

FOLDER TEACHERS & YOUTH WORKERS

Radicalisation
and how it's relevant to you

FOLDER FOR TEACHERS & YOUTH WORKERS

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.

Radicalisation is a problem which can best be tackled on a one to one basis, by people who know the radicalising person well.

Professionals working in schools, higher education, correctional institutions and social work can see how young people are developing. By observing, providing a listening ear and support in forming a positive identity, you can help.

Most of the people who become violent because of their membership to a radical group are young, usually between the teenage years and the mid twenties. Extremist activity can seem to provide thrills and fame, and guidance on how to dress, talk and behave – even what music to listen to – which can be very attractive to young people who are trying hard to fit in.

There is no checklist which shows that someone is radicalising. But there are some things which you might be able to observe.

BE ALERT TO CHANGE IN:

- Attitude towards society and authority – less belief that they are effective;
- Sense of belonging: either lack of belonging to the general context, or increased sense of belonging to a specific political group;
- Friendship group; old friends may be left behind in favour of new friends from within the radical group;
- Clothing and appearance, for example growing or shaving hair or getting tattoos which refer to a specific group;
- Vocabulary, especially about ethnic, religious or political groups;
- Way of making contact with you/ social group/ family;
- Academic performance;
- School attendance;
- Attendance at leisure activities.

DO

- Be aware that these changes might be caused by radicalisation;
- Provide support to the vulnerable person in forming positive identity. Show an interest in hobbies and talents and if you can bring the individual into contact with positive groups and role models;
- Make sure that any reports of racism or other discrimination at school are dealt with thoroughly and fairly;
- Keep talking to the person you are worried about. Don't be afraid to ask what is going on and contact them if they stop coming to school or the activity you do with them;
- Raise awareness about the methods used by extreme groups to recruit new members. Don't single any one person out, but inform, for example, your whole class, and let it be a basis for discussion. Encourage critical thinking;
- Where possible provide support to the family of the radicalising individual;
- Make contact with a professional network in your area, such as police and social workers. Often, these exist around other social problems, such as youth criminality.

DON'T

- Assume that conversion to a religious or political cause is automatically a cause for concern;
- Intervene unless necessary – you might make a problem worse;
- Make an individual feel singled out for special (negative) attention.

WORKING WITH A COMMUNITY APPROACH

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

If you are worried that someone in your school, class or case load is radicalising, there are three crucial decisions which you will have to make.

1 Should you try to discuss it with them?

This is a very personal decision. Do you have a good relationship with the person? Have you previously talked about personal issues with them? If so, discussing it with them is a good idea. Always address the problem as the type of problem it is – for example school performance, breaking rules, health or abuse,. Don't explicitly frame it as radicalisation. This might make the problem worse. Instead, share your concerns about the possible relationship between the problems you see and radicalisation, with other professionals, like social workers, and law enforcement personnel.

2 When should you share your concerns with other professionals?

Check what the privacy laws in your country are. Are you allowed to discuss those under your care with other professionals? In principle you can share your concerns at any point with this group – you are the expert on the group under your care, and if you are worried, let the other professionals know. If you observe clear signs of change, do not hesitate. The sooner a group of professionals is aware of the problem and able to share information, concerns and decisions on whether or not to take action, the better.

3 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. If a person is simply seeking ways to deal with discrimination or identity, any decision to intervene should be taken by the multidisciplinary group and not by one individual alone.

If a person has integrated into a radical group, and is taking action on their behalf, intervention is crucial. This should be done by law enforcement personnel – it's vital that they have received all the information they need to take this decision and intervene at the right moment – not too early, and of course, not too late, and in the right way.

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 (free of charge).

contact

M. Rooze MA/MBA
Projectleader TERRA

info@terratoolkit.eu
www.terra-net.eu

Partners in TERRA are Impact, National knowledge and advice centre for psychosocial care concerning critical incidents, partner in Arq Psychotrauma Expert Group, The Netherlands and The Network of Associations of Victims of Terrorism (NAVT) and the Association of Aid to Victims of March 11th (AAVM11) Spain.



partner in

