MANUAL
POLICE
OFFICERS

Radicalisation
and how it's relevant to you

A MANUAL FOR COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICERS

This manual describes how a community approach may be implemented, and may benefit the work of the police. It discusses which other professional groups are well placed to recognise signs that someone may be radicalising, some information about how you and they may notice this, and some suggestions about your role within this process. It has been produced by TERRA, a European wide network-based learning program. This advice is part of a comprehensive toolkit, created for local and national governments, and for other professionals coming into professional contact with vulnerable individuals or groups who may be at risk of radicalising.

CONTENTS

1 AIMS AND BACKGROUND: DEALING WITH RADICALISATION

The main goal of the information produced by TERRA is to promote and inform a community approach to radicalisation, in which prevention and deradicalisation are the aims.

The full toolkit includes information for secondary school teachers and other youth workers, prison and parole officers, and religious leaders, and guidelines for journalists and policy makers at local and national level. We hope that once you have read this manual you might:

- Be more aware of the possibility that someone within your target group is at risk of radicalising;

- Know what some of the causes of this process might be;

- Know what some of the possible signs of this process are;

- Be aware of the other professional groups which could be involved in influencing this process towards a positive outcome, and providing support both for them and for the person they have concerns about;

- Feel empowered to take action by making contact with those groups and by approaching the person they feel may be vulnerable.

Making contact with law enforcement agencies plays a crucial role in this approach, allowing these professional groups both to share their concerns and receive support with them, and law enforcement agencies an insight into the community which may otherwise have been unavailable to them.
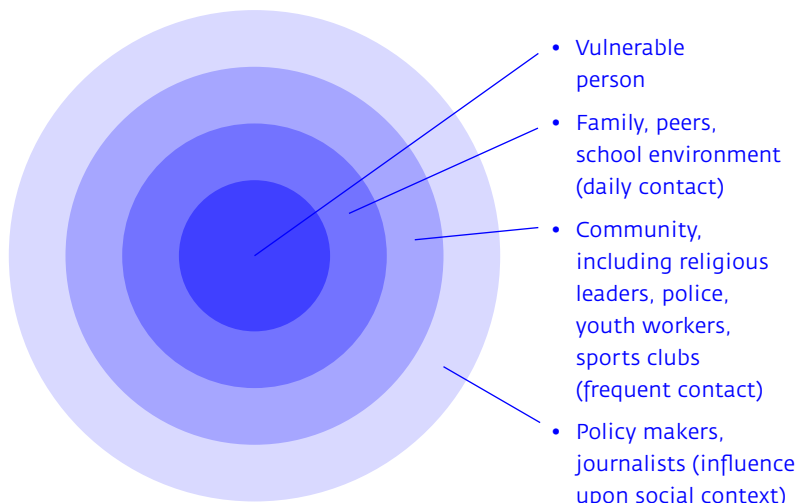
WHY A COMMUNITY APPROACH?

A young person who is seeking his identity can be greatly influenced by the people they have around them. As someone working regularly with this group in a professional capacity, you, and other people working in a frontline role, are in a perfect position to notice radicalisation. You might see changes in behaviour, appearance or interactions with you or within a friendship group.

We propose that you consider making contact with other professionals working with vulnerable individuals or communities on a regular basis. To do so, you may be able to use an existing network (in several European countries, multidisciplinary groups are already in place to deal with other issues, such as youth criminality or troubled neighbourhoods) or you may have to set up a new system, facilitated by local government.

At these meetings, we suggest that you discuss individual causes for concern, doubts or worries about radicalisation and trends in radicalisation in your area with other professionals who are well placed both to observe and act upon it.

Here is how we have visualised the context of a young person who may be at risk of radicalising:

Every circle has its own type of contact with and influence on the vulnerable person involved. Changes in behaviour, peer group or ideology are more obvious to people in the innermost circle than the outermost. A young person's parents, for example, are able to see that their son has made drastic changes to his appearance and has a new set of friends. A police officer, who is seeing the boy for the first time will not be able to see how much he has changed within the last year – and this process is crucial. That's why it's so important to realise that in order to really grasp what might be going on, contact, communication and transparency between and within the respective circles is vital.

- Vulnerable
  person
- Family, peers,
  school environment
  (daily contact)
- Community,
  including religious
  leaders, police,
  youth workers,
  sports clubs
  (frequent contact)
- Policy makers,
  journalists (influence
  upon social context)

WHY YOUNG PEOPLE?

Although in theory anyone could potentially radicalise, research shows that some groups are more vulnerable than others. Most terrorists (though not exclusively) are young and male, usually between the teenage years and the mid twenties. Terrorist activity can be an attractive testing ground for young men seeking their identity, with a possibility of thrills and fame adding to its allure. Also, a search for identity plays a role in the development of every adolescent. Radical groups can offer a pre packaged identity to their recruits, with implicit guidance on how to behave and dress.

The fact that adolescents and young people seem to be more prone to radicalising than other age groups means that professionals working in schools, higher education, correctional institutions and social work are uniquely placed to observe and help them within the context of a familiar and pre-existing structure.

2 WHAT COULD BE YOUR ROLE?

The police have several roles in this system. On the one hand, you can use the information to play a very practical role in crime prevention, where necessary acting upon the information you have received. For more guidance on this we refer you to the materials produced by the European project COPPRA (COPPRA 2010), which contains detailed information about types of radicalisation, symbols and logos used by various groups active in Europe, and suggestions about how and when to use this information.

In terms of interaction with the community itself, COPPRA suggests that the police use their engagement with the broader community in order to provide a place in which community concerns and fears over radicalisation can be expressed, and to build public confidence. In order to achieve this, it provides the following advice on six key areas:

1   Attentiveness
    The police should attend to their citizens' problems and 'be present'.

2   Reliability
    There needs to be a degree of predictability about what the police do.

*If you work in an integrated way with
other organisations in a preventive way,
you should be able to put your police powers aside.*

3   Responsiveness
The police should provide a client-centered service that is reassuring to their public.

4   Competence
The public respects a police organisation that can get the job done and where this cannot be done, the public respects a police force that clearly and honestly explains why.

5   Manners
Far more significant than what the police accomplish, is how they treat people on an interpersonal basis.

6   Fairness
The police should treat all people fairly.

In addition to interaction with the broader community, in the context of a network approach the police can provide help and support to other professionals with their concerns about groups and individuals, providing a key role in a fully integrated community approach.

In your contact with the broader community, tell people about other members of the community network. If you were, for example, to hold an information session at a school about this subject matter, make sure that you let the children at the school know that if they have concerns about this topic they can share them with a teacher.

His first memory is of his father hitting him in the face. His mother struggled with addiction and could not protect him from his father's violence. He grew up in a home where violence was the solution to any problem which arose. "I was so full of hate. I didn't know how to do anything but hate." When he became friends with some members of an extreme right wing group he felt accepted and protected for the first time in his life. "I followed their views but it could have been any group, any views. It would have been the same."

(Former member of an extreme right wing group)

WHAT THIS CIRCLE OF PROFESSIONALS MAY BE ABLE TO OBSERVE

First of all it is very important to underline that there is no checklist of "symptoms" which, if all the boxes are ticked, definitively says that someone is radicalising. But there are some signs which might indicate that a radicalisation process is underway. A person who is radicalising goes through a psychological process, so visible signs which professionals from this group are well placed to notice may be a change in attitude towards, for example, the government. At a later stage, change in appearance and more visible signs can be seen. In the introductory document which accompanies this manual, you can find a staircase model which describes this process, and some background information on what its causes and psychological elements may be. The aspect of change during this process is crucial.

A radicalisation process can go very fast, taking place in a matter of weeks, or be a gradual development spread over years, or anything in between. Some people may display all of characteristics below, others just a few of them.

Here, we have divided up the things you and other professionals may be able to observe according to which phase of the radicalisation process they are in.

KEES SCHOONEN
COORDINATOR RADICALISATION
AMSTERDAM POLICE, NL

3 RISKS AND RESILIENCE

INDIVIDUALS WHO COULD BE VULNERABLE TO THE INFLUENCE OF A RADICAL GROUP MAY BE:

- Searching for an identity. Radical groups, which deliver clear rules on how to behave and dress, and even what kind of music to listen to, can be very attractive to a young person who is seeking a way to belong.

- Connected to someone within a radical group. If a sibling, parent or close friend is known to be a member of a radical group, the influence on the individual will be much stronger. It is always important to be aware that this person runs a higher risk of becoming radicalised.

- The victim of discrimination. If a young person has experienced racism or seen that another ethnic, religious or political group has received preferential treatment, they are likely to feel resentful. If no legitimate solution for this state of affairs is provided, this person may feel drawn to a radical group, in the hope that a solution can be found through that channel instead.

DO

- Be aware that a young person who has social or familial connections to a radical group runs a higher risk of radicalising themselves. Be extra alert to their development. Where possible, discuss their family or social situation with them. Where possible, discuss this case with other professionals indicated by TERRA's community approach framework – social workers, other youth workers and teachers may be especially relevant.

- Respond pro-actively to any reports of racism or discrimination. First, explore the experience with the person reporting it. Is it genuine, or has the person mistakenly attributed a negative experience to racism, when in fact simply circumstances were against them? In this case, pointing out the difference between real and experienced discrimination is vital. Again, discuss these cases with other members of the community approach network.

- In cases in which you agree that discrimination has taken place, make it clear to the person reporting it that legitimate means to redressing the balance are available, and make sure that these are followed through. People who have experienced discrimination sometimes have the tendency to feel that the negative emotions expressed by the person who discriminated against them are common to their entire social group. Ensure that you underline that the discrimination they have experienced is a one off, individual action.

4 DEALING WITH YOUNGSTERS DEVELOPING SYMPATHY FOR RADICAL IDEAS

A first step on the path of radicalisation is often caused by feelings of frustration. Someone concludes that the actual social group (friends, community, ethnic or religious group) is not effective in combating experienced discrimination, and he or she starts to explore other options to fight injustice. This implies moving away from the mainstream, looking for groups which do provide a feeling that they are able to address discrimination or deprivation in a powerful way. They are open for radical ideas.

YOU MAY SEE THAT VULNERABLE PEOPLE:

• Display a loss of sense of legitimacy in authority (school, police, government, etc.);

• Display a heightened awareness of group identities – for example using an "us" versus "them" terminology – and develop a sense of competition between groups;

• Feel that the broad social group (friends, community, ethnic or religious group) are not effective in combating the discrimination that they experience or perceive. They begin to look for groups which do provide a feeling that action to address discrimination or deprivation as being taken.

• Be especially receptive to external influences and ideas from new people or groups who share the individual's negative experience of the wider society. Other individuals who share a sense of being disadvantaged can provide a reasoning to explain this sense of disadvantage, and a strategy to fight against it, will be especially attractive. You may be able to see some changes in the individual's peer group already starting to take place.

• Seek a group which provides a very clear identity, and try to join an extremist group. You may be able to see some changes in the individual's friendship group or appearance already starting to take place. This may show itself verbally through associations with the new group, or being very critical of the old friendship group.

• Sense that the new group is effective in addressing the perceived unfairness of society, while the old friendship or social group was not. This feeling may, or may not be verbalised.

• Display a tendency to attribute a lack of success in fulfilling goals or ambitions not to circumstances or personal failure, but to discrimination.

DO

● If you feel that an individual is attributing a lack of success to discrimination while no actual discrimination has taken place, it is vital that you challenge and question the perception of discrimination. Supporting attempts to improve the situation can be crucial in reaffirming a positive sense of identity and place in society.

● Connecting the vulnerable person with role models from within their own group can be a very positive step. This can challenge the idea that a lack of success can be attributed to discrimination against that group.

● Challenge a sense of "us versus them" and a lack of legitimacy of authority with counter narratives, for example exploring the common ground between different groups, and stressing the positive aspects of the group which the individual feels is experiencing discrimination.

- Emphasise the effectiveness of the group in achieving goals and realising ambitions.

- Remain aware that at this point, a radicalisation process may stop or die down by itself. Don't assume that an individual will necessarily become more radical.

DON'T

- Intervene in a law enforcement capacity, yet. You may create a problem by doing so.

5 WHAT IF THEY REALLY JOIN A RADICAL GROUP?

Once a group has been selected, the vulnerable individual tends to feel a strong desire to confirm their membership of it. At this point in the process, the individual is keen to draw attention to their membership of the group, and to take on the clear identity it offers, so the change is often very visible.

- Change in appearance. This might include adopting a certain style of dress, letting a beard grow, or indeed shaving off all hair, displaying flags or stickers, getting tattoos proclaiming affiliation to the group. Using vocabulary typical to the group is also common, for example names for certain ethnic or religious groups.

- Change in identity, even in name, can take place.

- Change in behaviour. In an attempt to affirm membership of the group to other group members and to peer groups, family and friends, changes in behaviour such as giving up drinking and smoking, and changing diet, may be noticeable. They may be very vocal in support of the ideology of the group, and even challenge non-members who do not conform to the behaviour suggested by the group. Again, it's important to emphasise that any one of these indicators means nothing on its own. A change of diet for example is part of normal, mainstream Islam and is no cause for concern. It is only when seen in the context of other, accompanying changes that it can become significant.

- Change in peer group. Individuals who have become involved with a radical group tend to withdraw from their previous social and leisure activities, becoming increasingly involved in activities connected with the group. This may include forming a new group of friends and associates.

- An increased sense of anger at society, and less participation in it. While this view may not be vocalised, most individuals at this point will share their views, partly to affirm their group membership and possibly with an indirect goal of finding new recruits.

- Clear vocal definition of own group as opposed to other groups. Threatening behaviour towards other groups.

*I live with my actions every day, live the consequences
of it, just part and parcel of life; but if we can stop
somebody else doing it that would be positive.*

DO

- Remain aware that changes – even fairly small changes – in appearance and in peer group, could have a deeper significance than a normal adolescent search for identity. If you do observe these, seek to discuss them with the individual, so that communication about their process remains open.

- If appropriate, bring the individual into contact with other groups which provide a clear identity and can channel this sense of disadvantage in a positive way, for example, a sports club, voluntary organisation, community group or (non-violent) religious organisations.

- Raise awareness of the tactics which may be used by terrorist groups in a recruitment attempt, especially the use of biased and emotive narratives.

- Involve and inform teachers, social workers, other youth workers and religious leaders in addressing groups which may be attempting to find new recruits by targeting a school or youth club.

- Remain aware that the radicalisation process might simply stop by itself.

DON'T

- Intervene in a law enforcement capacity, yet. You may create a problem or make one worse, by doing so.

- Make the individual feel as though they are being singled out for special attention. Their sense of identity at this point may be extremely fragile, and a feeling of threat to it may serve only to alienate them yet further from what they already perceive as a hostile society.

BILLY MCCURRIE
VICTIM OF TERRORISM AND FORMER RADICAL

6 IF THEY INTEGRATE INTO THE RADICAL GROUP

Once a group has been selected, the individual tends to feel a strong desire to confirm their membership of it. Most of the indicators mentioned will show themselves more outspokenly, like change in clothing style, using aliases, strong us-and-them terminology, or different word choice.

OTHER NOTICEABLE CHANGES THAT MAY POINT TO MEMBERSHIP OF AN EXTREMIST GROUP:

- A sense that violence as a means of addressing unfairness within society is legitimate. Again, most individuals at this point in the process are fairly vocal in their views.

- Forcing group rules on others, or challenging non-members who do not behave conform to the behaviour suggested by the group.

- Participation in closed meetings.

- Possession of propaganda material.

- Become more extreme in expressions of hate about those who do not share their views.

- Threaten other group members who try to leave the group.

- Use violence or commit minor crimes out of disrespect for authority, or display threatening behaviour towards other groups.

DO

- Take these signals seriously.

- Try to prevent the individual from becoming increasingly isolated. Maintain communication as much as possible.

- Where possible, discuss these changes with the vulnerable person's family and peer group. They may now be better positioned to maintain open communication with this person, and challenge the choices they are making.

- Discuss the costs of membership of the group.

- Involve teachers, other youth workers and social workers in sharing your concerns about the vulnerable individual.

- Prepare for intervention, or intervene. It is at this point that genuinely dangerous and violent activities may begin.

7 IF THEY TURN INTO HARD CORE RADICALS

Once integrated, the individual may become more and more convinced of the legitimacy of the thoughts and actions of the radical group. They are now very sensitive to indoctrination and will become more and more obsessive about the goals of the group and preparation for (violent) action. At this point, their activities may take place outside your view. **The radical person may:**

- Abandon a more extreme "look" in an attempt to blend in with peers, so as to escape the notice of law enforcement personnel and other professional groups;

- Recruit and train new members of the group;

- Show changes in pattern of travel, or staying in specific areas (i.e. conflict area);

- Express extreme feelings of hate or intentions of violence towards those who do not share their views;

- Make actual preparations for an attack, gathering supplies, carrying out reconnaissance (see also the COPPRA pre-incident indicators: Residence, Transport, Currency, Forged documents, Objects, and Preparation);

- Produce written or video material about their intentions;

- Remove all their money from the bank.
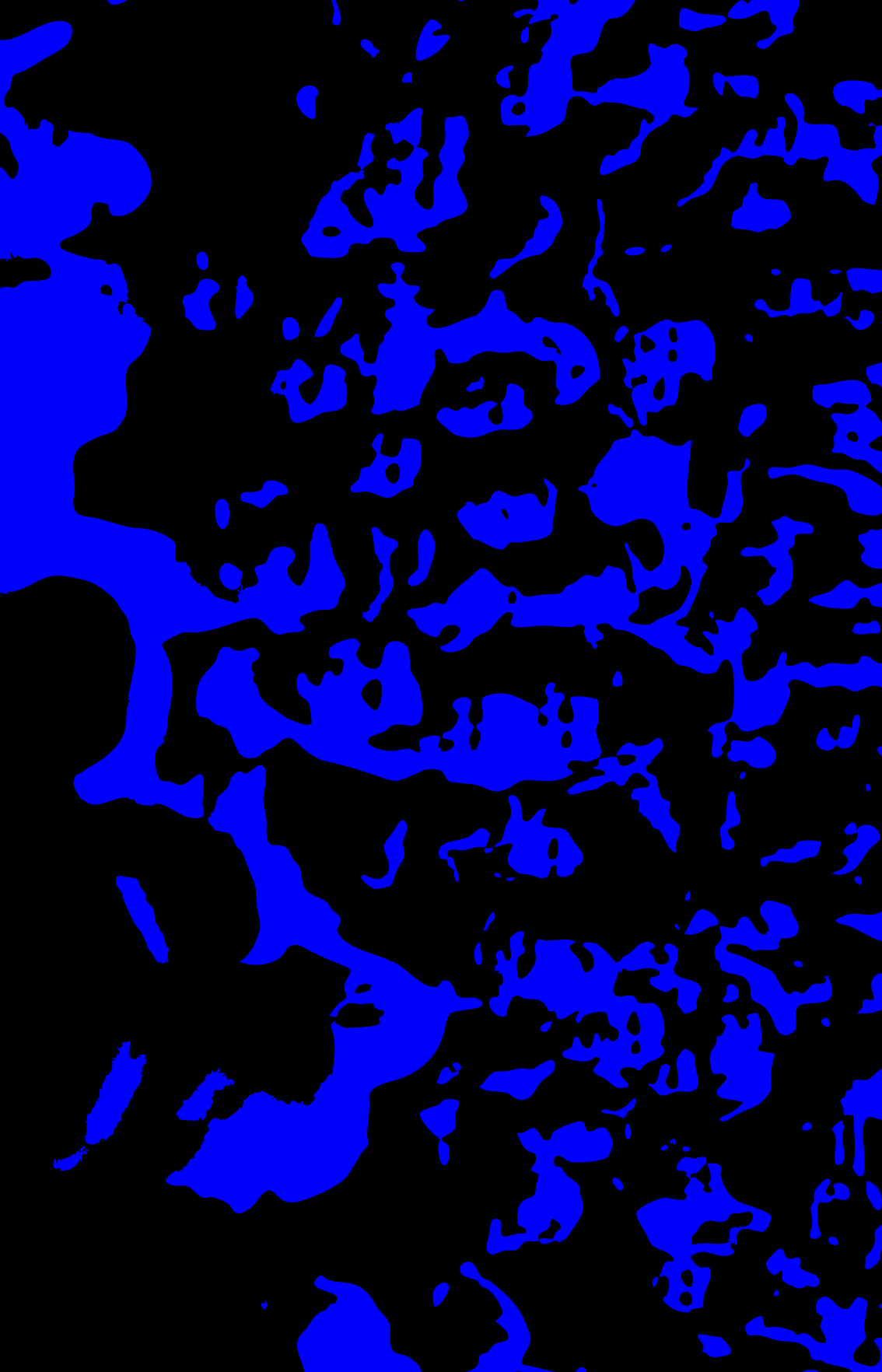
DO

- Act upon this information, urgently.

DON'T

- Assume that abandoning of the "look" associated with the group necessarily means that the person is taking a distance from the group and reintegrating. This may in fact be true – but quite the opposite might be happening, too.

*When I was young, no matter what we did, it didn't help.
Violence seemed like the only way to bring attention to our community and the problems we had.*

(Former member of the Irish Republican Army)

This manual was designed to help you to recognise and address radicalisation within the group you come into professional contact with. If you would like more information about this project, or further resources, please visit our website **www.terra-net.eu**

The material you can find in this Toolkit and online on **www.terratoolkit.eu** has been designed for professionals who come into contact through their work with a population which may be vulnerable to radicalisation. It explains why this subject may be of relevance to you, how you might notice if this issue was developing, and what you can do about it. Manuals which contain a fuller picture of this problem and an approach to solving it, and short fact sheets, can both be downloaded from the website free of charge.

impact

partner in

arq
Psychotrauma
Expert Groep

NETWORK OF ASSOCIATIONS OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

AV11-M
ASOCIACIÓN DE AYUDA A LAS VÍCTIMAS DEL 11-M