Identifying Resources for TVTP

Read Ahead Materials for the US Prevention Practitioners Network

Background - the US Prevention Practitioners Network

Over the course of the next two years, the McCain Institute, with support from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) and a steering committee of violence prevention and social safety experts, will develop and engage a US practitioners network for individuals working in **targeted violence and terrorism prevention (TVTP)**. The aim of this is not only to connect practitioners across the US with one another, but also to build their capacity and the efficacy of their programs through a series of workshops that cover both theoretical and practical elements of delivering prevention and intervention initiatives. This information pack is for a roundtable workshop about resources to learn more about TVTP.

Why is this an important topic?

Targeted violence and terrorism are complex and difficult subjects to broach. Those who are unfamiliar with these topics may find it difficult to know where to start, as much of what is in the public domain is either too jargon-heavy or not aimed at a generalist audience. Whether as a member of the public concerned about an individual or as a practitioner seeking to incorporate TVTP programming, it is difficult to gain a nuanced understanding of phenomena such as terrorism, radicalization to violence, and recruitment to violent extremist groups. Even knowing what to search for and how to identify whether or not a resource is suitable can be challenging. The McCain Institute and ISD are therefore hosting a workshop to address these difficulties, in an effort to:

- Identify resources to help the public best identify crisis intervention, behavioral analysis or similar resources when local services are not readily available;
- Scope plain English guidance that government agencies can provide to the public about how to locate these resources; and
- List and gather resources that behavioral practitioners can access to conduct initial intakes on referrals when not properly trained in TVTP behavioral threat analysis.

What is the purpose of this document?

These read ahead materials provide an overview of the landscape of TVTP resources in the US, to help frame workshop discussions. This document does not seek to provide an exhaustive list of resources that the public and/or practitioners can use to learn more about targeted violence and terrorism, but rather provides the following:

- a meta-analysis of existing resources and examples of particularly strong resources;
- gaps and challenges in the landscape of existing resources;
- considerations to help frame our thinking as we try to address these gaps;
- recommended further reading.

Documents like this one will be provided ahead of every workshop. This is the fifth of such documents - past documents and workshop recordings can be found here. For any inquiries, please contact the McCain Institute or ISD.

Background - the Landscape of TVTP Resources

There are numerous resources that the public and practitioners can use to learn more about targeted violence, should local, community-based services be unavailable. A quick search online, using broad queries like "targeted violence" or "violent extremism", as well as specific queries like "warning signs of radicalization," surfaces diverse materials ranging from the conceptual to the practical. To frame how this information pack considers TVTP resources, these are roughly categorized as follows:

Thematic - material about the phenomenon of targeted violence and related concepts. These may look at different "types" of violent extremism broadly, or may look in greater depth at specific violent extremist ideologies, narratives and vulnerabilities.

Output types typically include: academic articles, briefs and reports, research hubs or libraries, guidebooks.
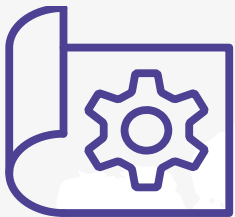
Practical - resources that focus specifically on structured responses to targeted violence, whether through early prevention programming or interventions. These give guidance on how to build TVTP programs or broader infrastructure to build resilience against violent extremism.

Output types typically include: toolkits, infographics, practice guides, training modules, program directories.

Behavioral - materials focusing primarily on identifying behaviors that may indicate radicalization to violence. Behavioral resources tend to sign-post services that readers can reach out to with concerns or queries.

Output types typically include: websites, guidebooks, infographics.

This categorization is based on a limited scoping exercise of readily accessible TVTP resources **online**. This is not an exhaustive categorization, nor are the categories mutually exclusive. For example, many of the resources specifically designed for the public are behavioral (e.g. about "warning signs" of radicalization) but supplemented with some thematic subject-matter background that explains targeted violence, radicalization and recruitment, as well as other issues like the role of the internet. **The next few pages provide particularly strong examples of resources this scoping exercise uncovered.**

Building Resilience & Confronting Risk in the COVID-19 Era
by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL)
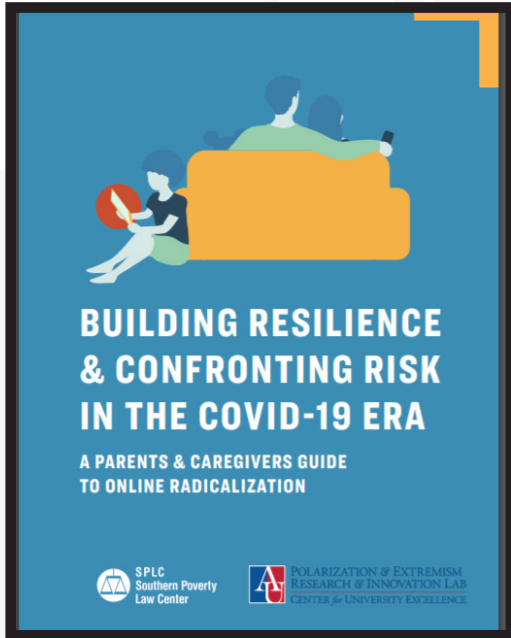
Summary: "Building Resilience & Confronting Risk in the COVID-19 ERA" seeks to help caregivers understand how extremists exploit anxieties, like those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, to radicalize and to recruit. It also provides "tangible steps to counter the threat of online radicalization, including information on the new risks during the COVID-19 crisis, how to recognize warning signs, and how to get help and engage a radicalized child or young adult."

Resource Category: thematic and behavioral
Output Type: guidebook
Level of Expertise: entry-level
Intended Audience: parents, caregivers and educators

Why is it a good resource?

Entry-level and accessible content
"Building Resilience & Confronting Risk in the COVID-19 Era" provides a clear overview of the concepts of extremism and radicalization, while also providing concrete tips and examples of how this may manifest online and in a person's behavior. The concepts are introduced in a clear manner that relays the importance of being aware and vigilant of radicalization **without fear-mongering**. The scope and quantity of subject-matter information caters well to an entry-level audience - the guidebook focuses on relevant, "need to know" information that is nuanced and relays the complexity of radicalization, but that **doesn't overwhelm readers with jargon-heavy language** and a potentially deterring level of detail. After introducing the concepts of radicalization, extremism, and the implications of COVID-19 for these phenomena, the guidebook dives straight into guidance for readers on how to identify and broach these challenges.

Clear guidance and signposting
The guidance provided is actionable and tangible. Rather than abstract warning signs like "an individual expresses discriminatory views", the guidebook provides specific examples or narratives (e.g. fear of "white genocide" or "great replacement") that may indicate a young person is being radicalized. It contextualizes these "signs" with a section on vulnerabilities, thus presenting a more holistic picture of radicalization that encourages parents to consider factors beyond just the beliefs being expressed. Finally, the guidebook ends with signposting readers to credible organizations like Life After Hate and Parents for Peace, prompting them to get in touch in the case of concerns or questions. **This is recommended practice and essential in any entry-level resource,** particularly if that resource provides guidance for behavioral analysis.

ACT Early
by the UK Government's Home Office

Summary: ACT Early is a safeguarding-focused UK government website that the public can use to learn more about radicalization on- and offline. The site has information about the vulnerabilities or "signs" that may suggest an individual is being radicalized, provides guidance on how to ask for help and what help may look like, and includes case studies of vulnerable individuals and how they were supported.

Resource Category: thematic and behavioral
Output Type: website
Level of Expertise: entry-level
Intended Audience: general public

Why is it a good resource?

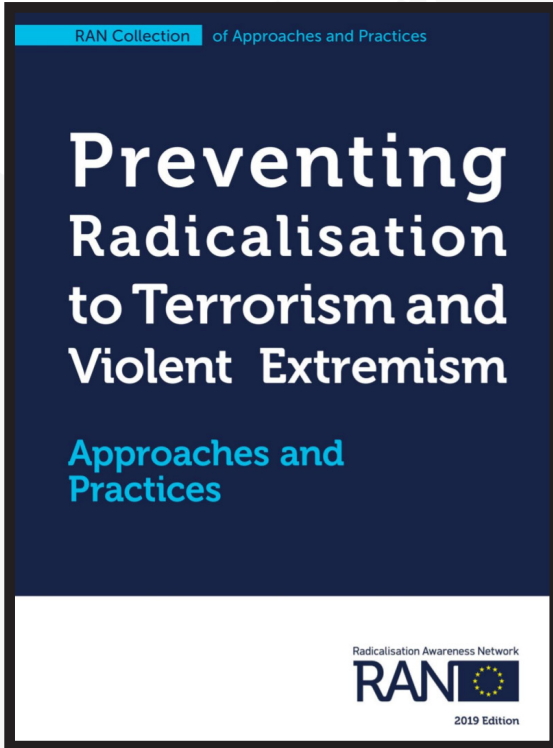✅ **Clean and easy-to-use interface**
The ACT Early (Action Counters Terrorism) website is easy to navigate, providing a visually-simple interface with clear prompts (e.g. "What you can do", "How we can help") to support users in their search for information. The "ACT Early" tagline and URL - actearly.uk - is easy to remember and clearly represents the service's preventative objective. **Concise, clear and easy-to-use designs and functionality are important for resources that seek to be accessible to all members of the public.**

✅ **Accessible signposting**
The website also provides signposting throughout, with clear messaging that urges users to "share a concern" if they have one. Some of the signposting accounts for potentially urgent inquiries - most landing pages have a "Share a Concern" banner at the bottom that both hyperlink to a different landing page with more information about expressing concerns, and that provide a Prevent advice phone line should a user require more immediate support. In addition, signposting is **made accessible to users with disabilities** - it refers those with hearing or speech impairments to a texting service, for example.

✅ **Overview of support**
Finally, the website is **transparent about what support for potentially vulnerable individuals can look like**. This is provided through "real stories", or case studies of individuals who received support through the Prevent program. The "Share a Concern" page also clearly states what the process of relaying a concern involves, including who information is shared with. This transparency and the case studies may encourage users to seek help, as it demystifies the process of reaching out, making the process seem less daunting or intrusive.

Radicalisation Awareness Network
by the European Union

RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices

Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Approaches and Practices

Radicalisation Awareness Network
RAN

2019 Edition

Summary: the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) is a European Union network of practitioners that work with individuals potentially vulnerable to radicalization or who have already been radicalized. The Network comprises representatives from civil society, social work, education, youth work, healthcare, local authority, police and the criminal justice system. The RAN website contains a compendium of "inspiring practices", that existing and prospective TVTP practitioners can learn from.

Resource Category: thematic, behavioral, practical
Output Type: virtual hub
Level of Expertise: ideal for users with some background in TVTP or similar disciplines
Intended Audience: existing and aspiring TVTP practitioners

Why is it a good resource?

✅ **Compendium of good practice**
The RAN hub provides a directory of inspiring TVTP practices. This is provided both in downloadable PDF format, but also as a live and filterable list. Users can filter by country, theme (e.g. "Internet and radicalization", "multi-agency cooperation"), core beneficiaries, and more. Users can therefore identify specific types of services they would like to learn more about or use to guide their own work. Profiles of practices in the compendium include program summaries and contact details, giving users the opportunity to learn directly from frontline practitioners with experience delivering different types of TVTP projects. In addition, the RAN website has a separate list of practitioners that have consented to being contacted, and has a public calendar of events. The RAN website therefore **provides users with different avenues through which to learn more about the practice of TVTP.**

✅ **Information is provided in different formats and media**
RAN has infographics, reports, factbooks, handbooks, papers that summarize RAN's expert meetings as well as workshops, podcasts and video content. This is helpful to account for different learning styles and levels of TVTP expertise - it gives experienced practitioners the outputs needed to stay updated about the latest trends and findings in the field and gives prospective TVTP practitioners **a large and diverse range of sources** to draw from as they build their confidence and subject-matter understanding to undertake TVTP-related work.
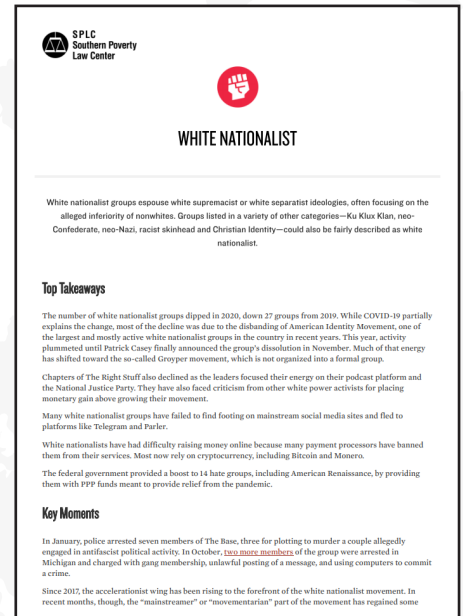
Research Libraries

by [the Anti-Defamation League](#) (ADL), [Center for Research on Evidence and Security Threats](#) (CREST), [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) (SPLC).
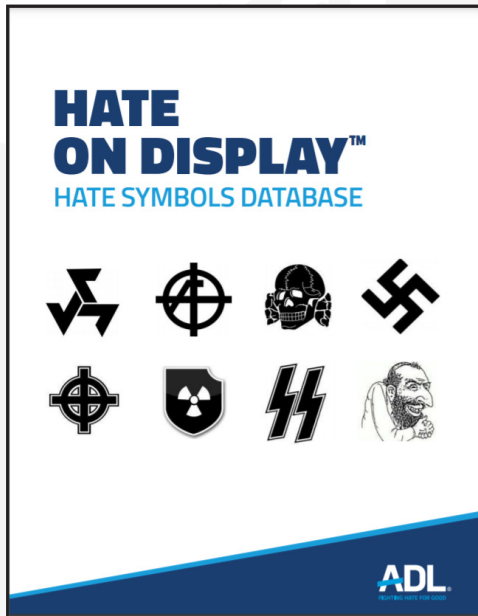
"Hate on Display" Database by ADL

"Extremism Risk Assessment" by CREST

"White Nationalist" by the SPLC

Summary: ["Research & Tools"](#) by the ADL, the [CREST hub](#) and SPLC ["Extremist Files"](#) are research libraries that provide thematic and practical resources that can help practitioners learn about the landscape of targeted violence and terrorism in the US. Pictured above are examples of useful resources from each organization. These reflect the types of resources practitioners can find in these libraries, which range from databases to overviews of specific TVTP processes and thematic briefs about different extremist ideologies.

Resource Category:

ADL **-** thematic, behavioral

CREST- thematic, practical

SPLC - thematic

Output Type: briefings, databases

Level of Expertise: ideal for users with a background in TVTP or similar disciplines

Why are they useful: Each resource has clear uses - the ["Hate on Display"](#) database can help practitioners understand and identify visual manifestations of hateful ideologies, for example. ADL also provides tools and strategies for response, including responding to ["jokes and slurs"](#), recognizing ["implicit bias"](#), and more. CREST's ["Extremism Risk Assessment"](#) guide provides an overview of risk assessment tools that practitioners can use to identify the one most suitable to their program, or to inform any bespoke tool they themselves have developed. CREST also has guides to help practitioners [conduct interviews](#), for [scenario-planning](#), among others. While not all of CREST's resources are specific to targeted violence, they all relate to safety and security, and therefore have transferable learnings. Finally, SPLC's "Extremist Files" provide a clear "state of play" about extremism in the US today. Generalist visitors and aspiring TVTP practitioners can learn about violent extremist narratives, ideologues and movements.

Gaps and Challenges

This section outlines some of the gaps in the existing landscape of resources, and some of the challenges with addressing these.

Resources for the Public

There are numerous resources on TVTP for the general public. However, these are often hard to locate and may not always be easy to find in the wide array of TVTP resources. Typing "is my child being radicalized" into Google for example surfaces a range of sources by different organizations - there is no clear, leading credible organization or standout resource, nor are there any calls to action to prompt searchers to click into a specific resource. This speaks to a need for TVTP programs and practitioners t**o better and more accurately communicate their services**, particularly those with resources designed for individuals that are concerned about others or need support. An example of a strong advertisement by Parents for Peace is provided on page eight of this document.

In addition, TVTP resources need to be more accessible. **Only one of the resources found in the scoping exercise that informed this document communicated special reporting mechanisms for individuals with disabilities**. None of the resources found offered versions in other languages.

Resources for the Public and Practitioners

Explicit TVTP crisis intervention and behavioral analysis tools for the public and for practitioners are limited. In most cases, behavioral analysis guidance for the public is provided in the form of lists of "warning signs" of radicalization.

However, **there are risks and challenges that come with trying to provide the public with behavioral analysis tools**. Firstly, there is no single, validated assessment tool that practitioners use to determine whether an individual is potentially vulnerable to radicalization. Radicalization is also a very complex process, with unique individual pathways. This means there is no definitive, universal set of behavioral factors that are considered by practitioners as they deliver TVTP assessments or interventions. Further, practitioners do not use behavioral analysis in isolation - assessing whether an individual is potentially vulnerable to radicalization generally combines behavioral analysis with an assessment of external factors, like education or employment status, and is informed by clinical judgement and experience. This makes it difficult to communicate an evidence-based set of behaviors that the public should be vigilant of or can use as potential indicators of vulnerability to radicalization. Any behavioral resource intended for the public or for audiences unfamiliar with TVTP should therefore frame behavioral guidance with disclaimers that a certain behavior does not necessarily mean an individual is becoming radicalized, but that any concerns or doubts should still be communicated to the appropriate services. **Such resources must therefore also signpost readers with clear guidance about who to speak to in the case of questions or concerns.**

Forward-thinking

Provided are some key considerations for local and/or national government and practitioners to bear in mind as they strive improve the landscape of TVTP resources.

For national or local government

- **Local government should consider conducting a mapping exercise of local services and their capacities to support TVTP -** when a member of the public has concerns or if an individual requires support, having a compendium of local services that can provide direct support is helpful. Similarly, a mapping exercise that identifies relevant services is an important first step in building **local prevention infrastructure**, a pillar of the Department of Homeland Security's new [Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships](). Such a mapping exercise would provide practitioners with oversight of different local services they can leverage in TVTP and related programming. Having clear community-based touchpoints for these services can therefore help take the onus away from concerned members of the public to identifying supporting resources themselves.

- **Any local or national government messaging needs to be clear and provide tangible guidance -** messaging intended for mass audiences needs to be concise and accessible. It needs to provide consistent signposting to make it clear to the public exactly who to contact to report a concern. Where possible, government messaging should recommend the same sources or services. If multiple services are recommended (like the "Building Resilience" resource does), then it needs to be clear what each of those services is best suited for. Any government messaging should ideally be supplemented with local-level awareness-raising - for example, teaching members of the public about potentially concerning behavior and reporting mechanisms. Community-based organizations can be leveraged to support such efforts.

For practitioners

- **For existing and prospective TVTP practitioners** - consider how you communicate* your services, bearing the following principles in mind:
  - **Accessibility** - does you communications strategy account for different levels of understanding and fluency, as well as varying levels of comfort with online platforms?
  - **Clarity -** as much as you can, be clear and transparent about the services you provide. What happens after someone expresses a concern to you? Clarity in communications not only helps manage the expectations of the public, but also demystifies TVTP.
  - **Conciseness -** be deliberate and careful in your language. Try to strike a balance between giving the necessary information and not overwhelming potential consumers of your content.

The topic of communicating your work will form the basis of one of the future workshops hosted for the emerging US Prevention Practitioners Network.

Consider also your digital presence and how you advertise your services. Parents for Peace, for example, uses clear and succinct messaging in its meta description for Google Search - it defines who its resources are for (any individual that is "worried that someone [they] care about is heading down a path towards extremism"), and makes it clear even before you enter their site that they can help ("contact us for help").

https://www.parents4peace.org › resources

Resources - Parents For Peace

We're here to help. If you are worried that someone you care about is heading down a path toward **extremism**, you are not alone. Contact us for help.
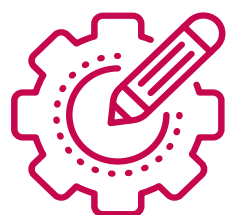
Further Reading

Below are a few of the resources that were identified through the scoping exercise conducted to inform these read ahead materials.

For existing and prospective* TVTP practitioners

- [An Imprecise Science: assessing interventions for the prevention, disengagement, and de-radicalization of left and right-wing extremists](#)
  By the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) - *research based on interviews with online and offline intervention providers*

- [Countering Violent Extremism: The Application of Risk Assessment Tools in the Criminal Justice and Rehabilitation Process](#)
  By the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) - *a useful overview of the history of risk assessment and challenges this in TVTP*

- [Countering Violent Extremism: The Use of Assessment Tools for Measuring Violence Risk](#)
  By RTI - *runs through existing frameworks for risk assessment and associated challenges*

- [Developing, implementing and using risk assessment for violent extremist and terrorist offenders](#)
  By the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) - *provides guidance for risk assessment in TVTP*

- [Extremism Risk Assessment: a directory](#)
  By the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST) - *provides a useful overview of six TVTP risk assessment frameworks (ERG 22+, IR 46, IVP, MLG, TRAP-18, VERA-2R)*

- [How Radicalization to Terrorism Occurs in the United States: What Research Sponsored by the National Institute of Justice Tells Us](#)
  by Allison G. Smith - *a useful report that summarizes findings and perspectives on radicalization to violence, as well as efforts to counter this, informed by practitioners from five difference TVTP programs.*

- [Radicalization and Violence Extremism: Lessons Learned from Canada, the UK and the US](#)
  by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) - *a useful report that summarizes findings and perspectives on radicalization to violence, as well as efforts to counter this, informed by practitioners from five difference TVTP programs.*

*TVTP may feel like an intimidating remit to take on. Behavioral practitioners that seek to incorporate TVTP into their remit of work can use these and other resources (on- and offline) to build their confidence and subject-matter to undertake TVTP.

However, behavioral practitioners should also remember **the invaluable and potentially transferable skillset and considerations** they bring from their professional experience outside of TVTP.

Further Reading

Below are a few of the resources that were identified through the scoping exercise conducted to inform these read ahead materials.

- Risk Factors and Indicators Associated With Radicalization to Terrorism in the United States: What Research Sponsored by the National Institute of Justice Tells Us
  By Allison G. Smith Ph. D. - *this is a very useful source, which compares two TVTP risk assessments with one for generic violence*

- The Practitioner's Guide to the Galaxy - A Comparison of Risk Assessment Tools for Violent Extremism
  By the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) - *compares the VERA-2R, ERG 22+, SQAT, IR 46, RRAP, Radar and VAF*

- Toward a Behavioral Model of "Homegrown" Radicalization Trajectories
  By Jytte Klausen et al. - *a "research note presents a dynamic risk assessment model of homegrown terrorists. The model was tested in a study of convicted "homegrown" American terrorism offenders inspired by Al Qaeda's ideology."*

- Using Behavioral Indicators to Help Detect Potential Violent Acts
  By Peter K. Davis et al. - *a RAND report that "reviews the scientific literature relating to observable behavioral indicators that might, along with other information, help detect potential attacks... It deals with individual-level indicators and does not extend to detecting society-level phenomena, such as social movements or insurgent groups."*

- Violent Extremism: a comparison of approaches to assessing and managing risk
  By Caroline Logan and Monica Lloyd - *maps the landscape of risk assessment, with a close look at a selection of existing frameworks. Also includes guidance for making risk assessments.*

> *See also the __recordings of, and read ahead materials for,__ past workshops for the emerging US Prevention Practitioners Network.*

Created for the US Prevention Practitioners Network by *the Institute for Strategic Dialogue* (ISD) and the *McCain Institute*.

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Further Reading

Below are a few of the resources that were identified through the scoping exercise conducted to inform these read ahead materials.

For the public, particularly caregivers and educators

- ACT Early
  By the UK Government - *see page 4 of this document*

- Building Resilience & Confronting Risk in the COVID-19 Era
  By PERIL - *see page 3 of this document*

- Educate Against Hate
  By the UK Government - *"government advice and trusted resources for schools to safeguard students from radicalisation, build resilience to all types of extremism and promote shared values."*

- Extreme Dialogue Educational Resources
  By Extreme Dialogue (supported by ISD, the Tim Parry Jonathan Ball Peace Foundation, and Duckrabbit) - *educational resources for broaching difficult topics, like extremism, in classrooms.*

- Prevention Tools
  By the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (CPRLV) - *"simple user-friendly tools ... available for everyone, including parents, community members, teachers, social intervention specialists, and health care professionals. These tools are designed to help in the dissemination of information, raising of public awareness and prevention of radicalization leading to violence."*

- Preventing Violent Extremism in Schools
  By the FBI's Office of Partner Engagement - *"a guide to educate school personnel about at-risk behaviors and activities that assist students with reducing social and psychological commitment to violence as a method of resolving a grievance."*

- Radicalization Toolkit and other resources
  By Parents for Peace - *resources by Parents for Peace and hyperlinks to external resources and services that can help members of the public better understand radicalization.*

- Resources for Educators, Parents & Families
  By the ADL - *resources include lesson plans, anti-bias tools and strategies, bullying/cyberbullying resources, and more.*

Reminder: these are not exhaustive lists.

Created for the US Prevention Practitioners Network by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) and the McCain Institute.

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