University of
Kent

SPOT THE SIGNS OF ONLINE RADICALISATION TRAINING

For individuals and groups using the 'Zak' simulation

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Background

It is mandatory to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.' (Home Office, 2016), as stated in Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and guidance is issued under section 29 of the Act.

The University of Kent, Kent Police, and partners in the local authority worked together to develop 'Zak' to offer professionals the opportunity to train on key aspects of radicalisation and online grooming. 'Zak' was launched in July 2013.

'Zak' – the simulation

'Zak' offers the opportunity for professionals to train on key aspects of online radicalisation – gaining insight into the process and implications for the victim and groomer. It is an interactive and immersive simulation, based on real cases and research.

'Zak' is designed for both professionals and young people, identifying how young people are groomed online for the purposes of extremism. It follows the compelling story of Zak and how he becomes involved with extremists.

Through the use of a social media style interface, with photos, chat, likes and shares, you will learn about grooming by tracking the behaviour of the groomer and see the implications for the victim.

'Zak' provides an innovative focus that will promote discussion in PSHE or Citizenship on the topics of extremism, radicalisation and internet safety. 'Zak' can be facilitated in small groups of 3 or 4 around a computer, from a single whiteboard at the front of the class or individually, dependent upon need, age or ability.

'Zak' for Professionals and young people

'Zak' includes links with tools and reflective questions on how to respond to young people who are potentially at risk, as well as a comprehensive training pack and detailed answers. An introductory video by Zak himself sets the scene. Two further videos show different endings to the story.

1 For professionals

To gain insight into grooming behaviour, how to spot it on different social media and, vitally, how to help victims protect themselves from exploitation.

2 For direct work with young people

To learn about grooming methods using a realistic social media-style scenario. By understanding the behaviours and implications of the characters, young people will learn how to keep themselves safe. Young people interact with Zak's friends and contacts, see the content of messages he has posted and received, and the web sites he has visited.

Objectives

- Increase awareness of the process of radicalisation
- Enable young people to identify and discuss factors/indicators of radicalisation in their peers
- Raise awareness of internet safety
- Encourage self-reflection on their own and others' behaviour
- Facilitate understanding regarding where and to whom concerns on radicalisation and internet safety should be reported
- Identify some of the procedures in place to support individuals in a pre-criminal space.

The top three comments from the evaluation:

"Increases staff confidence and awareness of radicalisation and internet grooming."

"The related training pack has been rated excellent by 90% of the users and good or very good by the remaining 10%."

"100% of pupils reported to their teaching staff that they learned things they did not know before and found 'Zak' engaging."

Next steps

Just pay for the training and the simulation is then free for a year.

1   Book online and pay by credit card via our website www.kent.ac.uk/sspssr/ccp/game/zakindex.html
2   Contact us to pay by invoice, to discuss group discount or to arrange bespoke training at your premises telephone 01227 827546 or email ccp@kent.ac.uk.

More from the Centre for Child Protection

'Rosie 1'

A simulation focusing on an initial assessment visit to a family. The initially benign situation rapidly develops into a case of child sexual abuse. Free download and worksheet from our website.

'Rosie 2' Assessing parental capacity and neglect in complex families

Workshop using our 'Rosie 2' simulation. It is now 5 years on from 'Rosie 1' and the case is still active and focuses on neglect.

'myCourtroom: Rosie's family go to court'

'myCourtroom' is an interactive and immersive simulation based on realistic scenarios to trigger discussions and decisions around court skills.

'Visiting Elliot'

Developed in collaboration with Kent Police and KSS CRC, 'Elliot' is designed to train professionals who visit sex offenders on licence in the community.

RITA

Responsive InTeractive Advocate (RITA) was developed with the aim of supporting the UK's ageing population through the use of responsive and interactive avatars.

'Zak'

An innovative social media style simulation for use with young people focusing on online grooming and the radicalisation process.

'Looking out for Lottie'

This training tool focuses on child sexual exploitation and online grooming with unique opportunity to consider the 'boyfriend style' groomer perspective. Award winning simulation on CSE*

'Maryam and Joe: Behind closed doors'

Funded by the Home Office, explore how two young people are groomed on multiple social media platforms, as well as face to face, for radicalisation by a far right extremist group and by so-called IS (Daesh) extremists.

MA

The two year, child-centred, distance learning MA in advanced child protection provides practitioners with knowledge, skills and confidence as well as multi-agency perspectives.

Standalone modules

All our MA modules can be studied as short courses and are a good taster for MA level study. We also have a specialist 'Direct work with children' module.

* Guardian Award for Digital Innovation 2016

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