

Lesson 4: Radicalisation and Prisons: What is the connection?

Lesson Outline

Target Group

Prison Senior Management Team
(PSMT)

Correctional Officers (COs)

Prison Support Staff (PSS) (Teachers, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrist, Non-Governmental Organisations/Voluntary Organisations personnel)



Suggested Number of participants

14

Duration

3 hours

Equipment

- ✓ Whiteboard
- ✓ Laptop
- ✓ Data Projector
- ✓ Flipchart
- ✓ Sound projections
- ✓ (Or large TV screen)

Aim

By the end of this session participants should be in a position to

- Deal with inmates who have acted on a violent extremist ideology
- Deal with individuals who are at risk of radicalisation
- Offer support and safety for incarcerated inmates
- Support rehabilitation
- Support reintegration
- Deal with the issue of radicalisation in prison.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge

- Understand that not all individuals sentenced for terrorist acts pose the same risk to society and other inmates
- To know how to recognise these different levels of threats
- Create a healthy prison and prisoner environment.
- Understand the advantages and disadvantages of concentrating or dispersing inmates suspected or convicted of violent extremist acts.
- Know how to support inmates for a successful reintegration to society
- Know how to support inmates in a desistance based approach to radicalisation

Skills

- The skill of fostering a positive staff-prisoner relationship
- The skills to create healthy prison settings
- The skill to work with those coming from other related agencies (multi-agency approach)
- The skill to support inmates for a successful resettlement to society
- The skill to support inmates to desist radicalisation.

Attitudes

- An attitude of respecting universal human rights at all times in a prison environment
- An attitude of understanding why radical positions may entice persons towards radicalisation
- Feel that offenders are capable of a positive change, and can offer support to help them disengage from extremism

Introduction to lesson

Opening question:

Are prisons 'Universities' for radicalisation?

Start by watching the following video:

'Universities for terrorists' EU prisons turning into radicalization hotspots



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pk8JtaJewsw>

Open up a discussion on the main points raised in this video.

Follow up by asking participants to read:



We need to talk about radicalisation in prisons. Mariam Mokhtar - October 25, 2017. Free Malaysia Today

Development

Introductory level

Step 1: Class discussion: Main question:

Which are the risks associated with radicalisation in prison?

Ask participants to write their contributions on a flip chart.

Compare the entries on the whiteboard with the following:

- recruitment of other prisoners;
- supporting extremist groups from prison;
- getting support from extremist groups outside prison;
- preparing for violent extremist/ideological inspired illegal acts after release;
- hostility to other groups of prisoners and/or staff;
- becoming more radicalised because of grievances/frustrations/anger related to being in prison.

Step 2: Watch and compare these two videos:

The Third Jihad: Radicalisation in Prisons

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQ8evikPTAk>

De-radicalisation programme trialled in French prisons

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXJGafiEd74>

Note for facilitator

Contribute to the discussion by pointing out (in case it does not come from the participants) that:

- People are able to go through positive change and disengage from violence, even though some might choose not to.
- Universal human rights conventions must be respected.
- Individuals sentenced for terrorist acts do not all represent the same risks to society.
- A safer and more ordered prison environment, including in terms of dynamic relations, is a precondition to limiting radicalisation processes and enhancing deradicalisation/disengagement.
- To prevent radicalisation and support disengagement/deradicalisation processes, multi-agency cooperation is crucial.
-  (RAN P&P Dealing with radicalisation in a prison and probation context - practitioners working paper)

Step 3: Creating a healthy prison and prisoner environment.

Key question:

From a scale of 1 to 10, rate the level of each of the following in your prison. Do you consider your prison as a healthy prison?

- **Safety**: if the prison staff is not able to uphold a safe environment, prisoners will form groups that offer both friendship and protection. These groups can in certain situations become prison gangs that enhance hierarchy, level of danger, conflicts between prisoners and between prisoners and staff.
- **Trust**: a concept hard to achieve in an environment of distrust which often flourishes in prison settings. However, trust is an important factor when dealing with prisoners in general but perhaps especially when it comes to preventing radicalisation and contributing to disengagement;
- **Fairness**: to be radical is not a crime and should as such not lead to repressive measures that go further than those imposed on ordinary prisoners. However, the crime(s) committed will always be factored in when the danger posed is assessed;
- **Humanity**: an environment characterised by kind regard and concern for the person.
- **Legitimacy**: the transparency of the prison, how it responds to incidents and its moral recognition of the individual.
- **Staff-prisoner relationships**: staff confidence and competence in use of authority is crucial to establishing a good relationship based on mutual respect.
- **The presence of a charismatic extremist leader** is an important factor: such prisoners must be identified and the risk they represent must be managed

Watch video and discuss:

Prison officers concerned about radicalisation in jails

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUD2X3YAjF8>

Step 4: Resettlement

The aim of resettlement should be to prevent violent behaviour and enable inclusion and participation in society. A sense of belonging and acceptance is likely to make a commitment to violence less sustainable. Radical ideas are not dangerous in themselves, even though they may remain a risk factor for violent behaviour in some circumstances.

RAN suggest that:

- Resettlement plans should be included in the working agenda for the offender as early on in the sentence as possible.
- It is important to understand the individual, work on their problems and their possibilities.
- It is critical to plan for the end of support, to gradually reduce the individual's reliance on others and build capacity for them to cope.
- Transitional periods are seen as points in time when the risk of recidivism is high, so it is important to have plans in place prior to them having served their full sentence. These plans should incorporate ways to deal with a problematic home or personal life and make use of human and social capital in order to prevent new offences.

Advanced Level

Step 5: There are basically three ways how prisons deal with radicalised inmates. These are:

- a. Concentration (placing convicted terrorists together)
- b. Dispersal (placing convicted terrorists in a regime with other prisoners not convicted of terrorism related crimes)
- c. A combination of a and b.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each of these approaches:

Regime choice	Potential advantages	Potential disadvantages
<p>Dispersed: People suspected or convicted of violent extremist acts are placed among 'ordinary' prisoners and fall under the same general regime. This does not mean that offenders are placed in an ordinary unit; placement is based on risk assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prisoners are less likely to regard themselves as marginalised because of their beliefs. They will, to some extent, be treated as ordinary prisoners. - Prisoners might be positively influenced because of being around different groups of prisoners with different mind-sets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handled by generalist staff members instead of specialists. - Risk of radicalising other prisoners. - Both the prisoner and his/her environment require close monitoring to identify any negative influences. - Risk of extremists mingling with criminal networks.
<p>Concentrated/ placed together: People suspected or convicted of violent extremist acts are placed together in a separate terrorist wing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All the prisoners on a terrorist wing can be completely monitored in their contacts within the wing. - Limited opportunity to influence other prisoners. - Individual and group work with prisoners on deradicalisation/disengagement and other interventions. - Staff on a terrorist wing become experts because they work with radicalised prisoners on a daily basis; only a small group of staff members must be trained. - This approach may reassure the public that real and powerful measures are being taken to safeguard society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The terrorist wing can facilitate further radicalisation/extremist acts. New bonds between extremist prisoners can be formed and this can increase the risk when they leave prison. - Lack of contact can cause difficulties when socialising someone after their release. - Perceptions of unfairness could lead to further radicalisation of the prisoner, but also of supporters outside the prison. - Such facilities are expensive and need capacity for urgent situations. - Prisoners might feel stigmatised by being in a separate wing, yet others see it as a sign of raised status or credibility as an extremist. It could therefore lead to greater cohesion within the group - Deradicalisation/disengagement interventions could be hampered. - The approach risks establishing a group with great symbolic power.
<p>Combination: Based on risk assessment, it is decided whether to place a person suspected or convicted of violent extremist acts in a separate or an ordinary regime.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tailor-made approach that fits the risk and needs of the prisoner. - After screening and assessment, the detainee can be placed in the most appropriate regime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both regimes need to be available. - Need for robust assessment tools.

Step 6: Desistance Based Approach

According to RAN, the most effective way to encourage desistance from violent radicalism may be to let the radicalised offender redefine his own identity as a non-radical – or at least a non-violent radical.

How in your opinion can you as an officer in a prison environment support an inmate to desist from violence?

Note to Facilitator



Read before the session: RAN P&P Dealing with radicalisation in a prison and probation context RAN P&P - practitioners working paper

Conclusion

Introductory level

Identify in order of importance some of the items/topics discussed in this lesson in relation to their importance in your prison.

Advanced Level

Think of one or two inmates who have been radicalised, or are suspected of radicalising others in your prison. Describe how these inmates are being treated. State how, in your opinion, such an approach can be improved.

Evaluation

Describe how, in practice, the offender's well-being and rehabilitation process can be implemented in a prison context in order to promote inmate's resilience.



Reading Material

Introductory level

Compulsory reading:

The Radicalisation of Prison Inmates: Exploring Recruitment, Religion and Prisoner Vulnerability by Mulcahy, Elizabeth, Merrington, Shannon, Bell, Peter. 2013. *Journal of Human Security*

Supplementary reading:

Spain smashes jihadist ring operating in 17 jails. Retrieved from <http://en.qantara.de/content/spain-smashes-jihadist-ring-operating-in-17-jails>

Advanced Level

Compulsory reading:

Radicalization or Rehabilitation. Understanding the challenge of extremist and radicalized prisoners. Greg Hannah, Lindsay Clutterbuck, Jennifer Rubin. Prepared for the RAND Corporation

Supplementary reading:

Anjem Choudary prison release could worsen both Islamist and far-right extremism, experts warn Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/anjem-choudary-prison-released-jail-extremism-isis-terror-islamist-far-right-al-muhajiroun-a8565601.html>

'Few' violent extremists radicalised in jail, report finds. Retrieved from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jun/07/few-violent-extremists-radicalised-in-jail-report-finds>

Information for the Facilitator

Most of the steps contain an added point with information for the facilitator. It would aid the discussion to keep those prospective answers in mind when conducting the session.

Furthermore, the facilitator should be very familiar with the document by RAN - Dealing with radicalisation in a prison and probation context, practitioners working paper