

Teachers and Youth Workers

Dealing with Radicalisation: Aims

These recommendations are for Secondary School Teachers and any other professionals who are in regular contact with young people.

After the course, you should:

- Be more aware of the possibility that an individual in your target group may be vulnerable to radicalisation;
- Understand some of the causes and possible signs of the process;
- Be aware of which other professional groups could help achieve a positive outcome from the process and could support you and the vulnerable individual;
- Feel empowered to contact these groups and correctly approach the vulnerable individual.

Why You?

- Young people seeking their identity can be greatly influenced by those around them.
- May be particularly drawn to radical groups who can offer them thrills and a 'pre-packaged' identity.
- Research shows young (male) individuals more vulnerable than others.
- Your job puts you in regular contact with young people and thus in a prime position to notice radicalisation.
- You may notice changes in their behaviour, appearance or interactions with peers.



A Community Approach

Your Potential Role

- Your profession puts you in the innermost ring, close to individuals who may be at risk.
- You may observe their behaviours, formation of beliefs and selection of peers.
- You could be someone they turn to for help or advice.
- While not an expert on terrorism, you are an expert on young people, which may help you to play a vital role in the counter-radicalisation process.

The Staircase Model

Based upon *The Staircase to Terrorism* (Moghaddam 2009)



What to look out for?

No specific checklist but some signs and possible behaviours you may be able to observe.

Be alert to changes in:

- Attitude towards society and authority;
- Friendship group;
- Clothing and appearance;
- Academic performance, school attendance or participation in leisure activities.

A radicalisation process may go very fast, be a gradual development spread over several years, or anything in between.

The Ground Floor

Individuals who may be vulnerable to the influence of radical groups may be:

- Searching for an identity.
- Connected to someone within a radical group.
- The victim of discrimination.

Do:

- Make yourself available as a source of advice and support
- Support the individual forming a stronger, positive identity.
- Be aware that a person runs a higher risk of being radicalised if they have social connections to a radical group. Be extra attentive to their development.
- Respond proactively to any reports of discrimination.
- If you agree that the discrimination was genuine, make it clear to the individual that there are legitimate means of addressing the problem.

On the First Floor

A vulnerable individual may:

- Display a tendency to attribute lack of success (e.g. in achieving goals) to discrimination rather than personal failure.
- Display a loss of belief in the legitimacy in authority.
- Display a heightened sense of awareness of group identities.

Do:

- Keep communication open and tolerant to maintain an open dialogue.
- If an individual is wrongly attributing lack of success to discrimination, it is vital you challenge and question their perception of discrimination.
- Connect the vulnerable person with role models from their own group to further challenge their attribution of lack of success to discrimination.
- Challenge their sense of 'us vs. them' or lack of legitimacy of authority with counter narratives.
- Emphasise the effectiveness of the group in achieving goals/ambitions.

On the Second Floor

A vulnerable individual may:

- Feel that their social group cannot combat their experienced (or perceived) discrimination.
- Be especially receptive to influences/ideas of new people/groups who share their negative experience of wider society.
- Seek a new group which provides a clear identity and which the individual perceives can be effective in addressing perceived societal unfairness.
- Come into contact with groups actively seeking recruits.

Do:

- Remain aware that changes (e.g. in peer group) could be more than a normal adolescent search for identity. Seek to discuss them with the individual.
- See what you can do to reconnect the individual with their normal peer group.
- Raise awareness of tactics which may be used by terrorist groups in recruitment.
- Involve other front-line workers in addressing groups which may be attempting to find new recruits by targeting a school or youth club.

On the Third Floor

A vulnerable individual may show some fairly dramatic changes, such as:

- Change in appearance, e.g. letting a beard grow or wearing group symbols.
- Change in behaviour, e.g. quitting smoking/drinking, challenging non-conformists' behaviour.
- Increased sense of anger at/withdrawal from society.
- Consider violence a legitimate means of addressing societal unfairness.
- Clear definition of the in-group/out-groups.
- Decline in school performance (indicator and accelerator of radicalisation).

Do:

- Take these signals seriously.
- Try to prevent the individual's isolation where possible- maintain communication, attempt to reconnect them with old friends.
- Discuss these changes and your concerns with the individual's family and law enforcement officers/other youth workers.
- Be careful not to make the individual feel singled out for special attention.

On the Fourth Floor

A vulnerable person may:

- Abandon a more extreme look, to blend in.
- Be less present at school.
- Make actual preparations for an attack, e.g. gathering supplies.
- Recruit and train new members of the group; threaten members who try to leave the group.
- Become more extreme in expressions of hate about non-members.
- Possess propaganda material or produce their own, explaining their intentions.

Do:

- Make sure that law enforcement personnel are aware of your concerns.
- As far as possible ensure that contact with the vulnerable person is not lost.

Don't:

Assume that the abandoning of their more extreme look means that the person has left the group and is reintegrating- quite the opposite may be happening.

On the Fifth and Final Floor

The vulnerable person is fully radicalised and an operational member of a group.

An attack is already planned and as a teacher or youth worker, your only role now can be to communicate your concerns and observations to law enforcement personnel.

The vulnerable person may:

- Make a suicide video or letter
- Remove all their money from the bank
- Express extreme feelings of hate or intentions of violence towards those who do not share their views.

Do:

Inform the police, urgently.