



SELF DIRECTED LEARNING TOOLKIT

Countering the
Radicalisation
of Vulnerable Youth

– A Front-line Approach



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Introduction

Introduction

This toolkit has been developed as an educational resource for front-line youth workers as part of the Erasmus+ Concordia Project. It complements the face-to-face training programme developed which supported the continuous professional development of youth professionals and other front-line workers to respond to the threat of radicalization. The face-to-face training programme, available to access on www.concordia.website, supports key front-line workers to develop core skills to work with vulnerable youth to produce and disseminate counter-extremist narratives. The training course enabled front-liners to harness the potential of readily available technology apparatus like smart-phones and tablets as media production devices and also demonstrated how to achieve high production values using open source editing and production software to create these narratives.

This toolkit is created as an autonomous self-directed resource that can be used by youth workers to: 1.) Enhance their existing knowledge and skills on the subject of radicalization and 2.) Introduce a range of practical exercises that they can use when working with young people on the topic of radicalisation.

The toolkit broken-down into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1: What is Radicalisation?**
- **Chapter 2: Social Media and Radicalisation**
- **Chapter 3: Prevention Strategies and Exercises**

Target group for the Toolkit:

Youth workers and other front-line staff work at the coal-face of emerging problems and issues and are expected to respond to new circumstances as and when they arise. These workers are some of the most innovative and resourceful professionals within the entire education landscape often operating in non-traditional settings without the comfort or certainty that many other institution-based educators enjoy. The radicalisation threat to vulnerable young people throughout Europe is the latest issue that these front-line professionals are being asked to address. This toolkit is aimed towards youth workers, teachers, trainers, social workers, street workers, and those delivering front-line services to young people, especially “at-risk” youth.

Methods:

Autonomous acquirement of theoretical input, discussions in groups, etc.

Resources:

Online learning portal www.concordia.website

Duration:

Approximately 65 hours of self-directed learning

CHAPTER 1

What is Radicalisation?

What is Radicalisation?

Radicalisation is not usually an event; rather it is a process in which individuals are drawn into terrorist-related activity. In many cases this process is related to the search for identity, meaning and community. It is a social process, in which peer relationships are likely to be significant in persuading an individual that terrorism is a legitimate course of action.

In order for an individual or group to become 'radicalized,' three components are usually present. Those are the existence of a radical ideology; the involvement of a radicaliser propagating that ideology and the presence of vulnerabilities and local factors which heighten the susceptibility of the individuals or groups to radicalisation. In order for these vulnerabilities to be fully exploited, there will be an absence of factors which would otherwise protect against or act as an obstacle to radicalisation. Research suggests that there is a two-stage pathway to radicalisation. The first stage encompasses an attitudinal journey, where an individual begins to hold extremist views. The second stage focuses on behaviours, where extremist views turn into violent actions. The first stage of the journey occurs when a vulnerable state of mind is exposed to a radicalising ideology and draws the individual towards an extremist point of view.

A vulnerable state of mind is thought to be the result of a combination of factors, which can include background issues (e.g. entrenched criminality, troubled family background);

- experiences and influences (e.g. friends, family, media), and
- unmet psychological needs (for belonging, status and meaning) to create the opening for extremist ideology.

The second stage of radicalisation is the result of a deepening commitment to the extremist cause brought about by one of three factors: either social (where the cost of disengaging from the extremist network is high); emotional (by cutting themselves off from outside influences and deepening their emotional engagement with the terrorist or extremist cause) or experiential (by participating in terrorist-related activity).

Others categorise this vulnerability to extremism as being a balance of vulnerabilities and opportunities, or 'push' and 'pull' factors.

Push Factors	Pull Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of grievance, injustice • Need for identity, meaning, belonging and/or comradeship • Desire for excitement, challenge, adventure • Need for status, significance • Criminality • Attraction to authoritarian ideologies • Certain mental health problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideology provides a diagnostic function • Identification with a noble cause, accessing a proxy family, social capital • Access to excitement, challenge, adventure • Empowered by extremist identity • Outlet for criminal capability • Opportunity to be an authoritarian leader or follower • Extremist ideologies can make sense of a confusing world

We use the term 'radicalisation' to describe the process of an individual engaging with an extremist ideology – a 'radicaliser' is therefore someone who influences others to engage in, maintain and deepen their involvement in violent extremist and terrorist activity. A radicaliser's influence can act as a catalyst to terrorist involvement for many individuals who become terrorists. Whilst radicalisers may be skilled manipulators, often they may also be polite, sociable, likeable and self-disciplined. Such individuals may show a range of positive behaviours and characteristics, and it is often these positive characteristics that give these individuals their power to influence others, and some may even be involved in positive activity not directly linked to radicalisation, such as helping young people get off drugs, reconcile with their families or stop (some types of) criminal activity.

Characteristics of radical groups

There are 5 types of radical groups that can be distinguished. The different types of radical groups share common elements. First, all radical groups perceive a serious problem in society. This problem or grievance is different for each radical group.

Second, radical groups are strongly dissatisfied with the manner in which the current institutions (particularly police/politicians) deal with their problem. They may argue that the institutions do not pay enough attention to their grievance, or they may think that the institutions do not do enough to handle their grievance. This creates a low institutional trust and a perception that authorities are not legitimate.

An important third characteristic of radical groups is that they consider their own group's norms and values as superior to those of other groups. This creates a strong us versus them distinction, which might form the foundation of the use of violence.

The fourth characteristic of radical groups is particularly important: most such groups embrace an ideology that legitimises violence to address their concerns, and this violence is often directed at an out-group viewed as the culprit responsible for creating the grievance. This is most clearly articulated in the application of social identity theory to radicalization, in

which identification with the in-group combined with dis-identification with the out-group are related to the use of violence against outgroup members.

In the table below, we describe these types and indicate what their main concerns are.

Type	Main Concern	Examples
1. Nationalistic or Separatist Groups	Secure a territory for the own group	ETA (Spain), IRA (Ireland), Palestine/Israel, PKK (Turkey), Tamil Tigers (Sri Lanka), ISIS (Syria & Iraq)
2. Extreme Right-Wing Groups	To safe-guard the high status position of the 'white race' that is perceived to be threatened by immigrants	Klu Klux Klan (U.S.), Pegida (Germany)
3. Extreme Left-Wing Groups	Achieve a just distribution of wealth and perceive capitalism as the main source of evil	FARC (Colombia), Baader-Meinhof Group/'Red Army Fraction' (Germany), the Red Brigade (Italy), the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front' (Turkey)
4. Single Issue Groups	Their main concern focuses on one particular topic (not an extensive ideology), such as the environment, animal rights or abortion	'Earth Liberation Front' (U.K.), 'Animal Liberation Front' (several countries), 'Army of God' (Anti-Abortion, U.S.)
5. Religiously motivated Groups	They adhere to a very strict interpretation of their religion to justify violence against 'infidels'	ISIS (Syria/& Iraq), Al Qaida (several countries), 'Army of God' (U.S.)

Europe and the Radicalisation Awareness Network

The European Commission's Communication on Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism as well as the European Agenda on Security provides the policy framework for the EU's prevention policies in this area. While the prevention of

radicalisation has been one of the main pillars of the EU's counter terrorism policy for over a decade, recent events have highlighted the importance and urgency of stepping up efforts to prevent and counter radicalisation more effectively. The European Agenda on Security and the 2016 Communication supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism, identified priorities and set out how the EU can support national efforts.

Measures to prevent and counter radicalisation are taken at local, regional and national level, and fall primarily within the competence of the Member States. The EU does, however, have a supporting role: the challenges affecting EU countries are similar, and the scale of the problem means that it affects the EU as a whole. Action at EU level facilitates cooperation, networking, funding and the exchange of good practices. The Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) is an EU policy tool. The network and its Centre of Excellence are designed to support objectives such as implementing de-radicalisation and rehabilitation programmes (including in prisons), developing approaches for handling returning foreign terrorist fighters, equipping teachers and youth workers in addressing the root causes of radicalisation, and strengthening resilience, in particular among young people.

RAN brings together practitioners from Europe working on the prevention of radicalisation. The most effective prevention strategies stop people from getting involved in violent extremism or acts of terrorism in the first place. RAN is a network of frontline or grassroots practitioners from around Europe who work daily with people who have already been radicalised, or who are vulnerable to radicalisation. Practitioners include police and prison authorities, but also those who are not traditionally involved in counter-terrorism activities, such as teachers, youth workers, civil society representatives, local authorities representatives and healthcare professionals.

The RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices presents a set of seven practitioners' approaches in the field of prevention of radicalisation, each of them illustrated by a number of lessons learned and selected practices and projects. The Collection supports the actions proposed in the EU Commission Communication "Preventing Radicalisation to terrorism and Violent Extremism: Strengthening the EU's Response" and it is an excellent tool for you as a youth worker or front-liner to consider when working with vulnerable young people.

The Collection is practical in nature and constantly growing and evolving. In your work with vulnerable young people you may draw inspiration from it; find examples adaptable to your local/specific context, and identify counterparts to exchange on prevention experiences. It is available to access for free at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices_en.

Practical Exercises for Youth Workers (1)

Exercise Title	What is Radicalisation?
Group Size and Age	Suitable for groups of 8 young people, aged 14 years+
Duration	No less than 60 minutes but can be extended depending on availability of time and the level and depth of discussion that is prompted
Overview	The objective of the exercise is to explore individual and group perceptions around the theme of radicalisation, clarifying what we mean when we use this term and to determine quite simply what it is that we are actually talking about.
Purpose of the exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To expose and discuss the range of different interpretations of the topic • To identify common themes and opposing positions • To determine how the young people in the group currently relate to this issue and assess the level of relevance within this particular target group • To assess participants initial level of understanding of the topic, paying particular attention to any potential prejudices that may be emerging



Description of Exercise	<p>Step 1: The facilitator invites each participant to individually come up with their own definition of radicalisation, based on their understanding of the word. Each group member captures this in a few lines on a post it. This part of the exercise should only take a few minutes and participants should be encouraged to write down the first thing that comes to mind without censoring themselves too much initially.</p> <p>Step 2: This definition is then shared with a partner and both individuals work together to merge the two views in order to create their joint definition. In order to do this, they will have to look for common threads in both their pieces and agree on something that captures both of their positions. The resulting definition is then put on a flipchart sheet.</p> <p>Step 3: Two pairs come together now to form a small working group of four. Each pair share their flipchart definition with the group and again the goal is to agree collectively on a definition that reflects all views and to ensure there is a consensus. The group definition is recorded on a flipchart sheet.</p> <p>Step 4: Everybody is brought back to the main group for feedback where each of the small working groups' are invited to share their definition and say a little about how they operated as a group in reaching their agreed position. If time allows you can refer to the flipcharts devised by the pairs first before moving onto the working group definitions. The flipchart sheets are placed around the room so the facilitator can reference them throughout the discussion.</p> <p>Questions for Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did participants find the exercise?• Was it difficult working alone initially and how did this differ from the dynamics of a partnership and small working group?• What were the common themes, coming through?• Were there many conflicting opinions and positions? if so how were these resolved?• Do participants believe these definitions are also representative of the views of the wider community?• Did they change their position at any point and if so, why?
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	<p>Step 5: The facilitator then reveals some official dictionary definitions to compare and contrast with the group versions. For the purposes of this exercise two examples have been given but different or additional versions may be used at the discretion of the facilitator.</p>
Versioning	<p>Version 1 gives a comprehensive overview...</p> <p>Radicalisation might be defined as “the growing willingness to support far-reaching changes in society, which may be aimed to the abolition of the established democratic legal order and which may involve the use of undemocratic methods” or “a process that leads an individual or a group to accept, support or encourage the use of violence as a political means” (From COPPRA Manual for Trainers http://www.coppira.eu/dl/preview%20trainers%20manual.pdf).</p> <p>Version 2 is a very simple one-line summary</p> <p>‘To make radical or more radical, as in politics: young people who are being radicalised by extreme philosophies’. (From the Random House Dictionary 2016)</p>
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post it stickers or blank sheets of paper• Pens• Markers for flipchart• Flipchart

Notes for the Facilitator	<p>This exercise assumes a fair degree of literacy amongst group members. If using the resource with young people who are presenting issues around literacy you can adapt the exercise by just asking participants to talk about their understanding of the topic. This can still be done in pairs (with participants sharing their thoughts and definitions of the word verbally with each other) and then through small group discussions with each pair feeding back verbally to small working groups and then finally to the main group.</p> <p>Methodology involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual reflection • Negotiation in pairs • Small group discussions • Feedback to main group
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Exercise Title	Exploring Core Values and Attitudes
Group Size and Age	Suitable for groups of 8 young people, aged 14 years+
Duration	60 -75 minutes
Overview	The aim of the exercise is to get participants to look at their own perceptions in relation to those engaged in what is considered radical behaviour. Through group work practice they will explore and expose the different attitudes and values apparent amongst the group members and in turn challenge the prejudices and stereotypes that currently exist.
Purpose of the exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage participants to explore and challenge their own perceptions and attitudes around radicalization and those involved in it • To develop an understanding of the ways in which our attitudes can influence our relationships with those who come from other cultures, belief systems and backgrounds • To encourage individual and group reflection on the issue • To clarify myths and challenge stereotypes about those involved in radical behaviour



Description of Exercise	<p>There are three options available to the facilitator.</p> <p>Option One: Large group discussion The facilitator reads out each statement and asks the group to react (at an instinctive level) and give their views on each statement.</p> <p>Option Two: Working Groups The main group is split into three working groups and each group is given a list of provocative statements. They are then asked to discuss each statement and decide as a group whether they agree or disagree with the sentiment behind the statement. After their deliberations the teams feed back to the main group where their findings will be endorsed or challenged by the other participants</p> <p>Option Three: Move across the room The facilitator designates three areas in the room to represent Agree, Disagree and Don't know. Read out the statements and invite participants to stand in one of the designated areas of the room based on whether they agree or disagree with the statement. Ask the participants to debate with each other and try to convince those with an opposing viewpoint to change their position.</p> <p>Follow up with discussion on the main issues that arose out of the statements and unpack any pre-conceived notions or prejudices that may have become apparent during the exercise.</p>
Versioning	<p>The facilitator can ask participants to research newspaper articles for provocative comments re different social groups/examples of radicalisation and these could then be used to form the basis of the attitude statements used in the exercise and subsequent group debate.</p>
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A worksheet with your statements (for options 1 and 3)• Small cards with provocative statements printed on them, 3 sets for your 3 working groups (for option 2)



Notes for the Facilitator	<p>Ground rules need to be established prior to the exercise to ensure everyone's position is respected and all participants are given the space they need to have their opinions heard.</p> <p>Methodology involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual reflection• Small group negotiations• Main group discussions
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Exercise Title	Character Profiles
Group Size and Age	Suitable for group working; young people aged 14 years+
Duration	60 minutes
Overview	The function of devising character profiles is to present a situation for analysis; to determine what factors created the situation and to explore potential avenues for moving forward
Purpose of the exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To assess if the situations presented through the characters are easily transferable to participant's experience, can they relate to the individuals they create?• For participants to reflect on and evaluate the quality of their own values and prejudices• To assess participants understanding and experience of the topic covered• To reproduce dilemmas and choices faced in real life



Description of Exercise	<p>Step 1: In pairs, the participants are to work on devising character profiles of the different types of people that they believe might potentially be vulnerable to getting involved in radical behaviour. Areas they are to explore and discuss include the individuals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background• Age• Family structure• Religion• Educational status <p>Step 2: After discussing all of the above features the pairs are to construct their character on flipchart sheets. One creative way of doing this (especially for younger age groups) is to get one person from each pair to lie down on a couple of sheets of flipchart which have been stuck together with tape. Their partner draws around them creating an outline of a person which they can then use as the basis of their character. They can name them; dress them in a particular way; etc.</p> <p>Step 3: The pairs present their character and say a little about why they chose this particular person to fill the brief they were given.</p> <p>Step 4: After all the pairs have presented their work, their characters can be hung on the walls and displayed around the room. The facilitator asks participants to brainstorm what they believe might happen to each character in the future.</p> <p>Additional follow up questions for the large group discussion should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did you find the exercise?• Was it easy to reach agreement with your partner on the type of character you would focus on?• Why did you choose that particular type of person?• Did you feel you were prejudiced towards any particular type of individual?• What was your character's motivation for getting involved in this type of behaviour?• What do you feel towards them...empathy, anger something else?• Can you relate to this person?
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Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart • Markers • Cellotape/Sticky tape
Notes for the Facilitator	<p>Methodology involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of character profiles • Partnership working • Large group discussion

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the warning signs of radicalisation?

Radicalisation in young people can happen over a long period of time. In some cases it is triggered by a specific incident or news item and can happen much quicker. Sometimes there are clear warning signs of radicalisation, in other cases the changes are less obvious. The teenage years are a time of great change and young people often want to be on their own, easily become angry and often mistrust authority. This makes it hard to differentiate between normal teenage behaviour and attitude that indicates one of your students may have been exposed to radicalising influences.

The following behaviours listed here are intended as a guide to help you identify possible radicalisation:

Outward Appearance

- Becoming increasingly argumentative
- Refusing to listen to different points of view
- Unwilling to engage with students who are different
- Becoming abusive to students who are different
- Embracing conspiracy theories
- Feeling persecuted
- Changing friends and appearance
- Distancing themselves from old friends
- No longer doing things they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Being secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts
- Sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups
- Changing online identity
- Having more than one online identity
- Spending a lot of time online or on the phone
- Accessing extremist online content
- Joining or trying to join an extremist organisations

You know your young clients well, so you are in a prime position to recognise if they are acting out of character. Trust and have confidence in your professional judgement, and get advice if something feels wrong.

What sort of person becomes a terrorist?

EU and academic research has consistently indicated that there is no single sociodemographic profile of a terrorist in the EU, and no single pathway leading to involvement in extremism. Terrorists come from a variety of backgrounds and appear to become involved in different ways and for differing reasons.

What kind of individual may be vulnerable to radicalisation?

There is no single archetype of an individual vulnerable to radicalisation, but there are certain common factors, specifically individuals with a vulnerable state of mind, who find themselves exposed to an extremist ideology, and who lack the protective factors (which would include strong family and community networks) that would otherwise help insulate them from radicalisation.

Are people who suffer from mental health issues more vulnerable to becoming terrorists?

Most terrorists do not have severe mental health problems and mental health problems do not necessarily lead to terrorism. Mental health problems are common within the general population and one would therefore expect some terrorists to suffer from mental health problems. Someone who has a mental health problem is typically not likely to be at increased risk of violence to others. Individuals with mental health problems are more likely to harm themselves than someone else.

How important is the influence of ideology in the radicalisation process?

Whilst ideology remains central to radicalisation, it needs to be addressed in tandem with psychological needs and vulnerabilities. Often terrorist propaganda appeals to these psychological needs, such as the desire for status or excitement. Ideology acts as a 'pull' factor, providing a framework that fulfils a need for identity, and a diagnostic by which to make sense of one's feelings of grievance or injustice.

What is the influence of online propaganda?

Online propaganda is one platform used by extremists and terrorists to promote ideological material. Material also includes books, leaflets, video and audio material that may be online or distributed via MP3, DVDs, CDs, websites, including forums and online newsletters. While formal media releases such as online magazines and propaganda videos are important, the growth of the use of social media platforms such as Twitter or Tumblr has allowed a greater involvement of 'amateur' Islamist extremist propagandists. While much of this content may be made up of reposted material from established groups, it can often be presented in novel and different ways. We can see this clearly in the flow of propaganda material coming out of Syria, where the formal pronouncements from groups such as ISIL or the Nusra Front are matched by a parallel stream of material from 'Western' recruits on Twitter or other social media sites. This material may provide a more targeted and relevant message with greater appeal amongst the target audience.

CHAPTER 2

Social Media and Radicalisation

Social Media and Radicalisation

Use of Social Media by Extremist Actors

The UNESCO Study titled *“Youth and violent extremism on social media”* found that the current state of evidence on the link between Internet, social media and violent radicalisation is very limited and still inconclusive. This being said, it can be extrapolated that the Internet and social media may play an active role in the violent radicalisation process, mainly through the dissemination of information and propaganda, as well as reinforcing the identification and engagement of a (self)-selected audience that is interested in radical and violent messages. In this sense, rather than being initiators or causes of violent behaviours, the Internet and social media specifically can be facilitators of radicalisation. Accordingly, the Internet’s role thus seems more specifically one of decision-shaping rather than triggering decision-making, and it works through the creation of an environment of like-minded people constituted in opposition to an “Other”.

Social media has become an essential and exciting part of how we live. Millions of young people use these platforms daily to share content. But there are a small minority of users who exploit social media to radicalise and recruit vulnerable people.

Exposure to extremist propaganda – both online and offline – is critical to the process of radicalisation. Extremist narratives are effective because of their simplicity, their use of scapegoating, and their emotional appeals to fear, anger, shame and honour. Their messages are crafted to exploit identity issues that many young people may be experiencing. It is upon this scaffolding that their violent and exclusionary ideologies are built. But the manner of transmission is equally vital. Popular extremist propaganda often includes: high production value, the use of fast-paced editing, music and a charismatic narrator, and a call to action. The professional and sophisticated use of social media by ISIL in particular has been a game-changer.

European governments and police authorities work closely with the communications industry to remove extremist and terrorist content from the internet. Since February 2010, over 95,000 pieces of terrorist content have been removed from the internet and the companies’ below continue to work with the EU to limit the abuse of their platforms by terrorists and their supporters. However, more content is uploaded all the time and many radicalisers have an established online identity using platforms described below:

- Facebook: ISIL supporters use Facebook to share content, such as news stories and YouTube videos, among their peer groups.
- Twitter: Twitter is another popular social media platform for pro-ISIL accounts and those sharing ISIL propaganda. It is easy to establish an account, stay relatively anonymous and share material with large numbers of people.
- Instagram: Instagram is used by fighters and ISIL supporters to share photosets frequently produced by various ISIL media organisations. ISIL supporters also use Instagram to share pictures of their life in Syria, often showing landscapes and images suggesting they are living a full and happy life.
- YouTube: YouTube is also used to host videos, both of official ISIL output and videos created by users themselves. Multiple ‘dummy’ accounts will be set up so that when videos are taken down they can be reposted quickly. Users will post YouTube links

across their own social media platforms in order to disseminate material, particularly Twitter and Facebook.

- Ask.fm: People considering travel to Syria or Iraq sometimes use Ask.fm to ask British jihadis and female ISIL supporters about travel, living standards, recruitment, fighting and broader ideology. The answers given by ISIL supporters are encouraging, saying all their difficulties will be solved if they travel to the region.
- Tumblr: Tumblr, the blogging site, is exploited by fighters to promote longer, theological arguments for travel. Tumblr is popular with female ISIL supporters, who have written blogs addressing the concerns girls have about travelling to the region, such as leaving their families behind and living standards in Syria.
- Private Messaging: On social media, ISIL supporters frequently encourage others to message them on closed peer-to-peer networks when asked for sensitive information, such as on how to travel to the region, what to pack and who to contact when they arrive. Popular private messaging apps include WhatsApp, Kik, SureSpot and Viber.

Reflecting concerns about the use of social media by extremist actors and mounting scepticism in relevant segments of society vis-à-vis traditional media, media literacy is considered as a key to the prevention of radicalisation.

This involves raising awareness for strategies and motives of extremist propaganda, hate-speech or fake-news, but also enhancing knowledge about technical functions and algorithms that contribute to the visibility and dissemination of related content; much of which was addressed in the Concordia Face-to-Face training curriculum.

In combination with approaches of civic education or diversity education, media education offers diverse opportunities to enhance participation and to empower young people to formulate and voice individual interests and perspectives.

Youth Clubs and schools should be a safe space where young people can discuss social and political issues, including extremism and terrorism. Building their resilience will put them in a stronger position to reject extremist views. You can build young peoples' resilience to extremist narratives by equipping them with the skills and knowledge to explore political and social issues critically, to weigh evidence, debate and make reasoned arguments. This can include facilitating conversations about extremism and radicalisation in an age-appropriate way, as well as other social and political issues and by promoting values of democracy, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance. The following section offers two practical exercises that can be used by Youth Workers and Front-liners to begin the conversation with young people.

Practical Exercises for Youth Workers (2)

Exercise Title	Media Myths and Messages
Group Size and Age	Suitable for groups of 8 young people, aged 14 years+
Duration	No less than 60 mins but can be extended depending on availability of time and the level and depth of discussion that is prompted
Overview	The objective of the exercise is to encourage participants to reflect on the role that fact, opinion and bias play in media messages and how misleading or distorted messages can change the way a story is presented. A greater awareness of the risks of bias and media manipulation may encourage pupils to challenge pro-violence messages
Purpose of the exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To highlight the way in which biased or misleading information is communicated so participants become aware of the need for critical evaluation of information sources • To make a distinction between fact, opinion and bias, and encourage debate on these issues • To present an opportunity to explore how the media might put pressure on governments and public opinion • To examine the role of the media in terrorism from both positive and negative perspectives



Description of Exercise	<p>Step 1: The facilitator begins by presenting the following statement to stimulate an initial discussion about the media's role in today's society.</p> <p><i>The Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the United Nations in 1948 states in Article 19: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.'</i></p> <p>Step 2: Depending on the numbers present, break the main group into small working groups of three or four people.</p> <p>Step 3: Having first provided an ample collection of newspapers and magazines, give each group flipchart sheets, adhesives and scissors. Ask them to cut out articles and photographs that they feel depict people involved in radical type behaviour. They are to sort them into categories based on whether the material that is presented is negative or neutral and to collate the images/stories under these headings and stick them onto the sheets.</p> <p>Step 4: Each group presents their flipcharts and shares their thoughts on the particular pieces they have selected. The facilitator concentrates their attention on the presentations from each group and then invites comments/questions from the other participants</p> <p>Step 5: The facilitator prompts a large group discussion focusing on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there recurring themes/images?• What sort of language is used?• Are the media and terrorism inextricably linked?• Do mass media and social networks have a role to play in the development of terrorism, including in recruitment and propaganda?• Do you believe there is confusion amongst the public at large as to the meaning of the terms terrorism, extremism and radicalisation?• What are the implications of this for both adults and young people in today's society?
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	<p>Step 6: The facilitator reads the following statement that specifically relates to the portrayal of young people in the media and asks the group for a reaction.</p> <p><i>‘Young people are often perceived as a threat and the media reflects this fear with alarmist stories about youth crime, young people falling prey to radical groupings and so on. This can contribute to the image of young people as a ‘social problem’ and the view that youth work should be about correcting this problem rather than allowing young people more freedom to express themselves.</i></p> <p><i>There needs to be a constant challenging of these ‘societal’ attitudes and sweeping generalisations. Young people should be encouraged to question their value and position in society.’</i></p> <p>Questions for discussion include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are any aspects of this statement true, if so which ones?• Do they find any aspect of the language offensive? What parts of it and why those in particular?• Where and how do we pick up ideas about young people and radicalisation?• How do the media portray these young people and how does their interpretation influence us?
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A selection of magazines and newspapers• Flipchart Sheets• Adhesive• Scissors
Notes for the Facilitator	<p>Methodology Involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and analysis of media material• Group work in small teams• Large group discussion



Exercise Title	Root and Branches
Group Size and Age	Suitable for groups of young people, aged 14 years+
Duration	No less than 60 mins but can be extended depending on availability of time and the level and depth of discussion that is prompted
Overview	<p>The objective of the exercise is to identify the causes of online hate speech and to introduce the “No Hate Speech Movement” of the Council of Europe. The <i>No Hate Speech Movement</i> is a youth campaign led by the Council of Europe Youth Department seeking to mobilise young people to combat hate speech and promote human rights online. For more information and to find out about your national campaigns and stakeholders, please visit: https://www.coe.int/en/web/no-hate-campaign.</p>
Purpose of the exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To understand the causes and effects of online hate speech• To explore ways of addressing hate speech online by examining the roots of the problem and identifying ways to react against it



Description of Exercise	<p>Step 1: Introduce the No Hate Speech Movement to participants. The participants divide into small groups. Each group works with a large sheet of paper (A2 or bigger) and has to draw a hate speech tree with its roots and branches.</p> <p>Step 2: Each group has to identify and write down some of the things which lead to hate speech online (the 'roots' of the tree), and some of the effects of hate speech (the 'branches'). Each root can have a deeper cause (root) and each branch a further outcome (higher branch).</p> <p>Step 3: Using the 'trunk' of the tree, insert the following text which the participants have to imagine that it has been posted on the internet: "Refugees arriving at the islands and coasts of Europe are terrorists and fanatics, members of the Islamic State. They cross the borders with fake papers and will unleash bloody attacks against us. Chase them out of Europe!"</p> <p>Step 4: Each group has 20 minutes and should complete as many branches and roots as they are able to. Then the groups present their results and display the trees around the room so that everyone can walk around and look at them.</p> <p>Questions for discussion include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did you notice any interesting differences between the trees produced by the groups?• How easy did you find the 'roots' of hate speech? Were there any difficulties?• How can we find ways to stop the spread of hate speech on the Internet?• How could you use your problem tree to make hate speech against refugees less likely?• From the roots and branches mentioned, which can be addressed by teachers at school, so that spreading of hate speech is prevented?
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flipchart Sheets (A2 or bigger)• Makers/ Pens

Notes for the Facilitator	<p>Methodology Involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and analysis of media material • Group work in small teams • Large group discussion
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Case Study Example - Jamal el Khitab (AT)

The core team behind the project 'Jamal' consists of nine people (both youngsters and adults), four of whom can be said to be former IS-supporters, or who have turned their backs on the Jihadi milieu. What unites them is that they are all young Muslims who want to take a stance against religiously inspired extremism.

Supported by a team of youth workers and other experts, the team produced a series of videos which tell the story of Jamal, a fictional youngster, who fled to Austria as a child. Jamal discusses the frustration he experiences and questions Islamic identity, providing an alternative to extremist ideology. The videos tell stories taken straight from the youngsters' lives. They can be watched via <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjKBZRn82kY>

After posting these videos on online channels where the target group (youngsters interested in extremist ideology) can be found, the youth workers engaged in discussion and reflection processes with those who reacted to the content (online-street work).

CHAPTER 3

Prevention Strategies and Exercises

Prevention Strategies and Exercises

The Role of Youth Workers in the Prevention of Radicalisation

Young people are an important focus in the prevention of radicalisation as they can be a very vulnerable group. Some particularly vulnerable young people are difficult to reach. Youth workers and other practitioners working with young people in social settings are often best placed to detect early signs of radicalisation and to offer alternatives. Youth workers and front-liners can also act as positive role models or mentors to these youth people. Typically youth workers are trained and experienced in working with young people on many problematic topics such as drugs, sexual exploitation, gambling, gangs, etc. and can use these skills to contribute to the prevention of radicalisation.

In 2017, several handbooks and toolkits were produced at European level to aid youth workers active in this area. *'The contribution of youth work to preventing marginalisation and violent radicalisation'* by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) and *'Young people and extremism pack'* by the British Council and SALTO are examples. These robust publications follow others, such as *'The preventative role of open youth work in radicalisation of open youth work'* by Werner Prinzjakowitsch. These handbooks and toolkits provide extensive recommendations and tools, ranging from early prevention and group work, to prevention for individuals already under the influence of an extremist ideology and are recommended for review as part of this self-directed learning toolkit.

In responding to possible radicalisation, an understanding amongst front-line workers that preventing further radicalisation is much wiser than trying to de-radicalise an extremist. Thus, beginning a conversation with the individual and involving other professionals and sharing concerns, while carrying out further monitoring or contacting law enforcement is recommended good practice. Intervening in a multi-agency context and knowing which other professionals should be involved; whilst finding the balance between confidentiality, privacy and reporting to others is proposed by the Concordia Project in the full knowledge that no-one can do prevention alone. In the following section, we are recommending five practical exercises that you as a youth worker could facilitate as part of prevention work in the field of radicalisation in section 3.2 below.

Recommended Further Reading:

- RAN Issue Paper: Discussing Taboos and Controversial Issues
- RAN Issue Paper: Multi-agency working and preventing violent extremism

Both papers are available to access on: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers_en

Practical Exercises for Youth Workers (3)

Exercise Title	The Tree Exercise
Group Size and Age	Small groups of 4 to 12 participants; aged 12 years +
Duration	60 minutes
Overview	This exercise looks at the young people's perception of the society they currently live in and exposes a little about the roles they feel different people and groups play within it.
Purpose of the exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To examine if young people believe there is a hierarchy of different interest groups in today's society and if so to map out what this looks like from their perspective • To unearth any stereotypes and hidden messages relating to the different groups presented by the participants





Description of Exercise	<p>Step 1: The facilitator distributes a blank page and marker to each individual participant and asks them to sketch the outline of a tree with some matchstick men/women sitting on the branches at different heights on the tree.</p> <p>Step 2: The facilitator tells the participants that the tree represents society and the different people on the tree are the different groups/races that make up our community. Based on their own personal experiences participants are to decide which groups they feel currently occupy the space at the top of the tree (symbolising that they are doing well) and then identify those groupings that they feel are struggling at the bottom. Who takes the middle ground?</p> <p>Step 3: After a few moments the facilitator invites participants to share their sketches with the rest of the group and to say a little about why they placed particular people/groups where they did.</p> <p>Step 4: Group discussion covering the issues raised; questions to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What needs to happen to make it a more balanced and fair society?• Do we have a role in contributing to this and if so how? <p>Step 5: Split the main group into small working groups. Give each group a flipchart sheet and ask them to sketch out a large tree and collectively create their version of what a balanced harmonious society should look like.</p> <p>Step 6: Each group presents their tree at the end of the session and says a little bit about how it came about and the thinking behind it.</p> <p>The facilitator then reads through the handout 'Dialogue cannot exist without humility' and distributes a copy to everyone in the group.</p>
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blank pages• Markers• Flipchart sheets• Dialogue handout: see Annex 1



Notes for the Facilitator	Methodology Involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual reflection• Small working group discussion and negotiations• Large group feedback and discussion
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Exercise Title	Lifeline
Group Size and Age	6 participants upwards, can be used with large group of approximately 18 – recommended for young people aged 12 years+
Duration	60 to 90 minutes depending on the group size
Overview	This exercise encourages participants to provide a critical perspective on some of the issues that affect young people who engage in radical activity and to see assess at what point in their lives is a person more vulnerable to this happening.
Purpose of the exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To examine the possible life history of a young person involved in radical behaviour• To identify and explore the main social issues that may disadvantage or marginalise young people and in doing so motivate them to engage in this type of behaviour• To explore the process of radicalisation and how it effects the individual, family, community and other social relationships



Description of Exercise	<p>Step 1: The facilitator splits the main group into small working groups of three and gives them some flipchart sheets and markers. Ask someone in each group to volunteer to draw a straight line across the sheet and explain that they are going to map out a young person's journey and that this line represents their character's lifeline.</p> <p>Step 2: Across the line on their sheet they are to mark in the ages of 14, 16, 18 and 20 to represent the different milestones that might be occurring for a young person at those ages. In their working groups of three the group have to produce a detailed lifeline of a character that has ended up on the road to radicalisation. They are to show this young person's progression route into radicalisation and take into account any significant pressure points the characters may be encountering along the way at the different ages.</p> <p>As a group they are to ask the question 'what is happening at each stage that keeps the young person on this path?' and through discussion try to establish the motivation behind the young person's actions.</p> <p>Step 3: The main group comes back together and each of the small groups presents back their lifelines and states the logic they used in coming to the conclusions they did about this young person. Other group members are encouraged to respond with any comments or questions of clarification that they might have.</p> <p>Step 4: The facilitator then poses some questions to the large group to prompt discussion. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What outcomes might be a feature of this type of lifestyle for the characters involved (positive/negative)?• What would you say to this young person if you were to encounter them today?• How might you discourage them from journeying down this particular path?• What impact is their behaviour having on those around them, their family, peer group and their community?
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flipchart sheets• Markers
Notes for the Facilitator	<p>Methodology Involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small working groups• Large group discussion and debate



Exercise Title	Understanding Conflict
Group Size and Age	6 participants upwards; 14 years+
Duration	90 minutes
Overview	In this exercise the participants will look at their understanding of conflict and using their own experiences will explore how peaceful relations between people can be restored, emphasising the importance of dialogue, respectful listening and the value of diversity.
Purpose of the exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To help participants clarify and evaluate their own skills in dealing with hostile or difficult situations• To explore the relationship between conflict and violence and to engage in a wide ranging discussion about how these issues affect the global community• Participants are invited to reflect on the consequences of conflict, and how destructive it can be for aggressors as well as victims.





Description of Exercise	<p>Step 1: The facilitator asks the group to say what springs to mind when they hear the term 'conflict'. Allow a few minutes for some words and themes to circulate.</p> <p>Step 2: The facilitator gives a brief overview of issues relating to conflict covering what it is, some root causes, and the strategies people adopt in order to deal with these type of difficult situations.</p> <p>What is Conflict? Conflict occurs when individuals or groups are not obtaining what they need or want and are seeking their own self-interest. Sometimes the individual is not aware of the need and unconsciously starts to act out. Other times, the individual is very aware of what he/she wants and actively works at achieving that goal.</p> <p>What are the causes? The differences upon which conflict can be based come from a variety of factors...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Facts...How things got a certain way (who did what to whom, when and how)2. Needs... What people believe they need in their lives to feel secure and respected? (material things, an identity to feel proud of, a sense of being treated equally, control over their own lives)3. Values... The beliefs people hold about how things should be? (human rights and democratic values, equality of race, religion and gender and participation in civil society) <p>Conflict is constructive when it...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results in solutions to problems and issues• Causes authentic communication• Helps release emotion, anxiety and stress• Builds cooperation among people, helping individuals develop understanding and interpersonal skills <p>Conflict is Destructive when it....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Takes attention away from other important issues• Undermines morale or self-concept• Polarises people and groups• Leads to irresponsible and harmful behaviour <p>Step 3: The facilitator then explains that in order to bring the topic</p>
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to life they are to reflect (individually) on a conflict type situation that they found themselves in. Focus on three questions...

1. What happened?
2. What was your response?
3. Did it work for you?

Step 4: Invite participants to share their example with a partner and discuss what you could have done differently. Get objective feedback from your partner on alternative responses you could have adopted.

Step 5: The facilitator receives the feedback from the pairs and uses this to lead the group towards a discussion on the many different approaches there are to dealing with conflict.

The facilitator gives a brief input on...

The four different types of conflict resolution strategies

1. Avoidance – Prevents the conflict surfacing
2. Defusing – ‘cooling’ the emotions
3. Containment – maintaining tight control over what surfaces
4. Confrontation – Getting all issues out in the open

Group discussion

In your case studies which one did you employ?

Are there times when all four approaches might be appropriate?

In what type of situations?

Step 6: The facilitator then follows up with some theories about:

Individual styles for handling conflict

Five styles are identified with each one representing varying degrees of assertiveness (the extent to which individuals endeavour to meet their own needs) and cooperativeness (the degree to which others needs are considered and met) in conflict.

Competitors

Pursue own interests at the expense of the other person. This win/lose approach to conflict is often based on using power to intimidate or coerce people.

Accommodators

Neglect their own interests in order to meet the needs and concerns of the other. Giving in to the other party rather than standing up for one's rights is a characteristic of an accommodating person.



	<p>Avoiders Will not address conflict. They withdraw from conflict situations or will postpone confrontation indefinitely or manoeuvre around issues to avoid conflict. They do not pursue their interests or the interests of the other party.</p> <p>Compromisers Explore the issue of a conflict and seek a common middle ground such as splitting the differences. They are interested in mutually agreeable solutions.</p> <p>Collaborators Strive to discover solutions which meet the needs of both parties as fully as possible. They confront people on issues to seek resolution. This is described as a win/win approach to conflict.</p> <p>Step 8: Group discussion Do you recognise yourself in any of those listed? Are there any other styles you believe that exist other than those mentioned here?</p> <p>Step 9: The facilitator tells the group that we are now moving from the personal position to the global position and asks participants to comment on how different interest groups (cultural, religious etc.) deal with conflict and how does this relate to the topic of radicalisation?</p>
Materials Needed	It is recommended that the facilitator prepare a summary information sheet covering some key features of conflict (root causes, strategies etc.)
Notes for the Facilitator	<p>Methodology Involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brainstorming• Theoretical inputs• Case study analysis• Working in pairs• Large group discussion <p>Good opportunity to focus on how people adopt different types of approaches when dealing with conflict, placing the emphasis on the behaviour rather than on the person so the facilitator can address the issue of 'bad' behaviour without personalising things.</p>



Exercise Title	Exchanging Seats
Group Size and Age	Suitable for group work with young people ages 14 years +
Duration	30 to 90 minutes depending on group size
Overview	One of the main aspects of radicalisation is the use of violence as a mean to attain objectives and solve conflicts. It is imperative for young people to know tools for solving conflicts in a peaceful and non-violent way and to be able to put themselves in someone's position and to see things in the other's eyes.
Purpose of the exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop the ability to elaborate, expose and exchange arguments in a debate.• Identify and develop counter-arguments to foster the analysis from different positions.• Put into practice the skill of standing in the place of the other person and develop ideas flexibility.



Description of Exercise	<p>Step 1: Present the activity and tell the group that they are going to hold a debate in which it is not a matter of trying to find a solution or convince anyone, but to put themselves in the shoes of others and challenge themselves to exchange opposing opinions with respect. Divide the group into three sub-groups: A, B, C. Then arrange the seats of group A and B facing each other and those of group C as observers.</p> <p>Step 2: Introduce a subject of discussion and ask to group A and B to take opposite positions in the debate (e.g. A – in favour, B – against). Group C (observer) has to listen to the arguments of both groups and to intervene at the end by showing common points and bringing their positions closer together. It is recommended that the group propose the topics to be debated. Some examples to guide them can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>“It is enriching that people come from other countries, but if customs clash, they have to adapt.”</i>▪ <i>“Violence is necessary to protect oneself.”</i>▪ <i>“The cultural majority is not doing anything to adapt to minorities.”</i> <p>Step 3: All three groups change places, so that Group A becomes the observer, Group B is in favour of the topic being debated and Group C is against in the debate. Here it is the turn of Group A to be the observer-conciliator whilst Group B and C are debating. It is recommended to follow with the same subject of discussion to observe the ability of learners to switch to different positions. This is then repeated again, so that all groups have the opportunity to take on all sides of the debate.</p> <p>Step 4: At the end, all learners have a reflection on how they feel (did they feel attacked, misunderstood, ignored, etc.) throughout the debate, did they change some of their arguments and what kind of difficulties did they encounter in defending their counter-arguments.</p>
Materials Needed	Chairs



Notes for the Facilitator	<p>Methodology Involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roleplaying <p>It is possible to adapt the discussion themes to the special situation of the group (age, internal conflicts, etc.). Based on this dynamic, the facilitator can address several themes such as: coexistence, violence as a tool or the effort of adaptation from the majority, among other issues. This activity can be driven in a more dynamic way, by establishing “short-times” to create argumentation and by changing physical seats quickly for example.</p>
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Exercise Title	Strengthening Roots
Group Size and Age	This exercise would be most suited to older teenagers and young adults; non-gender specific.
Duration	No less than 60 mins but can be extended depending on availability of time and the depth of sharing within the group.
Overview	This exercise allows participants to share their past and say a little about what has formed their outlook on life. Using the power of imagery and symbols, the facilitator encourages the participants to work without words in order to convey some powerful messages about their lives so far.
Purpose of the exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For participants to share their life experience • For participants to reflect on and share (if comfortable) their motivation for getting involved in radical type behaviour • To provide opportunities for bonding within the group • To focus on what groups members, have in common with the peers in their group and discover the areas of common experience that have led them to where they are today • Identify positive and negative qualities participants feel they have developed in response to their own life situations



Description of Exercise	<p>Step 1: The facilitator introduces the exercise by describing how the symbol of a tree will represent each participant's personal life experience. Using just images and symbols this tree will capture the essence of their life so far. Each participant gets a flipchart sheet and markers.</p> <p>Step 2: The participants are invited to start by sketching the roots which will represent their family background and the situation they were born into. Were these strong roots? Or mixed up and tangled? Are they of lasting importance and still holding them up?</p> <p>The trunk will represent their upbringing and time at school. Is their trunk thin, wavy, strong or stable?</p> <p>The branches are the different areas of their life, like family, work, hobbies, friends etc. Are some stronger than others? Do they balance each other?</p> <p>Tell them to use the image to say something about themselves. Are there any flowers, fruit or ivy growing on it? Do they have any cut off branches? Is their tree leaning? Is there a stake to support them – family, friends, political ideals, etc.?</p> <p>Participants are invited to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the influences that are having a big impact?• What things were once significant but are now being phased out?• What are your key motivations? <p>Step 3: Bring the group together to share their trees and this is used to highlight the different qualities in the group. Ask participants what they learnt about themselves and their fellow group members through this exercise? What do you have in common? What are the major differences?</p> <p>Step 4: Invite participants to close their eyes and visualise a number of buds growing on their tree. Tell them that these buds represent their future. What kind of things would they like to be a feature in their lives as they move forward?</p>
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flipchart sheets• Markers
Notes for the Facilitator	Methodology Involved:

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