

Parent Advice Briefing 2

Support Each Other

HOW EXTREMISM IMPACTS RELATIONSHIPS





LET'S TALK RELATIONSHIPS

One thing that many people underestimate is the damage that extremism does to different relationships. We have discussed in detail about how it affects the person involved and the parents but what about other relationships? Today we are going to look at that in more detail and discuss ways in which we can reduce that damage.

PARENTS

Any mums and dads out there who have a child involved in extremism will know just how consuming that is.

The topic of every conversation you have together is regarding that child.

You no longer spend quality time together because every waking moment requires all of your attention to be on the individual involved.

You are constantly walking on eggshells, trying to engage with your child, defusing fractured situations, avoiding debates and arguments, and if you have other children in the home you have to deal with them (we cover this topic later). This is all on top of managing a home and possibly a job.

The house is full of tension and getting through the day seems to be an endless challenge.

Tempers get frayed, you may even feel like your other half isn't doing enough or that you are not getting the support you need.

You may feel resentful of your partner because they get to go out of the house whether it be to go to work or to leave to go to an activity that they are involved in.

Over time instead of having conversations with your partner you start avoiding them, all you want is peace and quiet and to escape the reality that you have found yourself in, the last thing you want to do is face the wants and needs of your other half.

I think we need to be completely honest because this is not a subject that is talked about, and it should be. You end up so exhausted both emotionally and physically that personal contact is the last thing on your mind.

Before we continue, I just want to let you know that this is something that we see on a regular basis. I understand exactly what you are going through because I too have been there.

Do not think for a second that you are failing in any kind of way.

This is something we see in many parental relationships, there is no guidebook to surviving extremism so how can we know how to navigate the situation we have found ourselves in?

Saying that, let me assure you right now that with support you can and will get through this, not only can your relationship survive this, but you can come out of this stronger than ever before.

I am here to offer you the benefits of not only my own experience but also the team here at EXIT HATE UK, which includes Former far-right activists and trained professionals who have both the understanding and knowledge we have gained during our time supporting parents and families at EXIT HATE.

SEEK SUPPORT

Our situation often comes with fear of judgment, sadness, and even a sense of embarrassment and shame and because of that we often find ourselves closing ranks and isolating ourselves. One thing I think is vital is having someone that you can talk to, and although I think it's important that you and your partner communicate and work together, having a third party that you can trust and offload to ease

the pressure and will allow you and your partner the time and space you need to concentrate on your child and your relationship.

That could be a family support officer, a trusted family member, a good friend or even a combination of all three, and just knowing that you have that support system in place for when you need it will make a big difference.

Our support officers all have experience of extremism and all of them will understand what you are going through, they will offer you a safe space, where you can receive non-judgmental support, a listening and sympathetic ear and advice using the benefit of their own personal experiences.

I understand it is difficult to open up, but I urge you to do so, you are not alone, there is help available.

STAY CONNECTED

Set aside a time to discuss certain topics, extremism consumes everything but only if you allow it.

Have 30 minutes to 1 hour a day to discuss your child, you could chat about what happened that day, and how you think you should deal with it. You may not agree or have differing opinions about things and that is ok. Acknowledge that and look for a different solution.

A family support officer can help with this and can offer you advice which can ease that burden.

Be courteous of each other's feelings. Everyone handles things differently and if your partner doesn't feel the same way as you do, or they are acting in a different manner that doesn't mean that they do

not care, that is just their coping mechanism. Understand and support that.

Once that time is up try to return to some kind of normality. Chat about your day outside of your child.

Once a week allow yourselves two hours or more if you can alone together and agree not to bring up anything extremism related. You have time allocated to do this.

Go for a meal, a walk or watch a movie together when the kids are in bed or out.

Having that time where you can escape and re-connect as a couple is really important and well deserved.

AVOID DIVISION

Your child will undoubtedly try to play you off against each other.

An example we often see is they tell you that mom/dad understands them more than you do and that can hurt, this however can be a tactic used by those involved in extremism to pressure you to agree to understand them despite your misgivings or gain advantages.

If you are aware and understand this, then you can be prepared.

STAND UNITED

Remember you are both going through this because you love and want the best for your child. You both have the same goal and that is to get your child back on the right path.

By communicating and working together you can and will get through this.

Your child although they are unwilling to see it, need their parents.

Remaining a strong couple will give your child the stability that they will desperately need during their journey out of extremism.

FINALLY

Your relationship is important not only to your child, but to the both of you too.

Do not allow extremism to tear your lives apart and destroy everything that you have spent years building up. Extremists often seek to replace families with loyalty to the group, which then turns people against their families, who extremists will seek to portray as those responsible for the issues the individual is concerned about.

Never allow pride or fear to stop you from opening up, reaching out and getting support.

Never feel you are alone on this journey, we are here

Sarah

Exit Family Support Worker & mom of a son who left the far-right.

TALK TO US



TOGETHER, YOU CAN HELP YOUR LOVED ONE REJECT EXTREMISM.

**It Won't Be Easy, It Will Take Time, But If They Want To, You Can
Help Them Rebuild & Create A Better Life Away From Hate.**

If you need help, please get in touch.

You can contact us via our website, email us or call.

W: www.exithate.org

E: info@exithate.org

T: 0800 999 1945