

## Electronic Supplementary Materials

### Interview Schedule

1. What is your relationship to your loved one who is involved in QAnon?
2. How would you describe your relationship with your loved one before they became involved in QAnon?
3. How would you characterize QAnon in your own words?
4. What made you first notice that your loved one was involved in QAnon?
5. What changes (if any) have you noticed in your loved one's behavior? Do you attribute these changes to their belief in QAnon? Why or why not?
6. Over what period of time did you notice a change in your loved one's behavior?
7. How would you describe your loved one's worldview or political beliefs before QAnon?
8. In what ways do you think your loved one's beliefs have affected your relationship?
9. Do you think your loved one's beliefs have impacted their other relationships as well? If so, in what ways?
10. Do you feel like your loved one tries to push their beliefs on you? If so, how often and in what ways?
11. Have you found that your loved one's beliefs have limited what you can talk about? If so, how?
12. What does it look like when you try to discuss their beliefs or your beliefs? How would you describe your emotional response? Does your behavior towards your loved one change? If so, in what ways? How would you describe your loved one's response towards you when you discuss beliefs?

13. Do you find it difficult to set your beliefs aside for the sake of the relationship?

If so, why?

14. Do you think your loved one finds it difficult to set their beliefs aside for the sake of the relationship? If so, why?

15. Do you ever try to get your loved one to change their beliefs? If so, how does that go?

16. How would you describe your relationship with your loved one now compared to before their involvement with QAnon?

17. Is there anything else you would like to add, elaborate on, or revisit?

18. Can you reconfirm that you consent to have your data used in the research report? Is there anything we discussed that you would not want included in the research report?

## Exemplary Extracts Grouped by Code

Theme	Subtheme	Code	n of participants contributing (N=15)	Exemplary extracts
Malignant Q	Shocked by Loved One's Radicalization	Different political beliefs before and after QAnon (loved one was either left-wing, less political, or apolitical)	8	<p>"He was liberal. Um, it was – that was another thing that was shocking...In 2016, he was crazy pro-Bernie Sanders. He was one of the Bernie Bros posting on Facebook 24/7 about him, was so excited. And then, when, uh, Hillary got the nomination – and I actually agree the Democratic Party to some shady shit to make that happen – but in any case, when that happened, he went poisonously hated towards Hillary Clinton. I mean, nothing, and we had some major fights then. But then after the election, after Trump got in office, he kind of dropped politics for the next three years, until QAnon came along and then all the Hillary Clinton hate came back and it was 10 times worse than it ever was before. I'm sure that was the gateway" (P2).</p> <p>"American politics wasn't something that, you know, obviously beyond the the and a new president, or, you know, something big happening, it wasn't something she would have paid attention to. She's not even all that interested in Australian politics. It's, yeah, so it's, it's quite a big change for her" (P5).</p>
Malignant Q	Shocked by Loved One's Radicalization	QAnon as a continuation or amplification of previously-held beliefs (previous conspiracy)	9	<p>"I guess he's always he's always had an interest in conspiracies, or, you know, things that it feels like are being, you know, misdirection or hidden, you know, hidden by powerful people or governments or whatever, and</p>

		beliefs and/or previous right-wing beliefs)		<p>that's been a lifelong interest. And so, but I think the, you know, whatever happened in 2020 with how this information got, was kind of all brought together and it was really attractive to certain groups of people who may have those feelings. I think that's, that's what caused the rapid, just that really rapid change and a willingness to rapidly adopt, you know, whatever the talking points of of that camp would be" (P7).</p> <p>"She was one of the more, like, early adopters of this sort of alt-right ideology that worked into QAnon later" (P10).</p> <p>"Well, to be honest, my grandmother has always been very far right. I think a lot further than she thinks she is, and so it doesn't really surprise me at all that she ended up going down the QAnon rabbit hole. Like, I remember back in 2012 or whatever she was supporting really far candidates like Rick Santorum, and a lot of other like hyper religious – she's always been very religious, so. But as far as the QAnon stuff goes, I started seeing it got really weird when she started talking about like blood cabals and, you know, all that stuff" (P14).</p>
Malignant Q	Shocked by Loved One's Radicalization	Increased anger, paranoia, suspicion (on a macro level)	10	<p>"Their other behavior was that they're, they're now all, for some reason, wearing guns on their hips. I have no idea why they all went and got concealed carry licenses. I'm like, if you live in such a dangerous place, you need to move. That's all there is to it, you know, you don't need to carry a gun. Um, and that, and that, they've become very paranoid" (P1).</p>

				<p>“I know that he's been very disappointed that the storm...hasn't happened yet, and dates keep on getting pushed back way far off into the future, and then those dates arrive and still nothing happens, and so I think that's just made him angrier and angrier and angrier throughout the years” (P8).</p> <p>“He became really angry and paranoid, and hyper-aware of any criticisms that I might have” (P11).</p>
Malignant Q	Shocked by Loved One's Radicalization	Decreased tolerance and dehumanization	4	<p>“He, he recently just moved to a town that a small town that's three hours away from Minneapolis. And he's pressuring me to follow, but he basically moved there to get away from, to get to get away from the, not just, it's not just people, but certain types of people. You know, if you know what I mean. Different groups, diversity” (P4).</p> <p>“I think the scariest thing about this whole thing for me during that time, and certainly since, is, um, the number of people that are willing to call demonic anyone that disagrees with them, and the fact that there's this big cross section between their belief that, you know, and that othering that's happening, and the dehumanization that's happening of people that disagree with them, and the fact that these people are, by and large, are, you know, the Venn diagram between them and the people that show up at 2nd Amendment rally is like one circle. There's no, you know, that Venn, I like Venn diagrams but that one's a little too simple for me. It's like, it's the same group, right? And so, these people have these</p>

				totally, uh, really outsized othering, uh, you know, dehumanizing talk. And they're fucking, like, strapped to the gills with guns" (P11).
Malignant Q	Shocked by Loved One's Radicalization	Benign beliefs turned malignant	8	<p>"When he started talking about Tom Hanks eating children, babies, um, Hillary Clinton doing the same. Um, this, I think the thing that really, that stuff I kind of just laughed off like, oh, you're talking crazy. But I think what really got me is when he started reading about the Sandy Hook school shooting being a farce and pizza gate and, and those kinds of things" (P9).</p> <p>"I think that part of it is that she was already interested in certain natural healing or things that that initially that could be trusted, but there was, like, certain supplements that she was taking that I wasn't sure, could be, you know, like it was the same thing, it wasn't the same thing as the natural remedies like that you see on on in the stores and things. It was more like, you buy it online from some, you know, like source that you couldn't really trust. And then she started saying that she might try and get ivermectin just in case" (P13).</p> <p>"He was always into conspiracy theories, but this is like next level... <i>every single thing is a conspiracy theory, and it didn't used to be that way before...</i> I married a person who was very lighthearted, who likes to joke, who has a great sense of humor and now, like, it's been permeated with like this darker, under-level thing" (P15).</p>
Malignant	Ideology	Increased	6	"He became much more

t Q	Becomes Personal	callousness, anger, paranoia, or suspicion (on a personal level)		<p>conspiratorial about personal things, not just political things. Uh, like, he would accuse his wife of his random, weird stuff like trying to give him food poisoning or mixing up his medications on purpose” (P8).</p> <p>“I work at a primary school and during lockdown I had to obviously go in because we were still working with the, the children from key workers. And so I'd come home and I'd say something along the lines of oh, it's been really difficult because we've got to socially distance these little kids and they're five and they don't understand that they can't go and play with their sister, you know, in a different class or something like that. And he would, anything I tried to bring up even something as really, you would expect a response like 'oh yeah, I bet that's really hard because they are only little kids.' You'd expect that as a response. Then I would get a whole diatribe about how it's Bill Gates' fault because he's got no business developing vaccines. It was nothing to do with what I'd actually said” (P12).</p>
Malignant Q	Ideology Becomes Personal	Concern from friends and family	8	<p>“We've had phone calls from people we've never met. When I say we, I cause I'm the eldest. I have had phone calls from people I've never met who have said to me, “Are you aware what your mum's saying and what she believes in?” and we've said “Yeah, we, we are.” But you know, this is, this, people we've never met in person and, and they've tracked me down and and said, you know, we're concerned about your mum” (P5).</p> <p>“I took myself off social media, just cause I, I had a lot of</p>

				<p>people call me and think something wrong with her mental health and she's putting up all this stuff, but they were coming to me, not to her. And why? Why are you stressing me out more than I already am? You think I don't know there's a problem? Every time you send that I have an anxiety attack" (P6).</p>
Malignant Q	Ideology Becomes Personal	Embarrassment or shame	4	<p>"I think for me that there's a sense of shame that someone in my life got that into that and that I couldn't prevent it. You know, I have a sense of shame that I was living with somebody who was just going crackers like that. And, and I know that it's not my fault. I don't know where that shame comes from, but it's, I don't know. Getting that close to somebody who's losing, it like that, you know" (P11).</p> <p>"I'm a high school English teacher. I, like I teach about critical thinking skills. I teach about checking the sources and stuff. So, I'm embarrassed. Like, I'm embarrassed and, yeah, I'm flabbergasted, and just amazed that somebody that I thought, you know, it was so, like, I think he's still a very smart person, but how can he not grasp what, what is so obviously to me like a fact?" (P15).</p>
Malignant Q	Ideology Becomes Personal	COVID amplified things	11	<p>"He didn't like the fact that I got the COVID vaccine and immediately moved out of our shared bedroom and decided he was gonna sleep in the guest room down the hall" (P11).</p> <p>"This really came to a head over the vaccine 15 months ago....I assumed he was getting it, and then it really blew up. For four months, I wanted a separation...I</p>



				started to see that the belief in QAnon helped him deny any public health realities that we were going through” (P15).
Malignant Q	Ideology Becomes Personal	Participant distrusts or fears loved one or other QAnon followers	9	<p>“The QAnon subreddit on Reddit, it's a very interesting subreddit, but I think what you see mostly on there, is you see the very extreme cases on there. Honestly, I think the more dangerous part of QAnon are the part like my family falls in, where they're not going to be political activists. You're not going to see them at Trump rallies. You're not going to see them, you know, doing anything. But they're the silent people, and they're the ones that you have to be very careful of. Nobody saw Timothy McVeigh coming before the Oklahoma City bombing. Nobody saw the Twin Towers coming before the Twin Towers happened. It's that that silent, that silent majority of Q, I think, is more dangerous than what we see on that subreddit because those actions people, I feel so bad for those people, my god, those people. But they, you know, that's a very small percentage. I think it's the normal people, the people that you would never suspect. That's the more shocking and dangerous part of QAnon, I think.” (P1).</p> <p>“I started sleeping in another room. I put my daughter in the other room just because I didn't feel safe having her around him when he was talking about those kinds of things...it's extremely difficult when someone is sitting there trying to tell you that you're stupid because you don't believe these insane things” (P9).</p> <p>“It was very, very heavy traffic,</p>

				lots of lorries, and I was very nervous and he said, don't you trust me? I've been driving all my life. Don't you trust me? And I said, I don't actually trust you. I'm so angry. I said I don't actually trust you like I used to trust you. And he said, oh, if this is gonna be about QAnon and everything. I said it is. I said, because you chose some ridiculous internet cult over your wife that you've known for years that the mother of your children and you push me to one side. And that was more important" (P12).
Distance	Decreased Communication	Close or positive pre-QAnon relationship	8	<p>"It was great, I mean. I mean, it was a marriage we had our moments, like every marriage, but it was, we were both very happy" (P2).</p> <p>"Before she became embroiled in all of this, I would call her at least once a day" (P5).</p> <p>"We really don't talk...we used to talk on the phone probably once a week, once every other week, but it's gotten down to, you know, I think I've talked to him probably twice in the last eight months or so" (P7).</p>
Distance	Decreased Communication	Complicated or distant pre-QAnon relationship	7	<p>"So the the thing with my dad especially, he has a history of cutting contact with the slightest drama and that has happened about 6-7 times throughout my life. So, I'm not expecting a lot of our relationship and I always think well, it's just a matter of time before before he tells me I'm not his daughter anymore" (P3).</p> <p>"Pre-QAnon was strained, but we tried. Post-QAnon – sorry, my computer's being weird – and that's sort of like 2009 to 2015, when she was really</p>

				seriously running her blog, but before QAnon ran to, like rose to prominence, um, we definitely still talked, um, but it was strained” (P10).
Distance	Decreased Communication	Less frequent contact post-QAnon	13	<p>“Our relationship now is very strained. Uh, very strained. We mainly communicate by Facebook Messenger, and it's mainly just to check in message to make sure she hasn't collapsed at home, you know, that I don't need to send help. Um, she has not seen her grandchildren in, it's coming up to two years” (P5).</p> <p>“We really don't talk, like, for like, nearly as much at least, you know, we used to talk on the phone probably once a week, once every other week. Um, but it's gotten down to, you know, I think I've talked to him probably twice in the last eight months or so. Just did like a, you know, we, we text a little bit about, you know sports or something and, you know, infrequently” (P7).</p>
Distance	Decreased Communication	Limits on what can be talked about	11	<p>“We just, you know, we couldn't talk about anything real. We couldn't talk about Trump. We couldn't talk about the political situation. Couldn't talk about anything in the country, and of course, you know Trump fills the news 24/7, so, you know. Conversations at dinner became very superficial. Um, you know, the weather, our jobs. Nothing of any consequence, and then watch TV for an hour and go to bed” (P2).</p> <p>“And then trying to just avoid the, avoid those topics, but there's just – he can't have a conversation without it getting back to, yeah, something to do with, like COVID vaccines or the COVID virus, being this grand plan to exterminate</p>

				<p>people or something like that. And that's just, there's just no way to, there's no way to get through a conversation without it ending up there, so" (P7).</p>
Distance	Decreased Communication	Loved one becomes withdrawn or distances self	7	<p>"That was another part of the problem. I think he knew better than to try. He knew that I could not – you know, I'm, I'm very liberal and I'm very common sense and have no interest in conspiracy theories nonsense. So no, but that caused its own issues because, yeah, he was spending all his time on his 'research' and interested in little else in our marriage or doing anything else. So it became silent and withdrawn" (P2).</p> <p>"And then just normal things, she was constantly – we've always had coffee together every morning as the sun rises, every day of the week. We'd have coffee together and she'd just be on the phone like this [holds phone in front of face]. And if you interrupted her, it was just, it was this different person. 'Don't talk to me. I'm listening to something. This is important.' And I felt I was, I was getting – looking back, I was sidelined" (P6).</p>
Distance	Search for Connection	Difficulty maintaining relationships even before Q	4	<p>"My dad has always been, uh, difficult with friendships, kind of strange. Every time I would visit him, like once in, in, in, once, a couple, every couple years he would have new best friends. Um, so the, they're not lasting friendships" (P3).</p> <p>"Throughout my life, I've noticed that she'll have one very good in-real-life friend and then burn that connection within about 5 to 7 years, and then she'll find another very good real-life friend and burn</p>

				that connection" (P10).
Distance	Search for Connection	Loved one is a seeker or craves validation	4	<p>"He has tried several religions, including Jehovah's Witness, black magic, white magic and, and now, and he's into QAnon" (P3).</p> <p>"She's always been had a fearful personality. Nothing that would be diagnosed or, like, noticed by a psychiatrist, but she's always been fearful. She has always wanted connection. I think part of her adopting a child was trying to play that out" (P10).</p>
Distance	Search for Connection	Qommunity	10	<p>"He knew I didn't approve, but after a while, he didn't care that it was hurting me. He went further and further down into that place. You know, his, his, his choices, he just, you know, he, he, he did not, I feel like, I feel like he dove into the Q things so hard that, like, it's amazing and sort of gobsmacking to me how quickly he threw his relationship with me away in favor of this other thing. It, it, it was amazing how fast he let me go to, go to that, to go to people who agreed with him" (P11).</p> <p>"The relationship with me is, is I, I think I don't know at this point, forever changed. He has gotten, again, like, a lot closer to these people at the local pub and really, really, and I feel that like he communicates with them more than he communicates with me really now. So it just, yeah, huge damage and and a huge impact" (P15).</p>
Qonflict	Extreme Defensiveness	Evasiveness	4	<p>"And also, my sister just wouldn't tell me where she got her intel. Uh, she just flat out refused to tell me and just uh, oh yeah, and, and she and she was talking about Bill Gates and microchips and,</p>

				<p>and, and no matter what I asked her, she never finished the story. She would go on to something else if she knew she couldn't answer any questions" (P3).</p> <p>"He wouldn't even give you a chance to sort of answer anything. It was like a whole, um, torrent of one thing after another, and always asking questions, always saying like well, why do you think this is this, and tell me why that is that, and and why, what do you think they're doing there and what do you think – and you couldn't, he didn't even want answers to these questions" (P12).</p>
Qonflict	Extreme Defensiveness	Loved one is unable to examine or question their beliefs	8	<p>"It's very obvious that they're not going to listen to any other point of view at all" (P1).</p> <p>"He was not open to even the smallest discussion about believing something different or coming to a different opinion about, you know, and I'm like, please tell me you don't think Joe Biden is eating a baby in the White House right now, and he couldn't say it, and I knew we were, I knew it was only a matter of time at that point" (P11).</p>
Qonflict	Extreme Defensiveness	You'll see!	7	<p>"I said I cannot bring the girls here to see you while you're like this, and she scoffed at me and she said, 'Well everything is going to be revealed by the 1st of April,' ...that was April Fool's Day last year, and then we've had another one. We've had April Fool's Day this year and still nothing's happened" (P5).</p> <p>"Once he woke me up in the middle of the night because he'd been watching a YouTube or Bitchute video, and he was going, 'See?</p>

				Other people think there's something going on. Other people understand that there's something going on” (P12).
Qonflict	Disrespect	Need to proselytize	12	<p>“People can mention the most normal everyday things on Facebook or whatever, and he'll send them some link to something and it's just some deep, dark conspiracy about the Democrats, or Jewish people, or black people or this and that and the other, and it's exhausting” (P8).</p> <p>“I think the people that he does know in real life, I think he could not, he couldn't have a conversation when he was really, really into it, he could not have a conversation with anybody that didn't involve QAnon, and, or didn't involve not necessarily QAnon, but the conspiracies, the sort of multi-conspiracies that were involved” (P12).</p> <p>“If I'm ever alone with her, it always leads to long ranting lectures about, you know, conspiracy theories and, you know. So, I'd say in a lot of ways it's made me want to, you know, not be alone with her. Like, you know, sometimes it's fine if we're in a family group setting, but if I'm alone with her, it will never really end up in a like at least 30 minute long rant about, you know, like, there's usually just so much stuff that she just goes on about that I can't even remember all of what she says. But, you know, it's all definitely QAnon, far right-type stuff” (P14).</p>
Qonflict	Disrespect	Belittling or dismissiveness	13	“It's very obvious that they're not going to listen to any other point of view at all. And they get very angry that they call my mother naive, that she's just closing her eyes to the realities of the world, is what

				<p>they say. And that hurts my mother's feelings a lot" (P1).</p> <p>"So, Mum's become quite belligerent. Uh, she's she's quite aggressive in her – if you, if you try and argue or talk her down about a point or try and make her see reason, she will become quite belittling, and yeah, not a nice, not a nice person. It's not a nice side of her personality, yeah" (P5).</p> <p>"If I said that doesn't make sense, he would say things like, 'How stupid do you have to be?' He would be really, you know, 'How how thick are you? How stupid do you have to be? I don't know how I can make this make sense,' and I said, 'because you can't make the impossible make sense,' and he would do that every single time" (P12).</p>
Conflict	Disrespect	Feeling unseen or unheard	6	<p>"She's very detached. I think, yeah, it was bizarre. Like, being in her kitchen table, and being so upset, you know, in tears for more than an hour, and she didn't acknowledge that at all" (P5).</p> <p>"I don't think she ever saw me as an authority on my own opinions. To this day, she does not see me as an authority on my own opinions" (P10).</p>
Attempts at healing	Trying to Understand	Doing their own research	7	<p>"I spent a lot of time reading about cults, I read the work of Mick West Escaping the Rabbit Hole, I read Steven Hassan's books, all to try and pull him out of this" (P2).</p>
Attempts at healing	Trying to Understand	Where do they get this stuff?	11	<p>"In 2020, when kind of, things were changing a lot in terms of public health messaging around, you know, around the Western world, and kind of hearing, you know, hearing or reading about the different,</p>



				<p>you know, kind of counterpoints or misinformation that was cropping up around COVID and then hearing, you know, realizing that the, you know, I would see those and, you know, kind of online or, you know, like in the, in the Reddit forums, or, you know, subreddits and things like that. And then hearing him kind of repeat the same things not long after they first appear and then realizing that, ohhh, these are, you know, he, he must be, you know, kind of paying attention to these, these kind of, or he's being influenced by these, these misinformation campaigns" (P7).</p> <p>"Yeah, right now she is, a lot of the information she's getting is coming from this YouTuber called Julie Green or something, and I'm not sure how long she's been watching her, but I've noticed it's gotten really bad since then and she is an explicit Qanon-type person" (P14).</p>
Attempts at healing	Trying to Understand	Comparison to a cult or religion	6	<p>"QAnon...where to start? Um, I think it's grown way beyond QAnon, as in the official Q drops the main – because Q hasn't posted in like a year now, you know that. Um, but it's grown well, well beyond that and taken on a life of its own. I would describe it almost as a religion at this point" (P2).</p>
Attempts at healing	Trying to Understand	Comparison to addiction	12	<p>"It's an addiction. I think it's an internet addiction the same way, you know, we've recently had a thing here in [country], they're bringing back the ISIS brides and I've had an argument with my dad and I'm like, you know, that is the same thing that happens, has happened to [name]. It's just the content's different. They've</p>

				<p>been radicalized online and there's nothing you can do about it. And that's the thing I hate the most is you just, you're helpless" (P6).</p> <p>"It's like having somebody that you care about who's like on heroin. They are not gonna choose you," (P11).</p>
Attempts at healing	Active Approaches	Conversational approaches	13	<p>"The first time I actually talked to him about it was this year, and he just flat out came out and told me all about, uh, how Bill Gates was, uh, he was killed in India because a mob killed him because the vaccine killed their children and, and then they found a a doppelganger. and I don't know, I said, "That doesn't make any sense." Explain to me. What? Why, why, why the, why, who, like, who found a doppelganger, trains that person to sound and walk and and think, just like Bill Gates? It is, like literally unbelievable, isn't it? And I and I just, and then he would go on to something else. And, and the way he says it is just, yeah, he totally believes it" (P3).</p> <p>"He started saying about this person who was inside the US government, who was, leak, who knew the truth and knew all these things that were going on. And I, I remember just thinking, I, in fact I said to him, what a load of rubbish. I said, that's absolutely can't happen. I said if that was happening, that person would be rooted out and they'd lose their job. They'd probably be sent to prison. I said, you know, America has treason laws the same way that the UK does. It just wouldn't happen" (P12).</p> <p>"Yesterday, he mentioned something about, 'Well, if we</p>

				run out of meat, you know, I know a farmer,' and and I was like, 'Pardon?' and then he started talking about this whole theory...So I asked him on a scale of 1 to 10 what he, how he believed that, and he told me a 6.5. That I read in Going Down the Rabbit Hole [sic] by Mick West" (P15).
Attempts at healing	Active Approaches	I did the wrong thing	4	<p>"So when I first discovered it, you know I did all the wrong things because I didn't understand cults and I didn't understand what I was dealing with" (P2).</p> <p>"I was too emotional at first. This is before I got involved in like anti-cult activism...I did not understand how to connect with someone that was falling down a rabbit hole. I would get extremely emotional. I mean, like, just, I'm on the autism spectrum, sense of justice kicked in. There was lots of screaming and that was not helpful. Um, I was in my early 20s and I had not gone through as much therapy and development as I had, and I think my early reaction was very emotional" (P10).</p>
Attempts at healing	Active Approaches	Keeping the peace	8	<p>"For me personally, I tend to take a more academic approach with it. I try and stay more neutral" (P1).</p> <p>"I just always, to be honest, I just kind of sit there and just nod my head and just kind of dissociate whenever it's happening" (P14).</p>
Attempts at healing	Active Approaches	Setting boundaries	7	"I had to set up boundaries. So I just said I can't. I'm having, I had an attack last year where I actually thought I was having a heart attack, and she had to call my parents over. And I, it allowed me to create a boundary. You don't

				<p>tell me too much because whatever happens will happen, but I can't deal with the stress. But that gave me a bit of room to just sort of go OK, here's the boundary. Don't tell me too much. So, she sort of kept that and I was able to protect myself that way" (P6).</p> <p>"Whenever I've heard them have a political disagreement, it always gets very argumentative and very heated very fast, and they've had them make a rule at this point and not talk about politics or else, you know, it's gonna get pretty heated" (P14).</p>
Attempts at healing	Giving Up	Nothing works	11	<p>"I guess over the last couple of years, I've tried a lot of different strategies to, but I guess it's just, it's um, I guess the conversations just end up really, with us really angry at each other, and there's just no, it's not positive at all" (P7).</p> <p>"He would not come to the table with me about any of that stuff. Honestly, there was nothing I could do right towards the end" (P11).</p>
Attempts at healing	Giving Up	Exhaustion	4	<p>"If someone had told me that this would happen to us, I would not have believed it possible. It's just like an alternate reality that you just can't find, the door out. It's so – and it's all consuming. You know, it, it, it's just, it just never goes away. You never get a break from it" (P5).</p> <p>"Of all the research I've read, it's important to just keep having the conversation with these the people that believe these things and keep them talking, but I find that that's, it's exhausting" (P15).</p>
Attempts at	Giving Up	Hopelessness	4	<p>"I just don't see, I don't see them changing their beliefs.</p>

healing				<p>And I, I can see them pushing harder on them as things go on. There's nothing changing. Everything is getting a little worse, actually" (P1).</p> <p>"In recent months, he's really dialed up on, for example, denying the Holocaust. He's completely doubled down on that. And it's it's distressing to me, and I'm at my last rope" (P4).</p>
Attempts at healing	Giving Up	Lamenting lack of help	7	<p>"I'm involved in like, antiracist and then anti-extremist activism because of watching what she went through. Like it is so painful that I'm like look, it's not that these people are bad, it's that people are striving for connection right now and it's just – we are two different people with two different values, and I want to help people who were my adoptive mother in 2001 who are afraid, and they need connections, and they need support, and they don't know what that looks like. And sadly, you know, 2022 adoptive mom is, she found those in places that hurt other people" (P10).</p> <p>"Basically, right after he got back home, he was involved in a couple of violent incidents and one really sort of vague, but not so vague, violent threat to the public safety. So, because other members of the family were afraid to do it, I called the FBI and involved them. They took it quite seriously. They, they got him in front of a judge who put him in the psychiatric ward for a week long evaluation, which I, you know, I don't really know much about the outcome of that, except for, you know, I don't think it fixed anything. You know, I don't think, you know, because I don't think</p>

				there really is a treatment for this, you know?" (P11).
Attempts at healing	Giving Up	Grieving the living	4	<p>"I said to my psychologist today, I'm, it's like Alzheimer's. The person with it, they're not struggling. It's the other people that are. That's, that's probably the closest, you know, that's what this has been like" (P6).</p> <p>"It's all fun and games when you watch Jordan Klepper on The Daily Show kind of talk to the Trumpers and see how fucking stupid they are, but when someone who was formerly, you know, employed, and reasonable, and looking to the future with me became that person? That's what they don't talk about" (P11).</p>

## Exemplary Extracts Grouped by Subtheme

Theme	Subtheme	<i>n</i> of participants contributing (N=15)	Exemplary extracts
Malignant Q	Shocked by Loved One's Radicalization	15	<p>“He started mentioning adrenochrome a lot...I looked that up and immediately I saw this, like, very sketchy looking website peddling some weird story about Hillary Clinton drinking trafficked children's blood to stay young and I talked to him about it because I initially I thought it was kind of a joke and I was like, you know, I mean, obviously you can look at pictures of her, like, you know, year to year to year and she's aging. So why would that work? And he, like, I was very surprised. He, like, launched into a discussion and he had like points, he had links that he was sending me and he just kept on going and going and going. And it was getting to be like 20 minutes and I had to leave, and, uh, I was just shocked, like, how much information he had absorbed about this completely random and, like, what I thought at the time, and, you know, still think now actually is really stupid subject” (P8).</p> <p>“When we first started getting divorced, I talked to his dad and his sister, and they couldn't believe that this is the path that he's gone down. It's affected his relationship with our daughter because of his paranoid stances on basically everything in the world. I don't know of one personal relationship that he's had that it hasn't affected negatively” (P9).</p> <p>I'm a high school [subject] teacher. I teach about critical thinking skills. I teach about checking the sources and stuff. So, I'm embarrassed...and just amazed that somebody that I thought, you know, it was so, like, I think he's still a very smart person, but how can he not grasp what, what is so obviously to me like a fact? (P15).</p>
Malignant Q	Ideology Becomes Personal	11	<p>“There was a situation where, not too long ago, I think it was an August, my daughter was like, said that her her dad had said something to her that was crazy, and I asked her what it was and she wouldn't say, and she would say it a couple days</p>

			<p>later. She told me, um, Daddy says I can't have McDonald's anymore, McDonald's sausage. And I said why? And she said, well, Daddy says that that McDonald's puts human meat in the sausage there. And I'm like, OK, like, you know that that's, that's crazy, right? Like, that's not true" (P9).</p> <p>"And here I've taken the mark of the beast, right? Cause I've gotten my COVID shot. You know that, that, you know, and I'm certainly microchipped now or magnetic or some other bullshit, you know" (P11).</p> <p>"I married a person who was very lighthearted, who likes to joke, who has a great sense of humor and now, like, it's been permeated with like this darker, under-level thing" (P15).</p>
Distance	Decreased Communication	15	<p>"It makes you really think twice before you take a trip out there to [state] to visit them" (P1).</p> <p>"One day he was over there to deal with estate without me and spouted off to his niece, apparently just was saying insane things and she called me later, she's like, "it's not that I didn't believe you, but it was a whole other thing to see it up close," and I don't think they really – I think she had him over for Thanksgiving and Christmas, but I don't think she's seen him since. And previously we probably got together with them once a month or so" (P2).</p> <p>"We have a lot less contact. We're all very guarded when we talk to each other...We still want to plan a trip to [country] around Christmas, but I'm just so hesitant about it. I would rather not. My kids are [age] and [age], and it's good for them to see the other parts of our family. We should have booked by now, but I just can't do it yet" (P3).</p> <p>"And then trying to just avoid the, avoid those topics, but there's just – he can't have a conversation without it getting back to, yeah, something to do with, like COVID vaccines or the COVID virus, being this grand plan to exterminate people or something like that. And that's just, there's no way to get through a conversation without it ending up there" (P7).</p>



			<p>“From what I've heard, pretty much nothing can be talked about in his presence. I think the the only thing my dad was able to have a conversation with him about that didn't lean into QAnon stuff has been football, so. My, my dad and him pretty, pretty much only talk about the Green Bay Packers now and that's it” (P8).</p>
Distance	Search for Connection	12	<p>“I know that some mutual friends of ours, they've also, they've kind of, uh, cut down on contact and my sister has found new friends. So, she's creating her bubble” (P3).</p> <p>“The main connection she's had in her life are these online communities, which I haven't really had insight on beyond discovering these like you know, QAnon, communities, what's really going on, what's really the dogwhistles and then, kind of, decoding what she's saying from there” (P10).</p> <p>“I think she got closer to the QAnon friends. I think that, I don't even know who they are. She, you know, they were people that I didn't know online” (P13).</p> <p>“I've noticed he's a lot more secretive. Uh, a lot more secretive. And um, he has a different group of friends that he meets at a local bar, and I believe that they are all discussing this kind of stuff a lot amongst them, and I don't know these people. I'm not invited around them” (P15).</p>
Qonflict	Extreme Defensiveness	13	<p>“It's very obvious that they're not going to listen to any other point of view at all. And they get very angry that they call my mother naive, that she's just closing her eyes to the realities of the world, is what they say” (P1).</p> <p>“Even trying to talk to him about it was difficult because he would Gish gallop, if you know what that means. That's a term I learned in the course of all of this. And you know, he'd spit out 10 ridiculous things and in the time it took you to fact check one he'd be 10 items down the road” (P2).</p> <p>“You can show him that he's wrong, this is why, this proves that, but it's, you know, well, the media is bought by this person...and they want you to think that, and they're all in a sex trafficking ring together. So no, there's no convincing him”</p>

			(P9).
Qonflict	Disrespect	15	<p>“All the time he pushes his beliefs. And because I grey rock, unfortunately, I think he thinks that I agree with his worldview. Mostly just sending links, um, trying to get me to watch certain videos” (P4).</p> <p>“She is obsessive...she can't not talk about it. She brings it into every conversation if you if you don't shut her down as the very first mention, she will just keep going” (P5).</p> <p>“Then she sent me an e-mail with, it was like the worst PowerPoint presentation you've ever seen of Joe Biden being a pedophile...It was like, seriously?...and it was just nonstop” (P6).</p> <p>“When we were still in a relationship and it was the beginning of it, it was every day, multiple times a day, mostly by yelling in my face, pretty much, and telling me how stupid I was because I couldn't see what was really happening in the world” (P9).</p> <p>“He would, he would insist that he explained it to me so that I understood, and he would say, if I said that doesn't make sense, he would say things like, ‘How stupid do you have to be?’ He would be really, really, you know, ‘How how thick are you? How stupid do you have to be? I don't know how I can make this make sense,’ and I said because you can't make the impossible make sense. And he would do that every single time, try and tell me a new thing, a new Q-drop that had come out and why that particular set of nonsense words meant that this was going to happen, or that was going to happen. And, when I'd say, well, it doesn't make sense to me, how thick you have to be. It was all the time. Once he woke me up in the middle of the night because he'd been watching a YouTube or Bitchute video, and he was going, ‘See? Other people think there's something going on. Other people understand that there's something going on,’ and it really kind of annoyed me so much, but there was, there was nothing really I could do to get through to him at that moment in time. He was just so, yeah, he insisted. He tried to explain all of these things to me, but you can't explain the unexplainable, it's just ridiculous” (P12).</p>

			<p>“These rants have gotten more extreme and more out there. And I've also noticed that she seems very obsessive about this stuff in general, like, you know. If I if I see her, she's gonna find some way to work in something about the Clintons or George Soros” (P14).</p>
Attempts at Healing	Trying to Understand	15	<p>“I spent a lot of time reading about cults, I read the work of Mick West Escaping the Rabbit Hole, I read Steven Hassan's books, all to try and pull him out of this” (P2).</p> <p>“It's almost like we're dealing with a drug fiend. When you interrupt them, it's, a different person comes up, it's just in this zone, and you just can't talk to them. It's, it's like a zombie” (P6).</p> <p>“I've been trying to process my relationship with my adoptive mom, and through that, there has been a lot of trying to understand what QAnon is and what differentiates it from a lot of movements in the past. And probably the best explanation I've heard is it's kind of a choose your own adventure conspiracy theory. So, whatever was your conspiracy theory to begin with, you can work it into the Q and on framework...I feel like it's a topic that needs nuance, but it is a conspiracy theory that was founded online without a charismatic leader that allowed the people that chose to follow that conspiracy to incorporate what they wanted into that larger framework” (P10).</p> <p>“I think it was the YouTubing, you know, like, he wasn't, like, he didn't wanna watch movies anymore. He didn't wanna take part in watching, like, the regular news. He wanted to, uh, he was watching kind of a combination of, like, political stuff, like, really wackadoo, right wing political stuff and also some, you know, like, end times prophecies sort of preachers. It, it was a really – his, his YouTube algorithm was a hell of a cocktail, I'll tell you” (P11).</p>
Attempts at Healing	Active Approaches	14	<p>“At first I tried to walk through all their stories with them and try to make them see how these things just don't make sense. But, like I said, they just, as soon as they know they they feel cornered and they can't</p>

			<p>really make sense of it themselves, they jump onto the next thing” (P3).</p> <p>“I think one time she told me that all these people that we thought were dead were really alive, and I just said, ‘Well, [unintelligible] I know never died,’ so you have to find absolute truths like that and not make her feel like an idiot, which I've been very conscious of as well” (P6).</p> <p>“You know, like, you know that your, you know that the people around you are, are not, are not stupid like that. They could be ignorant in the way that the Internet works, you know, and things like that, but from the fact that we can still be friendly and come to certain logical conclusions, like there is still gonna be someone hurt by, by a bomb or there's still, you know, there's no way that technology is this far advanced. And even though there's excuses that she could, you know, counter arguments she could come up with, there's still, like, a way that we can come to some sort of agreement there” (P13).</p>
Attempts at Healing	Giving Up	12	<p>“We feel we've done what we can to educate her healthcare providers about this, and even knowing that we've done everything possible, it's just this feeling of helplessness, as it's just down to her. She's got, she has got to find her own way out of this. We can't do it for her, as much as we want to, we realize that we can't do that” (P5)</p> <p>“He came out with a YouTube documentary called In Search of a Flat Earth...I remember texting my dad the link and I was like, please watch this whole thing because if we can't connect over this, we literally can't connect over anything. Um, and the message I got back was, “Your mom and I aren't flat Earthers.” Um, and if you've watched that documentary, you know how hard that is to hear because it is, um, and I, you know, and that was that was the turning point. Like, that's that's when I knew like I need to set aside my preconceived notions and hope that they find connections outside of the internet, but I cannot be the one to do that for them” (P10).</p> <p>“I see people that are struggling with their</p>

			relationships, and the biggest question they have is, is there anything that will help me pull them back out? And I have not heard a yes yet" (P11).
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