# Countering Violent Extremism (CVE): Diversion Program—Assessment Tools to Support Secondary and Tertiary Intervention for Violent Extremism

## Final Report

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# 1. Introduction

Violent extremism is a critical concern for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), other federal and state agencies, local law enforcement, and the American public. For the past several years, there has been a steady increase in attention to both domestic and international terrorism from a growing community of researchers. However, research has not been systematically applied to evaluate tools available to professionals—including local law enforcement and community practitioners—to effectively identify early signs of violent extremism and divert individuals away from the path of violence. The Countering Violent Extremism (CVE): Diversion Program—Assessment Tools to Support Secondary and Tertiary Intervention for Violent Extremism (CVE Assessment Tools) project, sponsored by the DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), is designed to leverage existing research and expert input from stakeholders and potential end users to better understand their needs and preferences for violent extremism assessment tools and diversion programs to prevent terrorism and acts of targeted violence. In support of DHS's efforts, RTI International conducted research on existing violent extremism risk assessment tools and diversion programs across two phases (**Table 1**).

**Table 1.  CVE Assessment Tools Research Phases**

| Research Phase | Goals | Activities |
|---|---|---|
| State of the Science | ▪ Assess the state of the science on risk assessment tools for use in a terrorism context and adjacent fields.<br>▪ Gather information on risk assessment programs among pre- and post-criminal populations in the United States and internationally.<br>▪ Identify potential programs for adaptation in U.S. communities. | ▪ Develop literature reviews on domestic violent extremism risk factors, risk assessment tools, and diversion programs.<br>▪ Develop interview protocols and conduct interviews with academics, practitioners, and government officials active in risk assessment research and programming. |
| Solution-Focused Model[a] | ▪ Collect data on how the Solution-Focused Model assesses risk and diverts individuals from violent extremism in Denmark.<br>▪ Identify key components of the Solution-Focused Model for adaptation to U.S. communities.<br>▪ Assess the ability of U.S. communities to incorporate key components of the Solution-Focused Model. | ▪ Conduct field research on the Solution-Focused Model in Copenhagen, Denmark.<br>▪ Conduct a formal assessment of the Danish government's implementation of the Solution-Focused Model.<br>▪ Conduct focus groups in two U.S. communities to assess their ability to adapt and implement key components of the Solution-Focused Model. |

[a] The Solution Focused Model on Life Skills was developed in Aarhus, Denmark by Dr. Preben Bertelsen. For further reading see Bertelsen, P: (2015a): Danish Preventive Measures and De-radicalization Strategies: The Aarhus Model. Panorama 2015, p 241–253.

In the first phase, RTI conducted a state of the science summary on risk assessment tools, risk factors, and diversion programs for violent extremism and adjacent fields. The summary included two literature reviews and interviews with 27 risk assessment and diversion programming stakeholders and end-users. RTI identified six key components for successful risk assessment and diversion programs: referral, intake and management, assessment, treatment, follow-up, and multidisciplinary teams. Further, RTI identified the Solution-Focused Work on Life Skills model (Solution-Focused Model), a CVE intervention tool used by the Danish government, as a promising approach for incorporating the six key components into a holistic risk assessment and management program that could be adapted for U.S. communities.

In the second phase, RTI conducted research on the Solution-Focused Model to further assess its adaptability for U.S. communities. The second phase began with field research in Copenhagen, Denmark, to better understand how the model is operationalized by the Danish government. RTI then used an adaptation framework to identify key aspects of the model in all six core components (as identified in the first phase) for successful adaptation in U.S. communities. Finally, RTI collected data in two U.S. communities—Denver, Colorado and San Diego, California—to assess facilitators and barriers the communities might face to implementing key aspects of the model.

This report details findings from all research activities across both phases of the CVE Assessment Tools project. It also provides recommendations for future research on CVE and terrorism prevention risk assessment tools and diversion programs, and future research on adapting the Solution-Focused Model for U.S. communities.

# 2. State of the Science Summary

The first phase of the CVE Assessment Tools project was designed to leverage existing knowledge and expert input to better understand the current landscape and state of the science related to the use of risk assessment tools in the context of CVE. Through a robust examination of contemporary literature related to risk assessment and CVE and a series of semistructured interviews with academics, government stakeholders, and practitioners, RTI sought to provide a scientific foundation for the creation of nuanced risk assessment tools and protocols for use in the United States. The results of this state of the science summary would be used to inform provide recommendations for the next phase in the project. Phase 1 incorporated three data collection efforts: two literature reviews and one series of semistructured interviews with experts and other stakeholders. The first literature review and the semistructured interviews were conducted in tandem, with research literature leading to new interview questions identifying additional literature review sources. The second literature review expanded on the findings from the first literature review and interviews.

## 2.1 Initial Literature Review

The initial literature review addressed three goals and focused on academic and professional literature[1] from 2010 to 2016[2]:

1. Assess the state of the science on the use of risk assessment tools for use in a terrorism context;

2. Inform and refine semistructured interview protocols; and

3. Gather information on the types and application of procedures for assessing risk among pre- and post-criminal populations to support the design of risk assessment tools for use in the United States.

The review was concentrated on violent extremism assessment risk and protective factors commonly cited by researchers and other stakeholders; differences in individual- and group-level factors; validated risk assessment instruments from mental health, criminal justice, and psychology; violent extremism risk assessment tools; the lack of validations for violent extremism risk assessment tools; and requirements for validating risk assessment tools. The literature review summary included recommendations on best practices for violent extremism risk assessment tool development and validation and guidance on how risk assessment instruments should be used by CVE practitioners.

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[1] Domains included counterterrorism, psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, homeland security, education, workforce development, criminology, criminal justice, and law.
[2] Data collection for the literature review began in 2016 and a decision was made in consultation with DHS to define "recent" literature as articles published since 2010. Older articles were included if they were seminal or foundational research needed for clarification or contextualizing contemporary research.

### 2.1.1 Methodology and Sources

The literature review was conducted using EBSCO and Google Scholar to identify peer-reviewed articles on risk assessment, risk and protective factors, and indicators of risk. In addition, the literature review included sources identified during semistructured interviews or provided by participants and research and policy documents on international CVE assessment tools provided by DHS.

### 2.1.2 Findings

The review (1) included summaries of different types of assessment tools used in both terrorism-related interventions and other forms of more general crime (e.g., domestic abuse, recidivism), (2) described the evolution from strict actuarial assessment tools to structured professional judgment assessment tools, and (3) exposed barriers to deploying risk assessment tools, including lack of cultural nuance and empirical validation of accuracy and precision.

Investigations into the concept of assessing individuals' and groups' proclivities to engage in deviant behavior date back more than 50 years and have been conducted in myriad disciplines for a range of unique applications (Borum, 2015). Since the late 1980s, researchers have attempted to develop tools for assessing the likelihood that individuals will engage in violence. Although most early literature focused primarily on violence in general, the periods just before and since 9/11 risk assessment tool development have focused on extremist violence and terrorism. These contemporary risk assessment models view concepts such as "dangerousness" and "risk" as "contextual (highly dependent on situations and circumstances), dynamic (subject to change), and continuous (varying along a continuum of probability)" (Borum et al., 1999, p. 324).

There was consensus in the literature that risk assessments cannot predict future behavior but can identify certain characteristics that associated with a propensity to engage in selected behaviors. This distinction frames individualized risk assessments for CVE as "a problem to be solved, rather than as a prediction to be rendered" (Borum, 2015, p. 64). Attempts to understand how these characteristics influence risk yielded three distinct types of risk assessment tools: clinical, actuarial, and structured professional judgment (SPJ) (Borum, 2015; Dernevik et al., 2009; Dolan & Doyle, 2000; Lloyd & Dean, 2015; Monahan, 1984).

- *Clinical risk assessment tools* are the least structured and rely on the assessor's best judgment based on their knowledge and experience. The strength of this approach lies in its flexibility to tailor individual evaluations based on their unique context. However, research has shown that, used in isolation, the accuracy of clinical judgments is little better than chance (Mossman, 1994).

- *Actuarial risk assessment tools* are the most structured of the three approaches and rely on correlations between risk factors and violence to determine how much weight to assign each risk factor. Actuarial assessments allow assessors to make decisions

based on predetermined relationships and weighting (Meelh, 1954 in Dernevik et al., 2009). Actuarial assessments tend to be more consistent and accurate than clinical assessments (Grove et al., 2000; Mossman, 1994), but some (Hart, 1998a,b) have argued that actuarial methods do not effectively account for individual variation. Instead, they focus primarily on static variables and minimize the role of professional judgment. Others have identified concerns over the generalizability of these tools (Douglas & Reeves, 2009).

▪ *SPJ tools* are a hybrid of the clinical and actuarial methodologies, attempting to maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both (Borum et al., 1999; Dolan & Doyle, 2000). SPJ instruments provide evaluator a list of variables to consider, supported by empirical evidence, but do not suggest tallying risk factors like actuarial tools do. Instead, each item is rated on a scale (typically ranging from "not present" to "definitely present"), and the evaluator is left to use their judgment about the relevance of each factor and the overall level of risk based on the available information. This type of assessment is praised for its adaptability for use with a variety of samples (Scurich, 2016), improved accuracy over unstructured clinical judgment (Douglas, 2009), and appreciation for the role of protective factors (Dolan & Doyle, 2000). However, there are concerns over inter-rater reliability and the need for an experienced evaluator to perform the assessment.

**Table 2** summarizes common actuarial and SPJ violence risk assessment instruments including general violence and violent extremism risk assessments; the latter are italicized.

**Table 2. Actuarial and Structured Professional Judgment Risk Assessment Instruments**

| Tool | Items | Intended Use |
|---|---|---|
| **Actuarial Assessment Instruments** | | |
| Classification of Violence Risk (COVR) | Varies | Predict the likelihood of violence in adult psychiatric inpatients upon release. |
| Level of Service Inventory—Revised (LSI-R) | 54 | Predict general recidivism in adult offenders. |
| Psychopathy Checklist—Revised | 20 | Diagnose psychopathy in adult forensic populations. |
| Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (VRAG) | 12 | Predict likelihood of violence in mentally disordered adults with history of violence. |
| Violence Risk Scale (VRS) | 26 | Predict likelihood of violence in adult psychiatry patients. |
| **Structured Professional Judgment Assessment Tools** | | |
| *Extremism Risk Guidance Factors (ERG 22+)* | 22 | Assess risk and needs in convicted extremist offenders and other offenders for whom there are credible concerns about potential to commit extremist offences. |
| Forensisches Operationalisiertes Therapie-Risiko-Evaluations-System (FOTRES) | Varies | Assess and manage violent recidivism risk for specific offense in adults. |

(continued)

**Table 2.  Actuarial and Structured Professional Judgment Risk Assessment Instruments (continued)**

| Tool | Items | Intended Use |
|---|---|---|
| **Structured Professional Judgment Assessment Tools (continued)** | | |
| Historical, Clinical, Risk Management-20 | 20 | Assess and manage violence risk within correctional, civil psychiatric and forensic psychiatric settings. |
| Historisch, Klinish, Toekomst-30 (HKT-30) | 30 | Predict likelihood of violent recidivism in mentally disordered adults. |
| *IAT-8* | 8 | Assess whether intervention work is affecting the level of vulnerability to radicalization. |
| *Multi-Level Guidelines (MLG)* | 20 | Assess and manage group-based violence. |
| *RADAR* | 15 | Identify individuals who would benefit from services to help disengage from violent extremism. |
| Short-Term Assessment of Risk and Treatability (START) | 20 | Predict likelihood of violence, suicide, self-harm, and self-neglect. |
| Structured Assessment of Protective Factors for Violence Risk (SAPROF) | 17 | Supplement other assessments by providing a measure of relevant protective factors. |
| Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY) | 30 | Predict likelihood of violence in adolescents. |
| *Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol (TRAP-18)* | 18 | Assess risk of engagement in lone-actor terrorism to assist threat assessors with prioritizing cases for risk management. |
| Violence Risk Screening-10 (V-RISK-10) | 10 | Quickly identify psychiatric patients for violence risk and identify those in need of further assessment. |
| *Violent Extremist Risk Assessment-2 (VERA-2)* | 31 | Assess the likelihood of future violence by an identified offender who has been convicted of unlawful ideologically motivated violence. |
| WAVR-21 | 21 | Assess workplace and campus targeted violence risk. |

Researchers have worked to develop violent extremism-specific assessment protocols that use the known strengths of general risk assessment tools but also prioritize extremist-specific characteristics over those of individuals likely to commit more general violent acts. This is in response to one viewpoint arguing that existing SPJ tools for violence in general assume a linear cumulative risk model that equates the number of risk factors to the risk of engaging in violence (Borum, 2015). However, linear models may not be effective for violent extremism, since there is no way to account for background and motivations for violent extremism (Pressman, 2009). Similarly, Dernevik et al. (2009) suggest that findings

and tools developed using offenders with mental illness and generally violent behavior are not applicable to cases where the individual is politically or ideologically motivated. For example, because of limitations in using general violence models for violent extremism, the developers of the HCR-20, one of the most commonly used violence risk assessment tools, have been very clear that its use should be limited to historically violent individuals displaying characteristics of mental illness or personality disorder (Webster et al., 1997).

To develop violent extremism-specific assessment tools that identify risk and protective factors, outcomes to be predicted, and the relationship between factors and outcomes, there is a call for systematic research to link specific risk factors to engaging in terrorist acts (Roberts and Horgan, 2008). Reviewed research examined several major risk factors for violence and suggested little overlap with violent extremism risk factors; however, the literature did identify potential violent extremism risk factors for investigation: (1) ideology (the cultural, racial, or religious framework that inspires the individual's behavior), (2) affiliations (the individual's social, professional, and familial network), (3) grievances (issues, conditions, or events that motivate the individual to action), and (4) moral emotions (the ethical justification of the individual's actions) (Monahan, 2012). In a later summary of the findings related to these variables, Monahan adds a fifth category, "identities," which can be described as a feeling of oneness with a chosen group or cause (Monahan, 2015). Each of these categories has received at least some theoretical support from researchers over the years.

Another commonly cited shortfall of the state of the science is the dearth of valid risk factors identified by the research community and the inability to assess the risk of extremist violence rather than common violence (Monahan, 2012). One exception that Monahan identified was the Violent Extremism Risk Assessment (VERA), developed to specifically assess the risk of violent extremist behavior (Pressman, 2009). At the time it was developed, the VERA was on the cutting edge, representing the first known effort to develop a violent extremism-specific tool.

Around the same time the VERA was being developed, researchers in Europe were investigating the use of general violence prediction models with individuals convicted of politically motivated offenses (Dernevik et al., 2009). They focused on identifying extremist actors before they turned violent. The conclusions drawn were consistent with the findings of others, specifically that common violence risk assessment procedures were of limited utility with this population.

*Limitations of Risk Assessment Tools in Countering Violent Extremism*

There are numerous challenges to developing accurate and precise tools to measure an individual's risk of engaging in extremist violence. Despite similarities among convicted violent extremists identified in the literature (Borum, 2011, 2015; Dernevik et al., 2009; Gill et al., 2014; Grunewalde et al., 2013; Hamm & Spaaij, 2015; Horgan, 2008; Kruglanski et

al., 2008; Roberts & Horgan, 2008; Silber & Bhatt, 2007; Smith, 2016), most researchers and practitioners from private, academic, and federal organizations support the assertion that there is no single profile or pathway to violent extremism (Borum, 2011; Department of Defense, 2012; Gill et al., 2014; Hamm & Spaaij, 2015; Horgan, 2008; Kruglanski & Fishman, 2006; Silber & Bhatt, 2007; Van der Valk & Wagenaar, 2010). Borum et al. (1999, p. 328) argue that the profiles of those at risk for engaging in relatively rare types of violence will never be "sufficiently specific or sensitive" and there will be a large majority of individuals who fit these profiles but who will never engage in violence. Gill et al. (2014, p. 433) supported this claim over a decade later stating, "even if such a profile were evident, an over-reliance on the use of such a profile would be unwarranted because many more people who do not engage in lone-actor terrorism would share these characteristics." A review of the literature identified three primary limitations of risk assessment tools for violent extremism: lack of empirical validation, difficulty in defining the goal of the assessment, and legal and cultural concerns.

### *Lack of Empirical Validation*

The main criticism of these newly developed tools is the lack of published evidence to support their criterion-related validity (Cook et al., 2015; Monahan, 2012, 2015). Cook et al. (2015) point out the need for additional research to assess the predictive validity (does the tool predict the intended outcome; e.g., future violence), concurrent validity between tools (is the tool related to other similar tools), and discriminant validity (does the tool correctly distinguish those who engage in the outcome of interest from those who do not). Although some initial work has been done in this area (Meloy & Gill, 2016; Pressman & Flockton, 2012), the validation methods are less than ideal because of the lack of representative control groups, dependence on data sets primarily developed by coding open source materials (datasets that are often filled with missing or incongruent data), and the relatively extreme rarity of terrorism compared to other acts that are topics of risk assessment (e.g., drunk driving, domestic abuse).

### *Difficulty in Defining the Goal of Assessment*

Violence risk assessment tools also face the challenge of identifying what they are designed to measure. Roberts and Horgan (2008) stress the importance of "hazard identification." As seen in the development of psychological assessments that measure everything from general violence to very specific violent acts (e.g., sexual assault, bullying, spousal or child abuse), the identification of the outcome or hazard is critical to identifying valid risk factors and ensuring proper use of tools across contexts. The lack of any universally accepted definition of terrorism creates confusion that affects both theory development and measurement (Freilich & LaFree, 2016). Data sources used for research group analyses are often flawed because of inconsistent coding schemes, the use of varying and incomplete sources, and lack of consistent protocols for handling missing data. Control group studies are plagued by the use of inconsistent comparison groups including non-extremist general

violence offenders, nonviolent extremist offenders, violent offenders from other extremist groups, and the general population.

**Legal and Cultural Concerns**

In the United States, individuals are free to hold extreme and even radical views (FBI, 2016; Smith, 2016) so long as they do not participate in or incite violence. In the 2016 report "Preventing Extremism in Schools," the FBI states "The difference between protected speech and illegal incitement can be a very fine line…The issue is not if the individual voiced his/her support, but rather has advocated imminent violence in support of an extremist organization and that violence is likely to occur as a result" (FBI, 2016, p. 13). In other words, in the United States, individuals have freedoms protecting their right to expression without criminal persecution. It is not illegal to have or even expose or promote extremist beliefs or ideology, so long as the individual is not inciting violence. Unless an individual has broken the law or there is compelling evidence that he or she will break the law, law enforcement is limited in its responses. Accordingly, many critics argue that the use of risk assessment tools is an infringement as it seeks to repress or, in some cases, police protected speech. Through this perspective, many community- and faith-based groups and advocates object to the administration or prescription of any formal assessment for violent extremism.

Culturally, Americans have very different responses to the government, particularly law enforcement. This is not to suggest that each member of a community shares the same opinions and experiences of the community at large. Nevertheless, it is important to consider how the design and application of an assessment tool for extremist violence will be accepted by the communities in which it is deployed. Consideration should be paid to avoiding further alienating a community or individual by playing into an individual's reasons for becoming radicalized.

## 2.2   Expert Interviews

To understand how risk assessment tools are or could be used in terrorism prevention, RTI solicited input from a diverse group of stakeholders, including multiple levels of government (federal, state, and local); law enforcement; academics; practitioners; and community groups focused on public health, mental health, and support of religious or cultural communities. Stakeholder interviews provided myriad perspectives on conducting violent extremism risk assessments across a range of ideological contexts and stages of radicalization and criminality. The data gathered through these interviews provided insights into the application of risk assessment protocols in clinical, corrections, and law-enforcement contexts, and the limitations and barriers encountered while doing so.

## 2.2.1   Stakeholder Recruitment

Stakeholder recruitment began with the identification of experts in government, academia, law enforcement, and end-users or potential end-users of risk assessment tools for violent extremism. First, DHS S&T provided RTI with a list of potential stakeholders and end-users of assessment tools for terrorism prevention. RTI supplemented this list with stakeholders identified through the initial literature review. Upon DHS S&T approval of the preliminary stakeholder list, recruitment efforts began with an introductory e-mail from the S&T Program Manager requesting stakeholder participation in an interview related to the development and use of violent extremism assessment tools. This communication was followed by an e-mail from RTI reiterating the purpose and goals of the project, introducing the RTI project team, and initiating the scheduling process (see **Appendix A** for the text used in the e-mail messaging). RTI created a project-specific e-mail account through which all stakeholder communication was conducted (CVE@rti.org). At the end of each interview, RTI asked the participant to share the contact information of additional stakeholders who may be interested in discussing assessment tools with the project team. RTI then reviewed the newly identified stakeholders with the S&T Program Manager and extended invitations using the above protocol. In total, 22 of 57 stakeholders (39%) of those invited to participate in an interview did so. **Table 3** provides summary characteristics for those who participated; a full list of participating organizations can be found in **Appendix B**, complete with their organization name, stakeholder type, and country of practice.[3]

**Table 3.   Number of Interviewed Stakeholders, by Type**

| Type of Stakeholder | Number |
|---|:---:|
| Academic | 5 |
| NGO | 9 |
| Government/Law Enforcement | 13 |

## 2.2.2   Methods and Protocol

RTI used semistructured interview protocols to guide discussions through topics such as subjects' use of risk assessment tools for terrorism prevention, their need for validated risk assessment tools, and concerns related to the use of existing tools. Semistructured interviewing provided the fluidity and flexibility to drill deeper into the participants' areas of expertise and to pursue new topics of discussion as they arose during the interview. The project team developed two protocols to guide the discussions: one for academics, researchers, and general stakeholders in terrorism prevention research and one for clinicians and practitioners who are end-users or designers of violent extremism risk

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[3] Some stakeholders invited colleagues and other interested parties to participate in their interviews.

assessment tools. Using these protocols (included in **Appendices C and D**) ensured that important topics were addressed and there was consistency between interviews. Each interview averaged approximately 1 hour, taking place either by phone or through secure, online teleconference software. All interviews were recorded, with participants' knowledge and consent, and the researchers took notes throughout the discussion. After each interview, the recordings and notes were used to develop an interview transcript. Transcripts were analyzed using NVivo—a qualitative data analysis program—to identify prevailing themes.

In addition to expert interviews, DHS S&T and RTI attended a Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the Los Angeles Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) field office seminar on LAPD's Violence Extremism Intervention Model [*sic*]. The seminar provided an introduction and overview of the model and solicited input and reactions from regional law enforcement, academics, and clinicians. In addition, it included several presentations by local experts detailing the range of extremist threats active in southern California. The seminar informed the project team's awareness of active intervention models in the United States and provided a forum for the researchers to identify potential interview participants.

### 2.2.3 Findings

Seven prevailing themes emerged across the 27 interviews:

- Need for multidisciplinary teams
- Need for training
- Generalizability vs. specificity
- Need for support networks
- Role of law enforcement
- Need for better understanding of risk factors
- Need for validation of existing tools

*Need for Multidisciplinary Teams*

The ideal risk-mitigation infrastructure includes a coordinated network of community leaders, law enforcement officers, justice officials, and service providers who share a common risk management and intervention model. Without accessible services and cooperation, the risk assessment and intervention model cannot succeed. Although many participants agreed that certain types of assessments and tools are best suited for use by clinicians, they also noted that risk assessment is a skill that can be taught to different professionals (e.g., teachers, parole officers, police officers, counselors, social workers, and community leaders) who may come in contact with potentially radicalized individuals. Participants indicated that a multidisciplinary team of professionals and support networks

were more likely to successfully manage and treat individuals' risk than teams that did not use a multidisciplinary approach. Incorporating a wide array professional perspectives brings professionals together who individually assess the situation through their own lens (e.g., a health care provider from a public health perspective, a psychologist from a psychological perspective, a principal from an educational perspective). In concert, a multidisciplinary team can discuss their individual findings and identify points of consensus and nuances that may only be perceived by a certain type of professional. This discursive and collaborative method provides a holistic analysis of the individual's situation and reduces the threat of a biased assessment.

### *Need for Training*

Interviews revealed that training is a very influential component to operationalizing a risk assessment tool. At the time of the interviews, training was often focused only on the tool itself, rather than on the science behind risk factors or the context in which the tool should be employed. Training needs to encompass several features of not just the tool, but the treatment systems surrounding the tool.

- How to discuss the tool with other stakeholders such as clinicians, law enforcement officials, parents, or community support networks. Being properly versed in what the tool can detect about an individual and how to communicate concerns and resulting treatment options is critical for effective information sharing and ongoing monitoring and treatment.

- How to properly administer the tool to ensure that risk is being assessed accurately and changes to the risk level can be detected and not subject to administration error.

- How to make, receive, and process a referral and steps that should be taken, based on ongoing assessment, to ensure that proper monitoring and risk management protocols are in place.

Moreover, users need to be periodically retrained and recertified on proper use of assessment tools to ensure that they are being used consistently and correctly. Without proper and consistent administration, risk assessment tools are likely to lose their utility.

Providing a full clinical risk assessment tool to the public is not seen as a tenable solution; given the amount of training and contextualization required, releasing such a tool indiscriminately could lead to a surge in false accusations, increased social persecution of minority groups, and decreased legitimacy and support for the tools over time. However, participants agreed that armed with basic information on the radicalization process and indicators of potential violence, the public could be a strong ally in increasing referrals for assessment.

In addition to training for specific tools, users need to be knowledgeable about radicalization and cultural idiosyncrasies of the population they are serving. A common example offered by participants was the ability to discern between normal religiosity, such as growing a

beard in the case of Islam, and extremism. To properly evaluate which behaviors represent risk and which are harmless, the assessor should be intimately familiar with the individual's culture and religious practices and be able to separate these practices from extremist or concerning behavior (such as a sudden lack of empathy for immigrants in the case of right wing extremism, or a refusal to work with women in the case of Islamic extremism).

*Generalizability Versus Specificity*

Opinion on whether the focus of risk assessment tools for terrorism prevention should be broad or narrow is split. Some stakeholders expressed a desire for a catchall tool to be deployed to professionals and the community alike. The intent of such a tool would be to provide awareness of what extremism looks like and how groups recruit, and a list of general risk factors. Other stakeholders thought that violent extremism risk assessments should be specialized, similar to the way in which general violence is assessed among specific populations, using tools designed to maximize prediction of violent extremism for a given subgroup.

*Need for Comprehensive Risk Mitigation and Intervention Plans*

Several participants indicated that a risk assessment tool is only one small part of an overall risk mitigation and intervention plan and that the utility of a risk assessment is limited outside of a comprehensive plan. Comprehensive plans provide a framework for the overall management of an individual, and the tool is simply an implement that directs the flow of information and resources to the risk assessment team, providers, and the individual. Participants cited five components needed for a successful risk management plan:

- Referral: An efficient assessment and intervention model would provide numerous referral channels, through which parents, peers, teachers, or other community members can refer an individual to a central multidisciplinary team for assessment.

- Intake and Management: Once the individual is referred for assessment, a case file should be created and stored in a secure and confidential manner. Information in this system includes reasons for referral, documented history of violence or mental health crises, and other information that may be of use to the assessment. This information should be accessible to other relevant stakeholders in the system, including other assessors, parole officers, social workers, clinicians, and appropriate community leaders.

- Assessment: The type of assessment tool used would depend on the severity of the risk, the context in which risk factors and indicators present themselves, and the expertise and background of the assessor. Clinicians would have access to more complex tools that incorporate professional judgment and allow for the development of treatment plans that can be used to guide risk management. Teachers, clergy, and law enforcement would have access to a simpler tool that focuses on identifying individuals in need of further assessment. The results of each assessment should be made available to relevant stakeholders in the system.

- Treatment: In most cases, the full risk assessment protocol should incorporate a recommended treatment plan that is tailored to the at-risk individual based on age,

cultural background, exhibiting risk factors, and level of severity. At the early stages, the treatment for low-risk individuals may be referral for additional assessment or scheduled follow-up; or, if the initial risk level is elevated, the treatment may require intensive counseling, the completion of rehabilitative programming designed to assist with desistence, or more invasive intervention methods. In rare instances, the risk level may be so high that immediate action must be taken to provide treatment while also ensuring that the individual is not a threat to the community.

▪ Follow-up: Follow-up assessments are crucial to the intervention process for three reasons. First, they ensure that the treatment is having the desired effect, and if not, that the treatment can be escalated. Second, they ensure that the individual has not relapsed into the types of behaviors that that could lead to a higher risk of engaging in violence (if pre-criminal intervention) or recidivating into criminal activities (if post-criminal intervention). Lastly, follow-up assessments aid in evaluating the efficacy of interventions and contribute to advancing the science behind radicalization and interventions for violent extremism.

## The Role of Law Enforcement

Stakeholders disagree on the appropriate role of law enforcement in terrorism prevention. Some participants believed that law enforcement should play a key role, intervening when individuals are identified as potential risks for violent extremist action. Other stakeholders believed that law enforcement has no jurisdiction until a crime has been committed. General agreement that law enforcement should become involved as risk reaches an upper threshold supports the idea of support networks that include community, mental health, and law enforcement resources.

## Need for Better Understanding of Risk Factors

Overall, participants reported concerns over a general lack of understanding of how risk factors commonly cited in the terrorism prevention literature related to individuals who become radicalized into violent ideologies. These concerns lead to an overall discomfort with existing tools largely based on the lack of theoretical explanations. Community-based stakeholders were far more likely to have concerns over the use of risk assessment tools than were law enforcement personnel or researchers.

## Need for Validation of Existing Tools

A notable criticism of assessment tools for violent extremism is that they have not been fully and independently validated. One participant stated that many of the tools that do claim validity have only been tested internally by their authors, and the methods and exact data used in their evaluations are not always published. End-users believed that a validated tool would need to be peer-reviewed for its reliability and validity. Further, validated tools would have to be dynamic and sophisticated enough to handle the myriad pathways that could lead someone to radicalization while also considering risk and protective factors of different weights. Validation would also require a large amount of longitudinal data, which are not always easily accessible to researchers and evaluators. Additionally, two participants noted that validating risk assessment tools is challenging because the risks are too high

(significant casualties) if an individual is not incarcerated. Lastly, participants suggested that it is very unlikely that an assessment tool could ever be used in a predictive manner—that is, experts and practitioners caution against the notion that these tools could ever serve as a means to determine who will and who will not commit a future act of terrorism.

### *Limitations and Barriers*

Participants identified several limitations to risk assessment tools currently being developed and used in this context; these limitations can be divided into three categories.

- Lack of scientific support: Many are concerned that current tools designed to measure risk for extremist violence do not have the sufficient scientific rigor behind their designs. Stakeholders raised concerns that the risk factors used in these assessments have not been empirically evaluated for significant correlations with engaging in extremist violence. In other words, these risk factors are assumed to be at least associated with extremist violence, but some stakeholders felt that there is no concrete scientific evidence to support this relationship in a predictive manner. Many risk assessment tools for other contexts, such as domestic or sexual violence, have nearly 30 years of data to support their validity, and those types of violence occur far more often than terrorism. Regardless of the scientific rigor with which tools have been developed, the perception that they are not well researched and validated remains among some stakeholder subgroups.

- Legal concerns: Stemming from the previous limitation, several participants reported two primary legal concerns. The first is the possibility of the results of the assessment being challenged in court, when used in sentencing and parole situations. The second concern is a perceived lack of legal protections for those conducting the assessments. One NGO participant stated that their organization received requests to conduct assessments and provide rehabilitation programming, but has not agreed to participate because there are no clear legal protections for attempting (and failing) to off-ramp an individual who ultimately commits an act of violence.

- Stakeholder education: Participants indicated that for those unfamiliar with the nuances risk of assessment, it may carry a variety of misconceptions and preconceived notions regarding the intent, purpose, utility, and limitations of how these tools are used. To this end, stakeholders need to be taught the operational limitations of risk assessment to ensure that the tools are being used responsibly.

## 2.3   Expanded Literature Review

Based on the initial literature review and stakeholder interview findings, DHS and RTI concluded that current risk assessment tools were not yet ready for widespread deployment because of the issues described in Section 2.2. In addition, through interviews with international stakeholder and others, it became apparent that the utility of even the most accurate and reliable risk assessment tool is dependent on societal structures and context. With this awareness, DHS asked RTI to conduct a second literature review to further investigate risk assessment theory and its application in clinical and pre-criminal settings, identify necessary components and conditions for validating a risk assessment tool, identify programs that address violent extremism through direct intervention in the United States

and abroad, and identify program evaluations of direct intervention programs. This literature review was used to expand the initial review and create a comprehensive summary of the state of the science in regards to risk assessment protocols, intervention programs, issues related to producing valid risk assessment tools, and the implementation of risk assessment tools by a variety of stakeholders.

The expanded literature review was divided into five sections: (1) an overview of the history of risk assessment science and introduction to key terms and theories, (2) an introduction to risk assessment tools specifically developed for use with individuals vulnerable to engaging in violent extremism or offenders at risk of recidivating to violent extremist crime, (3) an examination of criticisms and limitations of risk assessment tools and an in-depth analysis of why validating tools for this context is so difficult (using the Classification of Violent Risk tool as an example), (4) an overview of promising programs to reduce risk of engaging in violent extremism in the United States and Europe, and (5) recommendations for the successful validation and integration of risk assessment tools for violent extremism for use in terrorism prevention contexts.

### 2.3.1   Methodology and Sources

Similar to the initial literature review, EBSCO, Google Scholar, and recommendations from other academics and experts were used to source literature. Because one of the goals of the second review was to detail the origin and evolution of risk assessment science, there was no temporal parameter for publication date. There were many common themes across the two reviews; where applicable, sources from the first appeared in the second as well.

### 2.3.2   Findings

*A History of Risk Assessment*

We are currently in the fourth generation of risk assessment tools. Fourth-generation risk assessments are specifically developed to guide the risk management process, assist with the selection of interventions and treatment plans, and track progress through rehabilitation. These tools include the measurement of a broader range of risk factors and are designed with a focus on identifying treatment needs (Andrews et al., 2006). Fourth-generation tools include both the risk assessment and a case management and treatment plan. These tools are designed to be used at multiple stages of the criminal justice process. Fourth-generation assessments inform pretrial diversion decisions, sentencing, incarceration status, release decisions and post-release tracking. Assessment is ongoing throughout the process to determine current risk level and changing rehabilitation needs. In addition, these tools incorporate "responsivity," which serves as a measure of an individual's readiness for change and ability to respond to rehabilitation efforts (Andrews et al., 1990; Baird et al., 2013). The term "responsivity" originates from the risk-need-responsivity model, the

predominant assessment and rehabilitation process currently used in criminal justice and offender management contexts.

Together the concepts of risk, need, and responsivity are used to form the Risk-Need-Responsivity model. This model is currently the most widely accepted evidence-based model of offender risk assessment and rehabilitation. The risk-need-responsivity model is built on three primary principles the authors outlined that are used to guide assessment and rehabilitation to address offender risk and recidivism.

- Risk—The level of treatment provided for the offender should be commensurate with the level of risk posed by the offender. Low-risk offenders require a low level of treatment, while high-risk offenders would require more intensive treatment. Importantly, as changes in risk are identified, the treatment plan should be adjusted accordingly to match the level of risk predicted for the offender.

- Need—Treatment and outcome behavior(s) of interest are malleable and a rehabilitation plan should be based on the offender's criminogenic needs. Criminogenic needs are essentially dynamic risk factors. They are factors that have been linked to reduction or removal of the need and are accompanied by a change in the dynamic risk factor, and therefore, also the risk level.

- Responsivity—Treatment and rehabilitation interventions should use cognitive social learning strategies that address the criminogenic needs by replacing risk-associated behaviors with more prosocial ones. Cognitive social learning posits that new behaviors can be learned through positive modeling, learner observation and imitation of others. In addition, the responsivity principle posits that the efficacy of rehabilitation and treatment will be enhanced if the interventions are matched to personal factors that improve learning. Specifically, tailoring rehabilitation programs to the traits such as learning style, cognitive ability, age, gender, and race will improve the transfer of information and lead to better results.

This model is used in prison and parole systems to guide risk management programs for both general and violent offenders. The model offers general guidelines for structuring risk assessment and rehabilitation interventions, which allows for a tailored approach to meet the needs of the offender population of interest. The potential utility of a risk-need-responsivity model for reducing violent extremism risk has been alluded to by several experts, but remains untested (Dean, 2016; RAN, 2016).

### *Risk Assessment Tools Specific to Terrorism Prevention*

**Table 4** lists risk assessment tools identified by the research team to be in current use in the field of terrorism prevention. Although some of these were not created specifically for use in violent extremism (e.g., HCR-20, SAVRY, SAPROF, and PCL-R), they have been used in this application with some success.

Researchers working to develop violent extremism-specific assessment protocols have attempted to leverage the strengths of general risk assessment tools but prioritize extremist-specific characteristics over those of individuals likely to commit more general violent acts. This effort suggests two significant shortcomings of existing risk assessment

tools. First, SPJ tools for extremist violence assume a linear cumulative risk model (Borum, 2015). In other words, presenting with more risk factors equates to a higher risk of engaging in violence which is not necessarily true for engaging in extremist violence. Second, risk assessment tools are an effective way to assess future violence, but are inadequate for assessing violent extremism risk because they do not account for ideologically motivated behavior (Pressman, 2009).

**Table 4.  Commonly Used Extremist and General Violence Risk Assessment Tools**

| Risk Assessment Tools Specific to Violent Extremism | General Violence Risk Assessment Tools |
|---|---|
| VERA-2R | HCR-20 |
| ERG 22+ | SAPROF |
| TRAP-18 | SAVRY |
| RADAR | PCL-R |

Although risk assessments that attempt to predict general violence are plentiful, the applicability of such instruments for use with violent extremists has been called into question. Specifically, the developers of the HCR-20, one of the most commonly used violence risk assessment tools, have been very clear that its use should be limited to historically violent individuals displaying characteristics of mental illness or personality disorder (Webster et al., 1997). Similarly, there is evidence that tools developed with offenders presenting mental illness or generally violent behavior are not applicable to cases where the individual is politically or ideologically motivated (Dernevik et al., 2009). The VERA is the most widely used (and researched) tool developed specifically for politically and ideologically motivated violence. Despite its widespread use, more research is needed to properly evaluate its long-term accuracy and practical application; moreover, it has predominantly been employed (at the time of this review) with post-criminal and incarcerated populations.

*Criticisms Associated With the Use of Risk Assessment Tools*

Despite the widespread use of risk assessments throughout the criminal justice system, debate regarding their use persists. Those in favor of their use argue that they can be used to assist the court with decisions about who should remain incarcerated or be released, and that they provide protections important for public safety (Starr, 2014). In addition, proponents claim that the use of risk assessments benefits the offender by potentially allowing for shorter sentences, providing useful information used to identify treatments, and preventing offenders from reoffending by keeping them incarcerated until they are ready to be released (Douglas et al., 2017). However, many practitioners and researchers argue against the use of risk assessments, or at the very least call for additional research and

development to improve the tools. This expanded review of the literature identified three additional criticisms and limitations of risk assessment tools in addition to those discussed in Section 2.1.2.

### *Limitations of Group-level Characteristics Applied to Individuals*

Debate continues over the use of static risk factors (e.g., race) because of their seemingly powerful predictive utility considering potential discriminatory side effects (Douglas et al., 2017). Recently, using group-level variables as predictors of risk has raised concerns over the possibility that certain groups, especially racial minorities, might be disproportionately negatively affected (Tonry, 2013). These concerns are tied to the use of static risk factors that may directly or indirectly promote unfair stereotypes. Specifically, when race is used as a predictor of risk, certain racial subgroups are more likely than others to be categorized as high risk. Likewise, the use of variables that are highly correlated with race (e.g., age at first arrest) will lead to the same outcomes. Several explanations for this have been proposed in the literature, including differential exposure to risk and social inequality (Hannah-Moffat, 2010 as cited in James, 2015). Risk assessments that systematically negatively affect racial minorities will lead to unfair outcomes for the affected groups based on the potential for longer initial sentences, fewer opportunities for rehabilitation or diversion, and fewer chances for early release.

To assess the extent of racial discrimination, Singh and Fazel (2010) used a meta-analytic approach to test the differential predictive ability of assessment tools based on race and were unable to confirm that bias existed. However, they were careful to suggest that none of the studies in their analysis compared groups directly and that such analyses were warranted to be certain that no effect existed. One potential solution is removing contentious variables, including race and ethnicity, from risk assessment applications, however the literature suggests this may not be wise given their potential utility and advocates for additional investigation (Monahan and Skeem, 2015).

### *Inconsistent Delivery*

Although much of the debate surrounding the legal and ethical use of risk assessment tools has centered around questions related to the variables used, researchers also warn that the methods by which they are implemented and the staff responsible for administration may also impact the predictive accuracy (Bonta et al., 2001). Risk assessment tools are developed and validated based on specific decision rules that guide how data are collected and what data are included. Variation from the validated protocol leads to degradation of the validity and accuracy of the tool. For example, researchers have shown that using untrained staff to administer risk assessments may cause the predictive ability of the tool to decrease significantly or even disappear (Flores et al., 2006; PEW, 2011). The same study determined that the number of years of experience for trained staff could also affect predictive accuracy. Further, a study by Geurts (2017) reached two important conclusions:

(1) there appears to be more consistent agreement on assessments among risk assessment professionals, and (2) professionals are better at identifying critical characteristics and requesting additional clarification. This reflects the previous supposition that assessment tools benefit from a mixture of both actuarial and clinical approaches that leverage the skill and experience of trained professionals. Additionally, it supports previous recommendations that in-depth training and certification of assessors is necessary, and simply including a list of instructions for an untrained assessor may be insufficient.

### Historical Overreliance on Static Risk Factors

Lastly, in the tradition of the risk-need-responsivity model, it has been argued that a reliance on static risk factors to maximize predictive utility leads to counterproductive outcomes by limiting treatment opportunities for high-risk individuals (Bonta, 2002). General models of criminal offending posit that risk can be managed through the identification and treatment of criminogenic needs—meaning, characteristics, traits, or issues that directly related to an individual's likelihood to recidivate. Bonta (2002) argues that limiting the reliance on data-driven actuarial assessment and incorporating theory- and case management–based tools is more consistent with those models and is likely to lead to better results. The challenge for development and use of any violent extremism or terrorism prevention-specific tool lies in identifying theory-relevant criminogenic needs (dynamic factors) and identifying or developing community-based programs to address those needs.

## Challenges to Validating Risk Assessment Tools

A key finding emerging from Phase 1 of this project was that current risk assessment tools lack validation. Accordingly, this literature review sought to investigate the validation process used for risk assessment tools used in other contexts and to examine in more detail why tools for use in violent extremism or terrorism prevention face challenges not encountered in the development of those other tools (even others related to criminal justice and violence). Specific examples of these challenges include access to reliable and complete data, the reliance on risk factors that have not yet been empirically validated to predict engaging in terrorist activities, and a lack of standardization of definitions which has led to errors interpreting and coding not only individual data points, but entire datasets. The second and third barriers are discussed in the summary findings of Phase 1 in Section 2.2.3 of this report and will not be repeated here.

### Access to Data

The effectiveness of any risk assessment tool is dependent on the types of information available to the evaluation team. Although attempts to develop databases that can validate existing risk assessment tools for use in terrorism prevention have been made, in many cases, the data contained therein are incomplete, inaccurate, or restricted to only certain personnel (Smith, 2016). The lack of data is partially explained by low base rates, or because terrorism is extremely rare, especially when compared to other forms of violent

crime (Monahan, 2012). This makes validation difficult because of the lack of statistical power of such a small sample size from which to derive any empirically meaningful conclusion. A longstanding challenge in assessing terrorism-related research and programs is that success is, by definition, a non-event (i.e., the non-occurrence of a terrorist attack). Fink and colleagues (2013, p. 2) refer to this dilemma as "measuring the negative." To mitigate sample size limitations, some studies resort to using incomplete data to have a large enough sample to conduct statistical analyses (Jensen & LaFree, 2016; Smith, 2016). Unfortunately, this causes inconsistencies in the data and groups offenders from a variety of backgrounds and causes into the same model.

### *Validating the Classification of Violent Risk (COVR) Case Study*

In 2012, John Monahan, a psychologist and professor at the University of Virginia School of Law, compared the actual process of validating the COVR (of which he is a co-owner) to the hypothetical validation of a risk assessment tool for violent extremism in detail and concludes, "In no real-world national security context can an instrument to assess the risk of terrorism be prospectively validated in the same manner that risk assessment instruments for common violence are prospectively validated" (Monahan, 2012, p. 192). The COVR was validated using two independent samples of acute mental hospital patients (n = 700 individuals). Then a stratified random sample of 177 patients classified by the COVR as either "high risk" or "low risk" were followed for 4 months after discharge. Follow-up data (through interviews with the patient and family members and hospital records) were collected for 157 (87%) of the 177 randomly sampled patients.

Transferring a similar validation design to a tool designed for violent extremism elucidates several disparities between the two contexts, namely, the difference in frequency of occurrence between general violence and extremist violence. It would be exceedingly difficult to find a significant number of individuals who have committed an act of terrorism who are also nearly all about to be released into the community in a similar time frame and to also locate, interview, or obtain records for a majority of these individuals post-release. It is for these reasons that Monahan (2012) argues that prospective validation of a risk assessment tool for violent extremism is nearly impossible. He instead recommends analyzing the individual risk factors that comprise the assessment tool using an evaluative technique referred to as "known group validation." This method is an intragroup comparison, wherein the evaluator measures the prevalence of a given risk factor among a group of known offenders, then compares the prevalence of this same factor in a group of people from the same population who are not offenders. If the prevalence of the factor differs significantly, we can assume that the given factor correlates with the outcome of committing an act of violent extremism.

*Programs to Reduce Risk*

### Current Efforts in the United States

Investigations by the research team identified two mature programs designed to reduce the risk posed by extremist offenders in the United States: (1) ExitUSA, which aims to support individuals in leaving right-wing violent extremist groups; and (2) the Terrorism Disengagement and Deradicalization Program, which seeks to promote the disengagement, deradicalization, and rehabilitation of individuals convicted of terrorism-related offenses.

Inspired in part by similar programs developed in Europe, ExitUSA is a voluntary program developed by the nonprofit organization Life After Hate with the goal of helping extremists abandon the white power movement, racism, and violence. The program also supports community practitioners (e.g., counselors, social workers) and families who are attempting to help individuals who want to leave violent extremism behind. No evaluation of the ExitUSA program has been conducted to date.

The Terrorism Disengagement and Deradicalization Program, announced by U.S. District Judge Michael Davis in Minnesota in 2016, is government-run and designed to assess and promote the rehabilitation of convicted extremist offenders (Berkell, 2017; Ibrahim & Yuen, 2016; Koerner, 2017). Although details on the assessment and rehabilitation efforts associated with this program are few, it was designed by Daniel Koehler, who serves as the director of the German Institute on Radicalization and De-Radicalization Studies and who has been affiliated with the Exit Deutschland and Hayat programs in Germany (see below). The program, which is being implemented by the U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services Office in Minnesota, has largely involved individuals convicted of supporting the Islamic State and al-Shabaab. Like ExitUSA, it is a relatively new program and has not yet been evaluated.

### Current Efforts in Europe[4]

Given similarities between the United States and European countries in terms of the nature of the extremist threat and their legal and cultural contexts, lessons learned from European programs may be particularly applicable to the U.S. context. **Appendix E** provides an overview of 12 of these programs, highlighting the implementing organization(s), target populations, and program goals. Although several of these programs also include activities targeting individuals who have not engaged in extremist offenses (e.g., more general outreach and education efforts aimed at the general public or practitioners), only those activities targeting extremist offenders were included.

One promising approach for reducing risk stems is Denmark's Solution Focused Model. This two-part model operates by first identifying risk factors and protective factors in an

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[4] Lessons from programs implemented in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand may also be quite relevant, but information on such programs was not available.

individual's life using a balanced risk assessment, then mobilizing a network of mentors and service providers to deliver tailored interventions designed to strengthen deficiencies in life skills thereby reducing the risk of engaging in violent extremism.

The theoretical basis for the Solution-Focused Model is life psychology which argues that individuals are motivated through a desire to be successful in life, and there exists a combination of 10 specific life skills that each person must perform competently to achieve success. When people do not possess these skills or are unable to perform them within the constraints of society, they are more likely to engage in deviant behaviors. Preliminary research on the Solution-Focused Model has provided an understanding of the model's main components, actors, and outcomes.

## 2.4   State of the Science Conclusion

The first phase of the CVE Assessment Tools project concluded that many risk assessment tools are currently being used in terrorism prevention efforts in the United States and abroad. However, typically the tools are limited or deficient in some way and require additional validation and extensive training programs to properly implement. Accordingly, DHS agreed that no new risk assessment tool should be developed as part of the CVE Assessment Tools project. Instead, the United States should promote research into the validation of existing risk assessment tools for terrorism prevention, identify and validate risk and protective factors to strengthen the legitimacy of these tools, and create and promote support networks in American communities that can locally conduct risk assessment and treatment. To this end, DHS and RTI agreed to investigate the adaptability of the Solution-Focused Model for use in U.S. communities, as it appears to fulfill the requirements of a cohesive risk assessment and management enterprise outlined previously in this report.

# 3. Phase 2: Solution-Focused Model

In the second phase of the CVE Assessment Tools project, RTI conducted field research on how the Danish government's implementation of the Solution-Focused Model integrates six core components of risk assessment and management programs: referral, intake and management, assessment, treatment, follow-up, and multidisciplinary teams. RTI then assessed the Danish implementation to identify key activities within each component and developed a typology that can be used to categorize communities by potential readiness to implement the model. Finally, RTI conducted focus groups in two U.S. communities (San Diego, California, and Denver, Colorado) to begin assessing ways in which U.S. communities could adapt the model for implementation.

## 3.1  Field Research

To collect additional data on how the Solution-Focused Model is operationalized by the Danish government, DHS and RTI conducted field research in Copenhagen, Denmark. This research began in August 2018 with a teleconference between DHS S&T, RTI, and a representative from the Danish Centre for Prevention of Extremism (DCPE) to learn more about the model, discuss the possibility of attending a workshop to observe the model, and communicate the idea of adapting the program in select U.S. communities for evaluation and potential implementation. Planning for the workshop began soon after this discussion and in December 2018 the CVE Assessment Tools research team travelled to Copenhagen, Denmark, to pursue this line of research.

### 3.1.1  Scope/Goals

The goal of the field research was to determine the feasibility of implementing the Solution-Focused Model in U.S. communities. Adapting an existing model could have several benefits, including cost and time savings and increased chance of early success (Card et al., 2011). To assess feasibility for adaptation, RTI identified a seven-step framework designed to maintain core components of an evidence-based intervention and best practices common to effective programs (Card et al., 2011). For this assessment, RTI modified the framework slightly by combining closely aligned tasks to include the following five steps: (1) select an effective program and gather the original materials, (2) develop a program logic model, (3) identify the program's core components and key materials, (4) identify and categorize mismatches between the context in which the original program model was implemented and the new context, and (5) conduct a needs analysis of the local community and adapt the original program model and materials based on the findings.

As noted in the beginning of Section 3, in the first phase of the CVE Assessment Tools project, the Solution-Focused Model was identified as an effective program for potential adaptation to U.S. communities; this satisfied step 1 in the adaptation framework. Steps 2 through 5 of the framework were addressed through field research.

Field research was organized with assistance from the DCPE, the agency responsible for supporting the model's implementation and included trainings on all aspects of the model (from referral to follow-up) and discussions with various actors in the model such as employees of the Danish government, social service providers, community support groups, researchers, law enforcement personnel, and educators. Through this experience, the research team gained a better understanding of how the model operates and its strengths and weaknesses.

### 3.1.2   Methods

The first day of field research included an introduction to the DCPE, a brief introduction to the Solution-Focused Model, and a presentation on organizing, synthesizing, and maintaining various intelligence sources. The second day included training on using the model to conduct risk assessments. On the third day, a training was provided on the solution-focused method of mentor-mentee interactions and relationship building. Day four focused on the Life-Skills Method, which includes a procedure for scoring basic life skills related to an individual's relationships, capabilities, and emotions. The final day covered the Balanced Risk Assessment, which incorporates holistic input from a multidisciplinary team on various dimensions[5]; this discussion included interactions with mentors who implement the method.

In addition to trainings and discussions, DHS and RTI visited the Copenhagen Municipality government offices and their VINK program.[6] VINK is the Copenhagen Municipality's unit for prevention of radicalization and extremism.

### 3.1.3   Findings

*Components of Model*

The Solution-Focused Model is based on the Life Psychology framework (Bertelsen, 2015b), which relies on three key assumptions: (1) everyone aspires to have a "good enough" life (i.e., a "perfect" life is not attainable), (2) having a "good enough" grip on life means one is able to cope with daily and more significant life tasks, and (3) everyone, regardless of personal characteristics or experiences, faces the same fundamental life tasks. In general, Life Psychology theorizes the existence of a basic skill set that shapes one's approach to life, understanding of reality, and ability to take the perspective of both self and others. These factors, together with motivational, cognitive, and environmental factors, influence an individual's ability to successfully participate in society. The Solution-Focused Model

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[5] The individual is assessed across the following nine dimensions: (1) personality factors, (2) mental vulnerability, (3) family, (4) network and spare time, (5) education and employment, (6) worrying convictions and rhetoric, (7) readiness to use violence, (8) criminal record, and (9) worrying socialization and relationships.
[6] https://vink.kk.dk/

assumes that individuals who have a good enough grip on life are less likely to commits acts of violent extremism.

From this foundation, the model integrates all six key components of risk assessment and management program—as identified in the first phase of this project—into a holistic, interagency risk assessment and management approach that offers promising early results for preventing terrorism.[7] Below is a description of each core component within the Danish context.

### Referral

Denmark has several channels by which community members can refer an individual for assessment to police, municipalities, and social service providers. Community members include parents, teachers, coaches, coworkers, police, parole staff, social workers, and peers. There is also a nationwide hotline operated by two municipalities within Denmark, Copenhagen, and Aarhus. The Danish government's referral procedures use two key documents:

- Receipt and Description of the Concern form—a semistructured interview guide used to collect background information on the subject of concern and contact information for the person reporting the concern. It was developed to ensure that municipalities, police, social service providers, and hotline workers gather sufficient information for making an initial determination about the severity of the concern.

- Phases in the Handling of Reported Concerns About Extremism Infographic—a reference material that outlines how referrals move through the Solution-Focused Model.

### Intake and Management

Once a referral is received, the case is assigned to one of 12 regional Infohouses, which are collaborations between Denmark's 12 police districts and 98 municipalities. The Infohouses serve as "frameworks for local cooperation between the police and municipal social service administrations and providers" (Hemmingsen, 2015, p.27) working together to prevent extremism and radicalization. Once a referral is received, the Infohouse convenes a multidisciplinary network including representatives from schools, social services, psychiatric services, police, and prison and probation services. These networks are referred to as SSPs (Schools, Social Authorities, and Police), PSPs (Psychiatry, Social Authorities, and Police), and KSPs (Prison and Parole System, Social Authorities, and Police). When a case is assigned to a network, members share information on the individual and assess the threat. The Infohouse coordinates all multidisciplinary networks and information sharing, convenes in-person meetings, and stores all program materials and documentation. One key document is used during the intake and management phase:

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[7] To date, no formal evaluations of the Solution-Focused Model have been conducted.

- ▪ *Preventing and Countering Extremism and Radicalization National Action Plan*—a policy document outlining Denmark's key priorities and approaches to countering priority violent extremist and terrorist threats; the plan helps Infohouses ensure that their intake, management, and assessment processes align with national priorities.

### Assessment

The assembled multidisciplinary network then assesses the referred individual. First, the team compiles and shares information on the individual. Under the Danish Administration of Justice Act, information may be shared on an individual twice before notifying the individual of the review. The team then conducts a risk assessment tailored to the individual. The Balanced Risk Assessment Tool developed by DCPE directs the team to assess the individual across nine dimensions:

- ▪ Personality Factors—characteristics that can indicate sense of self, including impulse control and ability to set limits

- ▪ Mental Vulnerability—overall mental health and cognitive ability

- ▪ Family—family relationships, focusing on immediate family

- ▪ Network and Spare Time—how and with whom spare time is spent

- ▪ Education and Employment—current and past education enrollment and current employment status

- ▪ Worrying Convictions and Rhetoric—expressions of agreement with or willingness to carry out illegal actions because of an extreme ideology

- ▪ Readiness to Use Violence—past or present use of violence

- ▪ Criminal Record—any recorded or nonrecorded criminal acts perpetrated

- ▪ Worrying Socialization and Relationships—association with individuals who support violent extremism

All nine dimensions are scored using a 5-point scale (0–4). Based on the score, the team decides to (1) take no action, (2) engage the individual in a mentoring program, or (3) refer the individual to criminal authorities. Individuals are only referred to criminal authorities if they have engaged in violent extremism or pose an immediate threat of engaging in violent extremism. It is important to note that there are no scoring thresholds for the three potential actions. The key document during the assessment phase is:

- ▪ *Balanced Risk Assessment Tool Moderator Board, Balanced Risk Assessment Tool Manual, Tools 1–4*, which includes detailed guides on all aspects of the risk assessment process and describes the assessment metrics.

### Treatment

After the assessment, a decision is made on whether an individual is referred to the Solution-Focused program. Referred individuals are assigned a mentor by mentoring coordinators from the local municipality. The overall goal of the mentoring effort is to help

eliminate the risky behavior and guide the mentee toward more positive development. Mentors may help the participant identify challenging aspects of daily life; assist with securing resources, training, or other opportunities; and challenge the mentee's thinking to stimulate introspection and growth. A unique feature of the mentoring program lies in its discursive and cooperative nature. For example, the mentor and mentee work together to determine areas for improvement in the mentee's life and collaborate to set milestones and assess progress in meeting them. The mentor serves as a guide, available to offer recommendations, contextualize the discussion, and hold the mentee accountable. The mentee also has a say in determining the best treatment plan and is ultimately responsible for following through with that plan.

If a mentor is not available in the municipality, efforts are made to secure one from a nearby municipality. Mentors are matched based on their compatibility with the individual. Although there is no formal assessment of compatibility, efforts are made to identify mentors who have had success with similar cases or who would be appealing to the mentee.

Mentors use the Life Psychology Analysis Form (LPAF) (**Appendix F**) to gather information "about the individual's general life skills, well-being, decisiveness and resilience to negative impacts" (Danish Centre for Prevention of Extremism Manual). The 10 skills included on the LPAF are:

- Relations—being part of good close relationships

- Frames—maintaining structures and frames for oneself and one's interests

- Community—participating in a personal way in something beyond one's private life

- Presence—being absorbed in something/focused activity

- Pragmatics—finding the most efficient approach

- Ethics—considering the norms and values of one's goals and approaches

- Awareness—awareness of the world and nonverbal cues from others

- Reflection—takings one's own thoughts and life aspirations into perspective

- Empathy—taking other's thoughts and aspirations into perspective

- Navigation—taking the world and the systems and rules that impact life into perspective

Each skill is evaluated across five dimensions: the individual's want, ability, opportunities, support, and action toward the skill. Each area is then rated on a 5-point (0–4 scale) to complete the assessment.

In addition to the LPAF, the mentors use a second tool, the Topic-based Life Psychology Analysis Form—Radicalisation and Extremism (**Appendix G**) form. The form addresses four additional skills and three external factors:

- Cognitive style—assessing tolerance for ambiguity, open-mindedness, and versatility

- Dynamic style—assessing energy level and risk-taking behaviors

- Mirroring—assessing reactions to offenses

- Idealization—measuring ability to maintain balanced, realistic images of others

- Close networks—assessing personal networks

- Immediate environment—assessing living conditions, home, and school environments

- Major structural conditions—assessing the structure in one's life

Once the mentor and mentee have completed the LPAF and have identified areas of strength and weakness, they will discuss which skill(s) the mentee can improve. When one or more skills have been identified, the Assessment, Planning, and Progression Form (APPF) (**Appendix H**) is used to supervise and monitor the mentee's progress on skill building. The APPF documents the following:

- Cause for concern—noting concerning life skills, personal psychological factors, external factors, and behaviors

- Works—noting positive life skills, personal psychological factors, external factors, and behaviors

- Goals—mentee's hopes for improving the selected skill

- Agreements—specific plans for achieving mentee's goal

The goal is that by the time agreements are made that satisfy both the mentee and mentor, the mentee will have a good enough grip on the selected life skill. Each milestone along this path may have a specific timeline depending on the mentee's needs, goals, and life circumstances. By focusing on one life skill, the hope is that mentees will be able to focus on discrete tasks and improve their likelihood of developing the selected life skill. Additionally, because of the relationships among many of the life skills and the malleability of human nature, progress in one skill area will likely improve other skills as well.

Finally, the Life Psychological Goal Setting Tool (**Appendix I**) is used to help a mentee set a goal, determine the feasibility, and define how to achieve the goal. First, the mentee sets a goal. The mentor and mentee then review the goal to make sure it is S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, attuned, realistic, and timed). The pair then identify up to three skills that can help reach the goal, documenting what the mentee is currently doing well and how the mentee can improve each skill. Finally, the mentor and mentee agree on next steps for the goal, with the aim of having the mentee complete the next step before their next meeting.

The following are key treatment materials:

- Methodology manual—Created by DCPE, it sets best practices for mentoring and parent coaching for relatives and caregivers of the individuals of concern. Specifically, the manual provides a detailed overview and tutorial for the Solution-Focused Work on Life Skills methodology developed for the Aarhus Model (Bertelsen, 2015b). The manual serves as a companion guide to the training mentors and coordinators receive from the DCPE and is not limited to end-users from any particular professional background.

- Life Psychology Analysis Form—Completed by mentors and mentees to identify areas where they can improve the mentee's grip on life, with the goal of developing a good enough grip on life.

- Topic-based Life Psychology Analysis Form—Developed by DCPE as a supplement to the Life Psychology Analysis Form, it focuses specifically on risk and protective factors related to engaging in extremist behavior.

- Assessment, Planning, and Progression Form—Used to assess the mentee's current grip on a selected skill, develop a goal to improve the selected skill, create a plan to achieve the goal, and document progress toward the goal.

- Life Psychology Goal Setting Tool—Used by mentors and mentees to refine goals, ensuring that the goals are actionable and focused on specific skills. This tool specifies next steps to be achieved before the next mentor-mentee meeting.

- Life Psychology Summary Cards and Solution-Focused Approach Example Guide—These materials are flashcard-style summaries of the Life Psychology framework, including case examples and quick-recall information about each of the 10 life skills identified in the LPAF, and examples of initial and probing questions for use by mentors during meetings with mentees. At the time of field research, these cards were only available in Danish with no plans to translate or publish online.

### Follow-up

Tracking and documenting the mentee's progress toward improving life skills and attaining goals is collaboratively managed by the mentor, the mentoring coordinator, and the Infohouse. The mentor maintains detailed notes regarding the mentee's progress throughout the progression of the program, based on observations and discussions with mentee. The mentor may revisit the LPAF, use the Assessment, Planning, and Progression Form (**Appendix H**), or turn to other means to support the documentation process, address barriers, and otherwise help the mentee continue or resume making progress. The key document is:

- *Assessment, Planning, and Progression Form*—Charts the mentee's progress through the mentoring program.

### Multidisciplinary Teams

The Solution-Focused Model uses multidisciplinary teams to assess the risk level of individuals and to determine suitability for the mentoring program. Municipality-based mentors are assigned to those who would benefit from additional support. The corps of

mentors is often composed of professionals working for the local government who have volunteered their time and skills to help support those at risk. Volunteers are trained in Solution-Focused techniques, Life Psychology theory, basic life skills, and tools developed to support the identification of needs and measurement of progress. The mentors are supported by mentor coordinators who serve as coach and quasi-supervisor by ensuring appropriate mentor/mentee pairings and meeting with mentors for ongoing review of cases and skill development.

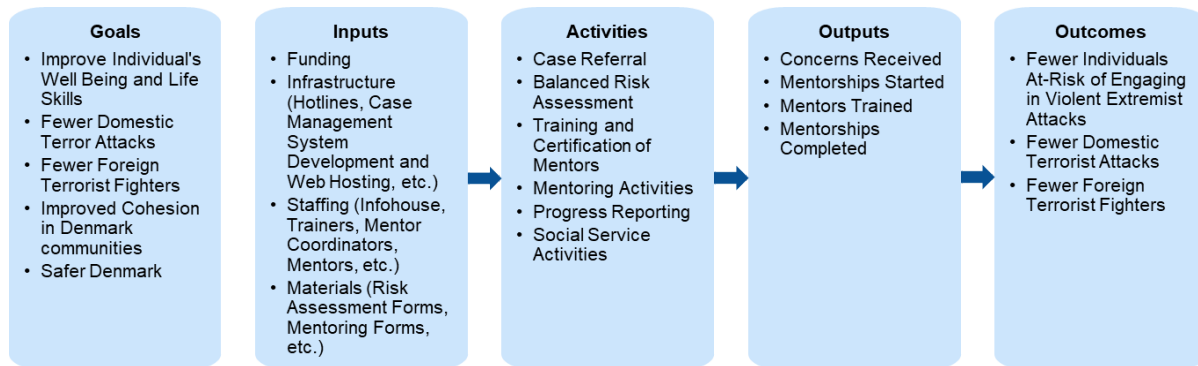### 3.1.4 Adapting the Solution-Focused Model to U.S. Communities

Adapting the Solution-Focused Model could have several benefits for U.S. communities, including cost and time savings and increased chance of early success (Card et al., 2011), as suggested by similar adaptations of pre-criminal support programs by local government or nongovernment community organizations (Rosand, 2018). The next step was to develop a logic model and identify the key components of the Solution-Focused Model.

Logic models are a useful tool for establishing responsibilities and goals in the early stages of program adaptation and implementation, thus ensuring fidelity to the original program design. Further, evaluators use logic models to assess a program's fidelity and efficacy as outlined in the program's theory of change by identifying "the relationships between the original components and key outcomes of the selected intervention and help assess whether these relationships are still logical and robust [in the new context]" (Card et al., 2011, p. 27). To this end, logic models are useful in identifying correlative relationships between the dependent variable (inputs), protocol (activities), independent variable (outputs), results (outcomes), and the hypothesis (goals).

Key features of logic models include the following:

- ▪ Goals—the aims of the program
- ▪ Inputs—resources the program uses
- ▪ Activities—how inputs are used
- ▪ Outputs—results of activities
- ▪ Outcomes—measurable impacts on the target population

Currently, there is no published logic model for the Solution-Focused Model, only the Danish government's national action plan. However, using background research, interviews with Danish government officials, and observations made during the workshop in Copenhagen, the research team developed a logic model for the Solution-Focused Model, shown in **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1. Solution-Focused Logic Model**

| Goals | Inputs | Activities | Outputs | Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Improve Individual's Well Being and Life Skills<br>• Fewer Domestic Terror Attacks<br>• Fewer Foreign Terrorist Fighters<br>• Improved Cohesion in Denmark communities<br>• Safer Denmark | • Funding<br>• Infrastructure (Hotlines, Case Management System Development and Web Hosting, etc.)<br>• Staffing (Infohouse, Trainers, Mentor Coordinators, Mentors, etc.)<br>• Materials (Risk Assessment Forms, Mentoring Forms, etc.) | • Case Referral<br>• Balanced Risk Assessment<br>• Training and Certification of Mentors<br>• Mentoring Activities<br>• Progress Reporting<br>• Social Service Activities | • Concerns Received<br>• Mentorships Started<br>• Mentors Trained<br>• Mentorships Completed | • Fewer Individuals At-Risk of Engaging in Violent Extremist Attacks<br>• Fewer Domestic Terrorist Attacks<br>• Fewer Foreign Terrorist Fighters |

*Core Components of the Solution Focused Model*

Core components of programs are defined as "elements of the intervention that are responsible (or believed to be responsible) for its effectiveness" (Card et al., 2011, p. 29). For program adaptation to be successful, core components of the program cannot change without loss of fidelity to the original program (Rolleri et al., 2014). Based on the logic model shown in Exhibit 1, RTI identified the following core components of the Solution-Focused Model:

- Life Psychology framework, used to identify risk and protective factors in various aspects of an individual's life including their behavior (Bertelsen, 2015a).

- Balanced Risk Assessment used to assess and monitor individuals (Danish Centre for Prevention of Extremism Manual).

- Solution-Focused approach, which forms the basis for the mentor-mentee interactions and relationship building (Danish Centre for Prevention of Extremism Manual).

- Mentor-provided guidance and structure to mentees.

- Life Psychology Analysis Form (**Appendix F**), used to gather information "about the individual's general life skills, well-being, decisiveness and resilience to negative impacts" (Danish Centre for Prevention of Extremism Manual).

- Life Psychological Goal Setting Tool (**Appendix I**), used to help mentees set goals, determine their feasibility, and focus on how to achieve goals.

- Progress reporting to track improvements of life skills and goal attainment.

- Assessment, Planning, and Progression Form (**Appendix H**), used to review and track the mentee's progress.

*Mismatches from the Solution-Focused Model for U.S. Communities*

Adapting a program from one location to another is not a seamless process, and mismatches will occur based on the unique characteristics of each location. Attempting to

adapt the Solution-Focused Model for U.S. communities is no exception and presents several societal, legal, cultural, and technical mismatches. The core components of the model outlined above must be implemented for the program to maintain fidelity. However, non-core components of the model may be altered to better fit U.S. communities. For the purposes of the following discussion, mismatches are classified in two categories: (1) societal and cultural characteristics and (2) legal and technical characteristics.

### *Societal and Cultural Characteristics*

Societal and cultural differences affect the ability to adopt the Solution-Focused Model to U.S. communities without adaptation. Denmark has a relatively homogeneous population with approximately 6 million citizens compared to a more diverse U.S. population of 329 million citizens (CIA, 2019). Given the size and diversity of the United States population, a more varied adaptation strategy may be required for the model, whereby multiple versions are developed for U.S. communities with different population characteristics. Even though Denmark is generally more homogeneous than the United States, Danish government officials noted a similar need to alter the program when adapting it to the needs of rural areas versus urban centers (e.g., Aarhus and Copenhagen). Therefore, it is unlikely that one adaptation of the model would be appropriate for all U.S. communities.

Compared to the United States, Denmark has experienced proportionally higher levels of citizens joining the Syrian civil war as foreign fighters (Jayakumar, 2015). Denmark's proximity to Syria contributed to a surge of over 19,000 Syrian immigrants, causing political and social concerns (CIA, 2019). This spike in Syrian migration led Bertelsen to develop the Solution-Focused Model with a focus on foreign fighters. However, aspects of the model targeted toward foreign fighters may be of less utility in the United States where foreign fighters are less prevalent.

### *Legal and Technical Characteristics*

The U.S. and Danish governments share the goal of countering violent extremism to prevent acts of terrorism (Hemmingsen, 2015). However, because of legal and technical differences between the two countries, implementation of such efforts in each country will be very different.

The Solution-Focused Model is successful in part because of interagency collaboration among social service providers, police, intelligence and security services, the education system, and the health care system. Sharing expertise and information among these organizations is regulated by the Danish Administration of Justice Act, which provides a legal avenue for the exchange of information critical to the prevention of extremism and radicalization (Hemmingsen, 2015). There is no comparable legal framework within the United States to facilitate interagency communication. Mental health and criminal issues are often dealt with separately and with no national systematic plan in place to leverage these efforts.

Additionally, Denmark's state-sponsored social support structure offers several services to program participants at no cost, including career counseling, psychological counseling, and housing assistance (Hemmingsen, 2015). This aligns with the goal of improving the overall quality of life of at-risk individuals addressed in the Solution-Focused Model. Alternatively, the United States addresses at-risk individuals through a less structured, decentralized array of social service and criminal justice systems. Nevertheless, individual U.S. communities may already have processes and protocols in place through NGOs and state and local governments to provide services similar to called for by the Solution-Focused Model.

Differences in the government structures introduce additional challenges in adapting the Solution-Focused Model to U.S. communities. Denmark comprises 5 administrative regions, 98 local municipalities, and 12 police districts, which all function within federal law and under a common organization. The administrative regions oversee control of the physical and mental health sectors of society; municipalities oversee the welfare sector, primary school, and daycare facilities; the police districts enforce criminal justice. Denmark also has a national police force, which has authority over the police districts.

This differs from where U.S. communities operate under state and local laws that can differ significantly between communities, creating less cohesion between and across jurisdictions than in Denmark. This separation and independence among various levels of government can impede the federal government's ability to effectively communicate the intent of programs and operate programs at the local level.

## 3.2 Adapt the Solution-Focused Model for American Communities

This next phase of the research project examined how to apply the core components of the Solution-Focused Model in the current legal, political, and social context of U.S. communities. DHS S&T and RTI developed research questions, established a typology of communities and identified communities based on the typology, conducted focus group discussions in two U.S. communities, and prepared summary reports based on the data collected.

### 3.2.1 Scope/Goals

The goal of this investigation was to determine how to adapt and implement core components of the model and identify barriers to implementation. The investigation addressed the following research questions:

- What processes and protocols are already in place in these communities that could be used to implement the Solution-Focused Model, and what are the gaps?

- What are the local barriers to implementation of the Solution-Focused Model?

- What would the Solution-Focused Model look like in practice in U.S. communities?

### *3.2.2 Methods*

To account for the diversity of U.S. communities, RTI developed a typology for classifying communities' current levels of violent extremism and terrorism prevention engagement. The framework was informed by research from the first phase of the CVE Assessment Tools project and previous contracts with DHS S&T.[8] This typology and criteria relied on structured judgments about specific levels of programming and networking engagement.[9]

The community classifications include three categories of partnerships across two dimensions—relationships between people and structural linkage between organizations (Brown and Keast, 2003):

- *Cooperative relationships* are characterized by short-term, informal, and largely voluntary agreements between different parties. Information sharing, referrals, and space sharing may be present, but these relationships are marked by a lack of common goals, limited to no resource sharing, and autonomy among participants.

- *Coordination* reflects a more intense and formal relationship than cooperation and requires a greater degree of joint planning and information- or resource-sharing between actors to achieve a predetermined goal.

- *Collaborative agreements* are characterized by stability and long-term integration through formal information-sharing, pooled resources, and close relationships between members.

Based on this continuum, we created a classification framework to describe three categories of Terrorism Prevention programming across four dimensions: relationship type, structure type, breadth of resources, and endurance (**Figure 2**).

- **Relationship type**—One of the three types ranging in intensity of effort as outlined by Brown and Keast: cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

- **Structure type**—Degree to which organizations have aligned goals and resources: independent, situational, integrated.

- **Breadth of resources**—Degree to which the available resources address needs related to education, social services, law enforcement (scored on a 3-point scale where each area addressed is worth 1 point).

- **Endurance**—Length of time that (most) actors have been collaborating.

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[8] Countering Violent Extremism: Developing a Research Roadmap and Evaluation of the Community Resilience Exercises (CREX).

[9] *Programming* is defined as any organized effort to promote or achieve a desired outcome related to Terrorism Prevention or targeted violence.

**Figure 2. Community Terrorism Prevention Programming Typology**

| Programming Type | Relationship Type | Structure Type | Breadth of Resources | Endurance (Approximate Minimum Months) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type A | Cooperation | Independent | 1–2 | 0–6 |
| Type B | Coordination | Situational | 1–3 | 7–24 |
| Type C | Collaboration | Integrated | 2–3 | 24+ |

For additional details on classifications, including the types of classifications mentioned below, refer to the Community Classifications memo submitted to DHS S&T on July 31, 2019 (**Appendix J**).

DHS and RTI collected data on legal frameworks, partnerships, and the state of interagency cooperation in two U.S. communities: San Diego, California, and Denver, Colorado. San Diego was identified as Type-B community, having *some* established programming and networks, including:

- Several professionals working on CVE

- Some centralized effort and cooperation between the community, local government, and NGOs

- Some Terrorism Prevention programming

    – Community Led Resilience Building: The Connected Youth-Resilient Communities (CY-RC)[10]

    – TRAP 18 and WAVR 21 assessment tools

    – San Diego Cares

Denver was selected as a Type-C community with w*ell-established* programming and network structures based on collaboration, including:

- Numerous professionals and agencies working on Terrorism Prevention efforts, including local academic institutions

- Several Terrorism Prevention programs

    – The DHS field office working on community terrorism prevention engagement and programming

- Colorado Information Analysis Center (CIAC) is a centralized effort through DHS and coordinates different state and local entities.

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[10] https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/20_0326_tvtp_preliminary-report-programmatic-performance-fy16-cve-grants_0.pdf

## Data Collection Planning

Once the communities were agreed upon by DHS and RTI, planning began for conducting the focus groups. These activities included identifying a local point of contact (POC) in each community, identifying focus group participants and locations, organizing the focus group logistics (e.g., dates and locations), and creating the discussion guides. The following subsections describe each phase of data collection planning.

### Identify a Local Point of Contact

DHS and RTI identified a POC to serve as a liaison with the community and focus group participants. For San Diego, RTI identified Bridgecomm Strategies, a local community development consulting firm with experience in the areas of targeted violence and CVE. For Denver, Jenny Presswalla (DHS) served as the POC.

### Identify Focus Group Participants and Locations

DHS and RTI worked with the POCs to identify focus group participants from three Solution-Focused Model focal areas: education, law enforcement, and social services. The POCs identified potential participants, managed outreach (e.g., sent initial invitation, sent follow-up communications), and identified and booked the meeting locations.

### Develop Focus Group Discussion Materials

RTI developed focus group discussion protocols for homogeneous focus groups with each population: educators, law enforcement personnel, and social service providers. Groups were designed to be homogeneous to increase stakeholder comfort and encourage honesty and openness among participants (Krueger & Casey, 2015). After conducting the San Diego focus groups, RTI updated the protocols to address gaps in the original guides. The final version of the focus group discussion protocol is provided in **Appendix K.**

In preparation for focus groups, RTI also created reference materials that were used to help facilitate the discussion. These materials included a quick reference on the Solution-Focused Model core components and a training scenario taken from the DCPE's training materials titled "The Case of Nedim."[11] Based on feedback from the focus groups held in San Diego, RTI developed "The Case of Joseph" to replace "The Case of Nedim." The "Case of Joseph" scenario was set in Denver and described a story of a young man getting involved in white supremacist ideologies.

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[11] *The Case of Nedim* is a vignette developed and provided by the Danish Centre for the Prevention of Extremism which details the radicalization process of a youth named Nedim. Its purpose in the protocol is to ask participants to respond to a specific scenario using their expertise and available resources in the community identified in the first part of the interview.

*Focus Group Data Collection*

The San Diego focus group discussions were held the week of June 26, 2019, and the Denver focus group discussions were held the week of July 15, 2019. The findings from the San Diego and Denver focus group discussions are described below.

### 3.2.3 Findings

The following sections provide an overview and findings from the San Diego and Denver focus group discussions, including local legal frameworks, partnerships, and the state of interagency cooperation in each community.

*San Diego*

Thirty-two individuals across three professional domains (i.e., social services, education, and law enforcement) were invited to participate in San Diego focus groups on June 27 and 28, 2019. The focus groups gathered information to assess the extent to which the community might be able to implement an adapted version of the Solution-Focused Model. Of the 32 invitees, 16 attended focus groups: 5 from social services, 5 from education, and 6 from law enforcement. A summary of each session is provided below.

**Social Service Providers**

Six social service providers attended the San Diego focus group: two were trained mental health clinicians[12] and four participants were organizers and leaders in local community outreach programs.

**Local Concerns**
- Participants initially reported very little awareness of any incidents of terrorism in the community. One participant stated that youth in San Diego are more at risk for gang violence and drug abuse than they are for joining a terrorist organization such as ISIS or al-Shabaab.

- San Diego is an economically and culturally diverse community, where each segment of the community has its own needs and solutions to those needs which may not be transferable to other communities.

**Referrals and Intake**
- Participants could not reference or describe any formal referral process for youth at risk of involvement in terrorist- or gang-related activity.

- Participants noted that law enforcement would only be contacted in extreme situations where the individual is already "deeply involved in a gang and at risk of engaging in violence."

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[12] One of whom was also one of the local San Diego organizers who assisted with recruitment.

In less extreme situations, community members tend to consult local elders, leaders, and resources within the community to "create life opportunities" such as education, cultural engagement, and job assistance for the individual of concern.

- One participant noted the importance of connecting the individual with someone from a similar background who could adequately understand the cultural issues at play.

- Familiarity with community and relationships with school staff and parents were mentioned as key pathways for identifying at-risk individuals.

- All participants agreed that a hotline (like 211 or Safe2Tell, as employed in Denver) would not work for San Diego because of varying levels of trust in authorities.

- In addition, language barriers were a major concern because many adults in immigrant communities have limited English-language proficiency.

## Assessment

- A participant who oversees a local community outreach program reported using a community handbook that details behaviors of concern and is used to assess whether a youth needs to be connected to appropriate resources within the community. The handbook is used by several others in the community, but the participant noted that the process of referral, assessment, and linking the individual to resources in a timely manner presents challenges.

## Treatment and Follow-up

- Participants were well-versed in their own programs but did not report the existence of any cohesive network to channel a referral to a specific program. Programs recruit largely by word of mouth or direct referral from schools.

- Programs focus on providing safe spaces for youth to engage in prosocial activities (e.g., bowling, movies, larger youth summits) away from stressful environments (e.g., dysfunctional homelife, bullying at school).

- One participant suggested that there is a wealth of programs in the San Diego area, but that they operate in silos.

- Several participants said that many programs are not culturally responsive, and those programs that do not seem to be working were described as attempting to assimilate the individual into a culturally inappropriate environment.

- All participants agreed that the individual must want to participate, otherwise incentivizing them to do so is difficult, if not impossible.

## The Case of Nedim

- One participant mentioned that some individuals are motivated by hate and others by mental illness. The participant noted that often when the perpetrator is from an Islamic background, the individual is labeled a terrorist; when they are inspired by white supremacy, they are often labeled as mentally ill. He thought that Nedim should be treated as a person with a mental illness, adding that in cases where someone's religious or cultural background is relevant, the individual needs to be addressed within that context without labeling the religious or cultural aspects of behavior (e.g., growing a beard, clothing choice) as indicators of terrorist activity.

- Another participant offered that if he were to encounter Nedim, he would involve an achievement coach who would meet with Nedim's teachers, school counselors, and Nedim to investigate what is going on and how to address the issues at hand.

- Another participant noted that the Case of Nedim was interesting and that it "happens all the time." He noted that the symptoms being exhibited appear to be motivated from online radicalization and that intervention would be suitable, including putting Nedim in touch with a religious leader in the community.

- One participant from a community group noted that trust plays an important role in an individual's decision to seek help or a family's decision to seek help for their child. In some cases, children rebel against parents and are more open to outside support: "We give the same lessons that parents give, but because we have built this connection with them, they deem me/us cool because we are…not their parents and have this built in trust."

- One participant, a clinician, offered that mentorship would not be their solution for Nedim. First, they would need at least 3 months to treat his schizophrenia and bring him back to a baseline level of awareness and mental health. Then he would begin other services and "wraparound care" such as mentoring. Psychiatric evaluation would be the priority, then engaging the family in an attempt to solve the other presenting issues.

## *Educators*

Five educators participated in the focus group; three worked in student affairs and outreach at postsecondary education institutions and two were high school teachers.[13] Initially participants were unsure of why they were selected to participate; however, RTI and the POCs explained the purpose of the research project and the focus group discussion continued.

### Local Concerns

- Participants from institutions of higher education reported more experience with targeted violence from the victim's perspective and less from the perpetrator's perspective. They discussed resources available to victims including trauma counseling and direction to other resources in the community.

- These participants reported that sometimes the potentially violent individual is a professor or other administrator at the school. Students are hesitant to report concerning behavior for fear of academic, physical, or some other form of retribution.

- One high school teacher stated that students becoming involved in gangs was a more common concern in San Diego.

### Referrals and Intake

- The two high school teachers reported having received no training or guidance from administrators on procedures to identify an at-risk individual for further assessment or treatment.

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[13] Three of the participants did not attend the entire focus group session, leaving only the two high school teachers to participate in the last 20 minutes of the discussion.

- One teacher reported an instance of an individual whom they believed might be capable of committing an act of violence, evidenced by the content of the student's homework assignments. The teacher reported the student to an administrator, but as far as they know, nothing was done, and the student could still be a potential threat.

- When asked if there were mechanisms or channels in place to refer similar cases for review, both teachers stated that there are no resources to make such referrals other than to the administrator who uses discretion to pursue with discipline or involve the police.

## Assessment

- Participants did not identify any formal mechanisms, tools, or procedures for conducting a risk assessment in their schools.

## Treatment and Follow-up

- Participants from institutions of higher education reported have no legal authority and few options to intervene in circumstances where an individual may be radicalized or at risk of committing an act of violence.

- One participant from higher education stated that there are two options for dealing with targeted violence: (1) educating the attackers and (2) supporting the victims. Their school has decided to educate the attackers, but those who show signs of being high risk are not willing to seek or accept services that could help.

- Participants from the local high school reported no known treatment options other than disciplinary.

## The Case of Nedim

- Participants identified avenues of outreach through Nedim's friends and brother and community resources such as the Chief Diversity Officer on campus.

- One participant suggested putting Nedim in touch with someone who made him feel safe, and with someone of a similar race, religious preference, sex, and cultural background. They qualified their prescription by noting that if Nedim refused, there would be nothing more they could do.

- The high school teachers noted that their school used to have a close relationship with the local National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC). The NCRC was reportedly a significant resource in 2018, with friendly staff who connected well with students who were feeling marginalized. But the participants said that the connection and resource disappeared suddenly in 2019 and they were unsure why.

- Teachers suggested that teaching people to change behaviors is hard, even for teachers who serve more as a life coach than as a classroom instructor.

- One participant suggested that giving students access to employment opportunities would be beneficial in similar cases.

### *Law Enforcement Personnel*

Six law enforcement personnel participated: five sworn police officers and one from the

District Attorney's Office. Compared to the social service providers and educator

participants, the law enforcement participants had more experience with acts of targeted violence and extremist violence.

**Local Concerns**

- Participants agreed that school shootings are a significant local concern. According to one participant, there have been approximately 550 school threats in San Diego "in the past year."

- One participant noted that a single Juvenile Services Team officer is assigned to up to eight schools on average and their workloads leave only "30 minutes a week" to establish relationships with students in each school.

- Another participant noted that radicalized adults pose a significant risk to the community as well. They mentioned difficulty in determining whether someone is radicalized and how to obtain information necessary to make that determination.

**Referrals and Intake**

- Participants reported that most actionable and reliable referrals for school-based threats come from students and social media. Several participants reported having good relations with the schools, with information passing quickly from the administration to the police who are then able to address the issue.

- The participant from the DA's Office said they receive referrals directly from schools on a regular basis.

- Police officers receive referrals from the general public via a Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) that routes to all officers' cell phone. The SARs contain tips and reports from local and state partners, and one participant stated that 40% of threats are against schools. From officers, SARs are distributed to the Law Enforcement Coordination Center and other stakeholders.

- One officer suggested that counties in Southern California have improved practices for sharing information between different agencies and departments, including:

  – Information related to terrorism threats is stored in an FBI database and shared with fusion centers.

  – Information related to school shootings in the San Diego area is shared with various agencies through a model similar to that of fusion centers for local threats.

  – The participant noted that more could be done by including colleges in the database.

- When possible, police conduct a background check and potentially refer to service or send officers to check in with the individual in person.

- One participant suggested that there is discomfort among immigrant communities when reporting to the police and cultures sometimes clash, resulting in not only mistrust of the police but also a lack of information on how to properly report a concern.

- One effective solution for bridging the gap between the community and law enforcement has been the establishment of multicultural storefronts. These are

multi-use spaces embedded in the community with a police officer on site who is available to interact with the community in a public and nonthreatening environment.

## Assessment

- Participants from the San Diego Police Department did not report any experience or expertise in conducting any traditional risk assessments, rather they use threat assessments to determine whether there is a clear and immediate threat.

- These threat assessments are triggered by SARs, tips from social media, schools, and other law enforcement agencies. A participant noted that when the tip is from a civilian, the police tend to act immediately since the individual of concern probably has not been contacted or investigated by law enforcement previously. If the concern is reported by law enforcement, then contacting the individual can usually wait a day or two because law enforcement may have exhausted all of the legal resources already and the tip is motivated by a need to inform for general awareness rather than an immediate call for service.

- The participant from the DA's Office reported some experience with evidence-based assessments of youth and adults. "We do evidence-based assessments. We ask questions related to their mental health status. We ask how things are at home, school, and how well they get along with peers. We try to find if there have been acts of violence in the past year. A lot of behavioral, mental, and emotional health." Three months after the initial assessment, another assessment is conducted.

- Eighteen years ago, the San Diego Police Department created a Psychological Emergency Response Team (PERT); team members often accompany officers on calls for service. PERT comprises licensed clinical psychologists who can perform psychological evaluations in the field and advise officers on whether behaviors being exhibited are the result of mental health. PERT staff are not sworn and are not mandated to share specific health records with police who are conducting an evaluation. Their role is to perform mental health evaluations, the results of which can be shared with the police officer who decides to refer the individual to services, detain, incarcerate, or notify additional agencies such Child Protective Services. PERT staff are now deployed with the San Diego Fire Department as well. The role played by PERT in making available information on an individual's mental health status is characterized in the comments made by two focus group participants:

  – "[PERT] can see the mental health history that they can use. This helps us a lot."

  – "[Because of the clinician] we can see the historical course of the person's mental health disorder. The PERT clinician can open this database. The officer does not have that information. 5150.05 states that we must consider historical course in persons mental disorder."

## Treatment and Follow-up

- One officer stated that "Lack of services is not the issue in San Diego" and referenced both "pre- and post-criminal services [*sic*]" that are made available to the individual, including alternatives to detention such as mental health counseling, parole, community service, and restorative justice.

- According to several participants, parents can be an obstacle in connecting youth to services.

    – One participant said that parents "refuse to believe that they have the kid that [could] end up on the news."

    – Another participant reiterated that the officers and police staff cannot harass a parent into forcing services on a child unless a crime has been committed. In some instances, child specialists are available to liaise between the police and parents; this approach is sometimes successful at overcoming mistrust of the police by some in the community.

    – One officer posited that costs of services are a concern for some families, but another officer countered that, "Cost isn't an issue" as most services are publicly funded, and they had not ever heard of a child being turned away for lack of funds.

    – The first officer added that paying for the services is not the only constraint, as many parents cannot afford to take time off from work. Although some services are offered after work, many are not and that could be a barrier to receiving services.

▪ The options for officers to follow up or reinitiate contact with an individual are limited because of the concerns regarding harassment of individuals who have not committed a crime.

    – One officer described automatic prompts for review from an officer 6 months after a formal incident.

    – In some cases, services are mandated by a judge; in these instances, police intervention may be allowed if conditions are not met.

▪ The DA's Office can stay involved with a case more easily than the police can, and regularly performs follow-up assessments 3 months after services have been provided.

▪ One diversion program is Safe San Diego which offers therapeutic services, family counseling, anger management, and other off-ramping solutions aimed at correcting behaviors.

## *Denver*

Thirty-one individuals across the three stakeholder categories were invited to participate in focus groups in Denver. Out of the 31 invitees, 26 were able to attend the sessions: 5 from social services, 11 from education, and 10 from law enforcement. Participants from each domain shared their experience with targeted violence and terrorism prevention in Denver. They offered historical context for the current systems, described available processes and resources, and identified strengths and weaknesses impacting their prevention efforts.

### ***Social Service Providers***

The five social service providers in attendance reported first-hand experience with targeted violence or terrorism prevention during their career. They highlighted several factors contributing to Denver's history of targeted violence and terrorism including an overall lack of prevention and intervention resources, economic stress in the general population, availability and accessibility to firearms, and the presences of "toxic masculinity." The

stakeholders are commonly aware of or involved with victims of identity crimes, individuals making threats, and people who perceive themselves as victims of injustice. They noted that individuals who perceive themselves as being victims of injustice are often the ones who commit the targeted acts of violence.

**Local Concerns**

- Participants acknowledged that targeted violence and terrorism are issues they are concerned about and deal with professionally. When asked about their concerns, the conversation focused on how Denver addresses threats and the deficiencies in various structures and systems.

- They noted a lack of community awareness and knowledge related to targeted violence, most importantly in clinical settings and the school systems. One reason for the lack of awareness is the absence of a single definition for "targeted violence."

- One participant stated that clinicians often do not know what their options are when a threat is made. Most are not trained on how to address the concern. Even when clinicians are trained, they may feel a conflict between their role as a caretaker and their role as a threat assessor.

- Participants said that many school administrators are ill-informed about targeted violence and as a result make misguided judgment calls such as removing their school resource officer (SRO), even though SROs are beneficial for school relations.

- Participants opined that school staff are overburdened with heavy workloads and the issue of targeted violence is not deemed a priority. Educators are not only teaching; they are also involved in the students' mental health. Responding to this need may add to the pressure school staff feel, especially because they are not professionally trained for this role. They noted that many Colorado communities, particularly in rural areas, do not have the resources to afford a mental health provider in their schools.

- Participants were aware of many interested partners and champions who want to work together to address targeted violence. They noted that local community leaders recognize the threat and the fact that action is needed. One participant mentioned a group of social and health service providers that gathers to exchange information and concerns across sectors.

- The group agreed that Denver has strong legal backing around reporting and consulting. Denver has unique laws, such as the Claire Davis School Safety Act.[14]

**Referrals and Intake**

- Most reports of concern come from bystanders and community members. Often, someone will see something concerning or threatening posted on social media and will report what they saw. Participants noted that teachers and school administrators also play an important role in identifying concerning behavior and alerting the appropriate social service agency.

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[14] https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cssrc/claire-davis-school-safety-act. The act "imposes a limited waiver of sovereign immunity for schools if a school fails to exercise "reasonable care" to protect all students, faculty and staff from "reasonably foreseeable" acts of violence that occurs at school or a school-sponsored activity" (Colorado.gov).

▪ Additionally, school personnel can make a request for a student to undergo a formal threat assessment.

▪ Participants cited the anonymous Safe2Tell (S2T) system as an important mode of reporting.[15] They described the general population, and especially students, as highly aware of S2T.

**Assessment**

▪ Once a report is received, individuals are offered clinical care or undergo a threat assessment.

▪ Additionally, a group of experts, referred to informally as the "Vortex," handles the assessment process and manages the individual case.[16] The Vortex can also include any community member, such as a religious leader, who might help address the concerns. The Vortex determines how often the team meets and which team member(s) will oversee the case.

▪ Participants said that most clinicians are not trained on the warning signs of targeted violence. One noted that of about 300 therapists, roughly 50 have been trained to deal with these specific types of concerns.

**Treatment and Follow-up**

▪ For the social service providers and the Vortex to be successful, participants noted the need for support from family and friends close to the individual and buy-in from the school system. The participants try to encourage teachers to provide countermeasures. For example, rather than telling the student to not do a certain behavior, the teacher should warn them of the consequence and then follow through with that warning if the behavior continues (i.e., detention or suspension depending on the severity of the behavior). Together, the team of experts and the community, including school personnel, are integral parts of handling a concern and managing the process.

▪ Participants distinguished between threat assessment and threat management. Management is an ongoing process where the individual is routinely checked on after receiving the assessment. The participants noted that their goal is to manage the individual, not just provide an assessment.

▪ The group cited four structural factors that inhibit effective management:

   – Sharing information across sectors or accessing an individual's history is either difficult or impossible. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) Act prevents the sharing of important medical and mental health history information; this can hinder an investigation and threat management.

   – A general lack of structure and resources prevents successful collaboration. No structure is in place for the school systems, social service providers, and law enforcement to communicate and share information. There are multiple databases that do not communicate with one another.

   – As described above, participants expressed concern about the lack of education and awareness surrounding targeted violence and terrorism. No evidence-based

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[15] https://safe2tell.org/
[16] The Vortex is a multidisciplinary team of psychologists, school principals, SROs, school counselors, and other personnel deemed necessary to address the individual's concerns

practices for treating individuals who are identified as at-risk are in place. Different approaches and treatments are being used depending on who is addressing an individual's issues.

– Denver has unique cultural properties that contribute to the challenges of responding. Participants described Denver as reactive rather than proactive when it comes to addressing targeted violence. They suggested that Denver has unprecedented access to firearms in combination with what they referred to as "toxic masculinity."

### *Educators*

The education focus group discussion included 11 participants from various institutions. The discussion centered on the various threat levels (low, medium, and high) and the protocols used to identify and address threats. Although the group felt that good practices are in place to address targeted violence and terrorism, protocols and ideologies vary across institutions and school districts. Like the social service providers, educators stated that a lack of resources and a large workload have made it difficult to deal with these types of issues.

### Local Concerns

▪ Their concerns centered on school safety and threats of violence to/from the school-aged population (K-12). Participants agreed that although most acts of violence in this population are carried out by older youth, most threats that surface come from the elementary-aged students. They stated that the young age of the students making these threats affects the approach taken by educators to intervene in a way that guides the students back to normal ways of self-expression. A participant gave this example: If a young child makes a serious threat, the teacher may say "that is not how we express our feelings." If additional risk factors are detected after the initial threat, the concern will be raised to a higher level.

▪ Other concerns expressed by the participants include a lack of resources to address local threats, heavy workloads, limited or no access to mental health resources in rural areas, and constraints on response alternatives because of an emphasis on local control within Colorado, including:

– Some schools do not have SROs.

– S2T is only offered in English and Spanish.

– Education on and use of S2T varies depending on the school district.

– Districts have different standards and protocols on when to conduct a screening and threat assessment.

▪ Participants said they focus on areas that they can address: educating students, parents, and staff on the early warning signs of violence and how to report a concern.

### Referrals and Intake

▪ Although tips can come from anyone (e.g., teachers, bus drivers, parents, health facilities), the most reliable tips come from S2T and directly from the students.

- Reporting to S2T has increased dramatically over the past few years. Because of the number of tips, the Colorado Information Analysis Center (CIAC) now handles the incoming phone calls for S2T. When a report is received, the individual will be screened to determine how to address the concern.

**Assessment**

- A student who exhibits warning signs will be screened using a risk assessment tool developed by the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center.[17] School staff use the tool to look for clear indications that the person has identified a means to act on the threat.

- Based on the screening results, the school will create an individualized safety plan for the student. The school may also use the screening results to determine whether the student should go through a more comprehensive threat assessment.

- Participants also reported using other risk assessment tools such as the VERA 2, SIVRA-35, SAVRY, WAVR 21, and Trap 18.

- In response to the shooting at Columbine High School and other mass school shootings, Colorado developed and implemented procedures for conducting threat assessments for students. Educators classify threats into three levels:

  – Low: This is used for an initial verbal or behavioral threat, in cases where there are no known risk factors associated with the individual and it is a standalone issue or concern.

  – Medium: A medium threat level borders the threshold to involve law enforcement and an SRO may be involved.

  – High: The individual is clear on their intent, means, and ability to carry out a threat and they have a history of violence or other behavioral issues and motivational factors. Law enforcement officials are automatically involved.

- One participant reported that most threats in the past year were low level, while 6% of over 1,000 threat assessments were high level.

- Participants noted that all youth who follow through with a targeted act of violence were at some point considered a low-level threat, which is why early intervention is crucial.

**Treatment and Follow-up**

- One participant mentioned that their team addresses four areas of intervention/management: (1) monitoring, (2) discipline, (3) skill development, and (4) relationship building.

- One participant noted that within their school system, a law enforcement representative is present every week to cross-reference ongoing cases. The representative will guide the school on whether it needs to escalate the situation or gather more information.

- Participants reported experiencing difficulties after a threat is received. Even if a child is referred to mental health counseling, it is not mandatory. Sometimes the

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[17] https://www.dhs.gov/news/2018/07/13/us-secret-service-releases-operational-guide-preventing-targeted-school-violence

parent does not want the child to receive the services. Additionally, follow-up procedures with the youth needs to be improved, including tracking and documenting.

### *Law Enforcement Personnel*

Ten law enforcement personnel participated in the focus group discussion. Their main concerns were related to white supremacy and homegrown terrorism. Participants noted that law enforcement is highly organized and places an emphasis on documentation, communication, and community relations. Nevertheless, they said that there is a need for increased awareness in the community. Additionally, the participants mentioned the need for law enforcement to be more proactive when it comes to targeted violence and terrorism. At the end of the discussion, one participant noted the state is developing a plan to address some of these weaknesses.

### Local Concerns

- With an uptick of threats and actions based on the ideology of white supremacy, participants expressed concern about homegrown terrorism.

- Participants highlighted three types of efforts to reduce targeted violence: (1) educating the community, (2) building relationships within the community, and (3) educating law enforcement personnel. The participants stated that educating the community on what drives radicalization is very important so that they know when to report something. Even though ideologies may differ, many of the indicators and drivers to commit acts of violence are similar. Educating the community focuses on outreach to potential bystanders and also potential victims of targeted violence. As discussed by social service providers and educators, S2T is widely known for school-aged children (K-12). However, one weakness is the lack of education, outreach, and awareness building in postsecondary education institutions.

- Participants work with the Colorado Resilience Collaborative (CRC), a community-based organization, to address identity-based violence. The CRC is important for community building and provides counseling triage support services for community members.

- One weakness related to building community relationships is the inability to communicate with everyone because of language barriers.

- Participants discussed the importance of educating their own agency staff as well. Law enforcement officials receive ongoing training on targeted violence, and prevention and intervention training allows them to review case studies so that they understand the drivers behind terrorism. The participants noted that these trainings focus on the bystander role in terrorism prevention since bystanders serve as an important resource of information. Having this background knowledge strengthens the officers' abilities to gather information and handle referrals.

### Referrals and Intake

- In conjunction with educating the community, participants also emphasized the importance of building strong community relationships. Community members, including houses of worship, serve as an important source of information, so establishing trusting relationships allows for greater information sharing.

▪ Law enforcement personnel receive referrals and tips from various sources, but the discussion focused on how referrals are received from community members. Community members will reach out by directly e-mailing the police department or through the city webpage e-mail address, calling 911, calling a city council member's office or the Mayor's Office, attending and speaking out at community meetings, and reaching out to a trusted community partner who will then bring the issue forward to law enforcement.

## Assessment

▪ Upon receiving a referral, the first step is to gather information on the individual in question. Unlike the other stakeholder groups, law enforcement does not use any risk assessment tools. Rather, a patrol officer is dispatched to the individual's address to gather information, including (1) Who is this person and what is their background? (2) Do they have any warrants? (3) Do they have any weapons? (4) What support systems are in place for this person? (5) What are this person's triggers? and (6) What safety and protection measures need to be put in place?

▪ Several participants noted that they work with clinicians as co-responders so that they can assist with the initial contact. Co-responding means that a clinician rides in the patrol car and addresses the mental health aspect of the information-gathering. The clinician and the officer work together to assess whether this is a mental health crisis or if there needs to be a criminal investigation because the person is dangerous or radicalized. If it is a mental health crisis, the mental health unit will take the lead. If it is a criminal matter, law enforcement will take the lead. The police department will decide which unit or detective should be assigned to the case.

## Treatment and Follow-up

▪ After the referral and information gathering processes have started, the case is managed by law enforcement or mental health services. The participants noted that they try to avoid prosecution, if possible, by diverting cases to mental health services. If the individual does not agree or the intervention does not work and the behavior escalates, then it will likely revert to law enforcement.

▪ Regardless of whether mental health or law enforcement takes the lead, the two agencies will typically continue to work together to address the individual's needs. Although there is collaboration between law enforcement and mental health personnel, HIPAA impedes the extent to which information can be shared with law enforcement. The participants noted that this is one of the biggest hurdles they face.

▪ Participants emphasized the importance of documentation and information sharing among agencies to successfully manage and track cases. To ensure information flow, there are analysts who work around the clock on case support. If an individual previously referred to law enforcement enters the system again, the analyst can notify the appropriate agency to address the issue promptly. The CIAC is also involved in this network which allows statewide resources to be connected.

▪ Participants noted that there are several diversion programs available and law enforcement personnel will recommend the program that best fits the individual's needs.

## 3.3   Solution-Focused Model Conclusions

Findings from the second phase of the CVE Assessment Tools project suggest that the Solution-Focused Model, with further research, could be adapted and implemented in U.S. Type B and C communities to counter violent extremism and prevent terrorism. Based on San Diego, CA, and Denver, CO, focus groups, there is initial evidence that a full model adaptation and implementation may be more useful in Type B communities where there are fewer ongoing CVE and terrorism prevention programs. In Type C communities, with more established and successful CVE and terrorism prevention programs (e.g., Denver's Safe2Tell program), it may be more useful to adapt portions of the model to fill gaps in current programming.

However, additional research is needed before any adaptations or implementations are attempted in the United States because of significant legal differences between the United States and Denmark, specifically U.S. restrictions on information sharing and variation between U.S. communities in their government structure and operation. Therefore, RTI recommends conducting additional focus groups in additional Type A, B, and C communities to better understand the impact of legal differences on potential adaptations and implementations.

# 4. Findings and Recommendations

Across both phases of the CVE Assessment Tools project, DHS and RTI developed a comprehensive understanding of terrorism prevention risk assessment and diversion, including current and past research and programming. Through this research endeavor, RTI has identified future research priorities to improve DHS's support of terrorism prevention programming and risk assessments—**Table 5** details key findings and recommendation from both phases.

**Table 5.  CVE Assessment Tools Findings and Recommendations**

| Phases | Findings | Recommendations |
|---|---|---|
| State of the Science Research | ▪ Current risk assessment tools are lacking adequate validations.<br>▪ Tools rely too heavily on static risk and protective factors and there is a need to identify and incorporate additional dynamic factors.<br>▪ Successful risk assessment and diversion programs have six common components: multidisciplinary teams, referral, intake and management, assessment, treatment, and follow-up.<br>▪ CVE and terrorism prevention programs and service provider networks are missing or inadequately supported in most U.S. communities. | ▪ Conduct additional research on risk protective and protective factors.<br>▪ Conduct an expert elicitation on violent extremism including a discussion on barriers to validation and current program evaluation efforts.<br>▪ Investigate the suitability of the Solution-Focused Model for adaptation and implementation in U.S. communities. |
| Solution-Focused Model | ▪ The model incorporates all six core components of successful risk assessment and diversion programs.<br>▪ Given cultural and legal differences between the U.S. and Denmark, significant adaption would be required to implement the model in the U.S.<br>▪ U.S. communities may be able to implement an adapted model; however, it may be more useful in Type A and B communities with less extant programming.<br>▪ In Type C communities, parts of the model could be adapted to fill gaps in current programming. However, a full adaptation may counter successful extant programs. | ▪ Conduct focus groups in additional Type C communities.<br>▪ Conduct focus groups in additional Type B communities.<br>▪ Conduct research on adapting and implementing the model in Type A communities.<br>▪ Conduct research on efforts to validate or evaluate implementations of the model in other countries.<br>▪ Conduct an expert elicitation on adapting the model. |

These recommendations identify research and developmental needs for terrorism prevention assessment tools and diversion programming, highlighting the need for improved provider networks, interventions, and programs to reduce the risk of violent extremism and terrorism. The Solution-Focused Model provides a promising option for adaptation and implementation in U.S. communities. However, research suggests there is no "silver bullet" for assessing and preventing extremist violence and terrorism. Therefore, additional research is needed to understand how best to adapt and implement the model in U.S. communities, noting that there will need to be significant differences in adaptation and implementation based on community type.

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# Appendix A:
# Stakeholder Recruitment—Email Text Used in Email Messaging

## From DHS

Dear [name],

As a Program Manager with the Department of Homeland Security Science & Technology Directorate (DHS S&T), I am writing to request your participation in *Countering Violent Extremism: Diversion Program—Assessment Tools to Support Secondary and Tertiary Intervention for Violent Extremism*, a research effort jointly sponsored by DHS S&T in collaboration with the Department of Justice (DOJ) National Institute of Justice (NIJ).

As the threat of extremist violence against the United States continues to evolve and increase, DHS S&T is developing a Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Framework, the goal of which is to provide a comprehensive strategy for preventing and mitigating the threat of violent extremism. As a part of this goal, this current project seeks to fill an important gap for the federal government and local communities alike by working to develop risk assessment tools to help professionals assess risk and provide treatment.

DHS S&T selected RTI International, a leading research institute dedicated to building knowledge to inform practice and policy, to assist the agency in the design of future CVE programs. Your input is vital to understanding the current state of CVE risk assessment research, the identification of future needed research, and the implementation of current, possibly transferable, risk assessment tools. Participation will involve an individual interview; during which time RTI will seek your expertise and knowledge on existing risk assessment tools or risk assessment needs. RTI will also want to understand better how your organization uses risk assessment tools, and/or the operational context in which you may be able to utilize such tools.

RTI International will be contacting you shortly via email regarding your participation (communications will be sent from the RTI Project Director Casey Tischner (ctischner@rti.org). Thank you in advance for your time and consideration, and if you have comments or questions, you can reach me at Jennifer.Foley@hq.dhs.gov.

Best regards,


Jennifer Foley

## RTI Follow-Up

Dear [name],

I am writing to follow-up on the email sent yesterday by Jennifer Foley of the Department of Homeland Security, Science & Technology Directorate (DHS S&T) regarding the *Countering Violent Extremism: Diversion Program—Assessment Tools to Support Secondary and Tertiary Intervention for Violent Extremism* project.

As explained by Ms. Foley, we are interviewing stakeholders to develop a better understanding of how your organization uses risk assessment tools or how your organization could potentially use a risk assessment tool in the future. This information will be used to develop a comprehensive overview of CVE risk assessment efforts and assist DHS S&T with the development of tools to help professionals (such as psychologists and counselors assess risk and provide treatment.

My colleagues and I will be contacting you soon, as we would like to speak with you more about your work and schedule a convenient time to meet with you in person or set up a video conference. I am happy to answer any questions you may have about the project or the process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,


Casey Tischner

## Appendix B:
## Full List of Participant Organizations

| Stakeholder Organization | Organization Type | Country |
|---|---|---|
| *Research Partner* | | |
| German Institute on Radicalization and De-Radicalization | Research | Germany |
| National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) | Academic | United States |
| Blackhawk Technical College | Academic | United States |
| Institute for Strategic Dialogue | Research | United Kingdom |
| *NGO* | | |
| The Soufan Group | Consultant | United States |
| Muflehun | Practitioner | United States |
| Life After Hate | Practitioner | United States |
| Identify Psychological Services LTD | Clinician | United Kingdom |
| Cambridge Health Alliance | Clinician | United States |
| *Government* | | |
| City of Atlanta Mayor's Office | Administrative | United States |
| Royal Canadian Mounted Police | Law Enforcement | Canada |
| Los Angeles Police Department | Law Enforcement | United States |
| National Counterterrorism Center | Research | United States |
| United States Attorney's Office, Boston | Judiciary | United States |
| Department of Homeland Security Office of Community Partnerships, Denver | Administrative | United States |

# Appendix C:
## Interview Protocol for Academics, Researchers, and General CVE Stakeholders

## Introduction

Good evening. My name is XX and I'm joined by YY, we will be asking you a few questions and capturing notes from our discussion.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science & Technology Directorate (S&T) in collaboration with the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) seeks to identify individual and group violent extremists risk assessment tools, and to understand the current state of the science. With a strong foundation in research, DHS and NIJ ultimately strive to support the development of tools that will help community organizations and local government institutions to identify potential early signs of radicalization and also to assess individual aptitude for successful completion of diversion and rehabilitation programs. To properly gauge the feasibility of and gather requirements for CVE assessment tools, RTI is eliciting input from potential end-users and stakeholders from multiple sectors including; US Attorneys' offices, local law enforcement, DHS CVE stakeholders, experts on terrorism and psychology, secondary school counselors, and clinical end-users. By understanding the daily operations of your organization, we seek to work toward developing instruments that can be integrated into the current processes of multiple end user groups, while also providing the information and guidance needed from an assessment tool. The information gleaned from our conversation with the various stakeholders across numerous sectors will be used to assist DHS S&T and NIJ in understanding the operational context and the priority needs of the end user community, how assessment instruments are or could potentially be used, and what research is still needed in order to validate and better understand the individual and group risk factors associated with violent extremism.

We expect the interview to last about 60 minutes.

*Ask permission to record the interview.*

## Consent and Confidentiality

Before we begin, we'd like to remind you that your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may stop at any time. You can choose to skip any question you do not want to answer. We will be recording this interview so as not to miss any important information. The recording will be transcribed so that we will be able to identify, analyze, and compare the major themes that cut across all of the interviews that we conduct We will also be taking notes about your responses to our questions, but your name will not be recorded or connected in any way to your responses. We request that all participants maintain the confidentiality of the interview and request that you refrain from disclosing any information about the interview session, including the identity of other participants. Keep in mind that we are only interested in gaining a better understanding of your work and how CVE assessment tools are or would be of benefit to you in your work, and not about any details tied to you specifically.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

# Questions

## 1. Background

- What is the mission/ goal of your organization (the work that you do)? How do you implement your objectives? *(Probe to understand daily operations, primary interactions with target audiences, both in general and if they have a specific CVE agenda.)* <u>What happens in a typical day?</u> *(Not for leadership)*

- Who are your partners? Main stakeholders? *(Probe for organizations, schools, universities, and government agencies with whom they work in general and specific to CVE. Also ask about stakeholders, making clear the difference between partners and stakeholders. Stakeholders are not necessarily people who help run/support the goals, but folks they are beholden to either due to legal authority or funding.)*

- How do you define success? *(Probe for metrics of success in terms of daily operations and performance)*

## 2. Intersection with CVE

- How would you rate the threat of violent extremism (e.g., extremist acts by or affecting community members, backlash or renewed concerns to acts elsewhere, etc.) to the community you serve? *(Probe to better understand the VE threat in relation to the other threats to the community they serve)*

- How familiar is the concept of countering violent extremism (or CVE) to you? For how long has it been on your radar? Is it a growing, decreasing, or steady concern? What in your view does CVE involve? *(Probe for both programs as well as actions taken to combat VE. It is important to know how they understand CVE and view this universe)*

- What is the nature of your research/work related to violent behavior, radicalization, and violent extremism? *(Probe to determine if work focuses on general violence, prevention, rehabilitation, recovery, etc.)*

## 3. Have you done (or are you aware) of any work that has been conducted on assessment tools/identification of individuals that may display violent/extremist behavior prior to the commission of a crime?

- If yes, what types of tools are you familiar with? Do you have any experience using them yourself? In general, what are your thoughts regarding the use/utility of such tools?

- What characteristics/variables would be most useful in assessing the risk of someone being radicalized and/or exhibiting violent extremist behavior?

- Who would the appropriate end-users for these types of tools be? How would you envision these tools being used most effectively?

- Are there any ethical/legal concerns with the use of such a tool?

- Are you aware of any particularly important papers or experts in the field that we would benefit from investigating?

4. **What would an ideal diversion/prevention system look like? Who is best suited to identify potential violent actors and what types of programs are needed to prevent radicalization or violent action?**

5. **How should these predictive assessment tools be utilized—for example, are these one-use diagnostic tools to be used at the beginning of an intervention, or can they be used throughout the deradicalization/disengagement process?**

   ▪ Should only one tool be used, or are there a plurality of tools that need to be incorporated?

6. **Are you aware of any tools that would assess the likelihood of further violent acts and/or the potential for an individual to be rehabilitated?**

   ▪ What characteristics/variables would need to be measured to assess the potential that violent/radicalized offenders could be rehabilitated?

   ▪ What types of programs/interventions would be needed to encourage desistance from violent criminal behavior? Do these programs currently exist? How effective are they?

   ▪ What are the biggest barriers to rehabilitation?

7. **Next Steps**

   ▪ I want you to picture for me the ideal system- pre-criminal, currently incarcerated, and post release- to best assess the risk that someone poses a threat of extremist violence, what does this system/process look like? *(Probe for multiple responses based on the different stages- and ask for specific steps- Step 1 teacher sees disengaged student, Step 2 etc.)*

   ▪ In order for us to get to this ideal system, where are the major gaps, and what is needed to fill these gaps? *(Probe for specific categories- is it funding, more policy, political will, research on validation, group factors, etc.?)*

**C-3**

# Appendix D:
## Interview Protocol for CVE Assessment Tool End-Users: Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)-Assessment Tools

## Introduction

Good evening. My name is XX and I'm joined by YY, we will be asking you a few questions and capturing notes from our discussion.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science & Technology Directorate (S&T) in collaboration with the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) seeks to identify individual and group violent extremists risk assessment tools, and to understand the current state of the science. With a strong foundation in research, DHS and NIJ ultimately strive to support the development of tools that will help community organizations and local government institutions to identify potential early signs of radicalization and also to assess individual aptitude for successful completion of diversion and rehabilitation programs. To properly gauge the feasibility of and gather requirements for CVE assessment tools, RTI is eliciting input from potential end-users and stakeholders from multiple sectors including; US Attorneys' offices, local law enforcement, DHS CVE stakeholders, experts on terrorism and psychology, secondary school counselors, and clinical end-users. By understanding the daily operations of your organization, we seek to work toward developing instruments that can be integrated into the current processes of multiple end user groups, while also providing the information and guidance needed from an assessment tool. The information gleaned from our conversation with the various stakeholders across numerous sectors will be used to assist DHS S&T and NIJ in understanding the operational context and the priority needs of the end user community, how assessment instruments are or could potentially be used, and what research is still needed in order to validate and better understand the individual and group risk factors associated with violent extremism.

We expect the interview to last about 60 minutes.

*\*Ask permission to record the interview.*

## Consent and Confidentiality

Before we begin, we'd like to remind you that your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may stop at any time. You can choose to skip any question you do not want to answer. We will be recording this interview so as not to miss any important information. The recording will be transcribed so that we will be able to identify, analyze, and compare the major themes that cut across all of the interviews that we conduct We will also be taking notes about your responses to our questions, but your name will not be recorded or connected in any way to your responses. We request that all participants maintain the confidentiality of the interview and request that you refrain from disclosing any information about the interview session, including the identity of other participants. Keep in mind that we are only interested in gaining a better understanding of your work and how CVE assessment tools are or would be of benefit to you in your work, and not about any details tied to you specifically.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

# Questions

## 1. Background

- What is the mission/ goal of your organization (the work that you do)? How do you implement your objectives? *(Probe to understand daily operations, primary interactions with target audiences, both in general and if they have a specific CVE agenda.)* What happens in a typical day? *(Not for leadership)*

- Who are your partners? Main stakeholders? *(Probe for organizations, schools, universities, and government agencies with whom they work in general and specific to CVE. Also ask about stakeholders, making clear the difference between partners and stakeholders. Stakeholders are not necessarily people who help run/support the goals, but folks they are beholden to either due to legal authority or funding.)*

- How do you define success? *(Probe for metrics of success in terms of daily operations and performance.)*

## 2. Intersection with CVE

- How would you rate the threat of violent extremism (e.g., extremist acts by or affecting community members, backlash or renewed concerns to acts elsewhere, etc.) to the community you serve? *(Probe to better understand the VE threat in relation to the other threats to the community they serve.)*

- How familiar is the concept of countering violent extremism (or CVE) to you? For how long has it been on your radar? Is it a growing, decreasing, or steady concern? What in your view does CVE involve? *(Probe for both programs as well as actions taken to combat VE. It is important to know how they understand CVE and view this universe.)*

## 3. Existence of a Risk Assessment Tool

- Does your organization conduct risk assessments related to violence? *(Probe: make sure they understand that we want to know both about violent extremism and general violence assessments used- pre-criminal and post-conviction phases. Names of the assessments, and who uses them how.)*

- If so, can you describe your current or past use of risk assessments? *(Probe for target audience, training involved prior to use and on-going, impact and effectiveness of the assessment outcomes. Please ask for materials related to tools.)*

- What tools, if any, do you currently have to help you identify and deal specifically with violent extremism? *(Probe for current tools that they have, what resources they currently use to refer and assess individuals.)*

## 4. Organization DOES currently use or has in the past used an assessment Tool (Probe for all types of assessment tools- not just CVE specific assessment tools)

- Please explain the tool- how it works, by whom it is administered, etc.

- How and by whom was the tool developed?

- If and how are people trained to use the tool? Who conducts training?

- What do you find most and least helpful about the tool, both in terms of overall effectiveness and administration?

- How could the tool be improved?

- Has the effectiveness of the tool been evaluated? How well do you think the tool meets the needs for which it is used?

- What concerns, if any, do you have surrounding the use of the tool?

## 5. Cost and benefits of an Assessment Tool

- Do you think a tool that assisted you in understanding and assessing the risk factors for individuals to potentially engage in extremist violence would be helpful to you? If so, why do you need this tool? How would it help you fulfill your mission? If not, why not?

- What do you see as the potential benefits of an operationalized/relevant/ tested/usable assessment tool?

- What would you want to know about the assessment tool before using it?

- What would be some potential concerns about using an assessment tool? (Probe for limitations of the tools, capturing concerns about liability/community perceptions)

- How would you communicate about this assessment tool with your colleagues, individuals you are assessing, their families, communities, etc.?

## 6. Operationalization of an Assessment Tool

- How would you use such a tool? *(Probe about their daily operations and how they would be able to integrate this tool into their routine and culture of their organization, ask for examples of use. Specifically ask about steps taken after the tool is used, how would the data be used? For what purpose?)*

- What would be some challenges faced in using an assessment tool? *(Probe for institutional barriers within the organization, as well as larger issues of liability and community response)*

- Do you believe that you, and others in your position, would be the best persons to utilize this assessment tool? *(Probe about work load, possibility of intensive training, knowledge criteria, and legal requirements)*

- If you are not the best person to use this assessment tool, who do you believe should be using and operationalizing such a tool? Why do you think this organization/position is better suited to using this tool? *(Probe for funding issues, connections with target community, availability for timing, academic training required, etc. Probing the response for this question and the previous question is key. See if one groups steps up and/or falls out as being the ideal user)*

## 7. Next Steps

- I want you to picture for me the ideal system- pre-criminal, currently incarcerated, and post release- to best assess the risk that someone poses a threat of extremist violence, what does this system/process look like*? (Probe for multiple responses based on the different stages- and ask for specific steps- Step 1 teacher sees disengaged student, Step 2 etc.)*

- In order for us to get to this ideal system, where are the major gaps, and what is needed to fill these gaps? *(Probe for specific categories- is it funding, more policy, political will, research on validation, group factors, etc.?)*

- If you have an assessment tool, can you share it with us?

Thank you so much for your thoughtful responses and your valuable time.

# Appendix E:
# European Programs Designed to Reduce the Risk Posed by Extremist Offenders

**Table E-1.  European Programs Designed to Reduce the Risk Posed by Extremist Offenders**

| Program (Location) | Implementer | Target Population | Goals |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Programs Run Outside of Prison** | | | |
| **Danish or Aarhaus Model** (Denmark from 2007 on) (Bertelsen, 2015a; Christensen, 2015; RAN[a], 2016a, 2017a, 2017c) | Government (national police; social and psychiatric services; Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET)) | Right-wing, left-wing, and religious extremists; returning foreign fighters | ▪ Addressing physical and mental health issues<br>▪ Mentoring participants in how to address challenges posed by leaving extremism and everyday life<br>▪ Helping individuals to develop non-extremist social networks<br>▪ Developing parents' network to support individuals in abandoning violent extremism<br>▪ Helping participants to secure housing (if necessary) and employment |
| **Early Release Scheme** (N. Ireland from 1998 through early 2000s) (Democratic Progress Institute, 2013; Horgan & Braddock, 2009) | Government (U.K. and Irish); nonprofits (e.g., N. Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) | Loyalist and Republican extremists who qualified for early release | ▪ Providing job training and education for individuals released as part of effort<br>▪ Providing assistance finding employment<br>▪ Offering monetary assistance<br>▪ Providing support for individuals' families (e.g., educational support) |
| **Exit Deutschland** (Germany from 2000 on) (Butt & Tuck, 2014; Christensen, 2015; RAN, 2017a) | Nonprofit (ZDK Society Democratic Culture) | Right-wing extremists voluntarily seeking to leave movement | ▪ Addressing individuals' extremist ideology<br>▪ Helping individuals to acknowledge harm they have done to victims<br>▪ Providing therapy to address psychological issues, addiction, or family issues<br>▪ Counseling families of extremist individuals<br>▪ Helping individuals find a safe environment away from group (through police protection, etc.)<br>▪ Providing assistance with job training and education |

**Table E-1. European Programs Designed to Reduce the Risk Posed by Extremist Offenders (continued)**

| Program (Location) | Implementer | Target Population | Goals |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Programs Run Outside of Prison (continued)** | | | |
| **EXIT Fryshuset** (Sweden from 1998 on) (Butt & Tuck, 2014; Christensen, 2015; Ramalingam & Tuck, 2014; RAN, 2017a) | Nonprofit (Youth Centre Fryshuset) | Right-wing extremists voluntarily seeking to leave movement | ▪ Developing confidential relationships between participants and *former* violent extremists who can provide guidance<br>▪ Providing counselling (with psychologist or psychiatrist if needed)<br>▪ Providing training in social skills and conflict management<br>▪ Helping individuals to reestablish contact with former friends and family<br>▪ Supporting family members of individual leaving group<br>▪ Providing safe housing<br>▪ Supporting participants in finding a new jobs and establishing new lives |
| **Hayat** (Germany from 2012 on) (RAN, 2017a) | Nonprofit (ZDK Society Democratic Culture) | Islamist extremists voluntarily seeking to leave movement; returning foreign fighters | ▪ Addressing individuals' extremist ideologies<br>▪ Providing counseling to participants<br>▪ Counseling families of extremist individuals<br>▪ Serving as bridge between participants, their families, and social service, employment, educational, or law enforcement organizations |
| **Inclusion** (The Netherlands; unclear when started) (RAN, 2017b) | Government (Dutch Probation Service) | Islamist extremists on parole or probation | ▪ Addressing psychological issues and extremist worldview through cognitive behavioral exercises<br>▪ Supporting reconciliation with family members or other positive influences<br>▪ Developing tailored plans for participants' future<br>▪ Assisting individuals in finding job, schooling, housing, and debt relief |
| **Jump** (Germany from 2010 on) (RAN, 2017a) | Nonprofit (Christliches Jugenddorfwerk (CJD)) | Right-wing extremists voluntarily seeking to leave movement | ▪ Reflecting on experiences inside and outside of group and moral dilemmas<br>▪ Identifying and handling triggers that may lead to rejoining group<br>▪ Developing sustainable courses of action to avoid rejoining group<br>▪ Helping to secure housing, education, or employment |

**Table E-1. European Programs Designed to Reduce the Risk Posed by Extremist Offenders (continued)**

| Program (Location) | Implementer | Target Population | Goals |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Programs Run Outside of Prison (continued)** | | | |
| **Success Together** (U.K., 2014–2015) (RAN, 2017a) | Nonprofit (Account Trust) | Tamil extremists who support separatist agenda | ▪ Providing culturally appropriate cognitive therapy in native language<br>▪ Developing narratives to counter extremist separatist agenda<br>▪ Providing training and employment opportunities |
| **The Unity Initiative** (U.K. from 2010 on) (RAN, 2017a) | Nonprofit (The Unity Initiative) | Islamist extremists convicted of Terrorist Act offenses; returning foreign fighters | ▪ Developing tailored one-on-one interventions<br>▪ Working to change the worldviews and ideologies of participants |
| **Prison-Based Programs** | | | |
| **Back on Track** (Denmark from 2011 on) (Butt & Tuck, 2014; RAN, 2017a) | Government (Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration; Danish Prison and Probation Service) | Inmates convicted of extremism-related crimes; inmates assessed as vulnerable to extremism | ▪ Providing mentoring in how to handle everyday situations, problems, and conflicts<br>▪ Engaging inmates' families and social networks to support former inmates when they reenter society<br>▪ Providing support finding new job and establishing new life after release |
| **Healthy Identities** (U.K. from 2010 on) (Dean, 2012; NOMS, 2013) | Government (National Offender Management Service) | Inmates convicted of extremism-related crimes | ▪ Providing one-on-one tailored sessions focused on<br>▪ Empowering individuals to take responsibility for themselves, how they live and their personal commitments<br>▪ Developing positive identities and self-images<br>▪ Reducing "us versus them" thinking and identification with violent extremist groups<br>▪ Enabling participants to express, tolerate and cope with powerful emotions without denigrating or harming others<br>▪ Addressing attitudes and beliefs that support extremist offending<br>▪ Developing individuals' support networks and preparing them for future intervention work |

(continued)

**Table E-1. European Programs Designed to Reduce the Risk Posed by Extremist Offenders (continued)**

| Program (Location) | Implementer | Target Population | Goals |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Prison-Based Programs (continued)** | | | |
| **Violence Prevention Network** (Germany from 2001 on) (RAN, 2016a, 2017b) | Government-funded (Federal Agency for Civil Education, part of the Federal Ministry of the Interior); run by nonprofit | Inmates convicted of crimes related to right-wing extremism and, more recently, religious extremism | ▪ Providing 23-week education program with small group of prisoners focused on:<br>▪ Understanding motivations that led to extremist activity<br>▪ Identifying alternative responses and ways to handle conflict<br>▪ Reintegrating them into democratic culture<br>▪ Providing dedicated support from mentors once individuals have been released<br>▪ Offering support for individuals' families before and after release<br>▪ Helping individuals find housing and employment |

ª RAN is the acronym of the Radicalization Awareness Network, an organization that brings together European practitioners who work on radicalization prevention efforts.
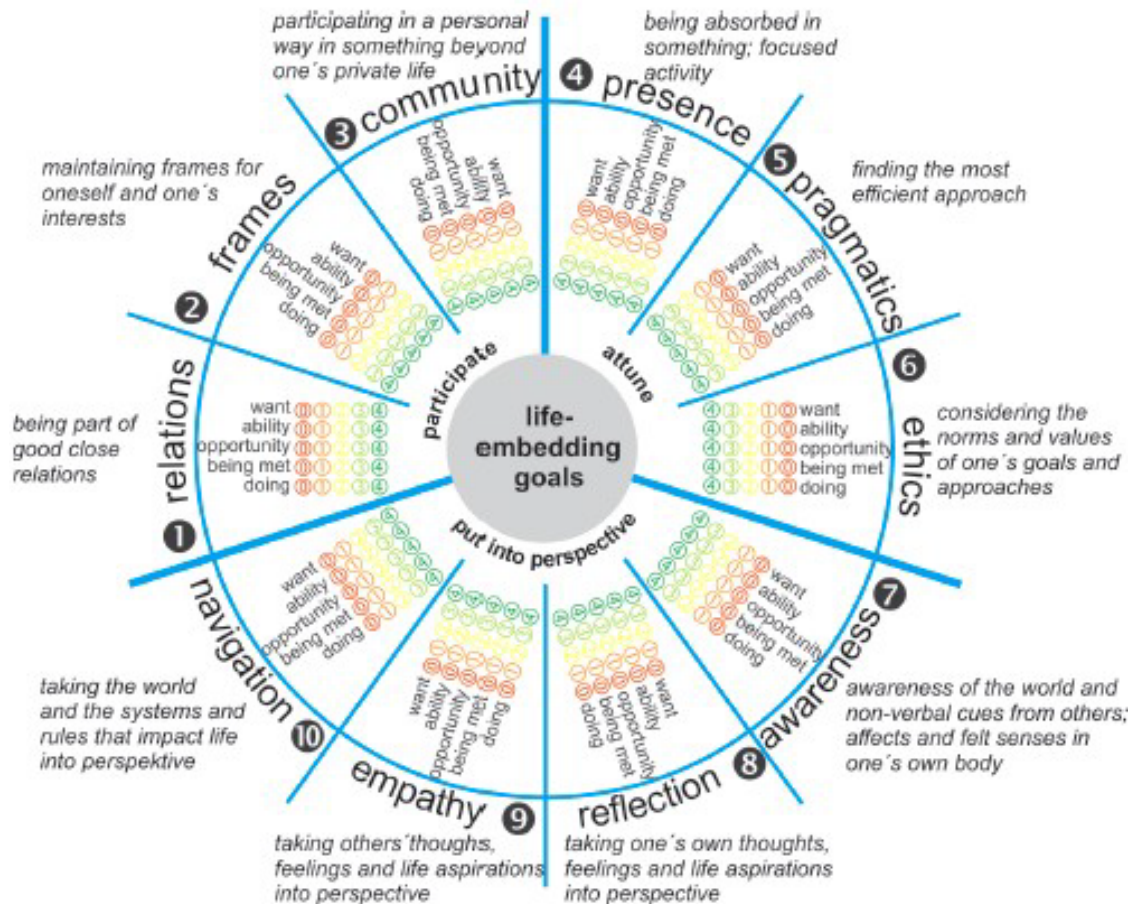
# Appendix F:
# Life Psychology Analysis Form

**TPA-tk Life Psychology Analysis Form** © Preben Bertelsen, Department of Psychology, Aarhus University

This is a basic form for assessment of individuals with social problems. The form is based on life psychology and illustrates the 3 overall life tasks and the 10 fundamental life skills that are necessary to solve the life tasks. The form therefore provides information about the individual's general life skills, well-being, decisiveness and resilience to negative impacts. Each of the 10 life skills are assessed and scored on the basis of the five basic questions of life psychology (Basic Five):

## The Basic Five of life psychology

Each of the ten skills are scored according to the Basic Five of life psychology

| Want | May | External possibilities | Being acknowledged | Doing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| To what extent does the individual have the desire, the motivation and the ambition to exercise this skill? | To what extent does the individual have knowledge and information, ability and proficiency to exercise this skill? | To what extent does the individual have resources and the framework in the form of time, place, possessions, institutions etc. to be able to exercise this skill? | To what extent does the individual receive support, help, acknowledgement and responsiveness from others to be able to exercise this skill? | To what extent has the individual taken actual practical steps towards realising this skill? |

participating in a personal way in something beyond one's private life

being absorbed in something; focused activity

maintaining frames for oneself and one's interests

finding the most efficient approach

❸ community ❹ presence ❺ pragmatics

frames ❷

want ability opportunity being met doing

being part of good close relations

relations ❶

want ability opportunity being met doing

life-embedding goals

considering the norms and values of one's goals and approaches

ethics ❻

taking the world and the systems and rules that impact life into perspektive

navigation ❿

awareness of the world and non-verbal cues from others; affects and felt senses in one's own body

awareness ❼

empathy ❾ reflection ❽

taking others' thoughs, feelings and life aspirations into perspective

taking one's own thoughts, feelings and life aspirations into perspective

participate   attune

put into perspective

© WOS The Life Psychological Wheel of Skills
Preben Bertelsen, Department of Psychology, Aarhus University

# Appendix G:
# Topic-Based Life Psychology Analysis Form—
# Radicalisation and Extremism

**TPA re Life Psychology Analysis Form**　　　© Preben Bertelsen, Department of Psychology, Aarhus University

This form is a supplement to the life psychology analysis form/basic form.

While the basic form illustrates the individual's fundamental life skills (and thus, also the individual's resilience to negative impacts), this form illustrates a number of deeper personality factors as well as external structural and relational factors of particular importance for radicalisation and association with extremist environments.

These factors are relevant in terms of whether the life skills take the form of risk factors or protective factors.

## Cognitive style

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intolerant to ambiguity | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Tolerant to ambiguity |
| Jump to conclusion | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Consider carefully |
| Fundamentalism | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Openness |
| Monomania | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Versatility |

## Dynamic style

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relatively high energy level | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Balanced energy level |
| High degree of thrill seeking | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Balanced degree of thrill seeking |
| Jump to action | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Consider the consequences |

## Deep personal style 1) mirroring

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-overestimation and unrealistic mirroring | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Balanced and realistic self-image and mirroring |
| Will not let violations go | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Able to let go and forgive |
| Aggression and violence as the preferred response | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Non-violent response |

## Deep personal style 2) idealisation

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Over-idealised quest to belong | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Balanced, realistic image of others and ideals |
| Guilt and shame in terms of unrealistically high standards | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Balanced and realistic standards |
| Identity simplification | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Identity complexity |
| Violence and aggression as accepted prices to pay | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Non-violent response |

## External factors

| Close networks | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents: Psycho-socially dysfunctional | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Parents: Psycho-socially well-functioning |
| Parents: Socioeconomically disadvantaged | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Parents: Socioeconomically well off |
| Parents: Negative role models | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Parents: Positive role models |
| Friends/others: Negative role models | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Friends/others: Positive role models |
| Very different/incompatible values and norms | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Shared values and norms |
| Immediate environment | | | | | | |
| Residential area disadvantaged | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Residential area well-functioning |
| School disadvantaged | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | School well-functioning |
| Either no leisure activities or dysfunctional leisure activities | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Leisure activities present and well-functioning |
| Major structural conditions | | | | | | |
| Few or no work or after-school job opportunities | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Good work or after-school job opportunities |
| Few opportunities for cultural or societal participation | ⓪ | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | Good opportunities for cultural or societal participation |

community · pre-sence · pragmatics · frames · participation | attunement · Norms, values · relations · a good enough life · perspective taking · navigation · aware-ness · empathy · reflec-tion

# Appendix H:
# Assessment, Planning, and Progression Form

This form is used to assess the individual's challenges and resources and to agree on, and plan relevant efforts to help the individual develop more positively.

The individual's situation is assessed on a scale from 0 to 4. Read more in the guide to Balanced Risk Assessment.

| Cause for concern | Works | Goal | Agreements |
|---|---|---|---|
| Describe any concerns, in particular in relation to: | Describe exceptions, possibilities and resources, in particular in relation to: | Describe the goals the individual intends to achieve: | Describe specific agreements and plans. |
| Fundamental life skills | Fundamental life skills | | |
| Personality psychology factors | Personality psychology factors | | |
| External factors | External factors | | |
| Behaviour | Behaviour | | |

☹ 0      Risk assessment      4 ☺
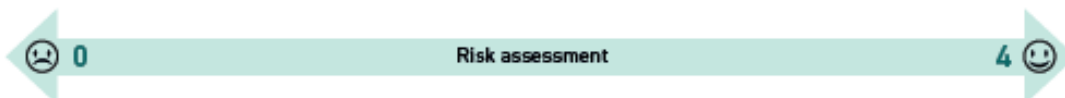
# LGT version 3.2
## Life psychological Goal setting Tool

## 1: Set a goal

Which challenge would you like to work on?

Which goal may help you in this work?

**S.M.A.R.T.GOAL?**

- ☐ Specific?
- ☐ Measurable?
- ☐ Attuned?
- ☐ Realistic?
- ☐ Timed

## 2: Choose a focus on your goal

| A - Choose skill A to reach goal - | B - Choose skill B to reach a goal | C - Choose skill C to reach a goal |
|---|---|---|
| A: How is this skill already working well? | B: How is this skill already working well? | C: How is this skill already working well? |
| A: How can you improve this skill? | B: How can you improve this skill? | C: How can you improve this skill? |

## 3: The next step towards your goal

| Next step towards the goal using this focus? | Next step towards the goal using this focus? | Next step towards the goal using this focus? |
|---|---|---|
| You will take the next step at this point in time: | You will take the next step At this point in time: | You will take the next step at this point in time: |
| ...and/or when you experience the following: | ...and/or when you exprience the following: | ...and/or when you experience the following: |

**IS YOUR NEXT STEP MOTIVATING?**
yes maybe no
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do you want to?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are you capable of?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ External possibilities?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are you being met?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do you act?

**IS YOUR NEXT STEP MOTIVATING?**
yes maybe no
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do you want to?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are you capable of?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ External possibilities?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are you being met?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do you act?

**IS YOUR NEXT STEP MOTIVATING?**
yes maybe no
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do you want to?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are you capable of?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ External possibilities?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Are you being met?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ Do you act?

Name:_____

Date:_____

# Appendix J:
# Community Classifications Memo—
# Submitted to DHS July 31, 2019

![RTI International | Memorandum logo]

To:        Jen Foley

From:      RTI International

Date:      July 31, 2019

Subject:   Terrorism Prevention Community Classification Framework

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) has asked RTI International to assess the suitability of local communities in the United States to implement the Solution-Focused Model (SFM) used to prevent terrorism in Denmark.[18] To this end, RTI will examine current Terrorism Prevention engagement, programming and networking in selected communities by conducting focus groups and interviews with community stakeholders. This memorandum outlines RTI's approach to classifying the level of community engagement and describes our application of this approach when selecting communities to include in the examination.

During the early stages of designing the current project, the need to establish community classification parameters and criteria became apparent due to the diversity present in the United States. To facilitate classification, RTI developed a framework informed by research we conducted under a previous contract with the DHS S&T and the National Institute of Justice[19], as well as opinions expressed by Terrorism Prevention experts collected during the preliminary data collection. We note that the framework, parameters, and criteria rely on subjective judgments about what is considered to be evidence of programming and networking and what indicates a specific level of engagement. Also, the scope of activities used to investigate engagement within a community are constrained by time and budget

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[18] The solution-focused model, sometimes called the Aarhus Model, was developed by Preben Bertelsen for the city of Aarhus, and is an intervention-focused model to counter violent extremist recruitment and promote desistance and disengagement from violent extremist organizations. It has been adopted by the Danish government and is supported by the Centre for the Prevention of Extremism.

[19] Countering Violent Extremism: Developing a Research Roadmap and Evaluation of the Community Resilience Exercises (CREX)

afforded to the current project. Therefore, the decisions described in this memorandum must be seen as a first attempt to assign communities to the correct categories. In fact, a key objective of the current research is to learn more about the selected communities in terms of Terrorism Prevention engagement and suitability to implement the SFM. Therefore, adjustments to the methodology and assignments are expected.[20]

For the purposes of this investigation, *programming* is defined as any organized effort to promote or achieve a desired outcome related to Terrorism Prevention or targeted violence. In this case, it includes any effort with components designed to counter the threats of extremist or targeted violence against communities or to impede the recruitment of individuals into organizations motivated to commit violence by political, cultural, or systemic grievances.

Our classification for different types of networks is derived from Brown and Keast's[21] (2003) review of the available engagement literature detailing the possible partnerships between community stakeholders and governments. They describe three categories of partnerships with increasing integration and formality across two different dimensions—relationships between people (e.g., cooperation, coordination, and collaboration) and the structural linkage between organizations (e.g., network arrangement, networks, and network structures).

- *Cooperative relationships* are characterized by short-term, informal, and largely voluntary agreements between different parties. Information sharing, referrals, and space sharing may be present, but these relationships are marked by a lack of common goals, limited to no resource sharing, and autonomy among participants. Winer and Ray[22] (1994) and Cigler[23] (2001) also note that cooperation tends to occur in less-strategic initiatives and are often undertaken by personnel stationed towards the bottom of the organizational chart. Similarly, *networking arrangements* are loose connections between different organizations which mostly interact and share information through informal, situational channels. Organizations mostly work independently, and their goals may be complementary but not necessarily the same.

- *Coordination* reflects a more intense and formal relationship than cooperation and requires a greater degree of joint planning and information- or resource-sharing between actors to achieve a predetermined goal. Organizations remain mostly autonomous, but each contributes to a specific goal, program, or outcome. The motivation for coordination is often driven by more than just "the good will of the different actors," and usually has the force of a common objective or mandate which

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[20] Updates will be described in separate email communication and memoranda from RTI to DHS S&T throughout the period of performance. They will also be reflected in the final report.
[21] Brown, K.A. & Keast, R.L. (2003). Citizen-government engagement: community connection: community connection through networked arrangements. *Asian Journal of Public Administration*, *25*(1), 107–132.
[22] Winer, M., & Ray, K. (1994). *Collaboration handbook: Creating, sustaining and enjoying the journey*. St Paul, MA: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.
[23] Cigler, B. (2001). Multiorganizational, multisector, and multicommunity organizations: Setting the research agenda. In M. P. Mandell (ed.), *Getting Results Through Collaboration: Networks and Network Structures for Public Policy and Management*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books, pp. 71–85.

leads to "a more enduring system of relationships" (Brown and Keast, 2003). These enduring relationships result in stronger bonds between organizations and formalized *networks* for sharing information and resources toward common goals. Networked organizations retain high levels of autonomy while simultaneously taking on more risk for more reward. This type of partnering is typically situational, wherein organizations coordinate temporarily to achieve a common goal that supports their respective missions.

▪ *Collaborative agreements* are characterized by stability and long-term integration through formal information-sharing, pooled resources, and close relationships between members; there is also the potential for significant loss of autonomy. Brown and Keast (2003) posit that collaboration is often used to address complex social problems when other forms of integration have failed. *Network structures* rely on high degrees of collaboration, trust, and interdependence between members. The structures often are the result of a failure of traditional channels or methods, and sometimes see previously competing organizations collaborating to solve joint problems in new ways. This type of arrangement is highly integrated and may include extensive division of labor based on each organization's unique skills and infrastructure.

Based on this continuum, we have created a classification framework to describe three categories of Terrorism Prevention programming across 4 dimensions: relationship type, structure type, breadth of resources, and endurance (Exhibit 1).

▪ **Relationship type**—One of the three types ranging in intensity of effort as outlined by Brown and Keast: cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

▪ **Structure type—**Degree to which organizations have aligned goals and resources: independent, situational, integrated.

▪ **Breadth of resources—**Degree to which the available resources address needs related to education, social services, law enforcement (scored on a 3-point scale where each area addressed is worth 1 point).

▪ **Endurance—**Length of time that (most) actors have been collaborating.

**Exhibit 1. Community Terrorism Prevention Programming Matrix**

| Programming Type | Relationship Type | Structure Type | Breadth of Resources | Endurance (Approximate Minimum Months) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type A | Cooperation | Independent | 1–2 | 0–6 |
| Type B | Coordination | Situational | 1–3 | 7–24 |
| Type C | Collaboration | Integrated | 2–3 | 24+ |

*Type A: Communities with little (if any) Terrorism Prevention programming and loose network arrangements based on cooperation*. These are communities with either no programs aimed at Terrorism Prevention, or programs with little sustained engagement or support beyond a limited timeframe. Individuals or non-governmental organization (NGO)

staff within these communities may be working on Terrorism Prevention issues (e.g., threat assessment, gang prevention), but terrorism or targeted violence are not the primary focus. Additionally, these groups do not constitute an integrated system working toward a common goal. While organizations may jointly work on common and even related goals, they are largely independent in these endeavors and any form cooperation is limited in scale, scope, and duration. Typically, these communities are characterized by relatively less familiarity and experience with traditional countering violent extremism programming and practices. Furthermore, the communities often lack dedicated programs to identify and off-ramp individuals vulnerable to committing acts of extremist violence or being recruited to violent extremist organizations. Generally, these communities are not recognized by Terrorism Prevention experts as having a significant level of Terrorism Prevention programming or networking. It is important to note that these communities can vary greatly in size and demographic characteristics.

*Type B: Communities with some established programming and networks based on coordination*. In these communities, some Terrorism Prevention-focused intervention or diversion programming is occurring, but there may be only limited or temporary coordination among organizations, agencies, and service providers, and they may or may not share common goals or missions. These communities typically have some knowledge of and experience with off-ramping or diversion programs but lack a formal network of experienced stakeholders. Organizations in these communities typically only coordinate towards common goals in specific (potentially long-term) situations that are mutually beneficial and where goals align but retain a large degree of autonomy in effort, resources and rewards. They are most notably distinguished from Type A communities by their pool of qualified professionals knowledgeable about Terrorism Prevention methodologies.

*Type C: Communities with well-established programming and network structures based on collaboration*. These are communities with several long-standing established Terrorism Prevention programs or networking dedicated mostly or completely to preventing recruitment into violent extremist organizations or to off-ramping individuals vulnerable to committing targeted violence act. The network structures, which often include educators, law enforcement personnel, social service providers, local government, and community group members, share common goals and lines of communication and information-sharing (e.g., common meetings, shared online forums). Generally, these communities are recognized as having a pool of knowledgeable Terrorism Prevention practitioners and multiple enduring programs and networks covering a broad array of service areas and topics. Organizations in Type C communities are heavily integrated and freely share information, resources, and credit to achieve a common goal.

The initial study design called for RTI and DHS S&T to select one Type A community and one Type C community in which to conduct focus groups and interviews. We were to use the findings from these sessions to determine the suitability of implementing the adapted SFM

in each community. However, it became apparent that identifying a enough individuals from any Type A community with the knowledge and access to infrastructure needed to identify and address the issues associated with model implementation would be unlikely. Therefore, the design was revised such that interviews with individuals engaged in some form of Terrorism Prevention activity in a Type A community would be conducted and no focus groups would be attempted in any Type A community.

However, we were confident in our ability to identify a sufficient number of individuals from Type B and Type C communities to conduct focus groups and interviews. Individuals from these types of communities would likely possess the knowledge and infrastructure to contribute meaningfully to discussions regarding tangible and observable gaps, barriers, and other concerns of implementing the adapted SFM.

Raleigh, NC, San Diego, CA, and Denver, CO were considered and assessed using available information on Terrorism Prevention programming and networking. Exhibit 2 displays relevant characteristics and RTI's initial assignment of these communities using the categories described above.

**Exhibit 2. Community Characteristic Matrix**

| Community/Characteristics | Programming Type | Relationship Type | Structure Type | Breadth of Resources | Endurance (Approximate minimum months) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Raleigh, NC<br><br>▪ A few professionals working on threat assessment<br>▪ Some knowledge of countering violent extremism, but no existing programming<br>▪ No coordinated Terrorism Prevention efforts<br>▪ No-low recognition of Terrorism Prevention programming or networking among the field | Type A | N/A | N/A | Unknown | N/A |
| San Diego, CA<br><br>▪ Several professionals working on countering violent extremism<br>▪ Some centralized effort and cooperation between the community, local government, and NGOs<br>▪ Some Terrorism Prevention programming<br>▪ Some recognition among the field | Type B | Coordination | Independent | 3 | 7–24 mos |
| Denver, CO<br><br>▪ Numerous professionals and agencies working on Terrorism Prevention efforts, including local academic institutions<br>▪ Several Terrorism Prevention programs<br>▪ Centralized effort through DHS and a willingness to cooperate among the different local actors the state<br>▪ High reputation among the field | Type C | Collaboration | Integrated | 3 | 24+ mos |

# Appendix K:
## Suitability Focus Group Discussion Protocols

## Materials

1. **Protocol**
2. **"The Case of Joseph" handout**

## Introduction

Hello Everyone.

My name is [RTI Project Team Member #1] and I am joined by [RTI Project Team Member #2]. We are from RTI International, a research organization located in the Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. We are working with the Department of Homeland Security Science & Technology Directorate. Thank you all for taking the time to meet with us. Your input is really important and valuable.

We understand that [COMMUNITY] has implemented protocols and procedures to address violent extremism and acts of targeted violence. We're here today to learn about your efforts. More specifically, we hope to discuss how you identify needs, any challenges you encounter and solutions you have found, the types of stakeholders that are involved in these efforts, and other lessons you have learned.

## Consent and Confidentiality

Before we begin, I'd like to mention that your participation in this discussion is voluntary and you may stop at any time. You can choose to skip any question you do not want to answer. We will record and transcribe this discussion so as not to miss any important information; we also will take notes during the session. But your name will not be recorded or connected in any way to your responses. We ask that everyone maintain the confidentiality of the discussion and that you do not disclose any information about what is said or the identity of other participants. Keep in mind that we are only interested in gaining a better understanding of the efforts that your community has taken toward preventing violent extremism and targeted violence and not about any details tied to you personally.

Do you have any questions before we start?

## Introductions

- Roundtable introductions stating:

  – Name

  – Organization

  – Title/Role in the organization

## Background

When we think of violent extremism or targeted violence, we all may have a different definition, but for our conversation today, let's consider violent extremism and targeted violence as deliberate participation in or direct support of any act of mass violence such as a bombing, mass shooting, or joining violent organizations such as ISIS. There are many programs and organizations in the United States dedicated to preventing these incidents from happening. Often these efforts include attempts to identify individuals most at risk of committing an act of mass violence, and then intervening with programs that might include mentoring, counselling, mental health, civic engagement, and job placement.

Over the past three years, DHS and RTI have been looking at existing programs for preventing violent extremism and targeted violence—in addition to adjacent fields. Through this research, we have identified six common, core components of such programs:

(1) Referral—How individuals are identified and by whom

(2) Intake and Management—How case files are created and stored and who has access to the information

(3) Assessment—How risk assessments are done and who gets the information

(4) Treatment—How treatment plans are developed and what they include

(5) Follow-up—If, and how, follow-up is done

(6) Multidisciplinary Teams—How cases are managed after assessment and who is involved in the follow-up

I'm hoping that these core components might serve as a framework for our conversation. But first, I would like to get a general sense of what is happening in [COMMUNITY].

## Protocol A: Local Context

### *1.1 Baseline Community Knowledge*

I would like to start by asking you, as *educators/law enforcement personnel/social service providers*, to share any concerns you might have about violent extremism and targeted violence in [COMMUNITY].

- As [FILL FOCUS GROUP OCCUPATION], is violent extremism or targeted violence something that is on your radar? Do you see this as a pressing concern within your community or not really something that [COMMUNITY] needs to deal with at this time?

    – Why or why not?

- As [PROFESSION], have you had any experiences with violent extremism or targeted violence in [COMMUNITY]? Please tell me about that.

    – What are the circumstances of your experience?

- What training have you received related to violent extremism or targeted violence?

[IF RESPONDENTS DO NOT HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE WITH VIOLENT EXTREMISM OR TARGETED VIOLENCE AND/OR ARE STRUGGLING TO UNDERSTAND THE PROMPT, SKIP TO PROTOCOL B "THE CASE OF JOSEPH". THE VIGNETTE SHOULD BE USED ONLY IF PARTICIPANTS SEEM UNABLE TO RESPOND TO THE OPENING DISCUSSION.]

## 1.2 Referrals and Intake

- What processes are in place within the *school system/police department/social service agencies* to identify individuals who are at risk?

    – Who typically identifies individuals at risk? Family members, friends, professionals?

    – How is risk defined in practice?

- Once individuals are (or would be) identified, what is the next step? Is there a referral process?

    – Can you describe the process?

        • Who receives the referrals?

        • What is the timeline of events from intake to resolution?

- How did the processes develop? Were they set up as they are now, or did they sort of develop and evolve over time?

    – Tell me more about how the processes came to be the way they are now.

        • What events led to their development?

        • Who was instrumental in their development?

- To what extent do you think the identification and referral processes are successful? What helps make them successful/What prevents them from being more successful?

## 1.3 Assessment/Teams

- How do you confirm/validate that the concern that initiated the referral is well founded?

- What processes are in place to identify the nature of the threat? For example, how do you (how would you) determine that this individual is a real threat instead of just a normal teenager acting out or just an unhappy person needing to let off some steam?

    – Once you have learned about a concern, what steps are taken to confirm that the threat is real or valid?

    – Who is involved in these actions? Who makes the decisions?

    – What is the timeline of events for the assessment?

- What tools or methods do you have in place to make these assessments?

        • What is the name of risk assessment tool or methodology that you use?

**K-3**

▪ How did these assessment processes develop? Were they set up as they are now, or did they sort of develop and evolve over time?

 – Tell me more about how the processes came to be the way they are now.

 • What events led to their development?

 • Who was instrumental in their development?

▪ To what extent do you think the assessment processes are successful? What helps make them successful/What prevents them from being more successful?

 – Is this a formal policy? How do you define formal?

▪ With whom can you share information about the individual(s) posing a threat (e.g., law enforcement, schools, parents, health care providers, and other professionals)?

 • What type(s) of information is shared?

 • How is it shared? (e.g., encrypted emails, phone calls, databases, etc.?)

 • Are there legal barriers to sharing specific type(s) of information?

 • [IF YES TO ABOVE] how do you overcome these barriers?

 ◦ Are there any legal protections for professionals working on these types of cases? Are there any special statues or laws that allow for the sharing of information?

▪ To what extent do you think the information sharing processes are successful? What helps make them successful/What prevents them from being more successful?

## *1.4 Treatment*

▪ If an individual is determined to be a credible threat, how is the threat addressed?

 – Law enforcement

 • What options are available other than arrest?

 • How does an individual's criminal history affect decisions?

 • How does an individual's age affect decisions?

 • Would you say the decisions about how to address such threats are based on formal policies or are they more discretionary?

 • How did these policies/practices develop? Were they set up as they are now, or did they sort of develop and evolve over time?

 • Tell me more about how the policies/practices came to be the way they are now.

 ◦ What events led to their development?

 ◦ Who was instrumental in their development (e.g., local law enforcement agency personnel, other law enforcement agency personnel, school personnel, parents, students, social service providers)?

 • To what extent do you think the policies/practices are successful? What helps make them successful/What prevents them from being more successful?

 – Education

- What school policies are in place to address these students?

- In addition to/Other than policies, what practices are typically employed to address these students?

- Are there any resources available at school to address these students?

- How did these policies/practices develop? Were they set up as they are now, or did they sort of develop and evolve over time?

- Tell me more about how the policies/practices came to be the way they are now.

  ◦ What events led to their development?

  ◦ Who was instrumental in their development (e.g., state education department/district personnel, school administrators, teachers, other school personnel, parents, students, law enforcement, social service providers)?

- To what extent do you think the policies/practices are successful? What helps make them successful/What prevents them from being more successful?

- What if the student is not a threat, but their mother/father/sibling is?

– Social Services

- What agency policies are in place to address treatment of these individuals?

- In addition to/Other than policies, what practices are typically employed to treat these individuals?

- What agency resources are available to treat these individuals?

- How did these policies/practices develop? Were they set up as they are now, or did they sort of develop and evolve over time?

- Tell me more about how the policies/practices came to be the way they are now.

  ◦ What events led to their development?

  ◦ Who was instrumental in their development (e.g., state social service agency personnel, local agency administrators, school personnel, parents, students, law enforcement)?

- To what extent do you think the policies/practices are successful? What helps make them successful/What prevents them from being more successful?

- How are the services funded?

▪ What other groups are involved in carrying out this treatment?

– To what extent do [educators/law enforcement personnel/social service providers] interact with [educators/law enforcement personnel/social service providers]?

– How were these relationships established?

– How is information shared between you and these other professionals?

– How did these information sharing practices develop? Were they set up as they are now, or did they sort of develop and evolve over time?

## *1.5   Follow-up/Case Management*

▪ Once a concern or a threat has been identified, are there processes in place for monitoring and processing the case?

– How are these cases tracked over time?

– How are these processes documented (i.e., record keeping)?

• Online or paper files?

• Who is responsible for updating the records?

• Who has access to this information?

– Do you share this information with any other organization or agency, such as the *school system/law enforcement/social service*?

• What information is shared with other organizations/school/communities or made public?

• Why is some information shared and some not?

– How did these follow-up/case management practices develop? Were they set up as they are now, or did they sort of develop and evolve over time?

– Tell me more about how the practices came to be the way they are now.

• What events led to their development?

• Who was instrumental in their development (e.g., state social service agency personnel, local agency administrators, school personnel, parents, students, law enforcement)?

– To what extent do you think the practices are successful? What helps make them successful/What prevents them from being more successful?

## *1.6   Cross-agency Collaboration*

▪ IF COLLABORATION MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY: We've touched on this during our discussion today, but I'd like to hear more about the extent to which you or your agency collaborates with the [*school system/police department/social service agencies*] on issues related to violent extremism and targeted violence.

– What do you collaborate on?

– When did the collaboration begin?

– Who is involved in collaborative projects?

– What has helped/hindered the collaboration?

▪ IF COLLABORATION NOT MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY: I don't think that we've mentioned it during our discussion today, but I'd like to hear about the extent to which you or your agency collaborates with the [*school system/police department/social service agencies*] on issues related to violent extremism and targeted violence.

– IF COLLABORATION OCCURS:

• What do you collaborate on?

• When did the collaboration begin?

- • Who is involved in collaborative projects?

- • What had helped/hindered the collaboration?

  – IF COLLABORATION DOES NOT OCCUR:

  - • What has hindered collaboration in this area?

  - • What do you think could happen realistically to help foster collaboration?

## Protocol B: Case of Joseph

I would like for you to read an excerpt from a real case of violent extremism that occurred in the United States. Then, I will ask you to react to what you have read using the 6 core components I mentioned earlier (referral, intake, assessment, treatment, follow-up, and multidisciplinary teams). Specifically, I want to know:

1. whether you believe this individual is a threat,

2. how did you make that determination,

3. to whom can you report this concern,

4. what type of treatment or intervention would you recommend (if any),

5. and who would be responsible for managing this concern?

\*Read "Case of Joseph" from CREX Binder\*

Now let's think about what resources are available locally, drawing from your own experience and professional networks, to address the Case of Joseph.

### *2.1   Referral/Case Management*

- ▪ Based on your experience, what referral mechanisms are in place for you to report this concern?

- ▪ What does that process look like, what are the limitations and how would you overcome them?

- ▪ What type of case management is available?

  – With whom could you share this concern?

  – What types of information could you share or not share about this case?

  – What concerns do you have about sharing information?

  – Where is this information stored?

### *2.2   Teams*

- ▪ Who should be notified of this individual and why?

- ▪ What information can you share about the cases, why or why can't you share certain information?

- ▪ Other than these people already mentioned, who else should be involved in the case, if there were no barriers to information sharing or jurisdiction?

- ▪ What are your relationships with other actors like?

## *2.3   Assessment*

- Who would assess whether this individual is a threat?

  – What would that look like?

  – Who is involved?

  – What processes or venues are in place to discuss these?

  – Who makes the final determination?

  – What happens next?

  – What if he is not a threat?

- What assessment tools do you have available?

- What sort of assessment tools do you not have, but wish you had available?

## *2.4   Treatment/Follow-up*

- Based on your experience and knowledge, what type of treatment would you recommend for Joseph in your community?

  – Who is involved and what is/are their role(s)?

  – Who administers this treatment?

  – Who needs to be informed of this treatment?

- What are the barriers to enacting this treatment and how would you overcome them?

- What resources are available or could be leveraged for treatment?

  – Who would take responsibility for this?

  – Who would provide oversight?

    • Who would follow up?

    • What training do they receive?

    • Who do they answer to?

    • What authority do they have?