



CANSEES

Canadian Network for Research on Security, Extremism and Society

Nihilistic Violent Extremism Working Group Meeting – 2025.11.26

*Please note: This meeting was held under Chatham House Rule.

Summary and Action Items

The meeting identified three interconnected issues that need to be addressed by the NVEWG.

I. Legal Issues

Short version: NVE researchers face legal difficulties presented by collecting, storing, and sharing content that would be illegal if not for its legitimate research use.

Context: simply put, researchers put themselves in legal peril when they work with some NVE materials. The few researchers who have navigated this daunting terrain essentially relied on personal connections within police departments/ security services; however, this is not a sustainable approach to conducting research.

What is required: a systematic approach to securing formal legal permission from the authorities to conduct research in this area and a means of alerting law enforcement/ security services that this research is being done.

Action item:

1. Create a subcommittee to liaise with law enforcement and create a systematic, formal process for securing legal permission to research, collect, store, and share NVE content:
 - a. This subcommittee will include, and reach out to, individuals who already have experience navigating these legal challenges.
 - b. Some individuals have already volunteered during the meeting. CANSEES will send out an email to the remainder of the NVEWG to solicit further participation.
 - c. CANSEES will organize an initial meeting of the Legal subcommittee that will plot its direction moving forward.

II. Ethics Issues

Short version: NVE researchers face difficulties when dealing with the Research Ethics Boards (REBs) in their universities.

Context: universities' ethic boards are generally risk averse. With sensitive topics such as NVE, researchers are often required to go through many (sometimes dozens of) revisions of their proposals, and may be denied permission altogether. This greatly delays, and otherwise jeopardizes, timely and much needed research.

What is required: a systematic approach to developing ethics proposals and communicating with REBs.

Action item:

2. Create a subcommittee to liaise with university REBS:
 - a. This subcommittee will include, and reach out to, individuals who already have experience navigating these challenges.
 - b. Some individuals have already volunteered during the meeting. CANSES will send out an email to the remainder of the NVEWG to solicit further participation.
 - c. CANSES will organize an initial meeting of the Ethics subcommittee that will plot its direction moving forward.

III. Data Issues

Short version: a number of researchers are collecting NVE data and materials (much of it visual) but do not have a realistic way to share it with other researchers.

Context: even after the legal and ethical issues have been addressed, there are practical difficulties of data storage and sharing that must be overcome.

What is required: a fully functional, sophisticated data portal/ repository.

Action item:

3. As part of its long-term strategy, CANSES is working toward the creation of a data portal. CANSES will continue to share information with the network regarding its ongoing efforts.

What else did we talk about?

IV. Involving Non-traditional Disciplines

Context: One of the defining characteristics of NVE is the extent to which it involves a wide variety of disciplines that have not traditionally been involved in researching violent extremism. To craft effective policy responses, it is necessary to bring these non-traditional disciplines to the table. These disciplines include, but are not limited to:

- a. Child sexual abuse
- b. Sex trafficking/ human trafficking

- c. Cyberbullying
- d. Cyberaddiction
- e. Emergency medicine
- f. Pediatric medicine
- g. Veterinary medicine
- h. Eating disorders
- i. Self-harm

Action item:

- 4. The NVEWG will continue its efforts to identify and recruit individuals working in these fields to participate in our efforts to address NVE.

V. Developing NVE Resources

Short version: There is a pressing appetite for information/ educational resources about NVE from parents, victims, educators, and law enforcement.

Context: The Open Source Unit (OSU) of the Canada Centre has already begun to create 2-pagers and other NVE resources.

Action item:

- 5. The NVEWG will coordinate with the OSU and the CANSES Education Working Group to assist with the creation and distribution of these resources.