

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 radicalization to violence and protective factors against radicalization to violence that are important for understanding and addressing radicalization to violence. These findings can inform local prevention efforts. At the individual level, staying informed and becoming involved are key.

Definitions

Radicalization to violence: The process wherein an individual comes to belief that the threat or use of violence is necessary – or even justified – to accomplish a goal.

Risk Factor: 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.

Protective Factor: A characteristic that decreases the likelihood that an individual will radicalize to violence. An individual may have one or more risk factors and never radicalize to violence. Protective factors are not determinative.

Criminogenic factors: Factors that are derived from central criminological theories and which have consistently been shown to be related to a range of deviant and criminal cognitions and behaviors. Some of these factors may overlap with psychological, experiential, and attitudinal factors.

Criminogenic Risk Factors for Radicalization to Violence

Deviant and similar peers: In line with Social Learning and Social Control theories, having deviant and highly similar peers increases the risk for the development of deviant attitudes and behaviors.

Moral neutralizations: In line with Social Learning and Social Cognitive theories, morally neutralizing or disengagement with respect to some deviant behaviors increases the likelihood that other behaviors will be related to similarly.

Self-control: In line with Self-Control theory, individuals low in self-control, and who are high in impulsivity, are at a greater likelihood for deviance.

Thrill-seeking: In line with the Dual Self-Control perspective, thrill-seeking and risk-taking tendencies are related to self-control.

Criminal history: Having a criminal record

Contact with the police: Having previous citizen-police encounters.

Anomie: A disconnection from society and norms.

Criminogenic Protective Factors Against Radicalization to Violence

Social bonds: In line with social bonds/social control theories, stronger bonds with parents and other authority figures serve as protective factors. Elements of these bonds include attachment, involvement, and control.

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 regular interactions between community members through noncontroversial activities such as intramural sports, field trips, creative arts activities, etc.
- Continually emphasize the value of all members of the community and actively educate on the values 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.

For More Information:

The Department of Homeland Security:

The Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships

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

The Science & 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 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

“Mental Health”

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

(DHS SEAL)

Preventing Terrorism

Understanding and Addressing
Radicalization to Violence:

Criminogenic Risk Factors

(IMAGE)