



BRAVE Schools

Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism in Schools
Strengthening schools' capacity for violence prevention

Why BRAVE Schools?

Students today are struggling in their mental health, social lives, and sense of belonging. Unfortunately, this increases their vulnerability to recruitment from hate groups, and students today report being regularly exposed to hate online. At the same time, mass shootings are increasing. Older teens are the age cohort most likely to engage in serious violence.

School communities provide vital support to youth. This project works with the whole school community to strengthen each school's resilience to violence and extremism.

Project Overview

- 1. Train and support a Care Team** to lead project implementation in each school
- 2. Engage students:** build awareness and involve them in violence prevention
- 3. Create a peer support network** amongst participating schools

OBJECTIVES

Raise awareness

- Learn to identify risk factors and early warning signs
- Understand factors that build student resilience

Strengthen processes

- Create/strengthen integrated systems that support struggling youth, assess behaviors, and provide tiered responses to prevent violence
- Co-design processes with students

Build resilience

- Embed proactive violence prevention strategies in the school culture
- Improve safety of school climate for everyone

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

- **More effective referral systems** for students at-risk of committing violence or being lured into extremist groups
- **Improved support** for staff roles in violence prevention
- **Active student participation** in violence prevention
- **Safer, more resilient school communities**

PROJECT COMPONENTS

The project includes approximately 10 hours of training (in person and online), ongoing consultation, and support for staff and student processes.



Violence Prevention Training

- Understanding how hate groups recruit youth
- Identifying early warning signs
- Evidence-based techniques for engaging youth who have been radicalized or are at risk



Support Systems & Conflict Management

- Workshop in conflict management, tailored to schools
- Dialogue facilitation with student groups
- Ongoing consultation with Care Team



Additional Resources

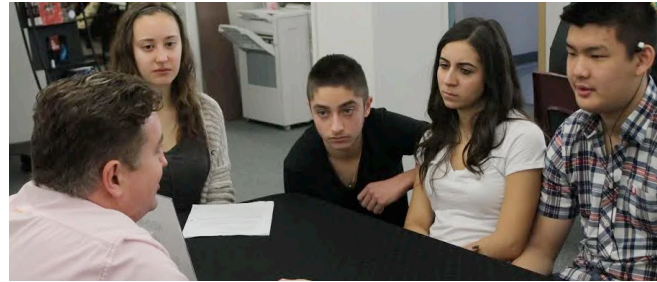
The project may be able to identify additional resources for staff, parents, and students from other organizations, most at no cost to schools.



TENTATIVE SCHEDULE 2023

- January:** Schools commit to project and sign MOU
- February:** Karuna meets with Care Teams in each school to launch project. Online training modules activated for Care Teams.
- Spring:** In-person training at end of school day and launch of peer support network for the Care Teams
- Fall:** In-person, half-day training for Care Teams
- Student group becomes involved in project
 - Student assembly to build awareness
 - Development of the peer support network
- Late fall:** Karuna supports sustainability of project outcomes

BRAVE Schools proactively engages students and staff in preventing violence and strengthening resilience.



Tony McAleer (left), project trainer, facilitating a discussion

ABOUT THE PROJECT TEAM



Karuna Center's dialogue-based approach to preventing violence has been honed through joint design and implementation of peacebuilding programs in more than 30 conflict-affected countries, including the United States. This includes dialogues, discussions, and community-building initiatives in a wide variety of contexts.



Tony McAleer is the author of *The Cure for Hate* and an international speaker who strives to educate individuals, families, communities, law enforcement, and governments that are struggling to grapple with white supremacist movements. Drawing upon his own journey of leaving a hate-based movement, Tony co-founded the not-for-profit *Life After Hate*, which helps other people leave white supremacist movements behind.



Robert Örell has more than two decades experience in the field of disengagement, rehabilitation, and reintegration of violent extremists in Europe and the United States. His recent work focuses on setting up exit programs for people in hate or extremist groups (drawing upon his experience as a former member in his youth), advising on policy guidelines and recommendations, online counseling, and understanding radicalization in online gaming communities.

WHAT PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS DO

Superintendent or Principal:

- Supports and guides the project

Care Team:

- Each school chooses a **5-person team** suited to that school. This could include faculty, nurse, counselors, administrators, etc—building on existing collaborations.
- The **Care Team** works closely with the project team: receiving training, supporting students, making referrals, and educating the school community

Students:

- The Care Team works with Karuna to convene a **student group** for dialogue about current referral processes and to identify student-friendly procedures
- The **broader student body** participates in a student assembly, a student-driven awareness campaign, and/or other means decided by each school



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