



**Prevention  
Practitioners  
Network**

# **The Targeted Violence Threat Landscape**

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*A Practice Guide for the US Prevention  
Practitioners Network*

**ISD**

Powering solutions  
to extremism  
and polarisation

**MCCAIN  
INSTITUTE**



**Arizona State University.**

# About this Practice Guide

## THE US PREVENTION PRACTITIONERS NETWORK

Since September 2020, [the McCain Institute](#), with support from [the Institute for Strategic Dialogue](#) (ISD) and a steering committee of violence prevention and social safety experts, have been developing and engaging 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, and through providing information packs and practice guides in supplement to the workshops.

**For more information about the Network or to access past information packs and practice guides, visit [the McCain Institute's website](#).**

## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document is one in a series of practice guides that ISD and the McCain Institute are producing for the emerging Prevention Practitioners Network. It is a resource for existing and prospective network members that deliver (or seek to deliver) TVTP interventions. This particular guide supplements the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth workshops that were delivered for the emerging Network, and covers the threat of white supremacy and anti-government violence, Incel and misogynistic violent extremism, internationally inspired terrorism, and the role of mis-, dis- and mal-information in terrorism.

### How does this differ from the read-ahead materials prepared in advance of the workshops?

The read-ahead materials provided to participants prior to each workshop are entry-level resources that provide context and background on a given topic, helping participants prepare for the workshop and identify potential questions for discussion. Read-ahead materials are prepared and provided for every workshop. You can access past read ahead-materials [here](#).

The practice guides, on the other hand, combine the contents of the read-ahead materials with insights from the workshops to provide both a conceptual overview of and practice tips for the given topic, which Network members can refer to in their work. Each practice guide covers several workshop topics.

Practice guides will be provided to Network members every few months. The first practice guide covers [multi-disciplinary staffing considerations in interventions to prevent targeted violence and terrorism](#), and the second provides an overview of [key legal considerations for TVTP interventions](#).

**For any inquiries, please contact [the McCain Institute](#) or [ISD](#).**



# Contents

<b>Chapter One - The Current Threat Landscape</b>	<b><a href="#"><u>4</u></a></b>
General Considerations: False Information in Targeted Violence	<a href="#"><u>5</u></a>
General Considerations: Types of Narratives in Targeted Violence	<a href="#"><u>6</u></a>
Conspiracy Case Study: QAnon	<a href="#"><u>7</u></a>
White Supremacy	<a href="#"><u>8</u></a>
Anti-Government Militias	<a href="#"><u>13</u></a>
Internationally-Inspired Terrorism	<a href="#"><u>15</u></a>
Emerging Threat Considerations: the "Manosphere"	<a href="#"><u>18</u></a>
 <b>Chapter Two - Targeted Hate and Violence Online</b>	 <b><a href="#"><u>22</u></a></b>
Mainstream Platforms	<a href="#"><u>22</u></a>
Fringe Imageboard Sites	<a href="#"><u>22</u></a>
Fringe Video-Hosting Sites	<a href="#"><u>23</u></a>
Fringe Social Networking Sites	<a href="#"><u>23</u></a>
Instant Messaging Applications	<a href="#"><u>24</u></a>
Forums	<a href="#"><u>24</u></a>
Visual Culture Online: Memes	<a href="#"><u>25</u></a>
 <b>Chapter Three - Program Development Considerations</b>	 <b><a href="#"><u>26</u></a></b>
Program Development	<a href="#"><u>26</u></a>
Program Delivery	<a href="#"><u>27</u></a>
Other Considerations	<a href="#"><u>29</u></a>
 <b>Annexes</b>	 <b><a href="#"><u>30</u></a></b>
Annex A - Types of False Context	<a href="#"><u>30</u></a>
Annex B - Key Terms and Examples of Coded Language	<a href="#"><u>31</u></a>
Annex C - Further Reading Recommendations	<a href="#"><u>36</u></a>

# Chapter One - The Current Threat Landscape

## WHY THIS TOPIC?

To be able to address targeted violence and terrorism in an informed and responsible manner, practitioners must first develop a conceptual understanding of the phenomena, particularly of the dominant narratives, movements and figures that make up the domestic threat landscape in the US.

### Did you know?

In its [Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence](#), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) defines targeted violence as “any incident of violence that implicates homeland security and/or U.S. DHS activities, and in which a known or knowable attacker selects a particular target prior to the violent attack”. The definition is based on research from the [National Institute of Justice](#), wherein the term was first coined.



## HOW DO I USE THIS CHAPTER?

This chapter starts with a broad overview of the role of misinformation, disinformation and mal-information in targeted violence, as well as the types of narratives commonly employed in extremist worldviews and how these are strengthened with false information. This chapter then provides an overview of the current landscape in the US, looking specifically at:<sup>3</sup>

- White supremacy
- Anti-government militias
- Internationally-inspired targeted violence
- Emerging threat considerations: the "manosphere"

Each subsection includes a brief overview of that specific threat entails, related submovements and narratives, and provides a "Conspiracy Case Study" to demonstrate how those narratives can merge into a dystopian worldview where an "out-group" is blamed for the grievances of the "in-group".\*

Importantly, these subsections condense the contents of the read-ahead materials provided ahead of the workshops that addressed each topic, and are intended as refreshers of those materials rather than as supplementary deep-dives into the given topic. For more information about each threat "type", readers are advised to refer to [past materials](#) provided to the Network and to the "Further Reading Recommendations" listed in Annex C at the end of this practice guide.

### \*Practice Tip:

- In-Group: the group to which someone belongs / identifies with.
- Out-Group: those who are excluded from the in-group.

[Violent out-grouping is core to targeted violence](#), so it is important for practitioners to be able to recognize when an individual does this. Out-grouping in targeted violence may entail:

- in-group and out-group identities being based on racial, ethnic and/or religious grounds, sexual orientation, gender identity;
- positioning the in-group as inherently superior to the out-group, by virtue of the above-mentioned characteristics (e.g., race, religion);
- advocating for violence or the sociopolitical exclusion of the out-group, and/or framing the out-group as inherently threatening to the in-group.



<sup>3</sup>These specific topics were identified as priority areas of concern by the Prevention Practitioners Network's multi-disciplinary Advisory Board and in the U.S. Government's National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism.

# GENERAL THREAT CONSIDERATIONS

## FALSE INFORMATION IN TARGETED VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

False information, whether shared knowingly or unknowingly, has the potential to cement hateful ideologies, polarize communities, diminish trust in institutions like government and medical authorities, and, perhaps most pointedly, to lead to violence. This section explores the role of false information in targeted violence. Before delving into examples of the nexus of misinformation and extremism, this page takes a step back to define what we mean by misinformation and related terms:

- **Misinformation:** Information that is false, but the person who disseminates it may believe it is true.
- **Disinformation:** Information that is false and **deliberately** shared to cause harm or to influence.
- **Mal-information:** A less-known term but used amongst some public safety stakeholders to refer to information that is genuine but used to inflict harm on a person, organization or country. This [includes](#) the misuse of personal or confidential information, and the political use of sensitive information.

**Example of disinformation:** *At the height of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) demonstrations in 2020, white supremacist actors and influencers spread [claims](#) that the protests were inherently violent. Some users created **imposter content**\*, where [fake accounts pretending to be pro-BLM](#) were created to post fabricated content inciting violence against white people. Disinformation campaigns like this sought to paint and discredit BLM as a violent, anti-white movement.*

**Example of mal-information:** *Doxxing is the mal-intended publication and distribution of personal identifiable information about another individual. Doxxing is known to be a cyber weapon of choice amongst [racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism \(REMVE\) actors](#) - for instance, chat logs from Discord reveal “concerted efforts to compile private information on ‘leftist enemies’ ... to encourage harassment or violence”.*

- **Conspiracy Theories:** A type of mis/disinformation, conspiracy theories seek to explain a phenomenon by invoking a sinister plot orchestrated by powerful actors. Adherents to conspiracies usually see themselves as an “initiated few” who have access to hidden or “secret” knowledge.



### \*Did you know?

There are multiple types of false content. "Imposter content", for example, refers to content that is authored by users that use the name, brand or identity of a public figure or organization (without their permission to do so) to reach a certain audience and to add a sense of legitimacy and credibility to a specific claim. In other cases, images, headlines, quotes and other content may be taken from one context and framed in an entirely different context. This is referred to as "false context". **For a full list of the types of false content in disinformation, see Annex A.**

## TYPES OF NARRATIVES IN TARGETED VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

While movements differ in their perceptions of the "in-" versus "out-group", there are overarching narratives that are core to the wider spectrum of targeted hate and violence. Being able to recognize how movement-specific claims fit into these overarching narratives may help practitioners as they support individuals with disengaging from these movements. This page outlines [five common crisis narratives](#) that extremist groups deploy in their worldviews, based on research by extremism expert J.M. Berger. Examples are provided to demonstrate how these narratives are strengthened by false claims.

- **Impurity** - "corruption of in-group beliefs, practices or traits, sometimes including infiltration of out-group beliefs, practices and traits".

**Example:** "White genocide" conspiracy theorists position inter-racial relationships and non-white immigration as part of a plot to corrupt and decimate white populations.

- **Conspiracy** - "the belief that out-groups are engaged in secret actions to control in-group outcomes".

**Example:** The "New World Order" conspiracy accuses a "globalist" elite of orchestrating global events, from immigration to COVID-19, as a means to implement a one-world government. Sometimes this takes antisemitic undertones, where the "elite" is characterized as Jewish.

- **Dystopia** - "the belief that out-groups have successfully oriented society to disadvantage the in-group".

**Example:** Many sub-communities of the "manosphere" hold dystopian views that allege society is gynocentric, essentially favoring women and disadvantaging men in all domains of life.

- **Existential threat** - "the belief that out-groups threaten the continued survival of the in-group".

**Example** "The Great Replacement" theory, which [motivated](#) the perpetrator of the 2019 attacks against the Muslim community of Christchurch, New Zealand, is founded in the belief that immigration is an existential threat to white survival, a view they reinforce by taking news stories out of context, exaggerating migration and other demographic statistics and stigmatizing non-white communities as inherently violent.

- **Apocalypse** - "the belief that out-groups will precipitate a comprehensive end to history in the not-too distant future".

**Example:** Conspiracies like the "New World Order" point to an impending shift in society as we know it and may incite action and violence to protect against this. Berger [refers](#) to this subcategory of apocalyptic belief - specifically that "the current world will be replaced by a perfect utopian world very soon" - as **millenarian belief**.

**Practice Tip:** If you are working with an individual that expresses conspiratorial views, do not voice judgement about their beliefs. This may only enforce their views and may result in them being less receptive to your support. Instead, consider an evaluatory approach - **evaluate** their claims with them and work with them to build their curiosity and critical thinking about the conspiratorial views they are expressing.







## CONSPIRACY CASE STUDY: QANON

In 2017, a user calling themselves Q posted on the "politically incorrect" board of the fringe imageboard platform, 4chan. Q claimed to have high-level security clearance and that they would work to covertly inform the public about President Trump's ongoing battle against the "deep state", a blanket term used to describe those in power allegedly working against the then-President. Since then, users claiming to be Q have made thousands of posts and claims, or "Qdrops", and have fostered a rapid rise in QAnon supporters globally. At its peak, the QAnon theory "[combined anti-vaccine, anti-5G conspiracies, antisemitic and anti-migrant tropes, and several bizarre theories that the world is in the thrall of a group of pedophile elites set on global domination...](#)". Specific claims include:

- **Satan-worshiping deep state rules the world** - The QAnon conspiracy alleges that Democrats, Hollywood celebrities, billionaires and others are all part of a Satan-worshiping cabal that rules the world. This often entails the same antisemitic tropes employed in "New World Order" conspiracies, particularly that Jewish families, like the Rothschilds, George Soros and others, control major financial institutions and are thus able to influence political affairs worldwide.
- **Pedophilia and human trafficking** - Q also alleges that this deep state engages in pedophilia, human trafficking and ritualistic child sacrifice. QAnon supporters have even attempted kidnappings, inspired by the belief that the targeted children were "[falling victim to pedophiles](#)".
- **Adrenochrome harvesting** - Related to claims that the deep state engages in pedophilia and child trafficking is medical misinformation that alleges these global elites steal children to harvest adrenochrome from their blood. This adrenochrome is allegedly used to keep members of this elite young and healthy. Adrenochrome-related misinformation surged in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, when celebrities posted "natural" photos of themselves, prompting QAnon supporters to claim they were suffering from adrenochrome withdrawal due the pandemic's impact on the "[child-trafficking supply chain](#)". This is testament to the all-encompassing nature of conspiratorial worldviews, where even celebrity selfies are explained as proof of conspiracy.

Importantly, even though Q's initial claims were predominantly US-focused, the influence of QAnon and the conviction that there is a deep state conspiracy have spread across borders into Europe and beyond - some [reports](#) suggest to at least 85 countries globally.

### THE IMPACT:

QAnon supporters were among the insurrectionists that stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. Some [reports](#) suggest at least 34 QAnon adherents took part in the attacks on the Capitol. Further, the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Response to Terrorism (START) [reports](#) that, as of September 22, 2021, at least 100 QAnon followers have allegedly committed ideologically-motivated crimes in the US. Importantly, **at least 18** of these followers also have known affiliations with other REMVE and anti-government militia groups, including the Sovereign Citizens Movement, Proud Boys, Three Percenters and the Boogaloo movement, pointing to an interplay between a) a decentralized, primarily digital conspiratorial movement united only by their belief in Q's claims and b) more defined group structures with notable operations offline. There have also been attempted and [successful kidnappings](#) inspired by QAnon beliefs that governments run child pedophilia and trafficking rings.



## THE THREAT LANDSCAPE - WHITE SUPREMACY:

*The racist belief that white people are superior to people of other races. It advocates for the legal, political, cultural and social dominance of white people over all others.*

### SUBTYPES IN THE US INCLUDE:

- **"Traditional" White Supremacy:** or groups and networks that were founded for the purpose of denying black people their rights:
  - This includes the entire network of [Ku Klux Klan](#) (KKK) groups, and which is perhaps the most well-known white supremacist subtype. It is distinctive for its white hoods and robes, and its hierarchical structure where an "imperial wizard" presides over the nationwide movement, and "grand dragons" serve as statewide rulers. The group is still active across the US and has over [15 affiliated subgroups](#). Although founded as an anti-black movement opposed to the civil rights movement, it has since adopted increasingly antisemitic, xenophobic and nativist rhetoric.
  - This also includes [neo-confederacy](#), which is an ultra-conservative ideology that fights for "traditional" values it claims modern Americans have lost. Not all neo-confederates employ white supremacist messaging, but some affiliated groups have advocated "us-versus-them" narratives, including for racial segregation and traditional gender roles. Key groups include: [League of the South](#) and [Identity Dixie](#).
- **Neo-Nazism:** emulates Nazi ideas about nationalism, racism and antisemitism to incite hatred and violence against non-white communities. Neo-Nazism is a global ideology with organized networks and affiliate movements across the world, concentrated especially in North America and Europe. In the US, high-profile neo-Nazi movements date back to the late 1950s, with the founding of the [American Nazi Party](#). Other past and existing movements include: [National Alliance](#), [National Socialist Movement](#) (NSM), [the Base](#) and the [Atomwaffen Division](#).
- **White Nationalism:** white nationalists advocate for racial segregation and for the establishment of a white ethnostate. They "justify" this within "scientific racism" and the alleged intellectual and cultural superiority of white people. KKK, Neo-Nazi and neo-Confederate ideology incorporates white nationalism, but white nationalists also exist outside these movements. Key movements include: [American Renaissance](#), the [National Policy Institute](#) and the [American Identity Movement](#). The latter subscribes to **identitarianism**, which originated in Europe, and also argues for the establishment of white ethnostates but often frames this in more intellectual or "palatable" terms (see also "The Alt-Right" below).



- **The Alt-Right:**

According to the ADL, the alt-right, which is short for "alternative right", is a "[repackaging of white supremacy by extremists to mainstream their ideologies](#)". This is achieved through a concerted effort to avoid language and ideological framing that is explicitly racist and/or discriminatory, instead cushioning white supremacist views in softer language (at least in comparison to e.g. explicit neo-Nazi doctrine) to add a sense of legitimacy and mainstream what are essentially extremist ideologies. For example, alt-righters often claim they are working to preserve (European-American) cultural heritage and values and/or "Western civilization", instead of explicitly mentioning the white race. Importantly, the alt-right is a decentralized cluster of movements, groups and figures whose ideologies all focus on white identity (and the alleged superiority of that identity to non-white populations).

- **Proud Boys:**

Founded in 2016, they are a violent street protest movement that self-identifies as "western chauvinist" and are known to espouse anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and misogynistic rhetoric.

- **White Supremacist Prison Gangs:**

A large component of the wider white supremacist landscape in the US, white supremacist prison gangs differ from other white supremacist movements in that their ideology is usually secondary to their criminal behavior - it is not usually a driving factor behind their criminal activities. Although white supremacist prison gangs originate in prisons, they are active outside of prisons.

**Other:**

- **Norse Paganism:** otherwise referred to as "Asatru", Norse Paganism is a revival of old Norse religious practice. While it is not racist in and of itself, some white supremacists have co-opted it to reinforce their views, claiming it is a religion for those of (white) European descent only.
- **Racist Skinheads:** a "[variation of the skinhead subculture](#)" that employs neo-Nazi beliefs.
- **Christian Identity:** a movement that believes white supremacy is justified by the Bible. They claim, for example, that the Bible likens black people to animals and that Jews are descendants of Satan and Eve, where as white people are considered God's chosen people.

**Practice Tip:** If you run an interventions program, take great care in deciding who has most interface with the individual receiving support (e.g., the case manager) - for example, if they identify with one of the communities that are commonly targeted by the movement with which the individual is affiliated, do you have support mechanisms in place to support them with the emotional challenges of working with someone that may hold discriminatory views against them?





## GOOD TO KNOW: ACCELERATIONISM

Accelerationism is a term used by white supremacist and other extremist groups to refer to [“their desire to hasten the collapse of society as we know it”](#). Generally, acceleration is used in the context of white genocide conspiracy theories, which believe white people are under threat and are being systematically targeted through e.g. immigration and other means. A collapse of modern societal structures and political systems is seen as the only means through which to stop these perceived injustices against white people. Indeed, many accelerationist groups desire this collapse and call for [replacing modern society and governance with one founded on ethnonationalism](#).

Accelerationism is at its core an encouragement of civil discord that employs an “ends justify the means” approach towards violence. Most white supremacist accelerationists view violence as a necessary means for catalyzing societal collapse and implementing new power structures that prioritize the “needs” of white people. **There have already been notable instances of violence affiliated with accelerationist ideology.** For example, Brenton Tarrant, who perpetrated the terror attack against the Muslim community of Christchurch in 2019, [dedicated an entire section of his “manifesto” to accelerationism](#). The perpetrator of the Poway synagogue shooting in 2019 similarly [expressed accelerationist beliefs](#), saying he “used a gun for the same reason that Brenton Tarrant used a gun... the goal is for the US government to start confiscating guns. People will defend their rights to own a firearm - civil war has just started”. Accelerationism is therefore not just dangerous because of its potential to encourage violence, but in the fact that **violence is seen as the primary means to bring about the desired goal of societal collapse**. Accelerationism comes from an amalgamation of:

- **Neoreaction**, or NRx - a doctrine developed by Nick Land and Curtis Yarvin, which [claims democracy doesn’t work nor does it allow for good governance](#). Neoreaction instead embraces autocracy or authoritarian rule, where a single individual is given full power to lead. Neoreactionaries often liken what they perceive to be valid and effective national leadership to that of corporate governance, where a national ruler should lead a country similarly to how a chief executive officer would his company.
- **White supremacist beliefs** that [“‘white identity’ is under attack by multicultural forces using ‘political correctness’ and ‘social justice’ to undermine white people and ‘their’ civilization.”](#) As opposed to neoreactionary belief, which posits democracy as the biggest obstacle to a better future, white supremacists tend to scapegoat Jewish people and other religious and ethnic minorities as the greatest barrier to a future that upholds white dominion.
- **Siege culture** - a violent subculture of white supremacy inspired by [James Mason](#) and his neo-Nazi essays, SIEGE. Mason argues that “only the full collapse of American democracy and society will bring conditions sufficient to bring order through Nazism”, and calls for violence to expedite this collapse.

Accelerationism derives from [cross-pollination of these ideas](#), combining anti-democratic neoreactionary beliefs with white supremacist siege culture to manifest a belief that the “future of the white race is bleak” and that a better future can be secured through an escalation of violence and disorder that facilitates the collapse and replacement of existing political and societal structures (referred to by accelerationists as [“the System”](#)).

## SIEGE AND SIEGE CULTURE

SIEGE by James Mason is a compilation of neo-Nazi essays. The book graphically incites violence against Jewish and Black communities across the US, claiming “civil war, a total revolution” would give these communities the “death they so richly deserve”. The book is so influential in white supremacist circles that it has inspired what is now dubbed “siege culture”, referring to violent accelerationist groups and their forums online.

## TYING IN CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

Accelerationists leverage contemporary events to recruit and further their agenda to take down “the System.” Among others, accelerationist discourse in the past year has addressed:

- **the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests**, especially those where there was confrontation with law enforcement. These were viewed by some accelerationists as potential catalysts for civil war. White supremacists have also “infiltrated” these protests, [vandalizing properties to provoke disorder](#).
- **COVID-19** - where public confusion spurred by inconsistent government messaging has been exploited by accelerationists to “prove” that [existing political structures are incapable of managing crises](#). COVID-19 conspiracism is also prevalent in accelerationist discourse, where the [virus is claimed to be a weapon](#) used by the New World Order (see page 15), the Chinese government and others to decimate the white race.
- **The Second Amendment** - accelerationists rely on increased gun control legislation to catalyze disorder and violence. They hope stricter gun ownership legislation will inspire (violent) backlash and encourage more individuals to take on the accelerationist agenda of societal collapse.
- **January 6th storming of the Capitol** - the insurrection at the US Capitol Building on January 6th 2021 was celebrated by many accelerationists as a [key catalyst for their desired civil war](#).

These are but a few examples that demonstrate how accelerationists rely on public disorder and violence to further their narratives - accelerationists believe that the more chaos ensues, the more people are likely to abandon moderate views or political stances for the extreme.

## THE TURNER DIARIES

The Turner Diaries is a foundational text of contemporary white supremacist movements in the US. Written by William Pierce, leader of the neo-Nazi National Alliance until his death in 2002, the fiction novel tells the story of Eric Turner, who, as part of a white supremacist revolutionary army, helps overthrow the US government and implement an Aryan republic. The novel is rife with antisemitism, giving a platform to antisemitic tropes that claim Jewish people are deceitful and that they are “Satan’s spawn.” Further, violence is a key part of the story, presented as a necessary means through which to achieve white domination not just in the US, but globally.

The novel is affiliated with notable instances of violence, including Timothy McVeigh’s terror attack in Oklahoma City in 1995, which killed 168 and injured over 600. The white supremacist terrorist group, The Order, was founded by an affiliate of Pierce and, inspired by The Turner Diaries, committed assassinations and other crimes in an attempt to incite white revolution.

## WHITE SUPREMACIST NARRATIVES MAY TARGET:

- **Jewish communities:**

Prominent white supremacist antisemitic claims include that Jewish people control the media, politics and the economy. White supremacist discourse also sees Jewish people blamed for medical crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, acts of terror, the "war on drugs", which is explained as Jewish effort to control supply and demand of drugs, and multiculturalism, which is framed as a Jewish-made mechanism to "invade" (white) Christian nations and/or to commit "white genocide" (see page 9). Other antisemitic tropes posit Jewish people as greedy, corrupt and manipulative. Holocaust denial<sup>2</sup> is also common particularly amongst neo-Nazis, and is used not only to reinforce antisemitic stereotypes of Jewish people being manipulative, but also to absolve Hitler of his responsibility in attempt to make neo-Nazi doctrine more palatable.

- **Muslim communities:**

White supremacist anti-Muslim narratives generally refer to Islam as an invading force that isn't just incompatible with Western society, but is also an active threat to Western society and cultural norms. In this context, white supremacists have used [Crusader-themed imagery and rhetoric](#), like the Jerusalem Cross, the Knights Templar and "Deus Vult," as dog whistles to promote anti-Muslim hate. Other anti-Muslim tropes include that all Muslims are terrorists and/or rapists, that all Muslims, particularly Muslim politicians, celebrate 9/11, that Muslims are uncivilized or barbaric, and that they seek to implement Shari'ah across North America and Europe. "Creeping shari'ah" is therefore a common conspiracy amongst white supremacist (as well as other anti-Muslim) circles, as is the "[The Great Replacement](#)"<sup>3</sup>, which argues that white people in Europe are being systematically replaced by non-white "foreign" populations.

- **Black communities:**

Anti-black activism remains prominent across the white supremacist spectrum and is exacerbated by more mainstream forums that relay racist tropes to wider audiences. Dominant anti-black narratives include fabricated claims about black on white crime, which enforce white supremacist discourse about an ongoing or impending "race war", and that white people are genetically and biologically superior to black people. In the context of the latter claim, white people in interracial relationships are viewed as "race traitors", and interracial marriage is deemed to be unnatural and selfish.

- **Migrant communities:**

Like anti-Muslim narratives, white supremacist anti-migrant discourse fear-mongers by claiming "American identity" is being threatened by mass immigration of non-white populations. Some groups present this in more palatable terms, claiming an end to immigration will allow for American "cultural preservation".

- **LGBTQ+ communities:**

Although the overlap with white supremacy may not be immediately clear, white supremacist groups are generally virulently LGBTQ-phobic. Similar to anti-Muslim and anti-migrant narratives, white

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<sup>3</sup> ISD has briefing notes about Holocaust Denial and "The Great Replacement" conspiracy available on request. Please contact ISD's Charlotte Moeyens ([crlm@isdglobal.org](mailto:crlm@isdglobal.org)) for more information.

supremacist anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric presents any gender identity and sexual orientation outside of cisgender heterosexuality as a threat against "traditional" Western culture. This ties in with white supremacist conspiracies that claim white populations are being replaced by non-white communities, where white same-sex couples are [blamed](#) for a perceived decline in white birth rates. Anti-LGBTQ+ narratives include that there is a "homosexual agenda" to erode Christianity and traditional Western society, and that members of the LGBTQ+ community seek to "brainwash" children into homosexuality. Transgender people are also targeted heavily in this context, White supremacist groups may call for the criminalization of LGBTQ+ people.

## CONSPIRACY CASE STUDY - "WHITE GENOCIDE":

### What is it?

The "white genocide" theory is ultimately the North American counterpart to ["The Great Replacement" conspiracy theory](#), which claims **white populations are being systematically and deliberately replaced through non-white immigration and other means**, with many white supremacists scapegoating Jewish people for this alleged plot.

The term "white genocide" is affiliated with David Lane, known also for his white supremacist motto, the "14 words" ("we must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children").

### Beliefs Include:

The theory is core to the North American white supremacist landscape, with believers vehemently opposed to non-white immigration to the US and what they perceive to be the "forced assimilation" between non-white and white communities. Believers are also strictly opposed to inter-racial and inter-ethnic relations, arguing this causes "degeneracy" and framing this within "scientific racism", or the believe that non-white people are inferior to white people and that there is empirical, scientific evidence to this end. Believers also claim Jews are responsible for this concerted effort to decimate the white race.



# THE THREAT LANDSCAPE - ANTI-GOVERNMENT EXTREMIST MOVEMENTS AND MILITIAS:

*Generally, anti-government extremist movements and militias claim the US federal government exerts undue control over its citizens, posing the government as a tyrannical force that infringes too much on personal freedoms and liberties.*

## RELATED MOVEMENTS IN THE US INCLUDE:

- **The Boogaloo Movement<sup>3</sup> (or "Boogaloo Boys"/"Boogaloo Bois"):**

A loosely organized anti-government and anti-law enforcement movement that arose in 2019 and believes insurrection against the state is necessary to protect individual liberties. Although it originated with an Internet meme referring to a second civil war, it has demonstrated its potential to mobilize offline. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) [lists 16 instances](#) of Boogaloo-related arrests in 2020, for example.

- **Three Percenters (or "III%ers"):**

A sub-"brand" of the wider militia movement, Three Percenters see themselves as lineal descendants of early American colonists that took up arms against the British. A concept initiated by gun owners founded in 2018, the name stems from the disputed claim that only three percent of American colonists did as such.

- **Oath Keepers:**

Founded in 2009, this group focuses its recruitment and rhetoric towards the military, law enforcement, and first responders recruiting active and former members of all three. The name comes from swearing to defend the Constitution against all enemies, domestic and foreign.

- **Sovereign Citizen Movement:**

A "[loosely organized collection of groups and individuals who have adopted a right-wing anarchist ideology](#)", with believers claiming existing government structures in the US are illegitimate. Sovereign citizens ultimately desire the "restoration" of minimalist governance, and in some cases incite violence against the current government to do so. The Movement is increasing in

popularity, with adherents exploiting the broader anti-vaccine and anti-mask movements to recruit and spread their beliefs.

### **Practice Tip:**

While there are certainly distinctions between REMVE groups and anti-government militias, there are also important overlaps for practitioners to be aware of. Members of both perpetuate the "New World Order" conspiracy (see page 12), for example, and anti-government forums online are often rife with racist, xenophobic rhetoric, among others.



[See the ADL's Glossary of Anti-Government Extremist Terms, Movements and Philosophies for more.](#)

<sup>3</sup> ISD has a briefing note about the Boogaloo Movement available on request. Please contact ISD ([info@isdglobal.org](mailto:info@isdglobal.org)) for more information.



## ANTI-GOVERNMENT NARRATIVES INCLUDE:

- **Government overreach:**

Anti-government extremist movements and militias accuse the federal government of conspiring with the "**New World Order**" to infringe on individual freedoms and rights. The Boogaloo movement, for example, advocates for minimal government and the abolishment of all legislation and policy that they perceive has limited personal freedoms. In this context, most, if not all, government mandates are framed as government overreach and attempts to control their citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic is a recent telling example of this, where subsequent social distancing requirements and other restrictions have been posited as "proof" of state-led attempts to control American citizens.

- **The Second Amendment:**

Gun control legislation is also commonly referred to as an example of government overreach, and forms a particularly powerful and popular narrative amongst militia movements, owing to their paramilitary nature. Militia movements are therefore likely to position themselves as protectors of the Second Amendment, which they view as a fundamental human right not to be infringed on in any manner. Anti-government militias also believe the US government is plotting mass gun confiscation, with some claiming the government will implement martial law to do so.

- **Law Enforcement:**

Anti-government extremist movements and militias generally stand against law enforcement. Most movements, like the Boogaloo movement, largely view law enforcement officers as enforcers of government tyranny. Others are more likely to work with or alongside law enforcement. The Oath Keepers, for example, are known to recruit former police officers and have [joined demonstrations](#) to help law enforcement by "defending" local shops and businesses from Black Lives Matters protesters. This is, however, an attempt to legitimize or "enhance" their public image, rather than out of genuine interest to aid law enforcement officers.

- **Civil War:**

Movements like the Boogaloo movement believe a second civil war or insurrection against the state is necessary to protect individual liberties and to restore the freedoms it accuses the government of taking away. In fact, "boogaloo" started as an [Internet meme](#) on 4chan's weapon board (/k/) to refer to civil war. It has since also been used by white supremacists to [call for race war](#).

### CONSPIRACY CASE STUDY - THE "NEW WORLD ORDER":

#### What is it?

Proponents of the "New World Order" conspiracy believe a cabal of powerful elite figures wielding great political and economic power is conspiring to implement a totalitarian one-world government. The conspiracy often incorporates antisemitic narratives, drawing on long-established tropes that claim Jewish people control major financial and media institutions around the world.

Most anti-government extremist movements and militias operate in response to the "New World Order", claiming gun control legislation and general government overreach are attempts to exert undue control over American citizens as part of efforts to implement the "New World Order". Anti-government militias may frame themselves as a necessary response to this encroachment, and as true "defenders" of American civilians and their freedoms.



## THE THREAT LANDSCAPE- INTERNATIONALLY-INSPIRED TARGETED VIOLENCE:

*The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) defines international terrorism as "violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups who are inspired by, or associated with, designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored)."*

### IN THE US, THIS THREAT HAS COME PREDOMINANTLY FROM FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS LIKE:

- **Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)** - Also referred to as ISIL, Daesh and IS, ISIS has been the focus of global counterterrorism efforts since it captured major cities of Syria and Iraq in 2014, after which its then-leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced a new Islamic "Caliphate". Baghdadi's establishment of the "Caliphate" prompted citizens from countries around the globe to migrate to ISIS-held territory, some of whom traveled to join the group's military operations, others of whom simply wanted to live under the "Caliphate" or were taken there against their will or without informed consent (e.g., children).

The scale of the foreign terrorist fighter (FTF) phenomenon that was spurred by ISIS's successes in Syria remains a significant security challenge. [More than 60](#) US citizens are thought to have traveled to ISIS territory, of which only 19 are known to have returned to the US, and the remainder are either dead, unaccounted for or remain in refugee camps in Syria, Turkey and elsewhere.

ISIS's influence in the US also takes shape beyond FTFs and terrorist plots. Internet and communications technology (ICT) are core to ISIS's recruitment and mobilization strategies, for example. Since its founding, and catalyzed by Baghdadi's declaration of the "Caliphate", ISIS operatives have used social media to encourage Westerners to migrate to ISIS territory or to perform acts of violence on the group's behalf. Official propaganda by the group has been circulated across digital spaces ranging from Telegram to Facebook. **Today, the threat from ISIS in the US comes predominantly from the group's persistent and extensive online presence.** Official and unofficial ISIS support networks can be found across the Internet, on mainstream social media platforms, forums, bespoke websites and direct-messaging applications. ISD's [analysis](#) of ISIS's biggest known digital repository, which contains over 94,000 pieces of violent extremist content, reveals that 30% of its visitors between March and May 2021 had US addresses, highlighting the prevalence and popularity of the group and its propaganda amongst violent extremists in the US.

The group also has multiple formal and informal regional affiliates, including:

- ISIS-K / ISIS-KP - Islamic State in the Khorasan Province
  - ISIS-GS - Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
  - ISIS Philippines
  - ISIS-DRC - Islamic State in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- 
- **Al Qaeda (AQ)** - founded in the late 1980s by Osama Bin Laden, the group originally focused outwardly on fighting what it deemed its greatest enemy, the US. Since Bin Laden's death, however, the group has focused more on expanding its regional branches. These include, among others:
    - AQAP - Al Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula
    - AQIM - Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
    - AQIS - Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent
- 
- **Al-Shabaab** - An affiliate of Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab is a terrorist group based in Somalia. The group has some traction in diaspora communities but has been less successful with recruitment than ISIS. The group seeks to overthrow the Somali government.

## KEY NARRATIVES INCLUDE:

Specific ideological convictions differ from group to group and individual to individual. However, **Salafi-jihadist**<sup>3</sup> foreign terrorist organizations like ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab and their supporters generally embrace the following narratives:

### Violent "out-grouping":

Just like other types of targeted violence and terrorism, violent Salafi-jihadists posit the superiority of an "in-group" (in this case those that abide by their understanding of Islamic identity and practice) over an "out-group". This plays out on- and offline, with groups like ISIS regularly carrying out attacks against Shi'a Muslims and non-Islamic faith communities, while affiliates and supporters online may refer to those they deem to be part of the "out-group" with dehumanizing terms like "filth".

### Anti-secularism:

Violent extremists affiliated with or supportive of foreign terrorist groups like ISIS generally perceive secular and democratic rule to be illegitimate. This was particularly fundamental to ISIS's ideology, manifested in its strategic focus on **state-building** and narratives that posit the necessity of a "Caliphate" as a means for implementing what they perceive to be proper Islamic governance.

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<sup>3</sup> Salafi-jihadism believes in the implementation of puritanical interpretations of Islamic governance achieved specifically through a violent understanding of jihad. For more on Salafi-jihadism, read Dr. Shiraz Maher's ["Salafi-Jihadism: the History of an Idea"](#).

### Anti-liberalism:

Corresponding with anti-secular and anti-Western narratives, affiliates and supporters of groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda generally understand liberalism to be comprised of immoral Western values that only corrupt or erode "proper" societal norms and religious practice.

### Gendered narratives:

ISIS in particular has proven apt at disseminating gendered narratives that seek to recruit women to their cause. These [include](#):

- **A rejection of Western feminism:**

Tying in with narratives that claim liberalism is a Western-centric ideology that teaches immoral values, gendered narratives posit feminism as Western-oriented and therefore exclusionary of non-Western communities. Related narratives may point to feminist perceptions of women's rights and freedoms as teaching corrupt values that actually do women harm in the long-term. These narratives find success especially when they appeal to feelings of social exclusion and discrimination, where Western liberalism and feminism are blamed (at least in part) for instances of discrimination faced by minority women in Europe and the US.

- **The importance of women in state-building efforts:**

Among ISIS's gendered narratives were calls for women to migrate to the "Caliphate" to help birth and raise the next generation of ISIS fighters. While some women that joined were indeed restricted (or restricted themselves) to household roles, there is a commonly-held misconception that women who joined ISIS played no role in the "Caliphate" beyond that. On the contrary, women were also involved in implementing ISIS's ideology in the "Caliphate", with the all-women "al-Khansaa Brigade" serving as morality police specifically on women's dress and character. Women were also involved in [recruitment](#), with some operating online forums to propagate and convince others to join.

### Practice Tip:

Ensure you and your team are competent and familiar with cultures that differ from your own, and remember you are not trying to change someone's cultural viewpoints. You are trying to build a space in which the individual you are working with feels safe. The more you familiarize yourself with their (cultural) beliefs, the more you will be able to build a meaningful relationship with them.



## CONSPIRACY CASE STUDY - WESTERN "INDOCTRINATION":

### What is it?

Ideologues and adherents of groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda claim the West is waging a "[war on Islam](#)". They may position LGBTQ identities, feminism and other values that they perceive to be inherently contradictory to their worldviews as corruptive Western values that "indoctrinate" today's youth as part of this "war". Conspiracism around a coordinated, Western plot against Islam is also used to discredit groups and ideologues that don't abide by restrictive, Salafi-Jihadist understandings of Islam. ISIS, for example, [accused the Muslim Brotherhood of being an American project to "alter the tenets and teachings of Islam"](#).



# EMERGING THREAT CONSIDERATIONS - THE "MANOSPHERE":

*An umbrella term referring to inter-connected, misogynistic communities online, the "manosphere" ranges in severity from broad anti-feminism to violent rhetoric towards women. This section looks at the more divisive components of the "manosphere".*

## WHY THIS TOPIC?

Since 2014, [several people have been killed in violence related to the "Involuntary Celibate" \(Incel\) community](#).

As a result of violent Incel-related activity, TVTP practitioners and researchers are increasingly treating Incels and the broader "manosphere" as part of the targeted violence threat landscape. This is also reflected in policy responses to Incel violence - in [Canada](#), for example, Incel incidents have been classified as terrorism, while in the [UK](#), Incel violence falls into the category of "Mixed, Unclear and Unstable" extremist threats.

However, before delving into this topic, it is important to caveat that some practitioners have urged caution with framing responses to Incel violence within broader counter-extremism and counter-terrorism strategies. Firstly, the motivation to push forward an ideological cause isn't always explicit in Incel-related violence, especially in comparison to e.g., white supremacist mobilization, which is generally rooted in an ideological desire to fight what is perceived to be a systematic decimation of white populations.

Secondly, violence is committed by only a very small fraction of the wider Incel community, and, as noted, many Incels vehemently condemn violence committed by self-identified members of the community. Practitioners have cautioned that [most Incels are much more likely to self-harm than to harm others](#), and that positioning them as part of the broader targeted violence threat landscape risks causing self-identified Incels to avoid seeking help for fear of being treated as a threat of violence.

While these caveats are important, Incel-related violence and how easily accessible extreme misogynistic content is in Incel forums must be addressed, as does the broader misogynistic landscape in which Incels exists. **This section therefore looks at the so-called "manosphere", with a focus on Incels but also briefly covering other related subcultures.**



### Did you know?

While most Incels condemn acts of violence by other self-identified Incels, as well as the increasingly misogynistic steer of the community overall, a minority have lionized the perpetrators of these acts of violence. For example, Elliot Rodger of the 2014 Isla Vista attack is referred to by some Incels as "Supreme Elliot Rodger" and/or "The Supreme Gentleman".

## SUBMOVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- **Involuntary Celibates**

"Involuntary Celibates", or "Incels" for short, [“forge a sense of identity around a perceived inability to form sexual or romantic relationships”](#). Incels may blame themselves, society at large and specifically women (most self-identified Incels are men) for these perceived failures, and therefore feel a bitterness towards women and themselves.

While Incel-related violence is a relatively new phenomenon, the label of “Incel” has been used since the 1990s, when a Canadian college student [created a website](#) titled the “Involuntary Celibacy Project”. The website sought to help those struggling with dating and intimate relations with others. The first Incel forum was therefore intended as a support community for individuals to exchange experiences with and anxieties about dating. It wasn’t until the [early 2000s](#) that spin-offs of the original forum arose - these forums were less-moderated, allowing misogynistic views to persist and ultimately steering Incel communities more and more towards anti-women sentiment.

Today, Incel forums are overwhelmingly male-dominated and rife with misogyny that ranges in severity from broader generalizations of women to pro-rape discourse. While many users in Incel forums condemn violent rhetoric and behavior, violent Incel discourse and propaganda is now readily available across [Incel-dedicated sites](#), fringe platforms like [4chan](#) and [8Kun](#), as well as more mainstream sites like [Reddit](#).

- **Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW)**

An [exclusively male](#) movement that blames feminism for the perceived decline of modern men. However, while Men's Rights Activists (see page 17) and related anti-feminist groups celebrate patriarchy and may advocate for confining women to the domestic sphere, MGTOW affiliates advocate for a world [without women](#), or male separatism. They believe that existing societal structures are impossible to change, and that the only remaining avenue to protect male interests is to segregate along gender lines. MGTOW narratives are therefore full of misogynistic fear-mongering, where

### **Did you know?**

In addition to being exclusively male, **MGTOW** have strict entry requirements and have provided potential affiliates with [stages](#) through which they can track their commitment to the MGTOW cause:

**0) Stage Zero:** "Situational Awareness" - the "red pill" has been taken - gender equality is understood as a feminist lie.

**1) Stage One:** "Rejection of Long-Term Relationships" - the individual abstains from long-term intimate relations with women.

**2) Stage Two:** "Rejection of Short-Term Relationships" - the individual abstains from all sexual relations with women, including one-time hookups.

**3) Stage Three:** "Economic Disengagement" - the individual harbors anti-government sentiment, where the government is deemed a tyrannical force seeking to drain its citizens financially. The individual commits to earning no more than is necessary to sustain him.

**4) Stage Four:** "Societal Disengagement" - the final stage, where the individual commits to separatism by refusing to interact with society.



women are stereotyped as deceptive, incapable of honesty, "out to get men" and where society is positioned as matriarchal. MGTOW believe that men are victims of **gynocentrism** (see page 18), and that men are entrapped by modern society as silent breadwinners.

- **Men's Rights Activists (MRA)**

MRA communities differ from Incels in that affiliates do not define themselves by the status of their sex life or intimate relations with women. Rather than focusing on sex, MRAs criticize gender equality, women's rights, and women's status in society more broadly. Some believe, for example, that women's suffrage, women's right to education and to a life in the public sphere rather than just domestic sphere have all contributed to a declining status and power of men in society, and that this needs to be reversed.

MRA movements also generally make a more concerted effort than other "manosphere" communities to "formalize" their discourse by framing it within academic terms, thus adding a false sense of legitimacy to their claims. For example, *A Voice for Men*, one of the most visible MRA websites, claims its mission statement is to "provide education and encouragement to men and boys: to lift them above the din of misandry, to reject the unhealthy demands of **gynocentrism** in all its forms...". While this seems harmless, the site is full of misogynistic content. In an audio recording on the site, for example, the site's founder states that "p\*\*\*\* is the only real empowerment women will ever know", effectively belittling women down to sexual objects.

- **Pick-Up Artists (PUAs)**

PUAs compare to Incel communities in that they feel men are owed sex and that women therefore need to be sexually available at all times. As their names suggest, PUAs focus on teaching others how to manipulate women into sex. Arguably the most visible name within these communities is "[Roosh V](#)", founder of the *Return of Kings* website. Derogatory, homophobic terms like "soy boy" and "faggot" are commonplace across the site while women and feminism are blamed for what is perceived to be an increasing intolerance towards men. The site also contains articles that mock sexual violence and sexual consent, claiming among others that all girls have a rape story because it is how they compete with one another.

### CONSPIRACY CASE STUDY - "BRANCH-SWINGING":

#### What is it?

Some Incels, MRAs and PUAs believe women are driven entirely by the physical and financial status of men. They may claim, for example, that women will only have sexual relationships with "Alpha" males (also referred to as "Chads"), who are typically considered to be tall men of a muscular physique, "chiseled" jaw and of good financial status.

Women may therefore be derogatorily referred to as "branch-swingers" by members of the "manosphere", in reference to the belief that they are hypergamous (see page 18) and will always look for (or "swing to") a male partner who they feel is superior (in looks and financial status) to their current partner.



## KEY NARRATIVES INCLUDE:

- **Society is gynocentric:**

Defined as being “dominated by or emphasizing feminine interests or a feminine point of view”, some "manosphere" movements, like MRAs, argue that society is gynocentric and therefore favors women over men. Female privilege is therefore seen as reality, whereas male privilege is seen a lie espoused by mainstream media and by feminists. MRAs argue that gynocentrism is prevalent across all aspects of life, particularly in courts of law, which they accuse of favoring women especially in divorce or rape cases. Many MRA affiliates believe modern marriage is also gynocentric, in that it is burdensome on men financially and emotionally. That said, not all MRA affiliates are opposed to marriage so long as the husband-wife dynamic is ideologically appropriate. There are a number of articles on MRA sites on how to choose an appropriate wife, for example, and how to address and handle your marriage after you’ve been redpilled.

- **Women are hypergamous:**

Taken from animal biology and applied to women, hypergamy is the concept of “mating upwards”. Incels and other "manosphere" communities believe women are hypergamous and therefore will always seek relationships with men of higher status than themselves, or than the men they are currently with. This, in turn, stereotypes women as disloyal, opportunistic, and greedy. Incels may therefore also refer to women as "branch-swingers" or "vine-swingers" to enforce the belief that women are always seeking "better" men, and are therefore always "swinging" from one relationship to the other for opportunistic reasons, be it money, looks, or the status a certain (Alpha) partner may give them. **The belief that women are hypergamous is core to Incel ideology.**

- **An individual's worth is determined by their "sexual market value":**

Prevalent especially in Incel and PUA forums, "sexual market value" (or "SMV" for short) is used as a metric to measure an individual’s "sexual desirability". Categorizing individual's by their SMV is also common, where "Alphas" are considered to have the highest SMV, followed by "Betas" and "Omegas". **In Incel communities, one’s SMV is considered the primary measure of their worth.**

### **Practice Tip:**

Incels in particular are extremely self-deprecating. According to William Costello, 34% of self-identified Incels could be clinically diagnosed with severe depression, and 42% with moderately severe depression. A survey of an Incel forum found 82.3% of respondents (all self-identified Incels) had considered suicide. Incel forums are therefore also rife with often graphic discussions around suicide and self-harm. Unfortunately, many Incels are hesitant to seek help for fear of being stigmatized due to the violent actions of other self-identified Incels. Be considerate of this as you develop your TVTP program, particularly how you frame the challenge you seek to address. You may want to avoid language like "threat" to mitigate against risks of stigmatizing the groups you intend to work with.



## Chapter Two - Targeted Violence Online

The aptness with which violent extremist groups and individuals navigate and exploit digital platforms makes an understanding of what the threat looks like online essential for any TVTP practitioner. This chapter provides an overview of how targeted violence and terrorism manifest online, specifically how different mainstream and "fringe" platforms are used.

### ONLINE PLATFORMS AND TARGETED HATE AND VIOLENCE

#### Mainstream



The use of mainstream platforms (like **Facebook**, **Twitter**, **YouTube**, **Instagram** and **TikTok**) by bad actors has been well-documented. For extremist groups, while alt/fringe platforms provide "["havens where they can do \[and say\] what they please"](#)", **mainstream platforms are an important vehicle for increasing traffic to and visibility of their cause online due to the large user bases of these platforms.**



While many of the mainstream platforms have strict content moderation policies, mal-intended actors have successfully bypassed these by, for example, cloaking content (e.g., covering the "ISIS flag" in an ISIS propaganda video), purposely misspelling words or using codes (e.g., white supremacists often use "((( )))" to refer to Jewish people), exploiting specific platform features, like Instagram's "Story" function, and co-opting/hijacking trending hashtags, which is a particularly common tactic in disinformation campaigns.

#### Fringe Imageboard Websites



Imageboard websites are messaging sites where visitors can start discussions on various "boards" about specific topics, to which other users can contribute. Typically, users post text comments often accompanied by images, memes or links to other content on other websites or platforms. You don't need an account to post on imageboard websites like **4chan** and **8kun** (previously called 8chan), giving users total anonymity. Coupled with the lack of moderation, this means violent content is easily accessible on these sites: manifestos and the writings of perpetrators of terrorist attacks, including the 2019 attack on the Muslim community of Christchurch, New Zealand, [remain](#) on these platforms.

**Practice Tip:** Keep abreast of mainstream and fringe platforms - this will not only help you to develop an understanding of where an individual's social media usage may be part of the problem (e.g., if they spend a lot of time on a fringe site that has little diversity in the views expressed), it will also help you connect and build a relationship with the individual. Also, remember that platforms considered "fringe" may feel "mainstream" to those using them - for example, they may use it more frequently than a mainstream platform, and may find it fulfills their social needs more.



## Fringe Video-Hosting Sites



**BitChute** is a video-hosting service that was created in 2017 with the purpose of providing an [alternative to mainstream platforms such as YouTube](#), and has less-stringent content moderation guidelines. Because of this, the platform is favored by conspiracy theorists and extremists, and videos that have been removed by mainstream platforms often remain unchecked and available on BitChute, garnering millions of views in the process.



**Rumble** has become a favored platform amongst anti-vaccination conspiracy theorists and is known to be a [hotbed of medical misinformation and conspiratorial content](#).



**DLive** is a live video streaming service founded in 2017. It was originally designed for video gamers, allowing users to livestream themselves playing games while talking to an audience. However, the platform's barebone terms of service and lax implementation of already minimal moderation guidelines have led to it becoming a popular alternative to more rigorously moderated mainstream platforms (such as YouTube and Facebook) among right wing extremists, who use it to stream offline activities like political debates or rallies, as well as hateful, racist and conspiratorial content. At least nine individuals involved in the storming of the US Capitol on 6 January 2021 [used DLive to livestream events](#) around Washington DC and inside the Capitol building.

## Social Networking Sites



**Gab** is a social networking, microblogging platform. The platform's [absolutist approach to free speech](#) has attracted a large user base of extremists who have been banned from other platforms, including neo-Nazis, white supremacists and white nationalists. Gab plays host to extreme content such as indoctrinating cartoons and revisionist documentaries, and [antisemitic content is rife](#).



**Parler** is a social networking platform that has a microblogging format similar to Twitter and labels itself the "world's premier free speech platform". It has a [significant user base of conspiracy theorists and REMVE actors](#), which range from anti-government extremists (such as Three Percenters and Oath Keepers militias) to QAnon supporters and supporters of white supremacists groups such as Atomwaffen Division, all of whom openly promote their ideologies on the platform.



**MeWe** is a social media and networking platform that dubs itself the "anti-Facebook" due to its user-privacy focus, with no targeted ads or sharing of user data. The platform's lax approach to misinformation has made it [popular amongst REMVE and militia groups and conspiracy theorists](#), including QAnon adherents and anti-vaxxers.



**MyMilitia** is a discussion site and internet forum that connects users with local militias across the US and is popular with right wing extremists and militia movements. The site not only provides a space for militias to grow and to mobilise, it ["is also a repository of information about building weapons, hosting PDFs of texts like The Anarchist Cookbook instructing users how to create homemade grenades, flamethrowers and explosives"](#).

## Instant Messaging Platforms



**Telegram** is a messaging and content-sharing app that offers encrypted messaging as part of its services. The app offers public and private channels and also offers users an increased level of privacy than other platforms through its end-to-end encrypted [private chat function](#).

In recent years, it has become a key communication tool used by radical and extremist groups across the world. It came to public attention due to its [popularity amongst ISIS adherents](#) but has increasingly hosted right wing extremists too, including [white supremacist groups](#) such as those related to Atomwaffen Division and Siege Culture. REMVE actors have used the platform to [share links of where to buy weapons and in the months preceding the storming of the US Capitol on 6 January](#), individuals used private chats on Telegram to [organize and coordinate their efforts](#). Due to Telegram's limited content moderation policies, it has become [a central platform on which white supremacist actors can gain momentum](#). Their activity on the platform ranges from general ideological discussions to the promotion of political violence, the glorification of terrorist attacks, and even sharing guides which help individuals prepare for violence.



**Discord** is an encrypted chat service that was initially designed for gamers and became [popular with alt-right groups](#), becoming a central communication channel for white nationalists and neo-Nazis due to the anonymity and privacy it offers. As well as communicating through voice calls, video calls, text messaging, media or as part of communities called "servers", users can communicate through private, invitation-only chat groups invisible to those outside the app. Discord was the [primary platform used to plan the fatal 2017 "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia](#). Following the events in Charlottesville, [Discord began to remove alt-right and neo-Nazi groups](#) and has since been used less prominently by alt-right groups.

## Forums

Some online forums have been directly established for the purpose of openly speaking about and sharing extremist ideologies or harmful content more broadly (e.g. **Stormfront**, which is one of the largest white supremacist websites globally), while others are created for mainstream use (e.g. **Reddit**) but may contain extremist sub-forums or message threads.

### **Spotlight - Incel Forums:**

Incel forums are platforms created by Incels exclusively for Incels and subsequently act as echo chambers of misogynistic content that ranges from broad generalizations about women to pro-rap and pro-violence rhetoric. Further, in incel forums, users that demonstrate more mainstream views are often accused of being "fakeincels" (fake incels) and blind to the reality of contemporary gender dynamics. Their comparably milder views and rhetoric are therefore disregarded and silenced in favor of more extreme narratives, thus speaking to the potential of such forums to radicalize and further anti-women attitudes.

### **Practice Tip:**

Even having the language to talk confidently about different platforms can help you connect with the individual(s) you are providing support for. This can also mitigate against risks of inter-generational challenges impeding the ability with which you, as the practitioner, develops a meaningful relationship with your clients, especially if you work with digitally native youth.





# VISUAL CULTURE ONLINE: MEMES

## What are Memes?

An internet meme is “[a piece of culture, typically a joke, which gains influence through online transmission](#)”. Internet memes are considered a part of Internet culture and are visual tropes that most often take the form of an image-text combination. Simple to understand and usually a comedic appropriation of broader culture, they can be “[mimicked or remixed](#)” (replicated or altered) by any online user.



### Did you know?

The [emergence and growth of the “alt right”](#) (“alternative right”) movement in the early 2010s was characterized by an extensive use of social media and online memes.

The alt-right’s use of memes is thought to have “[established a cultural policy that combined ideas of white supremacy with digital meme, game and hacker cultures in such a way that it provided fascist ideology with a new look or image...for the digital age](#)”. Memes have since become a central online communication, propagandizing and recruitment tool for REMVE and other actors in the targeted hate landscape.

As memes convey meaning through association rather than explicit argument, not all memes used by extremist actors are clearly violent, hateful or racist. Rather, they can take on these connotations when situated in a wider extremist context, only recognizable to someone embedded within that context. An example of this is the “Yes Chad” meme (pictured right): to the unfamiliar observer the image appears entirely innocuous, and it is often used on social media without any hateful or racist connotations. On [4chan](#), however, [a study highlighted](#) that the “Yes Chad” meme is “often used as the archetypical (white) face of /pol/ culture, with the blunt ‘yes’ caption often being used to succinctly undermine ‘leftist’ politics or to frankly affirm racist statements”.



## Why is this important?

The centrality of memes in extremist subcultures online rests in the conveyance of meaning through association rather than explicit argument, whereby familiarity is required to understand a meme’s specific message in a given context. In this way, memes [can help cultivate a sense of collective belonging](#), and an “imagined community”, amongst individuals participating in otherwise dispersed online networks. **A result of this is that supposedly humorous and harmless images in the cultural space can begin to shape an individual’s political worldview and opinions.** The participatory culture of memes reinforces this: as users become more active in the reproduction and continuation of in-jokes through editing existing memes, they also become [bound by dynamics of co-production as well as consumption](#). This contributes to the creation of an “in-group” status, which is critical in fostering an extremist mindset and has played a [particularly influential role in instances of radicalization into lone-actor terrorism](#).



## Chapter Three - Program Development Considerations

Chapters One and Two of this practice guide provide an overview of the current TVTP threat landscape. This chapter draws from global good practices for responding to the threat, including insights given by practitioners who attended the "Threat Landscape" workshop series hosted for the Practitioners Network by the McCain Institute. This chapter provides a series of practice tips as practitioners across different disciplines - from social work to education - seek to build their capacity to develop and deploy programs that address targeted hate and violence (or fold this into their existing programs).



### PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT:

#### **1. Familiarize yourself with the legal and socio-political context in which you work, particularly policy and security-approaches to targeted violence and terrorism, as well as general community receptiveness to TVTP.**

While local TVTP programs should ideally complement broader policy frameworks related to targeted violence and terrorism, be mindful of how you position your work. In some contexts, there may be hesitation with getting involved in any type of program - be it early prevention or intervention - that is at all affiliated with terms like "targeted violence", "extremism", and especially "terrorism".

#### **2. Map the services in your area and adopt a multi-disciplinary approach.**

Hateful views do not exist in a silo. Individuals that engage in hateful movements and/or ideology may struggle with other personal and environmental issues that are exacerbating their vulnerability to hateful narratives. This *may* be things like homelessness, mental ill-health, unemployment, a lack of pro-social networks, among others. A multi-disciplinary approach enables the provision of wraparound services that can address most, if not all, the needs of an individual. An important step in developing a multi-disciplinary approach is to conduct a **mapping exercise** of your local area to identify existing services that can be leveraged to respond.

#### **Did you know?**

The McCain Institute and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue developed a practice guide for the emerging Practitioners Network, which outlines steps to set up and deploy a multi-disciplinary team in interventions to prevent targeted violence and terrorism.



#### **3. As you map relevant services, consider the advantages and potential challenges of working with former extremists in your program.**

Former extremists have invaluable support to offer the wider landscape of TVTP programs. Their lived experiences can show others, whether it's individuals currently involved in extremist movements or their friends and family, that there is a way out. Former-led mentorship is therefore one avenue of support that may help individuals disengage and exit hate-based movements and ideologies.

However, there are also challenges associated with engaging formers in responses to targeted violence. For example, many formers have trauma from before, within or after involvement in the movement, but which is related to their involvement and may thus be triggered if they work closely with individuals currently involved in extremist movements. **Where formers are involved in TVTP, it is therefore essential that there are strong support systems in place to help them address the potential emotional toll of working with individuals currently engaged in the extremist ecosystem.**



## PROGRAM DELIVERY

### 4. Familiarize yourself with the coded language used by extremist communities on- and offline, as well as the culture of communication online.

Extremists across the spectrum use coded language and memes to express their ideological beliefs and/or conspiratorial worldviews. Being familiar with this language is an important step in being able to connect with individual(s) you are working with. The **function** of specific lexicon (rather than just the content) is also really important and may provide further insight into the individual's needs.

The **function** of coded language will differ between each individual and from movement to movement. For example, white supremacists may use e.g., "(((( )))" or "six gorrillion" to derogatorily refer to Jews and to express Holocaust denialism in a way that circumvents content moderation. Incels, on the other hand, often use coded language to self-deprecate, and to create a self-image that they are easily able to express to others in the community. Some Incels [add the suffix "cel" to other words](#) to categorize themselves further, for example, where different traits are alluded to as the cause for their celibacy. This includes:

- **Physical traits.** Examples include: "acnecel", "heightcel", "baldcel", "stuttercel".
- **Harmful or illegal desires.** "Pedocel", for example, is short for "pedophile Incel". Also prevalent is "rapecel", or Incels that glorify sexual violence and in some cases advocate for the legalization of rape. These are a very small minority within Incel communities.
- **Other identities.** Some south Asian Incels call themselves "currycels", for example, while Incels of southeast Asian descent may call themselves "ricecels". This may also refer to religious identity (e.g. "Muslimcel").
- **Coping mechanisms** Incels use to deal with their perceived sexual "failings" (e.g. "gymcel", "escortcel").

Incels may also use the suffix "fuel" to refer to self-harm and suicide ideation, where something that

#### Did you know?

"Pilling" language is common across the movements outlined in Chapter One of this practice guide, where the "red pill" is used per movement to refer to an openness and acceptance of their worldviews. If you are "redpilled", you are therefore considered to be "initiated", having seen and accepted whatever "truth" or worldview espoused by the given movement. If you are "bluepilled", you are considered to be blind to or dismissive of this "truth". **Examples of other coded language used per threat "type" are provided in Annex B.**



exacerbates suicidal thoughts is referred to as "suifuel" or "ropefuel". In these cases, an understanding of the function behind the language used may help practitioners identify and unpack concerns and grievances that are catalyzing an individual's vulnerability to engaging in harmful groups and narratives.

## **5. Be culturally and gender-sensitive.**

Your team should be equipped to work with individuals of different cultural, religious, ethnic, socio-political and other backgrounds, and should have the training and interpersonal skills to navigate these differences responsibly. Multi-disciplinary approaches can also support in this context, where different institutions and services can be leveraged to accommodate the personal needs and sensitivities of the individual(s) referred to the program. You may, for example, need to leverage someone who is versed in the cultural and/or religious background of the individual that requires support. By having these services pre-mapped and integrated into the broader infrastructure of your program, you will be able to acquire the necessary support more efficiently.

## **6. If an individual expresses conspiratorial worldviews, evaluate these rather than passing judgement.**

If you outright deny the conspiratorial claims an individual makes, you may only be reaffirming their views - they may, for example, dismiss you and your denial as part of the conspiracy. This, in turn, will make building a meaningful relationship with them all the more difficult. Instead, consider adopting an evaluatory approach, with the objective being to make them more curious and critical of the claims they are making. This creates an entry point to explore and challenge their claims, while mitigating against risks of them switching off from the discussion entirely as a consequence of their views not being taken seriously.

## **7. Support the family and friends of individuals you are working with.**

In some cases, families may exacerbate an individual's vulnerability to harm, in others, they may serve as protective factors. In both scenarios, it is important to work with the families of the individuals, as well as their other personal networks, as part of the wraparound service you are providing. At the very least, working with families on the emotional impact of the situation on them and building their capacity to serve as pro-social, protective relationships that mitigate against risk of relapse will help facilitate a long-term response.

## **8. Adopt a goals-based and strengths-based approach.**

It may be helpful to frame your intervention as an alliance between you, the practitioner, and the individual receiving support. This positions the relationship between you and the individual in a positive manner and makes it clear from the onset that you have shared goals that you seek to achieve together. Take the following steps to cement this alliance- and goals-based approach:

- Agree on reasonable goals that cater to the strengths of the individual;
- Agree to a timeline for achieving these goals;
- Assign tasks (consider creative tasks too - see Point 9) that will help the individual feel they are achieving against those goals, thus motivating them with feelings of accomplishment;
- Check in regularly on the status of the goals and the individual's overall progress, and adapt the support being provided as needed.

## 9. Be creative, especially when you work with children.

Consider creative and/or performing arts activities to help children express themselves. This may be particularly helpful when working with individuals that are neurodivergent. Creative activities can also form a part of an individual's **aftercare\*** strategy.

### **\*Did you know?**

Aftercare is an essential part of the broader support package that an individual receives, and is concerned with long-term support and care. An appropriate aftercare strategy will help the individual transition from receiving direct, frequent one-to-one support, to a less intensive support provision. For more about aftercare and how to staff this, refer to the [read-ahead materials and video recording of the second workshop](#) delivered for the Prevention Practitioners Network.



## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### 10. Consider vicarious trauma and burnout, and try to implement a structure of support for you and the wider team you work with.

The field of TVTP is certainly not easy - it is ever-evolving and the nature of the subject-matter can have an emotional toll, especially on TVTP practitioners that identify with communities that face the brunt of the hate deployed by extremist and terrorist groups and individuals. Consider the following practical tips:

- Limit the amount of casework that you (and each of your team members) are involved in;
- Have dedicated "well-being check-ins" with your team;
- Try to source trauma training specifically on vicarious trauma;
- Create a 1-pager with signs and symptoms of burnout - post this somewhere visible to remind yourself (and your team) to be aware of burnout and to monitor known symptoms;
- Take part in local and national networks (like the Prevention Practitioners Network) to connect with other practitioners and share insights on how to protect against burnout.

### 11. Consider partnering with a subject-matter expert or expert organization to stay abreast of the ever-evolving threat landscape.

For example, targeted violence and terrorism have been marked by a "**post-organizational**" trend in recent years, where membership of, affiliation with, and support for specific groups has become more ambiguous. We see, for example, attacks being committed by individuals *without* strong ties to specific organizations, instead inspired by overarching ideologies and doctrines. Prominent examples include the attack in New Zealand in 2019 and affiliated attacks in Germany and the US in 2019 and 2020. In these cases, the perpetrators had little or no relationship with proscribed terrorist groups. Instead, their "manifestos" and social media activity suggested connections to (and being inspired by) loose transnational white supremacist networks that operate primarily online. **This has implications for TVTP practitioners, namely in how practitioners think about risk and needs assessment.** Determining whether or not an individual is being radicalized (or is already radicalized) may prove more difficult in the absence of a connection with known organizations, or in the absence of targeted violence propaganda produced and branded by known organizations.

# ANNEX A - TYPES OF FALSE CONTENT

## Satire

At the lower end of the threat spectrum, satire or parody - the use of humor or exaggeration to mock or criticize and individual or institution - often has no intention to cause harm, but nonetheless has the potential to fool. While such content isn't always intended to misinform, online content labeled as "satire" can be hateful, polarizing and divisive in certain contexts. Crucially, recognizing satire as such requires an understanding of the context of whatever point or person is being satirized. With social media allowing for mass- and quick-res sharing of posts to broad networks, contextual understanding often gets lost as more users get exposed to it, allowing for potentially harmful misinterpretation.

## False Connection

"False connection" refers to an increasingly prevalent disconnect between the title, caption or headings of a piece of content, and the actual body or substance of that content. Clickbait is a clear example, where e.g. YouTubers or tabloids use sensational or hyperbolic headlines to draw consumers to their content. Some users, however, may not dig into the accompanying content, thus taking the headline at face value, resulting in a simplistic and un-nuanced understanding of the topic being addressed.

## Misleading Content

Where a specific topic is framed in a certain way through the provision of incomplete information, e.g. "[by cropping photos, or choosing quotes or statistics selectively](#)".

## False Context

Where content is taken out of one context and placed into another. A common example is the use of images, where photos from specific stories or events are repurposed in content about different topics entirely.

## Imposter Content

Content authored by users that use the name, brand or identity of a public figure or organization to reach a certain audience and to add a sense of legitimacy, credibility and "weight" to a specific claim.

## Manipulated Content

Content that is altered to deceive or change its original meaning or to make a specific point. "[Deepfakes](#)", or video footage that is made to make it seem as if an individual said or did something they didn't, are an increasingly common and worrisome example of manipulated content. Deepfakes also demonstrate the increasingly sophisticated nature of false content.

## Fabricated Content

Content that is entirely false and doctored, but designed specifically to give a perception of legitimacy and credibility. Deepfakes can also fall into this category, as some deepfakes are entirely doctored and not manipulated versions of pre-existing footage.

# ANNEX B - KEY TERMS AND EXAMPLES OF CODED LANGUAGE

## WHITE SUPREMACIST AND ANTI-GOVERNMENT EXTREMIST TERMS AND PHRASES INCLUDE:

- **(((((**) - triple parenthesis are used to identify or refer to individuals believed to be Jewish.
- **1488** - refers to the 14 words (see below) and 88, which is code for "Heil Hitler" (H is the 8th letter of the English alphabet).
- **14 words** - white supremacist slogan coined by David Lane, which reads "we must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children".
- **20:4** - refers to April 20th, which was Hitler's birthday and is often celebrated in neo-Nazi forums.
- **311** - refers to the KKK (K is the 11th number of the English alphabet).
- **Accelerationism** - refers to the desire to hasten societal collapse (e.g. through a cycle of violence).
- **Blood and Soil / BH** - translation from the German "Blut und Boden", a term adopted by Nazis to enforce an ethnonationalist depiction of Germany. This is used by contemporary neo-Nazis.
- **Boogaloo / Big Igloo / Big Luau** - Boogaloo is an Internet meme that refers to a second civil war (in some forums this is used as a more explicit call for a race war). Big Igloo and Big Luau are plays on this term.
- **Boogaloo Boys, Boojahideen, Boog Boys, Boog Brothers** - members of the Boogaloo movement.
- **Eurabia** - a conspiracy theory coined in the early 2000s by Bat Ye'or (aka. Gisèle Littman), who argued that Western countries are slowly being brought under Islamic rule. **Islamification, Islamization, Shari'afication, "creeping Shari'ah"** are also used to this end.
- **"joo" or "juu"** - derogatory plays on "Jew".
- **JQ** - short for the "Jewish Question", which was part of a long-running debate in Europe in the 18th to 20th centuries about the civil, legal, national and political status of Jews in Europe. This has been used by contemporary white supremacists to dehumanize Jewish people.
- **HH** - short for "Heil Hitler".
- **"Holo hoax" or "Hollow hoax"** - short for "Holocaust Hoax", used to express Holocaust denial.
- **KEK / Kekistan** - a satirical meme that originated on 4chan's /pol/ board according to which Pepe



the Frog (see below) is a deity living in the invented country of Kekistan, a utopia for online-trolls.

- **Normies** - derogatory term to refer to individuals that don't adhere to white supremacist or anti-government ideologies.
- **Pepe the Frog** - a popular Internet meme used in a variety of contexts. In recent years it has also been appropriated by white supremacists, particularly those from the "alt-right," who use it in racist, antisemitic or other hateful contexts.
- **Race Realism** - euphemism used for racist beliefs about the genetic inferiority of certain racial and ethnic groups, particularly in relation to intelligence.
- **RAHOWA** - short for Racial Holy War.
- **Remigration** - a non-violent form of ethnic cleansing that calls for forced deportation of (non-white) migrant communities in effort to build ethnically or culturally homogeneous societies.
- **Remove Kebab** - A meme referring to a Serbian anti-Muslim propaganda song still nodded to in white supremacist circles. The song featured in the Christchurch perpetrator's livestream of his attacks.
- **Siege culture** - *SIEGE* by James Mason is a compilation of neo-Nazi essays. The book graphically incites violences against Jewish and Black communities across the US, claiming "civil war, a total revolution" would give these communities the "death they so richly deserve". The book is so influential in white supremacist circles that it has inspired what is now dubbed "siege culture", referring to violent accelerationist groups and their forums online.
- **Snowflakes** - derogatory term for liberals or left-wingers, used to denote "weakness" or someone easily provoked.
- **Soy Boy** - a derogatory term for individuals that identify as (or are thought to identify as) LGBTQ.
- **The Great Replacement** - a conspiracy that claims white European populations are being deliberately replaced at an ethnic and cultural level through immigration and the growth of minority communities.
- **The New World Order** - a conspiracy that claims a shadowy, global elite is trying to implement a one-world government.
- **The Turner Diaries** - The Turner Diaries is a foundational text of contemporary white supremacist movements in the US. Written by William Pierce, leader of the neo-Nazi National Alliance until his death in 2002, the fiction novel tells the story of Eric Turner, who, as part of a white supremacist revolutionary army, helps overthrow the US government and implement an Aryan republic.
- **White Genocide** - core to the US white supremacist ecosystem is the "white genocide" conspiracy, which ["warns that 'the white race' is endangered by a changing demographic landscape caused by immigration and interracial relationships"](#). This relates to "The Great Replacement" conspiracy, however "The Great Replacement" started in and is focused on Europe.

See also the ADL's [Glossary of Extremism](#).

- **White Power** - common white supremacist motto.
- **WP** - short for "white pride".
- **WPWW** - short for "White Pride World Wide".
- **ZOG** - short for "Zionist Occupied Government", an antisemitic conspiracy that claims the US government is controlled by Jews.

## "MANOSPHERE"-RELATED TERMS AND PHRASES:

### Related to status:

- **Alphas** - men considered to be sexually "successful", generally attributed to their looks and/or financial and social status. Most Incel forums consider chiseled, muscular features, a wide jaw and strong social or financial status as Alpha traits.
- **Betas** - Incels identify as Betas, believing they are celibate because they don't exhibit Alpha traits. Women, who are considered hypergamous are accused of disproportionately favoring or making themselves sexually available for Alphas.
- **Omegas** - Similar to a beta, but used to refer specifically to men who struggle to interact women at all (sexually or otherwise).
- **Chads** - a similar concept to "Alphas" above, Chads are men that Incels deem traditionally handsome and Incels assume to be sexually successful. Chads may be referred to with admiration or mockingly.
- **Stacys** - the female equivalent to a "Chad". Incels believe Stacys will only engage with Alphas or "Chads".
- **Beckys** - women considered to be more "basic" and less attractive than Stacys.

-cel: Some Incels [add the suffix "cel" to other words](#) to categorize themselves. This includes:

- **Physical traits they deem responsible for their involuntary celibacy.** Examples include: "acnecel", "heightcel", "baldcel", "stuttercel".
- **Harmful or illegal desires.** "Pedocel", for example, is short for "pedophile Incel". Also prevalent is "rapecel", or Incels that glorify sexual violence and in some cases advocate for the legalization of rape. These are a very small minority within Incel communities.
- **Other identities.** Some south Asian Incels call themselves "currycels", for example, while Incels of southeast Asian descent may call themselves "ricecels". This may also refer to religious identity (e.g. "Muslimcel").

- **Coping mechanisms** Incels use to deal with their perceived sexual “failings” (e.g. “gymcel”, “escortcel”).
- **Incel status** - some Incels may accuse others of being “fakecels”. Other examples include “nearcels”, which is used to refer to those who rarely have sex but don’t quite qualify as Incels, and “wizardcel”, which is an Incel who is a virgin at 30+ years old.

#### Other terms and suffixes:

- **-maxxing**: suffix used to indicate that an Incel is trying to improve an aspect or multiple aspects of their lives in order to achieve sexually. Examples include “looksmaxxing” and “gymmaxxing”, where Incels strive to “better” their physical appearance, and “moneymaxxing”, where an Incel tries to improve his financial status in order to increase their dating “game”.
- **-fuel**: generally used to refer to suicide. If something is considered “suifuel” or “ropefuel”, it is deemed to contribute to or cause suicidal thoughts or behavior.
- **Just Be White (JBW)**: referring to the belief that women will always choose white men over others.
- **All women are like that (AWALT)**: used to stereotype women, typically used in reference to the belief that all women are hypergamous.

## "PILLING" LANGUAGE

Terminology used in Incel and other "manosphere" forums, often reference different colored pills, each of which refers to a different level of exposure to and/or acceptance of what these groups deem to be reality. These metaphorical pills are inspired by the film *The Matrix*, in which the protagonist is offered a blue pill or a red pill, the latter of which will show him how the world really is. In this vein, affiliates of these different online communities refer to being "redpilled" as recognizing and embracing their worldview. **"Pilling" language as such is also used by REMVE actors and, increasingly, by internationally-inspired extremists.**

Importantly, given the popularity of the film that inspired this terminology, if an individual uses such language it does not mean they necessarily associate with hateful movements. "Pilling" language therefore needs to be understood in the broader context of how it is used.

- **The Red Pill:**  
The red pill is essentially an acceptance of the worldviews put forth by whatever individual or group is using the term. In the context of the "manosphere", for example, the red pill is recognizing among others that feminism is harmful to men, that men are the victims of a gynocentric world, and, especially amongst Incels and PUAs, that men are entitled to sex and that women should therefore be sexually available to them. Importantly, the red pill is used not only to denote abidance by these narratives, but also as a call to action to further disseminate them. Many Incel forums and MRA websites now feature

videos or threads about "how to redpill" others, especially women. Similarly, some sites directly call to its visitors to "take the red pill", where the red pill is offered as an explanation for and solution to all the woes and ills of men, whether that's unhappiness in marriage, unemployment or self-esteem. Finally, individuals that consider themselves "redpilled" may refer to those that aren't as "**normies**" or as "**bluepilled**", usually derogatorily.

- **The Blue Pill:**

The blue pill sits opposite the red pill. If you are bluepilled, you are considered to be ignorant of how the world really is. In other words, you don't abide by the worldview put forth by those that consider themselves redpilled.

- **The Black Pill:**

The black pill is not as common across all components of the "manosphere" as the red pill is. Most notably, it is used by Incels to refer to hopelessness – that there is no way out of being an Incel. While both redpilled and blackpilled Incels are unhappy with being "involuntarily celibate", those that identify as redpilled generally feel there are ways out of that status, while those that identify as blackpilled believe "[that their situation is permanent and inescapable](#)". Dissimilar to MRAs and PUAs, Incel forums are therefore often rife with imagery and mentions of suicide, of "LDAR" (lie down and rot) or of "going ER", in which ER refers to Elliot Rodger of the Isla Vista killings.

- **The Pink Pill:**

As [noted by the ADL](#), "while many Incels argue that women by definition cannot be Incels, since there will always be Incels willing to sleep with women, femcels (female Incels) do make up a small subset of Incel culture". The pink pill is used by female Incels essentially the same way the black pill is used by male Incels – it is the belief that nothing will change their situation and they will never be considered desirable by men.

- **The Rape Pill:**

the rape pill is used exclusively amongst a subset of the Incel community (rapecels) that believe male-female sexual relations should always be decided by the man and that female consent is therefore not necessary.

# ANNEX C - FURTHER READING RECOMMENDATIONS

## Relevant Resources Created for the Prevention Practitioners' Network:

The following resources were created for the Prevention Practitioners' Network by ISD in partnership with the McCain Institute and the Network's Steering Committee of violence prevention experts. All of the published resources can be found on the Network's [website](#).

- [Interventions to Prevent Targeted Violence](#)
- [The Threat Landscape: White Supremacy and Anti-Government Violence](#)
- [The Threat Landscape: Internationally-Inspired Terrorism](#)
- [The Threat Landscape: Incels and Misogynist Violent Extremism](#)
- [The Threat Landscape: the Role of Mis-, Dis- and Mal-Information in Targeted Violence and Terrorism](#)

## General Tools, Toolkits and Databases:

- [Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States](#) by the US Department of Homeland Security.
- [Homegrown Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators – 2019 Edition](#) by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.
- [Global Terrorism Database](#) by The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism at the University of Maryland.
- [Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons](#) by the UN Office for Drugs and Crime.
- [Mapping Militants by the Center for International Security and Cooperation](#) at Stanford University.
- [Resource Library](#) by the ADL.
- [Glossary of Extremism](#) by the ADL.



## About White Supremacist and Anti-Government Narratives and Groups:

- [A Dark and Constant Rage: 25 Years of Right-Wing Terrorism in the United States](#) by the ADL.
- [“Accelerationism in America: Threat Perceptions”](#) by the Global Network on Extremism & Technology (GNET).
- [“Atomwaffen and the SIEGE parallax: how one neo-Nazi’s life’s work is fuelling a younger generation”](#) by the SPLC.
- [“COVID-19 Disinformation Briefing - Far-Right Mobilisation”](#) by ISD.
- [New Hate and Old: The Changing Face of American White Supremacy Report](#) by the ADL.
- [“Popular Among Antigovernment Extremists, ‘Second Amendment Sanctuary’ Resolutions Pose Risks”](#) by the SPLC.
- [“Special Report: the Atomwaffen Division: the Evolution of the White Supremacy Threat”](#) by the Soufan Center.
- [“The Alt-Right is Killing People”](#) by the SPLC.
- [“The Great Replacement”](#) by ISD.
- [“The Long Road to the Capitol”](#) three-part blog series by ISD.
- [““There is no political solution’: Accelerationism in the White Power Movement”](#) by the SPLC..
- [“Think Global, Act Local: Reconfiguring Siege Culture”](#) by Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST).
- [“Uniting for Total Collapse: The January 6th Boost to Accelerationism”](#) by Brian Hughes and Cynthia Miller-Idriss for the Combating Terrorism Center.
- [“Visions of Chaos: Weighing the Violent Legacy of Iron March”](#) by SPLC.
- [“White Supremacists Embrace ‘Accelerationism’”](#) by the ADL.
- [“White Supremacists and the Weaponization of the Coronavirus”](#) - intel brief by the Soufan Center.
- [“White Supremacists Embrace ‘Race War’”](#) by the ADL.



## The "Manosphere":

- ["Incels: A Guide to Symbols and Terminology"](#) by Moonshot CVE.
- Tim Squirrel's Definitive Guide to Incels:
  - Part One - [Incelocalypse](#)
  - Part Two - [The A-Z Incel Dictionary](#)
  - Part Three - [The History of Incel](#)
  - Part Four - [Why Can't Everyone be Blackpilled?](#)
  - Part Five - [Why are Incels Becoming More Extreme?](#)
- ["Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism - Overview and Recommendations for Addressing the Threat of Male Supremacist Violence"](#) by Megan Kelly, Alex DiBranco, Dr. Julia R. Decook for New America.
- ["Adding Fuel to the Fire: How Digital Media Has Transformed Inceldom"](#) by Victoria Munoz for Ethics and Society.
- ["Inceldom 101 & How You Can Help"](#) by Joyous Njoku for Risk Intervention & Safety Education.
- ["Incels: America's Newest Domestic Terrorism Threat"](#) by Bruce Hoffman and Jacob Ware for Lawfare Blog.
- ["Inside Incels' Looksmaxxing Obsession: Penis Stretching, Skull Implants and Rage"](#) by Jesselyn Cook for Huffington Post.
- ["Incels Categorize Women by Personal Style and Attractiveness"](#) by Rebecca Jennings for VOX.
- ["Is the 'incel' ideology a terror threat? That's the wrong question to ask"](#) by Milo Comerford and Jakob Guhl for the New Statesman.
- ["The Psychological Profile of Incels"](#) by William Costello.

## Internationally-Inspired Targeted Violence and Terrorism:

- [The Cloud Caliphate: Archiving the Islamic State in Real Time](#) by Moustafa Ayad (ISD), Amarnath Amarasingam (ISD) and Audrey Alexander (Program on Extremism).
- [The Fuouaris Upload](#) by Moustafa Ayad at ISD.
- [Terrorism in America after 9/11](#) by New America.
- [Homegrown: ISIS in America](#) by Seamus Hughes and Alexander .

- [Incitement: Anwar al-Awlaki's Western Jihad](#) by Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens.
- [Violent Extremism in America: Interviews with Former Extremists and Their Families on Radicalization and Deradicalization](#) by RAND.
- [Radicalization in Custody: Towards Data-Driven Terrorism Prevention in the United States Federal Correctional Facilities](#) by Bennett Clifford for the Program on Extremism.
- [Rethinking Transnational Terrorism: An Integrated Approach](#) by Martha Crenshaw for the United States Institute of Peace (USIP).
- [Returning Foreign Fighters and the Reintegration Imperative](#) by USIP.
- [The Challenge of Foreign Fighters: Repatriating and Prosecuting ISIS Detainees](#) by Vera Miranova for the Middle East Institute.
- [Women, Girls and Islamist Extremism](#) by the ISD.
- [Trial and Terror](#) by The Intercept.
- [ISIS in America](#) by the Program on Extremism.



# Prevention Practitioners Network

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