

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)  
FY2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism  
Prevention (TVTP) Grantee Evaluation

Site Profile

# Life After Hate



Developed for:



Science and  
Technology

Developed by RTI International

# List of Abbreviations

---

<b>ACD</b>	Alliance for Co-Responder Development
<b>CMS</b>	Case Management System
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Homeland Security
<b>IMP</b>	Implementation & Measurement Plan
<b>MHPCD</b>	Mental Health Professional Co-Responder Development
<b>MI</b>	Motivational Interviewing
<b>TVTP</b>	Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention
<b>VFRE</b>	Violent Far-Right Extremism
<b>WSE</b>	White Supremacist Extremism

## Executive Summary

---

The Science and Technology Directorate at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security funded RTI International to research and evaluate a Fiscal Year 2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention grant to Life After Hate to examine program accomplishments, challenges, and recommendations. The evaluation team completed a process evaluation of two of Life After Hate's three grant components: its ExitUSA services to support exiting white supremacy extremists and its outreach to build awareness of exit process and ExitUSA services. Researchers additionally conducted an outcome evaluation of Life After Hate's third grant component: the development and implementation of training for mental health and law enforcement professionals. The research team reviewed materials developed for the ExitUSA program, training curricula, and other program materials; observed selected training sessions; interviewed relevant staff and partners; and analyzed pre-, post-, and follow-up test data. Table ES-A summarizes these findings.

Despite organizational challenges that developed during the grant period of performance, including a change in leadership, Life After Hate completed all of its objectives. It succeeded in providing ExitUSA services to support exiting white supremacy extremists and in providing aftercare services through a modified design of the ExitUSA mentorship work. The ExitUSA program provided services to over 150 unique clients, revamped its screening and assessment tools, and added more than 85 referral partners to its interactive resource map. In the first year of the grant, Life After Hate created Community Forums and resources for exiting individuals, family, and friends; however, the forums were mostly inactive by the end of this evaluation. Life After Hate produced six counternarrative videos, conducted a targeted online campaign, and redesigned the Life After Hate and ExitUSA web pages. Life After Hate developed and implemented two training curricula for mental health and law enforcement professionals. First, it conducted 8 Mental Health Professional Co-Responder Development training sessions that convened 157 mental health professionals in total. Second, it developed an Alliance for Co-Responder Development asynchronous online training with 67 community law enforcement professionals— working in law enforcement, corrections, and probation/parole— completing the training modules, surpassing their preset target of 50.

This work is supported by funding by the United States Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate under contract #140D0418C0012/P00005.

Table ES-A: Summary of Findings

 <p><b>ExitUSA Services</b></p>	Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide ExitUSA services to facilitate exit from violent white supremacist extremism</li> <li>• Provide ExitUSA's aftercare services to build individual resilience</li> </ul>
	Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 156 individual and family cases managed<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Screening tools updated</li> <li>• 85+ new referral partners added to an internal directory map</li> <li>• Community Forum channels created for exiting individuals and friends and families</li> </ul>
	Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff shortages delayed intervention implementation</li> <li>• Inadequate case management system (CMS) caused difficulties in comprehensively documenting services and producing reliable reports</li> <li>• Unclear IMP led to speculations about activities and outputs</li> </ul>
	Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement trainings for new and existing staff</li> <li>• Conduct regular internal assessments to monitor service delivery practices, as well as staffing levels and composition in relation to demand for services</li> <li>• Ensure that CMS is in place allowing for reliable recording of client interactions and generating aggregate reports</li> <li>• Implement standardized protocols for CMS data audits</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Exiting Process Awareness Outreach</b></p>	Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance outreach to build awareness of the violent white supremacist extremism exit process and ExitUSA intervention services</li> </ul>
	Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life After Hate and ExitUSA web pages updated and redesigned</li> <li>• One pilot campaign and one five-month targeted online campaign conducted</li> <li>• Six counternarrative videos developed</li> </ul>
	Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff turnover and shortage delayed development of videos and stalled website redesign</li> </ul>
	Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop standard operating procedure and process documentation to help with staff transitions and prevent loss of institutional knowledge</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Mental Health and Law Enforcement Professionals Trainings</b></p>	Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build local capacity to enhance the ability to identify and respond to individuals at risk of mobilizing to violence</li> </ul>
	Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted eight MHPCD training sessions for</li> <li>• 157 mental health and other professionals</li> <li>• Increased the average participants' knowledge score from 77% to 89% immediately after MHPCD training and to 87% three months after MHPCD training</li> <li>• Adapted ACD training to online modality</li> <li>• 67 local prevention network professionals completed the ACD training</li> <li>• Increased the average participants knowledge score from 57% before to 89% immediately after ACD training and to 88% two months after ACD training</li> <li>• Developed Community Forum channels</li> </ul>
	Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in the organization leadership led to continued revisions of the MHPCD curriculum</li> <li>• Recruitment for the ACD training met with red tape when communicating directly with law enforcement organizations</li> </ul>
	Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate development of outreach and training recruitment materials earlier to prevent delays after the curriculum is finalized</li> <li>• When developing new training, review and implement training best practices and connect with others in the field for training review and feedback</li> <li>• Develop a plan for training graduates to use the Community Forum for continuous education and resource sharing</li> </ul>

Note: Outputs listed in the IMP did not line up with their relevant components. They were realigned in this report for the sake of clarity. Only selected outputs were listed because of an extensive number of outputs.

<sup>1</sup>Output in the original IMP called for 360–450 individual and family cases managed. The number was revised to 150 in Quarter 6 of the project.



# Site Profile: Life After Hate

Life After Hate was awarded a two-year grant by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships in 2020 and was selected in 2021 to undergo an independent evaluation. This site profile reviews Life After Hate's grant design, implementation, accomplishments, challenges, and relevant recommendations for future programming in targeted violence and terrorism prevention (TVTP). Life After Hate's grant underwent an evaluability assessment and a process and outcome evaluation. The research team completed a process evaluation of the ExitUSA services to support exiting white supremacy extremists and the outreach to build awareness of exit process and ExitUSA services. Researchers also conducted an outcome evaluation of the trainings provided for mental health and law enforcement professionals.

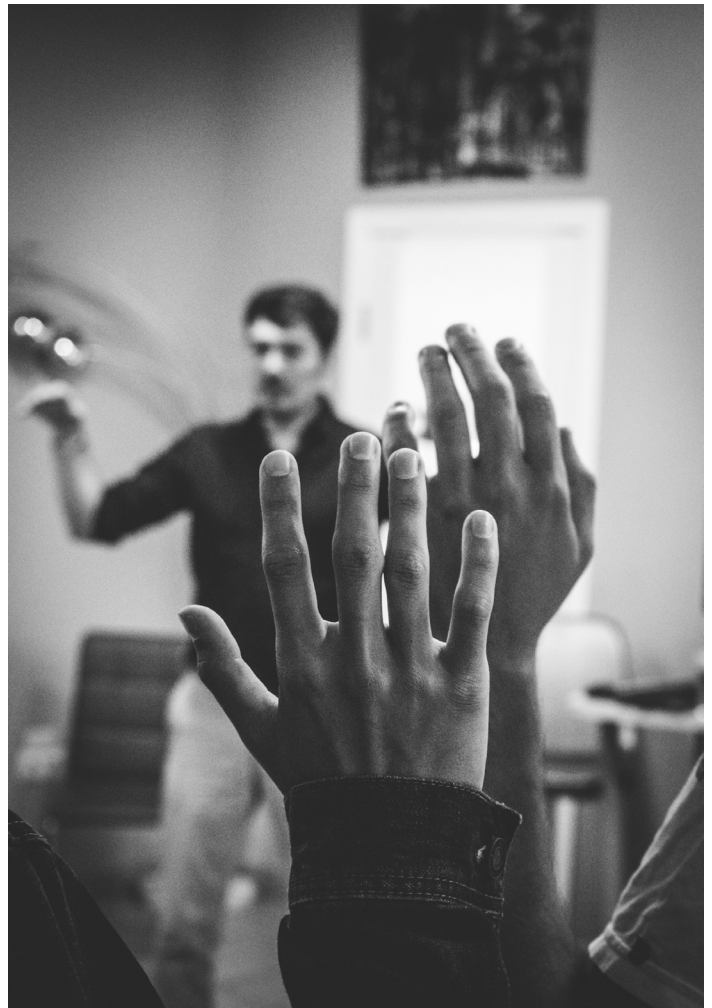
This report is separated into three sections. The first section examines process- and outcome-level findings related to Life After Hate's grant implementation. The second section details the findings of a survey that researchers conducted of Life After Hate's project partners. The final section includes an overall discussion of evaluation findings, a discussion of the sustainability of Life After Hate's grant activities, and recommendations for the TVTP grant program.

For Life After Hate's full Implementation & Measurement Plan (IMP), which outlines its goals, target audiences, objectives, activities, inputs, time frame, anticipated outputs, performance measures, and data collection plan, contact DHS.

## Life After Hate

Life After Hate is the first nonprofit organization in the United States dedicated to helping individuals disengage from violent far-right hate groups and hateful online spaces. Since its founding in 2011, Life After Hate has expanded its services to include friends and family members of individuals who are involved with the violent far right or are disengaging.

Founded by former extremists (known as "formers"), Life After Hate is committed to combating violent extremism to establish a safer, more resilient nation. A central part of the organization's mission is the innovative approach to interventions. The multidisciplinary team model combines formers and mental health practitioners to help individuals identify what they need to leave hate and violence and be able to set and manage their goals to restore their lives. Services are provided online, allowing Life After Hate to provide support to individuals across the country.



# Life After Hate's FY2020 Grant Summary

Life After Hate's FY2020 TVTP grant program was divided into three goals, each centered around a different project component. Due to the distinctive nature of each of these components, this report addresses each of them separately.



### ExitUSA Services to Support Exiting Far-Right Extremists.

Life After Hate sought to provide direct support to individuals who may be questioning their belonging to violent far-right extremism (VFRE), with a goal of facilitating their disengagement, exit, and reintegration, along with supporting families and friends who were concerned about their loved one's engagement with the ideology. Services were provided via ExitUSA, Life After Hate's flagship intervention program.



### Outreach to Build Awareness of Exit Process and ExitUSA Services.

Life After Hate sought to increase awareness of the VFRE exit process and ExitUSA intervention services by updating Life After Hate's and ExitUSA-specific website content, conducting an online messaging campaign in collaboration with Life After Hate's subcontractor (Moonshot), and developing VFRE counternarrative videos targeting their client base and the general community.



### Development and Implementation of Training for Professionals.

Life After Hate sought to enhance the ability of local prevention networks to identify and work with individuals at risk of mobilizing to violence through a series of trainings and

the creation of an online Community Forum to provide training graduates with continuous support and network-building opportunities. Two trainings were developed and implemented: the Mental Health Professional Co-Responder Development (MHPCD) training and the Alliance for Co-Responder Development (ACD) training.

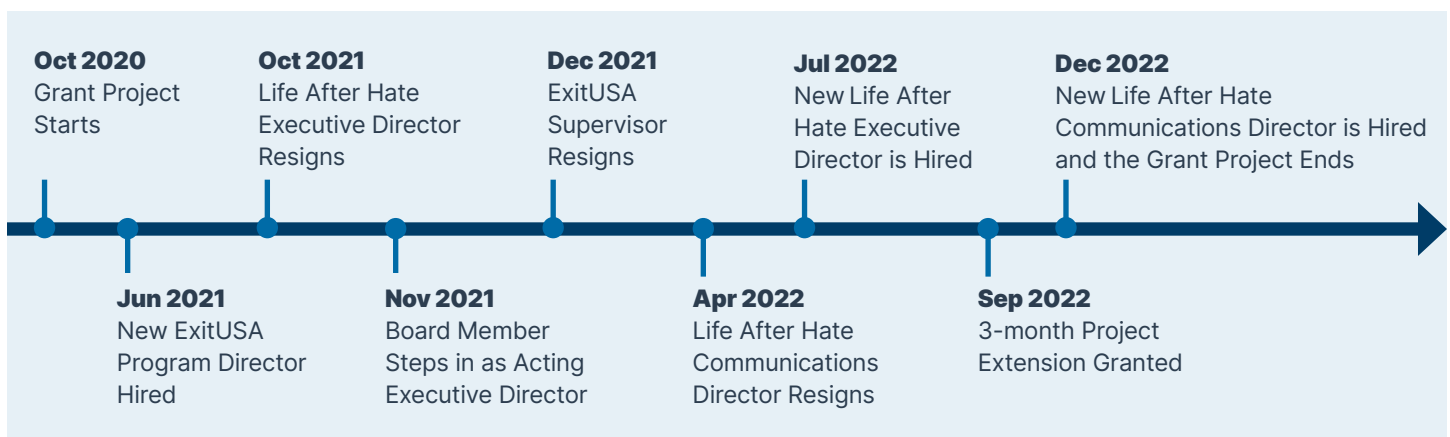
## Life After Hate Experienced Considerable Organizational Changes

Life After Hate went through a leadership change in the middle of the grant (beginning in October 2021) when the Executive Director and several other staff left the organization (Figure 1). These organizational changes are discussed throughout this report and are described here to provide important context to the grant and its implementation.

One existing board member took on the role of acting Executive Director in collaboration with the ExitUSA Program Director. The new leaders were tasked with reorganizing service delivery and other activities included in the original project narrative and IMP. Life After Hate experienced additional key staff turnover until the new Executive Director began work in July 2022.

These leadership changes directly affected grant implementation by delaying service delivery and material development, and by creating a lack of clarity around the initial intentions of the FY2020 grant project.

Figure 1. Life After Hate Organizational Change





# ExitUSA Services

## ExitUSA Services Support Individuals Exiting Far-Right Extremist Groups

ExitUSA, Life After Hate's intervention program, provides direct help to individuals and friends or family of individuals interested in disengaging from violent far-right hate groups. ExitUSA staff do so by exploring with clients their reasons for leaving while addressing the barriers that exiting individuals typically face. When it is a concerned friend or family member reaching out to ExitUSA, they are provided resources as needed depending on the situation. When a client reaches out to ExitUSA they are provided a social worker who is responsible for their case management and rescue coordination. Because exiting clients approach ExitUSA in varying stages of disengagement, it is important that the program designs a tailored plan and resources, including mental health referrals, practical skills-building, and peer-to-peer interventions. ExitUSA also provides exit specialists as part of the program - former VFRE members who have exited and now serve as peers to those currently in the exit process.

## Design and Methods for Process Evaluation

For the process evaluation of ExitUSA services, researchers engaged in systematic information gathering through monthly calls with Life After Hate to document overall progress. The research team requested systematic data transfers of the program data collected in the ExitUSA case management system (CMS), but those data could not be produced because of inconsistent electronic tracking and missing data. However, ExitUSA staff conducted a cross-sectional manual chart review that allowed researchers insight into symptoms experienced by the clients at the program intake. In addition, researchers reviewed grant materials including the theory of change, client flowchart, and various needs and risk assessment forms. Furthermore, the evaluation team interviewed five ExitUSA staff to collect information on implementation, services, and lessons learned.

## Findings

This section examines the process evaluation findings regarding ExitUSA's direct services, which correspond with Goal 1, Objectives 1.1 and 1.2 in Life After Hate's IMP.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1: Provide ExitUSA services to facilitate exit from violent WSE**

**OBJECTIVE 1.2: Provide ExitUSA aftercare services to build individual resilience**

## ExitUSA Program Reorganization & Redesign Resulted in Improvements

“The FY20 TVTP grant gave Life After Hate the opportunity to hire multiple professional staff to audit and restructure the organization to meet established legal, ethical, and practice standards.”

**LAH Staff Member**

Outside of the TVTP grant, Life After Hate conducted an internal audit in the summer of 2021 and found the ExitUSA program to be significantly understaffed, considering the demand for direct services. The program lacked a clearly defined structure, so program staff were pulled in many directions without enough time to adequately support clients and keep up with administrative needs. For example, existing screening tools were administered to clients, but staff lacked the time needed to document these data correctly and consistently in the CMS. The audit also found that the program was significantly understaffed in terms of competencies, which meant that all services being provided at the time were akin to paraprofessional peer mentoring by peer mentors with minimal training and oversight, rather than the social work case management that LAH now provides to clients post-reorganization. Program staff described working conditions as “unhealthy” before October 2021. One staff member explained, “Our staff believed they had to do everything all the time for everyone or someone would die from a hate-related accident.” This undue pressure resulted in staff burnout.



After the leadership change, however, the organizational culture shifted to a greater focus on structure, professionalism, open communication, and wellness of employees and contractors. One staff member noted, “Ever since the [reorganization], I am a lot happier working here and I imagine others would agree. Our clients get better services.” Life After Hate’s experience highlights the importance of proper selection, training, licensure, and support of staff taking part in such interventions, as well as the risks of not doing so.

The reorganization and redesign of ExitUSA also led to measurable changes in client contact. During the first year of the grant, prior to the redesign, the majority of clients were seen only once, according to LAH’s records (and are therefore classified as being enrolled for less than 1 month). After staffing changes were made to emphasize social work case management provided by full time social workers as the primary service providers, the majority of clients were seen more than six times (an enrollment of six months). According to LAH, approximately 25% of exiting individuals stayed in services for 9-18 months.

## Redesigning the ExitUSA Program

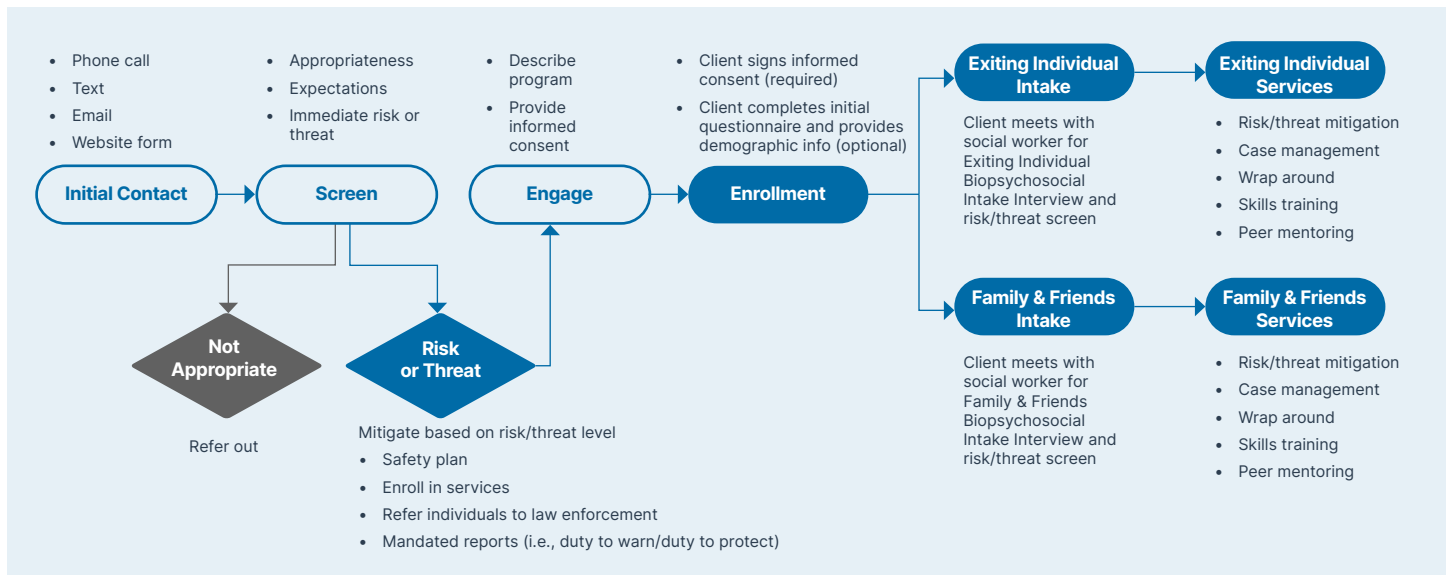
As a result of the internal audit findings, the ExitUSA program was restructured beginning in September 2021. Life After Hate updated a suite of program materials, revised their client case flow, changed staff composition and training, expanded the number of referral partners, and redesigned aftercare services (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. ExitUSA Program Redesign**



**Program Case Flow.** Life After Hate revised several program materials, including its client case flow. As pictured in Figure 3, exiting individuals and friends and family clients follow the same path to the program under this revised case flow system. After a potential client makes initial contact with ExitUSA, staff screen them and provide information about the ExitUSA program. The eligible clients sign a consent form, begin enrollment, and meet with the ExitUSA case manager, who is a trained social worker, to complete a comprehensive battery of intake assessments—biopsychosocial, risk, and threat screenings—along with a goals and needs assessment. The case manager also administers the VFRE assessment, which is repeated every three to six months.

Exiting individuals receive case management services that are focused on addressing factors that individuals identify as contributing to their ability to leave VFRE, including referrals to community resources and support, and an internal referral to peer support provided by exit specialists. Exit specialists work with individuals on involvement in VFRE ideology, behavior, and social networks. Friends and family clients typically receive case management services focused primarily on relevant safety issues. They can opt to join a twice-monthly psychoeducational support group that features a structured resource or intervention (e.g., healthy boundary setting, self-care, positive interactions with a loved one in the movement) and an unstructured peer support opportunity.

**Figure 3. Redesigned ExitUSA Client Screening and Intake Workflow**

**Staff Composition and Training.** During the ExitUSA redesign, LAH hired new staff to supervise the program, who brought high levels of education and training in their fields and license to practice independently. Additionally, at the conclusion of this evaluation, ExitUSA employed three full-time social work-level case managers and four part-time exit specialists, representing an expansion in staffing and service delivery capacity from no social work case managers and two part-time exit specialists employed at the initiation of the program redesign. These new staff also represent an increase in competencies, as the three case managers have extensive experience providing case management in a variety of contexts that further contribute to their competencies with LAH's clients (e.g., incarcerated youth and adults, substance abuse, domestic violence, child welfare). Current and new staff received an estimated 40 hours of training that included risk assessment; suicide and domestic violence risk; and overall training in documentation standards, ethics, and compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). These trainings were rolled out as a part of onboarding for new staff and ongoing training for existing staff. ExitUSA began implementing a triad approach in which an exit specialist, a case manager, and a client would meet to ensure comprehensive client support. Only some clients are referred

to peer mentors and all clients working with a peer mentor are required to meet with a social worker at least once per month, if not more, to ensure adequate professional oversight of clients. Staff noted their appreciation for the opportunity to work alongside formers, indicating that doing so helped individuals understand “that people are complex and that good people are capable of bad things and bad people are capable of amazing things.”

**Expanding the Number of Referral Partners.** ExitUSA staff worked to expand a list of trusted referral partners and update the internal referral directory for various services, including tattoo removal and housing. As a result, more than 85 new referral partners were added to their interactive resource map.

**Redesign Aftercare Services.** Life After Hate's original plan, as described in the grant proposal and IMP, indicated that it would establish a formal ExitUSA mentor program to provide aftercare services. This plan was modified by the new ExitUSA Program Director and discussed with DHS. After the redesign, Life After Hate reportedly formalized the approach and onboarded exit specialists to provide these mentorship services, although they are not formally considered mentors.



# Providing Direct Services to Contend with Complex, Individual, and Nonlinear Exit Pathways

In its closeout report, Life After Hate described the stories of three clients who have received ExitUSA services.

---

**Client A** identified as a “Neo-Nazi,” holding violent, antisemitic beliefs for over 30 years, he reached out to Life After Hate in the summer of 2021 stating, “I don’t know what I want, but (my beliefs) are becoming a problem.” He has worked closely with a peer mentor who has helped him to challenge his long-held antisemitic and racist beliefs. Client A began disposing of his Nazi paraphernalia, including flags and clothing emblazoned with swastikas, and “WWII memorabilia” (his terminology for Nazi artifacts). He now states “violence isn’t right,” has tentatively begun engaging with anti-racism information and independently challenges the rhetoric that promotes Jewish conspiracy theories. He has begun developing and nurturing friendships with prosocial people outside of VFRE. Most recently, the peer mentor has convinced him to work more actively with the social worker assigned to his case to find and access mental health services to address the effects of childhood trauma, abuse, and neglect.

---

**Client B** identifies as a “patriot” with anti-government, anti-immigrant, and anti-Muslim beliefs steeped in white supremacist and antisemitic justifications. He reached out to Life After Hate saying his involvement in VFRE is straining his family relationships. He is a high school dropout, unemployed, and socially isolated beyond the VFRE group. Client B has worked with the social worker to identify the steps necessary to obtain his GED and figure out how to re-establish friendships with peers he had lost contact with after joining the VFRE group. With the social worker’s encouragement, Client B found a church to attend regularly, a community institution in which he found comfort and support as a child. The peer mentor has worked with Client B to problem solve the safest way to slowly disengage from the VFRE group and has helped him to challenge some of the VFRE ideology, making progress in reducing violent anti-government beliefs. This client is in the early stages of a long path to exit VFRE.

---

**Client C** was part of a white supremacist gang and engaged in illegally transporting drugs and weapons. He reported to Life After Hate that he suffered from anger management issues, anxiety, and depression, and had a history of substance abuse

from which he had been sober for some time. He was largely ambivalent about exiting but told Life After Hate that he was estranged from his family and saw exiting as a means of potentially reconnecting with them. After establishing a working relationship with a social worker and peer mentor he admitted he had participated in militia-style “training exercises” with a violent extremist group. He confided that he had been binge-watching videos of acts of mass violence based on white supremacist beliefs and fantasizing about committing a similar mass violence attack. He stated that he had relapsed into substance abuse, was barely sleeping, and experienced racing thoughts. He told his Peer Mentor that he was reaching his breaking point, wanted to change, and needed help.

Within less than 24 hours Client C had met with the social worker who conducted a comprehensive assessment of the needs and targets for intervention, assessed risk and threat, and developed a plan to address the complex set of needs. The wrap-around plan included identifying substance abuse treatment facilities and helping Client C access substance abuse and mental health treatment. Client C also felt he could not sustain change while still in the company of the violent far-right group. The case manager helped him to identify a new place to live with a prosocial/nonviolent acquaintance, aided in problem solving, and supported the steps he needed to take to geographically relocate to get away from his violent extremist peers. As soon as he relocated, the case manager helped Client C access substance abuse and mental health treatment, navigating what can be a challenging and frustrating health system. During these initial weeks, the case manager and peer mentor met with Client C via phone, video meeting, or text check-in at least daily to provide emotional support, reinforce his positive choices and changes, and address any barriers to continued progress.

Client C continued to meet with the peer mentor and case manager throughout substance abuse and mental health treatment, has taken steps to have his hate symbols tattoos covered up, reports he no longer fantasizes about committing acts of violence, and is challenging the violence-justifying, racist beliefs he has held for so long. He has re-established contact with his family, established a nonviolent and prosocial social network and is looking for ways he can give back to his community. When he was at his lowest point, he trusted his Life After Hate peer mentor and social worker enough to be honest, ask for help, and is now meaningfully reintegrating into society.



## Community Forums Inactive Likely Because Prioritization Pivoted to Direct Client Contact

Life After Hate established an online Community Forum, where, through joining relevant channels, exiting individuals and their families and friends could receive continuous support. The forum was designed as a bank of resources with articles on wellness and discussion chats. Engagement in the forum has declined since its inception, possibly as a result of the restructure of ExitUSA services and prioritization of staff time for meetings with clients as opposed to interactions with forum members. In addition, one staff member shared that the security measures in place for the discussion rooms made it difficult to access them and prevented the program from reaching more people. Life After Hate then decided to stop reporting traffic metrics for the Community Forum since it was primarily inactive.

## New CMS Allows for Consistent Client Tracking

The original CMS used by ExitUSA, Simple Practice, posed a significant challenge due to its many shortcomings. The CMS was unable to reliably document client interactions and generate aggregate reports on ExitUSA services provided to clients, resulting in some staff attempting to supplement the CMS with an Excel tracker. As part of the ExitUSA redesign, a new CMS (CaseBuddy) was selected; collaboration on its development and implementation started in February 2022. Full implementation was planned to take up to six months, including design and implementation of data items and evaluation measures, followed by configuration and testing. Because of delays at different phases of implementation, the system was not fully deployed until December 2022.

## Subset of ExitUSA Client Data Shows Varying Stages of Exiting VFRE

In August 2022, the ExitUSA Program Director completed a manual Simple Practice chart review and delivered limited information to the research team. This included data from September to July 2022 from the initial contact and the intake documentation, if recorded. The data set, while limited, included 71 exiting individuals and 47 family members.

Analysis conducted by RTI indicated that both exiting individuals and friends and family commonly experienced a wide array of symptoms of negative affect (e.g., depressed mood, angry outbursts, panic attacks). Many exiting individuals also reported negative outcomes, including having used illicit drugs, having committed violent and nonviolent crime in the previous six months, and having had suicidal thoughts. These data showed that more friends and family members than exiting individuals reported experiencing panic attacks during this period. Furthermore, 15% of friends and family reported having had suicidal thoughts in the previous six months.<sup>1</sup>

## Challenges

**Leadership Change, Staff Shortage, and Turnover.** Life After Hate and ExitUSA experienced organizational changes related to the leadership transition that significantly affected ExitUSA service provision. Design choices made in the first year of the project resulted in lack of systematic services and data collection. An internal audit revealed that the ExitUSA program was severely understaffed and unable to manage the increasing need for its services, which also led to staff burnout. This issue was resolved through program restructure and hiring new case managers and exit specialists.

**Case Management System.** ExitUSA's original CMS was insufficient for its needs and resulted in a loss of important data. Life After Hate was able to correct this issue by acquiring a new CMS; however, because of delays with development, installation, and testing, the program was unable to collect any reliable data with the new CMS before the grant period was over.

**Unclear IMP.** Life After Hate's IMP lacked clear organization and description across its goals, objectives, inputs, outputs, and outcomes. As a result, the new Life After Hate leadership had to infer the intentions of those who originally developed the IMP.

1 For more information on this topic, view data analysis conducted by Life After Hate: <https://www.lifeafterhate.org/blog/2022/10/18/white-paper-confronting-the-mental-health-realities-of-successful-exit-from-vfre/>



## IMP Accomplishments

Life After Hate achieved its objective of providing ExitUSA services to support exiting far-right extremists (Objective 1.1). While Life After Hate was able to provide data regarding the number of clients served and the number of sessions per client, the organization was unable to provide more comprehensive data regarding their ExitUSA client services administered during the grant period due to challenges with its CMS. Per information received from Life After Hate, 156 clients were served by the ExitUSA program during the grant period (surpassing the goal of 150), who participated in a total of 2,151 individual client sessions. Although this averages to approximately 14 sessions per client, the actual number of sessions per client ranged widely, from as little as one session to as many as 78. This range is due, in part, to the reorganization and redesign of ExitUSA, which resulted in an increase in the number of client interactions. While the majority of clients prior to the reorganization engaged only

once, most clients (both exiting individuals and family clients) in the second year of the grant participated in services for at least 6 months. Another 25% of clients stayed in services for 9-18 months.

All screening and assessment tools were revamped as part of the ExitUSA program redesign, and more than 85 referral partners were added to the interactive resource map (surpassing the goal of 50 new referral partners). Community Forum channels for exiting individuals and family and friends were created and a set of static resources were developed in the first year of the project; however, the channels were mostly inactive in the second year of the grant. Life After Hate also reportedly succeeded in providing ExitUSA aftercare services to build individual resilience (Objective 1.2) through a modified design of the mentorship provided through exit specialists' work rather than a separate peer mentorship program. However, Life After Hate did not share any data related to the progress toward this objective.

## Recommendations

- ✓ Grantees that provide direct services to clients as part of their projects should ensure that new staff receive relevant onboarding training before engaging with clients and that existing staff continue to receive refresher trainings to maintain high-quality service provision.
- ✓ Grantees should consider implementing regular internal staff assessments to ensure that their staff provide services that adhere to standardized procedures. Assessments should also seek to evaluate whether staffing levels and composition are sufficient to meet the demand for services and that the staff-client ratio is acceptable and manageable.
- ✓ Grantees that provide direct services to clients should examine their CMSs to confirm that they allow reliable documentation of all aspects of direct service provision and that they can generate aggregate reports.
- ✓ Grantees that provide direct services to clients should consider performing regular CMS data audits to identify and address potential issues related to incomplete data or shortcomings of the CMS. A standardized process of frequently reviewing CMS data for completeness and correctness would prevent issues with missing data and allow for more accurate tracking and reporting of outputs.



# Exiting Process Awareness Outreach

## Building the Public's Awareness of the Exit Process and ExitUSA Through Messaging

Life After Hate strives to increase awareness of the exit process and available support services within the ExitUSA clients as well as the wider audience. With this goal in mind, Life After Hate planned to update Life After Hate and ExitUSA-specific website content, conduct an online messaging campaign, and develop VFRE counternarrative videos targeting their client base and the general community.

## Design and Methods for Process Evaluation

For the process evaluation, researchers documented progress made to update the Life After Hate and ExitUSA website content and developing counternarrative videos. The research team reviewed the final report of the five-month targeted online campaign facilitated by Moonshot. The research team interviewed Life After Hate and Moonshot staff responsible for relevant tasks related to outreach activities, and reviewed limited data on website views and interactions.

## Findings

This section examines the process evaluation findings regarding Life After Hate's communication and outreach efforts, which correspond with Goal 1, Objective 1.3 and Goal 2, Objective 2.1 in its IMP.

**OBJECTIVE 1.3: Enhance outreach to build awareness of the violent WSE exit process and ExitUSA intervention services (targeting ExitUSA clients)**

**OBJECTIVE 2.1: Enhance outreach to build awareness of the violent WSE exit process and ExitUSA intervention services (targeting overall community)**

## Online Campaign Designed to Redirect at-Risk Individuals

Life After Hate contracted Moonshot to pilot and deliver an online redirect intervention connecting at-risk individuals with the ExitUSA program. A social enterprise that was originally established to understand and counter violent extremism, Moonshot's work varies from software development and capacity building to leading global counter-messaging and intervention campaigns.

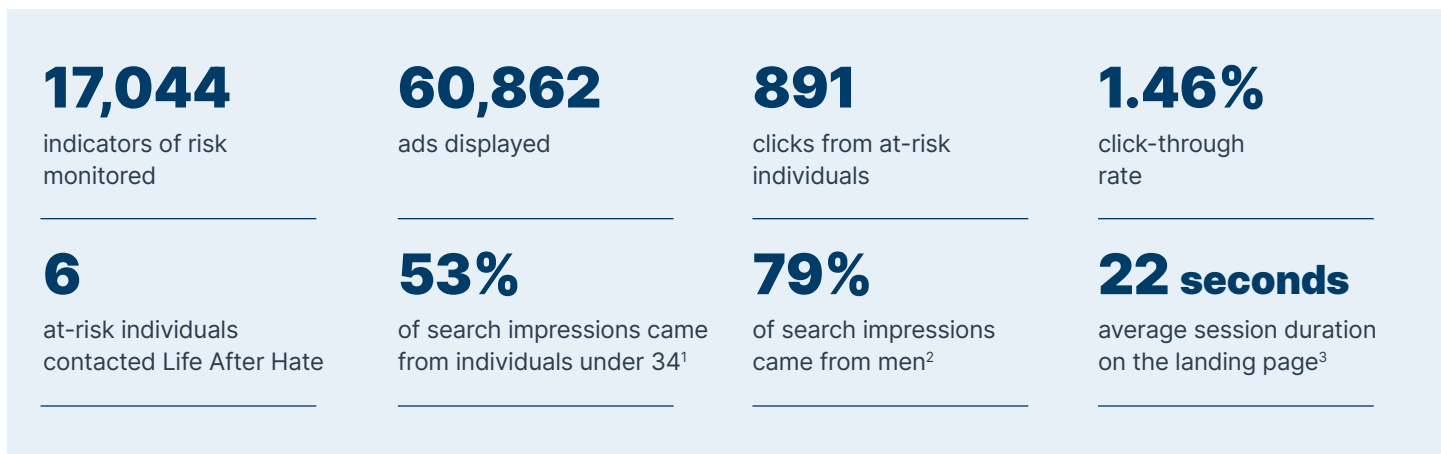
Moonshot's five-month campaign was directed to over 17,000 individuals searching Google for keywords related to violent white supremacist and anti-government extremism. The campaign's primary goals were to raise awareness of Life After Hate's services among at-risk individuals and to provide a path for disengagement from far-right extremism groups. The campaign launched on August 19, 2021 and continued through January 6, 2022.

A campaign report produced by Moonshot (Figure 4) described the campaign's key outputs, including redirecting almost 900 at-risk individuals to Life After Hate's website and creating an outline for future interventions to reach and engage at-risk users online. An unintended outcome of the campaign was that it provided important experience in setting up effective Google advertisement campaigns to reach potential clients and supporters. The campaign development and implementation generally progressed according to the plan, although it was paused twice, at the request of Life After Hate, to ensure that case management capacity remained at a safe and manageable level.





Figure 4. Social Media Campaign Highlights from the Moonshot Report



<sup>1</sup> Based on available demographic data. Google collects these anonymized and aggregated demographic data from signed-in users based on self-reported characteristics, ad settings, and their behavior on its advertising network. For users whose age and gender cannot be attributed, Google records the demographic as "unknown." Most search impressions were generated by people 34 years old or younger (18- to 24-year-olds, 27.4%, and 25- to 34-year-olds, 25.5%).

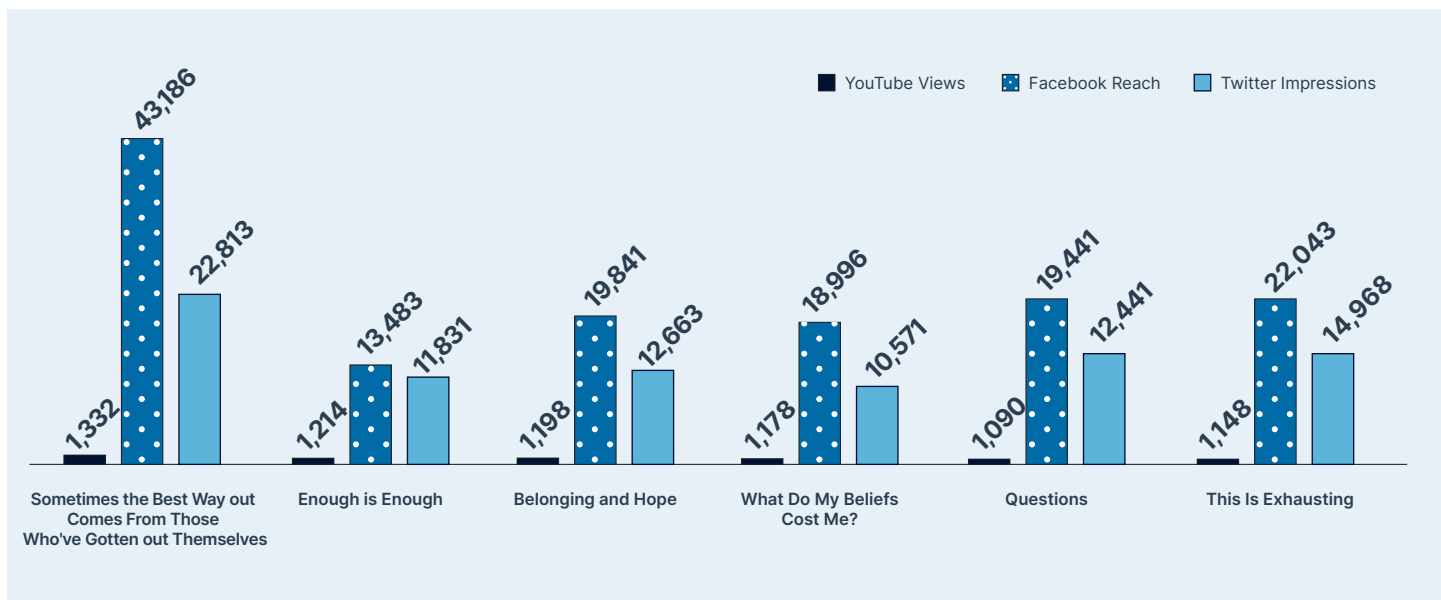
<sup>2</sup> Based on available demographic data, women produced 21% of search impressions for which a gender was attributable.

<sup>3</sup> This metric includes users who returned to the page at a later date.

## Counternarrative Videos Developed

Life After Hate planned to develop and launch five counternarrative videos for the ExitUSA client base as well as the general population. Ultimately, Life After Hate produced six videos between February 2022 and December 2022 and posted them on its YouTube channel, Facebook, and Twitter pages. Life After Hate tracked views and engagement (e.g., likes, comments, shares) for each video. As shown in Figure 5, Life After Hate’s videos had the widest reach on Facebook, followed by Twitter. The most successful video in terms of engagement was the first, titled “Sometimes the Best Way out Comes From Those Who’ve Gotten out Themselves.” However, this video was posted on social media longer than the others, meaning it had more time to gain views. The final four videos were also shown at conferences.

Figure 5. Video YouTube Views, Facebook Reach, and Twitter Impressions as of December 28, 2022



Note: Facebook Reach is the number of individuals who saw the video. Twitter Impressions are the number of times a video appeared on someone’s Twitter feed.



## Website Redesign to Optimize Access and Draw Users

Life After Hate sought to update the Life After Hate and ExitUSA websites. In July 2022, the new permanent Executive Director took over the process, making changes to optimize the loading speed of web pages, improve the website organization to better direct those seeking services, attract potential funders, and extend the time visitors spent on the website. The revised website launched in December 2022.

## Challenges

**Staff Shortage and Turnover.** The Director of Communication's departure in April 2022 affected progress on several aspects of the outreach component, as the director had previously led video development and website redesign. This effort was therefore placed on hold until the new Executive Director started, causing a gap between videos and requiring a no-cost extension to complete production and dissemination of both the counternarrative videos and the ExitUSA website redesign. In addition, the ExitUSA case management staff shortage triggered two pauses in the social media campaign.

## IMP Accomplishments

Life After Hate met its objective of enhancing outreach to build awareness of the VFRE exit process and ExitUSA intervention (Objectives 1.3 and 2.1) by producing and releasing six counternarrative videos (exceeding the target of five videos), conducting a targeted online campaign, and redesigning and optimizing Life After Hate and ExitUSA web pages.

## Recommendations

- ✓ Develop standard operating procedures with general guidelines for project functioning, staff responsibilities, and succession planning. Strong progress documentation preserves institutional knowledge in cases of staff turnover, could prevent delays if a task lead resigns, and allows for a less-challenging transition for new staff.



# Development and Implementation of Training for Professionals

## Enhancing Local Prevention Networks' Ability to Identify and Support Individuals At Risk of Mobilizing to Violence

Life After Hate developed and implemented training modules for two populations: mental health professionals (MHPCD training) and law enforcement professionals (working in law enforcement, corrections, and probation/parole; ACD training). They also planned to direct trainees to the Community Forum, but as previously discussed, the outreach strategy shifted, and training-related channels within the forum were not utilized.

## Design and Methods for Process and Outcome Evaluation

Researchers collected attendance and pre-, post-, and follow-up test data. For the MHPCD training, pre- and posttests were administered for all training sessions between February 2022 and June 2022. The follow-up tests were emailed to participants three months after the training. For the ACD training, pre- and posttests were programmed and administered for all trainees but, due to its asynchronous format, the time between pre- and posttest completion varied. The follow-up test was sent two months after the training module closed and only to participants who completed the training. For both the MHPCD and ACD trainings, the follow-up tests asked the same questions as the pre- and posttests and also included items related to utility of knowledge gained during the training.

The research team analyzed the quantitative data produced from the pre-, post-, and follow-up tests to examine the change in knowledge of VFRE and retention of knowledge over time. In addition, the evaluation team reviewed training curricula, observed two MHPCD training sessions, reviewed training recruitment materials, and received regular updates on implementation progress and milestones.

## Findings

This section examines the process and outcome evaluation findings regarding Life After Hate's trainings for professionals, which correspond with Goal 3, Objective 3.1 in its IMP.

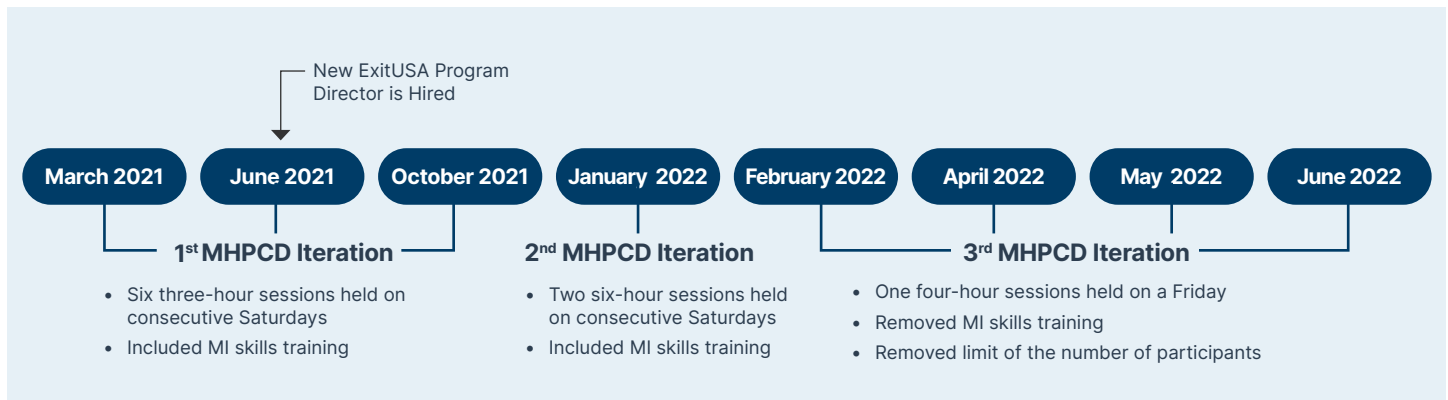
**OBJECTIVE 3.1: Enhance outreach to build awareness of the violent WSE exit process and ExitUSA intervention services (targeting ExitUSA clients)**

## MHPCD Training

The MHPCD virtual training was developed to increase mental health professionals' knowledge about the needs of clients who are disengaging from VFRE. As pictured in Figure 6, Life After Hate developed three iterations of that training and facilitated eight training sessions. Recruitment methods for these trainings varied in each iteration but ultimately included posts on Twitter, emails to Life After Hate and DHS Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) electronic mailing lists, posts on LinkedIn, and the landing page of the Life After Hate website.



Figure 6. MHPCD Training Timeline



**First and Second Iterations.** Life After Hate originally structured the training as six three-hour sessions on consecutive Saturdays. Three training cohorts were organized in 2021, and a total of 19 participants completed the training. Eleven participants completed satisfaction surveys, indicating that they liked the training but found its timing and frequency to be difficult. The new ExitUSA Program Director responded to the survey feedback by condensing the training into a 12-hour session held over two consecutive Saturdays. The only training session using this structure took place in January 2022.

**Third Iteration.** The final version of the curriculum was further condensed into one four-hour session focused on VFRE, with Motivational Interviewing (MI) and trauma-informed care themes throughout. The originally included interactive MI skills practice was removed from the curriculum to open it to a wider audience, participant criteria were expanded to include individuals other than licensed mental health practitioners, and the attendance cap was removed. Supplementary strategies were used to increase pre-/posttest data collection response rates, including allowing time at the beginning and toward the end of the training for pre-/posttest completion and asking trainees to indicate completion by raising their virtual hands. It was also recommended that the posttest be administered before the final question-and-answer period which was then implemented. A total of 132 people completed this third iteration of the training.

## Pre- and Posttests Indicate Statistically Significant Knowledge Gains

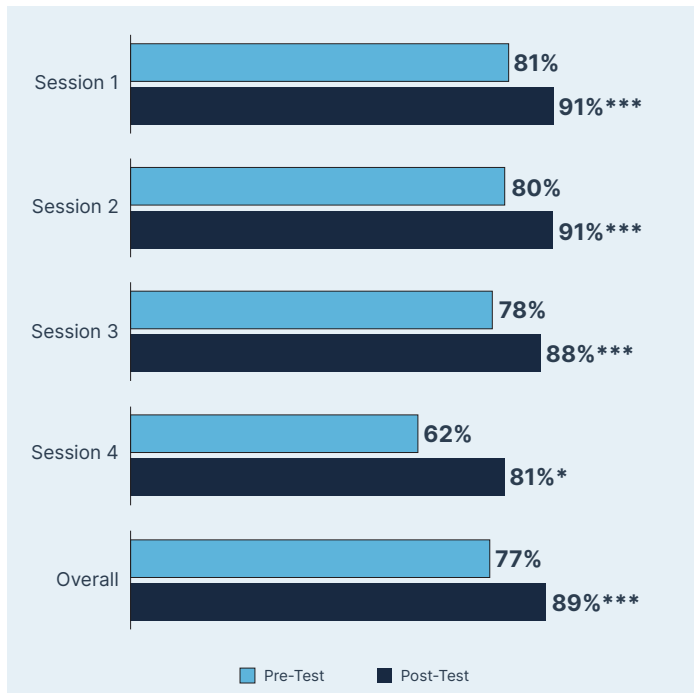
Pre- and posttests consisted of 20 identical questions regarding risk and protective factors for radicalization. Life After Hate staff added two additional questions to the posttest related to satisfaction and topics of interest for future trainings. Of the 132 individuals who participated in one of trainings, 88 completed the pretest, 72 completed the posttest administered immediately following the training, and 38 completed the follow-up test sent three months after completion of the training.

The 72 individuals who completed both the pre- and posttests received an average score of 77% on the pretest. The average pretest score was relatively high but that is not unexpected as the MHPCD course was advertised largely to mental health providers and it was not mandatory. Despite the pre-test scores being high, the average score on the posttest was higher at 89%, demonstrating a 12% increase (Figure 7). The largest individual training session increase between pre- and posttests was Session 4 with a jump of 19%. Even though this session had the lowest average posttest score, they seemed to benefit more from the training than those in the other sessions.





**Figure 7. MHPCD Training Participants' Average Pre- and Posttest Scores**

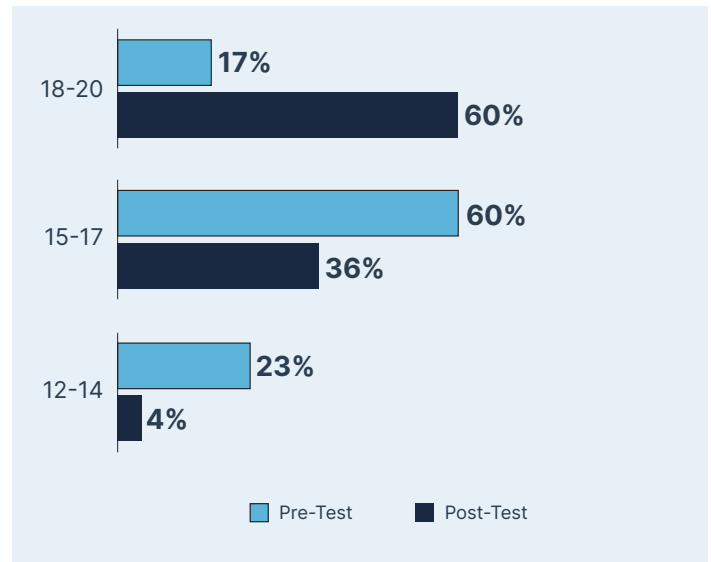


\*\*\* p < 0.001

\* p < 0.05

These improved test scores are reflected when looking at individual results. The lowest individual score on the pre-test was 12 out of 20 questions, whereas the lowest individual score on the posttest was 14 out of 20 questions. As shown in Figure 8, the percentage of participants who got 18 or more questions correct increased from 17% in the pre-test to 60% in the posttest. On average, the 72 participants who completed the posttest answered 3.2 more questions correctly in the posttest than in the pre-test. Questions with the largest increase between pre- and posttests were found in topics about VFRE in general (identification of VFRE groups, ideologies within the VFRE movement) and characteristics of exiting individuals (commonality of Adverse Childhood Experiences, emotions shown by exiting individuals).

**Figure 8. Number of Questions Answered Correctly in Pre- and Posttest (Out of 20)**



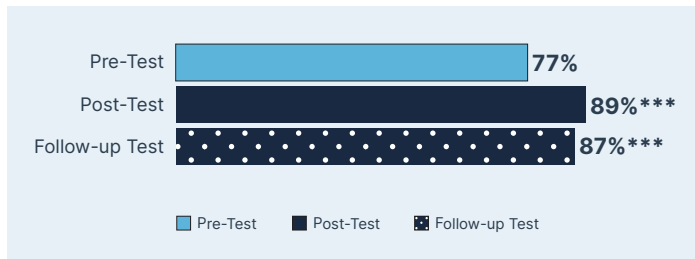
## Follow-Up Tests Indicate Knowledge Retained

Three months after each of the four training sessions, all participants were invited to participate in a follow-up test to examine whether the knowledge gains that were seen in the posttest were retained over time. Participants were sent multiple reminders in an effort to reduce expected attrition. In the end, of the 72 people who completed the posttest, 38 completed the follow-up test (53%).

Some amount of knowledge loss between posttest and follow-up tests, as demonstrated by decreased test scores, is typically expected. The average score among the 38 individuals who completed the follow-up test was 87%, which is a slight, albeit expected, decrease from the average posttest score of 89%. Overall, this demonstrates that participants' average scores after taking the MHPCD training rose a significant, yet small, amount and remained significantly higher than the pretest three months later.



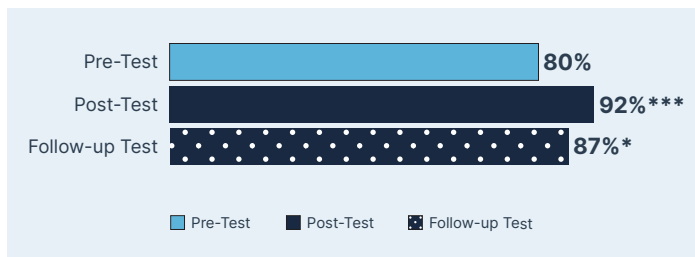
**Figure 9. MHPCD Overall Training Participant Performance on Pretest, Posttest, and Follow-Up Test**



\*\*\* p < 0.001

When looking only at the data of the 38 individuals who completed the follow-up test, this group scored slightly higher than average on both the pre-test (80%) and the posttest (92%) (Figure 10), though the differences were small and collectively all participants still scored relatively high. The minor discrepancy in scores does indicate that self-selection to complete the follow-up test was not based on those individuals being more knowledgeable in the topic. When looking only at the average scores of these 38 individuals a marginally larger decrease between their posttest and follow-up test scores (from 92% to 87%) is shown, but both of these scores are still significantly higher than their initial pretest score of 80%.

**Figure 10. Average Test Performance for Those who Completed the Follow-Up Test**



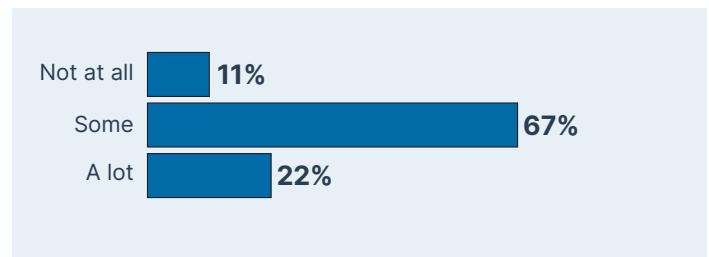
\* p < = 0.05)

\*\*\* p < 0.001

## Participants' Reflections on Training

As part of the follow-up survey, Life After Hate also asked participants to answer questions regarding their reflection on the training they received. Of the 27 participants who answered these questions, all of them indicated the training was at least slightly relevant to their current work. As shown in Figure 11, most respondents (n=24) noted they used what they learned from the course in their professional work to at least some extent in the months since their training. The 11% of individuals who stated that they had not used their training provided explanations such as being on medical leave, still undergoing professional training, or had not had the opportunity with their specific clients. These data are promising on the utility of the training for mental health practitioners and other community stakeholders.

**Figure 11. Extent to Which Participants Used What They Learned in the Course in Their Work**



## Alliance for Co-Responder Development Training

The Alliance for Co-Responder Development (ACD) training was developed for the law enforcement community, encompassing law enforcement, corrections, and probation/parole professionals, and was designed as a two-hour asynchronous online training, programmed using a learning management system called Thinkific. The training content, delivered through a combination of slides and videos and adapted from the MHPCD training, was developed by a former on the Life After Hate staff and designed for users to go at their own pace. Curriculum was finalized and loaded into Thinkific in late May 2022, after which selected individuals were invited to test the system and provide feedback. The training went live in late August 2022, but recruitment proved to be more challenging than anticipated. The original recruitment plan was twofold: (1) an "individualized approach" in which information was sent directly to individuals via email, as well as posted on the Life After Hate website and announced on its social media

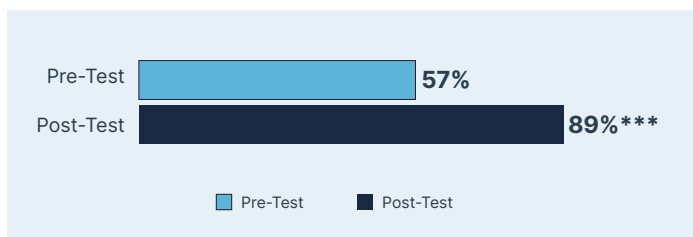


pages, and (2) a “wholesale approach” described as outreach directed toward establishments such as law enforcement membership organizations, law enforcement media outlets, and police departments, to get them to share the training within their organizations. Due to unanticipated recruitment challenges, the first training registrations did not take place until September 2022 and the first training was completed in October 2022. Because of these challenges and the grant timeline, Life After Hate decided to focus on its individualized approach but plans to pursue the wholesale approach in the future as a long-term goal for sustainability. By the end of the grant, 67 individuals had completed the ACD training.

### Pre-, Post- and Follow-Up Tests Indicate Significant Knowledge Gain

All training participants (n=67) completed the pre-test and 60 (90%) participants completed the posttest. These tests consisted of 12 questions regarding risk and protective factors for radicalization as well as general information on extremism in the United States. As shown in Figure 12, pre-test scores were relatively low, with participants correctly answering 57% of the questions and only 11 out of 60 (18%) answering between 10 to 12 questions correctly. The posttest demonstrated a marked improvement, with the number of participants answering 10 to 12 questions correctly increasing to 57 participants (95%). The average score increased by 32% (p < 0.001), which means that participants got nearly 4 additional questions correct on the posttest compared to the pre-test after going through the ACD training. Questions with the largest increase between pre- and posttests were found in topics about VFRE in general (distinguishing between violent extremism and domestic terrorism) and characteristics of exiting individuals (commonality of Adverse Childhood Experiences, paths into VFRE, reasons for joining a VFRE group).

Figure 12. ACD Training Participants’ Average Pre- and Posttest Scores

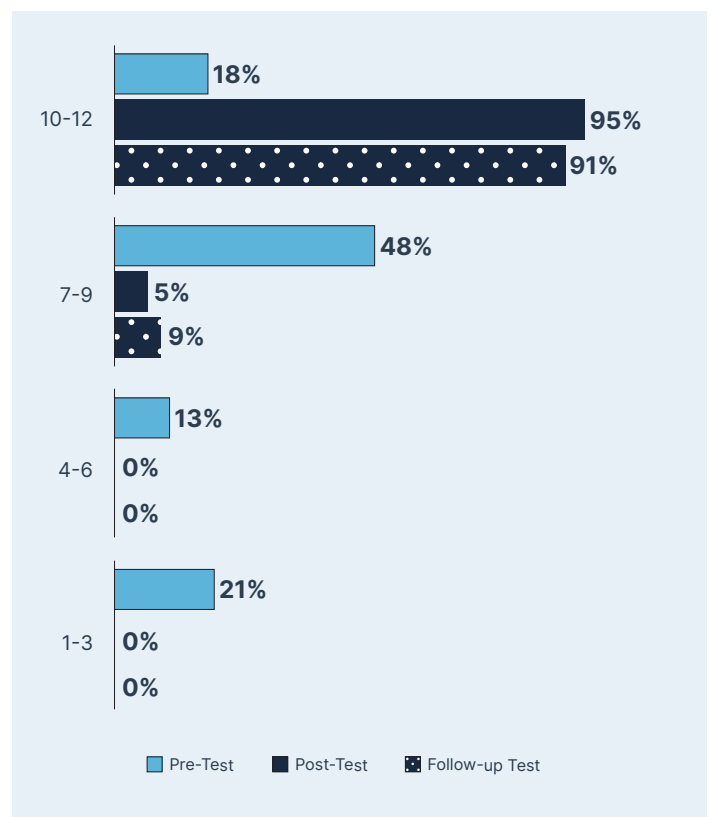


\*\*\* p < 0.001

### Follow-Up Tests Indicate Knowledge Retained

Two months after the training window ended, all participants were invited to participate in a follow-up test. Of 67 total participants who completed the training, 45 completed the follow-up tests (67.2%). The follow-up tests showed that the evident increase in knowledge demonstrated by the posttest was largely retained with 41 out of 45 people (91%) scoring between 10-12 a few months after the training.

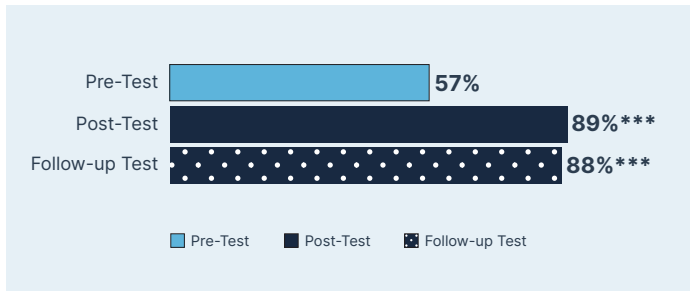
Figure 13. Number of Questions Answered Correctly in Pre-, Post-, and Follow-Up Tests (Out of 12)



There was a nominal decline (1%) in the average test scores between the post-test and the follow-up-test, which demonstrates that scores stayed significantly higher, even two months after training, than scores prior to the training (Figure 14). As previously mentioned, some decline is expected between posttests and follow-up surveys.



**Figure 14. ACD Training Participants' Average in= Pre-, Post-, and Follow-Up-test scores**



\*\*\* p < 0.001

## Challenges

**Training Redesign.** Life After Hate went through two extensive revisions of its MHPCD training over the course of the grant in response to low participation rates and feedback from participants on timing and frequency. The final iteration of the training did have a positive outcome on participant knowledge, although it is not possible to examine whether and to what extent the first two iterations had any effect on the knowledge of those cohorts.

**ACD Recruitment.** Even though the training curriculum was finalized and tested in the system in June 2022, the registration site was not ready until August 2022 and, because

of recruitment challenges, the first training was not completed until October 2022. Once Life After Hate staff initiated recruitment for training participants, they encountered unanticipated challenges when communicating with law enforcement organizations and had to rely on an individualized outreach approach. These challenges included (1) officers do not have time while on duty to complete the course; (2) departments cannot require this training, as they would have to pay for the time it took to complete the training; and (3) police departments are unionized and have specific rules about what officers can and cannot do on and off shift.

## IMP Accomplishments

Life After Hate's final goal was to enhance the ability of local prevention networks to identify and work with individuals at risk of mobilization to violence (Objective 3.1). Life After Hate met the objective of facilitating eight MHPCD training sessions and exceeded the objective of training 40 to 80 mental health and other professionals (157 professionals attended the training across three iterations of the curriculum). The ACD training was developed and adapted to an online modality and 67 law enforcement professionals completed the training modules. Training-specific Community Forum channels were created for continued education and engagement but were not made available to training graduates.

## Recommendations

- ✓ Grantees conducting trainings should consider developing an outreach and training recruitment plan early in the process. Doing so could prevent delays in recruitment and allow for outreach to take place immediately after the curriculum is finalized and tested.



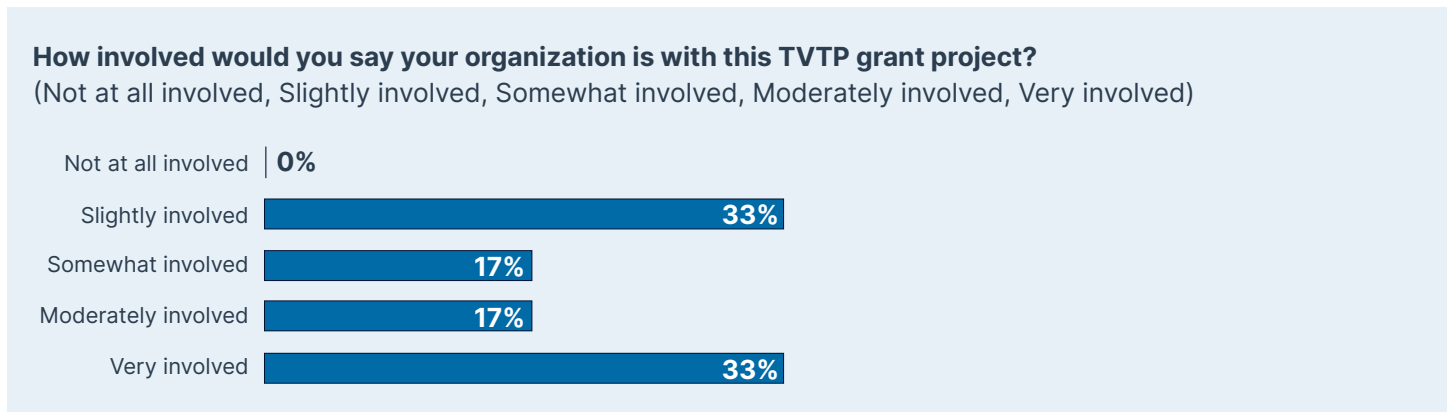
# Life After Hate Partner Survey Findings

Life After Hate engaged six partners to support its FY2020 grant. These partners came from academic fields, behavioral and mental health practitioners, and audio-visual and technology backgrounds. They also had a former Life After Hate Director as part of their team conducting portions of the MHPCD training. They used their past and present networks to put together a community of experts to support this grant project. Engaging partners as they did provided a more well-rounded program and new perspectives for fresh ideas to help support the exiting and practitioner community. RTI International surveyed these partners to better understand Life After Hate's collaboration with partners and the challenges they faced. This section discusses the findings from that survey.

## Nature of Partnerships

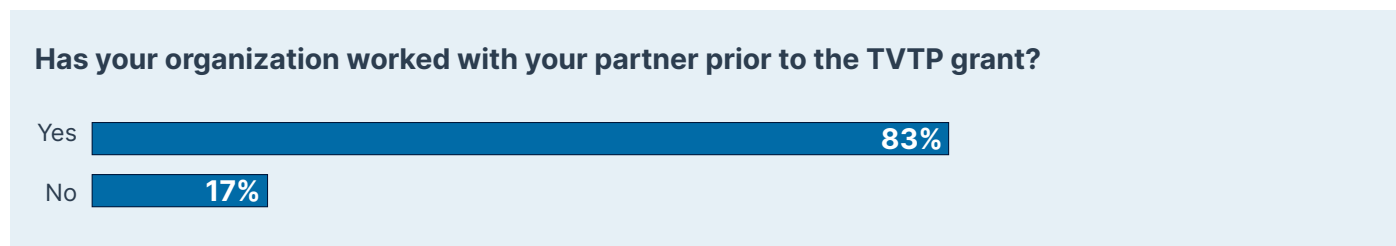
The survey revealed that levels of collaboration between Life After Hate and its partners varied quite a bit (Figure 15). This is understandable given that Life After Hate's partners were involved in different aspects of the grant and organization.

**Figure 15. Partner Organization Involvement**

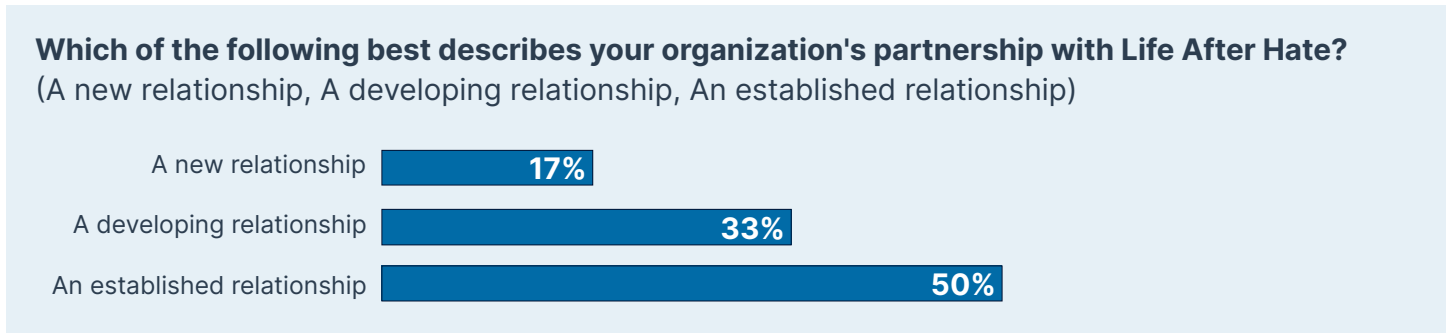


Most of the partners had worked with Life After Hate before this grant (Figure 16). Among those who had worked with the organization previously, there was a mix of relationships, with some categorizing their relationship with Life After Hate as established and others categorizing it as developing (Figure 17). Overall, the partners noted positive relationships with Life After Hate, with the majority indicating they had an excellent relationship and the rest stating that their relationship was good (Figure 18).

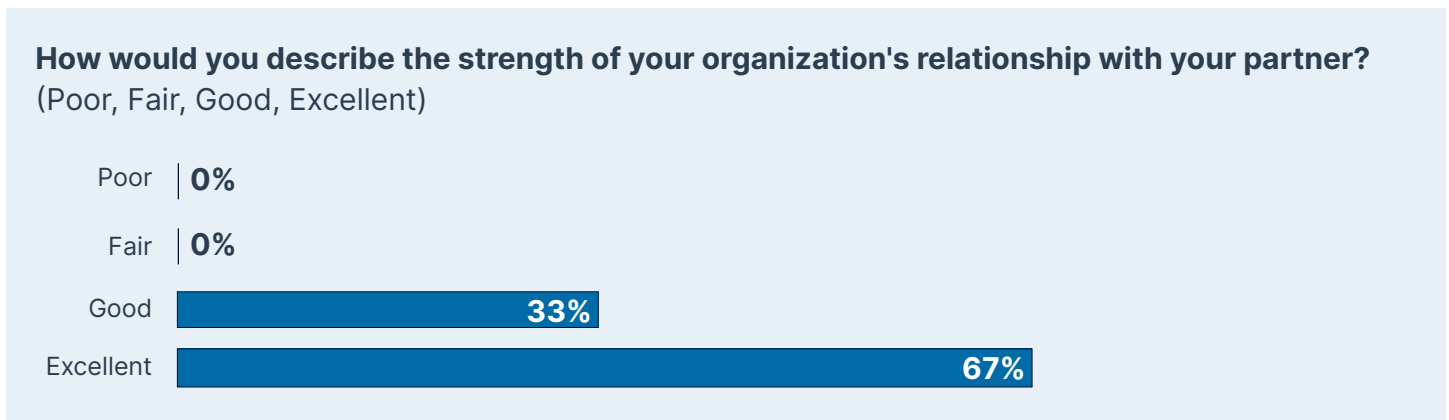
**Figure 16. Prior Partner Collaboration**



**Figure 17. Partner Organization Relationships**



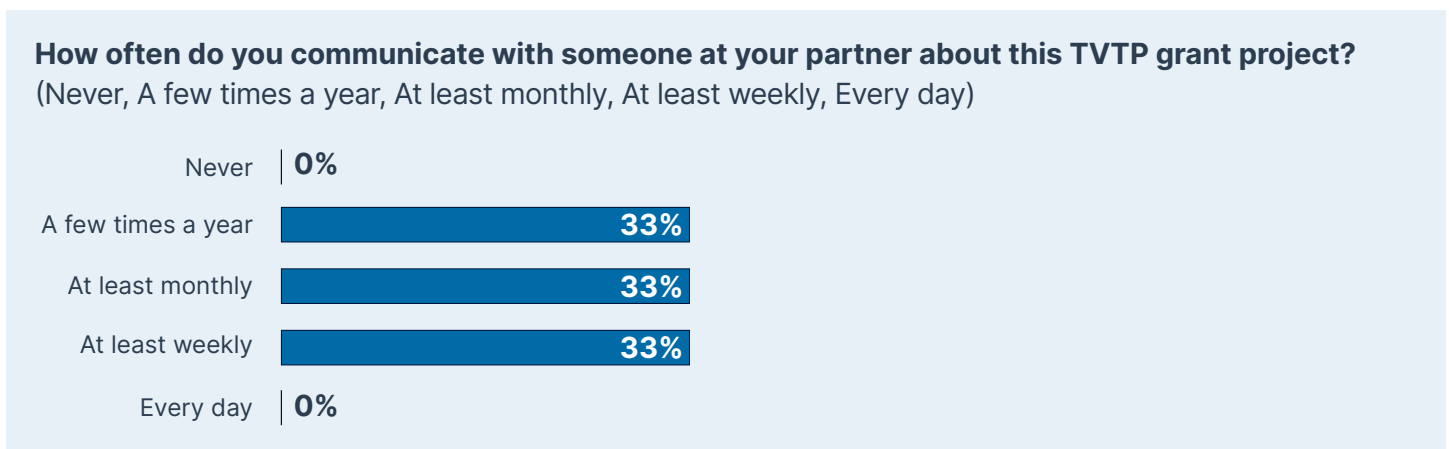
**Figure 18. Strength of Partnership**



## Communication

The partners were equally split regarding how often they communicated with Life After Hate. A third each indicated they communicated with Life After Hate a few times a year, at least monthly, or at least weekly (Figure 19). There is no expected frequency of communication for these partners but given the variable nature of the roles they had on this project, this breakdown of responses is somewhat expected. Not all partners had roles that required monthly or weekly communication, whereas others would have certainly benefited from having more contact with Life After Hate.

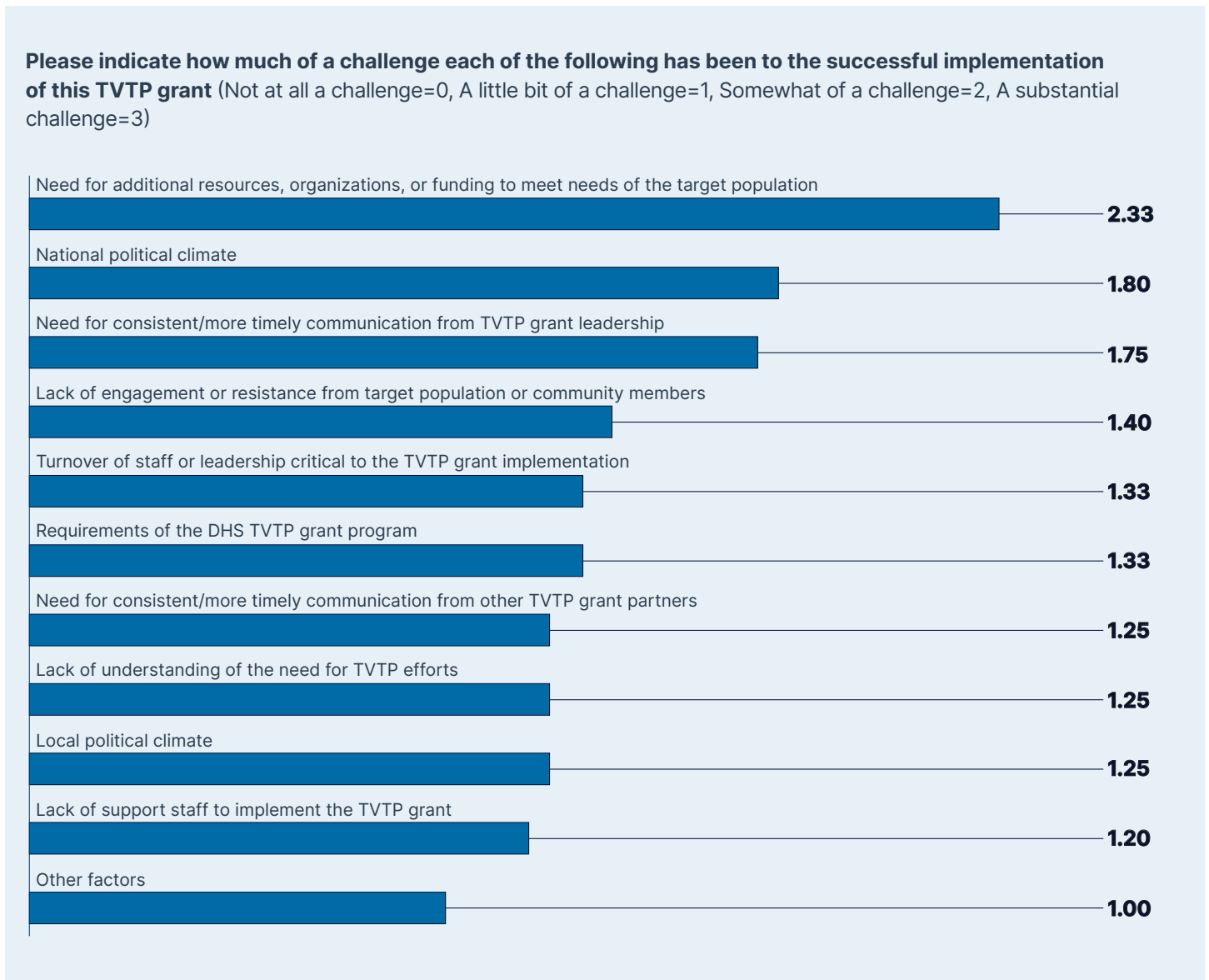
**Figure 19. Communication With Partner Organizations**



## Challenges

Partners identified several important implementation challenges. Participants were asked to rate certain challenges on a scale ranging from “not a challenge at all” to “a substantial challenge”. The “not a challenge at all” responses were coded as 0 to indicate the absence of a challenge. The need for additional resources, organizations, or funding to meet the needs of the target population was viewed as the biggest challenge of those provided. The need for additional resources or funding was the only factor that averaged above two on this scale (2.33), with the national political climate being the second biggest challenge (1.80) and the need for more consistent or timely communication from TVTP grant leadership the third (1.75) (Figure 20). Besides these challenges, no other factor averaged above a 1.5 out of 3.

**Figure 20. Perceived Challenges to Successful Implementation of TVTP Grant**



# Discussion

---

Despite significant challenges, Life After Hate achieved its grant objectives of (1) providing ExitUSA services to support exiting VFRE movement, (2) enhancing outreach to build awareness of the violent extremism exit process and ExitUSA interventions, and (3) enhancing the ability of local prevention networks to identify and work with individuals at risk of mobilization to violence. Even when Life After Hate faced challenges in implementing some of its activities as planned, staff members noted that the implementation process provided them with important experience and that they learned lessons that they will apply in the future. Additionally, these lessons can serve to illustrate the challenges and opportunities of conducting such activities to inform future TVTP efforts in this area. This evaluation is one of the early studies focused on helping individuals exiting VFRE and supporting practitioners in responding to this demographic. The TVTP field would benefit from more and greater in depth studies of programs like these and similar practitioner trainings.

The ExitUSA restructure improved the function of the program. Life After Hate hired and trained new and existing staff, more clearly defined roles, developed and applied updated screening and assessment tools, and implemented a new CMS that will better enable ExitUSA to systematically track its services and cases. Although Life After Hate, along with the ExitUSA program, underwent significant reorganization during the grant period, the research team anticipates that these changes have prepared it to operate as a well-functioning program that is able to focus all its resources on providing direct services to its target population. It is also better structured to anticipate and mitigate risks associated with this work, such as staff burnout or unqualified staff participating in interventions.

Life After Hate is in a good position to continue increasing awareness of the VFRE exit process and the ExitUSA program using redesigned and optimized web pages. Counternarrative videos produced as part of this grant will continue to be used to engage and educate the general population. The targeted online campaign conducted in collaboration with Moonshot was successful in redirecting at-risk individuals to Life After

Hate's website and allowed staff to learn how to create effective Google ad campaigns to reach potential clients and supporters.

Finally, the two training curricula developed and implemented as part of the grant have proven successful in educating local prevention stakeholders. Knowledge tests were administered at three points in time (pre-, post- and follow-up) for the MHPCD training and the ACD training. Analysis of these survey data collected from the MHPCD and the ACD training participants demonstrated a significant increase in participant knowledge regarding risk and protective factors for radicalization between the pre- and posttests and between the pre- and follow-up tests. In addition, the MHPCD follow-up survey respondents indicated that the training was relevant to their current work and that they had used the knowledge in their professional work in the past three months.

## Sustainability

This TVTP grant had a significant impact on Life After Hate's capacity to implement similar programming in the future. It allowed for the design and implementation of processes that can ensure proper functioning of the ExitUSA program and funded development of products (e.g., videos, training curricula) that can continue to be used to carry out its mission. ExitUSA will continue to provide direct services to exiting individuals and other clients, and changes implemented during this grant period will likely have an important positive impact on the program function. Life After Hate has taken active steps to secure sustainable programming, including expanding collaboration with partners as well as diversifying its funding sources. The organization was awarded a FY2021 DHS TVTP grant, and Life After Hate staff also indicated potential collaborations with Meta/Facebook and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

The four most recently published counternarrative videos were well received at the events where they premiered, and they generated multiple requests from nonprofits



and documentary filmmakers who want to connect to formers. In addition, Life After Hate received invitations to visit college campuses, which will enable staff to continue to use these videos to educate and engage additional viewers. Life After Hate staff shared that there is a plan to cut existing videos into shorter pieces to better share them on Instagram and TikTok. They also plan to continue developing new videos.

Life After Hate is planning to revamp the training for mental health professionals and continue boosting knowledge of VFRE in the field. Similarly, because of high interest in the ACD training, efforts will be made to redesign that training for continued use in training of law enforcement professionals, with the long-term goal of incorporating the training into the onboarding processes of various agencies.

## Recommendations for the TVTP Grant Program

### ✓ Ensure IMPs Are Written with SMART Goals to Aide Continuity.

The initial review of Life After Hate's IMP revealed a lack of clear organization across goals, objectives, inputs, outputs, and outcomes. This was further magnified when a new project lead was brought on and there was difficulty understanding what their predecessor meant or had intended in the IMP. Grantees should use the SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) approach to develop goals and objectives so that their IMPs are understandable and clearly written. Doing so will assist in clarifying the program design and enabling the measurement of program results, in turn strengthening the TVTP evidence base, and it will also enable continuity of work in the face of staff turnover. Additionally, Life After Hate did not have components of its IMP finalized until 10 months into the grant, which posed challenges as some components were already in the implementation phase without a plan to collect necessary performance measures. This grant experience showed that it is crucial that all TVTP grantees have an IMP (with measurement, data collection, and analysis plans) in place before implementation begins.

### ✓ Develop Quality Assurance Mechanisms to Assess Performance and Provide Professional Development.

Grantees providing direct services to clients should consider implementing periodic staff evaluations to confirm that staffing levels and organizational support are sufficient to meet the organization's needs and demand for services. Special consideration should be given to training staff during onboarding prior to direct client engagement. Grant programs such as these should also provide refresher training for existing staff to ensure they are supported with the tools needed for their job.

### ✓ Improve Follow-Up Data Collection Methods.

Conducting follow-up tests a number of months after a training can provide deeper insight into how much content resonated with trainees to the point of remembering and how that knowledge may be used in their professional lives. These important data are difficult to gather as they require recontacting trainees, and some attrition is expected, but methods to improve response rates to these surveys should be considered. In addition to repeated reminder emails, consider increasing awareness of the forthcoming follow-up at the end of the training so they will be expecting it. While still at the training, explain to trainees the importance of their participation and that they cannot be replaced within the sample as only a finite number of people take that training at that time.

### ✓ **Embrace a Multidisciplinary Team Approach.**

Respondents shared that, when Life After Hate was created, the importance of having licensed mental health professionals in this work was not recognized. Government sponsors and TVTP researchers should conduct research on the function and utility of multidisciplinary approaches in which mental health professionals, law enforcement, formers, and local partners work together. Based on Life After Hate's experience, staff felt that this approach allows teams to draw from a larger pool of talent, promote a clear understanding of roles, and create a supportive environment for the client with the same message from all about a path to a new life free of violence.

### ✓ **Consider Extending the Length of Program Funding.**

Because of the often long-term and nonlinear nature of exiting a violent extremist ideology or group, it was difficult for Life After Hate to witness or measure demonstrable change among its clients within the TVTP grant program's two-year period of performance. Life After Hate additionally faced significant structural challenges that further reduced its time for implementation. While the organization did receive a no-cost extension of three months, DHS should consider extending the length of funding from the outset beyond two years for programs that provide direct services to target populations because of the nature of their work. Extending the period of performance will enable programs to provide more consistent services, and it will also enable greater tracking and data collection to learn more about the short- and long-term results of such interventions—a critical gap in the TVTP field.

**Developed for:**

The U.S. Department of Homeland  
Security (DHS) Science and  
Technology Directorate (S&T)



**Science and  
Technology**

**Developed by RTI International:**

Matthew DeMichele\*  
Renata Zablocka  
Madison Fann  
Ariane Noar  
Sarah Cook  
Daren Fisher

\*Corresponding author: [mdemichele@rti.org](mailto:mdemichele@rti.org)