

The background of the cover is a detailed architectural drawing of a building, possibly a prison or a secure facility, rendered in white lines on a dark blue background. The drawing shows a complex layout with multiple rooms, corridors, and a large circular central area. Several rooms and corridors are highlighted with orange lines and shading, indicating specific areas of interest or focus. The drawing is a technical sketch, showing structural elements and spatial organization.

COMPENDIUM OF GOOD PRACTICES IN THE REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST OFFENDERS

By **Christopher Dean** and **Eelco Kessels**
August 2018

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CENTER** 
ON COOPERATIVE SECURITY

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About the Authors

CHRISTOPHER DEAN

Christopher Dean is a Senior fellow for the Global Center on Cooperative Security (UK), a chartered and registered forensic psychologist, and director of Identify Psychological Services Ltd., providing specialist psychological services to counter violent extremism. From 2008–2015, he was a member and then head of a specialist team in Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service of England and Wales, which pioneered the development of innovative, evidence-based assessments and programs to counter violent extremism.

EELCO KESSELS

Eelco Kessels is Executive Director of the Global Center, overseeing its strategic and organizational direction and daily operations. Additionally, he coordinates research and programming activities related to managing and reintegrating terrorism offenders, identifying and addressing violent extremist radicalization in prisons, countering violent extremism, and rule of law–based approaches to counterterrorism.

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Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

This document is an abridged version of the online Compendium of Good Practices in the Management, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders. The online compendium should be consulted for further details, references, promising practices, and resources. For the online compendium, visit veocompendium.org.

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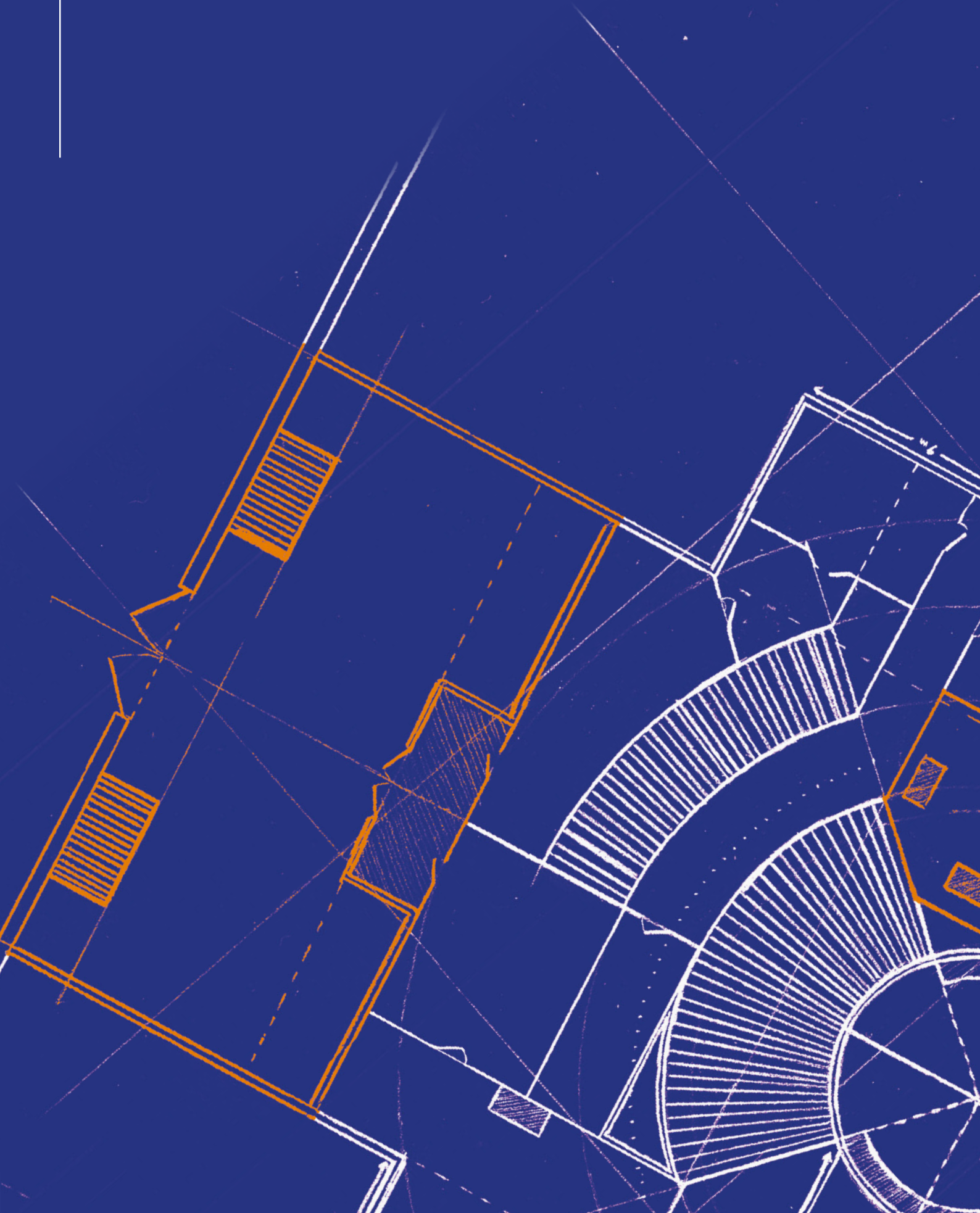
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Executive Summary



This compendium highlights good and promising practices for supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders (VEOs) in correctional settings. The compilation endeavors to (1) inform understanding and improve decision-making regarding the implementation of approaches for the rehabilitation and reintegration of VEOs, specifically in the correctional services of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, although it has value in other jurisdictions; (2) integrate established with emerging promising practices in this field; (3) translate key existing documents into an applied and accessible resource for use by various stakeholders; and (4) include good and promising practices associated with women, juveniles, and foreign fighters convicted of terrorism offenses, and prison and probation services where issues associated with violent extremism may be less frequent.

This compendium presents good and promising practices in the rehabilitation and reintegration of VEOs, while also discussing how practices related to prison regime, security, intelligence, and risk assessment can impact these two processes.

An online version of this work provides further elaboration and detail on these areas. It also includes more practical tools and will be updated as new evidence becomes available. For the online compendium, visit veocompendium.org.

Good and promising practices for this compendium have been compiled from handbooks, reports, and papers that have previously addressed the issue of effectively rehabilitating and reintegrating VEOs in correctional settings, as well as from practical, on-the-ground experience.

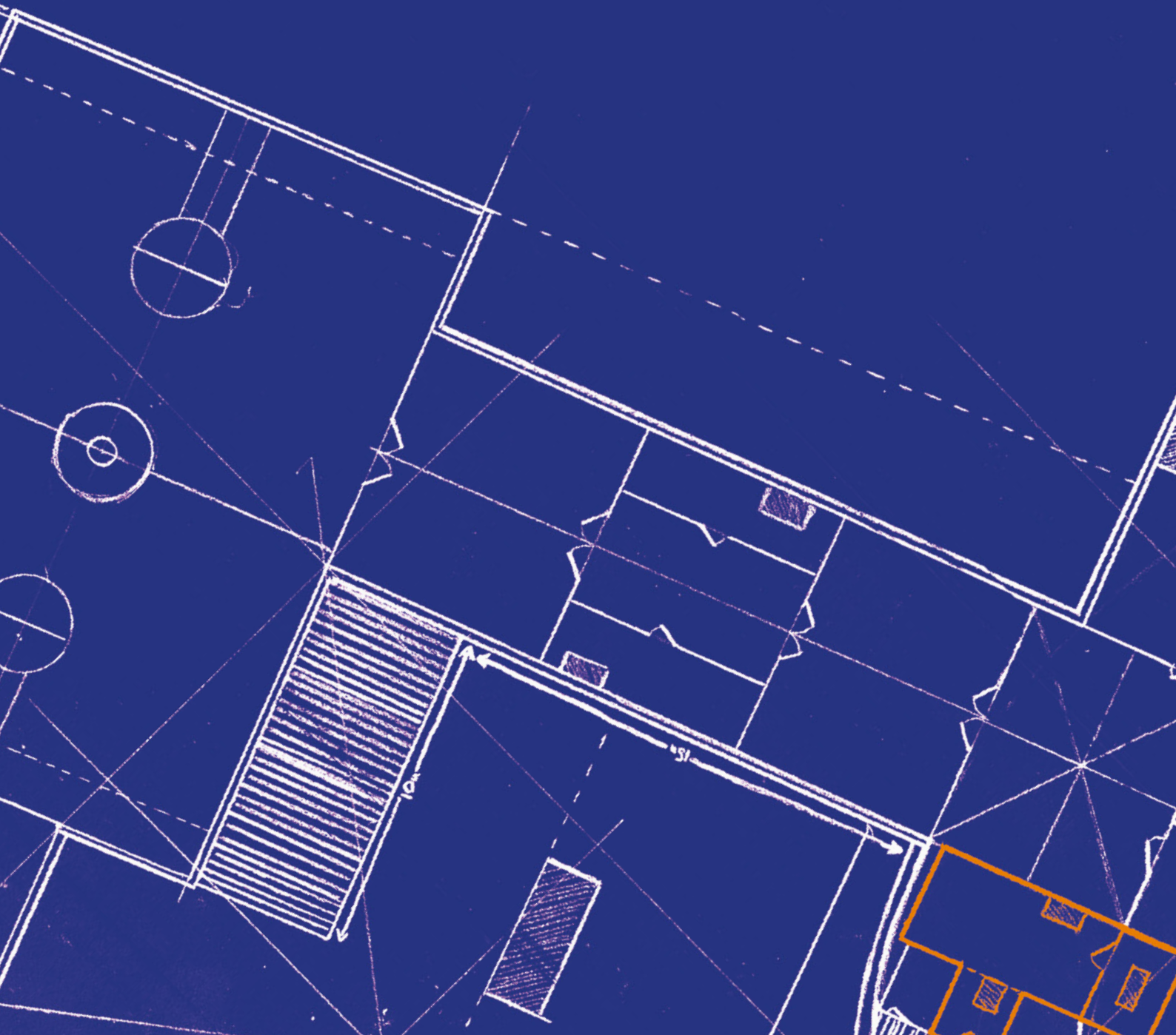
Given the relative lack of empirical data and experience to substantiate whether and under what circumstances practices are effective, the term “promising practices” is considered appropriate in most cases. As further evidence and data about practices are published, the understanding of practices considered most effective will be reflected in the online version of this compendium.

The compendium highlights a number of key themes and recommendations.

- Correctional services should implement approaches and practices that are most suitable for the local circumstances of their prison and probation services. They must be responsive to the specifics of the offender population, including addressing the distinct needs and circumstances of women, juveniles, and foreign fighters convicted of terrorism offenses.
 - Correctional services should consider whether existing or new policies, procedures, and practices can facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of VEOs. An adaptation of existing approaches, including those used in other jurisdictions, may be another viable option.
 - Correctional services should recognize the importance of facilitating offender disengagement from violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies to expedite desistance. They may identify and respond positively to offenders displaying doubts or disillusionment about their involvement in violent extremism, provide offenders with opportunities to identify with alternative groups and causes, and enable offenders to resist reengaging, especially once released.
 - Correctional services should be vigilant about and appropriately manage the influence of social and political contexts on VEO rehabilitation and reintegration efforts. They must be alert to the impact of peer influence on offender participation in interventions, the impact of events such as terrorist attacks and their repercussions on the delivery of interventions, and the influence and role of community members once offenders are released.
- Correctional services should implement and support general approaches and practices that prevent and counter, not reinforce, those associated with violent extremism. Staff members must treat offenders humanely in accordance with international laws and standards, model ways of thinking and behaving that do not reinforce those associated with violent extremism, and use staff-prisoner relationships as a vehicle to challenge divisive perceptions of different groups.

1

Introduction



This compendium highlights promising and good practices associated with support for the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders (VEOs) in correctional settings. Prisons and correctional settings are often reported and perceived to be environments that present significant organizational threats and challenges regarding violent extremism. Sometimes depicted as “finishing schools for terrorists” where radicalization spreads like wildfire,¹ prisons have recently received increased attention due to the supposed existence of a crime-terror nexus and the redemption narrative used by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant to recruit ordinary criminals.²

Substantial qualitative and quantitative data on the extent of VEOs radicalizing and recruiting others in prison and the risk of postrelease recidivism are sorely lacking, with evidence often being largely anecdotal in nature and numbers of incidents relatively small.³ In fact, experience suggests that prisons can be places of opportunity to prevent and counter violent extremism. Some offenders have identified their time in prison as crucial in initiating or consolidating doubts about their identification with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies and in starting to disengage and desist.⁴ Such reexamination may occur from the smallest or seemingly insignificant actions of staff members, such as helping prisoners maintain contact with their family, or other aspects of decent treatment, which often runs counter to their expectations.

Secure environments typically bring together individuals from different backgrounds with different views, which means that VEOs may be more exposed to and challenged about violent extremist attitudes and beliefs than they otherwise would. Correctional settings also play a primary role in providing interventions, reintegration activities, and an environment that specifically seeks to prevent and counter violent extremism.

In recent years, knowledge of good and promising practices has increased significantly, as has knowledge of the challenges and threats associated with VEOs in correctional settings. A prison’s regime and conditions appear to affect VEOs as much as they do any other group of prisoners. A humane detention policy that respects the fundamental rights and dignity of the detainees and places at its core a focus on their rehabilitation and reintegration is critical for all.⁵ Professional relationships and constructive communication by staff may have a particular effect on VEOs; they often perceive representatives of the state as their enemy and the justice system as illegitimate and expect mistreatment. If the prison regime and staff can represent attitudes and approaches opposed to violent extremism and can model positive behavior, prisons are more likely to be secure and constructive places of opportunity and reform.

A prison’s regime, security, and assessment arrangements are also critical to effective and appropriate intervention and reintegration. The effectiveness of any intervention and reintegration effort cannot be considered in isolation from the environment in which it is taking place and that has the capacity to significantly enhance or undermine such efforts. For example, if staff members or prisoners feel unsafe or threatened, this will inevitably have an impact on the delivery and reception of intervention and reintegration activities. Likewise, risk and need assessment is critical for identifying appropriate interventions, evaluating progress on interventions, and informing reintegration planning.

Interventions for VEOs benefit from being designed, delivered, and implemented according to general principles and approaches underlying other interventions intended to reduce risk, support reintegration, and facilitate rehabilitation.⁶ Building on existing good practices and methodologies for managing, rehabilitating, and reintegrating other types of offenders may prove to be effective and resource efficient, particularly in countries with well-developed corrections approaches and a small VEO population. Yet, VEOs and violent extremism pose different and distinct needs, risks, and challenges that require considered, nuanced, and innovative approaches. These include (1) the need for interventions to accommodate issues of offender identification with specific groups, causes, and ideologies; (2) the ability of practitioners to work with offenders who may seek to politicize interventions; and (3) the need to prevent potential peer and group interference from disrupting intervention efforts.

Novel and innovative areas of focus have included working with offenders to address “black and white” thinking through development of integrative complexity—the ability to recognize and seek to integrate different perspectives.⁷ Others have focused on developing strategies and techniques to facilitate disillusionment and disengagement from groups and using theology-based approaches to strengthen religious identity and undermine violence supportive attitudes.⁸ Interventions may not need to be focused only on preventing reoffending, but also on preventing offenders from becoming further radicalized to violent extremism, preventing offenders from radicalizing others to violence, and in some circumstances building offender and staff member resilience to violent extremism. The goals of such interventions and effective evaluation of achieving such outcomes remain prominent issues. Nevertheless, practitioners, offenders, researchers, and other stakeholders are identifying promising principles and practices that remain open to examination.

The reintegration of VEOs must be a two-way process, the responsibility not only of the individual but also of the authorities and society at large. Because VEOs typically support or commit violent acts to change

aspects of society, the manner in which government and the public view and treat them is crucial in influencing their future attitudes and actions toward society, and vice versa. VEOs may face specific issues and obstacles that hinder their reintegration, such as particularly stringent release conditions and surveillance, significant social stigmatization, and the threat of violence against themselves and family members. These obstacles exist in addition to the fundamental challenge of incentivizing VEOs to move away from their commitment to a group, cause, and ideology that may have brought them many perceived benefits, such as a sense of belonging, purpose, security, money, power, redemption, and revenge. In asking individuals to make new commitments in their lives, social, economic, and political opportunities and alternatives must be made available for successful reintegration.⁹ Agencies must find a balance between enabling access to such opportunities and ensuring that individuals do not pose an imminent threat.

Scope

With the support of the government of Australia, the Global Center on Cooperative Security has developed this compendium to provide a practical overview of good and promising practices in the management, rehabilitation, and reintegration of VEOs. The compendium is specifically targeted at correctional services in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, although it has value in other jurisdictions. The compendium combines established promising practices in this field with the latest, innovative good and promising thinking, policy, and practice from around the world. It aims to broaden understanding of different approaches for managing, rehabilitating, and reintegrating VEOs. It also aims to support better decision-making in the design and implementation of programs for VEOs, offenders indicating support for violent extremism, and those deemed at risk of radicalization to violent extremism.

Because learning in this field continues to evolve quickly and significantly, the compendium will be released in hard copy and more extensive online versions, with the opportunity to continue to update and revise the latter in response to new insights, research, and evidence. This hard copy focuses on promising practices associated with VEO rehabilitation, primarily through intervention, and reintegration. It also focuses on how practices related to regime, security, intelligence, and risk assessment can impact on these areas. The online version provides further elaboration and detail regarding promising practices associated with all five domains, namely regime, security and intelligence, risk assessment, interventions, and community reintegration. The platform housing the online version also contains a good practices guide

that users can consult to review how their service or prison currently applies international good and promising practices in managing, rehabilitating, and reintegrating VEOs in relation to prisoners, staff, and other governance issues. For the online compendium, visit veocompendium.org.

Both versions place specific attention on intervention and reintegration considerations for specific groups, notably juveniles and children, women and girls, and returning and relocating foreign fighters (FFs).¹⁰ They also present promising practices for how prisons or regions where issues associated with violent extremism may be rare or infrequent, including those that accommodate a small number of VEOs, could seek to facilitate intervention and reintegration. Information and guidance about promising practices is accompanied by select international case studies.

Sources

The compendium has been developed from a number of key sources and experts. The foundation comprises existing handbooks and papers that have previously addressed the issue of effectively managing, rehabilitating, and reintegrating VEOs and managing other issues associated with violent extremism in correctional settings, as well as practical, on-the-ground experience in various countries across the world. Those of most significance are the *Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders* by the Global Counterterrorism Forum; *Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Offenders and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons* by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime; “Council of Europe Handbook for Prison and Probation Services Regarding Radicalisation and Violent Extremism”; and working papers in 2015 and 2016 by the Radicalisation Awareness Network on countering radicalization in prison and probation. A number of international expert practitioners, academics, intervention providers, and other relevant stakeholders reviewed a draft of this document. More detailed information about the development of the compendium is provided in the online version.

Additional Considerations

Although the term “good practices” is used throughout this document, many of these suggested practices are promising, given the relative lack of experience, learning, and data to substantiate the efficacy or propriety of such practices. It is not anticipated that any service, prison, or region would be implementing all of the practices identified or that all of these

will necessarily be effective or appropriate in all circumstances or contexts.



Good and promising practices within the compendium are largely intended to apply to all forms of violent extremism.



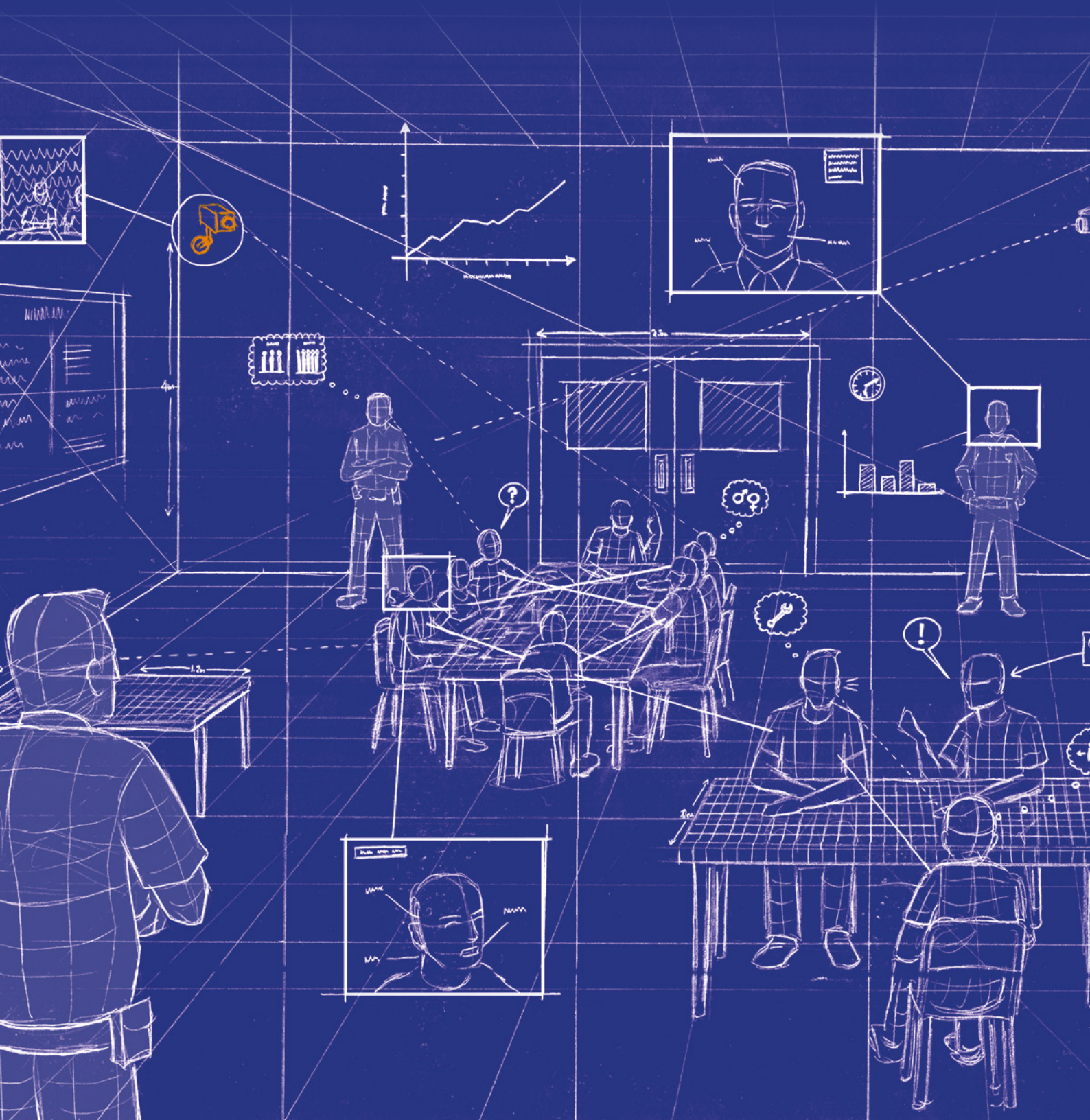
Good and promising practices within the compendium are largely intended to apply to all forms of violent extremism. There are some exceptions, as violent extremism is incredibly diverse in its nature across regions, jurisdictions, and continents around the world. As such, a practice that may work in one location may not always work elsewhere due to the characteristics of the offender population and the prison context. Good and promising practices may also apply to prisoners who are charged and on remand, as well as those who are convicted and sentenced.

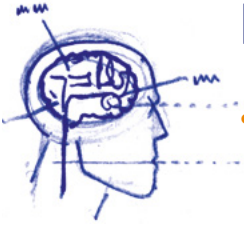
Please note that the practices in this compendium are presented in no particular order and are not weighted in terms of their importance or significance.

2

Regime, Security, and Assessment

This section focuses on a selection of good and promising practices associated with how prison regime, security, and risk and need assessment can contribute to informing effective and appropriate intervention, rehabilitation, and reintegration efforts.





Key Promising Practices

- Intervention, rehabilitation, and reintegration efforts are likely to be undermined if the wider prison regime does not support the humane treatment of prisoners in accordance with international law and standards.
- Sufficient access to services, meaningful relationships, and activities may all serve to facilitate intervention, rehabilitation, and reintegration efforts.
- Appropriate placement based on assessment of individual characteristics, risk, and need is necessary to support interventions and rehabilitation.
- Staff involved in the everyday management of offenders should model ways of thinking, behaving, and relating that counter those associated with violent extremism and support those approaches adopted in interventions.
- Staff members and VEOs need to feel safe, secure, and confident when engaging with each other if interventions and rehabilitative efforts are to be successful.
- Professional and constructive staff-prisoner relationships may provide important opportunities to challenge ways of thinking about other groups, which may facilitate rehabilitation and reintegration.
- All staff should have training in how their day-to-day actions and roles can support rehabilitative and reintegrative efforts.
- Staff need to be alert to the impact of local, national, and international social and political events on the behavior of offenders and their participation and progress in interventions.
- Information and intelligence sharing should be considered an important tool in informing and monitoring intervention and reintegration efforts.
- Monitoring prisoners, visitors, and materials used in interventions can ensure interventions are not counterproductive.
- Identification of offenders who are becoming radicalized to violent extremism; are resisting involvement in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies; or are becoming disillusioned with their involvement may be crucial to help target interventions.
- Appropriate assessment of risk and need is deemed crucial to inform intervention and reintegration planning, including its intended goals, outcomes, focus, and responsiveness to individual needs and circumstances.
- Assessment protocols need to accommodate specific dynamic risk and protective factors and circumstances associated with violent extremist offending to inform and assess progress during interventions and activities appropriately and effectively. Yet, protective factors involved in assessment tools are dependent on the questions asked.
- When appropriate, assessment protocols should include the contribution of the individual offender being assessed as this can provide a foundation for encouraging participation in interventions and collaboration in reintegration activities.

2.1 | Standards, Services, and Categorization

All prisoners, including VEOs and those suspected of radicalizing to violent extremism, need to be treated humanely, with respect for the rule of law and their inherent dignity and diversity as human beings. Treatment should be in line with international standards such as the *United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (The Nelson Mandela Rules)*. All prisoners shall not be subjected to and need to be protected from torture and other cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment. This includes indefinite or prolonged solitary confinement, a method that certain countries continue to practice, including with VEOs. Any activities that undermine the dignity and humanity of prisoners and the rule of law are also likely to undermine intervention, rehabilitation, and reintegration efforts.

A transparent legal framework, policies, and procedures need to be in place for the detention and day-to-day management of VEOs, implemented in a just and fair manner and in compliance with obligations under international law. These policies and procedures should explicitly list and empower the institutions and actors involved and delineate their responsibilities, roles, and powers.¹¹

While allowing for addressing individual needs and vulnerabilities, prison regimes¹² must be fair; and rules, regulations, resources, services, and programs must be applied impartially and without discrimination. This includes discrimination on the grounds of race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, sexual identity, or any other status.¹³ Investing in one group of prisoners, such as VEOs, should not divert attention from others, and investments in the system should benefit all offenders as much as possible. Prison services must justify why approaches are different, proportionate, and necessary; communicate them clearly to the offender; and ensure they are in compliance with international laws and regulations and subject to review and appeal. Treating VEOs differently from other offenders without justification can be counterproductive, further stigmatizing VEOs, reinforcing their grievances, and providing them with a perceived “special status,” thereby decreasing their chances to successfully disengage, rehabilitate, and reintegrate, notwithstanding that the safety and security of the community should be viewed as the overriding priority. Conversely, specialized investments and approaches may lead other prisoners to see benefits in becoming associated

with violent extremism and violent extremist groups, increasing the risks of radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism.¹⁴

The right to freedom of religion or belief is a fundamental right. Like other prisoners, VEOs should be able to adopt and practice their religion and beliefs peacefully and freely and have access to a qualified representative of that religion and approved religious texts. Religion can provide prisoners with a sense of purpose and meaning, a normative framework to follow, and a sense of control over an uncertain future.¹⁵ In addition, spiritual practice has been found to promote desistance and rehabilitation.¹⁶ Equating violent extremism with a specific religion and religious conversion with radicalization is highly counterproductive and may reinforce grievances, a narrative of discrimination and persecution, and “us and them” thinking. Conversely, fostering religious liberties within prisons and society may contribute to religious pluralism and tolerance, which may minimize the risk of radicalization to violent extremism.¹⁷ Beyond those prison services critical for all offenders such as food, health care, and chaplaincy, the availability of particular services and service providers may be especially important for certain VEOs. This includes (1) religious counselors for those VEOs that have used religious justifications for their actions, (2) social workers to assist VEOs in developing critical thinking and moving away from a dichotomous world view, and (3) trauma counselors in cases where VEOs have returned from fighting in conflicts with certain traumas such as post-traumatic stress disorder. More generally, these services and practitioners have a critical role to play in maintaining secure and resilient prisons. For instance, a knowledgeable, constructive, and dynamic prison chaplain can directly and indirectly prevent and counter radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism on a daily basis through certain attitudes, communications, and actions.

All prisoners have the right to family life and meaningful interaction with other individuals, especially their family and friends. Maintaining or reestablishing relationships with families and friends may provide a key opportunity through which VEOs can identify with others in their life who may not be associated with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies. It also may strengthen resilience in other prisoners to becoming radicalized or recruited to violent extremism. Yet, this should be considered on a case-by-case basis because some VEOs’ extremist views may be reinforced by family or friends.

Just like other types of prisoners, VEOs benefit from sufficient and continued access to constructive out-of-cell activities that support rehabilitation, ranging from sports to education and vocational skills programs, including VEOs accommodated under a very restrictive regime.

Prisoners, including VEOs, will need to be separated according to their legal status, gender, and age—pretrial versus sentenced, men versus women, and children versus adults.¹⁸ Where appropriate, prison services should ensure that pretrial detainees and individuals detained in facilities other than regular prisons also benefit from efforts to address and counter radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism.

VEOs can be classified in different groups and security categories based on a comprehensive, individual risk and need assessment and medical examination conducted when incarcerated and taking into account their character and criminal records. Following separation based on their legal status, gender, and age, assessment will inform appropriate placement to best manage each individual's health, safety, and security issues and provide the most suitable intervention and reintegration strategies.¹⁹ This includes a categorization according to the security and control risks VEOs may pose, such as the

likelihood of radicalizing and recruiting other prisoners to violent extremism.²⁰

Prison services need to carefully weigh a variety of factors to decide which classification and accommodation approach (e.g., separation or dispersal) best benefits individual VEOs. This may require flexibility in modifying such approaches based on general characteristics of the prison population and system, as well as changes in the risk and need assessment of individual VEOs. Such a flexible system of classification needs to allow for movements to different levels based on assessed changes in prisoner risk and need. Clear, legally based assessment criteria need to be established to determine which and when VEOs will enter a higher security classification and segregated conditions and when they should move out of such conditions. Not doing so may reinforce grievances and narratives of discrimination, injustice, and unfair and unequal treatment. Transparent entrance and exit criteria can help depoliticize VEO regime decisions and personalize them through focusing on individual behavior and circumstances instead of solely basing them on the offense or offender category.

IN FOCUS

Integration-Separation Model, Correctional Service of Canada

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), in part facilitated by the small size of its violent extremist offenders (VEOs) population and adequate facilities and resources, has opted to implement an integration-separation model for VEOs. This approach focuses predominantly on the integration of VEOs and other prisoners “of concern” in an open general-population environment. It permits for the physical separation of these offenders where information suggests that the direct association of two or more offenders poses a threat to the offender, institution, or staff. Separation is achieved

through placement of a VEO within a different living unit at the same correctional facility or via placement at a different institution or correctional setting. The CSC believes that managing VEOs consistently with other types of offenders that pose a security threat avoids providing unwarranted status to the VEO and defuses any potential violent extremist recruitment and radicalization hubs.^a Such a practice is dependent on the demographics of the offender population and available infrastructure.

^a Correctional Service of Canada, email to authors, April 2018.

2.2 | Staff-Offender Relationships and Communication

Staff-Offender Relationships

Staff members need to engage with VEOs in a professional, constructive, positive, just, equal, and consistent manner. They can do this by being empathic; appropriately trusting; taking time to listen; treating them fairly and with respect, including in relation to certain cultural or religious issues; behaving appropriately; demonstrating integrity; and encouraging hope and personal development. Through trust building and positive relationships with VEOs, us-and-them thinking may start to change, and prisoners may start to reflect on their past beliefs and actions. Staff need to be attuned to these cognitive openings and take appropriate actions (e.g., informing senior officers or intervention providers and further reinforcing doubt and disillusionment).

Good staff-prisoner relationships can help staff to identify and support VEOs seeking to resist engagement or disengage from violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies and to desist from violent extremism. Staff also need to be able to identify prisoners that are being targeted for violent extremist radicalization and recruitment and support them, possibly through interventions, in making positive efforts to resist being radicalized and recruited to violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies.

Communication

When engaging with VEOs, constructive communication techniques can be helpful in a number of ways, including

- encouraging prisoners to participate in interventions and reintegration activities,
- encouraging and supporting steps toward disengagement and desistance,
- allowing concerns about prisoners to be raised effectively by staff or prisoners,
- helping to identify prisoners who may need support, and
- preventing VEOs from creating conflict between staff members or prisoners and staff.

Constructive communication techniques with VEOs include those that can be effectively used

by prison staff in daily interactions with other prisoners, such as

- building trust and confidence;
- creating space to talk and listen and giving and receiving feedback;
- acknowledging and respecting VEOs as individuals;
- using Socratic questioning (“question, do not tell”);
- moving from negative to positive and encouraging hope;
- rolling with resistance (“verbal judo”); and
- teaching prisoners how to seek reliable information and verify sources.²¹

Having received appropriate levels of training, staff may be able to communicate in ways that directly oppose or counter the types of communication typically associated with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies. For example, staff may express tolerance for diversity and difference and encourage VEOs to keep an open mind and be more critical and questioning of ideas and opinions, for instance through challenging simplistic or dogmatic statements. Staff should take care not to reinforce types of communication and attitudes associated with violent extremism but instead model those that counter and oppose violent extremism. The more staff and prisoners do this, the more likely that these can become accepted as normal within the prisons, reducing tolerance for attitudes and behavior associated with violent extremism.²² Such approaches may be important in initiating doubts about interest and involvement, consolidating personal changes in thinking and actions, and building resilience to engagement with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies.

The following two figures outline characteristics of violent extremist communication and approaches to countering them.²³




Through trust building and positive relationships with VEOs, us-and-them thinking may start to change, and prisoners may start to reflect on their past beliefs and actions.



Characteristics of Violent Extremist Communication

Communication	Description
	<p>Imposing</p> <p>Force their views and beliefs on others</p>
	<p>Intolerant</p> <p>Unwilling to listen to or acknowledge views that are different from their own</p>
	<p>Unempathic</p> <p>Unwilling or unable to understand and share the feelings of others</p>
	<p>Dogmatic</p> <p>Absolute certainty that their views and beliefs are undeniably true</p>
	<p>Simplistic, including stereotypical</p> <p>Consider complex situations as much simpler than they are</p>
	<p>Divisive</p> <p>Encourage division and animosity between groups</p>
	<p>Demonizing</p> <p>Portray other groups as purely evil and wicked</p>

Countering Violent Extremist Communication

	Communication	Example
	Invite rather than impose	“Would you consider thinking about this?”
	Express tolerance	“I appreciate that you may have different views.”
	Express empathy	“I can understand why you feel strongly about this.”
	Express caution	“How can you be so sure?”
	Emphasize complexity	“Can it be that straightforward? Is everyone like that?”
	Emphasize commonality	“I think we share that in common, do we not?”
	Emphasize common humanity	“Does everyone not have the capacity to do good and bad things?”

IN FOCUS

Supporting Complexity of Thinking Among Staff, Scottish Prison Service

The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) argues that successful offender rehabilitation and community reintegration requires flexible, nonjudgmental relationships among offenders and prison staff based on mutual respect and trust and a whole-person approach to increasing offender self-management, especially in social contexts.^a These requirements contrast with the “black and white” (“low complexity”) thinking often established in prison contexts to maintain secure custody and order in a safe environment. Inflexible categorical thinking, however, can reinforce and perpetuate polarization among staff and offenders and facilitate recruitment tactics by gangs and violent extremist groups. By designing an organizational ethos, staff training,

and prison practices to develop complexity in thinking (“integrative complexity”), the SPS aims to ensure that the prison environment, culture, and staff-offender relationships support rehabilitation and reintegration. Creating a prison culture with structures and systems that develop integrative complexity among staff is intended to reconcile seemingly paradoxical prison goals: empowering offenders to be flexible, respectful, and compassionate while maintaining prison security, order, and safety. Integrative complexity-focused interventions and environments can improve the ability of prisoners and staff to respect diverse values and viewpoints and seek collaborative outcomes to disagreement.^b

^a Scottish Prison Service, “Unlocking Our Potential: A Value Proposition,” December 2016, p. 7, <http://www.sps.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.aspx?ID=3081>.

^b Eolene Boyd-MacMillan, email to authors, May 2018.

2.3 | Staff Security and Support

Prison staff may feel pressure and anxiety in relation to managing and engaging VEOs. Such feelings could be the result of myths and fears that exist related to violent extremism and VEOs, the physical and psychological strain that may be caused by working with VEOs, and the public, political, and organizational attention to “deal with this problem.” This may have significant implications for how interventions are delivered and reintegration strategies formulated. Staff must be empowered by leaders to feel comfortable and confident in dealing with these prisoners, which requires

- strong support by prison leadership and senior officers, who need to model and reinforce good practices because they set the overall tone and culture of the system;
- clear procedures and guidance;
- appropriately recognizing and rewarding frontline staff;
- ongoing supervision, feedback, and training; and
- staff support systems, such as debriefings, stress management courses, and peer-to-peer mentoring to provide methods to share, reflect on, and learn from experiences.²⁴

Prison services may need to implement extra measures to ensure the personal physical safety of prison staff working with VEOs and other prisoners observed to have radicalized to violent extremism, as well as that of their families. VEOs may present a particular threat as some have networks inside and outside of prison, associates living in the same local communities as staff members and their families, and access to and experience with weapons and combat training. Measures may include secure housing for staff and their families, special vehicles, and personal alarms and security equipment.

Working with VEOs also can be emotionally draining and cause stress and anxiety among staff members. This can be due to the combative nature of some VEOs and their treatment of prison staff as part of the often dehumanized out-group, the many real and perceived security threats posed by these prisoners and their affiliates, and the political, public, and institutional pressure to deal with this problem.

2.4 | Staff Characteristics, Selection, and Training

Staff Characteristics and Selection

VEOs may attempt to undermine, intimidate, manipulate, condition, and corrupt prison staff. Hence, a high level of professionalism and ethical standards is required from staff,²⁵ including attributes such as integrity, empathy, discretion, fairness, consistency, impartiality, and transparency. Staff need to have strong interpersonal skills and be sensitive to prisoner identities and different norms, values, cultures, religions, genders, sexual identities, and ethnicities. They need to have well-developed verbal and nonverbal communication, conflict prevention, and mitigation skills and good teamwork abilities. Staff should be willing to challenge their own personal assumptions and prejudices and act as a positive role model. They need to be resilient to the influence of VEOs and violent extremism.

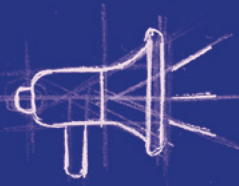
Staff may be recruited from the same or similar backgrounds as VEOs, including factors such as language, ethnicity, culture, and religion. This could increase the chances of building trust, empathy, and credibility. At the same time, matching offenders with staff members that have similar backgrounds or language skills may not always be possible or appropriate. This can be due to a lack in quantity or quality or because staff are perceived and treated as traitors or are more easily coaxed into supporting the VEO's beliefs, objectives, and actions. Differences between VEOs and staff and VEOs and other prisoners may also provide opportunities, and the officer's skills, competences, and confidence are often the most decisive factors in establishing productive relationships. Interaction with people from very different backgrounds, with whom a VEO would not normally associate outside of prison, has the potential to expose commonalities; could challenge us-and-them perspectives, polarized thinking, and echo chambers; and may facilitate doubts. Staff from different professional backgrounds, ideally adopting a multidisciplinary team approach, should be available to work with VEOs, including psychologists, social workers, religious leaders, and teachers.²⁶

Staff Training

Prison staff should receive specialized training to identify radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism and manage, rehabilitate, and reintegrate VEOs, especially when working in institutions that accommodate VEOs. Staff should be aware of their specific roles and responsibilities in this regard. Through training and mentoring, staff need to become competent and confident in recognizing recruitment and radicalization techniques used by VEOs. They also need to discern behavioral indicators of possible radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism in other prisoners.

Staff will need to be aware whether, when, and how best to raise concerns with appropriate stakeholders (e.g., a prison intelligence unit) in order to help inform approaches to and decisions about further assessment, management, intervention, and reintegration. Behaviors that may indicate possible radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism will vary between person and context but can be divided into different categories and range from the easily observable (e.g., increased association with known VEOs or the use of language or symbols commonly associated with a certain violent extremist group) to the more complex (e.g., changes in privately held beliefs or attitudes). Behavioral indicators should be approached extremely cautiously as these may not indicate and do not prove that someone is radicalized to violent extremism. They are simply behaviors of concern that should not be neglected and are likely to warrant further investigation. Many jurisdictions have identified categories of behavior and specific behaviors of concern based on their own experience and relevant to their specific context (see figure for an example of behavioral categories used across different prison services).

Behavioral Categories



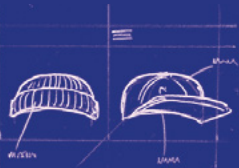
Interests

The range of personal interests exhibited by an individual, including valued items, possessions, and pastimes, which may be linked to violent extremism



Susceptibility

Circumstances that make some people more susceptible to radicalization to violent extremism



Appearance

An individual's choice of clothes, hairstyle, body art, and accessories, which may indicate interest or involvement in violent extremism



Conduct

The behaviors of an individual, including their choices, habits, and lifestyles, which may indicate involvement in violent extremist groups



Associates

Associations with VEOs and violent extremist groups



Statements

New beliefs that are verbalized or contained in written communications, such as expressing support for violent extremist groups

Through training, staff should be made aware of the types of actions that may exacerbate or reinforce violent extremist thinking or increase the risk of radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism. These include actions that may discourage engagement in intervention efforts, undermine the goals of interventions, and encourage reengagement with certain groups, causes, and ideologies. For example, inhumane treatment or confinement conditions, which many of the VEOs were likely expecting

from “the enemy,” will only harden them in their beliefs. Through training and experience, prison staff should be aware how their everyday interactions with prisoners can provide desistance, disengagement, and intervention opportunities and help build resilience to radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism. Staff should be provided training to be aware of behaviors that may indicate that VEOs are attempting to manipulate or groom them.

2.5 | Information Sharing and Monitoring

Information Sharing

Prisons should have a well-resourced central intelligence unit that can provide management and intervention providers with accurate and timely information. This information should help to inform all staff about security-related issues through regular briefings, including in relation to new trends in radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism and usages of new technologies, and appropriate decision-making. Good cooperation should be developed and appropriate information should be shared between a prison intelligence unit and security staff, public and private sector intervention providers, and other custodial staff and probation officers. Staff, however, must have the appropriate levels of security clearance, and laws must cover the sharing of such information.

Reciprocal information-sharing between prison staff and external intervention providers will ensure that there is a common understanding of interactions with and progress made by a specific VEO. This should allow for more consistency and better tailored interventions and support programs, as well as the implementation of safeguards against identified risks. Yet, these individuals should not be instrumentalized as intelligence gatherers, and confidentiality and professional privileges should be appropriately protected.

Monitoring VEOs and Violent Extremism in Prisons

Prison services need to put appropriate processes in place to regularly monitor the activities and behavior of VEOs and prisoners that are considered “of concern” with regard to possible radicalization to violent extremism. This includes the monitoring and managing of contacts that VEOs have with fellow VEOs and other offenders and the dissemination of violent extremist ideologies and material. Such monitoring may facilitate the timely detection and prevention of the planning of illicit actions and violent extremist activities and the radicalization and recruitment of other prisoners. Beyond the primary responsibility of staff members to proactively observe prisoner behaviors and interactions, monitoring may occur through security camera and video surveillance and digitally monitoring internal and external communications.

Information obtained through monitoring efforts is essential in identifying and informing responses to positive changes in behavior and resilience to radicalization to violent extremism. Monitoring may help to identify when prisoners are observed confronting VEOs, challenging their views, and seeking to resist attempts at violent extremist radicalization and recruitment. It is essential that prison information and intelligence procedures are consistent with international standards and national laws and include clearly defined confidentiality protocols, reporting mechanisms, and informant protection. The latter is particularly important when a VEO is speaking out against fellow group members who have a presence and influence in the prison system or within the VEO’s family or community.

Transparent mechanisms should be established for offenders to express concerns about their safety and security, followed by an appropriate and effective response. Failure to respond to those seeking protection is likely to exacerbate feelings of fear, hopelessness, and grievance, undermining participation in intervention and reintegration efforts and potentially increasing the threat of violent extremism.

Monitoring External Actors

Although visitors can play an important role in disengagement and reintegration processes, some may reinforce a prisoner’s radicalization to violent extremism and, in doing so, undermine such efforts. Thus, appropriate vetting of visitors before visits and screening and monitoring during visits are key; and related information needs to be carefully analyzed and logged by the appropriate body (e.g., a prison intelligence unit).

Appropriate screening and monitoring is also applicable to external intervention providers and material brought into the prison system. Particularly relevant in this context is ensuring that the materials, including texts and manuals; methods used; and messages conveyed by external intervention providers neither inspire nor reinforce interest or engagement with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies. The establishment of transparent criteria for what is allowed; clear identification and authorization of suitable providers, methods, and materials, including manuals where appropriate, used

to deliver interventions; and transparent monitoring protocols and procedures should ensure that services are appropriate.

Monitoring the Impact of Societal Events on VEOs

Staff need to be aware of the potential influence and impact that local, national, and international events and news of any type may have on the behavior of those prisoners associated with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies.²⁷ Events of particular interest may include conflicts and warfare between different countries, terrorist attacks and their consequences on communities, rising levels of assaults and discrimination against certain communities, prominent leaders sanctioning hatred or violence toward other groups, and political uncertainty and protests.

Such events may influence VEO responses to other people, including staff members, family members, and other prisoners, and vice versa; interventions; and prisoner engagement or disengagement from violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies. Events and decisions that affect VEOs in prisons may trigger responses in

the wider community, such as demonstrations, which may lead to further responses in the prison.²⁸ Events such as terrorist attacks within societies and communities may affect how others, including other prisoners, staff members, families, and local communities, respond to VEOs, which may have a direct impact on rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.²⁹

Monitoring of Institutional Conditions, Policies, Processes, and Practices

Prison services should establish processes and frameworks for the independent monitoring of prison conditions, policies, processes, and practices, as well as formal and safe complaint mechanisms for prisoners, staff, and the public. This will help examine the appropriateness of the prison regime and operations and identify where these may be enhancing or undermining intervention and reintegration efforts. This monitoring must be truly independent from the local prison management and central government while being respectful and considerate of the views of all parties.



Events such as terrorist attacks within societies and communities may affect how others, including other prisoners, staff members, families, and local communities, respond to VEOs, which may have a direct impact on rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.



2.6 | Risk and Need Assessment

Goals and Outcomes

Risk and need assessment protocols should be made available for those individuals who have committed terrorism-related offenses, those suspected of radicalizing to violent extremism, and those considered at risk of radicalizing others.³⁰ Risk and need assessment should play a central role in informing decisions about an offender's intake and allocation, including separation, classification, and categorization; intervention (selection, approach, and progress); placement; security classification; release; reintegration; sentence management; and support.³¹ With regard to interventions, assessment can inform their intended goals and outcomes, the tailoring of intervention plans, and the responsiveness of interventions to individuals, for example through assessments of mental health, learning ability, and beliefs and values.

Evidence suggests that assessment protocols for other forms of offending, including violence, are not necessarily valid for terrorism-related offending and VEOs and should be used cautiously for this purpose.³² Such assessments may typically exclude factors and circumstances associated with violent extremism, do not include VEOs in their testing samples, and cannot accommodate specific issues associated with assessment of this group (e.g., peer influence, concealment, and political context). Assessment should therefore be formulated around evidence-based indicators that are relevant to the specific risks and needs being assessed.³³ Services may choose to adapt established assessment protocols to accommodate such issues, incorporate specialist protocols used in other jurisdictions, or create a completely new protocol.³⁴ A number of specialist protocols have been developed to specifically assess the risk of terrorism-related offending and offenders. The most prominent of these are the Violent Extremism Risk Assessment (VERA), Extremism Risk Guidelines (ERG 22+), and Multi-Level Guidelines (MLG). All these protocols are based on a structured professional judgment approach and are manualized and typically require a certain level of knowledge, skill, and expertise to complete. Evaluation and comparison studies of these tools are providing more insight into if, when, and which of these different and relatively new protocols may be most appropriate to use.³⁵ Other assessment protocols may still be valuable to administer in conjunction with those designed specifically for issues associated with violent extremism, but this will depend on the intended goals and outcomes of the assessment process. For

example, certain mental health assessments may help inform assessment protocols examining how identified risks for committing terrorism-related acts can be managed and mitigated.

Assessing Change

As with comparable assessments for other forms of offending behavior, violent extremism-related assessments should be able to evaluate factors and circumstances that are dynamic, as well as those that may remain static.³⁶ Given that assessments in this field are focused on evaluating processes, for example, the process of becoming interested and involved in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies and offending, recruiting, and radicalizing others on their behalf, analysis of factors that can change is particularly important. An individual's role in or relationships with certain groups, causes, and ideologies may change over time, which may directly affect issues of risk and protection, including disengagement and desistance.³⁷ Similarly, the initial reasons for why an individual may become interested and involved in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies may not be the same as those that maintain ongoing involvement.³⁸ For these reasons, ongoing monitoring of changes in behavior and circumstances, such as offender responses to staff and other prisoners and the activities in which offenders participate, is important.³⁹ From an intervention perspective, if assessments do not measure change, offenders may be less willing to participate in intervention efforts, intervention progress will be more difficult to evaluate, and reintegration plans more difficult to formulate.

Assessing Protective Factors, Including Disengagement and Desistance

Assessments should include consideration of factors and circumstances that may protect individuals from becoming interested and involved in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies and offending on their behalf.⁴⁰ This includes factors and circumstances that may protect an individual from reoffending, rereadicalizing, and rerecruiting other individuals.

Examples of protective factors include holding beliefs that oppose violence being used to achieve political ends and having friends and

family who oppose or do not support violent extremism. There is increasing evidence of the types of factors and circumstances that may lead individuals to disengage from violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies or desist from offending on their behalf.⁴¹ These include becoming disillusioned with leaders of groups, doubts about the use of violence, and questioning group strategy.⁴²

Consideration of these types of protective factors is critical in ensuring assessments remain objective, accurate, appropriate, and effective in informing decisions about interventions and reintegration. In addition, VEOs' perceptions that authorities are investing in enhancing resilience may have a positive impact on how willing they are to engage and participate in interventions and reintegration activities.

Dimensions

Engagement and disengagement. Assessment should help to provide an understanding of the factors and circumstances that contribute to an individual's interest and involvement in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies.⁴³ VEOs are not a homogenous group, and factors and circumstances contributing to their interest and involvement are often varied and complex.⁴⁴ Assessment should also help to provide an understanding of the factors and circumstances that are contributing or could contribute to an individual becoming disinterested or no longer involved in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies. The reasons why people disengage are also varied and complex but usually involve doubts and disillusionment about involvement and include dissatisfaction with the leadership of groups, group objectives, and methods.⁴⁵ Assessment of this dimension is important in helping to identify how interventions can target specific factors that contributed or may contribute to engagement and offending and how they may facilitate or consolidate circumstances contributing to disengagement. For example, if doubts are assessed as already being present, intervention may seek to consolidate these.

Intent and desistance. Assessments should help to identify whether individuals are willing and prepared to commit terrorism-related offenses and associated behaviors such as radicalizing and recruiting others to violent extremism.⁴⁶ Factors and circumstances associated with a preparedness to commit terrorism offenses include types of thinking (e.g., beliefs that justify offending, dehumanizing others, and us-and-them thinking). Assessment should also help to provide an understanding of the

factors and circumstances that are contributing or could contribute to an individual desisting from offending on behalf of violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies. These are diverse and may include changes in thinking about violence (e.g., no longer seeing violence as justifiable); perceptions of other groups (e.g., no longer dehumanizing other groups); and changes in relationships (e.g., violence no longer being sanctioned by others). Assessment of this dimension is important in helping to identify how interventions can address factors that may have contributed or may contribute to offending and how they may facilitate changes that support desistance. For example, interventions may focus on changing perceptions of other groups, such as by highlighting commonalities rather than differences between group members.

Capability and disruption. Assessments should help to evaluate the capability of an individual for committing terrorism-related offenses and associated behaviors of concern (e.g., radicalizing and recruiting others to violent extremism).⁴⁷ Assessment of this dimension is less likely to impact the type of interventions implemented to support rehabilitation and reintegration, but it can highlight how changes enacted through intervention efforts may impact capability. For example, if an offender chooses to disassociate themselves from other group members (an act of disengagement), this may disrupt their ongoing capability to offend as well.

Political and social context. Assessments must accommodate the specific personal and contextual circumstances of each individual that are likely to contribute to such offending in the future.⁴⁸ Given that, for many VEOs, the purpose of offending is to influence political and social change or maintain the political and social status quo, the influence of current events and circumstances on individual behavior should be considered carefully.⁴⁹ This includes appreciation of the impact the prison context may have in relation to various risks and behavior. Individuals may appear to become interested or involved in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies for various reasons relating to the prison context. These include day-to-day survival, exploitation or ill treatment by prison staff or other offenders, access to particular goods, and an opportunity to commit other, usually acquisitive criminal acts.⁵⁰ Changes in political and social context are important to assess in order to inform interventions in terms of (1) participation (e.g., is participation influenced by events within the prison or outside of the prison); (2) focus (e.g., changing relationships to change personal behavior); (3) targets (e.g., changing perceptions of how a social and political context is interpreted); and

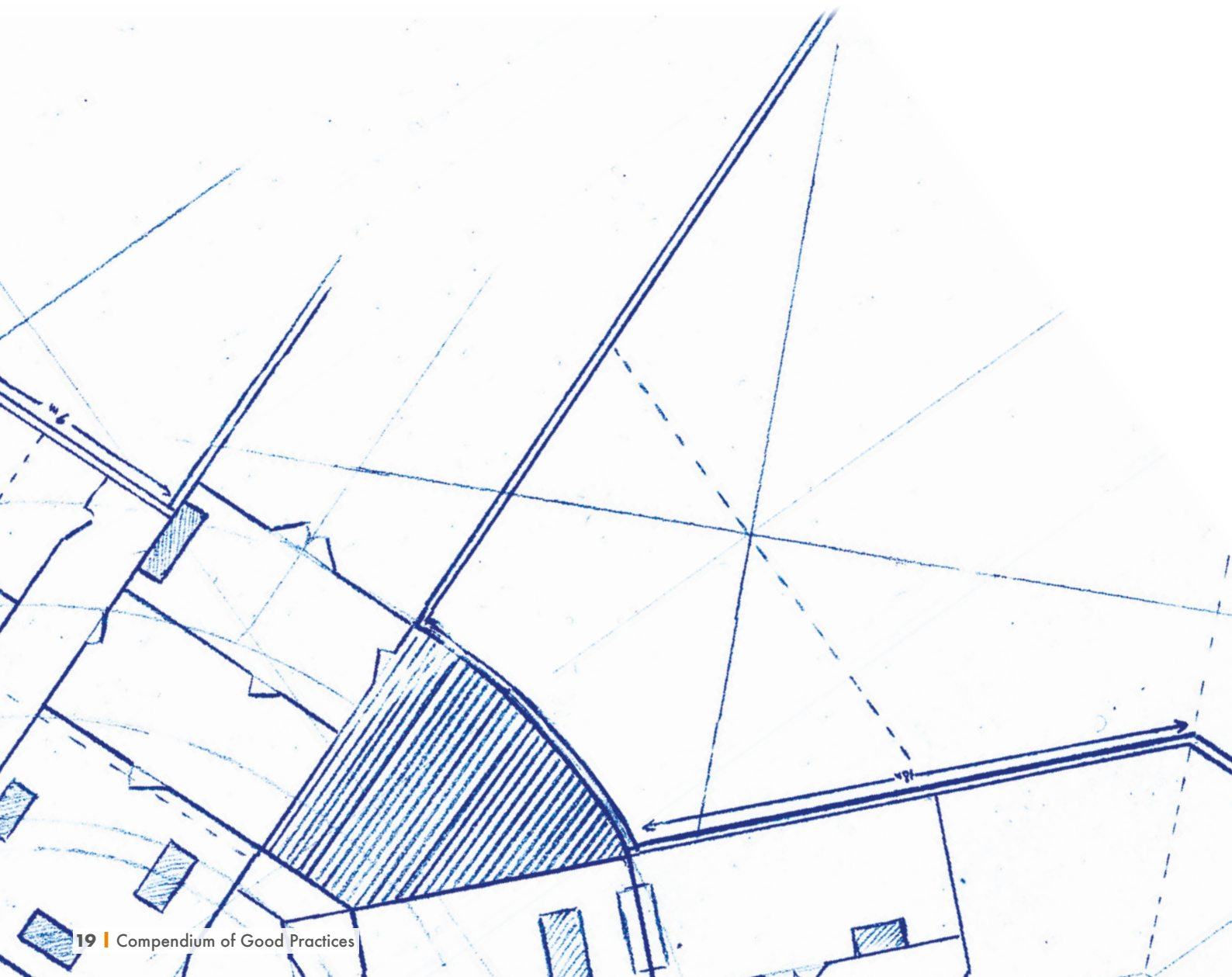
(4) delivery (e.g., preventing other prisoners from disrupting the intervention). Likewise, assessment may be crucial for similar reasons when planning reintegration efforts, especially in terms of evaluating the response of family, friends, and members of society to individuals once released.

Prisoner Involvement

Risk assessments can be carried out with or without the cooperation and engagement of the person concerned through, for example, a direct interview.⁵¹ There may be circumstances where the involvement of the prisoner may be inappropriate, such as when this may jeopardize investigations and intelligence processes, compromise the safety of the prisoner or other people, and undermine efforts to maintain prison security. There may be distinct benefits in inviting VEOs to collaboratively contribute to assessments, providing written representations to questions or attending an interview.⁵²

Involving VEOs in the assessment process may

- enable meaningful conversations and trusting relationships to develop;
- initiate participation in other activities or interventions;
- enhance VEOs' prison experience;
- change VEOs' perceptions of staff;
- provide additional information that may otherwise be unknown, regardless of concerns over the credibility of self-reported information; and
- communicate that staff are interested in individuals and their perspectives, which may, for instance, challenge us-and-them perceptions.⁵³



IN FOCUS

The Extremism Risk Guidelines, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service of England and Wales

The Extremism Risk Guidelines (ERG 22+) are a structured professional judgment assessment protocol developed by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service of England and Wales, intended for use with those who have committed terrorism-related offenses and who are identified as being interested and involved in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies. The protocol was designed for use in correctional services to specifically inform intervention planning, evaluate change following intervention, and inform correctional decision-making (e.g., security recategorization and release decisions). The tool is consistent with widely used structured professional judgment protocols for the assessment and management of violence risk, such as Historical Clinical Risk Management-20. The guidelines provide the basis for assessors to create a case formulation to help understand why individuals were or are engaged with a violent extremist group, cause, and ideology; when they were or are willing to offend on their behalf; and why they were or are capable of committing different types of violent extremist offenses in the future. This will inform decision-making about how individuals are managed, supervised, and reintegrated. From an intervention perspective, ERG 22+ analyzes the factors and circumstances that may have

contributed to past offending and current risk to offend, therefore helping to identify where changes may be required to prevent or reduce the impact of these on future behavior. It also identifies evidence of changes that may have already occurred, including disengagement, which can help tailor intervention delivery, focusing on consolidating changes rather than seeking to initiate these. Assessment also helps identify whether conventional criminogenic factors may need to be targeted through more conventional interventions that address violence and other types of offending behavior. Finally, the ERG 22+ identifies issues that may impact intervention delivery, such as the extent to which peer influence and intimidation may need to be managed and obstacles to participation may need to be overcome. An independent process evaluation of the pilot implementation of ERG 22+ highlighted how it played a key role for some violent extremist offenders in building trust, strengthening cooperation with the authorities, and incentivizing their participation in interventions.^a

^a Stephen Webster, Jane Kerr, and Charlotte Tompkins, "A Process Evaluation of the Structured Risk Guidance for Extremist Offenders," *UK Ministry of Justice Analytical Series*, 2017, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/661787/process-evaluation-srg-extremist-offender-report.pdf.

2.7 | Specific Considerations for Special Populations

Regime and Security Considerations

Similar to other types of offenders, VEOs are a diverse group consisting of individuals with a variety of backgrounds, motivations, and criminal pasts and having individual needs that should be taken into account. Among this population may be those that require special consideration, including women, children, elderly offenders, first-time offenders, foreign nationals, FFs, minorities, and people with mental and physical health problems. Their vulnerabilities must be carefully considered and addressed in compliance with international obligations, such as the Nelson Mandela Rules, and their rights protected and promoted. How the specific needs and circumstances of these different individuals are addressed and accommodated in their daily life is likely to significantly impact their participation and progress in interventions and reintegration.



Where appropriate laws and arrangements are in place, prison services should seek to cooperate closely and exchange information with other jurisdictions and allied international agencies to

help identify individuals entering prison and probation services who have been involved in violent extremist activities abroad.⁵⁴ They need to remain alert to the increasing number of returning and relocating FFs arriving in prisons, as well as the capacity and resources required to manage this group.⁵⁵ Without effectively monitoring FFs, opportunities to provide suitable interventions and plan reintegration strategies for this group of VEOs are likely to be limited.



Efforts should be made to develop and deliver a regime that is gender sensitive and tailored to the risks and needs of female VEOs.⁵⁶

Female offenders must be treated in accordance with relevant international standards, particularly the *United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (The Bangkok Rules)*.⁵⁷ Significant efforts should be made to facilitate contact between women and girls and their children, family, and local communities.⁵⁸ Specific attention should be given to the impact

of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and violence on the actions of female VEOs and to the management of these issues in support of their daily welfare and reintegration.⁵⁹ Maintaining relationships with meaningful others, especially in the role of mother, sister, daughter, etc., who will not further advance the VEO's violent extremist views can play a key role in facilitating and strengthening disengagement and encouraging participation in interventions and reintegration strategies. A sensitive and empathic response to trauma and victimization may also play a powerful role in challenging perceptions of and feelings toward other groups (e.g., dehumanization of and hatred toward representatives of the state), which may facilitate disengagement and cooperation with intervention and reintegration efforts.



Juvenile justice standards and norms should be the key principles for the management, rehabilitation, and reintegration of children and juveniles convicted of violent extremist offenses or

suspected to be engaged in violent extremism.⁶⁰ Children must be treated in compliance with relevant international standards, particularly the *United Nations Minimum Standards for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules)* and the *United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of Their Liberty*.⁶¹ Appropriate sentencing decisions, including alternatives to custody such as community sanctions, diversion programs, and restorative justice, may be particularly important and appropriate for juvenile offenders who are likely to be individuals with no previous or significant criminal history.⁶²

Consideration should be given to recognition of children as perpetrators and victims⁶³ and promotion of rehabilitation and reintegration over punitive outcomes.⁶⁴ Juvenile VEOs should have regular contact with parents, guardians, and other family members.⁶⁵ Where parents and family members have been involved in the violent extremist radicalization of children and juveniles, consideration should be given to balancing the child's rights to protection and maintaining contact with their parents and family members and the interests of public order.⁶⁶

Juveniles must be separated from adults and not placed in high-security conditions unless

in exceptional circumstances, proportionate to the crime and risks, and in line with international and domestic law.⁶⁷ For those who have seemingly disengaged or had peripheral involvement with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies, alternatives to custody or minimization of the impact of custody on their lives should be seriously considered.⁶⁸ Staff members may benefit from specific training to handle the various complexities involved in the management and rehabilitation of children and juveniles, including issues related to trauma and mental health.⁶⁹ In addition, they may benefit from training that sensitizes them to how features of being a juvenile, such as immaturity, identity development, and impulsivity, may have contributed or may contribute to their interest and involvement in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies. This may be important in preventing staff from pathologizing behavior, especially in juveniles, whose actions may be more prone to circumstance rather than established traits, commitments, and informed decisions. This may also contribute to preventing children and juveniles from being labeled or defining themselves primarily or exclusively as violent extremists.⁷⁰ If a prison regime communicates that juveniles are considered first and foremost VEOs, then arguably they will define themselves as such. Juveniles may be less inclined to consider and explore other ways to define themselves during this important phase of identity development, preventing a natural opportunity for positive identity change.



In prisons and regions where issues associated with violent extremism may be rare or infrequent, a primary consideration will be prevention of radicalization to violent extremism within the existing regime without requiring significant resources or specialized training, assessments, and interventions. Good prison standards and staff compliance with policies and practices that support a constructive, secure, and healthy regime are suggested to be important bases for more elaborate programs aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism and to reduce the risk of radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism in prisons.⁷¹ It may be appropriate for general awareness-raising training and communications to illustrate why a positive regime can help to prevent and counter violent extremism. For example, staff who forge meaningful and respectful relationships with offenders may help to mitigate “us and them”-type thinking and the demonization of those in authority, which can characterize thinking associated with violent extremism. In addition, it may be useful for such prisons to understand how existing interventions and activities undertaken in the prison and prison service may help to prevent radicalization to violent extremism. For example, thinking skills programs could include components that may protect against interest and involvement in violent extremism through perspective-taking skills; and involvement in activities that provide self-esteem, purpose, and belonging may prevent the attractiveness of violent extremist groups as alternative places to meet these needs.



Similar to other types of offenders, VEOs are a diverse group consisting of individuals with a variety of backgrounds, motivations, and criminal pasts and having individual needs that should be taken into account.



Assessment Considerations



Currently, the issue of how assessments can sufficiently accommodate risk and need presented by so-called lone actors, women, and children and young people is identified as particularly important.⁷² There are no known assessment protocols specifically designed for these groups regarding assessment of risk and need related to terrorism-related offending,

but protocols based on case-formulation approaches are well suited for this purpose.⁷³ This is because they seek to analyze and build a picture of the distinct factors and circumstances underlying why each individual may have offended or may offend and how this can be prevented. This necessitates consideration of factors and circumstances related to gender, age, culture, and mental health.

Mental health issues and a lack of group influence may be particularly significant for lone actors.⁷⁴ FFs may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and experience other difficulties due to their experience in conflict zones. For women, motives and circumstances such as a desire for religious freedom, personal liberation and agency, and emotional and social blackmail may need to be accommodated.⁷⁵ With younger people, the specific influence of immaturity, neurological development, and peer influence may need to be considered.⁷⁶ In addition, assessment may need to acknowledge that children and young people may (1) be particularly vulnerable to indoctrination, (2) be susceptible to peer and family influence, (3) lack consequential thinking, (4) have a desire to oppose authority, and (5) be more open to experimentation and exploration of different roles, identities, and ideas. Furthermore, assessment may need to recognize that interest, involvement, and offending may be reflective of a developmental phase from which children and juveniles could “age out.”⁷⁷ Assessment can also identify the extent to which changes in developmental maturity and social circumstances may contribute to managing and mitigating future offending

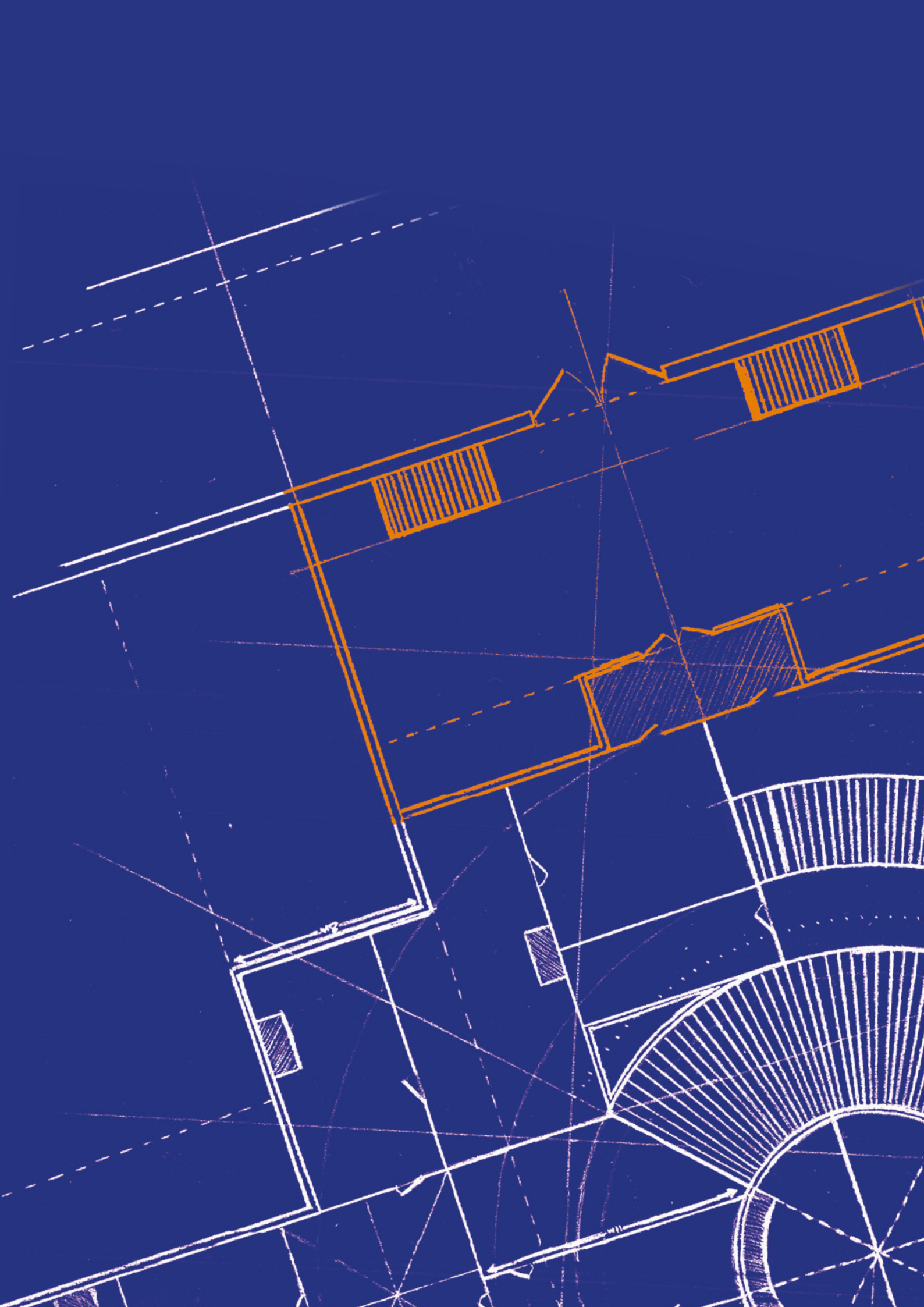
and when interventions seeking to facilitate personal changes in thinking and behavior may be appropriate. Such considerations need to be included in assessment formulations. If individual differences are neglected, the nature, targets, and delivery style of interventions and reintegration support are likely inappropriate and counterproductive.

Case formulation–type assessment approaches that examine individual backgrounds and circumstances carefully, including those that may be unique to the individual or receive less attention in existing protocols and the role these may have on protection and risk, are well suited to try and accommodate specific considerations such as mental health issues. Given that existing protocols have limited guidance on issues and considerations that should be taken into account for specific populations, assessors will need to incorporate their own knowledge about these considerations into assessments.



In prisons and regions where issues associated with violent extremism may be rare or infrequent, consideration needs to be given to whether implementing an appropriate assessment should be a

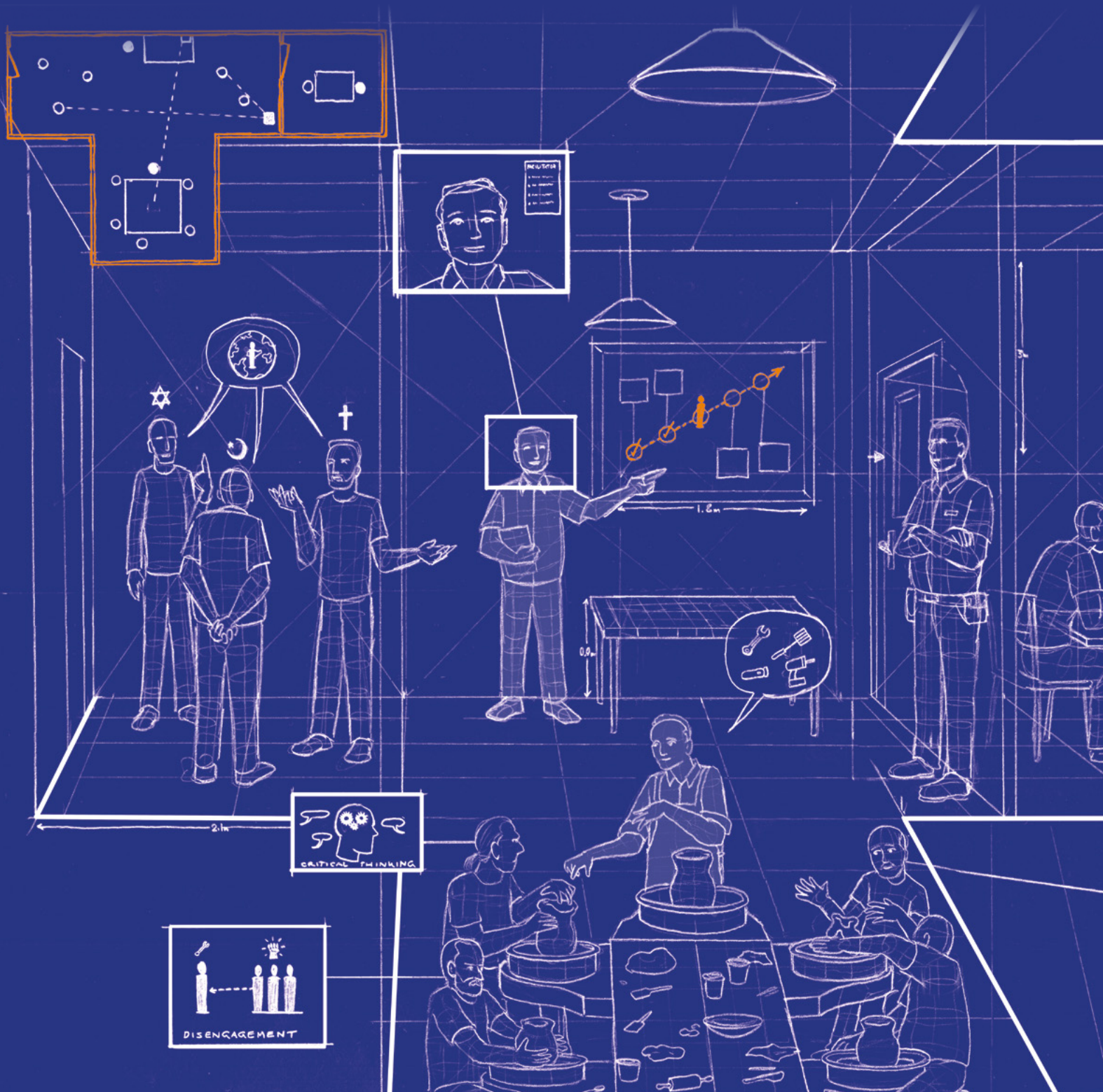
priority relative to focusing attention and resources on actually addressing the problem behavior and circumstances identified. Where assessment is deemed necessary, the organizational requirements, intended purpose, outcomes, and recipients need to be clearly identified. Decisions will need to be made about whether adaptations can be made to existing protocols used in a prison and probation service to accommodate issues associated with violent extremism or whether protocols designed specifically for this purpose will be used. If adaptations are to be made, attention may need to be focused on whether this can be done while maintaining legal, ethical, practical, and scientific standards. If targeted protocols are used, specific attention may need to focus on whether this will be appropriate for a specific context, how it will be resourced, and the feasibility of implementation.

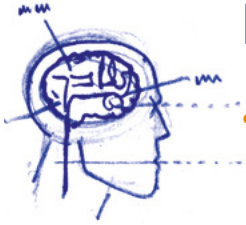


3

Interventions

This section will explore good and promising practices for developing and implementing purposeful and planned activities to prevent and reduce radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism.





Key Promising Practices

- Interventions should focus on facilitating disengagement from violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies to support the goal of desistance.
- Interventions should be available to address various issues associated with preventing and countering violent extremism in prisons, including preventing individuals from offending and radicalizing others to violent extremism and protecting individuals from becoming radicalized to violent extremism.
- Although interventions may vary significantly in terms of their nature, methods, content, and delivery, interventions should seek to achieve five specific goals and outcomes: (1) meeting personal needs without being engaged with a violent group, cause, and ideology; (2) pursuing values and causes through legitimate, legal means; (3) addressing attitudes and perceptions of others that support and justify violent extremism; (4) expressing and managing feelings associated with involvement in violent extremism; and (5) strengthening personal identity and agency.
- Interventions should be designed, developed, and implemented with consideration of local conditions, culture, legal traditions, prison population and culture, resources, and staff capabilities.
- Interventions may need to be available that incorporate a variety of different approaches but that may reinforce similar messages and seek similar changes in behavior, including targeted psychological, social, theological, mentoring, educational, sporting, and cultural interventions and activities.
- Interventions need to be responsive to the individual circumstances and needs of VEOs to be effective and appropriate, including the individual's age, gender, any role in a group, level of engagement or disengagement, learning ability and style, and religious and cultural background.
- Interventions should be based on established principles and research underlying approaches proven to prevent other types of offending when this is deemed appropriate, while accommodating novel features specifically relevant for VEOs and violent extremism, such as addressing an individual's relationship with a specific violent extremist cause. Further research and key findings regarding these principles will likely emerge in due course from the current cohort of VEOs.
- Facilitators of interventions may require specific qualities and support to prevent issues such as self-radicalization, intimidation, manipulation, and corruption.
- A respectful and trusting facilitator-offender relationship should be considered the fundamental basis on which interventions are delivered and through which personal change can take place.
- Careful consideration should be given as to whether interventions should be delivered in a group or one-to-one setting and steps taken to mitigate issues associated with these approaches.
- There should be clear and accountable management support and ownership for intervention and reintegration efforts.
- Monitoring and evaluation of an individual's progress during an intervention alongside ongoing research and evaluation of intervention implementation are necessary to ensure interventions are fit for purpose and revisions for improvement can be made.

3.1 | Intervention Goals and Outcomes

The specific goals and intended outcomes of interventions⁷⁸ must be explicit and understood by intervention providers.⁷⁹ Interventions have two primary goals: preventing prisoners from becoming or remaining engaged with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies⁸⁰ and preventing prisoners from becoming or remaining willing or prepared to commit offenses on behalf of extremist groups, causes, and ideologies.⁸¹

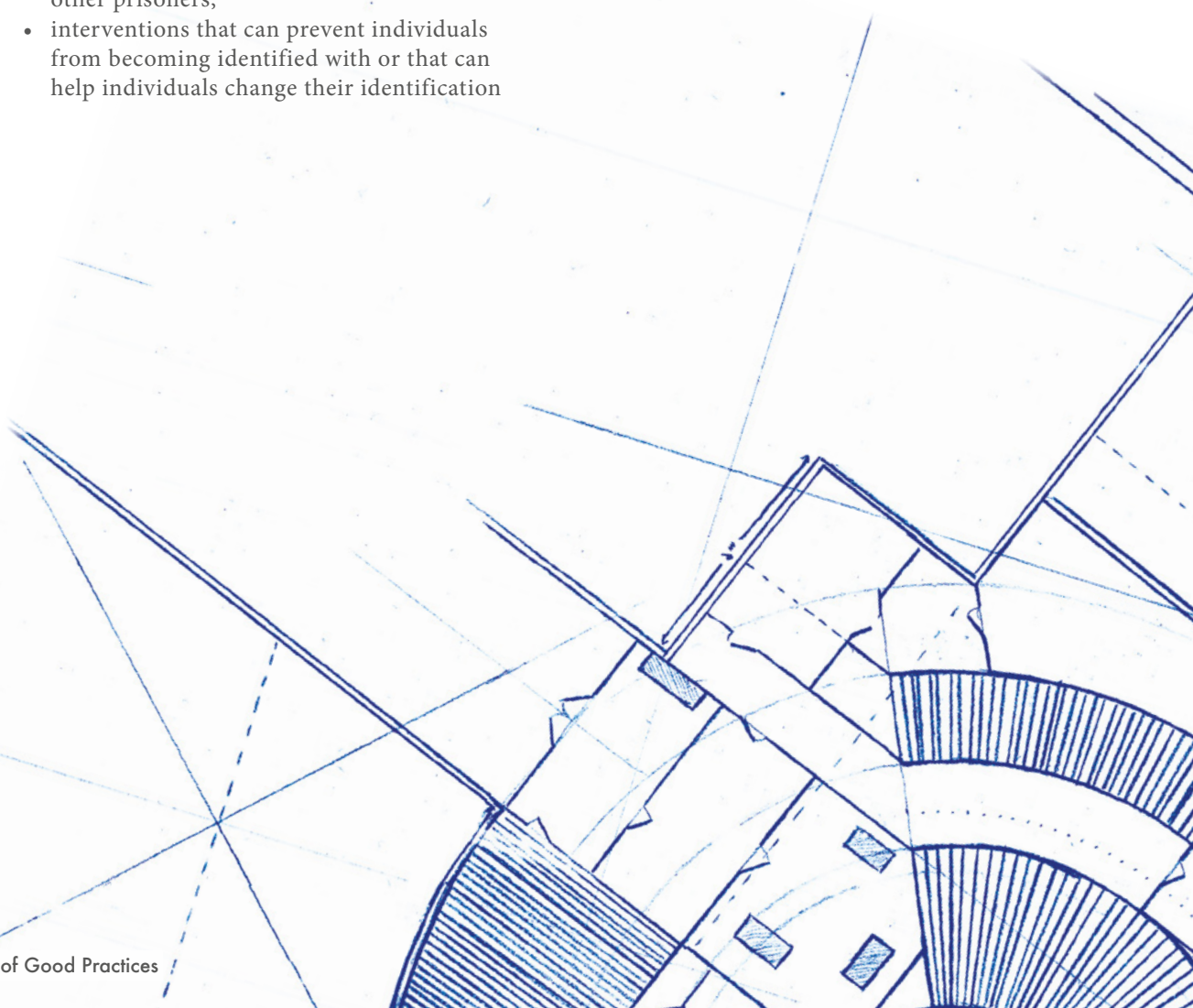
Different types of interventions may need to be available to address a number of different goals and outcomes.⁸² These include

- interventions and activities that protect prisoners from becoming interested and involved in violent extremist activities;⁸³
- interventions for prisoners about whom staff have concerns regarding their interest or involvement in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies and their possible support for acts of violent extremism, even though such prisoners have no history of committing terrorism-related offenses;⁸⁴
- interventions for prisoners who are suspected of or known to be recruiting and radicalizing other prisoners;
- interventions that can prevent individuals from becoming identified with or that can help individuals change their identification

with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies;⁸⁵ and

- conventional interventions for prisoners who may or may have become interested or involved with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies for more conventional criminal motives, such as monetary and violence-related opportunities.⁸⁶

Clarifying whether interventions are intended to change beliefs or behavior and outlining the theory behind this change are particularly important to allow for careful monitoring of progress and evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions.⁸⁷ Targeting changes to behavior rather than beliefs may be more realistic and effective and less prone to ethical challenge.⁸⁸ More generally, intervention practitioners should be clear about whether the intended goals and outcomes are justifiable with regard to maintaining human rights, especially when interventions seek to influence personal beliefs in light of, for example, freedom of belief and expression.⁸⁹



Generally, violent extremism–related interventions can target five specific areas.

Needs



Interventions should encourage and enable prisoners to fulfill their needs and aspirations through opportunities that they might otherwise seek through involvement with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies.⁹⁰ Interventions are more likely to be effective when they meet and fulfill the same needs on which violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies may focus, including survival, money, employment, security, significance, belonging, purpose, power, and self-worth.⁹¹ Interventions may need to encourage individuals to find alternative ways to meet these needs, such as by exploring new relationships, occupations, and interests or strengthening existing positive ones.⁹²

Values and goals



Interventions should empower and enable prisoners to pursue their values, goals, and causes through legitimate and legal means and to participate in society without offending.⁹³ Interventions may need to (1) challenge prisoners about their sense of entitlement to use violence for a specific cause or on behalf of a group of people, (2) explore whether such behavior is counterproductive to their cause, (3) examine the consequences of such behavior on other people, (4) facilitate a reappraisal of the need and justification for continued violent extremism, and (5) encourage prisoners to express disillusionment with the violent extremist group's policies, leadership, and objectives and with specific operational tactics (e.g., the targeting of civilians).⁹⁴

Attitudes and perceptions



Interventions should address a prisoner's attitudes, ways of thinking, and perceptions of others that support and justify violent extremist offending.⁹⁵ They may need to encourage prisoners to reconsider whether violent extremist offenses can be justified and encourage tolerance of different beliefs, viewpoints, and identities and empathy and compassion toward other people.⁹⁶ The assumption is that if such interventions can prevent prisoners from possessing beliefs and attitudes that justify violent extremist offenses, then they are more likely to desist from such offending.⁹⁷ Interventions may need to expose inconsistencies and inaccuracies in attitudes, types of thinking, and perceptions of others that support extremist violence. This includes (1) reducing identification with a group or cause, which can begin to weaken the bonds of ideology; (2) making it more difficult for them to see other groups in simplistic ways through diluting us-and-them–stereotypes; (3) reducing the demonization and dehumanization of others; and (4) recognizing the complexity of other people's values and commitments and commonalities between groups.⁹⁸ This may create cognitive dissonance and self-reflection, which could provide an important opportunity to initiate and maintain positive change.

Expressing and managing emotions



Interventions should help individuals express, tolerate, and manage strong feelings associated with interest and involvement in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies.⁹⁹ This may include (1) making individuals more aware of the association of their emotions with their values and beliefs, (2) helping them to tolerate emotions more effectively and “let go” of these, and (3) making changes in their lives to make circumstances that impact on the things with which they identify feel less personal.¹⁰⁰ This focus may be required especially for prisoners who may be contemplating and changing their relationship with a violent extremist group, cause, and ideology, which may trigger strong feelings of distress, grief, and loss.¹⁰¹

Personal identity and agency



Interventions should strengthen personal identity and agency.¹⁰² Interventions may need to reconnect an individual with their sense of personal identity and agency, which may have been dominated by that of a group.¹⁰³ They may need to educate individuals about why and how people can adopt the beliefs and values of others without question, i.e., indoctrination, as well as help them reflect on and question their and others' ideas, beliefs, and actions.¹⁰⁴ Interventions also may need to empower individuals to take responsibility for making new commitments in their lives that will influence their identity and change their interest and involvement in violent extremist activities.¹⁰⁵

3.2 | Features and Components of Interventions

Interventions should be designed, developed, and implemented with consideration of local conditions, culture, legal traditions, prison population and culture, resources, and capabilities of staff.¹⁰⁶ Those that work in one jurisdiction cannot simply be transferred to another; they need to be tailored to the specific local context and circumstances.¹⁰⁷

A range of activities and interventions should be available to contribute to possible prevention, disengagement, and desistance efforts in prison.¹⁰⁸ Activities and interventions should include a focus on psychological; social, including familial; practical; and, when relevant, theological approaches;¹⁰⁹ cultural activities, including sport; educational courses; vocational skills courses; and employment assistance.¹¹⁰ Not all individuals may require specialist interventions targeting violent extremism; more general activities and arrangements may be sufficient and appropriate for certain prisoners based on their crimes, risks, and needs (e.g., involvement in educational and vocational training or strengthening family relationships). Whether specialized interventions are necessary will require individual assessment of risk and need.¹¹¹

There are several different types of interventions for VEOs.

Psychosocial interventions. Psychological and social interventions should focus on facilitating disengagement and desistance and, where applicable, address mental health issues.¹¹² They should be based on established principles for preventing other forms of offending behavior while tailoring them and including unique approaches to address violent extremism specifically.¹¹³ Components of psychosocial interventions may include

- facilitating behavioral change;
- enhancing coping and emotional management skills;
- promoting critical and complex thinking, problem solving, and decision-making skills;
- improving relationships;
- building self-esteem;
- facilitating personal potential, development, and growth;
- addressing beliefs and ways of thinking that support violence;
- improving self-knowledge and understanding;
- reconstructing experience and character for adjusted living;

- healing emotional pain and resolving confusion; and
- supporting individuals through the process of disengagement.¹¹⁴

Addressing identity issues, for instance, by assisting offenders to misidentify from violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies and strengthening alternative prosocial identities, is an important focus for VEOs.¹¹⁵ Such approaches can help support individuals in resolving identity conflict, confusion, and crisis that may have initiated engagement and help individuals to strengthen other identity commitments in their life that may support disengagement (e.g., as parent and spouse).

Theological interventions. Spiritual support and religious counseling are significant for many different types of offenders, as religion may provide offenders with a sense of purpose, order, and hope, which in part may explain the comparatively high conversion rates in prisons. In the case of religiously inspired violent extremism, religious counseling and education in prison can help to reduce vulnerability to radicalization to violent extremism.¹¹⁶ Such interventions can (1) facilitate or develop doubts about involvement with violent extremists, groups, or causes, i.e., encourage disengagement;¹¹⁷ (2) strengthen religious identity for maintaining a positive sense of self and associated sense of purpose, meaning, self-worth, and belonging;¹¹⁸ (3) provide alternative narratives to those supportive of violent extremism;¹¹⁹ and (4) challenge views and justifications for violence, including us-and-them thinking, based on an interpretation of religious scripture and encourage prisoners to think about issues in a different way. Religious interventions should be based on teaching broad principles of tolerance, diversity, and peace rather than narrowly seeking to focus on the doctrine of specific theological schools.¹²⁰ There is little empirical evidence regarding which theologically informed interventions are effective, although components have been cautiously proposed. These include features such as (1) religious interventions being delivered within a holistic approach that addresses psychological; social, including familial; and practical issues associated with effective disengagement and reintegration; (2) tutors of courses being carefully vetted, well educated, informed, credible, competent, and compassionate, with the confidence to rebut beliefs that permit violence; (3) interventions

challenging ways of thinking that support violence, including us-and-them mentalities; (4) dialogue that is meaningful, focused, and tailored and that covers critical themes over a sufficient duration; (5) interventions that involve the continuous study of evolving narratives and ideologies, as well as perceived grievances and aspirations; and (6) interventions ideally being delivered in a one-to-one setting.¹²¹

Educational activities. Educational programs may focus on a number of areas, including (1) developing basic educational skills (e.g., reading and writing); (2) supporting individuals in reviewing and revising their beliefs and convictions; (3) developing life, communication, and decision-making skills; (4) learning about specific topics such as rule of law, justice and fairness, human rights, and democracy; and (5) learning about legitimate ways to express values without resorting to violence.¹²² This may be particularly relevant for VEOs whose ideology or group leaders prohibited their participation in the regular educational system. Education may also help to (1) broaden perspectives and develop critical and complex thinking to build resilience to indoctrination; (2) develop independent thinking and open-mindedness; (3) challenge distorted thinking and beliefs; (4) foster civic values and knowledge about rule of law, democracy, civic responsibility, and cultural diversity; (5) raise self-esteem, self-confidence, and status; and (6) empower individuals to seek new alternatives and opportunities in their lives.¹²³

Vocational training. Employment and vocational opportunities may reduce the appeal of violent extremism and sustain disengagement in part because they keep individuals occupied, support mental well-being, and help to facilitate new relationships and meet their needs in alternative ways, such as confidence building and purpose.¹²⁴ Skills to be acquired should match an individual's talents, potential, and preferences to optimize the effectiveness of such training.¹²⁵ Effective liaison between prison and probation services and employment services and the private sector may be important to match vocational skills with the employment market and negotiate and prepare individuals for positions of employment, given the stigma and issues associated with violent extremism and VEOs.¹²⁶

Sports activities. Sports may provide (1) excitement and fun; (2) opportunities to develop skills in teamwork, discipline, and leadership; (3) an alternative source of identification; (4) prosocial values such as responsibility, fair play, adherence to rules, and competition without conflict; (5) an appreciation of different

people and skills; (6) self-confidence; (7) self-control; and (8) a sense of personal agency.¹²⁷ Sports may be particularly relevant for VEOs whose ideology or group leaders prohibit such activities. Those leading sports interventions need to model the attitudes and behavior that they intend the participants to adopt.¹²⁸ Learning to participate appropriately in sporting activities also may provide individuals with the qualities and skills to engage effectively with more intensive and demanding types of interventions.¹²⁹

Cultural activities. Cultural activities may include various types of arts, including music, dance, performance, fine art, and handicrafts, as well as cultural festivities. These activities may help to (1) develop critical thinking, (2) facilitate emotional expression and management, (3) change ideas and ideologies, (4) develop personal strengths, (5) increase hope, (6) explore identity, (7) understand and explore grievances, and (8) establish connections and commonalities.¹³⁰ Cultural activities may be particularly relevant for VEOs whose ideology or group leaders prohibited their past participation in these. Art therapy may play a specific role in helping individuals address challenging feelings and trauma and in exposing attitudes and beliefs that can be analyzed and used as an opportunity to reexamine the legitimacy of violent extremist beliefs.¹³¹ Certain creative interventions, such as music and group performances, also can build self-worth and teamwork.¹³²

Mentoring interventions. Mentoring can include role-modeling prosocial behavior (e.g., sharing personal stories of those who have disengaged and how they have successfully achieved this)¹³³ and assisting individuals with more practical tasks, such as completing job applications.¹³⁴ Tailored mentoring plans should be developed and followed to ensure interventions are in line with sentence-planning goals and can be evaluated.¹³⁵ Appropriate matching of the correct mentors to individuals is identified as particularly important for effective mentoring support.¹³⁶

IN FOCUS

The Healthy Identity Intervention, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service of England and Wales

The Healthy Identity Intervention (HII) is a semistructured, manualized, psychosocial intervention delivered by psychologists and probation officers in prisons and the community to encourage violent extremist offenders (VEOs) to disengage and desist. The intervention is conducted on a one-to-one basis with VEOs associated with a variety of groups, causes, and ideologies. It has a range of modules and sessions that can be used flexibly to address the specific risk and need of individual offenders, in part based on how identified and committed individuals are with specific groups, causes, and ideologies. In light of this, the HII can be delivered as a low-, medium-, or high-intensity intervention in terms of the number of sessions, the intensity of content, and its duration. It primarily focuses on supporting individuals to renegotiate their relationship with a violent extremist group, cause, and ideology and reduce their preparedness to support and commit acts of violent extremism. The HII contains modules that focus on understanding involvement and

offending, emotional management, personal identity, group involvement and group identity, group conflict, self-image, seeking change, and moving on.⁴ Sessions can have a variety of aims, including encouraging individuals to identify how they can meet important personal identity needs, such as belonging, purpose, and significance, through alternative relationships, occupations, and interests; initiating and consolidating doubts and disillusionment about engagement; encouraging individuals to question their legitimacy to offend and the productiveness of offending for political purposes; and supporting individuals in understanding and managing becoming overidentified with groups, causes, and ideologies, such as making identity commitments in different aspects of their life to develop a more balanced identity. Because the HII is implemented in custody and the community, it can be continued and reinforced by different staff members in either environment over a longer duration of time.

⁴ Christopher Dean, "The Healthy Identity Intervention: The UK's Development of a Psychologically Informed Intervention to Address Extremist Offending," in *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform*, ed. Andrew Silke (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2014), pp. 89–107.

3.3 | Tailoring Interventions

Appropriate assessment of an offender's individual risk, need, and circumstances is crucial in tailoring interventions for individuals, including what, when, how, and by whom interventions are delivered.¹³⁷ Effective interventions are less likely if implementation is indiscriminate and factors and circumstances that are important in individual cases are assumed. This includes overlooking idiosyncratic circumstances for involvement in violent extremism. They should focus on the specific, changing motives and circumstances that can contribute to possible and ongoing interest and involvement in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies.¹³⁸ This may inform whether interventions focus more on changing an offender's interest and involvement (disengagement) or on addressing their

willingness to offend (desistance). For example, for those who are significantly identified with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies, aiming to increase their inhibitions to offend may be more feasible and productive than aiming for complete disengagement.¹³⁹

Interventions should not assume that the strength and intensity of an offender's interest and involvement at the time of offending, if applicable, will be the same when an intervention commences—radicalization to violent extremism is a dynamic process. Where prisoners have already made steps to disengage, interventions may need to focus on consolidating gains and strengthening these steps. More generally, the timing of intervention delivery is an important consideration, given the

possible limited impact and negative effects of interventions that are delivered too early or too late.¹⁴⁰

Some interventions and activities may be inappropriate and counterproductive for certain individuals, and the risks associated with participation need to be carefully assessed. For example, some VEOs may have used sports such as football to actively identify and recruit individuals previously and may seek to do so again. They may try to use education in specific disciplines to further their ability to indoctrinate other prisoners, and they may seek to use particular work activities to further their capacity to commit particular extremist offenses.¹⁴¹

Interventions should be tailored to the specific characteristics, need, and circumstances of every individual,¹⁴² including taking into consideration

- age and gender;¹⁴³
- whether individuals are followers or leaders;¹⁴⁴
- whether they have previously committed a terrorist offense;¹⁴⁵
- whether they have short or long sentences;¹⁴⁶
- whether mental health issues may contribute to their possible and ongoing interest, involvement, and offending and how these need to be considered in the delivery of any interventions;¹⁴⁷
- learning ability and style;¹⁴⁸

- religious and cultural background;¹⁴⁹
- influence of associates;¹⁵⁰ and
- whether they are involved for opportunistic or personally meaningful reasons.¹⁵¹

When accommodating individual differences, intervention providers need to consider how these circumstances should impact what and how content is delivered. For example, interventions may need to accommodate the learning ability of individuals and cultural learning norms may impact whether content is presented visually or orally rather than in written form.¹⁵²

To be responsive to individual differences, interventions should vary in their duration, intensity, focus, and timing in line with general “what works” principles for effective interventions to prevent other forms of offending, such as the Risk, Need, and Responsivity model (risk and deficit focused) and the Good Lives model (desistance and strengths focused).¹⁵³

3.4 | Selecting and Supporting Practitioners

Competence and Credibility

Intervention practitioners should be experienced and credible in the eyes of prisoners and the community and have a strong sense of accountability for the work that they are delivering.¹⁵⁴ Who delivers interventions will depend on the nature, aims, and intended outcomes of the intervention, as well as the VEO’s circumstances, including where they are located. Specialized, targeted programs are more likely to require the input of those with specific, violent extremism–related knowledge, skills, and experience, such as psychologists, probation officers, religious scholars, and former VEOs.¹⁵⁵ Not all professionals will necessarily be suitable by virtue of their competencies, skills, and personality to deliver intervention-type work in corrections settings, and therefore these qualities need to be evaluated in selecting staff.¹⁵⁶ In certain cases, nongovernmental actors may be better suited to deliver certain interventions. Intervention practitioners should

operate according to the principles of respect, competence, responsibility, integrity, and do no harm.¹⁵⁷

Vetting, Supervision, and Support

Intervention providers should be appropriately vetted, supported, and supervised in their practice.¹⁵⁸ They need to be supported and supervised to help them (1) build trust with prisoners; (2) remain resilient to corruption, conditioning, manipulation, self-radicalization, and intimidation; (3) maintain professional boundaries; (4) manage professional discretion over the direction of intervention work; and (5) learn from more experienced colleagues.¹⁵⁹ Areas that may require specific focus in vetting processes include whether practitioner knowledge and views are acceptable, in line with the goals of interventions, and not likely to be

counterproductive.¹⁶⁰ Support for intervention providers may include individual supervision, group support with supervisor and peers, mentorship, and manuals to guide interventions and clarify aims and outcomes, delivery methods, and suggested exercises.¹⁶¹ There may be specific challenges faced in providing sufficient support when participants are few in number and dispersed across multiple locations. These include a lack of cases requiring intervention to justify regular support, difficulties establishing sustainable support and supervision structures, and limited resources to monitor and evaluate ongoing delivery.¹⁶²

role and may need to include modules on (1) how to operate in a prison setting and how to work with prisoners in general and VEOs in particular; (2) basic training in psychology and counseling; (3) understanding and dealing with the complexities of rehabilitation and reintegration efforts; (4) distinguishing signs of radicalization to violent extremism from other behaviors, including legitimate expressions of faith and ideology; (5) constructive communication; (6) responding appropriately to threats; (7) the goals and objectives of interventions; (8) familiarization with intended content and delivery; and (9) crises management.¹⁶⁴

Training

Intervention providers should be specially trained.¹⁶³ The type and nature of training should reflect the complexity and significance of their



Interventions should include a number of practitioners from different disciplines and specializations, including psychologists, mentors, religious scholars, social workers, and aftercare experts, to ensure the complex issues underlying violent extremism can be addressed appropriately.



3.5 | Implementing Interventions

Practitioner and Stakeholder Involvement and Cooperation

Interventions should include a number of practitioners from different disciplines and specializations, including psychologists, mentors, religious scholars, social workers, and aftercare experts, to ensure the complex issues underlying violent extremism can be addressed appropriately.¹⁶⁵ Practitioners may need to be available of different genders, ethnicities, and linguistic abilities as this may improve the delivery and acceptance of interventions.¹⁶⁶ Regardless, practitioners must have the skills and the character to work effectively with VEOs that may have very different backgrounds from them. Intervention practitioners should cooperate, communicate, and work with each other and other stakeholders, including families and local communities, to ensure interventions are effective.¹⁶⁷

Intervention efforts should be carefully structured and coordinated to maximize effectiveness and to ensure all practitioners are communicating consistent messages.¹⁶⁸ An integrated case management approach, involving the input of various stakeholders and agencies, should be taken to coordinate assessment, goal setting, intervention planning and implementation, demarcation of roles and responsibilities, and collective reviews of progress.¹⁶⁹ The aims, themes, and outcomes of different types of intervention approaches may complement and reinforce one another. For example, theological and psychological concepts may align and overlap. Multiple voices from different backgrounds with similar messages may carry particular weight, and programs that communicate respect for a range of approaches may reduce suspicion and mistrust.¹⁷⁰ A level of consistency in message and final aim, although respecting a variety of methods and substance, will increase the overall chances of success.

Motivation and Engagement

Incentives should be used to encourage prisoners to participate in intervention activities to motivate ongoing engagement and to reward completion of interventions.¹⁷¹ These may include (1) enhanced visitation with family members, (2) increased recreational activities, (3) other additional privileges and benefits while incarcerated, and (4) certificates, medals, and graduation ceremonies.¹⁷² They may encourage (1) further, ongoing participation in programs and activities; (2) personal change; (3) a sense of accomplishment and a highlighting of personal achievements, skills, and abilities; (4) a sense of “moving on”;

and (5) further educational and employment opportunities.¹⁷³ Incentives may be removed if prisoners engage in unacceptable or inappropriate behavior.¹⁷⁴

It may be prudent to delay intervention efforts, such as when prisoners are first incarcerated, to give prisoners time to acclimatize to prison life and allow for any natural or undirected disengagement opportunities to occur.¹⁷⁵ Under no circumstances should provision of basic conditions outlined in the Nelson Mandela Rules be withdrawn from VEOs as a means to coerce them into participating.¹⁷⁶ Careful consideration should be given to the name of interventions (monikers) so that these do not act as obstacles to participation, reinforce labels, and further stigmatize offenders.¹⁷⁷ For example, instead of referring to VEOs going through violent extremism disengagement programs, some countries refer to intervention recipients as beneficiaries participating in rehabilitative interventions.

Consent and Confidentiality

Confidentiality during the intervention process should be respected to the extent that it does not interfere with security and crime prevention.¹⁷⁸ Within the appropriate legal framework, the limitations of confidentiality and the consequences of disclosure must be shared explicitly with intervention recipients at the start of programs to establish clear boundaries and build trust.¹⁷⁹ Before participating in interventions, VEOs should be informed about the rules of confidentiality and the principle of informed consent as applied.¹⁸⁰ Disclosure of information outside of the intervention team should only take place where there is a threat to the safety of the VEO, other prisoners, staff, and other individuals and to national and prison security.¹⁸¹

Interventions have a greater chance of success when VEOs participate voluntarily.¹⁸² Participants should ideally sign a written consent form and be informed that they are able to withdraw their consent to participate at any point.¹⁸³

Practitioner-Prisoner Relationship

Developing constructive relationships based on respect and trust between practitioner and offender should be a key consideration in the delivery of interventions because it may be crucial for changes in motivation, beliefs, behavior, identity, and relationships to take place.¹⁸⁴ A positive

relationship should be seen as a key vehicle through which change can happen, including (1) to provide a basis for meaningful conversation and dialogue, (2) to identify commonalities rather than differences between people, (3) to challenge beliefs where differences are used to justify violence, (4) to challenge us-and-them thinking, (5) to remove suspicion, and (6) to communicate tolerance.¹⁸⁵ The time required to establish trusting and constructive relationships will vary and may demand persistence, especially in relation to VEOs that may distrust the authorities and intervention provider.¹⁸⁶

Practitioners need to model the same attitudes, values, and behavior that interventions are intended to facilitate in participants for interventions to be effective, for example, treating others with humanity, empathy, and tolerance as a means to undermine beliefs, thinking, and behavior associated with violent extremism.¹⁸⁷

Intervention Setting

Whether interventions should be delivered with a group of VEOs or individually should be carefully deliberated, weighing the pros and cons of either approach depending on the participants and intended outcomes.¹⁸⁸ There is limited empirical evidence to suggest under what circumstances which format is more effective, although a more tailored and individualized approach is generally considered to be most impactful.¹⁸⁹ Information about interventions intended to target groups with the aim of collective disengagement and desistance from violent extremism remains limited and largely historical. Therefore, such group-based interventions should only be delivered cautiously with due consideration for current research and knowledge available.¹⁹⁰

Individual interventions may reduce the potential negative impact of group dynamics, including peer pressure and intimidation, in preventing disengagement; seek to reconnect individuals with their personal identity and reduce the influence of their shared group identity; and increase an individual's confidence to disclose information about their involvement and actions.¹⁹¹ They are typically more expensive and resource intensive than group interventions and may not be realistic with large numbers of VEOs.¹⁹² Group interventions in some circumstances may inhibit participant disclosure and openness, reinforce identification with violent extremist groups, and lead to dynamics that may disrupt disengagement efforts, especially in cases where several committed VEOs from the same organization participate in group interventions together.¹⁹³ Group-based interventions could potentially be more beneficial when other group participants are more effective

than facilitators in challenging each other's harmful views and beliefs. This may particularly be the case where former group leaders can foster group member disengagement. Furthermore, peer support could help facilitate personal change, and group participants can model prosocial thinking and behavior.¹⁹⁴

Intervention practitioners and prison management should make efforts to recognize and minimize the potential negative influence and interference of other VEOs on individuals considering participation and participating in interventions.¹⁹⁵ Participation in interventions may signal disloyalty that may trigger group reprisals; in custodial settings, it can be more difficult for offenders to distance themselves from such pressures and participate discreetly. In response, some participants may choose not to participate; some may participate but only demonstrate changes in thinking and behavior during sessions to prevent reprisals; and some may choose to publicly commit to disengagement to seek additional support from the authorities.¹⁹⁶

Managerial Support for Interventions

Interventions are only likely to be effective if the context in which they are delivered is safe and secure and all staff, including managers, are supportive of such efforts.¹⁹⁷ Managerial support may be provided through

- training and support by prison headquarters,
- appropriate levels of supervision,
- resourcing interventions adequately,
- training staff members not directly involved in interventions about how they can support the delivery and goals of interventions, and
- integrating staff from different backgrounds into intervention efforts.¹⁹⁸

Managers of prisoners are responsible and accountable for ensuring interventions can be delivered effectively. Intervention practitioners should ensure prison managers are fully aware of intervention requirements, including the time and resources required by practitioners to establish trusting and meaningful relationships with VEOs to encourage disengagement and desistance.¹⁹⁹ Regular feedback should occur between practitioners and managers to ensure that interventions and those delivering them continue to be supported and effective.²⁰⁰

IN FOCUS

Proactive Integrated Support Model, Corrective Services New South Wales, Australia

The Proactive Integrated Support Model (PRISM) is a pilot, voluntary disengagement support service for inmates who have a conviction for terrorism or have been identified as being at risk of violent extremism. PRISM is an enhanced case-management model that seeks to assist the disengagement process. Although it is a custody-based service, postrelease transitional planning and support is offered to assist the offender in effective engagement with their community corrections officer and other social, religious, and community-based intervention and support services. It is facilitated by a multidisciplinary, mobile team consisting of a senior psychologist (the team leader), psychologists, and a religious support officer. The mobile nature of the PRISM team aims to ensure the service is available to any offender supporting or promoting violent extremism regardless of classification or gender. The team seeks consent to undertake assessments that inform an individual support plan that is embedded within their whole-of-sentence case plan in order to ensure offenders address their general criminogenic needs and violent extremism-specific treatment targets. The assessment component involves an analysis of the offender's radicalization process,

including identification of their individual predisposing, precipitating, perpetuating, and maintaining factors, as well as an identification of protective factors and strengths on which to build. The assessment process, wherever possible, includes engagement with the family and social network to assist in motivating and engaging the offender and with building community support to facilitate long-term behavior change. The service aims to focus on the social, theological, psychological, and ideological needs of the offender with the aim of promoting moderate, prosocial behavior to assist with transitioning back to the community. Although each intervention plan varies, the core treatment components consist of psychological and religious interventions to challenge cognitive distortions and violence-supporting or -promoting attitudes, as well as on building protective factors. This may encompass healthy identity development, including a focus on supporting cultural awareness and pluralistic living and employment and educational skills, building healthy relationships, emotion regulation and coping skills, and risk management planning.^a

^a Corrective Services New South Wales, Australia, email to authors, April 2018.

3.6 | Monitoring and Evaluating Interventions

Monitoring and Evaluating Prisoner Progress

Progress on interventions should be carefully, structurally, and consistently reported.²⁰¹ Reports should include information about the impact of interventions, behavioral changes, and any other relevant issues that may have impacted on intended outcomes.²⁰² Reporting progress is important for a number of reasons, including

- informing sentence and risk management decisions,
- ensuring accountability,
- facilitating monitoring,

- providing professional and personal protections of those involved, and
- establishing a foundation for evaluation.²⁰³

Indicators of progress may include changes in prisoner behavior, attitudes, and relationships; level of engagement with the interventions; number of institutional incidents; reduced security level for prisoners; and number of interventions completed.²⁰⁴ Evaluation of progress should also include indicators of failure.²⁰⁵

Regular reviews, ideally interdisciplinary case conferences involving relevant stakeholders, such as prison and probation officers and intervention

providers, should take place to plan, monitor, and review progress made on interventions.²⁰⁶ The aims of such reviews include

- planning the direction of interventions and assessing their ongoing appropriateness,
- sequencing interventions,
- reviewing effective or ineffective approaches,
- developing strategies for future work, and
- bringing together different perspectives and ideas to inform how interventions continue to be implemented.²⁰⁷

Interventions should acknowledge that individuals may lapse in their behaviors or require a time-out from interventions in their efforts toward disengagement and desistance.²⁰⁸

Monitoring and Evaluating Interventions

Prison services should use and commission high-quality research to inform the design, development, delivery, and implementation of interventions.²⁰⁹ The implementation of interventions should be monitored and supervised by individuals independent of those delivering and managing the interventions.²¹⁰

Through downgrading and sanitizing of data, prison services should provide as much access to information as appropriate to researchers and intervention providers. Such independent monitoring can assist in ensuring interventions are delivered as intended—maintaining intervention integrity—to ensure they are more likely to be effective, appropriate, and productive.²¹¹

At headquarters level, there may also need to be a supervisory, multidisciplinary management team that holds the overall responsibility for establishing and overseeing the development, implementation, and evaluation of interventions. They also may provide mentoring and support for prison-based intervention teams and coordinate with other governmental agencies.²¹²

Processes and research should be implemented to measure if interventions are effective and productive and have an impact on achieving their intended outcomes.²¹³ Evaluation may need to determine whether the objectives of intervention were appropriate, whether the activities were effectively implemented, and the extent to which the objectives were met.²¹⁴

Services should be willing to modify their programs based on new research and the outcome of evaluations.²¹⁵ Evaluation research should ideally be widely published to develop an evidence base of what works in this field, to inform revisions and developments in intervention design and implementation, and to improve the practice of intervention providers.²¹⁶ Such efforts should consider the impact of interventions beyond desistance and disengagement of individual prisoners, such as on the wider prison environment.²¹⁷

3.7 | Specific Considerations for Special Populations

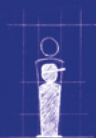


Authorities should be alert to and provide treatment for specific mental health issues to which FFs may be particularly vulnerable and that may have been acquired in conflict zones, such as post-traumatic stress disorder.²¹⁸ Additional considerations for this group include the need for specific interventions, given that they may already have disengaged prior to entering custody, and management of the impact of any intervention on prospective court cases, which may affect participation and compliance.²¹⁹



Women should be involved and represented in all efforts aimed at and agencies responsible for preventing and countering violent extremism, and their expertise should be used to inform the design, development, and delivery of interventions.²²⁰ More specifically, they should be recruited and trained to work with female VEOs to deliver gender-sensitive interventions.²²¹ Female religious leaders, teachers, community representatives, and other intervention providers should also be involved in counseling, education, and training, particularly for female VEOs.²²²

Interventions should be responsive to some of the distinct motives, factors, and circumstances that may have engaged girls and women with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies. These include (1) a desire for sisterhood; (2) a desire for religious freedom; (3) a desire for personal liberation and agency; (4) emotional and social blackmail; (5) familial, physical, and emotional coercion, including a sense of having no choice; (6) a challenge to social gender norms; and (7) a desire for safety.²²³ Different motives and circumstances may require different intervention responses, for instance when accommodating issues of exploitation and victimization.



Comprehensive, tailored, age-appropriate interventions should be provided to children based on age-sensitive risk and need assessments.²²⁴

Specific consideration should be given to the role

of developing maturity in understanding the actions of children and juveniles and how best to support them moving forward, including in intervention and reintegration efforts. This involves appreciating how immaturity can contribute to vulnerability to indoctrination, susceptibility to peer and family influence, a lack of consequential thinking, a desire to oppose authority, and an openness to experiment with and explore different roles, identities, and ideas. More generally, interest, involvement, and offending may be reflective of a developmental phase from which children and juveniles could “age out.”²²⁵

In light of these circumstances, intervention work with children and juveniles may need to focus on protecting them from being vulnerable to accepting ideas and beliefs without question by enabling them to be more questioning and critical in how they consume information. Such work does not necessarily need to be focused on issues associated with violent extremism per se but should be framed in relation to the wider benefits this can have in their lives. This includes enabling them to make choices that they want to make, make commitments that reflect what matters to them, and not make choices that will lead to consequences they may not want.

Specific caution should be applied regarding implementing intensive psychological programs that are exclusively focused on deconstructing the content of violent extremist ideologies with children and juveniles, as this may be inconsistent with principles of juvenile justice and not aligned with their level of maturity.²²⁶

An additional danger of intensive interventions that are not managed carefully is inadvertent reinforcement of the child’s or juvenile’s identity as a VEO. Efforts should be focused on strengthening other identities that can shape them as individuals moving into adulthood. Given that children and particularly juveniles are typically exploring and forming identity commitments, supporting them in this process and helping them to work toward developing prosocial identity commitments will be most appropriate. Interest and involvement may be relatively temporary and transient for children and juveniles, and therefore interventions may need to respond to these particular circumstances.

Interventions may need to focus more on changing circumstances around children and juveniles, such as providing opportunities to meet new people and participate in new activities and occupations, rather than seeking to promote significant attitudinal or behavioral change, unless their specific circumstances suggest this would be appropriate.



In prisons and regions where issues associated with violent extremism may be rare or infrequent, specialized interventions may not always be appropriate in light of (1) the identified scale of the

problem; (2) the number of prisoners requiring intervention; (3) the resources required, including available staff skills; and (4) the potential to stigmatize individual prisoners through such efforts.²²⁷ Whether specialized, targeted interventions rather than existing interventions or more generic policies and practices should be implemented will depend on these factors.

Implementing general and targeted approaches is likely to be most effective and appropriate, but the balance of their deployment is likely to depend on the local circumstances of each prison service.²²⁸ In most cases, preventing and countering violent extremism should be communicated to staff as just another important reason for why they should be conscientious about being professional in their daily roles. In addition, this is another important reason why they should implement existing policies, processes, and practices that may also directly or indirectly address these issues (e.g., those that promote respect, diversity, tolerance, and rehabilitation and reintegration efforts).

Specific approaches may be developed and implemented that can assist in preventing and countering violent extremism but

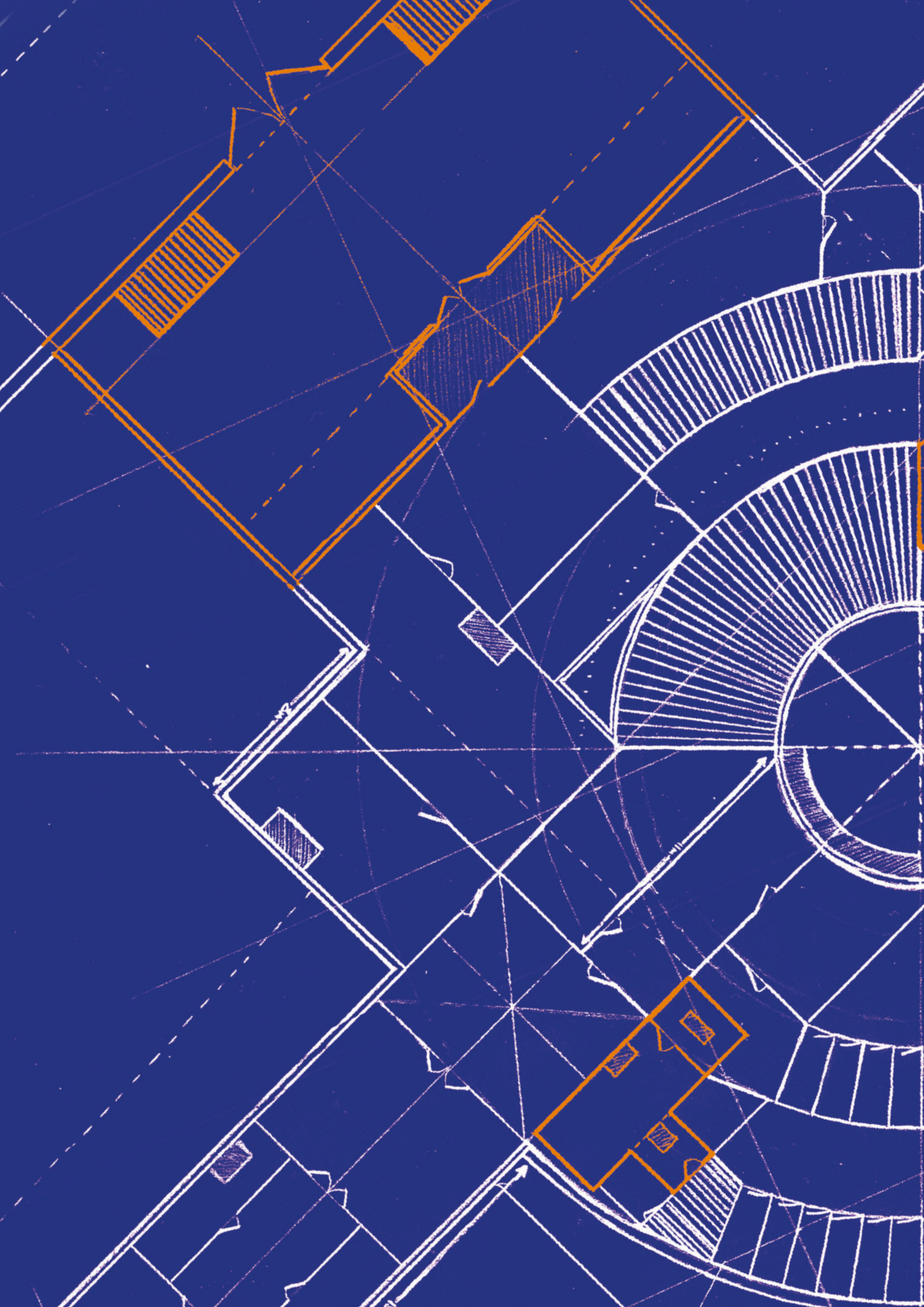
may also have positive benefits on other offending behavior. Encouraging staff to model attitudes and behavior that counter methods of communication associated with violent extremism, such as inviting rather than imposing, expressing empathy, and emphasizing complexity, has wide-ranging benefits.



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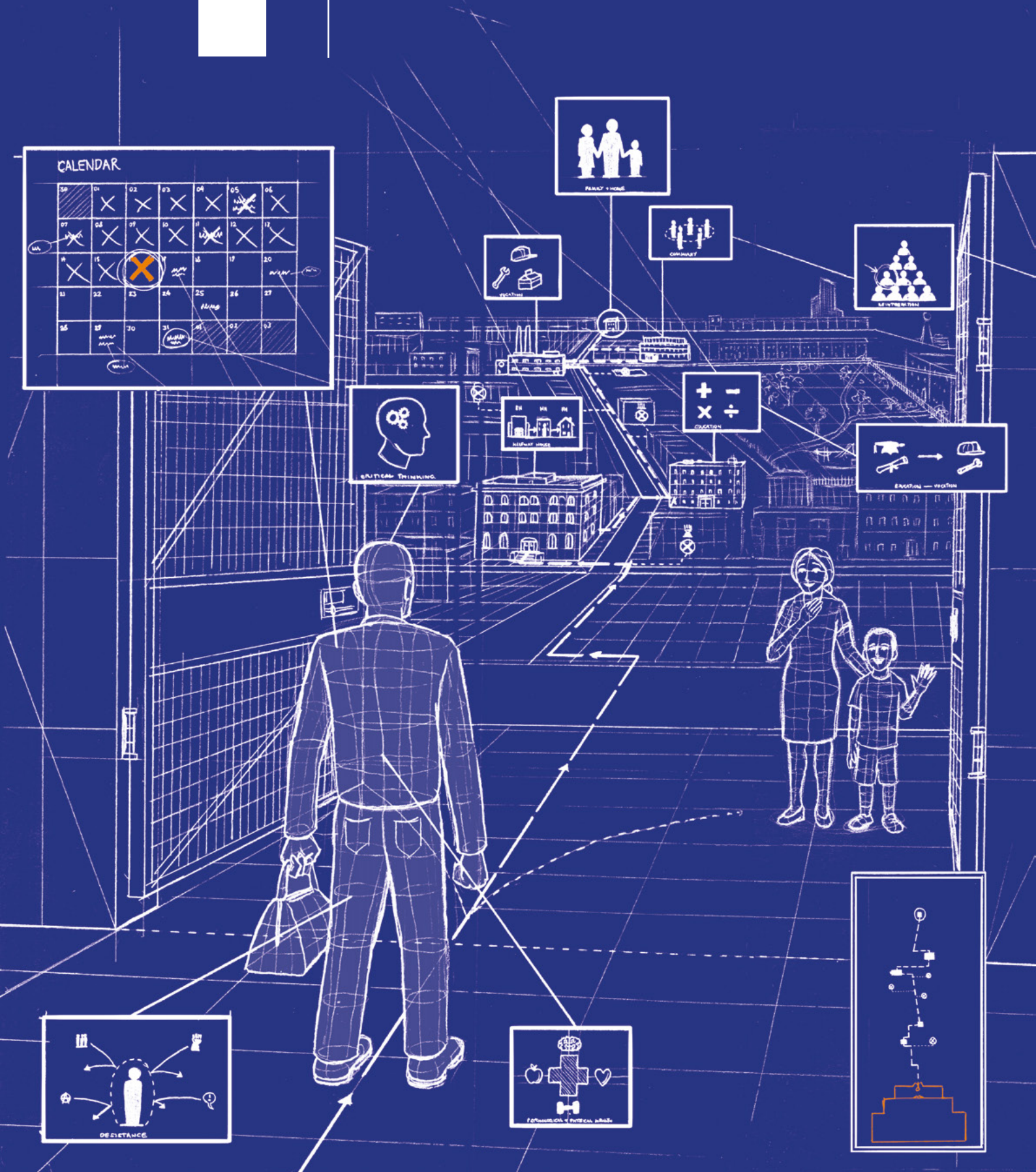
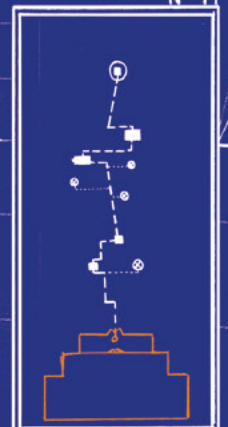
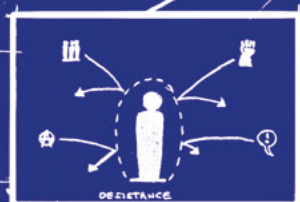
For VEOs and individual offenders identified as being interested and involved in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies, different options can be taken. In some circumstances, practitioners trained and experienced in targeted interventions with this group could travel to prisons and regions to deliver interventions. If this is not feasible, it may be appropriate for a practitioner trained and experienced in interventions with this group to remotely supervise the intervention work of a local practitioner. This may enable practitioners to adapt their approaches to accommodate the distinct issues these offenders may present. Finally, if an assessment has been conducted well, some practitioners may be able to use their existing knowledge and skills to address identified needs that may not require significant experience and knowledge of working with VEOs, for example, those that relate to emotional management and developing new relationships.

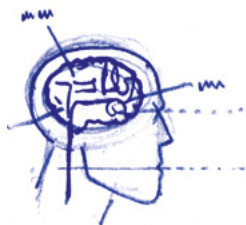


4

Community Reintegration

This section will examine good and promising practices relating to the successful reintegration of VEOs and prisoners observed to have radicalized to violent extremism into their local communities.





Key Promising Practices

- Reintegration policies, processes, and practices should have a strong legal basis and be in line with international standards and human rights obligations.
- Reintegration of VEOs should not be considered in isolation from victims of acts of violent extremism and the wider community and should be conducted collaboratively with such groups when appropriate.
- Timely and effective reintegration planning may be necessary to facilitate reintegration opportunities, such as employment, especially given the stigma that VEOs may experience within society that may need to be overcome.
- A key focus of reintegration should be on prevention of reengagement by individual offenders with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies to maintain desistance from offending.
- Effective reintegration is likely to require individuals to receive support in one or more of the following areas: social relations, coping, identity, ideology, self-agency, and disillusionment.
- Release restrictions should be appropriate and proportionate, not unnecessarily obstruct disengagement and desistance opportunities, and be balanced within the context of ensuring the safety of the community.
- Probation supervision of VEOs may require the support of senior managers and probation officers with specific attributes and competencies, specific approaches to supervision, and a focus on facilitating disengagement and desistance in cooperation with other partners.
- Family and friends can play a central role in reintegration efforts if they are committed to supporting disengagement and desistance and should be supported accordingly.
- Civil society organizations, former VEOs, religious representatives, victims, and mentors may all have specific roles to play in reintegration; but these roles and responsibilities should be carefully managed, supported, and evaluated.
- Multiagency arrangements should be utilized to coordinate and implement reintegration plans and strategies, using existing arrangements for other offender groups when appropriate.
- Protecting the safety of VEOs and their families is an important consideration during reintegration given possible retribution from community members and the violent extremist groups from which individuals may have disengaged.

The practices build on the various principles and examples provided in the previous section on interventions because many will apply to the reintegration of these individuals. The online version of this compendium provides more detailed and comprehensive information about good and promising practices associated with community reintegration, including additional references and links.

4.1 | Reintegration Policies, Strategies, and Planning

Policies and Strategies

Reintegration policies and strategies for VEOs need to be embedded in and benefit from existing approaches and frameworks for different types of offenders and overarching national strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism. Policies and strategies need to have a strong legal basis, be in line with international standards and human rights obligations, and offer appropriate legal and physical protection to the various actors involved, including the beneficiary, reintegration support providers, and family and community members.

Authorities should enable appropriate and sustained resourcing in financial, expertise, and capacity terms. The different roles, responsibilities, and information-sharing arrangements of governmental agencies should be clearly defined and attributed. This includes not only prison and probation services, but also law enforcement, educational and labor departments, social services, and local government. The potential involvement of civil society organizations and community members also should be considered, outlined, and supported.

Authorities need to consider the reintegration needs of victims and other individuals impacted by violent extremism and how solely investing in the reintegration of VEOs may be met with criticism if similar support is not provided to these groups. For instance, girls and women that are kidnapped by violent extremist groups with the aim of making them wives of fighters may require comparable reintegration support. They may experience stigmatization and ostracism similar to VEOs after returning to their communities even though they may not have committed violent extremist offenses. A restorative justice approach can be considered for VEOs, focusing on their rehabilitation and reintegration through reconciliation with victims and the community at large. This may be especially relevant when the actions of VEOs have harmed the very community from which they come and to which they are intending to return. It may help to facilitate healing, demonstrate forgiveness, and avoid retraumatization of offender, victims, and the wider community.

Planning

Multiagency cooperation and planning for release should begin well in advance of a VEO's reentry date, preferably at least six months earlier. This should ensure that information exchange between relevant stakeholders is well established and continuous and that support services are in place with an essential role played by probation services or the national equivalent.²²⁹ This may be especially relevant when pertaining to high-profile cases. Resettlement and release plans should be developed as early in the sentence as possible and be informed by risk and need assessments. These need to consider the circumstances, strengths, and challenges for each individual to inform how they can most successfully reintegrate into society.²³⁰



Authorities need to consider the reintegration needs of victims and other individuals impacted by violent extremism and how solely investing in the reintegration of VEOs may be met with criticism if similar support is not provided to these groups.



Risk and need assessments and resettlement plans also should be used to inform decisions for early or conditional release.²³¹ Resettlement plans should focus on managing the transition from prisons to probation, including progressive reintegration via day releases or halfway houses. Plans should take into consideration aspects such as (1) a problematic home or personal life, (2) intervention planning and timing, (3) the expected reception by members of violent extremist groups, (4) hostile members of the community and the media, and (5) optimizing how the strengths, qualities, and human capital of individuals can support desistance.²³²

They should include consideration of how housing agencies, educational institutions, health care providers, employment services,

family services, social services, and rehabilitative interventions may address critical needs to support disengagement and desistance. Landlords and employers may be reluctant to engage VEOs given the stigma, fear, and anger experienced in relation to their offense and their perceived continued danger. Certain administrative measures that stand in the way of a wholesome reintegration, such as the freezing of bank accounts and withdrawal of passports, will take time to be overturned.

Employment in particular may fulfill a number of needs for many VEOs, including keeping occupied, forming new associations and role identities, and providing an income that may enable them to play a meaningful role in their families.²³³

The planning process should give careful consideration to exit strategies for the various types of assistance and reintegration providers. For instance, a religious reintegration provider may identify individuals in the community that can slowly start to take over the counseling and clerical role.

VEOs should get the opportunity to contribute their own perspectives to decision-making processes about their early or conditional release and resettlement plans, indicating their preferences and areas where they feel they may need support.²³⁴ This may increase a VEO's level of commitment to the plan and ownership over their future and is especially critical in case there are reasons to consider relocation to a different community based on safety and welfare considerations of a VEO and their family.

4.2 | Aims and Focus of Reintegration Efforts

VEO reintegration efforts should be focused on how individuals can be supported in sustaining a commitment not to reengage with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies and developing commitments to constructive practices and social settings.²³⁵ Reintegration efforts need to support VEOs in areas that are most likely to assist disengagement and desistance. Successful disengagement and integration has been associated with VEOs who have made significant changes in five different domains: social relations, coping, identity, ideology and action orientation, and disillusionment.²³⁶

In summary, effective reintegration efforts are those that enable an individual to

- have supportive and meaningful relationships, including with family members, state representatives, and other prosocial influences;
- maintain good psychological and physical health, including being able to cope with challenging emotions associated with disengagement and reintegration;
- establish a balanced identity, no longer identifying exclusively with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies;
- remain resilient to beliefs and ideas that justify supporting and committing violence on behalf of violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies, including acceptance of the rule of law;
- be proactive and confident in participating constructively in society, such as through

employment, education, training, and family and community activities, and remaining disillusioned with the relevant group, cause, and ideology, noting that the risk of unemployment in the current environment remains high;

- be more equipped to use critical thinking to consume information and challenge their own group ideas and arguments; and
- develop a broader, more contextualized understanding of religion and politics.²³⁷

Additional components of successful reintegration efforts that have been identified for VEOs include

- developing or strengthening a sense of personal agency over their thinking, actions, and life course;
- addressing anger management and frustration tolerance issues;
- focusing on their rights and responsibilities as citizens;
- finding alternative, nonviolent ways to address political and social grievances and concerns;
- developing resilience to negative peer influence;
- addressing denial and minimization;
- motivating engagement with probation staff through motivational interviewing; and
- enabling them to engage in generative activities (giving back and supporting or caring for others).²³⁸

IN FOCUS

“Back on Track” Mentoring Scheme, Danish Prison and Probation Service

The “Back on Track” mentoring scheme was initiated by the Danish Prison and Probation Service in 2012, focused on preventing and countering all forms of radicalization to violent extremism among prisoners. The scheme was organized within an existing mentoring framework used with other types of offenders and coordinated across different agencies, including the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and the Security and Intelligence Services. It is specifically targeted at those charged with or convicted of terrorism-related offenses, those whose offenses were associated with hate of another group, and those prisoners deemed vulnerable to radicalization to violent extremism.

The aim of the scheme is to help prisoners become better at tackling everyday situations, problems, and conflicts in order to prevent them from committing future acts of violent extremism. The role of the mentor is to support and strengthen the inmate’s motivation to opt for a lifestyle free of crime and to build new relations in noncriminal and non-violent extremist environments. Focus is placed on

involving the prisoner’s family and social network outside of prison, giving them an active role during the offender’s time in prison and reintegration.

During reintegration, mentors focus on supporting the mentee in dealing with concrete challenges surrounding the release. This could be helping the mentee find a place to live, an education, or job and in the form of support to build new social relations. Mentors are trained in various dialogue techniques and coaching and conflict management skills and know how to involve the mentee’s family and friends. They are provided with a foundational level of knowledge of radicalization to violent extremism and related issues so that they better understand their mentee and can tailor the interventions accordingly. Mentors are supported and supervised by experienced coaches. The mentoring scheme is deemed most effective when it is part of a holistic rehabilitation approach and when efforts are effectively coordinated across relevant agencies.^a

^a Danish Department of Prisons and Probation and Danish Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs, “Back on Track: A Pilot Project on the Prevention of Radicalization Among Inmates,” June 2014, https://www.kennisplein.be/Documents/Back%20on%20Track_Denemarken.pdf.

4.3 | Restrictions on Liberty

Restrictions on liberty for VEOs need to be proportionate and balanced against the need to support reintegration and desistance while addressing national security and public protection concerns.²³⁹ If individuals are not given the freedom to establish new prosocial relationships, interests, and occupations, it is unlikely that their engagement and identification with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies will change. Indeed, draconian restrictions on liberty may exacerbate engagement by fueling grievance and despondency, sustaining us-and-them perceptions, and reinforcing their violent extremist identity.²⁴⁰

When VEOs violate their restrictions, measures need to be available to deal with noncompliance and associated risks, utilizing multiagency arrangements. Strategic, sensitive, and proportionate approaches are required, especially for low levels of noncompliance, that seek to maintain successful completion of supervision without immediately returning offenders to prison.²⁴¹ For instance, stakeholders can deliver interventions to address the issues underlying the problematic behavior. Disproportionate responses may be counterproductive with regard to reducing and managing risk and can potentially exacerbate grievances and influence reengagement in violent extremism.

4.4 | Probation Supervision

Formal supervision by probation services and equivalent authorities should be governed by the principal goals of public protection, risk reduction, and disengagement and desistance promotion. Probation officers can play an important role in (1) developing and supporting resettlement plans; (2) monitoring compliance with release restrictions; (3) directing reintegration activities; (4) acquiring and arranging resources to help meet the VEO's needs and basic living arrangements, such as access to a bank account; and (5) empowering offenders to cope with reintegration.²⁴²

Supervisors should work with other stakeholders and the VEO to carefully plan the end of support and assist offenders in using other resources and support structures available to them, including their own, when the supervision period ends.²⁴³

Strategic and senior-level support may be necessary to assist probation officers in seeking to negotiate workable arrangements that can reassure organizations and give them confidence to provide opportunities for this particular offender group.²⁴⁴ Developing trusting relationships between probation officers and VEOs is crucial, especially given that issues of mistrust, grievance, and us-and-them perceptions may affect how VEOs interact with professionals associated with the state.²⁴⁵ Having considered and mitigated associated and potential risks to staff, matching probation officers carefully with VEOs, including those who may share cultural or religious backgrounds, may help in this process.²⁴⁶ Establishing trust between probation staff and individuals who may not share cultural or religious backgrounds may be particularly powerful in challenging perceptions of individuals deemed to be different, highlighting

commonalities and strengthening respect and tolerance.

Qualities and approaches probation officers should consider adopting when working with VEOs include (1) remaining nonjudgmental; (2) demonstrating interest and commitment; (3) being transparent; (4) consistent role modeling, including reinforcing prosocial behavior; (5) being sensitive but forensic in addressing issues, including those associated with culture and religion; and (6) focusing on personal growth and change.²⁴⁷

Various promising practices have been identified in relation to the focus for probation officers in supervision sessions to assist VEO risk and case management. These include

- encouraging probationers to be more open-minded and develop their critical thinking (regarding how they interpret information and form their worldview);
- helping probationers develop a more balanced identity (not identifying exclusively with a violent extremist group, cause, and ideology);
- helping probationers reject the legitimacy of violence to resolve grievances;
- addressing denial and minimization of probationer offenses;
- assisting probationers to develop positive social networks and disengage from antisocial networks;
- helping probationers strengthen and repair family relationships; and
- supporting them with training, employment, and education, where this does not further their violent extremist views.²⁴⁸

4.5 | Involvement of Support Network and Nongovernmental Actors

Role and Involvement of Family and Friends

Providing opportunities for VEOs to maintain close ties with family and friends who will not further their violent extremist ideologies is crucial for supporting successful disengagement and reintegration.²⁴⁹ In prison, ensuring regular and meaningful contact, including with children, through prison visits in an appropriate environment and for a sufficient duration should

occur, as well as enabling phone calls and letters while ensuring security precautions are in place.²⁵⁰ Family members should be identified as central to supporting VEOs in their release and plans built around this, with responsibilities and obligations of all governmental and nongovernmental parties agreed and made clear.

Family members and close friends may play a number of roles, although not necessarily exclusively, in supporting a VEO's

disengagement and effective reintegration, including

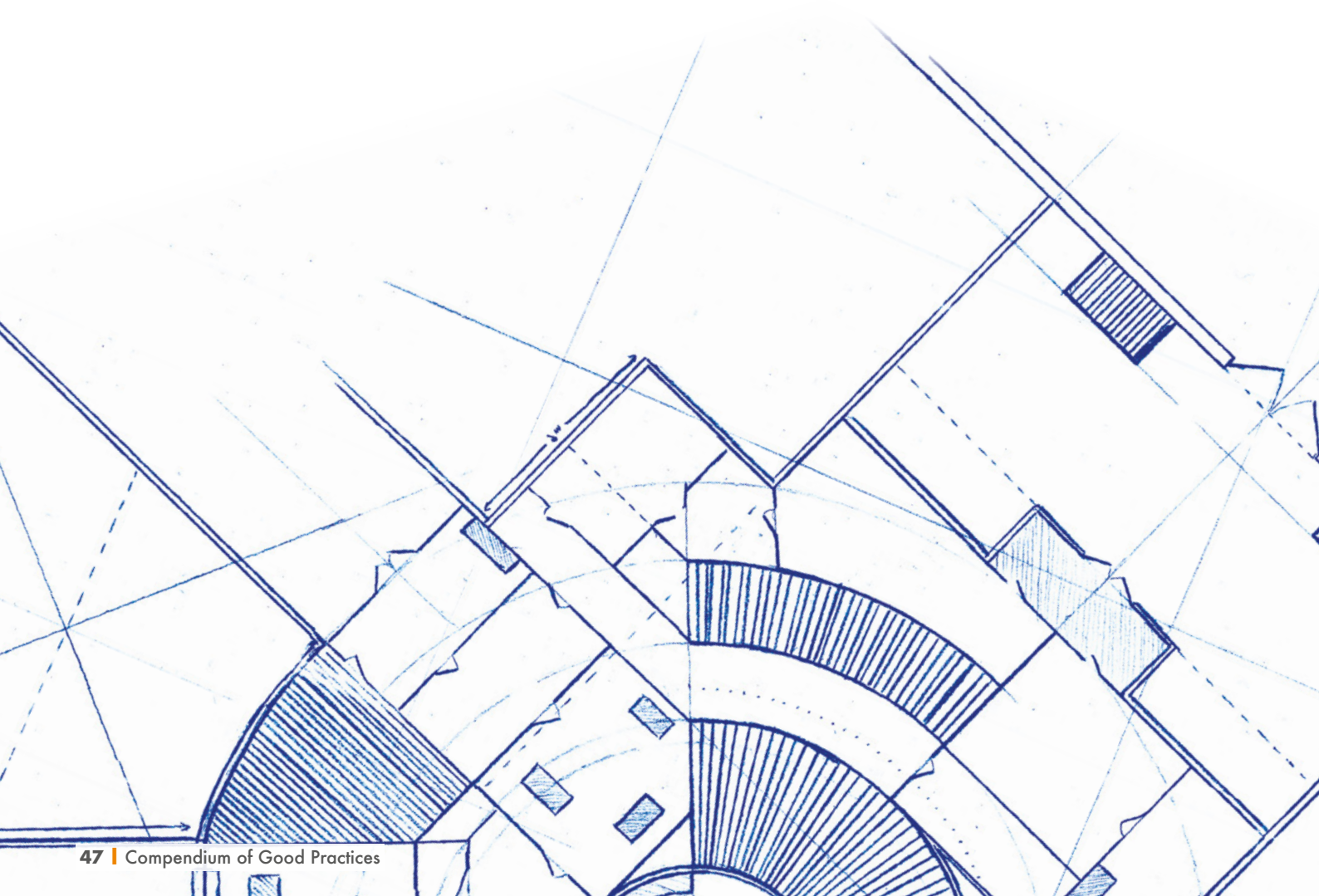
- helping VEOs address problems and issues they see as important for disengaging from and desisting violent extremism;
- helping offenders recognize, realize, and channel their strengths, capabilities, and skills;
- helping VEOs identify and find opportunities and activities in the community to aid disengagement and reintegration;
- encouraging them to meet their goals and needs in nonviolent ways;
- challenging justifications and perceptions supportive of violent extremism; and
- providing a continued sense of hope and belonging.²⁵¹

The influence of family members, close friends, and community members may not always be positive, with some actively supporting violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies. Such individuals may seek to undermine rehabilitation and reintegration interventions and activities, maintain associations between VEOs and other group members, and reinforce beliefs and narratives supportive of violent extremism.²⁵² Thus, careful assessment and vetting of family members are required based on information about family ties, family

circumstance, and their wider social network, including observations and intelligence about family-offender interactions during prison visits. Subjects of vetting should be notified of this.²⁵³ Careful consideration must be given to the organizational, legal, and ethical issues and obligations associated with restricting and closely monitoring contact between a VEO and a family member, especially if both are convicted for violent extremism-related offenses.²⁵⁴

Support should be provided to families and close friends so that they may fulfill their important role in VEO reintegration and may occur in various forms, including

- training or guidance that helps them to support the individual when they are released or when their license period ends, while increasing their own understanding of and resilience against violent extremism;
- involvement in the individual's rehabilitation from an early stage while in prison;
- assistance for the financial, emotional, and social adjustments that occur when their loved one is released into the family environment; and
- connections to social services and other support providers and resources.²⁵⁵



IN FOCUS

Exit Sweden Disengagement Program, Fryshuset

In Sweden, Exit is a project of the nonprofit organization Fryshuset, supporting individuals with a desire to leave neo-Nazi groups. Working with the prison and probation services, housing corporations, police, social services, families, and friends, Exit takes a multiagency approach to rehabilitation and reintegration. The project was founded by a group of former violent extremist offenders (VEOs) and professionally trained social workers working together as coaches to develop and deliver tailor-made support to VEOs to build prosocial identities, as well as to counsel parents, spouses, siblings, and others close to them.^a

In Exit Sweden's work, the relationship between coaches and clients is perceived as fundamental to the disengagement process. Coaches are very aware of their responsibility as role models and how their ways of thinking, behaving, interacting, and relating is intended to influence and shape the thinking and behavior of their clients. Modeling democratic and pluralistic ways of interaction involving trust, negotiation,

and communication counters ways of interacting typically associated with violent extremist groups.^b

This program also focuses on making changes to embodied knowledge, which includes the behaviors, routines, and other bodily expressions developed by VEOs through their engagement with a violent extremist group, cause, and ideology. The way that these individuals position themselves and behave in daily life and social settings and with others can be heavily influenced by their engagement, for instance leading to a generally threatening and conflict-prone stance, expression of superiority through disrespect to others (e.g., skipping the line), lack of patience, and low frustration tolerance.

Through counseling and activities, such as taking right-wing extremists to coffee shops in multicultural neighborhoods and modeling appropriate social behavior, VEOs become more aware of these learned bodily behaviors and routines and are able to change them.^c

^a Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission, "Exit Sweden," 22 June 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/7415_en; Fryshuset, "Global," n.d., <https://global.fryshuset.se> (accessed 1 August 2018).

^b Tina Wilchen Christiansen, "A Question of Participation: Disengagement From the Extremist Right; A Case Study From Sweden" (Ph.D. dissertation, Roskilde University, October 2015), p. 109, http://pure.au.dk/portal/files/98323271/A_question_of_participation.pdf.

^c Ibid.

Role and Involvement of Nongovernmental Actors

In addition to governmental actors, relevant civil society organizations and other nongovernmental actors and intervention providers should be involved in designing, delivering, and evaluating VEO reintegration programs and providing aftercare support. These entities often bring to bear specific expertise and skills and may engender high levels of trust and credibility among the local community and with the reintegration beneficiaries.²⁵⁶

More broadly, nongovernmental actors and the private sector may assist in the creation of safe and prosperous communities and livelihood opportunities. Beyond providing financial resources, private sector companies can provide traineeships, job placements, and equipment. Many of the good practices relating to

intervention providers apply to those providing reintegration support, including the need for appropriate vetting, resourcing, and support, especially because they are often the same actors. There are several types of nongovernmental actors.

Civil society organizations. The design and implementation of reintegration strategies and programs can benefit greatly from the inclusion of civil society organizations working alongside governmental agencies. Civil society organizations can assist with employment, provide spiritual and theological guidance, and deliver social and psychological support services.²⁵⁷ Specific advantages that these actors may be able to provide include (1) through-the-gate continuity of support between prison and release into the community, (2) specific and specialized expertise in delivering interventions to address radicalization to violent extremism,

and (3) more credibility and independence to build trust and engage with VEOs as nonstate actors.²⁵⁸

When identifying and engaging civil society organizations, consideration should be given to (1) their reputation and track record; (2) the transparency and focus of the work they intend to conduct and how the work fits with the overall reintegration strategy; (3) their credibility and competency, including professional skills, to deliver this work; (4) their relationship and links with the wider community and governmental agencies; and (5) their funding structure.²⁵⁹ They should be appropriately vetted.

Authorities should support civil society organizations with funding, training, and information sharing and, when necessary, by providing adequate political and legal space for their operations and protection. At the same time, both parties need to carefully consider the impact that overt financial links to the government may have on the credibility of these independent organizations.

Former VEOs. Former VEOs can play an important role in intervention and reintegration efforts given their distinct position. Specific advantages they may have include (1) credibility in being able to talk from first-hand experience; (2) acting as role models who represent successful disengagement, desistance, and reintegration; (3) being well placed to empathize with the difficulties faced by VEOs including those of imprisonment and reintegration; (4) being able to challenge beliefs and ways of thinking associated with violent extremism; and (5) being able to demonstrate prosocial ways of alternative thinking, behaving, identifying, and living as a lesson for VEOs.²⁶⁰

Other intervention providers can use the example of former VEOs in their work to highlight how others have made positive changes and are leading constructive lives.

When working with former VEOs, it is important to

- establish that they have genuinely disengaged from violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies and thus no longer support and condone extremist violence, such as through security background checks and confirmation of their registration with legitimate organizations to conduct reintegration work;
- verify any hidden agendas regarding their involvement, such as through evaluating their motives for this work;
- monitor their physical safety, especially if they are known for being identified as traitors by

other VEOs, and their psychological health, given the impact that these engagements may have on them; and

- select and vet them based on their qualities and competencies to conduct this work effectively and appropriately, utilizing information available from a range of sources.²⁶¹

Victims. Victims must be notified when VEOs are scheduled to be released from prison in order to prepare them for this potentially impactful moment and offer any protection and support services.²⁶² Some victims may have a desire to play a more active role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of VEOs, and where appropriate, efforts should be made to accommodate this. Examples of possible involvement include victims engaging in personal encounters with VEOs via a mediator or counselor or providing written or verbal stories and testimonies that can be used to emphasize the harmful consequences created by acts of violent extremism.²⁶³

Such methods may be particularly useful for restorative, reintegrative approaches that focus on forgiveness and community healing and prevent retraumatizing victims and communities after reintegration.²⁶⁴ Any involvement of victims in intervention and reintegration work needs to be managed very sensitively with those victims involved deemed resilient and able to engage in this work.²⁶⁵

Mentors. Mentors who have been vetted should ideally start their one-to-one interventions with VEOs while they are still in prison to provide continuity of support after release.²⁶⁶ They should approach their work with an open, nonjudgmental attitude and be able to offer different perspectives to the offender.²⁶⁷ Mentors should be provided with financial compensation to encourage long-term commitment, but there may be issues associated with governmental funding impacting on their perceived credibility that need to be carefully considered.²⁶⁸

Religious representatives. Religious experts may have an important role in helping to reintegrate VEOs beyond delivering interventions specifically targeted at addressing disengagement and desistance. Such representatives may (1) provide more general social and spiritual support, (2) help build relationships with the individual's family, (3) identify contacts within their networks that can assist with employment opportunities, and (4) liaise with other religious representatives to provide continuity of support after release.²⁶⁹

4.6 | Multiagency Arrangements

Multiagency arrangements for managing VEOs as they are released into the community are crucial to ensure effective reintegration and should be established at different levels of authority.²⁷⁰ Where possible, arrangements should be based on existing models for managing other types of offenders, which may be more efficient, economical, and prudent than setting up entirely new ones, and any model should be consistent with the local context.²⁷¹

Although prison, probation, and law enforcement agencies should play a central role in these arrangements, reintegration involves a broader range of actors. These include representatives from community organizations, local authorities, and municipalities; social, educational, and health services; and families.²⁷² Multiagency cooperation and collaboration should be used to (1) assess risk and need, (2) identify appropriate support and continuity of care, (3) plan and coordinate interventions, (4) reward and reinforce use of skills and learning, and (5) exchange information.²⁷³

All partners should clearly understand the principles of information sharing and confidentiality, shared objectives, roles and responsibilities, and ongoing contact and communication between different agencies.²⁷⁴ Probation and prison services and other agencies and organizations should seek to use the same definitions, categorizations, language, knowledge, understanding, and assessment and intervention models and approaches to address these issues.²⁷⁵

Efforts should be made to strengthen confidence and trust within and between different agencies and organizations to reinforce cooperation and collaboration. Policies and measures should be implemented to facilitate the appropriate exchange of information and intelligence relating to a VEO's reintegration between relevant stakeholders who are appropriately vetted. A key measure to assist information sharing is to distinguish what is genuinely classified information and what is sensitive but can be declassified when abstracted.²⁷⁶

4.7 | Community Cooperation

A welcoming and positive community environment, where VEOs are accepted and their transition assisted is crucial in supporting long-term reintegration efforts.²⁷⁷ Effective reintegration may be as much about the community as the offender.²⁷⁸

Specific community members, the media, and certain groups in society may seek to stigmatize VEOs and undermine reintegration efforts.²⁷⁹ Efforts may need to be undertaken to overcome stigma associated with being involved with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies, including in accessing social support, education, and employment.²⁸⁰

Steps that can be taken to overcome these barriers can include

- establishing the support of community leaders;
- building links between professionals, such as probation officers, and community organizations to raise awareness of the importance of providing opportunities to VEOs to help them reintegrate; and
- investing in community awareness and

preparedness, including through media and political statements, in order to confront prejudicial attitudes toward VEOs.²⁸¹

Fear of retribution and excommunication is potentially a significant issue in social reintegration.²⁸² Measures should be put in place to protect the safety of VEOs and their family where there is credible information about threats to life or limb from members of the community, including retaliation from members of violent extremist groups. VEOs and their families should be appropriately shielded from any undue media attention to ensure their ongoing rehabilitation and reintegration are not jeopardized.

VEOs should be asked whether they are aware of any specific threats and concerns before they are released in addition to authorities collating intelligence and information about any specific threats. Measures may include relocation, witness protection arrangements, and educating individuals and their families on practices they can implement to manage possible threats.²⁸³

4.8 | Specific Considerations for Special Populations



Returning and relocating FFs may present a specific threat to transit countries and their country of origin, given that many may possess the motivation, intent, and capability to undertake

significant terrorist activities by virtue of their experiences and training abroad. This includes the planning, coordinating, and conducting of attacks; the production and dissemination of propaganda; the recruitment, radicalization, and training of others; and the establishment of new terrorist groups or cells.²⁸⁴ The potential of individuals to deceive authorities by denying or deemphasizing their involvement must be considered, especially given the difficulty that authorities face in gathering evidence in foreign conflict zones.²⁸⁵

Conversely, FFs may have disengaged from violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies prior to or while returning to their host countries.²⁸⁶ This group therefore provides a particular challenge regarding reintegration given that they may present a low or high risk of committing future terrorism-related offenses.

Incorrectly identifying an individual as high or low risk clearly has significant repercussions, including for effective reintegration. Services therefore should provide comprehensive and tailored reintegration strategies for FFs. These should be based on sound assessment in accordance with the services' obligations under international law and, where appropriate, developed with local communities, mental health and educational practitioners, civil society organizations, and other relevant actors.²⁸⁷

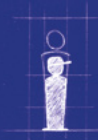


A distinct issue that girls and women may encounter when reintegrating are threats to their safety from family members and communities that may seek to ostracize, punish, or harm them

because of their perceived past actions and associations.²⁸⁸ More generally, the stigma of being a female associated with violent extremist groups and activities and the additional obstacles to reintegration that consequently may arise need to be taken into account.²⁸⁹

To mitigate such issues, discussions with these girls and women, family members, and community members should try to identify possible threats and concerns they may have.

Negotiated strategies may be necessary among the offender, her family, and the community.



A number of considerations should inform the reintegration of children and juveniles associated with violent extremism. These include (1) consistently applying juvenile justice

standards and norms, (2) not allowing children and juveniles to be stigmatized or defined by their offending behavior, (3) recognizing and being responsive to their stage of development and maturity, and (4) mitigating the negative impact of peers in response to their offending behavior.²⁹⁰ For many children and juveniles, especially those who have been incarcerated, trying to live a "normal" life may be the key priority.

Juveniles typically must contend with many personal and interpersonal challenges as part of the transition to adulthood; association with violent extremism is only likely to compound this. They may resist ongoing interventions and processes that they perceive to be holding them back from normality and maintaining aspects of their past from which they want to distance themselves. To enable this, providing them with similar opportunities to those of their peers could be the most important part of reintegration.



Juveniles typically must contend with many personal and interpersonal challenges as part of the transition to adulthood; association with violent extremism is only likely to compound this.



Services should think carefully and sensitively about the extent to which they want to impose more formal, violent extremism-specific intervention and supervision approaches because these may reinforce stigmatization and limit disengagement. This consideration should be balanced against the need to ensure the safety and security of the community.

The influence of social media and the internet may specifically impact the reintegration of children and juveniles associated with violent extremism. They may be subject to threats and taunts, but also praise and support by peers, strangers, and other VEOs. Individuals will respond in different ways, but they may need support in coping with and responding to these approaches. They may be particularly vulnerable to reengaging with certain groups, causes, and ideologies when they, for example, find reintegration particularly challenging, still value their identity as a violent extremist, or feel excluded or marginalized.

Where laws allow, consideration should be given to alternatives to imprisonment by diverting and reintegrating juveniles into the community, as well as to having them remain in juvenile centers when they are scheduled to transition from juvenile to adult facilities.²⁹¹ For reasons outlined above, these alternative approaches may prevent or mitigate children and juveniles defining themselves as VEOs, prevent further possible radicalization to violent extremism and other antisocial attitudes and behavior from adults, and allow them more opportunities earlier in their lives to disengage. If they remain in juvenile facilities, however, the rights and needs of other juveniles should be considered carefully, especially if there is a risk that they may be radicalized to violent extremism by this individual.

The children and spouses of VEOs must be protected from being radicalized to violent extremism and recruited to violent extremist groups when VEOs are being reintegrated. Where there is evidence and legitimate concerns about such radicalization taking place, appropriate and proportionate restrictions on the nature of contact may need to be enforced

and decisions and justifications appropriately documented. Due consideration should be given to the legal obligations regarding the right of children to be protected, the right of children to maintain contact with their parents, the right of the parents to have access to their children, and the interests of public order.²⁹²



In prisons and regions where issues associated with violent extremism may be rare or infrequent, the policies, processes, and practices that govern the reintegration of other offenders, such as multiagency public protection arrangements, should be followed unless there are clear and legitimate reasons for not doing so.

Prison managers may want to contact colleagues in prisons and regions with more experience to identify what specific issues should be accommodated within these processes and practices for the reintegration of VEOs. There is a danger that, with inexperience, prisons and regions may act disproportionately regarding the amount and type of resources and measures that need to be taken to manage the reintegration of a VEO. Attention should be focused on a measured response built on existing good practices and “what works” principles. Authorities should not equate an individual convicted of a terrorism-related offense or who has shown an interest or has been involved in violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies as being at high risk of offending and high risk of serious harm by default.

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