

Together, Let's Reduce the Hate that Leads to Violence

A program designed to find common ground, build media literacy and active listening skills, and promote civic participation.

In today's rapidly evolving information landscape, media messages can activate fear in ways which reduce our ability to trust. Rising levels of extremism and polarization pose a grave threat to our democracy. Help us counteract violent extremism using the power of media literacy, active listening, and dialogue and discussion. Funding is available for participants, thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.



Courageous RI Professional Development Program



In the Fall of 2023, the Media Education Lab offers a fully online professional development program for middle school, high school, and college educators from any field or discipline. This program is coordinated by Renee Hobbs at the University of Rhode Island. In this program, participants will:

- Gain knowledge about how to integrate media literacy and active listening into the curriculum
- Learn more about how us-versus-them frameworks can shape knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes in ways that cultivate fear and hate
- Work with a partner to develop teaching and learning ideas, resources, and assignments in a professional learning community.

Courageous Conversations The Ripple Effect



Educators, librarians, or community members offer students, library patrons, or local residents the opportunity to participate in a structured series of Courageous Conversations discussion forums in either face-to-face or online formats. In this program, participants will:

- Offer a structured conversation program where people of all ages can practice their media literacy and active listening skills
- Help increase local knowledge about the problem of violent extremism, the power of us-versus-them frameworks to cultivate the hate that leads to violence, and media literacy's capacity to increase intellectual curiosity and reduce fear.

Courageous Youth Voice Student Media Contest



We are mobilizing youth voice by inviting middle school, high school, and college students to offer their perspectives on solutions to reduce the fear and the hate that leads to violence. 16 prizes will be awarded, including a \$1,000 grand prize award, and selected entries will be showcased at the state level. Participants will:

- Showcase their communication skills, creativity, and technical skills
- Amplify positive messages that improve the quality of civic discourse.

Why it Matters

Counter Disinformation

In Courageous RI, you are empowered to become a frontline defender against disinformation, hoaxes, propaganda, and the culture of outrage. You will learn how to help people make more responsible choices of information, entertainment, and persuasion.

Improve Media Literacy Skills

In the digital age, media literacy is no longer an option but a necessity. You will gain insights into media biases and learn about how the media ecosystem monetizes anger and hate.

Reduce Violence Through Civic Education and Engagement

By developing the knowledge, habits of mind, and critical thinking that leads people away from polarization and hate, you will contribute to positive change in your community.

What You Can Expect

Expert Guidance

Courageous RI brings together leading experts in the fields of media literacy, prevention, and civic engagement. For everyone, we offer program outlines, coaching, and guidance on how to host lively Courageous Conversations discussion programs. You will receive practical strategies to counter the hate that leads to violence. Our team of professionals is committed to supporting you throughout the academic year, ensuring that you have the necessary knowledge and resources to make a meaningful impact.

Collaborative Learning

By joining Courageous RI, you become part of a vibrant network of educators and librarians who share a common goal: combating disinformation and promoting media literacy and active listening. Through collaborative learning, you will exchange ideas and share challenges and success stories. Collectively, we will develop innovative approaches to cultivate Courageous Conversations.

Customized Options and Resources

We understand that every educational setting is unique and that people have different priorities and needs. That's why Courageous RI provides customizable learning opportunities. For middle school, high school, and college educators, we offer a learning community along with teaching resources. For students, we host a media contest to unleash creativity and amplify the power of youth voice.

We Explore These Courageous Questions

Why Media Literacy Matters

What is media literacy and how can it help people to respond to disinformation & hoaxes?

Preventing Violent Extremism

How is violent extremism affecting our society and what can we do about it?

High Conflict

What is the difference between good conflict and high conflict?

Conflict Entrepreneurs

What do people need to know about social media economics and the profit motives that underpin conflict?

Feelings and Facts

Why do stories, characters, and conflict change minds?

The Influencers

How do people decide who to trust?

Targets of Propaganda

Who is targeted to receive harmful propaganda and how does it affect them?

Free Speech, Hate Speech and Censorship

How are digital technologies influencing people's understanding of free speech, hate speech and censorship?

Falling Down the Rabbit Hole

What can be done to support people who are moving towards radicalization?

The Ripple Effect

How can you build bonds of trust and respect with the people in your life whose views and opinions are far different than your own?

Courageous RI Professional Development Program

Who: The Media Education Lab offers a fully-online professional development program for middle school, high school, and college educators from any field or discipline. This program is taught by Renee Hobbs (University of Rhode Island) and colleagues.

Audience: Rhode Island middle school, high school, and college educators from any field or discipline.

What: Be part of a supportive online professional learning community that helps students build media literacy and active listening competencies as they examine the growing problem of violent extremism and discover strategies to reduce the fear and hate that lead to violence.

Where: This fully-online program happens on Zoom.

When: Fall 2023

- September 26
- October 10
- October 24
- November 7
- November 21
- December 5

Time: To be determined by participants



Incentives: A \$500 stipend is provided to 50 middle school, high school, or college educators who participate in a 10-hour online PD program (6 one-hour online programs plus independent reading, viewing, and other work). A certificate of completion and 10 CEU credits are provided from the Media Education Lab. Participants will be expected to implement at least 1 learning activity with their students and will be formally recognized at a culminating event in spring 2024.

Courageous Conversations

What: The Media Education Lab supports people who want to offer a local, structured conversation series in either face-to-face or online format.

Why: Examine the growing problem of violent extremism and discover strategies to reduce the hate that leads to violence by incorporating Courageous RI discussion programs into your workplace, community organization, school, library or club.

Where: You can develop a program for a school, library, church, workplace, organization, or another community context.

When: Fall 2023 and Spring 2024



Incentives: Participants who implement one discussion program (with a minimum of 6 participants) get a \$50 stipend. For every subsequent session, each partner receives a \$50 payment up to a maximum payment of \$300. Participants will be formally recognized at a culminating in-person ceremony in spring 2024.

Courageous Youth Voice Student Media Contest

Who: Middle school, high school, and college students from across Rhode Island get top priority and students from around the U.S. are also welcome to participate.

What: Courageous Youth Voice is a media contest that awards 16 prizes, including a \$1,000 grand prize award.

Content: Student media submissions should relate in some way to Courageous Conversations themes and amplify positive messages that improve the quality of civic discourse. Media literacy and active listening can help people recognize and resist disinformation, hoaxes, conspiracy theories and other forms of media that promote fear and hate.

Format: Students may create media in one of the following formats:

- Vertical videos, including information, entertainment, or persuasion;
- Graphic designs (such as memes, digital posters, billboard designs, etc.)
- Audio media (such as original music, spoken word, or podcast)
- Writing (news stories, op-eds, poetry, or short stories)

When: The contest opens on January 15, 2024 and submissions must be received by May 30, 2024.

How: Students can compose media as part of an in-class assignment, an after school program or special event, or as independent learners. The competition will be judged by a panel of 10 community leaders, educators, and media professionals from Rhode Island.



Incentives: Judges will award \$7,000 in prizes with a top prize of \$1,000. Students (and their teachers) will be formally recognized at a culminating in-person ceremony in spring 2024.

How to Apply



These programs are competitive. The program is open to all, but people who live or work in Rhode Island get highest priority for limited spots.

Apply at www.courageousri.com/education

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Are people who reside outside of Rhode Island eligible for this program?** Yes. While the majority of the opportunities will go to people residing in Rhode Island, non-RI residents will also be selected to participate.
- 2. Who can participate in the PD program?** Anyone who works with people between the ages of 12 - 25 can participate in the Professional Development program. You may work in a public, private, or parochial school, or teach at a college or university. You may work with youth in an out-of-school context, including an after school or summer program. We also welcome support staff including library, technology, student affairs, student resource officers, counseling, and mental health staff.
- 3. What is the time commitment for the PD program?** Participants in the PD program who attend 6 one-hour sessions in Fall 2023 and complete 4 additional hours of independent reading, viewing and other activity will receive a \$500 stipend and a certificate of completion from the Media Education Lab.
- 4. Who can participate in Courageous Conversations?** The program is open to anyone who has the capacity to gather a group of people to implement a Courageous Conversation. Courageous Conversations can be hosted in a library, workplace, community organization, school, club, non-profit organization, faith community, or any other place. A middle school, high school, or college teacher can implement Courageous Conversations in the classroom, or in a club or after school program.
- 5. Can I participate in both the PD and the Ripple Effect at the same time?** Yes! You are encouraged to participate in all three programs during the 2023 - 2024 academic year. The maximum financial incentive you can receive is \$800.