



Countering Violent Extremism Guidebook

Prepared by the Countering Violent Extremism sub-committee of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police Counter-Terrorism and National Security Committee.

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Note from Assistant Commissioner Mark Flynn & Deputy Chief Myron Demkiw

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Countering terrorism and violent extremism is a shared responsibility across law enforcement, governments at all levels, and the private sector. Collaboration and collective action in managing threats to the country's national security is the foundation of Canada's national security policy.

Police agencies are uniquely positioned to counter terrorism and extremism by virtue of their presence in communities across the country. As such, the police are likely to be among the first alerted to suspicious activity related to terrorism and extremism from concerned family members, friends, community members, or through daily police work and calls for service. Recent years have seen an increasing trend toward the localization of national security and countering violent extremism activities. As such, this genre of police work is increasingly falling under the jurisdiction of local institutions and organizations – like the police, corrections, and a variety of community-based human and social service agencies. Community engagement is an important cornerstone of police work, as relationships are strengthened to prevent individuals from becoming involved in a range of criminal activity, including terrorism, hate crimes and extremism.

At a national level, Canada is working closely with domestic and international partners and continues to build on our multi-layered approach to public safety and security. Of utmost importance, Canada's counter-terrorism activities need to be guided by the principles of respect for human rights, the rule of law, and the treatment of terrorism and extremism as crimes. The courts act as a final check and balance to ensure that these types of criminal investigations are conducted in a reasonable and proportionate manner to the threat posed.

To encourage a coordinated approach to national security within the policing community, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police Counter-Terrorism and National Security Committee (CACP-CTNS) has prepared this guidebook to support efforts in developing counter-terrorism strategies at all levels. The purpose of this guidebook is therefore to provide a primer for generalist police officers on a host of considerations related to identifying, preventing, intervening, and/or investigating and disrupting terrorism and/or extremist violence.

Activities related to counter-terrorism are most effective when there are clear and coordinated roles and responsibilities amongst partners to facilitate integration and accountability. It is important to encourage participation by all relevant stakeholders so that information sharing and integration can be maximized, while keeping in mind that agencies will participate according to their mandate and level of capacity. Community perspectives, input and participation are also critical to the development of an effective Canadian response. These efforts will enhance Canada's ability to counter terrorism and extremism domestically, while coordinating efforts with key international partners.

The development of strategies at all levels of policing will facilitate the identification of common objectives, establish roles and responsibilities, and initiate mechanisms through which agencies can work together (e.g., counter-terrorism steering committee). With such a collaborative framework in place, stakeholders can enhance how they are working to address terrorism and extremism, while remaining flexible and adaptable to changes in a complex and evolving threat environment.

Any feedback or questions can be directed to the CACP-CTNS Committee Secretariat: CACPCTNS@rcmp-grc.gc.ca. Thank you for your continued efforts to combat the threat of terrorism and extremism in Canada.

Sincerely,

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Introduction

Canadian police and security agencies are tasked with responding to threats of extremist violence perpetrated by a small number of individuals who have become radicalized for political, religious, or other ideological reasons. Though national security investigations legislatively fall under the mandate of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the responsibility for national security work has become increasingly localized and also involves specially-trained police officers from municipal, regional and provincial services working on their own or in Joint Forces Operations (JFOs) (for example, Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams that fall under the mandate of the RCMP for central coordination by ministerial direction). Yet specialist officers are not the only police officers “doing” national security work – increasingly, generalist officers (i.e., those with no specialized experience or training) are also expected to possess the requisite knowledge that will enable them to identify, prevent and/or intervene in situations involving actual or potential radicalization to violence. This is because officers from the police of jurisdiction (POJ) may be among the first to be notified about or otherwise encounter a radicalizing/radicalized individual. Recognizing and attending to such individuals is therefore imperative from a national security perspective.

The purpose of this guidebook is therefore to provide a primer for generalist police officers on a host of considerations related to identifying, preventing, intervening and/or investigating and disrupting extremist violence.

Key Terminology

Radicalization is a process by which an individual or a group gradually adopts extreme positions or ideologies that are opposed to the status quo and challenge mainstream ideas (Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence, 2018).

Radicalization to violence is the process by which individuals and groups adopt an ideology and/or belief system that justifies the use of violence in order to advance their cause (Canada Centre, 2018).

Violent extremism is a term describing the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve extreme ideological, religious, or political goals (Canada Centre, 2018).

Terrorism – In Canada, section 83.01 of the *Criminal Code* defines terrorism as an act committed “in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause” with the intention of intimidating the public “... with regard to its security, including its economic security, or compelling a person, a government or a domestic or an international organization to do or to refrain from doing any act.” The legal definition of “terrorist activity” is set out in section 83.01 (1)(a) and (b) of the *Criminal Code of Canada*, while the definition of a terrorist offence is laid out in sections 82.03 to 83.04 and 83.18 to 83.23.

Relevant *Criminal Code of Canada* sections for these offences can be found here:

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/page-8.html#h-116339>.

Hate/Bias Crime is a broad legal term that encompasses a diversity of motives, perpetrators, victims, behaviours, and harms. Research has identified individuals and groups that are at a particular risk of hate/bias crime victimization, including Indigenous peoples and those targeted because of race, religion, ethnicity, national orientation, sexual orientation, gender, disability, or an intersection of more than one of these identities (Chongatera, 2013; Leber, 2015).

Hate/bias crimes affect not only individual victims, but also the larger community. Hate/ bias crimes also have consequences that reach far beyond a specific incident and are particularly concerning because they:

- can have uniquely violent and assaultive characteristics,
- cause trauma to victims, family, and friends,
- can cause fear of being targeted for future crimes,
- can escalate and prompt retaliation,
- can foster community unrest, and
- threaten national values of tolerance and inclusion.

It is important to note that while hate can be a motivator in these types of offences, it is often not the sole motivating factor. Research demonstrates that hate/bias crimes are often motivated by multiple factors, including ignorance, fear, anger, and social/political grievances (Janhevich, 2001; Tetrault, 2019), which can pose legal challenges for determining and demonstrating hateful motivation.

Legally speaking, hate/bias crimes are criminal offences that are found to have been motivated wholly or in part by hatred toward an identifiable group. According to s318(4) of the *Criminal Code of Canada*, such groups are distinguishable by race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, among other factors. Simply put: *any criminal act* has the potential to be a hate/bias crime if the hate motivation can be proven.

Examples of hate crime offences may include acts of violence or hostility such as an assault (hitting or spitting on someone) or causing damage to property. The key is that these acts intentionally target individuals or property based on the offender's hate towards the broader "identifiable group".

Hate Propaganda is defined in the *Criminal Code* as any writing, sign or visible representation that advocates or promotes genocide or the communication of which by any person would constitute an offence under Section 319 [Willful Promotion of Hatred].

There are four specific offences listed as hate propaganda or hate/bias crimes in the *Criminal Code of Canada*:

1. advocating genocide (section 318 (1)),
2. public incitement to hatred where likely to lead to a breach of the peace (section 319 (1)),
3. willful promotion of hatred (section 319 (2)), and
4. mischief motivated by hate in relation to religious property (section 430 (4.1)).

With the exception of public incitement to hatred where it is likely to lead to a breach of the peace (Section 319 (1)), police must obtain consent of the Attorney General prior to laying charges.

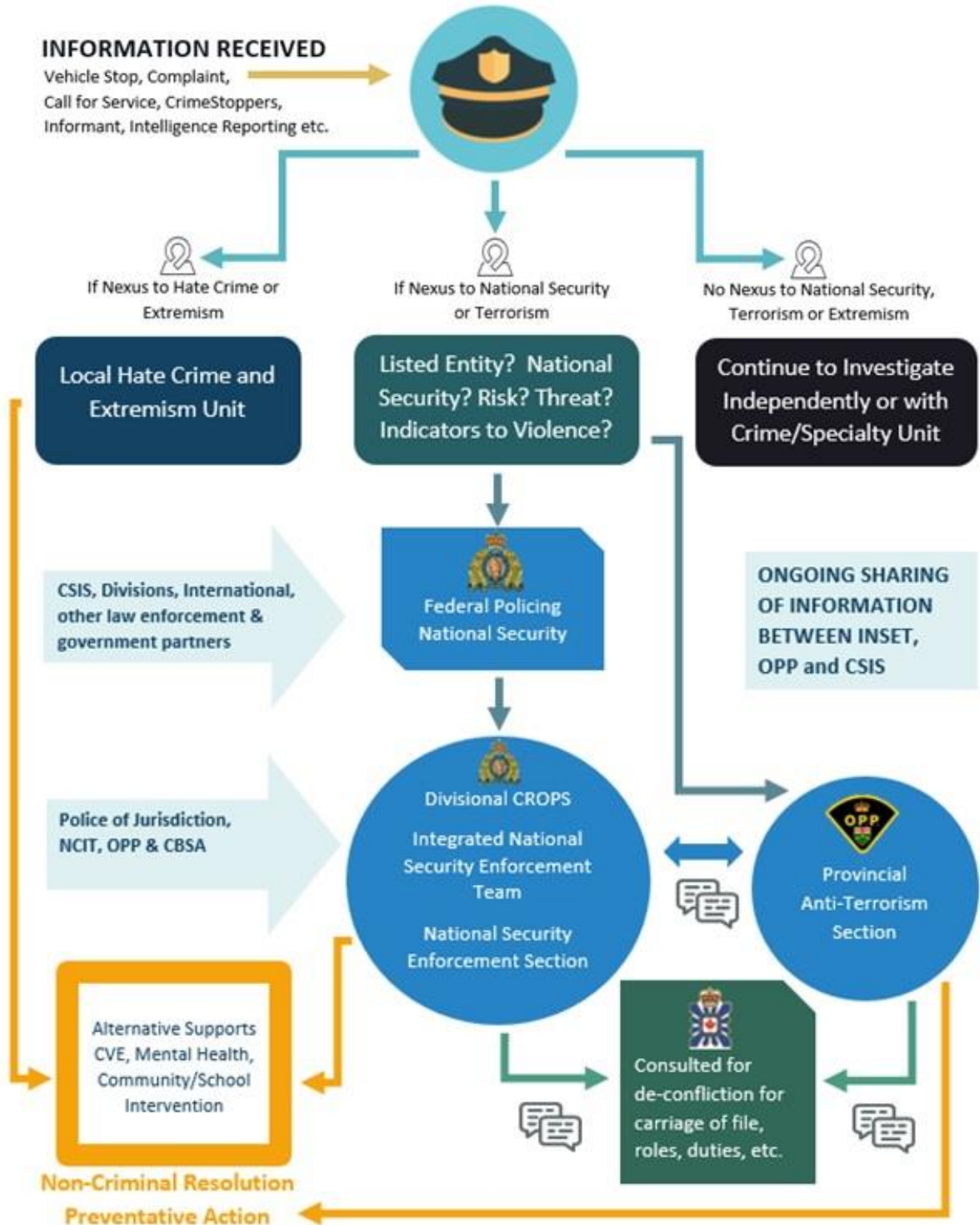
Relevant *Criminal Code of Canada* sections for each of these offences, can be found here: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/section-319.html>.

A Hate/Bias Motivated Incident refers to non-criminal hate incidents that involve the same characteristics as hate/bias crimes but do not meet the threshold to be classified as criminal offences under *Canada's Criminal Code*. An example of a Hate/Bias Motivated Incident is when a neighbour dispute or a dispute in a parking lot escalates to verbal abuse involving derogatory or racial slurs. Given the nature of these incidents and their potential to generate widespread fear in affected communities, police have an important reassurance role to play when responding to such occurrences.

The Hate/Bias Crime – Terrorism/Violent Extremism Nexus research demonstrates that hate/bias crime and terrorism/violent extremism share some important similarities (Mills et al., 2017; Deloughery et al., 2012), and should therefore be viewed as “close cousins”. This is because in each case, the target of the offence is selected because of his or her group identity, not because of his or her individual behaviour, and because hate/bias crime and terrorism/violent extremism generate fear among a greater number of people than those directly affected by violence.

There can also be a temporal association between these types of offending – that is, one can trigger the other. More specifically, some research has demonstrated that hate/bias crimes are often perpetrated in response to acts of terrorism. This appears to be especially the case within the first four weeks of a terrorist attack, though the first week generally appears to be the period of acutely elevated risk for hate/bias crime victimization. It therefore appears that some hate/ bias crime is reactionary in nature, serving as a form of vicarious retribution against innocent members of the group thought to be responsible for, or sympathetic to, the terrorist act. This has obvious implications for police services who can provide important reassurance and community support roles in the wake of such incidents.

The Canadian National Security Apparatus



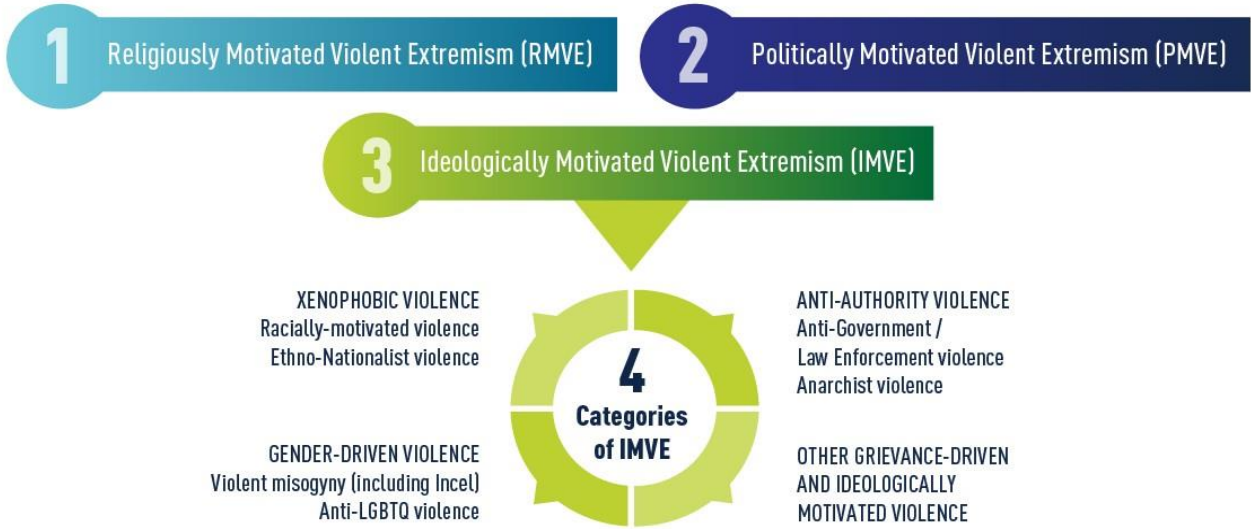
Though this graphic is specific to the Ontario context, it is intended to provide a general framework to describe how federal, provincial, and local police and intelligence agencies intersect and collaborate in the sharing of vital national security information. Because these channels and partnerships vary across provinces and territories, and because they are dynamic and subject to change, it is always best practice to forward any information believed to have a nexus to national security through your service's intelligence or investigative bureaus.

**Radicalization to Violence (RTV):
A Spectrum of Diverse Ideologies/Belief Systems, Motivations & Activities**

The concept of radicalization is central to understanding how and why someone might become interested in a particular ideology or belief system and ultimately mobilize to perpetrate violence in support of that ideology or belief system. Radicalization refers to belief systems and behaviours that range from the non-violent to the pre-violent to the extremely violent, involving individuals and groups located across the ideological spectrum.

These include:

- **Religiously motivated violent extremism (RMVE):** the use of violence as part of a spiritual conflict against a perceived immoral system (GC, 2021).
- **Politically Motivated Violent Extremism (PMVE):** the use of violence to create political systems or instill new structures or norms within existing systems.
- **Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism (IMVE):**
There are 4 general categories of IMVE:
 - Xenophobic and/or racially motivated violence
 - Anti-authority violence: anti-government violence, violence against law enforcement, anarchist violence
 - Gender-driven violence: Violent misogyny, anti-LGBTQ2S violence
 - Other grievance-driven and ideologically motivated violence: violence committed by individuals with no association to an organized group or external organization.



For more information and examples of each extremism typology, please see:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/security-intelligence-service/corporate/publications/2020-public-report/the-threat-environment.html#toc4>

It is important to remember that radical thinking, in and of itself, is not criminal – some of the most important social justice movements of our time stemmed from what were regarded by some at the time to be “radical” perspectives. Police and national security agencies are instead concerned with individuals who radicalize to *violence* and/or who present with risk indicators and behaviours that are thought to be consistent with early-stage radicalization to violence.

Radicalization to Violence (RTV): A Process

Radicalized violence is a very rare outcome. Most people who espouse extremist beliefs find alternative, non-violent means of promoting their cause or they become disenchanted with or otherwise disengage from a given ideology/belief system, either on their own or with the assistance of others (which underscores the importance of effective prevention/intervention activities in the national security space).

However, a very small proportion of those who espouse extremist beliefs come to believe the use of violence is an appropriate or even necessary way to advance their particular cause. So, radicalized violence represents the merging of a given ideology or belief system and violent action.

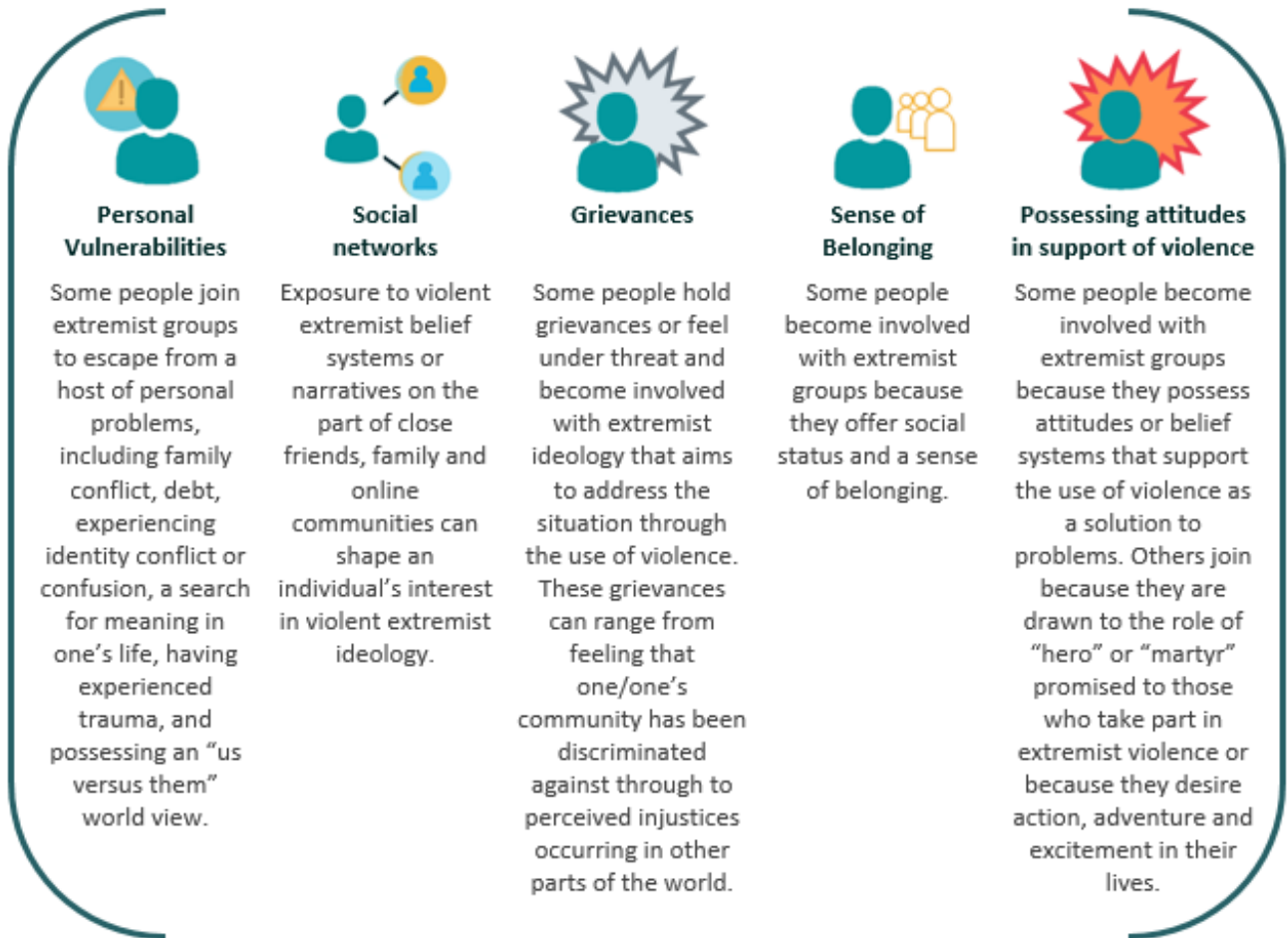
RTV: Risk Indicators

Individuals who radicalize to violence come from all socioeconomic, educational, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds - and the reasons and motivations underlying the radicalization process are themselves diverse and complex. This means there is no checklist or profile that can be used to help identify those who have or will radicalize to perpetrate violence. However, research *has* identified a number of factors that appear to be relatively consistent risk indicators for RTV across the social and political spectrum.

It is important to recognize that multiple risk indicators tend to be present in those who RTV as opposed to just one or two. Further, while the presence of multiple risk indicators in one person may be associated with their RTV, the presence of the same constellation of risk indicators in another may not be. And finally, the relationship between risk indicators and radicalized violence is in no way fully predictive – rather, the presence of a number of these factors should be understood to increase the *likelihood* of RTV.

Some of the factors that facilitate the RTV process identified in the research literature include:

Select Risk Indicators



Some research has also identified a number of protective factors that, if present, may buffer or mitigate the effects of the aforementioned risk indicators. These include:

Protective Factors



Responding to Radicalized Violence (RV)

The most appropriate response to RV is dependent on where in the RTV process a given individual is located. Research in this area tends to divide the process into 3 distinct phases: pre-criminal (early stage radicalization; no related criminality), criminal (fully radicalized; related criminality), and post-criminal (this involves those who mobilized to commit RV, served a prison sentence and are being released OR are so-called “returnees” or “foreign fighters” – that is, individuals who radicalized, then left Canada to take up arms with terrorist/extremist groups in other countries).

When someone has or is on the verge of committing extremist violence, the most appropriate response is likely a disruption/enforcement-based one aimed at containing the threat. However, those who ultimately mobilize to commit violence represent a tiny proportion of those who initiate and embark upon the radicalization process. In recent years, a host of additional strategies have been developed to identify and attend to those who may be vulnerable to the risk of RTV prior to, or in the early stages of, the radicalization process – that is, in the pre-criminal space. Related programming has also been implemented to work with individuals who fall into the post-criminal space – that is, intervention-based programming aimed at assisting individuals to disengage from extremist networks and desist from violent behaviour (Harris-Hogan et al., 2016).

Taken together, these strategies fall under the umbrella of Countering Violent Extremism (hereafter CVE; sometimes also referred to as Countering Radicalized Violence, or CRV), a series of prevention/intervention-based and remedial measures aimed at mitigating national security threats.

Responding to Various Stages of the RTV Process



Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)/Countering Radicalized Violence (CRV)

Although there is no singular pathway of radicalization to violence, we know that processes of radicalization involve a series of mini-stages and key moments during which risk is said to crystalize over time. As such, CVE/CRV hinges on the idea that there is also a sequence of key moments at which the radicalization process can be socially and/or ideologically interrupted (Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence, 2018). CVE/CRV efforts therefore represent an attempt to add more upstream, proactive approaches to address radicalization to violence to the available toolbox of strategies. This obviously would free up investigatory and enforcement-based units to focus their efforts on those persons thought to pose a more imminent threat to public safety and national security.

As discussed previously, recent years have seen an increasing trend toward the localization of national security work (Coaffee & Wood, 2006; Thompson & Bucerius, 2020). This means that CVE/CRV work is increasingly falling under the jurisdiction of local institutions and organizations – like the police, corrections, and a variety of community-based human and social service agencies. Partnerships among and between these agencies are thought to produce new opportunities for interventions and to foster direct communication between individuals, communities, and state actors. Often, local police services play a significant role in the development, implementation, and subsequent operation of CVE/CRV approaches, in part due to their operational capacity, along with their familiarity and existing relationships with the communities they serve (Thompson & Bucerius, 2020; Thompson & Leroux, 2020; Waxman, 2008).

CVE/CRV is best understood as a “policy spectrum” (Harris-Hogan et al., 2016) – a range of programs and initiatives that fall along a continuum that ranges from prevention/intervention-based activities through to disengagement/de-radicalization and reintegration strategies which are remedial.

For an interactive map of operational CVE/CRV programming in Canada, see <https://cpnprev.ca/the-interactive-map/>.

Additional Resources

Canadian Practitioners for the Prevention of Radicalization and Extremist Violence (CPN-PREV): <https://cpnprev.ca/#>

Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence: National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence: <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/ntnl-strtg-cntrng-rdclztn-vlnc/ntnl-strtg-cntrng-rdclztn-vlnc-en.pdf>

Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security and Society (TSAS): <https://www.tsas.ca/>

Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (Montreal): <https://info-radical.org/en/>

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