

Stakeholder Perceptions of Risk Assessment for Terrorism Prevention

Purpose of Project

Risk assessment for terrorism prevention is the process of identifying an individual's level of risk for future violence using tools that serve as frameworks for collecting data and informing treatment. The Countering Violent Extremism (CVE): Diversion Program—Assessment Tools to Support Secondary and Tertiary Intervention for Violent Extremism project, sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate, is designed to examine existing research and consult with experts to better understand the current state of existing risk assessment tools and the needs and preferences of potential end users. RTI International interviewed stakeholders and end users familiar with the use of risk assessment tools in a terrorism prevention context to evaluate how these tools are currently used and to identify factors for consideration when developing and implementing such tools.

Stakeholder Interviews

A total of 27 experts participated in semi-structured interviews, including stakeholders from government, law enforcement, research centers, and international organizations. Interviews covered a range of topics relevant to risk assessment for targeted violence, including applicability, limitations, gaps in research, scientific validity, and cultural concerns.

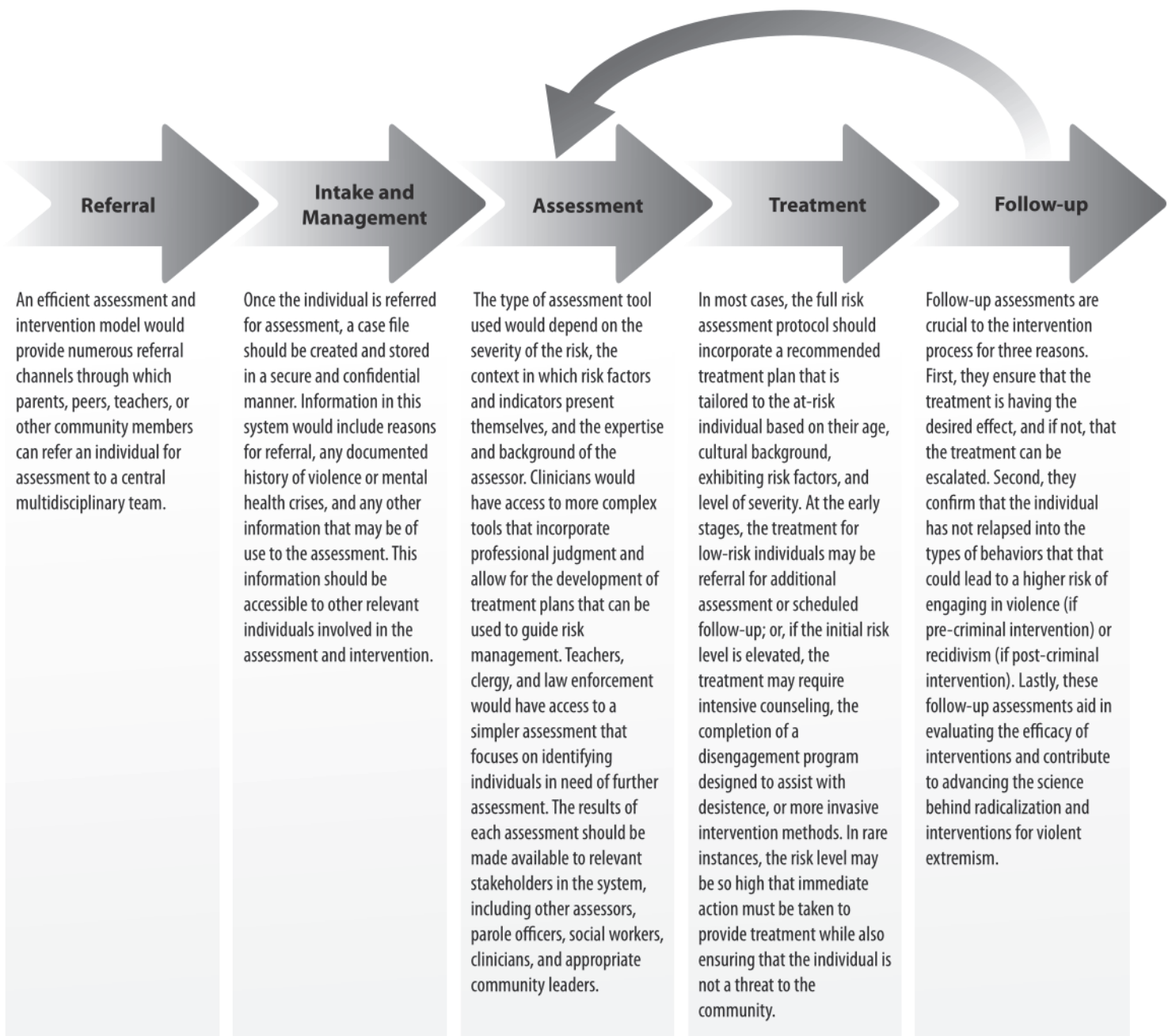


Considerations for Maximizing the Utility of Risk Assessment Tools

	Need for multidisciplinary teams —Risk assessment tools are best suited to inform ongoing efforts of multidisciplinary teams and should not be limited to only one type of professional or end user. Multidisciplinary teams may include community leaders, educators, mental health professionals, law enforcement, and family members and peers.
	Training —Training needs to encompass features of both the tool and treatment systems surrounding it. Moreover, users need to be periodically retrained on the tool to ensure consistent and correct use.
	Specificity —Risk assessment tools can either focus on extremist violence in general or be tailored to specific ideologies and contexts. One potential approach is to use a risk assessment “tool box” wherein several tools may be required for use by different types of end users and for individuals at different stages of radicalization.
	Support Networks —Risk assessment tools are only one small part of an overall risk mitigation and intervention plan, and a risk assessment’s utility is limited by the number of resources supporting it. Accordingly, risk assessment tools are only useful if there are resources in place to direct at risk individuals.
	Law Enforcement —Law enforcement officers are often the first responders in potentially high-casualty situations and are uniquely equipped to respond to potentially violent threats. However, in instances where no crime has been committed, law enforcement should have limited involvement in the risk assessment process. Law enforcement should be trained to identify and address potentially violent individuals but have the resources and relationships with the community, mental health workers, etc. to direct care to the individual without making an arrest.
	Scientific Research on Risk and Protective Factors —Additional research is needed to understand the role of protective factors in measuring and mitigating risk, and the interaction effects between risk and protective factors.
	Risk Assessment Tool Validation —Risk assessment tools currently in development have not been fully and independently validated. Validated tools should be peer reviewed to assess reliability and validity, and to examine the impact of risk and protective factors on an individual’s behavior.
	Limitations and Barriers —Commonly identified limitations and barriers to developing and fielding risk assessments include: i. Lack of scientific support behind the tools and presumed risk factors ii. Legal concerns (e.g., challenges to scientific validity, first amendment protections, legal protection for assessors) iii. Low stakeholder education surrounding risk assessment tools’ utility, implications, and limitations

Ideal System for Administering Risk Assessments for Violent Extremism

Stakeholders were asked to envision the ideal system for conducting risk assessments for violent extremism and managing cases that require further attention. The most common elements center around five stages: referral, intake and management, assessment, treatment, and follow-up.



Page 062

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Page 063

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Page 064

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Page 065

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Page 066

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Page 067

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Page 068

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act