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Why radicalisation is a child protection issue

Radicalisation is a complex issue that needs to be tackled head on, says CEO Peter Wanless

Today, we'll be standing alongside government ministers at Bethnal Green Academy in East London as a new initiative is launched to help protect children from extremists grooming children to be sympathetic to terrorism.



Radicalisation has become one of this century's most pressing child protection issues, and not one that's likely to go away. In recent weeks, [ChildLine](#) has carried out more than 260 counselling sessions with children disturbed by the Paris terrorist attacks of last November. And that's why it's never been more important to address the issue.

NSPCC Chief Executive, Peter Wanless will explain how extremists used similar methods to online paedophiles to radicalise children.

Peter Wanless, Chief Executive at the NSPCC, said:

"Our mission is to keep children safe from harm. We are contacted daily by worried parents and children themselves on all sorts of issues including radicalisation and dangers associated with extremism. Grooming online or in person is a classic technique used by abusers to exploit vulnerable young people. Spotting the signs of such abuse has never been more important if we are to help protect children from sexual exploitation, gang related activity or other hate crimes.

"The consequences can be devastating for them and others, leading to isolation, depression, drugs, self-harm and worse. Together we must help equip young people with a resilience and confidence in understanding and judging the risks associated with growing up, while ensuring adults are alive to identifying tell tale signs of exploitation so they can be rapidly addressed."

Talking about terrorism: tips for parents

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 ok 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 is 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.

Educate against hate

This website gives parents, teachers and school leaders practical advice on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation.

[Visit the website](#)

Increase in children calling ChildLine fearing terrorist attacks

Children as young as 9 are calling ChildLine terrified that they will be the victim of a terrorist attack following the Paris attacks in November.

[Read more](#)

Call the NSPCC helpline

If you're worried about a child, even if you're unsure, contact our professional counsellors 24/7 for help, advice and support.

Call us or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

0808 800 5000

Report a concern

Want to know more?

Contact our press office

Contact our press office using our online form.

Contact press office

Our campaigns

Our campaigns help keep children safe and make sure their voices are always heard by those in power.

Our campaigns

What we stand for

We're standing up for children, demanding that laws change and action is taken to better protect them.

Find out more