



# Talking About Terrorism

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# Terrorism



Children are exposed to news in many ways, so it would be practically impossible to shelter them from reports of terrorist attacks when they occur.

When talking with your child, it's okay to agree such attacks are frightening and sad, and that you can't stop them happening. Avoid complicated, worrying explanations, as they won't be able to process the information and it could leave them more frightened and confused.

It's also important to address victimisation following the terrorist attacks.

### **Some children will feel targeted because of their faith**

It's important to look for signs of bullying, and make sure that they know they can talk with you about it. Often they'll feel scared or embarrassed talking about it, so reassure them it is not their fault that this is happening, and that you will help the bullying stop. Alert your child's school so that they can be aware of the issue.

### **Offensive or unkind comments about a child's faith or background in response to the terror attacks**

If you think this is happening, it's important to intervene. Calmly explain that comments like this are not acceptable. Your child should also understand that someone's beliefs do not make them a terrorist. Explain that most people are as scared and hurt by the attacks as your child is. You could ask them how they think the other child felt, or ask them how they felt when someone said something unkind to them. Explain what you will do next, such as telling your child's school, and what you expect them to do.

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# Radicalisation



## How could my child become radicalised?

Young people may be vulnerable to a range of risks as they pass through adolescence. They may be exposed to new influences and potentially risky behaviours, influence from peers, influence from older people or the internet as they may begin to explore ideas and issues around their identity.

There is no single driver of radicalisation, nor is there a single journey to becoming radicalised. The internet creates more opportunities to become radicalised, since it's a worldwide 24/7 medium that allows you to find and meet people who share and will reinforce your opinions. Research tells us that the internet and face-to-face communications work in tandem, with online activity allowing a continuous dialogue to take place.

There are a number of signs to be aware of (although a lot of them are quite common among teens). Generally parents should look out for increased instances of:

- A conviction that their religion, culture or beliefs are under threat and treated unjustly
- A tendency to look for conspiracy theories and distrust of mainstream media
- The need for identity and belonging
- Being secretive about who they've been talking to online and what sites they visit
- Switching screens when you come near the phone, tablet or computer
- Possessing items – electronic devices or phones – you haven't given them
- Becoming emotionally volatile.

# Talking about radicalisation with your child

This is a difficult topic to broach with your child and needs to be dealt with sensitively if you're concerned about their behaviour. Here are some tips to help you raise the subject and information to give your child to prevent them being unintentionally exposed to radical ideas:

## **Be approachable**

Let them know you're there to help them if they get into trouble online – and if they're concerned about something they can come to you.

## **Be calm and don't get angry**

Your child is far more likely to be open and honest with you if you remain calm about the situation.

## **Talk to them about their online friendships**

Find out what sites they go to, where they met their online friends, how they communicate and what information they share. Talk to them about being cautious about what they share with people online. Remind them that even though people they've met online might feel like friends they may not be who they say they are, and that they may have ulterior motives for befriending them.

## **Tell someone**

Make sure your child is aware that if something makes them worried or uncomfortable online their best course of action is always to talk to an adult they trust.

## **Don't be confrontational**

Your child's beliefs are a sensitive subject and need handling carefully as you don't want to push them away or shut them out.

## **Be safe in real life**

Teach your child to never arrange to meet someone they only know online without a parent present.

## **Encourage them to share their ideas and opinions**

Many young people are often not aware of the realities and consequences of the radical ideas they have formed or the arguments against them.



## What action should I take if I think my child is in danger of becoming radicalised?

If you feel your child – or another child – may be in immediate danger, a threat to others or there is a risk they may leave the country, contact the Child’s Social Worker and your Supervising Social Worker about any worries or concerns as soon as possible. You will also need to contact the police and ensure that their passport is kept in a safe place.

If you see any content online related to terrorism, you can report it anonymously to the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU) <https://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism>

## Where to get help

The Active Change Foundation (ACF) provide a confidential helpline to prevent British nationals from travelling to conflict zones. 020 8539 2770

If your child wants to talk to someone in confidence they can call Childline on 0800 1111 or Get Connected on 0808 808 4994 (text 80849)

Muslim Youth Helpline (MYH) is a national award winning charity that provides free and confidential faith and culturally sensitive support services targeted at vulnerable young people in the UK. 0808 808 2008

Parents can call the NSPCC’s free 24/7 adult helpline on 0808 800 5000, email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) or text 88858. You can also contact the Stop it Now! helpline on 0808 1000 900 where you can seek advice anonymously

If you see any content online related to terrorism, you can report it anonymously to the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU)

For more information read “Radicalisation of young people through social media” by Sajda Mughal, OBE (April 2016)

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/expert-opinion/radicalisation-of-young-people-through-social-media/>

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Martina



Hi friend!! Long time no see. How are you?  
Let's go travel this weekend.

2:47 PM

That's great! I miss you so much

2:53 PM



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