

# Responding to Hate, Discrimination, Extremist Rhetoric & Violence

As we work to reduce these risks in our community, victim-survivors and potential targets of hate-fueled attacks must be our central concern. This is both a matter of justice and practicality. Radicalization comes with heavy consequences, but it also depends on the choices and free will of the radicalizing individual. Young people belonging to identities that have been targeted and marginalized do not have the luxury of choosing whether or not to experience these problems, and they are especially susceptible to the traumas and ongoing stress of supremacist activity.<sup>17</sup> As with radicalization, every victim-survivor's experience is different. Here are some best practices you can use to support anyone targeted by hate-fueled individuals.

## Support young people who have been harmed or targeted by radicalized individuals

**Take it seriously.** Exposure to hate is a growing reality for everyone, not just young people and not just those at risk for radicalization.<sup>18</sup> If a young person has been targeted by — or merely exposed to — hateful content or activity, address it immediately. When incidents are not dealt with, targeted young people commonly see a decline in academic performance, increased social isolation and potentially suicidal behavior or ideation.<sup>19</sup> These incidents should be dealt with on a “whole community” level — from school to home to extracurriculars.

**Create a record.** File a report (e.g., with the school district) that addresses the harms that have occurred. If that is not possible, or no sufficient action is taken, reach out to those in leadership. Make them aware and advocate to work toward a solution that centers the victim or victims. This will help educators and administrators, coaches, mental health professionals or others understand the child's or children's experiences and determine the best ways to support them. Filing a report creates a paper trail for leadership that can also hold them accountable for ongoing issues and improving outcomes. [\(See Get Help, below, for more.\)](#)

**Connect.** Young people who experience hate and discrimination are more likely to experience feelings of isolation, depression and anxiety. They are more likely to hide or suppress whichever aspect of their identity was targeted for hate, threats or denigration. By simply working to determine their needs, you can make a supportive emotional connection that will help them heal.

**Support.** Targeted and potentially targeted young people may feel unsafe in certain environments. Provide them with the support and space they need to feel safe again. This might include — if requested — helping the targeted individual move away from the aggressor to a different

sports team or class schedule. For perpetrators, other ideas include stricter consequences for hateful behavior. To accommodate victims, consider accepting absences without threatening detention or truancy. To further support youth who are marginalized you may serve as volunteer sponsor or advisor for a club or cause that champions the experiences and voices of youth who are marginalized, promote interactions across faith groups or create activities addressing social justice, diversity and inclusiveness.



**Advocate for policies recognizing and respecting young people's preferred pronouns and push for regular cultural competency training.**

**Advocate.** Policies such as dress codes have become largely normalized but often have harmful and discriminatory impacts on girls, young women, nonbinary and transgender students as well as students whose clothing symbolizes important aspects of their religious faith and ethnic heritage. Advocate against such policies to ensure that young people's access to equitable education and social interactions is not undermined by policies that value a young person's appearance over their personality, abilities and individuality. Further, advocate for policies recognizing and respecting young people's preferred pronouns and push for regular cultural competency training for coaches, counselors, mentors,



educators and other trusted adults. Help one another understand the positive difference that such advocacy makes for everyone, not just young people, and the hurt that can be caused otherwise.

- SPLCs Learning for Justice “Inclusive Education Benefits All Children”:  
[www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/fall-2022/inclusive-education-benefits-all-children](http://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/fall-2022/inclusive-education-benefits-all-children)

**Get help.** There is only so much one person can do alone. Some advocacy groups (see below) collect reports of harassment, hate speech, bullying and violence. 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. Groups such as these can refer you to resources for reporting, pursuing legal action, financial assistance or support for physical and mental health needs.<sup>20</sup>

- The Victim Connect Resource Center:  
[victimconnect.org/learn/types-of-crime/hate-crimes/](http://victimconnect.org/learn/types-of-crime/hate-crimes/)
- Council on American Islamic Relations Incident Reporting Site:  
[www.cair.com/report/](http://www.cair.com/report/)

- The “Stop AAPI Hate” Reporting Center from the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council:  
[www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/stop-aapi-hate/](http://www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/stop-aapi-hate/)
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice:  
[www.advancingjustice-aajc.org/](http://www.advancingjustice-aajc.org/)
- The Anti-Defamation League’s Bias and Discrimination Incident Reporting Site:  
[www.adl.org/reportincident](http://www.adl.org/reportincident)
- The Trevor Project: Supporting Black LGBTQ Mental Health:  
[www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/supporting-black-lgbtq-youth-mental-health/](http://www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/supporting-black-lgbtq-youth-mental-health/)
- National Center for Transgender Equality:  
[transequality.org/](http://transequality.org/)
- Investing in Native Communities Funding Map:  
[nativephilanthropy.candid.org/funding-map/](http://nativephilanthropy.candid.org/funding-map/)
- Center for Native American Youth:  
[www.cnay.org/](http://www.cnay.org/)
- Survivors’ Agenda:  
[survivorsagenda.org/](http://survivorsagenda.org/)

- What is Historical Trauma?  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWmK314NVrs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWmK314NVrs)
- The NAACP:  
[naacp.org/contact](http://naacp.org/contact)
- Anti-Violence Project:  
[avp.org/get-help/](http://avp.org/get-help/)
- Resources for Victims and Survivors of Gun Violence  
[everytownsupportfund.org/everytown-survivor-network/resources-for-victims-and-survivors-of-gun-violence/](http://everytownsupportfund.org/everytown-survivor-network/resources-for-victims-and-survivors-of-gun-violence/)
- From Healing to Action: A Toolkit for Gun Violence Survivors and Allies  
[giffords.org/toolkit/from-healing-to-action-a-toolkit-for-gun-violence-survivors-and-allies/](http://giffords.org/toolkit/from-healing-to-action-a-toolkit-for-gun-violence-survivors-and-allies/)
- Office for Victims of Crime: Directory of Crime Victims Services  
[ovc.ojp.gov/directory-crime-victim-services/search](http://ovc.ojp.gov/directory-crime-victim-services/search)

**Involve law enforcement as a last resort.** Incarceration and other law enforcement-based solutions have little to no positive effect on reducing radicalization and involvement with extremist groups. However, potentially criminal behavior such as making direct threats or stockpiling weapons do require law enforcement intervention. Before contacting law enforcement, ask anyone harmed by the hateful incident if they are comfortable with law enforcement responding to the incident and with speaking to them. Given the high levels of anti-Black, anti-Hispanic, anti-Indigenous, anti-LGBTQIA+ and anti-disability discrimination from security officers in schools, many students may not feel safe in the presence of law enforcement or those serving in security-related roles.<sup>21</sup>

- The U.S. Department of Justice Hate Crimes Reporting:  
[www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/get-help-now](http://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/get-help-now)