

# Operation250

*Educating to Prevent Another 250*

OP **250**

# Countering Violent Extremism | CVE

**Countering Violent Extremism, or CVE, refers to a holistic and societal approach to counterterrorism that seeks to prevent individuals from engaging in, or supporting politically/ ideologically motivated violence.**

# Radicalization & CVE

- **Radicalization: Embracing values and opinions about a particular belief, topic, and/or idea that can gradually becomes more extreme.**
  - **For example: Neo Nazism, animal rights, religion.**
- **Radicalization in America has increased in the last ten years, being enhanced by the internet and the free flow of ideas today.**

# Radicalization **Vs.** Terrorism

- **There is a connection between radical ideas and violence, however just because someone is “radicalized” does not mean they are a terrorist**
- **A majority of the people who are deemed “radical” do not participate in violence.**
- **There is no set definition of terrorism, but it involves the use of, or threat of violence to make a political change.**

# Radicalization

**44** Western youth have attempted to commit acts of terror in the West in the name of ISIS

**70.6%** of these youth were radicalized online



# Social Media and Radicalization

On Twitter, American white nationalist movements have grown by **600%** since 2012

**15.6** ISIS accounts tweets per day at its height

**11.8** White Nationalist accounts tweets per day

**12.1** Nazi accounts tweets per day



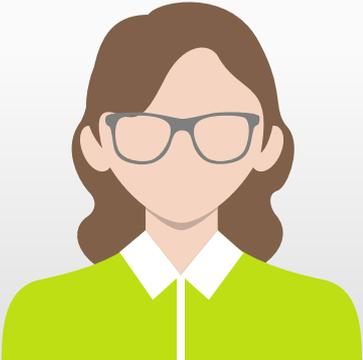
# Online Sexual Grooming



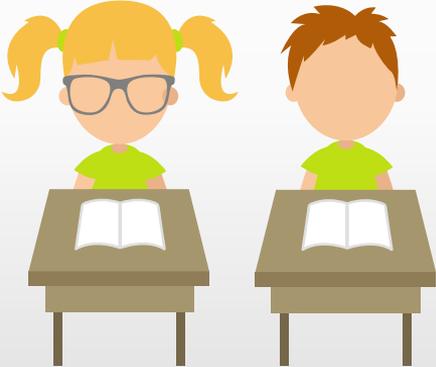
**8%** of 11-16 year olds in the UK have received unwanted sexual messages

**12%** of 11-16 year olds in the UK have received unwanted sexual messages

# PARENTS STATISTICS:



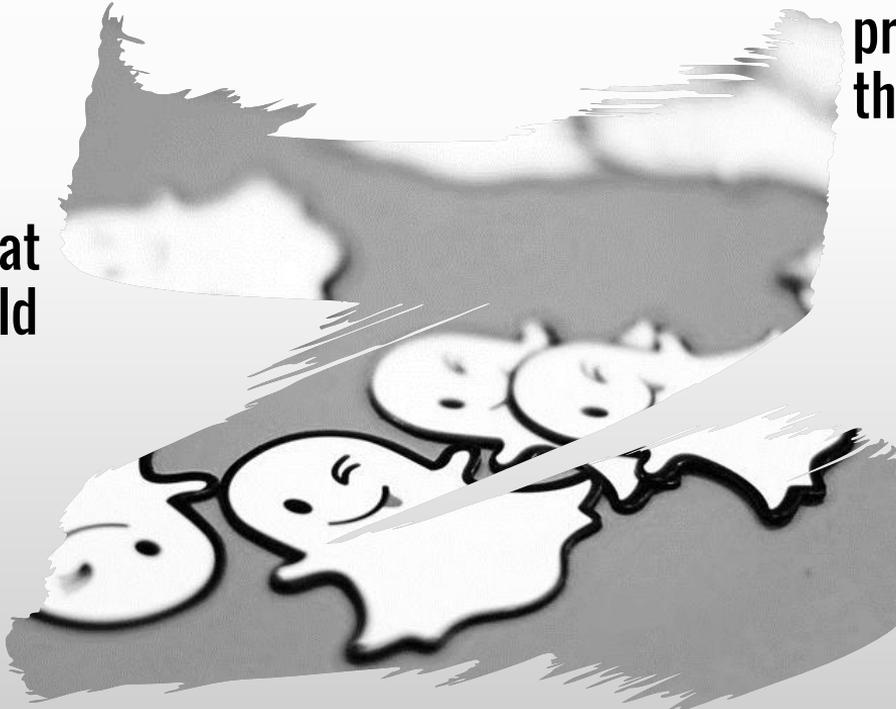
**32% of conversations are lost**



# Educators Statistics

**82%**

of administrators  
'strongly agree' that  
online safety should  
be covered in the  
curriculum



**51%**

of teachers say their district  
is doing an inadequate job of  
preparing their students for  
the digital age

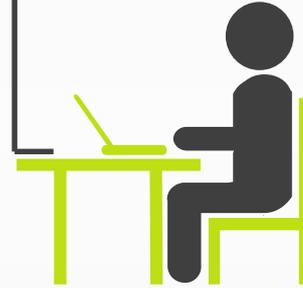
# ADOLESCENT STATISTICS:



**69%**

OF TEENS REGULARLY  
RECEIVE PERSONAL  
MESSAGES ONLINE FROM  
STRANGERS. MOST OF  
THEM DO NOT TELL A  
TRUSTED ADULT ABOUT IT

(AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION)



**25%**

OF TEENS IN THE US  
HAVE VISITED HATE  
WEBSITES

(LEE AND LEETS 2002)

**14%**

HAVE SEARCHED  
HOW TO MAKE A  
BOMB

(LEE AND LEETS 2002)

# Operation250 Basis



# Mission Statement:

**Operation250 seeks to educate children, parents, and teachers about online safety and how they can most effectively protect themselves from coming into contact with online violent extremist material and individuals.**

# Op250 Timeline

## Peer-2-Peer Competition Start

Department of Homeland Security & Facebook sponsored competition that helped create Op250



## Peer-2-Peer Final

After placing in the top-4 in the country and 1 of 7 teams all over the world, Operation250 was the #1 ranked educational program



## Secured funding to continue

Experts in the field looked at our work and wanted to help us continue



## Massachusetts District Attorney Partnership

The Massachusetts District Attorney's office has looked at our program and wants to work with us in helping this expand across the state.



## UMass Lowell Differencemaker

Operation250 competed in a competition against close to 150 other ideas and innovative technologies and placed 1<sup>st</sup>.



## Harvard University Study

Harvard researchers have looked at CVE programs around the country and chose our program to study its effectiveness.



## Seed Grant

The University of Massachusetts Lowell awarded Operation250 a sizable seed grant to launch a pilot study to measure the effectiveness of our program.



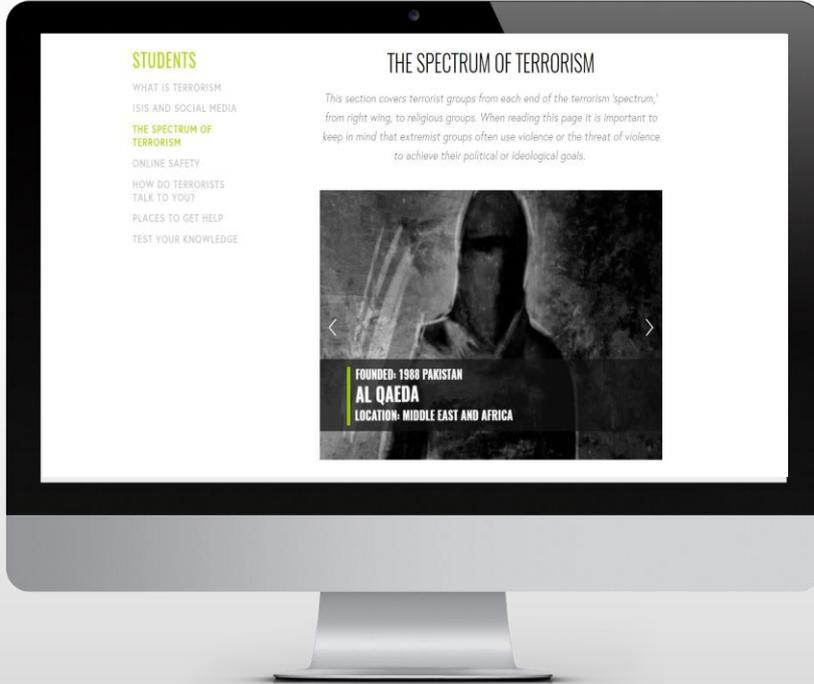
## NAPS Presentation

Here we are with you all today!



**August 29<sup>th</sup>**

# Operation250.org



Student Section



Parent Section



Educator Section



@Operation\_250



Operation 250



Online Quiz



Interviews with  
Mothers' of ISIS



Printable Classroom  
Activities





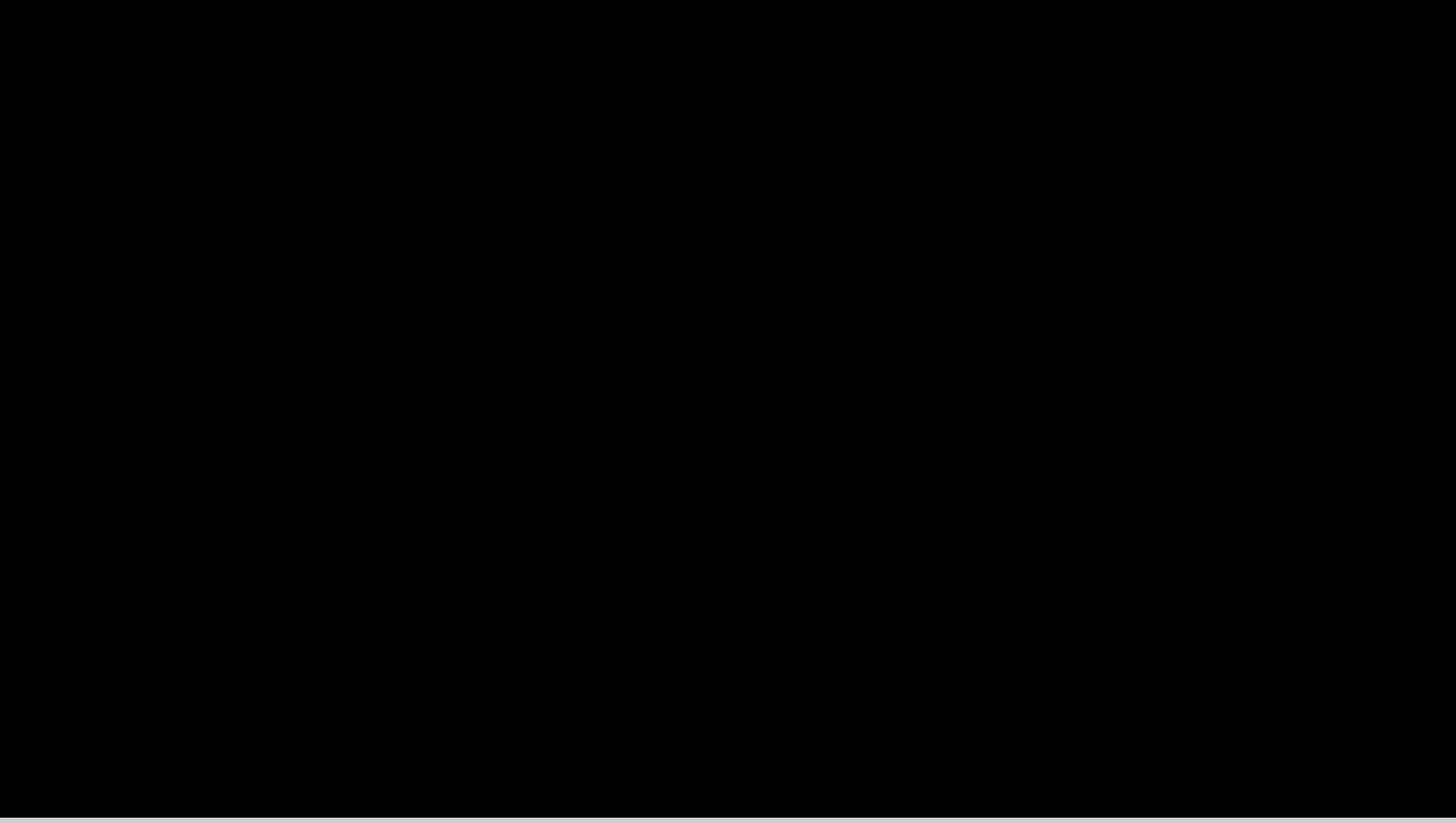
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# Students Sections

- What is Terrorism?
- ISIS & Social Media
- Spectrum of Terrorism
- Online Safety
- How Do Terrorists Talk to You?
- Can We Profile Terrorists?
- Defectors
- Test Your Knowledge

## **Christianne Boudreau on Education:**

**“If we are not providing that information for children in a safe environment, they will start looking for those answers elsewhere.”**



# Parents Section

- **How to Spot Signs of Radicalization**
- **How Terrorists Use the Internet**
- **What to Do if Your Child Is Talking to an Unsafe Person**
- **An Interview with Christianne Boudreau**
- **An Interview with Nicola Benyahia**
- **The Psychology of Grooming: An Interview with Ian Elliott**

# A Look at Our Partners



# Educators Section

- Starting the conversation
- What is terrorism? What isn't terrorism?
- Why are these attacks truly happening?
- What are the forms of extremism that are out there?
- Classroom Activity series: Table Talks

# TABLE TALKS | WHAT IS TERRORISM?

## WHAT MAKES SOMETHING AN ACT OF TERRORISM?

- Broadly speaking for something to be an act of terrorism it must have a political goal (i.e., they seek to change the behavior of a Government).
- What this means is that the "victim" (i.e., the people they target) are not the ultimate victim, but simply a means to affect or influence the policy of a Government.
- If someone does not have a political goal for their actions, no matter how much they "terrorize" the civilian population they cannot be a terrorist.

**QUESTION FOR YOU:** James Holmes killed 12 people in Aurora, Colorado. He pled guilty by reasons of insanity. He had an obsession to kill since he was young. Given the information you have, why is James Holmes not a terrorist?

## TERRORISM "I KNOW IT WHEN I SEE IT"? WHY IS TERRORISM SO HARD TO DEFINE?

- "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." A catchy phrase, but what it is really saying is that because terrorism is political, whether or not you think someone is a terrorist may depend on your view of what they are fighting for.

**QUESTION FOR YOU:** Are the Sons of Liberty, from the American Revolutionary War, terrorists or Freedom Fighters? Do you think people in Britain would agree with you?

## WHEN LOOKING AT A POTENTIAL ACT OF TERRORISM WHAT PARTS OF TERRORISM ARE THE HARDEST TO AGREE ON?

- An important part of any definition of terrorism is violence, force, or the threat of harm. However, many people who engage in terrorism do not use force, or violence. Can they still be viewed as a terrorist?

**QUESTION FOR YOU:** Tony T, a young male living in Alabama, leaves America to join a terrorist organization. He had met someone at his local gym who talked to him about the benefits of being a member of a terrorist organization and helped him get a plane ticket and arranged for him to meet someone when he landed. When he landed, he was met by this person and that person escorted him to meet with the local extremist organization. While Tony T was there he ran out of money and asked his parents for money to help him buy food and travel around the country. They gave him \$500. In this scenario, who is "the terrorist" and why?

- In this case all of the above would be defined as terrorists. Even though many of them only helped, and many of them were not engaged in violence, or threatened force, they are all still facilitating a known terrorist organization. Even the parents.

# TABLE TALKS | WHAT IS TERRORISM?

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Below we will provide you with two scenarios. Which one is a case of terrorism and which one is not?

**SCENARIO 1:** After becoming increasingly upset about the use of animals in academic research at their university, a psychology student decided to sneak into the research lab after hours and destroy the computers and research equipment that she believed belonged to the professor(s) who were engaged in research which (she feels inhumanely) uses animal participants.

**SCENARIO 2:** Mr. J. V. drives up to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and opens fire on civilians and security staff at the site using an automatic weapon. He kills one security guard and injures 3 civilians. The police arrive at the site and during the firefight Mr. J. V. is killed.

## Who do you think is the terrorist?

- Scenario 1
- Scenario 2

## ANSWER

**Scenario 1.** While it may seem unlikely, the first scenario is actually terrorism. The reason for this is that despite being less violent (it involves no harm to people), it does involve a political effect (changing policies about the use of animals in research). Despite the fact that Mr. J. V. clearly "terrorized" people, as it stands we cannot call him a terrorist. This is because at the moment we do not know why he did what he did (although I am sure many will make several assumptions given the target). Without knowing that Mr. J. V. wanted his actions to have a political effect, we cannot call what he did terrorism.

## TABLE TALK TAKEAWAY

Defining terrorism is complex but motives matter. If we cannot say for sure that someone wanted their actions to cause a political effect then it is important that we do not apply the label "terrorist."

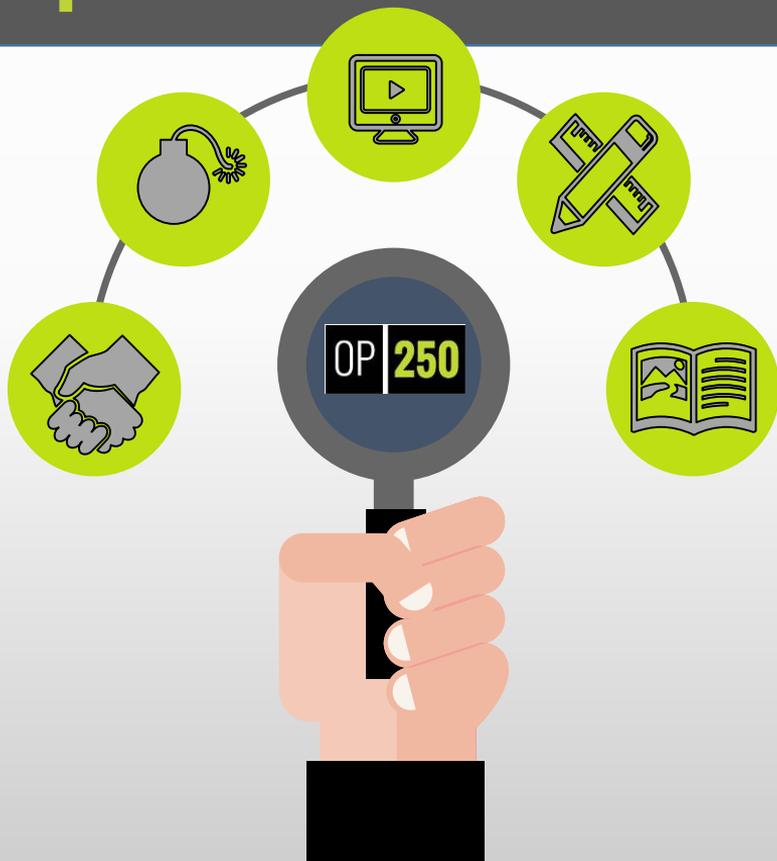
# Offline Work with Educators

“Educational programs could cover: the risks and warning signs of radicalization; effective methods of counseling and mentoring; child brain development; how violent extremists use social media; how parents and social workers can discuss extremist propaganda; and trust-building and prevention fundamentals, including how to intervene with at-risk individuals”

Shannon Green



# Operation250 and the Classroom



1

Teacher | Op250 Partnership

2

Terrorism Readings

3

Online Safety Readings

4

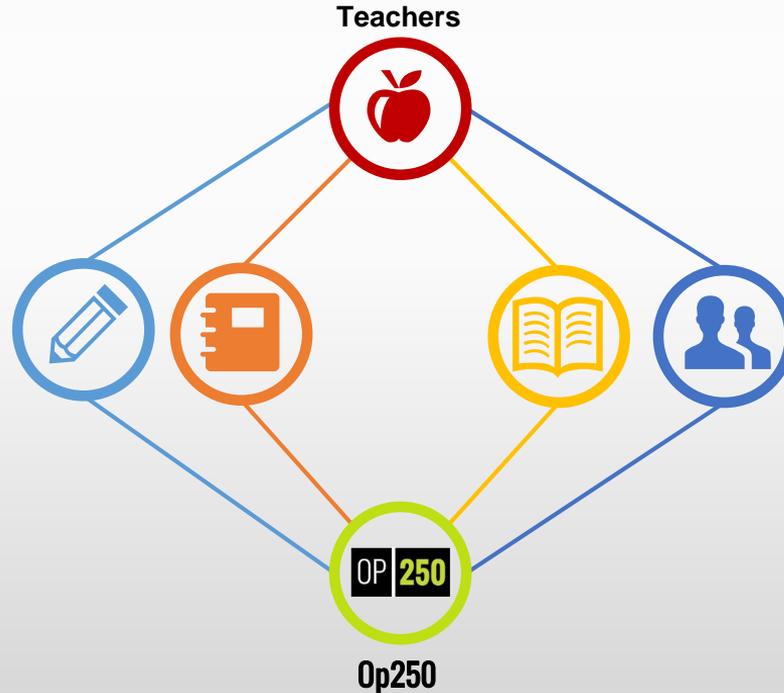
Classroom Activities

5

Op250 Programs and Lecture

OP 250

# Operation250 - Teacher Collaboration



- **Table Talks**  
Built specifically on topics ranging from terrorism to online safety

- **Classroom Activities**  
Classroom activities that are made for student engagement and critical thinking

- **Readings**  
3-5 page briefs on a range of topics

- **Student Engagement Activities**  
Activities made for students to engage into an interdisciplinary field of learning



# Op250 Guest Lectures



- Terrorism
- Online Safety
- Online Extremism
- Countering Violent Extremism
- Terrorism in America today
- United States Response to Terrorism
- History of Terrorism in America and the World
- Realities of Being Online
- And More...

# Operation250 Readings

- **Similar to Table Talks, Op250 compiles sources of information into one easy-to-read document for students to read.**
- **Teachers will be able to use these readings, made by Op250, to give to students to further enhance their understanding in topics in a short, more concise matter.**
- **These can also be partnered with Table Talks, to match the in-depth readings with the discussion starting activities to enhance learning and understanding.**

# Meet the team

## Tyler Cote

Education & Outreach

Majoring in Criminal Justice and Political Science, Tyler focuses on working with the educators and classroom content

## Danielle Thibodeau

Online Content Development

Danielle, who recently completed a summer with the FBI, is a project coordinator in developing the content on the website and in the classroom.

## Nicolette San Clemente

Business Advancement

Nicolette is majoring in International Business and plays a chief role in the daily operations and social media.

## Jonas Pierribia

Online Content Development

Jonas has taken a chief role in enhancing the online content and specializing in radicalization and online safety.

## Jaime Keenan

Director of Non-Profit Ventures

Jaime is majoring in Criminal Justice and is the key factor in the organization's movement into 5013c status and content development.

## Neil Shortland

Advisor

Dr. Shortland has been an advisor to the team since its beginning. Although not developing the content on the page, he plays a key role in our success



# Contacts

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EDUCATING TO PREVENT ANOTHER 250

OP **250**

#StopAnother250 #ChallengingExtremism