When Online Spaces Glorify Violence

A Guide for Community Members

ADL®

Understanding Targeted and Mass Violence Involving Youth

What's going on? Since 2024, the ADL Center on Extremism has identified more than 50 attacks, plots, and other criminal activities worldwide linked to the True Crime Community, an online subculture that glorifies mass killers. It is one of several online communities that celebrate violence, recirculate content from past attacks, and reward notoriety.

These spaces are not hidden. They can reach people, often young people, on the same social media and gaming platforms everyone uses. Antisemitic, white supremacist, and other extremist rhetoric are prevalent in these spaces, whether participants adopt these ideas out of conviction or for shock value. These communities can normalize violence and put some vulnerable participants on a pathway toward targeted violence.

Terms Worth Knowing

True Crime Community (TCC): An online subculture where some people admire, glorify or imitate mass killers. It differs from mainstream interest in true crime, which often focuses on victims or justice.

The Com and 764: Loosely connected online networks that target young people for exploitation, including sextortion and pressure to harm themselves.

Gore sites: Websites and forums that share real footage of violence and death, often alongside extremist content.

Memetic violence: ADL's term for violence carried out mainly to gain attention or status within these online communities.

Targeted violence: A planned act of violence against a specific person, group or place. It rarely comes out of nowhere; there are usually signs along the way.

Keep It in Perspective

Most people who come across this content will never hurt anyone. But a pattern of concerning behavior, especially one that is escalating, should never be brushed off.

Speaking Up Stops Attacks

A study of mass attack plots in the U.S. between 1995 and 2020 found that when someone reported warning signs, more than 80% of plots were stopped. About two-thirds of foiled plots were stopped thanks to tips from the public.

What May be Concerning

No single sign means someone intends to harm anyone. But several together, especially when talk turns to action, demand a response. Watch for:

- Praising or identifying with people who committed mass violence
- Collecting or sharing content that celebrates attacks or attackers
- Sudden interest in acquiring weapons or ammunition
- Threats, including "jokes" or posts about hurting others
- Extreme mood swings, deep withdrawal or a sudden lack of concern for their own safety
- Researching a location, making a list of targets or other signs of preparation
- Antisemitic, racist or misogynistic language or symbols

What You Can Do

Don't dismiss it. If something feels wrong, raise it. You don't need to be certain.

Don't amplify. Never share attack videos, manifestos or content that glorifies attackers, even to condemn them. Notoriety is the goal.

Report it. Flag violent or hateful content on platforms where you see it.

Stay connected. A conversation or check-in can reach someone who is struggling or isolated.

Let professionals assess. Trained threat assessment teams and law enforcement can judge whether a threat is real.

If you're concerned

Immediate danger
Call 911

Anonymous tip
Sandy Hook Promise
Say Something tipline
1-844-5-SayNow

Crisis, self-harm or suicide
Call or text 988

Online exploitation of a child
NCMEC CyberTipline
report.cybertip.org

Threat of violence
FBI tip form: tips.fbi.gov

Antisemitic or hate incident
adl.org/report-incident

Scan to learn more
Research, warning signs & resources

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