

offenses like violence. In the context of CVE, risk assessment is the process of identifying the level of risk for future violence or radicalization based on a set of characteristics demonstrated by known extremist offenders. Risk is calculated based on a set of characteristics demonstrated by relevant (e.g., crime type or population of interest) known reoffenders. These characteristics, known as risk factors, have been displayed by a significant proportion of previous offenders and thus appear to be related, albeit not necessarily causally, to the outcome of interest. A risk factor is any attribute (belief, appearance, experience, environment) that increases the likelihood of the outcome being measured. For example, smoking is a well-known risk factor for lung cancer. That is, the presence of smoking behavior in an individual increases the likelihood of that person developing lung cancer. It does not mean the individual will develop lung cancer, because some smokers will not. However, when examining patients who develop lung cancer, a significant proportion will be smokers. Many risk factors that have been identified and are used in assessment tools are present in a large proportion of the general population (Smith, 2016); however, the pattern of several risk factors is less prevalent among non-offenders.

Table 1. Use of Risk Assessment Tools in Criminal Justice Context

Criminal Justice Phase	Risk Assessment Tool Usage
Pretrial detention	Identify which offenders are suitable for release pending trial. Minimize risk of additional offending or flight.
Pretrial diversion	Identify which offenders would benefit from training or treatment programs. Provide treatment and could avoid need for incarceration.
Sentencing	Determine whether confinement or community supervision is necessary.
Probation/Supervision	Identify supervision and treatment/intervention needs to ensure that the offender does not reoffend.
Prison	Determine confinement location and incarceration security level.
Parole	Identify offenders who can be released to the community.

Risk factors should not be confused with indicators. Although the terms are often used interchangeably, there is clear distinction between risk factors and indicators (National Institute of Justice, 2015; Smith, 2016). Risk factors increase the likelihood of a given outcome, while indicators help signal the presence of that outcome. For example, smoking is a risk factor for lung cancer because it increases the likelihood of the outcome (cancer) happening in the future. Coughing blood is an indicator of lung cancer, because it signals that the cancer may currently be present. Indicators function similarly to risk factors in that their presence does not necessarily mean that the outcome is happening. The presence of risk factors and indicators does not automatically mean that the outcome of interest is present (Kraemer et al., 1997).

2.1 Risk Factors and Indicators Specific to CVE

A significant amount of research and development of risk assessment tools has occurred in the criminal justice field. However, many of these tools focus on general reoffending. There are a number of tools that measure the risk of violence. Questions remain regarding whether these tools are relevant for assessing the risk of extremist behavior. Table 2 summarizes widely accepted risk factors for CVE identified by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) through a conference examining risk assessment research in Canada, the UK, and the United States (National Institute of Justice, 2015) and through an examination of NIJ-funded research (Smith, 2016). The NIJ conference focused on risk factors for radicalization, while the NIJ-funded research focused on risk factors for violent action. Where risk factors alluded to the same concept, they were combined for ease of review. As shown in Table 2, there is a significant overlap. Furthermore, many risk factors for radicalization that were not identified in NIJ-funded research are risk factors associated with other models of extremist violence (Cook et al., 2013; Meloy & Gill, 2016; Pressman & Flockton, 2010).

Table 2. Potential Risk Factors for Radicalizing to Violent Extremism

Risk Factor	Radicalization	Violence
Experiencing identity conflict/being a loner	●	
Feeling there is a lack of meaning in life	●	
Wanting status	●	
Failing to achieve aspirations		●
Wanting to belong/trouble with platonic relationships	●	●
Trouble in romantic relationships		●
Desiring action or adventure/military experience	●	●
Having experienced trauma/abuse	●	●
Having mental health issues or being emotionally unstable/troubled	●	●
Being naïve or having little knowledge of religion and ideology	●	
Having strong religious beliefs/extremist ideology	●	●
Having grievances	●	
Feeling under threat	●	
Having an “us versus them” world view	●	
Justifying violence or illegal activity as a solution to problems	●	
Having engaged in previous criminal activity	●	●
Involvement with a gang or delinquent peers		●
Stressors (e.g., a family crisis, being fired from a job)	●	●
Societal discrimination or injustice	●	
Exposure to violent extremist groups or individuals	●	●
Exposure to violent extremist belief systems or narratives	●	●
Family members or friends in violent extremist network	●	●

Table 3 identifies indicators for the possible presence of radicalization and imminent or ongoing extremist violence. Again, there is a significant amount of overlap between

indicators present in these NIJ-funded efforts and other models of violent extremist behavior.

Table 3. Potential Behavioral Indicators That an Individual is Radicalizing to Violent Extremism

Indicators	Radicalization	Violence
Seeking information on a violent extremist ideology	●	
Withdrawing from society or existing relationships	●	
Engaging in conflict with family/others (e.g., teachers, religious leaders)	●	●
Making dramatic lifestyle changes (e.g., unexpectedly quitting work, leaving home)	●	
Immersing oneself with violent extremist peers	●	
Joining or staying in a violent extremist organization	●	●
Making public statements about violent extremist beliefs	●	●
Expressing threats or the intent to engage in terrorist activity	●	●
Engaging in preparatory activities related to an attack (e.g., training, obtaining weapons and materials, conducting surveillance)	●	●
Others becoming aware of one's grievances		●

Although each model of extremist activity (radicalization or violence) contains a unique set of risk factors and indicators, the models themselves, and the risk assessments associated with each model, display a significant amount of overlap. Subsequent sections of this report discuss how and why the risk assessment tools exhibit slight variation in the risk factors and indicators used.

Although a risk factor increases the likelihood of a negative outcome, some risk assessment tools have started to incorporate protective factors which have the opposite effect. Protective factors are characteristics of the individual or his or her environment that decrease the likelihood of a negative outcome. To date there has not been as much research into protective factors relevant to CVE; however, a few assessment tools have started to incorporate them. Protective factors are believed to counter the effects of risk factors by providing the individual with the support and strength necessary to withstand stressors. Protective factors seen as countering risk factors for radicalization and extremist violence include high self-esteem, strong family and community ties, mental health treatment options, and exposure to nonviolent belief systems.

2.2 Methods for Assessing Risk

Tools for assessing risk have gradually evolved over the past 50 years, primarily in the criminal justice sector, and will continue to do so in the future. The criminal justice literature often refers to the four generations of risk assessment to highlight the differences among different methods of assessing risk. Although these iterations of risk assessment tools are

often viewed as generations, showing incremental improvement with each subsequent generation, all the methods are currently in use different purposes.

First Generation: Unstructured

First-generation risk assessment involved individuals, typically clinicians and physicians, making judgments of risk based on clinical interviews and qualitative information collection. The clinician would estimate the risk based on informal, subjective methods. Using this information, the clinician would develop a treatment plan for the offender. Unsurprisingly, these unstructured methods are prone to error and bias (Grove et al., 2000). To compensate for the shortcomings of clinical judgment-based assessments, the next generation of risk assessments focused instead on standardized methods.

Second Generation: Actuarial

Second-generation risk assessment tools use measurable and statistically significant predictors or risk factors to provide a quantitative estimate of the risk level. These tools, often referred to as actuarial risk assessments, were devised by maximizing the predictive value of a set of variables. That is, using existing databases of known offenders, developers employed statistical modeling to identify the variables that maximized the predictive validity of the tool. Being a purely statistical, or actuarial, exercise, these tools have been criticized for their lack of theory and rehabilitative utility. Specifically, because the risk factors are selected to maximize predictive validity, they do not incorporate a theoretical model to explain how and why the included risk factors lead to the undesirable outcome. Thus, the tools do not provide explanations for the behavior, nor do they provide a treatment plan to limit or reduce the calculated risk level. Part of the reason for this lack of rehabilitative utility is that actuarial risk assessment focuses primarily on unchanging, static risk factors. Examples of static risk factors include race, gender, age at first arrest, and previous arrest history. Although static risk factors can demonstrate relatively good predictive utility, they do not provide an opportunity for change, and thus the calculated risk level remains the same over time. Table 4 lists some of the most common second-generation assessment tools currently in use.

Table 4. Select Second-Generation Violence Risk Assessment Tools

Tool	Items	Intended Use
Classification of Violence Risk (COVR)	Varies	Predict the likelihood of violence in adult psychiatric inpatients upon release
Level of Service Inventory – Revised (LSI-R)	54	Predict general recidivism in adult offenders
Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (VRAG)	12	Predict likelihood of violence in mentally disordered adults with history of violence
Violence Risk Scale (VRS)	26	Predict likelihood of violence in adult psychiatry patients

Third Generation: Actuarial with the Inclusion of Dynamic Factors

To direct the focus of risk assessment back to treatment and clinical intervention, third-generation risk assessments incorporated the actuarial treatment of risk factors with a theoretical understanding of the underlying behavior (Campbell et al., 2009). In addition to the inclusion of the behavioral theory component, third-generation risk assessments began incorporating dynamic risk factors. Dynamic risk factors are variables or characteristics of the person and his or her environment that can change over time. These factors can change through biological, social, psychological, and contextual means (Douglas & Skeem, 2005). Examples of dynamic risk factors include attitudes, relationships, beliefs, employment, and substance abuse. These factors can be manipulated and changed over time through interventions, education, training, counseling, or the use of medication. Incorporating malleable characteristics as risk factors in a predictive model allows the risk level to change over time, reintroduces the clinician into the risk assessment process, and provides some input for the rehabilitation process. This combination of statistically predictive, dynamic factors and clinical evaluation is often identified as structured professional judgment and is the preferred method of many existing psychological assessments. Table 5 provides a summary of common third-generation violence risk assessment tools.

Table 5. Select Third-Generation Violence Risk Assessment Tools

Tool	Items	Intended Use
General Violence Applications		
Forensisches Operationalisiertes Therapie-Risiko-Evaluations-System (FOTRES)	Varies	Assess and manage violent recidivism risk for specific offense in adults
Historical, Clinical, Risk Management-20	20	Assess and manage violence risk within correctional, civil psychiatric, and forensic psychiatric settings
Historisch, Klinisch, Toekomst-30 (HKT-30)	30	Predict likelihood of violent recidivism in mentally disordered adults
Short-Term Assessment of Risk and Treatability (START)	20	Predict likelihood of violence, suicide, self-harm, and self-neglect
Structured Assessment of Protective Factors for Violence Risk (SAPROF)	17	Supplement other assessments by providing measure of relevant protective factors
Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY)	30	Predict likelihood of violence in adolescents
Violence Risk Screening-10 (V-RISK-10)	10	Quickly identify psychiatric patients for violence risk and identify those in need of further assessment

(continued)

Table 5. Select Third-Generation Violence Risk Assessment Tools (continued)

Tool	Items	Intended Use
Specific Violent Extremism Applications		
Extremism Risk Guidance Factors (ERG 22+)	22	Assess risk and needs in convicted extremist offenders and other offenders for whom there are credible concerns about their potential to commit extremist offences
IAT-8	8	Assess whether intervention work is affecting the level of vulnerability to radicalization
Multi-Level Guidelines (MLG)	20	Assess and manage group-based violence
RADAR	15	Identify individuals who would benefit from services to help them disengage from violent extremism
Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol (TRAP-18)	18	Assess risk of individuals engaging in lone-actor terrorism to assist threat assessors with prioritizing cases for risk management
Violent Extremist Risk Assessment -2 (VERA-2)	31	Assess the likelihood of future violence by an identified offender who has been convicted of unlawful ideologically motivated violence

Fourth Generation: Increasing Focus on Treatment

Newer, more complex assessment tools with criminal justice applications are being developed as fourth-generation tools. Fourth-generation risk assessments are specifically developed to guide the risk management process, assist with the selection of interventions and treatment plans, and track progress through rehabilitation. These tools include the measurement of a broader range of risk factors and are designed with a focus on identifying treatment needs (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2006). Fourth-generation tools include both the risk assessment and a case management and treatment plan. These tools are designed to be used at multiple stages of the criminal justice process. Fourth-generation assessments inform pretrial diversion decisions, sentencing, incarceration status, release decisions, and post-release tracking. Assessment is ongoing throughout the process to determine current risk level and changing rehabilitation needs. In addition, these tools incorporate “responsivity,” which serves as a measure of an individual’s readiness for change and ability to respond to rehabilitation efforts (Andrews, et al., 1990; Baird et al., 2013). The term “responsivity” originates from the risk-need-responsivity model, the predominant assessment and rehabilitation process currently used in criminal justice and offender management contexts. Table 6 displays some common fourth-generation criminal risk assessment tools with a focus on case-management.

Table 6. Relevant Fourth-Generation Risk Assessment Tools

Tool	Items	Intended Use
General Violence Applications		
Violence Risk Scale-2	26	Identify key treatment targets associated with a violent lifestyle
Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS) – Risk of Violence Scale	Varies based on scale	Measure risk of recidivism (including violent recidivism) and needs in a variety of populations
LS/CMI	43	Assess general recidivism risk and identify rehabilitation needs
Post-Conviction Risk Assessment	56 (+80 item self-report)	Identify recidivism risk level and rehabilitation needs for offenders in the federal probation system
Violence Risk Scale (VRS)	26	Assess risk of violence and change resulting from treatment for offenders awaiting release
Specific Violent Extremism Applications		
Returnee 45	45	Organize needs and risk behaviors of returning foreign terrorist fighters for further assessment by professionals

2.3 General Recidivism, Violent Behavior, and CVE-Specific Tools

Much of the ongoing development of risk assessment tools has occurred in the criminal justice sector. As a result, the most developed, tested, and researched instruments tend to focus on needs related to the assessment and management of most offenders in the criminal justice system. The most pressing risk needs for the entire population of offenders are related to the commission of additional crimes (while awaiting trial or following release) and the commission of violent acts (while awaiting trial, during incarceration, and following release). These scales are identified and discussed above because they are informative to the development of tools to assess risk of violent extremist behavior. However, as several authors have warned, these tools are not ideal for the specific context of violent extremism (Dernevik et al., 2009; Pressman, 2009; Webster et al., 1997). Violent extremist behavior is characterized by a unique set of motivations, actions, and rehabilitation needs (Roberts & Horgan, 2008; Pressman, 2009). Thus, a tool designed specifically for use with identified violent extremists is more appropriate. Monahan (2012) criticized the lack of valid risk factors identified by the research community and the inability to assess the risk of extremist violence rather than common violence. Recently, several tools to assess risk in CVE-specific contexts have been in development (highlighted in tables 5 and 6).

As noted by RAN (2017), some governments currently use violence risk assessment tools with terrorists and extremists both to determine the appropriate prison setting and to identify risks and needs to guide the direction of treatment. The VERA-2 is the most widely used and researched tool currently available for this population. These tools have shown promise but require further development and testing. Assessments specific to violent

extremism face many of the same requirements and challenges as tools used with general offenders. Specifically, they need to be grounded in theory and applicable within a useful model of offender management.

2.4 Risk-Need-Responsivity Model

The risk-need-responsivity model is currently the most widely accepted evidence-based model of offender risk assessment and rehabilitation. Andrews, Bonta, and Hoge (1990) identified key elements of offender treatment programs that were effective. The risk-need-responsivity model is built on three primary principles the authors outlined that are used to guide assessment and rehabilitation to address offender risk and recidivism:

- The Risk principle states that the level of treatment provided for the offender should be commensurate with the level of risk posed by the offender. Low-risk offenders require a low level of treatment, while high-risk offenders would require a more intensive treatment plan. Importantly, as changes in risk are identified, the treatment plan should be adjusted accordingly to match the level of risk predicted for the offender.
- The Need principle states that treatment and rehabilitation plans should be based on the offender's criminogenic needs. Criminogenic needs are essentially dynamic risk factors. They are factors that have been linked to the outcome behavior(s) of interest, are malleable, and a reduction or removal of the need is accompanied by a change in the dynamic risk factor, and therefore, also the risk level.
- The Responsivity principle states that treatment and rehabilitation interventions should use cognitive social learning strategies that address the criminogenic needs by replacing risk-associated behaviors with more prosocial ones. Cognitive social learning posits that new behaviors can be learned through positive modeling, learner observation, and imitation of others. In addition, the responsivity principle posits that the efficacy of rehabilitation and treatment will be enhanced if the interventions are matched to personal factors that improve learning. Specifically, tailoring rehabilitation programs to the learning style, cognitive ability, age, gender, race, etc. will improve the transfer of information and lead to better results.

This model is used in existing prison and parole systems to guide risk management programs for both general and violent offenders. The model offers general guidelines for structuring risk assessment and rehabilitation interventions, which allows for a tailored approach to meet the needs of the offender population of interest. The potential utility of a risk-need-responsivity model for reducing violent extremism risk has been alluded to by several experts but remains untested (Dean, 2016; RAN, 2016).

2.5 Concerns About the Usage of Assessment Tools in Criminal Justice Contexts

Despite their widespread use throughout the various levels and proceedings of the criminal justice system, a significant amount of debate exists regarding the use of risk assessments. Those in favor of their use argue that they can be used to assist the court with decisions about who should remain incarcerated or be released and that they provide protections important for public safety (Starr, 2014). In addition, proponents claim the use of risk

assessments benefits the offender by potentially allowing for shorter sentences, providing useful information used to identify treatments, and preventing offenders from reoffending by keeping them incarcerated until they are ready to be released (Douglas et al., 2016). However, many practitioners and researchers argue against the use of risk assessments, or at the very least call for additional research and development to improve the tools.

A common concern of risk assessment opponents is that decisions are being made about the risk an individual poses based on group-level characteristics. Specifically, the methods by which actuarial elements of these tools are developed are based on aggregate probability using historical data. Although most concede that group behavior has some predictive relevance, predictions of future individual-level behavior based on group-level data are seen as inappropriate for decision-making purposes (Hart et al., 2007). Some have argued that to make inferences about an individual based on his or her membership in a group would be illogical (Cook & Michie, 2010). The concern is that the predictive accuracy of actuarial tools is limited by reliance on group-level data. Proponents of risk assessment argue that although predictions will contain some error, and will never be perfect, they are still able to provide useful information for risk assessment and risk reduction (Faigman et al., 2014; Skeem & Monahan, 2011). From a statistical standpoint, it has been argued that concerns over the effect of group/individual prediction on predictive accuracy are non-issues that are common among many types of predictive instruments (Tonry, 2014). Specifically, Imrey and Dawid (2015) argued that precise estimation at the individual level is not required because the goal of risk assessment is to distinguish between high- and low-risk offenders, which has been routinely demonstrated by existing tools. Finally, it has been argued that even with slightly reduced predictive accuracy because of the existing level of analysis issue, risk assessments are less error prone than unaided human decision making (Skeem & Lowenkamp, 2016).

Recently, using group-level variables as predictors of risk has raised concerns over the possibility that certain groups, especially racial minorities, might be disproportionately negatively affected by their use (Tonry, 2013). These concerns are tied to the use of static risk factors that may directly (e.g., race) or indirectly (e.g., education, employment, previous arrest history) promote unfair stereotypes. Specifically, when race is used as a predictor of risk, certain racial subgroups are more likely than others to be categorized as high-risk. Likewise, the use of variables that are highly correlated with race (e.g., age at first arrest) will lead to the same outcomes. Several explanations for this have been proposed in the literature including differential exposure to risk and social inequality (Hannah-Moffat, 2010 as cited in James, 2015). Risk assessments that systematically negatively affect racial minorities will lead to unfair outcomes for the affected groups based on the potential for longer initial sentences, fewer opportunities for rehabilitation or diversion, and fewer chances for early release.

In defense of risk assessment practices, Austin (2004) pointed to the need for group-based prediction because of the inability to predict individual-level behavior in the context of so many situational and environmental factors. To assess the extent of the racial discrimination problem, Singh and Fazel (2010) searched for evidence of differential predictive ability of assessment tools based on race using a meta-analytic approach and were unable to confirm that such bias existed. However, they were careful to suggest that none of the studies in their analysis compared groups directly and that such analyses were warranted to be certain that no effect existed. Monahan and Skeem (2015) argue that additional investigation is warranted but that removing contentious variables from risk prediction completely is an unwise move given their demonstrated predictive utility and warn that their premature removal could create a bigger racial discrimination issue that is less transparent. Debate continues over the use of static risk factors because of their seemingly powerful predictive utility in light of potential discriminatory side effects (Douglas et al., 2017).

Although much of the debate surrounding the legal and ethical use of risk assessment tools has centered around questions related to the variables used, researchers also warn that the methods by which they are implemented and the staff responsible for administration may also impact the predictive accuracy (Bonta et al., 2001). Risk assessment tools are developed and validated based on specific decision rules that guide how data are collected and what data are included. Variation from the validated protocol leads to degradation of the validity and accuracy of the tool. For example, it has been shown that using untrained staff to administer risk assessments may cause the predictive ability of the tool to decrease significantly or even disappear (PEW, 2011). The same study determined that the number of years of experience for trained staff could also affect predictive accuracy. These factors are compounded when working with newer, fourth generation assessments where administration often requires a lengthy interview and professional interpretation regarding the subject's progress through treatment. A lack of consistency in administration of risk assessment tools results in a lack of consistency with respect to the predicted outcomes. Under these conditions, risk assessment tools may demonstrate substandard levels of reliability and validity (Austin, 2004). To ensure consistency, users need to be rigorously trained in the use of off-the-shelf tools that may be adopted, and training programs will need to be developed for any nonproprietary tools. In addition to the initial training efforts, administrators will require ongoing training in the use of the tool to avoid calibration drift (Casey et al., 2014). The cost of ongoing training can be prohibitive; however, the consequences of not doing so could be far greater. This has led some to suggest that more simplistic, easier to use tools may be preferable but require further investigation (Hanson, 2009).

The method of administration refers not only to the abilities of the individuals using assessment tools, but also to decisions about how, when, and with whom they are used. Development and training costs are a barrier to the development and implementation of

use-specific tools (Lowenkamp, 2008; Mamalian, 2011). As a result, users often adopt one or more of the existing off-the-shelf solutions. The result may be the use of a tool that is not suitable for a particular context, which would lead to lower predictive utility. Regardless of whether a new tool is developed or an existing tool is adopted, risk assessments should be validated using the population of interest. In addition to the initial validation, tools should be revalidated over time to account for any changes in what is being measured or the population it is being used to measure (Casey et al., 2014). Specific challenges that affect efforts to validate a risk assessment specific to CVE are discussed in section 3.

Lastly, in the tradition of the risk-need-responsivity model, it has been argued that a reliance on static risk factors to maximize predictive utility leads to counterproductive outcomes by limiting treatment opportunities for high-risk individuals (Bonta, 2002). General models of criminal offending posit that risk can be managed through the identification and treatment of criminogenic needs. Bonta (2002) argues that limiting the reliance on data-driven actuarial assessment and incorporating theory- and case-management-based tools is more consistent with those models and is likely to lead to better results. The challenge for development and use of a CVE-specific tool lies in identifying theory-relevant criminogenic needs (dynamic factors) and identifying or developing community-based programming to address those needs. Section 4 discusses the availability of rehabilitative programming for CVE offenders.

3. VALIDATION CHALLENGES

Practitioners and academics strongly agree that for assessment tools to be effectively implemented into the field, they must first be properly validated for both accuracy and precision (Roberts & Horgan, 2008). Validation refers to the quality of predictive capabilities of the instrument. In other words, there is strong statistical and empirical confidence that the tool is correctly assessing what it is designed to (e.g., risk to commit extremist violence) and that it is correctly doing so more than it is not (i.e., a very low degree of either false positives or false negatives). Proper validation of an assessment instrument involves collecting data from a known population and applying the tool to those cases to determine how effectively it performs. The process requires several cases for testing and typically involves a measurement of the risk of a future outcome followed by a follow-up period to determine if that outcome occurred. Given the nature of violent extremist offenses, this is not always possible or prudent. Some argue that it is unrealistic to expect that assessment tools will ever be sophisticated or reliable enough to confidently predict when or if an individual will commit and act of violent extremism (Smith, 2016); moreover, it would be irresponsible and unconstitutional to arrest an individual based on an assessment score. Therefore, it is incorrect to use a tool in a predictive manner; rather, they serve to aid in the decision-making process when either attempting to divert or off-ramp an individual from the path of violent extremism or release him or her into the community.

The main criticism of current tools for violent extremism in the field is the lack of published, empirical evidence supporting their validity (Cook et al., 2014; Monahan, 2012). This is not, however, necessarily the result of lack of effort or lack of interest. Risk assessment tools, by nature, are very difficult to validate, and many of the limiting factors of general risk assessment tools are exacerbated when dealing with such a rare and sensitive issue as violent extremism. Some limitations identified by Roberts and Horgan (2008) include difficulty focusing on the wide range of behaviors under the umbrella of terrorism, the infrequent nature of attacks, low base rates of violent offenders from whom to sample, and reliance on risk factors that have yet to be fully validated. Because of these limitations, and others, there are many barriers to effective assessment tool validation for a violent extremist context, which are discussed in the following section.

3.1 Access to Data

The effectiveness of any risk assessment tool is dependent on the types of information available to the evaluation team. In a post-criminal context, the evaluation team may have access to a wealth of information such as mental health screenings, interviews, arrest records, and observations from prison staff. However, once the individual is released, the chances of following up with the individual shrink significantly, rendering direct observation and assessment of the individual difficult if not impossible. In a pre-criminal context, the evaluation team may be equipped with even less information. Not only might arrest and mental health records not be made available (or exist), Roberts and Horgan (2008) point out that some jurisdictions may not allow law enforcement interviews with individuals who are not under or pending arrest. Furthermore, many perpetrators are often either killed in the act or arrested, rendering them unavailable for interview by researchers (Borum, 2015; Department of Defense, 2012; Hamm & Spaaij, 2015; Roberts & Horgan, 2008). These limitations leave the evaluation team few options if the individual does not consent to be interviewed for assessment—a reality that faces many evaluation teams. The remaining options are to interview their family and associates or access information from a database. Unfortunately, in many cases, these data are either incomplete, inaccurate, or restricted to only certain personnel (Smith, 2016).

3.1.1 Low Base Rates

Because terrorism is extremely rare, especially when compared to other forms of violent crime (Monahan, 2012), there are simply very few terrorists in general. There are fewer still who are caught, convicted, and released after having served time. This makes validation incredibly difficult because of the lack of statistical power of such a small sample size from which to derive any empirically meaningful conclusion. To mitigate sample size limitations, some studies must resort to using incomplete data to have a large enough sample to conduct statistical analyses (Jensen & LaFree, 2016; Smith, 2016; Smith et al., 2016). Unfortunately, this causes inconsistencies in the data and groups offenders from a variety of

backgrounds and causes into the same model. This is problematic, because different terrorist organizations have their own idiosyncratic reasons for existing and mobilizing for their causes. Individuals who radicalize and join violent extremist organizations have been shown to do so based on a variety of reasons including the unique ideology they embrace, the time period in which they radicalize, and myriad personal factors affecting the individual's own life history (Hamm & Spaaj, 2015; Horgan et al., 2016; Klausen, 2016, LaFree, 2015; Smith, 2016).

A longstanding challenge in assessing terrorism-related research and programming is that success is, by definition, a nonevent (i.e., the non-occurrence of a terrorist attack). Fink, Romaniuk, and Barakat (2013, p. 2) refer to this dilemma as "measuring the negative." Measuring the negative is extremely difficult, and researchers and practitioners are acutely aware of this challenge. Similarly, the outcome of interest—a terrorist event—is rare, creating a lack of data from which to identify trends among the acts themselves and the perpetrators. This creates a difficulty in "drawing a line of causality between the desired outcomes that we observe (nonradicalization or nonviolence) and a specific Prevention [sic] initiative" (Romaniuk & Fink, 2012, p. 10). Low base rates feed into the previously discussed issues of data quality, because, to make up for low number of cases, evaluators must resort to using imperfect data sources.

3.1.2 Risk Factors Have Yet to Be Completely Validated

One prevailing issue facing risk assessment tools in general is the dilemma regarding what types of behaviors and outcomes they should attempt to predict. Simply attempting to determine if an individual will commit an extremist act is unlikely to be a successful endeavor. Roberts and Horgan (2008, p. 4) point out, "The successful terrorist event will only happen because it is sustained and enabled through a series of informal but related activities." In other words, the actual extremist event (e.g., a bombing) is the culmination of several smaller activities and beliefs that could be observed and assessed, including stockpiling materials, learning or asking questions about manufacturing techniques, inflammatory rhetoric including threats, and planning logistics. These activities represent risk factors or indicators that could lead to extremist violence.

Many risk assessment tools overlap in terms of risk factors including, notably, the ERG 22+, VERA 2, and HCR-20. Until very recently, however, several risk factors had not been empirically validated. Four studies sponsored through NIJ-funded research have made some significant progress in this regard. Research conducted through the University of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (Jensen & LaFree, 2016) and the University of Arkansas (Smith et al., 2016) included a nonviolent control group in their analyses and assessed risk factors for both lone actors and group actors, while studies conducted at Indiana State University (Spajj & Hamm, 2015) and the University of Massachusetts Lowell (Horgan et al., 2016) only investigated lone actors and

did not include a nonviolent comparison group. All four studies incorporated a variety of extremist ideologies. Although these studies suffer limitations because of completeness of data, potentially overlapping individuals, differing criteria of analysis, and subjective opinions between the different research teams (Smith, 2016), they are one of the first steps to validating risk factors that are commonly included in risk assessments for violent extremism.

3.1.3 Example: Validating the Classification of Violent Risk (COVR)

Although some tools have undergone a degree of validation, many evaluation studies have either been conducted by their own authors, such as the Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol (TRAP-18) (Meloy & Gill, 2016), or in limited contexts, such as the VERA (Violence Extremism Risk Assessment) and VERA-2, which have been commonly used on individuals currently incarcerated (Pressman & Flockton, 2012; Smith, 2016). None of the existing violent extremism assessment tools have undergone the degree of validation that assessment tools in other disciplines have, and it is worth noting that the creators of the TRAP-18 classify the tool as an investigative template because it has not been validated enough to be used as a true assessment tool (Meloy & Gill, 2016). For example, John Monahan compares the actual process of validating the COVR (of which he is a co-owner) to the hypothetical validation of a risk assessment tool for violent extremism in detail and concludes, "In no real-world national security context can an instrument to assess the risk of terrorism be prospectively validated in the same manner that risk assessment instruments for common violence are prospectively validated" (Monahan 2012, p. 192). The COVR was validated using two independent samples of acute mental hospital patients totaling 700 individuals. Then a stratified random sample of 177 patients classified by the COVR as either "high risk" or "low risk" were followed for 4 months after discharge. Follow-up data (through interviews with the patient and family members and hospital records) were collected for 157 (87%) of the 177 randomly sampled patients. The results of the evaluation showed that nearly 1 in 10 of the patients who were classified as low risk recidivated, whereas half of the patients classified as high risk committed a violent act following discharge.

Transferring a similar validation design to a tool designed for violent extremism elucidates several disparities between the two contexts. Namely, the difference in frequency of occurrence between general violence and extremist violence. It would be exceedingly difficult to find a significant number of individuals who have committed an act of terrorism who are also nearly all about to be released into the community in a similar time frame and to also locate, interview, or obtain records for a majority of these individuals post-release. It is for these reasons that Monahan (2012) argues that prospective validation of a risk assessment tool for violent extremism is nearly impossible. He instead recommends analyzing the individual risk factors that comprise the assessment tool using an evaluative technique referred to as known group validation. This method is an intragroup comparison,

wherein the evaluator measures the prevalence of a given risk factor among a group of known offenders, then compares the prevalence of this same factor in a group of people from the same population who are not offenders. If the prevalence of the factor differs significantly, it can be assumed that the given factor correlates with the outcome of committing an act of violent extremism. This, however, only fulfills half of the requirements for being a valid risk factor as argued by Kraemer et al. (1997), who state that the risk factor must precede the action and be positively correlated with the observed outcome. This would still need to be determined, because if the risk factor manifests in the individual only after he or she has become a terrorist, then it would not be considered a risk factor (Monahan, 2012). Therefore, even though known-group validation methods may be able to provide validation for some aspects of tools, there remain challenges in assessing validity completely.

These limitations all create substantial methodological barriers to properly validating any tool to be used in the context of violent extremism. Several policy shifts would need to occur and several issues resolved before any true progress can be made. A potential starting point would be to establish a ubiquitous lexicon of clear nomenclature including definitions of terms such as radicalization and extremism, create a logical coding scheme for analyzing and discussing behaviors and characteristics, establish pathways for researchers and evaluators to access databases and records necessary to conduct the evaluation, and perhaps most importantly to educate stakeholders on the limitations and uses of assessment tools. For example, stakeholders need to have realistic expectations of the outcomes and use of these tools—namely that they are to be used as part of the decision-making process, not as definitive predictors of future behavior. Additionally, there remains the unresolved issue of whether assessment tools for violent extremism can effectively be used on all forms of violent extremism or if there would need to be a variety of individual tools for specific, unique contexts. On one hand, a general tool would potentially be able to gather the required number of cases needed for validation, but it could be too broad to accurately assess risk, and it would assume that all violent extremists have the same motivations and objectives. Despite similarities between convicted violent extremists identified in the literature (Borum 2011, 2015; Dernevik et al., 2009; Gill et al., 2014; Grunewalde et al., 2013; Hamm & Spaaij, 2015; Horgan, 2008; Kruglanski et al., 2008; Roberts & Horgan, 2008; Silber & Bhatt, 2007; Smith, 2016), most researchers and practitioners from private, academic, and federal organizations support the assertion that there is no single profile for or pathway to violent extremism (Borum, 2011; Department of Defense, 2012; Gill et al., 2014; Hamm & Spaaij, 2015; Horgan, 2008; Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006; Silber & Bhatt, 2007; Van der Valk & Wagenaar, 2010). Context-specific tools would mitigate these limitations, but would also be more expensive to develop, would require an extensive amount of time and ongoing validation, and acquiring the requisite number of cases for validation could prove to be impossible. Finally, based on objections to existing criminal justice risk assessment practices, any tool would need to be accompanied

by a robust and proactive public relations campaign to secure buy-in from stakeholders in the community they would potentially be targeting. One way to do this would be to involve the community during the design phases, so issues can be addressed and treated as efficiently as possible.

4. PROGRAMS TO REDUCE RISK

As discussed above, there are multiple challenges involved in assessing the level of risk posed by an individual who has engaged in extremist activity. Assuming, however, that these challenges are addressed and a validated risk assessment process is developed, the next question becomes how this risk can be reduced. In spite of the fact that this issue is currently receiving increased attention in the United States because of rising concerns about (1) the return of foreign fighters from Syria and Iraq as the territory controlled by the Islamic State shrinks and (2) the eventual release of individuals convicted of terrorism-related crimes from U.S. prison, few programs focused on reducing the risk posed by extremist offenders have been developed in the United States (Berkell, 2017; Hughes, 2017; Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2017). After discussing the general goals of these types of programs and describing two nascent efforts in the United States, this section provides an overview of several more mature programs in Europe and lessons learned that can inform the development of future programs in the United States.

4.1 General Goals

One of the key distinctions made in the terrorism literature when discussing how individuals leave terrorists groups or cease terrorist activity is that between disengagement and deradicalization (Bjorgo & Horgan, 2009; Horgan, 2008). Specifically, whereas disengagement is generally viewed as involving the abandonment of extremist activity, deradicalization is viewed as involving the abandonment or rejection of extremist beliefs and ideology. Although further research is needed to understand how these two processes relate to each other—and to recidivism—many of the programs discussed below focus on promoting disengagement *and* deradicalization and thus include efforts aimed at supporting individuals in changing both their behaviors and their beliefs.

Further, in addition to helping offenders to move away from extremism, many of these programs focus on supporting these individuals as they move toward their eventual reintegration into society. As seen below, several programs include various lines of effort

Disengagement vs. Deradicalization

Disengagement: A psychological or physical change that involves the cessation of violent activities and/or an exit from a group that advocates or participates in violent activities. Accompanied by an observable change in behavior.

Deradicalization: Process that involves changes to the psychological state or belief systems of those participating in violent activities and/or groups that advocate for violent activities. Accompanied by a change in beliefs and a rejection of extremist beliefs.

aimed at rehabilitating participants and improving their ability to function in mainstream society. These activities range from addressing offenders' psychological issues to providing them with basic skills through training programs.

4.2 Current Efforts in the United States

Two efforts to reduce the risk posed by extremist offenders in the United States have been the recent focus of research or media attention. One, ExitUSA, aims to support individuals in leaving right-wing violent extremist groups. The other, the Terrorism Disengagement and Deradicalization Program, seeks to promote the disengagement, deradicalization, and rehabilitation of individuals convicted of terrorism-related offenses.

Inspired in part by similar programs developed in Europe, ExitUSA is a voluntary program developed by the nonprofit organization Life After Hate with the goal of helping extremists to abandon the white power movement, racism, and violence (<https://www.lifeafterhate.org/programs>). Founded and run by former white power violent extremists, ExitUSA offers tailored one-on-one counselling to individuals to support their disengagement and deradicalization processes (Lenz, 2016). The program also supports community practitioners (e.g., counselors, social workers) and families who are attempting to help individuals who want to leave violent extremism behind. No evaluation of the ExitUSA program has been conducted to date.

Unlike ExitUSA, which is run by a nonprofit and supports individuals who have not necessarily been convicted of their offenses, the Terrorism Disengagement and Deradicalization Program announced by U.S. District Judge Michael Davis in Minnesota in 2016 is government-run and designed to assess and promote the rehabilitation of convicted extremist offenders (Berkell, 2017; Ibrahim & Yuen, 2016; Koerner, 2017). Although details on the assessment and rehabilitation efforts associated with this program are few, it was designed by Daniel Koehler, who serves as the director of the German Institute on Radicalization and De-Radicalization Studies and who has been affiliated with the Exit Deutschland and Hayat programs in Germany (see below). The program, which is being implemented by the U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services Office in Minnesota, has largely involved individuals convicted of supporting the Islamic State and al-Shabaab. Like ExitUSA, it is a relatively new program and has not yet been evaluated.

4.3 Current Efforts in Europe

Over the past few decades, governments and nonprofit organizations in various countries around the world have developed and implemented programs focused on reducing the risk posed by extremist offenders. Collectively, these programs have targeted offenders with differing ideologies (e.g., Islamist extremist, right-wing extremist) and individuals who have and have not been convicted of terrorist offenses. These different programs have been implemented inside and outside of prisons and have included various lines of effort focused on the disengagement, deradicalization, or rehabilitation of their participants.

Although arguably it may be possible to learn something from every program that has been developed, given that the United States and European countries share similarities in terms of both the nature of the extremist threat they face and the legal and cultural contexts in which this threat occurs, lessons learned from European programs may be particularly applicable to the U.S. context. (Lessons from programs implemented in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand may also be quite relevant, but information on such programs was not available.) As such, the rest of this section focuses on European programs aimed at reducing the risk posed by extremist offenders and some of the lessons learned that have been gleaned through implementing them. Table 7 provides an overview of 12 of these programs, focusing on which organization(s) implemented them, their target populations, and their goals. Although several of these programs also include activities targeted toward individuals who have not engaged in extremist offenses (e.g., more general outreach and education efforts aimed at the general public or practitioners), only those activities targeted toward extremist offenders are included below.

As can be seen in Table 8, many of the programs developed and implemented in Europe include efforts focused on supporting participants in addressing thought patterns and emotions related to extremist offending, developing more prosocial and adaptive ways of dealing with challenges and conflict, and reconnecting with positive social influences. In addition, the majority of programs provide more concrete assistance aimed at reintegrating participants into mainstream society, such as help in seeking employment, education, or housing. Interestingly, several of these programs also offer support to participants' families, who may experience their own challenges related to their extremist family members and, in some programs, are viewed as central to whether participants are able to move away from extremism and toward more productive lives (Koehler, 2015). Finally, a few, although by no means all, programs (e.g., Exit Deutschland, the Unity Initiative), directly address participants' extremist ideologies.

4.4 Lessons Learned

In an ideal world, the implementation and impacts of all of the programs discussed above would be rigorously evaluated, and, based on the findings of these evaluations, it would become clearer what works and what does not work in reducing the risk posed by extremist offenders. In reality, findings from such evaluations are generally not available (Horgan & Braddock, 2009; Mastroe & Szmania, 2016; Neumann, 2010; RAN, 2016b; Veldhuis, 2015). Further, the findings that are available tend to focus primarily on data related to how many individuals participated in the programs, how many completed them, or how many subsequently reengaged in extremist offending (i.e., the recidivism rate) (Mastroe & Szmania, 2016). Thus, for example, Exit Deutschland reports that since 2000, more than 500 individuals have completed the program and that these participants have a recidivism rate of approximately 3% (<http://www.exit-deutschland.de/english/>). Although certainly

Table 7. European Programs Designed to Reduce the Risk Posed by Extremist Offenders

Program (Location)	Implementer	Target Population	Goals
Danish or Aarhaus Model (Denmark from 2007 on) (Bertelsen, 2015; Christensen, 2015; RAN, ^a 2016a, 2017a, 2017c)	Government (national police; social and psychiatric services; Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET))	Right-wing, left-wing, and religious extremists; returning foreign fighters	▪ Addressing physical and mental health issues ▪ Mentoring participants in how to address challenges posed by leaving extremism and everyday life ▪ Helping individuals to develop non-extremist social networks ▪ Developing parents' network to support individuals in abandoning violent extremism ▪ Helping participants to secure housing (if necessary) and employment ▪ Providing job training and education for individuals released as part of effort ▪ Providing assistance finding employment ▪ Offering monetary assistance ▪ Providing support for individuals' families (e.g., educational support)
Early Release Scheme (N. Ireland from 1998 through early 2000s) (Democratic Progress Institute, 2013; Horgan & Braddock, 2009)	Government (U.K. and Irish); nonprofits (e.g., N. Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders)	Loyalist and Republican extremists who qualified for early release	
Exit Deutschland (Germany from 2000 on) (Butt & Tuck, 2014; Christensen, 2015; Exit-Germany, 2014; RAN, 2017a)	Nonprofit (ZDK Society Democratic Culture)	Right-wing extremists voluntarily seeking to leave movement	▪ Addressing individuals' extremist ideology ▪ Helping individuals to acknowledge harm they have done to victims ▪ Providing therapy to address psychological issues, addiction, or family issues ▪ Counseling families of extremist individuals ▪ Helping individuals find a safe environment away from group (through police protection, etc.) ▪ Providing assistance with job training and education

(continued)

Table 8. European Programs Designed to Reduce the Risk Posed by Extremist Offenders (continued)

Program (Location)	Implementer	Target Population	Goals
EXIT Fryshuset (Sweden from 1998 on) (Butt & Tuck, 2014; Christensen, 2015; Ramalingam & Tuck, 2014; RAN, 2017a)	Nonprofit (Youth Centre Fryshuset)	Right-wing extremists voluntarily seeking to leave movement	▪ Developing confidential relationships between participants and former violent extremists who can provide guidance ▪ Providing counselling (with psychologist or psychiatrist if needed) ▪ Providing training in social skills and conflict management ▪ Helping individuals to reestablish contact with former friends and family ▪ Supporting family members of individual leaving group ▪ Providing safe housing ▪ Supporting participants in finding a new job and establishing new lives
Hayat (Germany from 2012 on) (RAN, 2017a)	Nonprofit (ZDK Society Democratic Culture)	Islamist extremists voluntarily seeking to leave movement; returning foreign fighters	▪ Addressing individuals' extremist ideologies ▪ Providing counseling to participants ▪ Counseling families of extremist individuals ▪ Serving as bridge between participants, their families, and social service, employment, educational, or law enforcement organizations
Inclusion (The Netherlands; unclear when started) (RAN, 2017b)	Government (Dutch Probation Service)	Islamist extremists on parole or probation	▪ Addressing psychological issues and extremist worldview through cognitive behavioral exercises ▪ Supporting reconciliation with family members or other positive influences ▪ Developing tailored plans for participants' future ▪ Assisting individuals in finding job, schooling, housing, and debt relief

(continued)

Table 9. European Programs Designed to Reduce the Risk Posed by Extremist Offenders (continued)

Program (Location)	Implementer	Target Population	Goals
Jump (Germany from 2010 on) (Jugenddorfwerk (CJD)) (RAN, 2017a)	Nonprofit (Christliches Jugenddorfwerk (CJD))	Right-wing extremists voluntarily seeking to leave movement	▪ Reflecting on experiences inside and outside of group and moral dilemmas ▪ Identifying and handling triggers that may lead to rejoining group ▪ Developing sustainable courses of action to avoid rejoining group
Success Together (U.K., 2014 – 2015) (RAN, 2017a)	Nonprofit (Account Trust)	Tamil extremists who support separatist agenda	▪ Helping to secure housing, education, or employment ▪ Providing culturally appropriate cognitive therapy in native language
The Unity Initiative (U.K. from 2010 on) (RAN, 2017a)	Nonprofit (The Unity Initiative)	Islamist extremists convicted of Terrorist Act offenses; returning foreign fighters	▪ Developing narratives to counter extremist separatist agenda ▪ Providing training and employment opportunities ▪ Developing tailored one-on-one interventions ▪ Working to change the worldviews and ideologies of participants
Prison-Based Programs			
Back on Track (Denmark from 2011 on) (Butt & Tuck, 2014; RAN, 2017a)	Government (Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration; Danish Prison and Probation Service)	Inmates convicted of extremism-related crimes; inmates assessed as vulnerable to extremism	▪ Providing mentoring in how to handle everyday situations, problems, and conflicts ▪ Engaging inmates' families and social networks to support former inmates when they reenter society ▪ Providing support finding new job and establishing new life after release
Healthy Identities (U.K. from 2010 on) (Dean, 2012; NOMS, 2013)	Government (National Offender Management Service)	Inmates convicted of extremism-related crimes	▪ Providing one-on-one tailored sessions focused on ▪ Empowering individuals to take responsibility for themselves, how they live and their personal commitments ▪ Developing positive identities and self-images ▪ Reducing "us versus them" thinking and identification with violent extremist groups ▪ Enabling participants to express, tolerate and cope with powerful emotions without denigrating or harming others ▪ Addressing attitudes and beliefs that support extremist offending ▪ Developing individuals' support networks and preparing them for future intervention work

(continued)

Table 10. European Programs Designed to Reduce the Risk Posed by Extremist Offenders (continued)

Program (Location)	Implementer	Target Population	Goals
Violence Prevention Network (Germany from 2001 on) (RAN, 2016a, 2017b)	Government-funded (Federal Agency for Civil Education, part of the Federal Ministry of the Interior); run by nonprofit	Inmates convicted of crimes related to right-wing extremism and, more recently, religious extremism	▪ Providing 23-week education program with small group of prisoners focused on: ▪ Understanding motivations that led to extremist activity ▪ Identifying alternative responses and ways to handle conflict ▪ Reintegrating them into democratic culture ▪ Providing dedicated support from mentors once individuals have been released ▪ Offering support for individuals' families before and after release ▪ Helping individuals find housing and employment

^a RAN is the acronym of the Radicalization Awareness Network, an organization that brings together European practitioners who work on radicalization prevention efforts.

necessary and helpful, data such as these do not provide much insight into what specific aspects of the program are the most and least successful and, more generally, what accounts for this positive outcome.

There are several possible reasons for the current lack of data regarding the implementation and outcomes of programs developed to reduce the risk posed by extremist offenders. First, some of the programs may be too new to evaluate thoroughly as is certainly the case for programs like the Terrorism Disengagement and Deradicalization Program in Minnesota, which started in 2016. Second, in some cases, evaluations may have been completed, but findings are not publicly available because of concerns related to national security, participant privacy, public relations, etc. Third, the evaluation of some programs may be ongoing, with researchers not yet able to share results. Fourth, there may be no funding to conduct rigorous evaluations of the programs given fiscal restraints or lack of will. Regardless of whether any or all of these reasons can explain the current scarcity of publicly available evaluation findings, it is clear that conducting evaluations of these programs and sharing the findings of these evaluations is essential to improving programs moving forward.

In the interim, several organizations have put together lists of lessons learned in developing and implementing programs aimed at reducing the risk posed by extremist offenders. A brief summary of these lessons is presented below.

Formalize the program (Global Counterterrorism Forum, 2012; Radicalization Awareness Network, 2016a, 2017a; Veldhuis, 2015)—Outlining the goals of a program, its stakeholders' responsibilities, and how the program should be implemented helps to ensure that it functions as smoothly as possible. This process also supports future evaluations of the program because it suggests metrics that can be used to assess its implementation and impacts. Finally, addressing any legal issues and funding needs up front may improve the program's sustainability over the long run (Butt & Tuck, 2014; Ramalingham & Tuck, 2014). At the same time, just because a program is formalized does not mean that it cannot change and evolve.

Adapt the program to the local context and conditions (Butt & Tuck, 2014; Christensen, 2015; Holmer & Shtuni, 2017; Neumann, 2010; Radicalization Awareness Network, 2017a)—A program that works in one cultural, political, social, or historical context may not necessarily work in the same manner in a different one. Thus, it is unrealistic to expect that any program can be imported wholesale from one context to another. To give just one example, although they have similar goals and target populations, the Exit programs in Sweden and Germany differ in terms of the focus they put on directly addressing individuals' extremist ideologies (Christensen, 2015).

Tailor the program to individual participants

(Butt & Tuck, 2014; Christensen, 2015; Global Counterterrorism Forum, 2012; Holmer & Shtuni, 2017; Radicalization Awareness Network, 2016a, 2017a; Veldhuis, 2015)—Research has shown that the processes of disengaging from terrorism and reengaging with society vary by individual (Altier et al., 2017; Barrelle, 2015). As such, a program developed to support extremist

offenders in these processes is likely to be more successful if it takes this variation into account. Gathering extensive information about participants' backgrounds, experiences, and characteristics, and engaging in a robust risk assessment process, can facilitate developing this type of tailored program.

Ensure that the program staff has diverse areas of expertise

(Butt & Tuck, 2014; Global Counterterrorism Forum, 2012; Radicalization Awareness Network, 2016a, 2017a, 2017b; Ramalingham & Tuck, 2014)—Given the diverse backgrounds, experiences, characteristics, and needs of extremist offenders, it makes sense to ensure that program staff have expertise in a range of areas, which could include psychology/psychiatry, social work, terrorism studies, religious studies, and others. Although it may

not be the case that a program can employ individuals with backgrounds in all of these areas, having experts available to consult with the program as needed could be helpful. Further, ensuring that all staff members receive the appropriate training and organizational support needed to deal with their stressful and challenging positions is essential.

Establish trust between program implementers and participants (Butt & Tuck, 2014; Radicalization Awareness Network, 2016a, 2017a)—The process of trying to reintegrate into mainstream society after belonging to an extremist group or engaging in extremist offending is not an easy one, and it is likely to be even more challenging if program participants do not trust the people who are trying to help them. For this reason, it is

Special Considerations for Prison-Based Programs

- Consider whether inmates going through the program are segregated from or integrated into the general prison population (Global Counterterrorism Forum, 2012; Radicalization Awareness Network, 2017b; Veldhuis, 2015).
- Prison officers need to understand the program, even if they are not responsible for its delivery (Global Counterterrorism Forum, 2012).
- Ensure that there is some provision for aftercare, whether through programs run outside of prison or connections with other social service organizations, once a participant leaves prison (Global Counterterrorism Forum, 2012).

Special Considerations for Programs Focused on Returning Foreign Fighters (Returnees)

- Be honest with returnees and their families about what they will face upon returning (e.g., monitoring, prosecution, imprisonment) (Radicalization Awareness Network, 2017b).
- Engage with returnees immediately upon their return and throughout the legal process (Radicalization Awareness Network, 2016a, 2017b).
- Consider developing programs specifically focused on female and child returnees (Holmer & Shtuni, 2017; Radicalization Awareness Network, 2017b).
- Understand that returnees may have mental health issues related to their exposure to and participation in war and violence (Holmer & Shtuni, 2017; Radicalization Awareness Network, 2017b).

important that program implementers try to establish relationships with participants that are both respectful and productive. One way that some programs try to address this need is by involving former extremists, who often have a better understanding of the processes participants are going through and, thus, more credibility. Another is by ensuring participant confidentiality.

Include multiple lines of effort in the program (Global Counterterrorism Forum, 2012; Holmer & Shtuni, 2017; Neumann, 2010; Radicalization Awareness Network, 2016a, 2017a, 2017b)—Although there is no set list of activities that should be included in every program, and, as discussed above, the actual implementation of a program may vary by participant, incorporating activities that address various aspects of participants' disengagement, deradicalization, and reintegration processes is generally viewed as increasing the chances that a program will be successful. These lines of effort may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Addressing participants' ideologies or religious beliefs
- Addressing participants' mental health needs
- Helping participants to develop social and cognitive skills
- Helping participants to develop positive social networks
- Supporting participants' family members and involving them in the reintegration process
- Providing participants education and training in vocational skills
- Assisting participants in obtaining employment, (safe) housing, and other resources
- Facilitating connections between participants and other social services

Communicate clearly with external stakeholders and the general public (Butt & Tuck, 2014; Holmer & Shtuni, 2017; Radicalization Awareness Network, 2017a, 2017b; Veldhuis, 2015)—Because the ultimate goal of many programs is the successful reintegration of their participants back into the community, it is important to take into account stakeholders outside of the program, including local authorities in the areas where program participants live and the general public. Specifically, these groups may have concerns about safety that need to be addressed, and some may feel general discomfort with, if not outright hostility toward, the idea that extremist offenders are receiving services to support their return to mainstream society. Developing and implementing a robust and transparent communication strategy may help to alleviate some, although likely not all, of these issues.

Evaluate the implementation and impacts of the program (Radicalization Awareness Network, 2016a, 2016b; Ramalingham & Tuck, 2014; Veldhuis, 2015)—As discussed above, evaluating current programs that have been developed to reduce the risks posed by extremist offenders is essential in ensuring both these and future programs work as well as possible:

[Programs], both new and existing, should be subjected to critical, independent and real-time evaluation so their goals, underlying assumptions about how to achieve them, organizational implementation, and degree of success can be assessed. This is crucial to designing and implementing more effective initiatives and thus to minimizing the [likelihood] of terrorist recidivism. (Radicalization Awareness Network, 2016a, p. 8)

Although the United States is behind European countries in developing programs focused on reducing the risk posed by extremist offenders, it now has the opportunity bring these lessons to bear moving forward.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Validation of Existing Instruments

As discussed above, there is currently a small set of risk assessment tools and protocols that have been developed to assess the risk of that an individual will engage in extremist offenses (Lloyd & Dean 2015), extremist violence (Pressman 2009), group-based violence (Cook et al. 2015), or lone actor terrorism (Meloy et al. 2015). Recently, a new tool has been released to assess the risk of future extremist offending in returning foreign terrorist fighters (Radicalization Awareness Network, 2016). Although there is considerable overlap in these instruments with respect to the types of risk factors and indicators measured, further research is needed to validate these tools and to assess their limitations based on the context, and population to which they are applied. To the extent possible, we recommend collaboration with and among the developers of these tools to ensure transparency of the research and to assess the generalizability of the tools across contexts.

5.2 Identify Primary Assessment Tool Needs

The violent extremism literature suffers from a significant amount of variation in the way concepts and targets are defined (Kruglanski et al. 2008; Roberts & Horgan 2008). The development of a violent extremism assessment tool requires careful consideration regarding what the outcome of concern is and the purposes of the tool. The history of violence risk assessment includes attempts to measure the likelihood of general violence, sexual assault, spousal violence, child abuse, targeted violence, treatment needs, radicalization, stalking behavior, and so on. For a tool to be effective, it must be designed for a specific end use. We recommend careful planning to identify the outcomes of concern (specific terrorist threat, mass murder, targeted violence, etc.), the types of decisions to be made based on the tool (resource allocation, assessing treatment needs, monitoring, etc.), and the context in which the tool would be used (public policing, incarcerated offenders, etc.). Furthermore, an assessment tool alone is not able to store historical information about a subject. Agencies and organizations performing risk assessments require a comprehensive system designed to collect, curate, recall, and disseminate information collected by first responders, other agencies, and by other interviewers.

5.3 Assess the Utility of Relevant Risk/Protective Factors

Tool development begins with the identification of risk factors that demonstrate a statistical and theoretical link to the risk behavior of interest. Previous work has focused on identifying potential risk factors and amassing them into large behavioral checklists. To our knowledge, there have been no attempts to validate existing risk factor checklists against existing data from known offenders. As discussed above, a manageable set of dynamic risk factors, complimented by case management tools that provide insight into the criminogenic needs of the offender and allow for long-term tracking of the rehabilitative process represent the next wave of risk assessment. Risk factor identification should skew toward more dynamic traits and temporally relevant behavior patterns as opposed to focusing primarily on static, historical factors. Protective factors and the offender's responsivity to treatment methods should also be considered.

5.4 Consider the Importance of Structured Rehabilitation Programming

Next generation risk assessment tools use evidence-based dynamic risk factors to predict risk and guide treatment to reduce said risk. The utility of dynamic factors lies in their ability to change over time through education, therapeutic treatment, and rehabilitation. In the absence of effective treatment, assessed risk is unlikely to decrease. Current rehabilitation programming for extremist offenders has largely been untested. Evaluations that have been conducted are of minimal utility and often suffer from methodological challenges. The efficacy of existing programs should be considered in light of the lessons learned presented in Section 4 of this report. Efforts should be made to bring together experts in CVE, violent offender rehabilitation, recidivism, psychology, and law enforcement to develop a roadmap toward the creation of rehabilitative programming for violent extremist offenders. Given the infrequency with which such offenders are identified and referred to treatment, and the specialized treatment needs, initial efforts will likely require a distributed expertise model rather than attempting to develop a community-based approach within a single location.

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