Understanding the Risks of Radicalisation for Children & Young People

**Power of Sport: Youth Crime Prevention Conference
18th September 2024**

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Essex County Council

INTRODUCTIONS

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WHY PREVENT IS IMPORTANT

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The CONTEST Strategy

The aim of CONTEST is to reduce the risk to the UK, and its interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence. The CONTEST strategy was first published in 2003, with the latest revision released in July 2023.

The CONTEST Strategy is made up of 4 different areas, each comprising a set of key objectives:

Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks happening in the UK or against UK interests overseas.

Protect: to strengthen protection against a terrorist attack.

**Prevent:** to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Prepare: to minimise the impact of an attack and reduce the likelihood of further attacks.

What is Prevent?

The aim of the Prevent Strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The Prevent Strategy has three strategic objectives:

o Tackle the ideological causes of terrorism.

o Intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation.

o Enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.
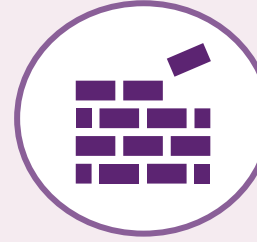
Prevent works in a similar way to other safeguarding programmes that protect people from harms such as gangs, or sexual abuse.

Prevent offers early interventions and support to all individuals who are at risk, regardless of where the risk has come from.

It does this by helping build people's resilience to radicalisation – just like they can be susceptible to any other form of grooming abuse.

The National Picture

The threat from extremism has become increasingly diverse with an amorphous set of domestic and international actors working within fast-moving online ecosystems. There has been a rise in 'hybridised' extremism threats where the role of a specific extremist ideologies more ambiguous, with individuals fascinated by violence displaying multiple or even changing motivations. The amount of radicalising content online has grown exponentially, with radicalisation happening across multiple platforms and at speed.

Extreme Right Wing: Whilst traditional organised groups have splintered recently, there is a growing number of online communities and high-profile influencers. They continue to coalesce around asylum issues, focusing on Home Office hotels, as well as the Israel-Gaza conflict, with counter protests at pro-Palestinian events. There has been an increase in Anti-LGBTQ+ hate, targeting of drag events and the use of the 'groomer' slur. Recently, they have been galvanised by events in Southport, linking it to other incidents as an 'enough is enough' campaign.

Islamist Extremism: This remains the dominant terrorism threat in the UK. Islamist groups have mobilised around the Israel-Gaza conflict, with a huge increase in terrorist content, much of which is extremely violent nature, circulating on mainstream social media platforms.

Antisemitism & Islamophobia: There continues to be heightened level of hateful targeting of both Jews and Muslims since the beginning of the Israel-Gaza conflict. Antisemitic rhetoric is present throughout both Extreme Right Wing and Islamist Extremist ideology, as well as present within conspiracy theories. Anti-Muslim rhetoric has also increased, both in connection to the conflict and as part of Extreme Right wing targeting of asylum seekers.

Conspiracy Movements: Many of these grew or emerged during the pandemic and more recently there has been increased radicalisation within these movements, manifesting in highly localised campaigns of targeted abuse, harassment and violence. Different conspiracy theories have become intertwined with each other, as well as with Extreme Right-Wing narratives and antisemitic tropes. Some websites and fake news social media accounts are also linked to and/or funded by hostile stated actors.

The Manosphere: The has been an increase in misogynist violent extremist expressions featuring within the Manosphere, with self-styled Incels committing violent acts. Extreme Right Wing narratives are strongly present within the manosphere, as are a many conspiracy theories.

Extremist Ideologies

- An ideology is a set of beliefs or narratives for the purpose of supporting a particular worldview. An extremist ideology is one that is intolerant of generally accepted values of society.

- It's important to remember that not all extremist groups will commit terrorist or violent acts. However, some groups pose particular threats, both online and offline.

- A broad range of ideologies and narratives draw people into supporting or committing acts of terrorism. Extremist ideologies encompass a range of religious, political, nationalist or other single-issue, or emerging ideologies that may contribute to making a person susceptible to radicalisation. Broadly, these are categorised as:

    o Islamist Extremist ideology

    o Extreme right-wing ideology

    o Left-wing, anarchist and single-issue ideologies

- The terrorist threat in the UK today is dominated by individuals or small groups acting outside of organised terrorist networks. Adoption of specific ideologies is less consistent than a decade ago. **Self-Initiated Terrorism currently constitutes the most significant terrorist threat to the United Kingdom.** Self-Initiated Terrorists are unpredictable and difficult to detect.

- Access to extremist material online is one of the key drivers for Self-Initiated Terrorist self-radicalisation. It is easily accessed by individuals, irrelevant of their ideology. There is a range of terrorist literature, across numerous ideologies, which encourages Self-Initiated Terrorist attacks.

UNDERSTANDING RADICALISATION
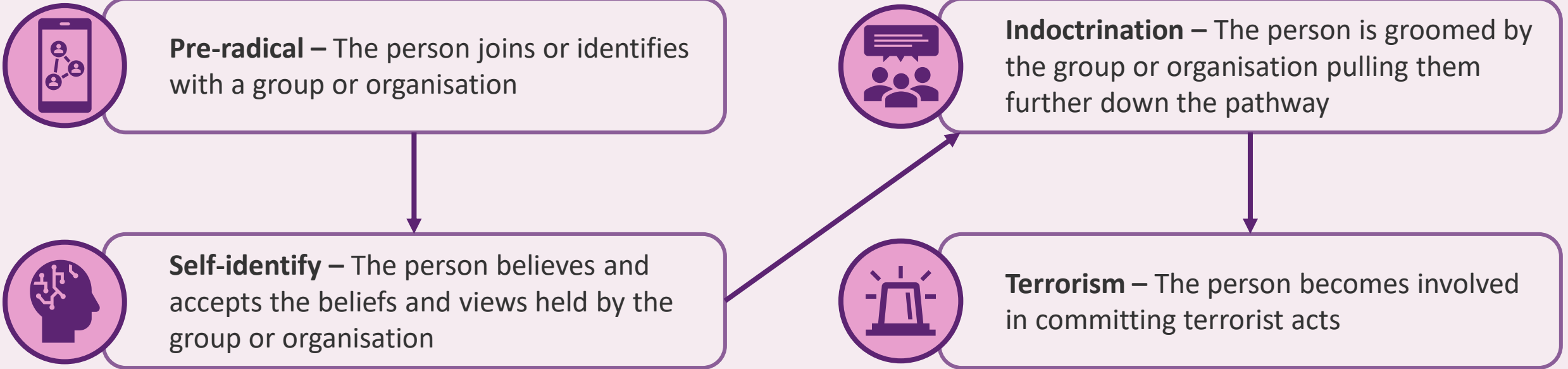
Understanding Radicalisation

?

Think of a time in your life when you became attracted to a group, activity or cause; something or someone you felt passionately about. Perhaps it is or was music, a sport or a certain group of friends. How did this sense of belonging make you feel?

The emotions involved when someone is at risk from radicalisation are common to all of us.

This may help you begin to understand why people can be prepared to act in extreme ways for people or things in their lives they feel strongly about.

Four Stages of Radicalisation

Radicalisation has been described as a four-stage process:

Pre-radical – The person joins or identifies with a group or organisation

Indoctrination – The person is groomed by the group or organisation pulling them further down the pathway

Self-identify – The person believes and accepts the beliefs and views held by the group or organisation

Terrorism – The person becomes involved in committing terrorist acts

What Radicalisation Can Look Like

Extremist material online: Radicalisers groom people using online platforms. There are also web pages which are not so noticeable, such as social media networking groups that draw people in. These groups look innocent on the outside but are actually extremist groups.

In person meetings: Radicalisation can occur in a person and can appear quite benign. There may be scenarios that look normal on the outside, such as people meeting in a public park or at a local library, that seem safe and innocent, but where a person is actually at risk.

Public displays of hate and division: Radicalisation can draw on all forms of extremism. For example, extremism can lead to a public display such as racially antagonistic graffiti. This might represent the actions of someone who has taken on board an ideology.
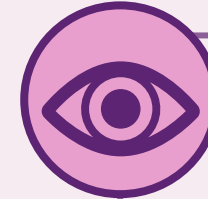
The adoption of icons or symbolism: Icons and symbols are often a demonstration that someone is bonding to a group, cause or ideology. People can be drawn to imagery which they see as rebellious and socially challenging.

Promoting ideologies: Extremist groups use a range of means to promote their ideologies. For example, a protest or handing out material that promotes hatred and division.

Travelling to an area of conflict: Travelling to an area of conflict is often well-intentioned, however it can also be misguided and very dangerous to the person concerned.

Notice – Influencing Factors

Radicalisation is a process of change where a person undergoes a transformation over a period of time. This can be a gradual change or, because of the increasing threat of online radicalisation, one that can also happen quite fast.

Sometimes there is a significant event or incident that can trigger a person and make them more susceptible to extreme views. It can take multiple forms and include:

Internal Factors

- Struggling with a sense of identity and feeling confused where they fit in or belong.
- Feeling under threat either personally, or as part of a community.
- Feeling angry or wronged about events like conflicts or terrorist incidents happening in the UK or abroad.
- Mental health issues.
- A traumatic life event like bereavement, or the loss of a job or home.
- Experiencing racism, bullying or discrimination.
- Family issues.
- Feeling left behind.

External Factors

- Community tensions.
- Knowing someone who is expressing extreme views or who have joined extremist organisations or groups.
- Terrorist incidents that have happened in the UK or abroad.
- Events or incidents that are affecting a specific group or community, either in the UK or abroad.

Notice - Signs of Radicalisation

There is no single route to radicalisation and there are many factors that can make someone susceptible to radicalisation.

More important than any one specific sign is the sense that something is not quite right with the person you're worried about. You could spot one sign or a combination of signs that are increasing in intensity.

Identifying them doesn't necessarily mean someone is being radicalised. There can be other explanations behind the behaviours you are seeing.

Increasingly agitated or violent behaviour

- Expressing feelings of grievance or injustice.
- More argumentative in their viewpoints.
- Being abusive to others.
- An obsessive or angry desire for change or 'something to be done'.
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.

Changing associations

- Changed friends.
- Altered their style of dress or appearance to accord with an extremist group.
- Using a new vocabulary.
- Isolated from friends and family.
- Being influenced or controlled by a group.

Increasingly anti-social behaviours

- Unwilling to engage with people who are different.
- Secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts.
- Adopted the use of certain symbols associated with terrorist organisations.
- Desire for status, need to dominate and control others.
- Looking to blame others.

Changing online behaviour

- More than one online identity.
- Spending more time online.
- Accessing extremist online content.
- Downloading propaganda material.

RADICALISATION IN A SPORTS SETTING

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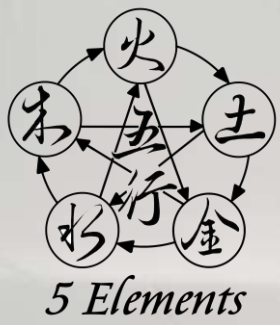
Radicalisation

What does it mean day to day in a sports setting

Who is vulnerable

What many of us get wrong

The future

# Who am I?

✅ Founder of Be Aware Take Care & 5 Elements Combat Academy

✅ 25 years of teaching martial arts

✅ Masters in Business and in Counter Terrorism

✅ Recognised authority on Situational Awareness, Risk, Self- Defence and Counter Terrorism

✅ Ran workshops in the UK & Europe

✅ 1st book was published in 2015

✅ Speak at industry conferences on Risk, Situational Awareness, Counter Terrorism and Radicalisation

Be Aware Take Care
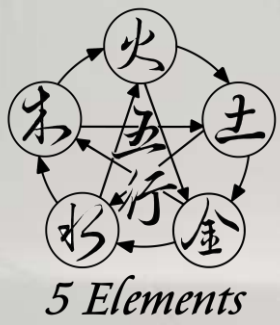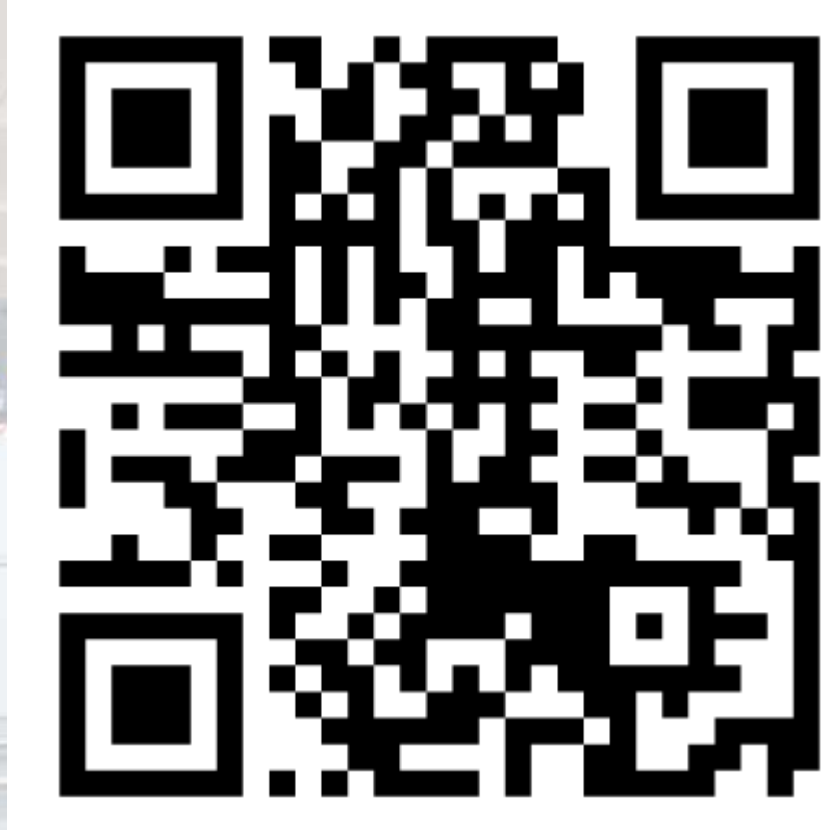
WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT SOMEONE

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Notice, Check, Share

Notice

Those who work in front-line support roles will often be the first to notice if someone is experiencing difficulties. Remember to:
- **Look** out for changes in behaviour that cause you concern.
- **Ask** yourself whether this person might be vulnerable to the risk of radicalisation.
- **Keep up-to-date** with extremist signs and symbols.

Check

It's important to understand why changes are happening before drawing conclusions. Remember to:
- **Handle** safeguarding issues with care.
- **Try to understand** the bigger picture by gaining more context.
- **Check** your concern discreetly with a colleague, your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or contact the ACT Early Support Line on 0800 011 3764.

Share

Everyone is responsible for sharing any information they hold that causes concern about a person. Remember to:
- **Share** information with your DSL or a colleague.
- **Share** information that is only relevant to the purpose.
- **Share** information early to reduce risk.

You should call 999 where a person poses an immediate risk of harm to themselves or others.

LET'S THINK ABOUT YOUR ROLES...

What is Your Role?

? What are some of the opportunities you might have to spot the signs of radicalisation in a young person attending one of your sessions?

? Is there anything that might stop you from reporting these concerns?

REMEMBER: you are not wasting anyone's time, you won't ruin lives, you might save them

NEXT STEPS

Prevent Awareness Training

Essex County Council & Active Essex are now able to offer free Prevent Awareness training for all Locally Trusted Organisations. The sessions cover:

Background – An overview of CONTEST, The Prevent Duty, why it is important and an understanding of Terrorism legislation.

Ideologies – What is meant by an extremist ideology, how antisemitism and conspiracy theories are linked to extremist ideologies, 'pilling' language and an overview of the ideologies behind and some of the symbols used by Islamist Extremists, Far Right Extremists, Incels and Left-Wing, Anarchist & Single Issue extremists.

Understanding Radicalisation – Four stages of radicalisation, influencing factors, what to look out for, online radicalisation, the 'notice check share procedure' and what happens when someone is referred to Prevent.

There will also be an opportunity in the sessions to work together on some case studies to think about the type of situations where you may have concerns about a young person you're working with, and what you can do.

Further information

- You can find guidance on what to look out for and how to report at www.actearly.uk

- You can find the Home Office Prevent e-learning at www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-duty-training

- You can find the Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) Awareness e-Learning package at https://www.protectuk.police.uk/catalogue

- You can find details of proscribed terrorist groups or organisations at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2

- You can find out how to report Hate Crime (to the Police or anonymously) as well as information on organisations that offer support to victims at https://www.essex.police.uk/hatecrime

community.safety@essex.gov.uk