

# FOLDER POLICE OFFICERS

## **Radicalisation** *and how it's relevant to you*

### **FOLDER FOR COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICERS**

*This folder is a short version of TERRA's manual, "Radicalisation and how it's relevant to you." It contains brief tips on how you might recognize and deal with radicalisation in the population you come into professional contact with, and how you might participate in a community approach.*

Timing is crucial in the contact between the police and someone who is radicalising. General, positive contact is beneficial – for example providing information sessions, or socialising and encouraging the interest and talents of an individual. But intervening with a search, arrest or caution in the early stages of the process can make a problem worse, or even create a problem where none existed, by making someone feel as though they have been singled out for negative attention.

On the other hand, if the radicalisation process has gone further, and the individual is planning or carrying out violence in the name of their group, the police must intervene, and on time. To do this, you can make use of the support of other professionals within the group.

There is no checklist which shows that someone is radicalising. But there are some things which you, or other professionals working with the radicalising person might be able to observe.

#### BE ALERT TO CHANGE IN:

- Attitude towards society and authority – less belief that they are legitimate and effective;
- Sense of belonging; either lack of belonging to the general context, or increased sense of belonging to a specific radical group;
- Friendship group;
- Clothing and appearance, for example growing or shaving hair, getting tattoos which refer to a specific group;
- Vocabulary, especially about ethnic, religious or political groups;
- Way of making contact with you/ social group;
- Contact with the police for harassment of others who don't live according to the group rules, or for committing minor crimes.

#### DO

- Be aware that these changes might be caused by radicalisation;
- Look for professional networks in your area dealing with this, or other social problems;
- Make contact with the professional network connected to the person you are concerned about, such as social workers, teachers and religious leaders, if appropriate.
- In general contact with your community, especially young people, provide support in forming positive identity. Show an interest in hobbies and talents and if you can and if appropriate bring them into contact with positive groups and role models.
- Where possible provide support to the family of the radicalising individual.
- Make sure that any reports of racism or other discrimination are dealt with thoroughly and fairly.
- Raise awareness about the methods used by extreme groups to recruit new members. Encourage critical thinking.

#### DON'T

- Intervene in a law enforcement capacity unless you are sure, also based on information from other professionals around the individual, that there is reason to do so. You may make a problem worse, or even create a problem where none exists.
- Assume that conversion to a religious or political cause is automatically a cause for concern.
- Make an individual feel singled out for special (negative) attention.

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## WORKING WITH A COMMUNITY APPROACH

Some places already have a team of professionals in place who are working to signal radicalisation. Find out if a network is in place in your area. Other networks could also be contacted – social workers dealing with youth criminality, for example.

### When should there be an intervention?

This is a very important decision. Intervening too early, or unnecessarily, can make a problem worse, or even create a problem where none existed. Any decision to intervene should be taken by the multidisciplinary group and not by one individual alone.

If a person has arrived at the point of really planning an attack, intervention is crucial. Ensure that the decision to intervene is based upon a full picture of the individual, and is carried out in a way which will not give radical groups cause to use it as part of extremist narratives.

This folder is a summary of a short manual which goes deeper into the signs that a person may be radicalising, offers more tips about how to act if you do, how to use your community in building resilience, and how to support parents. It also reflects on the role you could play in a network approach, together with for example social services and law enforcement.

The manual is available on [www.terratoolkit.eu](http://www.terratoolkit.eu) (free of charge).

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