Finding the Balance: Countering Extremism and Combating Stereotypes

Young people are exposed to discussions of extremism every day through social media, news and overheard conversations between adults. As an educators, the topic can be challenging to teach because the situation is always changing and evolving and worse, classroom conversations can themselves lead to stereotyping, bias and bigotry when discussing perpetrators and victims.

The following resources will help you teach about extremism while ensuring that the threat is neither over- nor under-exaggerated. They include:
strategies that discourage the reinforcement of biased ideas during discussion;

resources to equip students to be savvy consumers of online material and propaganda;

background information for educators and administrators on the causes and observable signs of student violence and extremism; and

evidence-based suggestions for keeping schools safe.

Lesson Plans

ADDRESSING HATE ONLINE: COUNTERING CYBERHATE WITH COUNTERSPEECH (En español)

HIGH SCHOOL

High school students define, discuss and learn more about cyberhate and explore the role of counterspeech in being an online ally.

LEON PLAN

ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY AND BEING AN ALLY

MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

Bigstock
Middle and high school students explore the connection between anti-Muslim acts of bigotry and the misunderstandings and stereotypes about Muslim people, and identify ways they can be allies in the face of bias and discrimination.

LESSON PLAN

Outsmarting Propaganda: Combatting the Lure of Extremist Recruitment Strategies

HIGH SCHOOL

Teach high school students what propaganda is and how it has been used to recruit young people into extremist groups and how to counter those strategies.
LESSON PLAN

Terrorist Attack in Paris and Scapegoating
MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

Use this lesson to teach students about the Paris attacks and understand the ways in which Muslim people and Syrian refugees are being scapegoated as a result of the terrorist attacks.

Freedom House/Flickr

Educator and Parent Resources for Discussing Issues of Extremism and Stereotypes with Young People
Empowering Young People in the Aftermath of Hate (en Español)

Tools, tips and strategies for what educators and family members can do to help young people discuss and deal with the aftermath of hate-inspired events.

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Gun Violence and Mass Shootings

Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about mass shootings, violence, guns and gun laws.
Islamophobia and Being an Ally

In the wake of terrorist attacks and ISIS, here are tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about Muslims, islamophobia and being an ally.

Nice, France and Our Response to Terrorist Attacks

Have a parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about the 2016 attacks in Nice, France and understanding the complexities around incidents of terrorism.
Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about propaganda, extremism and recruitment tactics of terrorist groups.

**Propaganda, Extremism and Online Recruitment Tactics**

Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about propaganda, extremism and recruitment tactics of terrorist groups.

**Helping Students Make Sense of News Stories about Bias and Injustice**

When there are national news stories that involve incidents of bias and injustice, young people want to be part of the conversation.
Teaching Tools & Strategies

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Challenging Biased Language

On a daily basis—in the lunchroom, at the grocery store, in school hallways and even at home—people hear and sometimes use words and phrases that demean or ridicule. Here are some strategies for responding.
Creating an Anti-Bias Learning Environment
Tips for the classroom educator to create an anti-bias learning environment.

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Pyramid of Hate (en Español)
A visual of a pyramid which shows biased behaviors, growing in complexity from the bottom to the top.
Each year, ADL's Center on Extremism tracks murders perpetrated by all types of extremists. In 2018, every single extremist killing — from Pittsburgh to Parkland — had a link to right-wing extremism. This report provides key insights into the crimes, including motivations behind these violent attacks.

**Murder and Extremism in the United States in 2018**

This resource dispels stereotypes and myths about Muslim people and Islam, suggest ways that educators can address these important topics in the classroom and provide relevant key words and definitions.

**Myths and Facts about Muslim People and Islam**

This resource dispels stereotypes and myths about Muslim people and Islam, suggest ways that educators can address these important topics in the classroom and provide relevant key words and definitions.


Read the full comprehensive report, The ISIS Impact on the Domestic Islamic Extremist Threat: Homegrown Islamic Extremism 2009-2015. In 2015, 80 U.S. residents were linked to...
With Hate in their Hearts: The State of White Supremacy in the United States

Read ADL’s latest report, "With Hate in Their Hearts: The State of White Supremacy in the United States." This comprehensive report covers the historical roots to the modern iterations of white supremacist ideology and groups.

Other Resources

Mass Violence and Extremism Backgrounder: Information for Educators and School Administrators

This backgrounder strives to provide comprehensive information that is relevant and appropriate for all school districts. It delves into some of the causes and observable signs of student violence and extremism and provides a set of steps for schools to take that may aid in discouraging attacks. This resource is a joint project of ADL and The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.