

Risk Assessment of Radicalization to Violence Applications of VERA-2 in Prisons

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What is Risk Assessment

Risk is ubiquitous-omnipresent

RISK ASSESMENT INCLUDES

- 1. THE IDENTIFICATION (variables) ,**
- 2. THE EVALUATION (indicators) ,**
- 3. THE ESTIMATION OF LEVEL of RISK**

**RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR VIOLENCE DIFFER
NOT ONLY ONE KIND OF RISK ASSESSMENT**

RISK ASSESSMENT APPLICATIONS RELEVANT BUT NOT LIMITED TO PRISONS

PRISONS & JUSTICE: DIFFERENT TYPES TOOLS NEEDED TO RESPOND TO NEEDS

- General violence/recidivism (Traditional)
- Radicalization to violence – (New- not same as OCVO requires new solutions, different outcomes)

- **RISK ASSESSMENT BROAD CONTEXT
OUTSIDE PRISONS-also examples**
- Business Risks; Risk to Critical Infrastructure; -
Defence/Military, CYBER, Other

IDENTIFYING RISK AND THREAT:

Definitions

- **RISK = probability (of injury or damage) X severity of the loss (harm) [$R = p \times h$]**
 - RISK – THE ACTOR (producing the harm X severity of loss or damage)
 - RISK –OBJECT – (object of harm X severity)
- **THREAT= Intention to act -extremist violence) X capacity-successfully carry out act [$T = i \times c$]**

TERMS AND MEANING:

RADICALIZATION & VIOLENT RADICALIZATION

- **Radicalization:** the process of adopting or promoting an extremist IDEOLOGY OR BELIEF intended to advance political, religious or social change.
- **Violent Radicalization:** PROCESS of adopting an EXTREMIST BELIEF SYSTEM with the intention and justification of USING VIOLENCE to achieve political, religious or social goals = violent extremism

VIOLENT EXTREMISM & TERRORISM: DIFFICULT TO DEFINE

- **EXTREMISM**: REFERS TO ANY POLITICAL THEORY THAT HOLDS TO **UNCOMPROMISING AND RIGID POLICIES OR IDEOLOGY**
- **EXTREMIST**: ONE WHO HOLDS TO SUCH VIEWS (LAWFUL)
- **VIOLENT EXTREMIST**: ONE WHO USES (SUPPORTS) VIOLENCE TO ADVANCE THESE VIEWS OR RELATED ACTIONS DEFINED BY STATUTE AS UNLAWFUL IN FURTHERANCE OF AN IDEOLOGY OR PROSCRIBED GROUP -[PROCESS TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM]
- **TERRORIST**: - ONE WHO USES IDEOLOGICAL BASED VIOLENCE TO FURTHER GOALS WITH THE INTENTION TO CAUSE FEAR IN A CIVILIAN POPULATION

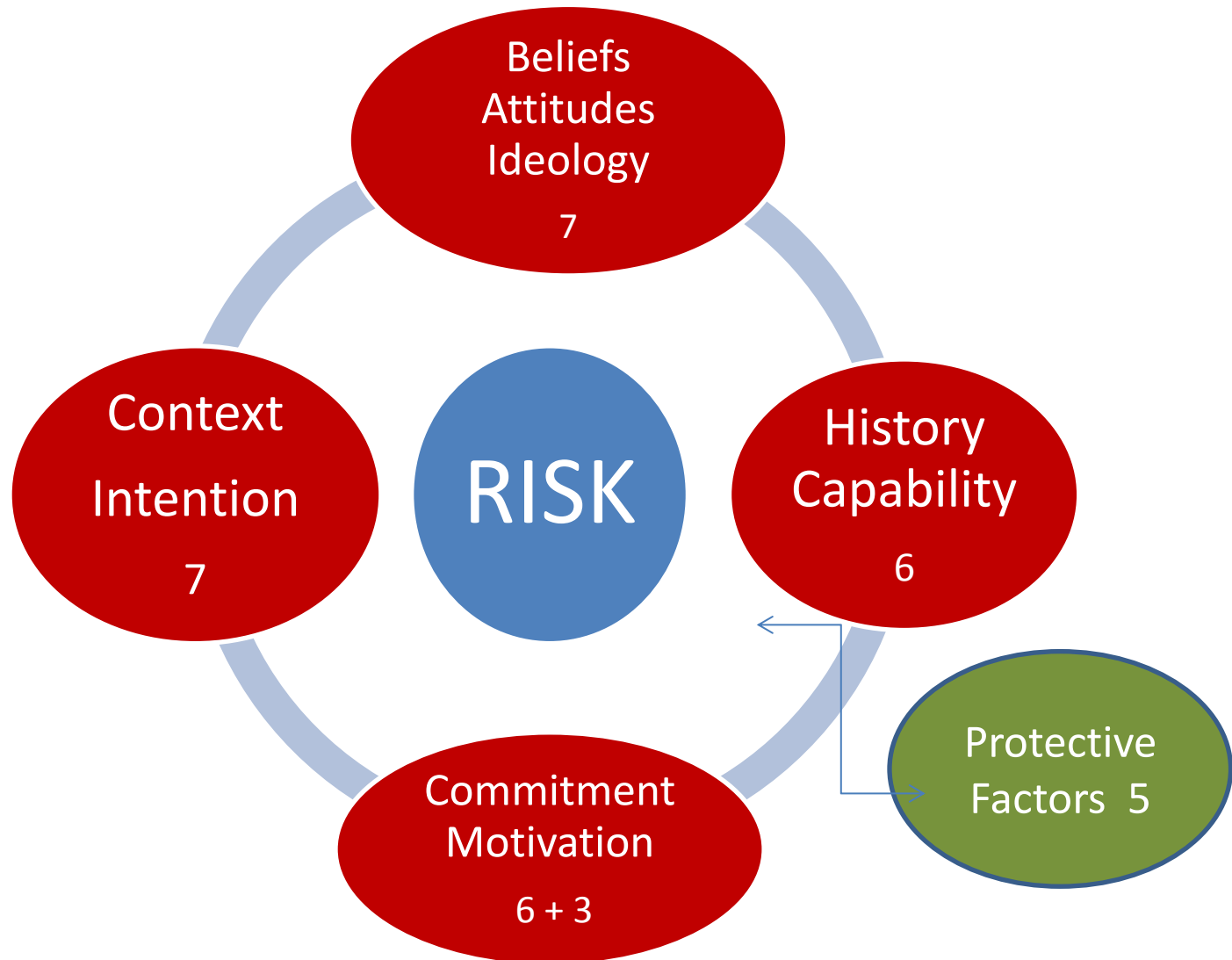
WHAT IS THE VERA*-2 ?

*VIOLENT EXTREMIST RISK ASSESSMENT

- **RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL**
 - 1. DEVELOPED SPECIFICALLY FOR RISK ASSESSMENT OF RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM [TERRORISM]
 - 2. VERA DEVELOPED IN 2008-9 PSC website
 - 3. REVISED IN 2010 as VERA-2 & 2015 VERA-2+REM
 - WITH NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY & PSYCHOLOGY [NIFP] MIN. SECURITY AND JUSTICE, NL.
- **TO ESTABLISH RISK LEVEL MEASURE FOR EACH INDICATOR AND OVERALL RISK (criterion defined levels)**
- **USED IN PRISONS + NATIONAL SECURITY APPLICATIONS, POLICING AND/OR PRISONS on 4 CONTINENTS - uses dynamic indicators - process**

VERA 2 +REM RISK INDICATORS N=34

COMPLEX DYNAMIC CAUSAL MODEL



VERA & VERA -2 Risk Indicators

VERA (2009) N=28

Attitudes (10)

Contextual (4)

Historical(6)

Protective(5)

Demographic (3)

VERA 2 (2010) N=31

Beliefs & Attitudes (7)

Context & Intent (7)

History & Capability (6)

Commitment/Motivation (5)

Protective (6)

NEW VERA DEVELOPMENTS

VERA-2 + REM*

NL, GERMANY SWITZERLAND, BELGIUM, UK

VERA 2 (2010) n=31

Beliefs & Attitudes (7)

Context & Intent (7)

History & Capability (6)

Commitment/Motivation (5)

Protective (6)

VERA 2 + REM [NIFP] N=34

Beliefs & Attitudes (7)

Context & Intent (7)

History & Capability (6)

Commitment/Motivation (8)

Protective (6)

VERA Revisions Informed By Empirical Experience & Expert Opinion from:

- **Correctional Experts following use**
- **Forensic psychologists and psychiatrists**
- **Risk Assessment Methodologists-
International Experts**
- **Law Enforcement-operational users**
- **Terrorism Researchers**
- **Input from Canada, USA, Europe, Australia, countries in S.E. Asia**

DISTINCT TOOL NEEDED: MAJOR DIFFERENCES ORDINARY CRIMINAL VIOLENCE AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

- **PREVIOUS VIOLENCE**
- **YOUNG AGE AT 1ST VIOLENCE**
- **RELATIONSHIP INSTABILITY**
- **MALTREATMENT IN YOUTH**
- **POOR PARENTING**
- **EDUCATIONAL FAILURE**
- **EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS**
- **PERSONAL GAIN**
- **MAJOR MENTAL ILLNESS**
- **PSYCHOPATHY**
- **PERSONALITY DISORDER**
- **LACK OF INSIGHT**
- **STRESS**
- **IMPULSIVITY**
- **PATHOLOGICAL LYING**

VIOLENT EXTREMISTS : INDICATOR DIFFERENCES

- **DEEP CONVICTION/ NOT SUPERFICIAL FEELING AS IN PSYCHOPATHY**
- **JUSTIFICATION for ACTION- OFTEN RELATED TO HIGHER AUTHORITY, THAT IS A MORAL JUSTIFICATION**
- **NOT USUALLY MOTIVATED BY CRIMINOGENIC NEEDS, ALCOHOL, DRUG ADDICTION, PHYSICAL COMPULSIONS**

Violent Extremism: Differences from Ordinary Violent Offenders

- **ACTION FOR GLORIFICATION- NOT PERSONAL GAIN+ MIXED MOTIVES**
- **SELECTIVE EMPATHY , NOT ABSENCE OF EMPATHY**
- **EDUCATION OR EMPLOYMENT FAILURE NOT NOTABLE**
- **CHILDREARING- ABUSE NOT USUALLY RELEVANT**
- **STABLE FAMILY FREQUENT**
- **LESS MENTAL ILLNESS**
- **PSYCHOPATHY NOT TYPICAL**
- **IMPULSE CONTROL PROBLEMS MINIMAL**
- **ATTITUDES IDEOLOGICAL, MORALISTIC**
- **STRATEGIC LYING; NOT PATHOLOGICAL LYING**
- **PURPOSEFUL, PLANNED- NOT IMPULSIVE**
- **ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY**

SPECTRUM OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM: PRISONS: ACTION VERSUS CONVICTION

- **ISIS/ISIL; Al-Qaeda inspired actors;**
- **Right-wing extremism – Left-wing extremism**
- **Anarchists: Rejection of laws –Freemen; Sov Cit.**
- **Returning/aspiring Foreign Terrorist Fighters**
- **Eco-terrorists- (attacks on critical infrastructure +)**
- **Nationalists, Separatists**
- **Other ideological-based extremism: political-religious-ideological**
- **ISIS infiltration of migrant, other populations**

WHO CAN USE THE VERA-2

- **TRAINED INDIVIDUALS IN VERA 2 PROTOCOL**
- **REQUIRES KNOWLEDGE OF TERRORISM***
- **ANALYTICAL EXPERIENCE DESIRABLE**
- **PREFERENCE TO USE AS PART OF BATTERY-**
- **USE WITH ALL REPORTS, CASE FILE DATA, OBSERVATIONS, INTELLIGENCE**
- **POSSIBLE TO APPLY WITH FILE DATA, REPORT INFORMATION, ONSEERVATIONS**
 - **ACCESS PROBLEMS & ROLE OF DECEPTION**

KNOWLEDGE
BASE OF
TERRORISM
(VIOLENT
EXTREMISM)



BEHAVIORAL
SYSTEMMATIC
ASSESSMENT
APPROACH



Risk indicators
USING SPJ &
evidence -
based
approach

PRISONS & RISK ASSESSMENT PROTOCOLS : BASIC PREMISES

- 1. NOT ALL RISK ASSESSMENTS RELATE TO MENTAL HEALTH**
- 2. VERA-2 ADMINISTRATION: NOT NECESSARILY BY PSYCHOLOGISTS:** (e.g. Intelligence personnel, social work, other counselors)
- 3. DIRECT ACCESS TO CLIENT NOT ESSENTIAL:** (e.g. use of file data, observations, reports, trajectory of risk)
- 4. DIFFERENT TYPES OF VALIDITY EXIST: NOT ONLY PREDICTIVE VALIDITY- RELEVANCE TO DYNAMIC PROCESSES & PURPOSEFUL ACTION**

STRUCTURED PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT [SPJ]

- 1. Systematic , STRUCTURED way to make decisions**
- 2. Criterion-definition based ratings provide reliability**
- 3. Accepted methodology used in other violence risk tools (HCR-20, SAVRY....)**
- 4. Appropriate for indicator complexity of VE (not binary)**

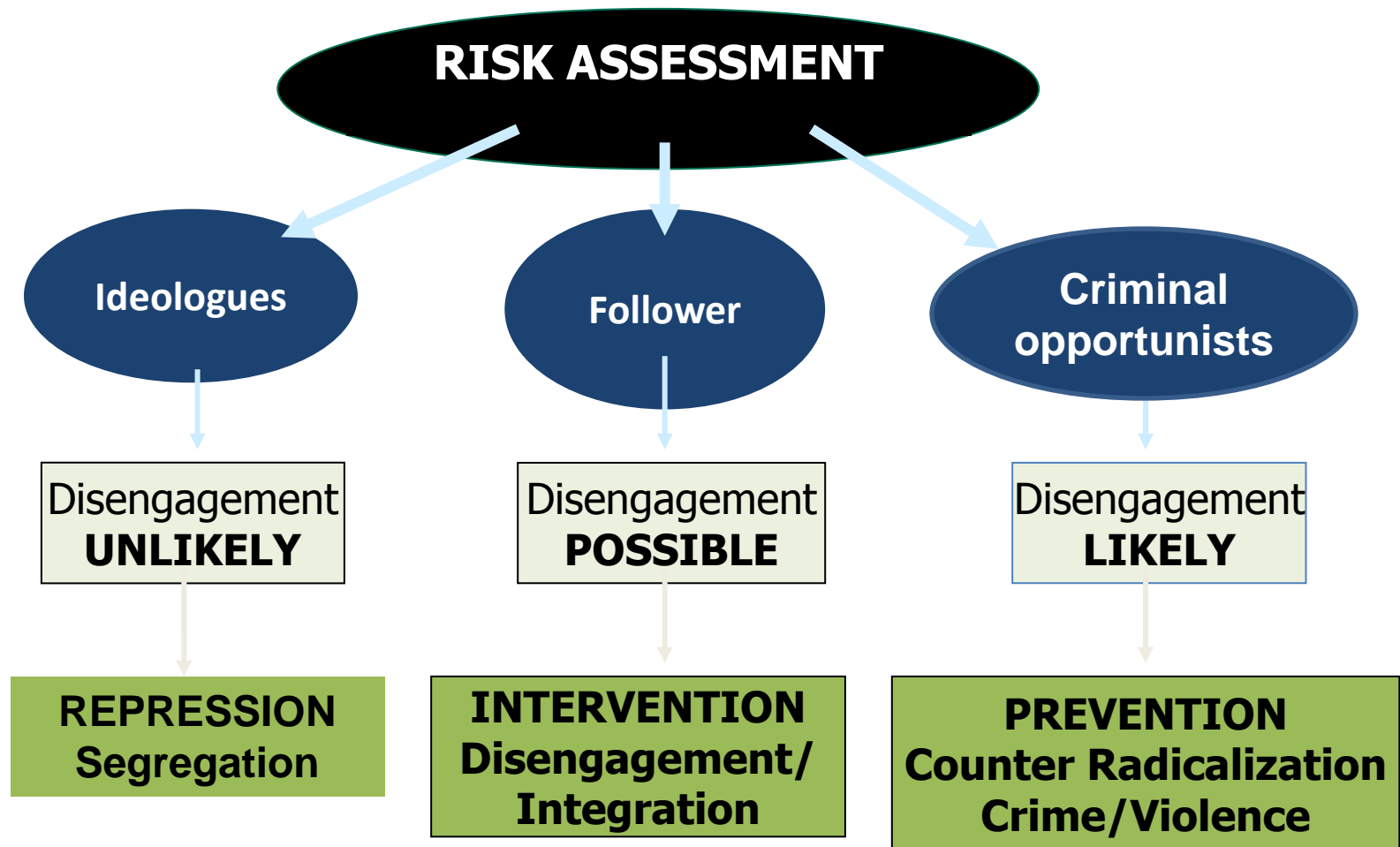
STRUCTURED PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT

- 5. Provides judgment of the likelihood of re-offending-(estimation) – based on inductive logic**
- 6. Assists decision transparency (e.g. court)**
- 7. Provides for repeat administrations for identifying/measuring change**
- 8. Assist judgment , not replaces judgment**

ROLE IN PRISONS

- **CLASSIFICATION**
- **PROGRAMS**
- **PLACEMENT**
- **EARLY RELEASE**
- **DETAINED AWAITING TRIAL**
- **PROGRAMS PLANNING /IMPLEMENTATION: [RAN]**
CASE-BY CASE: NEED DETAILS OF
INDIVIDUAL TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC GOALS
- **AWARNESS * FIRST LINE CONTACTS [RAN]**

Example of Rehabilitation Program Model USING VERA-2



VIOLENT EXTREMIST Risk Assessment

Linked intelligence/security information,
behavioral analysis

+

General crime/violence risk

+

Terrorism risk (VERA-2)



RISK JUDGEMENT



Decisions/Action

Classification, Placement, Associations, Programs, Progression

WHY USE THE VERA-2 + REM

- 1. **RELEVANCE:** Appropriate indicators for ideologically motivated violence- spectrum
- 2. **NEED:** in prison setting for violent extremists
- 3. **VALIDITY:** independent study support 2013
CONSTRUCT VALIDITY; CONTENT VALIDITY;
USER/EXPERT CONSUMER VALIDITY; DEDUCTIVE
VALIDITY, FACE VALIDITY: DATA /ACCESS /BASE-RATE
PROBLEMS: PLANS FOR INTERNATIONAL DATA BASE
- 4. **RELIABILITY:** independent support- 2013 +

WHY USE THE VERA-2+ REM

5. **SPJ: ACCEPTED, APPROPRIATE METHOD**

Actuarial not feasible, less structured is less accurate

6. **PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT:**

Role retained: important for a complex dynamic model

7. **USERS IN METHOD- COMPETENCE**

Prison staff, intelligence officers, * availability

8. **MEASUREMENT CAPABILITY**

Ratings permit collection of information to provide behavioral evidence of change

9. **MULTI-EU COUNTRY INITIATIVE FOR DATA-BASE DEVELOPMENT – LED BY NL + GERMANY; BELGIUM, SWITZERLAND, UK WITH DISCUSSIONS FOR OTHERS**

VERA-2 [+REM]

INDIVIDUAL RISK ASSESSMENT

- **NOT A SILVER BULLET - BEST PRACTICE-**
- **Reasoned Systematic, Consistent , Scientific, Transparent Approach**
- **Independent support obtained for validity and reliability – important for repeat measures**
- **More data required + broader evaluation [NIFP]**

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES CAN BE MET

- 1) TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON THE LIKELIHOOD OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST ACTION AND HOW TO TRY TO PREVENT THIS; COLLABORATION; INCREASE AWARENESS IN STAFF WITH INDICATORS
- 2) TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO ASSIST INTERVENTION ACTION- CASE-BY-CASE as recommended by [RAN]
RAN, (2015). Preventing Radicalization to Terrorism and Violent Extremism.
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/ran_collection-approaches_and_practices_en.pdf
- 3) TO MONITOR PROGRAM EFFICACY
- 4) EARLY SIGNS OF RADICALIZATION IN PRISONS – MONITORING
- 5) PERTINENT INFORMATION FOR EARLY RELEASE DECISIONS

Thank you. Questions?

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