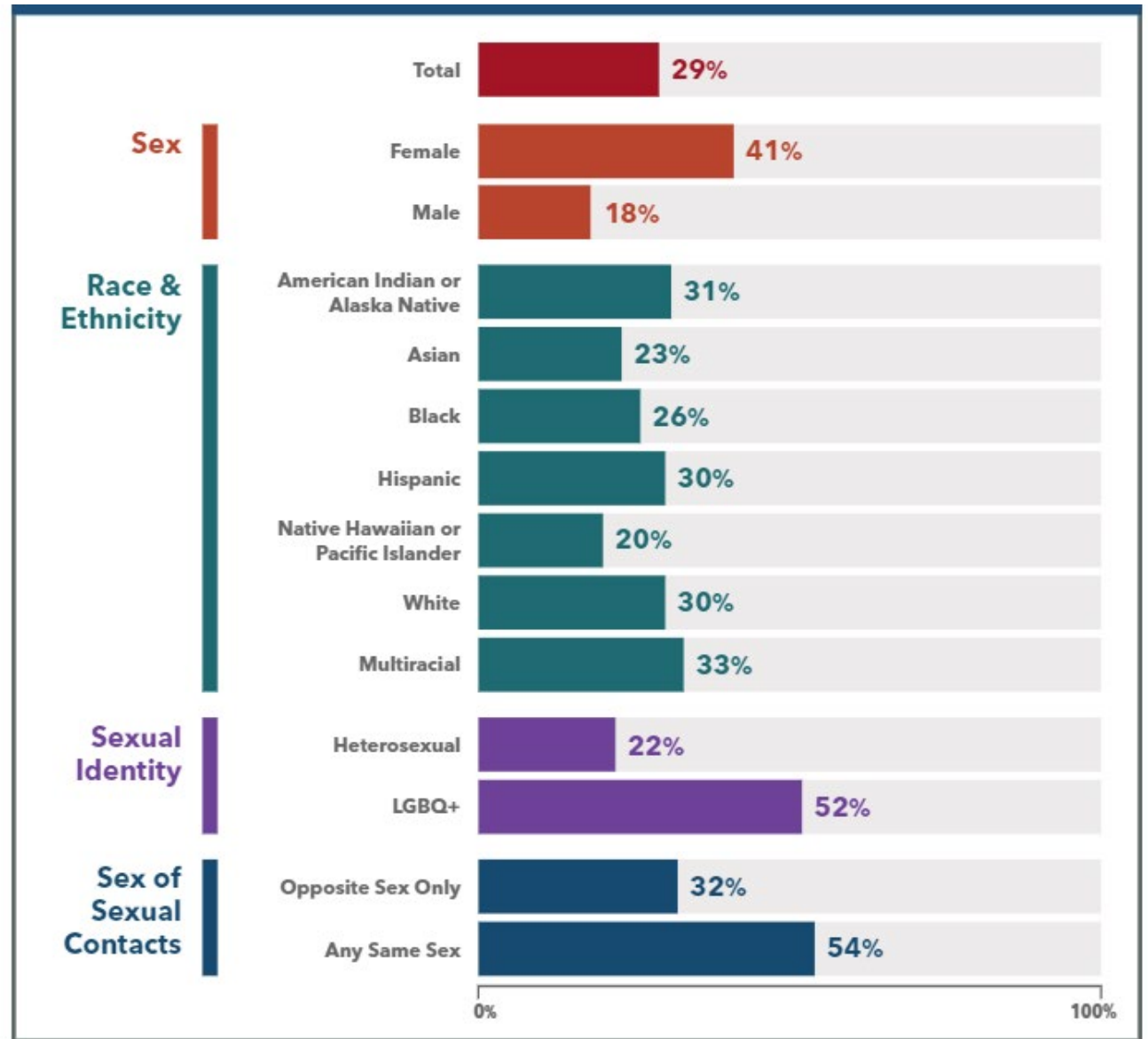
Prevalence of Treatment

Source: CDC. 2023. *Mental Health Treatment Among Children Aged 5–17 Years: United States, 2021*.

Figure 1. Percentage of children aged 5–17 years who had received any mental health treatment, taken medication for their mental health, or received counseling or therapy from a mental health professional in the past 12 months, by age group: United States, 2021
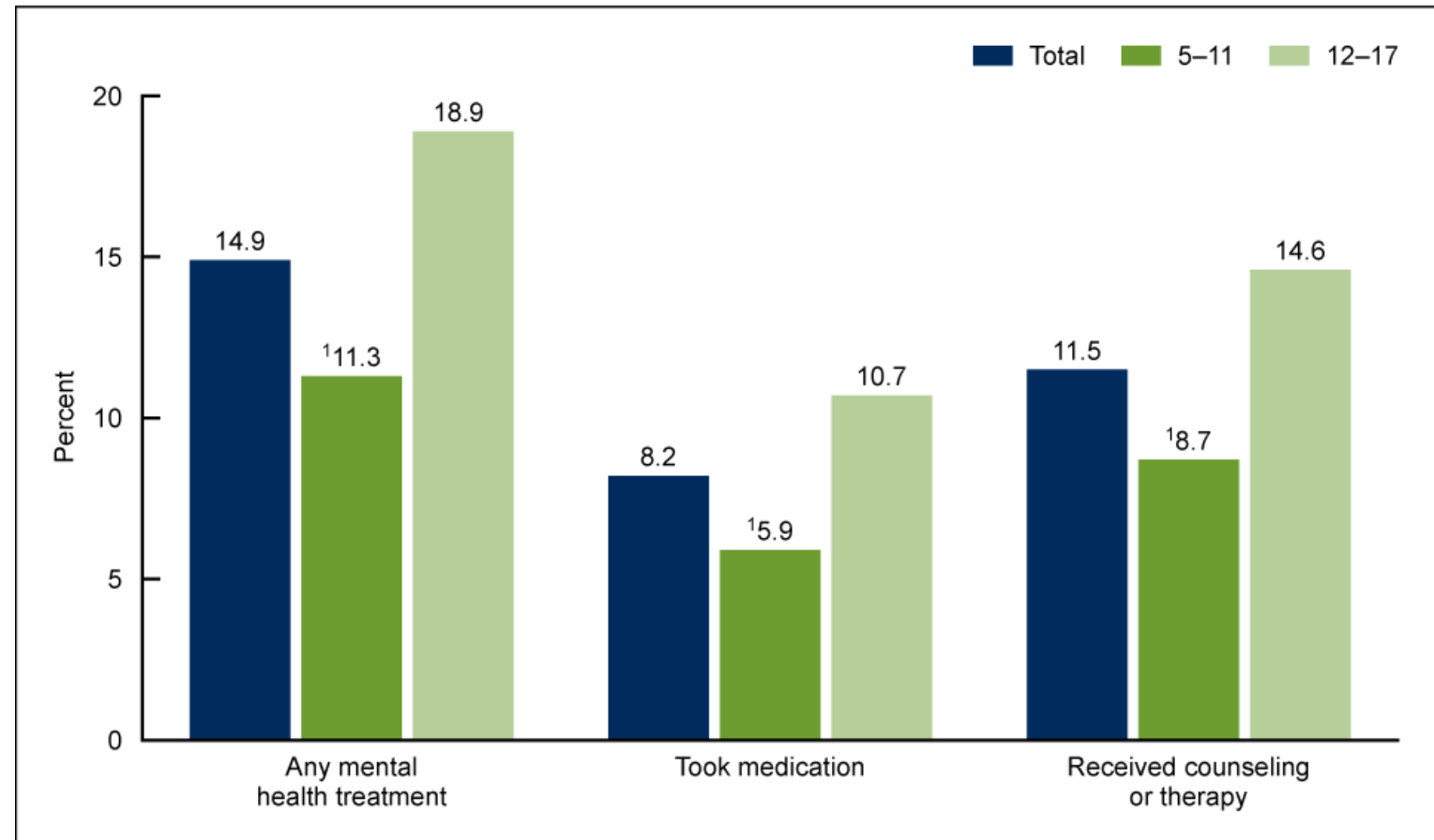
[1]Significantly different from children aged 12–17 years ($p < 0.05$).
NOTES: Children were considered to have received any mental health treatment if they were reported to have taken medication for their mental health, received counseling or therapy from a mental health professional, or both in the past 12 months. Estimates are based on household interviews of a sample of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population. Access data table for Figure 1 at: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db472-tables.pdf#1.
SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 2021.

Iceberg of Trauma

- Draw an iceberg like the one you see here.

- List some problematic behaviors you've experienced working with youth at the top of the iceberg.

- Then, below list some of the incidences of trauma, adverse experiences, or difficult upbringings you've heard from, or about, the youth you've worked with.

- Reflect on what experiences below the tip of the iceberg may have caused the problematic behaviors we see.
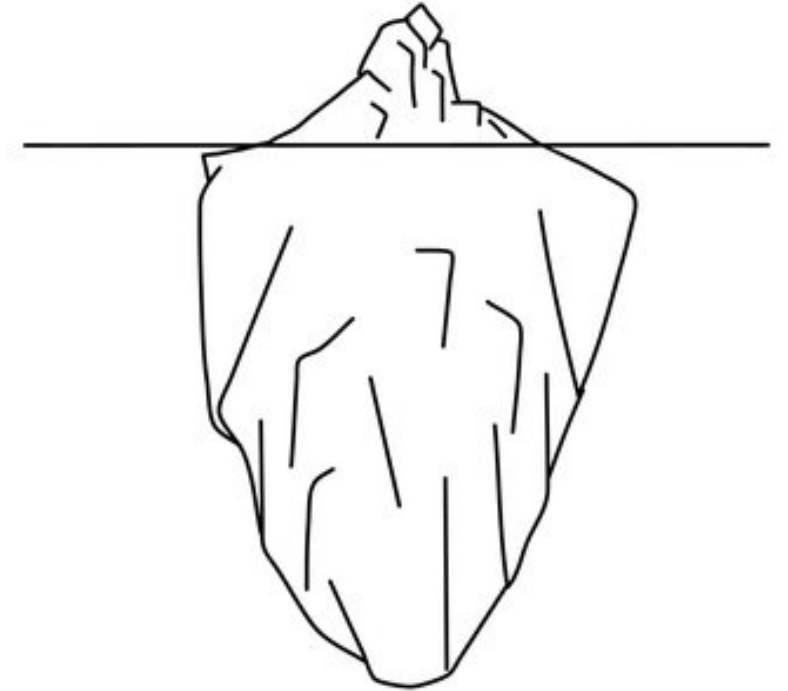
Psychologically-Informed Approach

- Building from psychological frameworks to ensure we think and act with intention.

- How we support:
  - Young people
  - Other staff
  - Ourselves

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Positive Youth Development

Main Assumption
Strengths-based philosophy

Young people have stregths to be nurtured not problems to be fixed

Key for mentoring
Youth-led & collaboration

The importance of forming healthy adult-youth relationships

Outcome
Personal & social development

Thriving young people and health development growth

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Self-Determination Theory

- Three basic psychological needs:
  - Autonomy
  - Relatedness
  - Competence

- If needs are met, we are more likely to feel motivated, experience higher levels of well-being, and flourish.

- Create a needs-supportive climate.

Building a Safe Space (Part 1)

- Need input of youth/co-constructed

- Young people:
  - Feel cared for, comfortable, and supported
  - Feel respected
  - Know they have a voice
  - Have sense of autonomy
  - Know they will not be judged for their thoughts, feelings, or actions
  - Recognize clear and mutually agreed boundaries
  - Experience consistent expectations and actions

Building a Safe Space (Part 2)

- How do we respond to setbacks? How do we support each other through challenges?

- How do we show respect to each other?

- How we define success and failure? How do we celebrate our successes?

- How do we know when either of us needs space vs. when we need support?

- How do we problem solve together?

- What are our strengths that we each bring?

- What are some areas we could grow in?

Reframing (Part 1)

- Think of some characteristics of difficult people you've worked with; this could be fellow staff or participants or think of some challenges you faced to working with someone (e.g., it would take us a long time to make a decision).

- Draw a line down a piece of paper.

- Write down these characteristics or problems in a list on one side of the paper.

- Then, on the other side of the paper, work a group to challenges yourselves to think about how these characteristics could be perceived as strengths.

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Reframing (Part 2)

Troublesome Perception	Reframed Situation
That person was not good at…	They had the most potential to grow in…
They were too loud…	They spoke with passion and enthusiasm…
They didn't pull their weight in tasks…	Were they given an opportunity to use their strengths effectively in tasks?

Relationship Building and Maintenance (Part 1)

- Write down some examples of behaviors you can take to nurture feelings of connectedness, trust, respect, support, and proper boundaries between you and the youth whom you serve.

- Write down some behaviors that can harm forming a healthy relationship with young people.

Relationship Building and Maintenance (Part 2)

Being curious, wanting to learn more, being present

Facilitating youth-led problem solving

Sharing insights from your life and sessions you've learned

Being consistent, showing up

Respecting privacy and confidentiality

Committing fully to the relationship

Creating equitable power dynamics

Being authentic

Building trust

Do no harm

'Clock watching', being too outcome focused

Trying to 'fix problems'

Trying to coerce or offer too many tangible rewards

Not following through with promises or plans

Making promises you cannot keep

Navigating Difficult Conversations (Part 1)

- What are some of the difficult conversations you might have with a young person?

- How did you handle the conversation?

- What are some body language actions to include? What are some to avoid?

- What are some phrases to include? What are some phrases to avoid?

Navigating Difficult Conversations (Part 2)

Active listening skills

✓ **Clarify** – check that you have understood fully and try not to assume knowledge

> *May not be helpful to clarify on the traumatic event itself; instead seek clarification about how it makes them feel, think or act (in the present)

✓ **Silence is okay** – it may take the young person time to find the right words. Being too quick to break the silence may cut off the young person's thinking time.

✓ **Body language to avoid**

> Crossing arms
> Shuffling in seat
> Body turned away from person

These body language cues tell someone we're not present, disinterested, or uncomfortable

✓ **Body language to include**

> Maintain eye contact
> Soften your tone
> Subtle responses in facial expression

These body language cues convey, empathy, listening, and openness

Validating language

✓ **'Thank you for sharing that with me'** – simply acknowledging the young person's ability to share somethingpersonal can be a helpful first response.

✓ **Withhold your own views** – expressing your own views can imply judgement and it is not possible to know how the young person will feel about this. Try to **remain non-judgemental**, instead just aim to learn more about their perspective.

✓ **Phrases to avoid**

> 'I know how you feel'
> 'I've been there'
> 'I've been through the same thing'

These phrases do not help to validate the personal experience of the young person

✓ **Phrases to include**

> 'It's okay to feel that way'
> 'that must have been difficult for you'
> 'I'm here for you'

These phrases reflect acceptance, non-judgment, and support

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Responding to Problematic Behavior (Part 1)

- Think back to the problematic behaviors you may have listed at the top of your icebergs.

- Mapping out what caused a behavioral response on a piece of paper with a youth can be helpful for this process.

Responding to Problematic Behavior (Part 2)

- Ask the young person how they managed the situation, on a scale of 0 to 10.

- Ask the young person what they did well to avoid saying zero (or a negative number if they say zero).

- List back all the things they did well to not be a lower score and ask the young person if they would score themselves differently in light of these.

- Think about if this situation arose again, what might a one- or two-point improvement look like?

- Help youth come up with their own solutions. Ask about their strengths, coping skills, and emotions.

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Empowering Youth (Part 1)

- An empowered young person is likely to feel autonomous and competent, that is, the feeling they have a sense of choice and volition and self-belief in the capacity to complete tasks.

- We can play an active role in nurturing young people's basic psychological needs by working in a "needs-supportive" way; in other words, being aware of how our actions either promote a young person's psychological needs or diminish them.

Empowering Youth (Part 2)

- Identify whether the actions below nurture competence or diminish competence:

    - Making comparisons to others
    - Bringing awareness to young people's strengths
    - Solution-focused
    - Problem-focused
    - Recognizing effort
    - Using punishment

Empowering Youth (Part 3)

- Identify whether the actions below nurture autonomy or diminish autonomy:

  – Fixing problems for them

  – Asking open-ended questions

  – Meeting youth where they are

  – Not validating their point of view

  – Providing a rationale for tasks

  – Readily offering reassurance

Supporting Your Own Well-Being

- Support networks and reflective practice

- Keep a reflective journal

- Self-care strategies:
  - Spending time in nature
  - Mindfulness or meditation
  - Asking for support when you need it
  - Scheduling your days/weeks to ensure you have intentional time and space to do something you want to do

Presentation Overview

- Background of study

- Quotes from study

- Takeaways to inform supporting vulnerable youth

- Questions and Answers

Background

Quotes in this presentation are from a qualitative study with 28 mentors who worked with Black youth.

- Volunteer mentors from across the United States were interviewed about their experiences working with Black youth.

- None of the mentors identified as Black, and 26 out of 28 identified as non-Hispanic White.

- These quotes have broad implications for anyone working with vulnerable youth.

Source: Jones, K. 2021. "Examining the process of change for Black youth in a community-based mentoring program: A qualitative study grounded in the experiences of mentors." [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Texas at Austin.

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Consider Racial and Cultural Experiences in the Youth's Life

- "One time, he calls me from jail. He got arrested. And his story was, like any high school kid, he was like, 'Me and a buddy got pulled over and we had some weed and the cop arrested us.' His perspective was definitively 'if I was White, that wouldn't happen.'"

Meet Basic Needs as Best You Can

- "There were some really hard financial times in his family when he was going to high school. I would show up and he literally had one shirt and it would just be always the same shirt and it didn't fit him. So, I said 'let's go buy you some new clothes for school.'"

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Engage in Activities Based on the Youth's Cultural Identity

- "It was interesting because one of the things I made a point of doing was watching a movie with <mentee's name> that was all about racism with a Black hero."

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Be Mindful of Potential Cultural Differences

- "My mentee said, 'Well, I don't talk with you like I do at home.' And I said, 'What do you mean?' She gave me examples, and that same day, I had to take her home to an aunt's house. We knocked on the door. And I heard what she was talking about. And I was just flabbergasted. It brought on a big conversation between us."

Acknowledge the Current Social Climate

- "I wouldn't say that <mentee's name> and I really addressed racial justice topics often. I think the only time we've talked about it directly was relatively recently, this year [2020] with the protest against police brutality."

Have Hard, but Needed, Conversations

- "Well, I've talked to them about how to act if they're in a car and if they get pulled over by the cops, or if they're just out on the street and a cop stops them."

Hard Conversations Can Have Tangible Benefits for Vulnerable Youth

- "A huge success was a couple months ago, he told me that he was pulled over. I'm like, 'Alright, dude, what [did] you do?' He's like, 'I did the three things and they left me alone.' I'm like, 'Oh, thank goodness.' You know, it could have turned out much worse."

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Be Aware of Colorblindness

- "She was driving this big rig truck. And then she was saying that the cop pulled her over because she was Black. And I was like, 'no, the cop pulled you over because you probably couldn't even see him because you were switching lanes illegally.'"

Be Mindful of Privileges You Have That Youth May Not Share

- "And so, especially with her, I was learning a lot. For example, when I learned it, I didn't know what to call it. But now I do—I was learning my internal biases that I just grew up with and not knowing what they were."

Try to Establish a Partnership with the Family

- "The mother told me, 'I just want to tell you that we're a team in this. And it's so nice to have someone to lean on and to know that she's got my daughter's back.' And yeah, so I have a few tears over that one."

It All Pays Off

- "At Thanksgiving, he sent me a message just telling me that he was thankful for me being a big brother. And even though we don't see each other like we used to, he is just thankful for everything that we did."

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Takeaways

- Find ways to acknowledge and discuss cultural issues and dynamics that impact vulnerable youth and their community.

- Recognize that adults can learn from youth as well.

- Try not to minimize youth experiences—*even if they do not align with your worldview.*

- Be a consistent and unwavering presence, even when times are hard.

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Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Preventing Youth Hate Crimes Virtual Symposium

What is Happening to Our Kids Online? Preventing Cyberbullying, Extremism, Radicalization, and Cyberhate

October 18, 2023

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What is Happening to Our Kids Online? Preventing Cyberbullying, Extremism, Radicalization, and Cyberhate

Lydia Bates (she/her)
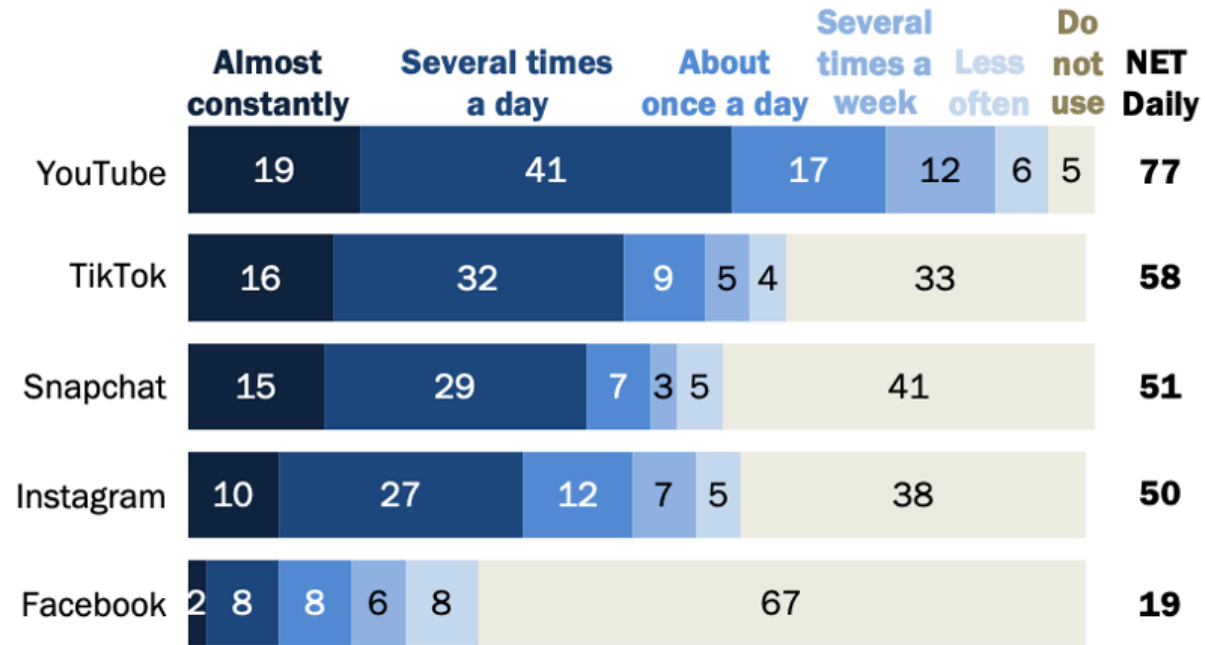
Program Manager, Partnerships

Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)

Young People Online: Consumption and Platforms

Roughly one-in-five teens are almost constantly on YouTube; only 2% say the same for Facebook

% of U.S. teens who say they visit or use each of the following sites or apps ...

	Almost constantly	Several times a day	About once a day	Several times a week	Less often	Do not use	NET Daily
YouTube	19	41	17	12	6	5	77
TikTok	16	32	9	5	4	33	58
Snapchat	15	29	7	3	5	41	51
Instagram	10	27	12	7	5	38	50
Facebook	2	8	8	6	8	67	19

Note: Teens refer to those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown. Figures may not add up to the NET values due to rounding.
Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022. "Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022" Pew Research Center.

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Young People Online: Impact

Other than a small number of Telegram users (n = 18, average = 2.14 hours), the highest average of gun-related media hours per day were spent by participants who watch, in order:

- **Breitbart** (n = 52, average = 1.98 hours),
- **YouTube** (n = 841, average = 1.91 hours),
- **Tik Tok** (n = 658, average = 1.86 hours),
- **Facebook** (n = 888, average = 1.84 hours)
- **One American News** (n = 37, average = 1.81 hours).

Higher endorsement of **male supremacist** beliefs is associated with more **mental distress** (depression, anxiety, loneliness, post-traumatic stress), support for **racist ideas**, support for **anti-government ideas** and viewing more **gun-related media**.

Source: SPLC. 2023. *U.S. Youth Attitudes on Guns*.
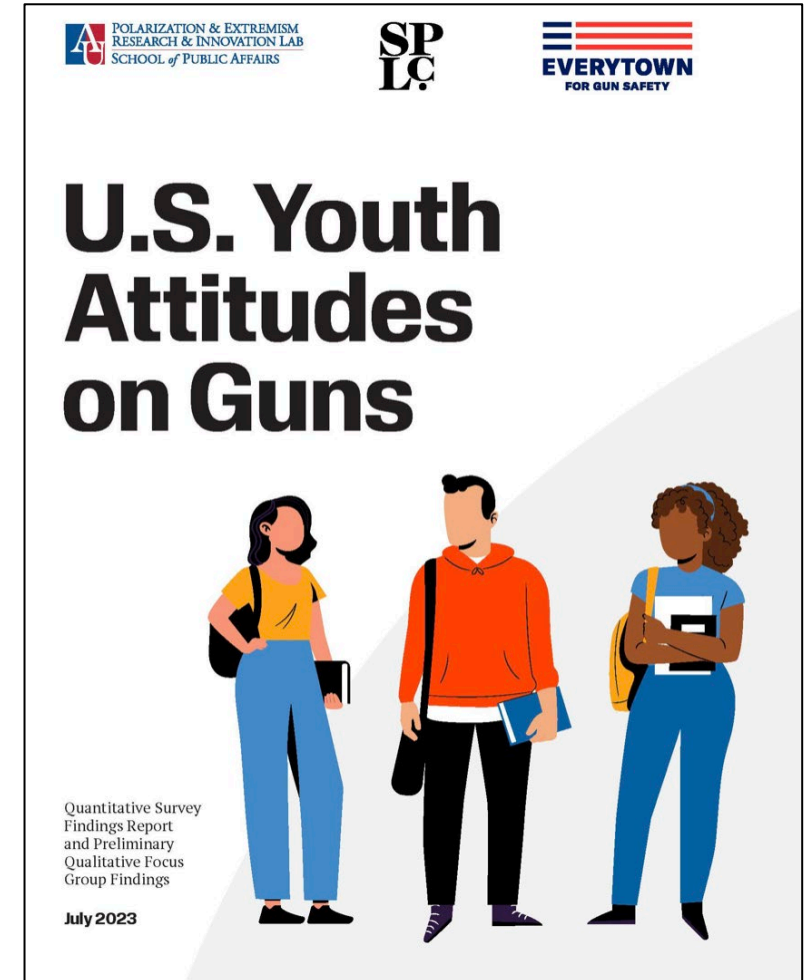
Partnerships for Primary and Secondary Prevention

Primary Prevention

Education, civil society, community-based prevention
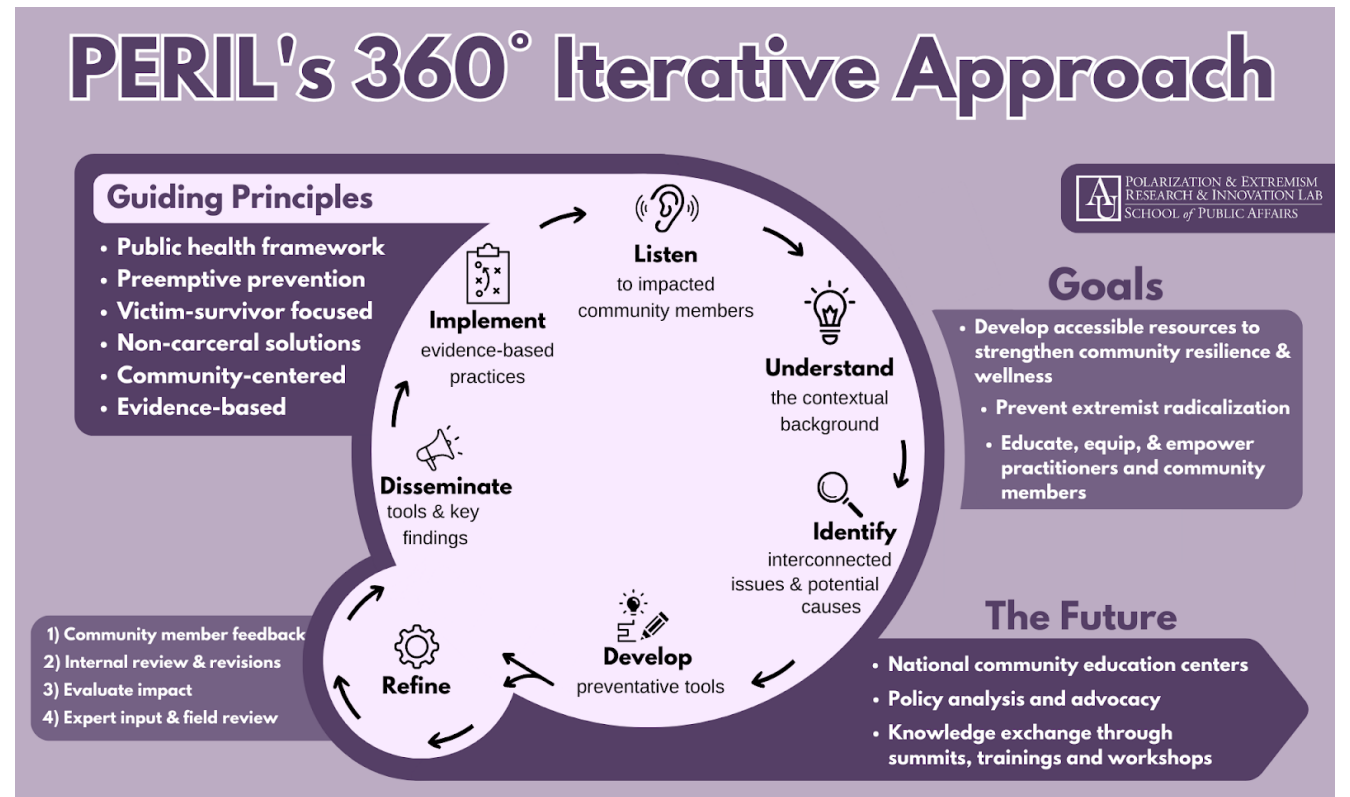
Secondary Prevention

Mobile counseling work, family counseling, much more based on public-private partnerships

Tertiary Prevention

Deradicalization work

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Public Health Model and Guiding Principles

PERIL's 360° Iterative Approach

Guiding Principles
- Public health framework
- Preemptive prevention
- Victim-survivor focused
- Non-carceral solutions
- Community-centered
- Evidence-based

Listen to impacted community members

Understand the contextual background

Identify interconnected issues & potential causes

Develop preventative tools

Refine
1) Community member feedback
2) Internal review & revisions
3) Evaluate impact
4) Expert input & field review

Disseminate tools & key findings

Implement evidence-based practices

POLARIZATION & EXTREMISM RESEARCH & INNOVATION LAB
School of PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Goals
- Develop accessible resources to strengthen community resilience & wellness
- Prevent extremist radicalization
- Educate, equip, & empower practitioners and community members

The Future
- National community education centers
- Policy analysis and advocacy
- Knowledge exchange through summits, trainings and workshops

PERIL's 360-degree Iterative Approach, by the Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab, American University School of Public Affairs. Guiding Principles: Public health framework; Preemptive prevention; Victim-survivor focused; Non-carceral solutions; Community-centered; Evidence-based. Goals: Develop accessible resources to strengthen community resilience and wellness; Prevent extremist radicalization; Educate, equip, and empower practitioners and community members. The Future: National community education centers; Policy analysis and advocacy; Knowledge exchange through summits, trainings and workshops. Process: Listen to impacted community members. Understand the contextual background. Identify interconnected issues and potential causes. Develop preventative tools. Refine (community member feedback, internal review and revisions, evaluate impact, expert input and field review). Disseminate tools and key findings. Implement evidence-based practices.

PERIL: Parents and Caregivers Guide to Online Youth Radicalization

The guide introduces parents, caregivers, and other adults to key features of online radicalization and explains how those features can lead young people to adopt extremist views that may lead to violence.

It explains the risks that were particularly pertinent during the COVID-19 era:
- unprecedented time online
- increased circulation of propaganda and disinformation
- distracted parents and caregivers
- reduced network of trusted adults who might notice red flags or changes in behavior.

Outlines strategies for engaging youth who may have become exposed to extremist ideas—or even begun a process of radicalization.

Offers effective means of caring for the needs of targeted individuals and groups.

Source: SPLC. 2022. *Building Resilience and Confronting Risk: Parents and Caregivers Guide to Online Youth Radicalization*.
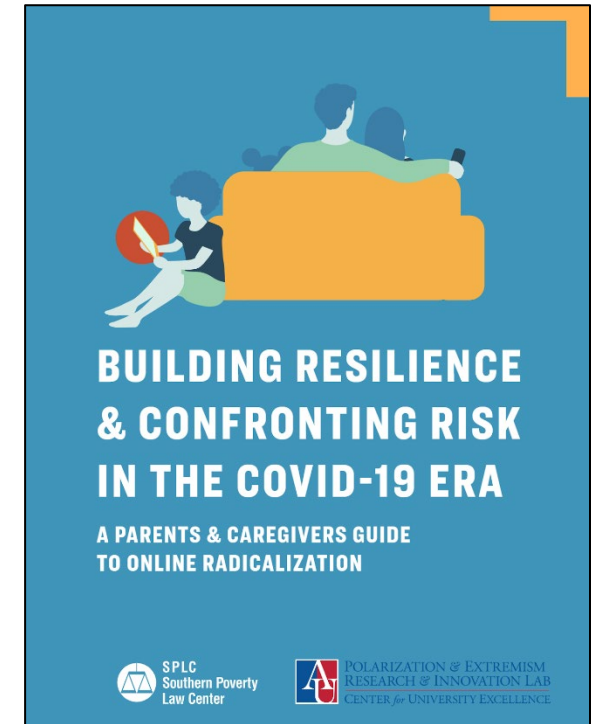
Parents and Caregivers Guide Longitudinal Impact

Initial Impact Study:

- (87%): "Extremely Satisfied" (49.5%), "Satisfied" (37.5%)

- "Just 7 Minutes": Improved Awareness and Understanding of Youth Radicalization

- Longer Respondents Read = More Confident to Intervene

Source: SPLC. 2021. *Empowered to Intervene: An Impact Report on the SPLC/PERIL Guide to Youth Radicalization*.

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6-Month Parents and Caregivers Guide Longitudinal Study

Source: SPLC. 2023. *Preliminary Longitudinal Study of the Parents and Caregivers Guide.*

Since reading the guide, have you joined or created a group that discusses issues of youth radicalization and extremism?

10.24%

89.76%
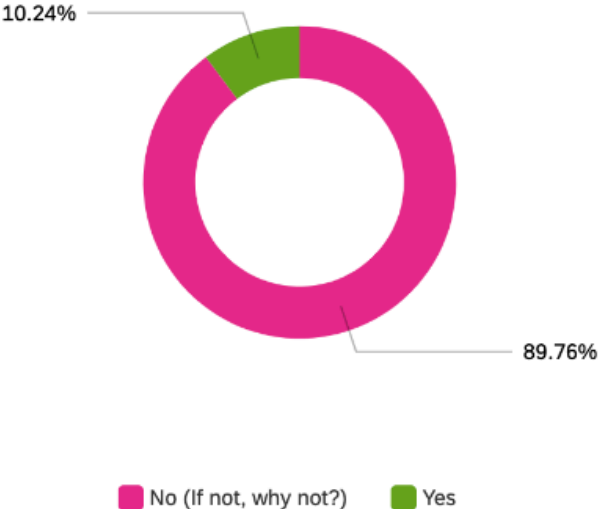
- No (If not, why not?)
- Yes

#	Field		Choice Count
0	No (If not, why not?)	89.76%	991
1	Yes	10.24%	113
			1104

PERIL: Building Networks Guide

"Every trusted adult in a young person's life has their own role to play in building resilience against manipulation by extremists."
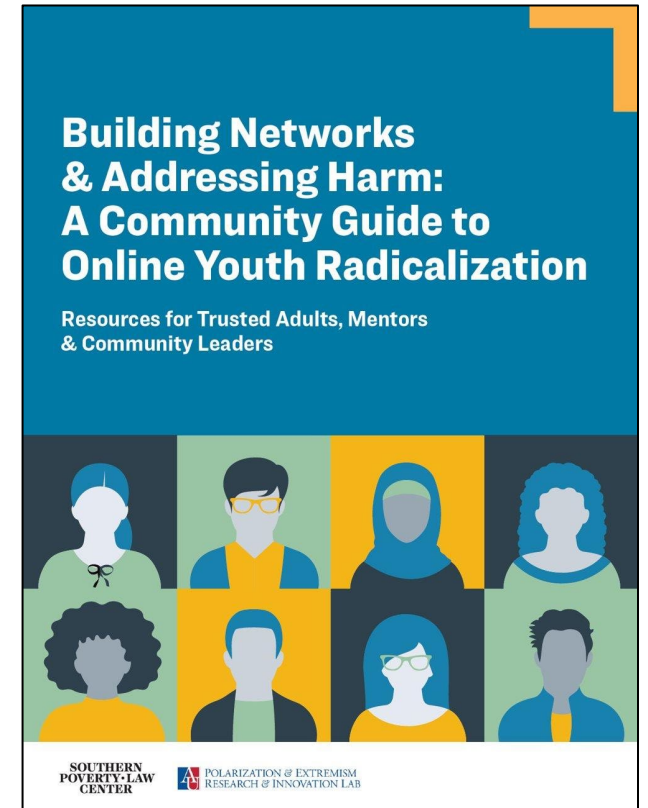
— PERIL Associate Director Brian Hughes, Ph.D.

Inner circle of support: Often have an intimate view into young people's lives and play a key role in caring for them both inside and outside the home.

Close support network: Consists of trusted adults in whom young people confide and regularly rely on for support and guidance.

Extended support network: May not have frequent contact but play a significant role in helping shape young people's developing identities, choices, and beliefs.

Source: SPLC. 2022. *Building Networks & Addressing Harm: A Community Guide to Online Youth Radicalization*.

Building Networks & Addressing Harm: A Community Guide to Online Youth Radicalization

Resources for Trusted Adults, Mentors & Community Leaders

SOUTHERN POVERTY·LAW CENTER | POLARIZATION & EXTREMISM RESEARCH & INNOVATION LAB

Building Networks Guide Impact

Impact study of 739 adults

In an average 12 minutes spent reading the guide:

- 85% of participants reported understanding how young people become radicalized online either "mostly" or "a great deal."

- 35% increase in overall understanding of extremism-related topics and pathways to radicalization.
  - 74% of participants became aware of filter bubbles
  - 45.39% became aware of scientific racism
  - 65.17% became aware of moral disengagement
  - 57.23% became aware of the "great replacement" conspiracy theory

Source: SPLC. 2023. *Building Networks and Addressing Harm: A Community Guide to Online Radicalization Impact Study.*

Community Advisory, Resource and Education (CARE) Centers

WHO:

- Informed by the **needs of the community**
- Focus on **support for those targeted and harmed** by supremacist ideologies and actions
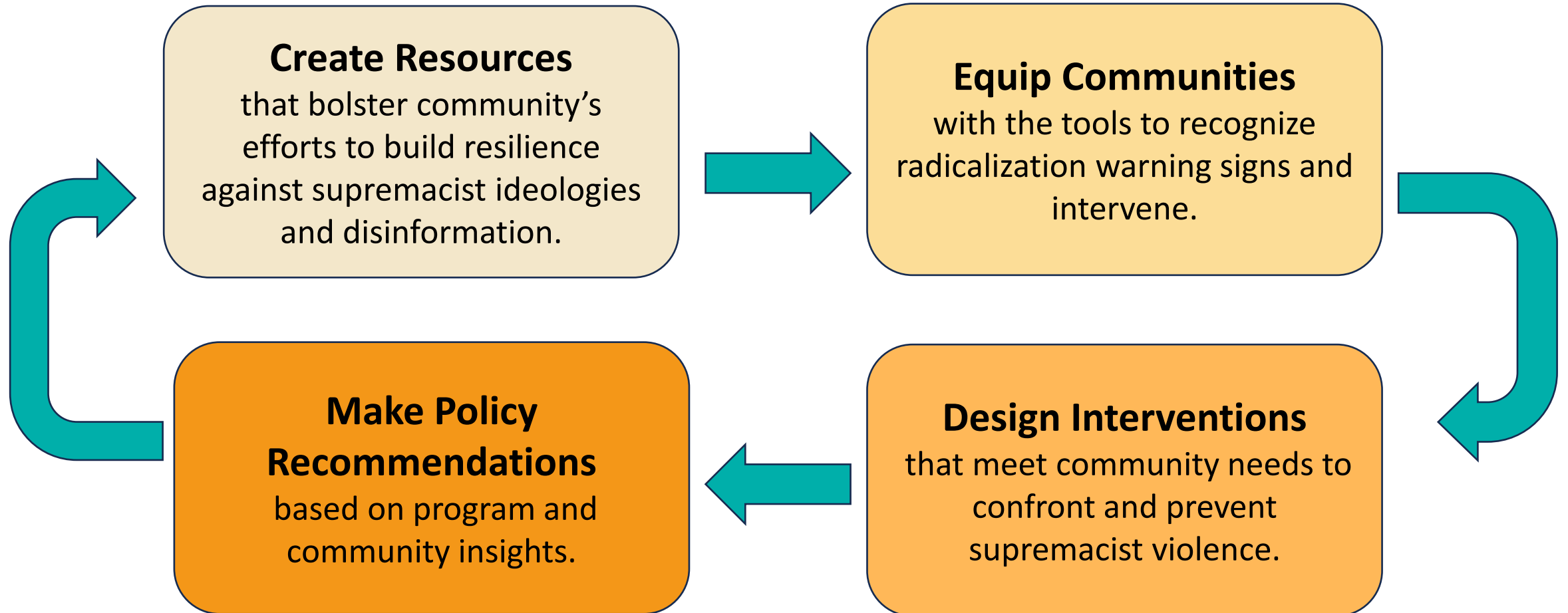- Elevating the need for **non-carceral solutions** for those susceptible to radicalization

WHAT:

- Modeled after the 22-year-old German mobile advisory centers
- Through a **public health approach**, develop and harness the power of local networks of practitioners and community leaders
- Will provide on-site trainings, assessments and referrals, resources to those impacted by supremacist ideologies, as well as those susceptible to radicalization

WHERE:

- **Michigan** and **Georgia**, our two pilot regions

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How CARE Centers will Support Communities

Create Resources
that bolster community's efforts to build resilience against supremacist ideologies and disinformation.

Equip Communities
with the tools to recognize radicalization warning signs and intervene.

Design Interventions
that meet community needs to confront and prevent supremacist violence.

Make Policy Recommendations
based on program and community insights.

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Media and Digital Literacy

- **7-module curriculum** "focused on building students' awareness of and skills in healthy media engagement"
  - Geared towards middle schoolers (grades 6-8)

- **Train-the-trainers** model

- **Motivational Interviewing Guide** for school counselors

Recognize and Resist Key Findings

On average, students improved their ability to correctly identify a factual statement by 15 percent.

Data disaggregated by gender:

- **Discerning fact from opinion:**
  - Female students improved average 22 percent versus male students' 4 percent

- **Awareness of hate speech:**
  - Male students reported 14 percent **greater awareness** versus female students' 5 percent
  - However, female students still self-reported **higher levels of awareness of hate speech** on aggregate than male students.

- **Confidence determining truthfulness of something read online:**
  - Female students **increased** self-reported confidence by 10 percent
  - Male students' confidence **decreased** by 2.5 percent

Source: SPLC. 2023. *Recognize and Resist Program Learning Survey.*

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Learning for Justice

SPLC's [Learning for Justice](#) department focuses their work with educators, students, caregivers and communities in four areas:

1. Culture and Climate
2. Curriculum and Instruction
3. Leadership
4. Family and Community Engagement

"Our free educational resources—articles, guides, lessons, films, webinars, frameworks and more—help foster shared learning and reflection for educators, young people, caregivers and all community members. Our engagement opportunities—conferences, workshops, and school and community partnerships—provide space where people can harness collective power and take action."
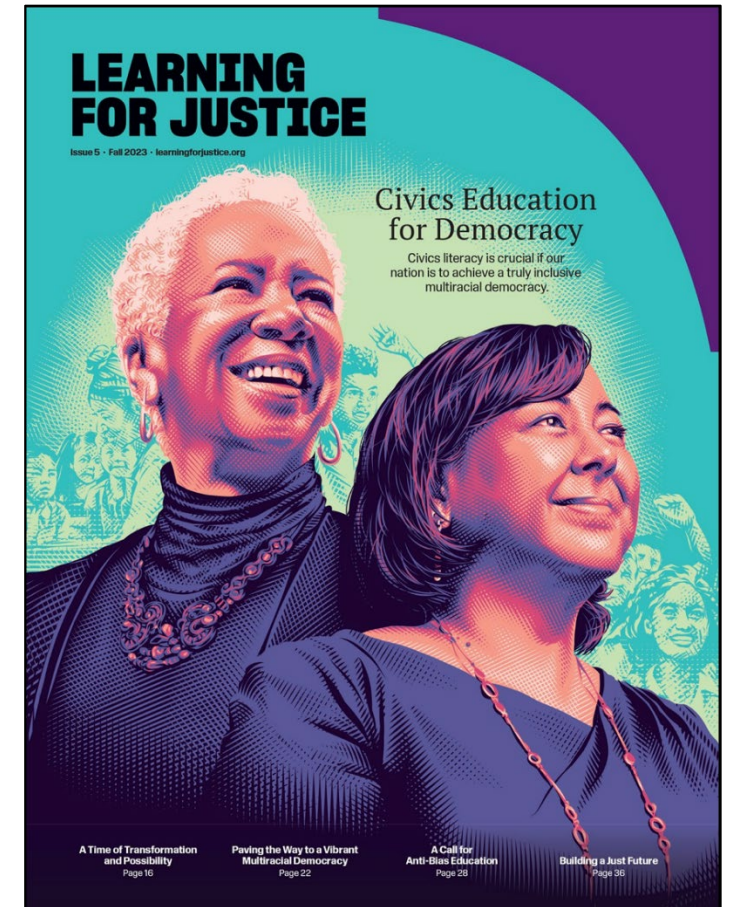
LEARNING FOR JUSTICE
Issue 5 · Fall 2023 · learningforjustice.org

Civics Education for Democracy
Civics literacy is crucial if our nation is to achieve a truly inclusive multiracial democracy.

A Time of Transformation and Possibility Page 16

Paving the Way to a Vibrant Multiracial Democracy Page 22

A Call for Anti-Bias Education Page 28

Building a Just Future Page 36

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What is Happening to Our Kids Online? Preventing Cyberbullying, Extremism, Radicalization, and Cyberhate (2)

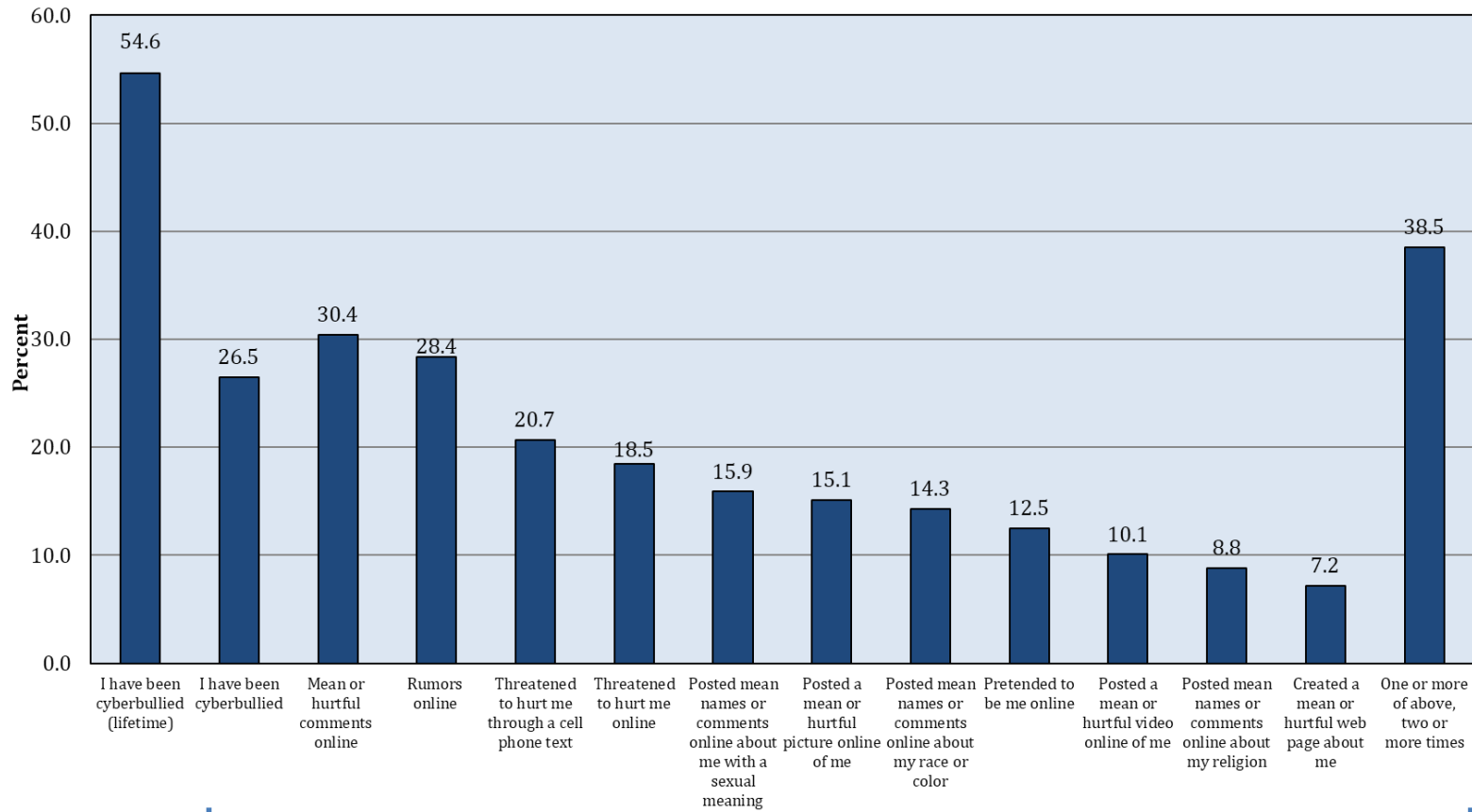Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D.
Co-Director, Cyberbullying Research Center

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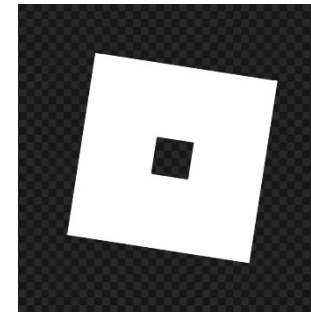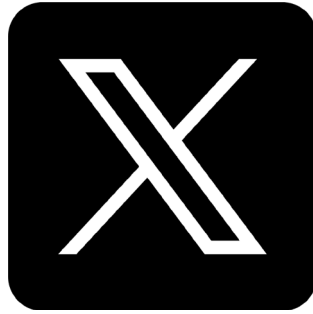
Cyberbullying Victimization

N=5,005

Nationally-representative sample of 13-17 year old middle and high school students in the U.S.

Percent

- I have been cyberbullied (lifetime): 54.6
- I have been cyberbullied: 26.5
- Mean or hurtful comments online: 30.4
- Rumors online: 28.4
- Threatened to hurt me through a cell phone text: 20.7
- Threatened to hurt me online: 18.5
- Posted mean names or comments online about me with a sexual meaning: 15.9
- Posted a mean or hurtful picture online of me: 15.1
- Posted mean names or comments online about my race or color: 14.3
- Pretended to be me online: 12.5
- Posted a mean or hurtful video online of me: 10.1
- Posted mean names or comments online about my religion: 8.8
- Created a mean or hurtful web page about me: 7.2
- One or more of above, two or more times: 38.5

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cyberbullying.org

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Who did you tell about your experience with cyberbullying?
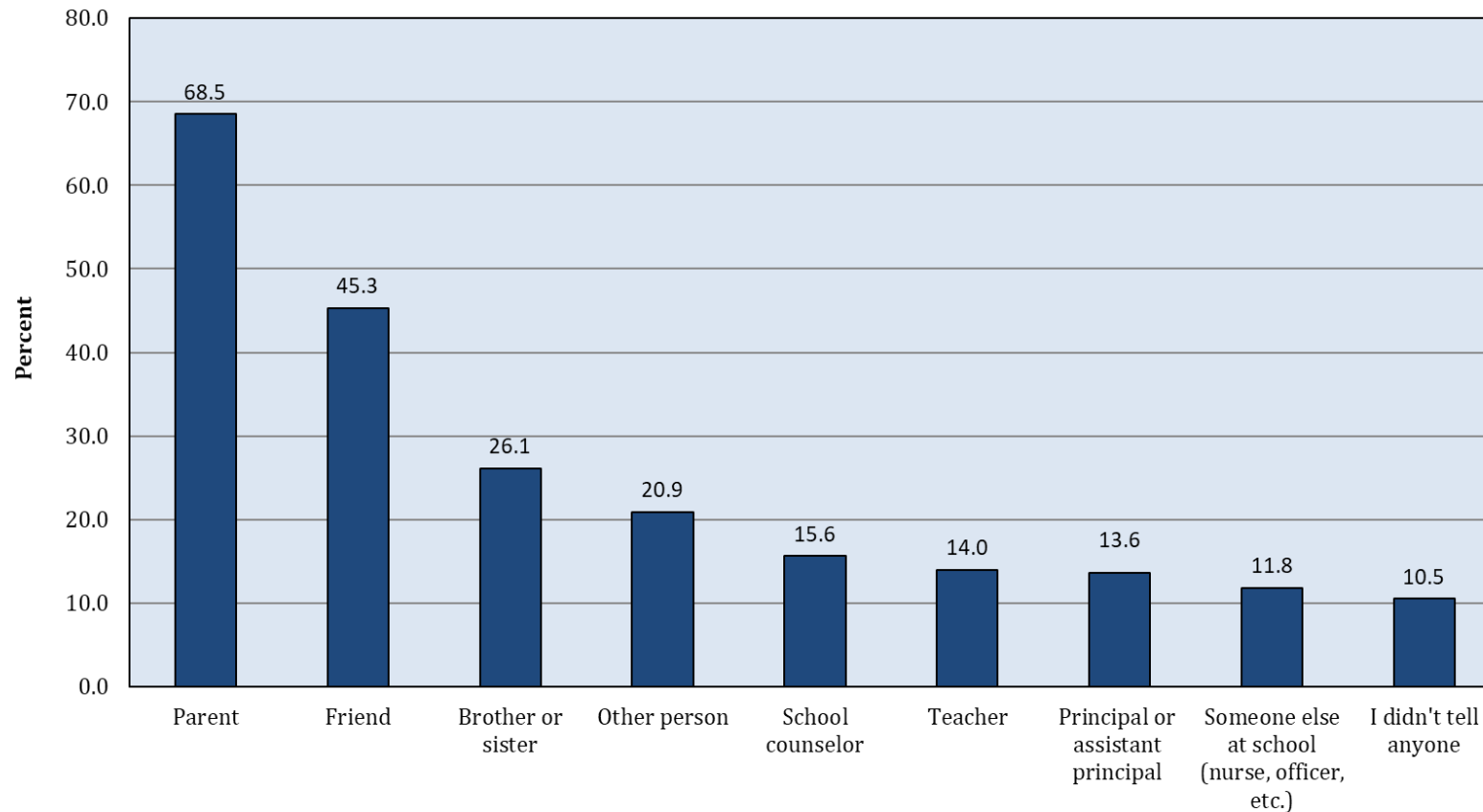
Note: responses from those who have ever been cyberbullied (n=2,733)

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cyberbullying.org

Contributing Factors

- Social media fosters and facilitates like-minded communities and insularism.

- Subjects are easily portrayed in offensive terms in unregulated spaces.

- Violation of free speech? (Mathew et al., 2019)

- Youth trivialize and rationalize hate speech (Jubany and Roiha, 2016).

- Victims normalize the abuse and fail to report (Hubbard, 2020).

- Protection of humor in platform policies provide loopholes (Lim, 2020; Matamoros-Fernández, 2017; Topinka, 2018).

- Legislation can only go so far, and law enforcement is late to the game.

School Responses to Hate Speech

- Never stay silent!
- Immediate investigation and condemnation of act (if public)
- Liaise with law enforcement as necessary, assist targets to pursue options.
- Policies! (identification, reporting, investigation, evidence preservation)
- Formal complaint procedures (confidentiality, protection against retaliation, anonymous systems)
- Crisis Intervention Plan
- Codes of Conduct
- Substantial and material disruption clause
- Equity/Compliance Coordinators
- #usvshate curriculum
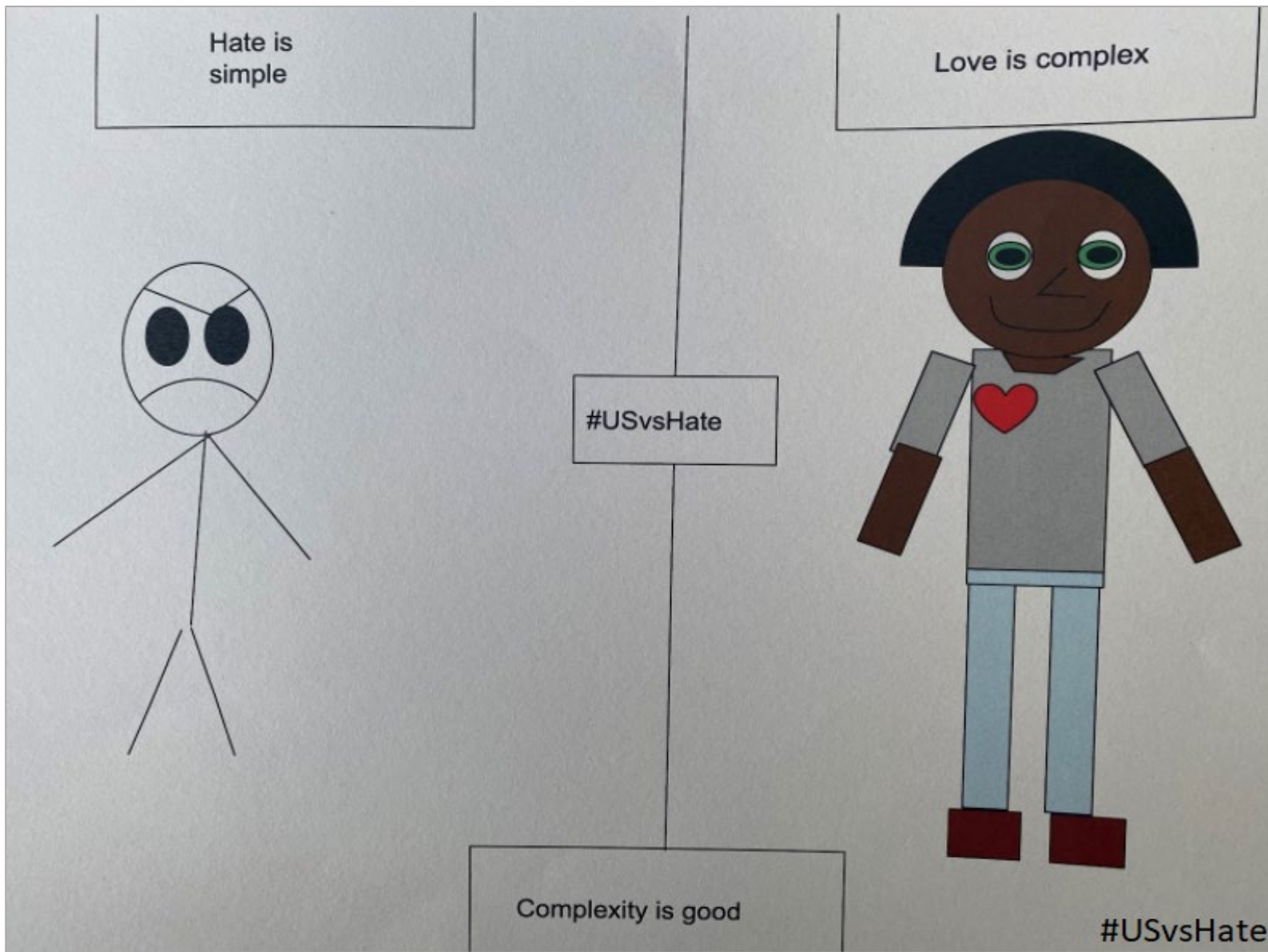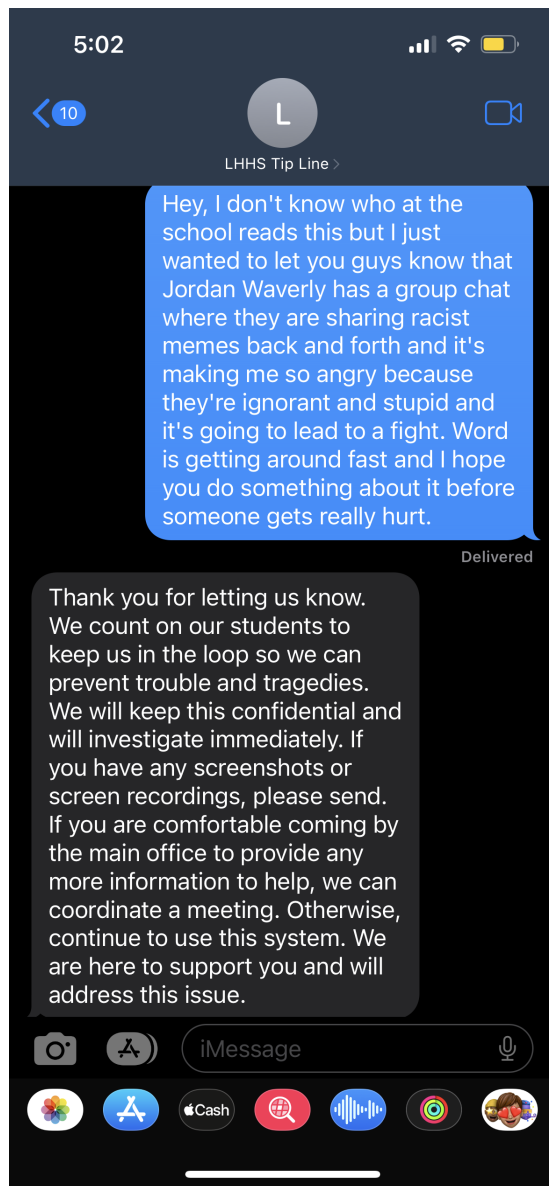
Text message to LHHS Tip Line. Hey, I don't know who at the school reads this but I just wanted to let you guys know that Jordan Waverly has a group chat where they are sharing racist memes back and forth and it's making me so angry because they're ignorant and stupid and it's going to lead to a fight. Word is getting around fast and I hope you do something about it before someone gets really hurt.

Response to message: Thank you for letting us know. We count on our students to keep us in the loop so we can prevent trouble and tragedies. We will keep this confidential and will investigate immediately. If you have any screenshots or screen recordings, please send. If you are comfortable coming by the main office to provide any more information to help, we can coordinate a meeting. Otherwise, continue to use this system. We are here to support you and will address this issue.
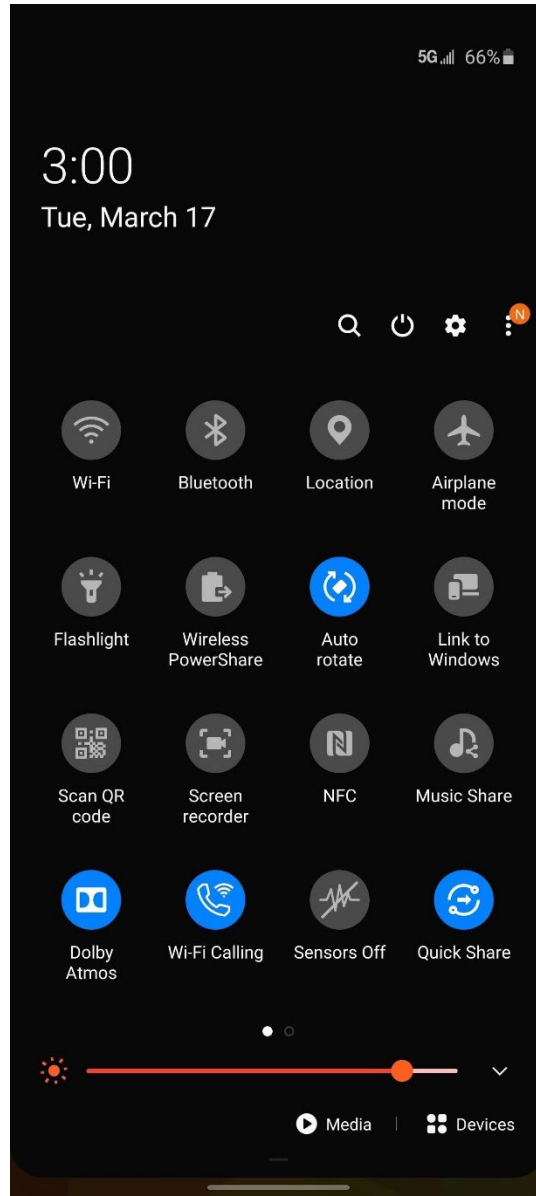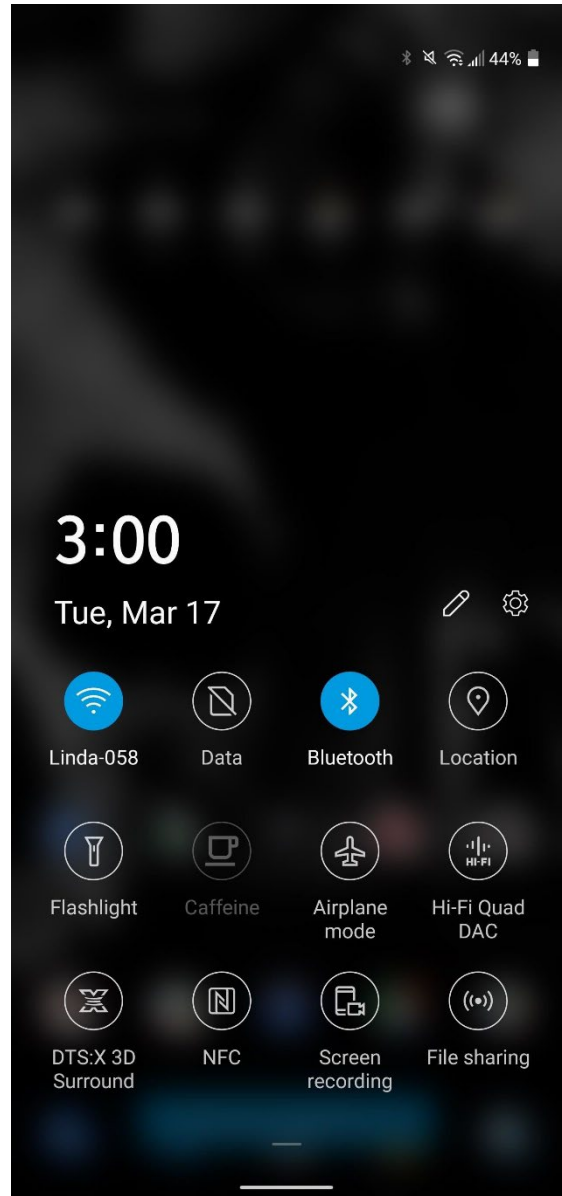
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EMBRACING OUR DIVERSITY

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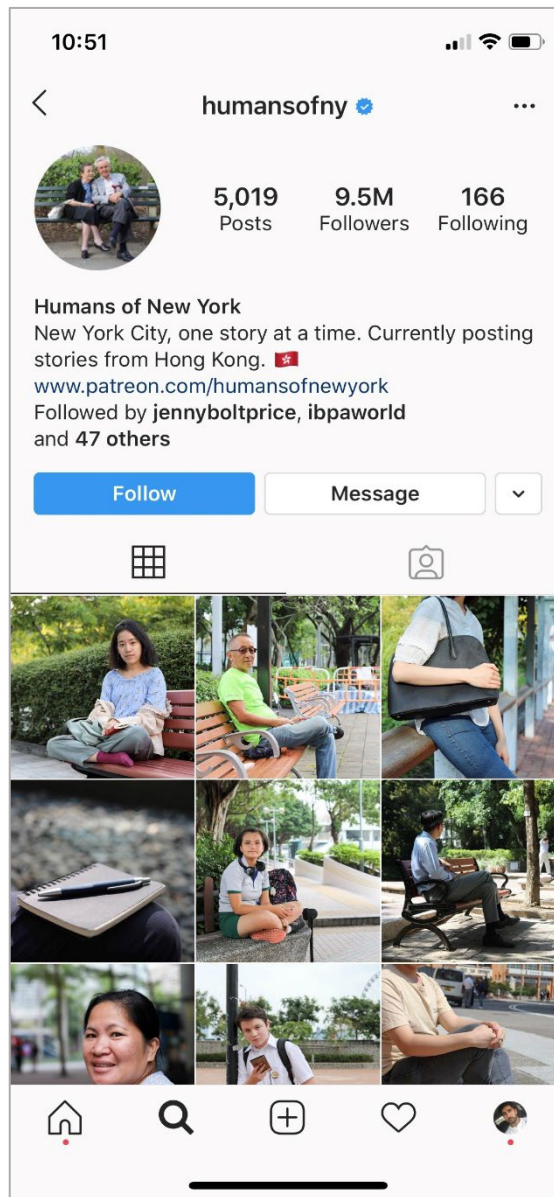
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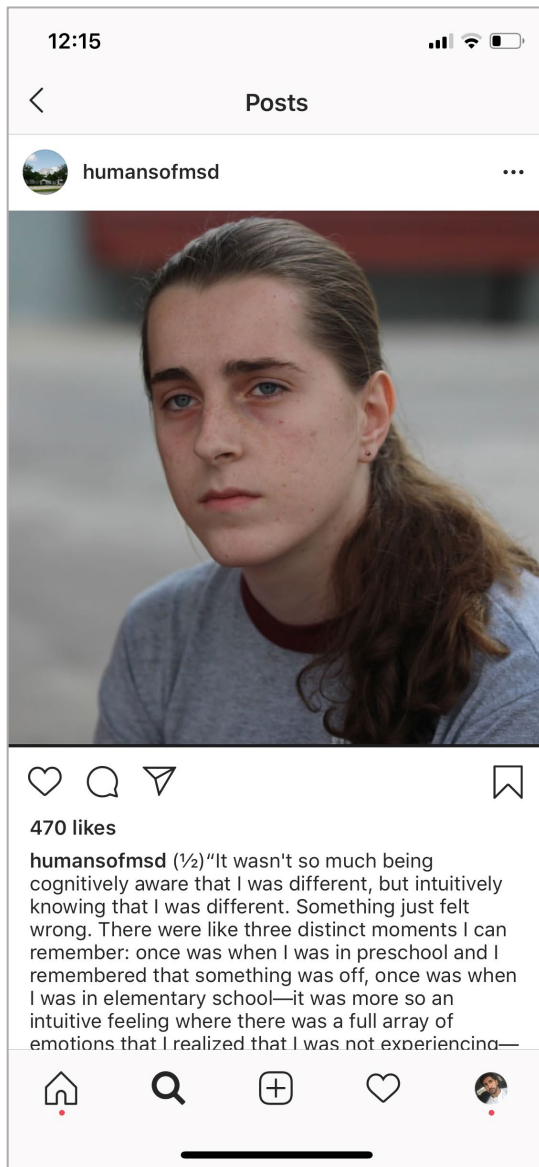
"It wasn't so much being cognitively aware that I was different, but intuitively knowing that I was different. Something just felt wrong. There were like three distinct moments I can remember: once was when I was in preschool and I remembered that something was off, once was when I was in elementary school it was more so an intuitive feeling where there was a full array of emotions that I realized that I was not experiencing."

Counterspeech

- Denounce hateful speech and actions.

- Counter any chilling effect that stems from targeted abuse.

- Shape the climate through kindness, tolerance, respect, and civility.

- Overtly support others of varying demographics and backgrounds through posts, comments, and actions to build solidarity and community.

- Share stories of overcoming harassment by others to encourage and empower others to do the same.

- Use humor and memes to defuse online conflict, or at least to deflect and distract.

Prevention and Response

- Pareto Principle
- Combat inaction, encourage deletion, promote education, especially teach counter-speech (Citron and Norton, 2011)
- Warn of consequences, shaming/labeling, empathy/affiliation, humor, images (Benesch et al., 2016)
- Exposure to hate crime material <-> perpetrator (Peddell et al., 2016)
- Study propagation networks to measure escalation, duration, diffusion, and de-escalation of social reaction (Williams and Burnap, 2016)
- Take advantage of the half-life hypothesis
- Solve for the echo chambers that algorithms help create
- Control bots

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References (Part 1)

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Hubbard, L. 2020. *Online Hate Crime Report: Challenging online homophobia, biphobia and transphobia*. London: Galop, the LGBT+ anti-violence charity.

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Mathew, B., et al. 2019. Thou shalt not hate: Countering online hate speech. *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media* 13: 369–380.

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Contact Information

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Parents for Peace: Born from Tragedy

(from left to right)

- Carlos Bledsoe (sentenced to life in prison)
- Troy Kastigar (died in Somalia)
- Nicole Mansfield (died in Syria)
- Sabri bin Ali (died in Syria)

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No One Is Born An Extremist

What Happened To My Child?

Parents for Peace: Hope

- Parents for Peace offers the only confidential helpline for families and individuals struggling with extremism, regardless of ideology.

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Parents for Peace: Interventions

- Initial Call
- Intake
- Interventions
- Follow up
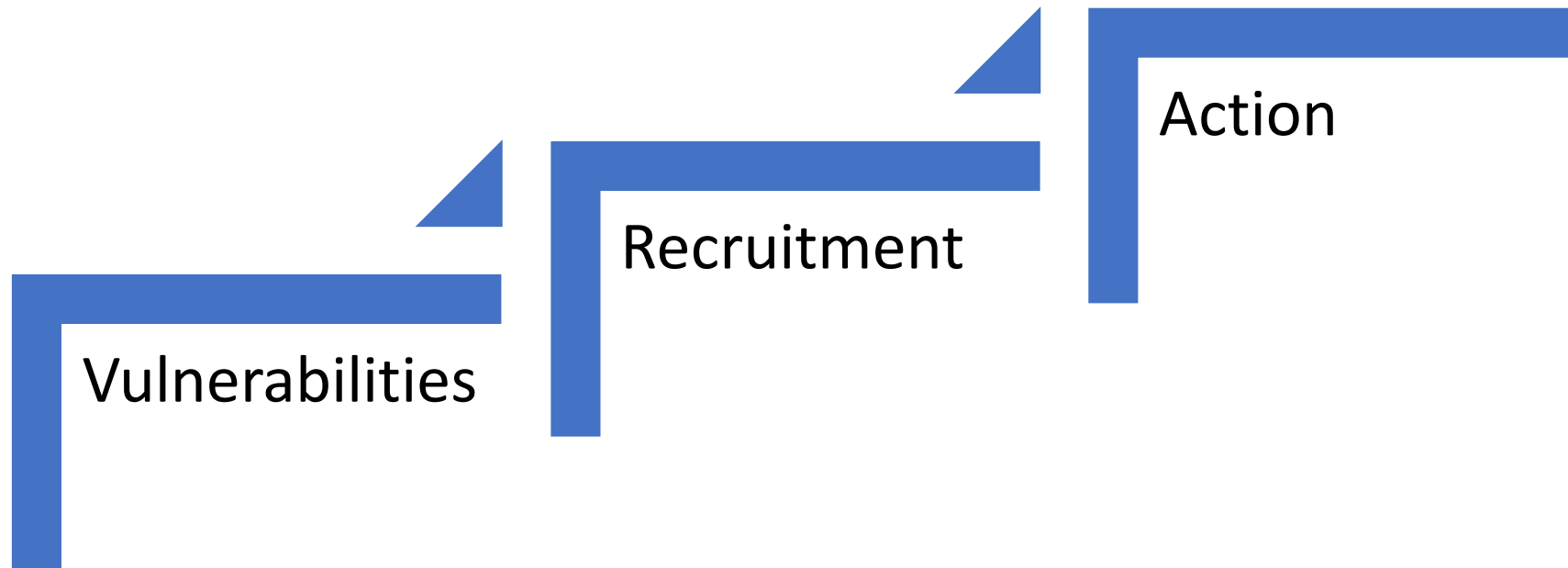
Parents for Peace: Impact

- Over 750 interventions (since Sep 2022) to intimate bystanders and individuals of concern.
  - Successfully off-ramped dozens of individuals

- PFP's approach is getting recognized by key stakeholders:
  - Law enforcement
  - Universities
  - Think tanks
  - National media

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Lessons from the Helpline: Radicalization is a Process

Vulnerabilities

Recruitment

Action

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Adolescent Vulnerabilities

- Neo-cortex not fully developed until 25 (impairment of rational decision-making and poor emotional regulation)

- Idealism and the desire to be a hero

- Identity crisis: the desire to form a new identity independent of one's parents and defying boundaries

- Desire to seek certainty in a confusing and uncertain time of one's life

- Susceptibility to peer pressure

- Poor self-esteem

- Black and white thinking

The MEHRIT Centre
SELF-REG.CA

● Neocortex
● Limbic System
● Reptilian Brain
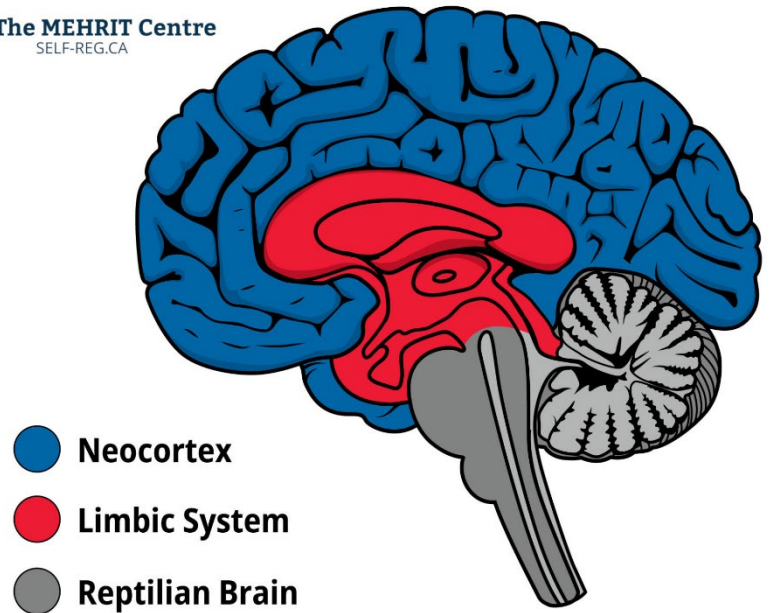
Adapted by The MEHRIT Centre from Paul MacLean's 1960s Triune Brain Model

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Environmental Vulnerabilities

- Unaddressed trauma

- Weak parental boundaries

- Over-exposure to social media

- Culture of victimhood

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The Seduction of Extremist Ideologies

1. Seduction

2. Indoctrination
- **Addiction**
- **Depravation**
- **Isolation**

3. Action Phase
- **Instruction**
- **Becoming a recruiter**
- **Ongoing control**

- Ideologies provide a community, identity, and purpose

- Acknowledge the injuries, giving microphone to the pain

- Offer a quick solution to numb the pain

- Provide a clear target to blame (scapegoating)

- The individual begins to identify with the ideology

Indoctrination

- The individual increasingly adopts the extremist ideology, viewing it as absolute truth and accepting a narrative of 'us versus them'.

- Cuts ties with their old life and forms new relationships with fellow extremists.

- The individual becomes "addicted" to hate.

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We Cannot Prevent What We Don't Understand

- Law enforcement cannot singlehandedly prevent extremism

- Punitive measures are necessary but insufficient

- Virtue signaling does not work

- Alienation feeds extremism

- Lessons from the AIDS pandemic

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A Public Health Approach to Extremism

- Raising awareness

- Educating the first responders

- Early intervention

- Engagement with policy makers

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Hate Has No Color, Neither Does Kindness

- My Moroccan story

- Anyone can be a part of the problem or the solution

- Extremism is a collective challenge, not *us v. them*

- Extremism is a *human* problem

- Healing is possible

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