

DANGEROUS EXTREMIST VIEWS: THE RISK TO UNIVERSITY CULTURE AND EXPERIENCE



swinburne.edu.au/safercommunity

MADE BY THE SAFER COMMUNITY TEAM

Creating a safe and respectful Swinburne community.

Swinburne celebrates and champions diversity and inclusion in our community: from sexual orientation, sex and gender identity to culture, faith and spirituality. Your time here is a meaningful opportunity to explore your perspectives and who you are, and to form important social connections.

All members of our community have the right to express their ideas and opinions through respectful and peaceful means. We have zero tolerance for using deceit, violence, fear, coercion or hatred to justify or promote a particular view. The **Swinburne Student Charter** outlines the behavioural expectations for all students.

To maintain our safe and inclusive Swinburne community, it is important to recognise when someone is expressing or promoting their views in an unacceptable or potentially dangerous manner.

What is dangerous extremism?

Dangerous extremism is when an individual or group adopts political, social or religious values that are far outside of conventional attitudes. It is characterised by an intolerance of other views, incitement of hatred and division, and rejection of human rights. It often involves discrimination, harassment and vilification which are unlawful in some instances and go against Swinburne's policies and procedures (see the **Discrimination, harassment and vilification factsheet** for further information).

SIGNS OF DANGEROUS EXTREMISM:

- Inciting hate towards other groups or individuals based on characteristics such as race, age, sexual orientation and religion.
- Claiming ideas and opinions as factual despite going against expertise and evidence.
- Feeling the need to cut ties with family and friends to dedicate to a cause.
- Viewing deceit, fear and intimidation as acceptable ways to promote views and achieve ideological goals.

Pathway towards dangerous extremism

Individuals and groups can be influenced to support dangerous extremist views. There is no standard pathway, however, common signs that someone might be progressing towards dangerous extremism, include:

- Pulling away from typical activities and social groups, and increasingly interacting with a secretive and tight-knit network.
- Increasingly making discriminatory comments about a particular group and advocating intolerance towards others who do not share the same views.
- Considering or participating in illegal means to promote one's views.

Recruitment by dangerous extremist groups

On campus

Some extremist groups may present on campus to recruit new members by approaching students directly in-person, or indirectly via propaganda material (e.g., posters). As a student, you can be especially vulnerable to being influenced when under stress. It is important to be aware of recruitment tactics employed by such groups as they may appear harmless initially.

SIGNS YOU ARE BEING RECRUITED BY A DANGEROUS EXTREMIST GROUP:

- **Isolation:** Encourages you to isolate yourself from your family and friends to increase your dependency on the group.
- **Deception:** Uses deceptive or aggressive tactics to encourage your participation.
- **All-knowing:** Claims to have all the answers to your problems.
- **Secrecy:** Conducts their business in secret and withholds information from you.
- **Hypocrisy:** Group members engage in a toxic culture, such as excessive drinking, partying and drug use, despite allegedly celebrating values such as discipline.

Online

Online recruitment by dangerous extremist groups is increasing. Larger numbers of individuals can be reached via the internet. Groups can use online channels and chatrooms, to create initial interest and then reinforce their worldview.

Be equally vigilant about the on and offline avenues used to express or promote dangerous extremist views. Online methods can include:

- Publishing or sharing articles and theories that have little or no evidence.
- Using 'likes' on posts to make them seem credible and further spread misleading information into the community.
- Identifying and approaching vulnerable individuals based on their profile, activity history and friend lists. For example, socially isolated individuals may more readily align themselves with extremist views after a newfound sense of belonging.

DANGEROUS EXTREMIST VIEWS

Implications of becoming part of a dangerous extremist group

Association with a group that adopts concerning extremist views, whether by choice or unknowingly, can impact you and those around you profoundly. Potential implications include:

- **Loss of self-worth and independence:** You may be discouraged from questioning the group's decision and making independent lifestyle choices.
- **Decline in mental health and emotional wellbeing:** You may become socially isolated from your family and friends, and instead, surrounded by a culture that does not prioritise your needs.
- **Deterioration in professional and social relationships:** You may express ideas that are viewed by your professional and social network as discriminatory and harmful, leading to reprimand or social exclusion.
- **Tunnel vision:** You may become overly focused on the perspectives expressed by the group, preventing you from gaining awareness of other views and cultures.

What you can do to help

BE CONSCIOUS

- Keep an eye on friends or others who you think may be susceptible to influence by alarming extremist views. Have they changed their behavioural patterns in their interactions both on and offline? Have they become socially isolated for no apparent reason? Has their worldview altered significantly with the refusal to consider other perspectives? Have they been increasingly sharing posts online that may not be credible?

PROVIDE SUPPORT

- Talk privately to the person if they are showing signs of being influenced or recruited by a dangerous extremist group and ask if they are ok.
- Encourage the person to seek help from trusted friends and family as well as support services such as counselling and spiritual care listed on this factsheet.
- Encourage the person to research and read up on credible sources of information about the topic/s they are at conflict with. Education is key in raising awareness about the impacts of dangerous extremist perspectives.
- Understand that the person may not be ready to report the concerning extremist group, particularly if they have come to identify with the group's ideologies and are experiencing a feeling of betrayal in breaking ties with the group.
- Provide the person with information on their reporting options and encourage them to reach out to the appropriate internal and external services listed on this factsheet when they are ready to report.

RECORD AND REPORT

- If someone is hurt or in immediate danger, call for help from Swinburne Security or Emergency Services as listed in this factsheet.
- Keep a record of the behaviour you or someone you know has experienced including date, time, place, names and witnesses.
- Keep any evidence, for example copies of messages, photos, or online conversations.
- Report on campus promotion of dangerous extremist views to Swinburne Security and Safer Community.
- Report online promotion of dangerous extremist views to the website or social media platform, and Safer Community.
- If you feel fear for your safety or feel threatened, report the behaviour to Police.

DANGEROUS EXTREMIST VIEWS

Support on campus

SAFER COMMUNITY

Safer Community offers advice, support, intervention, and risk management for students who experience or witness inappropriate, concerning or threatening behaviours on or off campus. You can get in touch with the team by email or via the online reporting form:

safercommunity@swin.edu.au
swinburne.edu.au/incident-reporting-form
swinburne.edu.au/safercommunity

SWINBURNE SECURITY

Contact campus security services for emergencies on campus, after hours assistance or for a security escort.

03 9214 3333

CRISIS LINE - OUT OF HOURS

The Swinburne crisis line is available to help 24 hours a day on weekends and public holidays, and outside business hours on weekdays (before 9am and after 5pm).

Call 1300 854 144

Text 0488 884 145

STUDENT COUNSELLING

If you are struggling with a personal, emotional or mental health difficulty, whether related to your studies or your life away from university, counselling may help. Register and make an appointment with the counselling services.

03 9214 8483

swinburne.edu.au/counselling

INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY SERVICE

Swinburne Student Life provides policy advice, support and guidance in academic issues, and advocates for best outcomes in complaints, grievances, appeals and misconduct hearings.

03 9214 5445

studentlife@swin.edu.au

swinburne.edu.au/advocacy

ACCESSABILITY

The AccessAbility service advises students who have a disability, medical or mental health condition, or are a primary carer for someone on what reasonable adjustments can be made to ensure equal opportunity to access and participate in their education at Swinburne.

03 9214 5234

swinburne.edu.au/accessability

MULTI FAITH CENTRE

The Multi Faith Centre at the Hawthorn campus provides faith rooms suitable for prayer, meditation and reflection. It can be used for group or individual prayer, or simply serve as a place for quiet thought. This facility is here for people of all faiths or with no faith. We also have Interfaith, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Jewish chaplains at the centre providing spiritual care for all, irrespective of belief.

chaplaincy@swin.edu.au

swinburne.edu.au/current-students/student-services-support/spiritual-care/

Support off campus

POLICE

National emergency response and reporting.

In emergencies call 000.

police.vic.gov.au

LIFELINE

24/7 phone crisis support and suicide prevention.

13 11 14

lifeline.org.au

VICTORIAN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY & HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Free service for dispute resolution and information around issues of equal opportunity, racial and religious vilification and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

1300 292 153

humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au

AUSTRALIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Investigates and resolves complaints of discrimination, harassment and bullying based on a person's sex, disability, race, age and sexuality.

1300 656 419

humanrights.gov.au

EHEADSPACE

A confidential, free and secure space to chat to qualified youth mental health professionals.

eheadspace.org.au

ESAFETY COMMISSIONER

Advice, strategies and support for cyber abuse, as well as online reporting.

1800 880 176

esafety.gov.au