



PREVENTING TERRORISM

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENCE

Experiential Protective Factors
and Risk Factors



Science &
Technology

DHS-001-01721-003406



Research shows that one avenue of preventing terrorism lies in understanding and addressing radicalization to violence. This starts with understanding what can lead an individual to radicalize to violence and how communities can take action and protect against this growing threat. The Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) works with the whole-of-society to build local prevention frameworks in order to address risk factors for – and build protective factors against – radicalization to violence.

As part of a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) research and development effort, the Campbell Collaboration, an international social sciences research network, conducted research through the review of 127 studies on terrorism. That research found multiple risk factors for – and protective factors against – radicalization to violence that are important for terrorism prevention. These findings can inform local prevention efforts.

EXPERIENTIAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS AGAINST RADICALIZATION

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

EXPERIENTIAL RISK FACTORS FOR RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENCE

EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE

FAMILY VIOLENCE

ONLINE POSTING

PARENTAL ABUSE

PAST ACTIVISM

PERSONAL STRAIN

PRIOR INCARCERATION

RADICAL MEDIA/VIOLENT
MEDIA EXPOSURE

RECENT JOB LOSS

DHS-001-01721-003408



WHAT CAN YOUR COMMUNITY DO? _____

Communities can help individuals and their communities by building protective factors and addressing risk factors. Examples of programs and activities that communities can do include:



Ensuring schools include media literacy/online critical thinking skills into curricula.



Ensuring all schools have active, comprehensive anti-bullying programs including intervention programs for students who engage in bullying.



Ensuring communities know the signs of parental/caretaker mistreatment and developing and implementing intervention programs for parents/caretakers who abuse their children.



Educating parents on ways to address online radicalization to violence. American University's Polarization and Extremism Research Innovation Lab (PERIL), recipient of a CP3 grant, has a toolkit for parents on their webpage.

-  Increasing the awareness of available public health, mental health, and social services including no- or low-cost services.
-  Ensuring your community has comprehensive victim services programs.
-  Ensuring that “returning citizens” have access to tailored programs to help them re-integrate into your community.
-  Implementing civic engagement awareness programs that educate members of your community about the variety of ways community members can express their concerns and contribute in positive, pro-social ways.
-  Ensuring that communities do not, in any way, target activists. Activism is constitutionally protected activity. Including activists in the issues of concern to them is one pro-active way to celebrate activism and ensure activism continually aids to the development of an inclusive community.
-  Ensuring that there are nonviolent outlets for activists’ voices to be heard/ encourage open dialogue surrounding issues of concern.

DEFINITIONS

EXPERIENTIAL FACTORS: The personal experiences an individual has had and that characterize their background.

RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENCE: The process wherein an individual comes to believe that the threat or use of unlawful violence is necessary or even justified to accomplish a goal.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS: A characteristic that decreases the likelihood that an individual will radicalize to violence. An individual may have one (or more) protective factors and still radicalize to violence. Protective factors are not determinative.

- **PROCEDURAL JUSTICE:** Treated fairly by legal institutions.

RISK FACTORS: A characteristic that increases the likelihood that an individual will radicalize to violence. An individual may have one (or more) risk factors and never radicalize to violence. Risk factors are not determinative.

- **EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE:** Perpetrated/victim of violence involving strangers, bullies, or parents.
- **FAMILY VIOLENCE:** Degree of violence occurring within the family unit.
- **ONLINE POSTING:** Active posting of political/radical opinions/content online.
- **PARENTAL ABUSE:** Physically abused by parents.
- **PAST ACTIVISM:** *Engaged in legal, nonviolent behaviors in the name of a cause.
- **PERSONAL STRAIN:** Loss of parents, loss of work, experienced traumatic event, etc.
- **PRIOR INCARCERATION:** Previous incarceration for a crime.

- **RADICAL MEDIA/VIOLENT MEDIA EXPOSURE:** Exposure to mediated, radical content and/or mediated violence/violent content.
- **RECENT JOB LOSS:** Recent loss of employment.

***Activism is woven into the fabric of the United States and is constitutionally protected. As with all risk factors, this risk factor itself is not predictive of violent behavior. That is, someone who participates in activism is not necessarily a threat to the community. Prevention efforts are designed to ensure that communities understand and address risk factors as well as build protective factors.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

The Science and Technology Directorate

<https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/terrorism-prevention>

THE CAMPBELL COLLABORATION

<https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/better-evidence/radicalization-pu-tative-risk-and-protective-factors.html>

The Campbell Collaboration is partially funded by the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY – PERIL

<https://www.american.edu/centers/university-excellence/peril.cfm>

https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/splc_peril_parents_and_caregivers_guide_june_2021_final.pdf

STOP BULLYING

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/get-help-now>



PREVENTING TERRORISM

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENCE

Attitudinal Protective Factors and Risk Factors



Science &
Technology

DHS-001-01721-003414



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ATTITUDINAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS AGAINST RADICALIZATION

INSTITUTIONAL TRUST

LAW ABIDANCE

LAW LEGITIMACY

POLITICAL SATISFACTION

SOCIAL SUPPORT

ATTITUDINAL RISK FACTORS FOR RADICALIZATION

ANGER

LOW INTEGRATION

ACTIVIST INTENTIONS

PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION

ANOMIE/ALIENATION

PERCEIVED INJUSTICE

ANTI-DEMOCRATIC

POLITICAL EXTREMISM

COLLECTIVE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

POLITICAL GRIEVANCE

COMMITMENT TO CAUSE

RADICAL ATTITUDES

INDIVIDUAL RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

SEGREGATIONIST

IN-GROUP SUPERIORITY

SELF-EFFICACY



WHAT CAN YOUR COMMUNITY DO?

Communities can help individuals and their communities by seeking to strengthen protective factors and addressing risk factors. Examples of programs and activities that communities can do include:

- ✓ Encouraging schools and communities to develop and deliver broad-based civic education and engagement programs that focus on how democracies work and how individuals can be heard within a democracy.
- ✓ Continually emphasize the value of all members of the community and actively educate on the value of inclusiveness and diversity.
- ✓ Ensuring all institutions within the community – religious organizations, schools, law enforcement, government, civic organizations, et al. – work to gain and keep the trust of the community through transparent, open dialogue and communication.
- ✓ Encouraging regular interactions between community members through noncontroversial activities such as intramural sports, field trips, creative arts activities, etc.
- ✓ Re-orienting the community to positive, value-affirming ways to evaluate themselves and their community.
- ✓ Increasing the awareness of available public health, mental health, and social services including no- or low-cost services.
- ✓ Staying engaged as a parent, teacher, mentor, or peer to maintain connectivity and reduce isolation.

DEFINITIONS

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- **LAW LEGITIMACY:** Respect for the government/law/authorities.
- **POLITICAL SATISFACTION:** Satisfaction with the current system of government.
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- **ACTIVIST INTENTIONS:** The degree to which an individual is committed to a particular cause or willingness to engage in behavior on behalf of that cause.
- **ANOMIE/ALIENATION:** A feeling of disconnect and isolation from other individuals/communities.
- **ANTI-DEMOCRATIC:** Beliefs that reject or run contrary to democratic values.
- **COLLECTIVE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION:** A feeling that one's in-group has been deprived of some valuable thing or discriminated against relative to other groups.
- **COMMITMENT TO CAUSE:** Level of commitment to a cause.

- **INDIVIDUAL RELATIVE DEPRIVATION:** A feeling that one has been deprived of some valuable thing relative to one's own past, or persons or groups, or some other category.
- **IN-GROUP SUPERIORITY:** Believing that one's own group identity (race, religion, ethnicity, etc.) is better than other groups.
- **LOW INTEGRATION:** Having feelings of not belonging to the local community/society where one lives.
- **PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION:** A belief that an individual – or a group – is treated unjustly based on individual (or group) characteristics such as race, ethnicity, or religious beliefs, etc.
- **PERCEIVED INJUSTICE:** Feeling that oneself – or one's group – is being treated unjustly.
- **POLITICAL EXTREMISM:** Holding political views that are far outside the mainstream attitudes of society. Holders of politically extreme views may be opposed to compromise, intolerant of dissent or opposing views, demonize opposing views, etc.
- **POLITICAL GRIEVANCE:** A real or imagined wrong or other cause of complaint or protest about local, national, or geo-political situations or events.
- **RADICAL ATTITUDES:** Having support for or justification of radical violence in the name of a cause.
- **SEGREGATIONIST:** A belief that groups should be forcefully separated into their specific racial/ethnic categories.
- **SELF-EFFICACY:** Having confidence in one's ability to exert control over one's motivations, behavior, or social environment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

The Science and Technology Directorate

<https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/terrorism-prevention>

THE CAMPBELL COLLABORATION

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PREVENTING TERRORISM

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENCE

Psychological and Personality Protective
Factors and Risk Factors



Science &
Technology

DHS-001-01721-003422



Research shows that one avenue of preventing terrorism lies in understanding and addressing radicalization to violence. This starts with understanding what can lead an individual to radicalize to violence and how communities can take action and protect against this growing threat. The Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) works with the whole-of-society to build local prevention frameworks in order to address risk factors for – and build protective factors against – radicalization to violence.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PERSONALITY PROTECTIVE FACTORS AGAINST RADICALIZATION

LIFE SATISFACTION

PERSONALITY TRAITS

SELF-ESTEEM



PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PERSONALITY RISK FACTORS FOR RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENCE

ANGER

AUTHORITARIANISM/
FUNDAMENTALISM

DISCONNECTEDNESS

DUAL IDENTITY

HYPERMASCULINITY

IN-GROUP IDENTITY (SYMBOLIC/
REALISTIC THREAT)

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

OBSESSIVE PASSION

PERSONALITY TRAITS

POWER-DISTANCE ORIENTATION

QUEST FOR SIGNIFICANCE

SELF-SACRIFICE

SOCIAL ALIENATION

SOCIAL DOMINANCE ORIENTATION

TRAUMA/PTSD

DHS-001-01721-003425



WHAT CAN YOUR COMMUNITY DO? _____

Communities can help individuals and their communities by building protective factors and addressing risk factors. Examples of programs and activities that communities can do include:

- ☒ Encouraging regular interactions between community members through noncontroversial activities such as intramural sports, field trips, creative arts activities, etc.
- ☒ Continually emphasizing the value of all members of the community and actively educating on the value of inclusiveness and diversity.
- ☒ Re-orienting the community to positive, value-affirming ways to evaluate themselves and their community.
- ☒ Increasing the awareness of available public health, mental health, and social services including no- or low-cost services.
- ☒ Staying engaged as a parent, teacher, mentor, or peer to maintain connectivity and reduce isolation.

DEFINITIONS

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Characteristics that show a pattern to someone's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENCE: The process wherein an individual comes to believe that the threat or use of unlawful violence is necessary or even justified to accomplish a goal.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS: A characteristic that decreases the likelihood that an individual will radicalize to violence. An individual may have one (or more) protective factors and still radicalize to violence. Protective factors are not determinative.

- **LIFE SATISFACTION:** An individual's evaluation of the quality of his/her life. The subjectivity of this factor allows for change.
- **PERSONALITY TRAITS:** *Openness to Experience* (being receptive to new ideas and trying new things), *Conscientiousness* (having a tendency towards self-discipline and striving towards achievement), and *Agreeableness* (valuing the ability to get along with others in order to maintain social harmony).
- **SELF-ESTEEM:** An individual's subjective evaluation of his/her own worth. Groups and the public at-large also engage in a subjective evaluation of the worth of a group and of the public. The subjectivity of this factor allows for change.

RISK FACTORS: A characteristic that increases the likelihood that an individual will radicalize to violence. An individual may have one (or more) risk factors and never radicalize to violence. Risk factors are not determinative.

- **ANGER:** Having anger, resentful, or furious feelings about an issue or situation.
- **AUTHORITARIANISM/FUNDAMENTALISM:** Having a belief in the submission to higher authority.
- **DISCONNECTEDNESS:** Lack of social contacts/activity.
- **DUAL IDENTITY:** Torn between more than one important group-based identity.
- **HYPERMASCULINITY:** Exaggerating stereotypical male behavior such as strength, aggression, and sexuality.

- **IN-GROUP IDENTITY (SYMBOLIC/REALISTIC THREAT):** Constructing an identity based on group identity (e.g., religion, ethnicity, race, etc.). Having an in-group identity may lead to beliefs that one's "in-group" is being deprived/discriminated against relative to other groups ("out-groups"). It may also lead to viewing the influence of out-groups as a threat to the in-group – including a threat to the in-group's survival. Strong in-group identity may be accompanied by aggression to out-groups.
- **MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES:** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mental health refers to our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It also determines how we handle stress, relate to others, make healthy choices, and has an impact on how we think, feel, and act.
- **OBSESSIVE PASSION:** Passion for an activity that is consuming one's life or identity.
- **PERSONALITY TRAITS:** *Narcissism* (pride, grandiosity, egotism, and a lack of empathy), *Machiavellianism* (manipulation and exploitation of others), and *Psychopathy* (antisocial behavior, callous and unemotional behavior) that result in a lack of empathy for others.
- **POWER-DISTANCE ORIENTATION:** Acceptance of inequality between classes/hierarchical structures.
- **QUEST FOR SIGNIFICANCE:** Seeking to attain/regain a lost or absent sense of personal significance.
- **SELF-SACRIFICE:** A willingness to sacrifice on behalf of an in-group or cause.
- **SOCIAL ALIENATION:** A feeling of disconnect and isolation from other individuals/communities.
- **SOCIAL DOMINANCE ORIENTATION:** Having a desire for social dominance over others. If holding a strong in-group identity, the orientation would favor the dominance by the in-group over out-groups.
- **TRAUMA/PTSD:** Having a deeply distressing or disturbing experience. PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) is a specific type of disorder that is triggered by a traumatic experience but is severe and can last for years. PTSD may interfere with an individual's day-to-day functioning.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

The Science and Technology Directorate

<https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/terrorism-prevention>

THE CAMPBELL COLLABORATION

<https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/better-evidence/radicalization-putative-risk-and-protective-factors.html>

The Campbell Collaboration is partially funded by the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate

THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION | “MENTAL HEALTH”

<https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/index.htm>





PREVENTING TERRORISM

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENCE

Attitudinal Risk Factors and Protective Factors



Science &
Technology

Center for Prevention
Programs and Partnerships

DHS-001-0172-0003430



Research shows that one avenue of preventing terrorism lies in understanding and addressing radicalization to violence. This starts with understanding what can lead an individual to radicalize to violence and how communities can take action and protect against this growing threat. The Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) works with the whole-of-society to build local prevention frameworks in order to address risk factors for – and build protective factors against – radicalization to violence. As part of a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) research and development effort, the Campbell Collaboration, an international social sciences research network, conducted research through the review of 127 studies on terrorism. That research found multiple risk factors for – and protective factors against – radicalization to violence that are important for terrorism prevention. These findings can inform local prevention efforts.

ATTITUDINAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS AGAINST RADICALIZATION

INSTITUTIONAL TRUST

LAW ABIDANCE

LAW LEGITIMACY

POLITICAL SATISFACTION

SOCIAL SUPPORT

ATTITUDINAL RISK FACTORS FOR RADICALIZATION

ANGER

LOW INTEGRATION

ACTIVIST INTENTIONS

PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION

ANOMIE/ALIENATION

PERCEIVED INJUSTICE

ANTI-DEMOCRATIC

POLITICAL EXTREMISM

COLLECTIVE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

POLITICAL GRIEVANCE

COMMITMENT TO CAUSE

RADICAL ATTITUDES

INDIVIDUAL RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

SEGREGATIONIST

IN-GROUP SUPERIORITY

SELF-EFFICACY



WHAT CAN YOUR COMMUNITY DO?

Communities can help individuals and their communities by seeking to strengthen protective factors and addressing risk factors. Examples of programs and activities that communities can do include:

- ✓ Encouraging schools and communities to develop and deliver broad-based civic education and engagement programs that focus on how democracies work and how individuals can be heard within a democracy.
- ✓ Continually emphasize the value of all members of the community and actively educate on the value of inclusiveness and diversity.
- ✓ Ensuring all institutions within the community – religious organizations, schools, law enforcement, government, civic organizations, et al. – work to gain and keep the trust of the community through transparent, open dialogue and communication.
- ✓ Encouraging regular interactions between community members through noncontroversial activities such as intramural sports, field trips, creative arts activities, etc.
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- **INSTITUTIONAL TRUST:** Confidence in institutions (e.g., the police, courts, government, etc.).
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- **SOCIAL SUPPORT:** Perception/feelings of receiving adequate support from others.

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- **COMMITMENT TO CAUSE:** Level of commitment to a cause.

- **INDIVIDUAL RELATIVE DEPRIVATION:** A feeling that one has been deprived of some valuable thing relative to one's own past, or persons or groups, or some other category.
- **IN-GROUP SUPERIORITY:** Believing that one's own group identity (race, religion, ethnicity, etc.) is better than other groups.
- **LOW INTEGRATION:** Having feelings of not belonging to the local community/society where one lives.
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- **PERCEIVED INJUSTICE:** Feeling that oneself – or one's group – is being treated unjustly.
- **POLITICAL EXTREMISM:** Holding political views that are far outside the mainstream attitudes of society. Holders of politically extreme views may be opposed to compromise, intolerant of dissent or opposing views, demonize opposing views, etc.
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

The Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships

<https://www.dhs.gov/CP3>

The Science and Technology Directorate

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PREVENTING TERRORISM

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENCE

Attitudinal Risk Factors and Protective Factors



Science &
Technology

CENTER FOR PREVENTION
PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

DHS-021-01721-003438



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ATTITUDINAL RISK FACTORS FOR RADICALIZATION



ANGER

LOW INTEGRATION

ACTIVIST INTENTIONS

PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION

ANOMIE/ALIENATION

PERCEIVED INJUSTICE

COLLECTIVE RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

POLITICAL EXTREMISM

COMMITMENT TO CAUSE

POLITICAL GRIEVANCE

INDIVIDUAL RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

RADICAL ATTITUDES

IN-GROUP SUPERIORITY

SEGREGATIONIST

SELF-EFFICACY

DHS-001-01721-003440

ATTITUDINAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS AGAINST RADICALIZATION

INSTITUTIONAL TRUST

LAW ABIDANCE

LAW LEGITIMACY

POLITICAL SATISFACTION

SOCIAL SUPPORT



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